



Phase 2 Engagement Report

Uptown-Douglas Corridor Plan

September 6, 2016

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Executive Summary

Public engagement in support of Phase 2 of the Uptown – Douglas Corridor Plan project occurred from May 26 – June 26, 2016. The engagement process was directed by the Engagement Strategy, which was developed with input from, and endorsed by, the project Advisory Committee. Engagement activities included a survey, poll questions, small-group discussions, and pop-up events located throughout the study area. Across all activities, an estimated 2,500 engagement interactions took place, and approximately 900 responses were collected.

Engagement questions focused on five topics related to the long-term future of the study area: Vision, Values, Goals, Issues and Opportunities. Respondents / engagement participants included residents from across the south island, with fewer than half of survey respondents reporting their home address within the study area. In addition to study-area residents, participants included people who work in the area, own property, land or businesses there, use the area for services such as shopping, use the area for recreation, or pass through the study area while commuting.

When asked to provide key words related to a vision for the future of the Uptown – Douglas Corridor, the top themes of responses included:

- Walkable / bicycle-friendly;
- Greenspace;
- Sustainable / environmentally-friendly;
- Community;
- More residential / increased density;
- Safe; and
- Transit.

Together with the project Advisory Committee, a set of draft Values, Issues and Opportunities were generated, and community members were asked to rate the level of importance or desirability for each item. Respondents were then invited to add additional items or comments. Overall, input in these areas largely aligned with the draft lists.

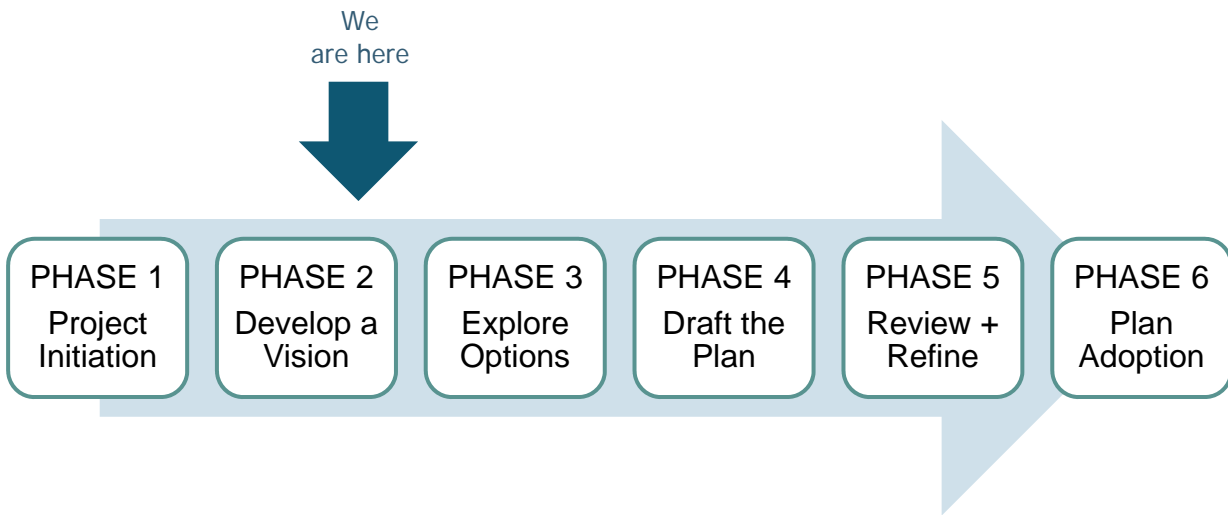
Generally speaking, a major focus or theme across all engagement input was transportation, with a large portion of comments relating to access, flow, safety and/or connectivity for pedestrians, cyclists, public transit and/or drivers.

The input collected during this phase of engagement will be used to develop the official Vision, Principles and Goals for the Uptown – Douglas Corridor Plan. This input will also be used to refine and finalize a list of priority issues to be addressed in the plan.

Introduction

The Uptown – Douglas Corridor (UDC) Plan is a comprehensive plan that will guide land use in the area over the next 30 years. The process to develop a Plan for this central regional hub was started in 2015.

The project has been divided into six phases, and is currently in Phase 2 - Develop a Vision. It is anticipated that the Draft Uptown-Douglas Corridor Plan will be presented to Council for consideration in late 2017 or early 2018.



As identified in the Terms of Reference, one of the key deliverables from Phase 1 was to develop a Public Engagement Strategy. The Public Engagement Strategy was developed based on industry best practices, the International Association of Public Participation (IAP2) protocols, the District’s Public Participation Policy, input from the UDC Advisory Committee and interviews with a variety of stakeholders. The UDC Advisory Committee endorsed the Engagement Strategy, and that document became the blueprint for Phase 2.

Public engagement for Phase 2 was implemented according to the Engagement Strategy, which identified four engagement objectives:

1. Prior to the commencement of engagement activities, the public and stakeholders are *informed* about the planning process, the current facts and figured of the study area, planning constraints and how they can participate.
2. During the active engagement period, May 25 – June 24, *consult* with stakeholders on a list of community values generated by the UDC Advisory Committee.
3. During the active engagement period, *consult* with stakeholders on a list of issues and opportunities for the study area.
4. During the active engagement period, to *involve* stakeholders in developing a vision, principles and goals for the long-term future of the UDC area.

The purpose of the public engagement during Phase 2 of the UDC project was to gather input to develop a community vision, values and goals for the future of the area. The District was also looking to the public and stakeholders to help identify issues and opportunities for the study area.

Questions asked during the engagement period, including in the public survey, focused on five areas:

- Vision;
- Values;
- Goals;
- Issues; and
- Opportunities

Phase 2 Public engagement events and opportunities ran from May 26 through June 26, 2016. It should be noted that walking tours were included in the Engagement Strategy under Phase 2 engagement activities; however, it was decided that walking tours would be better suited to the public engagement objectives identified for Phase 3 of the UDC Plan project. Therefore, the decision was made to postpone the public walking tours until the Phase 3 public engagement.

Further public engagement is planned throughout the remainder of the UDC plan project, specifically during Phases 3 and 5.

Engagement Synopsis

Advertising and Notification

To raise awareness for Phase 2 engagement and advertise opportunities for input, the following key outreach activities were taken:

- Postcards were mailed to every home, registered owner and business in the study area (approximately 3,800);
- Newspaper ads were placed in the Saanich News (7 times) and Times Colonist (2 times) advertising the coffee klatches, lemonade stands and living room sessions and encouraging the public to participate;
- Press release and direct media outreach resulted in an article in the Saanich News;
- Emails were sent out to the stakeholder contact list (approximately 100 people) advertising the events, sharing information and encouraging public participation;
- Regular social media posts on the Sustainable Saanich Facebook and Twitter feeds as well as LinkedIn to promote the engagement opportunities;
- Details on the events and general project information were advertised on the Saanich home page, project page and in the event listings;
- Posters advertising the events and survey were placed in numerous locations throughout the study area;
- Letters were sent out to major property owners, providing notification of the project, highlighting engagement events and offering one-on-one meetings; and
- Displays and tablets were located at Municipal Hall as well as the Emily Carr and Centennial Branches of the Victoria Public Library to provide information about the project and

encourage input and survey participation (surveys were loaded on the tablets and people were encouraged to complete the survey electronically).

Public Engagement Activities

Both in-person and online engagement opportunities were offered throughout the active engagement period from May 26 through June 26, 2016. As outlined in the Engagement Strategy, techniques included multiple pop-up booths at Uptown Shopping Centre and on the Galloping Goose Trail, small-group discussions held at coffee shops throughout the study area, an online survey, weekly online poll questions, and information and survey displays at Saanich Municipal Hall and two nearby public library branches.

Across all engagement activities and techniques, it is estimated that more than 2,500 engagement interactions took place over the May 26 – June 26 period. Nearly 900 pieces of feedback were received, including survey and poll responses, sticky-note comments, and coffee klatch input.

Pop-Up Booths

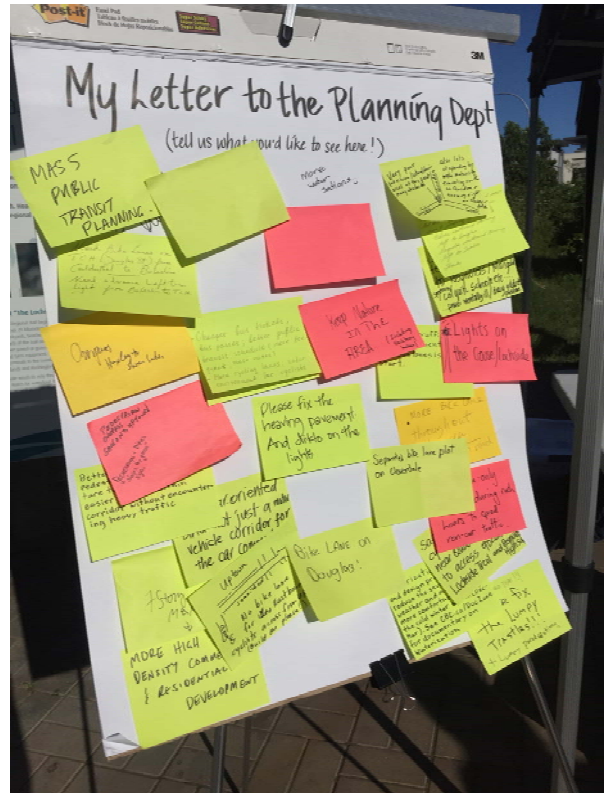
The booths included information displays, maps, pamphlets, postcards and hard-copy surveys, and members of Saanich planning department and the UDC Advisory Committee were on hand to receive comments and answer questions. At some sessions, tablet computers were available for people to complete the survey electronically on-the-spot.

Participants at the pop-up booths at Uptown Shopping Centre and on the Galloping Goose Regional Trail were not officially counted, however it is estimated that more than 2,000 people were engaged across the eight sessions that were held. Five sessions took place in the busy Town Plaza area at Uptown Shopping Centre, and three sessions were held at various locations on the Galloping Goose.



Pop-up booths were installed at the Uptown Shopping Centre (above) and on the Galloping Goose Regional Trail to engage the community in order to help create a vision for the UDC area.

At most of the pop-up booth sessions, participants were invited to write their hopes and ideas for the UDC area, with a sticky-note collage activity called “My Letter to the Planning Department – What’s your vision for the future of the UDC area?”. More than 300 comments were collected through this activity.



Coffee Klatches

A total of 18 small-group discussion opportunities were held during the active engagement period, with a total of 32 participants. These sessions were called “coffee klatches” and were held in study-area coffee shops such as Starbucks, Tim Hortons, Good Earth, Serious Coffee and Roundhouse Café at a variety of times and different days. A few of these sessions were separately convened by members of the UDC Plan Advisory Committee, as part of their role in assisting to facilitate the engagement process.

Survey & Weekly Polls

Online engagement opportunities included a survey (which was also available in hard copy), plus three weekly poll questions that were posted on the Saanich website and heavily advertised through social media. A total of 321 responses were received for the survey, with 256 fully completed surveys received. There were some technical issues with the survey time-out settings early on in the engagement period, leading to higher-than-usual incomplete responses. This was corrected on June 2, or approximately one week after the survey was launched online.

Weekly poll question response rates were as follows:

- Poll Question 1: 55 responses
- Poll Question 2: 66 responses
- Poll Question 3: 117 responses

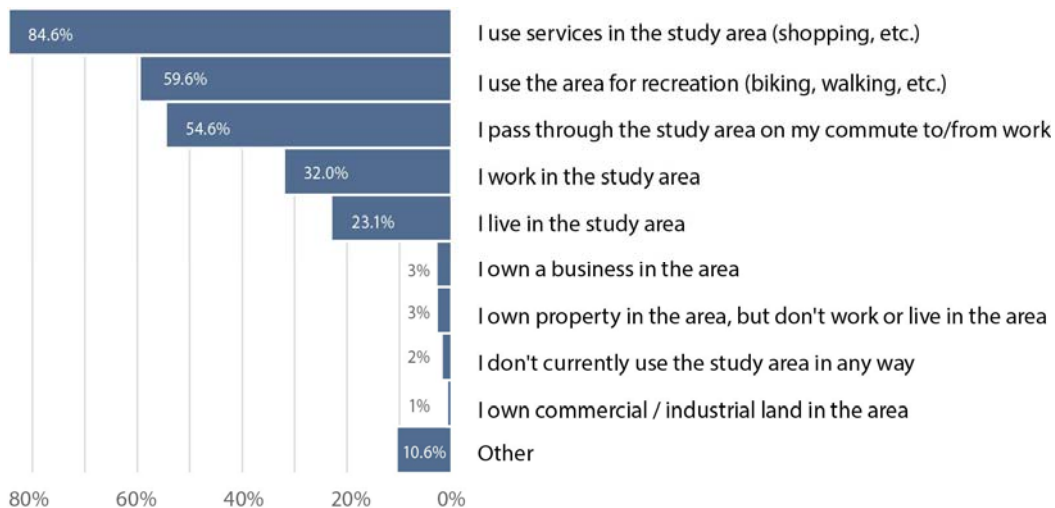
UDC Plan Advisory Committee Participation

As previously noted, members of the UDC Plan Advisory Committee played a significant role in the development of the Engagement Strategy and were involved in helping to promote and facilitate the Phase 2 engagement activities.

Advisory Committee members provided approximately 70 volunteer hours through attending and facilitating discussions at the pop-up booths and coffee klatches. In addition, Morguard provided the pop-up booth space at Uptown Shopping Centre at no cost to the District.

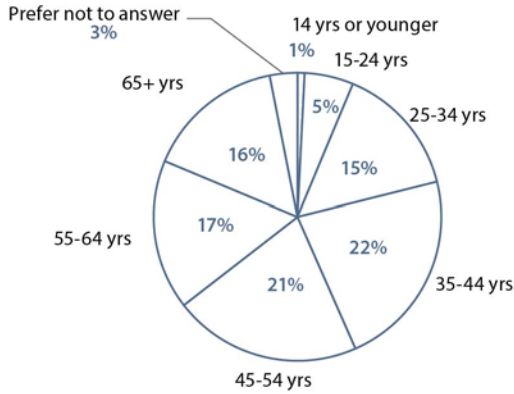
Participants

Survey respondents and participants in small-group discussions (coffee klatches) were asked how they currently use the Uptown – Douglas Corridor study area. A total of 337 people answered this question across the two engagement techniques. Respondents included area residents, employees, property and land owners, and business owners. Nearly 85% of respondents (285 people) use the area for services such as shopping, while almost 60% (201) use the area for recreation. More than half (184) pass through the area while commuting to/from work.



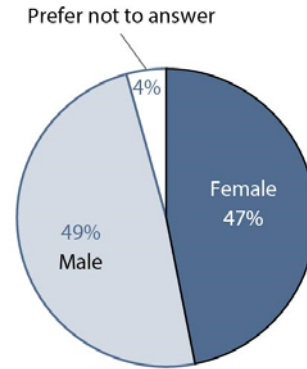
How Respondents Use the Area

Additional demographic information is illustrated below:



Age of Survey Respondents

Compared to age distribution in the Core area (Saanich, Victoria, Esquimalt, Oak Bay, View Royal) of the Capital Regional District (CRD), based on the 2011 Census, there was an under-representation of youth and young adults in the UDC survey. Youth between the ages of 15-24 represent 12.9% of the population in the CRD's core; however, only 5.5% of survey respondents were from this age group.



Gender of Survey Respondents

It is worth noting that there was an almost 50/50 representation of male and female respondents.

Recommendation: Specific efforts should be made to reach out to this age group (24 and under) in future public engagement activities for this project. Targeted outreach could include working with the Saanich Youth Council and conducting intercept surveys or pop-ups at college and university campuses.

Engagement Results

Vision

Community members were asked about their vision for the future of the UDC area in the survey, one of the poll questions, and in the small-group discussions (coffee klatches). The survey asked respondents to provide **up to five key words they would like to be included in a vision statement**. Below is a visual representation of the nearly 550 words that were provided, with the most frequently-used words appearing in the largest font:



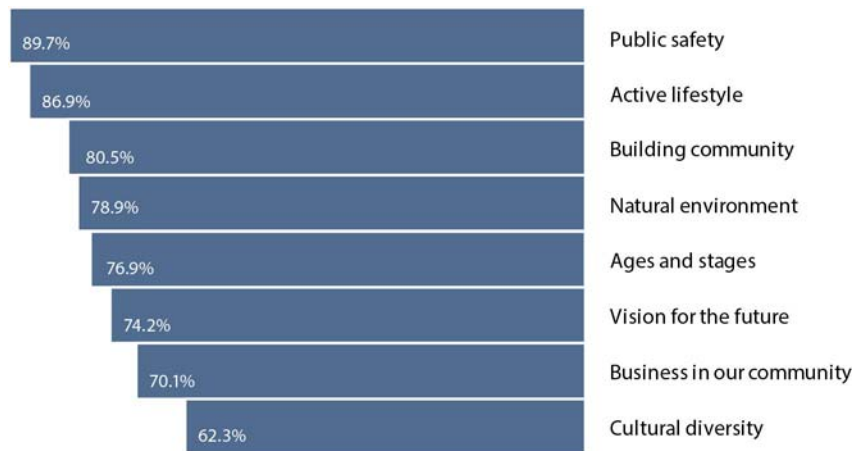
Note 1: Words that were noted three times or more were illustrated.

Note 2: Similar words, such as “sustainability” and “sustainable” were grouped for this illustration)

Values

A draft list of values, or guiding principles for planning, was generated with the UDC Advisory Committee during development of the Engagement Strategy, and was used to inform some of the questions for public engagement. In the survey, respondents were asked to rate the level of importance, on a scale of 1-5, for each of the draft values.

The following illustrates the percentage of respondents who gave the specific value a score of 4 or 5, indicating that they consider the value as very or extremely important:



Values: Levels of importance for issues ranked 4 & 5
(5 = *Extremely Important*)

Most of the additional comments regarding values, which were collected in the survey, the coffee klatches and the “My Letter to the Planning Department” techniques, also align with the draft values.

More than 50 comments were related to **natural environment** and **sustainability**, including protecting/increasing greenspace, parks, sustainability, green energy, food production, etc. **Safety** was another key theme of the comments, with approximately 42 comments related to cycling, pedestrian and traffic safety, crime prevention, lighting and public safety at night, and police presence. Approximately 39 comments were related to **business**, with specific requests for more restaurants, entertainment, local crafts, cafés, amenities, etc., as well as more general comments such as business-friendly and more commercial. **Community** was another key theme, with 32 related comments such as public spaces/gathering places, neighbourhood/village feel, etc. Approximately 20 comments were related to **ages and stages** (all ages and abilities), with references to children, youth, seniors, families, people with disabilities, and inclusivity. **Active lifestyle** was mentioned in 17 comments, such as encouraging active transportation, more cycling and walking opportunities, etc.

There were additional comments related to values, or principles, which did not easily fit into the draft list generated by the Advisory Committee. More than 70 comments were related to **transportation**, with some specific suggestions for road improvements, more general comments

about improving access and flow for all modes (vehicles, bicycles and pedestrians), public transit, reduced traffic, etc. Approximately 15 comments were related to **housing**, such as affordable housing, increased residential, more options/mixed types of residential. **Affordability** was mentioned approximately eight (8) times, in relation to housing and also more generally. Preservation of **heritage** or **history** was mentioned several times. **Livability** was also mentioned in several comments.

Goals

Community members were asked about their long-term goals for the Uptown – Douglas Corridor area through the survey and coffee klatch discussions. Many similar themes, categories and areas of focus in the comments overlap with the input related to Vision, Values, Issues and Opportunities.

Many respondents focused on a goal of improved transportation accessibility and flow, describing the future of the UDC as a multi-modal transportation hub with a focus on walkability, cycling opportunities, transit, and also vehicle access. Mixed-use development was another key theme under goals, with many respondents envisioning the UDC area as containing a variety residential options/types, plus a range of services, amenities, business types and activity options. Several respondents specifically mentioned small, local businesses as a goal, while others described it as a place to live, work, play, and access all the necessities of life. The idea of the UDC becoming the “downtown” of Saanich, an urban centre, a regional hub and destination was also repeated in many responses to this question.

Similarly to the input related to Vision, respondents repeatedly used words such as “vibrant,” “community,” “sustainability,” “safe,” “livable,” “affordable,” “greenspace,” “diversity,” “accessible,” and “density” here.

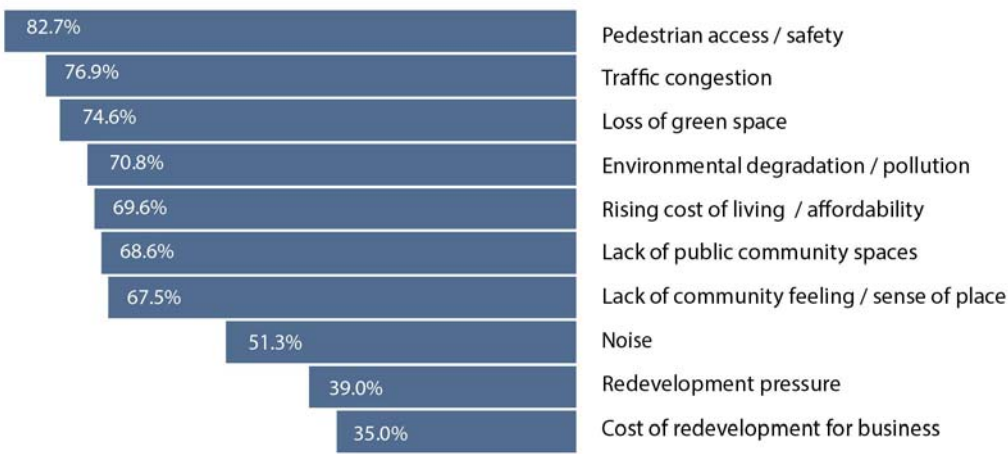
Issues

Though not specifically focused on issues or concerns, the first poll question highlighted a major theme that spanned across all input gathered during this phase of public engagement: traffic congestion and transportation.

The poll question asked: “When you think about the Uptown – Douglas Corridor area as it is today, what’s the first word that comes to your mind?” Visual representation of the 55 responses that were received is noted as follows:



A draft list of issues, or concerns, was generated based on input from the Advisory Committee and then used in the survey. Respondents were asked to rate the level of importance for each issue, on a scale of 1-5, where 5 means very important. The following graph illustrates the percentage of respondents who gave the specific issue a score of 4 or 5, indicating a high level of importance:



Values: Levels of Importance for Issues Ranked 4 & 5
(5 = Extremely Important)

Comments related to issues, which were collected in the survey, coffee klatches, and “My Letter to the Planning Department” techniques, largely aligned with the draft list. Approximately 40 comments were related to **traffic congestion**. Many comments that were related to **pedestrian access and safety** also mentioned **cycling**, and together these two issues generated

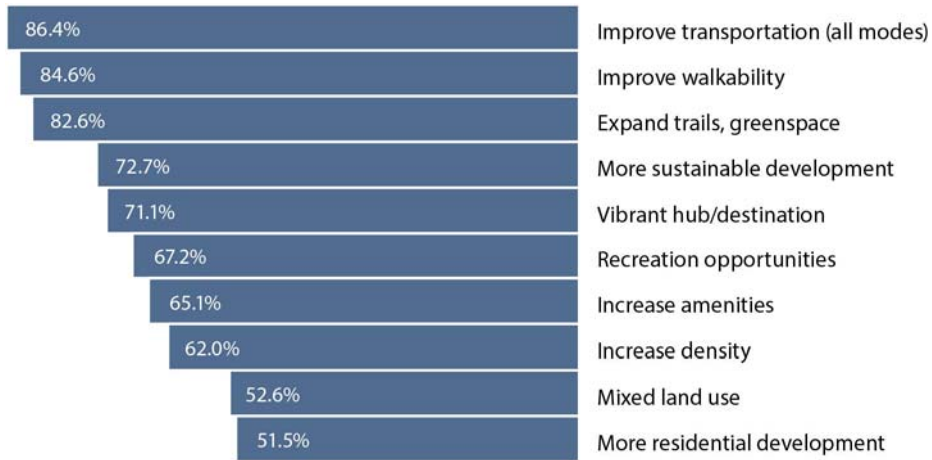
approximately 45 comments. **Affordability** was another theme, especially related to affordable housing, with 20 comments. Approximately 19 comments were related to a lack of **public/community spaces**, with an additional 10 comments related to a lack of **community feeling/sense of place**.

Comments heard from the public that did not align with the draft list of issues included the following:

- A lack of **public transit** options, planning and connectivity, which generated approximately 15 comments.
- Approximately 14 comments were related to transient people, **homelessness**, urban campers and/or panhandlers.
- Ten comments were related to **parking** issues, such as a lack of parking regulations/restrictions, a lack of resident-only parking, and commuters to downtown Victoria using free street parking in the UDC area.

Opportunities

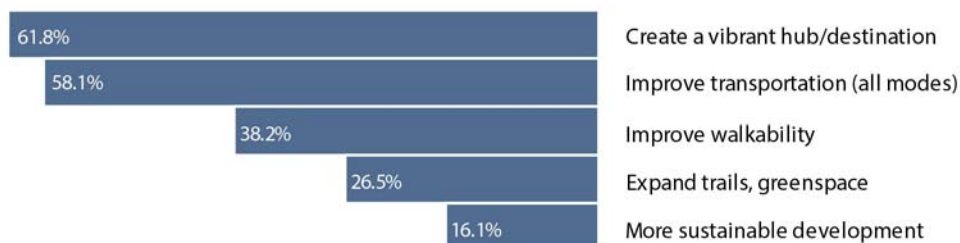
A draft list of opportunities for the future of the UDC area was also generated based on input from the Advisory Committee. In the survey, respondents were asked to rate each of the draft opportunities on a scale of 1-5, with 1 meaning not at all a desirable outcome and 5 meaning a very desirable outcome. The chart below illustrates the percentage of respondents who rated the specific opportunity as 4 or 5, indicating the opportunity as a desirable outcome for the Uptown – Douglas Corridor:



Opportunities: Desirable Outcome Rated 4 and 5
(5 = A Very Desirable Outcome)

Based on the initial survey responses, a list of the top five desirable outcomes were then used in the third poll question, which was active June 14 - 26 and received 117 responses. The poll question required respondents to rank the five opportunities in order of priority from 1 - 5, with 1

being the respondent's top priority. The graph below illustrates the percentage of respondents who ranked the opportunity as 1 or 2, indicating high priority compared to the other opportunities:



Opportunities: Priority 1 and 2 (1 = Top Priority)

It is interesting to note that in the survey, “Create a vibrant hub/destination” was No. 5 in terms of the percentage who rated its desirability as 4 or 5, but in the poll, where respondents had to rank the opportunities in order, “Create a vibrant hub/destination” was the top opportunity in terms of the percentage who ranked it as priority 1 or 2.

In the written and verbal comments related to opportunities, which were collected through the survey, coffee klatches and “My letter to the Planning Department” techniques, **improving transportation** was by far the most prominent theme. A total of more than 200 comments were received related to vehicle traffic, public transit and cycling. Nearly 70 comments were related to **transit** improvements or suggestions. Of those, it’s worth noting that approximately 28 comments specifically mentioned rail, **LRT**, trams or streetcars. Approximately 65 comments were related to improvements to **cycling** infrastructure, connectivity and safety. Improvements to **vehicle traffic**, flow and connectivity accounted for 55 comments. Improving **walkability** in the study area was mentioned in approximately 42 comments.

More than 60 comments were related to opportunities to **expand and enhance parks, trails and greenspace**. As part of that total, about 18 comments were related to **community gardens** or opportunities for food production in the UDC area. Approximately 53 comments were received relating to opportunities for **creating a vibrant hub / destination**, with suggestions ranging from public art and gathering spaces, to more community/public events and things to draw visitors/tourists. Suggestions for **increased amenities** such as restaurants, services, entertainment, etc. accounted for 38 comments, while approximately 30 comments were related to opportunities for **recreation** facilities and services such as a recreation centre, swimming pool, skate park, playgrounds, etc. Approximately 32 comments were related to opportunities for **increased residential development**, while 26 comments were related to **increased density**.

Additional themes related to opportunities that were not specifically covered in the draft list included approximately 13 comments related to environmental opportunities such as **alternative/renewable energy** systems such as solar, wind and district energy. Opportunities for **improved signage/wayfinding** was mentioned in approximately nine (9) comments.

Themes of Convergence

As previously mentioned, engagement questions about Values, Issues and Opportunities were based on previous input from the UDC Advisory Committee. Public engagement participants were asked to rate the level of importance or desirability for each item, and were then invited to add additional ideas and comments. Overall, input in these areas largely aligned with the draft lists.

Transportation

By far, the majority of input throughout this engagement phase was focused on transportation. There seems to be a strong, general consensus among all stakeholders that transportation in the Uptown – Douglas Corridor area should be a major focus of the UDC Plan. Generally speaking, stakeholders would like the plan to address walkability, cycling infrastructure and connectivity, transit services, and flow of vehicle traffic. **Access** and **safety** of transportation were both strong themes in comments related to all modes (pedestrians, bicycles, transit and vehicles).

It should be noted, however, that there was a general divide in comments between vehicle traffic and “active transportation” modes (walking, cycling, transit). Many stakeholders who commented on vehicle traffic did not mention active transportation, and vice-versa.

Themes of Divergence

Transportation

As noted above, most stakeholders commented either on vehicle traffic or other transportation modes including walking, cycling and transit. This difference in focus among stakeholders extended to some comments suggesting that vehicle traffic should be reduced in the area, or removed altogether with a very few comments requesting car-free streets or areas. A few related comments requested traffic-calming measures or reduced speed limits. Contrasting those sentiments were other comments focused on improving access and flow of vehicle traffic, with some specifically saying “no” to reduced lanes, boulevard designs, or other plans that may impede or reduce vehicle access to the area.

Cycling

A significant portion of comments across all engagement techniques were related to improved access, safety, connectivity and infrastructure for cycling in the UDC area. However, several stakeholders strongly opposed the idea of increased cycling infrastructure – especially if it was to come at a cost of reduced vehicle capacity (i.e. lane reductions), or would have any impact on vehicle access and flow.

Density

There is a lack of consensus among stakeholders on the idea of increased density in the UDC area. There were a few comments requesting that density *not* be increased; however, more stakeholders expressed support for increased density than those who opposed the idea.

It's also important to note that many of the comments in support of more density included specifications, limits or nuances, such as a maximum number of stories for buildings (i.e. "mid-rise," "no high-rises," "six stories max," etc.) or requests for moderation and careful planning in any increases to density. A few comments specified "low-rise, high density" development.

Industrial Uses

Industrial or light-industrial uses were not a large area of focus for input during this engagement, but the comments that were received were mixed. Some stakeholders commented in support of preserving the existing industrial uses in the UDC study area, while others commented in favour of transitioning away from industrial uses. Many of these comments did not specify what they would like to see in place of industrial, but some said residential.

Casino

While only a relatively few comments were related to the idea of a casino in the UDC area, those that were received were mixed. Nine (9) comments specifically registered opposition to any possible future casino, while five (5) expressed support or desire to see a casino in the study area in the future.

Next Steps

In addition to this report outlining the Phase 2 engagement process and outcomes, the Terms of Reference for the UDC Plan project outline two other deliverables for Phase 2:

- Refined list of priority issues to be addressed in plan
- Vision, Values and Goals

A refined list of priority issues will now be developed based on this Phase 2 engagement input, as well as the planning work and analysis that has been done to date. As well, based on this engagement input, draft Vision, Values and Goals will be developed. The UDC Advisory Committee will have the opportunity for review and input into the draft Vision, Values and Goals in September 2016. Following Advisory Committee input and endorsement, the Vision, Values and Goals will be finalized for inclusion in the UDC Plan.

Conclusion

The input from this engagement process will be used to help structure, develop and refine the overarching long-term vision, goals and direction for the Uptown – Douglas Corridor Plan. Additionally, this report and the Vision, Values and Goals will be used for direct outreach and engagement with the study-area business and commercial landowner stakeholder groups during Phase 3 of the project.

The Phase 2 engagement process was the first period of active public engagement for the UDC Plan. Additional public engagement is planned throughout the remaining 16 months of the project – particularly in Phases 3 and 5.

This input will be incorporated into the UDC Plan to the maximum extent possible, recognizing that the ultimate plan and decisions must also align with the council-approved Terms of Reference and other guiding documents and regulations such as the District of Saanich OCP.