

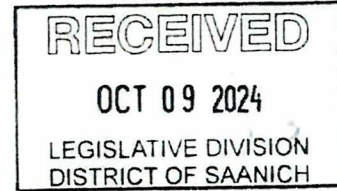


The Corporation of the District of Saanich

Report

C/W-October-21-2024

To: Mayor and Council
From: Lindsay Chase, Director of Planning
Date: October 8, 2024
Subject: Draft Quadra McKenzie Plan
File: 2310-20 • Draft Plan Review



RECOMMENDATION

- 1. That Council receive the Draft Quadra McKenzie Plan (Attachment A) for information.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this Report is to introduce the Draft Quadra McKenzie Plan. The Report includes a Phase 2 Engagement Summary (Attachment B), and details on the upcoming Phase 3 community consultation on the Draft Plan. The Draft Quadra McKenzie Plan outlines the vision, policy direction and priority actions to guide future development in the area over the next 20 years and builds on existing plans, including the Official Community Plan, to address future mobility, housing, economic development, and community liveability needs.

BACKGROUND

Council Direction

On August 8, 2022, at Committee of the Whole, Council endorsed the Terms of Reference for the Quadra McKenzie Area Planning Study.

Process To Date

The Quadra McKenzie Study began in February of 2023 (see Figure 1), after Council approval of the Terms of Reference. The intent of the project is to develop a Plan that promotes sustainable land use and transportation, while accommodating new housing and employment growth within well designed Centres, Corridors and Villages (CCVs). The process is being delivered in accordance with the Terms of Reference and is currently in phase three of four.



Figure 1: Quadra McKenzie Plan Phases

Phase 2 Engagement Activities

Staff completed Phase 2 engagement between May 2023 and March 2024 with a focus on consulting the public and stakeholders on issues and opportunities and gaining feedback on the Quadra McKenzie area planning concepts. Key items explored included:

- Options for implementing the Official Community Plan and Provincial housing directions;
- Locations for new housing options;
- Corridor designs to support sustainable transportation;
- Options to improve walkable access to community amenities and services; and
- How the redevelopment of major sites can contribute to the area.

A mix of in-person and online engagement sessions were offered including:

- Pop-up Events (6);
- In-person and online sessions - workshops and webinars (8);
- Survey - online with print option and online mapping tool (2);
- Large landowner notifications;
- Targeted stakeholder interviews;
- Stakeholder meetings and webinar; and
- Presentations to Community Associations.

Through these opportunities, over 2000 people were engaged and over 3,200 comments were received. A summary of the Phase 2 engagement key themes is included below. Further details on promotion, engagement activities, who participated, and in-depth findings are available in the QMS Phase 2 Engagement Summary (Attachment B). The firm Urban Strategies Inc. was hired to support the Phase 2b work; Urban Strategies Inc. led the delivery of online and in-person public engagement and community survey administration, analyzed input received from all formats, and prepared the Phase 2b Engagement Report.

Phase 2 Engagement Results

Engagement occurred in two phases. Phase 2a focused on a broad community survey and online mapping tool to gather input on issues and opportunities for the future of the area. Phase 2b centred on workshops that presented preliminary concepts, including a land use concept and future designs of the McKenzie and Quadra Corridors. Workshops averaged over 100 participants each and enabled valuable feedback to be received that helped build the core content for the Quadra McKenzie Plan.

Across Phase 2 engagement, the following key themes were expressed:

- *Land Use* – Overall acknowledgement that increasing density in Centres and along Corridors could help reduce development pressure on lower density residential neighbourhoods and natural and environmentally sensitive areas. Protection of environmental assets, including the bird habitat, Garry Oak ecosystems, and local watersheds were of importance. There was support for the Centre Core designation for Quadra McKenzie Centre and for staff to explore the addition of a new Centre at Gordon Head Road and McKenzie Avenue. There was also general support for taller buildings, up to 24 storeys, with a focus on high quality urban design, placemaking, and connectivity. Additional density was generally supported in all sub areas with greater appetite for higher heights in the Shelbourne McKenzie and University (Gordon Head McKenzie) sub areas and other strategic locations adjacent to Centres and Villages. Overwhelmingly, there was a strong desire for a greater diversity of shops, services, and amenities serving the local

communities thereby supporting the concept of a 15-Minute Community. Corridor hubs and locations were strongly supported with many respondents wanting to see the hubs pulled in towards the neighbourhoods, including around parks to provide more equitable access and uses of the surrounding spaces while catering to the uniqueness of each neighbourhood with retail and community amenities at-grade.

- *Transportation* – Strong support was received for a transportation and mobility plan that would help the District of Saanich meet its transportation and climate objectives. Feedback indicated support for street design concepts that focus on pedestrian and cyclist safety and the provision of dedicated transit lanes. Most residents also supported the re-design of the Four-Corners intersection. Many comments supported improvements and connections to the Lochside Trail and highlighted its significance as a pivotal corridor, not just for active transportation, but also for promoting mixed-use development, integrating green space, and fostering a more integrated, inviting, and accessible urban environment.
- *Housing Diversity, Supply & Affordability* – Housing affordability is a key concern among the public and other stakeholders. There is strong agreement that the Quadra McKenzie area presents a significant opportunity to increase housing diversity, affordability, and supply. There is a strong desire for a greater diversity of housing typologies and tenures, with a focus on families, youth and those on fixed incomes. Proximity to shops, amenities, transit and active transportation routes are key considerations for the development of multi-family or mixed-use living.
- *Public Realm and Open Space* – Feedback highlighted that most participants agreed that connectivity between parks, open spaces, and the community is paramount – and that concepts offering pathways and cut-throughs were preferred. There was significant concern about increased building heights next to parks and many participants expressed a preference for a more stepped transition/interface to minimize potential shadow impacts. There were suggestions to have diverse and affordable housing types such as purpose built rental, family, and co-op housing prioritized in areas adjacent to parks and open spaces. Community members would like to see a commitment to green development near parks in order to minimize impacts on adjacent parks and natural areas, their ecosystems, and wildlife habitats. Many participants felt that the Plan direction offers a significant opportunity to improve the local trail system to include opportunities for placemaking through redevelopment alongside the trail.

DRAFT PLAN OVERVIEW

As directed by the Terms of Reference, the Draft Quadra McKenzie Plan is focused on land use and transportation and also addresses housing, employment, the public realm, sustainability, economic vibrancy, parks and open space, and community amenities.

The Draft Plan builds on the broader land use designations of the OCP to provide detailed parcel by parcel guidance for future use, building height and density. Another key element of the Draft Plan is future design concepts for McKenzie Avenue and Quadra Street that support the transition of these corridors to livable complete streets with high frequency transit. Given the large Plan area, eight sub-area sections are included to enable area-specific issues to be addressed in policy.

Plan Goals

Four Plan goals, endorsed by Council as part of the approval of the Terms of Reference, have guided Plan development and reflect the focused nature of the Plan. Plan goals are as follows:

- A. Land Use - Implement the Centre, Corridor and Village growth management framework to build compact, liveable, accessible, sustainable, and climate resilient communities with places to live, work, come together, and move around.
- B. Transportation & Mobility – Redesign McKenzie Avenue and Quadra Street as complete streets that accommodate all modes and uses and prioritize improvements to active transportation and transit networks to support car light living, create more vibrant public spaces and improve safety and accessibility.
- C. Housing Diversity, Affordability and Supply – Expand the range of housing options, types, tenures, and affordability levels through the plan area and pair with convenient access to transit, active transportation, services and amenities.
- D. Public Realm & Open Space – Support community livability by providing a walkable network of parks, trails and open spaces and strengthening public realm areas to support the gathering and movements of people, with a focus on enhancements to McKenzie Avenue, Quadra Street and within community nodes.

Key Plan Directions

The key plan directions reflect highlights of the Draft Quadra McKenzie Plan and are included below.

- 1. Implement Rapid Transit on the McKenzie Corridor**
Redesign McKenzie Avenue to provide high quality, efficient transit service that aligns with mixed-use commercial hubs and active transportation options.
- 2. Connect the University of Victoria (UVic) to urban Saanich**
Introduce a new Centre at Gordon Head Road and McKenzie Avenue and implement land use, transportation and public realm changes that integrate the UVIC campus with Saanich.
- 3. Introduce Corridor Hubs to expand walkable 15-minute neighbourhoods**
Support community-focused Corridor Hubs that provide commercial services, accessible public spaces, and multi-modal connections to improve walkable access to daily needs.
- 4. Expand housing in locations near high frequency transit**
Provide opportunities for more housing options to be located within walking distances of high frequency transit corridors to support car light living.
- 5. Use density incentives to obtain desired community outcomes**
Trial a pilot density framework that incentivizes housing affordability and diversity, urban forest, environment, heritage, public realm, private amenity space, and 15-minute community outcomes.
- 6. Provide greater housing diversity near parks**
Support the integration of diverse housing opportunities near recreational parks to promote more equitable access to amenities.

7. Celebrate the Lochside Trail as a community asset

Enhance the role of the Lochside Trail as a community amenity, public space, and regional transportation route.

8. Enhance Quadra Street as a Complete Street

Redesign Quadra Street as a complete street with enhanced transit, cycling facilities, sidewalks and treed boulevards integrated with pedestrian-oriented land uses.

9. Revitalize the Saanich Operations Centre with a greater mix of uses

Redevelop the Saanich Operations Centre as a modern facility to serve community needs and with a greater mix of uses and public realm improvements.

Land Use

The Plan area has significant potential for land use changes, with a focus on developing complete, walkable 15-minute communities. Overall the Quadra McKenzie Plan area encompasses 40% of Saanich's Primary Growth Areas, highlighting its importance in meeting housing and economic development objectives. The land use section outlines strategies to ensure coordinated land use and transportation planning over the next 20 years. The framework consists of four key components:

- Objectives that define the primary land use goals for the next two decades;
- Policies that address specific aspects of land use;
- Land Use Designations that set parameters for future land use; and
- A pilot Density Framework (included as separate document) that provides pathways to achieve more intensive development based on housing, environment, use and public realm outcomes.

Building on the Official Community Plan Framework, the Quadra McKenzie Plan area boundaries are focused around the following Centre, Corridor and Village areas identified in the Official Community Plan:

- Quadra McKenzie Centre
- Shelbourne McKenzie Centre
- Gordon Head McKenzie Centre (new)
- McKenzie Corridor
- Quadra Corridor
- Four Corners Village

Additionally, the Plan introduces Corridor Hubs to further support walkable services and amenities along Corridors and into neighbourhoods, bridging the areas between Centres and Villages and helping implement the vision of Saanich as a 15-minute community. Corridor Hubs are as follows:

- Saanich Road Hub
- Blenkinsop Braefoot Hub
- Chatterton Hub
- Beckwith Hub
- Falmouth Hub
- Tolmie Hub

Figure 2 shows the location of Centres, Villages and Corridor Hubs in the Quadra McKenzie Area.

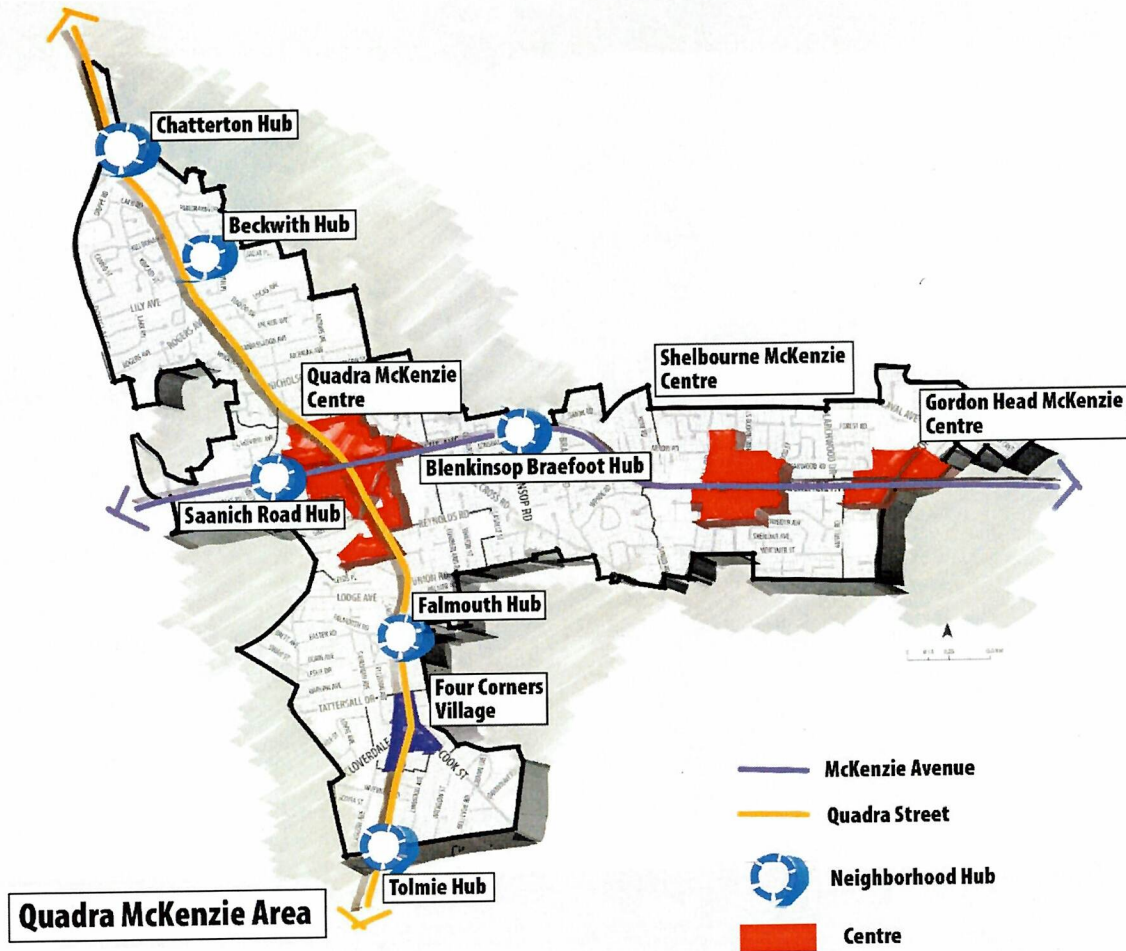


Figure 2: Quadra McKenzie Centres, Villages and Corridor Hubs

Special Sites

In order to deal with unique conditions in the Plan area, a number of special sites have been identified based on site features (e.g. habitat areas), distinct uses and/or site complexity. Consideration of redevelopment on these sites will require careful analysis and balancing of multiple objectives. The Draft Plan highlights key objectives to guide evaluation of land use changes and development on these sites.

Density Framework

The Draft Quadra McKenzie Density Framework is included as a separate document from the Plan (Attachment C). The Density Framework represents a pilot initiative that seeks to incentivize key outcomes identified in the Draft Plan and other documents such as the Urban Forest Strategy and the Housing Strategy.

Additional work will be undertaken to continue to refine the Framework and seek input from the community and stakeholders on priorities and the framework’s potential application to the development process.

Transportation and Mobility

The Draft Quadra McKenzie Plan has a strong focus on implementing transportation directions in the Official Community Plan, the Active Transportation Plan and BC Transit policy documents. A principle emphasis is providing future design concepts for the key corridors of Quadra and McKenzie. A context specific approach is taken to both the Quadra and McKenzie Corridors, adapting the design to respond to the land use context and other area specific considerations. Figure 3 shows a future design concept for McKenzie Avenue near its intersection with Quadra Street.

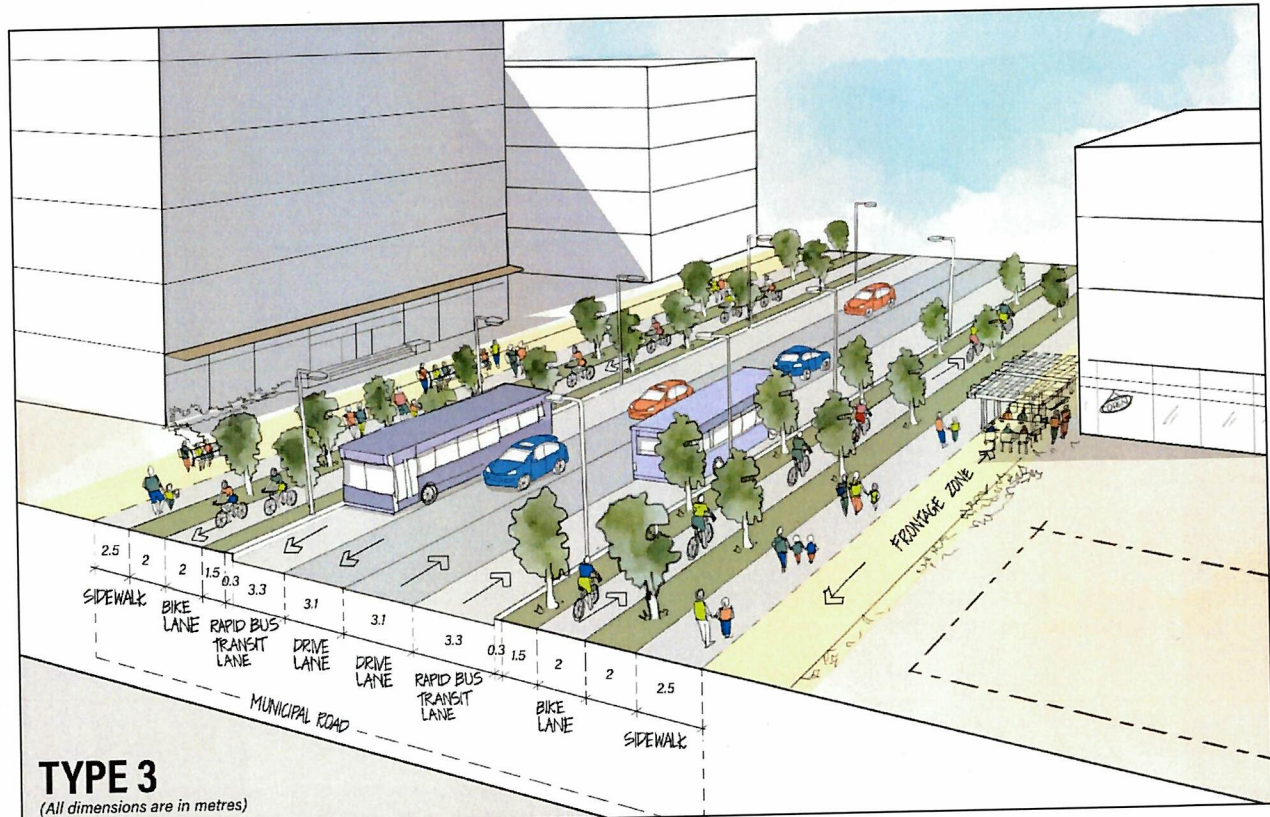


Figure 3: Example of McKenzie Corridor Design Concept

In addition to the identification of future concepts for key corridors, the transportation and mobility content in the Draft Plan also identifies key pedestrian, cycling, and transit improvements. This includes new pedestrian and cycling connections and improvements to Corridor Hubs that enable a better connection to the active transportation network and a higher quality pedestrian environment.

DRAFT PLAN (PHASE 3) ENGAGEMENT

Phase 3 engagement will be undertaken in alignment with the project Terms of Reference. A combination of in-person and online engagement tools will be employed to share the Draft Plan and obtain feedback from the public and stakeholders.

Key engagement activities will include:

- Open houses
- Webinars
- Online survey / polls

- Stakeholder presentations
- Council Advisory Committee presentations
- Social media posts
- Mailer to households and businesses

Engagement on the Draft Plan will conclude in the Fall. The results of engagement will be used to help inform refinements to the Draft Plan.

ALTERNATIVES

Quadra McKenzie Plan Process

If Council wishes to explore alternatives to the recommendation presented by staff and the previously approved Terms of Reference, the following options are presented for consideration:

1. That Council direct staff to amend the Phase 3 community consultation/engagement process and timeline.

Should Council wish they could provide direction on amendments to the process as laid out in the Terms of Reference. Depending on the scope of amendments, there may be implications to project budget or timeline.

2. That Council provide alternative direction.

Non-Market Housing Land Use Designations

Council adopted changes on September 9, 2024 to support the rapid deployment of non-market housing. The changes allow non-market housing projects to proceed without a rezoning provided they align with the broad Official Community Plan (OCP) land use designations. The adoption of the Quadra McKenzie Plan would mean more detailed height and density designations on a parcel by parcel basis in the Quadra McKenzie area and would replace the broader zoning entitlements for non-market housing in the Official Community Plan.

For example, at present all parcels within an OCP designated "Centre" would be permitted to have an 18 storey non-market project proceed without a rezoning. Once the Quadra McKenzie Plan is adopted, more detailed parcel by parcel designations would apply and this would mean some parcels would permit 18 storey buildings, while others would permit different heights, such as a six-storey maximum. These detailed designations/height limits would also apply to non-market housing and these projects would need to be within the Quadra McKenzie Plan limits to proceed without a rezoning.

Staff are seeking Council's direction on how they would like to proceed. Alternatives available for Council's consideration are as follows:

1. Apply Quadra McKenzie Plan height and density limits to non-market housing projects.

In this scenario, site-specific land use designations included in the Quadra McKenzie Plan would apply to non-market housing developments, meaning that projects would only be excluded from a rezoning process when they were consistent with Quadra McKenzie Plan designations. The benefit of this option is that it would mean the scale of non-market housing would be consistent with other development and reflect the desired future land use conditions.

The downside of this option is that it may impact flexibility of non-market housing providers in delivery of their projects.

Should Council support this approach, no additional motion / supplementary direction would be required.

2. Apply broader Official Community Plan land use designations to non-market housing projects.

In this alternative, all non-market housing projects within each OCP land use designation (e.g. Centre, Village, Primary Corridor) would be treated equally and the more detailed designations of the Quadra McKenzie Plan would not apply. No rezoning would be required for non-market projects that fit within the broad parameters of the OCP (e.g. 18 storeys for all parcels, 6 storeys for all parcels on a Corridor). The benefit of this option is that it provides greater flexibility for non-market housing providers to deliver economically viable projects. The downside is that non-market housing projects may be incongruent with the scale and density of surrounding properties and the work of detailed planning analysis would not be applied.

Should Council wish to advance this option, the following motion would be appropriate:

“That Council support the continued application of broader Official Community Plan land use designations for the rapid deployment of non-market housing in the Quadra McKenzie area.”

3. That Council provide alternative direction.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Council allocated \$270,000 to fund the Quadra McKenzie Area Planning Study. The project is currently on track to be completed within budget allocations.

OFFICIAL COMMUNITY PLAN IMPLICATIONS

The Draft Quadra McKenzie Plan is the first Centre, Corridor and Village Plan to be developed after adoption of the Official Community Plan (OCP). The Quadra McKenzie Plan builds on and provides greater detail on the broader policy directions of the OCP. Notably, it advances the OCP direction to focus most growth on Centres, Corridors and Villages, while supporting compact, complete, walkable neighbourhoods.


CONCLUSIONS AND NEXT STEPS

The Draft Quadra McKenzie Plan provides a detailed land use and transportation plan for this critical area of Saanich that encompasses two Primary Corridors, three Centres and one Village. The Draft Plan builds on the recently adopted Official Community Plan and advances several other Saanich and regional plans. The Draft Plan content was strongly informed by engagement in the first two Phases of Plan development. In Phase 2 alone, there were over 2,000 people engaged in the project.


The next Phase of the project, as outlined in the Terms of Reference, will involve obtaining input on the Draft Plan. A variety of online and in-person engagement avenues will be available to community members to share their feedback. Once engagement concludes in the Fall, staff will work to make Plan revisions and bring forward a proposed Plan to Council in early 2025.

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Approved by: 

Lindsay Chase
Director of Planning

TG/kb

- Attachments: Attachment A: Quadra McKenzie Draft Plan – September 2024
Attachment B: QMS Phase 2 Engagement Summary (Summer 2023 – Spring 2024)
Attachment C: Draft Quadra McKenzie Density Framework

ADMINISTRATOR’S COMMENTS:

I endorse the recommendation from the Director of Planning.



Brent Reems, Chief Administrative Officer