



The Corporation of the District of Central Saanich

REGULAR COUNCIL REPORT

For the Regular Council meeting on Monday, October 7, 2024

Re: Civic Redevelopment – What We Heard Report 2024

PURPOSE:

To provide Council with a summary of public engagement on the Civic Redevelopment project.

BACKGROUND:

The Civic Redevelopment Project is a comprehensive plan to update aging District facilities to ensure they meet the current and future needs of Central Saanich's growing community. The project includes plans for the District's municipal services, including police and fire, to move to a new site on Hovey Road and reimagine the current site at 1903 Mt Newton Cross Rd in the heart of Saanichton Village; it will also include addressing an adding Municipal Yard.

The District has been engaging with the community on the Civic Redevelopment Project since October 2023 with a focus on ensuring transparent communications and providing residents with easy-to-understand information throughout the project.

The most recent phase of engagement from July to October 2024 followed the acquisition of Lot A, Hovey Road, and sought to build awareness about progress on the project, educate residents about the need for redevelopment and potential benefits and gather feedback on the project.

DISCUSSION:

The feedback received through this engagement process is aligned with the significant community engagement in recent years as part of the development of the planning documents and policies that have been developed by the District, specifically the visions set out in the Official Community Plan and Saanichton Village Design Plan, as well as the desires of the community reflected in the Community Satisfaction survey, the Recreation Needs Assessment, and the Child Care Action Plan. There is a strong desire to see an increasingly vibrant Saanichton Village with housing, public amenities and services. There is also a desire to see some of the community's needs for recreation, community rental space, and plaza/public/green space incorporated into the Hovey development as part of a new municipal building.

Engagement to date has reached 7,000 households and 800 local businesses with 301 individuals providing their feedback and ideas about the Civic Redevelopment Project. To inform and solicit input from residents, the District provided print materials in the community, hosted open houses, had a demographically-representative survey conducted, and solicited input from the business community. The uptake in engagement was modest, and it is clear the community is still becoming familiar with the

project; though a random sample of 107 residents showed that 58% felt informed, which Deloitte notes as a standard result when gauging the level of informed residents in a community. Awareness and understanding about the Civic Redevelopment Project increased significantly during the course of this engagement process, which was demonstrated in the tone of engagement and type of feedback being shared with staff.

Who we heard from

The What We Heard Report (appendix A) demonstrates the open houses served as a productive way to have one-on-one conversations with residents. Open house attendees did not represent the demographic makeup of the community however; the District sought to hear from a range of ages and the business community through other means. The feedback has been analyzed to understand the input of distinct demographics and also looked at holistically as a representation of the community's current makeup.

What we heard

In addition to providing information to the community about the project, residents were asked what their priorities were for the redevelopment of 1903 Mt Newton Cross Road and the development of Hovey Road. The key themes emerging from the consultation are consistent with District plans, including the Official Community Plan, Saanichton Village Design Plan, as well as the Community Satisfaction Survey; these include:

- On 1903 Mount Newton Cross Road, strong support for restaurant/café space, housing, medical/dental offices, plaza/green spaces and childcare spaces. Concerns about height and density and loss of rural character as well as impacts of traffic and growth.
- On Lot A Hovey Road, strong support for multi-purpose rental rooms, recreation, plaza/green space, childcare, and small-scale café/food service. Concerns about expropriation of land, loss of rural character of Hovey Road and traffic management.

The feedback at open houses evolved from the first to the third open house; at the first open house about 30-40 attendees expressed disagreement with the expropriation of Lot A on Hovey Road, mainly on the grounds of not supporting the act of expropriation, wanting to see a seniors' care facility be built, and feeling the area is too rural for a civic development. The second and third open houses drew approximately 80 attendees who were primarily residents in the Saanichton Village area; they were particularly engaged and interested in the 1903 Mount Newton Cross Road site and the dominant theme was enthusiasm for redevelopment of the site with green space and amenities and a strong alignment with existing District plans (such as the Official Community Plan and Saanichton Village Design Plan), with caution around the size and impact to neighbours.

Feedback from the 27 business owners that responded to the survey and shared with staff anecdotally was very positive overall. There is enthusiasm for renewal in Saanichton Village with a desire to see housing, public space and commercial and retail from food services to medical/dental and childcare. Recreation and rentable community space were the highest priorities for the Hovey Road redevelopment from business participants with additional interest in outdoor space and food services.

IMPLICATIONS:

First Nations

The District has informed local nations of the redevelopment plans and will be reaching out once concepts are developed to present further input opportunities.

Communications

Public feedback during phase one pointed to a need for further information shared in the community to ensure residents feel well-informed; ongoing communications efforts will continue and higher engagement is expected when concepts are developed in early 2025.

OCP

The community input gathered during the first phase of engagement is in alignment with the Official Community Plan.

CONCLUSION:

The first phase of engagement on civic redevelopment reflects community feedback that is aligned with existing District plans and their visions, and provides community input for concepts as they are developed. There is a strong desire to see an increasingly vibrant Saanichton Village with housing, public amenities and services. There is also a desire to see some of the community’s needs for recreation, community rental space, and plaza/public/green space incorporated into the Hovey development as part of a new municipal building.

Awareness and understanding about the Civic Redevelopment Project increased significantly during the course of this engagement process, which was demonstrated in the tone of engagement and type of feedback being shared with staff. Staff anticipate a growing level of interest and increased sense of being informed about the project from residents come early 2025 when concepts and details are developed and shared.

Report written by:	Britt Burnham, Manager of Community Engagement
Concurrence by:	Christine Culham, Chief Administrative Officer

ATTACHMENTS:

Appendix A: Civic Redevelopment What We Heard Report