



THE HUB

Public Space and Transit Improvements
at Terminal and Commercial

Public Engagement Summary

December 2021



The City of Nanaimo is situated on the traditional and unceded territory of the Coast Salish Peoples, the traditional territory of the Snuneymuxw First Nation and Snaw-Naw-As First Nation. We are grateful to be on these lands.

DOCUMENT PHOTO CREDITS

City of Nanaimo and Lanarc Consultants

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APPENDICES (SEE SEPARATE APPENDIX DOCUMENT)

Appendix A: Verbatim Comments from Input Questionnaire

Appendix B: Written Submissions

Appendix C: Display Board Comments from Public Event

THE HIGHLIGHTS



WHAT WE HEARD



952

Online Survey
Responses



~180

Community
Event Attendees



16

Registered Online
Workshop Participants



13

Emails or Written
Responses

PARTICIPANTS ARE EXCITED ABOUT:



- ▶ **REVITALIZATION OPPORTUNITIES**
strong general support for Downtown revitalization to create a vibrant core, specifically the potential for a mixed-use building for economic growth with supporting public open spaces and programming
- ▶ **SAFETY IMPROVEMENTS** integration of crime prevention principles to discourage negative social behaviour, lighting upgrades, and opportunities to increase positive activity and pedestrian / cyclist safety
- ▶ **PUBLIC OPEN SPACE IMPROVEMENTS**
upgrades to existing open spaces and potential new plazas areas (with safety considerations) as well as enhanced green spaces that integrate sustainable landscaping for climate enhancement

PARTICIPANTS ARE CONCERNED ABOUT:



- ▶ **SAFETY AND SOCIAL ISSUES**
related to concern that some existing public open spaces in Downtown are currently fenced or attract illicit activities, and that the transit exchange could exacerbate current challenges
- ▶ **IMPACTS TO TRAFFIC AND PARKING**
potential changes to Commercial Street and new bus exchange could increase congestion and reduce parking areas that provide access to local businesses
- ▶ **CREATING AN ATTRACTIVE GATEWAY TO DOWNTOWN** concerns that the bus exchange will not provide a vibrant, welcoming, and beautiful destination for Downtown Nanaimo
- ▶ **MAKING BEST USE OF HIGH VALUE LAND** preference for the site to be developed carefully to attract economic growth and development, and bring people to the area for long-term success

THE HIGHLIGHTS



TOP RATED CONCEPT (PUBLIC OPEN SPACE IMPROVEMENTS)



BUILDING CONCEPT



Preference for mixed-use (retail-commercial, affordable housing, live-work units, or artist studios) to activate space and increase area density and desirability. Consider combining preferred elements from all concepts.

PROJECT PRIORITIES



- Mixed-use development to activate the area and encourage economic growth and desirability
- Public safety improvements
- Public open space improvements

TOP URBAN DESIGN PREFERENCES



- 1 RETAIL OPPORTUNITIES
- 2 LIGHTING UPGRADES
- 3 PUBLIC WASHROOM BUILDING
- 4 GREEN STORMWATER MANAGEMENT
- 5 CYCLE AMENITIES

KEY CONSIDERATIONS

- ▶ **DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION:** Create a safe, attractive, and flourishing area as a "destination" for residents and tourists alike
- ▶ **LAND USE:** Consider the best use of high-value land that provides broad community benefits and amenities
- ▶ **SAFETY:** Provide a safe, inviting destination at all times of day
- ▶ **CONNECTIVITY AND ACCESSIBILITY:** Improve connectivity and accessibility for pedestrians, cyclists, and transit users for all levels of mobility
- ▶ **ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION:** Provide more options for people to choose sustainable modes of transportation for both climate enhancement and reduction of traffic congestion
- ▶ **DOWNTOWN INTEGRATION:** Consider development of both sides of Terminal Ave. (new retail and cafe spaces, streetscape, and accessibility improvements) and future development in the area
- ▶ **GREENSPACE:** Upgrade existing greenspaces, retain existing trees, and integrate new street trees and planting areas with native and pollinator-friendly plant species
- ▶ **URBAN DESIGN:** Develop public spaces that celebrate the site's unique urban location, character, and historical, environmental, and cultural identity
- ▶ **TRAFFIC:** Consider traffic implications to ensure a functional area that allows flow and connectivity to other areas of Downtown and the surrounding neighbourhoods



1 INTRODUCTION

This section provides an introduction to the engagement process including the purpose, engagement goals and objectives, and anticipated outcomes.

1.1 OVERVIEW



ABOUT THE PROJECT

The Terminal Avenue and Commercial Street intersection is the heart of Downtown Nanaimo and the gateway to our City. Through the years, the community has emphasized the importance of creating a great space in this location that sets the tone for experiencing our Downtown.

In connection with the ongoing Terminal Avenue Upgrades project, the City of Nanaimo is considering options for public open space improvements and concepts for a downtown transit exchange at the 500-block of Terminal Avenue, between Esplanade and Commercial Street. Proposed upgrades include new plaza and park spaces, improved cycle and pedestrian connections, and streetscape upgrades. Improvements are envisioned to create a vibrant, thriving transit-oriented destination in downtown Nanaimo dubbed the 'Hub'.

An integral part of the project is understanding public perspectives. From August 25, 2021 to October 4, 2021, the City engaged the community to share feedback on early concepts for public space improvements at Terminal and Commercial and a downtown transit exchange.

This document provides a summary of what we heard about the proposed design concepts as well as participant project priorities, urban design preferences, and who participated.



1 COMMERCIAL ST. AND TERMINAL AVE. INTERSECTION



2 FUTURE PUBLIC OPEN SPACE



3 VICTORIA CRESCENT AND ALBERT INTERSECTION



4 POCKET PARK AT THE VICTORIA / WALLACE / ALBERT INTERSECTION



5 CHINA STEPS AND LOIS LANE



6 FUTURE BUS EXCHANGE AND SHAW LANE



7 PORT PLACE ENTRY (ITALIAN FOUNTAIN TO REMAIN)



8 TERMINAL AVE. BETWEEN ESPLANADE AND COMMERCIAL

OVERVIEW



ABOUT THE CONCEPTS

Transit Exchange Concepts

The City has acquired land at the 500-block of Terminal Ave. for redevelopment purposes. The land has potential to create a transit-focused hub. To that end, three transit exchange concepts have been developed to foster discussion about a proposed exchange to be located on the west side of Terminal Avenue between Esplanade and Commercial Street. The concepts differ by bus access routes, potential changes to Commercial Street between Terminal Avenue and the Victoria / Albert / Wallace Intersection, and public open space improvement areas.

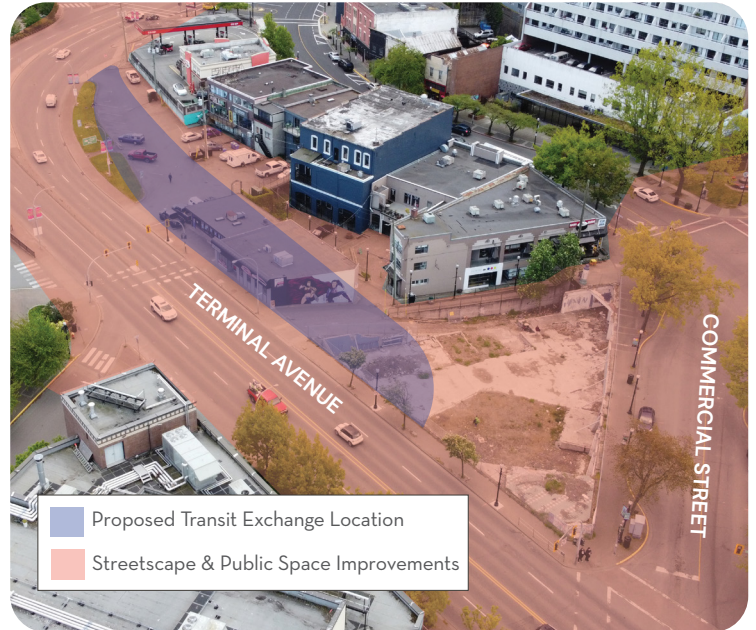
The final routing buses will use to access the transit exchange will be determined through a combination of technical analysis and input from the Regional District of Nanaimo, BC Transit, the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure, and Emergency Services.

Public Open Space Improvements

Three concepts for public open space improvements are being considered for the 500-block of Terminal Avenue:

- ▶ Creative Concept
- ▶ Tideline Concept
- ▶ Building Concept

Any of the public open space improvement concepts can be applied to any of the transit exchange concepts. This process sought to understand public preferences for the public open space concepts to be developed further alongside the final concept for the transit exchange during the detailed design phase.



PROJECT GOALS

- ▶ Create a welcoming and safe space that is a gateway for experiencing Nanaimo's downtown, Victoria Crescent, the Old City Quarter, and all that Nanaimo has to offer
- ▶ Support existing businesses by increasing accessibility and desirability in the area
- ▶ Promote redevelopment along the Terminal Corridor to create a vibrant pedestrian experience
- ▶ Link in strong walking and cycling networks
- ▶ Provide a downtown "hub" for Nanaimo's transit system

OVERVIEW



ENGAGEMENT GOALS & OBJECTIVES

Objectives of the engagement process were to:

- ▶ Raise awareness and understanding about the proposed public realm improvements and transit exchange concepts at Terminal and Commercial through broad outreach
- ▶ Provide understanding about the proposed public open space improvements including goals of improved access, safety, connectivity, sustainable transportation options, and development towards a vibrant downtown public realm
- ▶ Listen to public perspectives about the proposed concepts that will be considered along with further technical analysis and key stakeholder input during design refinement
- ▶ Maintain an open, transparent, and collaborative process to gather meaningful feedback and share back what we heard about project including next steps towards implementation

WHO WE ENGAGED

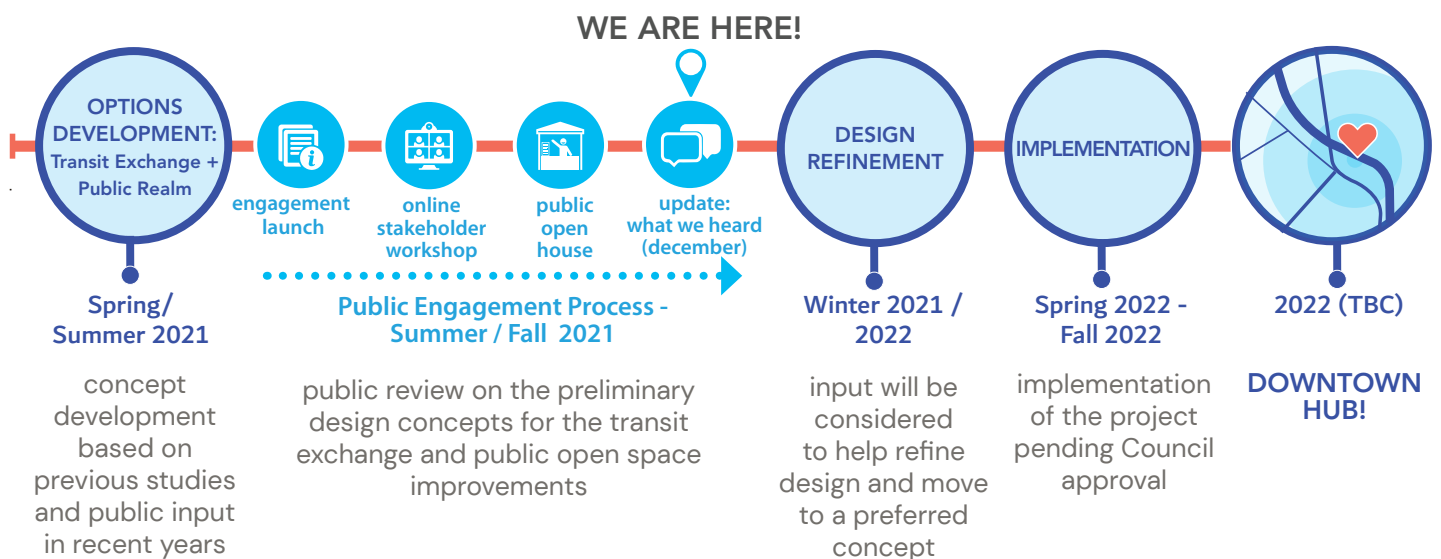
The City engaged with a diverse audience that included key stakeholders; local business owners; other local government and agencies; interest groups including transportation and mobility groups and neighbourhood groups; and members of the public.

OVERVIEW



ENGAGEMENT PROCESS

The following graphic provides an overview of the project and the public engagement process. Public engagement occurred from August 25, 2021 to October 4, 2021.



ENGAGEMENT DURING COVID-19

The COVID-19 pandemic continues to affect us all.

Throughout engagement, a key consideration has been to develop an approach that continues to meet engagement goals, while respecting public health guidelines and modifications required to provide a safe, comfortable experience for participants to engage and provide feedback.

We appreciate the community's feedback during this challenging time. We thank you for your participation throughout this process, both through online opportunities and attendance at our outdoor public event.



Public Event on Saturday,
September 25, 2021

2 ENGAGEMENT PROCESS

The engagement process focused on reviewing the public open space improvement concepts proposed at the 500-block of Terminal, between Terminal and Commercial Street. This section outlines the engagement process including outreach, materials, and activities to gather feedback.

2.1 OUTREACH



HOW WE ENGAGED THE PUBLIC



Public and Stakeholder E-Notifications

Email distribution to both public and stakeholder e-distribution lists to inform participants about the process and ways to be involved



Media Release

Information distributed to local media outlets to announce the engagement process and encourage broad participation



Newsletter - My Nanaimo This Week

Insertion in My Nanaimo This Week - community e-notification distributed to community members who have signed up for updates from the City



Community Posters and Large Site Signage

Posters distributed around the project area including at community centres, City Hall, libraries, and local businesses as well as large signs located at the site



Website Content

Online content on both the City of Nanaimo Planning Dept. page and Get Involved Nanaimo - the City's engagement site



Social Media

Regular postings on the City's social media channels including Facebook and Twitter to encourage participation in the process and announce public events



Word of Mouth

Notification from City staff, Mayor, and Council to spread the word about the process and generate interest in the community about the project

2.2 ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES

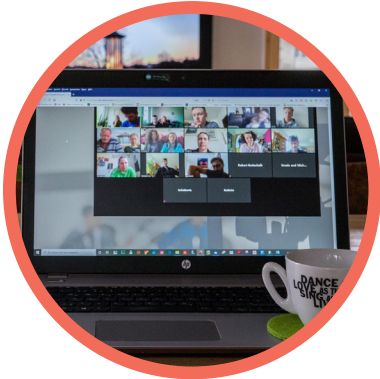


HOW WE GATHERED INPUT



Outdoor Community Event

On Saturday, September 25, an outdoor public event was held at Terminal Avenue and Commercial Street from 10:00 am to 2:00 pm. Commercial Street was closed for the event and display boards were attached to the fencing to provide information about the concepts and allow participants to review and provide feedback. City staff were on hand to answer questions from the public or listen to comments. Input forms were available and participants were encouraged to complete the form online. About 180 people attended the event.



Online Stakeholder Workshop

The City extended invitations to stakeholders and interest groups located adjacent to the project site who might be interested in registering and participating in a presentation and guided discussion about the concepts with the project team and other participants. The virtual workshop included an agenda, introductory presentation, and online discussion using an interactive tool called miro to share information and gather comments in an online setting. Discussion questions focused on project priorities, concept review, and ideas. Approximately 20 people attended the workshop on September 23 from 2:00-3:00 pm.



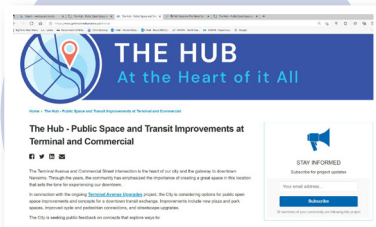
Input Questionnaire and Written Feedback

The City developed an input questionnaire to gather feedback on the concepts as well as on potential project priorities and design preferences. The questionnaire was available in an online format as well as a print version for download and submission. A total of 952 people provided input to the questionnaire and 1,835 people visited the questionnaire website between August 25 and October 4. In addition to input gathered from the questionnaire, the City received 13 written comments about the project submitted either via email communication or hand-written letter.

2.3 ENGAGEMENT TOOLS



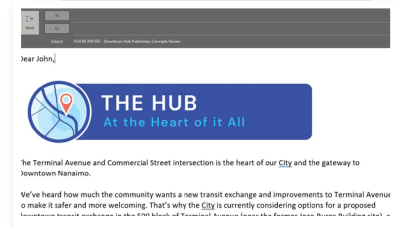
EXAMPLES OF OUTREACH & ENGAGEMENT TOOLS



Website: Get Involved Nanaimo



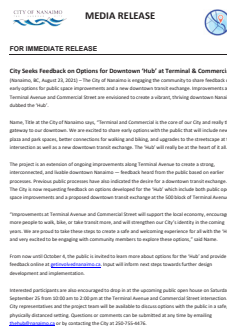
Social Media Posts



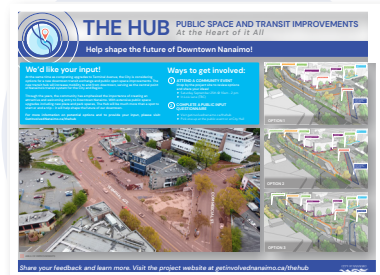
E-Notification



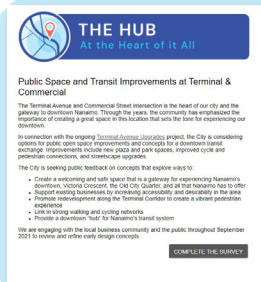
Community Poster



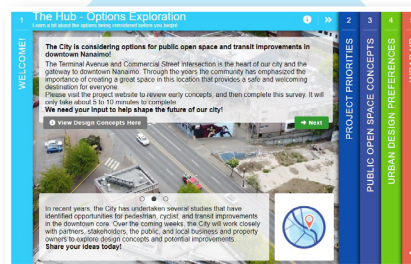
Media Release



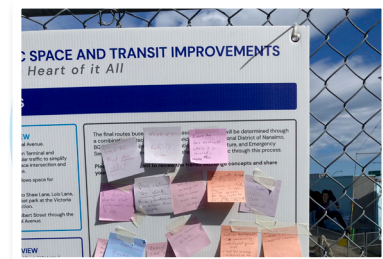
Large Signage



My Nanaimo This Week Notification



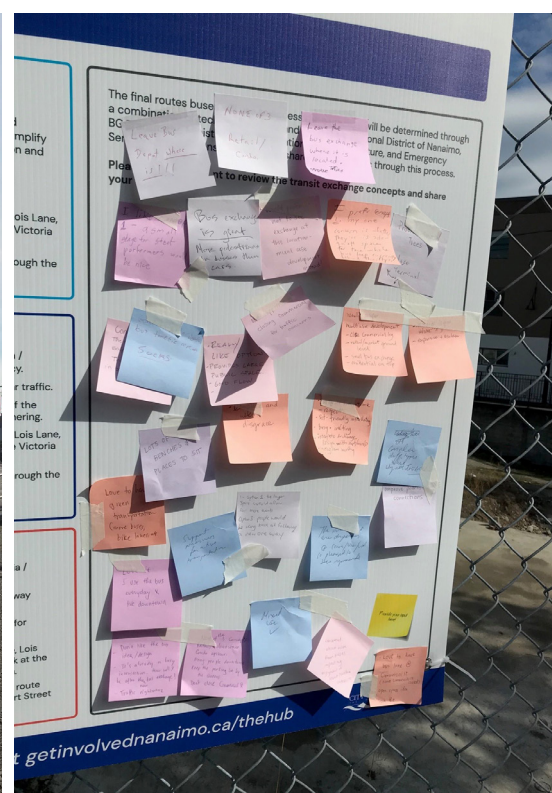
Input Questionnaire



Information Display Boards



Public Event on Saturday,
September 25, 2021





Public Event on Saturday,
September 25, 2021

3 WHAT WE HEARD

This section provides a summary of what we heard from those who participated in the engagement process. Participant feedback includes input on project priorities, design concepts for public open space improvements, and design preferences. Information about who participated is also provided.

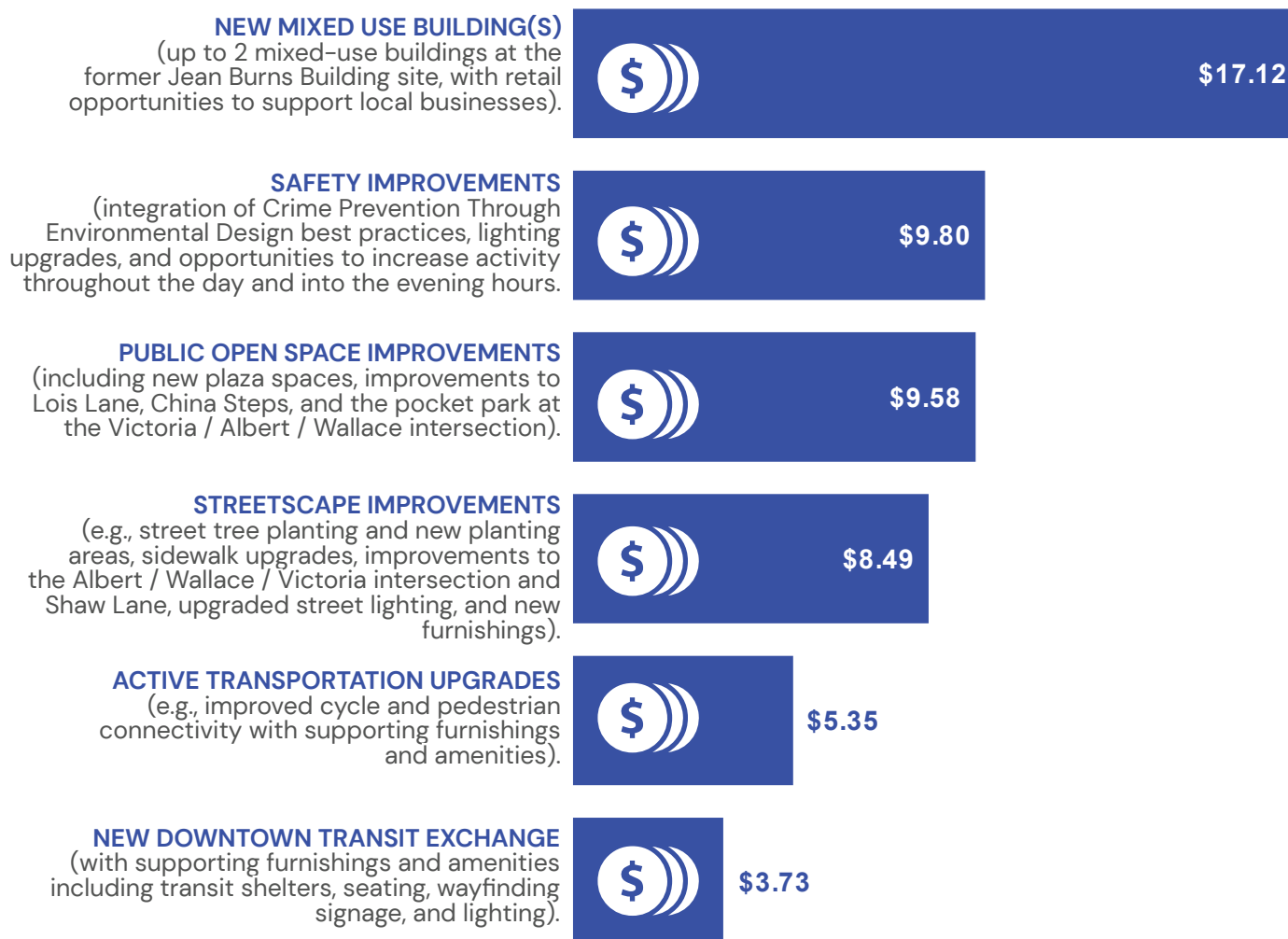


3.1 PROJECT PRIORITIES

AVERAGE SPENDING FOR POTENTIAL IMPROVEMENTS

Participants were asked to allocate their dollars* of what they would spend on potential urban design improvements to the project area. Average spending for each category based on all inputs is below.

* Participants could allocate \$55 in total spending.



The next page summarizes commonly noted themes for potential project improvements. For the full list of verbatim comments received, please refer to Appendix A.

PROJECT PRIORITIES



KEY INSIGHTS

- ▶ The highest ranked improvement for potential upgrades (based on average spending) was new mixed use building(s) at an average of \$17.12 indicating a desire for development on the existing space
- ▶ Safety improvements ranked second at an average of \$9.80 followed closely by public open space improvements at an average of \$9.58
- ▶ There was less support for active transportation upgrades at an average spending of \$5.35 and new downtown transit exchange at \$3.73

COMMENTS ABOUT POTENTIAL IMPROVEMENTS

Following is a summary of the most commonly noted themes. For the full list of verbatim comments received, please refer to the appendices.

New Mixed-Use Buildings

- ▶ Many participants noted that mixed-use buildings with housing opportunities will bring density to the area, enhance economic growth, and improve current conditions
- ▶ Consider broader area development (e.g., A & B Sound), retail opportunities (e.g., specialty shops, permanent covered market)

Safety Improvements

- ▶ Invest in safety improvements against theft, vandalism, or personal safety

Active Transportation Upgrades

- ▶ Ensure seamless connections to Commercial Street and other areas Downtown
- ▶ Make Victoria Crescent more pedestrian-friendly
- ▶ Consider the impacts of bike traffic on pedestrian-friendly spaces or consider speed limits for bikes or walk-only zones
- ▶ Concerns about safe pedestrian access at the proposed transit location

Public Open Space Improvements

- ▶ Ensure the space is functional yet aesthetically pleasing
- ▶ Prioritize improvements to existing nearby public spaces first (e.g., Diana Krall Plaza, Pioneer Square Park)

Streetscape Improvements

- ▶ Concerns about closing Commercial Street to vehicle traffic and limiting vehicles downtown
- ▶ Concerns about limiting parking around the site which provide access to local businesses
- ▶ Consider upgrades to the other side of Terminal Avenue to enhance project success

New Downtown Transit Exchange

- ▶ Concerns location is not suitable for a transit exchange and site would be better suited to alternatives; many prefer the current location
- ▶ Desire to upgrade the existing transit exchange to limit project costs
- ▶ Frustration with continued proposed location changes for the transit exchange

3.2 DESIGN CONCEPTS



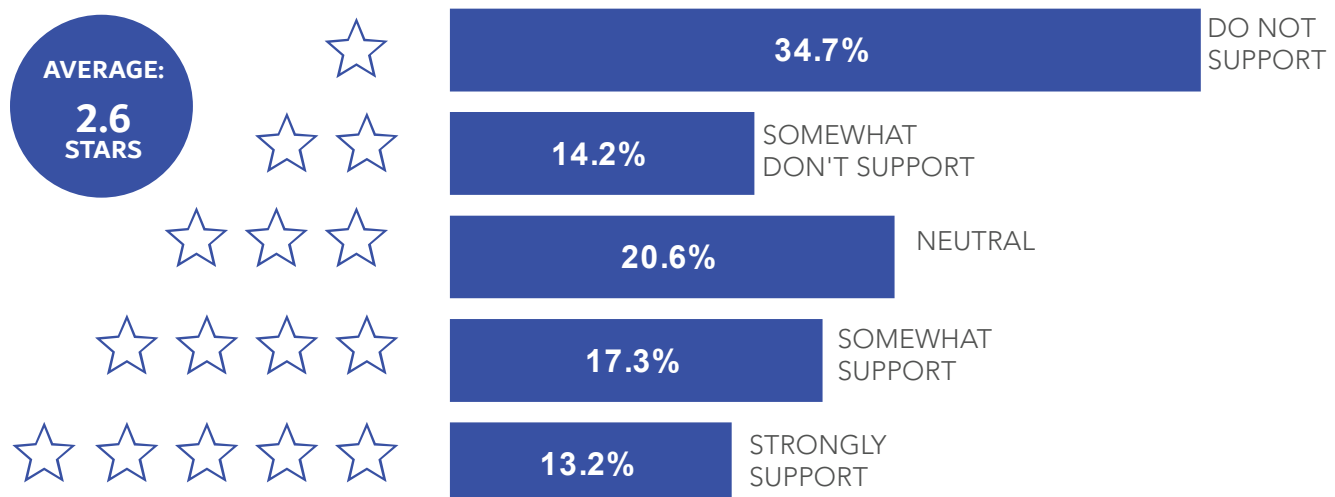
CONCEPT OVERVIEW

CREATIVE CONCEPT



- » This concept celebrates our creative history at the former Jean Burns building, which was previously home to a vibrant arts community.
- » Opportunities for interactive public art
- » Fun and interactive park/plaza features that encourage public interaction (e.g., movable / adaptable furnishings, overhead or decorative lighting, sound, music, or interactive art elements)
- » Reflects the downtown landscape's urban character
- » New public washroom facility
- » Integration of artistic elements such as decorative pavers, artistic sidewalk coatings, and bollards
- » Upgrades to the China Steps and retention of heritage elements including the decorative handrail and restored and new signage
- » Flexible custom seating including stepped concrete and wood seat walls
- » Integrated native plantings and protection of mature trees
- » New cycle connection and supporting amenities (racks, covered bike parking)

RATING Participants were asked to rate their level of support for this concept.



DESIGN CONCEPTS



COMMENTS ABOUT THE CREATIVE CONCEPT

Following is a summary of the most commonly noted themes for the Creative Concept. For the full list of verbatim comments received, please refer to the appendices.

What People Like

- ▶ More people to the area in a plaza would benefit public safety
- ▶ Large plaza could be used for community events and gathering such as a market, live music, cafe tables, etc. which are essential for a community as well as spaces without vehicles
- ▶ Limits buses on Victoria Crescent to access the transit exchange
- ▶ General support for addition of public art and celebrating the City's cultural identity, specifically opportunities for showcasing local artists

What People Don't Like

- ▶ Space is too expansive and concerns about under-use or vacant space that would encourage loitering
- ▶ Preference for more density at this site through opportunities for small businesses to encourage economic growth, or integration of affordable housing to active space
- ▶ Concerns that the City already has plaza space (Diana Krall Plaza) in close proximity
- ▶ Concerns about parking impacts and loading zones for existing businesses
- ▶ Concern about bike lane limiting vehicle access to businesses and Commercial Street
- ▶ Concerns about vandalism for these features and misuse of proposed features

Key Considerations

- ▶ Consider use of local artists
- ▶ Consider more greenspace or landscaping
- ▶ Consider seasonal implications and use during winter months
- ▶ Provide a stage for arts and culture
- ▶ Consider space as a "destination park" with interactive features e.g., chess tables, outdoor piano or other interactive music installations
- ▶ Retain and enhance the historic character along Victoria Crescent
- ▶ Retain heritage elements at the China Steps, including signage and design elements that celebrate the history and culture of the Chinese community in Nanaimo
- ▶ Consider connectivity to Victoria Crescent as it will no longer connect to Commercial Street and potentially divide downtown
- ▶ Rebuild the Jeans Burns site using a similar building footprint as the original building to retain the historic fabric of the area

DESIGN CONCEPTS



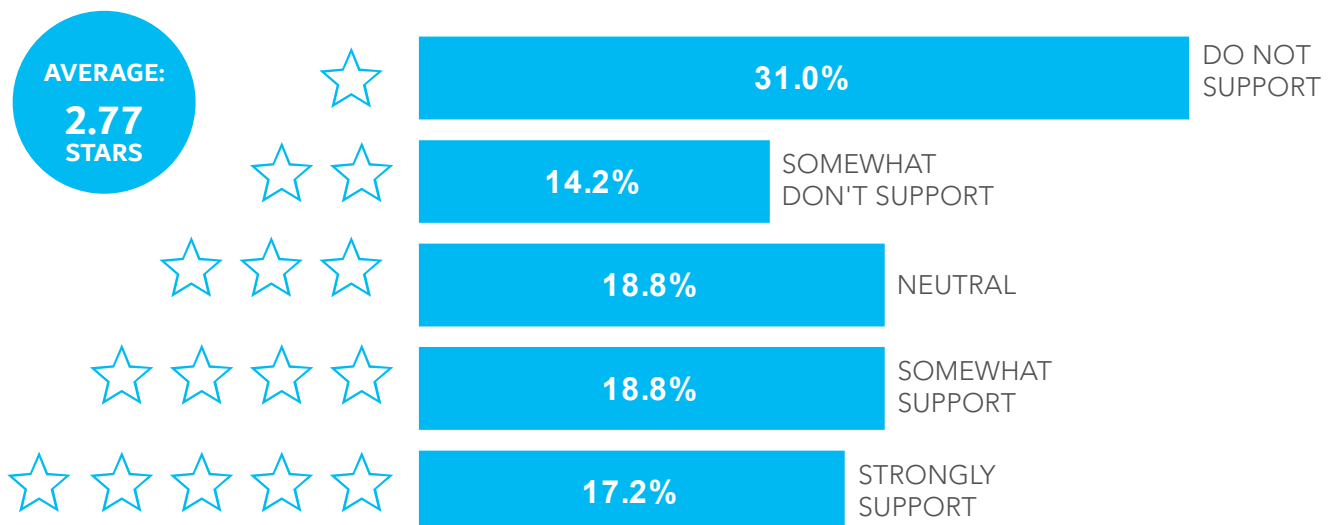
CONCEPT OVERVIEW

TIDELINE CONCEPT



- » This concept celebrates the site's environmental history, acknowledging the location of the historic shoreline
- » Integrates natural, sweeping, softer geometries
- » Contemporary, urban materials that reflect both the past and the present
- » Water feature to provide sound attenuation, visual interest, and opportunities for play
- » Opportunities for public art integration
- » Potential for overhead lighting, bollards, decorative paving materials
- » Specialty crosswalk treatments
- » Flexible seating and stepped seating
- » Upgrades to China Steps including new lighting, guardrails, and preservation of sign and arch
- » Protection of mature trees and integrated native planting including vines and trellis structures on vertical walls
- » Integrated green stormwater management strategies (rain gardens, permeable pavers)
- » Bike parking amenities
- » New public washroom facility

RATING Participants were asked to rate their level of support for this concept.



DESIGN CONCEPTS



COMMENTS ABOUT THE TIDELINE CONCEPT

Following is a summary of the most commonly noted themes for the Tideline Concept. For the full list of verbatim comments received, please refer to the appendices.

What People Like

- ▶ Appreciation for elements of concept including extension of the natural surroundings, recurring themes of water and seaside landscape which would be ideal for the "Harbour City"
- ▶ Celebrates what makes Nanaimo unique: oceans, mountains, forests
- ▶ Some support for the water feature as a design element and for sound attenuation
- ▶ Support for green stormwater management elements such as bio-swales, rain gardens, and lots of greenspace
- ▶ Support for public art
- ▶ Support for improvements to the pocket park at the Victoria / Wallace / Albert intersection
- ▶ Good flow with curved features that are appealing
- ▶ Preferred location for the public washroom in this concept
- ▶ Increased accessibility / accessible ramp is a good feature of this design

What People Don't Like

- ▶ Concern about plaza and potential under-use due to current social issues and general feeling that the space would be best utilized by including more shops, housing, and activity to enliven the space
- ▶ Concern about maintaining the water feature in terms of cost, potential vandalism, and sustainability with climate change
- ▶ Concern that an additional water feature may not be warranted given proximity to the Italian Fountain

Key Considerations

- ▶ Consider integration of design elements to celebrate the history and culture of the Chinese Community in Nanaimo
- ▶ Retain and enhance the historic character along Victoria Crescent
- ▶ Consider integration of a stepped waterfall, vegetated wall, or sunken garden as an alternative to provide noise attenuation
- ▶ Potentially incorporate some elements from the Creative Concept to provide artistic elements related to the ecological theme
- ▶ Consider integration of interpretive signage to educate people about green infrastructure, climate change and sustainability, and the site's history as the historic tideline of Nanaimo
- ▶ Consider creating more access routes to and through the plaza and individual pockets of seating

DESIGN CONCEPTS



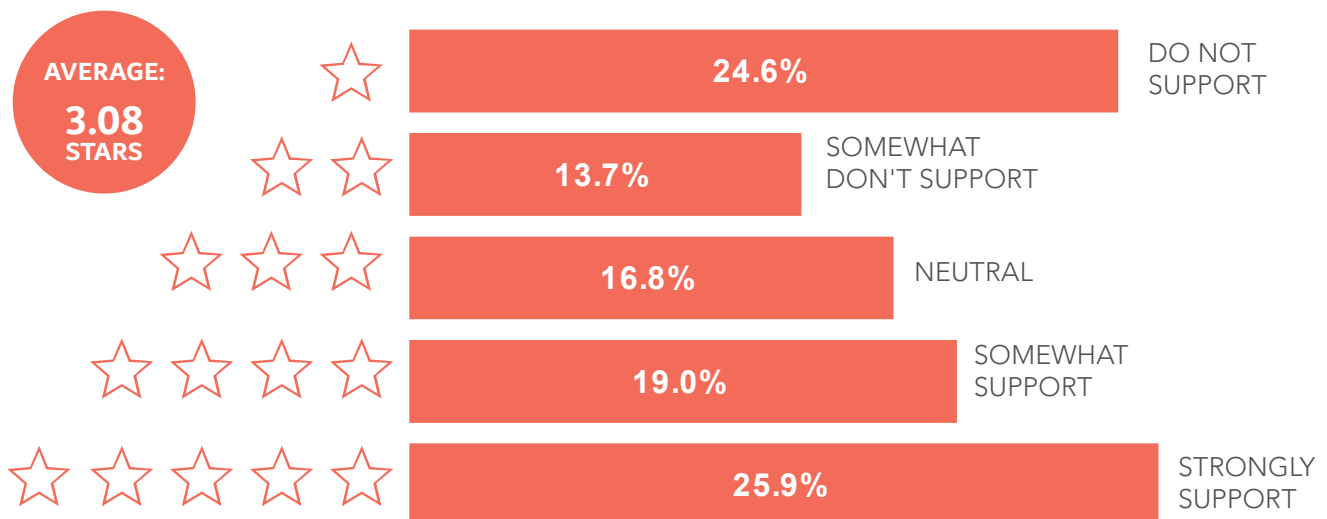
CONCEPT OVERVIEW

BUILDING CONCEPT



- » This concept integrates a mixed-use development on the former Jean Burns building site.
- » It includes the public open space elements listed in the Timeline Concept, plus:
 - Space for up to 2 mixed-use buildings that integrate with neighbourhood character and scale, with ground-floor commercial and retail opportunities to support local businesses (note: final siting and design would be determined in future phases and pending further technical review)
 - Potential for covered exterior plaza space
 - Upgrades to China Steps with opportunities to connect the steps to the new building entries and new overhead lighting
 - Smaller plaza spaces with fixed and movable furnishings
 - No water feature due to reduced plaza spaces
 - Potential to integrate a public washroom facility into building

RATING Participants were asked to rate their level of support for this concept.



DESIGN CONCEPTS



COMMENTS ABOUT THE BUILDING CONCEPT

Following is a summary of the most commonly noted themes for the Building Concept. For the full list of verbatim comments received, please refer to Appendix A.

What People Like

- ▶ Most favoured concept due to belief that mixed-use buildings for housing, retail, commercial or other activity will help revitalize downtown and draw people to the area and foster active civic, cultural, and economic improvement
- ▶ Provides a "destination" for people with buildings and amenities
- ▶ Highest and best use of space on prime real estate to attract revenue
- ▶ Best use of area for retail / housing with a building to provide an "anchor" to the space
- ▶ Consider live/work spaces, studios, or artist galleries

What People Don't Like

- ▶ Some people shared preferences for a park, greenspace, outdoor living space, or creative community space over building development
- ▶ Concerns about integrating new / additional retail space, when there are currently many vacant commercial spaces in Downtown
- ▶ Concerns concept would limit access to downtown and businesses along Victoria Crescent

Key Considerations

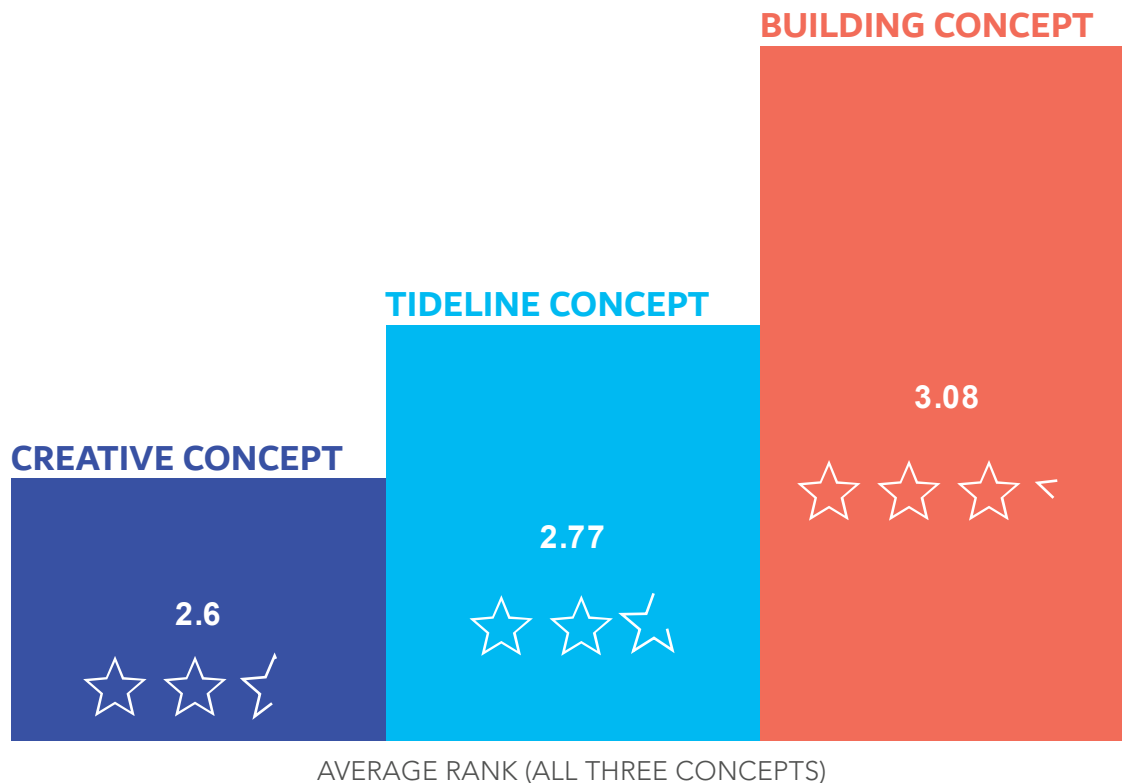
- ▶ Rebuild on the original footprint of the Jean Burns building to retain the original built fabric of this area
- ▶ Coordinate improvements with potential future development of the A&B Sound Building site e.g., potential walkway

- ▶ Retain access to existing businesses and limit potential construction impacts
- ▶ Limit building height to 2-4 storeys
- ▶ Consider the types of businesses in the building(s)
- ▶ Consider that retail spaces Downtown need to be affordable for smaller businesses
- ▶ Consider buildings to include a food market, farmers market, café, bakery, stalls (similar to Montreal's Atwater or Jean Talon markets)
- ▶ Integrate small studios on upper levels to be rented out to musicians and artists, and potentially the Arts Council
- ▶ Consider residential units above for affordable housing or social housing
- ▶ Consider enhanced amenities for bikers within the building including secure bike parking
- ▶ Consider covered outdoor plaza / patio areas for inclement weather
- ▶ Consider underground parking under the proposed buildings and to support businesses
- ▶ Ensure existing / new businesses have access to Lois Lane for deliveries and loading
- ▶ Collaborate with Vancouver Island University (VIU) for a potential satellite location for its programming to active the space

DESIGN CONCEPTS



AVERAGE RATINGS FOR ALL THREE CONCEPTS



KEY INSIGHTS

- ▶ While the results indicate some lack of support for each of the concepts, related comments indicate that the location of the transit exchange, safety, social issues, and traffic impacts are the key concerns and not necessarily the concepts themselves
- ▶ Of the three concepts, the Building Concept was rated the highest with an average ranking of 3.08 stars with a preference for mixed-use development
- ▶ The Creative Concept was least preferred
- ▶ While the Building Concept was most supported, further technical analysis and study is required to confirm feasibility, access, size, density, building uses, architectural features, and other details
- ▶ Public comments indicate a desire for downtown revitalization, improved connectivity and accessibility for all modes of travel, and public open space improvements

3.3 URBAN DESIGN PREFERENCES



TOP URBAN DESIGN ELEMENTS

Participants were asked consider a range of urban design features related to the public open space improvements to help identify the most preferable improvements to develop further in the detailed design phase.

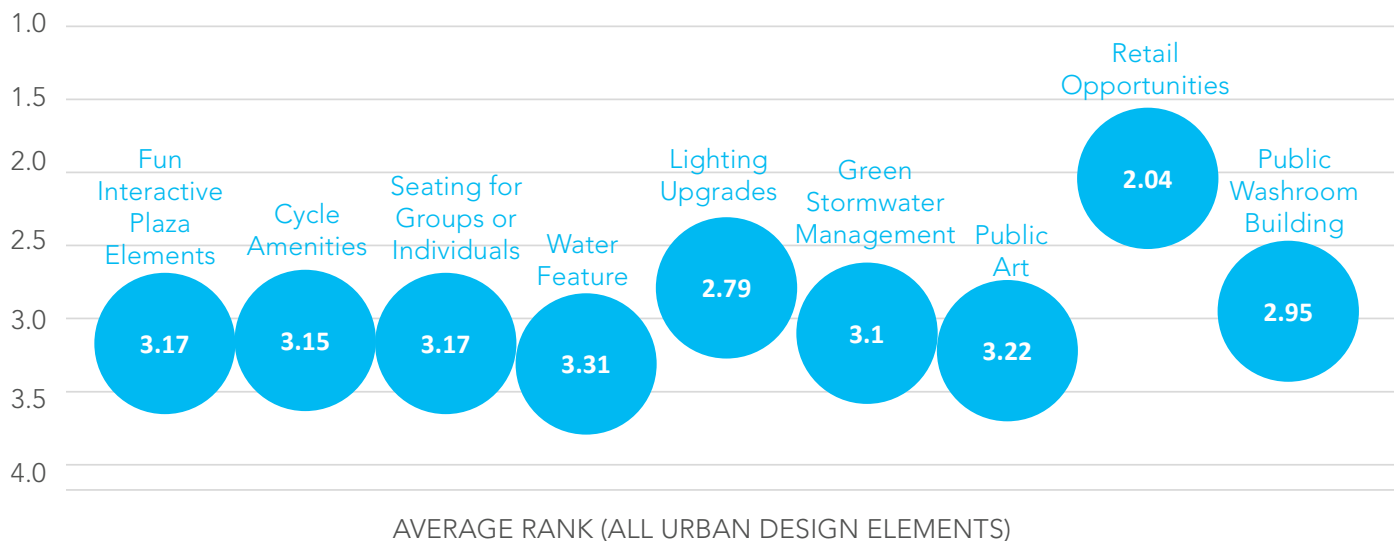
Up to 5 most favourite options could be selected and ranked by preference.

The results below indicate the top options that were ranked the highest by average.

TOP 5 PREFERENCES

- 1 Retail Opportunities
- 2 Lighting Upgrades
- 3 Public Washroom Building
- 4 Green Stormwater Management
- 5 Cycle Amenities

RANK * The highest rank is 1, so small rankings and averages indicate a higher preference of the option than high rankings which are a lower preference.



KEY INSIGHTS

- ▶ Retail opportunities was the most favoured option by a clear margin at 2.04 ranking
- ▶ The least favoured option was a water feature at a ranking of 3.31

URBAN DESIGN PREFERENCES



COMMENTS ABOUT PREFERENCES

Following is a summary of the most commonly noted themes based on top rated design preferences. For the full list of verbatim comments received, please refer to Appendix A.

#1 Retail Opportunities

- ▶ Strong support for enhanced retail opportunities and restaurants and cafes to bring density, activity, and new businesses into the area to revitalize downtown
- ▶ Support for retail development as mixed use with affordable housing above in 2-4 storey multi-family developments and rentals
- ▶ Permanent or semi-permanent public market or farmer's market
- ▶ Seasonal or temporary vendors during summer months
- ▶ Local artists or artist studios/ artist lofts or performance spaces for public art and street performers
- ▶ Destination area with fun shops to attract residents and tourists
- ▶ Potentially commercial office space

#2 Lighting Upgrades

- ▶ Support for high quality lighting to enhance public safety especially during darker months
- ▶ Support for overhead light installations
- ▶ Consider ground lighting in trees or fountain
- ▶ Consider custom lighting installations to acknowledge the area's cultural history

#3 Public Washroom Building

- ▶ Support for more public washrooms for convenience

- ▶ Support for clean, safe public washroom, potentially self-cleaning
- ▶ Consider public safety and proper management and maintenance to discourage negative social behaviour
- ▶ Consider murals and paintings on outside of washroom building

#4 Green Stormwater Management

- ▶ Support to enhance features based on anticipated climate change impacts
- ▶ Integrate educational / interpretive signage
- ▶ Enhanced green space including new street trees, native plant species, and plants to provide visual interest throughout the seasons
- ▶ Consider additional maintenance for landscaping to encourage high-quality planting areas that are aesthetically pleasing
- ▶ Consider costs to maintain trees and other plantings
- ▶ Consider green roof on transit exchange (similar to the visitor center near Northfield)

#5 Cycle Amenities

- ▶ Consider covered cycling infrastructure
- ▶ Consult cyclists on types of secure bike racks and cycling amenities
- ▶ Mixed support for bike lanes - some support for more active transportation and some opposition due to concern about use, bike theft, costs, and maintaining vehicle access

URBAN DESIGN PREFERENCES



COMMENTS ABOUT PREFERENCES Continued...

#6 Seating for Groups and Individuals

- ▶ Interactive seating such as chess tables, piano, and games to activate the space
- ▶ Attractive park benches or custom seat walls around trees or other features
- ▶ Picnic tables to allow for eating and gathering with small groups
- ▶ Concern about use due to current social issues and proximity to highway
- ▶ Consider more restaurants, cafes, and pop-up retail to activate seating areas

#7 Fun Interactive Plaza Elements

- ▶ Consider durability to avoid vandalism
- ▶ Consider elements that blend into landscape design
- ▶ Concern elements may not justify costs and that other features are more of a priority

8 Public Art

- ▶ Consider high quality attractive art that is aesthetically pleasing to a wide range of people
- ▶ Durable and reduces risk of vandalism or mis-use
- ▶ Provide opportunities for artists to sell their work (artist's market)
- ▶ Consider art that acknowledges local history and culture
- ▶ Consider revolving art to recognize local artists

9 Water Feature

- ▶ Some support for water feature for noise attenuation or visual interest as long as it is ecologically sound (i.e., re-circulates water) and can be easily maintained
- ▶ Some lack of support due to existing fountains that are not maintained and concerns about negative social issues
- ▶ Consider unique lighting for the fountain

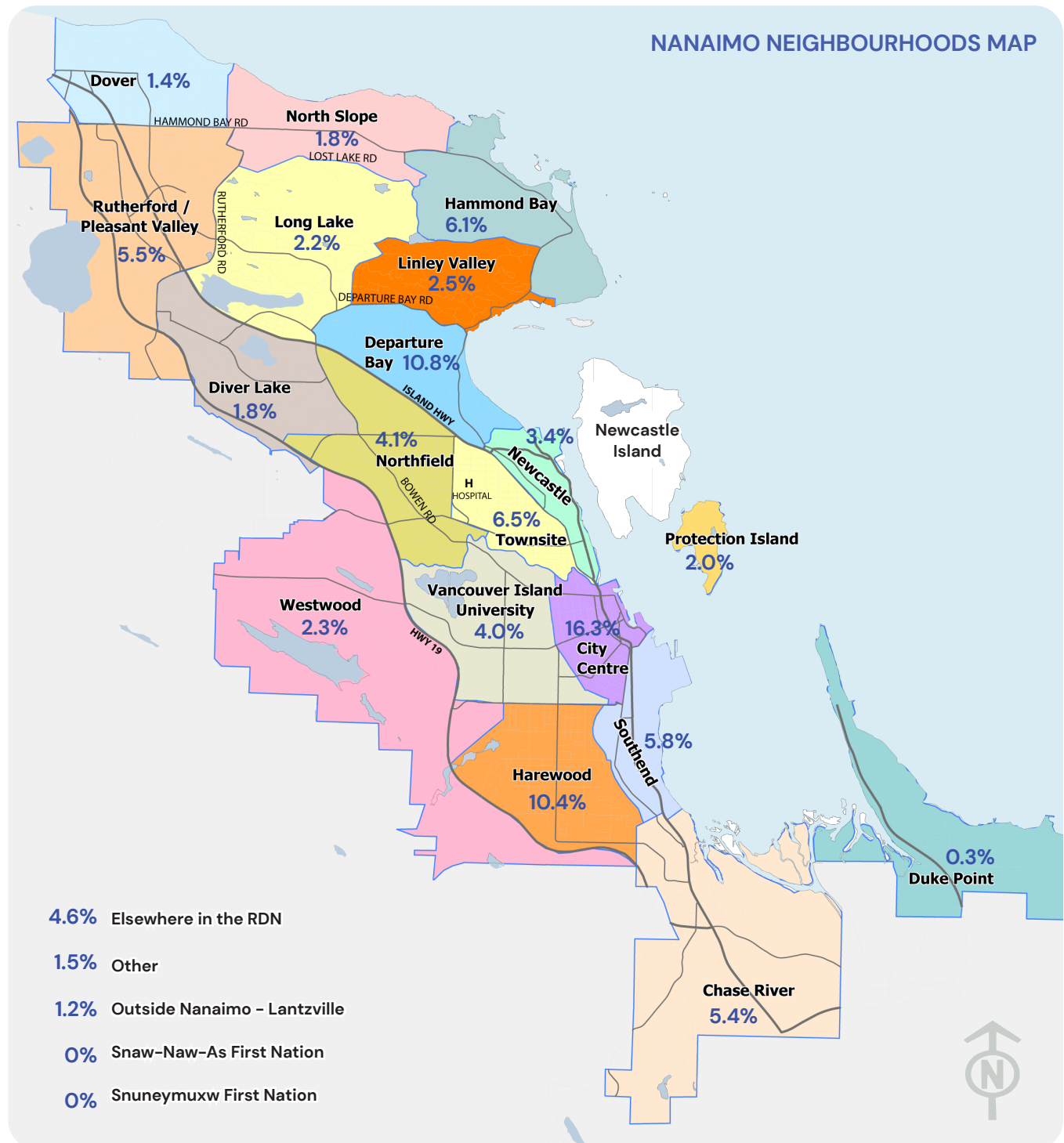
Other Ideas

- ▶ Consider design of pedestrian and vehicular routes, and plaza spaces to allow for key events (e.g. Christmas parade, Night Market, farmers markets)
- ▶ Potential future building development should consider the original fabric of the historic streetscape
- ▶ Review Bellingham, Washington's transit exchange for ideas including indoor waiting room, ticket sales, public washrooms, and security, covered waiting areas, and schedules
- ▶ Consider making Victoria Crescent pedestrian-only through the use of retractable barriers or bollards to allow service and emergency access but not constant street traffic
- ▶ Consider an iconic building design and form to create a landmark at this highly visible site

3.5 ABOUT PARTICIPANTS



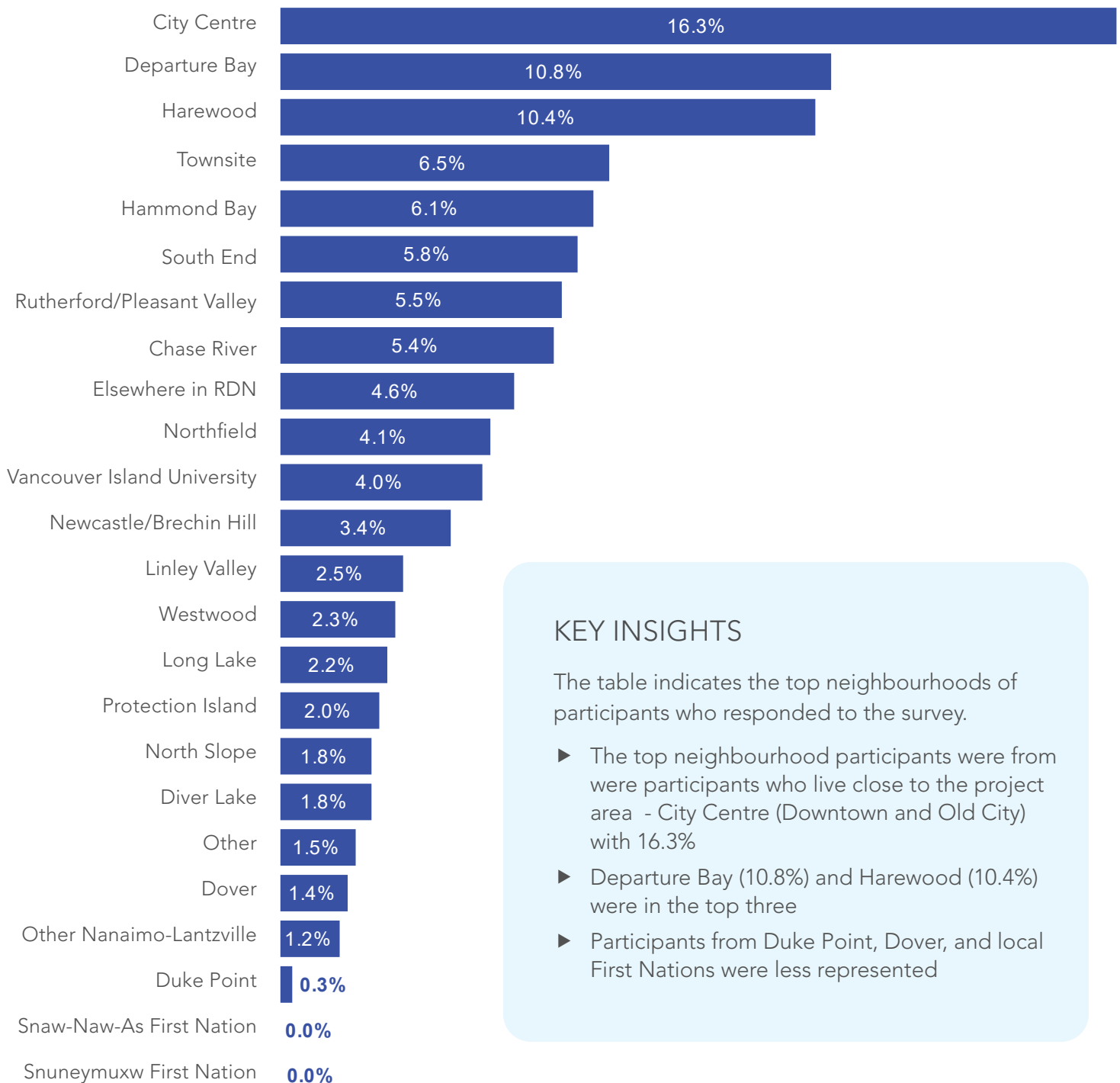
WHERE PARTICIPANTS LIVE



ABOUT PARTICIPANTS



WHERE PARTICIPANTS LIVE Continued...



KEY INSIGHTS

The table indicates the top neighbourhoods of participants who responded to the survey.

- ▶ The top neighbourhood participants were from where participants who live close to the project area - City Centre (Downtown and Old City) with 16.3%
- ▶ Departure Bay (10.8%) and Harewood (10.4%) were in the top three
- ▶ Participants from Duke Point, Dover, and local First Nations were less represented

ABOUT PARTICIPANTS



AGE RANGE OF PARTICIPANTS

KEY INSIGHTS

A diverse age range of people participated in the process, representing all age range categories aside from under 14 years.

- The highest numbers of participants were in the 35-39 years range (13.0%) and the 65-69 years range (11.2%).
- The lowest percentages were in the 15-19 years range (2.8%), over 75 years range (3.1%), and 45-49 years range (5.7%).

Under 14 years – **0.0%**

15-19 years | **0.2%**

20-24 years **2.8%**

25-29 years **9.6%**

30-34 years **10.6%**

35-39 years **13.0%**

40-44 years **9.5%**

45-49 years **5.7%**

50-54 years **7.5%**

55-59 years **7.5%**

60-64 years **10.9%**

65-69 years **11.2%**

70-74 years **8.1%**

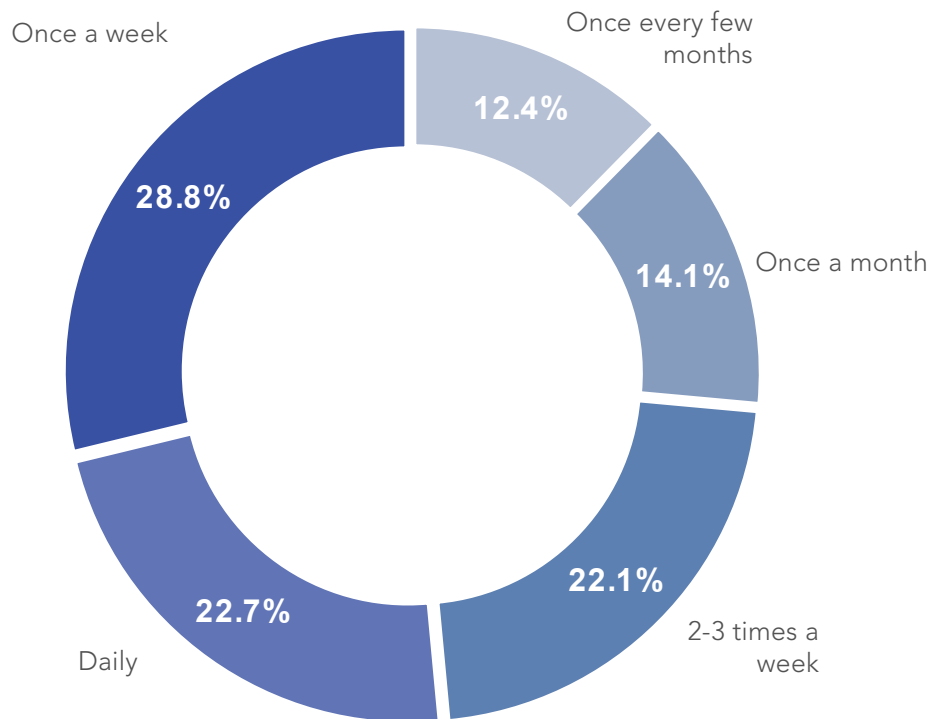
Over 75 years **3.1%**

Prefer not to answer **0.6%**

ABOUT PARTICIPANTS



HOW OFTEN PARTICIPANTS VISIT THE PROJECT AREA



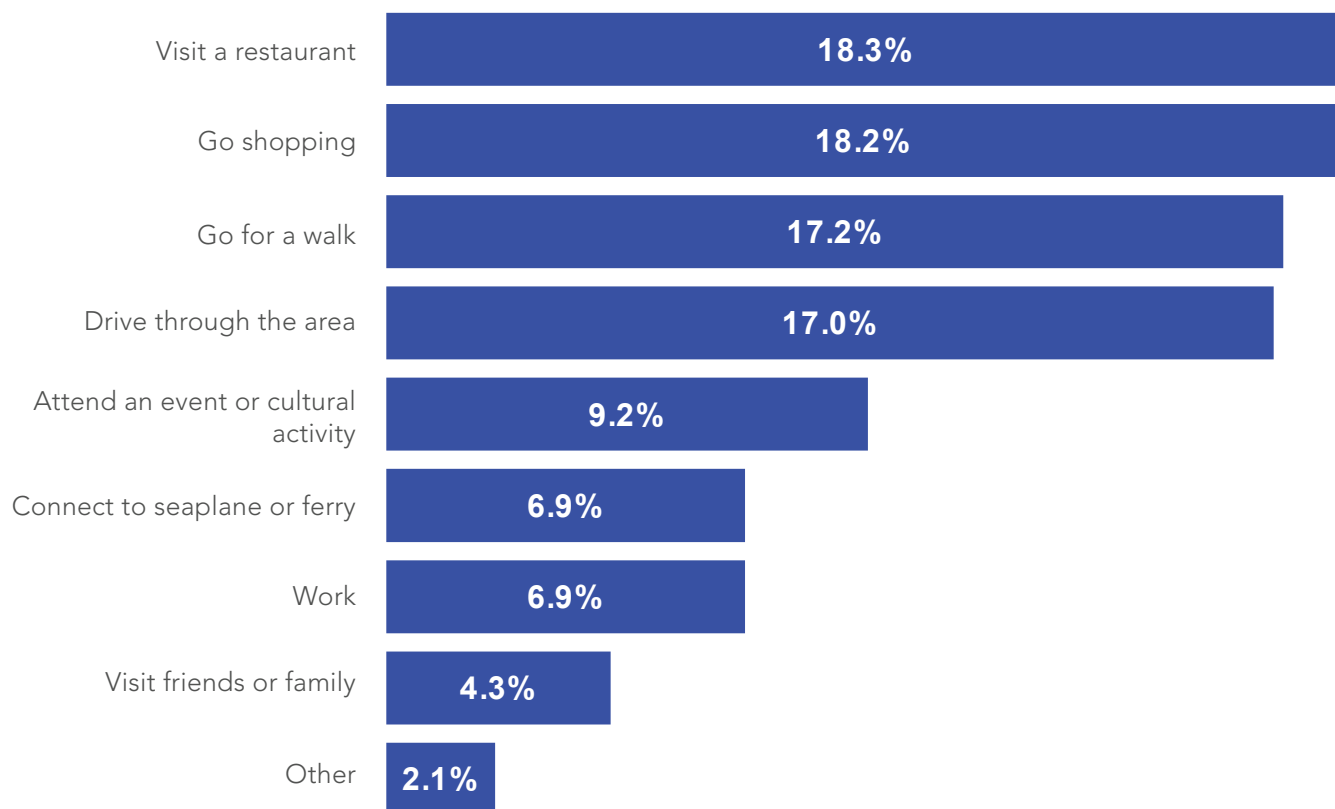
KEY INSIGHTS

- ▶ Many participants noted that they visit the project area at least once a week (28.8%) with many visiting daily (22.7%)
- ▶ A total of 26.5% of participants visit the project site less frequently - either once a month or once every few months
- ▶ For information about what activities participants do when they visit the project area, please see the next page

ABOUT PARTICIPANTS



PARTICIPANT ACTIVITIES NEAR THE PROJECT AREA



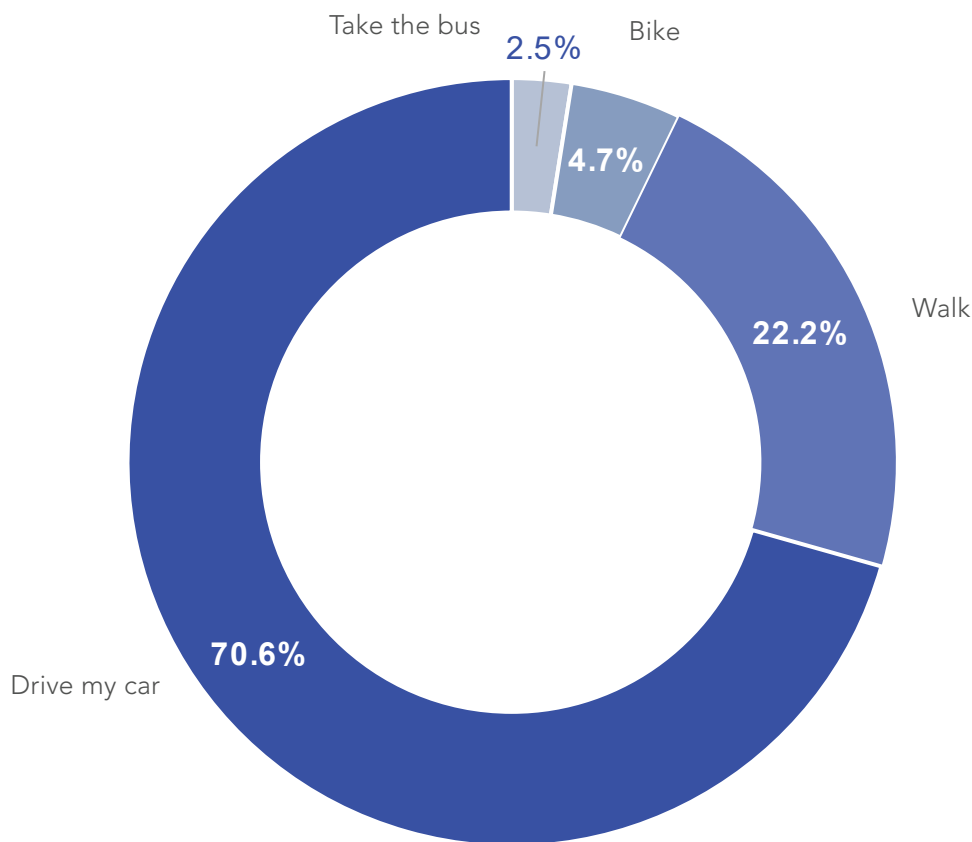
KEY INSIGHTS

- ▶ Although 6.9% of participants work in the area, many participants visit the project area to experience Nanaimo's downtown including visiting restaurants, shopping, or attending events or cultural activities indicating that the project area is already a kind of "hub"
- ▶ Slightly more people (17.2%) walk in the area than drive through (17.0%) while others (6.9%) visit the area to connect to other modes of transportation such as the seaplane or ferry

ABOUT PARTICIPANTS



PARTICIPANT TRAVEL TO THE PROJECT AREA



KEY INSIGHTS

- ▶ At present, the majority of participants use a vehicle to access the project area, although almost 30% use modes of transportation such as walking, biking, or taking transit
- ▶ Opportunities exist to improve transit ridership to and from Downtown, with potential for the new exchange to increase the number of transit users, particularly those visiting the area to work, access restaurants, shop, or connect to other forms of transit

GENERAL COMMENTS



KEY THEMES FROM GENERAL COMMENTS

Following is a summary of general comments most commonly provided by participants. For the full list of verbatim comments received, please refer to the appendices.

Downtown Revitalization

- ▶ Strong general support for Downtown revitalization and improvements to create a vibrant core
- ▶ Great potential for area especially with its unique location and configuration – could be a true Downtown "destination"
- ▶ Preference for a mixed-use development with housing, retail-commercial, or potentially live-work to create a functional space
- ▶ Encourage more retail on Victoria Crescent, Wallace Street, and Terminal Ave, for continuity to Downtown and connection to the Old City Quarter
- ▶ Consider appropriate types of retail businesses
- ▶ Consider project within larger area context (e.g., redevelopment of the A & B Sound building)
- ▶ Consider accessibility for those who find active transportation challenging (e.g., seniors, people with mobility challenges) and must rely on a vehicle
- ▶ Improve connectivity across Terminal Avenue and to the rest of Downtown and the Old City Quarter
- ▶ Mixed support for closing Commercial Street for a bike lane - some support the closure and more pedestrian-only streets in Downtown in general, while others feel the closure would impact businesses along Victoria Crescent, cause congestion, and potentially divide downtown
- ▶ Consider wayfinding signage for easy navigation to other areas on foot or bike

Transit Station Location

- ▶ Concerns about location of exchange due to potential traffic impacts in the area particularly on Terminal Avenue, noise, number of buses, potential increase of negative social behaviour, and aesthetics / placemaking

Active Transportation

- ▶ Support for more active transportation and cycling amenities with some lack of support for additional bike lanes

Streets, Traffic, and Parking

- ▶ Consider traffic implications from buses accessing the exchange
- ▶ Participants were concerned that the site is not an adequate size for transit exchange and park / plaza development
- ▶ Improve pedestrian connectivity and safety at the Victoria / Alert / Wallace intersection and along Terminal Avenue
- ▶ Consider programmatic or design elements to draw pedestrians from Commercial Street across Terminal Ave. (e.g, lighting features, public art, pop-up retail)
- ▶ Ensure that adequate parking is available around the project area for people who use vehicles

GENERAL COMMENTS



KEY THEMES FROM GENERAL COMMENTS Continued...

Public Realm Improvements

- ▶ Participants shared a wide range public open space amenity ideas in addition to those integrated in the proposed concepts including:
 - » Family-friendly events and programming to bring people together (e.g. markets, performances, and other cultural events)
 - » Recreational opportunities (e.g., ice rink in winter, splash pad)
 - » Art elements (e.g., murals, sculpture walk, or screen wall for evening projections or other art forms, unique paving stones)
 - » Green elements (e.g., vine plantings, urban wetlands, community gardens)
 - » Overhead crossing for pedestrians across Terminal Avenue.

Potential Development

- ▶ Participants suggested ideas for potential development on the site including:
 - » Businesses that can thrive throughout the year including the off-season
 - » Cafes, bistros, and restaurants
 - » Breweries
 - » Artist studios and galleries
 - » Specialty shops
 - » Larger retail outlets / department stores as well as smaller, local businesses
 - » Medical, dental, or other health services
 - » Offices
 - » Low-income housing developments

Environmental Considerations

- ▶ Potential open space improvements should be designed to integrate ecological design principles such as:
 - » Passive building techniques
 - » Shade trees
 - » Stormwater management
 - » Integration of native plants
 - » Use of sustainable building materials

Social Issues

- ▶ Prioritize addressing and supporting issues relating to homelessness as well and public safety before infrastructure development
- ▶ Consider additional security measures and enforcement to alleviate safety issues to park and transit users



4 NEXT STEPS

This section provides information about the next steps in the process toward potential implementation.



4.1 NEXT STEPS



The public feedback received will be considered by project staff and Council, along with further technical analysis, to inform next steps towards a preferred design approach.

Construction of Terminal Avenue improvements is currently planned to start in 2022, alongside continued analysis and design for The Hub (following Council update and review).



Please stay tuned for ongoing updates about the project at getinvolvednanaimo.ca/thehub

*Thank you for your
participation in this process!*



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