

BC Housing Skaha Lake Assembly Redevelopment

Phase 2 – Summary of Engagement Findings

Prepared Summer 2023

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Executive Summary

Executive Summary

This report details Phase 2 engagement activities and feedback received as part of BC Housing's Skaha Lake Assembly redevelopment in the City of Penticton.

Phase 2 community engagement invited Penticton residents, businesses, community organizations and existing BC Housing tenants living on the redevelopment site, to share their insights and feedback on draft concept plans for the redevelopment of the properties located at 2730, 2784, 2824, and 2872 Skaha Lake Road and 179 Green Avenue West, in the City of Penticton. No final decisions have been made regarding the design; however, two draft concept plans have been developed by the project team and are informed by community feedback received by Phase 1. It is important to note that these draft concept plans were developed to identify site massing and distribution of buildings within two unique development phases and did not show architectural design.

The draft plans are guided by a vision framework, best practices in placemaking, integrated planning and affordable housing and community feedback received in the Phase 1 (2022) engagement process. This redevelopment will play an important role in increasing the number of affordable housing units which are desperately needed in Penticton. More than 550 affordable units are being proposed in this redevelopment with the plan to have Phase 1 available to renters by 2028.

From May 17 to June 9, 2023, members of the community, current tenants of the Skaha Sunrise Apartments, and the Meadowlark, Sun Valley and Mayfair motels, community organizations, and other parties were invited to participate in the engagement process by:

- Completing an online or paper survey,
- Participating in a 30-minute phone interview,
- Attending a virtual or in-person information session,
- Participating in a virtual or in-person focus group or workshop,
- Sharing feedback in the online Question and Answer portal on BC Housing's [Let's Talk website](#),
- Contacting a BC Housing project liaison, and
- Email comments to communityrelations@bchousing.org

BC Housing shared detailed information about the project on its [Let's Talk project website](#), and responded to project queries, as received. Community project packages were distributed by email to a comprehensive list of community organizations, and paper copies of the project packages were hand-delivered to resident living on the current site.

The project packages included an overview letter, a frequently asked questions document, a project fact sheet, and a paper copy of the survey. There were two packages created to provide specific information and address concerns for both community members and organizations, and a second, more tailored package was shared with BC Housing residents living on site.

A total of 441 members of the public participated in the engagement process which included an online survey (356 participants), paper copy and online tenant survey (36 participants), virtual and in-person engagement sessions (80 participants), and one-on-one interviews with members of the public (five interviewees).

Following the engagement process, tenant and community feedback was analyzed and key themes or takeaways were identified for each option.

Engagement Findings: Key Themes

The remainder of this report provides context and background on the engagement, including detailed information on each of the key themes that was learned regarding the benefits and concerns related to each draft option for site redevelopment.

Preferred Option

Survey respondents preferred Option 2. The main reason given for preferring Option 2 was the preferred look and feel at Skaha Lake Road, more units overall in this concept and the addition of townhomes. Higher density and the use of the full site for buildings were also important reasons. Less important were the higher number buildings, the higher height and the inclusion of more retail space.

Those who provided other reasons for preferring Option 2 mentioned the greenery and trees along the road, the offset from the road and more parking.

Participants of engagement events preferred Option 2. The main reason given for preferring Option 2 was the fact that this option has a preferred look and feel at Skaha Lake Road, proposes more units, and has the addition of townhomes, which participants felt would be a good housing options for families. Higher density and the best and highest use of the site was also important reasons for participants in preferring this option. Less important were the higher number buildings, the higher height, and the inclusion of more retail space.

Suggested Improvements

Option 1

Suggested improvements include comments about the interior and exterior amenities or designs. This included:

- Adding a barbecue area,
- Ensuring as many units as possible have balconies,
- Including an indoor common room or gathering space for tenants,
- Maximizing outdoor green space, recreation area or garden.

Other suggestions included changes to the building heights (some recommending maximizing the allowable height, while others recommending decreasing it), making the development overall smaller or lower density, or adding more parking spaces.



Option 2

The largest theme regarding suggested changes was (the need for more) outdoor, garden, or green space in this design option, as well as the addition of a playground. Other improvements and emerging themes included:

- Reducing or increasing building heights,
- Adjusting parking spots (more or less), and
- General comments about the size and density (larger or smaller) of this option.

Other suggestions included changes to the building heights (some recommending maximizing the allowable height, while others recommending decreasing it), making the development overall smaller or lower density, or adding more parking spaces.



Tenant Selection

With the knowledge that the community recognizes the need for affordable housing for families, seniors and people with disabilities, many participants asked about how tenant selection will be managed for Phase 1 construction. This included a desire by participants to understand how community members looking for affordable housing can submit an application for tenancy, what onsite supports are available for tenants and looking to understand the tenant selection criteria for the Phase 1 units.

Tenant Relocation

A theme of discussion among participant groups was wanting to understand what will happen to the current 85 tenants on the site, where will they live, and how the tenant mix will support a safe and welcoming community for all.

Immediate Housing Needs

There is a general consensus among participants of the urgent need for housing now and that there is a need to increase temporary housing on the site immediately, using modular homes or tiny homes. Many participants shared the sentiment that the timeline to completion for these much-needed homes was far too long and that a solution is required now.

Context + Background

Context + Background

The Provincial Rental Housing Corporation (PRHC) owns the hotel sites located at 2730, 2784, 2824, and 2872 Skaha Lake Road and 179 Green Avenue West, in the City of Penticton. BC Housing is moving forward with redeveloping these properties, currently known as Skaha Sunrise Apartments, and the Meadowlark, Sun Valley and Mayfair motels. The future spaces will provide a variety of housing options focused on affordable rentals for singles, families, seniors, and persons with disabilities living and working in the community.



This redevelopment will play an important role in increasing the number of affordable housing units which are desperately needed in Penticton. More than 550 affordable units are being proposed in this redevelopment with the plan to have them available to renters by 2028.

No final decisions have been made regarding the design; however, two draft concept plans have been developed by the project team for community feedback. The draft plans are guided by a vision framework, best practices in placemaking, integrated planning and affordable housing and community feedback received in the Phase 1 (2022) engagement process.

Vision

The vision for the project is: *“To elevate the possibilities of the site by facilitating affordable, accessible, and sustainable housing for singles, families, workforce, seniors, and persons with disabilities, living in the Penticton area. Together, we reimagine the possible and challenge the conventions of affordable rental housing.”*

Principles

The principles for the project are:

- Building for a diverse and accessible community
- Environmental sustainability and resiliency
- Designing to encourage multiple forms of transportation
- Strengthening social connectivity and well being
- Implementing features that will enhance security and safety for residents and the community
- Designing the development to fit in with the neighbourhood
- Incorporating local culture and heritage in the design
- Collaborating with the community through engagement and partnerships
- Focussing on the principles of reconciliation through Indigenous engagement
- Ensuring a tenant first approach through ongoing communication and support

**Please reference separate document for more details on project vision and framework.*

Engagement Goal + Objectives

This report was prepared by Delaney, *the engagement people*, a neutral third party who provided engagement planning, implementation, and reporting support to BC Housing. Delaney applies the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) planning protocol and spectrum to its engagement plans (*please reference separate document for the IAP2 Spectrum of Engagement*). The engagement goal for Phase 2 was:

By Fall 2023, BC Housing will engage with tenants, neighbours, and the community of Penticton at large, to gain feedback on the proposed concept plans for the Skaha Lake Assembly redevelopment site.

Engagement Process

Based on the engagement goals, the engagement process was designed to provide project information and updates as well as to collect feedback from tenants, neighbours, and members of the community who are interested in or affected by this project. This feedback will help to identify the preferred concept plan, to understand what works well, and to identify opportunities for improvement. The Phase 2 engagement process offered several ways for community members and stakeholders to participate and to share their feedback. Participants could:

- Completing an online or paper survey,
- Participating in a 30-minute phone interview,
- Attending a virtual or in-person information session,
- Participating in a virtual or in-person focus group or workshop,
- Sharing feedback in the online Question and Answer portal on BC Housing's [Let's Talk website](#),
- Contacting a BC Housing project liaison, and
- Email comments to communityrelations@bchousing.org

The roll-out of the Phase 2 Communications and Engagement plan included creating awareness in the community of this project and the upcoming engagement sessions through local newspaper ads, delivery through Canada Post of 1,400 post cards to customers in the immediate area surrounding the site: additional postcards were made to directly invite community members from the mobile home park located adjacent to the site as residents noted they did not receive initial materials delivered through Canada Post. These were hand delivered by a neighbour who lives in the mobile home park, and by site operations staff delivering one paper information package to the door of each tenant living at the project site. Tenants were also provided both a paper copy of the survey as well as the link to the online survey, details about the in-person project information session and lunch onsite as well as information on the other engagement options so they could choose their preferred method of participation.

In addition, project information packages and invitations to participate in the engagement process were forwarded to a comprehensive list of community organizations, as identified by the project team. Please reference separate document for *the full list of community organizations that were invited to participate in this phase of engagement*.

Please note: BC Housing communicated directly with the Penticton Indian Band (PIB) regarding engagement for Phase 2.

Engagement Techniques + Results

Active engagement took place between May 17 – June 9, 2023. Providing multiple ways for members of the community to engage, including in-person and virtual options as well as available online and paper materials. This approach offered flexibility for the public to participate according to their schedule, and removed potential barriers that some may feel related to online or in-person engagement.

Tenants had the option to attend an in-person information session at the Skaha Sunrise location or to participate through the completion of an online or paper survey, which could be dropped off at 2872 Skaha Lake Road. There was no requirement to provide personal identifying information (e.g., name, address), which can at times be a perceived disincentive to participation. Tenants were also offered the option to participate in an in-person interview.

Engagement Techniques and Total Participants

The section below details the engagement techniques and total participants by technique. It should be noted that these are not necessarily unique participants as some participants may have completed a survey and attended an engagement event.

Technique	Number of Participants
Online engagement survey (320 community members and 36 tenants)	356 Participants
Four virtual interviews (One interview included two participants)	5 Participants
Virtual and in-person community engagement sessions	50 Participants
In-person tenant engagement/information session	30 Participants
TOTAL	441 Participants

Online Survey

Between May 17 and June 9, 2023, an online engagement survey was made available to tenants, community members and interested and affected parties in the City of Penticton. The survey was hosted on the BC Housing Let's Talk website and the survey link was shared via an open link that was accessible to all members of the community, with paper copies being provided to tenants to reduce an online form being a barrier to their participation. The survey consisted of closed (e.g., multiple choice, ranking) and open-ended questions (free text). Participation in the engagement process was through self-selection and as such does not reflect a random sampling of the population or target groups. Engagement results, including survey results cannot be interpreted to reflect the opinions of a larger group (i.e., all Penticton residents). The results provide a current snapshot of the insights and perspectives shared by those community members who responded to the survey.

One-on-One Interviews

As an additional option for participants to share their comments, 30–45-minute telephone or Zoom interviews were offered to individuals and organizations with a particular interest in the project, to share their insights and feedback. Four interviews were completed with representatives from local community organizations. Interview questions aligned with the questions asked in the survey and were sent to the participants ahead of their interview for review. Detailed notes were taken by the facilitator during the interview and then were reviewed by the participant for any errors to be corrected or for any additions to be made. *Please reference separate document for the full list of community interview questions.*

Community Information Sessions (Virtual and In-Person)

The purpose of the information session was to share information about the proposed project concept plans options, how the community could participate in the engagement process, and provide an opportunity for the community to ask questions and share feedback. Two information sessions were scheduled, one virtual session that was hosted on the Zoom platform and one in-person session.

In the virtual sessions, participants were required to register to attend the virtual session using Event-Brite on the BC Housing Let's Talk project page. Registration was not required to attend an in-person information session.

Tenant Information Session (In-Person)

In late May, an in-person information session was hosted onsite at the Skaha Sunrise, located at 2872 Skaha Lake Road. The project team shared a brief presentation and project overview and then facilitated feedback and discussion in small groups. Lunch was provided for all tenants and most participants noted appreciation for the opportunity to participate.

Community Workshops (Virtual and In-Person)

One virtual and one in-person workshop were scheduled to provide an opportunity for participants to work together to facilitate dialogue between those who may have differing perspectives. Due to low registration, these sessions were reformatted into roundtable discussions to ensure participants could share their feedback and engage in dialogue with other members of the community.

Participants were required to register to attend these sessions using Event-Brite on the BC Housing Let's Talk website.

Project Liaison

A designated BC Housing staff member was available to provide information and answer questions from the community throughout the active engagement period and to support engagement through the Let's Talk project page.

Communications Approach + Objectives

The Phase 2 communication goal for BC Housing was to ensure that all those who were interested in sharing their feedback and having a voice in this project had the information they needed to participate. This engagement process provided the opportunity for tenants, neighbours, and members of the community who are interested or affected by this project, to share their feedback, identify the preferred concept plan, indicate what works well and identify opportunities for improvement. The following communication channels were utilized:

Communication Channel	Date Promoted/Completed
BC Housing Let's Talk project site, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Updated project information and timeline • Project Fact Sheet • Project Frequently Asked Questions document • Interactive Question and Answer feature • Community engagement event registration links 	May 15, 2023
Designed project doorhangers delivered by Canada Post to 1400 residential homes and neighbours around the development sites.	May 17, 2023
Engagement packages delivered by BC Housing operations staff, to each tenant home (85 tenants) with a project information letter, fact sheet, FAQ and survey paper copy.	May 17, 2023
Postcard invitations hand-delivered to immediate neighbours (50) to the site the day before the information session.	May 29, 2023
Two email distributions (one initial and one reminder) to 38 community organizations with the project welcome letter, fact sheet, FAQ document, interview invitation and survey link.	May 15, 2023 May 30, 2023
Three paid half-page advertisements in the Penticton Now newspaper highlighting the project and providing a QR code to access the survey as well as Let's Talk website address.	May 17, 2023 May 24, 2023 June 7, 2023

Engagement Challenges + Mitigation Strategies

Engagement Limitations

Phase 2 engagement included broad outreach to all members of the community, including current tenants of Skaha Sunrise Apartments, current tenants of the Meadowlark, Sun Valley and Mayfair motels, neighbours to the site, and all members of the community of Penticton. Due to the varied audiences and interests that were represented in this engagement, some challenges in the communications and engagement for this phase included:

	Challenge	Mitigation
1	Limited or no access to technology for tenants to complete the survey or to provide access to project information and the Let's Talk website.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provided an option to tenants of one-on-one phone call/interview to share their comments and feedback. • Distributed paper copies of project information packages to each tenant. • Worked with operations staff onsite to ensure that tenants could share feedback through discussion with staff. • Hosted an in-person session onsite to provide tenants with project information and direct access to project team members to ask questions and to address concerns.
2	Inability to identify or connect with established community and business associations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Worked with the project team to identify community organizations that BC Housing works with. • Asked community contacts who they would suggest we engage.
3	Difficulty engaging with immediate neighbours.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delivered postcards directly to neighbour for delivery to immediate neighbours. • Hired Canada post for bulk mail delivery. • Emailed to the mobile home park manager.
4	A lack of understanding around the two-phased process and frustration around associated timelines due to the current housing crisis.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communicated the proposed timeline and identified Phase 2 opportunities for input and next steps for redevelopment. • Communicated with tenants through project information packages and direct onsite dialogue to ensure that tenants and onsite Operations staff had clear project information if questions arose.
5	Lack of understanding of the difference between supportive and affordable housing, related to this development.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provided clear information on the community supports required by supportive housing tenants and how that differs from the needs of tenants in affordable housing developments. • Clearly articulated "givens" and non-negotiables for this redevelopment. • Communicated the mandate and project goals clearly and consistently.

Social Sustainability

As neutral third-party facilitators, Delaney works hard to be unbiased and act as neutral stewards of the engagement process. Phase 2 feedback will help to define a preferred option to advance the redevelopment of the site.

Diversity, Inclusion, and Belonging

Delaney's approach to engagement is rooted in a strong belief in equity and inclusion and we recognize that this project must create the opportunity to nurture connection to place and to the community.

In order to facilitate this, we:

- Engaged with individuals and organizations with varied interests and backgrounds to gain diverse perspectives.
- Worked closely with onsite staff to arrange in-person engagement for tenants and for follow up with tenants, recognizing the importance of their feedback and continuing survey participation.
- Identified and mitigated potential barriers to participants.
- Supported those tenants who wanted to participate in their participation by trusted BC Housing operations staff.

Enhanced Wellness

Ensuring that the engagement process supported the health and wellness of current and future residents was a key priority. Those impacted by a decision (either positively or negatively) needed to feel safe in their ability to participate. This was achieved by:

- Communicating timelines and relevant information to manage tenant expectations, fears, or stress related to relocation.
- Clearly communicating the project goals and how they support enhanced quality of life for tenants and the community.
- Creating a safe environment for participants to provide their feedback.
- Providing various opportunities for all interested and affected parties to share their input and provide support to encourage this, as needed.

Equity and Equal Access to Opportunities

Decisions are more sustainable when they are informed by involved or impacted parties. To hear from those parties, we aim to ensure our engagement process is accessible to all, and that our process promotes equity. We do this by:

- Seeking early insights from some participants through interviews or discussion so that we can understand early on the needs of participants to ensure that all those interested or affected can participate, particularly those who are often underrepresented.
- Providing one-on-one opportunities for dialogue to reduce barriers for people wanting to participate.
- Ensuring that all materials are clear and include safe, accessible, and inclusive language.

What We Learned

What We Learned

The survey was created to explore which option people prefer, concerns, and things they wanted to address. The in-person engagement was an opportunity to have more conversation about each option both generally and specifically. Within the in-person engagement, several key themes emerged including the ones noted below, that were shared by community members and tenants.

Sustainable Building

There was a focus from all participants on applying sustainable building attributes to the redevelopment. This included reducing impacts on the environment, such as installing rain catchments, adding greenspace, and natural landscaping as well as reducing Co2 emissions through environmentally sensitive heating and cooling systems. Improving water quality and monitoring water usage through water reclamation and the use of swales for low water plants as well as creating opportunities to implement solar power and green roof options. There was an additional suggestion to harness the power that is generated by the wind in Penticton to reduce energy use and costs. The topic of the use of mass timber led some to express their concern regarding the overall safety of mass timber related to wildfires, others were supportive of mass timber as a more environmentally sustainable building material, however, fewer people noted this, and more were fearful of the potential impacts of wildfires on a wooden structure. While not all participants agreed on the same option, there was a consistent sentiment of the need to integrate best practices when constructing either option.

Addressing the housing need now

There was a consensus among participants of the urgent need for housing now and that there is a need to increase temporary housing on the site immediately, using modular homes or tiny homes. Many participants shared the sentiment that the timeline to completion for these much-needed homes was far too long and that a solution is required now. There were queries as to why the site cannot be used to increase housing with the use of other temporary housing units until the redevelopment is complete. Moreover, a few participants noted that it is within the province's control to move the timeline forward more quickly and they are choosing not to in Penticton. In our in-person engagement there was a clear recognition for the need for affordable housing now. Participants want to see either option built now to address the issue of a lack of housing in Penticton.

Traffic Management and Transportation

A request for traffic studies to be completed and provided to the public was made by participants as a way for the public to understand traffic management options (roundabouts, drive through areas etc.) that can be implemented on the site. Traffic conflict zones near entrances and exits were said to increase traffic flow impacts on adjacent side streets and Skaha Lake Road. Adding protected bike lanes, wider crosswalks and pathways throughout the development was seen to be a way to encourage cyclists and pedestrians to participate in safe and active transportation options. One participant suggested the installation of a bus loop onsite facing Skaha Lake Road, to allow for transit to utilize the space and the public to easily access transportation. Site access was raised as a key point when discussing access and egress for first responder vehicles.

Tenant selection

There is a clear need for affordable housing for families, seniors and people with disabilities in Penticton and many participants asked about how tenant selection will be managed for Phase 1 of the new site. This included a desire by participants to understand how community members looking for affordable housing can apply for tenancy.

The response shared with participants indicated that Phase 1 will be allocated to existing tenants based on a first right of refusal and if units remain after this, BC Housing will then go to their registry for tenant applications. The public would not likely have access to the affordable housing units in this redevelopment until Phase 2, or closer to 2030. This information created concern among participants of the composition and mixing of existing tenants requiring supports and other low to moderate income families, and seniors. In addition, participants shared their disappointment that the housing would not be prioritized for Penticton residents and that it would go to folks from

other communities on the BC Housing Registry. There is a general sentiment that housing in Penticton should be prioritized for people who already live in the community. Further, a participant (with agreement from others) said that there is a lack of operational information around who the tenants will be and how the building will operate. These participants opted to not provide feedback on the options because they felt “it was a little unfair – smoke and mirrors to have this conversation without a conversation about operator.”

Tenant Relocation

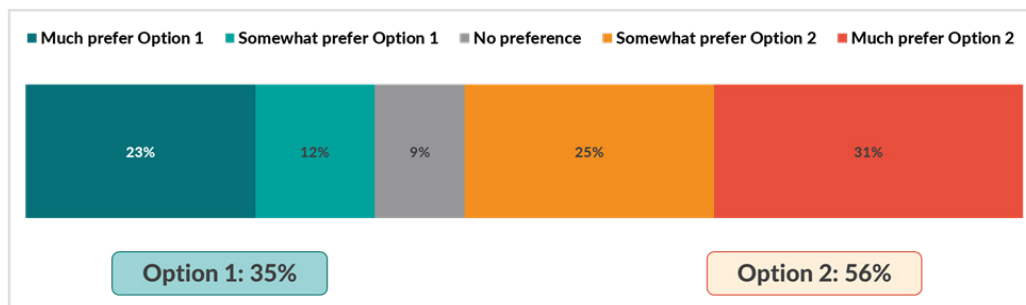
A theme of discussion among participant groups was wanting to understand what will happen to the current 85 tenants on the site, where will they live, and how the tenant mix will support a safe and welcoming community for all. Participants heard that Phase 1 will replace the current 103 low-income units and that the site will include geared to income units, a tenant support worker and that a non-profit will be located onsite to support tenants. This messaging led some participants to interpret that there will be supportive housing units in Phase 1 to accommodate the relocation of existing tenants. There is participant support to fairly relocate existing tenants but with the desperate need for affordable housing for seniors, families, workforce, and those with disabilities in the City of Penticton, many felt it was disingenuous to market this building as being for members of the community when the first Phase has already been allocated to current BC Housing tenants. While participants shared varied support for the two options, a general sentiment was to build the option that minimizes tenant impact the most.

Preferred Option

Overall, survey respondents preferred **Option 2** over Option 1.

While a third of the survey respondents preferred Option 1 (35%, with 23% much preferring it and 12% somewhat preferring it), the majority preferred Option 2 (56%, with 31% much preferring it and 25% somewhat preferring it.) The remaining 9% had no preference.

OPTION PREFERENCE



Among the 36 tenant survey respondents, Option 1 was preferred over Option 2 (73% vs. 27%) while among non-tenants (320 respondents), Option 2 was preferred (59% vs. 31%).

Respondents were asked to select the main reasons why they liked each option. For Option 1, 104 respondents provided feedback, while for Option 2, 200 did.

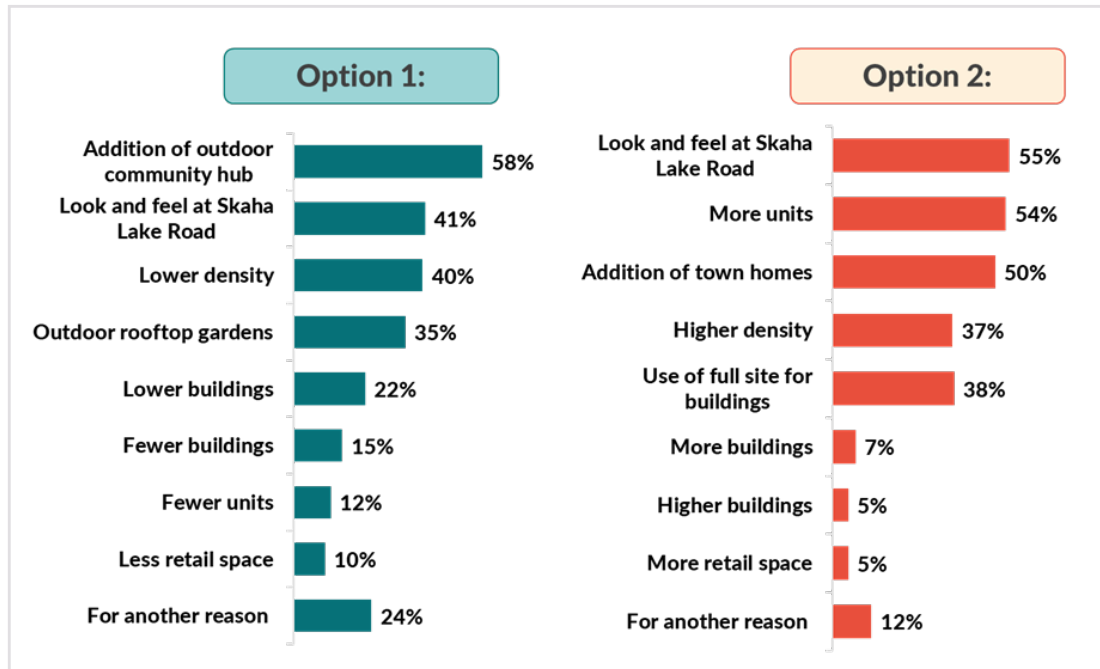
The main reasons given for preferring Option 1 were the addition of the outdoor community hub, the general look at feel at Skaha Lake Road, lower density, and the outdoor rooftop gardens. Secondary reasons were the lower height, and fewer buildings and units. Less retail space was not a very important factor for respondents who preferred this option.

Those who provided other reasons mentioned the (community) green space, and the exclusion of townhomes from this design option but the higher proportion of units with two and three bedrooms.

On the other hand, those who preferred Option 2 preferred the look and feel at Skaha Lake Road, more units overall in this concept and the addition of townhomes. Higher density and the use of the full site for buildings were also important reasons. Less important were the higher number buildings, the higher height and the inclusion of more retail space.

Those who provided other reasons for preferring Option 2 mentioned the greenery and trees along the road, the offset from the road and more parking.

REASONS FOR PREFERENCE



FEEDBACK FROM COMMUNITY EVENTS, INTERVIEWS AND CORRESPONDENCE: OPTION 1

Positive Feedback

Option 1 was the preferred option among community members and tenants who attended engagement events, for reasons such as diversity of height, less density (than Option 2), which often leads to less vehicles and traffic, semi-private greenspace, and walkways into the development where tenants can be outside as well as third floor access. It was noted that although Option 1 had five structures, they were smaller buildings, and the building placement created a “community feel” by its design. Ensuring privacy between the site and the neighbours to the east was seen as a priority while reducing developmental impacts to immediate neighbours, such as shadowing, sight lines, fencing and maintaining greenery. Common rooms and spaces were noted as being needed within the development to create community.

“Would love to see an outdoor covered area for smokes, gazebo, BBQ.”

– Tenant

Challenges

A key concern noted by participants for Option 1 was the resulting increase in traffic on Skaha Lake Road and Green Avenue with one participant suggesting that the 12-storey building proposed for the corner should be moved further into the site to improve sightlines. Design aesthetics need to be considered, related to shadowing, loss of view/sunlight and the large mass of building (density) not being visually pleasing.

Additional Considerations

There is a desire from those who live near the site to see a connection made from the site to the broader community. Creating access to the site for a daycare and spaces that encourage social connection and interactions such as a small art gallery, coffee shop, and things that support all members of the community and not just residents of the site, were seen to be a priority. When creating urban landscapes that are pleasing, it was suggested by some to focus not only on the visual but also the physicality and functionality of the space. This includes suggestions of a tiered – lower density site.

Additional feedback included that all suites should have the ability to be adaptable to increase broader use with accessible units available from ground floor access with accessible green space to play, have picnics etc.

“More street level green space.” – Community member

SURVEY RESULTS: OPTION 1

Suggested Improvements for Option 1

When asked if there were anything that could improve Option 1, 51 comments were received from survey respondents. These included comments about the interior and exterior amenities or designs, including adding a barbecue area, balconies, an indoor common room or gathering space for tenants as well as an outdoor green space, recreation area or garden. Others mentioned changes to the building heights, making the development overall smaller or lower density, or adding more parking spaces. Some commented on the number of or type of retail spaces they would like to see. Smaller themes included comments regarding supportive housing and adding housing supports onsite, traffic management, building appearance, and affordability.

“Have a tall building to the corner only; remove the upper storeys on the other tall building and add a 6th building or add storeys to the corner building.”

– Community member

“PARKING!!!!!!!!!! 581 units with 523 stalls does not compute. There will be parking issues forevermore, which will impact visual aesthetic and accessibility.” – Community member

Challenges with Option 1

Survey respondents were asked whether they had any concerns with either option, and what could be done to address these concerns. For Option 1, 167 respondents expressed concerns. The main theme was related to density, with participants either sharing the opinion that the buildings are too high and have too many units, or that there are not enough units.

Other themes were the overall appearance of this option, green space and community safety. The exclusion of townhomes was also mentioned frequently. Other concerns voiced included traffic/infrastructure and parking. A few concerns with the overall project were also voiced, including the fear that it would lead to ghettoization and the opinion that the project should be cancelled or moved to a different location. Some commented on in-unit amenities (in-suite laundry, air conditioning), features or storage, while some others voiced concerns about accessibility and appropriateness for seniors.

“I worry that it will appear as a wall of concrete along Skaha Lake Rd.”

– Community member

“Looks very institutional, warehouse like.” – Community member

Addressing Challenges with Option 1

In terms of addressing these concerns, survey respondents who felt the design was too dense suggested lower density (fewer units, fewer storeys), while those who said it was not dense enough, suggested higher density (more units and higher buildings). This latter group also often mentioned to go with Option 2 instead of Option 1 to address this concern. More green space or greenery was also called for, along with changes to the appearance of the development from the street. Suggestions also included ideas to ensure community and tenant safety, including tenant selection. There were also those who suggested the addition of townhomes to this option, as well as to add more parking. Other comments included to ensure accessibility or assisted living options, as well as suggestions for in-unit amenities or features. A few participants voiced general concerns with the development overall.

“Move the large building on an angle, the frontage is too symmetrical.” – Tenant

“Good mix of individuals (old, young, families, homeless).” – Community member

FEEDBACK FROM COMMUNITY EVENTS, INTERVIEWS AND CORRESPONDENCE: OPTION 2

Positive Feedback

Many participants were supportive of this option as they viewed it as the anchor, or landmark for the south gateway and questioned why it was not on a bigger scale due to the urgent need for housing, the size of the site and the existing zoning.

The townhouses garnered support for their appearance, the ability for tenants to have their “own front door”, backyard space and their likely appeal to families. There was positive feedback regarding the building locations and structure as well as the need for fewer buildings and construction. A key topic of discussion was whether parking could be sacrificed for additional density and/or greenery without sacrificing the buffer to the neighbouring homes. It was suggested that adding density would mean more units but there was less support if that meant a higher impact to those who live adjacent to the site. The mix of 12 storey and six storey buildings creates variety and looks a little less busy and many agreed that it was necessary to get as many units in as possible and provide more parking – and this option had both.

“We just need as many units as possible.” – Community member

Challenges

There were concerns of impacts on neighbours with too much density and confusion as to why the tallest building is in the front as it blocks the view. This option was seen having potentially negative impacts because of wind patterns and that the height of the buildings would make it too windy in its current configuration. For some participants the height of the buildings makes the overall site and entrance less inviting. While some supported the addition of townhouses into the design, others felt that they would not be accessible to all tenants, therefore excluding some members of the public. In addition, the townhouses were seen to take up space that could be used to increase density and are located right on Skaha lake Avenue where it can get very hot.

When discussing the proposed density for Option 2, some participants expressed that there are already two big condo complexes on Green Avenue and a big development has been approved in the area and this redevelopment does not appear to take into account the existing community.

“Too high density and not enough green space.” – Community member

Additional Considerations

One participant acknowledged a need in the community by saying that, “this option for a “multi-type building” is going to house both people who are disabled and those who are not, which will create a space where the community can support each other. Many asserted that Penticton is struggling with housing and that most housing has been very high end, so it’s good to see this accessible option be integrated into the community. Parking was agreed to be a challenge and it was noted that families and couples will require more vehicle space but without losing density. Considerations include car share programs and partnerships, so people don’t have to own a car.

In order to increase vibrancy, it was suggested by a few participants that the site would benefit from a community center for gatherings. This could be a standalone, smaller, and central building for the community to use as a space to build connections and foster positive interactions. On the other hand, one participant advised that, “*This development cannot be all things to all people.*”

“Redesign to include more parking stalls - you need at least a 1:1 ratio.” – Community member

SURVEY RESULTS: OPTION 2

Suggested Improvements for Option 2

Regarding potential improvements to Option 2, 87 comments were received from survey respondents.

The largest theme was (the need for more) outdoor, garden or green space in this design option, as well as the addition of a playground. Other main themes included changing building heights, parking (more or less), and comments about the size and density (larger or smaller) of this option. Several respondents also took the opportunity to voice their overall concerns with the development. Also mentioned by a few respondents was the inclusion of a common room or gathering space, balconies, and the mix of unit sizes and/or townhomes. Some other participants made comments regarding stores or retail space, allowing pets, having a daycare, affordability, and traffic management.

“Green space for each unit and the whole building, such as open balcony for each unit, and at the ground floor.”

– Community member

Challenges with Option 2

For Option 2, 139 survey respondents expressed concerns they had.

The first main theme was density, with respondents expressing that they felt this option was too dense and the buildings too high. The second main theme was that of (lack of) green space and a community hub. Secondary themes were concerns about community safety, traffic and parking. Some mentioned the overall appearance of the plan, that is not dense enough, the need for more larger units, and concerns about equity in deciding who would get a townhome.

“Not enough 3-bedroom units. Need more to accommodate families with children so there are a mix of residents, not just singles and seniors.”

– Community member

Addressing Concerns for Option 2

In terms of addressing concerns with Option 2 (where the main concern was density), the main way to address this was said to have fewer units and lower buildings. Another main theme was the suggestion for more green space. Secondary themes included suggestions to increase safety, suggestions on tenant selection, on accessibility / assisted living options and parking. A few others made suggestions about appearance, the mix of unit sizes and solutions for potential traffic issues.

“Fund community support to ensure BC Housing is a good neighbour. Also add funding for more enforcement, bylaw, rcmp.”

– Community member

RATING LEVELS OF CONCERN

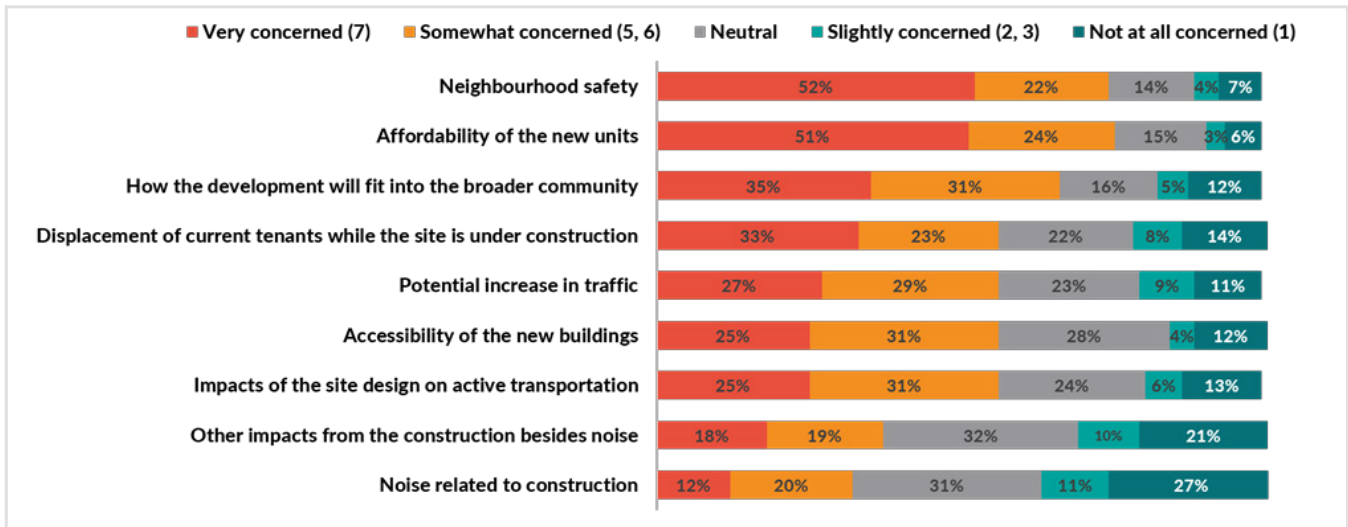
When asked to rate levels of concern on a number of specific issues the community may have related to the project, the highest levels of concern were attributed to neighbourhood safety (with 74% concerned, indicating five, six or seven on the seven-point scale, and among whom 52% rating it a seven or very concerned) and the affordability of the new units (75% concerned, among whom 51% very concerned).

The majority of respondents were also concerned about how the development will fit into the broader community (66% concerned, including 35% very).

Tenants showed higher levels of concerns than non-tenants about affordability, accessibility, tenant displacement and active transportation impacts.

Neighbours who live within 200 meters of the development showed higher levels of concern for neighbourhood safety, the community fit of the development, potential traffic increases and construction impacts, including noise.

CONCERNS



Survey response from Tenants

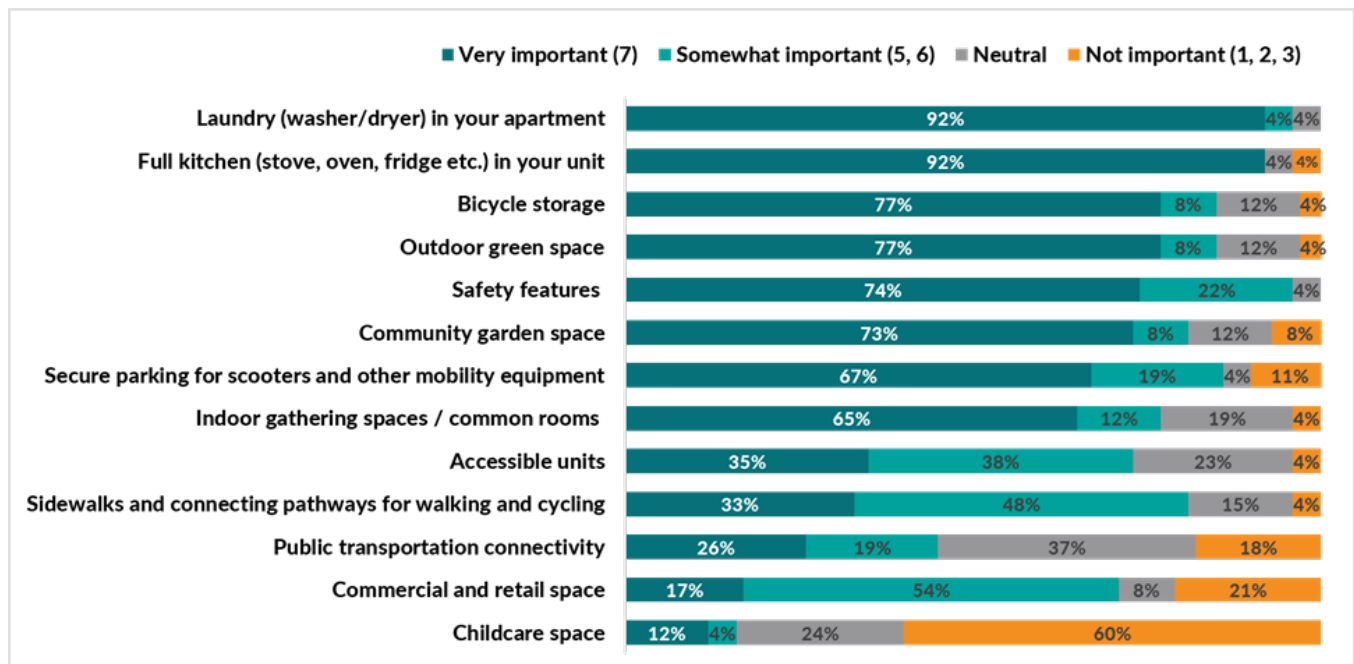
Respondents identifying themselves as current resident of the proposed site (36) were asked about the importance of a number of features of the new development.

Most important were in-suite laundry and a full in-suite kitchen, with 92% of participants rating each of these a seven out of seven on the importance scale.

Storage for bicycles (77%) and secure parking for scooters and other mobility equipment (67%) were also seen as very important to most participants, as were safety features such as smoke alarms, good lighting, cameras, sturdy locks on doors and windows (74%).

Places for tenants to gather were also seen as very important by a majority. Outdoor garden space (77%) and an outdoor community garden (73%) were seen as somewhat more important than an indoor gathering space or common room (6%).

IMPORTANCE OF FEATURES FOR TENANTS



Tenant In-Person engagement

Key feedback heard from tenants related to specific needs within the new development as well as there being an interest in understanding phasing, tenant relocation, and the general timeline for completion. Additional discussion centered around safety for individual tenants in their units such as door and window locks as well as support for security lighting, gates, security patrols and electronic access for tenants only. Community areas to gather, BBQ, and visit were important additions for many participants. Discussion of the interior of the building and individual units resulted in feedback requesting accessible hallways and doorways, stoves, washer and dryer and other appliances for each tenant.

Future Engagement

Online surveys are a popular way to provide additional feedback in the future.

The majority of survey respondents (86%) indicated this is a way in which they would like to engage going forward. One in five said they would like to take part in an in-person open house (22%) or in an online open house (18%), while 9% (also) indicated they would like to provide feedback through a paper/mail-in survey.

Additional Survey Feedback

Final thoughts were shared by 133 survey participants.

While many took this opportunity to reiterate comments previously made on the two designs, for example on density/height, parking, traffic, safety, affordability, etc., others left more general comments.

On the one hand, there were many who spoke out in support of the proposed concept plans in general, saying this development is necessary and can't come soon enough. On the other hand, there were also some who expressed that the development should be scaled back, moved elsewhere or should not move ahead. Some others commented on the engagement itself.

Tenants shared thoughts on the transition, on features and amenities of the building and units, and on general livability.

“Great job! Both are fantastic options to revitalize that area of town. I would be happy with either option being built, so my concerns are with 100% support for either version to move forward.”

– Community member

“Deny this development & relocate to a more remote site where children, seniors, and the general public are at smaller risk.”

– Community member

“Hurry up and get it built, the need is great.” – Community member



Next Steps

The outcomes of Phase 2 Engagement will help BC Housing identify a preferred concept option for development. In late 2023/early 2024, it is anticipated that BC Housing will submit a formal rezoning and OCP amendment application to the City of Penticton and that their submission will incorporate what was learned in this engagement process. Pending Council approval, construction is estimated to start after 2025.

More than 550 affordable units are being proposed in this redevelopment with the plan to have them available to renters by 2028.

Project Timeline

