

Village and Corridor Planning

Early Engagement Summary Report

Quadra | North Park | Fernwood

August 2020



Key Takeaways

North Park Village is valued for its proximity to downtown, as well as its diversity of businesses, art and maker spaces and its “edgy”, bohemian vibe. The neighbourhood is in need of both formal indoor public spaces and flexible outdoor gathering places. The Village and surrounding area lack greenery and street trees. While most people feel comfortable getting to and around the village, pedestrian realm improvements and increased safety and accessibility are desired. Many residents want more housing options near the Village.

Quadra Village is valued for diverse housing, services and amenities, particularly its small, multi-cultural businesses. Residents appreciate the Village’s walkability and access to transit and cycling routes. Large streets, like Hillside, Bay and Quadra, create barriers to accessing the Village, and increased connectivity within the Village is desired. Quadra Village is also in need of flexible outdoor public spaces, and increased capacity for community services and amenities. Residents want more housing options near the Village.

Fernwood Village is valued for its plaza space and the diverse opportunities it provides for community gathering. Local businesses, community, and arts and cultural spaces are beloved and, together with unique architectural features, contribute to the artistic energy of the neighbourhood. Most agree that the plaza could use a “refresh” to increase its vibrancy. Some feel new development is needed to energize the area and bring additional housing and services closer to the Village, others are concerned about associated impacts and the character of the area. Pedestrian and cycling improvements are desired.

Across the board, key themes emerged related to **housing, mobility, and public space**:

- A **greater diversity of housing** is desired, particularly in proximity to the villages, including affordable, market rental, ownership opportunities and more accessible and family friendly homes.
- There is a desire to **retain existing affordable housing** throughout the study area (including purpose built rentals, older condos, older homes, and homes with suites).
- The **desired building form and scale varies**. There is general support for more apartments, particularly rental or mixed use, along frequent transit corridors and in and near villages, and support for diverse ground-oriented forms elsewhere.
- The **local businesses are beloved** throughout the study area and there is a desire to retain them and create additional opportunities for entrepreneurs and makers near the villages.
- **Sustainable transportation options are valued** and there is a general desire to enhance them.
- Improved **safety and accessibility for pedestrians** are high priority issues, while increased service levels to and through Fernwood are top priorities for transit users.
- A common theme was to **increase cycling connectivity**, particularly east-west routes and routes that connect village areas to regional destinations.
- Residents and businesses alike note that **parking management is an ongoing concern**.
- **Flexible outdoor public space** with a focus on cultural diversity, particularly in North Park and Quadra Village, is a priority with new development.
- A common theme was a perceived **lack of equity** in the distribution of public amenities and community facilities. Participants feel that areas of the city that are richer in amenity (including parks, community facilities and access to sustainable transportation and recreation) have failed to accommodate or plan for new transitional, affordable and market-rate housing. At the same time, participants feel that the study area is home to more households with lower incomes, more services for people who are marginalized, and insufficient public amenity and are concerned about supporting growing populations in this context.

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**The City of Victoria is located on the homelands of the
Songhees and Esquimalt People.**

Local Area Planning Engagement

The City of Victoria uses local area planning together with the Official Community Plan to guide long term growth and change at a local scale. In late 2019, the City began a local area planning process for Villages and Corridors. The process is considering housing, mobility, and public space needs for building more sustainable and inclusive communities. The Phase 1 Study Area includes Quadra, North Park, and Fernwood Villages and connecting corridors.

Early Engagement Approach

Early engagement was focused on understanding issues, opportunities and big ideas. Staff made an effort to “go where people are” rather than focusing on events that required people to step away from their daily lives. The approach emphasized quality and diversity of engagement.

- The City’s online [engagement portal](#), which continues to serve as a central place for all project information, including a detailed [Backgrounder](#) for working together.
- An online survey with over 800 responses (the deadline for which was extended in light of COVID).
- Ten Community Discussions (including with community association boards and land use committees, advisory committees and other community organizations).
- Five Pop-up Events.
- 11 Focused Discussions (including diverse discussions hosted by working group members and meetings with business, cultural and service organizations).
- Social media channels, direct e-mail outreach, community newsletters, posters, and fliers, which notified the public of specific events and attracted survey participation.

The Working Group and Community-led Engagement

At the launch of the process a working group for Phase 1 was formed to support diverse engagement. The working group includes members nominated from community associations, advisory committees and other community organizations. The working group supported the design and implementation of early engagement activities. Working group members also led several focused discussions (in-person and online) using a *Meeting in a Box* tool. These efforts helped to reach Parent Advisory Committees, the Youth Council, local businesses, and the Disabilities Resource Centre.

In addition, community association-led engagement included a survey in Fernwood in fall 2019 (mail-in and online, with over 400 responses), and a focused discussion circle on housing and affordability. Other community-led planning work is ongoing.

Impacts of COVID Related Restrictions

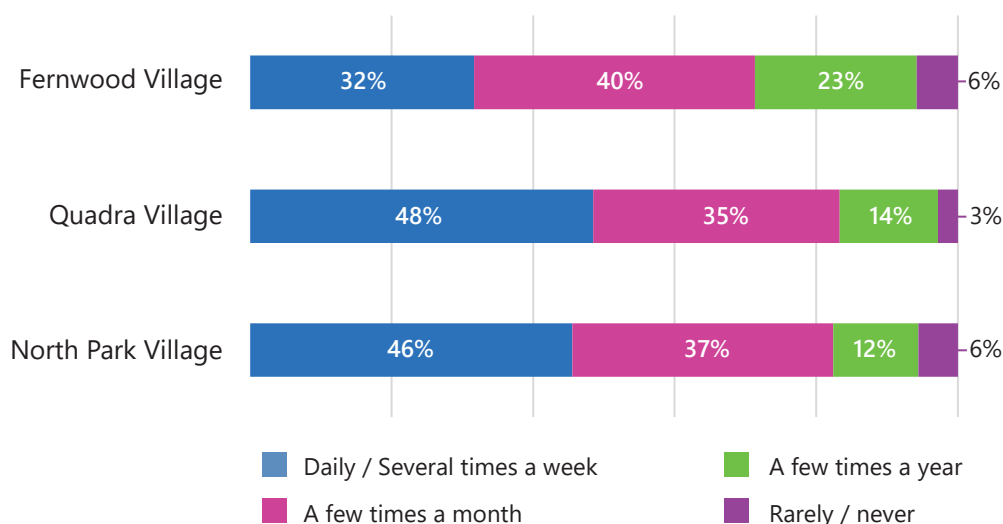
The City was nearing the end of early engagement when public health orders related to COVID-19 were enacted. The online survey deadline was extended to allow for additional feedback. Despite the cancellation of a small number of events and a planned mail-out, a broad and diverse audience was reached. Staff noted some gaps, potentially due to COVID related restrictions.

The survey was extended and had over 800 responses, however, few youth (under age 24) participated and key groups were somewhat under-represented (including renters and single parent families). One important youth event was canceled due to COVID related restrictions, and focused engagement with Indigenous groups did not move forward. However, earlier in-person engagement was focused on quality discussions with diverse groups, and was largely oriented to often underrepresented populations. The next phase of engagement will work to fill gaps.

Urban Villages

How Often Do You Visit?

Victoria's urban villages serve residents across the city so engagement initiatives sought anyone who lives, works, or spends time in the areas. Survey respondents were most likely to visit Quadra Village or North Park Village daily (40%-45%) or a few times a week, while most visitors to Fernwood Village went there several times a month.



Common Themes

Victorians love the city's walkable urban villages and value having opportunities to shop, access services and socialize within walking or wheeling distance from home.

Across all villages in the study area there is interest in:

- enhancing the comfort and safety of walking, wheeling and cycling to and within villages;
- maintaining or adding quality public outdoor gathering spaces in villages (with Fernwood Square held as a positive example);
- adding housing choice and diversity (with strong interest in maintaining and creating affordable options) in and near villages;
- enhancing landscapes and trees in villages and in neighbourhoods;
- expanding the choice of businesses and services in villages, and maintaining opportunities for local and small-scale businesses to succeed;
- supporting and expanding community facilities and offerings for families, seniors and people of diverse incomes and interests; and,
- adding or enhancing green spaces within walking distance.

Detailed feedback for each village is provided in the following sections.

North Park Village

What's Working

North Park Village is valued for small, local-serving businesses as well as offerings like the hardware store and nearby grocery stores. People appreciate the inclusive nature of businesses and offerings ("working class") and the nearby light industrial spaces. The ease of getting around the Village was noted (e.g. easy to cross Cook St).

Venues that provide opportunity for social connection and performance space, like churches and the Intercultural Association, are appreciated. Central Park was often cited as a valuable multi-generational gathering spot.

Beloved characteristics of the Village include unique public art (murals, banners, and street art) and small public gathering spaces like the seating near Cold Comfort Ice Cream or the food trucks near Mason Street.

What's Not Working

The lack of public gathering spaces and community amenities was often noted as was a desire for improved pedestrian realm (including wider sidewalks, more street trees and opportunities for outdoor seating near businesses).

Key concerns include gentrification, which makes it hard for people to find housing, and lack of support for people experiencing homelessness. People expressed concern over the impacts of street activity on businesses, parks and public spaces. There are perceptions that services for marginalized people are concentrated here due to resistance elsewhere.

What Can Work Better in the Future

Beyond the top desired improvements noted to the right, other desired improvements for the village include:

- better accessibility / parking for those with disabilities;
- better bicycle access and parking;
- better public information sharing opportunities;
- more parking (specifically for businesses);
- better branding (some find "North Park Village" is not identifiable);
- revitalization assistance for older buildings; and,
- pedestrian improvements (near George Jay school and in other areas).

Top Desired Improvements*

- 41%** more or better public spaces to gather
- 36%** more businesses / business variety
- 32%** improved trees and landscaping
- 31%** better quality street furnishings
- 30%** more housing options in and near the village
- 25%** make it easier to get around the village
- 25%** more community services and public facilities
- 23%** improved design of buildings

*as identified by the survey; respondents choose top 3 improvements; survey underrepresented those under age 30 and renters

“Some of the buildings [in North Park] are great ... business owners are doing an excellent job with interior and exterior improvements. I also really like the wall murals and neighbourhood signs”

More Gathering Spaces

Car-free gathering spaces are a key desired improvement. Suggestions include parklets to enhance narrow sidewalks in the Village and introducing a car-free or “woonerf” space (which is a street shared between pedestrians and slow auto traffic) at North Park Street east of Cook Street.

Support for Local Businesses

Parking is a key concern for local businesses, particularly those that are regional serving. There is a desire to find a better balance of parking for residents and parking that turns over to support commercial activity. Additional outdoor gathering spaces is also seen as something that would benefit local businesses. Some local businesses seek additional support in managing the impacts of local socio-economic issues (e.g. drug use in public spaces).

Improved Public Facilities and Services

There is a desire for improved public facilities and programming to reflect recent and future housing growth, the higher proportion of lower-income households, and the perceived concentration of services for marginalized people. Desires include spaces for childcare, community meals, classes and programs, and outdoor spaces. There is also a desire to recognize and use the curling club as an amenity.

Enhanced and Accessible Green Spaces

More street trees and greenery is desired in the Village. Quality, accessible green spaces are viewed as a key need, suggestions include:

- opening Royal Athletic Park to be more accessible to local residents;
- enhancing Central Park;
- adding a small outdoor music venue;
- adding spaces to sit and picnic;
- improving sense of safety in existing green spaces; and,
- an urban agriculture space (especially if Mason St. Farm leaves in the future).



At a *Meeting in a Box* event with the Youth Council, working group members organized a phone-based learning game that participants played after discussing the three villages.

Quadra Village

What's Working

Quadra Village is valued for its walkability and the presence of everyday businesses and services like a grocery store, drugstore and walk-in clinic. Indoor gathering places like coffee shops and restaurants as well as the nearby community centre are well used and loved. Cultural diversity and a "growing hipster vibe" were also noted.

Residents also appreciate the Village's diversity in terms of housing (with an availability of older rental buildings and condos) and businesses (with lower rents in older buildings that allow small businesses to thrive).

Arts venues like the Roxy and Vancouver Island School of Art (VISA), as well as community spaces and businesses that provide opportunities to host and showcase local arts are key cultural assets. Community and cultural events like Quadra Village days are highly valued.

Access to frequent transit and parks and formal and informal green spaces - in particular Wark Street Commons (with picnic tables, a community garden and trees) and the space in front of 950 Kings - contribute to livability.

What's Not Working

Many residents feel that both indoor and outdoor public amenities in the area are lacking. Some residents are also concerned that parts of the neighbourhood are not within easy walking distance of the Village and might benefit from added commercial spaces.

Generally, residents are concerned about potential future development. They fear rising housing costs, commercial rents and taxes, or that redevelopment may price out local businesses and moderate income households. Potential loss of publicly-owned green spaces that are not dedicated parkland is a top worry.

What Can Work Better in the Future

A New Public Open Space

The number one desired improvement is public space for gathering, including hardscapes and green spaces for casual gathering and events. Fernwood Square and Cook Street Village provide examples for desired space (as they give "space to breathe"). Programming ideas include a farmers' market and music. Kings Road / the adjacent green space at 950 Kings is a commonly suggested site. The large site that is home to Fairway Market was also seen as an opportunity.

Top Desired Improvements*

- 46%** more or better public spaces to gather
- 36%** improved trees and landscaping
- 32%** improved design of buildings
- 31%** more businesses / business variety
- 31%** more community services and public facilities
- 26%** better quality street furnishings
- 25%** more housing options in and near the village

*as identified by the survey; respondents choose top 3 improvements; survey underrepresented those under age 30 and renters

“I like that [Quadra] has an “urban buzz” with a neighbourhood feel, and diverse options for food, entertainment and socialization.”

Enhanced Green Spaces and Community Facilities

Overall, there is a strong desire to retain and enhance programmed green space. Suggestions include places for picnicking and bar-b-ques, activities for teens and older kids (e.g. skate park planned at Topaz Park; basketball courts), and considering street closures to add smaller green spaces and calm traffic. Enhanced community information boards, perhaps tied to the Kings Street bikeway, are also desired.

There is a strong desire for additional community space that integrates multiple services such as child care, youth and family activities, and cultural and recreational activities. (The current community centre is not seen as having sufficient space and programmed use of the gym at 950 Kings is temporary). Some also noted that community centre programming could appeal to a wider variety of socio-economic demographics.

Support for Business Diversity

Suggestions include programs that can support existing commercial buildings (e.g. tax incentives), avoiding rapid redevelopment of commercial buildings, and supporting micro-spaces. Parking that turns over is desired for businesses and arts and cultural events, especially for patrons coming from far and/or with mobility limitations.

Improved Pedestrian and Cycling Features

Desires include mid-block crossings in Quadra Village; reduction in auto traffic on Kings Road; better cycling connection to Fernwood Village and the Galloping Goose trail; traffic safety, noise reduction, and improved crossings on Quadra Street and Hillside Avenue. Desire for better east-west connections across Blanshard Street, e.g. near Topaz Park, have been noted in the past.

Support for Arts and Culture

Residents noted an emerging “cultural corridor” along Quadra Street. Stretching through Quadra Village, from Dance Victoria to the churches and arts venues in North Park and into the downtown. There is hope to enhance, celebrate and brand this organically evolving corridor. The theatre at the Roxy is interested in opportunities to expand its facilities.



Residents warmed up with local coffee and pastries while talking about the future of Quadra Village at a pop-up event on Kings Road.

Fernwood Village

What's Working

Fernwood square is well-loved by respondents. While improvements are suggested, caution was urged in not losing the key qualities that work today.

People appreciate the car-free gathering space for casual, everyday use and special events; places to sit; attractive character buildings; local businesses, including food service and coffee; a mix of housing; the human scale; trees; colour (in buildings and placemaking); and string lighting. The view to the Olympics from Chambers Street was also highlighted.

Programs at the community centre, events at the Belfry theatre, the plaza and in nearby community and cultural spaces are valued.

Nearby green spaces, urban food spaces, and recreation spaces are well loved and well used (specifically, Stevenson Park, Vic High grounds, Spring Ridge Common, Compost Education Centre, and the skate park).

What's Not Working

Key concerns include gentrification and the loss of diverse people with different incomes due to lack of affordability. Newly forming families have moved away to find suitable housing. Some residents feel the area is "growing tired" and that new development could bring new life to the square.

Other concerns include the potential that "improvements" to the square could detract from the positive ambiance and qualities valued today; potential loss of greenery and trees in surrounding area; and increasing automobile impacts (while others saw lack of parking as a concern).

What Can Work Better in the Future

Beyond the top desired improvements noted to the right, other desired improvements for the village and plaza include:

- more bicycle parking;
- enhanced arts and cultural spaces;
- better management of disruptive activities (e.g. smoking);
- maintaining locally-owned businesses; and,
- making it easier to get to the Village by transit.

Top Desired Improvements*

- 42%** more businesses / business variety
- 37%** more housing options in and near the village
- 32%** more personal and professional services
- 21%** better quality street furnishings
- 19%** more community services and public facilities

*as identified by the survey; respondents choose top 3 improvements; survey underrepresented those under age 30 and renters

“Fernwood is special because there is actually a gathering place for people where you don’t necessarily need to spend money... a basic human need for connection [is] met”

Expanded Village and Plaza

Some suggested modest expansion of the Village area, including south of the Village along Fernwood Road (across from Vic High open space), and/or east along Gladstone.

Expansion and improvements to the plaza are desired, either to the west or east along Gladstone. Desired improvements include: more inviting furnishings (e.g. movable furniture, tables, more seating in the square, more patio cafes) and multi-generational programming (e.g. chalk and toy boxes for kids, small events, music, markets).

Improved Pedestrian and Cycling Features

People would like to see improved pedestrian conditions (e.g. greater sidewalk widths, removing barriers such as poles, traffic calming and easier crossing of Fernwood Road) and better accessibility for those with mobility concerns (parking and walking/wheeling improvements).

Easier cycling on Fernwood Road and better connections to and from the north and other villages are desired. Signage is suggested to improve navigation of the complicated street network.

Increased Housing Diversity

Added housing diversity in and around the village is a key desire. When scale is mentioned, generally 3-4 storeys is preferred. Family-friendly housing, including modest-size 3-bedroom multi-family units was noted as a need.

Enhanced Green Spaces and Community Facilities

People would like to see an enhanced community centre space, modernized, with more offerings (recreation, meals and teas, and childcare). Additional space for arts incubation, including affordable maker spaces is recommended.

Desired enhancements to specific green spaces (e.g. Stevenson Park, Spring Ridge Common, Alexander Park, Kings Park, Grant Park) include: new or enhanced playgrounds; benches, seating, and picnicking areas; a splash park; restrooms and water fountains; and more age-diverse recreational opportunities.



The Fernwood Square pop-up event hosted a busker and activities for children, including chalk, bubbles, colouring sheets, and a trivia wheel game.

Housing

More housing is desired across the study area, both in terms of choice/diversity, and affordability. Overall, there is recognition that a mix – including affordable housing, rental and ownership housing, and family housing – contributes to the diversity of the area and there is a desire for that diversity to continue. Feedback was generally aligned with the objectives in the [Victoria Housing Strategy](#).

Choice and Affordability

Differing Opinions on Priority Needs

Some participants advocated to focus mainly or exclusively on non-market housing for people of low income while others were concerned about those who earned too much to qualify for non-market housing, but struggled to find suitable market options. Others were concerned about a lack of opportunities to get into the market as owners. Accessible/adaptable housing and housing for seniors was also identified as a need. Co-op housing and housing land trusts were also desired.

Adding Diverse Family Housing

Family housing was a common concern. Some families had left the area to find suitable housing but wanted to move back. The lack of diverse family housing (rental or ownership, multi-family, modest-size and affordable types) was noted. A few commenters felt only single-detached houses were appropriate for families with children.

Preserving and Enhancing What's Working

Participants advocated to retain existing, affordable market rentals and prevent renovations. Some expressed interest in better maintenance of rentals / ability for tenants to improve suites or grow food. Others pointed out that many suites do not serve all needs (not accessible / incomplete kitchen facilities).

Form

Differing Opinions on Form and Scale

There are varying preferences for form and scale. Generally, there is support for multi-family housing along main corridors and in specific areas; participants variously identified 6 storeys, 4-6 storeys, no more than 4 storeys, and 5-8 storeys as compatible in scale. Off of main corridors there is general support for “missing middle” housing in various forms; plexes or small apartments, suites, conversion of existing houses, other “gentle density” and tiny homes were all mentioned.

Design and Compatibility Desires

Desirable qualities included: human-scale architecture; doors facing the street; yards, greenery and trees on-site and along the street; retention of existing character buildings; access to open space (on-site or in nearby parks); food production opportunities; and green roofs/rooftop gardens. There is a desire for programs to enhance energy efficiency/sustainability of existing housing and for green building approaches to be incorporated into new housing (energy, stormwater, etc.).

Equity in Growth

There is a strong sentiment that all parts of the city do their “fair share” to accommodate both market and non-market (affordable) housing, supportive housing and social services. There is a perception that recent planning allowed more affluent neighbourhoods to avoid accommodating growth.

There is notable demand for new housing development to align with provision of amenities and green spaces (new or enhanced).

Business, Arts and Culture

Arts and Culture

More Spaces for Makers

The arts and maker spaces that exist are often not affordable. While many artists are currently working out of their homes, [Create Victoria](#), the City's Arts and Culture Master Plan identified a need for formal working spaces and this need was again reflected through early engagement feedback. Better options for affordable live-work spaces are also desired.

There is a strong desire for affordable housing to keep artists in the city, as well as more employment opportunities for those working in the arts. Many artists, even successful ones, need a side gig to make ends meet.

New and Expanded Venues

Places for music, events and festivals are desired, ranging from spaces for single buskers to smaller outdoor venues (both Wark Street and Central Park have been suggested). Enhanced spaces for markets, the book fair, and food events are also desired.

Theatres in the area, including the Belfry and Roxy, indicate a desire to expand to provide proper rehearsal spaces.

Branding and Planning

Quadra Street has been identified as a cultural corridor, stretching from venues in downtown and North Park (including theatres and places of worship) to the Roxy Theater and Dance Victoria Studios near the Quadra Village Centre. There is a desire to explore opportunities to enhance, brand and celebrate this corridor.

Residents of Fernwood would also like to create a plan to support the arts and culture.

Business Vitality

Overall, there is a strong interest in having diverse, walkable businesses in and near villages, and that the business environment support smaller, locally-owned businesses.

There is a concern that rising rents, taxes, or redevelopment may push local businesses out. There is also concern that new developments may not be affordable or may reduce the diversity of business (by attracting chains). The potential pace of new development in villages is also viewed as a risk to the areas' vitality and diversity.

Supporting Local Business Growth

There is interest in flexible opportunities to support new businesses. Specific suggestions included micro-business spaces, as small as 150-300 sq. ft., to incubate businesses or provide spaces for single operators. Another suggestion is a common outdoor dining space (like the Food Eco District) allowing diverse small businesses to offer take-out food and incubate new, multi-ethnic food businesses.

Some local business owners expressed a desire to explore a business revitalization program, such as considering incentives or tax structures that help smaller businesses or business spaces. (Staff note that there are legal restrictions on government help directly to businesses, but programs may exist to support business spaces.)

Mobility

Residents generally appreciate the walkability of the villages and the study area at large. Top concerns are aligned with what was recorded through the development of the City's Sustainable Mobility Strategy, [Go Victoria](#), and include enhancing sustainable options, and increasing safety and accessibility. There are varying opinions around auto parking.

Sustainable Options

Walkability

People expressed an overall desire for more walkability, with concerns focused on sidewalk widths and presence of poles, comfort and safety of crossings, visibility, and impacts of auto traffic (including noise) on villages. Traffic speed and safety near schools, parks and playgrounds is a concern. Benches are desired in more places for resting during walks or socializing.

Bay Street and Hillside Avenue are noted as key hot spots and barriers to walking and cycling.

Transit

People love the frequent transit related to Quadra Village. There is a desire for better bus stops, and for better bus service in the Fernwood Village area.

Cycling and Mobility Devices

There is a desire for better, safer cycling connections to and between villages and other destinations, including the Galloping Goose regional trail. More bicycle parking is desired in all villages and other destinations (e.g. parks and venues). There is a desire for better legibility (e.g. signage) of routes through Fernwood, and the overall completeness of the system.

Parking

There are diverse views on parking in all village and neighbourhood areas, but a general desire to improve parking management.

Residential Parking

While some want more car-light housing, others are concerned that added housing may bring parking impacts to local streets. Yet others want to reclaim on-street parking space for active transportation or public space (e.g. parklets). Some suggested a parking pass system for residents, possibly combined with short-term visitor parking.

Commercial Parking

Businesses and cultural facilities express a need for parking which is convenient and accessible, especially for those customers who come from outside the immediate area or who may have mobility limitations. Turnover of existing on-street parking, better walking conditions to get between parking and local destinations, and signage directing people to available parking were all suggestions.

Some suggested a "central" parking area for villages. Others suggested streets near villages accommodate short-term parking at certain times of day to better share the publicly-owned parking spaces between residents and visitors.

Open Spaces, Parks and Ecology

Residents value the mix of outdoor spaces found in the area and nearby. Central Park is valued as a multi-generational gathering space. Spaces like Wark Street Commons and Franklin Green (with a mix of playground, landscape, seating and picnic tables, urban agriculture); natural areas like Summit Park; and various urban food spaces are beloved.

Participants noted that the study area has higher population densities and higher proportions of low income households than other parts of the city. North Park was cited, in particular, as having a lack of access to open/public space.

Building on a Strong Network

Use of Informal Green Spaces

Residents value public green spaces that are not formal parks. In Hillside-Quadra, these include 950 Kings, SJ Willis, and the former Quadra Primary school at 2549 Quadra Street). In the Fernwood area, the Vic High grounds, track, and bleachers serve as places to recreate, see open views and watch fireworks.

More places for casual gathering are desired, including a mix of large parks and pocket parks (with suggestions to consider street closures, use of surplus space, “two-lot” parks, and small spots of greenery).

Improved Programming and Design

Residents desire more spaces that can be programmed, for instance with a farmers’ market or small music performances (Wark Street and Central Park were suggested). Formalized spaces for food trucks and small vendors in parks are desired as well (the Mason Street food trucks are beloved).

There is a desire for spaces, features and improvements for different ages, interests, and ethnic backgrounds:

- playgrounds for different ages, a splash park, exercise equipment, seniors activities, youth, skating, bocce, hard spaces for basketball and roller hockey, reservable tennis courts, etc.;
- more seating, spaces for picnicking, bar-b-ques, and gathering;
- more washrooms & water fountains for pedestrians and visitors to parks and urban villages;
- both dog-friendly and dog-free spaces; and,
- concerns about management and sense of safety (cleanliness, needles in parks, night lighting).

More Urban Food Spaces

There is a desire for community gardening opportunities including allotments, commons, food forests, and boulevard gardening, as well as education and programming. Increased access and ability to use existing food spaces (e.g. public seating in Spring Ridge Common) is desired. There is concern for the potential loss of the urban farm (Mason Street).

Ecology and Viewsheds

Residents value natural features like habitat, pollinators, and native plants. There is a desire to celebrate water features like the spring in Stevenson Park and daylighting of Rock Creek (the triangle south of Blackwood Park may be opportunity). Better drainage is desired for Central Park. There is a desire to integrate ecology into new developments, including retaining and adding trees, supporting ecological diversity and stormwater management, and considering habitat linkages.

Views of the mountains are valued. Residents hope to maintain the view corridor of the Olympic Mountains from Chambers Street north of Pandora, and to have more rooftop or other public amenities that include views.

Community Facilities

Enhancing Existing Spaces

Residents value the programming provided by community centres, and would like to see these services and spaces expanded. Specifically, people love and want to see more:

- child care programs;
- community food programs (family and seniors meals and teas, food security and food sharing programs);
- recreation classes and gym space;
- family and youth programs;
- supports for people with low incomes and accessible, affordable programming; and,
- arts and culture programming including multicultural opportunities.

Support for Planned Improvements

There is support for a number of the community facilities that have been identified in the [City's Strategic Plan](#), including:

- establishment of a library branch / services in the north half of the city;
- establishment of a community centre for North Park; and,
- expansion of the Quadra Village Community Centre (QVCC).

There is interest in creating a "Community Hub" as part of the QVCC expansion by combining the community centre, gym space, outdoor space for programming, and possibly the library branch.

Residents noted the North Park community centre should incorporate programming such as childcare, community meals, support for persons of low income, and community-building. Right now, occasional community meals are offered at churches.

Other Desired Amenities

Increased diversity of amenities and programming is desired. The need for free or low-cost recreation amenities, including parks, libraries, community centres, and green spaces for people with modest incomes was often noted. Some respondents, however, would like to see broader programming that brings people of different socio-economic backgrounds together. Free wi-fi in public spaces was also suggested.

There was a noted need for youth-friendly spaces/businesses, especially after 6pm. Youth looking for a place to go may choose downtown (because things are open) or the nearby McDonald's. Youth may not see a "community centre" as a place for them.

Formalizing or Increasing Access to Existing Amenities

There is a desire for more public access to and use of the Royal Athletic Park, which is seen now as a regional amenity that serves primarily paying patrons. There is a similar desire to see the curling club publicly accessible as a local serving amenity.

People value access to a range of services in urban villages, such as medical services, drugstores, and counseling, that may be provided by non-profits or businesses.

Appendix: Engagement Statistics

Reaching a Diverse Community

Early engagement was focused on quality and diversity. Staff made an effort to “go where people are” rather than focusing on events that required people to step away from their daily lives.

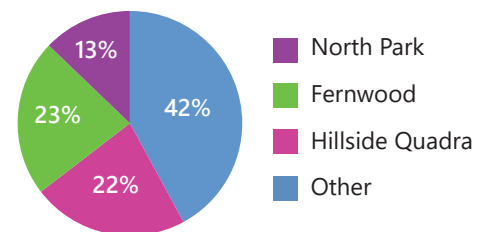
In an effort to reach a greater diversity of voices, particularly those that the City doesn’t typically hear from, staff attended family dinners, kindergyms, and community and recreation centres during family and youth events. Working group members also reached a broad diversity of voices through their individual networks (e.g. school Parent Advisory Committees, the Youth Council, local businesses, and the Disabilities Resource Centre). An estimated **140 residents were engaged in one-on-one and group discussions** through this outreach.

Demographic information was not collected at in-person events, so the demographics of over **800 survey respondents** paint only a partial picture of the diversity of participation.

Demographics of Survey Respondents

Where do respondents live?

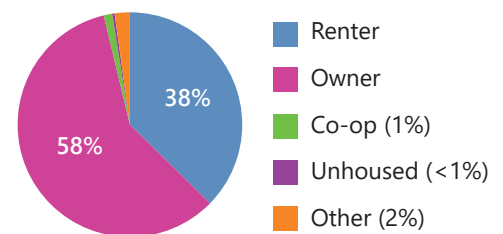
Most survey respondents (58%) live in the 3-neighbourhood study area, with the balance of responses generally proportionate to the total neighbourhood population. Other responses came mainly from Victoria residents, including Oaklands (7.5%), Downtown/Harris Green (6%), Fairfield (6%), and James Bay (3%). 6% live in Saanich and 3% elsewhere.



(of 827 respondents who answered)

Housing Tenure

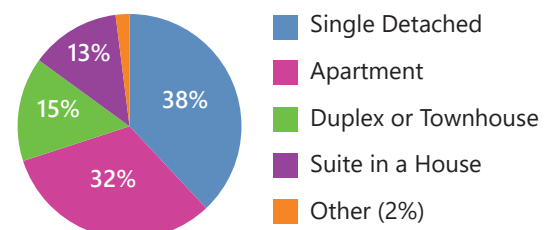
Just 38% of survey respondents were renters, this compares to 61% of Victorians (and 59%, 66% and 79% respectively in Hillside-Quadra, Fernwood and North Park) as of 2016. Of those who were not renters, 58% were owners, 2% indicated “other”, 1% lived in a co-op, and less than 1% were unhoused (including those “staying with friends.”) Additional efforts were made to understand the needs of renters through working group members on the City’s Renters Advisory Committee and through pop-up events.



(of 827 respondents who answered)

Housing Type

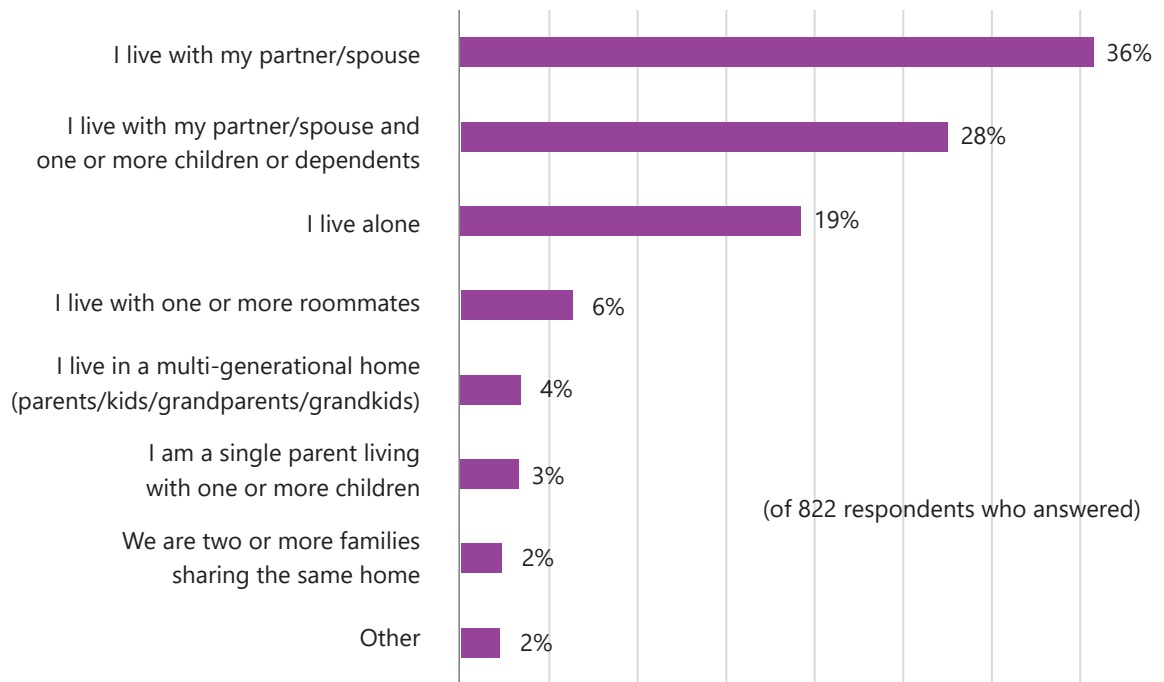
A disproportionate number of survey respondents resided in a single-detached house: 38% of respondents (compared to 19% of Victoria dwellings as of 2016). While just 32% of respondents lived in apartments (compared to 68% of Victoria’s dwellings being in a rental or strata apartment as of 2016). In total, 13% identified as living in suites; 15% in a duplex or townhouse, and 2% as “other” or “unhoused”.



(of 826 respondents who answered)

Household Composition

Survey respondents included a diversity of household types, although families (specifically those with a spouse / partner and those with a spouse / partner and children) were generally over-represented. Those living alone and single-parent families were under-represented relative to the city as a whole. Note that single-parent families are also more common within the study area than the city as a whole. For example, Hillside-Quadra has the highest rate of single parent households in the city at 12% and half of North Park households with children are single parent families. However, notable efforts were made to reach these groups in person through targeted pop-up events and discussions.



Age

Survey respondents represented a full range of age groups over age 30. However, the number of respondents in the 20-29 age range were not representative of the share of that age cohort in the city (9% of respondents compared to 18% of the city as of the 2016 census) and included almost no respondents under age 20. This could illustrate a gap in engagement, particularly since some events targeted at youth (e.g. workshop with Vic High classes; meetings with Quadra Village Community Centre Youth groups) were canceled due to COVID related restrictions, although one youth event (meeting with the Youth Council) did occur.

