

# Engagement Summary

Semiahmoo Town Centre Plan  
February 10, 2020

# | Building the Plan



## ENGAGING IN SEMIAHMOO

We meaningfully engage to help shape and define our City.

The Semiahmoo Town Centre is the commercial and cultural heart for South Surrey. We are developing a land use plan to help shape the future of the town centre. When finished, the plan will designate what can be built and where. It guides the height, use and look of new buildings and outlines the location and funding for new streets, parks, and other public services.

Over the past 18 months, there have been many opportunities for residents and stakeholders to provide input and feedback on the Plan. We've held 5 events, 5 surveys, and had approximately 3,500 touch-points (interactions) with participants, residents, and stakeholders.

This document summarizes the engagement process and staff take-aways throughout Stage 1 of the planning process. It also highlights some of the outstanding concerns that will be considered through the next stage of the planning process.

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

2	How We Engage
4	Engagement Snapshot
6	Phase 1: Getting Started
9	Phase 2: Exploring Options
12	Phase 3: Developing the Plan
18	Outstanding Concerns

## HOW WE ENGAGE

### Striking the right balance.

Every land use plan is the summation of three groups' opinions and sometimes competing objectives. Each group provides a valuable lens that cannot be ignored. The resultant plan is better than if it was completed by any one group alone.

**Everyone has a unique role in creating the Plan**

	<p><b>Staff &amp; Council</b></p> <p>Staff and Council ensure the Plan aligns with established City and inter-municipal policies (e.g. Official Community Plan, Sustainability Charter, and Regional Growth Strategy). These policies we have committed to keep us moving towards the same goal.</p>
	<p><b>Technical Resources &amp; Experts</b></p> <p>Experts provide detailed background studies and professional opinions on everything from traffic, the housing market, public health, biodiversity and more. They provide a quantitative and scientific lens to decision making.</p>
	<p><b>The Community</b></p> <p>Residents are the local expert. Where technical experts provide objective accounts, residents provide the qualitative, personal, subjective account of the community. They are our best resource for firsthand knowledge.</p>

## INVOLVEMENT IN THE PROCESS

The level of public engagement ranges from "Consult" to "Collaborate" depending where we are in the planning process.



INFORM	CONSULT	INVOLVE	COLLABORATE	EMPOWER
<p>To provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problem, alternatives and/or solutions.</p> <p><i>We will keep you informed.</i></p>	<p>To obtain public feedback on analysis, alternatives and/or decision.</p> <p><i>We will keep you informed, listen to and acknowledge concerns and aspirations, and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.</i></p>	<p>To work directly with the public to ensure that concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered.</p> <p><i>We will work with you to ensure that your concerns and aspirations are directly reflected in the alternatives developed and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.</i></p>	<p>To partner with the public in decision making, including the development of alternatives and identification of the preferred solution.</p> <p><i>We will look to you for advice and innovation in formulating solutions and incorporate your advice and recommendations into the decisions to the maximum extent possible.</i></p>	<p>To place final decision-making in the hands of the public.</p> <p><i>We will implement what you decide.</i></p>

## STAKEHOLDER INFLUENCE

The range of interests and influence.

A stakeholder is a person who has something to gain or lose through the outcomes of planning. 'Interest' indicates to what degree they are likely to be affected by the plan. Generally, this is proportional to the amount of time or investment they are willing to make to engagement. The 'influence' each group has on the plan varies through out the process.

Stakeholders with high influence and high interest are the people or organizations most integral to the planning process. Stakeholders with high interest but low influence need to be consulted with and kept informed. Those with high influence but low interest should be involved in the decision making. All stakeholders play an important role in the process. We offer all stakeholders the opportunity to get involved and provide input.

## STAKEHOLDER MAP

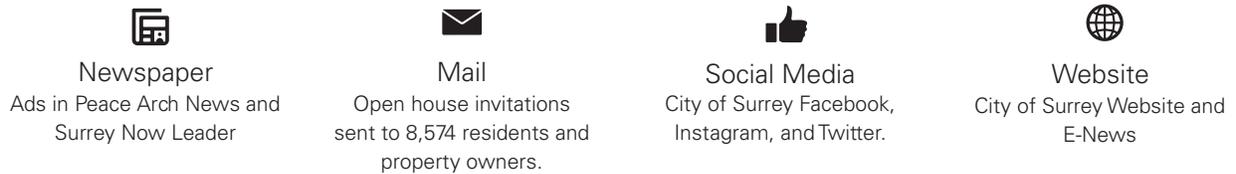


# Engagement Snapshot

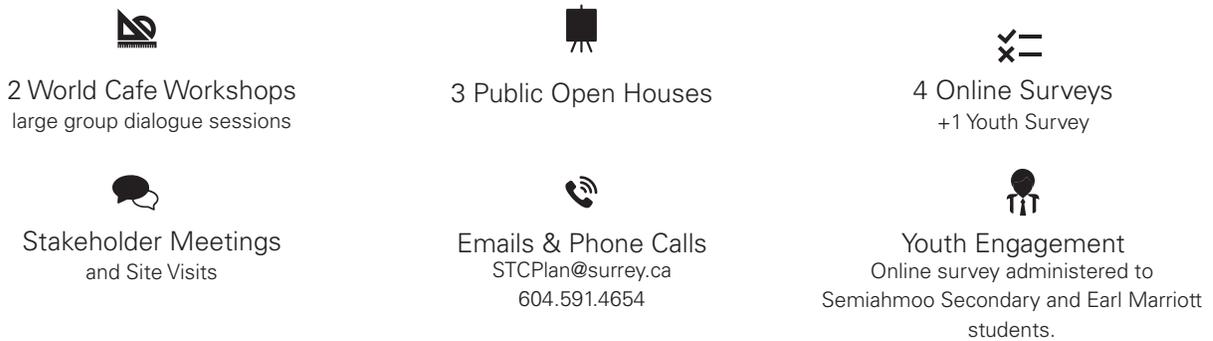
## A QUICK LOOK

Over the past 18 months, the plan has been refined through a comprehensive community engagement process. In total, over 2,300 residents and stakeholders have participated by attending workshops, open houses, stakeholder meetings or by completing an online survey. The result is an updated plan that reflects direct resident involvement.

## 4 WAYS RESIDENTS WERE NOTIFIED



## 6 WAYS STAKEHOLDERS PARTICIPATED



## BY THE NUMBERS

# 3498

Touchpoints with participants, residents, and stakeholders. A touchpoint is an interaction not a person. Very involved residents could be the source of multiple touchpoints.

Completed Surveys

**2398**

Open House Attendees

**1040**

Workshop Attendees

**200+**

Emails & Phone Calls

**100+**

Youth Survey Participants

**40**

Stakeholder Meetings

**20**

## ENGAGEMENT AT A GLANCE

### Summary of Community Engagement throughout Stage 1

	1: GETTING STARTED	2: EXPLORING OPTIONS	3: DEVELOPING THE PLAN
OBJECTIVES	<p>Approach process and residents with an open mind.</p> <p>Discuss concerns and desires.</p> <p>Explore how the community can evolve over time.</p>	<p>Educate on the planning process.</p> <p>Build understanding on the foundation for planning: <u>The Interim Plan</u> and <u>Extension Areas Workshop</u>.</p> <p>Explore <u>The Big Challenges</u> facing Semiahmoo Town Centre.</p>	<p>Present the first draft of the Land Use Plan and <u>7 Community Values</u>.</p> <p>Demonstrate how community values are represented in the <u>Draft Plan</u>.</p> <p>Explain what will be presented to Council for Stage 1 approval.</p> <p>Educate on the next steps and opportunities for further input/changes.</p> <p>Build an understanding of the outstanding concerns and issues to be resolved in the Stage 2 planning process.</p>
METHODS	<p> 2 World Cafe Workshops</p> <p> Online Survey</p> <p> Emails &amp; Phone Calls</p> <p> Stakeholder Meetings</p>	<p> Public Open House</p> <p> Online Survey</p> <p> Emails &amp; Phone Calls</p> <p> Stakeholder Meetings</p>	<p> 2 Public Open Houses</p> <p> 2 Online Surveys</p> <p> Emails &amp; Phone Calls</p> <p> Stakeholder Meetings</p> <p> Youth Engagement</p>
OUTCOMES	<p>Participants developed five early land use options for each of the extension area neighbourhoods.</p> <p>Staff reconciled the concepts into one preliminary concept plan for each extension area.</p>	<p>Participants provided their solutions to tackle the <u>Big Challenges</u>.</p> <p>Participants' ideas were summarized into seven <u>Community Values</u> reflected in the Draft Plan.</p>	<p>Participants prioritized the <u>Community Values</u> and evaluated how they were reflected in the <u>Draft Plan</u>.</p> <p>Staff re-evaluated the <u>Draft Plan</u> based on feedback.</p> <p>Staff compiled a list of outstanding issues to address in Stage 2 of the planning process.</p>

Community engagement does not conclude after Stage 1. There will be further opportunities for stakeholder participation throughout the Stage 2 planning process. Direct resident involvement will continue to shape the plan.

# 1 Engagement Phase One

1: GETTING STARTED

2: EXPLORING OPTIONS

3: DEVELOPING THE PLAN

## SUMMER 2018

On July 12th, 2018, the City of Surrey hosted neighbourhood workshops for the two plan extension areas - North and South. Approximately 200 people attended both workshops. Property owners and residents participated in exercises to develop a shared vision for their future neighbourhoods. Common land use themes were created from the discussion and verified in an online survey.

## PHASE ONE AT A GLANCE

Objectives	Methods	Outcomes
Approach process and residents with an open mind.	 2 World Cafe Workshops	Participants developed five early land use options for each of the extension area neighbourhoods.
Discuss concerns and desires.	 Online Survey	Staff reconciled the concepts into one preliminary concept plan for each extension area.
Explore how the community can evolve over time.	 Emails & Phone Calls	
	 Stakeholder Meetings	

## LIVE GRAPHIC RECORDING

During the workshops participants were asked to share their concerns and desires for the future of their neighbourhoods. Results were captured in this live graphic recording.





## ENGAGEMENT OUTCOMES

In the weeks following the event participants were asked to complete an online survey. The survey was used to determine residents' priorities and concerns. Participants were asked to prioritize the values, desires and concerns previously generated from the workshops.

### Residents most wanted to preserve:



### Residents most wanted to enhance:



### Residents top concerns were:



## ENGAGEMENT OUTCOMES

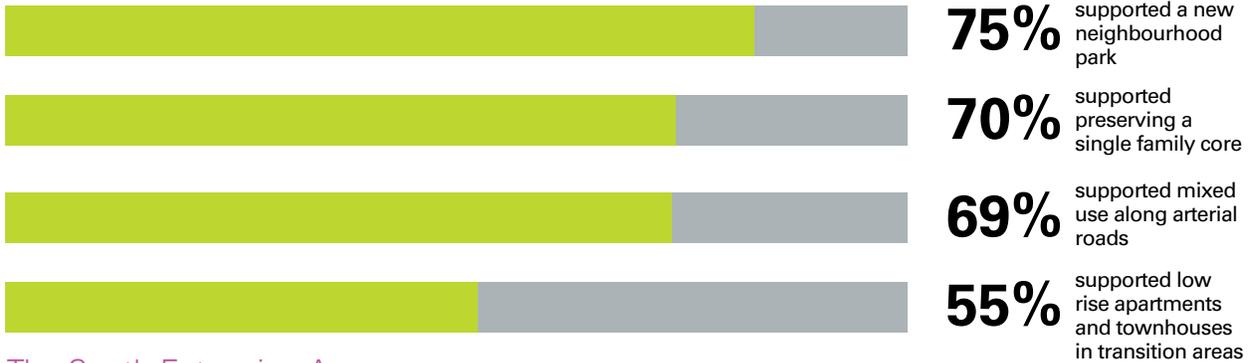
In the workshops, residents were grouped and tasked with exploring potential future land uses through mapping exercises. After the workshop, staff created a preliminary land use concept draft for the North and South Extension Areas. These concepts were based on the commonalities found among the various resident groups.

In the survey, participants were asked to evaluate what they felt about the resultant land use concept.

### The North Extension Area:



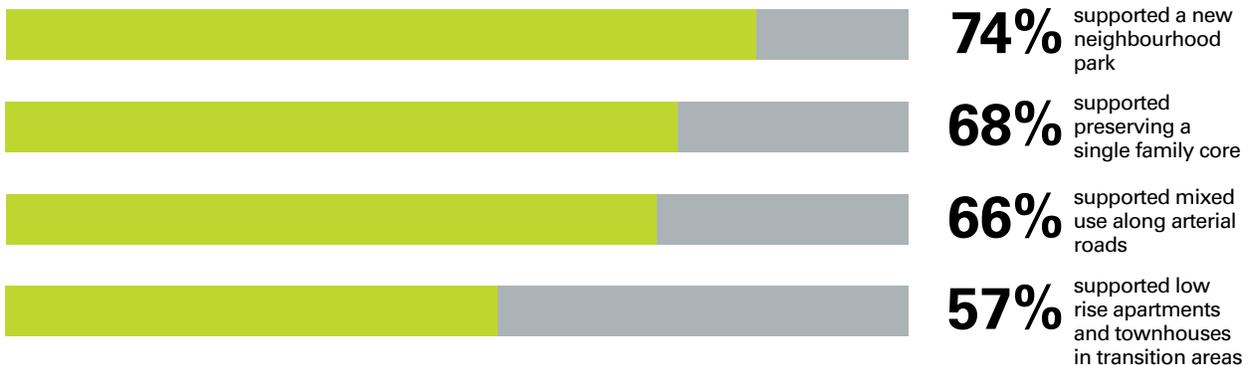
*"Not all families have to live in single-family dwellings."*



### The South Extension Area:



*"Why not have medical services in the same building as shopping centre so seniors can go have a look around after appointments"*



# 2 Engagement Phase Two

1: GETTING STARTED

2: EXPLORING OPTIONS

3: DEVELOPING THE PLAN

## WINTER 2019

On February 28, 2019, an open house and online survey were used to introduce participants to the planning process and gather feedback on the big challenges facing Semiahmoo over the next 30 years. Additional stakeholder meetings with community groups and landowners explored land use and development options on a few major sites within the Town Centre.

## PHASE TWO AT A GLANCE

Objectives	Methods	Outcomes
Educate on the planning process.	 Public Open House	Participants provided their solutions to tackle the <b>Big Challenges</b> .
Build understanding on the foundation for planning: <b>The Interim Plan</b> and <b>Extension Areas Workshop</b> .	 Online Survey	Participants' ideas were summarized into seven <b>Community Values</b> reflected in the Draft Plan.
Explore <b>The Big Challenges</b> facing Semiahmoo Town Centre.	 Emails & Phone Calls	
	 Stakeholder Meetings	



## ENGAGEMENT OUTCOMES

### Participants offered solutions to the Big Challenges:

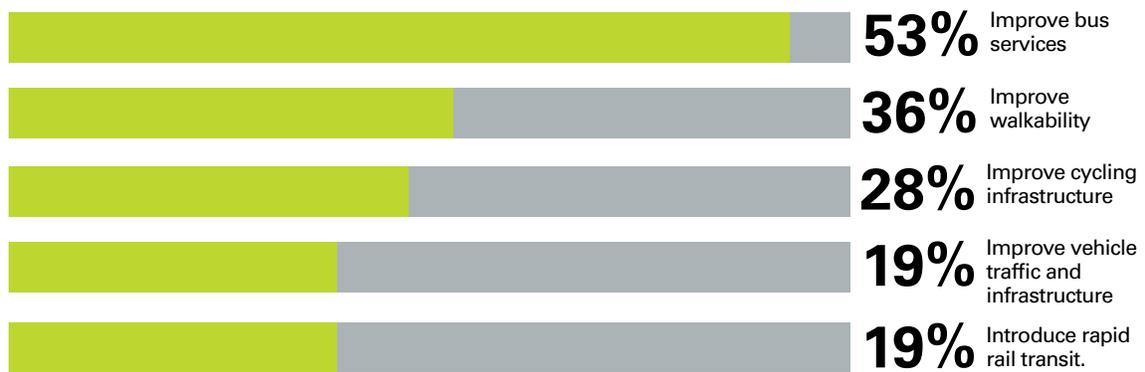
**1** Semiahmoo is growing, and everybody needs a place to call home. Our population is also getting older while household sizes are shrinking.

*How would you accommodate a growing population of aging seniors while also making room for young families? Consider the wide range of economic means and housing needs of different people.*



**2** We all have places we need to be. Transit ridership is up, a new B-Line is being planned. Traffic is also increasing.

*How would you improve Semiahmoo's transportation network to make sure everyone can get where they want to go, whether they're walking, taking transit or driving?*



**3** As a town centre, Semiahmoo should provide the opportunity for residents to live, work and play together.

*What would you like to do in Semiahmoo, but can't? What's missing?*



## EXAMPLE VERBATIM COMMENTS

"Decreasing the distance between homes, shops and services would be great!"

"Why not have medical services in the same building as shopping centre so seniors can go have a look around after appointments"

"Mixed use buildings with retail, medical, community centre amenities at ground level & housing above would be a good use of space."

"Mixed use addresses the need for less driving if services and green space are close by"

"Public gathering spots in the downtown core so people can be drawn to that area to meet and mingle"

"Go taller. But slim buildings with narrow shadows and large gaps between buildings"

"Communities that can house a diversity of ages and incomes are stronger because they provide opportunities for different generations to assist each other"

"Not everyone can afford a house."

"Single family housing is not the future."

"Families need yards, not boxes in the sky."

# 3 Engagement Phase Three

1: GETTING STARTED

2: EXPLORING OPTIONS

3: DEVELOPING THE PLAN

## PHASE THREE AT A GLANCE

Objectives	Methods	Outcomes
<p>Present the first draft of the Land Use Plan and <b>7 Community Values</b>.</p> <p>Demonstrate how community values are represented in the <b>Draft Plan</b>.</p> <p>Explain what will be presented to Council for Stage 1 approval.</p> <p>Educate on the next steps and opportunities for further input/changes.</p> <p>Build an understanding of the outstanding concerns and issues to be resolved in the Stage 2 planning process.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li> 2 Public Open Houses</li> <li> 2 Online Surveys</li> <li> Emails &amp; Phone Calls</li> <li> Stakeholder Meetings</li> <li> Youth Engagement</li> </ul>	<p>Participants prioritized the <b>Community Values</b> and evaluated how they were reflected in the <b>Draft Plan</b>.</p> <p>Staff re-evaluated the <b>Draft Plan</b> based on feedback.</p> <p>Staff compiled a list of outstanding issues to address in Stage 2 of the planning process.</p>



## SUMMER 2019

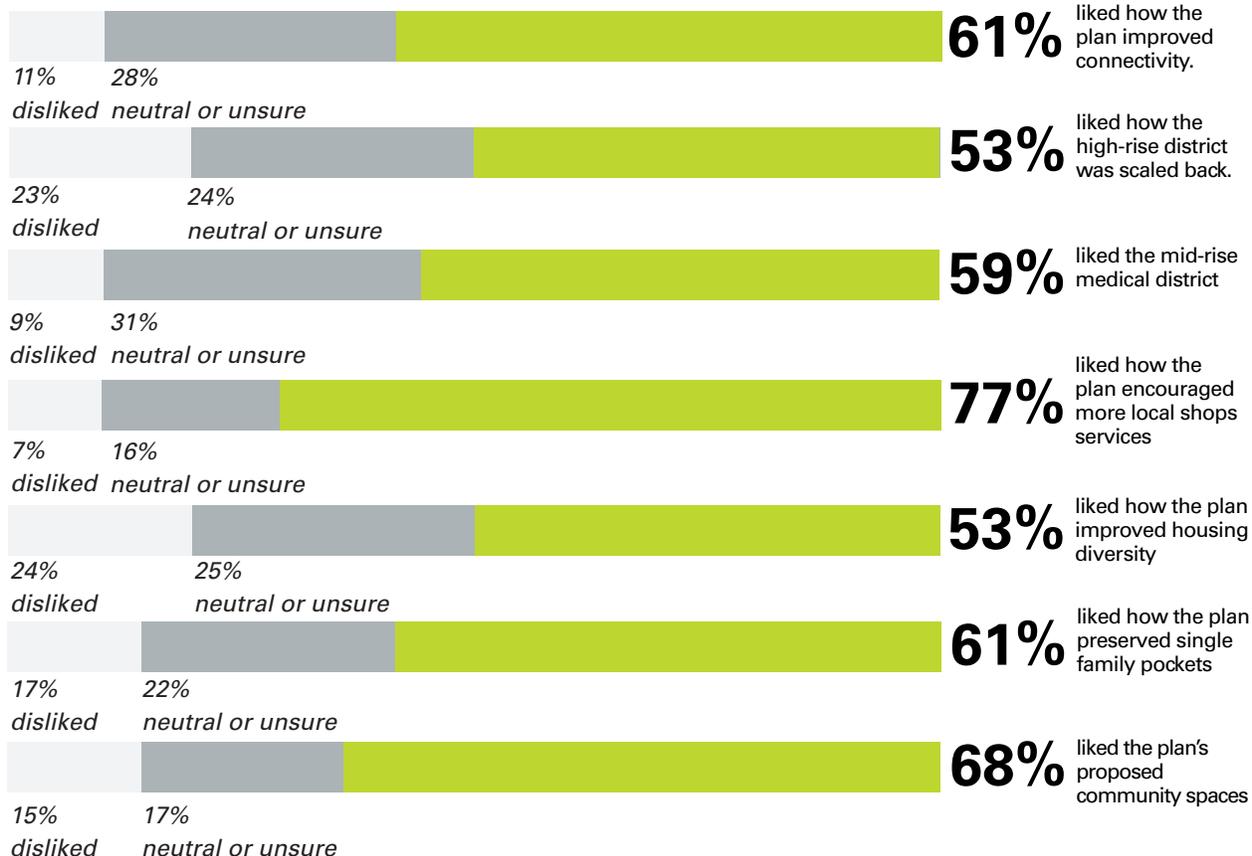
On July 11, 2019, the City of Surrey presented the first draft of the land use plan at a public open house and in an online survey. Participants reviewed how the City had summarized their solutions to the Big Challenges into 7 Community Values. Explanation was provided for how each community value was incorporated into the land use plan.

Community Value	What we heard	What we did
 <p>Improved Connectivity</p>	<p>Many residents were concerned about existing and future traffic congestion and were opposed to a road being constructed through Bakerview Park.</p>	<p>We've added new roads, enhanced bike lanes and sidewalks, and pathways to link neighbourhoods, relieve congestion and improve pedestrian safety and walkability. We've removed the proposed road through Bakerview Park.</p>
 <p>Scaled Back High-Rise District</p>	<p>Many residents expressed opposition to high-rise tower development in the town centre. Concerns included loss of privacy, sunlight and "small town" character.</p>	<p>We limited high-rise development to the area in and around the Semiahmoo Mall, adjacent to the future express bus service. Mid-rise development will be permitted on the periphery.</p>
 <p>Mid-Rise Medical District</p>	<p>Many residents wanted more shops and local medical services. Others were concerned about how taller buildings and additional development will impact adjacent neighbourhoods.</p>	<p>We've added a mixed-use mid-rise district along 16 Avenue to support expansion of medical services near Peace Arch Hospital. This steps down to low-rise and townhouse residential uses and a neighbourhood park.</p>
 <p>More Local Shops and Services</p>	<p>Many residents wanted more local services, shops and meeting places within walking distance.</p>	<p>We introduced new low-rise mixed use along 152 Street and 24 Avenue. These mixed-use developments will have commercial on the ground level and offices and residential above.</p>
 <p>More Housing Types</p>	<p>Residents wanted a wider range of affordable, family and senior-friendly housing types (e.g. townhouses, apartments).</p>	<p>We've included a wider range of residential land uses in the draft plan to support the diverse and changing needs of residents.</p>
 <p>Preserved Single-Family Pockets</p>	<p>Many residents in the extension areas expressed concern about the loss of existing single family neighbourhoods and character. They also want to improve the area with sidewalks, crosswalks and street trees.</p>	<p>We've retained many of the existing single family neighbourhoods in the plan area.</p>
 <p>More Community Spaces</p>	<p>Residents wanted more community and cultural spaces and places to socialize and interact.</p>	<p>We've added four new neighbourhood parks to the plan and are exploring partnership opportunities with developers to construct community amenity spaces for recreation, arts, and culture.</p>



## SURVEY RESULTS - JULY 2019

At the July 2019 open house and in the survey, the draft land use concept was explained in relation to the Community Values.



## EXAMPLE VERBATIM COMMENTS

"I like the idea of mid rise mixed use in the area, but I'm still concerned about the addition of more townhouses in the area, when there is already such an issue with school overcrowding"

"More local shops that are all within walking distance should make for easy access as well as help support current local businesses and business owners. I know a handful of local business owners who could really use this support."

"Scaling back high rise development (limits) the ability for future generations to live in the area, keeping the 'small town character' is going to destroy the potential for those that grew up in this community to stay here as there will be less availability of units and therefore higher prices."

"As one of the fastest growing municipalities, we need to provide access to affordable higher density accommodation for the growing population and to help younger families afford to stay in the community."

"We really desperately need the transit connectivity with the B-line running right down to 16th - the transit situation is ridiculous - we actually don't have a night bus!"

"What about bicycles? Connect bike paths with others to make bike routes. As the city of Vancouver and Victoria have proven, if you build it, bikes will come."

## SURVEY RESULTS - FALL 2019

On October 29, 2019, we held our last Open House of Stage 1. The intent of this Open House and was to inform participants of (1) what will be presented to Council for Stage 1 approval and (2) the next steps and opportunities for further input/changes to the plan. The goal for staff was to understand outstanding concerns and issues moving forward into the Stage 2 planning process.

The companion survey delivered in this period of engagement looped back to the "**Big Challenges**" that participants were introduced to in early 2019. Participants were asked to assess if they thought the proposed Plan would improve the outlook for Semiahmoo's future in regards to: growth, transportation, and community amenities.

*Does the plan address the housing challenges that will be faced by future generations of Semiahmoo residents?*



*Does the plan address the transportation challenges that will be faced by future generations of Semiahmoo residents?*



*Does the plan improve the community amenities for future generations of Semiahmoo residents?*



## YOUTH SURVEY RESULTS

Youth provided a seldom heard voice within land use planning. City staff felt it was important to engage this group specifically on this survey, as it was asking residents to consider their's and the plan's legacy for the next generation of Semiahmoo residents. For youth, their ability and desire to live, work, and play in Semiahmoo Town Centre over the next 30 years is directly affected by the policies and outcomes of the Town Centre Plan.

*Does the plan address the housing challenges that will be faced by your generation?*



*Does the plan address the transportation challenges that will be faced by your generation?*



*Does the plan improve the community amenities your generation has access to?*



## EXAMPLE VERBATIM COMMENTS FROM YOUTH

"I think it gives more affordable options which is really nice for the families that cant afford the beach houses or the massive houses."

"I think the plan is ambitious but very well thought out. It's seems it might be necessary to go through with it due to the increasing population in the area and it's a great plan for future growth. I encourage further development in surrey so this plan has my support."

"Keep Semiahmoo Mall. It's good enough."

"Skytrain and easy access is important to me. It is virtually impossible to go to Vancouver for a night out, responsibly speaking, without having to leave early to catch the last skytrain or bus at midnight. Cabs back are ridiculously expensive."

"Make it more affordable for our generation to live."

"Smaller therefore cheaper housing."

"I would hate to see town houses everywhere but there's no other option. The population will grow as well at the housing prices so best would be having town houses."

"More urban environment. More stores and easier access to public transportation."

# | Outstanding Concerns

## COMMON CONCERNS

Staff responses are shown below.

**Why is there an expectation that the South Surrey town centre should accommodate so many more people? Why can't they go somewhere else?**

Surrey is expected to grow by approximately 300,000 residents over the next 30 years. All of Surrey's established Town Centres are predicted to grow in the next 30 years.

Semiahmoo Town Centre and the City of White Rock form a significant "Municipal Town Centre" for the Metro Vancouver Region. Municipal Town Centres are characterized by access to rapid transit or TransLink's Frequent Transit Network. They provide regional employment, services, business, commercial, community, and cultural activities for the surrounding communities. They are encouraged to contain a higher proportion of high and medium density housing including affordable housing.

Focusing growth and development into established urban centres maximizes the benefits of compact sustainable development, allows efficient service delivery (such as public transportation) and minimizes the development of natural areas. For these reasons, Semiahmoo is one of the best places in the City to accommodate growth.

**Property owners are concerned about possible City land expropriations. What can be done about this situation?**

The City will not expropriate land for parks or local road connections.

On December 23, 2019, the City sent a letter to residents of both extension areas to provide additional information. We have also proposed petition requirements for areas designated to remain as low-density residential. This would limit the ability for a developer to amend the plan. We are also proposing strict consolidation areas. These create defined development blocks over multiple properties. This means developers would be required to obtain all the properties within the development block. In some cases, developers may have to wait a significant amount of time until all the lots are ready to sell. The proposed lot consolidation areas and petition requirements will be endorsed by Council as part of the Stage 1 plan approval. The Stage 1 approval is an important step to limit speculation and provide protections to these residents.

**Why is the proposed Plan so short and contain so few policies to guide development?**

A Stage 1 plan is not a complete plan yet. A Stage 1 plan is still a general concept. When Council approves a Stage 1 plan, they authorize staff to continue working on the details of the plan. The Stage 1 approval provides a level of certainty which allows staff and technical experts to conduct the further research and develop these policies. It also limits speculation and provides protection to residents.

When Council directs staff to move into Stage 2 of the planning process, we will develop the detailed policies and write the plan. We consider public realm guidelines to control streetscape design and urban design guidelines to control the massing and appearance of buildings. We also work out the costs of infrastructure and community amenity upgrades that developers will have to pay.

**Has this plan been coordinated with White Rock?**

The City of White Rock is an identified stakeholder in the planning process for Semiahmoo Town Centre. The City of Surrey has been in discussions with the City of White Rock throughout the planning process. We have conducted a review of their Official Community Plan. The proposed Stage 1 land uses were considered to provide continuity from White Rock. The proposed building heights in Semiahmoo are lower than what is permitted in White Rock.

**Will the plan encourage employment or just put more commuters to Semiahmoo?**

The plan will increase employment opportunities within Semiahmoo Town Centre. The areas designated as "mixed use" will require a significant portion of any redevelopment to be commercial or office.

- Peace Arch Hospital has intention of expanding some medical service and medical office related uses to the mixed-use medical district.
- The high-rise district could provide ground floor service employment with offices on subsequent floors.
- The mixed use main street on 152 Street could provide the opportunity for local businesses and restaurants.

### Why hasn't there been a town hall style meeting or public hearing?

The City of Surrey is not required to hold public hearings to approve land use plans. The Local Government Act 464 (1) requires public hearings for: official community plans, zoning bylaws, or early termination of land use contracts.

Open houses and workshops were selected as the preferred engagement events, as opposed to a town hall event. They are best practice and align with the City's engagement principles. As noted by the International Association of Public Participation (IAP2), Town Hall events may:

- Create a highly emotional environment rather than productive conversations;
- Can be difficult to build an open and neutral environment for all views to be shared;
- Underrepresented those who do not feel comfortable speaking in front of a group or those who hold a minority view; and,
- Can cause divisions among neighbours by removing anonymity of private conversation.

### What can be built in the area low density residential area?

Any fee-simple redevelopment is appropriate here. This could range from large single-detached, small-lot single detached, duplex or other attached fee-simple forms of ownership.

### Some residents love the mall. Why can't the mall remain?

Malls across North America are closing, struggling with vacancies, and falling into disrepair. The plan provides the mall's owner flexibility to adapt to changing conditions over the next 30 years. The City cannot force the mall's owner to continue operations if it is no longer profitable for them to do so. Flexibility is important to prevent the property from sitting vacant. The mall owner and their development team have created a master plan for the site that will take decades to build out. Their plan is for the mall to remain until the later stages of redevelopment (20-30 years).

Although it is a private space, we understand the mall is a valued gathering place for some residents. The City's vision for inclusivity places an importance on public space. The mall site redevelopment will contain several truly public spaces including: a park, pedestrian oriented streets, a performing arts centre, and an art gallery.

### How many towers will be built on the mall site?

The density floor area ratio (FAR) maximums approved in Stage 1 will greatly limit how many towers can be built on each site. The urban design guidelines developed in Stage 2 will contain policies for minimum tower separation and maximum tower floor plate size. In City Centre, tower separation is a distance minimum of 30 m on a diagonal or 50m face to face and towers must minimize the east-west dimension to 28m width with a maximum 600 square metre floor plate size.

### When will redevelopment occur?

Sometimes it takes decades for changes to occur following completion of a land use plan. Realization of the land use plan is dependent on individual property owner choosing to sell their properties to developers or redevelop their properties themselves. If there aren't willing buyer, sellers, and developers then not much will change.

At this time, there are some active applications within extension areas and a portion of the mall site. These could see completion in the short term (1-5 years). The City cannot speculate when it will be profitable for other lots to redevelop.

### It is unfair for those who are designated as parks. Can we just designate everything for higher density and make developers deliver parks later?

The land use plan's purpose is to provide certainty to residents and landowners. It is important to designate the desired sizes and locations of parks so the City can actively work to acquire them in the long-term. Relying on private development to contribute parkland is unreliable and often does not result in adequate parkland.

The locations of the new parks are the outcome of a comprehensive planning and community engagement process. The parks network was supported by the majority of participants through multiple public surveys. They are located carefully to ensure all future residents will be within a short walk of parkland, that they connect to existing pathways wherever possible and that they meet the intent of the Parks, Recreation & Culture Strategic Plan.

If your property is designated as parkland, you will not be required to move or sell to the City. The Plan will take many years to build out. As development occurs, developers make contributions to fund the City's future acquisition of parkland. When you are ready to sell, the City will purchase your property at market value.

There will be further opportunities for stakeholder participation throughout the Stage 2 planning process. Direct resident involvement will continue to shape the plan.