Engagement Summary

Semiahmoo Town Centre
November 2020 Survey

Urban Design and Community Amenities
Surrey began work on a new plan for Semiahmoo in 2018. Since that time, we’ve had over 4,500 touch-points with residents and stakeholders to share ideas through a variety of workshops, open houses, surveys and meetings. In March 2019 Council endorsed a draft (Stage 1) plan. Since then we’ve been working together on the final plan, including this recent survey which was focused on the plan’s urban design strategy and community amenities.

What We Did
Residents of the Plan Area and nearby were notified of the survey via mail. The survey was administered to City Speaks Panel residents living in South Surrey and also promoted on social media and within City of Surrey e-publications.
These results are based on 897 completed surveys:
• CitySpeaks Panel Survey: 328 responses from South Surrey residents, between November 4, 2020 – December 4, 2020
• Open Community Survey: 569 responses between November 4, 2020 – December 4, 2020

Participant Summary
This is a snapshot of participants from the November 2020 Survey.

There were approx. 897 completed surveys.

94% of those live in Surrey.

87% live in South Surrey

Age of Participants
24% under 40
35% between 40 and 65
38% over 65

For More Information
If you have questions about the survey or the Semiahmoo Town Centre Plan in general, please feel free to contact:
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For More Information
Survey Results - Key Take-Aways

1. Participants highly value walkability and public space.
   
   **94% said walkability was “Important” or “Very Important”**
   We will develop street cross sections that prioritize the pedestrian experience above other modes. These will include wider sidewalks, street trees, benches, weather protection, etc. We will also extend the Semiahmoo Trail network to connect through the future mall site to 16 Avenue with multiuse pathways.
   
   **89% said public space was “Important” or “Very Important”**
   We will refine the Land Use Concept to designate locations for urban plaza and pedestrian spaces. These plaza spaces will be in addition to the five neighbourhood parks identified within the plan (4 of which are new). We will also set fees for developers. These funds are earmarked specifically for improvements to new and existing community spaces.

2. Participants strongly oppose colourful buildings but are highly supportive of green buildings.
   
   **70% “oppose” or “strongly oppose” Colourful Buildings**
   The design guidelines will suggest neutral palettes and traditional materials for the exteriors of buildings.
   
   **71% “support” or “strongly support” Green Buildings**
   The design guidelines will encourage green building technologies including Green Walls and Green Roofs. Staff will consider how best to incentivize these and other sustainable architectural features.

3. The heart of Semiahmoo and most vibrant areas are **152 Street and 16 Avenue**.
   
   We will emphasize this area for enhanced public realm features including wider sidewalks, plaza spaces, and public art. We will work with TransLink to determine the appropriate size and dimensions for plazas nearby the future RapidBus stops. We will also carefully consider the design and format of commercial uses to foster vibrant and active street fronts in these areas.

4. Participants are concerned of the impacts of towers on surrounding properties.
   
   All the suggested mitigation measures were strongly supported and will be included in the design guidelines. Staff understand some residents have further concerns and will explore additional measures to sensitively transition new building height and density. Staff will also remain open to further suggestions from residents and stakeholders to address these concerns.

5. Socialization and relaxation amenities are most needed in Parks.
   
   COVID-19 has undoubtedly increased the need for comfortable, high quality, public outdoor social spaces. When developers have their projects approved, they pay fees to upgrade the neighbourhood for new and existing residents. The Plan will earmark the community amenity fees paid by developers specifically for **socialization and relaxation amenities in parks** as well as other highly needed facilities according to participants: washrooms and playgrounds.

6. Participants deeply value the environment and natural life within the neighbourhood.
   
   We received a lot of comments about the importance of nature. From trees, birds, trails, and parks to sustainable building and infrastructure technology, Semiahmoo residents greatly value the environment above all else. The plan urban design guidelines will reflect this by identifying opportunities looking to increase street tree canopy and landscaped area through unique road standards, park and plaza design and incentivizing green building design features.
An urban design vision will guide the overall look and feel of the community. It will help us to determine specific guidelines and policies needed to implement the plan. We asked participants to review priorities and tell us what is most important.

- Residents walk.
- There are exceptional public spaces for gathering and building community.
- Night skies are protected for migratory birds and other nocturnal wildlife.
- A range of housing types allows renters, first-time buyers, young families, and seniors the ability to stay in or move to Semiahmoo.
- New construction and existing buildings blend together sensitively.
- There is an emphasis on sustainable transportation.
- Residents enjoy getting from A to B. It is not just about the destination.
- Parking is provided but underground and out-of-sight.
- Residents are aware of and appreciate the history of the land of the Semiahmoo peninsula including its Indigenous peoples, whose culture and community continue to have a presence.
- The neighbourhood is a commercial and cultural hub.
- It is a distinctly urban neighbourhood with a unique character.
VERBATIM COMMENTS - Urban Design Principles

We heard a clear preference for human scale development and emphasis on greenery as the main priority for the urban design vision. Survey participants mention the need to incorporate the unique character of the area, as well as walkability and to ensure the area was developed for all ages.

- Consideration of all ages. I find there is little consideration for teenagers and young adults in many public spaces.

- Using the space in as green a way as possible. More living walls, planting of trees, roof top gardens, using solar panels. Nicer sidewalks/paths, so someone would want to walk from 16th to 24th along 152nd - more of a buffer between pedestrians and the traffic like trees, planters, benches, etc.

- Introduce design elements that could also benefit us from an environmental standpoint as well. Lighter coloured roads/sidewalks to keep the space cool as opposed to dark pavement/paint... Solar where it can be used.

- Create an urban village type of environment - with more eyes on the street and more customers to support local town centre businesses.

- More independent restaurants to add character. Same with retail, small unique, classy stores, not more dollar stores and junk. Store fronts should have character and charm, not ugly boxes. Make it a high end area to increase the socioeconomic feel of the area.

- Height of buildings should not overshadow and negatively impact residences that currently exist in the town plan area.

- Emphasize and highlight the incredible natural history and present day richness of surrounding Semiahmoo bay (one of the habitat top rated bird areas in North America, a historically rich shell fish and crab fishery,), existing forests and, the incredible array of migratory birds, the parks, trails and green infrastructure network and Biodiversity Conservation Strategy... all of which is foundational to City of Surrey vision and planning.

Architecture Styles

We asked participants to rate their preference for various building styles. This will help guide the overall urban design vision as well as development of specific building design guidelines.
Heat Mapping

We asked residents to participate in heat mapping exercises. The first question asked residents to highlight where they would consider the heart of Semiahmoo to be located.

The second question asked residents where they thought the most vibrant areas should be locations - such as main shopping or high streets, or key focal points. This will help staff determine where to plan for the most active and vibrant uses such as cafes, restaurants, and retail shopping.
Interface Issues

Some residents have expressed concern that new development will visually impact the existing neighbourhood character. We proposed three measures to help mitigate the impact of high-rise towers. They included: matching podium heights with adjacent low-rise buildings, limiting tower floorplate areas to create more slender towers, and creating minimum distances between towers. All measures were supported by a majority of participants.

Pedestrian areas designed like Italian piazzas surrounded by trees with curved pathways can act as windbreaks. These ‘piazzas’ can be open-fronted restaurants and small shops.

The essential requirement for either the distance between buildings or the volume of each building is technically expected to meet the various needs of sun exposure for different types of buildings.

Street setbacks for buildings to allow the people to be the focus rather than the buildings. A deep setback for each building will allow sidewalk and garden space for people to interact.

Rather than have buildings perpendicular to each other, angle the buildings so they don’t face another building directly. Fill the in-between spaces with trees and water features.

Greenery, trees, shrubs, garden space whenever possible in between buildings, on corners, on roofs, walls.

Using aspects of green and sustainable design like living walls, planted terraces, green roofs, etc also significantly breaks up the visual experience of living alongside a ‘tower’.

Green views...such as garden areas, etc., could be included on lower level roof tops among living areas, to create appealing views for residents in higher floors.
Semiahmoo Town Centre | Engagement Results

Parks
The Plan envisions four new parks within the community. It also presents an opportunity to renovate existing parks and bring more amenities and features to the area. We asked participants to consider what exists now in the neighbourhood and what types of amenities are most needed?

- Amenities for building social connections and promoting relaxation
- Washroom Facilities
- Playgrounds and Nature Play Features
- Urban Agriculture - Community Gardens and Education Programs
- Youth and Teen amenities
- Spaces for large group gatherings and events
- Fitness Spaces
- Dog Off-Leash Areas
- Wayfinding Signage within and between parks – (including Semiahmoo Trail)
- Opportunities for games and fun activities in parks
- No Opinion | I don’t know

Arts & Culture
VERBATIM COMMENTS - Arts & Culture

Survey participants emphasized the significance of Semiahmoo First Nations art, as well as traditional ecological knowledge of local vegetation and plants be incorporated throughout the Town Centre. Participants suggested the Semiahmoo Nation be consulted.

- Hire local artists. Murals are amazing. All art is amazing. Include the education of the history of the Semiahmoo First Nation. Build a long house so the local pow wows can be held there instead of at Earl Marriott. Support First Nations artists.
- I’d like to see more carvings, totem poles signage, more indication of First Nations.