

## Summary of Comments from Workshop #2: Building Strong Neighbourhoods



### Downtown Neighbourhood

1. Briefly describe your neighbourhood [its people, landscape (main features), land uses (residential, commercial, parks and recreation, etc.), type of housing, services, amenities, etc.]

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When describing downtown Duncan, workshop participants indicated that the area is currently a mix of uses, where the majority of individuals work, live and shop. The landscape features a variety of old and new structures, including a number of heritage buildings. The respondents indicated that that City square was a main feature for the downtown area, as well as Centennial Park, which was noted to be the only public green space for the core. Respondents described downtown as the transportation hub with the main transit exchange, and the train station in close proximity. It was felt that there is currently an abundance of parking; however, some disagreed. Downtown Duncan was also noted for its cultural elements including proximity to Cowichan Tribes, Totem Tours and the Totem Poles.

2. What are the strengths of your neighbourhood? What do you value most? What works well?

When asked what is a strength of the downtown area, participants agreed that downtown Duncan is the “heart of the valley” bringing 6000 workers a day into the city boundary, and increasing opportunities for the entire community. Workshop participants felt that Downtown Duncan could be valued for its appeal as a shopping destination for residents of the surrounding region, as well as from Victoria and Nanaimo, as it offers quality goods in a wide variety of shops, and services. It was also valued for its cultural and heritage attributes, including the totem poles, as well as the proximity of Cowichan Tribes to the downtown area. Participants felt that Downtown Duncan is both convenient and compact, which contributes to the walkability and safety of the area. It was noted that the painted alleyways provide good connectivity between many of the downtown streets, as well as being visually pleasing, inviting, and convenient.

Other strengths include:

- Farmer’s Market
- Centennial Park- asset to the downtown area
- Good Entertainment (Garage etc.)
- Attractive downtown “pretty”
- Little Park by the Bagel Shop

- Downtown at Christmas- people take pride in the downtown area with decorations/ lights etc.

### 3. Is anything missing from your neighbourhood? What are these?

While downtown Duncan is believed to be vibrant during the day, participants agreed that at night, when the shops are closed, there is not a great deal of things to do. Participants mentioned that there is an apparent lack of residential land uses in the downtown area, which results in people leaving the core boundary once the stores have closed. It was noted that while certain areas of downtown were zoned multi-family; very few areas have gone that way.

Other missing elements include:

- Benches on the streets and in Centennial Park
- There is no downtown access to the river- missing link
- Shops need to open earlier
- Too many overhead wires in the downtown area

### 4. What are the key issues/problems in your neighbourhood? What needs to be improved?

Parking in downtown Duncan was brought up as a key issue for participants, with some individuals feeling that there is too much parking, while others indicated that they feel there is not enough. It was discussed that there are a number of different user groups creating a demand for parking, such as residents and visitors, who may have different parking needs.

Traffic issues were also raised from a number of participants who felt that speeding was becoming a problem in some areas of the downtown core. The interface from 2nd, 3rd and 4th Street turning onto Canada Ave was noted to be a problem, with vehicles having problems making turns. A number of participants felt that traffic calming measures are required to reduce vehicle volumes and speeds within the downtown boundary.

Another issue that was raised at the workshop was the fact that downtown Duncan is relatively unknown from the highway, and drivers on the highway do not know it even exists. Participants agreed that there is a tendency for visitors to consider the highway as the downtown core, as there is no gateway or visible connection to the downtown area.

Another concern for downtown participants was the level of garbage and waste in Centennial Park, which is unappealing for both visitors and residents. Participants noted an abundance of cigarette butts, paper waste, food wrappers and containers, in the park. There was also some mention of the lack of sitting/ resting areas in the park for area employees and visitors who may want to enjoy green space while taking a break from work, or shopping.

Participants felt that an issue in downtown Duncan is the division between the Cowichan Tribes and the City, especially as there is a fence separating much of the land, which amplifies the feeling of separation between the two lands. One participant noted that there is no movement of people between the lands, with the example being Senior's centres located back to back, with one on City land and the other on Cowichan Tribes land, yet there is limited interaction between the two.

Other issues/ problems included:

- Pressure for smaller, community stores to stay open later to compete with larger stores
- Massive size of grocery stores moving in- takes away from the "little guy"
- Mixed perception of safety
- Some areas is good, but in the park it is poor

5. Do you have any suggestions for how they might be addressed/ solved?

Parking Issues: It was concluded that there should be a balance in parking within the downtown boundary, to allow for the needs from all of the different groups including residents and visitors, to be met (i.e. short term vs. long term parking needs).

Traffic Issues: In order to reduce traffic volumes and speeds in the downtown core, participants felt that traffic calming was needed. Participants also noted that more pedestrian-oriented areas in the core would re-prioritize other modes over the vehicle, which could help mitigate some of the traffic issues. There was also some discussion about the benefits of a multi-use trail extending along the E&N railway from downtown into North Cowichan, which could provide an alternative for people travelling into the downtown area.

Centennial Park: Participants felt that overall improvements could include: more flowers, benches, kid's garden projects (for teens and young kids), and the removal of American bullfrogs from pond (invasive species).

Downtown Awareness: In order to increase awareness of vehicle drivers on the highway that downtown Duncan exists, participants discussed the possibility of having some kind of formal gateway which directs people into the downtown core. Improved wayfinding was also considered to be a potential solution in helping bring people into the downtown area.

There was also some discussion about the possibility of revitalising the downtown core to improve sitting areas, building frontages, walkability and connectivity. It was felt that any revitalisation or beautification project should reflect Duncan's unique character and must integrate the existing buildings into the landscape. It was also felt that more sculptures and public art are needed in

the downtown core, with the possibility of having a public art gallery in the City Hall.

Other possible improvements include:

- Green Roofs- don't lose green to development, rather make it a part of the development
- Integrate water features into building designs- "water-centric" design
- More trees in downtown (get rid of grey)
- More community gardens
- Comprehensive planning
- Underground wiring- extend to whole block
- 4 pillar approach- cultural, social, environmental and economic
- Re-generative development- policies

6. Could you describe your ideal neighbourhood?

Workshop participants felt that an "ideal" neighbourhood has a strong sense of place, where residents and visitors feel safe, and there is a great deal of community interaction. An ideal neighbourhood includes a neighbourhood association and central meeting place, and is diverse in age, culture, and levels of income. An ideal neighbourhood has clean air and lots of green space, where the residents care about the community and take pride in where they live. There are activities for all ages, including teenagers and kids, and people/ business owners would look out for one another.

An ideal downtown Duncan is "Where we LIVE and WORK and SHOP and PLAY"

**Cairnsmore Neighbourhood**

Dubbed - "Cares more"

<i>Strengths</i>	<i>Weaknesses</i>	<i>Missing</i>
quaint/cute	sad area at night for kids	safe play areas for young kids
walkable	car theft & break-ins in cars	outreach for youth
changing –	isolation of marginalized groups	different housing types
residences/real estate	no after school care	co-op housing & gardens
flipping, upgrading/aging	too large apartment buildings	traffic calming
population		community events: film nights, BBQ's
established		green space

landscape/old growth		higher ownership
7/11 – safety, well lit, phone access, 24hrs, food	7/11 - litter, attracts people to area, bringing in other people from other areas	
vets slowly losing		
wide streets		
closeness to river, trails		
kids, lots – community (valley) wide		
few garages		
convenience		
Bruce's Grocery		
great yards & gardens		
Duncan elementary extended care		
closeness to hospital & town		
community minded neighbourhood		
people live & work within the area		
investing time, emotional		
warmth & security, (lights, people, front porches)		
caring community		
Guide hall		
Saint Andrews		
Growing Together Daycare		
garage sales		

*Ideal Neighbourhood*

safe, welcoming, inclusive, diverse, beautiful, growth (natural), peaceful & calm, pedestrian friendly, lots of support services for all residents, pet friendly, energy, free daycare, people know each other, village atmosphere, sustainable, helpful neighbourhood, village centre, music.

## Chesterfield Neighbourhood

Neighbourhood description, Challenges, Strengths, Vision (suggestions)

- Busy – traffic
- isolated
- other than sportsplex, has no community greenspace
- divided neighbourhood (between Duncan & N. Cowichan)
- confusion – services go half way down a street
- distinct differences in housing – some areas have high amounts of renters, others have
- high amounts of owners
- lots of turnover in some areas
- smaller lots for townhouses???
- lots of character/older homes
- “ugly piece” of TCH
- homes backing onto commercial area
- “pockets of rot” – derelict houses, rotting while others have been re-developed
- low-end commercial & residential – poorly executed mix
- pawn shops define health of a community – people need to get money
- Salvation Army supports lower income families
- because of the TCH people can’t cross the hwy, it’s unsafe
- only safe way to cross TCH is by car
- the commercial areas don’t serve the neighbourhood
- lots of youth passing/traveling through neighbourhood
- Trunk rd is a visible boundary
- isolated from services – but still has vibrant, well stocked convenience store
- Sportsplex brings a lot of people, money, health, noise, pollution, traffic into/through neighbourhood
- -traffic flow is well directed
- roads not being through access could be a good thing for neighbourhood
- Trunk rd is very busy but does now have sidewalks, good thing
- need sidewalks on Chesterfield
- drughouses – near school – many homeless people and people dealing with addictions hang out around these houses/areas
- no greenspace: no community greenspace, no children’s park/playground
- low income families have to go far to find daycare, must drive must cross TCH
- priority is to provide childcare in neighbourhood
- s/v – centres of roundabouts become green spaces/community parks; set up benches, shelters in them maybe on Coronation?
- create spaces where community can come together

- s/v buy a house & lot, turn house into a daycare, lot into community park
- get rid of northern boundary because two parts don't work together
- putting the northern border where it is doesn't help community togetherness feel
- s/v neighbourhood potlucks, all invited once every 2 weeks
- change zoning to require all new developments to build greenspace
- c – rising poverty
- need to ensure we keep affordable housing

### What's missing?

- greenspace
- childcare
- blockwatch
- sidewalks (though they are coming, slowly)
- compost centre
- community gardens
- leadership
- coordination
- planning
- emergency services network? combine with meeting neighbours, strengthening community connections
- heritage planning for preservation (especially of character homes)
- need to plan ahead for when lots become available – earmark funds to develop green space
- friendlier bike lanes/roads
- “blue bike” system – like a library borrowing system
- only 1 bus stop in neighbourhood
- boulevards/greenspace between traffic on roads & pedestrians, sidewalks
- tree-lined streets

### What are the problems?

- drughouses and the traffic they bring
- poverty
- need to find ways to get to know your neighbours
- the amount of garbage should only allow 1 can/week or people have to pay
- lots of police calls
- alcohol & drug abuse, addictions
- people will use cars just to drive 1 block
- need to create more bike space/racks, walking spaces

### Suggestions/vision

- get rid of ugly strip of TCH – the flowers and trees are a good start

### What is your ideal neighbourhood?

- family-friendly
- funky
- diverse
- connected
- pride & ownership
- neighbourhood get-togethers
- neighbours know each other
- planning for the future
- traffic is well managed
- community gardens
- compost collection
- drug-free & alcohol addiction free
- resident involvement
- safe
- green
- crime-free
- no 7-11
- bike & pedestrian friendly
- affordable housing
- childcare
- business owners are neighbourhood-minded – they live in the community and are involved in the community
- neighbourhood services – make community more complete, vibrant, self-contained
- what makes a community feel like a community?

### **Marchmont Neighbourhood**

#### 1. Briefly describe your neighbourhood [its people, landscape (main features), land uses (residential, commercial, parks and recreation, etc.), type of housing, services, amenities, etc.]

- Bulk R1 single family homes, some high density areas on edges
- Community largely made up 40- 50 age bracket
- Large park area along river
- Large lots have relatively small building footprints
- Highway business- a diverse range of businesses
- Many heritage trees
- 3 distinctive areas
- friendly and respectful of privacy
- lack of a sense of community – insular

- population reflects a diverse range of backgrounds and socio economic ranges
- not ethnically diverse
- Large number of rental apartments vs homes
- Keep places tidy, recycle, comply to a reasonable standard of housing maintenance
- Lots of people walking
- Odor from Joint Utilities Board sewage lagoons
- Low mosquito population
- No local store to walk to
- Completely flat
- In the floodplain

2. What are the strengths of your neighbourhood? What do you value most?

What works well?

Greenery

Large lots

Community that respects itself

Live work connection

Sense of community – feeling of safety ( it was noted that this took commitment and energy by an individual to cultivate that)

Apartment living – privacy is valued

Destinations that bring people in and also liked and used by residents

Cowichan River

Freshwater eco center

Bird viewing over sewage lagoons

3. Is anything missing from your neighbourhood? What are these?

- Lack of neighbourhood store
- Marked painted crosswalks on Marchmont
- Sense of community
- Lack of self sustainability
- Eg. Home gardens (not enough of)
- Rest areas for walkers – benches...
- Public washrooms (limited use of those at Macadam Park)
- Lack of playgrounds for young children
- Lack of designated walking paths in residential areas – don't want sidewalks
- Emergency safety plan
- Food security for low income families.

4. What are the key issues/problems in your neighbourhood? What needs to be improved?

- Lack of pesticide herbicide control
- Too many restrictions for urban farming
- Increasing noise from parks – recent clearing around chesterfield Park has increase noise levels
- Concern in regards to potential highway upgrades\*
- Smell from sewage lagoons\*
- More consistent and direct communication with local area residents and affected areas requested

5. Do you have any suggestions for how they might be addressed/ solved?

- Greenery
- Privacy
- Safety
- Strong community connectedness
- Gardens
- Water, land and weather
- Self sustainability
- Walk able, accessible

6. Could you describe your ideal neighbourhood?

We are missing the cooking pot structure for these wonderful ingredients to make a truly substantial soup for our ideal community.

## **Coronation Neighbourhood**

1. Briefly describe your neighbourhood [its people, landscape (main features), land uses (residential, commercial, parks and recreation, etc.), type of housing, services, amenities, etc.]

- Affordable housing
- Homelessness
- Traffic flow
- Transient traffic
- High speeds

2. What are the strengths of your neighbourhood? What do you value most? What works well?

- Walk ability
- Sidewalks

3. Is anything missing from your neighbourhood? What are these?

4. What are the key issues/problems in your neighbourhood? What needs to be improved?

- Lighting
- Unsafe at night

5. Do you have any suggestions for how they might be addressed/ solved?

### **Homelessness**

- Try to find more permanent housing
- Lack of temporary housing - Luxor manor
- Street living by choice
- Outreach with House of Friendship
- Behind Khowhemun School
- Combine Mental Health with the Basket Society
- Different Tiers of housing and rehabilitation opportunity
  - 60% 1st Nations
  - 40% out of town
- Alcohol and drugs - Need to mandate more addiction resources with Tribes
- New Casino brings new and heightened issues relating to gambling
- Voices need to be heard
- Downtown is where space is needed
- Leadership from the City of Duncan is needed
- Needle exchange (shooting gallery)
- Outreach needs huge strengthening and support
- Need to look at all "What if" scenarios
- Vocational Training
- Hands on learning
- There is a Ministry responsibility
- Bus also needed is a massive non-profit group initiative
  - Need non-governmental initiative
  - Cowichan Tribes
  - Basket Society
  - Mental Health
  - Lions Funding
- Typical and predictable needs of the homeless:
  - Shoes
  - Toiletries
  - Men's clothing

## Centennial Heights Neighbourhood

1. Briefly describe your neighbourhood [its people, landscape (main features), land uses (residential, commercial, parks and recreation, etc.), type of housing, services, amenities, etc.]

- National prize winning neighbourhood design
- Most notable, the planned-for small park areas, green spaces that are sprinkled through-out the area
- Well manicured - even with turnover of homeowners
- Families moving in

2. What are the strengths of your neighbourhood? What do you value most? What works well?

- Greenspace
- People value the area - and want to move here
- Pride
- Togetherness of neighbourhood
- Good neighbours
- Walkable to Town
- Schools are close
  - Quality and good schools
- Well positioned neighbourhood
- Affordability

3. Is anything missing from your neighbourhood? What are these?

4. What are the key issues/problems in your neighbourhood? What needs to be improved?

- Streetlights not approved by the residents
  - Shine directly into people's homes
  - Cast shadows- far darker
  - Adds as well to Pine Ave.
  - 30 km signs are not respected
  - Lanes are maintained by the City
    - Dogs along the lanes are not properly supervised

5. Do you have any suggestions for how they might be addressed/ solved?

- Need to keep the green spaces
- Respect from the City towards the green spaces
- Utility wires come rear of homes - not in City
- Do not allow unattended dogs to be in the lanes
- Centennial Park RCMP bike patrols

- Open drug use- needs to be faced
- New driving test for everyone (ha ha)
- Policing - generally under-serviced
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6. Could you describe your ideal neighbourhood?

- Values, attitudes need to change
- Caring, empathy, understanding
- Central common areas
- CH is a role model community for other neighbourhoods- re-design with CH in mind
- Slow traffic in the neighbourhood is crucial to a safe, healthy community
- Should not be through streets in a small city