

Workshop #6 - with the DBIA - VISIONING THE DOWNTOWN



#1 ON THE GROUND

- **What does Downtown Duncan look like on the street?**
- **Where are the meeting places**
- **Where are the open spaces - what do they look like? what happens there?**
- **Does the traffic move differently than it does now?**
- **What kinds of activities are taking place on the street - events, commerce etc.**
- **What does the lighting look like?**
- **Sidewalks, sitting areas**

Discussion

- Current positives include: trees, parks, benches, totems, flower baskets
- Needs include:
 - More lighting in the evening – currently too dark
 - Better lighting in public spaces (Charles Hoey, Station Street Park, City Hall)
 - Street lighting needed on perimeter accesses
 - Mandate businesses leaving lighting on at night – good advertising and safety enhanced
 - Stamped concrete tiles on city square is great but not needed throughout downtown
 - Paving needed on all other downtown streets – stamped concrete to accent look
 - Carry the paving work from City Square to Craig Street
 - Need a survey of how many deliveries downtown are front door only
 - Deliveries make changing Craig Street traffic flow prohibitive
 - Delivery zone on either corner of Craig in order to go to angle parking (deliveries could be hand-delivered by delivery truck drivers)
 - Lower, warmer lighting throughout downtown
 - Lower, softer lighting throughout town – city needs to step up
 - Bigger better flower baskets – emphasize the look of the flowers
 - Trees need to be lit – Autumn colour maples
 - Increase trees and flowers (e.g. on Courtenay)
 - Increased efforts at get businesses to put out planter boxes
 - Review public space availability
 - Increase streetscape space – less emphasis on the car
 - Increase city's paid parking capability
 - Plan to accommodate half the cars or less in the core streets
 - Possibly put angle parking on Station
 - One-way couplet on Canada Avenue – Duncan Street

- Angle parking on one side of Canada Avenue
- Improve signage for vehicles downtown
- Keep street parking downtown the same – don't increase angle parking
- Remove parking from downtown streets – courtyards, fountains, trees, benches, kiosks, locals selling art
- Increase perimeter public parking
- New building – hugely attractive – higher density
- Increase apartments, condos, downtown for upper market interest
- We want higher density opportunities for landlords, property owners and developers
- Increase density opportunities
- Landlords need a fire under them to assist businesses with their need to update and modernize
- Business owners (non-resident) need a voice
- Mandate the appearance of building facades
- Overhead umbrella glass roofs – sidewalks could then be removed
- Need more alleyways when they come available
- Better continuity of walkways from perimeter park areas into downtown
- Covered walkways, kiosks – better walkability downtown
- Community policing needs to be much more visible
- Park area around the train station needs a new dynamic - needs a family component (playground, RCMP on bike or horse) – huge accessibility issues, include museum and train station in planning
- Need more (2) public washroom facilities
- Increase downtown market on Craig on Saturdays
- Promote specialty shops – need to expand and rework the relations with Farm Market
- Need to come up with something else on Saturdays to promote the downtown
- More evening entertainment
- City could mandate better free directories – organized by the DBIA

#2 BUSINESSES - WHO'S HERE, WHO'S NOT?

- **Inventory of goods and services needed for a vibrant downtown**
- **Which businesses are not here and how do we get them here?**
- **Is there a need for more kinds of businesses? (Eg: cafes, restaurants, grocery stores)**
- **Which ones are indispensable, and why?**
- **What are some of the barriers to a successful downtown - and what are the solutions?**

Discussion

- Summary of needs: energy, enthusiasm, new blood; building code guidelines; more information; ethnic and cultural diversity; night life; young people
 - How do we motivate people to be enthusiastic and have a commitment – ownership, colour, accessibility

- Problem of deadbeat absentee landlords and building regulations (guidelines and expectations)
- Google city mixes – formula, key components of a great downtown
 - there are businesses that don't have to be downtown but need to be with
 - healthy mix of BRAND and small stores or boutique shops
 - success – Carmel – art, culture, music
 - Windermere – quaint
 - Chemainus – tourists
 - Kamloops – downtown caters to 25-35 age population
- What's missing:
 - Grocery store (Safeway is walkable but needs to be more so)
 - Farm store
 - Bakery
 - Diversity in downtown population (ethnic and cultural)
 - Viable evening services
 - Nightlife
 - Casual dining
 - Live theatre
 - Balconies
 - Ethnic, cultural offerings e.g. foods
 - Information – directory map
 - Community
 - Good employees
 - Fabric/crafts
 - Meat store
 - Men's stores
 - Hardware store
 - Mid-range clothing, shoes (men, women and children)
 - Young people

#3 LIVING DOWNTOWN - WHO, WHY, WHERE & HOW?

- **Who wants to live Downtown?**
- **Who doesn't want to, but should!?**
- **What is it like to live downtown - sell the idea!**
- **Where should the people be living?**
- **What does the housing look like? (apartment buildings, apt. above the shop, urban townhomes...)**

Discussion

- Who is living downtown: mostly seniors, mostly people with lower incomes, transients, youth
- Who should be living downtown: an interesting mix of urban/young professionals – young (25-35), students (18-25), children, seniors, people with different income levels (more middle income), families are getting smaller – downtown might suit them

- Why do people live downtown = lifestyle/ lifecycle
 - poor transit system elsewhere (for non-car owners)
 - convenience to services (outings don't take the whole day) and amenities
 - seniors housing is downtown
 - friendly, social, sense of neighbourhood
 - have business in the downtown
 - childless/ need less space (minimalist lifestyle)
 - activity – see things happening, pub/ restaurants
 - interesting (can walk about), refreshing, stimulating
 - quiet (in most locations)
 - people who want to avoid 'gridlock'
 - non-car owners
 - people who want a smaller housing unit
 - people with home-based businesses
 - access to train for commuting
- Downsides of living downtown: sirens, street cleaner comes early 4 days a week; people feel 'uncomfortable' on 1st, 2nd, and 3rd Streets
- Why do people not live downtown:
 - no family housing
 - not enough space for families
 - not enough for families to do
 - likes a more rural setting
 - hobbies need more space
 - daytime parking could be a problem
 - space is a serious consideration – affects who lives downtown
 - few balconies
 - older buildings are not accessibility to people with disabilities
 - no grocery store
 - safety – depends where you are (by park, Bank of Montreal/ CIBC, when Just Jakes closes)
- Where is downtown: up Government Street (include park) to midway through Ingrahm; downtown core and fringe (Brae, 1st, 2nd, and 3rd Streets, Garden, Alderley)
- What needs to be done to get more housing downtown:
 - quality of buildings needs to be improved
 - unit sizes need to have more variety (e.g. smaller units for affordability and lifestyle)
 - more space around buildings (achieved though higher density and regulation), more balconies, architectural detail and quality
 - mid-block pedestrian corridors and Vancouver model streetscape
 - mixed use (3-4 storeys) in the core area, redevelopment on the fringe (4-6 storeys – 6 especially on sides of hills), townhouses, apartment buildings); consolidation of lots (many different sized lots); more condominiums – above commercial space (e.g. Gallowglass condos) – viable for someone who has a business as it means someone is

there all night: more activity, life would attract younger folks; smaller units (e.g. 600-800 sq. feet)

- look at construction costs – cannot afford to build under current zoning

#4 SUSTAINABLE CITY - Economic, Environment, Social and Cultural

- **What does sustainability mean to a downtown community?**
- **How green can downtown be?**
- **What kinds of measures can be taken by merchants and residents?**
- **What does it mean to be economically sustainable?**
- **How can the downtown contribute to improving the social conditions of Duncan residents**
- **How might diversity be nourished?**
- **How can the arts be cultivated?**

Discussion

- What does a sustainable Duncan mean: it means making it attractive so people will come; making Duncan the centre of the Cowichan Valley, the pulse; sustainable because people will be able to STAY in the community and draw from other communities that are not sustainable
- Environment – education re: green movement natural step – Go Green – garbage cans along the river, littering signs, beautify cans; downtown re-cycling – individual efforts are needed for recycling, compost organics; poop and scoop in the downtown
- Traffic/ streets – start Saturday/Sunday walking only to promote downtown streets (start with Craig); extend market to all streets – music, etc.; have themes; encourage larger market area; celebrate all streets; need scooter/ wheelchair accessibility; need better posters
- Park – make more user friendly, attractive; get rid of garbage cans in back (move somewhere else – 3 restaurants use them)
- Kevin factor – what to do about it; educate public not to support drug addiction
- Building improvements – facelifts; make look environmentally friendly; need more people living downtown; DIBA should host a paint-in – make use of square – ‘imagine that moveable art in different shops’
- Local Art Day – art in the park, all the businesses support each others’ events; diversity includes all cultures (First Nations, East Indian, Chinese, others; why don’t we celebrate Chinese New Year!; Tribes – Salmon Walk, Healing and Reconciliation; include wineries
- Activity bursts throughout – continuity of hours, businesses need to be on board to support activity (i.e. buskers); festivals – Hindi Festival of Lights, Hanukkah – share them; banners – outreach, international; need support of local merchants
- Business – need a friendly introduction to business – provide information, get Mayor/Council to welcome ‘meet and greet’, get people in the Council to shop in town

- Economy – buy and sell local merchandise (e.g. local fencing) – made on Vancouver Island/ in the Cowichan Valley, like Salt Spring; Cowichan Valley may not have a diverse enough economy; economic engines that have low impact and high benefit; large market in the vicinity (Nanaimo, CV, Victoria) – economically sustainable (look at a 100 mile radius for food, art, etc. – need strategy that can survive **adverse graphic that consumers less and less**); have exceptional wilderness and habitat with a mix of urban
- Diversity – hire and train; visibility campaign (akin to Pink Campaign); safe campaign is needed – passive, systemic racism – ‘we are not welcome to shop downtown’ / ‘how do we celebrate a culture if they aren’t even welcome in the store’; education; economic development will come with cultural respect