

“Create an **exciting, lively and sustainable centre** for our community, incorporating a mix of uses and community recreation needs”

Corporation of the Township of Esquimalt

Esquimalt Village Project

COMMUNITY FEEDBACK SUMMARY

Staff from the Township of Esquimalt and the Planning Consultant team lead by Hotson Bakker Boniface Haden and Landeca held two Public Open House sessions in June 2007 to introduce the project and invite ideas and input from the community.

The first session was held on Thursday, June 14, 2007 and was designed to focus on the Archie Browning Sports Centre and seek input from the sport centre user groups. Over **100 people attended** the Open House.

The second Open House was held on Thursday, June 21, 2007. Building upon the materials presented at the first session, this Open House was focused on seeking community input on the vision for the Village Core. Over **75 people attended** this session and provided the Project Team with their thoughts and ideas for the future of the Esquimalt Village Core.

Opportunities for Input >> Community members were encouraged to provide their ideas regarding the Village Core and the types of needed services and amenities through feedback forms and comments posted during the Open Houses. A total of **78 completed forms** were received following the open house events, in addition to a number of written submissions. Many common themes emerged from the feedback and comments. The purpose of this document is to share a summary of the ideas with the community as a means of reporting the findings of this stage in the planning process. Further consultation and community engagement opportunities will be advanced in the Spring of 2008.

Community Feedback: Key Themes

Sports and Recreation Services >> Many participants expressed strong support for the retention of the sports services and amenities of the Archie Browning Sports Centre, with some noting a desire to see the existing facility upgraded and retained and others noting interest in a new facility located within the Village Core. Should a new facility be considered, it is a priority for the provision of existing sports services to continue during the construction period. Additional sports services, such as soccer fields, basketball, tennis or racquetball courts and recreational amenities, including walking and biking trails and children’s play spaces were also noted.

Village Core Revitalization >> Many comments emphasized the need to revitalize the Village Core, suggesting a range of strategies such as building improvements, diversified commercial services and public realm enhancements. New commercial services and retail shops - such as restaurants, cafes, boutiques, a hardware store, produce market, butcher - were noted as potential additions to enable more people to meet their daily shopping needs within Esquimalt.

Mixed-Use Development >> Comments received expressed support for the idea of a mixed-use Village Core where people can live, work and play. The current mix of uses within the Village Core - including a range of recreational services - was noted as a unique feature of Esquimalt. Mixed-use development, with more residential living opportunities, was noted as an important addition to the Village that will allow for more sustainable development.

Public and Community Amenities >> The need for additional community amenities was noted by many and ideas included a theatre, art galleries, arts and cultural learning facilities, a dance hall, an enhanced public square and overall public realm improvements.

Summary of Comment Form Responses

* Please note that Questions 1-8 were included on both the June 14 and June 21 Comment Forms, while Questions 9-16 were asked only on the June 21 Comment Form. The comments noted below reflect a range of opinions and ideas as submitted to the team on the completed comment forms.

1. What specific components or services of the Archie Browning Sports Centre do you use on a regular basis (i.e. more than 5 times per year)?

Responses varied and included comments from community members who use all components on a regular basis to those who never visit ABSC or only attend community events such as Buccaneer Days.

Comments Included:

- All of the above, more than 5 times per year (hockey, sports and community events).
- All at a time when our family was younger - young families NEED these facilities.
- I would use the lounge more often if it was open year round and had a menu similar to those found in neighbourhood pubs.
- Buccaneer Day , pancake breakfast, no other reason to go.
- None - family sports focus is swimming, biking, running, karate, walking, canoeing. I do not support use of my tax dollars, or an increase in taxes to maintain a building that is out dated and not self supporting.
- Ice Arena - we regularly use the arena as do all our children. Our community and sports groups depend on it!

2. Are there sports services that are currently not provided at ABSC that you would like to see included in the Esquimalt Village Core?

Comments Included:

- The ABSC could be used for more dry land use - floor hockey, roller skating, dances, team rentals for softball and soccer.
- Indoor sports on artificial turf on curling floor on the off season. Badminton, tennis, soccer, lawn bowling.
- Tennis - mini golf, pitch and putt - these bring in money.
- Non paved running/walking surface that connects to other community greenspaces.
- Chip trails - possibility even connected thru to Saxe Point? Green space. Safe, usable children's play area. Lots of pedestrian access.
- No, I think that the Esquimalt Rec. Centre is more than adequate for a municipality the size of Esquimalt, given the costs associated with building and operating facilities of this nature versus the size of our tax base and the current tax burden on property owners.
- Tennis, Badminton, Yoga, Roller Hockey, Dance.
- More variety of children's and teen's activities - dance, gymnastics, drama, art, hobby and skill development.
- If a new facility were approved, it must allow for seamless transfer of all existing programs.

3. What other types of recreational and community amenities would you like to see in Esquimalt?

Comments Included:

- Multi-user trails and connectivity to parks via sidewalks; green up the existing boulevards along major roads/sidewalks with BIG canopy trees.
- Larger town square area to better accommodate larger events - include a band shell.
- Art gallery, cinema/theatre space (outdoor?); concert/rehearsal facilities.
- A community garden would be an asset to the Esquimalt core.
- Bike lanes and pedestrian, skateboard, and rollerblade friendly walk ways; Market that is visible from Esquimalt Rd; Shops, restaurants and coffee shops with outdoor seating and green space.
- More biking and walking paths/routes. Better use of existing parks e.g. enhance the features in those parks, such as by adding interpretive signage pointing out natural/cultural/historic features of note.
- Other types of amenities needed: More bike trails, safe bike lanes

4. Where in Esquimalt should these facilities be located?

Comments Included:

- In the core primarily. We need to define a "centre" for Esquimalt.
- Could be built on parking lot behind the arena.
- In a newly designed town square with fronts of buildings given a new façade, where the parking lot is located in front of Country Grocer. But design a green space with trees, park benches.
- Make the "village" a beautiful place to run, walk, and play. Keep it green and green it up even more.
- In centre where ABSC, Bullen Park and Rec Centre currently exist. It is our centre and we need to keep them here!

5. What activities would attract you to visit the Esquimalt Village Core?

Comments Included:

- Clean, safe place to sit, enjoy a coffee, read, rest.
- Craft markets, music/dance. A folk fest. (we have so many talented local artists), A vibrant market like Sidney has on Thursdays in the summer.
- Good quality and selection of FOOD (not currently available); high quality public realm (performance space/market); diverse retail/commercial.
- Places to relax (benches, trees, theatre) as well as shop (stores).
- Artistic or cultural features or events. Farmer and artisan markets featuring local products. Locally based/owned coffee shops/restaurants/retail outlets offering fair trade and/or organic products. Gardens and green space. Sport/athletic events, that include existing Rec. centre facilities or use them for more diverse purposes.
- Outdoor summer concerts. Aggressive marketing to ensure the word gets out re: services at the arena etc.
- Sports events, car shows, entertainers, pet shows, dances - use of the ABSC because it is not being used fully now!

6. What additional land uses or services would complement the community and recreational facilities and the Village Core? Are there specific shops or services you would like to see?

Comments Included:

- Development of old municipal office and public works lands i.e. apartments or condos over new retail spaces with underground parking ,perhaps the town square would be better utilized when this happens.
- Residential/Commercial/truly mixed use. Arts/live work spaces.
- Affordable family stores/cafes that would ensure that residents couldn't be forced to shop out the municipality.
- There is no doubt that a highrise development would greatly assist the tax base and if it happens I would hope that a curling rink and ice hockey rink could be built on the ground floor or somehow incorporated into the complex.
- Shops - hardware; specialty clothing/boutiques; books/music ; Services- medical professional offices; cycle rental.
- Unique restaurants (somewhere for breakfast); florist; hardware; better grocery store; plants and greenery; pet food store; health food store; banks; stores like "Fields"; market.

7. Are there examples of facilities or amenities from other communities that you like?

Responses include a range of both public amenities, such as Bear Mountain Arena, and village shopping districts, such as Oak Bay Village.

Some Noted Choices:

- Mattick's Farm
- Cook Street Village
- Oak Bay Village
- Juan de Fuca Recreation Centre
- Bear Mountain Arena
- Children's water park

Comments Included:

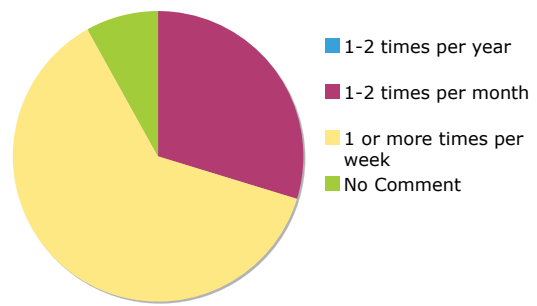
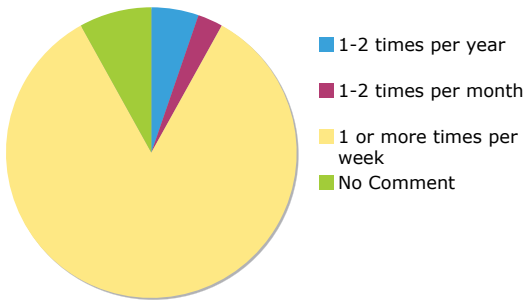
- Sidney - "marine style" street improvements, a nice feeling or "theme" when visiting there.
- JdF [Juan de Fuca] chip trail. Carnarvon water park.
- We like the character of Fairfield Village. A pedestrian-only village core would be ideal, but just about any upgrading of the current core would be welcome. We currently shop elsewhere, because the core is so uninspiring.
- Oak Bay Indoor Soccer field. Oak Bay Tennis courts. Kiddies water park.
- Cook St. Village - patio coffee shops, veggie stands, flowers; Quadra St. clothing shops, fish and chips, Caribbean village San Remos restaurant and deli/café, art shop (Thai); housing above shops that included all amenities, food laundry, clothing, bank, child minding.
- Mattick's Farm, in particular the shops surrounding a lovely indoor courtyard. Oak Bay Village - except that it is in a strip - no real traffic separation.

8. Do you have other comments to share with the Esquimalt Village Project Team?

Comments Included:

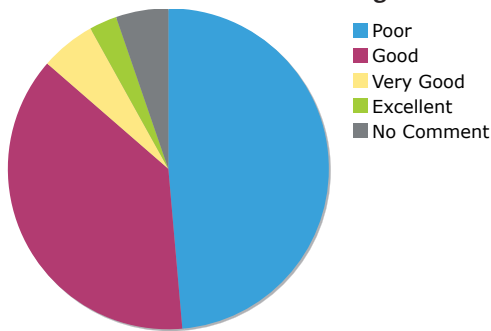
- The curling club in Victoria is getting old and "squeezed out." No parking any more! When the time comes to replace ABSC a partnership should be seriously investigated.
- Keep the land as part of the township. Do not sell the land of our grandparents and grandchildren. It is not ours to sell. Make use of space but keep ownership.
- Please keep an ice rink here. Only move it to the rec centre.
- Store fronts and some of our buildings need TLC and maybe with a naval theme.
- The "Archie Browning" draws more people to Esquimalt in a week than any improvements to the "Town Centre" could ever do. Residents of any area shop where it is convenient unless it is a specialty item they need. The only way to get more people shopping, etc. here is to have more people living here. Get on with developing the properties of the old municipal hall and works yards.
- Please keep the arena + curling rink in your vision when you think of the Esquimalt "Community" because it is very important to the residents + tax payers, as well as outside user groups to retain Archie Browning Sports Centre.
- Provide ample opportunity for input and feedback on ideas.
- Municipal land is valuable (keep it!).
- My village includes Archie Browning Sports Centre.

9. How often do you visit this area of Esquimalt? How often do you shop outside of Esquimalt?



Respondents noted that while they visit the Village often, they also shop outside of Esquimalt frequently. Respondents also noted that they would likely visit the Village more often if it were more vibrant.

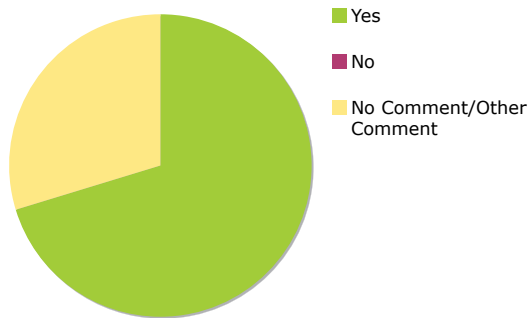
10. How would you rate your level of satisfaction with the variety/selection of shopping goods and services in the Village Core?



Comments Included:

- We are satisfied with grocery, bank and pharmacy, dry cleaner. Need clothing, gift shop, better dining.
- Good, but basic. Again, not much food selection or focus on regional products. No garden supply store!
- Need MORE selection; library is excellent.
- Good, but not good enough.
- I spend \$1000 a month, at least, shopping outside of Esquimalt (mostly groceries). We spend another \$200 or so a month, eating in restaurants outside of Esquimalt. We would rather stay in Esquimalt.

11. Do you support the idea of a mixed-use Village Core - with places to live, work, shop and play? Why or why not?



Comments Included:

- Yes! I would support that, as long as our recreational facilities remain.
- I like the idea of a mixed-use village core. Let's make sure that we encourage more user friendly services.
- Yes more people living in the core will support business, recreation, arts.
- I worry that this is an opportunity for high profit land developers to scoop the land for condos. No high rise please. Remember, most of us want general services at moderate prices; please do not aim for high end shops or trendy urban glitz.
- Definitely, I support a mixed-use Village Core. We need more people living here so we can support the kind of "upscale" shops and restaurants I would like to see.

12. What do you think are the top three issues the Project Team should be considering when planning for the Village Core?

Comments Included:

- | | |
|---|--|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Pilot innovation in: affordable housing; sustainable infrastructure. 2. Attract anchor tenants in: food; retail; commercial. 3. Improvements to Parks & Rec facilities. | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. "Walkability" - traffic away from pedestrians. 2. Variety - clothing, good restaurants, gift shops promoting local art. 3. Beauty/ aesthetics - would a cruise ship bus their passengers into our village for an outing? |
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Healthy living - shops/services that also fit with community plan - everything within walking distance; 2. Financial partners - change/development is doable with financial partners that have congruent goals. 3. Height restrictions - do not need comm. bldgs. taller than 3-4 stories. | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. If wishing to build new ice rink or curling rink, build new facilities before tearing old buildings down. 2. Move lacrosse box so it faces North South. 3. Move archives to a more prominent spot - more people will use it to read about their community, or be able to look old pictures. |
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Keep arena/curling rink in same area. 2. Put parking under ground. 3. Take advantage of mountain views & build housing (multi-story) to add income/ people to Village core. | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ice rink. 2. Prettying up Esquimalt Road. 3. Bike paths. |

13. What are the characteristics of Esquimalt that make the community unique? Please list your ideas.

Comments Included:

- We walk to the parks, the ocean and shopping. We want to maintain “the village” atmosphere.
- Broad range of incomes; mixed population - people of all cultures/backgrounds; “undiscovered” small town feeling; undeveloped compared to # of condos going up in other communities - can still have a view! Lots of well maintained green space.
- It’s a caring community, small enough to meet people you know while shopping, yet close to downtown Victoria so we can bicycle.
- Small town atmosphere; Friendly residents; Parks and Recreation facilities.
- Ethnic diversity; income diversity.
- Sense of small town community, security and facilities.
- The ocean almost surrounding us. Our lower cost of housing even though we are so close to downtown. Our lower age of the average citizen. A deeply embedded negative perception of Esquimalt that we need to dispel!
- Small town feel; great beaches and parks; location; feeling of community; history.
- Community. Families. Recreation facilities in centre. Keep curling and ice.

14. What scale of development (i.e. building heights and forms) would help to create a more vibrant Village Core?

Comments Included:

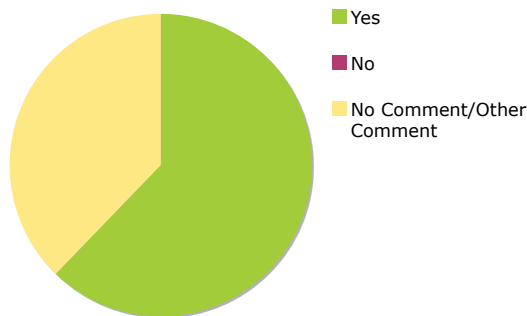
- I wouldn’t like to see too many tall buildings, that is not compatible with a livable village feel. But we do need enough density to support services.
- Building height: six stories should be the limit. Incorporate some “green” ideas.
- Less than 10 stories. Skyscrapers do not add to a Village feel.
- If we want to attract developers; we have to stop saying no and tying their hands.
- Vary heights - low buildings (2 floor) by sidewalk - higher heights in the interior of the property; all parking underground.
- No more than 3 stories - with mixed use, e.g.. Retail on ground floor, residence/public rooms above.
- I think 4 stories is high enough.
- Mixed use live work buildings with underground parking. Keep it low, green, sustainable.
- Reach for the sky.

15. Are there other features (open spaces, street beautification, public art, etc.) you would like to see incorporated into the Esquimalt Village Project?

Comments Included:

- Pedestrian mall area where there are no cars, and where one can sit at outdoor café patios with no cars/fumes; walking and cycling paths; facades of apt. buildings need to be “beautified” a bit (cleaned; different colour scheme)
- Change the design of Esquimalt Plaza. Keep the rec centre just make it what people need, it should pay its way.
- City Square in the middle of Esq. plaza. Needs a green space with trees.
- I like the mosaics in the library maybe they could be used in other areas.
- Public art gallery; continue to maintain the public lands and parks in Esquimalt; More family facilities/restaurants; More boulevard gardens.
- I know some people will advocate for community gardens - real estate values and scarcity limits this, but some fruit trees could be planted in public spaces for community access - as well municipal gardens could include herbs.
- Open spaces, street beautification, public art. Locally crafted public art; some symbols that brand Esquimalt/common theme; landscaping.

16. Do you support the consideration of sustainability initiatives for the Esquimalt Village Core? Why or why not?



Comments Included:

- Yes because I want my children and grandchildren to enjoy this community as I know it, and sustainability initiatives is no longer a choice, but something that must happen.
- Yes. In this day and age, it must be taken into account or you will not get support for your project from a lot of people.
- Yes - sustainability in all forms; - ecological (REDUCE car use encourages open space; - social (keep demographic variety); - economic (create village markets for shops/ services etc.); - spiritual (integrate churches, mosque etc. into the planned, network)
- Yes, because we can be leaders in this we can create a people friendly town that can have a unique future in the CRD.
- Absolutely necessary otherwise this project is not accountable or long-term.

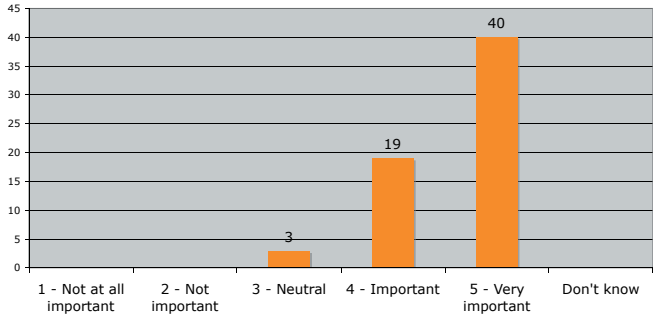
“A key to Esquimalt’s emergence as a 21st century community is a strong central village core, offering retail, mixed use, and quality of life amenities and services. When complete, the Esquimalt Village core will attract residents and visitors and will reinforce the community’s unique identity.”

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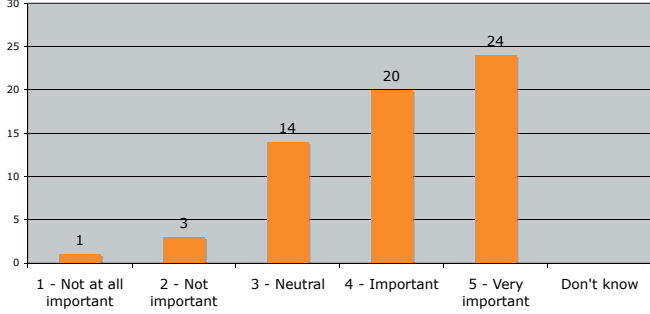
Following the June Open House sessions, an additional community input form was generated to facilitate ongoing public participation in the planning process. The form was made available at Esquimalt facilities, including the Municipal Hall, Library, Archie Browning Sports Centre and the Recreation Centre. In addition, the survey was posted on the EVP website to enable interactive completion. The team received a total of 38 completed hard copies, while 24 forms were completed on-line, for a **total of 62**. The following summarizes the input received through the community input forms.

- Using a five-point scale where 1 is “Not at all important” and 5 is “Very important”, respondents ranked the following **issues** in terms of how important they felt they were to the future of the Village Core.

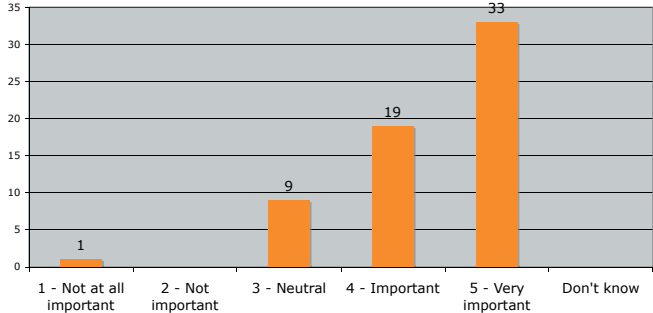
Taking action to protect the natural environment and promote environmentally-friendly development.



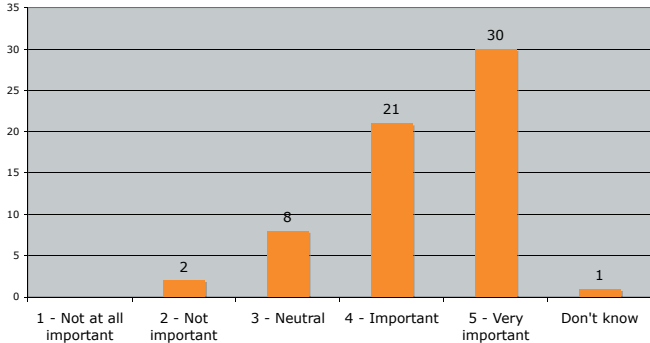
Ensuring that affordable housing options are available for families and people of all generations.



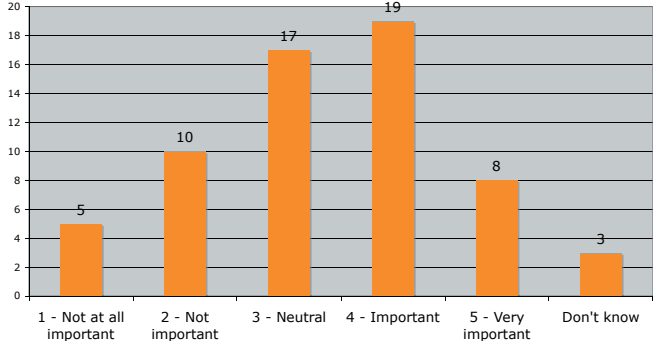
Encouraging people to use alternative forms of transportation (e.g., walk, bus, bike, carpool).



Supporting sports and recreational activities within the community.

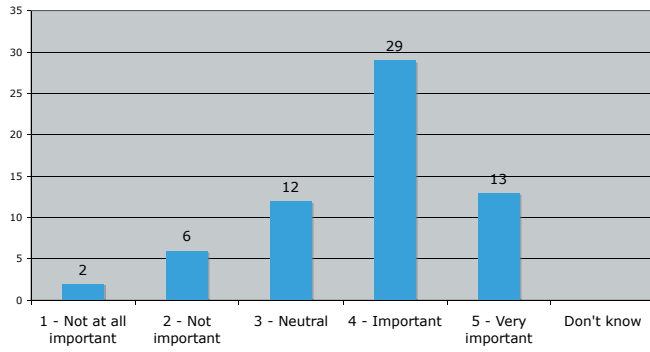


Exploring public/private partnerships for the delivery of services and amenities.

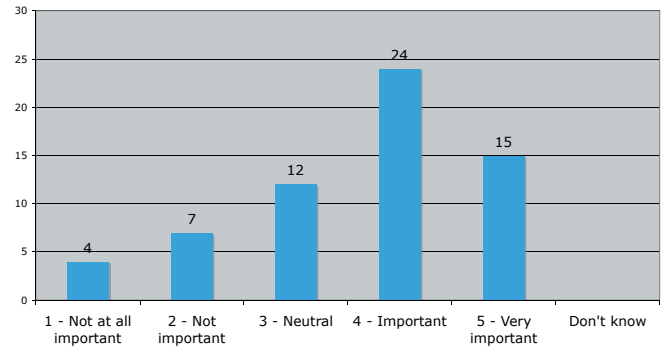


2. Using the same scale, respondents ranked how important the following **experiences** would be to them.

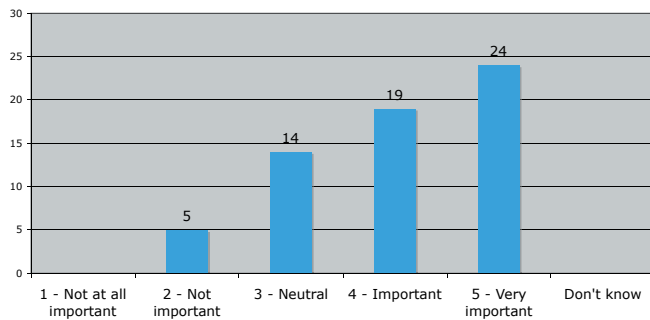
Attending live theatre or art galleries/studios in the Village Core.



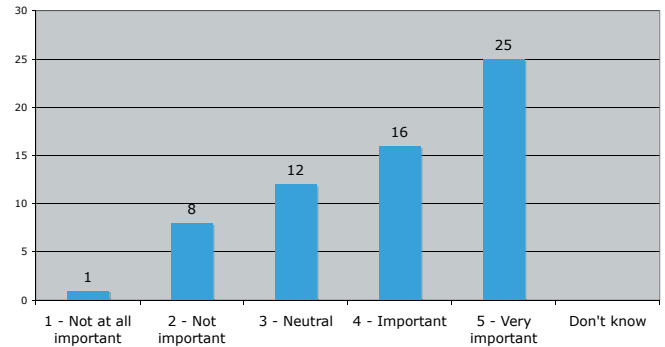
Participating in organized sports and recreation activities.



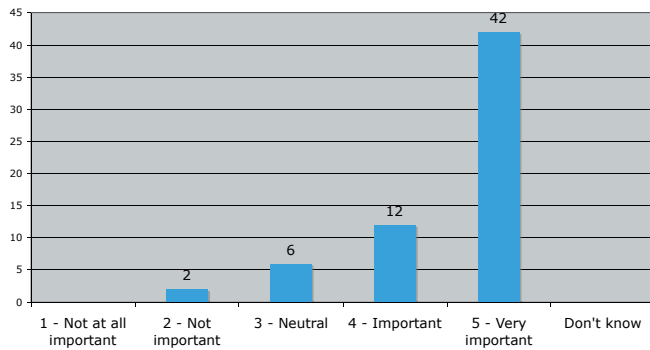
Attending a festival or event in the community (e.g. Buccaneer Days, Highland Games).



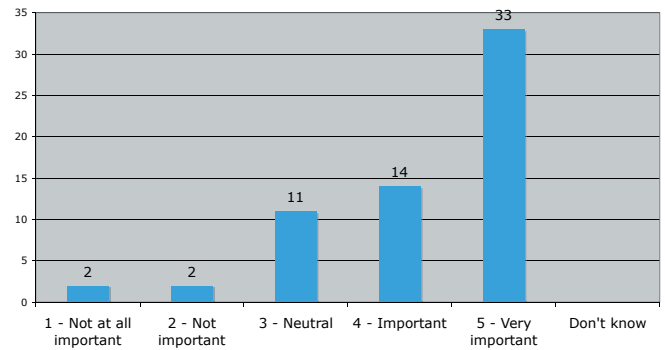
Viewing public art in parks, squares, and other public spaces.



Walking to the shops and services you need on a daily basis.

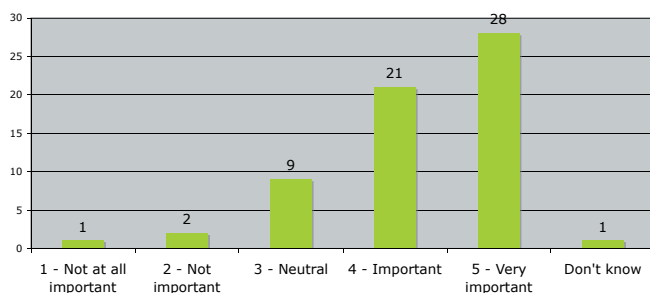


Meeting friends and neighbours within a public gathering place in the Village Core.

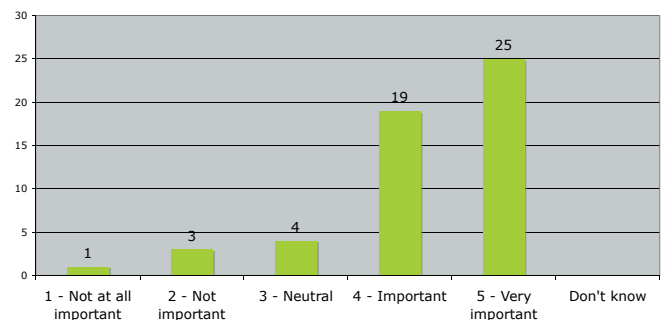


3. Using the same scale, respondents ranked how important the following **ideas/ concepts** would be to them.

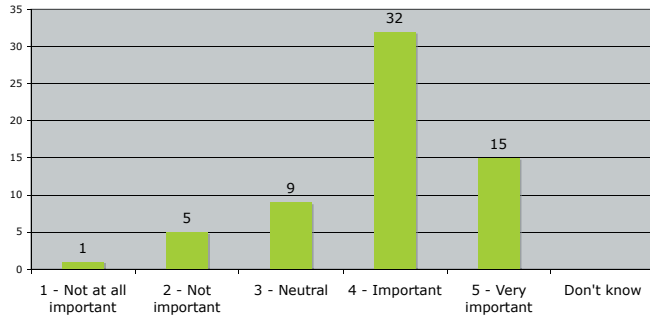
Developing an improved quality for the Village Core, reflective of Esquimalt's unique maritime history and "small town" character.



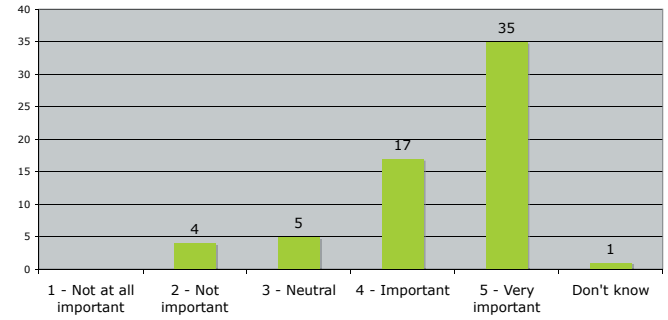
Beautifying the Village Core with features such as landscaping, street trees, signage, banners, street furniture, etc.



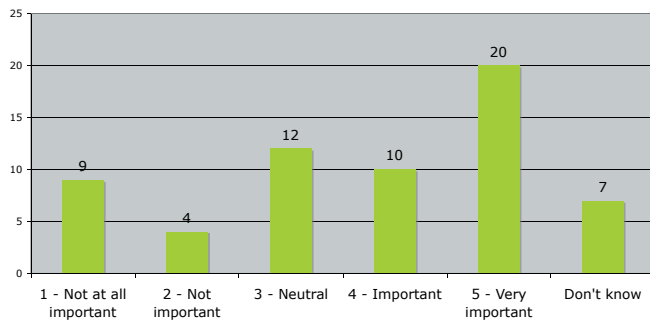
Assisting private property owners in the revitalization or beautification of buildings within the Village Core.



Developing mixed-use buildings to enable more people to live and work within the Village Core.

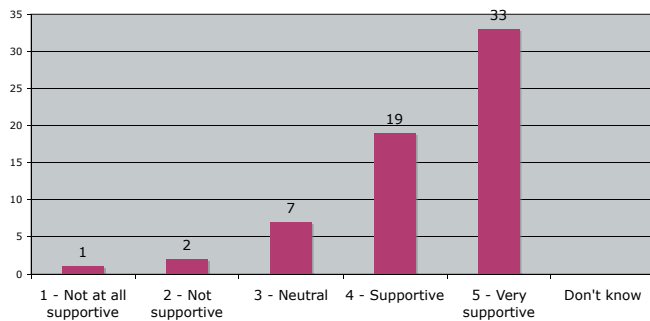


Considering the sale of Township-owned lands to assist in the implementation of a Village Core plan.

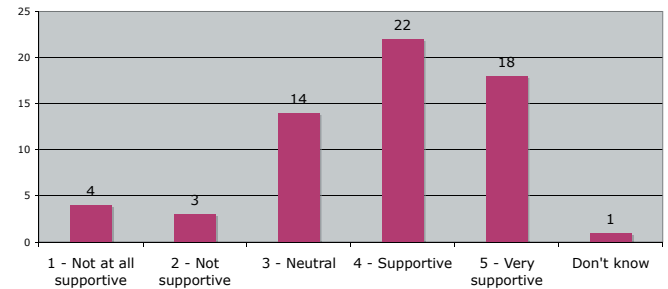


4. Using a similar five-point scale where 1 is “Not at all supportive” and 5 is “Very supportive”, respondents were asked to tell us how supportive they were of each of the following ideas for managing future transportation and parking within the Village Core.

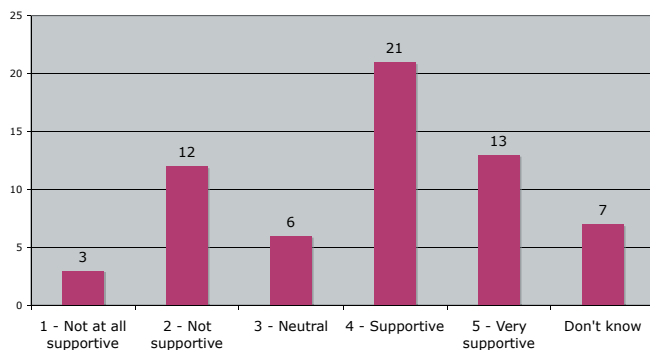
Developing more bike lanes and pedestrian routes to make biking and walking more attractive options.



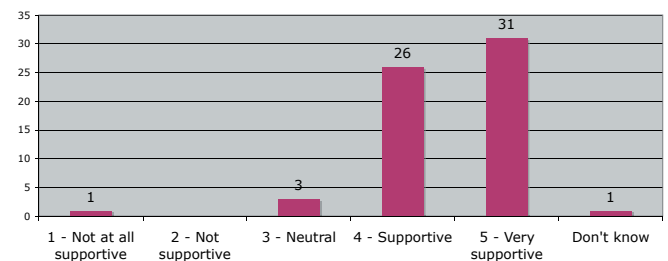
Encouraging the development of underground parking within the Village Core to reduce the amount of land used for surface parking.



Permitting the reduction of parking requirements for the Village Core.

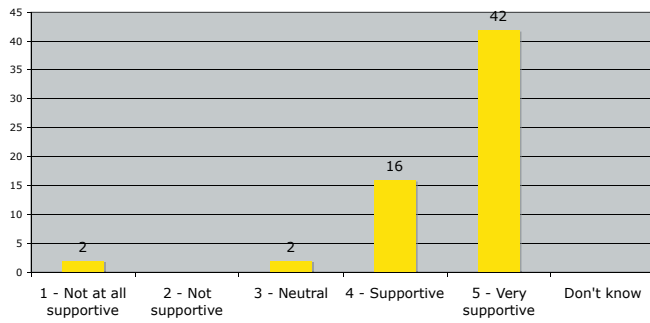


Encouraging the use of environmentally-friendly design and materials for parking areas, such as permeable paving (i.e. cobble stones, grass-crete) and landscaping.

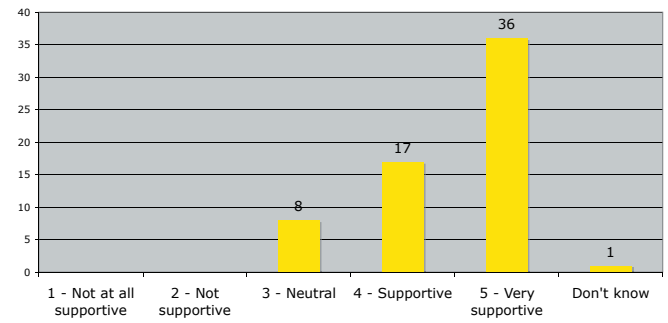


5. Using the same scale, respondents told us how supportive they would be of each of the following land uses or services being included in the Village Core.

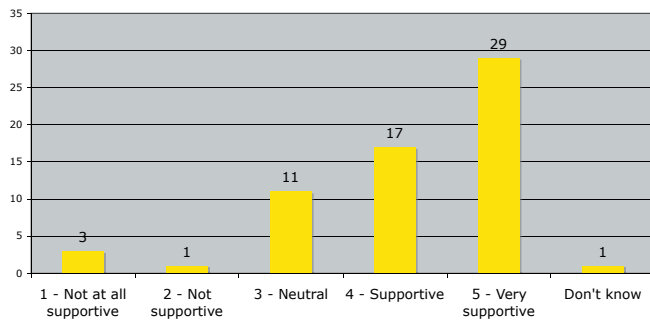
High quality food services, including restaurants, delis, cafes, produce market, butcher etc.



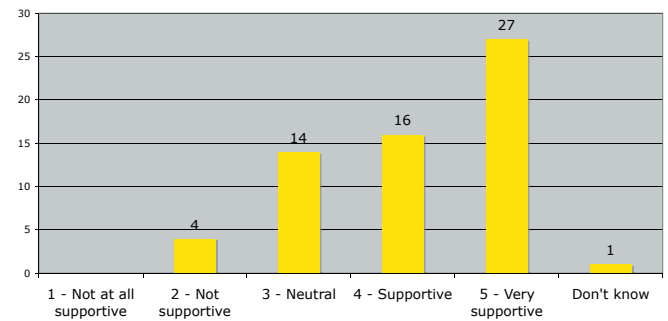
Community-oriented commercial services, such as dry cleaners, pharmacy, post office, medical/dental offices, etc.



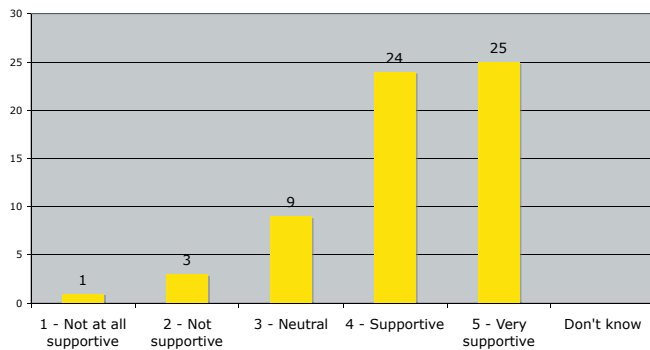
Specialty retail shops, such as clothing boutiques, gift shops, sporting goods stores, hardware/do-it centre, etc.



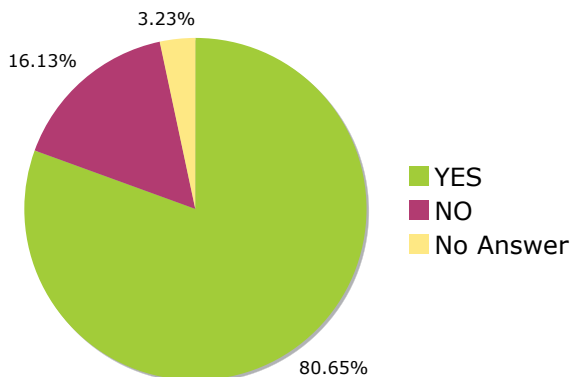
A range of residential housing options, including apartments, townhouses, seniors housing, etc.



Cultural and entertainment venues such as theatres, art galleries, artists' studios, etc.



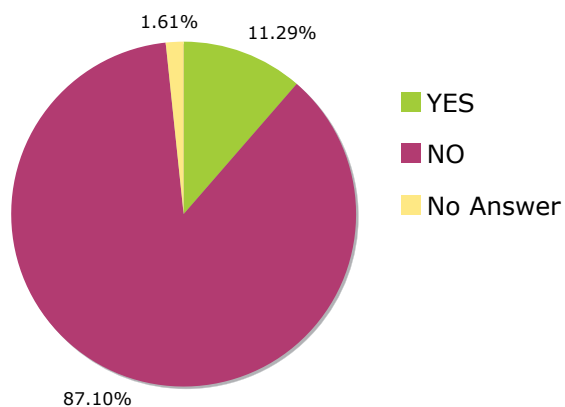
6. Respondents were asked if they can currently satisfy all of their sports and recreational needs within the Village Core?



Comments Included:

- More bike paths would be nice and perhaps running paths between/around rec centre to/from Archie Browning Arena. Perhaps a track?
- No. We would like to see better use of the ice rink, including beginning skate programs for both adults and children, and more programs for children at the recreation centre and library outside normal working hours
- Sports and Rec aren't important to me. The library is excellent. We need a place where residents can talk with each other and feel some identity of living in Esquimalt.
- My recreational needs are centred around the parks and natural environment with very few visits to formal sporting facilities. What I feel is needed is more greenways linking green spaces that are friendly to walkers, cyclists etc.

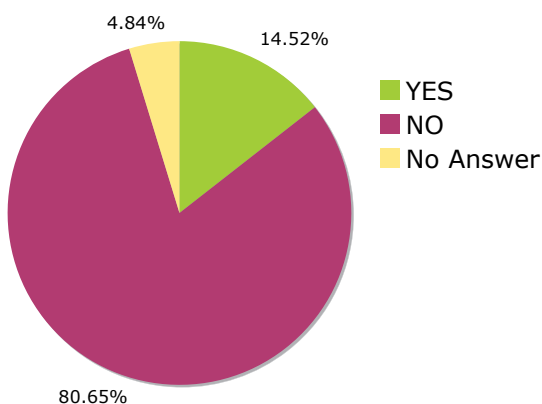
7. Respondents were asked if they can currently satisfy all of their **shopping needs** within the Village Core?



Comments Included:

- More high end retail as opposed to thrift stores.
- No. We routinely go beyond the core for: butcher, fishmonger, farm-direct/local produce, ice cream parlour, toy store, bookstore (incl. charts, maps and posters), hardware, garden supply, nursery, restaurants (incl. take-out and casual outdoor patio), pet food, veterinarian, sporting goods (incl. camping, fishing/crabbing, boating), ethnic foods, ethnic products, clothing, recreational shopping (bath products, clothing, housewares).
- Book store, children's clothing/toys, adult clothing/fashion, sporting goods, home décor, antiques/heritage store - would really fit with our focus on heritage!
- No. The quality and range of products provided do not satisfy my current needs and I find myself doing most of my shopping outside the village core area.

8. Respondents were asked if they can currently satisfy all of their **cultural and entertainment needs** within the Village Core?



Comments Included:

- It would be nice to see local artists work either incorporated in the design of buildings/surroundings or within an art gallery type setting. A small theatre for plays would be great! Something like the Belfry in Fernwood area.
- Public friendly Archives with displays so that we become proud of our history. Label historic sites and buildings.
- Art galleries, small theatre, outdoor music, film, outdoor stage.
- Live theatre, movie theatre, bowling alley, dinner theatre - retain the playing fields and rink activities.
- No - there is lots to do outside, or at the recreation centre and library but we are missing: any kind of cultural, arts or music venue, restaurants, coffee shops. I would also like to see a good neighbourhood pub.

9. Respondents were asked to describe their vision of what the Village Core would look like in 25 years. Below is a sampling of the responses provided by community members.

Comments Included:

- Vibrant, culturally alive community with cross section of shops, food stores, cafes, galleries and green space. Adjacent sports complex accessible to all the community.
- Friendly, accessible and density like Cook St. Village. Guided tours of historic and unique Esquimalt. Water taxi not only to West Bay, but also to Flemming Beach to take tourists (at English Inn Resort) and residents into town. Displays by our Archives to celebrate our roots.
- More like a small town. I would like to see more for families, younger people.
- Models: Oak Bay Village/Estevan Village/Dockside/Yaletown/Lower Johnson St./Ganges/ Funky bohemian heritage, mixed use, vibrant, safe, clean, green, human scale, old brick, wrought iron.
- Funky, vibrant, walkable, interesting, diverse.
- Uniquely Esquimalt. Not an Oak Bay copy. A place where people of all ages are comfortable conducting their daily lives, including working, shopping, playing and living.
- I like the idea of a Village Core having a ballpark, a lacrosse field and an ice rink. Very Canadian. Very "village."
- A vibrant place where people of different backgrounds can have a common place to share experiences and enrich their lives with culture, good food, recreation and a bustling market place.
- I would like Esquimalt to be affordable for all its residents. Hopefully reduced parking and improved walking and bike lanes will encourage more people to walk to local stores and attractions.
- An inviting plaza that has several uses. Places to sit, meet friends, a friendly landscape, safe, deli and bakery to purchase lunch, outside tables & entertainment in the summer. The Archie Browning Centre would be a modern, sports centre. The plaza would have a theme that fits with a small town atmosphere.

Thank you to all of the community members who have participated in the planning process and submitted their comments to the EVP Team.