

OTC SITE planning program

PHASE 1 CONSULTATION SUMMARY



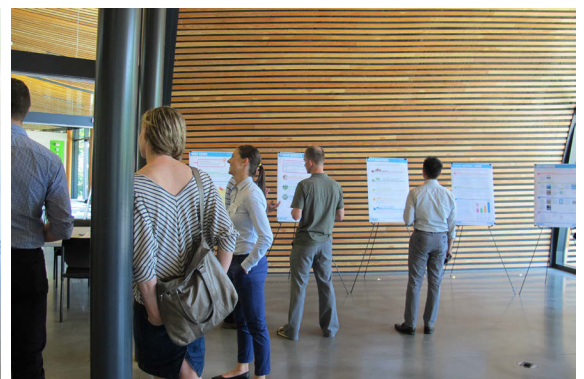
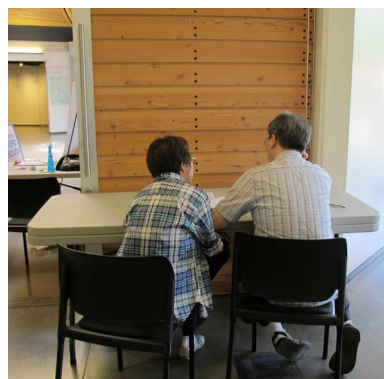
OTC Site Planning Program First Phase of Consultation

On June 8th and 12th, 2014, the City hosted two open houses to launch the Oakridge Transit Centre (OTC) planning program. The City, at the request of TransLink, the landowner, is creating a Policy Statement to guide future redevelopment of this 5.6 hectare (13.8 acre) site at 949 West 41st Avenue. The policy will include principles and objectives on land use, sustainability, transportation, density, building types and heights, public benefits and phasing for the development. The display material at the open houses provided an overview of the history of the site, the policy context and steps for the policy planning program. City staff and representatives from the TransLink team were present to answer questions.

The first open house featured an interactive brainstorming session to help participants visualize their ideas for the future of the OTC site. A group of artist-facilitators were present to illustrate ideas offered by those in attendance. Members of the public collaboratively created visions for the future of the site. Participants described activities they imagined taking place in the space over the course of a day. The artists sketched on the spot, listing the activities and identifying themes. Over the course of the day, 16 drawings were created, each accompanied by a ranking sheet to allow members of the public to vote on the ideas in each drawing. The 16 drawings and ranking sheets were also displayed at the second open house on Thursday, June 12th, 2014. Attendees to this open house were encouraged to examine the drawings and rank the activities and features.

In addition to the illustrated brainstorming session, questionnaires were made available for attendees to provide written feedback. The questionnaire asked about housing types, mix of land uses, community facilities, parks and open space, transportation, pedestrian connections and where various uses and building types should ideally be located. A representative but simplified map of the site and immediate surrounding context was included for respondents to draw their ideas.

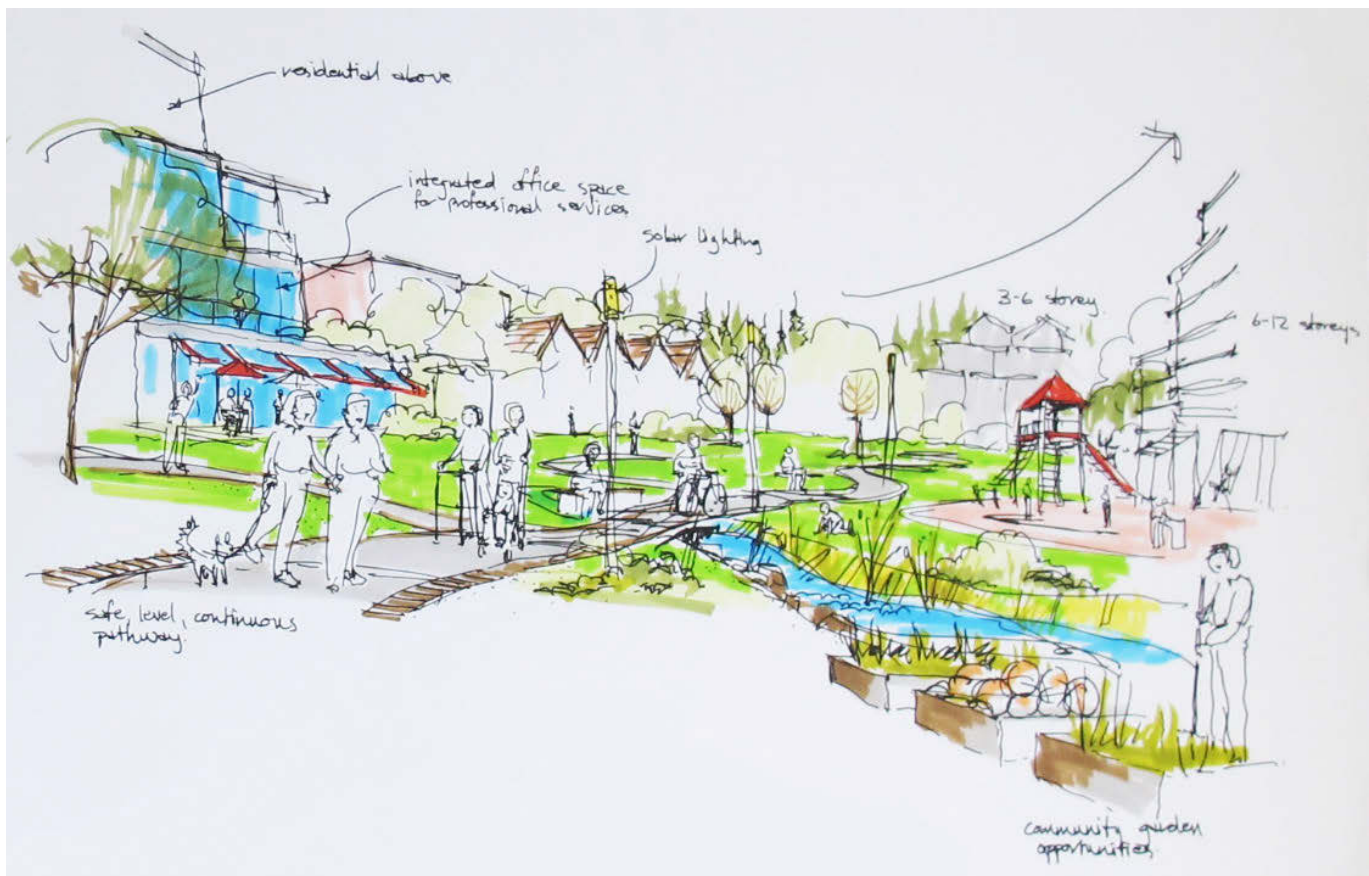
A total of 154 people attended the open houses over the two days, and 65 people completed the questionnaire. This document provides a summary of the key themes from the illustrated brainstorming session and the questionnaire responses. What we heard will result in the creation of guiding principles to inform and evaluate development concepts and subsequent policy for the OTC site. The second phase of open houses will present the draft guiding principles and initial concepts for public review and input.



Illustrated Brainstorming

When examining the drawings and ranking sheets together, seven central themes emerged related to:

1. Site Design
2. Parks and Open Space
3. Housing
4. Neighbourhood Shops + Services
5. Neighbourhood Character
6. Building Design
7. Sustainability Features



SITE DESIGN

Participants in the illustrated brainstorming session envisioned the future of the OTC site as a primarily-residential neighbourhood organized around a sunny, central open space. Park edges are activated by small-scale, locally-focused retail and the front doors of residential units. The neighbourhood is highly accessible and pedestrian oriented with excellent connectivity to nearby transit and bicycle facilities.

PARKS AND OPEN SPACE

Nearly 70% of all ideas submitted included a central public space. Park and open spaces are programmed to accommodate a variety of activities including active uses such as children's play areas, sports fields and courts, dog areas, gathering spaces for cultural festivals as well as more passive uses such as walking, jogging, and quiet contemplation. Park space is illustrated as a green, natural oasis with trees, lush landscaping, water features, public seating and adequate lighting.



HOUSING

Almost all of the drawings identified housing as a primary use for the site with housing affordability as a key theme. Suggestions were made to create a mixed-income neighbourhood achieved through the inclusion of social housing, innovative housing types such as co-housing, and/or modestly-finished units. More housing options for seniors and families were also suggested.



NEIGHBOURHOOD SHOPS + SERVICES

Many drawings illustrated small-scale, neighbourhood-focused shops and services for the new residents and the surrounding community. Bakeries, coffee shops and other specialty stores were often included as examples intended to provide opportunities for socializing and informal gathering. There were also suggestions for new amenities, including schools, cultural and recreational facilities.



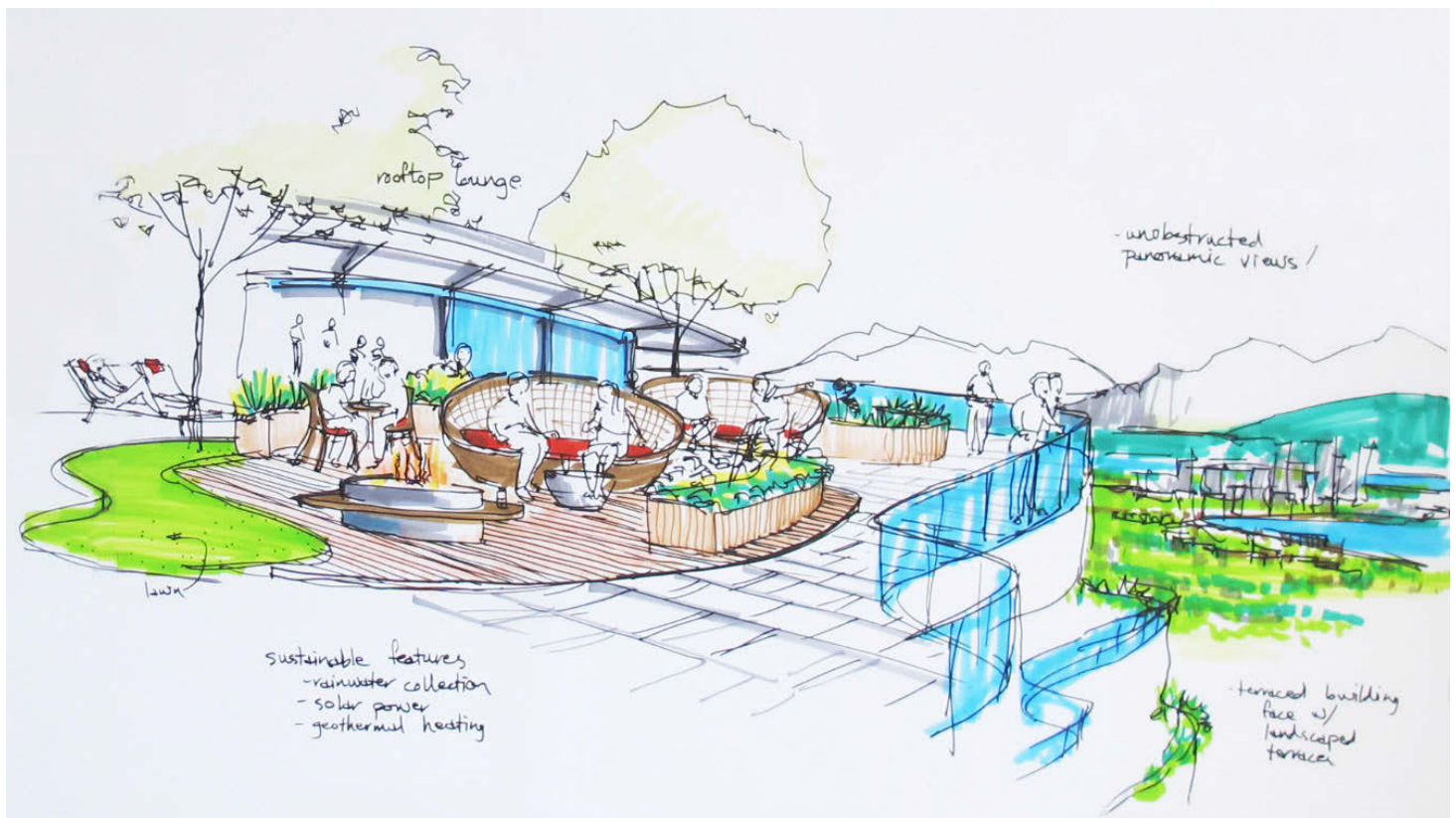
NEIGHBOURHOOD CHARACTER

Participants imagined the new neighbourhood as having a high-quality, West Coast aesthetic with references to First Nations heritage in the area, reflecting the site's history as a trolley bus depot. Proposed elements to enrich sense of place include public art, durable and high quality materials in the public realm, lush landscaping, and unique shops with an artisan or local craft focus.



BUILDING DESIGN

In most illustrations, the central public space is framed by residential or mixed-use buildings with retail uses or front doors at the ground level. A mix of building types ranging from townhouses to higher buildings up to 10 and 12 storeys are included. Higher buildings were proposed along 41st Avenue and in the centre of the site, transitioning down to the surrounding developments. Terraced buildings with landscaped roofs were suggested to take advantage of mountain views as well as to provide amenity spaces and areas for children's play. Buildings are expected to provide weather protection along retail edges and are wheelchair accessible.



SUSTAINABILITY FEATURES

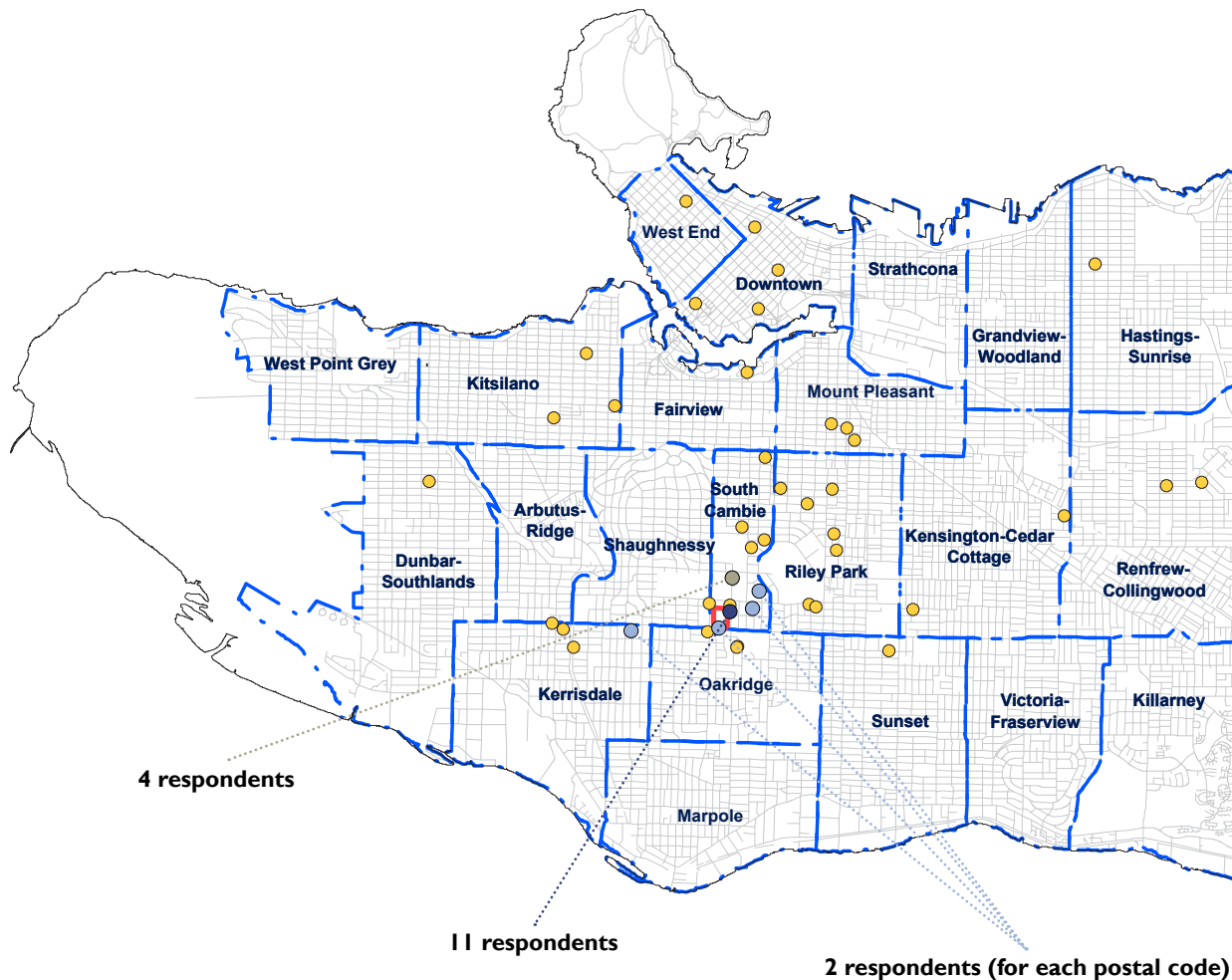
Several drawings incorporate sustainable infrastructure and practices. Solar panels, rainwater capture, geothermal energy, urban agriculture featuring community gardens, and waste management approaches including composting and recycling were identified as desirable for inclusion in the redevelopment of the OTC site.

Questionnaire

A paper questionnaire in both English and Chinese was available at the open houses and online (in English). The online questionnaire was accessible between June 9th and July 3rd, 2014. A total of 154 people attended the open houses and 65 people completed the questionnaire (45 hard copies submitted at the open houses and 20 completed online). One of the questionnaires submitted at the open houses was in Chinese. What follows is a summary of the results.

Where respondents live:

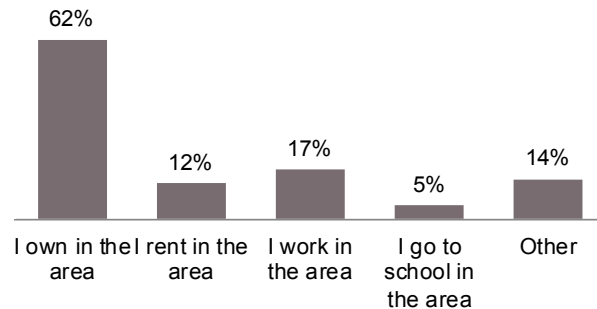
Respondents were asked to provide their postal codes, represented by dots on the map below. A large proportion of respondents live in the South Cambie and Riley Park neighbourhoods with many sharing postal codes within a few blocks of the OTC site.



DEMOGRAPHIC QUESTIONS

What is your connection to the area surrounding the OTC site? (Check all that apply)

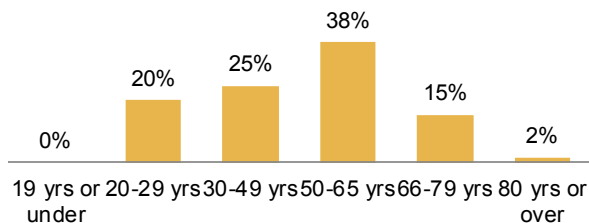
The majority (64%) of respondents live in the area with most being homeowners. A portion of the respondents work in the area (17%). Those that selected “other” (14%) travel through the area on their commute or for shopping.



Note: Percentages reflect how many respondents chose that option out of the total number of respondents; however, multiple choices could be selected, so the sum of the percentages does not equal 100%.

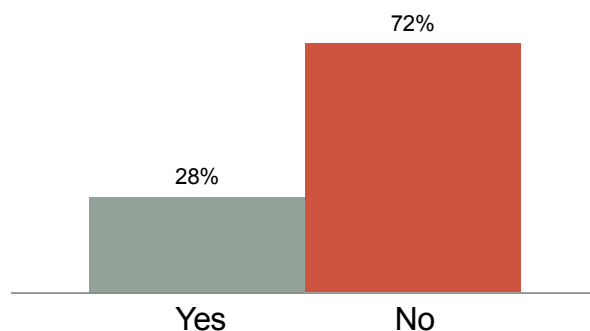
Which age category do you fall in?

Most of the respondents (38%) are in the 50-65 age bracket with significant percentages in the 20-29 (20%) and 30-49 (25%) age groups.



Do you have children under the age of 19 at home?

The majority of respondents (72%) do not have children under the age of 19 at home.



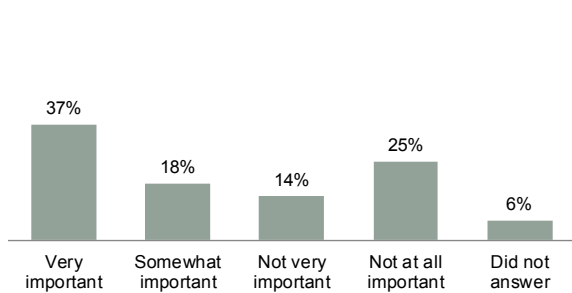
1. Housing

The OTC site will be primarily residential. Please indicate how important the following types of housing are for the OTC site?

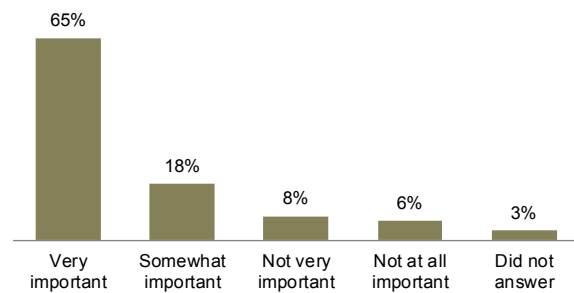
(Note: There is a City requirement to provide a minimum of 20% social housing on this site.)

Housing for families (83%) and seniors (81%) was overwhelmingly identified as important for the area. Rental housing (64%) was also underlined as important with social housing (55%) and market housing (49%) identified as important but less frequently.

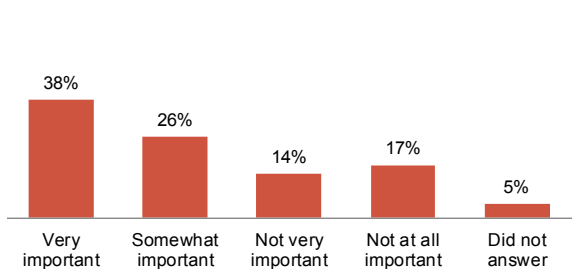
Note: percentages provided above combine the “very important” and “somewhat important” options represented below.



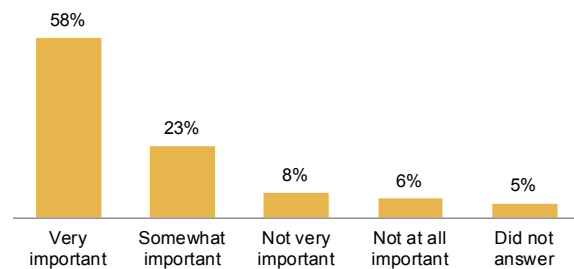
Social Housing



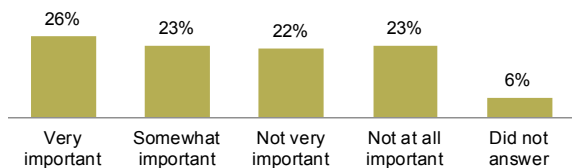
Housing for Families



Rental Housing



Housing for Seniors



Market Housing

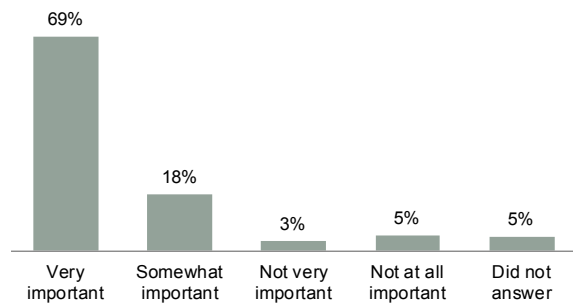
Other:

Eighteen (28%) respondents added additional comments about other types of housing considered important. Most comments emphasized affordable housing options as necessary, ranging from low-income housing for families and seniors to housing targeted towards middle-income earners. Co-op and co-housing options were mentioned as well as more pet-friendly housing.

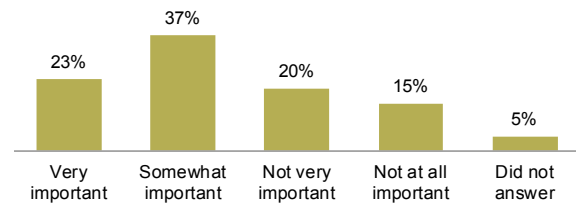
2. Mix of Uses

How important are the following land uses (other than residential) to the OTC site?

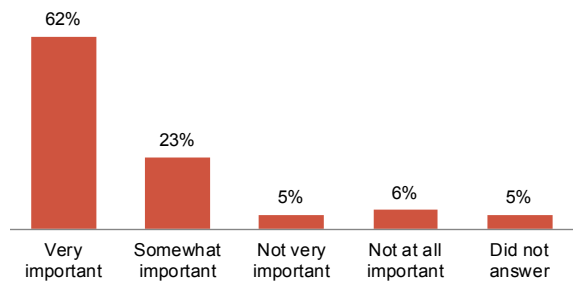
Parks and open space (87%) as well as community amenities (85%) were overwhelming identified as needed in the area with local serving retail (60%) and office and employment space (51%) identified as lesser needs.



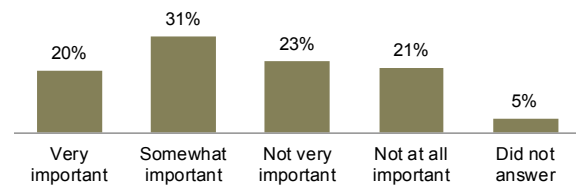
Parks and Open Space



Local Serving Retail



Community Amenities



Office and Employment Space

Other:

Seventeen respondents added additional comments about other types of land uses considered important for the OTC site. Responses were varied, but examples include: healthcare, a small grocery store, artist studios or live/work spaces and play areas for children.

3. Community Facilities

What kinds of community facilities or services (e.g. childcare, recreational, cultural, etc.) are most needed in this area and should be considered for the OTC site?

- A large portion of the 52 responses to this question identified childcare as a significant need in the area, especially more affordable and accessible options.
- Recreation was mentioned multiple times, including specific suggestions for a fitness centre, walking trails, a pool and a playground.
- Some respondents want a community centre on site whereas others would like to see arts and cultural facilities, including studios, galleries and performance venues.
- Facilities for seniors in the form of a community centre as well as assisted living housing options were also identified as a need.
- Finally, some respondents commented that the area is already well serviced by current and planned community facilities and want to see a focus on varied and accessible housing options for the OTC site.

4. Parks and Open Space

What are your priorities for planning parks and open space on the site? What activities should we plan for?

- Many of the respondents want to see passive greenspace that is protected from the traffic and noise on 41st Avenue. Some envision this space to be large while others see the area as already well served by park space (e.g., Oak Meadows Park and VanDusen Botanical Gardens) and find a smaller neighbourhood park on the OTC site more appropriate instead.
- Landscaping was emphasized multiple times as being important along with the incorporation of natural habitat features and wildlife. Multiple comments addressed walking trails and playgrounds as highly desirable.
- Spaces for public gathering either for political and cultural events or casual outings like picnics were requested by many respondents.
- Dog areas were mentioned several times, but many asked for them to be separated to make open space safer for children with some not wanting dedicated dog areas on the site at all.
- Many respondents identified community gardens as a priority for open space on the site.
- Water features and public art were also identified as desirable features.

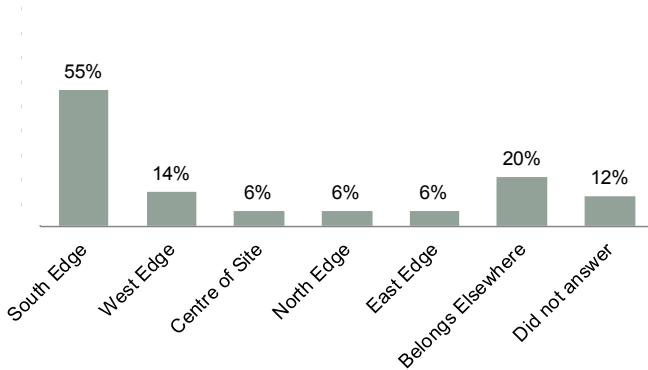
5. Transportation

When considering all modes of transportation – walking, biking, transit and cars – what key issues and opportunities should be considered in the redevelopment of the OTC site?

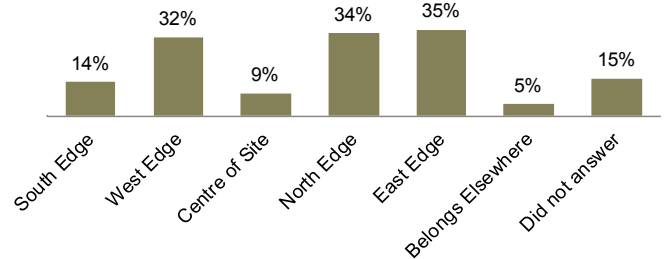
- The majority of comments emphasized pedestrian accessibility to and through the site. Respondents asked for strategies to mitigate noise and promote safety for the pedestrian experience.
- Many respondents asked for improvements to bike infrastructure (e.g., bike racks and storage) and to the surrounding bike route network, including enhancements to Heather Street Bikeway and the addition of separated bike lanes on 41st Avenue and Oak Street.
- A couple of respondents did not want to see any bike paths integrated within the site.
- Transit was highlighted as a huge priority with many respondents asking for improvements to the Oak Street and 41st Avenue bus routes (addition of buses to come more frequently) as well as the Canada Line (increased capacity).
- Multiple respondents expressed concern for adequate vehicle parking, suggesting separate spaces for residents in underground parking.
- A couple of respondents wanted any development to prioritize non-vehicular modes of transportation and use strategies to reduce single occupancy vehicle use.

6. Where on the OTC site would you locate... (select all that apply)

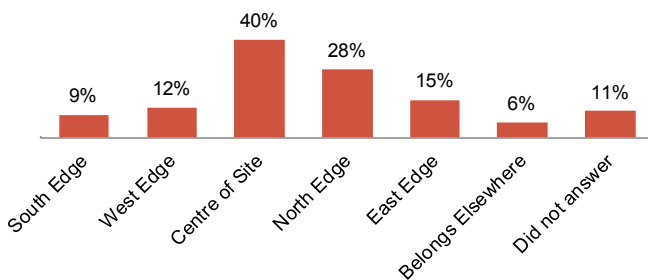
Respondents were asked where they would locate the amenities and building types listed below.



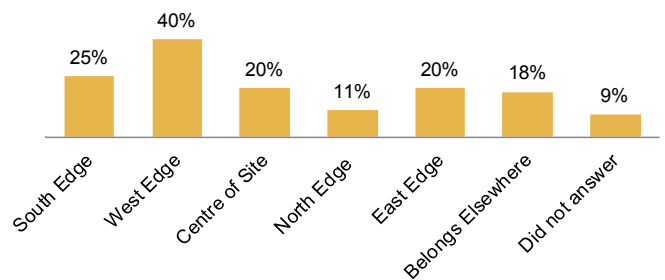
Retail or other non-residential uses



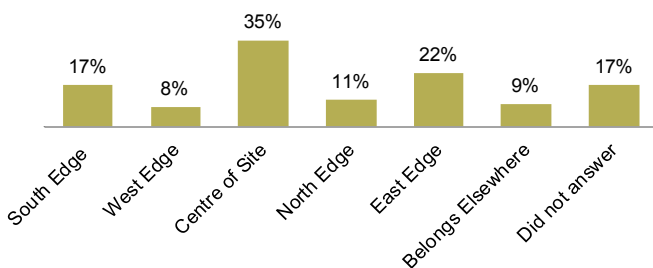
Townhouses (1 - 4 storeys)



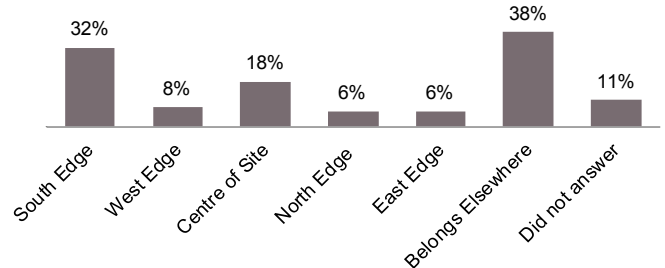
Parks and Open Space



Low-Rise Buildings (3 - 6 storeys)



Community Facilities

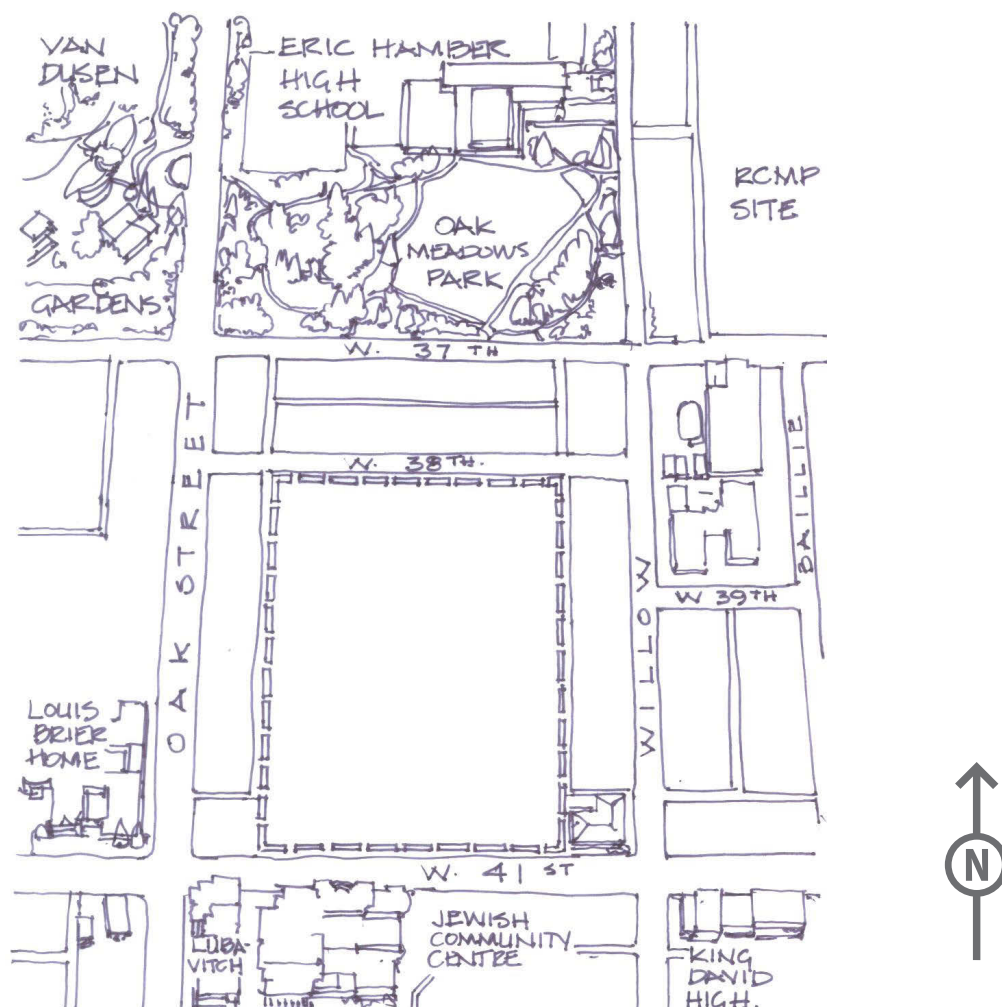


Mid-Rise Buildings (6 - 12 storeys)

Note: Percentages reflect how many respondents chose that option out of the total number of respondents; however, multiple choices could be selected for each topic, so the sum of the percentages does not equal 100%.

6. Where on the OTC site would you locate... (select all that apply) continued...

- The majority of respondents located retail or other non-residential uses on the southern edge (55%) with the second highest percentage expressing that they thought these uses belong elsewhere (20%).
- Many respondents located parks and open space at the centre of the site (40%) as well as on the northern edge (28%) with some interest in locating these uses on the eastern edge (15%).
- Most respondents located community facilities at the centre of the site (35%) with others choosing the eastern edge (22%) or southern edge (17%).
- A large number of respondents located townhouses on the eastern edge (35%), northern edge (34%) and western edge (32%).
- Many respondents located low-rise buildings on the western edge (40%) with relatively equal numbers choosing to locate this building type on the southern edge (25%), at the centre of the site (20%), on the eastern edge (20%) and as belonging elsewhere (18%).
- A large number of respondents identified mid-rise buildings as belonging elsewhere (38%) but others located them at the southern edge (32%) of the site with some choosing the centre of the site (18%).

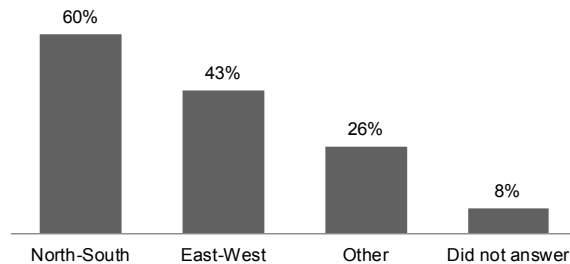


Note: The comment form included the illustrated map shown above for respondents to reference.

7. Pedestrian Connections

Are there important pedestrian connections that should be made through the site?

A north-south pedestrian connection was identified most frequently by respondents (60%) with moderate support for an east-west connection (43%). Those that selected “other” (26%) desire to have diagonal connections, a combination of both or as many as possible.



Note: Percentages reflect how many respondents chose that option out of the total number of respondents; however, multiple choices could be selected, so the sum of the percentages does not equal 100%.

8. Do you have any other comments?

- Multiple comments expressed opposition to tall buildings and high densities on the OTC site. There is concern that the densities proposed for the Oakridge Centre Mall redevelopment will be replicated here.
- Many want to see a focus on low-rise buildings and townhouses on the OTC site with a 6-storey maximum.
- There is desire for local-serving retail on site in the form of a small grocery or produce store.
- Many respondents shared a general desire for the OTC site to be community oriented in terms of the amenities provided and the design of open spaces.
- A couple of respondents fear the impact development and construction will have on traffic in the area.