**Summary of Proceedings**

**PROCESS**

On Feb 21st,2015, 45 people attended Mount View Colquitz Community Association’s “*Uptown-Douglas Corridor: From Nowhere Special to Someplace Great*” event, spending the morning generating a 10-year vision of an improved Uptown-Douglas Corridor area and the afternoon “drilling down” on specific areas of concern.

Of the 45 participants, 11 live in the area, 15 work in the area and 26 travel through regularly (some by car, many by bike). 26 people returned evaluations; according to these evaluations, 7 of those travelling through use cars, 3 used cars or bikes, 4 travel by bus and 2 cycle.

The people met at one of four tables, their dialogue seeded by questions framing a 10 year vision[[1]](#footnote-1). Their discussion was captured on flip charts at all four tables. At the lunch break, participants from all tables engaged in a gallery walk, reading over the posted flip charts and attaching blue/green stickers to indicate priorities, and red/yellow stickers to indicate items that resonated for them but weren’t necessarily priorities. In addition to the flip charts, three tables also recorded their conversation.

The vision on the next page is generated by priorities and resonances identified from the four tables’ conversations. (For detail, see “Vision Priorities dot data”.) Major themes included interconnectivity; regional approach to corridor planning; the need for increased and enhanced green space and higher densities done well; sense of community.

During the afternoon, participants rotated from table to table, discussing 3 or the following four topics: planning green space; planning mixed use density; building an interconnected bi-ped network; and people power- what can community do to achieve the vision. The contents of the afternoon discussions were reported back to the large group, but not evaluated with a gallery walk. From page major themes and topics are listed. Due to the free flowing nature of the conversations, comments made at one table that apply more to another topic have been shifted to the applicable discussion.

The afternoon conversations provide a kind of road map for achieving the vision in certain areas. Some items listed are clearly doable in the short term, at low cost. Other items will require greater discussion, bye-in and planning.

An abbreviated plenary discussion at the end of the day saw the following immediate next steps articulated:

* Letters from all CAs to both Saanich and Victoria about the importance of a joint planning process for the Douglas Corridor
* Request substantive response from the municipalities
* Include other municipalities in discussion (i.e. View Royal—as there may be implications for strategies such as a McKenzie overpass).
* Report out to all stakeholders

**10 YEAR VISION**

*“I would love to hear birds singing, water rushing by, have clean air to breathe”,*

*“I’d like to get the sense that every time I walk a hundred yards I’m in a different place*.”

Serviced by an Uptown-Downtown shuttle, the area between Blanshard and the Galloping Goose from McKenzie to downtown Victoria[[2]](#footnote-2) is an affordable, walkable, community in which people live, play and work. While the area is host to a rapid transit system moving people through and beyond the region, the area is no longer dominated by vehicular through-traffic. Planning for the area is regional, led jointly by Victoria and Saanich.

A residential address here is affordable and inviting; plenty of green space, assorted parks, day-lit creeks and other natural amenities and welcoming gathering places foster a strong sense of community. There is a pleasant sound ambience. The area boasts a vibrant mix of employment opportunities in the retail and restaurant sectors as well as the arts (live music and theatre), entertainment, technology, light industry and other commercial ventures.

Neighbourhoods within the area are connected by a continuous network of separated bike and walking paths that ensure both good walking routes for people of all types and abilities and safe commuter cycling routes. Residents have easy biped access to regional transit routes, local businesses and micro-green spaces as well as more green distant attractions such as Swan Lake or Rutledge Park. All biped pathways are separated from the road.

**DRILLING DOWN**

**On Planning Mixed Use Residential and Employment Density**

**“**I’d like to celebrate Canada Day there”

**Overview**

* + Build with contours in mind (lower levels, higher buildings)
  + Space for intentional communities
  + Currently “empty space” includes: former Mayfair Lanes (Oak and Tolmie); parking lot at BC Systems building;

**Short term, do-able, low cost**

* + Oak Street mixed use, high density housing/ shops below/ homes above
  + 8 to 10 stories max (as in Happy City—towers are isolating and alienating)

**Requires greater discussion, buy-in and planning**

* + Transform Gateway and City Hall area to be a municipal/ gathering area with presence
  + Redo Saanich Plaza (high density residential)
  + Encourage density along Carey with services in first floor of high rise
* Plan for high density all up Douglas St. so that it connects to Gov’t St. and downtown (and Store ST.) – people work and live there with lots of greenspace

**On Planning Green Space**

“*Make the trail more beautiful”*

*“I see a range of parks to suit their neighbourhoods. Mini-greens; kids play grounds; tennis/basketball courts; larger parks”*

**Short term, do-able, low cost**

* + Link existing parks with pathways:
    - E.g. From Goose to Rutledge park
    - overpass to Swan Lake at Huxley
  + Lower speed limits on residential streets so that streets can be used for play
  + Widen current paths to make them accessible – be sure it is wheelchair accessible
  + Day-light area creeks (e.g. Darwin creek)

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**Requires greater discussion, buy-in and planning**

* + Add green spaces[[3]](#footnote-3): at Uptown; around switch bridge; Mayfair lanes site; down Wascana
  + Fine tune development incentives for including parks in planning
  + Green space includes usable green roof tops (and woof-tops?)
  + Highway has to stop for urban core
  + Acquire greenspace by making streets one way; other lane becomes green walk/bike space; for example: Northbound highway 17 becomes green – no longer for cars (see “New Greenway” on map for specific street)
  + Gateway / Save On foods all becomes green
  + Like Banff – elevated living paths that animals can use as well as people (in place of walkways) Connect current greenspace like Swan Lake

**On Building an Interconnected Bi-Ped Network**

“*Challenge the assumption that there will inevitably be flow-through traffic and conduits that we have to accommodate “*

*“90% of complaints to Saanich police are traffic related”*

**Short term, do-able, low cost**

* + Add park-like and security amenities to the Galloping Goose/Lochside and other trails: park benches, water fountains, trail maps, dog disposal/garbage/recycling bins , emergency buttons/ thoughtful lighting/ reflective centre lines along the trail
  + Designate bike, pedestrian lanes on the Galloping Goose and Lochside trails
  + Widen trails to accommodate scooters/wheelchairs
  + Improve way-finding: Signs to direct people from trail to trail: a cycle/walk app.
  + Safe crossings at mid-points of blocks on Blanshard/Vernon, Huxley, Kent
  + Join current trails so that they link together; create an “adopt a trail” program
  + Increase east west connectivity from Goose
  + Separate cycle paths from roads
  + Keep trails and pathways in good condition in all weather; clear of snow and debris
  + Shuttle/trolley/ streetcar/tram between Uptown and Downtown and other places in the corridor (similar to the Langford trolley)
* Discourage thru traffic in secondary road areas
  + Foot- Bike access from Oak Street to Blanshard Park

**Important next steps**

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| * Public consultations with Transit authorities – meaningful and not just lip-service |
| o   Write letter to Susan Brice |
| o   Write letter from Community associations |
| * Transportation Data to inform the consultations |

**Requires greater discussion, buy-in and planning**

* Bi-ped cross traffic is at a different level – think overpasses with open spaces, patios, gardens. Roof top play grounds (pedestrian access above traffic—continuous connection at second floor level.)
* Consider banning vehicles from certain roads/ consider banning certain types of vehicles
* Consider restricting traffic on certain roads at certain times of day.
* Plan and establish a separate biped corridor/network
* Make Darwin, Nigel, Vernon a local boulevard for people turn area into a real neighbourhood
* High speed rail from Swartz Bay to Uptown Street car from Uptown to Downtown

**On People Power: How can we ensure the realization of the vision?**

**Themes**

* Citizen participation
  + Consultations (public)
  + Budgeting process
  + Advocacy
* Connect with others
  + E.g. community Assn’s, coffee places, GG intersection
* Showcase example from elsewhere, here
* Guerilla Urbanism

**Short term, do-able, low cost**

* CA’s advocate for meaningful, substantive public consultation
  + Advocacy:
    - better way-finding signs
    - standards for increasing lights on highways
    - cycling education on rules of the road for Goose and road
  + Raise awareness:
    - by going to places people already gather: parent advisory groups, block watch, school based programs
    - Engage people who use the Goose,
    - Harness social media; make it relevant, sexy, fun
    - Through ongoing amalgamation-governance discussions
* Individuals as active citizens: participate in land use planning, make voice heard, join political parties, participate all levels; join boards and community associations; join groups such as Walk on Victoria, GVCC, BTWW
* Form a transit advocacy group

**Requires greater discussion, buy-in and planning**

* Power sharing policies such as giving CAs budgeting power or earlier participation in land use planning processes

**OTHER TOPICS TO CONSIDER**

These topics were suggested via the participant evaluation forms.

* Safe transitions from residential areas to schools
* Light rail, trams or streetcars on Douglas
* Water use conservation, sewage treatments
* Focus on “people” instead of “cars”
* Focus on the fact that rail transit is the foundation of nearly all of the visions presented
* GhG reductions occur as soon as rail is implemented
* Official representation from Transit included
* Land use plan of Douglas Corridor from Humbolt to Uptown (Or McKenzie to Mile 0)
* More refined discussion on “future” park locations and specific biped/low car routes.
* The urgent need for fewer hurdles to decisions in CRD—amalgamation!
* Actual projects being mentioned and implemented

**NEXT STEPS**

During discussions, the following next steps were identified to assist in moving this conversation further. Currently these steps will be tracked on the Mount View Colquitz Community Association website

* Draft model letter for CAs and other organizations/ individuals with an interest to send to Victoria and Saanich, BC Transit, MOTI
* Collect feedback on Summary of Highlights to inform final report
* Address smaller actionable items than can be implemented in the shorter term. (short term, do-able, lo-cost)
* Consolidate maps showing preferred land use, green space, pathway linkages etc. for addition to final report
* Report out to all stakeholders (Saanich, CRD MOTI, Transit)
* Form a transit advocacy group
* Form “Towards Someplace Great” a Douglas corridor advocacy group
* Participants contact district council members to promote conclusions.

1. Why will you or other people come to the Uptown-Douglas corridor area? How does the area sound? How does it smell? What do you see? What is the area like to walk in? ride in? drive in? What is different from today? What has been retained? [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Some said “Uptown to the Hudson” referencing regional developments [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. See maps [↑](#footnote-ref-3)