



Quadra Cedar Hill Community Association

March 30, 2020

Ms. Alanna Cooke,
Planner, Community Planning
Saanich Planning

RE: QCHCA input re Uptown Douglas Corridor Plan

Dear Saanich Planning,

Thank you for QCHCA's opportunity to participate on the Uptown Douglas Corridor Plan Advisory Committee, your presentation to the Association in September, and the various points at which citizens were invited to provide input and feedback. While this is a very complex and diverse document, much of which with we are in agreement, we would like to highlight some of our concerns.

Right at the beginning on page 1, the report states that Saanich "lacks a singular, shared place for its residents to gather". Since the beginning of this five-year process, we have argued that a civic square needs to be created and the Saanich Cenotaph moved there for November 11th Remembrance Day ceremonies and other significant municipal events. The obvious location would be behind the Parks/Rec annex, adjacent to Lochside Trail, and opposite the new square being planned on the east side of the trail for the Nigel Valley complex. Saanich currently uses this space for vehicle parking. Such demand for use of this space should be reduced by issuing parking decal/passes for employees, encouraging greater use of active transportation and furthering progress on climate mitigation.

Map 5.1 on page 41 is very misleading in that the building heights shown are the base heights, and not the maximum as shown in the tables that follow. This is a concern as citizens may only look at the maps and not have a true understanding of the building heights proposed.

On a historical note, the original Uptown Shopping Centre was billed as a mixed-use community space with a significant residential component. Despite its special zoning, no residential component was ever built. The residential areas were promoted as a way to bring after-hours vibrancy to the community, as the residents would enjoy the many proposed cafes and other amenities. Since the residences were never built, the project has become a commercial/retail space with few after hours cafes and entertainment spaces. If the key plan direction #5, "Lead Growth with Residential", is to be achieved,

Saanich will need to find ways to ensure that the middle- and lower-cost housing actually gets built as part of the rezoning process.

In developing the Douglas Oak Hub, it would seem reasonable to extend the core designation all the way to the west side of Blanshard Street between Saanich Road and Tolmie Avenue, as both Douglas and Blanshard are major traffic arteries. Then, in the Rutledge neighbourhood, we would see the Urban mixed-use zone east of Blanshard Street converted to mid-rise residential.

If Douglas Street goes to seven lanes, thought should be given to some form of pedestrian refuge area between the two directions of traffic lanes for all pedestrians, and especially those with mobility issues, trying to cross such a wide and busy street.

When looking at the Urban Forest, especially within the streetscape of the core area, forward climate change projections should be taken into account. Further, in the core area, the harshness of traffic-related deposits such as road salt, oil and rubber, as well as the issue of “high maintenance” trees, should be considered when selecting appropriate species. For instance, many of the Garry Oaks and Arbutus are already under climate stress so planting these species might not be the best choice going forward.

Re Section 6.4.2 – we applaud the creation of a new Transit hub for the region. This should be a significant site and include other public venues such as relocation of the current Emily Carr Library branch (see 8.4.4). Other uses might include a seniors’ centre or a community centre.

Re Section 8 - Lochside and Galloping Goose Trails – complete negotiations with the CRD and widen these trails from Quadra Street to the Selkirk Trestle. Bike lanes must be separated from pedestrian walkways for safety’s sake. Rules must be implemented for electrically assisted modes.

Discussion was held at the March 12th Advisory Committee meeting re assigning a new name to replace “Uptown Douglas Corridor Plan”. We suggest simply renaming this the “Saanich Core Plan”. The sections of the existing Saanich Core Local Area Plan (on the east side of Calumet/Inverness) should be added to the current Quadra LAP (this has been suggested for the eventual updating of that plan).

Thank you again for the opportunity to comment. Please let us know if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Susan Haddon

President, QCHCA