



The Corporation of the District of Saanich

Report

To: Mayor and Council

From: Lindsay Chase, Director of Planning

Date: January 28, 2025

Subject: Quadra McKenzie Plan – Check in on Phase 3 Engagement

File: 2310-20

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That Council receive the Phase 3 Community and Stakeholder Engagement Summary for information (Attachment A).
2. That Council endorse Land Use Option #2 which scales back the intensity of land use changes with a focus on areas designated as Corridor and Corridor Hub.
3. That Council endorse Transportation Option #2, which defers determination of a road cross-section on McKenzie Avenue to a future process and retains the Quadra Street cross-section in the Quadra McKenzie Plan.
4. That Council endorse Process Option #2 to support an additional round of public engagement on the Revised Draft Plan prior to Council consideration of a Proposed Plan.
5. That Council allocate \$30,000 from the Housing Accelerator Fund to support additional public engagement, as outlined in Process Option #2.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this Report is to present the Phase 3 Community and Stakeholder Engagement Summary which highlights key themes and issues from public engagement on the Draft Quadra McKenzie Plan. Additionally, the Report provides recommendations on how to move forward with land use and transportation edits to the Draft Plan, as well as a recommendation on additional public engagement on a revised Draft Plan prior to Council consideration of a Proposed Plan.

BACKGROUND

Council Direction

At the Committee of the Whole on August 8, 2022, Council endorsed the Terms of Reference for the Quadra McKenzie Area Planning Study.

On October 21, 2024, Council received the Draft Quadra McKenzie Plan and the Phase 2 Engagement Summary for information, which initiated public engagement on the Draft Plan.

Process To Date

The Quadra McKenzie Study began in February 2023 (see Figure 1), after Council approval of the Terms of Reference. The intent of the project is to develop a Plan that promotes sustainable land use and transportation, while accommodating new housing and employment growth within well designed Centres, Corridors and Villages (CCVs). The process has been delivered in accordance with the Terms of Reference and is at the end of Phase 3.



Figure 1: Quadra McKenzie Plan Phases

PHASE 3 (DRAFT PLAN) ENGAGEMENT OVERVIEW

Phase 3 Engagement Activities

Staff completed Phase 3 engagement between October 2024 and December 2024, focusing on gathering feedback on the Draft Quadra McKenzie Plan. The project encouraged participation through the project website, Hello Saanich, an online notification link (Campaigner), social media platforms, newspaper advertisements, and targeted email lists for stakeholders. Notification letters were also sent to large-site landowners, First Nations, and other government entities. A combination of in-person and online engagement sessions were offered, including:

- Pop-up Events (3).
- In-person open houses (2) attended by 732 people.
- Online sessions (2) attended by 198 people.
- Survey - online with print option (online for 42 days) completed by 2,505 people.
- Targeted stakeholder meetings / webinars; and
- Presentations to Council Committees.

Through these opportunities, over 3,800 individuals participated, and more than 3,300 comments were received. A preliminary summary of key themes from Phase 3 engagement is provided below. Additional details on promotion, engagement activities, participant demographics, and in-depth findings can be found in Attachment A – Phase 3 Community and Stakeholder Engagement Summary.

Phase 3 Engagement Results

The engagement process conducted between October and December 2024 generated significant public feedback on the Draft Plan. This feedback will inform revisions and refinements to various policy directions. The majority of responses focused on land use, building heights and density, the preservation of neighbourhood character, and corridor design and lane reallocations.

The data presented in this Report summarizes feedback from survey responses, email submissions and open house comments. The summary is a high-level overview of key themes and considerations. Further detailed analysis of comments is ongoing to help identify appropriate changes to the Draft Plan. In total, over 12,000 qualitative comments/responses were received. Table 1 shares an overview of responses to key survey questions. Note that responses do not show neutral responses.

Table 1: Snapshot of Survey Findings

| Level of Support (Survey Findings) | Strongly Agree/Agree | Strongly Disagree/Disagree |
|---|-----------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Overall key plan goals | 31% (719) | 62% (1451) |
| Land use objectives | 38% (783) | 46% (1002) |
| New Centre at Gordon Head Road and McKenzie Ave | 46% (798) | 31% (535) |
| Concept of Corridor Hubs | 47% (782) | 38% (642) |
| Higher density developments near rapid/future transit routes | 53% (888) | 32% (532) |
| Proposed major transit stops | 42% (818) | 23% (455) |
| Parks, trails, open spaces, and community facilities objectives | 64% (1420) | 14% (330) |

A diverse range of public comments were received from multiple avenues, which can be reviewed in Attachment A – Phase 3 Community and Stakeholder Engagement Summary. The key themes of comments are outlined below and organized by Draft Plan chapters.

Section 2 – Key Plan Goals

- Common concerns raised with the key plan goals related to worsening traffic congestion, the reduction of travel lanes, and the preservation of neighbourhood character.

Section 3 – Land Use Framework

Areas of Support

- Overall, there was a level of support for the Draft Plan's vision to utilize the Centre, Corridor, and Village growth management framework to promote compact, livable communities.
- There was a recognition of the potential benefits of enhanced access to transit and local amenities.
- Some respondents were optimistic that a thoughtful, well-implemented plan can drive economic and social vitality in target areas.
- Feedback acknowledged the necessity of diversifying housing options.
- A level of support for different building forms as part of the future vision for Quadra McKenzie (see Figure 2).
- A range of building forms were supported for the long-term vision in the Quadra McKenzie area (see Figure 2)

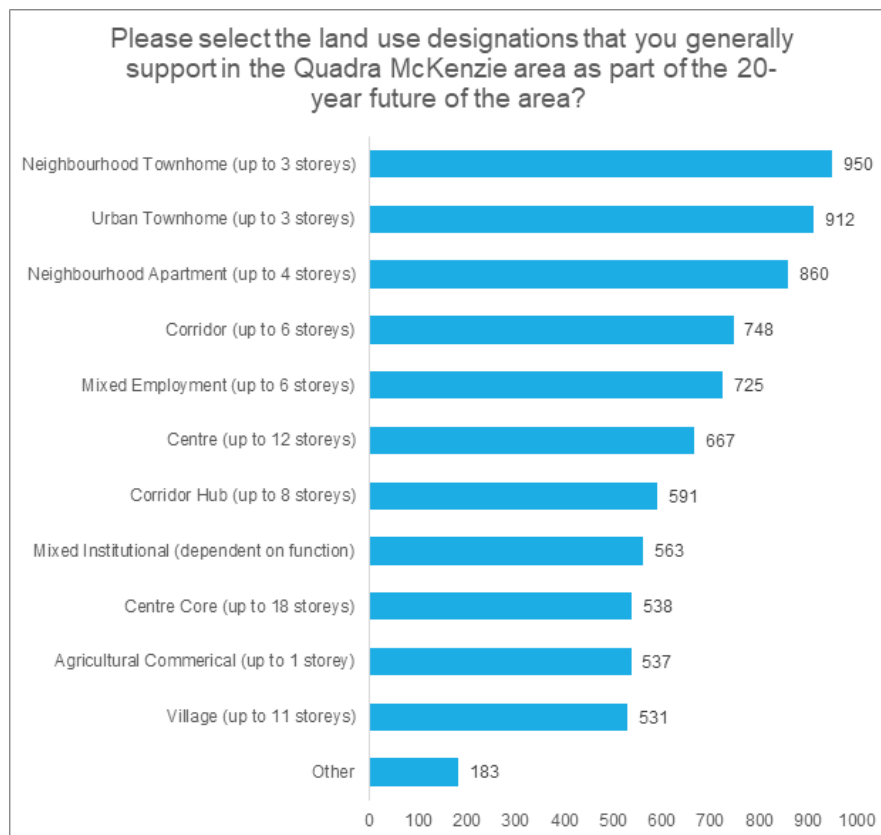


Figure 2: Survey Question # 13 – Section 3, Land Use Framework

Areas of Exploration/Concerns

- Commonly expressed concerns with land use framework related to impacts on existing residents, neighbourhood character and existing transportation and infrastructure networks.
- There was an overarching sentiment emphasizing managing density that supports local vibrancy without overwhelming current infrastructure or eroding neighborhood cohesion.
- Respondents would also like to see an inclusive planning process that prioritizes local insights, addresses concerns about noise and congestion, and ensures new developments are seamlessly integrated with the established urban fabric.
- Respondents expressed a desire to explore how high-density developments can be balanced with the desire for family-centric, affordable housing solutions, potentially leading to innovative housing models.
- Respondents generally supported the Draft Plan's ambition to deliver a variety of housing options to cater to diverse demographics and income levels. There is recognition that innovative housing solutions can promote inclusivity and economic diversity by offering more affordable living spaces while potentially revitalizing under-utilized areas.
- The introduction of dense, high-rise developments presented concerns with many fearing that such developments might not harmonize with the local character and could stress existing infrastructure, leading to transportation challenges, school overcapacities and utility challenges.
- Questions arose around high-density projects genuinely contributing to affordability without compromising quality of life or displacing current residents.
- There was a desire to create mixed-use communities that combine residential, commercial, and recreational spaces, fostering vibrant communities where residents can live, work, and engage in leisure activities without necessitating long commutes.

- Respondents advocated for housing plans that are sensitive to family needs, proposing the inclusion of family-sized units and supportive community amenities.
- Suggestions to leverage strategic locations close to transit nodes for higher densities, ensuring developments contribute to a diverse range of housing options without disproportionately impacting the existing community.
- Desire for affordable housing within sites through cooperation with developers and leveraging policy tools such as density bonuses or flexible zoning.
- There was more opposition than support for the Draft Plan's land use objectives (38% support/strongly support, 16% neutral, 46% oppose/strongly oppose).

Section 4 – Transportation and Mobility

Areas of Support

- Respondents acknowledged the Plan's vision of promoting active and public transportation over car dependency, showing foresight in sustainable development.
- Many respondents recognized the long-term benefits of prioritizing active transportation and improving urban mobility.
- There was an appreciation for fostering safer pedestrian and cycling environments, which aligns with increasing local and global trends towards sustainable urban transit.
- The vision of "car-light living" coined in the Draft Plan resonates well once it becomes evident that alternative transport options are feasible, reliable, and equally accessible.

Areas of Exploration/Concerns

- There was more opposition than support for the Draft Plan's transportation objectives (30% support/strongly support, 6% neutral, 64% oppose/strongly oppose)
- Commonly expressed concerns were related to the reduction of vehicle lanes and the potential for traffic congestion and longer vehicle commute times on McKenzie Avenue and Quadra Street
- Skepticism of transit replacing private vehicle usage, and perceived underutilization of cycling infrastructure.
- Common concerns raised were the accessibility of transit services due to inconvenient stop locations, and reliability of transit.
- Common concerns raised about proposed pedestrian crossings/signals were impacts of excessive pedestrian crossings to traffic flow, the need for safer crossings near schools, and proper signage at accident-prone areas.
- Respondents encouraged transit systems for all demographics that meet community needs while maintaining efficient access for emergency services and necessary vehicular access for those unable to rely on active travel modes.
- The majority of feedback highlighted the necessity to carefully approach the reduction of vehicle lanes, especially on critical corridors like McKenzie Avenue and Quadra Street.
- Respondents acknowledged the potential for reduced congestion and environmental impacts through alternative transit options while raising valid concerns about current public transportation adequacy, including infrastructure improvements and increased bus frequency to build confidence in public transit as a viable alternative.
- Feedback suggested that infrastructure improvements should be phased and accompanied by enhanced public transit solutions, such as increased frequency of service, better coverage, and improved accessibility.
- Respondents highlighted the necessity for infrastructure that supports multi-modal commuting, with integration points for bicycles, buses, and ride-sharing services, ensuring smooth transitions between different modes of transit.

Section 5 – Parks, Trails, Open Spaces and Community Facilities

Areas of Support

- There was community support for enhancing green spaces, emphasizing their value in improving quality of life.
- There was clear community appreciation for plans to enhance the connectivity and quality of parks and recreational spaces. Respondents particularly valued the role these spaces play in improving overall community well-being and environmental quality.
- There was support for initiatives that aim to increase accessibility to these areas, facilitating easier usage by all demographic groups within the community.
- There was support for the preservation of natural habitats within the urban areas.
- Respondents strongly supported maintaining a focus on preserving key natural features, which are treasured by the community not only for their recreational value but also for their contribution to regional biodiversity.
- There was strong support for the Draft Plan's parks, trails, open spaces and community facilities objectives (64% support/strongly support, 22% neutral, 14% oppose/strongly oppose).

Areas of Exploration/Concerns

- Commonly expressed concerns with parks, trails, open spaces and community facilities were related to the debate on maintaining park space or developing new parks, enhancing accessibility to parks and the infrastructure within them, expanding amenities such as restrooms and parking, and the protection of natural habitats and sensitive ecosystems.
- Suggestions for further integration of community-specific greenways reflected a broader enthusiasm for tailored, culturally significant open spaces that support local activities and events.
- By incorporating community-led insights and aspirations, there is an opportunity to create public spaces that resonate deeply with local needs and values, thereby fostering greater community engagement and sustainable urban coexistence.

OPTIONS FOR PLAN REVISIONS AND ADDITIONAL PROCESS

Staff are seeking Council direction on how to move forward with Draft Plan refinements, specifically in the areas of land use designations and transportation corridor design. Staff are also seeking direction with respect to the planning process / public engagement desired to complete the project and deliver a Proposed Plan for Council consideration. The following three sections highlight options and recommendations in each of these three areas of land use, transportation and process.

Land Use Policy Options

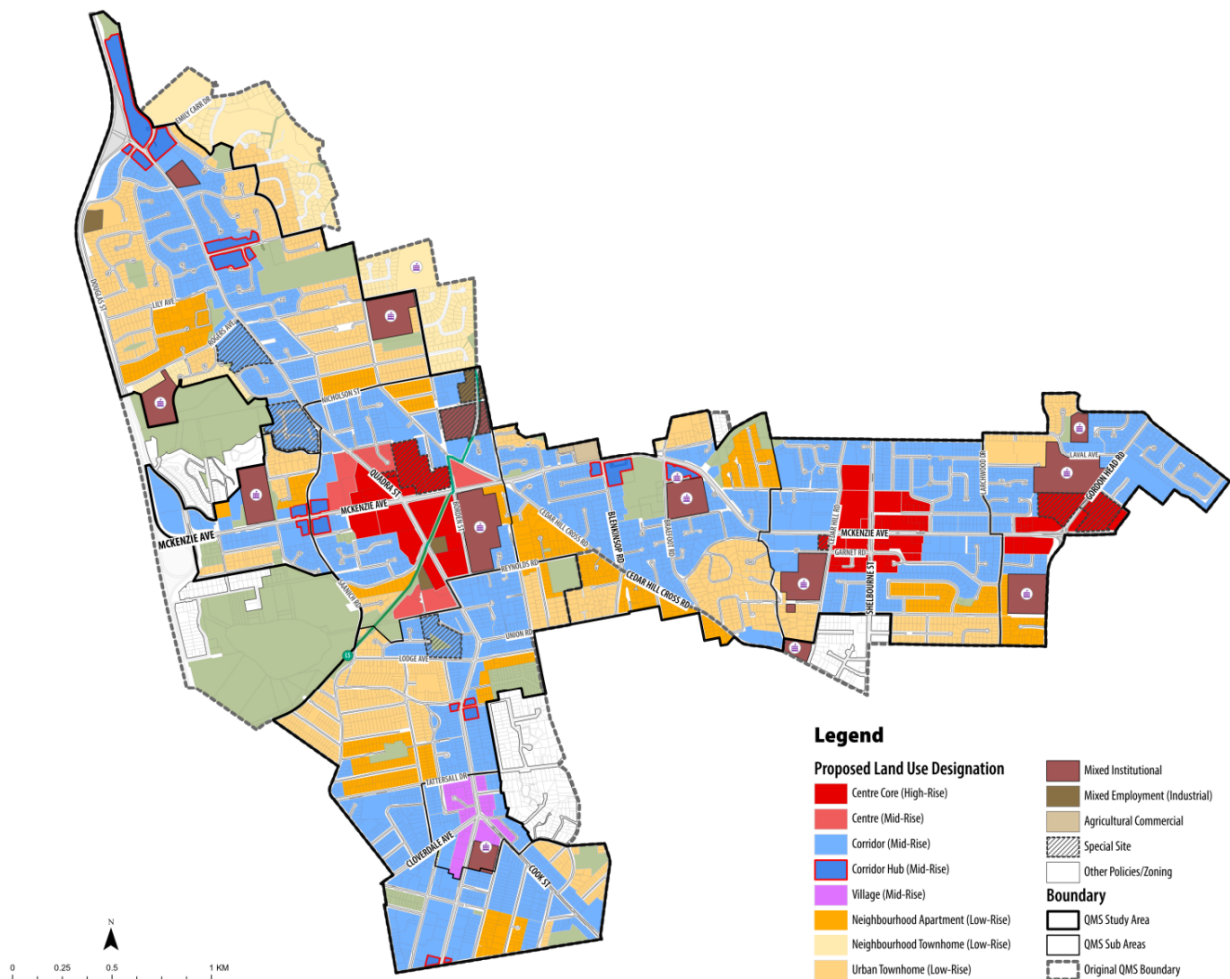
Feedback on the Draft Plan included a level of support for elements of the land use framework, but also some concerns about the scope and scale of potential land use changes. Some of the concerns were exacerbated by confusion around the immediacy of changes, a lack of appreciation of the 20-30 year time horizon of the Plan and the understanding that land use changes would only happen when initiated by property owners.

Four options are presented for Council's consideration with respect to approaching land use changes in the Draft Plan.

Land Use Option #1 – Retain Land Use Framework in Draft Plan with Minor Revisions

This option would direct staff to largely retain the Draft Plan land use designations, with minor revisions based on public feedback. This option would look at smaller scale adjustments to the land use designations on individual parcels but not change any of the fundamental land use elements included in the Draft Plan. Map 1 shows the land use designations in the October 2024 Draft Plan. This option would retain the strong focus of the Draft Plan on accommodating new population and employment in transit supported areas but not result in substantial changes based on public feedback.

Map 1: Quadra McKenzie Plan - Future Land Use Designations (Draft Plan, October 2024)



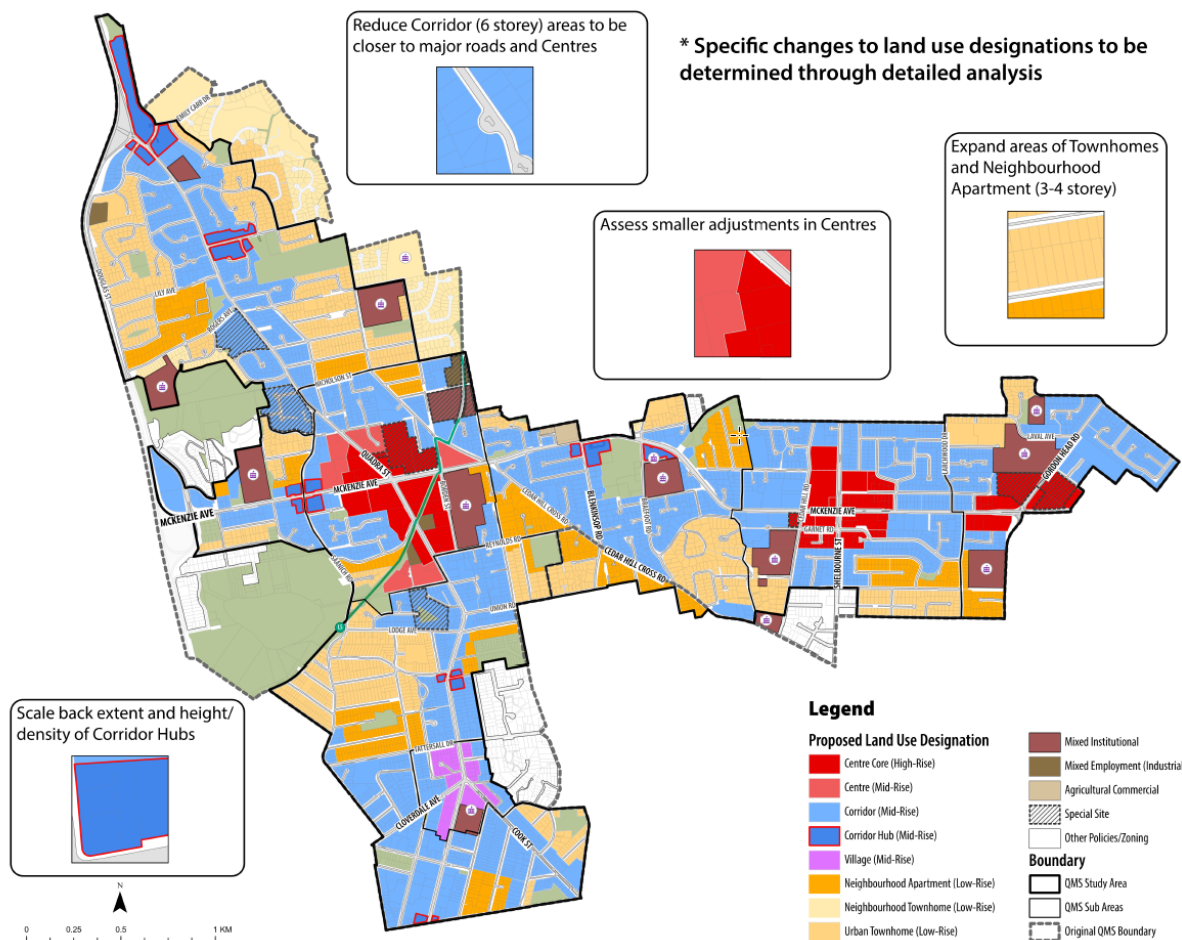
Land Use Option #2 – Scale Back Intensity of Land Use Changes

This option would direct staff to revise the Draft Plan to reduce the overall intensity of land use designations with the goal of addressing concerns around the scope and scale of future land use changes. The changes would include:

- Reducing area designated as Corridor (up to 6 storeys), with a focus on retaining parcels closer to major roads and within Centres.
- Scaling back building height / spatial extent of Corridor Hubs.
- Re-designating more parcels as Urban Townhome and Neighbourhood Apartment (3-4 storeys); and
- Assessing smaller adjustments to high density cores of Centres and Villages.

This option would reduce the overall future capacity for housing and employment uses but still maintain the OCP focus on key growth areas. The majority of new apartment units would be located in higher density Centres or near busy Corridors, reducing the diversity of housing choices in areas away from high volume streets or close to amenities, such as Parks.

Map 2: Key Elements of Land Use Changes in LU Option #2

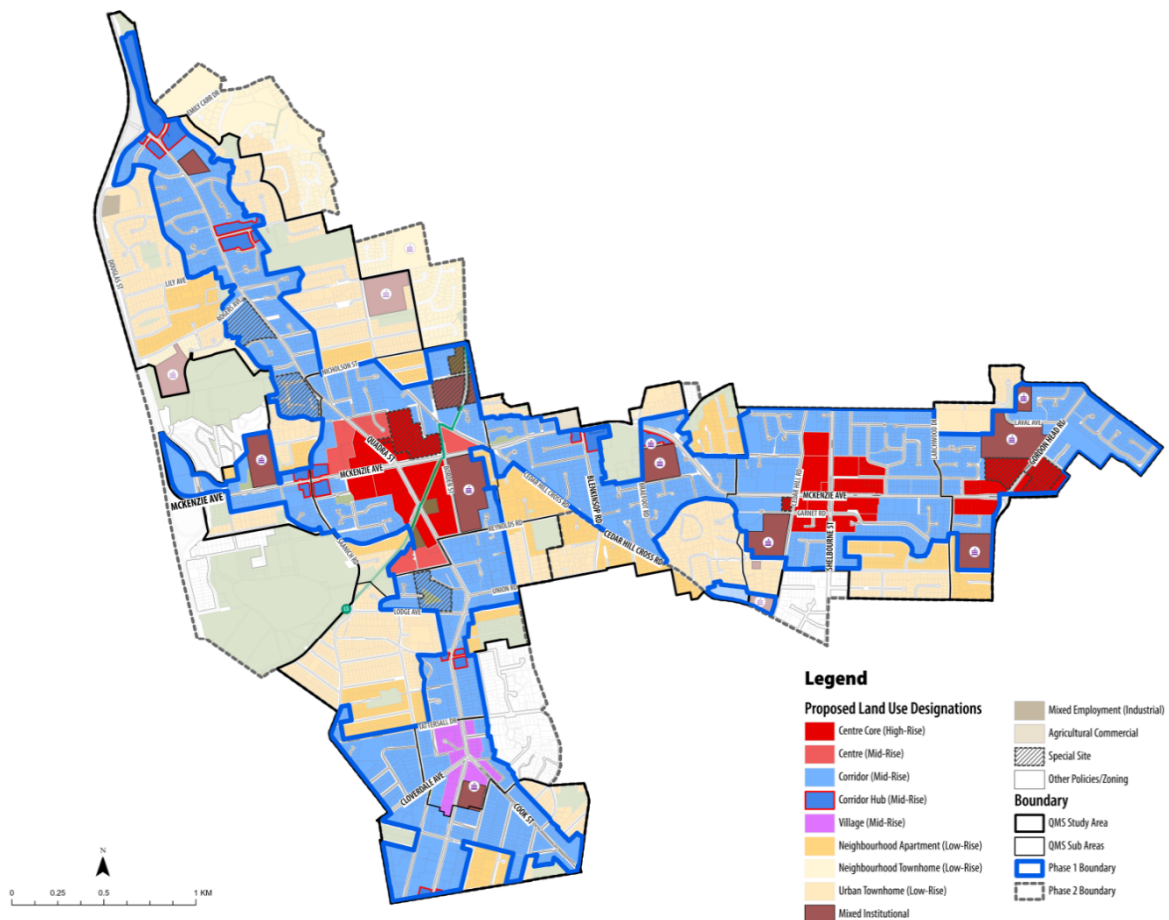


Land Use Option #3 – Phase Land Use Changes

This option would direct staff to develop a phased approach to land use designations, with a focus on supporting land use changes in areas within Centres and Villages and along Corridors in the current Plan. The remainder of the Plan area would be identified for re-evaluation as part of a 5-7 year review of the Quadra McKenzie Plan. As part of this approach, revisions would also include policy language to guide rezonings beyond the initial phase, in order to support priorities and implementation of the first phase.

Option 3 would prioritize changes in areas where redevelopment would be most beneficial in terms of achieving right of way / public realm improvements and would also minimize significant redevelopment in established neighbourhoods. This option would also reduce the overall development capacity and potentially result in underdevelopment on properties with convenient access to frequent transit and services and amenities. Map 3 illustrates areas that would be designated in current plan (largely red, blue and purple areas) and areas that would be considered in the future review (orange and yellow areas).

Map 3: Example of Potential Phased Land Use Changes in LU Option #3

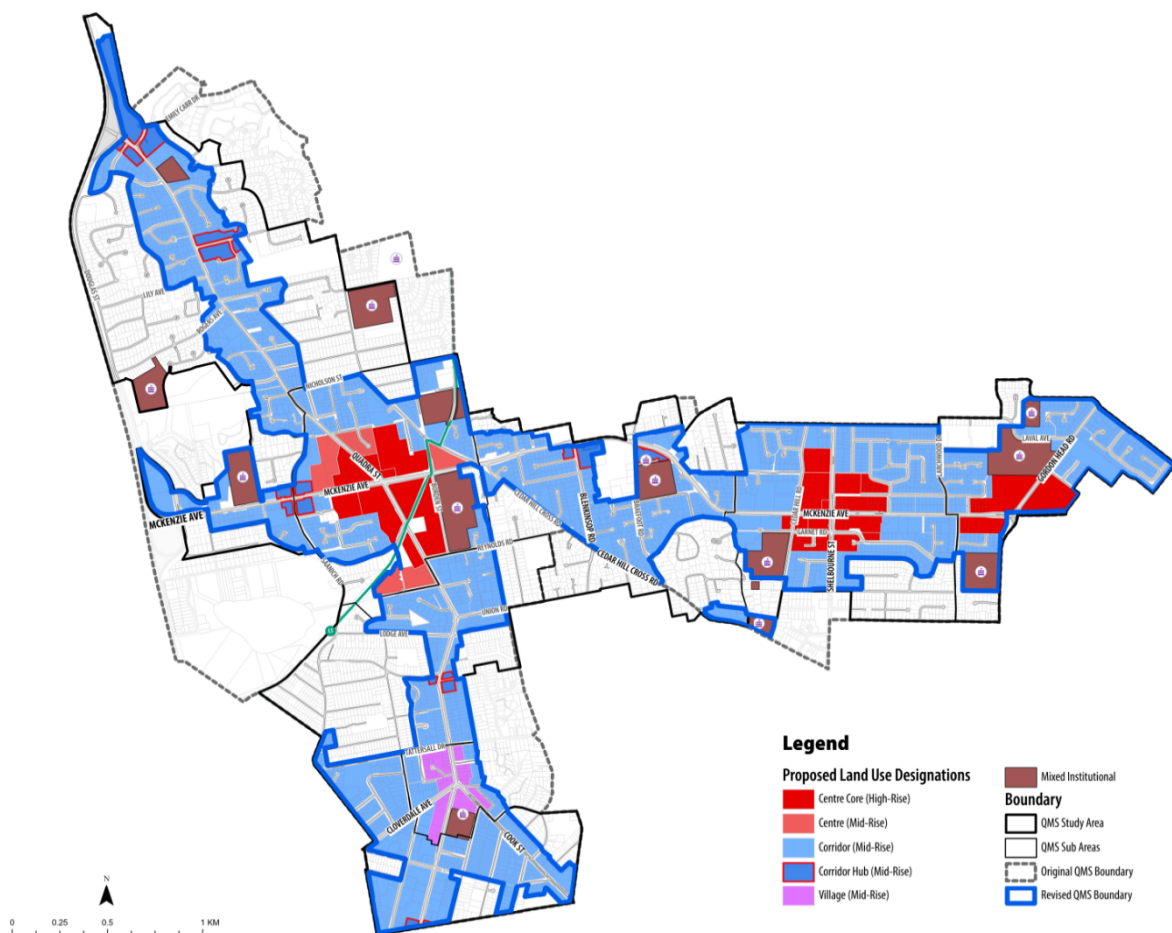


Land Use Option #4 – Decrease Land Use Change to Centre, Corridor and Village Designations

This option would direct staff to adjust the Plan area boundaries to limit changes to the Centres, Corridor and Village designations. Under this option, areas outside of these designations would not be a focus of future redevelopment and with land use changes primarily based on existing Small Scale Multi-Unit Housing / single family zoning. Map 4 shows how designations could be potentially modified under this Option.

Similar to Option 3, Option 4 would focus changes on properties in Centres and Villages and close to Corridors, limiting the extent and diversity of new housing options and resulting in the potential underdevelopment of well-located parcels.

Map 4: Potential Revised to Plan Area Boundaries under LU Option #4



Transportation Policy Options

Feedback on transportation content of the Draft Plan primarily centred on the future design concept for McKenzie Avenue and Quadra Street and potential benefits / impacts for transit and personal vehicle travel. Three options are presented for Council's consideration to potentially address concerns.

In both Options 2 and 3, staff acknowledge the need for more community consultation to address the transportation impacts that will result from proposed changes in the Quadra/McKenzie area. There is recognition that planning for future population and growth is complex and more analysis and community engagement is needed to identify solutions that respond appropriately to the transportation challenges and concerns raised by residents.

Transportation Option #1

Retain the existing transportation direction as outlined in the draft Quadra McKenzie Plan.

In this option the full right of way design concept would be retained for McKenzie Avenue and Quadra Street. While this approach would maintain alignment with the Active Transportation Plan and Transit Future Plan, it would not directly respond to the significant volume of public input received during the Draft Plan engagement process.

Transportation Option #2

This option focuses on modification of the cross sections for McKenzie Ave to show the active transportation facilities (protected bike lanes and sidewalks) and elements of the public realm (planting areas and frontage zones) behind the curbs. An example of what this could look in the Plan is shown in Figure 3. The design concept for vehicle travel lanes would be removed from the Draft Plan and be discussed in the future, as part of a detailed corridor analysis and design project to be undertaken in collaboration with BC Transit. In this option, full cross sections for Quadra Street would be retained in the Quadra McKenzie Plan.



Figure 3: Example of a cross section with active transportation and public realm elements behind the curb

The overarching policy in the QMP to prioritize sustainable transportation and transit along McKenzie Avenue would be maintained as part of Option 2 and in choosing this option, Council would be committing to maintain the road cross sections for Quadra Street, reflecting the fact that the majority of transportation concerns received in public engagement focused on McKenzie Avenue.

As part of the joint project with BC Transit, District of Saanich staff would commit to developing a phasing strategy for implementation that may include exploring metrics such as population growth, ridership levels, and service demands. Staff recognize that a future plan for transportation on the McKenzie Corridor is more complex than can reasonably be engaged through the QMP. More work will be needed on a project basis to engage technical experts and stakeholders and consult with the public on viable sustainable transportation and transit options.

Transportation Option #3

This option would involve the removal of both McKenzie Avenue and Quadra Street road cross sections from the Quadra McKenzie Plan. Similar to Option 2, the cross sections showing future design behind the curbs would be retained to show active transportation facilities (protected bike lanes and sidewalks) and elements of the public realm (planting areas and frontage zones).

Like Option 2, in Option 3 staff would undertake further work on a project-by-project basis to analyze and prepare detailed corridor designs for both the McKenzie and Quadra Corridors. The QMP would continue to reinforce sustainable transportation and transit priorities in alignment with the District's Active Transportation Plan and BC Transit Future Plan, and further community engagement would be undertaken as part of each project as their priorities arise.

Process Options

It's important to note that the completion timeline for the Plan is approaching, as outlined in the Terms of Reference. To date, the QMP process has included two comprehensive phases of engagement, which have encompassed webinars, online mapping tools, open houses, stakeholder engagement sessions, interviews and surveys.

Given the volume of input received in recent engagement and the potential for more significant changes to the Draft as outlined in land use and transportation options, staff are recommending that Council consider additional public process. The following process options are presented for Council's consideration:

Process Option #1 – Make Changes to the Draft Plan and Report to Council for Consideration for Plan Adoption

This option would direct staff to implement the required land use and transportation changes, as well as other Plan edits based on detailed feedback, and present a Proposed Plan to Council for consideration for adoption.

This option would maintain the current timeline for plan completion and has no additional budgetary implications. However, this option would not enable any further public engagement sessions or the opportunities to provide comment other than through the formal Council process.

Process Option #2 – One Round of Engagement on the Revised Draft Prior to Reporting to Council for Plan Consideration- \$30,000 budget request

This option would direct staff to implement the necessary land use and transportation changes, as instructed, to be presented to the public during an additional consultation phase scheduled for late Spring to early Summer of 2025, prior to returning to Council for consideration for adoption in Fall 2025. This engagement will be similar in nature to the Phase 3 engagement conducted in the Fall of 2024.

This option would extend the current timeline for plan completion by approximately 6-8 months and would require an additional budget of approximately \$30,000. The benefit of this option is that it would allow the public and stakeholders an opportunity to review and comment on Draft Plan changes prior to final edits being made.

Process Option #3 – Two Rounds of Additional Engagement on the Revised Draft Prior to Reporting to Council for Plan Consideration- \$60K budget request

This option would direct staff to implement the necessary land use and transportation changes, as instructed, to be presented to the public for feedback during an additional consultation phase scheduled for late Spring to early Summer of 2025. Following this consultation phase, staff would make revisions to the Plan as needed and prepare to present the final changes for public consideration in Fall 2025 before bringing the Plan to Council in early 2026. This option would extend the timeline for plan completion and adoption into 2026 and would be anticipated to cost \$60k to complete the two rounds of engagement.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Council allocated \$270,000 to support the Terms of Reference and facilitate the Quadra McKenzie Study and Plan. An additional \$40,000 was allocated for analysis (urban forest, economic viability) that will support all Centre, Corridor, and Village Plans and complete the work necessary to present the Plan to Council for consideration in Spring 2025.

Further consultation will require additional budget and staff resources. The staff recommendation for Process Option #2 involves an additional budget request of \$30,000. To support that recommendation staff are requesting Council allocate \$30,000 from the Housing Accelerator Fund (HAF). The completion of planning in Primary Growth Areas is a key component of the HAF funding agreement.

OFFICIAL COMMUNITY PLAN IMPLICATIONS

The Draft Quadra McKenzie Plan is the first Centre, Corridor and Village Plan to be developed after adoption of the Official Community Plan (OCP). The Quadra McKenzie Plan builds on and provides greater detail on the broader policy directions of the OCP. Notably, it advances the OCP direction to focus most growth on Centres, Corridors and Villages, while supporting compact, complete, walkable neighbourhoods.

CONCLUSIONS AND NEXT STEPS

The Draft Quadra McKenzie Plan provides a detailed land use and transportation plan for this critical area of Saanich that encompasses two Primary Corridors, three Centres and one Village. The Draft Plan builds on the recently adopted Official Community Plan and advances several other Saanich and regional plans. The Draft Plan content was strongly informed by engagement

in the first two Phases of Plan development and will be further amended as a result of Phase 3 engagement. In Phase 2 and 3, there were over 5,800 people that were engaged in the project.

The next Phase of the project, as outlined in the Terms of Reference, is intended to involve revisions to the Draft Plan and presentation of a proposed Plan to Council in Spring 2025. Given the volume and strength of feedback received on the Draft Plan, staff are checking in with Council at this juncture to seek direction on core land use and transportation content and potential additional public process.

Staff have identified options for Council in each of these three areas. Staff are recommending that land use designations in the Draft Plan be scaled back in intensity, focusing on more low-rise forms in areas away from Major Streets and Centres and Villages. Staff are also recommending that the road cross section for McKenzie Avenue be removed from the Quadra McKenzie Plan and explored through a future process. Finally, staff are recommending that an additional round of public engagement be endorsed and resourced. This additional engagement is estimated to take 6-8 months and require \$30,000.

Once Council provides direction, staff will proceed with Plan edits and process next steps as per Council direction. Should Council endorse staff's recommendation, additional public engagement would occur in Spring 2025 and a Proposed Plan would be considered by Council in Fall 2025.

Prepared by: Tami Gill, Planner

Reviewed by: Cameron Scott, Manager of Community Planning

Reviewed by: Lindsay Chase, Director of Planning

Reviewed by: Harley Machielse, Director of Engineering

TG/kb

Attachments:  Attachment A - Phase 3 Community and Stakeholder Engagement Summary

ADMINISTRATOR'S COMMENTS:

I endorse the recommendation from the Director of Planning.

Brent Reems, Chief Administrative Officer