# What We Heard

# Park Avenue Phase 2 Engagement Summary

December 2023

CITY OF NANAIMO
THE HARBOUR CITY

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# 1.0 PROJECT OVERVIEW

## 1.1 BACKGROUND

The property at 933 Park Avenue lies within the Traditional Territory of the Snuneymuxw First Nation who have many significant ancestral village sites through the city. Settlement in Harewood began in 1886, when Samuel Robins of the Vancouver Island Coal Mining and Land Company subdivided this area into five acre parcels so the company's miners could provide for their families. The park site is one of the last remaining 5-acre parcels in the neighbourhood with approximately a third of the property serving as a natural wetland. The farming legacy has continued on this parcel through operations by private owners and community groups.

In 2019, the City of Nanaimo purchased the property to meet several complementary community benefits. This property is designated 'Suburban Neighbourhood' in City Plan – Nanaimo ReImagined (City Plan), and is identified as a potential park in the Harewood Neighbourhood Plan.

# 1.2 SITE CONTEXT

## AT A GLANCE

| | |
|---|---|
| Civic Address | 933 Park Avenue |
| Neighbourhood | Harewood |
| Lot Area | ~ 20,221 $m^2$ |
| Land Use Designation | Suburban Neighbourhood |
| Zoning | R1 (Single Dwelling Residential) |
| Servicing | Water, Sewer and Storm |
| Ownership | City of Nanaimo |

# 1.3 PARK GOALS

The following park goals were identified by the neighbourhood residents, interest groups and City staff in the Phase One Engagement process as community priorities for uses on the site.

- Protection of the Natural Environment
- Affordable Housing
- Recreation
- Education
- Food Security
- Connectivity

# 1.4 TIMELINE

| 2019 | 2022 | 2022 | 2023 | October 2023 | December 2023 (WE ARE HERE) | TBD |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| City purchases property | Phase 1 Public Engagement | Draft Concept Plan | Council Meeting | Phase 2 Public Engagement | Council for decision | Implementation |

# 2.0 ENGAGEMENT PROCESS

## 2.1 PURPOSE OF THE ENGAGEMENT

Based on public and stakeholder input received during Phase 1 of the engagement process, a draft 'Park Avenue Concept Plan' was completed with five possible design options for 933 Park Avenue. The purpose of Phase 2 was to seek feedback on those design options, each identified using either a fruit or a vegetable.

**OPTIONS**

**1**

SWISS CHARD

**2**

BEET

**3**

APPLE

**4**

RASPBERRY

**5**

CARROT

# 2.2 OUTREACH

Outreach to seek feedback on the proposed design options was targeted to local neighbourhood residents in the south Harewood area, as well as collaborator groups such as Nanaimo Food Share, Growing Opportunities, Nanaimo & Area Land Trust (NALT), Nanaimo Association of Community Living (NACL) and the Harewood Neighbourhood Association. Outreach strategies included:

## ONLINE SURVEY

The online survey was open to the general public and sought feedback on the five land use options for the Draft Park Avenue Concept Plan. The survey requested a preferred option, along with why the option was preferred. The survey was posted on the City's Get Involved website for approximately four weeks.

## COLLABORATORS MEETING

The collaborators meeting included discussions with various organizations interested in the draft Park Avenue Concept Plan. Attendees included representatives from the Harewood Neighbourhood Association, Nanaimo Association for Community Living, Growing Opportunities, Nanaimo Food Share, and Nanaimo Area Land Trust.

## PRINT NOTIFICATIONS

Print notifications for the open house and online survey were sent to approximately one thousand local residences. Signage about the survey and open house were also posted around the school site.

## OPEN HOUSE

An Open House was held at Park Avenue Elementary School. Display boards providing details on the Park Avenue Concept Plan and related land use options were set up at the open house, and participants were asked to vote on a preferred option through a dotmocracy process, and leave a comment. Approximately 161 persons attended the open house

## GET INVOLVED PAGE

Creation of a Get Involved Project website with an outline of the project, project timeline, survey, and links to relevant background documents such as the Phase One Engagement Summary and City Plan.

## E-NEWSLETTER

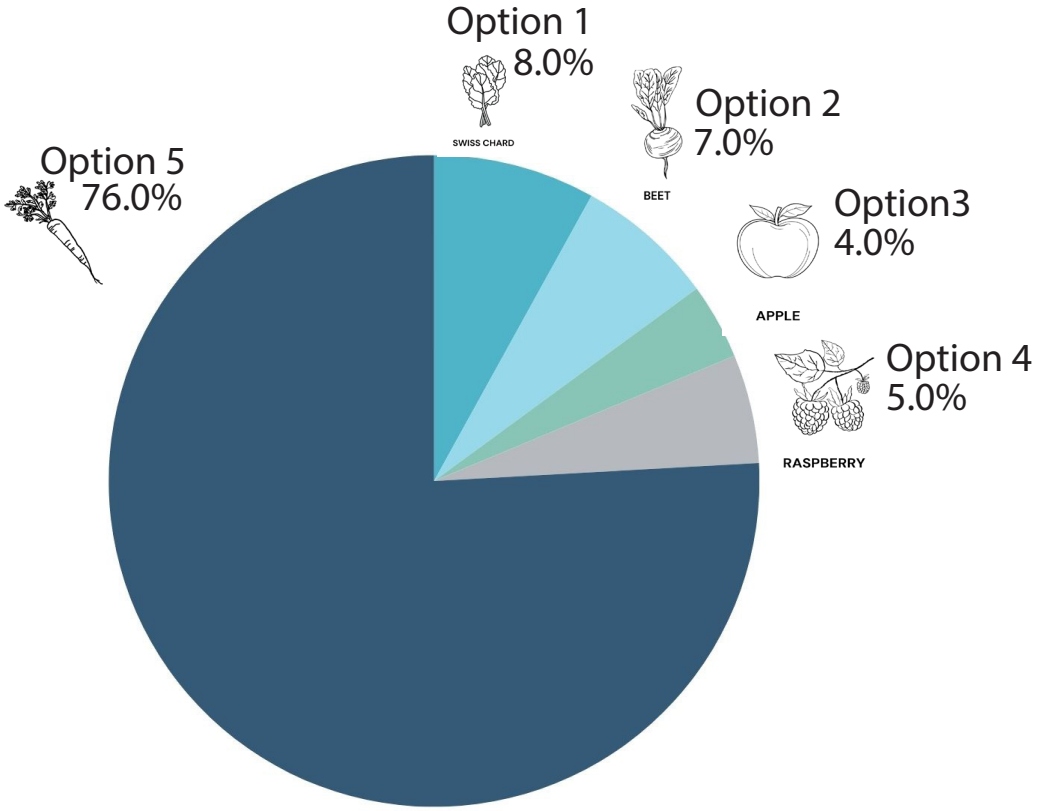
A write-up was included in *My Nanaimo This Week*, guiding residents to the Get Involved Page to review the design options and provide feedback by filling out the online survey.

# 3.0 WHAT WE HEARD

The following section provides a summary of the public input recevied on the five proposed design options from the online survey, open house and collaborators meeting. A full account of all comments gathered during these engagement processes can be found in the appendix.

# 3.1 ONLINE SURVEY

The online survey included 796 responses, with Option 5 | Carrot voted as the preferred option. Option 5 features no land allocated for housing. The results of the online survey are outlined below. For a summary of qualitative data provided through the survey, refer to Appendix A.

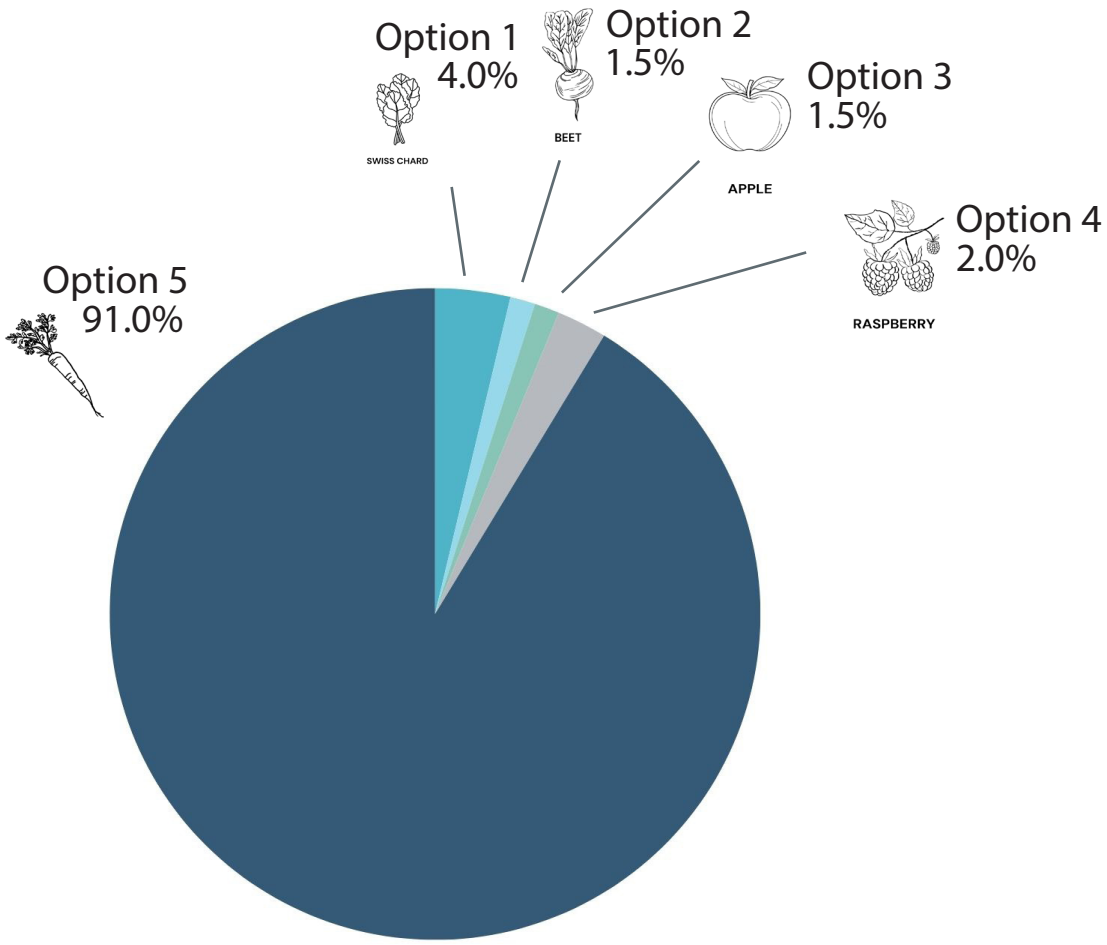



| OPTIONS | PROPOSAL | TOTAL VOTES | PERCENTAGE OF VOTES |
|---|---|---|---|
| OPTION 1 \| SWISS CHARD | 3 acres park use/2 acres housing | 64 votes | 8% |
| OPTION 2 \| BEETS | 4 acres park use/1 acres housing | 55 votes | 7% |
| OPTION 3 \| APPLE | 4 acres park use/1 acres housing | 30 votes | 4% |
| OPTION 4 \| RASPBERRY | 4 acres park use/1 acres housing | 43 votes | 5% |
| OPTION 5 \| CARROT | 5 acres park use/no housing | 604 votes | 76% |

"Affordable Housing is essential, but should be built upwards, not through infilling the scant green space and farm areas left in Nanaimo. Affordable housing is a priority for our city, preserving the farm is also a priority".

# 3.2 OPEN HOUSE

Open house attendees provided conversational feedback to staff as well as written feedback on the open house boards and through a dotmocracy exercise on the display boards. In order to be accessible, hard copies of the online survey were also available at the open house for attendees to submit. The open house dotmocracy results are outlined below. For a summary of written feedback provided on sticky notes, refer to Appendix B.




| | OPTIONS | PROPOSAL | TOTAL VOTES | PERCENTAGE OF VOTES |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | OPTION 1 \| SWISS CHARD | 3 acres park use/2 acres housing | 6 votes | 4% |
| | OPTION 2 \| BEETS | 4 acres park use/1 acres housing | 2 votes | 1.5% |
| | OPTION 3 \| APPLE | 4 acres park use/1 acres housing | 2 votes | 1.5% |
| | OPTION 4 \| RASPBERRY | 4 acres park use/1 acres housing | 4 votes | 2% |
| | OPTION 5 \| CARROT | 5 acres park use/no housing | 147 votes | 91% |

# 3.3 COLLABORATORS MEETING

Groups represented at the collaborators meeting, shared a wide range of comments and thoughts about the 5 proposed land use concepts and balancing site uses and community need. Discussion generally focused on the need to acknowledge the history of the site, and whether or not housing on the site made sense given the need to protect diminishing farmland in the area. The location of the site is ideal for teaching farming and promoting urban agriculture.

While housing is considered important, most of the groups in attendance noted preference for the site to be used solely for park/agricultural use, with no onsite housing. Below are a sample of key discussion points made by those in attendance. A full list of discussion points taken during the meeting can be found in Appendix C.

The group was curious about the breakdown of funds used to purchase the property and whether those funds could be reallocated to establish housing elsewhere in the city.

There is a real opportunity to elevate the importance of food security and food education on site.

Nanaimo Food Share shares that this piece of land has many opportunities to partner with other non-profit organizations for doing traditional farming on site. There is a lot of interest.

The location of this parcel is ideal for teaching farming and promoting urban agriculture

Nanaimo Association for Community Living explains the health benefits/ outcomes for folks with disabilities after visiting the site. While they acknowledge the need for housing, they support the site being used for green space, education and farming.

Nanaimo Food Share agrees with Community Living but suggests if housing does end up on the site, they will work with it.

Has there been an assessment done of the existing house? Is it viable for reuse or is it a liability?

A number of the groups in attendance noted preference for the site to be devoted to park/agricultural use, with no onsite housing, including NACL, Food Share, Growing Opportunities and the Harewood Neighbourhood Association.

If the site remained as a farm there would be a beautiful opportunity to work with Snuneymuxw to re-introduce culturally appropriate food.

Farming and farmers are 'aging out'. It's becoming more and more difficult as a profession so there is a need to educate younger generations on farming practices.

Questioned the impetus for putting housing on the site in the first place. What was the reasoning behind that decision?

# 4.0 NEXT STEPS

With Phase 2 public engagement complete, the next step is for Council to determine which of the five proposed design options should be incorporated into an updated Park Avenue Concept Plan.

## THANK YOU!

Thank you to everyone who provided their input, and we hope you continue to be involved in planning for a bright future for Nanaimo!