

## Open ended input from the consultation process

In addition to the online input, additional open-ended input was received through four channels:

1. Provided at the community consultation sessions,
2. Provided by email and other correspondence,
3. Provided from students during a consultation session at Belmont Secondary School
4. Provided during the online consultation

It should be noted that the statistics below should not be read as input from single individuals. In some cases, a single individual provided multiple comments on different topics. The numbers below represent the number of times an issue was mentioned, not the number of people mentioning the topic.

It is also important to note that a small number of comments were not entirely clear, and it was difficult or impossible to determine exactly the topic being mentioned. Other comments were clearly in the domain of other jurisdictions, such as expanded parent involvement in schools. In some cases, it was not clear that the comment had to do with the draft strategic plan. For this reason, there is not an exhaustive list of every comment made, although every effort has been made to include all comments, positive and negative, that relate to the draft strategic plan.

## Summary

General speaking, the open-ended input reflects much of the input collected by other means. Certain topics were dominant:

- Sustainable development
- Housing
- The environment and climate change
- Urban forest and tree protection
- Green spaces and public open spaces
- Affordability
- Public safety
- Active transportation
- Transit
- The availability of healthcare
- The unhoused

One noticeable difference in the open-ended input was the repeated emphasis on the needs of renters.

A second notable difference was the support among young people for a youth drop-in centre. However, the need for a youth drop-in centre was a direct question to the Belmont students, which was likely to generate a positive response.

There was a minor theme, mentioned 5-6 times, that the strategic plan should not reflect Council's priorities, rather the public's priorities. It should be noted that across Canada municipal strategic plans are overwhelmingly an articulation of the Council's shared priorities.

It should be noted that the great majority of the responses received from all four input channels are requests for expanded or new City services.

Other suggestions are services (healthcare, schools) that are the responsibility of other levels of government or the School District, however the City as an important advocacy role in both areas.

### Comments from the public input sessions

There were opportunities during the public input sessions for people to provide open-ended input, usually structured around the major issues facing the City, or the strategic themes themselves.

#### **Quality of Life:**

The great majority of the input had to do with quality of life with 40 comments, some mentioned more than once.

There was support for:

- Placemaking when considering developments (particularly in the core) – 11 mentions
- More parkland and greenspaces – 6 mentions
- Additional police – 3 mentions
- Crime reduction – 2 mentions
- Reduced reliance on cars – 2 mentions
- Lower taxes – 2 mentions
- Free parking – 2 mentions
- Light rail to downtown Victoria – 2 mentions
- Expanded healthcare services – 2 mentions

There were concerns about:

- Mobility and accessibility (including in new developments) – 5 mentions
- Homelessness and open drug use – 3 mentions
- Unhoused in City parks – 2 mentions

The remaining topics were mentioned once and include; more urban forests, traffic, support for purchasing the YWCA, childcare availability, safe routes to schools, support for the RCMP facility expansion, compassion for the unhoused, using schools as an element of disaster planning.

## **Climate Crisis**

There were nine comments that generally addressed the climate crisis, with two topics mentioned more than once.

There was support for:

- More cooling centres and community gardens– 3 mentions
- Fire risk (especially on Bear Mountain) – 3 mentions

Other single mentions include; tree protection, heat islands, lighting for active transportation, and renters' experience during heatwaves.

One person questioned whether there was a climate crisis, and suggested data would prove that there was not.

## **Housing/ Affordability**

There were ten comments in this category including three issues that had multiple comments.

There was support for:

- Better defining affordability – 5 comments
- The need for rent controls and public housing – 3 comments
- Lower taxes – 2 comments

Other comments were mentioned only once each; the need for shelters for vulnerable populations, personal issues with mortgage rates, affordability for children and future generations.

## **Inequality**

There were seven comments on this topic, none mentioned more than once, although several had to do directly or tangentially with renters.

The individual comments included; small business tax (relative to large industry), renter issues, the livability of condos.

One person was unsure that inequality was an issue.

## **Public Health**

There were nine comments in this area, only one mentioned more than once.

There was support for:

- More clinics and doctor spaces in the City – 2 mentions

In addition, other topics were raised once including; the creation of a medical school in Langford, housing for doctors, the unreliability of the federal and provincial governments, creation a public health unit, greater emphasis on prevention, support for privatized healthcare.

### **Infrastructure Costs**

There were ten issues raised in this topic, with two mentioned twice.

There was support for.

- Charging developers more – 3 mentions
- Improved school capacity – 2 mentions

Individual comments included; the need for a homeless shelter, the need to end sprawl, insufficient service infrastructure, more healthcare space, the need to charge developers less to improve affordability.

### **Does the Strategic Plan go far enough to address the issues above?**

There were fourteen comments raised in response to this question, some multiple times:

There was support for:

- The City reducing its use of contracted services – 4 mentions
- Additional greenspace in the core – 3 mentions
- Further protection of forests and wetlands – 3 mentions
- Further protection of existing green spaces – 3 mentions

Other topics mentioned once include; greater focus on the need for public housing, building the economy, more input at city committees.

Two people made comments to the effect that life in the city is currently very good, and the issue of the various crises is overblown.

### **Are any other issues missing from the plan?**

There were 20 topics raised in this entirely open-ended section, four more than once.

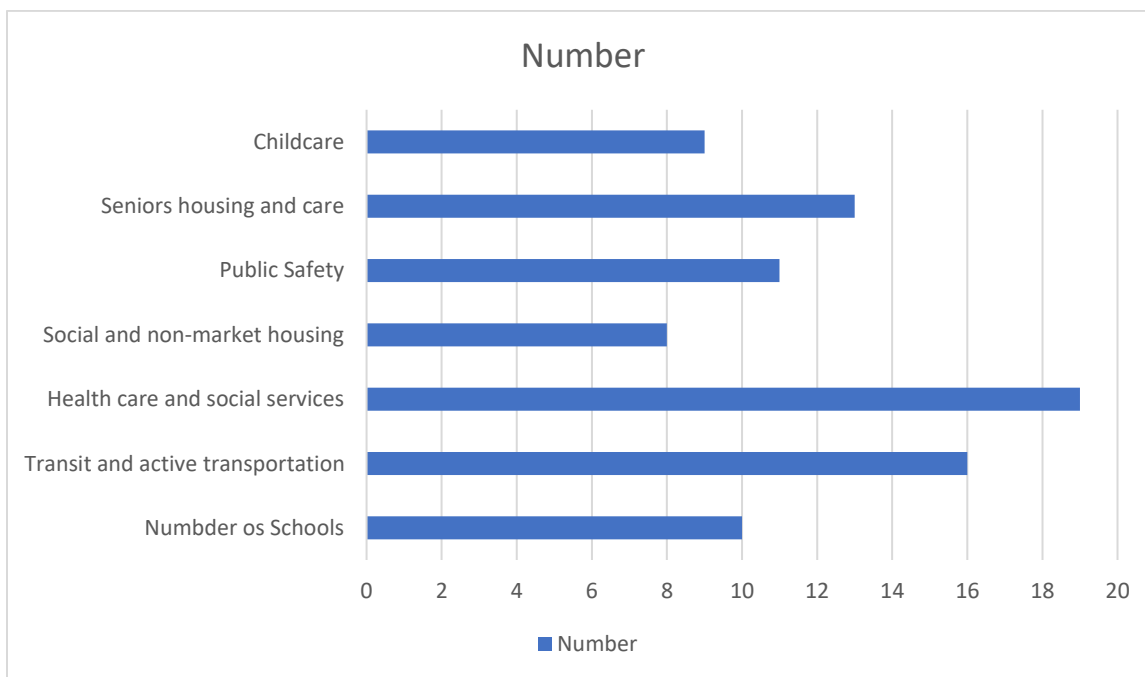
There was support for:

- More focus on the concerns of renters– 7 mentions
- Support for more coop housing – 3 mentions
- Tax break for renters, inventory of available rentals – 2 mentions
- Rent controls- 2 mentions

In addition, there was a wide variety of other issues raised once, including; compassion for the homeless, garden co-ops, trailer parks, parking, public participation at Council, the need for apartments with more bedrooms, safe spaces, concern that the public should have had more involvement in the creation of the strategic plan.

### **Collaborative Advocacy**

In this section people were asked to check the areas most important to them (some may have checked more than one area).



In addition, there were write-in comments including:

- More funding for children with disabilities
- Opposition to dedicated housing for seniors
- Support for dedicated housing for seniors
- Support for aging in place facilities
- Affordable housing
- Rent affordability

- Co-op housing

### **What is missing in collaborative advocacy?**

There were 11 responses to this open-ended question, three with multiple responses.

There was support for:

- Encouraging other Greater Victoria municipalities to take their fair share of housing and density – 5 mentions
- Ongoing engagement with the public – 3 mentions
- A reconciliation task force – 3 mentions
- More support for the unhoused – 2 mentions

In addition, there were single mentions of the following topics; community polarization, support for developers, renters' issues, affordability.

### **Emails and Correspondence**

Sixteen emails and letters were received covering a wide range of topics. As well, one person submitted an annotated copy of the draft strategic plan. Some of the emails covered multiple topics. Some individuals provided comments that they asked not to be publicly shared. For these reasons some comments have been rephrased to respect the confidentiality requests.

It should be noted that a few individuals took considerable time to write lengthy and thoughtful suggestions for improvement.

The key themes that were mentioned more than once in the emails included:

- General support for the plan (sometimes with some suggested minor amendments and wording changes) – 5 mentions
- Strong support for more sustainable development – 3 mentions
- Strong support for climate change initiatives – 3 mentions
- Concerns about the process of developing the strategic plan. Some felt that the strategic plan should not be Council's plan, but rather should have been developed to reflect the public's priorities. - 3 mentions
- The need for greater consultation on the draft plan – 3 mentions
- Support for expanded urban forest – 2 mentions

There were single comments in the following areas:

- Expanded support for immigrants
- Suggestions for reorganizing the layout of the draft plan

- Expanded library services
- General support for expanded open government.
- Construction fatigue (related to a specific site)
- An exhortation for Council not to listen to extreme voices
- Support for Council's efforts to expand community engagement
- The need for more playgrounds
- Improve access to City information
- Support for a five-year financial plan

## Student Engagement

To obtain input from a younger generation, a session was held at Belmont Secondary School. At this session a series of questions were explored that are related to the strategic plan, without undertaking a detailed review of the plan section by section.

### **What do you love about Langford?**

Over 34 answers were provided, with only a few receiving multiple mentions; Those include

- Indigenous events (2),
- Food Trucks (3),
- Christmas decorations (2),
- Wildlife (2),
- Lakes (2),
- Gyms (3)
- Landscape (2).

Numerous other things were mentioned, including skate parks, Luxton fair, softball, air quality, bike trails, car show.

### **Do you plan to stay in Langford for work or school? Why and why not?**

There were sixteen responses to this question. Three had multiple responses, including:

- Cost of living is a challenge - 3 responses
- Need better transit – 2 mentions
- Moving back to another country – 3 mentions

In addition, many indicated they have firm plans to go elsewhere for school or work, Langford lacks student housing, they will be staying in Langford to be close to family, want to take a trade program.

**Which recreation programs do you use? What do you enjoy about them? What can be improved.**

There were 22 responses to this, only one topic mentioned more than once:

- YWCA pool – 2 mentions

Beyond that there were numerous and highly varied responses, to the first part of the question. They include; gyms, rugby, hiking trails, turf fields, Starlight Stadium, parks.

There were also some suggestions for improvements, including: More arenas, more basketball courts, more turf fields, better dog parks, more hiking trails, more drop-in sports, skate park, more specialized training facilities

**Cities across the world are facing a climate crisis, what do you think government needs to do?**

There were 26 responses to this question, all different, although many had to do with varying aspects of tree protection and forests. They include; more transit, end sprawl, clean up days, more gardens, forest protection, zero carbon buildings, better land use planning, active transportation infrastructure, invasive species, clean energy, litter, planning for extreme weather events.

**What activities do you participate in outside of school?**

There were 17 responses to this question including three areas with multiple responses:

- Volleyball – 2 mentions
- Basketball – 2 mentions
- Badminton – 2 mentions

In addition, there were number other responses; music, gym, running, climbing, air cadets, hockey, MMA, roller derby, hanging out at Tim's.

**What facilities or amenities do you wish to see more of in Langford?**

There were 41 responses to this question, including five with multiple responses:

- Go karts – 5 mentions
- Sidewalks – 2 mentions
- More busses (currently too full) – 2 mentions
- Swimming spots – 2 mentions
- Mini golf – 2 mentions



In addition, there was a wide range of other suggestions including (this may not be exhaustive): fast food, gyms, speedway, transit, concerts, festivals, sky trains, turf fields, Apple store, trampoline park, women's clinic, murals, libraries, student parking at Belmont.

**Do you think Langford should have a youth drop-in centre? If so, what activities would you want to see?**

Twelve students supported the idea of creating a youth drop-in centre.

There were numerous areas of programming ideas where there was similar input:

- Swimming – 7 mentions
- Pool table – 6 mentions
- Karaoke and open mike nights – 4 mentions
- Roller-skating – 4 mentions
- Air hockey – 3 mentions
- Dance studio – 2 mentions
- Art – 2 mentions
- Crafts – 2 mentions
- Music lessons – 2 mentions
- Music area – 2 mentions

In addition, numerous other programming ideas were suggested including (this may not be exhaustive), gaming, pinball, badminton, cooking, maker's space, study spaces,

**Do you feel connected to your community? Tell us why or why not.**

Although the answers are difficult to quantify, many felt connected to the community due to the various things the city had to offer, such as sports, community events, outdoor spaces, friends, farmer's markets. Others felt there was not a lot to do, and the city was boring.

Some suggestions on how to improve connection with the City included (this may not be exhaustive); more volunteer opportunities, more to do, diversity celebrations, more gathering spaces.

## Open ended input from the online survey

The online survey allowed people to provide more detail about their rankings of the strategic objectives, and the challenges facing the City. The many hundreds of more detailed thinking have been reviewed by City staff. However, respondents' priorities have been reported out in a previous report to Council, and the results are not changed by the more detailed explanations of their priorities.

However, the online survey also contained two fully open-ended questions:

**Is there anything significant missing from the strategic plan?**

There were numerous thoughts on this topic. In many cases people used this question as an opportunity to make general comments about the plan. Many were complimentary about the plan, while a smaller number thought it was overly broad. In terms of specific issues that people felt were missing there was a lengthy list, with some issue mentioned by more than one person:

- Unhoused -7 mentions (5 of the 7 mentions recommended that the City provide more supports for the unhoused, while 2 recommended that the unhoused be moved out of the City)
- Safety – 5 mentions
- Active Transportation – 5 mentions
- Public health and health services – 5 mentions
- Housing – 4 mentions
- Traffic and road safety – 4 mentions
- Economic development – 4 mentions
- Recreation facilities – 3 mentions
- Taxes – 2 mentions
- Public spaces – 2 mentions
- Food security – 2 mentions
- Dog parks – 2 mentions
- Infrastructure
- Sports
- City expenditure control
- Transit
- Worker’s rights
- Over regulation
- Short term rentals
- RCMP facility
- Parks maintenance
- Arts and culture
- Over development
- Additional arena
- More schools

In addition to the issues listed above, many respondents indicated they could not think of any missing elements.

**Langford currently has a population of approximately 50,000 residents. What are the most important things the City can do to plan for Langford at 80,000 residents, while increasing quality of life and sustainability?**

Answers to this question were highly varied with some topics receiving multiple mentions.

- Expand active transportation – 20 mentions (19 in support, 1 opposed)
- Expand/protect public and green spaces – 18 mentions
- Intensification/densification -14 mentions (11 in support, 3 opposed)
- Address traffic congestion – 12 mentions
- Expand infrastructure (especially roads) – 11 mentions
- Affordable housing – 11 mentions
- Expanded transit – 10 mentions
- More healthcare services – 9 mentions
- Improved public safety (police fire, emergency preparedness) – 8 mentions
- Expand public consultation/communications – 6 mentions
- Economic development/support for business – 5 mentions
- Address the unhoused – 4 mentions (2 support more services, and 2 support removing the unhoused)
- More schools – 3 mentions
- Lower taxes – 3 mentions
- Improved parking – 2 mentions
- More festivals and events
- Lower cost of living
- Short term rentals
- New arena
- Lower development charges
- Construction impact mitigation