

ROYAL OAK URBAN VILLAGE
COMMUNITY PLAN



WHAT WE HEARD
ROYAL OAK PLAN PHASE 1
PUBLIC CONSULTATION

Phase 1 Public Consultation: By The Numbers

Phase 1 public consultation for the Royal Oak Urban Village Plan was conducted between late June and early fall of 2023. In mid-June, staff launched a marketing and public notification campaign which consisted of the following measures to notify the community about upcoming opportunities to participate:

15,610 postcards

were mailed to residents, property owners, business owners and other community members

Digital displays

on TV screens at Bonsor Recreation Complex began June 14

Organic and paid social media campaign

was launched on June 14 on major platforms

Paid Google advertising

began June 14 until July 31

Media release

was distributed June 14

Webpage content was updated

on Burnaby.ca/YourVoice-RoyalOak and Phase 1 online survey was launched on June 14

Posters

were displayed in Burnaby City Hall and Bonsor Recreation Complex starting June 14

CityConnect eNewsletter

promoted the survey on June 15

Full-page BurnabyNow ads

were published on June 15 and June 29

Key highlights of the Phase 1 public consultation process

188

completed online survey submissions were received



140

people attended the open house on Wednesday, July 19



11,030

organic* social media impressions**



86,227

paid advertising social media impressions**



6,176

web page views



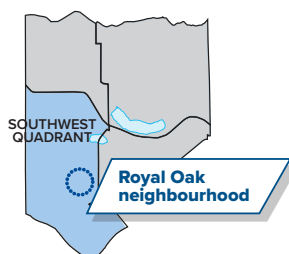
8,612

survey page views



over 81%

of online survey respondents lived within or in areas surrounding the Royal Oak Urban Village, based on postal code information provided



1,828

YouTube views of the Phase 1 introductory video



* Organic social is social media activity without paid promotion versus paid advertising on social media.

** Impressions refer to the number of times content appeared on a screen, whether it was clicked or not.



Phase 1 Public Consultation: Key Themes

Summarized below are several key themes that emerged from feedback received from the community during Phase 1 public consultation for the Royal Oak Urban Village Community Plan. It is noted that concerns and themes raised during Phase 1 public consultation will be considered through the ongoing development of more detailed draft plan directions in Phase 2, which will be presented in a separate future report to Planning and Development Committee (PDC) and Council.

The commentary below references feedback received from a variety of engagement methods, as described in **Attachment 1** of this report. While these themes do not represent the full range of comments and feedback received, they reflect comments that were raised by multiple individuals or community groups during Phase 1 public consultation.

Housing, Community Amenities and Community Building/Placemaking

Many respondents supported Phase 1 goals to increase the amount and diversity of housing forms, tenures, and options in the Royal Oak community, and understood the need for more affordable housing for various families and individuals. In particular, many supported ideas to provide more options for renters, and to focus on providing missing middle housing options such as rowhouses, townhouses and low to mid-rise apartment forms, some of which already exist in the neighbourhood. Other respondents expressed opposition to providing additional housing in the Royal Oak neighbourhood, citing concerns about the potential negative impacts of more density in the neighbourhood, including strain and overpopulation in existing schools, traffic congestion, noise, and displacement of existing residents.

Most respondents expressed support for improving the range of amenities and services in the Royal Oak neighbourhood, including daycares as well as restaurants, eateries and other culturally diverse businesses.

Sample of Comments:

"I would concentrate the focus on making sure that things like grocery and pharmacy stores are within easy walking and cycling distance, as well as ways to get there safely by those modes of active transport."

"I value the existing residential houses (no more than 3 storey) in the Royal Oak community. It makes Royal Oak a unique residential community."

"Buildings geared to being suitable for rentals. Not overbearing with height. Designed to reduce noise concentration and allow light down and in. Buildings that allow for other than studio, one bedroom and small two bedrooms. Buildings that encourage living not investing."

"Appropriate scale for the use. Inviting scale and density."

"Perfect - as tall as we can do on as little land as is manageable. Center everything in that area and expand on the Kingsway directions."

"More density, more need for close community services like schools and daycares."

"If urban village community wants to have family growing their children, they need to have as many daycare or care facilities as possible. With more buildings and densities given to the community, having these facilities would be important factors for family to decide where to live."

"We need to be intentional about creating places where people can live and work (so that their commute easily can be accomplished on foot, transit and/or bike because of the proximity of the workplace). Easy access to daycare and before and after school care (geographically as well as ability to get a spot) is also really important. Being mindful of these things helps to create a more livable city for residents."

"I like the idea of low rise town home missing middle housing."

"This sounds amazing! We desperately need more housing."

"There is something to be said for single family housing or duplexes away from the core."

"A combination of single family and townhouses, definitely not low rise or mid rise."

"No more single family homes. Reasonable cost [of] living spaces and commercial spaces for smaller businesses."

"There is no retention of space for a new school - that is desperately needed. There also needs to be more real park space."

Transportation, Mobility and Parks/Public Spaces

Over 80% of Phase 1 online survey respondents noted that “Improving access to recreation, nature, and cultural amenities” was a “very important” or “important” value to consider in shaping the future vision of the Royal Oak community.

Opinions on the amount of parks and green spaces in Royal Oak were split, with about 55% of survey respondents indicating that they would like to see more parks and open green spaces in the community, and about 43% stating that there are enough parks and green spaces already.

Many respondents pointed to potential opportunities to improve the safety and usability of existing or future parks, trails and green spaces, through strategies like improved lighting, amenities, landscaping and travel mode separation (especially between pedestrians and cyclists). While many supported the idea of park expansions, some comments alluded to a preference to focus on smaller parks distributed throughout the neighbourhood, rather than larger parks. Other comments expressed the need to focus on the following:

- » enhancing the BC Parkway, which is already valued and heavily used by the community
- » maintaining and enhancing access to trails at Deer Lake Park, potentially through expansion of Kisbey Park
- » improving streetscapes through landscaped boulevards, street lighting, wider sidewalks and cycling connections
- » better pedestrian and cyclist access to the Royal Oak SkyTrain station, as well as cyclist facilities and amenities (e.g. storage lockers) at the SkyTrain station
- » traffic calming and improving overall walkability in the neighbourhood, with a focus on more intuitive pedestrian connections throughout the community

Sample of Comments:

“SAFE north-south cycling connections are desperately needed, they are virtually non-existent right now. In addition, please improve the safety of intersections for both pedestrians and cyclists, consider continuous sidewalks and intersections, as in the cars have to rise up to the level of pedestrians, not the other way around, as much as possible.”

“I commute by bike on BC Parkway and Highland Park Line regularly. I see these trails being used by more and more cyclists, rollers, runners and pedestrians which is great! But some stretches and intersections are not able to accommodate all users and remain safe from cars, priority should be to expand and ensure safety of these trails.”

“The BC parkway and the SkyTrain station is the best and most unique feature that [redacted] neighbourhood has to offer. They are the reason I’ve never owned a car while [redacted]. They need to be enhanced.”

“We need proper cycle storage at SkyTrain stations and other large public areas (eg. Bonsor).”

“Buy-Low is the closest grocery store to me, and yet I don’t feel safe riding my bike there to get groceries. I go up to Metrotown or even the Buy-Low at Edmonds instead because there are more protected lanes. Royal Oak desperately needs AAA infrastructure.”

“Please do not remove existing parkland; should be safe and well-lit.”

“Add missing sidewalk connections, plant street trees.”

“Focus on strong, well detailed urban design elements at Royal Oak and Rumble Street node. Add street trees throughout the plan area. Retrofit existing streets with sidewalks and street trees where those don’t currently exist.”

“Allow for wide sidewalks that permit different uses (i.e., seating, landscaping, patios, etc.). Weather protection & street trees for shade.”

“While noble, I expect to see an improvement for transit - protected bike lanes, dedicated bus lanes, more bus stops, better routes, etc.”

“Support increasing green connections and pocket parks.”

“I am ALL for natural wetlands. Green infrastructure is the way of the future!”

“Traffic congestion must be a priority if more housing and people are planned for the area.”

“I would love to see more continuous rain covered street areas - similar to arcades or market streets in Japan and Korea. It rains for most of the year here, it would be much more pleasant to walk around commercial areas if they offered continuous rain coverage for pedestrians.”

Land Use, Built Form and Development Impacts

Over 75% of survey respondents noted that “maximizing the neighbourhood’s location as a transit-oriented Urban Village between Metrotown and Edmonds” was an important value to consider in shaping the future vision for Royal Oak.

Overall, survey responses showed strong support for increasing the range of housing options in Royal Oak as part of the new community plan. When asked about what housing forms could be supported outside of the main mixed-use commercial nodes and corridors, over 50% of respondents indicated support for 3-4 storey townhouse/rowhouse forms or low-rise (4-6 storeys) forms, while approximately 35% indicated support for even higher (6-12 storey) apartment forms.

Many respondents supported the idea of concentrating higher-density uses and building forms in the mixed-use node areas near the Royal Oak SkyTrain station and at the intersection of Kingsway and Royal Oak Avenue. However, many other respondents expressed opposition and concern to taller building forms and more housing in the neighbourhood, noting that only low-rise forms should be supported.

There was general sentiment that taller podium-tower high rise forms commonly seen in Metrotown and Edmonds should not be supported in Royal Oak, and that the urban design and built form in Royal Oak should be carefully considered and should remain distinct from what is seen and experienced in higher-density Town Centres.

Sample of Comments:

“Every SkyTrain station should be surrounded by high density housing.”

“In regards to transit, make sure there are no parking minimums - use of public transit should be encouraged.”

“Royal Oak and Kingsway are great locations for densification.”

“High density is fine. However, no need for high rise. There are ways to design low-rise high density housing that are not intrusive and overwhelming.”

“There should also be more focus on the Royal Oak/Rumble area for housing as a mini-urban hub. This area is a major hub of the community with grocery stores (Buy-Low), gyms (Anytime Fitness), gas stations, vets, dentists, restaurants, RMT, and other services.”

“Transit-oriented village is the need of the hour, but we have to craft this very carefully so that proposed community should make use of maximum green energy rather than conventional one. Dedicated car free zone would be desired.”

“More food options/safety in urban village + station hubs would be helpful.”

Local Economy and Employment

Phase 1 revealed strong support overall for improving local business and economic opportunities in Royal Oak, as well as creative employment options in the area east of MacPherson Avenue and south of Kingsway.

75% of survey respondents noted that “Enhancing Kingsway, Royal Oak Avenue and Imperial Street as vibrant commercial corridors” was a “very important” or “important” value to consider in shaping the future vision for Royal Oak.

Over 70% of survey respondents “strongly supported” or “somewhat supported” the enhancement of creative employment options in Royal Oak.

Comments noted support for enhancing commercial uses along Kingsway such that it would develop into a more vibrant and diverse commercial corridor with a unique sense of place with better nightlife and restaurant options, while providing for basic everyday needs like groceries, as well as services like doctors and dentists. Other comments noted that it was important to encourage small local businesses and smaller corner shops in more residential- focused areas.

Many comments expressed support for preserving light industrial and employment areas in Royal Oak, as these were important components of the neighbourhood, while also encouraging more creative employment uses in these areas. The idea of a brewery district or brewery row in Royal Oak was supported by many.

Sample of Comments:

“Do not get rid of industrial space. Do not build housing on top of industrial space. Build dense housing on top of sparse housing. Housing is in a crisis right now, but so is land for industrial usage. We need to make proper use of what land we have by building taller and denser.”

“Very important: Studio Brewery Model: Encourage the incremental development of creative employment uses south of Kingsway between MacPherson and Gilley Avenues through the adaptive re-use of existing industrial spaces and integration of accessory commercial uses.”

“Creative employment use and RGS amendment area could become Burnaby’s Granville Island. Heights and shapes of buildings should accommodate businesses that operate there.”

“While I agree with the ambitions of Creative Employment, please don’t use it to bludgeon the small shops and light manufacturers out of this area to be replaced with developments!”

“Yes to brewery row - with a green belt for families, activities.”

Plan Area Boundary

During Phase 1 public consultation, options for amending the existing plan area boundary for the Royal Oak Urban Village were presented, including options to expand the boundary north to Oakland Street and the Oaklands neighbourhood (i.e. “Area 1”), and west to Gray Avenue (i.e. “Area 2”). Feedback revealed a mix of opinions about the potential to amend the plan area boundary as part of the new Royal Oak Plan.

It is noted that during Phase 2 public consultation, staff may seek further feedback on these potential plan boundary adjustments in the context of more comprehensive information that will be presented as part of the detailed draft plan directions, on key topic areas such as potential future land uses, building forms, mobility networks, housing strategies, and community amenities and services. This will help community members to provide more targeted and specific commentary on whether they support amending the plan area boundary for the Royal Oak Plan.

Sample of Comments:

“leave the current boundaries unchanged”

“Don’t think the boundary needs to be extended to Oakland[s]”

“Yes, should include the potential amended plan boundary areas...”

“I agree with the proposed new boundaries (Oakland St. and Gray Ave.)”

*“Yes to include area 1. I feel it is part of the Royal Oak area. It is a natural extension.
I don’t feel area 2 is so connected and that it is more a part of the area west of it.”*

“I think it makes sense to include both area 1 and 2 in the plan area.”

Public Consultation Methodology

Aside from providing input on the Phase 1 public consultation content, community members in Royal Oak also commented on the methods and strategies being used to reach out to the community to notify and invite the public to engage in the community planning process. It is noted that staff will continue to seek ways to improve upon future public consultation efforts, based on continual input received from the public.

