



URBAN  
SYSTEMS



# CULTUS LAKE PARK VILLAGE CENTRE PLAN

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WHAT WE HEARD  
COMMUNITY MEETING ENGAGEMENT SUMMARY  
JANUARY 2023







# Introduction

In Summer 2022, Cultus Lake Park Board embarked on a planning process to prepare the Cultus Lake Park Village Centre Plan. The purpose of the Plan is to build upon PlanCultus 2016 (Cultus Lake Park Plan Bylaw No. 1080, 2016) and to provide clear direction for future growth and redevelopment of the Village Centre site. The Plan will consider how additional commercial, multi-family residential and mixed-use development can be integrated to support complete and healthy community development for residents and visitors alike.

On December 13th, 2022, a virtual community meeting was held via Zoom to introduce the Cultus Lake Park Village Centre Plan project to the broader community, to raise awareness about the future redevelopment of the Village Centre site, and to offer clear and transparent communication about the project. The event also provided an opportunity for community members to share their initial thoughts, ideas and ask questions.

The meeting was organized into two segments – Part 1 consisted of a short presentation which provided an overview of the project and was followed by a Q&A period. Participants asked questions and made comments related to the scope of work and considerations for any potential future development in the park. Part 2 consisted of facilitated small group discussions on select topics relevant to the planning process. Participants had the option to join for the full duration of the event or only Part 1.

In total, **51** participants attended the meeting with approximately **40** joining in for the discussion portion. A summary of what we heard during the community meeting is provided in this report. Participant feedback is organized into the following categories, which follow the format of the breakout room discussions:

- Connection to Cultus Lake
- How the Village Centre (the plaza) is used today
- Priorities for the Village Centre redevelopment
- Other comments
- Feedback on the community engagement session

Engagement with community members and key stakeholders is fundamental to the success of the Cultus Lake Park Village Centre Plan project. This event was the first of several planned engagement activities for the Village Centre planning process.



# Connection to Cultus Lake Park

Participants were asked about their connection to Cultus Lake Park. Nearly all participants are full-time, year-round residents. Many have had long-term connections to the area through multiple generations of family members who reside(d) or recreate(d) in Cultus Lake Park. Some residents, both current and past, are also the owners of a year-round or seasonally operated business. Few participants are currently part-time, seasonal residents.

Participants were asked about their primary reasons for living/visiting/working in Cultus Lake Park. The following reasons that make Cultus Lake Park special were provided.

## Community

- Strong sense of community
- Friendly, small town and lake community feel
- Good relationships between residents and with businesses
- Genuine care for the long-term health of the lake and park
- Long-term connections to the area as residents and/or visitors

## Location

- Unique location
- Natural beauty of the lake and the park
- Rural yet close to urban areas in the Lower Mainland
- Proximity to nature (lake, beach, forest) and outdoor activities (camping, boating, water sports, golfing, etc.)
- Proximity to amenities and services offered in urban areas

## Lifestyle

- Peaceful and quiet
- Community-oriented
- Safe
- Great place to raise families as well as to retire
- Great place for a vacation
- Summers are vibrant and fun with a lot happening, winters are quiet



# Current Use of the Village Centre

Participants were asked how they currently use the Village Centre site (the plaza) today.

The key takeaways from the comments are summarized below:

## Businesses

- Some participants use all or most of the existing businesses regularly, based on their operation schedule (year-round or seasonal). Popular businesses mentioned include Lakeside Beach Club restaurant, Cultus Lake Superette, Canada Post office, Kent's Ice Cream, Beethoven's Pizza, and other food and drink establishments.
- Some participants only use a small selection of the existing businesses and only on occasion.
- Some participants (non-residents) do not use the plaza at all and shop elsewhere.
- Generally, the plaza is used more during the summer when more of the businesses are open.
- Some participants would use the plaza more if the businesses were open year-round.
- There is a strong desire to support local business owners and concern about seasonal fluctuations.
- The grocery/convenience store is inadequate, and products are expensive. It is only used in emergencies, but otherwise, residents/visitors shop in Chilliwack or Abbotsford.
- Some participants only go to the Lakeside Beach Club.

## Amenities

- Some participants use the dog park/green space surrounding the plaza.
- Some residents enjoy the trails around the plaza for walking or cycling on their way to the lake.
- Some participants, those who work in the area or take their children to school, pass by the plaza on a regular basis and use it to access services.



# Current Use of the Village Centre

Participants were also asked what they like and/or dislike about the plaza.

## Like

- Good location with proximity to community, waterpark, lake, beach
- Walkable and easily accessible by car with parking availability
- Restaurants, businesses and post office open year-round
- Visible location for businesses to attract visitors
- Good opportunity to support local businesses
- Convenient for small things and to see what's going on in the community
- Provides opportunities for community gathering and connection
- Safe and great for kids
- Patios are great and desire for more
- Post office is valuable to community members
- Small plaza community feel
- Working there in the summer and meeting community members and tourists
- Dog park
- The businesses offer summer jobs for youth

## Dislike

- Unattractive and dated appearance
- Limited year-round services and amenities for residents, existing options do not meet current needs
- Businesses cater to visitors not residents due to seasonal closure
- Underutilization of site, awkward layout
- Improvements needed to attract people in winter months
- Not reflective of strong sense of community that characterizes Cultus Lake Park
- Trails to access plaza need improvements
- Washroom facilities need improvements
- Visitors have limited short-term accommodation options to stay in Cultus Lake (stay in Chilliwack instead), challenging to visit just for the weekend. The plaza would be more vibrant if more people visited the park short-term, especially during the off-season.

# Future Priorities for the Village Centre

Participants were asked about their priorities for the redevelopment of the Village Centre site. The following feedback was provided:

## Appearance & Accessibility

- Improved accessibility of plaza and surrounding greenspace
- Attractive site that represents the unique community of Cultus Lake Park
- Participants hope for improvements and a more enjoyable experience at the plaza
- Desire for plaza to resemble resort community with comparisons made to Whistler Village and Garrison area
- Improved plaza appearance through gateway project and landscaping (e.g., signage, flower beds, baskets)
- Improved traffic management and transportation access

## Sustainability & Environment

- Promotion of sustainability, affordability, and revenue generation for park
- Promotion of health of lake and natural environment

## Mix of Uses & Community Feel

- More year-round businesses, services, and amenities
- Retention of current local businesses and small community feel
- Creation of community hub to foster activity in the area
- Mix of uses including residential, commercial, and other community uses
- Consideration for unique uses not offered in neighbouring communities
- Consideration of uses to support senior population
- Promotion of housing diversity and affordability



# Future Priorities for the Village Centre

When asked what type of **uses** would engage people with the area, participants provided the following answers:

- Additional businesses, services and amenities open year-round (e.g., grocery store, post office, café, laundromat, wine tasting room)
- Community gathering places with seating
- Arts and culture
- Covered outdoor event space to support community activities (e.g., music events, movie nights, farmers' market)
- Dog park and greenspace with trees
- Mixed use development including residential



**Community amenities** that participants hope the Park gains from the development of the plaza include:

- Sidewalk and pedestrian connections to improve walkability and reduce driving
- Cycling trails
- Landscaping improvements (e.g., trees, flower beds, hanging baskets)
- More benches and seating areas
- More community gathering areas and event spaces
- Affordable parking
- Additional road entrance/access point to park
- Signs for full parking lot
- Safety improvements including speeding and signage
- Replacement of public access docks
- Replacement of septic field
- Relocation of works yard to landfill site



# Other Comments

Participants were asked if there is anything else they would like to share to inform the Village Centre planning process.

The following comments were made:

- Cultus Lake is a social place and there is a supportive, connected community. The plaza should reflect this.
- Plaza uses should be convenient, user friendly, and bring value to both residents and visitors
- Plaza needs something beneficial to increase park's revenue
- Important to balance community desires for the plaza with the preservation and health of the park, lake, and wildlife populations
- Desire for modern, mixed-use development with residential, commercial and community uses
- Desire to incorporate qualities of Garrison, Whistler Village, and other resort communities
- Community demographics are changing. Young families are moving and staying here, there are more full-time residents
- The school is over capacity and more classroom space is needed
- Important to consider different forms of housing in the community, such as through infill development
- Consider how to support senior population to allow for retirement in the community
- Consider the population threshold needed to support commercial uses
- Concern for capacity of existing infrastructure (water system, sewer system, roads)
- Is redevelopment happening to support existing residents/users or to bring others in?
- Consider how to manage costs/who pays for improvements/development
- Concern for impact of future development on park and lake health
- Concern for funding and economic feasibility of development and park improvements
- Important to capture more community members' voices, suggestion for comment box

# Engagement Session Feedback

Participants were asked to comment on the session and provide feedback for consideration when planning future engagement activities. The following comments were made:

- Good use of technology to come together and have important conversations
- It was nice to meet new people for the first time
- Grateful to be involved in engagement process
- Appreciation for opportunity to speak
- Breakout rooms were great, could also be done in person
- Concern that an online platform may be intimidating for some
- Important to consider framing of questions and messaging

