

THE CORPORATION OF THE  
**CITY OF WHITE ROCK**  
CORPORATE REPORT



**DATE:** July 25, 2016

**TO:** Mayor and Council

**FROM:** Kurt Alberts, Acting Director of Planning & Development Services  
Greg St. Louis, Director of Engineering & Municipal Operations

**SUBJECT:** Progress Update - Johnston Road Streetscape 'Gateway' Project

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**RECOMMENDATION**

THAT Council receive for information the corporate report dated July 25, 2016, from the Acting Director of Planning & Development Services and Director of Engineering & Municipal Operations, titled "Progress Update - Johnston Road Streetscape 'Gateway' Project."

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**INTRODUCTION**

This report provides an update to Council regarding the community engagement process undertaken to date regarding the revitalization of Johnston Road, as well as the next steps in the project.

**PAST PRACTICE / POLICY / LEGISLATION**

Council has identified the "Town Centre Plan" as a strategic priority. The revitalization of the Johnston Road corridor is an opportunity to achieve success by improving the functionality and vibrancy of Johnston Road as the commercial heart of the Town Centre. Staff have retained consultants (Studio Parsons and Eckford Tyake + Associates Landscape Architecture) to assist in the public consultation aspects of the project and in the preparation of concept plans.

**ANALYSIS**

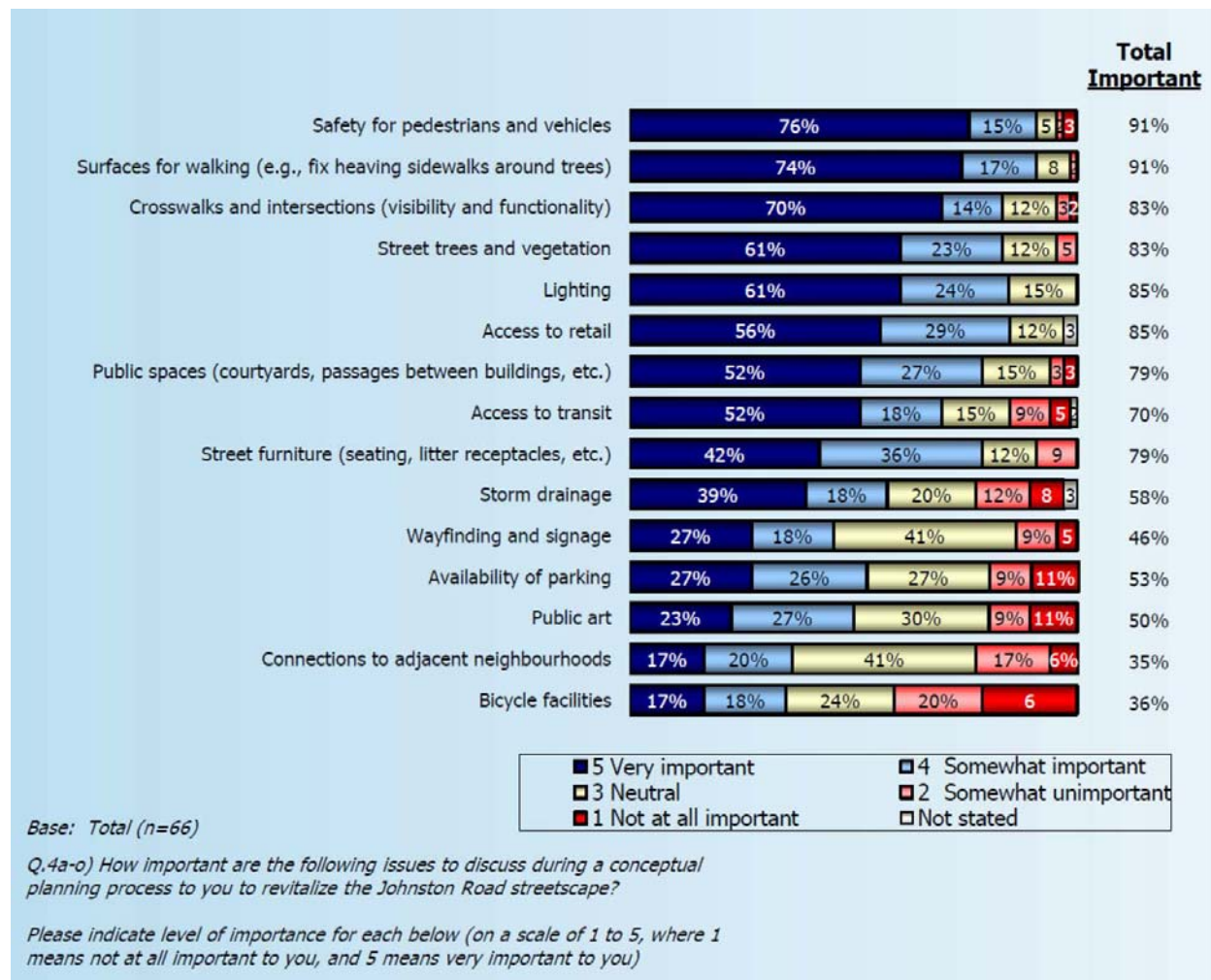
**Study Area**

White Rock's Town Centre is the southern part of the large, contiguous Johnston Road/152nd Street retail corridor and is the focus of White Rock's office, retail, and service space. The Johnston Road corridor study area is shown in Appendix A to this report. It consists of approximately 600 metres of public right-of-way between North Bluff Road to the north and Roper Avenue to the south. It is important to note that previous work (2001-2014) was focused on a smaller portion of Johnston Road, consisting of approximately 400 metres of public right-of-way between North Bluff Road to the north and Thrift Avenue to the south.

**Public Consultation**

A community survey regarding the existing and desired Johnston Road experience was undertaken through the Talk White Rock online platform from January 21, 2016 to February 3, 2016. Community members were invited to participate in the survey on the City's website, and

through telephoning all available published residential phone numbers for the City of White Rock (over 1,400 residences). 66 survey responses were received, 97% of whom were White Rock residents (the others were White Rock business or property owners on Johnston Road). A summary of the public consultation survey is included as Appendix B. An excerpt from the summary, highlighting the issues that people felt were most important, is included below:



On February 10, 2016, a public workshop was held at the White Rock Community Centre, where 65 participants were asked to share what makes Johnston Road unique, discuss aspirations and obstacles to street improvements, and develop preliminary principles to guide the work. The project consultants also provided a presentation highlighting some of the current issues and opportunities on Johnston Road and illustrating best practices for commercial main streets from other cities. The workshop was advertised through the City’s website, on posters in the windows of Johnston Road businesses, and directly through an invitation mailed to 1,013 owners and occupants of residential properties and the owners of 144 businesses within the study area. The feedback from this workshop has been summarized into “word” clouds identifying the subjects most frequently commented on at workshop tables (the more frequently noted the larger the word appears), which have been attached to this report as Appendix C. Draft guiding principles derived from the public workshop, as proposed by the project consultants, are attached as Appendix D. The draft guiding principles are intended to guide the concept design work, but are not intended as a detailed design brief or as formal criteria to evaluate the concept plans.

### **Business Consultation**

On April 7, 2016, staff cohosted a business consultation event on Johnston Road revitalization with the White Rock Business Improvement Association. Over 30 business and commercial property owners on Johnston Road attended the event, and participants were asked to provide input on what is working well and what could be improved for businesses currently on Johnston Road, and on how the City can help to minimize impacts on businesses during the construction phase.

### **Next Steps**

Based on the feedback received at the public workshop and business consultation event, staff have worked with the consultant team to refine design principles for the creation of three concept designs. These design principles include guidance around elements that will be shared by all three design concepts (such as consideration for sustainable storm water management and climate appropriate landscaping) and elements that will vary (such as differing levels of 'pedestrian priority' in sidewalk width, road configuration and presence of on street parking). The concepts will include the preliminary street layout, landscaping, lighting, and civil engineering design, and more, and will have Class C cost estimates prepared for the project components.

The consultant team is in the process of formulating the three concept designs and it is anticipated that the designs will be ready for a public open house in Fall 2016. The public will have an opportunity to provide feedback on the three concept designs and identify their preferred design or a hybrid design, and staff will report back to Council with the outcome of this public engagement.

After the preferred or hybrid concept design has been selected, final civil engineering drawings of all physical components of the project will be completed. Construction phasing, traffic management, tender package, and Class A cost estimate details are also finalized at this stage. Pre-construction planning will include confirmation of the total project budget and all internal/external project funding sources; preparation of public tender documents; and confirmation of a communication approach to minimize impacts on affected businesses and landowners.

During construction, the City's Engineering & Municipal Operations will manage the phased construction of the public infrastructure improvements, and if applicable, coordinate these improvements with redevelopment occurring along the Johnston Road frontage of private properties within the study area.

### **BUDGET IMPLICATIONS**

The City's Engineering & Municipal Operations has an approved dedicated budget for the Johnston Road design work outlined in this report. A complete scope of the construction and associated project management costs will be determined in Stage 3: Preliminary & Detailed Design.

### **CONCLUSION**

This report outlines the public consultation process undertaken to date for the Johnston Road Streetscape 'Gateway' Project with the community. The overall purpose is for improving Johnston Road's functionality and vibrancy as White Rock's central main street. Moving

forward with the revitalization of Johnston Road in 2016-17 will help advance Council's strategic priority for the Town Centre.

Respectfully submitted,



Kurt Alberts, MCIP, RPP  
Acting Dir. of Planning & Development Services



Greg St. Louis, P. Eng  
Dir. of Engineering & Municipal Operations

**Comments from the Chief Administrative Officer:**

I concur with the recommendation of this corporate report.



Dan Bottrill  
Chief Administrative Officer

- Appendix A: Johnston Road Streetscape "Gateway" Project Study Area
- Appendix B: Public Consultation Survey Summary
- Appendix C: Word Cloud from Public Workshop
- Appendix D: Draft Guiding Principles for Concept Design Work

## APPENDIX A

### Johnston Road Streetscape 'Gateway' Project Study Area



## **APPENDIX B**

### Public Consultation Survey Summary





## > Foreword

### Introduction

- The City of White Rock Council has identified the development of the Town Centre as a strategic priority. Revitalization of the Johnston Road streetscape provides an opportunity to improve the commercial heart of the Town Centre between North Bluff Road and Roper Avenue.
- Building on past Johnston Road studies and consultations, the City is now re-engaging the community to help develop a collaborative Concept Development Plan for Johnston Road in 2016.
- Prior to a February 10th community workshop on this topic, the City hosted a survey on its Talk White Rock website to gather preliminary input from the public about Johnston Road and possible revitalization efforts. Mustel Group was commissioned, via the consulting firm Studio Parsons for the Johnston Road Streetscape Revitalization, to assist the City with the survey efforts. Mustel Group provided survey design input, telephone outreach and survey reporting.

### Methodology

- The survey was open on [www.talkwhiterock.ca](http://www.talkwhiterock.ca) from January 21st to February 3, 2016.
- By way of the website and the City's local engagement network (newsletters, notices to community groups, classes, etc.), community members, business owners and property owners were invited to the survey. To encourage broader participation prior to the workshop, Mustel Group telephoned all available published residential phone numbers for the City of White Rock from January 26 to February 1, 2016. Over 1,400 residences were invited to the survey with this telephone outreach.

Telephone Outreach	
Spoke to adult in household	700
Left voice message	708
Total Contacted	1,408

- A total of 66 members of the community, business and property owners participated in the survey. The findings are presented in this report.
- In addition, the City received 12 comments via Facebook and email.

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## Executive Overview

### Perception of Johnston Road

- Public perceptions of Johnston Road between North Bluff Road and Roper Avenue are mixed with both positive and negative opinions. The area is seen to be an eclectic mix of shops, entertainment and dining, including a mix of both old and new. There is appreciation of the village atmosphere and character which is found to be quaint and friendly, offering a pedestrian/ walkable-scale to visitors. The local, small, family-owned business are also noted as part of the area's character.
  - The area is described by some as the main entrance to White Rock.
  - Street landscaping and the trees are mentioned among the positive comments.
  - However, many consider the street to be in need of renewal and repair, while recognizing Johnston Road's potential to be a more vibrant, appealing focal point for both the community and visitors.
  - The negative perceptions include dated areas, run-down buildings and to some, a generally unappealing, uninviting, bleak look. The sidewalks are found to be awkward and dangerous. Some find the street narrow and lacking in vehicle parking.
- Nevertheless, most respondents can name one or more place along Johnston Road that is a favourite destination or landmark. A wide variety of places are cited including the Whaling Wall, the boulevards/ landscaping, the farmers' market, as well as specific retail shops, the Saltaire building/corner and the theatre.

### Conceptual Planning Issues of Importance

- The top issues among a list of topics presented for consideration in the conceptual planning process are pedestrian and vehicle safety related—safety in general, surfaces for walking, and visibility and functionality of crosswalks and intersections more specifically. These are of highest priority to at least 7-in-10 respondents.
- Other important topics to discuss in the planning process are street enhancements such as trees and vegetation, lighting, access to retail and to transit and public spaces. These are of highest importance to more than half of survey respondents.
- Additional topics are also of some importance to about half of respondents.

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## Executive Overview

### Suggestions for Positive Change along Johnston Road

- Ideas suggested to improve the streetscape are offered by most respondents. The top three are:
  - Creation of a more pedestrian friendly street—such as with café patios, public art, benches and no traffic
  - Greater cohesion of buildings and store types
  - Fixing sidewalks
- Further ideas involve landscaping, diversified retail, renovated buildings and store fronts, improved traffic flow and parking.
- Popular street shopping areas elsewhere that the public wishes Johnston Road might look like include other local districts like Fort Langley, Granville Island, Morgan Crossing and Ambleside among many other suggestions.

### Conclusion

- In sum, it is clear that those who engaged in this survey will welcome a revitalization of the Johnston Road streetscape to improve the atmosphere of the street as well as for safety and aesthetic reasons.
- As one resident noted, renewal will give people a reason to visit the area more frequently and "spend our money locally".

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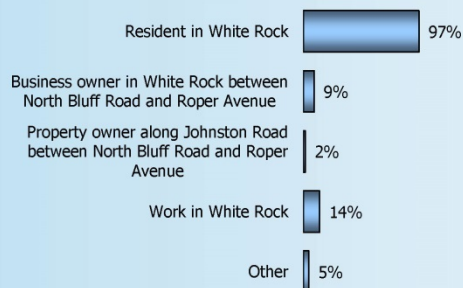




## Detailed Findings



### Reason Interested in Johnston Road

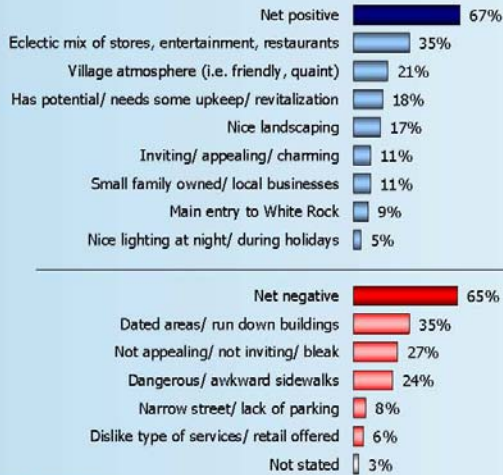


- Survey participants are overwhelmingly residents of White Rock.
- Some are also business or property owners and/or work in the community.

Base: Total (n=66)  
Q.1) Why are you interested in Johnston Road?



## Description of Johnston Road



Base: Total (n=66)

Q.2) If you were describing Johnston Road between North Bluff Road and Roper Avenue to someone who had never been there how would you describe it in a few words or sentences?

NOTE: Due to multiple responses, total and sub-totals (i.e., 'Net' sub-totals) add to more than 100%.

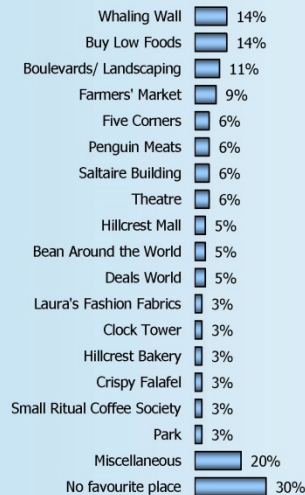
Respondents were asked to describe Johnston Road in their own words (unprompted). There is a mix of positive and negative comments, and some gave both.

- **Positives:** Many people first comment on the eclectic mix of retail, entertainment and dining options with some noting the small, family-owned, local businesses found on the street. Some describe the street as the main entrance to White Rock.
- The street's ambiance and character are a plus—described by some as a friendly, quaint 'village atmosphere' and by others as inviting, appealing or charming. On the other hand, the street is thought to have 'potential' but is in need of upkeep or revitalization.
- The landscaping and trees are mentioned in a positive way and a few note the lighting (at night and during holidays).
- **Negatives** focus on outdated or run-down buildings and being unappealing, bleak or uninviting feel.
- The dangerous/awkward sidewalks are a common complaint. Some find the street narrow and parking lacking, while only a few criticize the retail mix.

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## Favourite Landmark along Johnston Road



Base: Total (n=66)

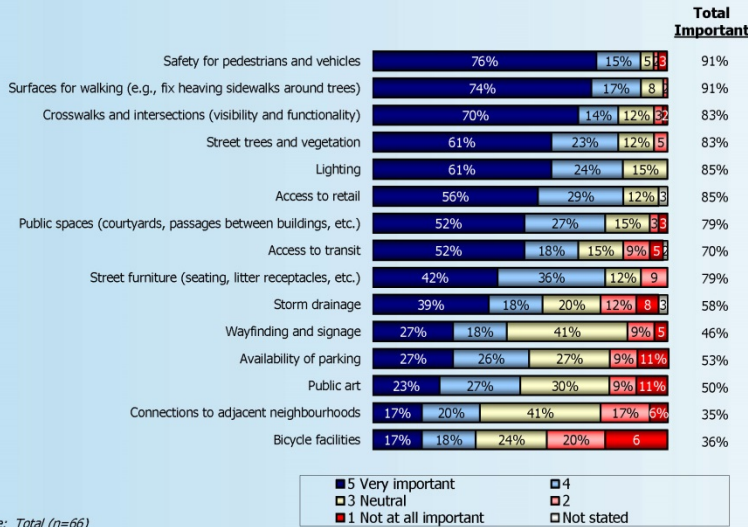
Q.3) Do you have a favourite place, landmark or destination along Johnston Road between North Bluff Road and Roper Avenue, if so what is it any why?

- Popular landmarks or destinations along Johnston Road include the Whaling Wall mural, the boulevards/landscaping and the farmers' market.
- Among retail shops, most mentioned is Buy Low Foods, but many people cite other specific favourites, such as Five Corners, Penguin Meats and a wide array of other shops and restaurants.
- The Saltaire building/corner and the theatre are singled out by some, while a few mention the clock tower and the park.
- A sizable group (30%), however, have no favourite place along Johnston Road.

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## ► Conceptual Planning Issues of Importance



Base: Total (n=66)

Q.4a-o) How important are the following issues to discuss during a conceptual planning process to you to revitalize the Johnston Road streetscape?

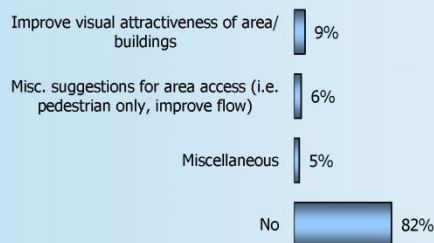
Please indicate level of importance for each below (on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 means not at all important to you, and 5 means very important to you)

- A list of 15 possible issues to be discussed during a conceptual planning process were presented and respondents asked to rate the importance of each.
- Topping the list of priorities are pedestrian and vehicle safety-related issues: general safety for pedestrians and vehicles, surfaces for walking (e.g., sidewalk heaving around trees) and crosswalks/intersections' visibility and functionality.
- Next in order of importance to be addressed are street enhancements such as trees and vegetation, lighting, access to retail, public spaces and access to transit, followed by street furniture and storm drainage.
- Half or more surveyed find most remaining issues at least somewhat important, but bicycle facilities and connections to adjacent neighbourhoods tend to be a lower priority.

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## ► Other Issues of Importance



Base: Total (n=66)

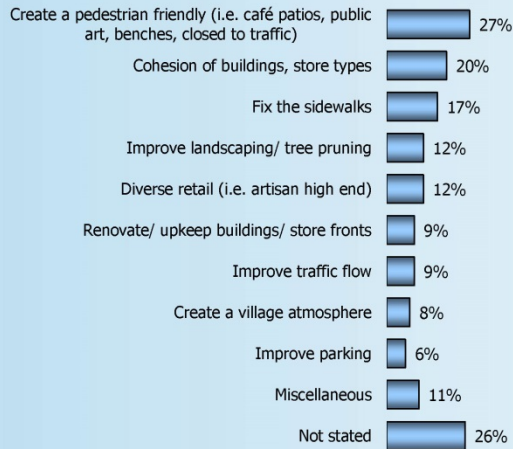
Q.5) Are there any issues not listed in Question 4 that you feel are important to be discussed during a conceptual planning process to revitalize the Johnston Road streetscape? If so, please describe.

- Most respondents felt the list of issues presented covered all that was important.
- Among topics raised by those with other suggestions were to make visual improvements to the attractiveness of the area and/or buildings and ideas for improving access to the area.

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## ► Suggestions of Positive Change along Johnston Road



Base: Total (n=66)

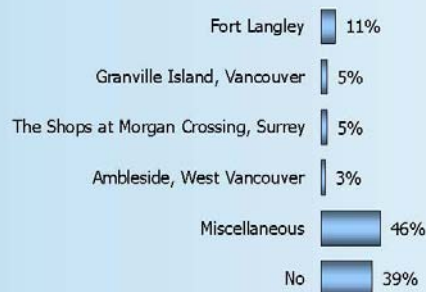
Q.6) Please provide your suggestions for positive change along the Johnston Road streetscape.

- The top three suggestions for positive changes along Johnston Road include:
  - Creation of a pedestrian friendly street (café patios, public art, benches, no traffic)
  - Greater cohesion of buildings and store types
  - Fixing the sidewalks
- Other ideas include landscaping, diverse retail, renovated buildings/store fronts, improved traffic flow, more of a village atmosphere and improved parking.

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## ► Other Favourite Shopping Areas of Interest



Base: Total (n=66)

Q.7) Do you have a favourite shopping street in another city that you wish Johnston Road were more like?

- Some suggest other favourite shopping streets in other cities that they wish Johnston Road could emulate. Local suggestions include Fort Langley, Granville Island, Morgan Crossing and Ambleside.
- Many miscellaneous other places are mentioned. (NB: Verbatim response list provided in a separate document.)

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## **APPENDIX D**

### **Draft Guiding Principles for Concept Design Work**

#### **DRAFT**

##### **ART**

Integrate and blend art into the signage, street furnishings, way finding and public spaces throughout the Johnston Road corridor

##### **CHARACTER + AESTHETICS**

- Develop a local character that maintains small town charm and is reflected through quality, natural building materials (resort destination; upscale / hippy mix; beach town character and investigate history; niche / boutique; "Living by the sea")
- Prioritize and enhance the pedestrian experience through:
  - aesthetics (interest, variety)
  - accessibility (even surfaces to walk on)
  - safety (removing obstacles)
- Differentiate Johnston Road from other local areas like Semiamhoo Mall and the beachfront
- Create a human scale street

##### **ECONOMICS**

Ensure economic viability of retail by working with local businesses and improvement are to diversify tenancy and develop a downtown enhancements program

##### **PUBLIC SPACES**

Encourage and invest in the development of community and public gathering

##### **STREET DESIGN**

- Coordinate street improvements with broader development plans
- Differentiate Johnston Road from other local areas like Semiamhoo Mall and the beachfront
- Utilize street design to streamline the flow of transportation

##### **TREES + LANDSCAPE**

- Develop a street tree plan that considers the location, health and viability of existing trees while considering alternatives for replacement
- Maintain, enhance and incorporate more planting, hanging baskets, floral planters, garden boxes and greenery

**SUSTAINABILITY** - Demonstrate leadership in environmental design and sustainability

##### **WAYFINDING**

- Celebrate the entrance to the community at North Bluff Road
- Develop way-finding for vehicles, cyclists, tourists and transit users to beach and regional sites
- Accommodate multilingual visitors and new residents to City through signage

**VIEWS** – capitalize on the ocean views and view to the islands and US