

Wharf Street Redesign: Public Engagement Results

HOW CAN WHARF STREET BE IMPROVED?



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The Village of Queen Charlotte (VQC) has received funding to re-design Wharf Street. In advance of drafting plans for a re-design, the VQC engaged the public to understand how they use the street, what they love about it, and what they think can be improved. The results of this engagement will be provided to ISL Engineering, and will inform the development of their re-design plans.

The Wharf Street Improvement plans are part of the Village of Queen Charlotte's \$4 million dollar, 3-year Transportation Improvement Project funded by the Federation of Canadian Municipalities Gas Tax Grant.

Process

The public provided feedback in one of four ways: an online survey, a drop-in station at the Causeway Convenience Store on Wharf Street, a neighbourhood meeting on Wharf Street, or by sending the survey directly to the Village office. The Village of Queen Charlotte received 132 written responses between April 1 – 26, 2019, and another approximately 25 people provided written and verbal feedback at the neighbourhood meeting on April 17, 2019.

All survey responses were open-ended, in order to encourage creativity and freedom of response. Responses were then themed and analyzed. The themes and their associated data is presented throughout this report, along with a selection of quotations from respondents.

Summary of Findings

Current Wharf Street Uses

Survey respondents are primarily drawn to Wharf Street by the shops (85%), services (59%) and restaurants (31%). Nearly 20% of respondents identified that the downtown area as a space to socialize, either at community events, public spaces or on the sidewalk. Another 20% identified accessing the wharf as a main reason for coming to the street. A smaller percentage (11%) identified Wharf Street as an area they come to exercise.

Strengths of Wharf Street

42% of survey respondents identified Wharf Street's functionality as one of the most-loved features of the street. Specifically, respondents appreciated that the street has many essential services clustered together in a small area with parking nearby. Others (30%) loved the appearance of Wharf Street. Respondents remarked on the surrounding view, the quirky look and feel, the historic buildings and the natural beauty. Respondents also identified the sense of community on the street as important (19%), noting that it is one of the few places in Queen Charlotte where you can easily connect with others. Some respondents felt that the current design of the street fostered community, by forcing people to slow down.

10% of respondents said there was little to love about Wharf Street, while 3% of respondents felt that the street should not be changed from its current state.

Opportunities for Improvement

While there are many strengths to Wharf Street, respondents noted three primary frustrations: difficulty parking (42%), congestion (38%) and difficulty navigating safely as a pedestrian (22%). Secondary concerns revolved around difficulties avoiding pedestrians (16%), the narrowness of the street (12%), the exits onto Oceanview Drive and Causeway Street (11%), and poor visibility (11%). Respondents offered a wide range of solutions that could remedy current challenges.

One Way Versus Two Way: 34% of respondents felt the street should be converted into a one-way street; 8% felt it should remain two-way.

Proponents for a one-way street suggested this would ease congestion, and increase the number of designated areas for pedestrians and cyclists. Most respondents did not specify a direction; however, of those who did suggest a direction, the trend was that traffic should flow from west to east.

Proponents for maintaining the two-way street suggested that the volume of traffic does not warrant this change, that better controlled parking would ease congestion issues, and that a one-way street would be less convenient for accessing the area.

Increasing Pedestrian-Friendliness: Respondents identified that as pedestrians, it felt unsafe to walk on Wharf Street, particularly with children, those with mobility issues, or with pets. Drivers also identified that it was a challenge to avoid pedestrians, who often walk on the road and stop for conversations. 33% of respondents identified expanding sidewalks as a potential improvement. 6% of respondents suggested bike lanes be introduced to the street. 4% of respondents suggested making the street pedestrian-only, either for certain days of the week or permanently.

4% of respondents noted that specific measures should be taken to make Wharf Street more accessible. This could include designated handicap parking, accessible beach access, and/or more ramps.

Greater Parking Control: 7% of respondents noted that parking was a strength of Wharf Street; however, 36% of respondents felt that parking could be improved. 10% of respondents felt there should be more parking available, and 26% felt parking could be better structured, more controlled or reduced. This could occur through more angled parking, limiting parking to one-side of the street, controlling times and places where freight trucks can unload, and better enforcement of parking regulations.

Beautification: 20% of respondents suggested that Wharf Street would benefit from more attention to its look and feel. Suggestions included more greenery (planter boxes, trees, gardens), sitting/picnic areas, general signage, Haida language signs, designated areas for food trucks, space for the farmer's market, character street lighting, local public art, public washrooms, coin showers and rainbow crosswalks.

30% of respondents do like the current appearance of the street. Given this, beautification efforts should work to maintain the current spirit of the street and broader community.

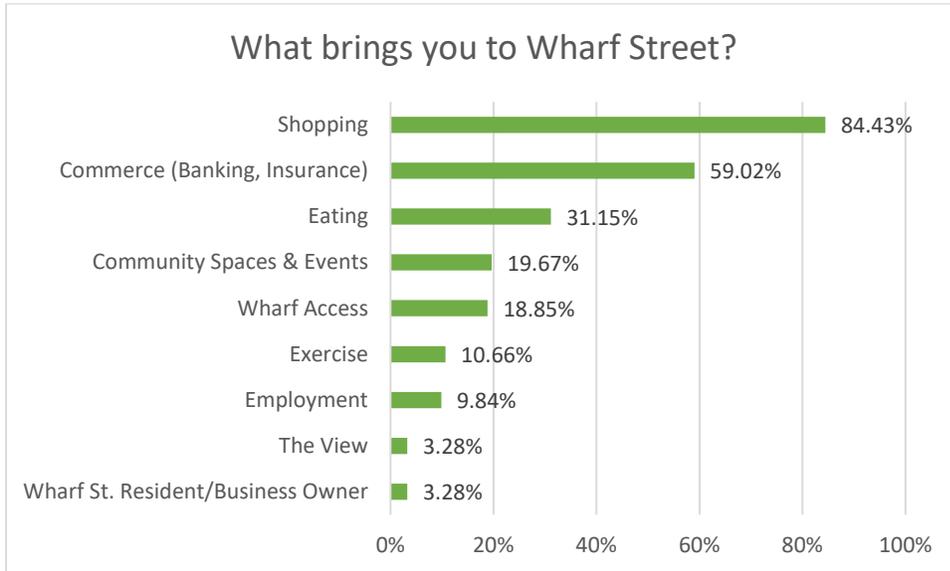
Increased Signage, Lane Markings and Traffic Calming: 20% of respondents suggested that Wharf Street could be improved with better signage, road markings or traffic calming measures. Many suggested that painted parking lines could improve the organization of parking and visibility on the street, particularly around Funk It and the Causeway. Others mentioned that the entrances/exits to Wharf Street near J&Ts, Meegan's and Causeway could be made safer with more signage and more controlled parking. 5% of respondents suggested the introduction of specific traffic calming measures, such as speed bumps.

Next Steps

The findings will be provided to ISL Engineering, and will inform the development of plans. Once the design options are complete, the Village will host another opportunity for residents and businesses to provide input before Council makes the final decision.

Summary of Survey Results

Q1: What brings you to Wharf Street?

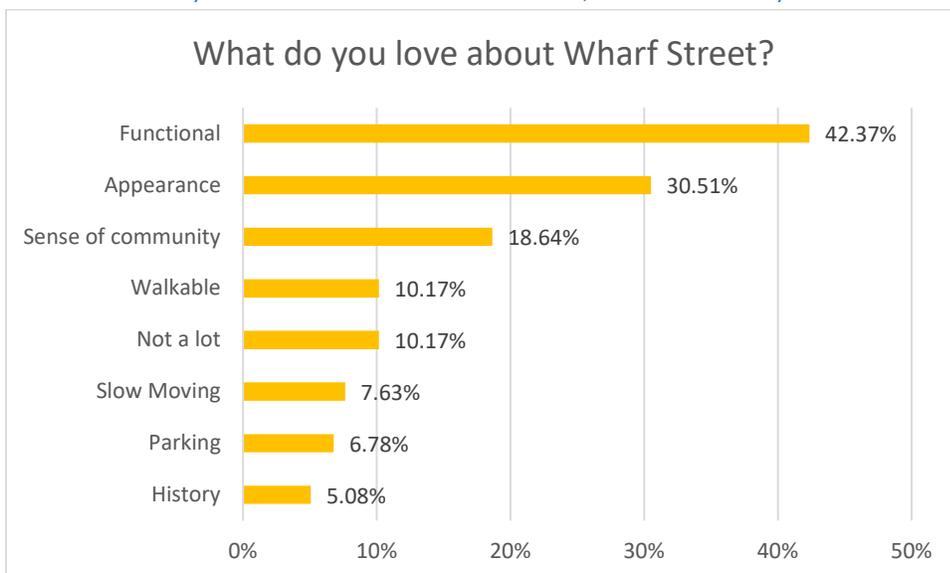


"It is a small town and there is not many places you get to see all the locals and family friends so I see it as a place to visit and reconnect with the community."

"Business (Isabel Creek, Queen B's, Convenience Store, Charlisle's) and Pleasure (Walking along Wharf Street 3x per week as part of my exercise routine)."

"Shopping. Banking. Walking with my dog. Eating. Walking down to the beach. Events on the stage."

Q2: What do you love about Wharf Street, as it currently is?



"Many local essentials are in one place, plus Queen Bs and Funk It are there to help you have fun. But really, the most important function of Wharf Street is that it is a meeting place. It's one of the only places to meet people spontaneously from all across town."

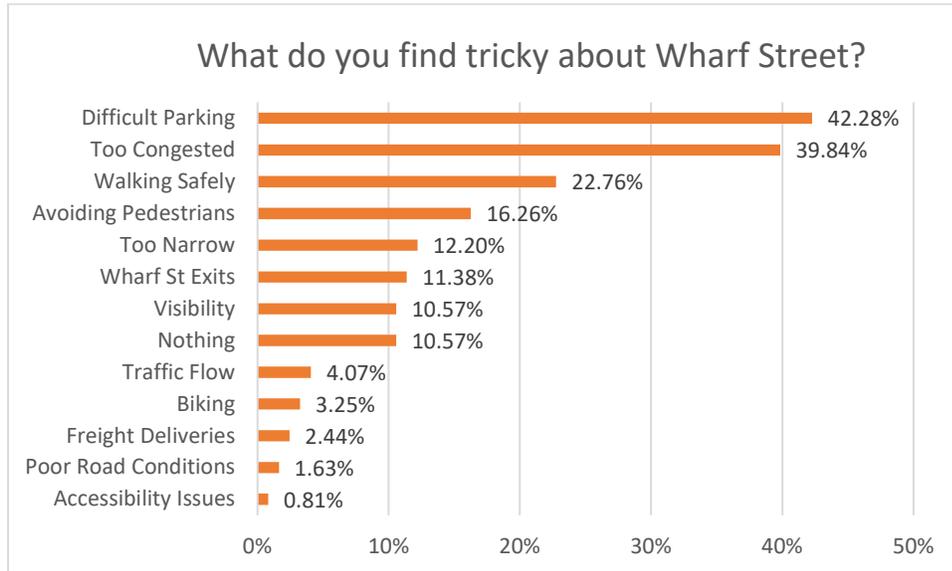
"Small town feel, intimacy, the need to slow down and connect with other people."

“Not over curated, good aesthetic, walkable.”

“Easy access to businesses, parking is always available.”

“It’s simple, easy. Please don’t make it complicated.”

Q3: What do you find tricky about Wharf Street?



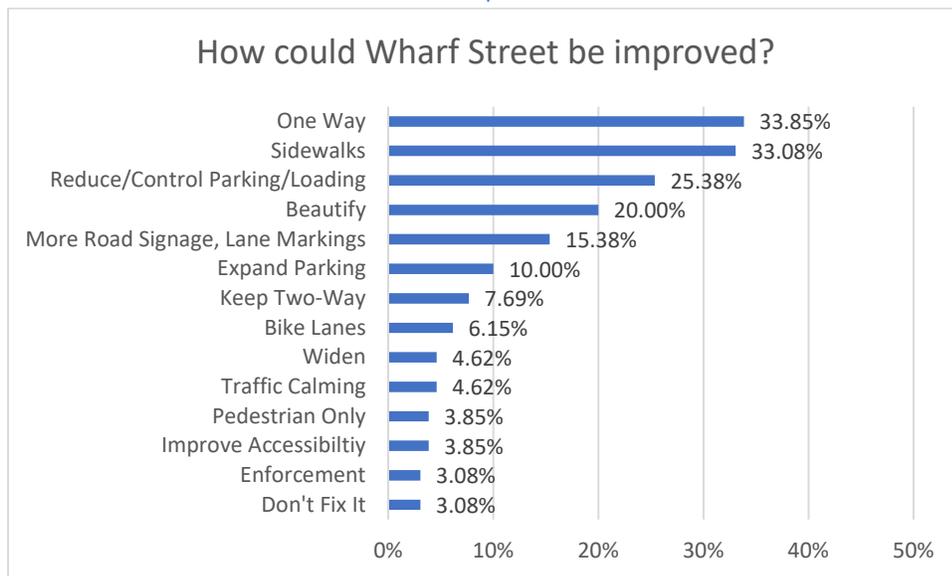
“It feels constricted and the T where the roads meet by Causeway convenience store; a very awkward place for traffic and pedestrians. I think there needs to be some no parking designations and crosswalk road paintings to open this spot up....how about some greenscaping? Parking overall around Wharf Street is clumsy at best.”

“Lack of sidewalks and people who park wherever and reduce the number of parking options.”

“Not having sidewalks for a portion of the street. Two way traffic in tight spaces esp. with parked vehicles.”

“Avoiding other vehicles, pedestrians etc. Getting from Wharf St back onto Oceanview Drive.”

Q4: How could Wharf Street be improved?



“One way west to east, two lanes in and out, one lane between two lanes of parking. Sandwich signs reserve space for freight trucks when expected.”

“Covered walkways, a path to the beach by Spirit Square, a nicer more well-kept government/Albion area. Spirit Square is so nice and the rest of the area is junky and messy looking. Expand parking for the Fisherman's Wharf - wider, the driveway and allow angle parking.”

“One way traffic, rainbow crosswalk by Causeway Convenience, spruce up that area by the pay phones (could be a neat little sitting area or garden), sidewalks, designated areas for food vendors (encourage other community's food trucks to come post up for a day), Haida language on signage”

“Need a safe right turn onto main road (Wharf by Meegan's). Crosswalk and yellow caution light to keep everyone safe accessing hotel, bakery, side roads, etc. Tourists wandering - SIDEWALKS PLEASE!!!! Make it one way entering at J&Ts corner, exit out by Wharf corner, which needs proper layout for turning right making it safer for children, students, strollers, elders, school bus, tourists, mobility scooters, cyclists, etc. on main thru fair.”

“NOT a one-way street. That would be very inconvenient and the amount of traffic does not warrant it. Possible a sidewalk with curbs on the south (water) side of the street from the eastern end of Wharf St. to the west entrance (past Meegan's) of Wharf St. But maybe not in front of Jackie Decembrini's place. Driveways where needed. One minor issue is parking in front of the liquor shop. It might be good to put a 15 minute parking limit on the street across from the liquor shop. Perhaps a parking lot just south of the credit union if that lot is available.”