



DRAFT

Downtown Vision & Action Plan



The District of Stewart needs your input on this Draft Downtown Vision and Action Plan to re-imagine Fifth Avenue and Downtown as a vibrant, attractive, accessible, and welcoming place for the community and visitors.

Please use the QR Code to the left or the link below to access the online survey and provide comments on this draft plan.

<https://forms.office.com/r/tzYjQ2gMt4>





TEMPTATIONS
BAKERY & DELI

Best Buns in Town

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Introduction



The District of Stewart's Downtown Vision and Action Plan re-envisions Fifth Avenue to serve community members of all ages and abilities, is attractive to economic development, and is a destination for visitors. This plan presents a vision for a vibrant and locally scaled downtown that reflects the community's needs, values, and aspirations in a clear and practical visioning document.

Site Context and Conditions

The District of Stewart is uniquely situated at the end of the land border between Alaska and British Columbia and at the head of the Portland Canal, a 114 km long fjord which forms a portion of the border at the southeastern edge of the Alaska Panhandle.



Stewart is an historic gold rush town and home to 500 residents. Natural, beautiful scenery surrounds the remote and small town. It's closest neighbour is Hyder, Alaska, a 3km drive accessed by Highway 37 A, also known as the Glacier Highway.

Located on the close to the ocean and with its maritime influence, it is described as a humid continental climate. There is approximately 74 inches of precipitation (rain and snow) in a year, and is known as one of the cloudiest places in the world.



The downtown plan area surrounds 5th Avenue, from Rainey Creek to the Stewart Airport (ZST). Some of the town's charms and highlights are the old mining town historical buildings and the breathtaking view along the Estuary Boardwalk.

- LEGEND**
- 1. Rainey Creek Campground
 - 2. Ian McLeod Memorial Park
 - 3. Rainey Creek
 - 4. Estuary Boardwalk
 - 5. Visitor Information Centre & Temporary Library Location
 - 6. Future Stewart Public Library
 - 7. Stewart Ball Diamonds
 - 8. Stewart Aerodrome



Policy Context

Previous studies and policies will help inform the direction of the Stewart Downtown Action & Vision Plan. The following section summarizes the existing regional and local policy documents that shape governance, infrastructure and built form in the District of Stewart community.

STEWART OFFICIAL COMMUNITY PLAN DRAFT (2022)

Provides guidance for District Council, staff and the community on how Stewart will grow and evolve in the future.

- Guiding Principles of the Official Community Plan (OCP) that are relevant to the Downtown Vision and Action Plan project include:
 - Encourage partnerships between different levels of government, crown corporations, local industry, small business and community groups
 - Foster an environment that provides active community engagement with a diverse cross-section of residents.
 - The District's role as the community moves forward will lead, facilitate, support and/or encourage the actions of others
 - Ensure that there is a proactive decision-making process that has a long-term focus.
 - Work within the Districts capacity to implement initiatives that are simple, meaningful, and cost effective.
 - Shared ownership of the OCP with the local community.
 - Ensure community planning decisions have transparency, clarity, and fairness.
 - Seek to promote unity in the community during decision-making processes.
- The OCP encourages new growth to support economic development, such as the Downtown Commercial Area. It also encourages higher density residential development in and adjacent to the area, the development of mixed-use buildings, and pedestrian-oriented development that's walkable and accessible, in the Downtown Commercial area.
- Downtown Stewart has retained several historical buildings, and it is encouraged to integrate key heritage themes into the existing and future development of facades.
- The Downtown Commercial area is also encouraged continue to direct lodging, restaurants and similar uses, as well as demolish buildings that are structurally unsound and cannot be restored.
- The Downtown is located within the Development Permit Area #3, which is subject with guidelines for the form and character of the District's Town Centre.

HOUSING NEEDS ASSESSMENT (2020)

Report that supports effective housing policy and development while understanding the District of Stewart's existing housing needs, and affordability and suitability challenges for residents.

Key Areas of Local Need

- Affordable Housing:** increasing housing values creates unaffordable conditions
- Rental Housing:** need for more rental housing options in the community
- Housing for People with Disabilities:** little to no supportive or accessible housing for those with special needs
- Housing for Seniors:** need for aging in place depending on individual needs
- Housing for Families:** lack of full-time employment and access to services threatens ability to afford and remain in the community
- Homelessness:** need for emergency and crisis housing, second stage housing, and supportive living facilities

STEWART AGE FRIENDLY ASSESSMENT COMMUNITY PLAN (2020)

Document that recognizes the importance of caring for older populations a priority for BC Communities, including Stewart.

The age-friendly assessment of the community implores priority areas of:

- Transportation**
- Health Services**
- Housing & Home support services**
- Walkways and Building Entrances**
- Communication**

DISTRICT OF STEWART STRATEGIC PLAN (2021-2022)

The document is a council-driven plan that discusses strategic areas for the year 2022-2023 that considers priorities that guide the municipality with the district's assets and potential long-term trajectory. The plan provides a refreshed vision, mission and values, strategic focus areas, goals and priority actions.

Values that guide the work of Council & Staff:

- Encouraging Community Involvement
- Building Trust & Respect
- Promoting Innovation & Creativity
- Recognizing the achievement and contributions of District Staff & Citizens
- Fostering Open & Proactive Communication
- Being Fiscally Responsible

Focus Areas (6):

1. Safe Community
2. Secure Finances, Assets & Infrastructure
3. Bold Economic Development
4. Livable Complete Community
5. Engaged Community
6. Organizational Excellence

REGION OF KITIMAT-STIKINE STRATEGIC PLAN (2019-2022)

Framework for the region to better understand the opportunities and challenges facing the region, as well as provide direction for decisions and ways to track progress overtime.

Strategic Focus Areas:

1. **Northwest British Columbia Resource Benefits Alliance**
 - To attain a long-term funding agreement with the Province to support economic development in the northwest and ensure that an appropriate share of resource revenues remain in the region.
2. **Engaging and Communicating with our Citizens**
 - To improve awareness of the Regional District's role and obtain feedback from our citizens on services we provide.
3. **Partnerships and First Nations**
 - Partner with our First Nations and communities to deliver services and amenities.
4. **Organizational Capacity**
 - To ensure we have the organizational capacity to deliver quality service and effectively respond to demands and opportunities as they arise.
5. **Provision of services in rural areas**
 - To provide and maintain services and amenities that support livable and sustainable communities throughout our region and protect our natural values and assets.
6. **Advocacy**
 - To advance a collective voice that represents the interests of the region to the Provincial and Federal governments and other governmental agencies responsible for providing services in our region.

DISTRICT OF STEWART TOWNSITE AVALANCHE HAZARD AND RISK ASSESSMENT

Summarizes a detailed study of avalanche hazard and risk to the Stewart townsite to update avalanche hazard zone maps and providing recommendations for mitigation.

A portion of the District of Stewart is within the high hazard zone and moderate hazard zone; therefore consideration must be given for geotechnical hazard of development.

DISTRICT OF STEWART CLIMATE ACTION STRATEGY: ADDRESSING BILL 27

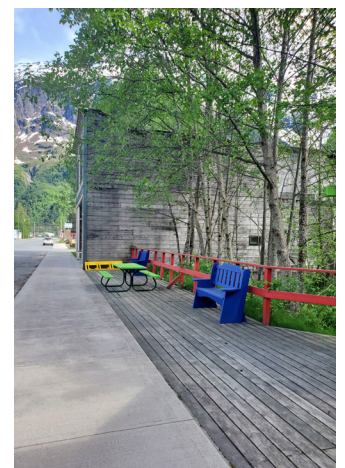
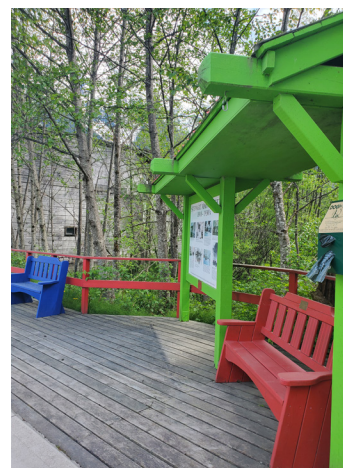
Provides recommended actions for how the District can better prepare for challenges that may arise as a result of a changing climate.

In addition to weather changes, climate change can also affect water, forest and agricultural resources and place increasing pressure on the District of Stewart's infrastructure.

Suggested climate high-level GHG policies for the District's are as follows:

- Support and facilitate energy efficient development and land use patterns to create complete, compact community development
- Promote energy efficiency, reduced energy costs, and the reduction of the carbon intensity of energy
- Work cooperatively with senior levels of government to reduce GHG emissions and energy consumption

Existing Conditions





Draft Vision & Guiding Principles

The downtown vision and guiding principles were developed based on a review of the City's planning documents, and input from staff, and what we heard from engagement events and surveys. The vision and guiding principles may be refined with staff, Council or community input.

Focus on 5th Ave Vision:



Downtown Stewart is a vibrant, beautiful, and inviting destination for both residents and visitors. This livable community core is well-connected to nearby amenities and is resilient to climate extremes. Community pride in heritage, culture and the natural environment is evident in both public and private spaces.



Guiding Principles



Mobility & Connections

- Create safe access and connections to, through, and around downtown for all modes of transportation
- Ensure mobility options for people of all ages and abilities are included in the downtown transportation network including walking and biking
- Ensure people of all ages and ability can access downtown comfortably and safely by foot or by wheel



Pride in History & Natural Surroundings

- Provide inclusive and welcoming spaces for residents and visitors of all ages, lifestyles, and abilities
- Prioritize places for people in the downtown that create places for memorable connection
- Foster enhancements that reflect the history of Stewart and celebrates community identity



Lifestyle & Livability

- Embrace downtown as a place that supports the various small-town lifestyles and cultures
- Shape the public realm to serve as an active community space
- Invest in infrastructure to support the future needs of Stewart residents



Environment & Outdoors

- Incorporate green spaces into the streetscapes and public places that reflect the beauty of surrounding natural areas
- Adapt to the changing climate by enhancing the resiliency of our infrastructure and reduce the impact of infrastructure on the environment
- Value the environment and protect ecological functions for everyone's enjoyment



Vibrancy

- Welcome creativity and innovation in downtown redevelopment and cleanliness efforts
- Promote a vibrant and inviting atmosphere that attracts and supports businesses, entrepreneurs, tourism, and talent to provide diverse employment opportunities
- Encourage a compact mix of land uses to provide opportunity for everyone to access places to live, shop, interact, play, work, and eat

Downtown Action Plan

The following list identifies proposed actions that respond deliberately to one or more of the guiding principles.

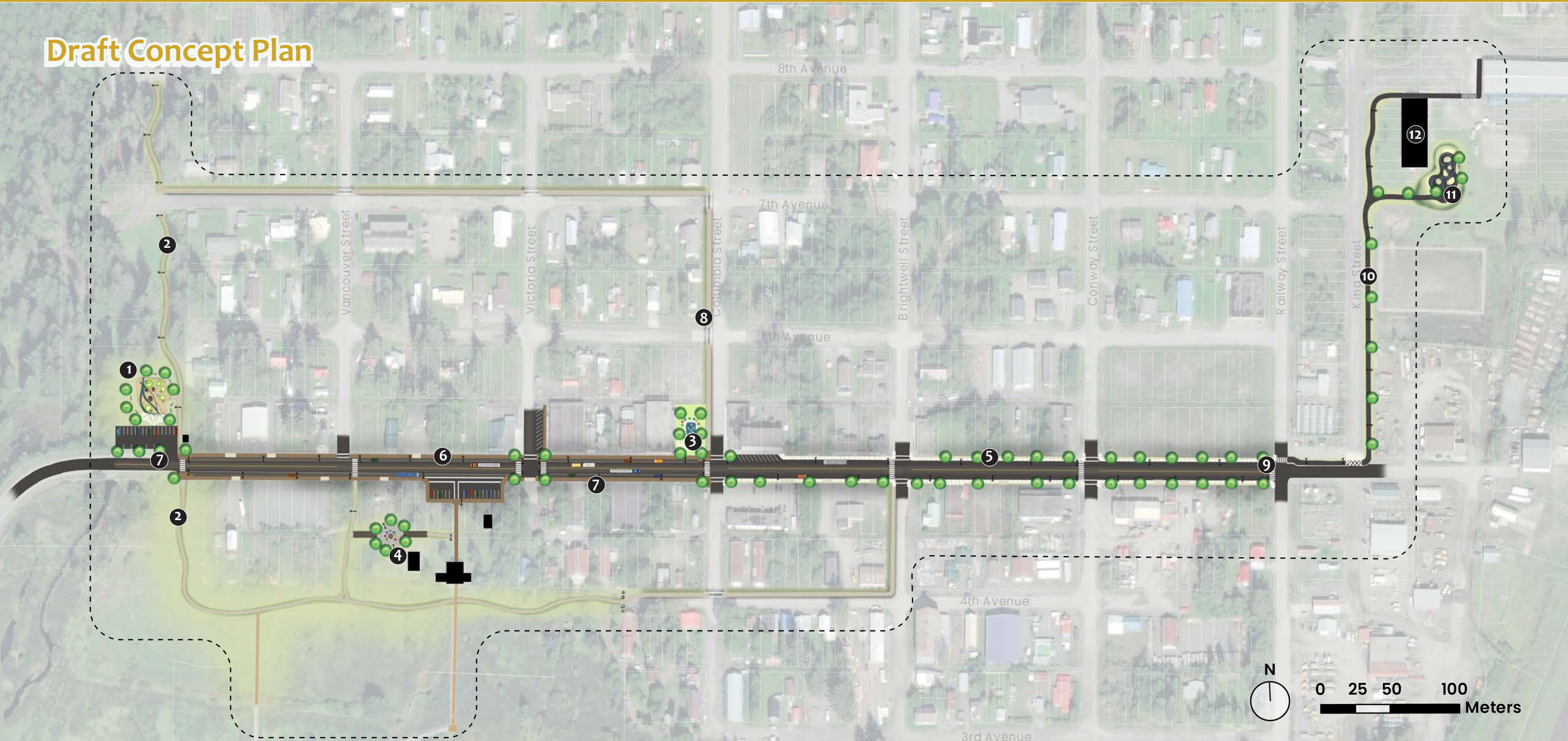


- Provide sidewalks throughout 5th Ave
- Renew aging parts of boardwalk and add more trail links to downtown network
- Provide a universally accessible connection from downtown to ball diamond
- Provide visible and safer pedestrian crossings on 5th Ave
- Connect trail from Rainey Creek Campground to downtown businesses
- Improve facilities within Rainey Creek Campground
- Bury power lines on 5th Ave when infrastructure renewal/upgrades occur
- Beautify 5th Ave with banners and hanging baskets
- Introduce enhanced sidewalk treatments on 5th Ave that reflect historical conditions with modern durable materials
- Partner with property owners to incorporate murals on building walls and historic images in windows of empty storefronts
- Improve drainage on 5th Ave
- Improve lighting throughout downtown

- Create year-round fire circle gathering space
- Include a water feature or spray plaza in downtown
- Include street trees where possible on 5th Ave
- Renew and upgrade equipment in Ian McLeod Memorial Park to create a destination playground
- Welcome visitors to downtown with gateway features and create a wayfinding strategy for the entire community
- Renew site furnishings with new colourful products made of low-maintenance and durable materials
- Maximize width of sidewalks to allow retail and dining to spill outside
- Maintain on-street parking and ease of vehicle access to downtown shops
- Create a youth-oriented hub near the school that includes an all-wheel pump track, climbing and skateboarding
- Establish a Historical Walk connecting important historical buildings around the downtown and pathways



Draft Concept Plan



LEGEND

Study Area

- 1** Playground Renewal in Ian McLeod Park
- 2** Trail Network Connections
- 3** Spray Plaza
- 4** Community Fire Circle

- 5** Standard Sidewalks and Pedestrian Crossings
- 6** Enhanced Sidewalks and Pedestrian Crossings
- 7** Street Lighting & Banners (throughout study area)
- 8** Historical Walking Loop

- 9** Gateway Feature
- 10** Paved Multi-Use Path
- 11** All-Wheel Paved Pump Track
- 12** Adaptive Reuse of Pool Facility- Enhance Youth Centre



Visualizing 5th



Key Map



LEGEND

- ① Enhanced sidewalks and pedestrian crossings
- ② Street lighting & banners (throughout study area)
- ③ Hydro lines buried underground
- ④ Increase street tree canopy
- ⑤ Seasonal parklets for public seating and plantings
- ⑥ Partner with businesses to create mural(s) on building facades

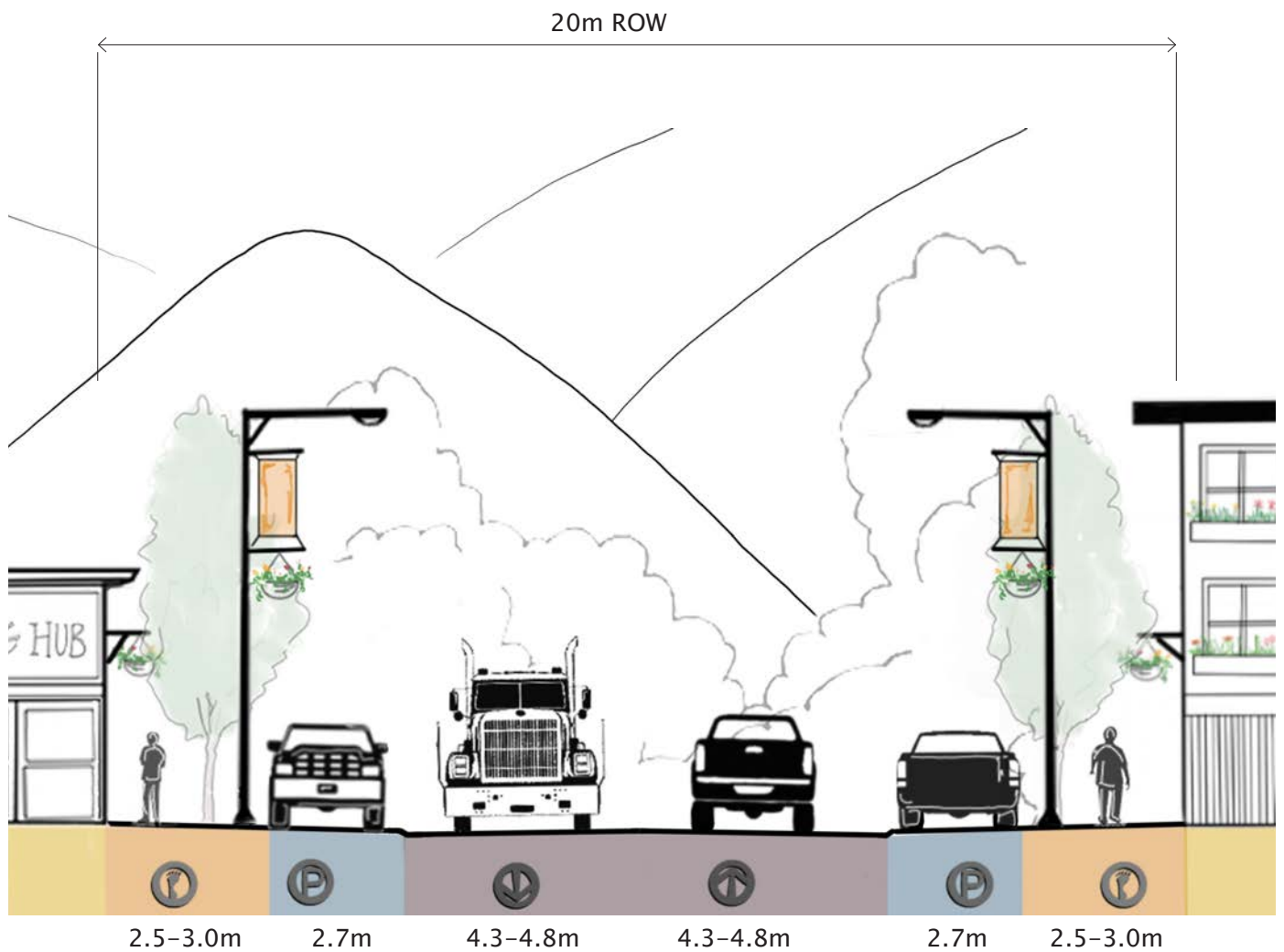


5th Ave - Street Sections

Key Map



Street Section A-A



2.5-3.0m

2.7m

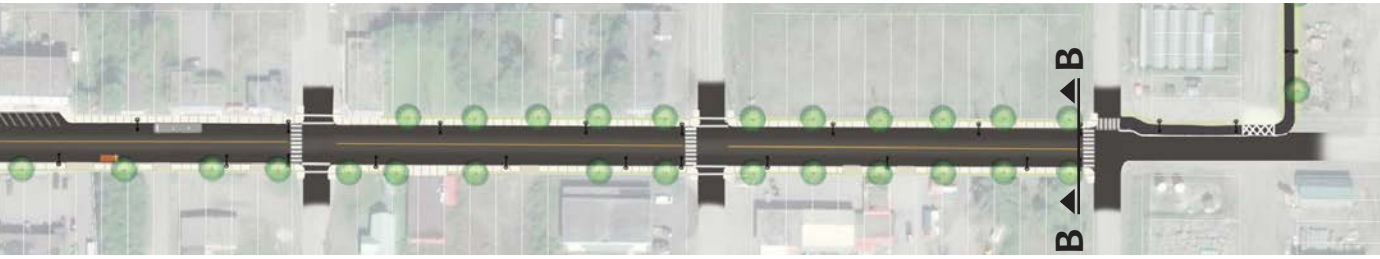
4.3-4.8m

4.3-4.8m

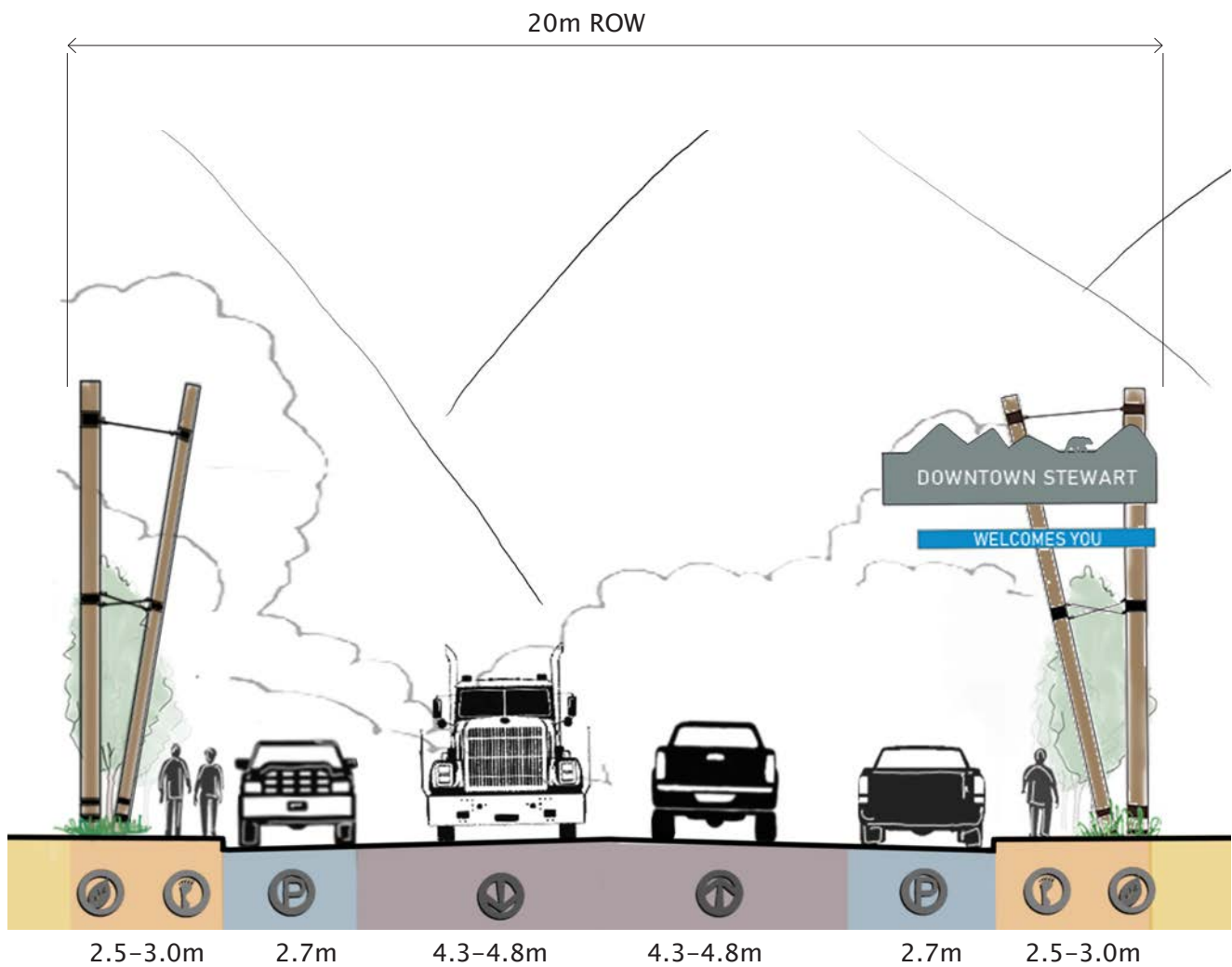
2.7m

2.5-3.0m





Street Section B-B



Precedents - Streetscape

Enhanced Concrete Sidewalk- Stamped and Coloured Wood Texture



Enhanced Crosswalks



Colourful Street Furnishings



Street Lights & Banners



Parking and Drainage



Downtown Gateway



Wayfinding



Precedents - Amenities

Community Fire Circle



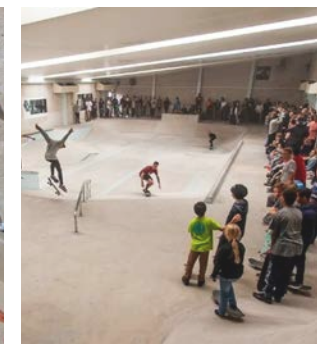
Spray Plaza



Playgrounds



Adaptive Reuse of Pool Building



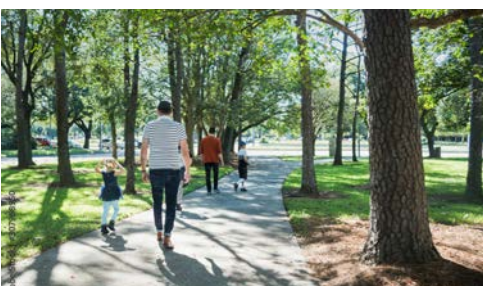
Paved All-Wheel Pump Track



Mural



Multi use Trails and Paths



Engagement Overview

The District of Stewart engaged the community in the process of creating a new Downtown Vision and Action Plan to re-imagine Fifth Avenue and Downtown as a vibrant, attractive, accessible, and welcoming place for the community and visitors.

Urban Systems team visited Stewart during May 24-26 to host public engagement events.

Engagement Events:

- Staff Workshop
- Public Drop-in session #1
- Public Drop-in session #2
- Online Survey
- Engagement panel in Harbour Lights Grocery

This summary incorporates the input received from all of these sources.



What We Heard: Opportunities

What are the leading opportunities for Downtown and Fifth Avenue?

Comments are listed in the highest order of priority from the community, based on the number of times we heard the comment or those that agreed with the comment (indicated in parenthesis).



Nature & Outdoors (8 comments)

- Natural beauty and views to surroundings (2)
- Campground (2)
- Town trails
- Dyke Road and access to beach
- Wildlife, bears, eagles, fish, etc
- Small harbor (at least have one)



Tourism (5 comments)

- Winter Tourism (snowmobiling)
- Tourism info center
- Colorful downtown is tourism friendly and every building is different
- Heli-tours, tours to glaciers
- Boat tours and fishing charter



Lifestyle, Character & Culture (11 comments)

- Ripley creek "Village" buildings (4)
- Character in the older heritage buildings (2)
- Small town safety
- Residents with knowledge and history of the past
- Often this is where one will find people and businesses
- Lifestyle choice to work from home
- Downtown appears clean



Amenities (13 comments)

- Boardwalk (4)
- Pavilion (2)
- Fire pit (2)
- Kids park
- Interpretive signs
- Colourful benches
- Playground
- Old prospector's cabins with old trails to access

What We Heard: Challenges

What are the most significant challenges facing Downtown and Fifth Avenue?

Comments are listed in the highest order of priority from the community, based on the number of times we heard the comment or those that agreed with the comment (indicated in parenthesis).



Maintenance & Cleanliness (9 comments)

- Litter from pets & cigarette butts, need more garbage and disposal bins (3)
- Snow removal and storage (2)
- Colored benches have to be painted every year (too many colours) (2)
- Massive amounts of snow and rainfall
- Damage from snow removal efforts



Open Minds & Community Growth (5 comments)

- Participation and community involvement
- Changing community attitudes
- ‘Old School’ thinking
- Keeping the town a community, not just a mining camp
- Keeping kids and youth busy



Vacancy & Surroundings (10 comments)

- Unattractive empty buildings or lots that aren’t maintained and need repairs (6)
- Looks like a ghost town at times
- The vacant lot full of willows and a chain link fence
- Lack of plants/green areas
- Poor connectivity to campground



Infrastructure & Amenities (12 comments)

- Slow internet (2)
- Vehicular traffic by playground is dangerous, noisy and increasing (2)
- Lack of parking at park in winter (2)
- Boat launch (Canadian) – only high tide, no parking, small vessels only (2)
- Massive trucks and increasing big truck traffic
- Not good fishing access for foot
- Brown water
- Canadian Marina lacks proper facilities, losing tourism
- Outdoor eatery

What We Heard: Ideas

What are your ideas for improving Stewart's Downtown and Fifth Avenue?

Comments are listed in the highest order of priority from the community, based on the number of times we heard the comment or those that agreed with the comment (indicated in parenthesis).



Cycling & Pedestrian (15 comments)

- Dedicated bike path and lanes (2)
- Accessible walking trails (2)
- Bike shelters and bike repair station (2)
- Maintaining the existing trails and adding more (forest and mountain trails) (2)
- Town trails made safer, easier access, and trail maps
- E-bikes
- Crossing / Pedestrian Activated Crosswalk
- Marked crosswalks on 5th Ave
- Walking track (made of mulch)
- Crosswalks on Hig
- More accessible for people who are mobility challenged



Infrastructure (21 comments)

- Road repair (5)
- More phone towers (3)
- Fish hatchery (economic development) (3)
- Shower facilities (2)
- ATV Access to dirt bike park
- Commercial – garbage bins for businesses
- Mining equipment all together and covered
- Electric Vehicle Charging Station
- Parking for transport trucks so they don't park on Main St.
- Tourist gondola into mountains
- Fence around ball diamond
- Upgrade playground at Rainey Creek (pour in place rubber, similar to Terrace)

What We Heard: Ideas

What are your ideas for improving Stewart’s Downtown and Fifth Avenue?

Comments are listed in the highest order of priority from the community, based on the number of times we heard the comment or those that agreed with the comment (indicated in parenthesis).



Amenities (140 comments)

- Skateboard park, pump track, and bike jump park (36)
- Swimming pool (23)
- Movie theatre (drive theater and snack stand) (20)
- Rodeo (13)
- Ice cream store (10)
- Adult playground (9)
- Fresh water pump, bottle station at Turnaround Park (7)
- Dog Park (6)
- Water park (4)
- Paint ball (3)
- Candy store (2)
- Asian garden near new community hall space (2)
- Splash park/playground
- Upgrade playground at Rainey Creek (pour in place rubber, similar to Terrace)
- Covered climbing wall
- More restaurants
- Roller coaster



Aesthetics (35 comments)

- Street lights (10)
- Banners, flowers, boxes or hanging baskets (6)
- Fix rundown buildings (6)
- Murals (3)
- Flowers and garden trees (2)
- Businesses being accountable for how their properties look
- Encourage more enhancements of private property and enforce unsightly premises (Banff is a nice example)
- Winter decorations (lights, boardwalk decorations)
- Trees along 5th from Railway to end (deciduous magnolia)
- Attract more residents
- Make people want to walk down the street (seating – colourful)
- Provide an incentive for owners of buildings not being utilized so they may be more willing to lease or sell
- Improving the visual aspect of downtown

What We Heard: Ideas

What are your ideas for improving Stewart's Downtown and Fifth Avenue?

Comments are listed in the highest order of priority from the community, based on the number of times we heard the comment or those that agreed with the comment (indicated in parenthesis).



Community Activities (18 comments)

- Farmers market / Commercial yard sale (Saturdays) (7)
- More sports (football, baseball, basketball, etc.) (4)
- Fair (3)
- Focusing on creating activities and things for people, especially youth and families, to have something to do and be active (2)
- Community programming and activities (eg movie night at the boardwalk)
- Chess tournaments (super intense)



History & Tourism (12 comments)

- Use technology to help visitors learn more about the town (2)
- Historic, aesthetic, rustic (Smithers an example)
- Historical images in store windows
- Historic style in downtown
- Stewart memorabilia – tourism, stickers, t-shirts
- Videos of the drive from the Meziadin Junction
- Stewart memorabilia (stickers, postcards, etc.)
- Slow down, watch for tourists (signs)
- Help visitor find cool spots (i.e. end of Dyke Road)
- Use technology to help visitors learn more about the town (2)
- All is not about 5th Ave and tourism
- If a building is just being used for storage something should be done to the front of it. Murals or vinyls to cover the windows. Show Stewart's history in pictures.