

# Student Consultation Report

**SUBJECT: Report on the June 2023 Student Consultation.**

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## **BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE:**

The student consultation was organized and run by the Gibsons Youth Representatives with the aim of hearing from fellow students at Elphinstone Secondary School. The goal was to hear their thoughts on the future of development in the town and provide an open space for youth to share any ideas or concerns about the community.

It was held in June of 2023, where around 17 students gathered along with the current Gibsons Youth Representatives. As a token of appreciation for their participation, students were provided pizza and pop.

## **DISCUSSION:**

In the interest of clarity, the report from this meeting has been organized into sections on specific themes from the discussion.

### ***Active Transportation and Public Transit Upgrades:***

Students are highly supportive of increasing public transit in Gibsons and on the Sunshine Coast in general. Desired upgrades to the transit system include higher frequency and expanded service hours, more conveniently accessible bus stops and new routes to serve currently under-served populations.

There was also the suggestion of expanded bike infrastructure, in particular a separate flat-track gravel path connecting Gibsons to Sechelt, with convenient access to the communities along the route. With the current biking infrastructure, many students feel it is unsafe to ride a bike to school, especially if the route to school involves going along the highway. Students also support more bike lanes on existing roads, with an emphasis on ensuring they feel safe to use.

### ***Road Infrastructure Upgrades:***

Students highlighted that the current road network has become more strained from increased traffic. There is concern that since all of our roads are single-lane in each direction, the road network cannot handle that many more cars, causing lots of slow traffic, especially at peak times.

There were also suggestions to include more crosswalks in the community, especially on blind corners, and along the highway. A traffic light at the intersection of Veterans Rd. and the highway was also suggested to increase the safety of the intersection and promote the flow of traffic.

### ***Recreation Upgrades:***

Students feel the need for more access to sports facilities, such as outdoor volleyball courts. There is a large community of volleyball-playing students on the coast, and many feel there is insufficient space to play games outside of the school gymnasium.

There is also a demand for significant upgrades to the Gibsons & District Aquatic Center. It is currently seen as quite outdated compared to the Sechelt Aquatic Centre, which boasts a larger pool, and many desired features. Many students identify the perceived outdatedness and lack of features as a significant barrier to using the Gibsons & District Aquatic Center.

### ***General Community Upgrades:***

In general, there is a desire for more spaces and events to bring the community together. Students feel that there is often a lack of connectivity in the community, and suggest more mixed-use and less car-centric community-oriented spaces to build a welcoming community.

There were also additional suggestions to promote more high-paying jobs in the community, as houses are very expensive limiting who can come to the community. There was also a suggestion to have a game store in Gibsons.

### ***Building Height and Larger Developments:***

The discussion around building height centred around the need for site-specific decisions regarding height. The majority of students present supported increasing the maximum building height to at least 6 storeys, in order to allow for more density and efficient land use. Some

students disagreed, stating the increase in height will bring even more people, putting more stress on infrastructure, and leading to Gibsons resembling Vancouver.

The affordability of the housing units inside of a building was important to students in justifying taller buildings. Students supported mixed-use developments with an emphasis on walkability and proximity to services. Certain proposed developments were flagged by students as being unlikely to include a significant enough amount of affordable housing to justify their heights, and could just be creating a disproportionate amount of high-end housing.

Some students were also concerned that large buildings would have a negative effect on the look and character of Gibsons, especially in Lower Gibsons. There were also concerns that more buildings would make the community darker, resulting in a loss of the community's cozy feel. Larger developments would also put more strain on vital resources, such as the aquifer.

Students specifically suggested the currently undeveloped parcel of land at the intersection of Gibsons Way and Pratt Rd. as an ideal spot for a taller development.

***Themes:***

Students are generally supportive of larger and taller developments if they fulfil the following criteria:

1. The development includes a significant proportion of affordable housing,
2. The development is considerate of the character of the surrounding area.

There is also a large desire for more upgrades to key community infrastructure, such as roads and active transportation. There is also a large desire for more community spaces, particularly for recreation. Youth often feel isolated in the community, and have a sense that there isn't much for youth to do.

Overall, students reported enjoying the opportunity for dialogue, and are in favour of future student consultation. Students acknowledged how important it is as a small community to engage in dialogue and keep the community together. There was a large desire from students to have future student dialogues to talk about community issues.

Respectfully Submitted,

Cael Read  
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Town of Gibsons Youth Councillor