

# Cedar Main Street Design Project

Community Design Charrette Questionnaire Results

## Creating a Vision for Cedar Main Street





## Background

A community design charrette was held at the Cedar Heritage Centre from January 25<sup>th</sup>, to 28<sup>th</sup>, 2012. The purpose of the Charrette was to visually explore design options for the Cedar Main Street Land Use Designation. A Design Charrette, in the context of this project, is an intensive, hands-on workshop that brings people with different disciplines and backgrounds together to explore design options for a particular area, building, or community. The Cedar Main Street Design Charrette occurred over four days. Day 1 involved general introduction and an overview of the project. Presentations were given by the project consultant, the Regional District of Nanaimo, British Columbia Housing, and a development economist. The result of day one was two overview maps which sketched participant's preliminary concepts in plan view. Day 2 included drawing time for the design team and a public presentation and discussion on the progress made. Day 3 involved further refinement of the concepts initiated in days 1 and 2 and a public open house. Day four was primarily a final public presentation on the ideas and concepts generated by the community at the charrette. Throughout the Charrette, an open door policy was maintained to allow the community at large to drop in at any time and provide their ideas and input. In addition, a core group of community members was invited to participate for the duration of the Charrette. The Charrette resulted in the following 14 distinct design ideas:

Following the charrette, a report was prepared which provided a brief project background and focused on the results of the charrette (14 distinct design ideas). In addition, a project website was launched along with an online questionnaire. The website directed viewers to review the charrette report and then participate in the Questionnaire. The intent of the questionnaire was to publically test the concepts created by the charrette participants to determine which, if any of these concepts, may be supported by the community and to what extent. The questionnaire was focused exclusively on each of the 14 design ideas generated at the Charrette. For each idea, the questionnaire provided a brief background description and rationale accompanied by any applicable sketches or illustrations. Participants were given an opportunity to weigh in on each option by indicating if their level of support by selecting either 'Strongly Disagree', 'Somewhat Agree', 'Neither Agree or Disagree', 'Somewhat Agree', or 'Strongly Agree'. Space was also provided to collect written comments in conjunction with each question. The online questionnaire was launched on March 23<sup>rd</sup> and was live until May 12<sup>th</sup> (five days past the advertised cut-off date).

A number of different methods of disseminating information were used to ensure that the community was aware of the opportunity to participate in the online questionnaire including:

- mailing a post card to residents in Electoral Area 'A' who are considered to be within the catchment area for Cedar Main Street (Cedar, Cedar by the Sea, Yellow Point, Nanaimo River Area);
- notice in the Take 5 Magazine and Regional District of Nanaimo Website;
- use of the project's email alert system;
- discussions with local business owners;
- distribution of post cards by local businesses and at the Regional District of Nanaimo ;
- radio coverage on "The Wolf" Radio Station; and,
- press Release.

The following pages present the questionnaire results. For more detailed information on each design idea, please refer to "Cedar Main Street Design Charrette: A Community Vision".





## Design Idea 1:

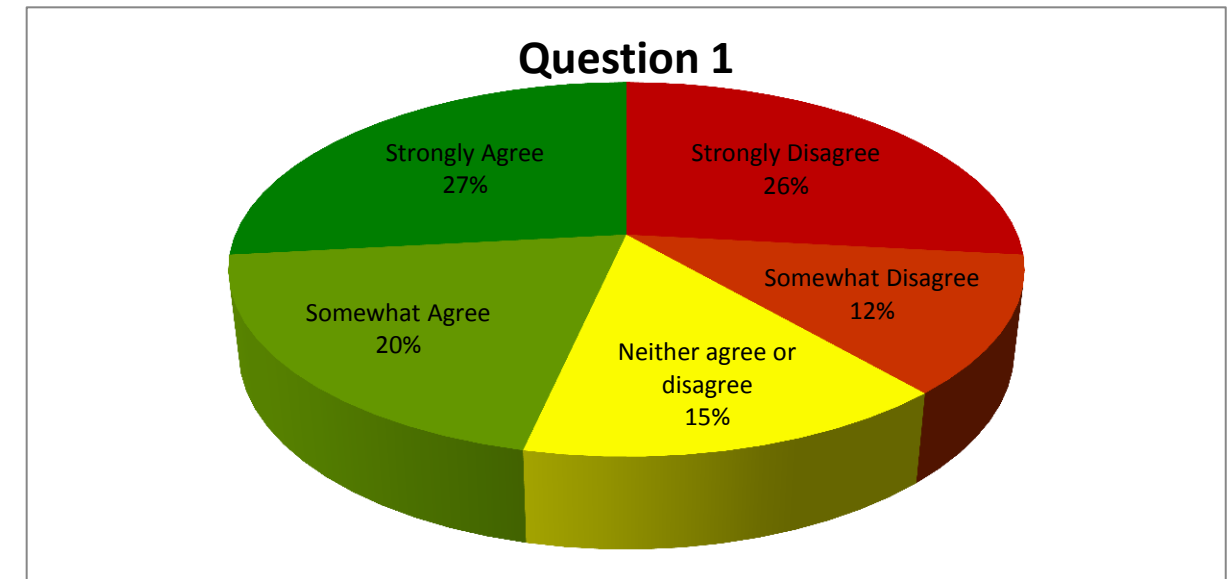
Create an alternate route around Cedar Main Street. Utilize this idea as an opportunity to:

1. Hold special events on Cedar Road.
2. Support a reduced speed limit.
3. Reduce traffic volumes during highway incidents.

As shown in the pie chart at right, nearly half of respondents either Strongly Agree or Somewhat Agree with Design Idea 1. Of the 101 responses to this question



**Above:** Sketch of a potential expansion to Nairne Road as drawn by a charrette participant.



### Written Comments

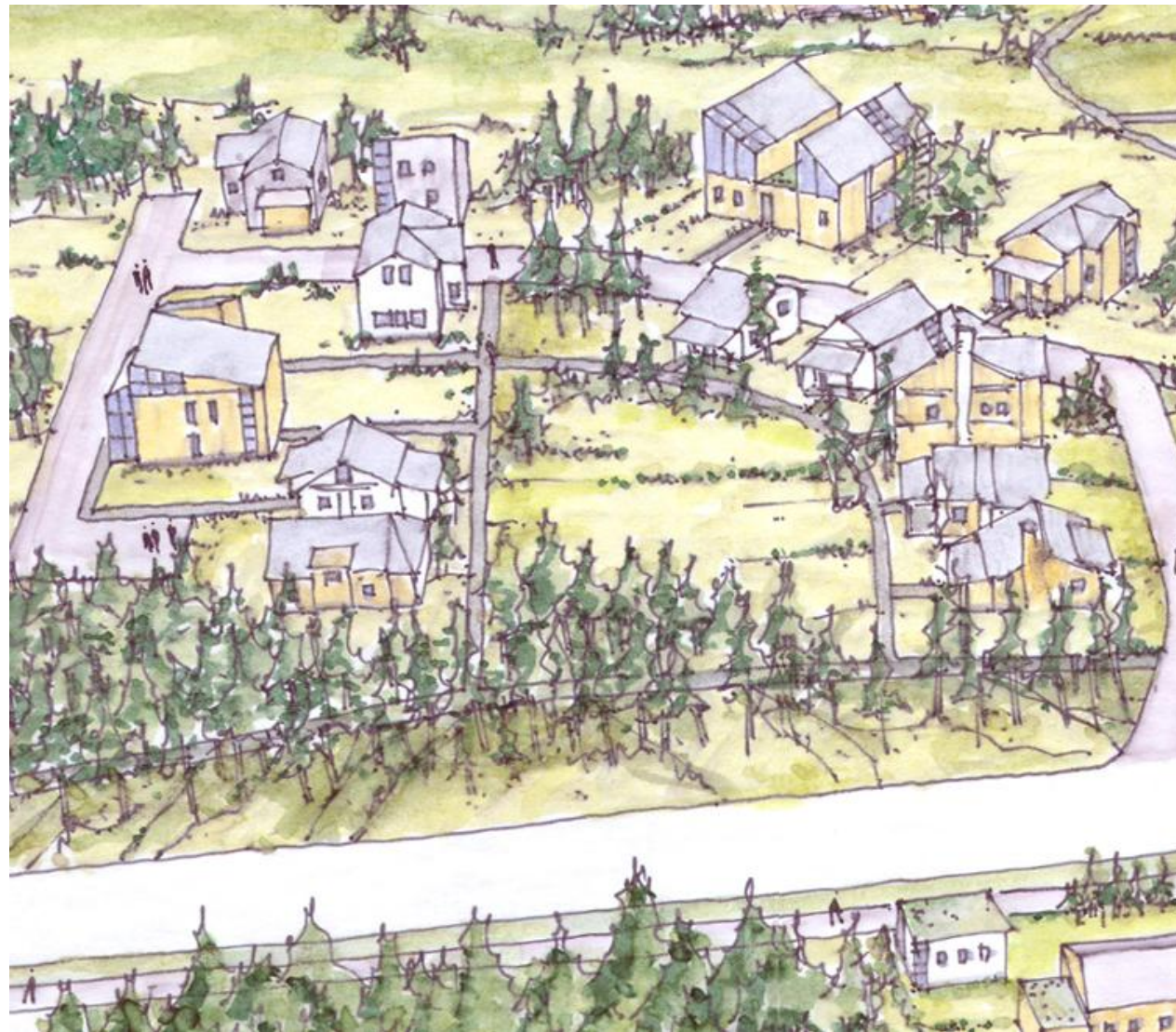
- As we presently live within this boundary will need access to our home during these events
- Too much traffic going to the high school right now. I live on Walsh Rd. and there is so much traffic now, just waiting for an accident to happen.
- Over the last 35 years traffic has increased many times. Getting to Yellow Point and beyond has reached a critical point .
- There already is a road around Cedar Main. Woobank to Holden Corso
- This is an excellent idea.
- Slowing the traffic through downtown Cedar is critical.
- Alternative routes already exist along Woobank Rd.
- Walsh Rd and Nairne Rd are narrow and in poor condition, therefore expensive to upgrade.
- There is a high level of pedestrian traffic on Walsh and Nairne Roads due to students from Cedar Community School
- There are numerous other routes that could be utilized - opening up Nairne Rd should not be an option!
- Spreading out the regular flow of traffic and providing an optional route is a good idea. Providing paved shoulders or sidewalks would allow people to use this route for walking and biking as well.
- Cedar Road is designed to handle the type of traffic that is currently using it. Simply moving it because it may be inconvenient when holding a street fair is short short-sighted.
- These three elements are graduated in their approach to traffic in the Cedar Village so I



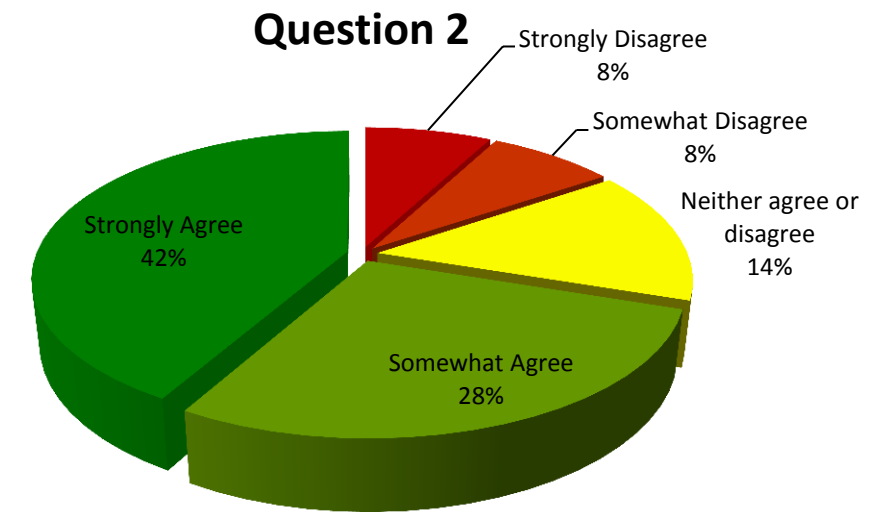
## Design Idea 2:

*Preserve the rural character of the larger lots along Cedar Main Street by:*

- 1. Working with land owners as development proposals come up to create innovative site planning strategies to preserve open space and trees.*
- 2. Encouraging small cottages rather than large homes.*
- 3. Siting cottages around greens rather than facing Main Street.*



Above: Conceptual illustration of how development could maintain rural character by preserving trees along Cedar Road.



Of the 103 responses to this question, 70% of respondents either strongly or somewhat agree with this concept. Only 16% of respondents strongly or somewhat disagree with this concept.

### Written Comments

- Option 1 with these properties becoming commercial spaces rather than residential lots.
- Better to enhance the rural feel of Cedar which is the main reason most people move here rather than living in the city.
- I think maintaining a community look and feel is important.
- Cedar Main Street needs more commercial shops.
- 30 km speed limit.



### Design Idea 3:

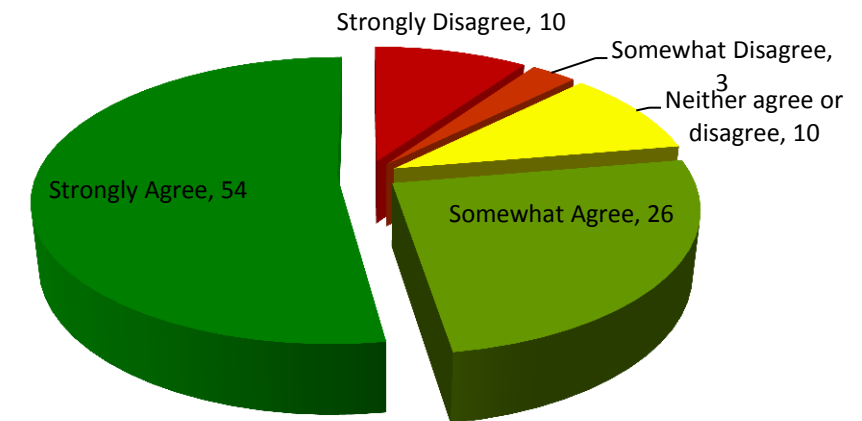
Engage with the York lake Wetlands by:

1. Designing, funding, and building a boardwalk around York Lake including a viewing platform at the lakes edge.
2. Working with existing ROWs and where no ROWs exist, working with land owners to acquire the necessary easements over time through the rezoning and subdivision of the adjacent properties.
3. Working with land owners to preserve the last stands of forest around York Lake.



Above: A conceptual illustration showing what a boardwalk at York Lake with a Viewing Platform may look like.

### Question 3



Of the 103 responses to this question, 80% of respondents indicated that they either strongly or somewhat agree with this design idea. 54% indicated that then strongly agree.

### Written Comments

- I really love this idea for sure. This would get utilized big time. There are so many people that walk around Cedar area.
- I did not know that York Lake was a lake, why is there a road right through it and then big power poles. It looks rather marshy to me -- unlike the lakes in Hemer Park
- Option 1 would provide easy access to recreational space; dog walking etc...
- Preserve the stand of Trees (3.) but leave the rest of York lake alone
- Partial boardwalk would be a better concept. A full boardwalk would be expensive to build and maintain and would not be necessary to enjoy the wetlands plus would limit access by wildlife access to the marsh.
- I think it is important that regardless of what else is done, that we must maintain a connection with nature.
- We need to plan for more parks as well.
- I would be a real shame to lose this natural feature of Cedar. It should be enhanced.
- Increase and preserve existing fish habitat.

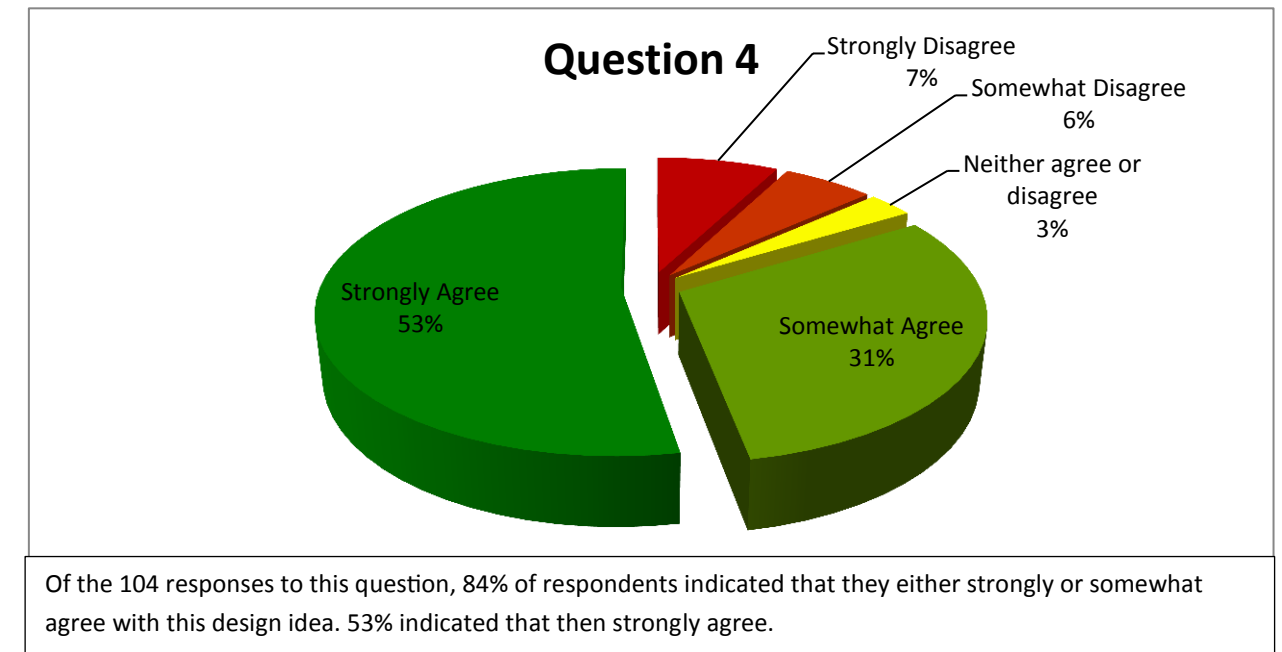
## Design Idea 4:

Expand the Village Square shopping centre to include more shops, public plazas, and possibly an all season home for the local farmers market. In doing so:

1. Use new buildings to frame a space for public gatherings including a farmers market.
2. Maintain the one and two story feeling of the existing Village Square shopping center.
3. Discourage the creation of additional large parking areas. As an alternative, work with MOTI to create on-street parking opportunities.



Above: Conceptual illustration showing expanded commercial/community area adjacent to the 49<sup>th</sup> Parallel Plaza.



### Written Comments

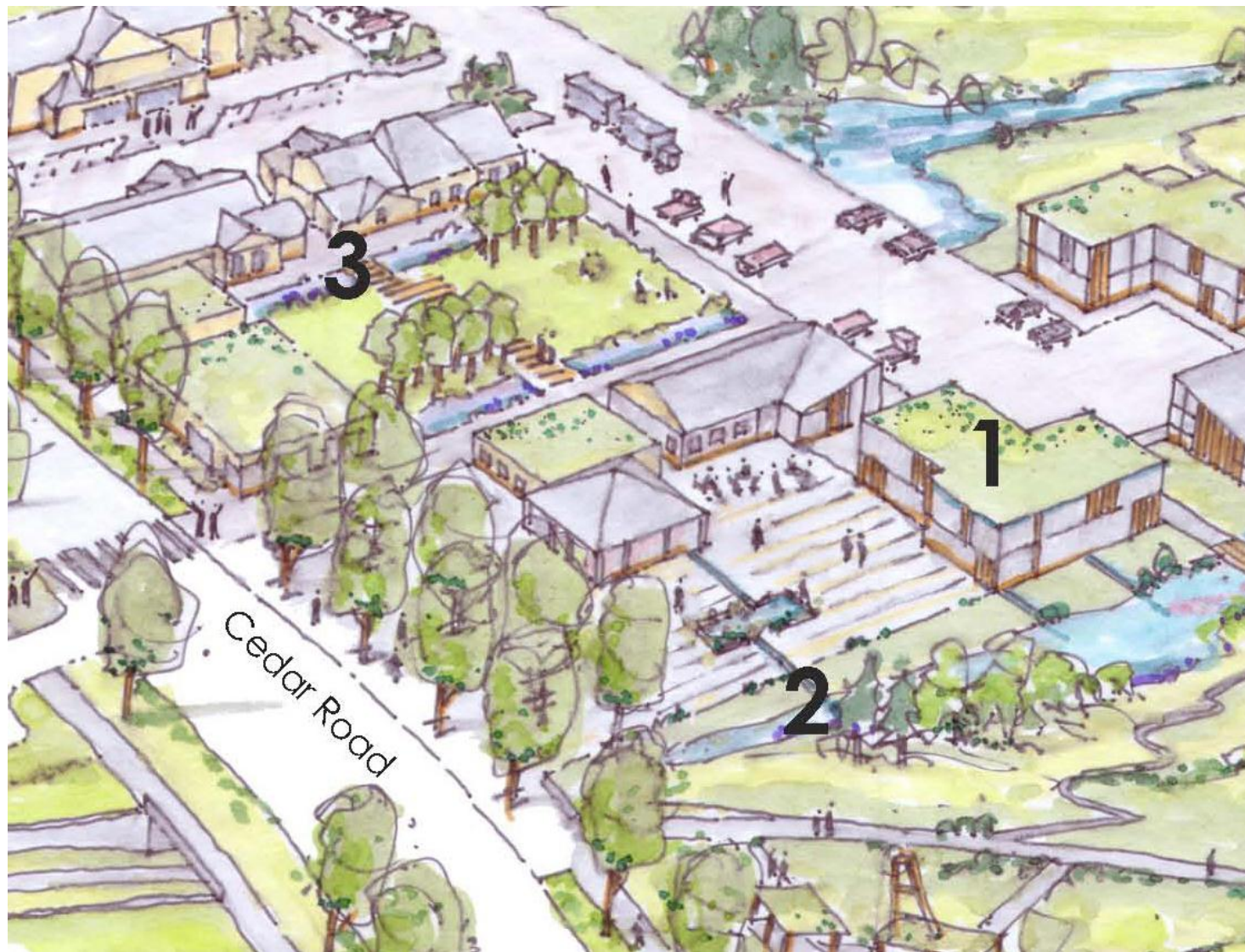
- We need to support the existing businesses. Many of the local businesses struggle due to: very high rental costs, very high costs for water, residents doing their shopping and eating out in Nanaimo.
- Reminds me of the James Bay project in Victoria, which is our favorite place to go!
- Parking is very important but trees and landscaping should be considered a part of the ambiance reflecting cedar area
- This would work if an alternate traffic route were created as well.
- "No sure about on street parking.
- Small parking lots dotted around preferred."
- Local markets encourage local producers. Lower carbon foot print. A great idea.
- Cedar needs a go to hub whether for buying milk or as a way of connecting with neighbours and new residents of our community.
- Where is the land set aside for community Gardens? Where does the money come from for new buildings? Dreams are great but they must be in the plan to work. Just drawing a picture will not make it so!
- increases traffic in the area
- less car and truck traffic and 30 km per hour



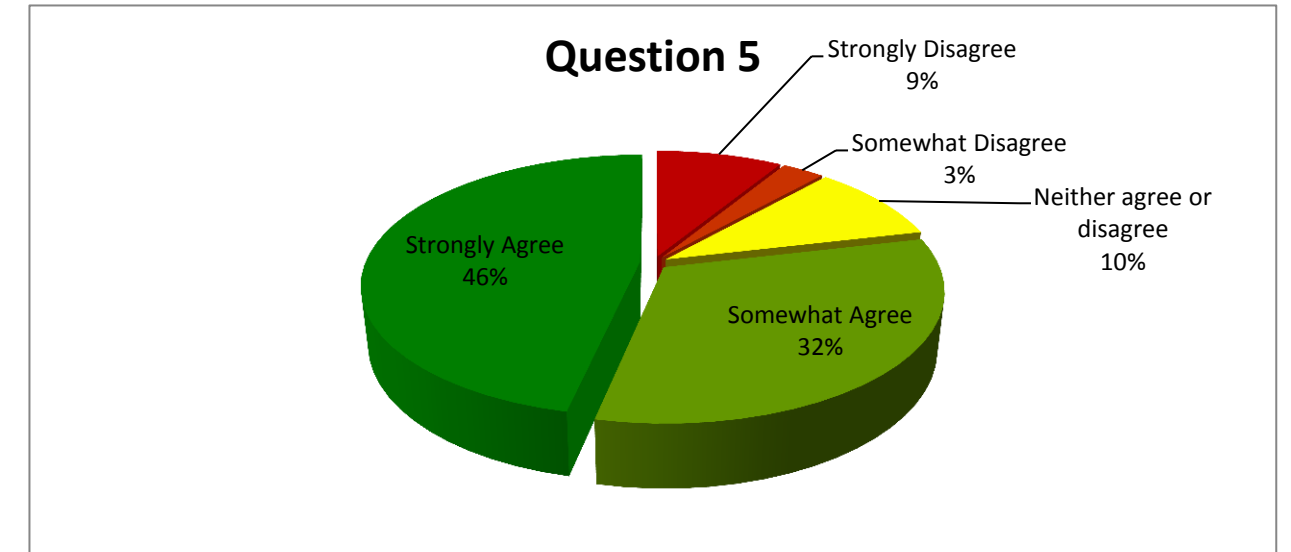
## Design Idea 5:

Ensure commercial development embraces the natural and rural setting of Cedar Main Street by:

1. Requiring energy conservation and green building features in new commercial development. These could include green roofs, high performance mechanical systems and drought tolerant landscaping.
2. Developing guidelines for water conservation and run-off quality such as rain gardens and infiltration areas.
3. Encouraging high quality design that will result in no drive through windows, minimal illumination, and the use of natural materials and colours.



Above: A conceptual illustration showing how commercial development could incorporate green site planning and construction practices.



Of the 103 responses to this question, 78% of respondents indicated that they either strongly or somewhat agree with this design idea. 46% indicated that they strongly agree.

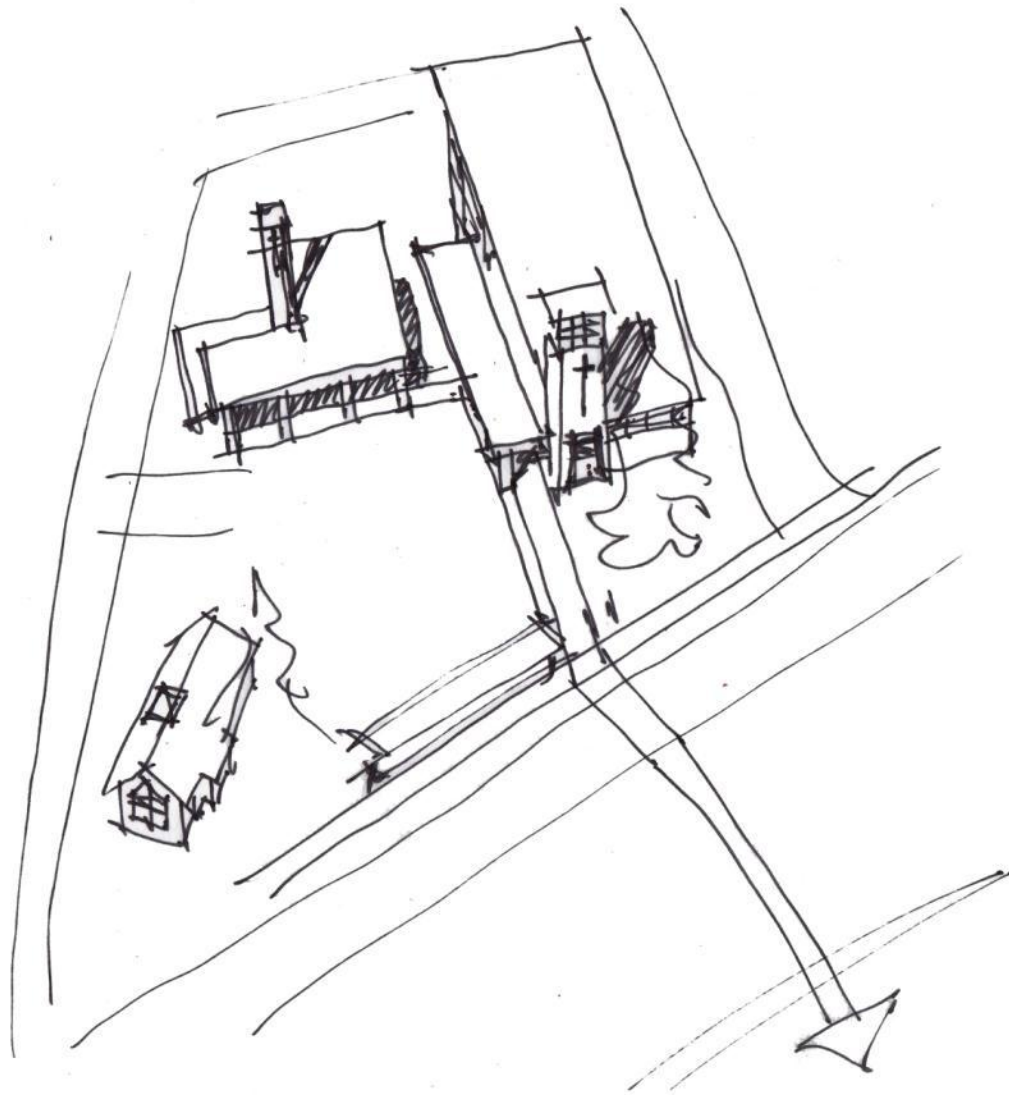
### Written Comments

- Again - businesses in Cedar are struggling to survive. We cannot increase their costs (rent is already very high) and expect businesses to be able to survive in the Cedar area.
- Green is good as long as it does not limit possibilities because of excess cost.
- This would be perfect.
- Government incentives for alternate energy: Solar, wind.
- Natural sustainability is important.
- Less traffic at 30 kph.

## Design Idea 6:

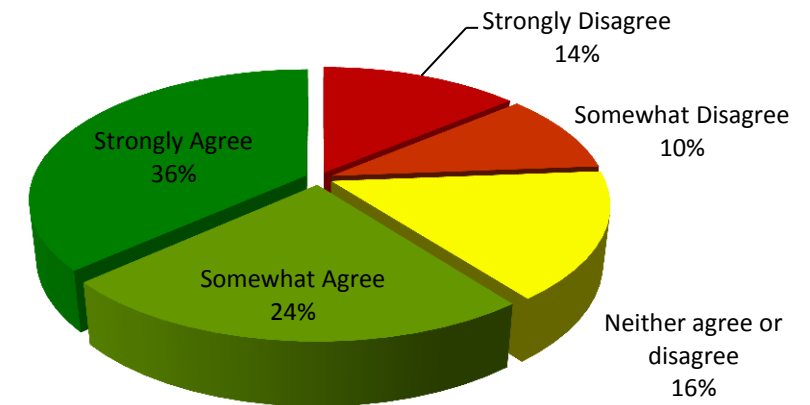
Support the redevelopment of the Anglican Church site to create a village square. This can be accomplished by:

1. Using new architecture to create public civic space
2. Retaining the heritage portion of the existing church.
3. Using tower elements as focal points.
4. Creating connections to York Lake.
5. Encouraging redevelopment of adjacent properties such as the Fire Hall site and the rental homes.
6. Locating a bus shelter adjacent to the square.



**Above:** A sketch showing opportunities for redevelopment at the Anglican Church site.

### Question 6



Of the 101 responses to this question, 60% of respondents indicated that they either strongly or somewhat agree with this design idea. 36% indicated that they strongly agree.

### Written Comments

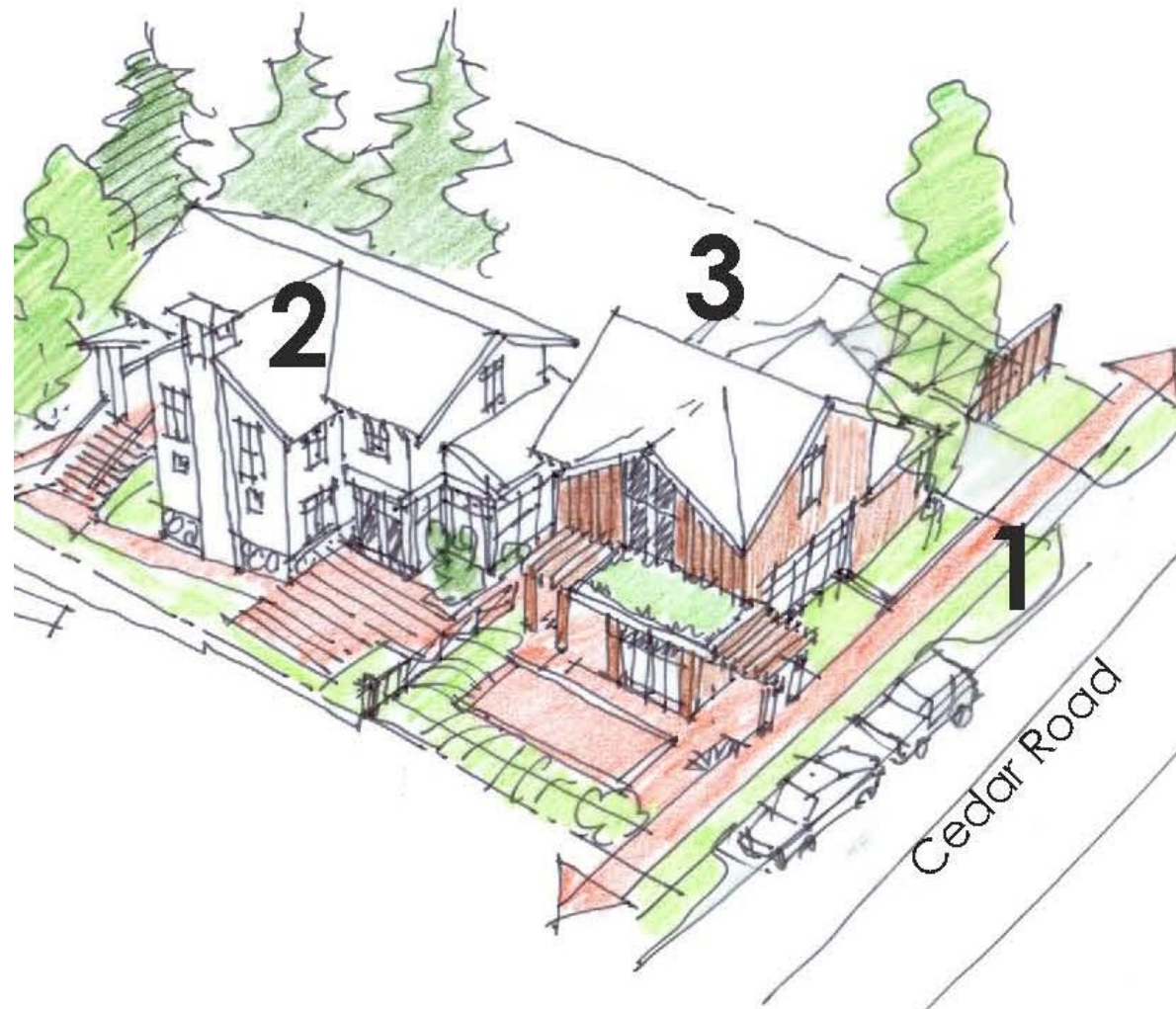
- I think this is up to the Anglican Church. Also there cannot be an expansion of businesses unless we support already existing businesses.
- The rectory was not so long ago completely renovated so think about that and also the redevelopment of adjacent properties should not be done to give this owner (note I said owner not owners) more power in this community as he/she have upset people.
- Have you talked to St. Philip church about this???
- I go to this church - we want to be part of Cedar Main street - not sure how the connection to York Lake matters -- (is York Lake cut by McMillan Road) I think it looks good -- I am sure just like Cedar Main Street this is in the future. It is
- All excellent ideas. Clean the eye sore of this part of our community.
- Basing community around churches is romantic but not necessary and perhaps out of date.
- The only concern I have is building use.
- The Anglican Church is a heritage site and should be maintained as such. The ground around the church is much more suitable for senior care housing and should be saved for that. There will be great indignation if the church property is sold to the RDN and developed. The gravesite is sacred.
- Lessen and slow traffic in whole Cedar area.
- Walking and bike lanes off Cedar Road.



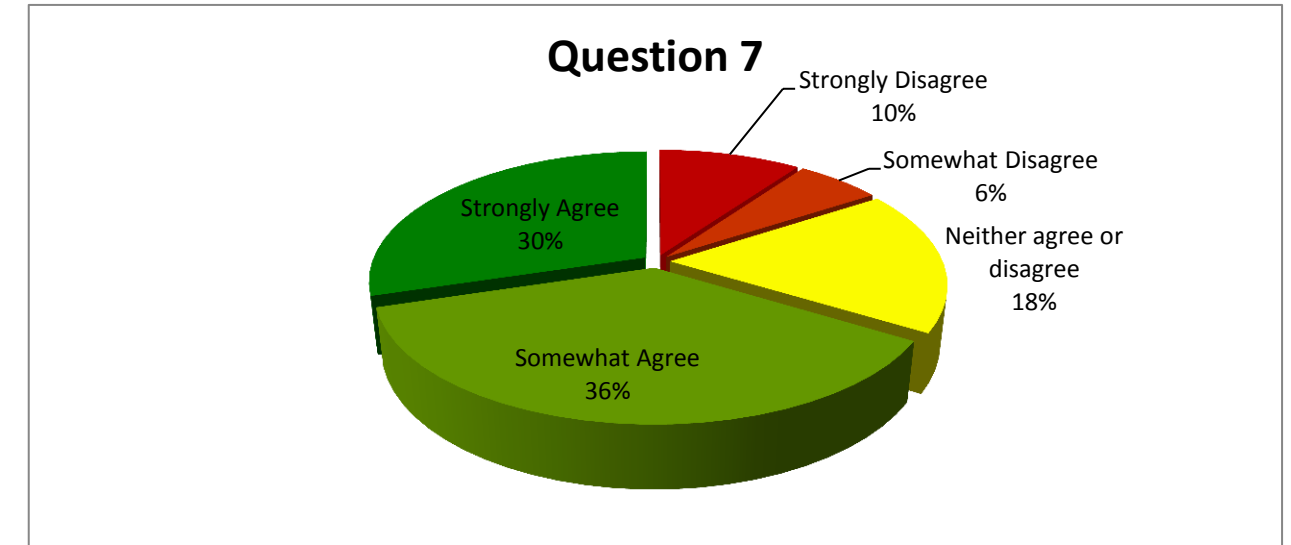
## Design Idea 7:

Encourage the redevelopment of private property within Cedar Main Street. This can be accomplished by:

1. Supporting the allowance for carriage homes, flex space and storefronts along Cedar Main Street.
2. Encouraging larger buildings to maintain a rural design character.
3. Encouraging creative site planning including the creation of small scale plazas, courtyards, creative placement of garages, and creative parking strategies.



Above: Illustration of a carriage home storefront facing Cedar Main Street. The main house is facing the rear of the lot.



Of the 101 responses to this question, 66% of respondents indicated that they either strongly or somewhat agree with this design idea. 30% indicated that then strongly agree.

### Written Comments

- While I like the idea of owner operated mixed used buildings, I am not so sure of increasing rental stock.
- I would agree to this if there were also public parks and recreational facilities in the plan. Cedar has no local public parks. The only green space belongs to the School Board and we, as citizens, have no control over it. We have waited 12 years for a skate park which is not within the village centre and therefor is out of sight of the public. I look for youth problems there in the future!
- This area needs to be cleaned up.
- 30 kph and walking lanes.



## Design Idea 8:

Support a maximum of three stories in Cedar which:

1. Take the character of two stories.
2. Are designed to minimize the appearance and massing.

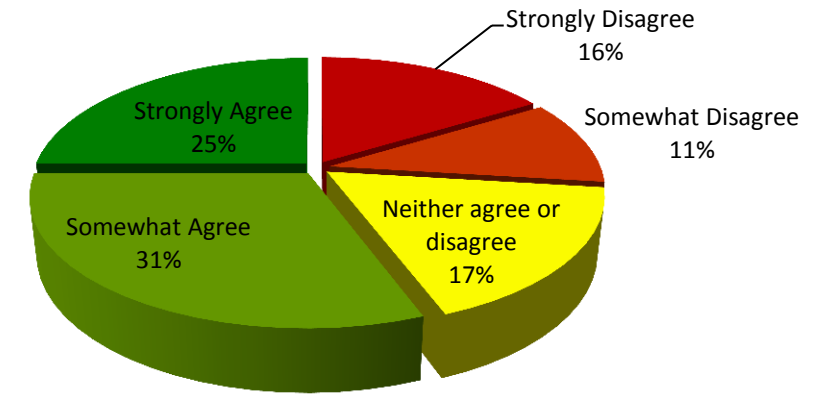
The current zoning and the OCP envisions limiting buildings to two stories. However three stories can fit in with the rural scale of Cedar. This can be accomplished by:

1. Maintaining site lines between buildings to protect views to York Lake.
2. Placing the third story in the roof or as a walk out basement.



Above: Grade change or creative 'roofscape architecture' can fit a third floor into the roof or as a walk out basement.

## Question 8



Of the 104 responses to this question, 56% of respondents indicated that they either strongly or somewhat agree with this design idea. 25% indicated that then strongly agree.

### Written Comments

- If folks owning homes along Cedar Road do not wish to sell, they should not be forced to do so. Obtaining this property should only take place when the owner choses to sell.
- Two story site lines where ever possible.
- Max two levels above ground is visually more appealing to rural development
- Even if limited to three stories, developers should be required as part of the development to fund fire department equipment upgrades.
- Three stories if it is a walk out basement with the roof at normal two story height.
- I am concerned about the model of building monster houses accommodating muti-same blood families.



## Design Idea 9:

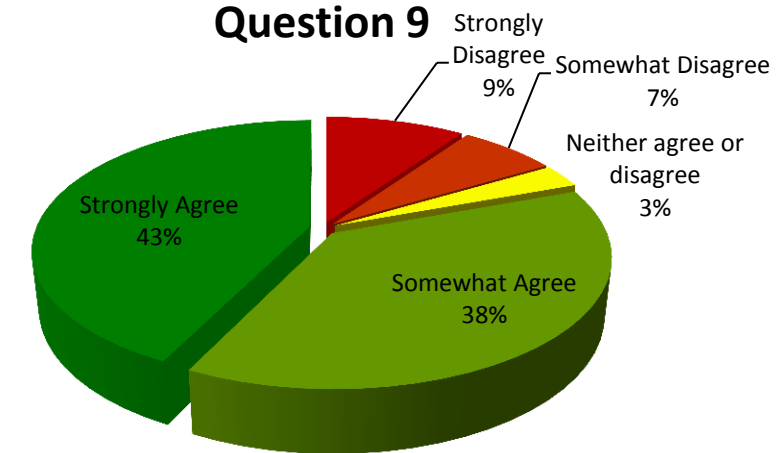
Get creative with parking. This can be accomplished by:

1. Allowing for on-street parking.
2. Encouraging shared driveways and smaller parking lots.
3. Providing bike racks near store fronts and offices.
4. Placing parking lots behind buildings not in front.
5. Planting street trees that provide shade for pedestrian and parked cars alike.
6. Reduce parking requirements to encourage a better use of land.



Above: Illustration showing how on-street and off-street parking can be integrated into the landscape.

### Question 9



Of the 103 responses to this question, 81% of respondents indicated that they either strongly or somewhat agree with this design idea. 43% indicated that they strongly agree.

#### Written Comments

- The only thing is if the parking becomes like the little malls at Southgate -- all cut up -- it is not good either. Not sure of the answer.
- I would recommend that an alley be constructed behind the first row of houses on both sides, with plenty of off-street parking for residents!
- Travel distance and rural area makes parking and buses a must.
- Creating bike paths and sidewalks around the cedar area to encourage people to walk or ride bikes. This would need to occur throughout cedar and not just in the main street area.
- Parking will continue to be an issue due to the rural nature of our area. Residents are still going to drive from the surrounding area to the village center.
- I do not like the idea of on-street parking, but prefer smaller parking lots behind buildings.
- Not the on street parking part.
- Smaller parking lots with access to stores or homes."
- No concerns here,
- I strongly agree with all the points except for #6,
- less truck and car traffic and 30 kph,



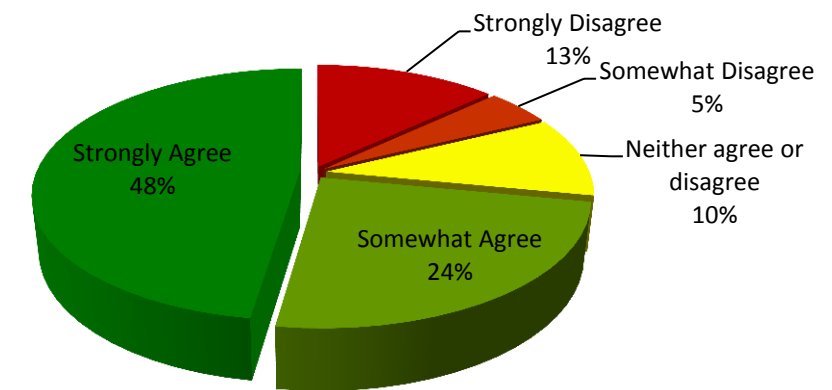
## Design Idea 10:

*Support roundabouts to slow traffic and address safety issues.*

*Roundabouts are an effective method for controlling traffic movements at key intersections and are safe as the landscape median makes it nearly impossible for two cars to collide. They also act as visual reference points announcing the beginning and end of a 'place', such as a shopping street.*



### Question 10



Of the 107 responses to this question, 72% of respondents indicated that they either strongly or somewhat agree with this design idea. 48% indicated that they strongly agree.

### Written Comments

- These roundabouts are attractive too.
- With reduced traffic flow (alternate route) traffic circles are unnecessary.
- They are very effective in Ladysmith.
- Almost all streets through Cedar village should have a roundabout - even the Food store.
- What about semi-trailers navigating thru the roundabout? Example Thrifty Foods delivering to 49th Parallel? Beer trucks to the Pubs? Crane trucks, cement trucks, gravel trucks, etc.....
- This is another excellent idea.
- I love the idea of roundabouts and wish that it could include the area as far as North Cedar Intermediate. This would provide traffic calming in an area where our kids need to cross Cedar Road to and from school.
- I can see nothing wrong with using roundabouts for traffic calming.



## Design Idea 11:

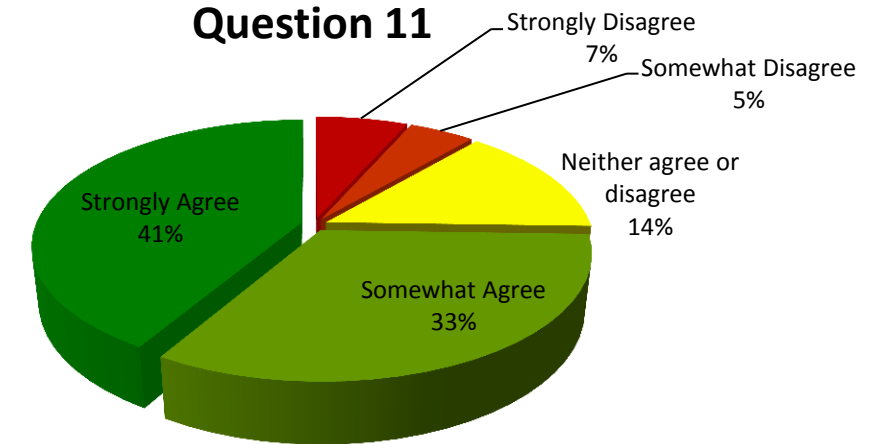
Support the provision mixed-use buildings along Cedar Main Street.

Having mixed-use buildings in Cedar enforces the concept of complete compact communities. Mixed-use buildings are buildings which contain a range of uses, typically having street-front ground floor commercial with residential and/or office space above.



**Above:** An illustration of what a mixed-use building could look like if creatively designed.

### Question 11



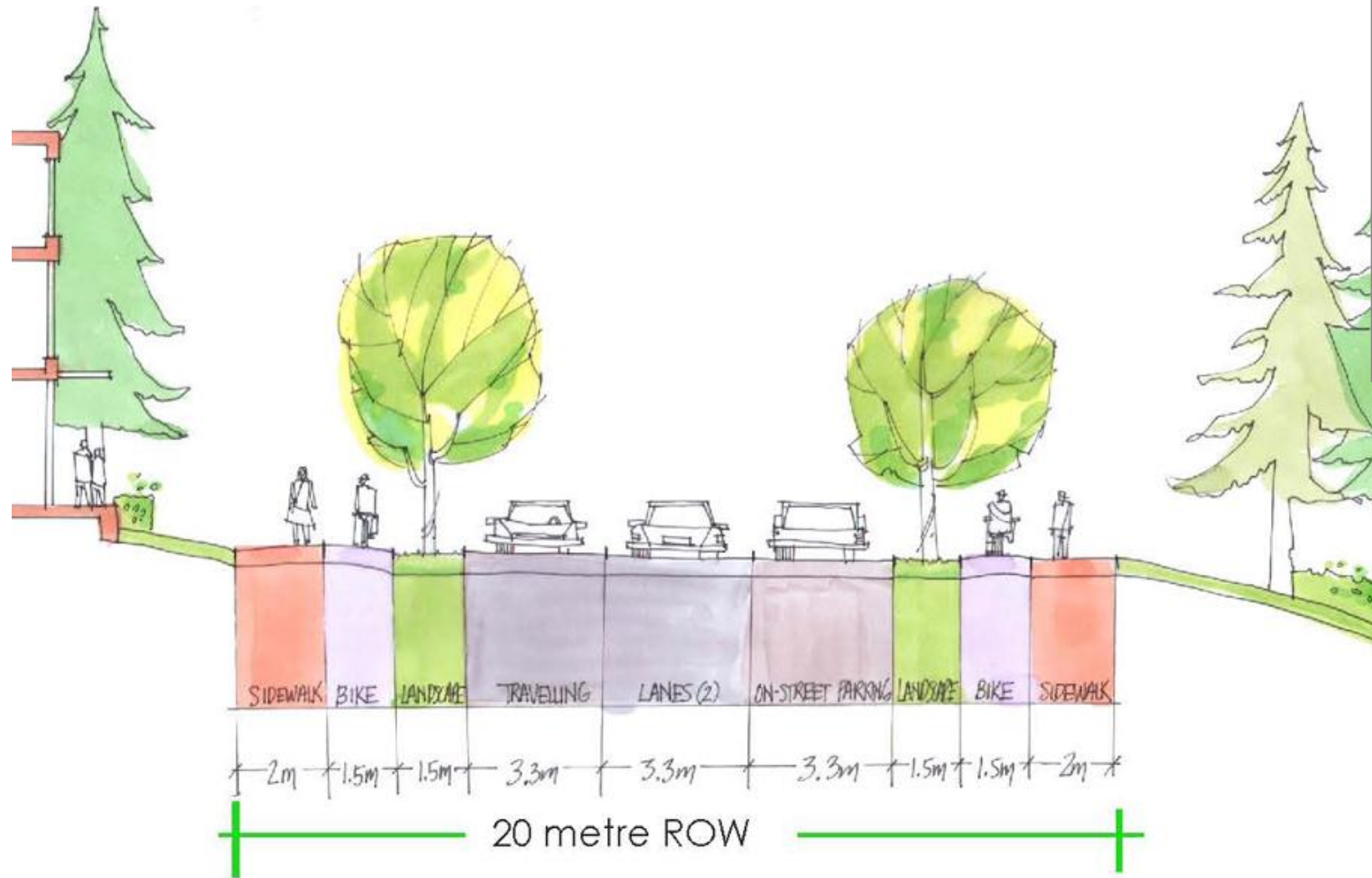
Of the 106 responses to this question, 74% of respondents indicated that they either strongly or somewhat agree with this design idea. 41% indicated that they strongly agree.

### Written Comments

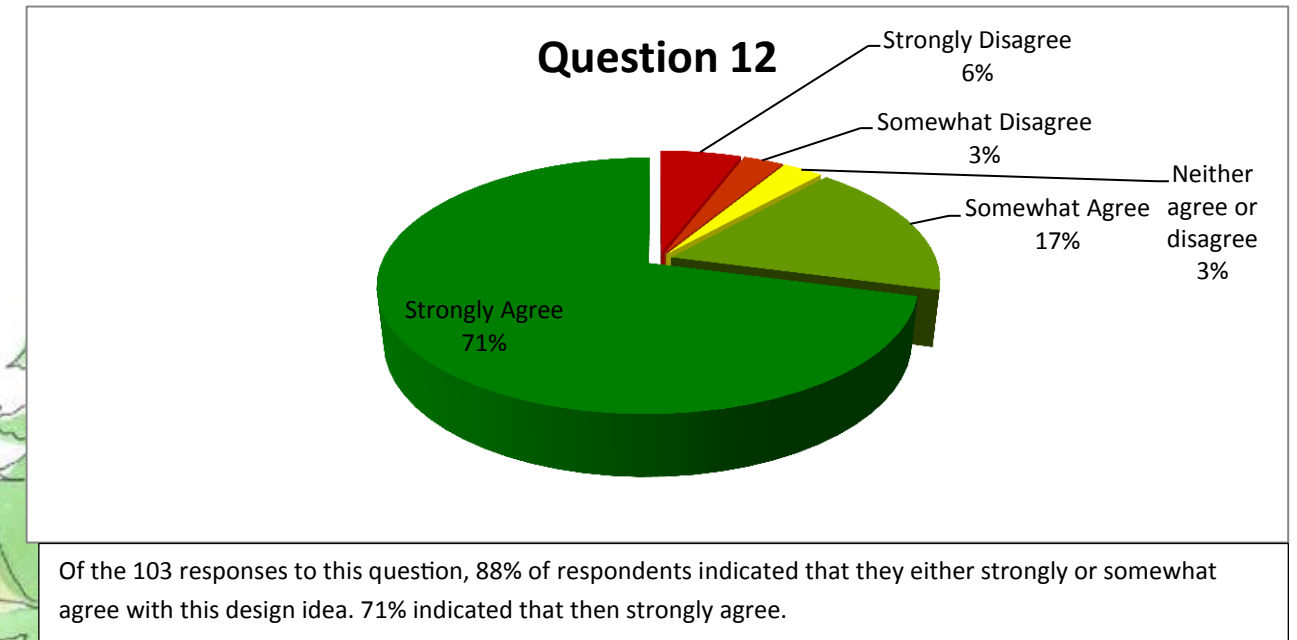
- Again, obtaining this private land along Cedar Road should happen over time. Do not want to see home owners forced to move.
- Excellent use of land!
- This area lacks good safe quality rental properties; great idea.
- Ok
- 30 kph

**Design Idea 12:**

Support improvements within the road ROW that enhance cyclist and pedestrian safety.



**Above:** An illustration of one possible option for how the existing Road Right of Way could be redesigned.



- #### Written Comments
- Right now it is so dangerous, I cannot stand it when it is raining and people are walking along Cedar Rd because they are dodging puddles everywhere. Especially when there are baby strollers involved. The lighting is terrible!
  - All around Yellow Point & Cedar Road as well!
  - This would need to occur in other areas of Cedar Road as well.
  - This is essential.
  - More bicycle space is really important. Not just for adult cyclists but for kids who do not bike in a straight line. Some barriers between the road and the cycling lane would be great.
  - Make space available for safer equine traffic thus maintaining the rural lifestyle we enjoy in cedar!
  - While I can see a need for sidewalks, or some type of separation between pedestrians and motor vehicle traffic, I see it a pointless exercise to discuss provisioning for bike lanes.
  - Definitely needed.
  - Less car and truck traffic and 30 kph.



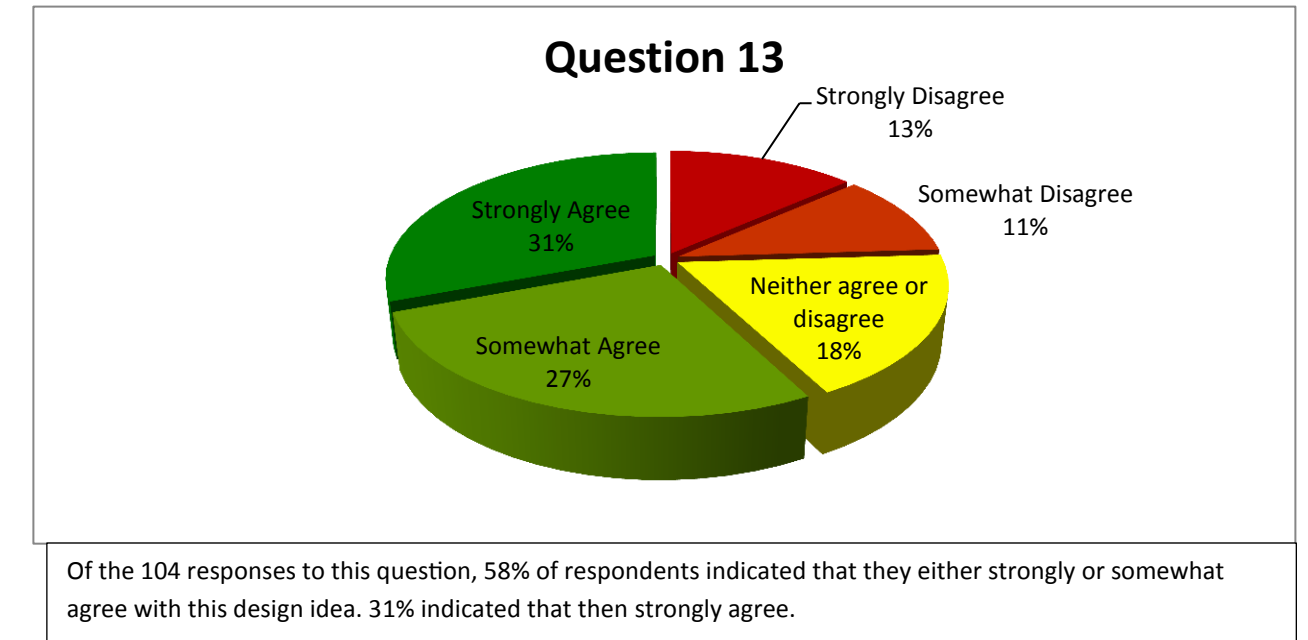
## Design Idea 13:

Create an entry monument:

1. Utilize an agricultural theme.
2. Locate across from the Cranberry Arms Pub just before the Duke Point Highway overpass, as well as near the Mahle House.



Above: Illustration of what an entry monument may look like (Sample Only).



### Written Comments

- Cedar is a large community; it is not restricted to the area outlined by monuments. Do not fragment our community. Developing the Cedar main street is one thing but it is not all there is to Cedar.
- The Cranberry Arms Pub is a massive eye sore, they need to upgrade at least the outside of the building. It looks in total disrepair.
- A Community Hall for South Entrance would be more appropriate.
- Cedar BC encompasses a larger geographical area than just the proposed.
- Monument might be a bit beyond the charm we are going for in the first place.
- Cedar should stand out by its own merit and not have ornaments.
- Walking and bike lanes and 30 kph.

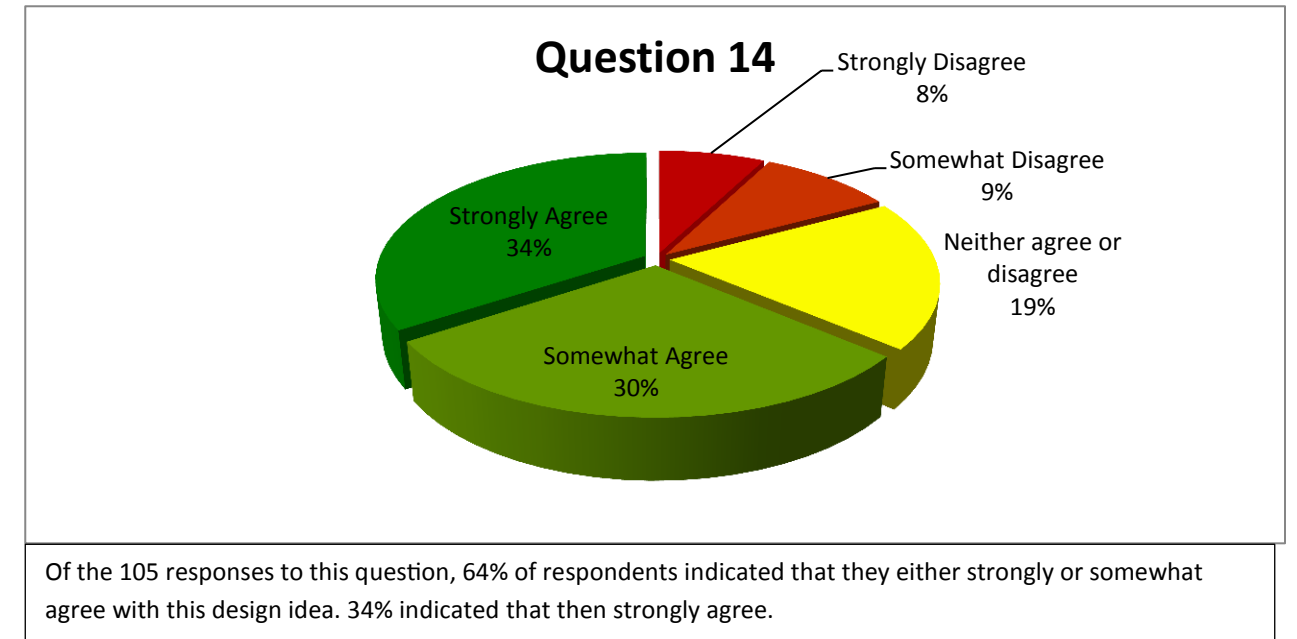
## Design Idea 14:

*Encourage a variety of architectural expressions.*

*Rather than re-create history, home owners, architects, and developers should strive for creative expression that speaks to the climate, site, and character of the landscape as well as the history of the site.*



**Above:** A photo montage comprised of popular images identified during the visual preference survey.



### Written Comments

1. Designs should reflect the area.
2. I think there should be some cohesion in the architectural style.
3. Please allow something interesting to occur. Beyond the "craftsman style" house trend that is far overdone and inefficient.
4. Not sure.