

# Engineering Expansion

**Engagement Executive Summary**  
**October 2020**



**University  
of Victoria**

Campus Planning  
& Sustainability



# Introduction

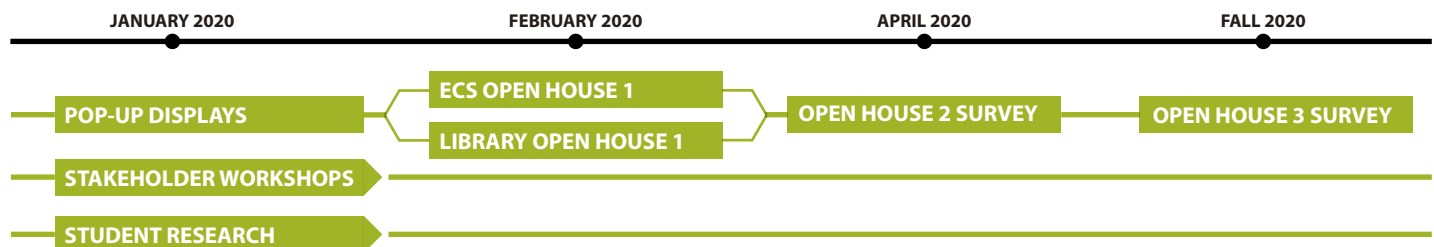
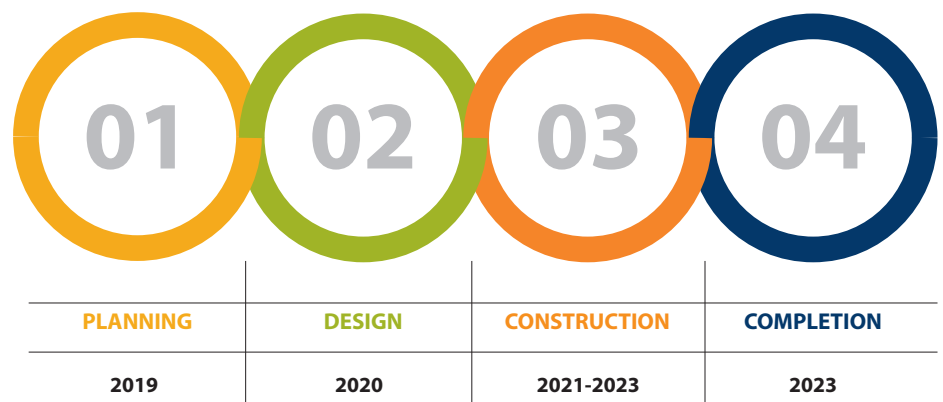
## Why We Engage

UVic's Community Engagement Framework outlines the university's commitment to informing the campus and neighbouring communities and facilitating meaningful input into the buildings' designs. This project involves large amounts of complex technical workspace, a condensed design timeline and a desire to inspire the creativity and engagement of the UVic community.

As the future users of the Engineering Expansion, the students, faculty and staff within the Faculty of Engineering and Computer Science are key stakeholders in this project. Beyond the project engagement model outlined in the Community Engagement Framework, these stakeholders have and will participate in informing design decisions through coursework, academic research and collaborative workshops.

## The Process

We are completing the design process for the Engineering Expansion. Design will continue through 2020, with construction anticipated to commence in 2021.



Full engagement summaries can be viewed online at [uvic.ca/engineeringexpansion](https://uvic.ca/engineeringexpansion).

## PROJECT VISION

The Engineering Expansion will be a beacon of innovation, collaboration and learning for an adaptive and sustainable future.

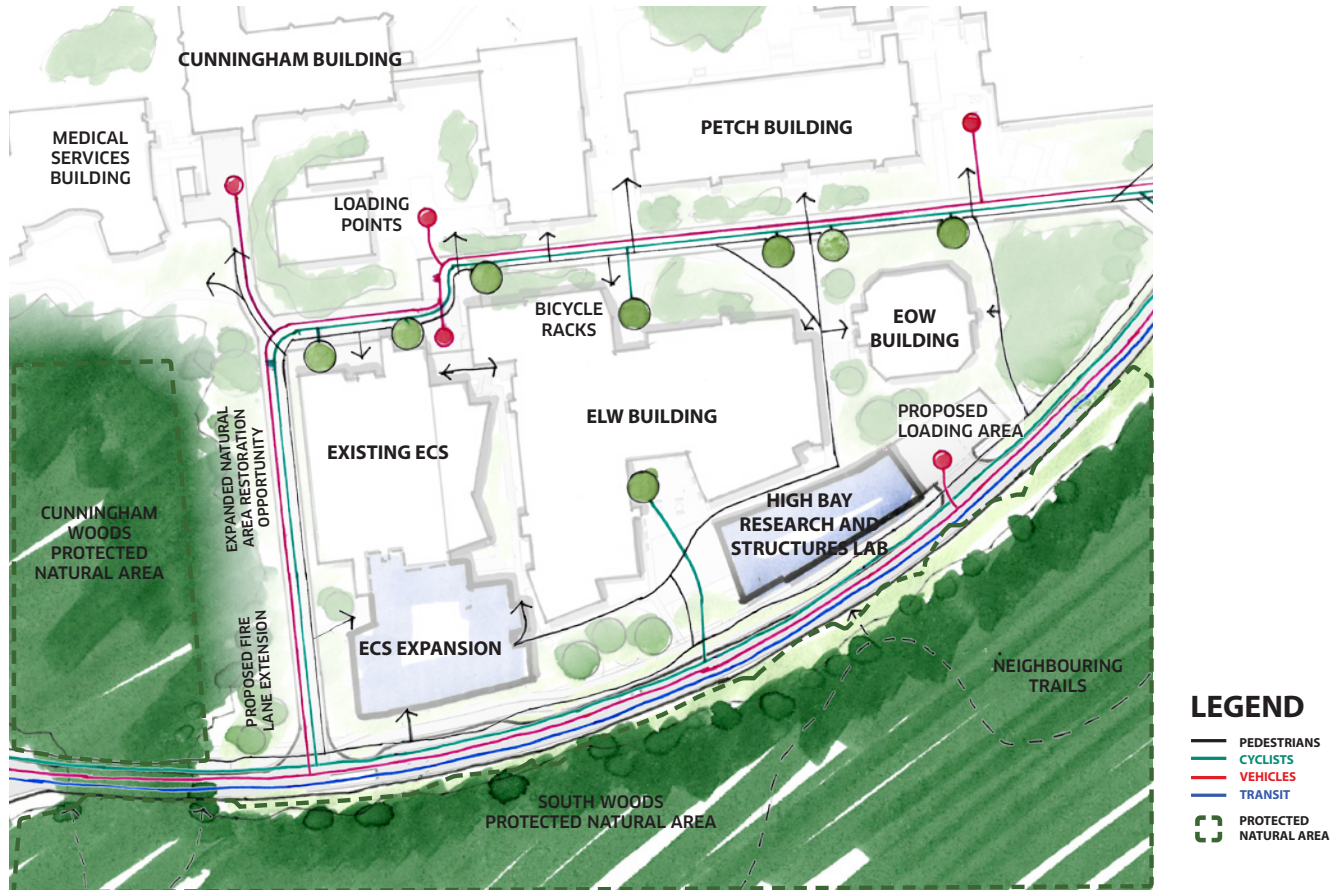


Figure 1. Project Site Plan

## About The Project

The University of Victoria is planning an expansion of the Engineering Computer Science (ECS) Building and a new High Bay Research and Structures Lab to meet the current student demand and expected growth of the Engineering and Computer Science Faculty. By adding these two new buildings, UVic will provide additional design studio and lab space along with office and research facilities.

The site area currently includes the Engineering Office Wing (EOW), Engineering Lab Wing (ELW) and the ECS building. Existing space limitations have resulted in the faculty creating temporary lab and design studios across campus. By expanding, UVic will be able to consolidate these temporary facilities into new, purpose-built facilities and continue to provide a dynamic learning environment. The project supports the faculty's goal to construct facilities at the forefront of green building design.

# How We Engaged

## Winter

Over 300 people participated in the engagement activities, most of which were current students.

Between January and February we engaged through pop-up displays in the ECS and ELW buildings, open houses in the ECS building and McPherson Library, and through ongoing stakeholder workshops and student research. The engagement activities were promoted across campus to raise broad awareness of the project and opportunities to get involved. Over 300 people participated in the winter engagement activities!

The engagement activities began with pop-up displays that were meant to spark excitement about the project and to consult the UVic community about what they would like to see in the project's design. The displays moved around busy areas in the ECS and ELW buildings over two hours on January 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2020. Visitors were invited to indicate their preferred interior design examples using sticky dots on precedent images.

The project's broad public launch took place on February 12th, 2020 in the form of two, two-hour open houses. The first was in the ECS building, the second was in the McPherson Library. The purpose of the open houses was twofold: first, to inform about the project including its timeline, program, project vision and ways student learning will be informing the design process, and second, to consult on site principles, sustainability strategies, and hear about what the UVic community would like to see in the project. Visitors were invited to use sticky notes and dots to provide comments and feedback on interactive panels. Members of Campus Planning and Sustainability and the project's design team were available to answer any questions.

## Spring

Over 400 individuals responded to the first open house survey.

In response to Provincial Government regulations restricting in-person gatherings to prevent the spread of COVID-19, the spring open house was modified into an online survey that was open for participation from April 5th-14th.

The purpose of the survey was to consult participants about the preliminary design directions of the ECS Expansion and High Bay Research and Structures Lab (HBRSL), sustainability strategies being explored as part of the design, and the project's transportation strategy.

Of those surveyed, 64% identified as students, 16% as staff, 3% as faculty, 18% as alumni, 2% as community neighbours, and 3% chose not to identify how they were related to UVic. 57% of respondents indicated that they were from the Faculty of Engineering and Computer Science. Over 75% of the respondents indicated that they had not attended either of the first open houses. This indicates that the online survey format may have been able to broaden the engagement participation.

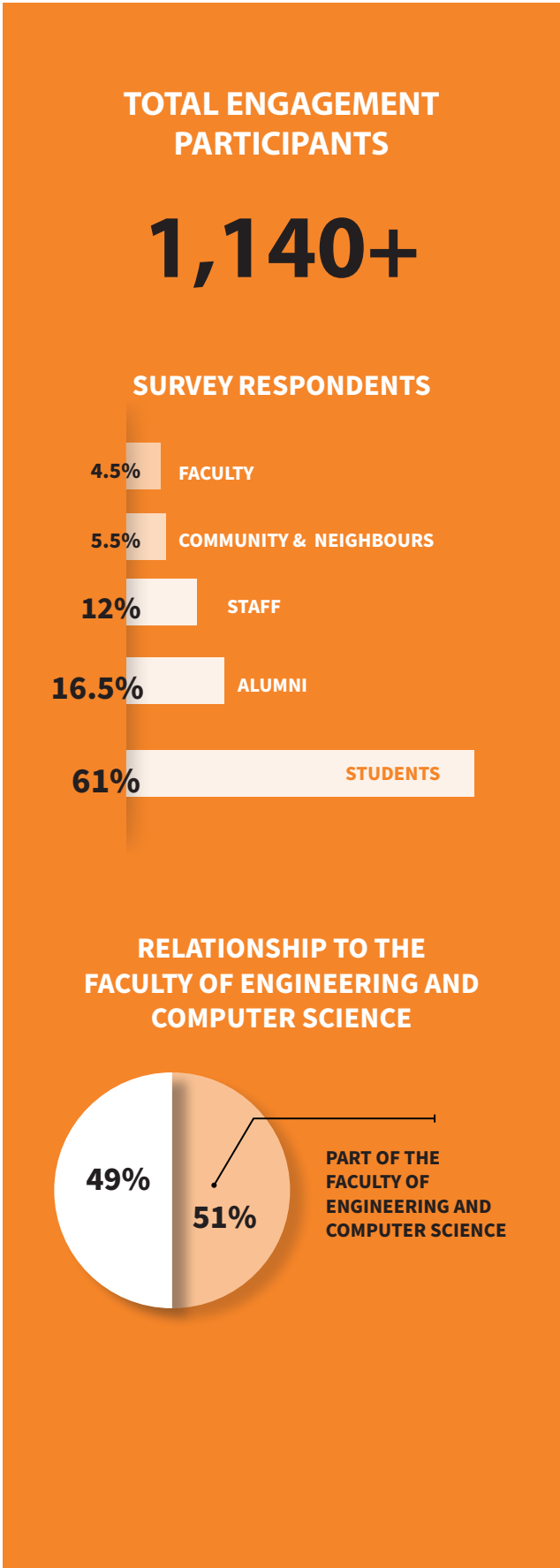
# Fall

Over 500 individuals responded to the second open house survey.

The purpose of the survey was to consult participants about the schematic design directions of the ECS Expansion and High Bay Research and Structures Lab (HBRSL), including landscape, massing and site features.

Of those surveyed, 63% identified as students, 10% as staff, 3% as faculty, 18% as alumni, 1.3% as community neighbours, and 34% identified as other external community members. Similar to the spring open house survey, about half of respondents indicated that they were associated with the Faculty of Engineering and Computer Science.

Almost 70% of the respondents indicated that they had not attended an engagement event so far. To prepare these respondents for meaningful participation, the survey was designed with contextual information to inform participants about the project's purpose, vision, and principles before they provided feedback on the design.



# What We Heard

Over the course of the engagement activities, key themes emerged. We heard a need for spaces that support wellness by exposing natural light and greenery, improved end-of-trip facilities including lockers, covered bike storage and safe pathways, and, the need for spaces that support collaborative student work. The themes below were heard during the pop-ups and open houses in the winter. They have been expanded upon and separated below to align with where they were heard on campus.

## Faculty of Engineering and Computer Science



### WELLNESS

Participants strongly favoured spaces that support wellness. For them, this included natural light exposure, indoor plants, views outdoors, and access to food.



### END-OF-TRIP FACILITIES

End-of-trip facilities that include covered bike parking, lockers, and showers in a location more secluded than the current area were a priority for many participants.



### COLLABORATION SPACES

Collaboration spaces including informal work areas (for instance lounges with white boards) and group study areas were asked for by many participants.



### ROOFTOP ACCESS

Many participants were excited by rooftop access. Some liked the potential of experiential learning opportunities.

## UVic Community and Neighbours



### SUSTAINABILITY

Participants indicated interest in restoring ecological systems and exploring renewable energy opportunities.



### END-OF-TRIP FACILITIES

Covered bike parking and end-of-trip facilities like showers and lockers are a priority shared by the broader UVic community.



### COLLABORATION SPACES

Collaboration spaces - group study areas in particular - were asked for by many participants.



### OUTDOOR AREAS

Participants indicated interest in having outdoor areas to work and study, and access rooftops.

We heard comments beyond the scope of this project, including a significant desire for more space for clubs and design teams, and concerns about recent tree removal associated with other projects on campus.

The spring and fall open house surveys invited the campus and broader community to provide detailed feedback on the project vision, sustainability priorities and design concepts. What we heard is summarized below.

## Project Vision

96% of survey participants felt that the project vision resonated with them. Comments identified the vision statement's focus on sustainability and innovation as critically relevant for UVic and Victoria's long-term competitive advantage.

## Architecture

We heard a desire for the architecture of both buildings to be bold, contemporary and a demonstration of sustainability at UVic. In the ECS expansion, we continued to hear a need for a diversity of study spaces for group work, lab assignments, and individual work.

The majority of participants remarked on the project's mass timber structure, emphasis on wellness including natural light exposure and views to green spaces and contemporary look as their favourite features of the architectural design.

We also heard a priority for connecting to the broader context. Efficient and accessible circulation throughout the engineering expansion area is important to this community along with design details that are relevant to the broader campus and that respect the surrounding natural features.

## Landscape

When we asked participants about the landscape design, they expressed a desire for a consistent aesthetic that incorporates resilient and indigenous plant species.

It was also mentioned that outdoor spaces should maximize functionality to accommodate various uses (studying, welcome-back events, etc). This requires consideration for outdoor electrical outlets, bench and table seating, and weather protected areas.

## Sustainability

Sustainability is a central driver for this project. Participants ranked energy and water efficiency, the restoration of natural ecosystems, active transportation and regenerative design as their highest sustainability priorities.

*"A statement building that defines the engineering program and UVic can be known for this new building"*

*"I really like the terrace idea and think it's a great opportunity to connect the architecture with nature (not just a concrete terrace)"*

*"Include covered bike parking spaces to encourage cycling on rainy days"*

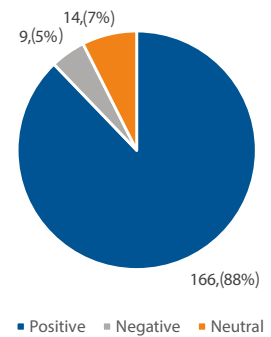


## Building Height

In the Fall Open House survey, participants were asked whether they supported the pursuit of a height variance for the ECS expansion building. 89% of respondents indicated either positive or neutral support for the proposed building height of the ECS expansion. Comments emphasized the need to maintain a compact growth and avoid encroaching on natural areas.

*"The only way to preserve the natural surroundings is to build up. New buildings on campus should go as high as they safely can."*

Sentiment - All Participants



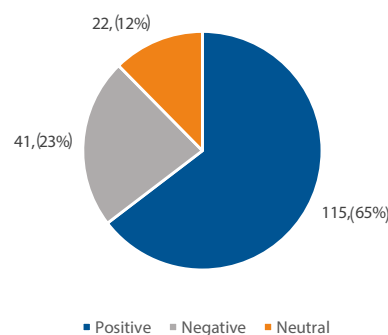
**Figure 2.** Building height comment sentiment from all survey participants.

## Transportation

Survey participants were asked to share their feedback on the project's approach to transportation. The majority of all demographic groups indicated a support for ways to provide more sustainable transportation options.

In the Fall Open House survey, 65% of survey participants indicated their support for the project's approach to transportation demand management and parking. Parking remained a concern for some. While Transportation Demand Management measures can be effective, participants mentioned a concern about accessible parking stalls and ease of layby parking for drop-offs (particularly for engineering students with large projects).

Sentiment - All Participants

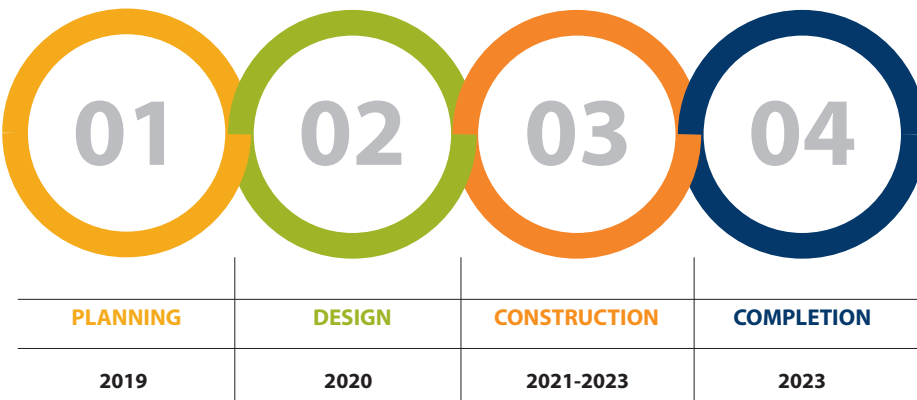


*"I love the focus on biking, as it was my primary way to get around campus when I studied there, but found there was a lack of infrastructure at the time."*

**Figure 3.** Transportation approach comment sentiment from all survey participants.

# Next Steps

Following Council consideration of the project the project team will continue to update campus and community stakeholders on project developments



**DIALOG®**

