

Week 2 of Edmonds' Comprehensive Plan Visioning Process

Quality of Life

By Susan McLaughlin, Edmonds Development Services Director

Planners often discuss the success of cities, towns, districts or neighborhoods relative to “quality of life.” While a fairly ambiguous term, it typically encompasses topics such as public health, economic and social well-being, safety, and community resilience. The World Health Organization defines quality of life as “an individual’s perception of their position in life in the context of the culture and value systems in which they live.”

This coming week we are asking Edmonds residents: how would you describe your quality of life in Edmonds? And what aspects of Edmonds (amenities, activities, location, affordability, etc.) contribute to that feeling?

The way people will respond to this question will reflect their lived experiences and the values they place on certain aspects of their current life.

In the book *Happy City*, the author reflects on his conversation with Enrique Peñalosa, the Mayor of Bogotá, Colombia in 2007; Enrique described how he transformed Bogotá from a truly horrible place to live to one of the happiest. Peñalosa is quoted as saying:

“If we defined our success just in terms of income per capita, we would have to accept ourselves as second- or third-rate societies - a bunch of losers. No, the City needed a new goal.” Peñalosa promised neither a car in every garage nor a socialist revolution. His promise was simple. He was going to make Bogotans happier.

He went on to be known as the Mayor of Happy.

I visited Bogotá in the fall of 2018 as a speaker at an international conference on Walkable Cities. I was fortunate to hear Gil Peñalosa speak, Bogotá’s former Parks, Sports and Recreation Commissioner and brother of Mayor Peñalosa. Their energy and passion to achieve collective happiness and well-being was infectious, and the result of their work was evident throughout the City. People were liberated by parks, walkways, bike paths, and new public spaces. While I did not conduct a sentiment survey during my visit, it did seem that happiness was a way of life in Bogotá, Colombia.

Every good plan starts with a collective vision. Tell us what you think about Edmonds’ quality of life. What makes you happy or would make you even happier in Edmonds. Join us in a city-wide conversation that will culminate in a vision statement to guide development of the Edmonds Comprehensive Plan.

Over the next five weeks, we will be focusing on key topics that touch upon various aspects of the Plan. Here is the line-up:

- Quality of Life: August 15-21
- Economic Growth: August 22-28
- Environment: August 29-Sept 4
- Culture: Sept 5-11

- Livability and Land Use: Sept 12-18

Please take our mini-survey on Edmonds' Quality of Life (available at <https://bit.ly/quality2024>, or by scanning the QR code below) and visit us this week at the following events to share your perspective:



Coffee chat with Susan (Development Services Director) | Wednesday, August 17th | Jaiiya Cafe at 10032 Edmonds Way, Suite 101 | 8:00-9:30 am

Edmonds Art Walk | Thursday, August 18th | downtown commercial area | Market runs from 4-8:00 pm, staff available from 5-7:00 pm

Taste Edmonds | Friday - Sunday, August 19-21 | Frances Anderson Playfield | Taste runs from noon-9:00 pm, staff available from 1-5:00 pm

Keep an eye out for more event announcements later this week as we move on to the themed community conversation on Economic Growth the week of August 22.