

BUILDING A FUTURE, TOGETHER

UBC School of Community
and Regional Planning
False Creek South Studio

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Introduction

Studio Context

This report is the culmination of the work that our team has completed together with *RePlan, as part of a studio course for the Master of Community and Regional Planning program at the University of British Columbia.

We are three Master of Community and Regional Planning students with a diverse set of backgrounds and interests.

Through this project, we have engaged with the community, thought differently about the built environment, practiced neighbourhood planning skills, and worked to understand the trade-offs and competing interests present in an urban environment.

This project began with three sites: the area under the Granville Street Bridge, the parking garage by Alder Street, and the bus loop near Heather Street. Our initial background research into the False Creek South neighbourhood and explorations of these sites are summarized in a previous midterm report. We expanded the initial scope of our project to include a corridor that spans most of the length of the False Creek South neighbourhood.

Project Context

The future of False Creek South is uncertain. With the expiry of the existing leases on the horizon, and a planning process focused on determining the future of False Creek South about to begin, it is more important now than ever to reimagine the future of the community.

Over the past six months, our team has been working with key community members from *RePlan to explore different opportunities within False Creek South and begin reimagining the future of the neighbourhood together.

Our goal throughout this project has been to support the continuation of this vibrant, livable community and reconcile the visions of both the community of False Creek South and the City of Vancouver.

Project Objectives

1

To bring together and mediate differing interests through the process of redesigning the identified sites

2

To establish a collective vision for the future of the False Creek South community through the revisioning of the identified sites

3

To use False Creek South Neighbourhood Association's principles as guiding values

4

To design alternatives for the identified sites that support a collective vision while respecting the existing design of False Creek South, supports the ideal of a livable community, and help *RePlan make a case to the City for lease renewal

Our Goal

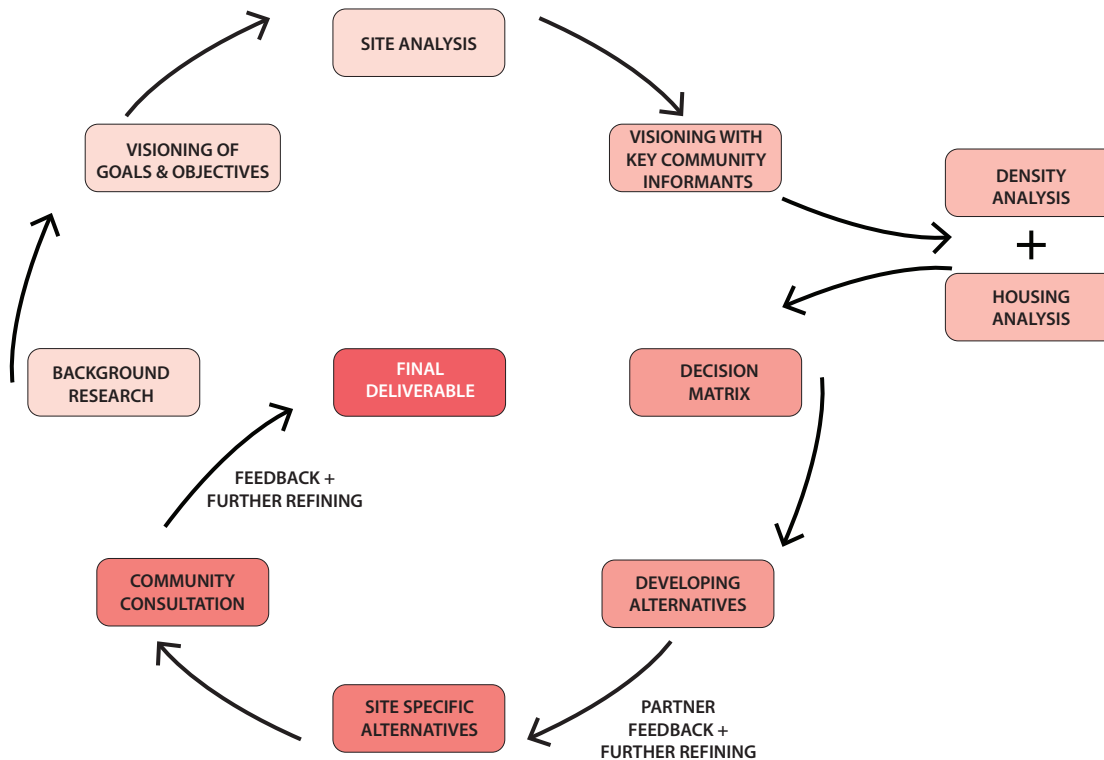
To support the continuation of the False Creek South community as a livable area through innovative and progressive design alternatives, which will aim to reconcile the visions of the community of False Creek South and the City of Vancouver.

Our Process

Key Steps

We began this project by researching the history of False Creek South and the principles behind the original design to become more familiar with the area. We defined our goals and objectives of this project, and then began analyzing characteristics of False Creek South. The key products of this work can be found in the following section. Throughout this process, we

received feedback from the project director and key community members. Based this feedback, we narrowed down broader context alternatives and began work on site specific alternatives, which constitutes the majority of this report. These designs were presented to the community on March 23, 2017. Feedback was gathered from this event and is also presented.



FCSNA's Guiding Principles

We adopted the following principles as a guiding framework for our design process:



Provide residents with an affordable option to remain in the community beyond lease expiry dates. Certainty around lease renewal is a priority in moving forward.



Achieve a demographic mix that is similar to the region's average and with a stronger emphasis on providing more housing for moderate and middle income workers and their families.



Seek opportunities for increased density while respecting the historic urban design pattern of buildings and open space.



Continue to embody City of Vancouver initiatives: greenest city, affordable housing, and financial sustainability.

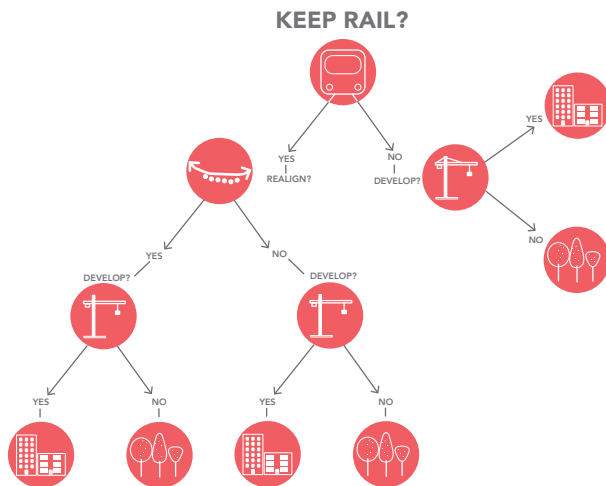


Model a process for dialogue, decision-making, partnership and change that is inclusive of all stakeholders.

Previous Work

Key Decisions

In order to understand the decisions which stem from the future of the existing rail corridor, a decision tree was created to help simplify the complex reality of the interconnected decisions. From this analysis, several broader context alternatives were developed. From feedback that was gathered, it became evident that a future without the streetcar should not be considered. However, the question remains about what should be done with the land available if the rail corridor is realigned further south along part of 6th. Should it be developed? Should there be a greenway or cycleway? These options will be explored further through in the Charleson Site section.



Assets

- + Affordable housing
- + Good design principles
- + Isolated
- + Access to seawall
- + Diversity of ages
- + Mixed income
- + Supports City's goals
- + Sense of community
- + Social Capital
- + Livability
- + Pedestrian-oriented

Challenges

- Re-balance occupant needs and housing types
- Isolated
- Lack of services and useful commercial activity
- Lack of community centre
- Accessibility for seniors; availability of transit options
- Less children and families than expected/desired
- Limited non-resident parking
- Blank stretch along 6th Avenue

Stakeholders

A broad range of stakeholders are interested in the future of False Creek South. A matrix was created (**Table 1**) to help identify the interests and goals of the interested and affected communities, and highlight any overlapping or competing objectives. The interests and goals identified were compiled from discussions with the project partner, principles of good planning practice, research on the various stakeholder groups, and assumptions based on relevant experience.

It became clear from the analysis that False Creek South residents, the False Creek South Neighbourhood Association and *RePlan, and the City of Vancouver would be the key stakeholders for this project, and in future planning processes. Moving forward, neighbouring residents and developers should also be consulted, along with the remaining stakeholders identified.

Stakeholder Mapping

	FCS Residents	FCSNA/ *RePlan	Neighbouring Residents	COV Residents/ Public Space Users	City of Vancouver	CMHC & Financial Institutions	Local Businesses	Developers
Affordable housing	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓
Access to quality public space	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓
Accessibility*	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
Financial Sustainability**	✓	✓			✓	✓		
Security of Tenure	✓	✓				✓		
Diversity of Architectural Design	✓	✓			✓			
Heritage and Historic Design Elements	✓	✓			✓			
Demographic Diversity	✓	✓			✓			
Achieving Policy Objectives***		✓			✓			
Aging in Place	✓	✓						✓
Increase Density	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓	
Maintain Density	✓		✓					✓
Livability	✓	✓						
Inclusivity	✓	✓			✓			

Table 1: Matrix of Stakeholder Interests & Goals

* The project partner has identified accessibility as a concern for the elderly population in the area and those who use the public areas; of particular concern is the need for more units without stairs and adequate public transportation

**Financial sustainability is referring to the sustainability of the outcomes of this project and of the area as a whole, due to the leasehold nature of most of the land and the looming lease renewal, which could potentially result in the City just selling off the land.

*** Achieving policy objectives is referring to the different levels of policy that exist at the City and beyond, such as the Greenest City Action Plan and the Livable Region Strategy, among others.

Engagement

Key Community Members

Given the studio project's timeline, the majority of our engagement with the community involved periodic discussions with a small group of key community members. These individuals were identified with the help of the Project Director, and consisted of a small group of resident architects and a Senior Planner from the City of Vancouver.

Although this group of residents do not necessarily represent the entire community, they provided insights from their own experience living in the neighbourhood, as well as a strong understanding of the design process.

This group was involved in discussions about the neighbourhood's assets and challenges, assumptions regarding the reintroduction and realignment of the streetcar along 6th Avenue, as well as the identification of areas in which infill development should be pursued. These key community members also provided feedback with respect to our final design proposals, which has been incorporated within this final report.

Throughout this process, these community members have been integral in providing local perspectives and knowledge that has helped guide the project's direction and deliverables. Although we have valued all of their feedback, many topics and issues that were brought up through the process were unable to be fully



Discussion with key community members.

addressed due to the nature of our project's timeline. These considerations are summarized for future research in the Next Steps section.

Neighbourhood Context



Reconnecting False Creek South is an important underlying theme which unifies the individual site designs and helps to create an even more vibrant community, while improving resident's access to nearby amenities.

Above is a map of the different sites within False Creek South that were explored through this project. The potential future streetcar line is outlined in blue, and possible transit stations are identified. It also highlights potential future pedestrian connections to False Creek South.

Each of the highlighted sights will be discussed in more detail in the following sections, beginning with the Granville Site, followed by the Alder Site, Charleson Site, and Heather Site.

Granville Site

Site Context

The Granville Site is situated on the western most edge of our study area. Seen through eyes of a planner, the Granville Site is characterized by several unique challenges, all of which constrain its potential for residential development. These include the obstruction of the Granville Street Bridge off-ramp, noise from overhead traffic, significant view corridors, and a lack of natural light.

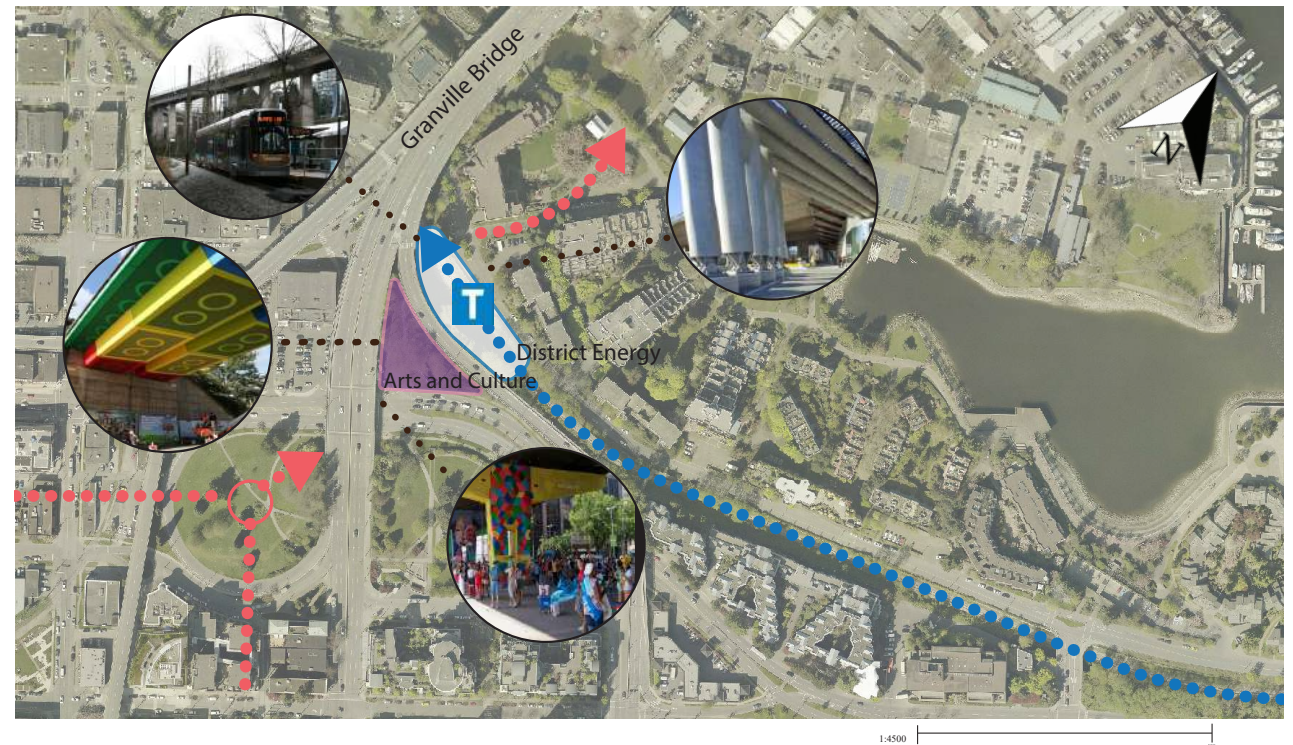
However, also seen through a planner's eyes, these challenges are opportunities for transformation, to enhance previously underutilized space with the input of artists, creative spaces and innovative technology. The site is well-positioned to serve as a nexus for arts and culture, sustainable energy and transportation, and a gateway between Granville Island, False Creek South and the downtown core. As will be presented in the following section, the design interventions presented for the Granville site embody the City of Vancouver's Greenest City and Renewable Energy principles, culture and heritage plans, and transportation strategies.

Overarching Design Strategy: Focus on connectivity

The design strategies associated with the Granville Site were evaluated against the principles of False Creek South and the City of Vancouver. While the details of the designs incorporate transportation, public realm, arts/culture, urban design, and sustainable energy, the overarching principle is connectivity.

A connected street system has major implications for the type of built form most suitable at this

site. The resulting recommendations, presented below, are based on a thorough analysis of built form and urban design. These recommendations are intended to provide design strategies that both maintain and enhance pedestrian contact with the street. The following section will define the final recommendations presented for the Granville Site, which can then be used to guide future development scenarios.



Design Intervention: Enhance creative capital

The area beneath the Granville Street Bridge is an ideal space for creative endeavours, for the same reasons that make it poorly suited for residential use: noise, unusual dimensions, heavy surrounding traffic and inconsistently available natural light. Noisy, potentially messy and process-oriented creative practices (i.e. music, rehearsal, sculpture, fabrication) thrive in these conditions, and find much-needed creative space in proximity to the pre-existing cultural vibrancy of Granville Island. Creating a set of flexible spaces for creative practice that share a permeable social and visual boundary with the surrounding area will add to creative capital while drawing local and touristic interest. The framing space of the existing bridge ceiling and pillars also presents an interesting architectural event ripe for artistic installation and adaptation.



Brooklyn Bridge Park.
Source: Gigi Altarejos, 2014.

Design Intervention: Explore co-benefits of the streetcar

This intervention is not about the streetcar itself, but about a sustainable relationship between land use, walking, and transportation. The advantages associated with having the streetcar line end at the Granville Site are numerous. Transit corridors support a diverse mix of land uses, increased density, high quality public space with urban design standards that create attractive and vibrant places. The Granville Site is positioned at the confluence of the final streetcar line and Granville Island, linking neighbourhoods with a convenient and attractive transportation alternative. This provides a rationale for enhancing creative space, innovative technology

and revitalizing the arts and culture of the site: access for everyone. Streetcars not only attract tourism dollars, but help move commuters and residents on their own recreational and/or shopping trips on a day-to-day basis. As can be seen in **Figure 1**, a pedestrian-oriented design that provides ground-floor sites along the street edge provides a graceful transition between Granville Island, False Creek South, and adjacent neighbourhoods. The site is framed by six storey buildings on both sides of Lamey's Mill Road, creating a visually interesting streetscape and street wall oriented towards the human scale.

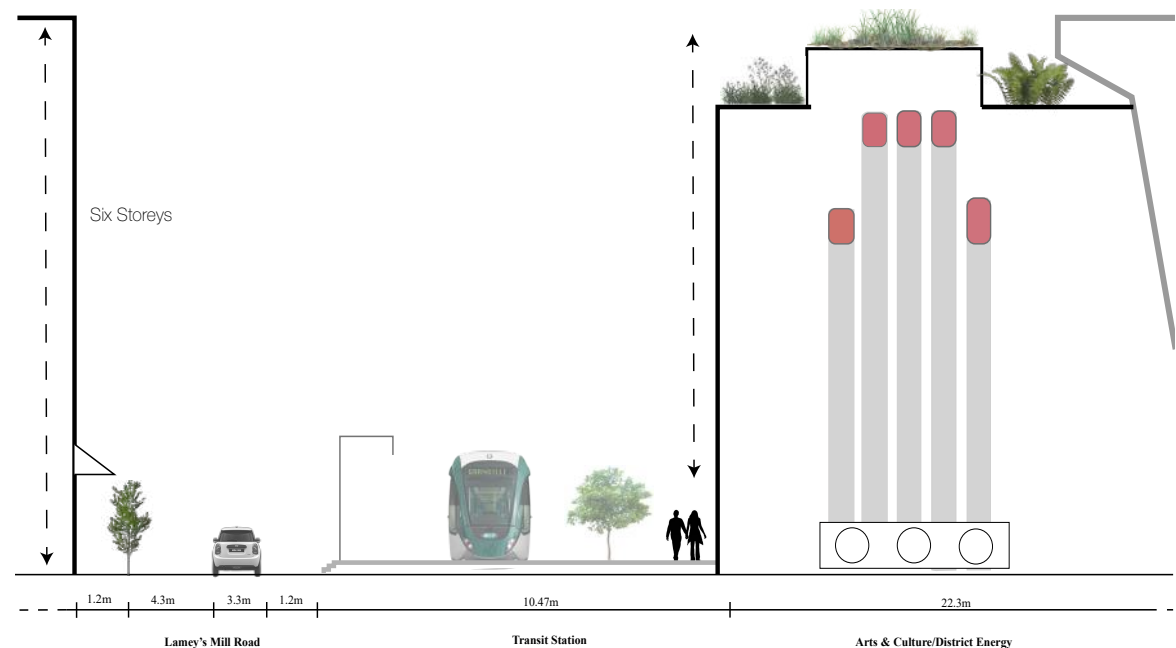


Figure 1: Cross section looking east at Granville and Lamey's Mill Road.

Design intervention: Embody Greenest City and Renewable Energy Principles

The viability of district energy in False Creek South is based on an assessment of built form: building typology, density and diversity of land use. To help understand the potential energy requirements from future development within the study area, three development scenarios are evaluated (refer to **Figures 2 – 4**), including:

- the minimum base density required to support district energy (35,000 m²);
- the viability at the current density and building type (249,890 m²); and
- the viability at full build-out/doubling of density and enhancing mixed-use development (approx. 648,000 m²).

Total heat demand was calculated by multiplying total building floor space with the associated approximate energy use intensity for each type of building. For the purposes of this assessment, the energy use intensity was derived from suggested values in the Plan 4DE model. Note: the analysis is for comparative purposes only— all energy use intensity data should be verified prior to additional feasibility studies.

The following three scenarios provide a rationale for adopting this design intervention. As can be seen in **Figures 2 – 4**, an increase in building density results in a decrease in total heat demand and thus a decrease in the specific heat cost.

Scenario 1

Scenario 1 represents the least possible density required to support district energy. The blue line on the graph represents the individual heating cost associated with a density of 35,000 m² of gross floor area. The results suggest that district heating is the more expensive option given that the share of networks cost (i.e. heat demand per square meter) is greater than individual heat supply. The threshold point at the centre of the graph indicates where district energy becomes economically viable.

Heat Density Threshold Cost Curve

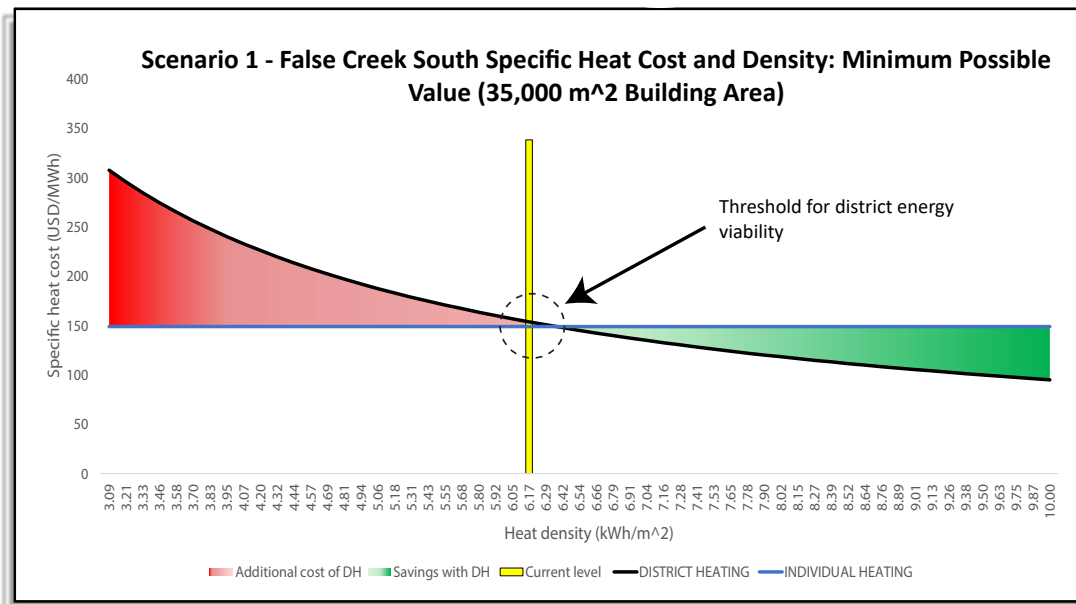


Figure 2. Scenario 1: Base Case.

Scenario 2

Scenario 2 represents the current density for False Creek South, and shows how the viability of district energy increases with increasing density (up to the current density of 249, 890 m²). Here, the gross floor area and configuration of buildings increases the estimated heating load target/viability resulting in significant cost savings across the neighbourhood.

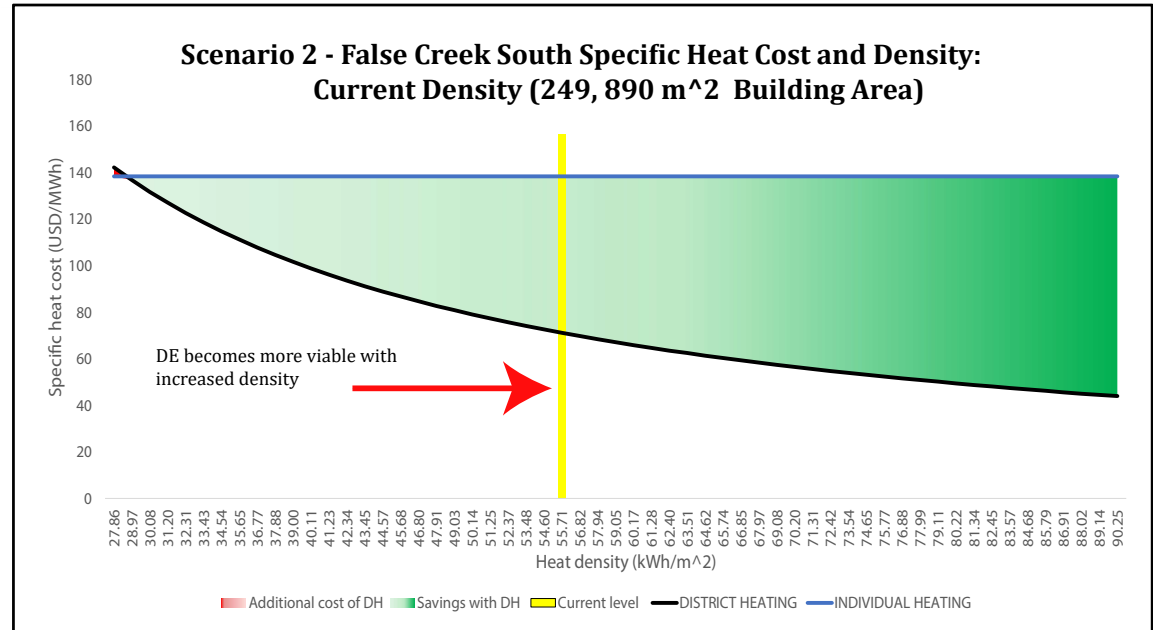


Figure 3. Scenario 2: Present Density.

Scenario 3

Scenario 3 represents the neighbourhood of False Creek South at a density of twice what it is today. The build-out of this scenario will add an additional 290,000 square metres of floor area including additional townhouse, low-rise, high rise, and mixed-use/commercial development.

Heat Density Threshold Cost Curve

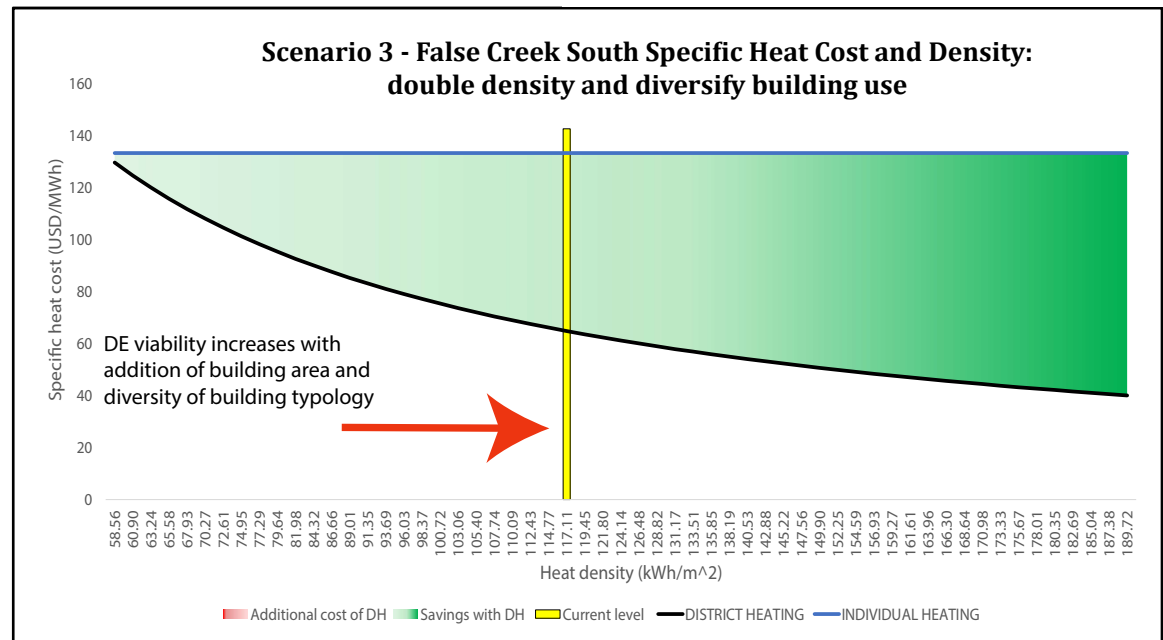


Figure 4. Scenario 3: Future Density.

Alder Site

Site Context

Existing housing around the site varies in height between two and four storeys tall (Figure 5).

Parking Garage

The first area within this site which drew our attention for its infill potential was the 2-storey parking garage located between the seawall and Lamey's Mill Road. One-third of the spaces in this parking garage are for pay parking, with the rest marked as reserved, presumably for nearby residents who need more space for parking. There are also a few spots for car-sharing vehicles from three main companies: Modo, Evo, and Car2Go. There are two entrances to the parking garage, one from the east side to access the top floor, and one from the north to access the bottom floor. The elevation at this site changes in an irregular fashion across the site. On the far west side the elevation changes from 12 metres above sea level (m.a.s.l.) in the southwest corner to 5 m.a.s.l. in the northwest corner. Near the pedestrian stairway, the elevation changes from 13 m.a.s.l. by Lamey's Mill Road to 4 m.a.s.l. by the seawall. Closer to the easternmost edge, it's only a difference of about a metre. This parking garage overlooks beautiful views of the seawall, False Creek, Granville Island, and Downtown (Figure 5). There is also a view cone which looks towards Mount Seymour from the site (Figure 6).



Figure 5: Existing conditions.



Figure 6: Looking north from the top of the parking garage.



Figure 7: Protected view cone of Mount Seymour.

Alder Site

Above the Rail Corridor

The other area which has potential for infill development is the airspace above the existing rail corridor, to the east of Alder Crossing. At its peak, this area sits about 8 metres above the level of the tracks (Figures 8 & 9). The rail corridor is underneath the north half of the site, and brush fills the south half of the site. There are also irregular elevation changes across this site. The west side is the highest, and as you move east across the site, the north edge along Lamey's Mill Road drops down more than the same portion on the south edge of the site along 6th Avenue. Along 6th, the at-grade elevation does not change significantly, but along Lamey's Mill Road, there is more of a dramatic elevation change between Alder Crossing and Alder Street.

Alder Crossing

Alder Crossing is currently a T-junction at both its north and south ends, with cars crossing between Lamey's Mill Road, a local road, and 6th Avenue, an important arterial for the City. It is four lanes wide, with turning lanes in each direction.

Opportunities

- More efficient use of space (underutilized land where existing uses, such as parking, could be integrated into the proposed future uses)
- More efficient pedestrian- and vehicle-oriented street network
- Improved pedestrian experience
- Preserve views of downtown, False Creek, and the edge of Granville Island

Challenges

- Irregular elevation changes
- Balancing heights with housing affordability, particularly with the premium on places with views
- Preserving the Alder Terrace view cone
- Inefficient pedestrian network
- Existing intersection of Lamey's Mill Road and Alder Crossing is disliked by residents (from Fix 6th Event)



Figure 8: Looking southwest towards Alder Crossing from Lamey's Mill Road.



Figure 9: Looking north towards Lamey's Mill Road.

Alder Site

Proposed Future Conditions

This proposal includes both residential and mixed-use development, greenspace, a streetcar stop, the realignment of Alder Crossing to Alder Street, and more pedestrian connections (**Figure 10**). The forthcoming draft Granville Island 2040 Plan outlines a potential future pedestrian bridge to Granville Island, which further reinforces the importance of more pedestrian connections in this area.

Streetcar

A streetcar stop is proposed between Oak and Spruce Streets. In the Administrative Report for the City of Vancouver about the potential for a future streetcar, a stop was identified at Spruce Street. This would serve the nearby enclaves well, and would also align with Choklit Park. However, with the potential for a future stop at Oak Street and Broadway for the newly confirmed Millennium Line Broadway Extension, a streetcar stop at Oak Street might be appropriate. We have proposed the stop be somewhere in between to balance these opportunities.

Mixed-Use Building

A 4 to 6 storey mixed-use building (orange) could be built west of the view cone. Small commercial uses like coffee shops or local bakeries may be appropriate on the first floor. Although commercial spaces in False Creek South have traditionally struggled, an increase in density may help support these businesses. The height of this building should also be stepped down towards the seawall (**Figure 11, following page**), to ensure that the building does not overwhelm pedestrians along the seawall. The smaller width of this building should also reduce shading effects on the seawall, maintaining a pleasant pedestrian experience along the seawall.



Figure 10: A map of the proposed future uses.

In order to make the project more economically viable and increase the affordability, it would follow that more density should be built on the site. However, that might make the pedestrian experience less enjoyable, particularly because of its proximity to the seawall. Although there are many high-rises in North False Creek, the setbacks are large enough that it does not feel like the buildings are crowding you, and the buildings closest to the seawall typically do not exceed four storeys, although there are some exceptions.

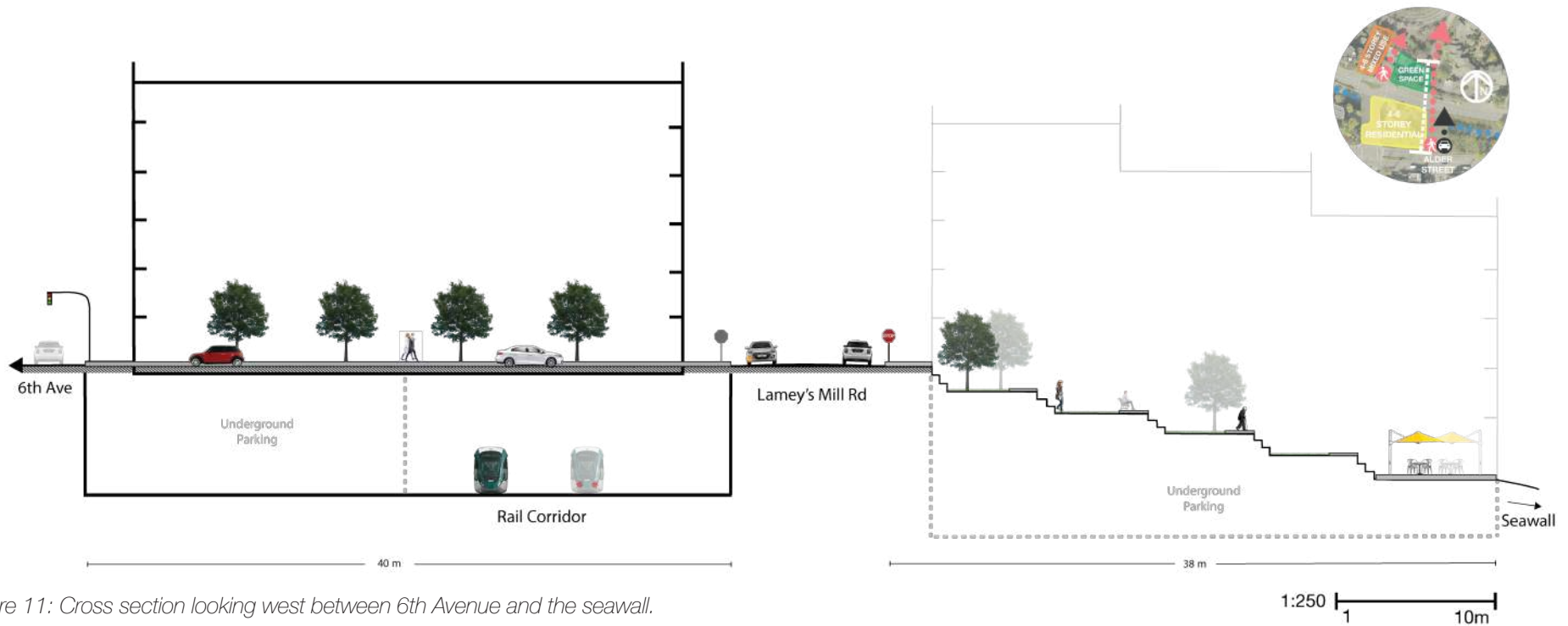


Figure 11: Cross section looking west between 6th Avenue and the seawall.



Figure 12: Design precedents for the proposed greenspace. Sources: Carroll Engineering, 2016 (left), Durante Kreuk Ltd., 2014 (right)

Greenspace

The proposed greenspace (green, **Figure 10**) on the remainder of the parking garage site would reduce the feeling of density and draw people to the area. This greenspace could include wide patches of grass or other greenery which are terraced down towards the seawall to provide areas to sit and enjoy the view (**Figures 11 & 12**).

Steps or ramps on either side, along the identified pedestrian pathways, would connect Lamey's Mill Road to the seawall. By the, outdoor tables and chairs could be set up in the warmer months for the adjacent commercial space. However, it is important to note that this greenspace might negatively impact the affordability of the development.

Residential Building

Above the rail corridor, a building of approximately 6 storeys (yellow, **Figure 10**) would increase density without being too imposing of a building. Originally, the idea was for this building to have a courtyard. However, given the typical lengths and widths of units, it was determined that the courtyard would not be very large, and would be

shaded most of the time. Therefore, this space is likely better used for more space for housing.

The building would also partially cover Alder Crossing, which would no longer be needed if it is realigned to Alder Street. However, a portion of the existing crossing could be left open to cars from either 6th Avenue or Lamey's Mill Road so that the entrance to Inspiration Furniture's underground parking could still be used. This section of the old Alder Crossing could also be used to access any underground parking built for the development above the rail corridor. This new underground parking could be located in the space directly adjacent to the rail corridor, below the new development.



Figure 13, above: Precedent for proposed at-grade pedestrian connections. Source: Perkins+Will & James Corner Field Operations, 2012

Figure 14, right: Perspective of the realigned Alder Crossing, looking north along Alder Street towards 6th Avenue, Lamey's Mill Road, and False Creek. The existing view can be seen in the inset photo.



Pedestrian Connections

At-grade pedestrian connections (**Figure 13**), or more pedestrian bridges, could also be built at Spruce and Oak Streets. Increased pedestrian connections could also improve child safety because students from False Creek South Elementary will no longer have to jump the fences along the rail corridor and cross 6th Avenue, as was described by some residents.

Realigning Alder Crossing

Realigning Alder Crossing to Alder Street (**Figure 14**) would facilitate better pedestrian movement, both between False Creek South, Fairview Slopes, and the seawall.

Community Feedback

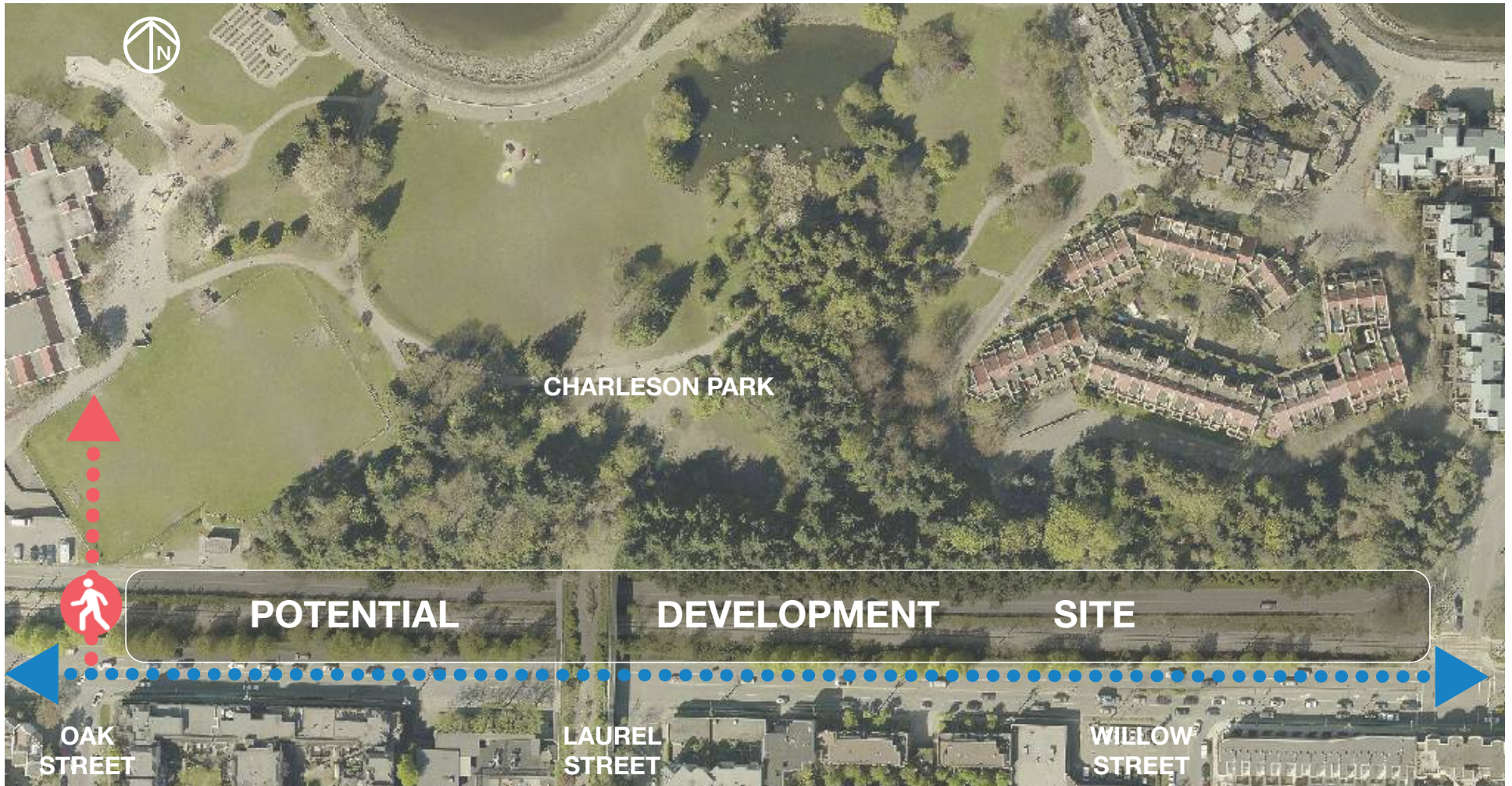
Residents were enthusiastic about having more pedestrian connections between False Creek South and Fairview Slopes. Although the location of the community open house in Sitka Square may have affected this result, many more people mentioned a connection across Spruce Street being particularly important. Some residents also suggested overland bridges similar to the Laurel Land Bridge. Many residents identified the Laurel Land Bridge as special place in False Creek South, and would enjoy similar connections being built elsewhere. Very few residents commented on the heights of the buildings. The proposed heights were generally viewed as

acceptable, with a few comments noting that they would not be in favour of anything higher.

Recommendations

- Build new pedestrian connections at Spruce and Oak to improve connectivity
- Utilize space underneath development for underground parking
- Limit building heights & use a stepped approach to minimize the effects to the pedestrian experience
- Consider the benefits to the pedestrian experience of greenspace, in addition to the economic implications

Charleson Site



Site Context

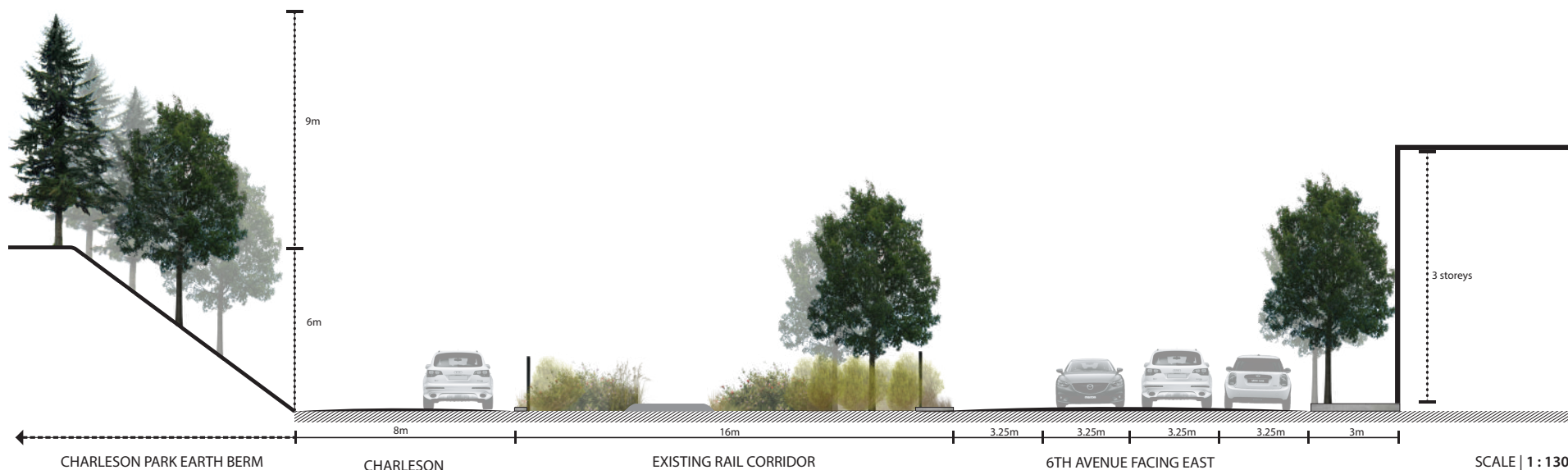
The Charleson Site is located along 6th Avenue, bounded to the north by Charleson Park, and to the south by Fairview Slopes. Under the assumption that the streetcar is reintroduced and realigned along 6th Avenue, a portion of

this area has the potential for infill development, given that the bus route would no longer need to travel along Charleson. The unused rail corridor provides a linear piece of land that has the potential for multiple design interventions.

The competing interests among users and stakeholders will need to be negotiated along this transect.



EXISTING LAUREL → WILLOW



Challenges

- 6th Avenue is currently car dominated and does not provide an enjoyable pedestrian experience for users.
- Residents' attachment to Charleson Park Earth Berm is still unclear.
- The newly introduced condition of Charleson as a public bus and cycle only route adds a new dynamic to the evolving characteristic of the area.

Opportunities

- There is a considerable amount of land that could be made available for infill housing.
- Reimagining the relationship of Charleson Park with the broader neighbourhood could open up existing green space to a greater amount of people.
- Adding pedestrian connections would facilitate access to False Creek South from the rest of Vancouver.

The following are four different options that were developed in response to the existing conditions of the site. These options are not mutually exclusive and should be understood in terms of the trade-offs between different potential uses of the space.

Option A



Description

This option combines infill development of three to four storey townhomes with a one way streetcar that would incorporate staggered pull out areas for passing trains. There is the possibility for building taller, as well as for implementing creative modifications to the earth berm that would strengthen the relationship of the rear of the building with Charleson Park.

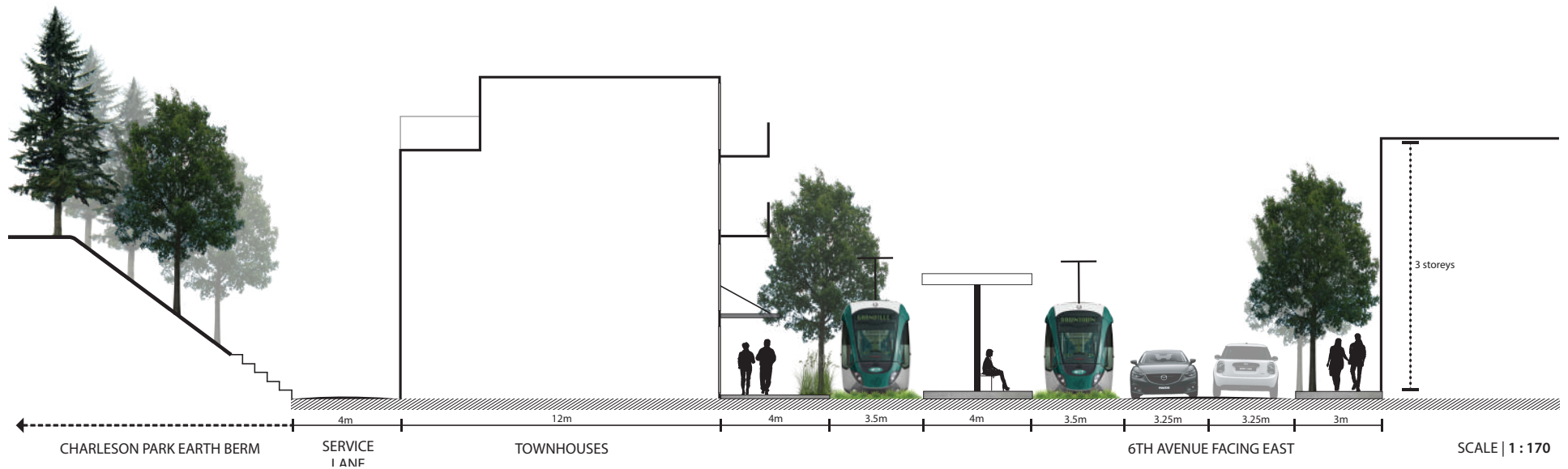
Pros

- This option balances interests of adding housing while providing co-benefits to existing residents, such as a dedicated streetcar line and better pedestrian environment on the north side of 6th Avenue.
- The one way streetcar could mitigate noise from the existing traffic conditions.
- This option does not limit the current flow of traffic on 6th Ave.

Cons

- A one way tram may not be as efficient or feasible as a two way option, and would require further study from a transportation engineer.
- A rear service lane may be difficult to make an inviting space, while also providing a utility function to residents.
- There is the potential of blocking views of Fairview Slopes residents on the south side of 6th Avenue.

Option B



Description

This option reduces the width of 6th Avenue to a skinnier, two lane street. Under this road “diet,” 6th would become a more pedestrian-oriented street with the potential for ground floor retail. The two way tram would also have a center platform for on- and off-loading. This option retains the same townhouse and service lane format as the previous one.

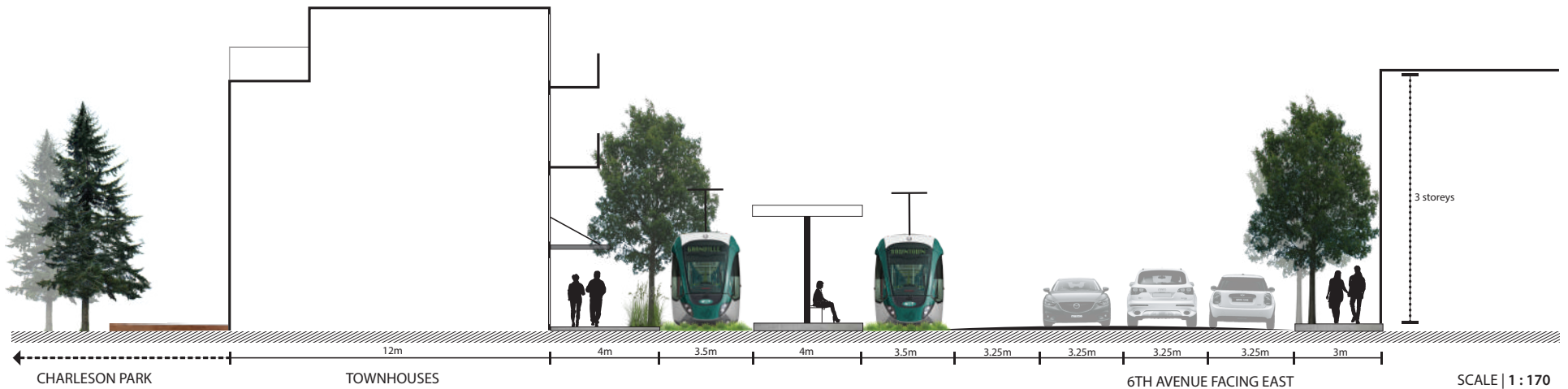
Pros

- This scenario provides the strongest potential for changing the nature of 6th Avenue to become a more pedestrian-friendly, ground floor retail oriented street.
- Reducing the amount of automotive traffic would reduce the need for noise pollution mitigation. The frontages of infill development could therefore be more open to the street.

Cons

- This option would be very difficult to implement given the importance of 6th Avenue as a major arterial road. Perhaps in the future when automotive vehicles are less of a priority within the city, this option would become feasible. Residents were understanding that this option was highly unlikely.

Option C



Description

This option translates potential infill development further northward into Charleson Park. By modifying the existing earth berm at intervals along the corridor, it would be possible to both introduce 12 metre townhouses and a two way streetcar, as well as retain the existing traffic conditions of 6th Avenue. Surprisingly, residents were both understanding and even supportive of changing the earth berm to become a more efficient and equitable space.

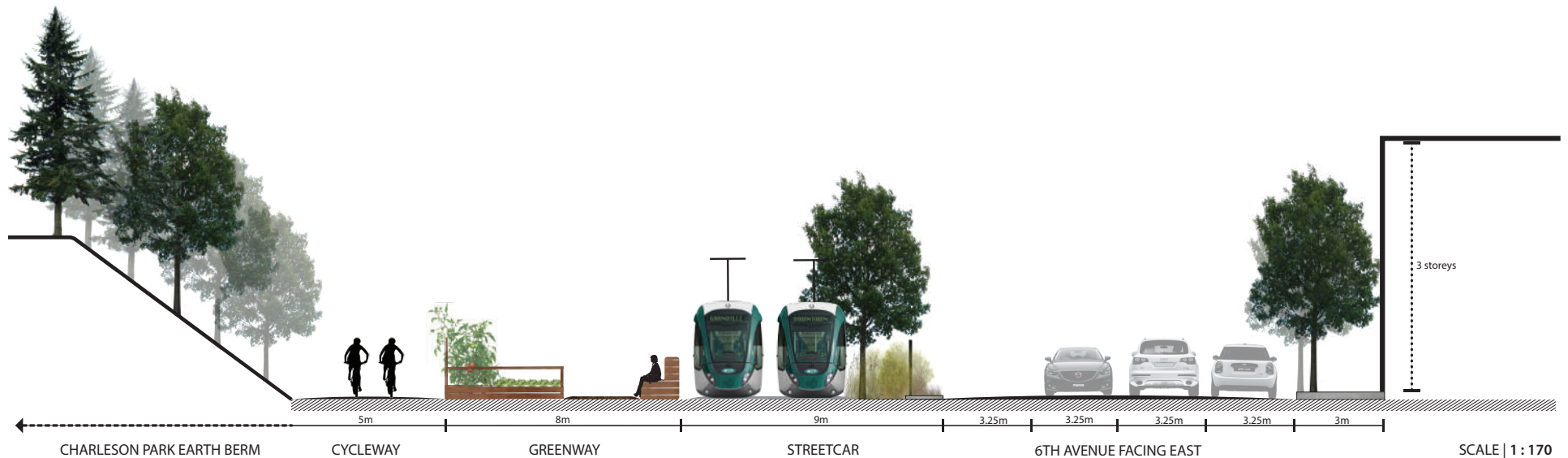
Pros

- This scenario includes infill development, a two way streetcar, and 6th Avenue as a four lane arterial road.
- This redistribution of space would modify the earth berm, but would allow for all many different development possibilities. Adding infill along the transect would alleviate some of the need to add density elsewhere in the neighbourhood.

Cons

- This condition alters the Charleson Park Earth Berm, which may potentially upset some residents whom have an attachment to the history of that section of the park.
- This option does not include a dedicated cycle path.
- This option perpetuates the condition of 6th Avenue as a car-dominated arterial road.

Option D



Description

This option highlights potential other uses under the condition that no infill development is introduced within the site. The streetcar would actually remain within the existing rail corridor as a two way service. 6th Avenue would remain a four lane arterial road.

Pros

- Provides an alternative cycle route to the seawall that is separated and direct.
- Community gardens can help residential access to nutritious food and build neighbourhood resiliency.
- The greenway could favour existing biodiversity that uses the unused railway as a habitat corridor.

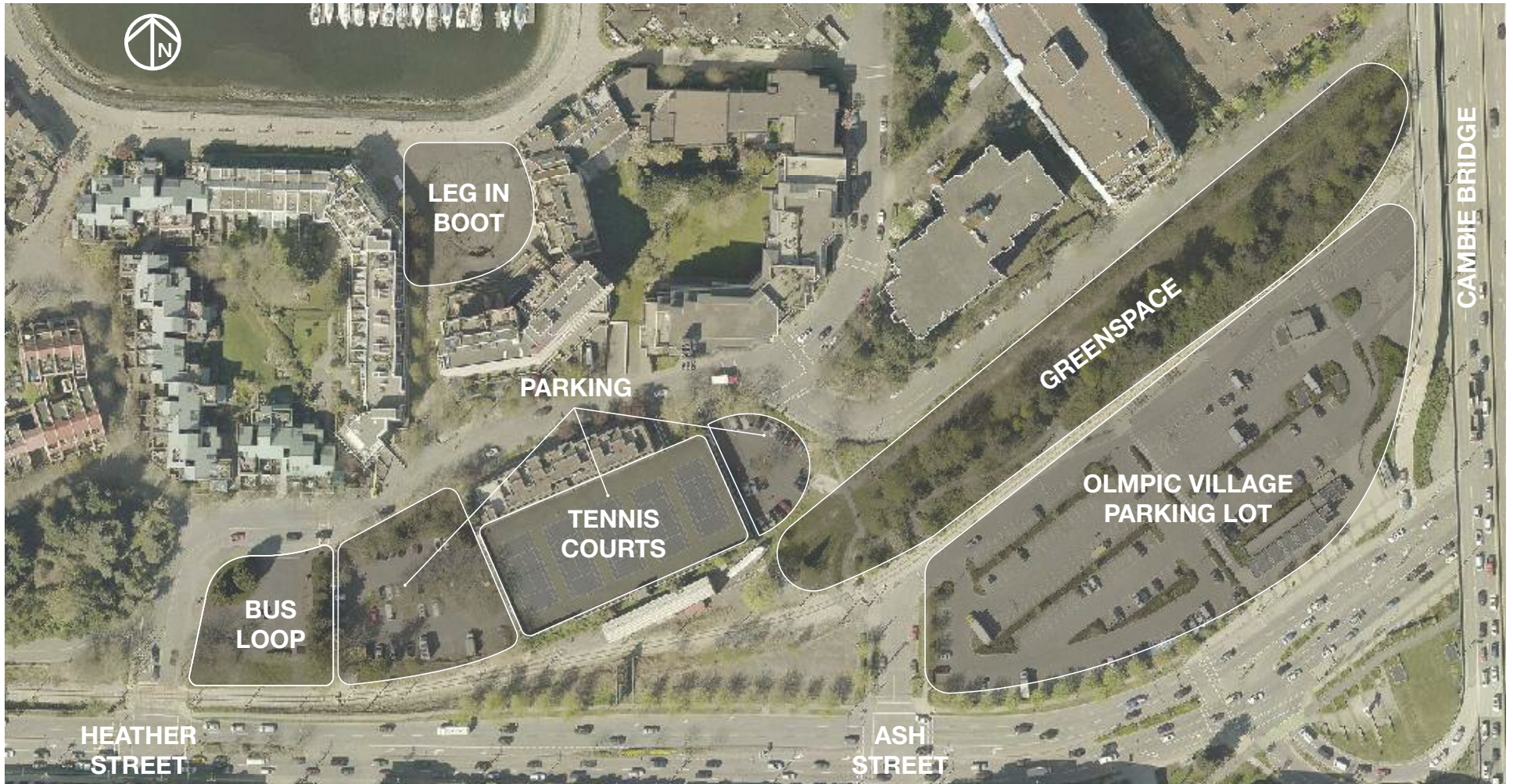
Cons

- Limits the potential for infill housing.

Recommendations

- Explore a combination of infill development with a greenway and cycleway.
- Open up Charleson Park to the broader public.
- Integrate new pedestrian connections with the new development.
- Concentrate retail and commercial uses at the Heather Site, as opposed to along 6th Avenue.
- Use the rail corridor as a buffer for traffic noise.

Heather Site



Site Context

The Heather Site is located north of 6th Avenue, between Heather Street and the Cambie Bridge. It includes Heather Square Bay 1 Bus Loop, several surface parking lots, as well as tennis courts and currently underutilized green space.

6TH AVENUE

1:1100 1 100m

Opportunities

- This site has a vast amount of land that could be transformed into a large scale mixed use development. By prioritizing housing in this location, it could both alleviate the need for infill development elsewhere, as well as leverage lease renewal.
- The proximity of Olympic Village SkyTrain Station and the reintroduction of the streetcar would support and favour transit oriented development.
- The site is located adjacent to the Cambie corridor, as well as the seawall.
- There is the potential to revitalize Leg in Boot Square as a better utilized commercial area.



View of Heather Bay Square 1 Bus Loop and existing rail corridor.

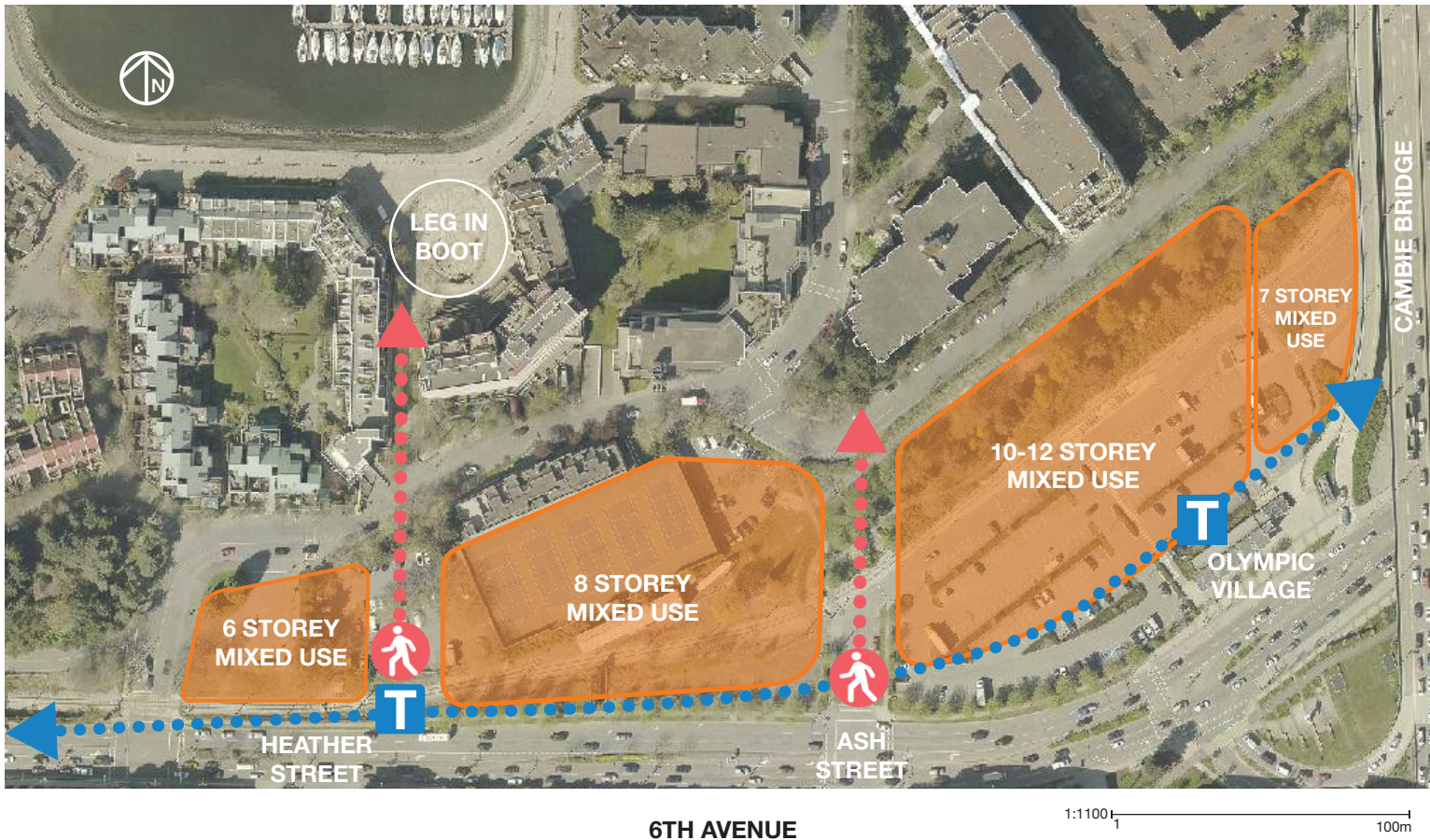
Challenges

- The connection from Heather and Ash Street towards the seawall and Leg in Boot Square is currently limited by fences and parking lots.
- The 4 storey freehold townhouses on the northern edge of the tennis courts parking lot would need to be considered
- View cones from City Hall towards the North Shore mountains limit building heights in the eastern portion of the site.
- Understanding what is an appropriate building height and density will require an ongoing conversation between existing residents as well as the broader Vancouver public.



Map of existing building heights (storeys) and maximum potential heights due to view cones (in red).

Proposed Conditions



Residential



Light Industrial



Ground Floor Retail



Community Gardens

Potential Future

This proposed design explores the possibility of a mixed use development that incorporates a diversity of accessible and adaptable residential options. These would range from micro units to multi bedroom dwellings intended for families. The actual breakdown of housing types would depend on the possibility of older residents downsizing from their existing larger units,

freeing up potential family housing elsewhere in the neighbourhood. This proposal includes new, direct pedestrian connections and concentrates fine grained, ground floor retail opportunities along the Heather - Leg in Boot Square pedestrian street. The proposed stepped building heights towards Cambie Bridge would respect surrounding building context, while maintaining

views and minimizing shadowing of existing residents. The introduction of light industrial use, particularly cafes and craft brewing, as well as community gardens, would help activate the neighbourhood throughout the day. Following community feedback, the need for new daycare facilities was also emphasized.

Pedestrian Connection to Leg in Boot Square



This rendering shows a potential future condition that incorporates a direct pedestrian connection from Heather Street to Leg in Boot Square. This would include opportunities for seating, vegetation, as well as retail and light industrial uses. It would be an inviting space that invites users toward the sea wall.

Recommendations:

- Respect a stepped building height, but test the limit of acceptable density and building heights for residents
- Promote the use of well crafted mid rise, full block buildings that respect existing urban form.
- Use materials that are carbon sequestering, such as wood frame.
- Provide a range of housing options, both in terms of size and number of bedrooms
- Incorporate light industrial activity at the ground floor as a way of activating the neighbourhood

What We Heard

The following feedback was provided during a community open house held on March 23rd, 2017. A total of 19 individuals responded, with a range of residents living in different buildings/enclaves, as well as amount of time having resided in the neighbourhood. The following are some overarching commonalities expressed in a multitude of ways:

- Residents were largely supportive of the reintroduction of streetcar and new pedestrian connections.
- The selection of sites were agreed upon.
- The Granville Site was viewed as a non housing site, to be developed either as industrial or arts and culture space.
- Considerations regarding shadowing and parking were also highlighted.



Some General Insights:

- “Daycare/childcare a huge need.”
- “I want to live in an infill building for seniors with a common kitchen/lounge, facing the creek.”
- “Great suggestions, almost identical to my vision.”
- “The train was hugely popular. Is there a transportation needs/use study to support the project? If not there is little justification for this.”
- “I would love to see the streetcar running again. It could bring people from the skytrain to the island. Interesting idea.”
- “Infill sites would be good use of unused land. We need to increase SFC accommodation – especially for elders and young families. Challenge will be to convince current SFC residents to accept and welcome significant changes.”
- “More important than the streetcar is to link Olympic Village Station to VCC Station via Canada Line/Expo Millennium Line.”
- “Replan principles are great. Sites chosen for infill probably bodes well for the neighbourhood in terms of future lease renewals, challenges include preserving the character of existing neighbourhood and buildings, and the juxtaposition of the old and the new – do they fit together well to create a comprehensive whole?”
- “Necessary for contractors and guests to have access to the entire area.”

Granville Site

- “I like the emphasis on increasing arts and culture and/or light industrial here. Would also like to have an elevator connecting Granville Island to bridge deck.”
- “Dance clubs, yes! Wine bars with tasting nights. 2 am nights for live music, etc!”
- “Best use of site would be industrial. This is a super difficult site. It could be a number of things but it would have to use extreme grade drop across the site and would have to respond to its unusual geometry.”
- “The site at entrance to Granville Island would be difficult to develop as housing. Important to keep sensitive to existing, even if higher.”
- “I live near this site. More housing is OK with me. Not sure about attractiveness of art facilities, people would have to be able to walk to them – parking is nearly impossible in this area.”
- “Only use this site to traverse to GI or beyond from residence. Something arts would be a wonderful addition. It’s a pretty grim entrance to GI.”

Alder Site:

- I agree with all of the ideas here – nothing to add! Well...I’m not optimistic that mixed-use buildings work very well for food/coffee places. Better for medical/service offices.”
- “I think the idea of connecting Fairview slopes more effectively is good. We need for housing, there’s a lot of green space in False Creek South.”

- “Current green space between parkade and west side of Vancoeverden housing is only green space in that area and bench is often used by resting pedestrians.”
- “Do not crowd housing, neither healthy or pleasant. Places for gardens and garden sharing aka community gardens. Very contentious if costs designate only high rises. 6-8 stores max.”
- “No problem with the suggested heights. Would need to designed in more detail to get a sense of grade differential, proximity to traffic, connectivity.”
- “Keep heights low, no high-rises.”

Charleson Site:

- “Infill along Charleson/Lamey’s Mill Road would be great. FCSNA would like to expand and have universal design apartments for people to downsize.”
- “Would prefer bucolic promenade on the route instead.”
- “Not concerned about losing the berm except as a green space.”
- “Streetcar– yahoo! Realignment on 6th probably the best location. Infill is a necessity and with adequate street crossing might help invigorate 6th ave.”
- “Intersecting east-west under the Cambie bridge is important to consider.”

Heather Site:

- “Leg in Boot is underutilized.”
- “Have shadows from building and obstructed sight been given sufficient consideration? I think a lot of the area will be darkened.”
- “I think this area is totally under-utilized. More housing is ideal.”
- “Concern for the loss of parking in the area. Selfishly very concerned for the loss of light with a proposed building in the bus loop. Units directly across from this area would be adversely affected since the only sunshine into these units is from the south during the afternoon.”
- “Very good use of land. Buildings might be high – scale models would help decide. Pedestrian walkways between buildings fits well with rest of FCS.”
- “We would live across from this so the heights are a concern about losing our sun. However I am also in favour of more density so I cannot complain.”
- “Promising densities. I like the idea about reinvigorating leg-in-boot square and reinforcing connectivity.”
- “6th Avenue raises an issue; traffic noise can make a building unlivable.”
- “A good place for increased density & a good plan. If driverless cars actually work as well as we hope, they could serve as micro buses to help the loss of parking lots.”



Conclusion

Although the future of False Creek South is currently uncertain, this uncertainty brings with it the possibility to reimagine the future of the community.

Through this studio project, a vision for reconnecting False Creek South to the rest of the city has been established, and people from different perspectives have come together to help develop a platform for sharing ideas.

Now, the community can approach the lease renewal process with a stronger understanding of potential future directions, and help build a future together with the City of Vancouver.

Next Steps

The following areas of investigation were raised through discussions with key informants, but were unable to be addressed through this project. They should be considered in the future planning process for the neighbourhood:

- Food security
- Climate change vulnerability and sea level rise
- Retrofitting existing buildings toward low carbon energy use
- Community land trust models

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