

Grandview

DRAFT Synopsis of Sub-Area Workshop



March 2015

Introduction

The following document provides a synopsis of the ideas that were generated in the Grandview sub-area workshop (January 10, 2015). This event was among several sub-area events held between November 2014 and March 2015 as part of the Grandview-Woodland Community Plan process.

The document contains a short overview of the workshop, a discussion of sub-area character, and an overview of the key areas of focus identified by workshop participants. These areas of focus are then explored in greater detail under the following headings:

- Public realm & transportation
- Housing & built form
- Local economy
- Services, amenities and other planning themes

In each of these four areas, Planning staff have identified the *general* areas of convergence and divergence amongst workshop and focus group participants. This material was distilled from small-group discussion table notes and maps that were produced by participants, as well as from the 'report out' sessions that occurred throughout the day.

It is important to note that this document provides an *overview* of the dialogue. Given that each of the small-group tables discussed a wide variety of items (and often in a very lively and free-flowing manner), creating a summary that incorporates every idea discussed is impossible. Instead, the Planning team has taken every effort to present the material in a fashion that does justice to the spirit of the conversation. Those wishing to review the complete set of notes from the events are invited to download them from the vancouver.ca/gw webpage.

Workshop and focus group participants are also encouraged to submit any corrections or clarifications to the Grandview-Woodland Community Plan team. Details on how to provide feedback can be found at the back of this document.

Workshop Details

The Grandview sub-area workshop was held on Saturday, January 10, 2015, at the WISE Hall.

Workshop participants undertook four key activities:

1. Creating neighbourhood character statements - reflecting both present day and future (aspirational) character for the sub-area;
2. Reviewing proposed policy from the *Emerging Directions*, as well as the community feedback that was received;
3. Assessing possible areas of change or no-change in the sub-area (policy geography);
4. Generating ideas around possible built-form typologies and conditions connected with sub-area geography.

A total of 96 individuals registered to attend (75 residing inside the sub-area, and 21 residing outside of it). On event day 90 individuals participated in the session.

At the conclusion of the workshop, 61 participants completed an evaluation form (68% response rate). The following table provides an overview of the demographic profile of those participants that completed the evaluation form.

Of the 61 workshop respondents:

AGE	#	%	SEX	#	%	TENURE	
> 20	0	0	Male	28	46	Renter	0
20-24	0	0	Female	32	54	Owner	52
25-34	2	3.3				Co-op	1
35-44	9	14.8					
45-54	9	14.8				Work in GV	10
55-64	24	39.3					
65-74	15	24.6					
75+	2	3.3					

On average, workshop participants had lived in Grandview-Woodland 19.1 years ($n=61$) and in Vancouver for 34.2 years ($n=55$).

Sub-Area Context and Character

The Grandview sub-area is located to the east of Commercial Drive and is located inside the boundary created by Hastings Street, Broadway and Nanaimo Street.¹

The neighbourhood contains high proportion of Grandview-Woodland's older (pre-1940s) buildings, as well as a large number of designated heritage structures. Notable examples of Edwardian, Craftsman, Queen Anne and Storybook styles, among others, can be found along its streets.

The area is primarily zone for duplex (RT) or single-family (RS) housing, with a portion of the sub-area's north end designated as an apartment zone. Within Grandview, the number of owner and renter households is fairly evenly split.

With a close proximity to two high street areas (Commercial Drive and E Hastings Street), Grandview is a particularly walkable and bikeable neighbourhood. The area is also well-served by transit.

Two key streets factor prominently in the character of the neighbourhood: E 1st Avenue and Victoria Drive. The former, with its high traffic volumes (and speeds), is seen by many residents as a barrier between the north and south 'halves' of the neighbourhood. The latter, running parallel to Commercial Drive, has been identified as an opportunity area for a variety of transportation-related considerations: traffic calming, cycling facilities, and other public realm improvements. It is also the site of an interesting array of small-scale shops and restaurants, which punctuate the length of the street.

Grandview has a number of well-used parks and greenspaces, including the recently redesigned Victoria Park, as well as McSpadden, Templeton, Garden and Salisbury Parks. School grounds provide another important gathering and recreation area. The public realm of the sub-area is further defined by a generous (though unevenly distributed) array of street-trees. The topography of the area also opens up a variety of grand views of the city and north shore (the source, historically, of the name of the community.)

Key cultural facilities include the Cultch and WISE Hall, as well as MacDonald School (which has an Aboriginal-focussed curriculum). Among the social amenities in Grandview are four elementary schools (Queen Victoria Annex, Lord Nelson, MacDonald, and St. Francis of Assisi) and one high school (Templeton).

¹ In the initial *Emerging Directions* document, the eastern border ran along Garden Drive and jogged around Garden Park, Lord Nelson and Templeton schools. As noted in The Grandview and Nanaimo sub-area backgrounders, this boundary generated some concern among community members.

Present Day Character - Wordcloud

Participants at the January workshop were asked to identify short (1-3 word) statements about both the present-day character of Grandview, and the ideal character in the future (anywhere from five to 30 years hence). Participants could write as many of these statements as they wished.

At the conclusion of the exercise, statements were typed up and, using Wordle software, assembled into a word cloud. The resulting image resizes the top words or phrases depending on their frequency of use. (The larger the word or phrase, the more often it was used).

Word cloud: Key statements about the present day character of Grandview



Word cloud: Key statements about the (ideal) future character of Grandview



Key Areas of Focus

Public Realm & Transportation

Key ideas

Workshop participants discussed the need for qualitative and quantitative improvements to sub-area parks, and enhancements to other spaces such as school yards and 'orphaned' spaces. Specific attention was also given to desired improvements for Victoria Drive and E 1st Ave - related to improved pedestrian (and, in the case of Victoria, cycling) facilities and traffic-calming measures. Additional attention was given to transit and parking matters.

Areas of general convergence at workshop

Participants were in *general* agreement about the following:

- a) The sub-area would benefit from an increase green space, street trees and community gardens. There is support for the creation of new pocket parks, as well as the incorporation of micro-parks or parklets into new developments. Specific locations for new parks could include areas adjacent to bike lanes and greenways.
- b) Existing parks, in particular McSpadden and Garden Park, should be upgraded and enhanced.
- c) Overall, participants were interested in the idea of neighbourhood parks serving different core uses (e.g. recreation, habitat, culture, etc.). Specific support for the creation green spaces to support mature native trees (and other flora) to grow to full maturity.
- d) Participants encouraged the City to work with the Vancouver School Board to maximize use of school grounds and facilities for community. Participants also identified the opportunity to improve school grounds via the planting of more trees.
- e) Additional discussion focused on the opportunity to improve neglected (or orphaned) spaces so that they could be utilized by the community. (Some examples: the area around apartments along Frances, along the lanes).
- f) The sub-area is very walkable, and participants are interested in seeing additional supports for pedestrians, including wider sidewalks, "greenway treatments," better lighting, and traffic calming (especially around schools and parks). Additional pedestrian safety measures (improved crossing areas and bulges) are needed along Victoria Drive and E 1st Ave. For Victoria, there is a particular desire to see traffic calming to limit short-cutting from Hastings and Broadway.
- g) In general, there is support for cycling improvements in the sub-area - in particular along Victoria (though some difference of opinions on the specific approach) and the Lakewood bikeway (a number of suggestions were made requesting that consideration be given to rerouting this north/south route to Templeton because of its easier grade). Additional east-west cycling

connections are needed, and possible opportunities for designated bike streets are Graveley, Napier, 3rd, 6th, or 7th.

- h) E 1st Ave acts as a barrier between the north and south halves of the neighbourhood, and there is strong interest in seeing the arterial 'tamed' via measures that would reduce traffic speeds/volumes while improving safety and the public realm. There is a desire for more trees, better lighting, increased walkability, restoration of off-peak street parking. Additional discussion took place about the merits (and costs) of tunnelling car traffic.
- i) Additional transit service (in particular, along E 1st Ave) is needed to offset an increase in sub-area/neighbourhood population.
- j) Participants encouraged the City to (continue to) adapt parking requirements for developments near transit, in order to encourage transit use

Areas of general divergence at workshop

There was a high degree of support for the various public realm and transportation items that were discussed. As noted, there were a small number of areas where divergent opinions were noted:

- a) There was some divergence of opinion with respect to bike lanes on Victoria - particularly in regard to the specific type of bike lane. Some concern that a fully separated lane would impact parking on parts of the street where there is no rear lane to store cars.
- b) An additional variety of opinions (not necessarily divergent) were noted with respect to the potential locations for east/west cycling routes. See point (g) above.

Housing

Key ideas

Workshop participants focussed their discussion on a number of key areas - looking at ways to encourage gentle-density throughout the sub-area, exploring the means to support heritage retention and the preservation of neighbourhood character, and greater degrees of housing diversity to meet the needs of residents. The opportunity for new housing typologies was explored chiefly in one area: E 1st Ave, though there was additional discussion about Victoria Drive, and, to a lesser extent, E Pender Street and the apartment zoned (RM) area at the northwest corner of the sub-area.

Areas of general convergence at workshop

Participants were in *general* agreement about the following:

- a) There is a need to ensure a variety of housing so families to stay in the area, seniors can age in place, and different populations can continue to call the sub-area home. There is similar support for a variety of housing tenures (rental, ownership, co-ops and co-housing).

- b) There is strong support for the creation of policy/mechanisms that would offer increased protection existing rental housing. Ideas include a moratorium on demolitions, the extension of Rate of Change policy beyond RM zones and/or a lowering of units for the Rate of Change guidelines application.
- c) Where change occurs in the sub-area, it should primarily be achieved via approaches that emphasize 'gentle density' (e.g. via infill, lane-way housing or coach-house, secondary suites, etc.)
- d) There is general support for the introduction of new housing on E 1st Avenue. Groups varied in their opinions about appropriate height - between 2-stories (no change) to ("up to 4-stories").
- e) With regard to E 1st, there was general support for townhouse typologies rather than 'bulkier' apartment-style development. There was here was also some discussion (though no agreement) about the potential merits of locating higher buildings on the north side (for solar access), or concentrating new housing in one or more areas (e.g. at intersections; at the eastern end between Lakewood and Nanaimo; near shopping). Finally, it was also noted that E 1st presents some livability concerns, given traffic volumes and speeds.
- f) There was strong interest in seeing the proposed "3-4 storey stacked townhouse form" removed from the 2200 and 2300 blocks flanking Garden Park, Lord Nelson and Templeton. There was some interest in smaller townhouse forms (e.g. "up to 35 feet").
- g) Where new housing is introduced, there is a general desire to ensure that lot-assembly is limited, and doesn't lead to the creation of "canyons" of the same housing type. There was discussion about the creation of policy to enable smaller assemblies in order to provide greater diversity of housing types and prevent overly large buildings.
- h) There is concern about the demolition of older heritage homes in the area, and a desire to look at changes to zoning that could better incentive heritage retention. In general, there is a desire to adapt zoning to allow flexibility for preservation of character homes by allowing forms of infill on the lots.
- i) Related to this - and further to the idea of encouraging gentle density - there is interest in the expansion of RT (duplex) zones, so as to allow additional opportunities for two or more families to occupy a site (e.g. duplex, secondary suites and laneway/coach house, and/or via potential for strata-titled floors or secondary suites).
- j) There is some interest in the introduction of rowhouse and townhouse forms on Victoria Drive - provided existing heritage homes are not compromised. There was also interested in mixed-use (commercial + residential) with the aim of creating more mom-and-pop retail opportunities.
- k) There is a desire to see support for more energy efficient buildings (including the opportunity to incorporate renewable energy technology).

Areas of general divergence at workshop

The primary point of divergence concerned the introduction of new housing on E 1st Avenue. There was no overall consensus regarding opportunities for new types of

housing, and with those groups that were supportive of the idea, there were a number of divergent opinions, as outlined here:

- a) The discussion about introducing new housing opportunities on E 1st avenue provoked a variety of opinions around the appropriate height, building type, and location. Opinions on acceptable height varied between 2, 3 and 4 stories. Typological discussions tended to focus on townhouses and other “less bulky” forms. Locational considerations varied. For some participants, the opportunity for a new typology to be introduced along the full length of E 1st (in Grandview) was acceptable. For others, there was a desire to vary it depending on the north or south sides of the road. Finally, there were discussions about whether new typologies should be concentrated at the east end of the sub-area; near shopping; or near intersections.

Other points of divergence included:

- b) The nature of change south of Hastings. There was some interest, though not consensus, on introducing a transitional form of housing along Pender Street (currently zoned for single-family or duplex, depending on the location). With those interested in transitional housing, there was no consensus on the type of housing, or allowable height.
- c) There was limited discussion of the multi-family (RM) area at the north end of the sub-area. One group discussed the opportunity to allow “up to 6 storeys” for purpose-built rental projects in this area. Additional discussion noted the need for design guidelines around apartments, and the desire to limit lot assembly to ensure buildings remained ‘roughly’ in scale with the neighbourhood.
- d) Role of design guidelines. There is some interest in creating guidelines that would require new architecture to follow character aspects of existing architecture. Alternately, there is a desire to not encourage ‘faux’ heritage, and to allow for contemporary architecture - provided it fit within the general scale of the neighbourhood.

Local Economy

Key ideas

Participants offered support to local retail services, and explored the opportunities to introduce new small-scale retail on Victoria Drive, on lanes, and possibly elsewhere in the sub-area.

Areas of general convergence at workshop

Participants were in *general* agreement about the following:

- a) Residents of the sub-area view the proximity of Commercial Drive shops and services as a key asset - ensuring a high degree of walkability and bikeability for the Grandview neighbourhood.

- b) There is strong support for small-scale retail on Victoria Drive, and an interest in (a) protecting the existing shops and services along the street, and, (b) creating the opportunity for additional commercial opportunities (primarily on Victoria, but potentially elsewhere in the sub-area).

Other general ideas pertaining to local economy in Grandview include:

- c) The potential for creating laneway-oriented small businesses (or markets) in the alleyways behind major streets (e.g. Commercial or Victoria). This could provide an area for new and emerging businesses, and also create the impetus for laneway revitalization.
- d) There is interest in the creation of live-work spaces for small-businesses in the area.

Areas of general divergence at workshop

No particular areas of divergence were noted at the workshop; however previous community planning consultations have noted concerns around the availability of parking for small-scale businesses.

Services, amenities, other planning themes

Key ideas

Various ideas around social and cultural matters were discussed. Key topics included local sub-area heritage, facilities to support local health and well-being, community gathering areas, public art and food security.

Areas of general convergence at workshop

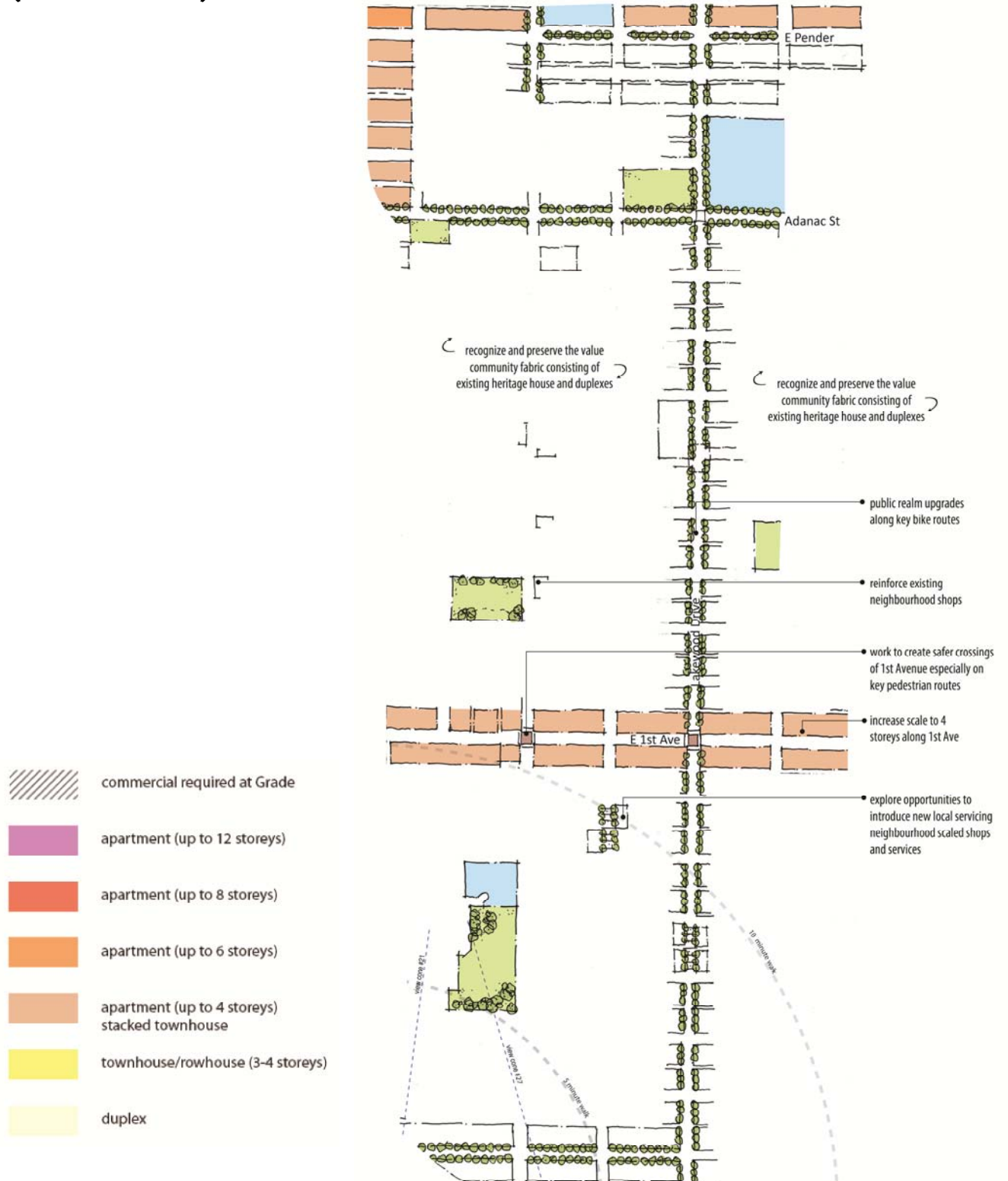
Participants were in *general* agreement about the following:

- a) There is strong support for initiatives to encourage celebration of neighbourhood heritage (plaques and markers), and policy that would support the retention of heritage structures/features (and/or disincentives related to the demolition of older buildings).
- b) One type of tool that had considerable support for heritage purposes is the provision of increased density through secondary suites and coach/laneway buildings and/or the opportunity to subdivide (or strata title) separate units/floors.
- c) There is strong support for renewing existing pools and recreation facilities at Templeton and Britannia as both play an important role in the community.
- d) There is a desire to see key public facilities (including Templeton, Lord Nelson and Queen Vic Annex) remain accessible and open for community use.
- e) There is an opportunity to better incorporate the work of local artists into neighbourhood public art.

Other ideas regarding social and cultural services:

- f) Local health facilities such as REACH (Commercial Drive) and VCH (Broadway and Commercial) are well used. Services such as these need to be expanded (or increased in number).
- g) Support was also noted for the various social services in the neighbourhood. Particular reference was made to services supporting low-income individuals and families, mental health consumers, substance misuse.
- h) Food security is important. There is interest in expanded community gardens fruit trees and other edible landscaping.
- i) There is a strong Aboriginal presence in the neighbourhood, and support for the various Aboriginal services found in Grandview-Woodland.

Appendix: *Emerging Directions* - Grandview sub-area policies (June 2013)



Draft Policies *Emerging Directions* (pg. 30)

- GV-1: Retain duplex and single-family land-use (with the exception of opportunities for change immediately south of Hastings and along E 1st Avenue)
- GV-2: Introduce opportunities for multi-family residential housing along E 1st Ave (up to 4 storeys west of Nanaimo; up to 6-storeys at Nanaimo)
- GV-3: Consider opportunities for the development of coach houses in the duplex (RT) zone
- GV-4: Continue to allow laneway housing and lock-off secondary suites, per prevailing zoning.
- GV-5: Explore options to further conserve existing heritage resources through zoning and guidelines.
- GV-6: Work toward the development of traffic calming along Victoria Drive (including a bike lane).
- GV-7: Support existing small-scale neighbourhood retail on Victoria Drive

Additional *Emerging Directions* Policy Ideas - Land Use Map

- Land-use map: work to create safer crossings of 1st Avenue especially on key pedestrian routes.
- Land-use map: public realm upgrades along key bike routes
- Land-use map: recognize and preserve the valued community fabric consisting of existing heritage houses and duplexes

Land-use map: explore opportunities to introduce new local servicing neighbourhood-scaled shops and services