

NEIGHBOURHOOD DESIGN

Neighbourhood design forms the foundation of communities. Area D is defined by its history and origin. The physical form of the neighbourhood is composed of streets, blocks and buildings that date back to the 1920s University Master Plan that was informed by the English Garden Style of the time. By the 1950s, the Master Plan had been regularized with a grid network of neighbourhood streets meshed with large collector streets to link the area with Vancouver.

As we plan for the future, it will be important to consider how the design of our area shapes the quality of life and sustainability of our community.



Figure 1. ARABIC 1: University Endowment Lands, 1952
(Item: CVA 59-15)

HOW CAN WE DESIGN A VIBRANT, DISTINCT AND CONNECTED NEIGHBOURHOOD THAT BUILDS ON HISTORY AND SUPPORTS CHANGE?

TRENDS & ISSUES

- **Area D is a unique mixed-use neighbourhood.** Area D is the only neighbourhood in the UEL with a commercial hub and multi-family housing. The mix of townhouses, mid-rise and high-rise apartments, and commercial spaces support a unique character and a compact, walkable community.
- **There is a mix of older and newer housing.** Development in Area D has been steady since the 1920s, with rapid increases in the 1950s, 1970s and 2000s. Some older buildings are reaching their end of life while others may have the potential to be saved as heritage homes (such as Colonial House and Somerset Manor). The **leləm** development will add another 1,250 units over the next ten years.
- **Significant development is occurring in adjacent areas.** New development at **leləm** and in nearby UBC neighbourhoods, such as Acadia Park and U Boulevard, are increasing in density. Future developments will include more mid and high-rise apartments.
- **Maintaining a strong Village 'centre' may be difficult.** As **leləm** and UBC continue to grow, it may become difficult to maintain the strength of the retail and character of the Village centre. Left to market forces, the commercial centres in **leləm** and UBC may draw people away from the Village.

KEY FACTS

- Area D has over 2,000 people with an average household size of 2.62.
- Housing within Area D is 55% ownership and 45% rental; however, 67% of residents rent.
- Most residents commute by walking, cycling or taking public transit (70%).
- Area D has a number of small parks (totaling 2 acres) and a protected greenway.

KEY DEFINITIONS

Neighbourhood design is how we make communities – shaping the layout and uses of buildings, streets, and natural spaces to create connected and lively communities. There are different theories of sustainable neighbourhood design but they all have the following in common:

- **Mixed-use:** neighbourhoods should have multiple uses, such as homes, retail, and professional and service businesses. More people are around at different times of the day supports businesses and can improve safety. Mixing jobs, shops and housing also supports people’s ability to walk and cycle for some of their daily trips.
- **Sense of place:** neighbourhoods should be unique and reflect the people who live there and the landscape where it is located. This helps support a vibrant community and attracts new residents and visitors.
- **Housing diversity:** neighbourhoods should provide a variety of housing types so that people can choose a home that suits them at all life stages.
- **Walk-able:** neighbourhoods should include lots of street connections, good quality sidewalks, and places to walk to, such as grocery stores, transit, and coffee shops.
- **Transit:** neighbourhoods that have enough people and street connections to make public transit feasible.
- **Eco-Assets:** neighbourhoods manage eco-assets, such as natural spaces, ecosystems, and storm water in a sustainable way. This includes storm water ponds and features such as bioswales. This also contributes to a neighbourhood’s character and liveability.

RELATED POLICIES & PLANS

- University Endowment Land Act
- Official Community Plan
- Land Use, Building and Community Administration Bylaw
- Community Amenity Provisions

GOALS

The UEL can work towards the following goals and objectives:

Goal 1: Create a complete community

- Consider compact mixed-use building designs with more residential and employment space
- Encourage people-friendly building and complete street designs

Goal 2: Create and enhance a unique sense of place

- Strengthen the Village as a walkable hub and a desirable place to shop, live, work, play, and visit
- Define, preserve and enhance heritage values (cultural, historical and natural environment)
- Develop a design guidelines for form and character
- Coordinate building and landscape design guidelines with wayfinding

Goal 3: Increase connections within and from other neighbourhoods to Area D

- Define current and future open space needs
- Encourage gathering spaces for people throughout the year
- Create a transportation plan for all modes of mobility and relationships to building edges

Goal 4: Create a continuous network of greenways and parks

- Design and encourage a neighbourhood-wide greenway

Goal 5: Revitalize and activate existing spaces

- Identify future commercial demand within the Village based on population projections (both neighbourhood and UBC student enrollment)
- Explore phased redevelopment opportunities along Dalhousie Road with consideration for commercial/retail uses at the street level
- Program and animate the Village with an active, engaging and dynamic series of experiences that entice residents and visitors to explore destinations amenities.

IDEAS

To support neighbourhood design, the UEL can explore a wide range of policies, projects and partnerships. The following provides options to spark discussion about the best way forward for Area D. It is not a complete list of options and no decisions have been made at this point.

WE WANT TO KNOW WHAT YOU THINK!

Share your thoughts on the future of Area D by:

- Visiting us at AreaDPlan.ca
- Telling us what you think in an online survey
- Coming to one of our events

Create An Illustrated Plan. The current relationship between streets, intersections, buildings and land uses lack a coherent 'story' related to the history and identity of the UEL. By including an illustrated plan in the new future Official Community Plan, we can support redevelopment in Area D and beyond with a complete understanding of identity and sense of place.

Update Neighbourhood Design Guidelines. Review and revise the design guidelines for Area D to consider sustainability and quality of life in everything from land use to building form, landscape design, protecting significant land and improving connections from other UEL neighbourhoods to the Village in Area D.

Support Complete Streets. Continue to support complete streets with design guidelines that upgrade streets to improve safe for people of all ages and abilities, and accessibility to those who walk, cycle, take transit, or drive.

Creatively Re-use Existing Spaces. Encourage creative re-use of existing spaces. Through direct investment, grants and tax incentives, the community can explore opportunities to enhance existing spaces such as: activating underused public spaces and lanes, creating indoor spaces for public use, supporting multi-purpose commercial areas with pop up parks and playgrounds or initiatives to celebrate local arts, culture and history (like Mural Fest).

Revitalize The Village. Explore redevelopment opportunities that include mixed uses outside of University Marketplace, including destination retail uses at grade and residential above. Relocate and/or configure the food court to animate indoor/outdoor spaces and building edges along the street. Program and animate the Village with an active, engaging and dynamic series of experiences compatible with existing commercial uses that entice visitors to explore destination amenities.

Increase Density. Increase the overall residential density in Area D without significantly altering the character of the neighbourhood taking into consideration future densities of the surrounding neighbourhoods.

Explore Dalhousie Road As A 'High Street'. The commercial area along Dalhousie Road is anchored by mixed use buildings and Jim Everett Memorial Park on the North side. To the West, there are opportunities to link the area with the Bridle Path, Regent College and UBC's hospital precinct. Dalhousie Road could also benefit from a narrower cross section with more active, ground level retail uses and improved landscaping to support a pedestrian-friendly 'high street'. Dalhousie Road could be the focus of higher density, mixed use buildings as the area redevelops to help create a more affordable and diverse housing options.

Connect Other Neighbourhoods And 'Centres' To The Village. Design and provide connections from adjacent neighbourhoods and centres to the Village. For example, the **leləm** development has the potential to become a new community 'heart' if built as planned. There will be a large plaza with a restaurant, café and grocery store all with outdoor seating. The plaza will have a water feature, public art, ample seating and space to host community events. It is also connected to the new community centre, park and wetland. It will be important to connect the Village 'hub' with **leləm** through design, placemaking and gathering places.

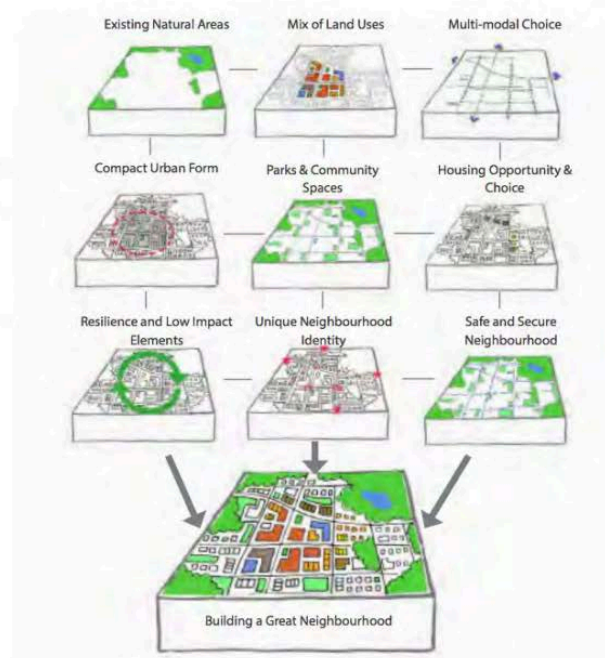
Support A Network Of Greenways And Parks. Create a continuous network of attractive parks, public spaces, green streets and amenities (e.g. Block F community centre and Jim Everett Memorial Park etc.).

CASE STUDIES

PLANNING AND DESIGN GUIDELINES, RED DEER

The City of Red Deer developed Neighbourhood Planning and Design Guidelines to guide the good design of neighbourhoods. These guidelines are aimed at new 'greenfield' development, providing both developers and City staff with useful direction to work together towards the City's goals. Nine principles are identified for creating great neighbourhoods:

-  Start with the existing Natural Areas and Opportunities for Ecosystem Enhancement
-  Outline a Mix of Land Uses
-  Ensure the neighbourhood is well connected to provide Multi-modal Choice
-  Strive for a more Compact Urban Form and increased Density to create distinct neighbourhood nodes
-  Integrate a variety and mix of Parks and Community Spaces
-  Provide for Housing Opportunity and Choice
-  Build in Resilience and Low Impact attributes that enhance the neighbourhood
-  Create a Safe and Secure Neighbourhood
-  Encourage elements that add to the neighbourhoods Unique Identity



RIVERFRONT, NEW WESTMINSTER

The City of New Westminster recognized that the riverfront is the city’s most significant cultural and economic asset and was underutilized but could be home to vibrant spaces, quality recreation, progressive business and housing. New Westminster set out to rebrand the riverfront as a valuable asset by engaging the community in redefining Westminster Quay into Riverfront with the River Market and developing a neighbourhood plan with public and private investments.

The Riverfront vision is to seamlessly connect the riverfront through a system of parks and greenways running the length of the city and to provide improved connections from neighbourhoods to the river. Along with enhanced access and facilities, the riverfront’s recreation and tourism potential will be bolstered by public spaces and activities that generate interest for all demographics, all year long.

The vision is supported by three goals:

- Continuity. Creating a continuous network of attractive greenways and parks.
- Connectivity. Providing connections from all neighbourhoods to the river.
- Activity. Programming and animating the riverfront with an active, engaging and dynamic series of experiences compatible with existing industrial uses that entice visitors to explore its many destinations and adjacent amenities.

