

**Connecting the City: Redefining a Railway Divide in Duncan,  
British Columbia**

by

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## **ABSTRACT**

This architectural thesis seeks to examine how public architecture and urban design can facilitate increased social connection and exchange in North American cities through the suggested development of unused rail corridor into an active transit path with adjoining community hubs in Duncan, British Columbia. The proposal seeks to increase social and community involvement between residents by encouraging active modes of transportation (walking and cycling) and promote local production and commerce. While the design is specific to Duncan and the presence of an abandoned rail corridor the strategies explored to facilitate urban and social revitalization are applicable to many cities in North America with similar urban and social problems.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

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To Michelle Geneau, Helen Reid, Warren Wier, Sharon Jackson, David Coulson, and James Lockwood, thank you for dedicated correspondence, taking time out of your schedules to consult with me, and the continual work you do everyday to make Duncan the best city it can be.

Thank you to Lisa, my family, Ruthie and Roger for all your love and support.

## CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

### The Problem Identified

The rapid industrialization and globalization society has undergone in the past century has had countless benefits and improvements on the ease and quality of life worldwide; however, certain aspects that have accompanied these advancements have limited the social vitality of our cities. Two aspects that have emerged from societal advancement that limit social and community connection are those of everyday vehicular transportation and commercialization of production and selling. Many small to mid sized towns in North America have been the most affected by automobile transit and commercial commerce as the majority of their development happened during the golden age of these two influencing factors.

The typical North American town which grew under these influences is not difficult to picture: Most of its residents live in suburban neighbourhoods, they drive into the city to work, they park in one of the countless parking lots or structures, their shopping is done at the cheapest, most convenient location which is the complex of commercial box stores located on their route home.

What has happened in this city is that human scale has been removed. This separation of scale is not only physical in the distance between destinations but also physiological. The average resident has been physiologically separated from how their goods are produced, where their food comes from, and even from the urban city itself (Oldenburg 1989, 140). The separation of the human scale effectively removes the human connection from the average resident's daily life. That connection is essential to the social wellbeing of the residents and the overall vitality of the city (Jacobs 1993, 83-84).

While the invention of cars and commercialization of production have no doubt numerous benefits, over utilization of these advancements has led to a severe lack of involvement and connection between people and their cities (Oldenburg 1989, 139). It is the over utilization and reliance we have developed on these aspects of modern North American society that this thesis challenges by investigating how the human scale and connection within cities can be returned to everyday life.

## **Proposed Solution**

Dream as we might we cannot go back and stop the design of cities based on automobile transit and the widespread replacement of local producers with chain stores; however, we can suggest how public architecture and urban planning can work with existing city conditions to promote active forms of transit and local production involvement withing daily life.

Many communities in North America have already recognized the value of assessing our dependence on motor vehicles and commercial production. In many places movements have begun among the population to push back on the aspects which global advancement has brought. The Slow Food movement, Buy Local, and Cycle to Work are just a few examples of these movements. Governing bodies may have recognized these movements and made minor changes accordingly but seldom has the effort been made to re-think city planning and city services to facilitate them.

The approach which should be taken is to re-asses the priority that has been placed vehicular transit and commercial business by our governments. Once a governing body recognizes the value that active transit and a focus on local production have for promoting local economy, improving the urban core, and increasing civic and community pride then the priorities of public works and infrastructure projects will shift.

## Site

### The City of Duncan

The city of Duncan on Vancouver Island in British Columbia provides the ideal testing ground for these concepts of addressing motor vehicle planning and prominence of corporate stores. As many other small North American towns Duncan has developed to allow for maximum vehicle transit. The presence of roadways and parking is overwhelming in the city. The highway has shaped the city growth and it remains the area most often associated as the city's identity. Large commercial store developments have occurred in multiple location within the downtown, and at the edge of the city.

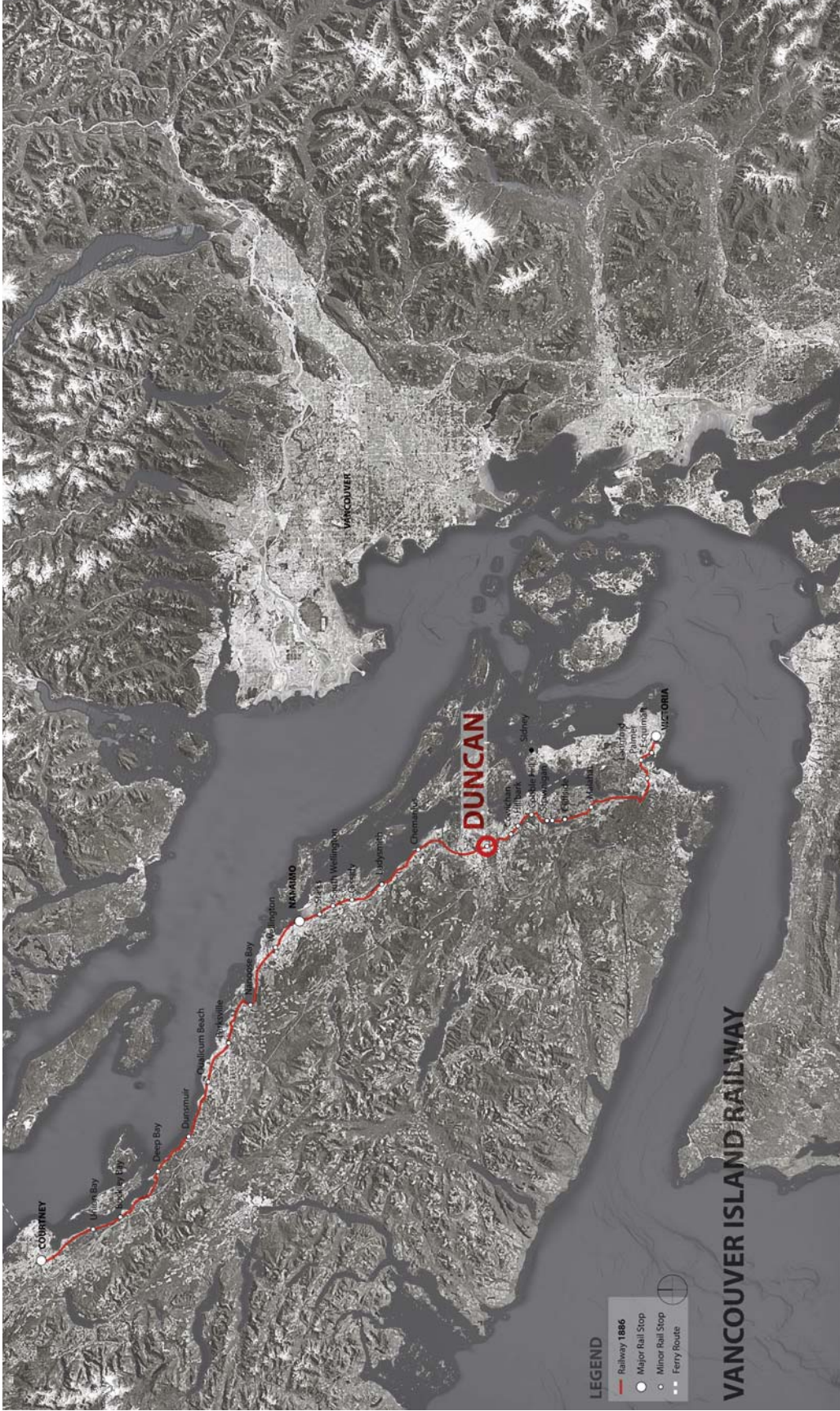


One of three major commercial shopping centres within Duncan, BC. *Google Maps*



Wide roadways and excessive parking in the downtown area of Duncan. *Google Maps*

Despite these limiting aspects of the city's planning and development many residents are interested in active forms of transit and focusing on local production and buying; and the number of people communicating a desire for these aspects is increasing rapidly. (S. Jackson, personal communication, December 22, 2014). The City of Duncan has done very little to accommodate this shift in resident's priority but some simple provisions made by the city could have a huge impact on the success of active transportation use and local production involvement in the city.



The Southern Vancouver Island Railway and its stops as active from 1886 - 2011. The City of Duncan is highlighted for context only. Google Earth, [bc.transport2000.ca](http://bc.transport2000.ca)



## The Rail Corridor

The Southern Vancouver Island railway was constructed in 1886 to facilitate the transportation of goods and people between the cities of southern Vancouver Island, British Columbia. The introduction of the railway promoted the growth of Duncan, British Columbia from a small farming settlement into a thriving forestry and agriculture town.

As the city of Duncan was founded by the railway, the Train station and rail corridor were locationally and programmatically the heart of downtown. The downtown rail corridor that resulted from the city's initial planning consisted of a rail right of way flanked by two adja-

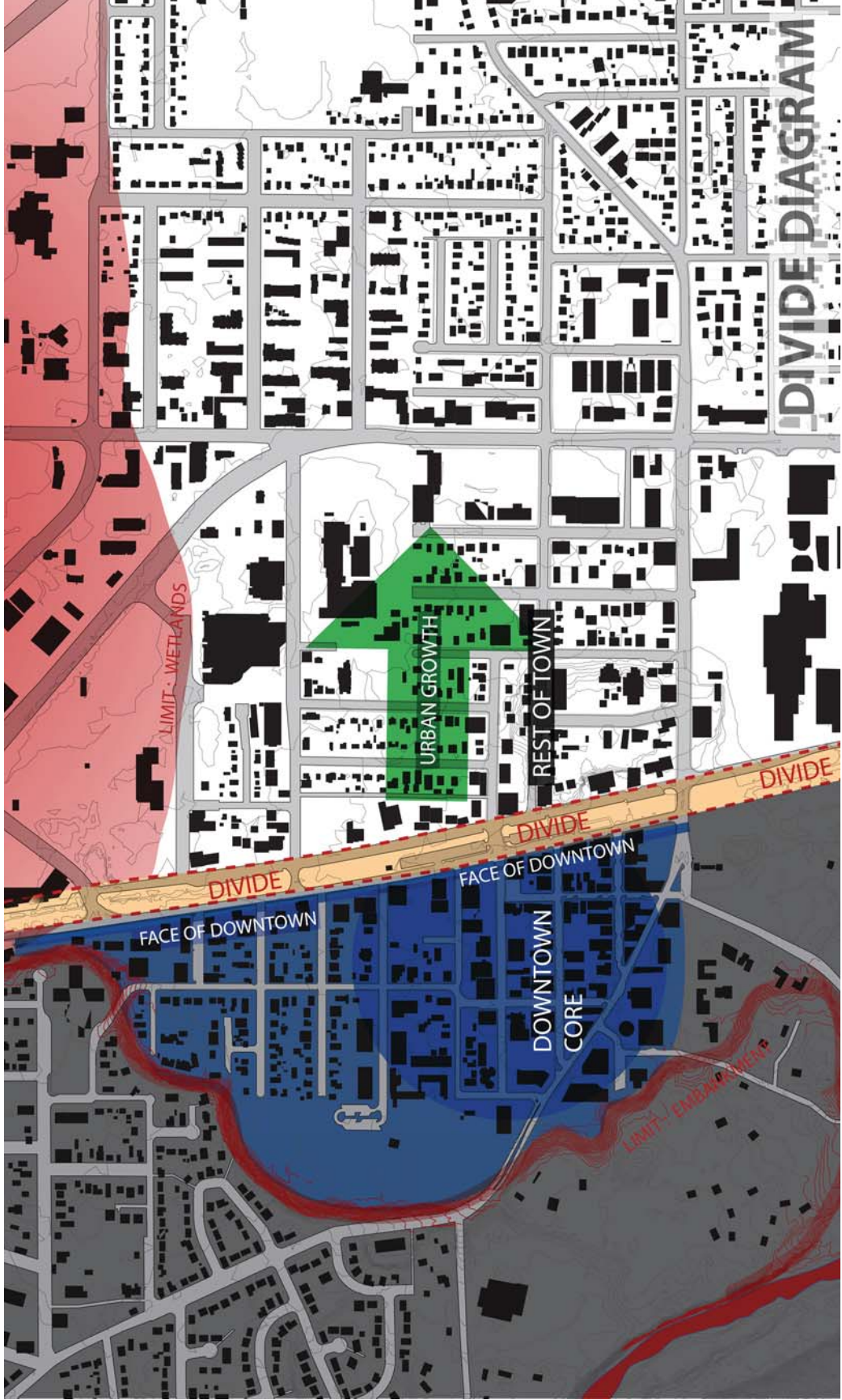


Historic railway and train station in Duncan dating from (left to right): 1887, 1912, 1944.  
<http://www.cowichanvalleymuseum.bc.ca>

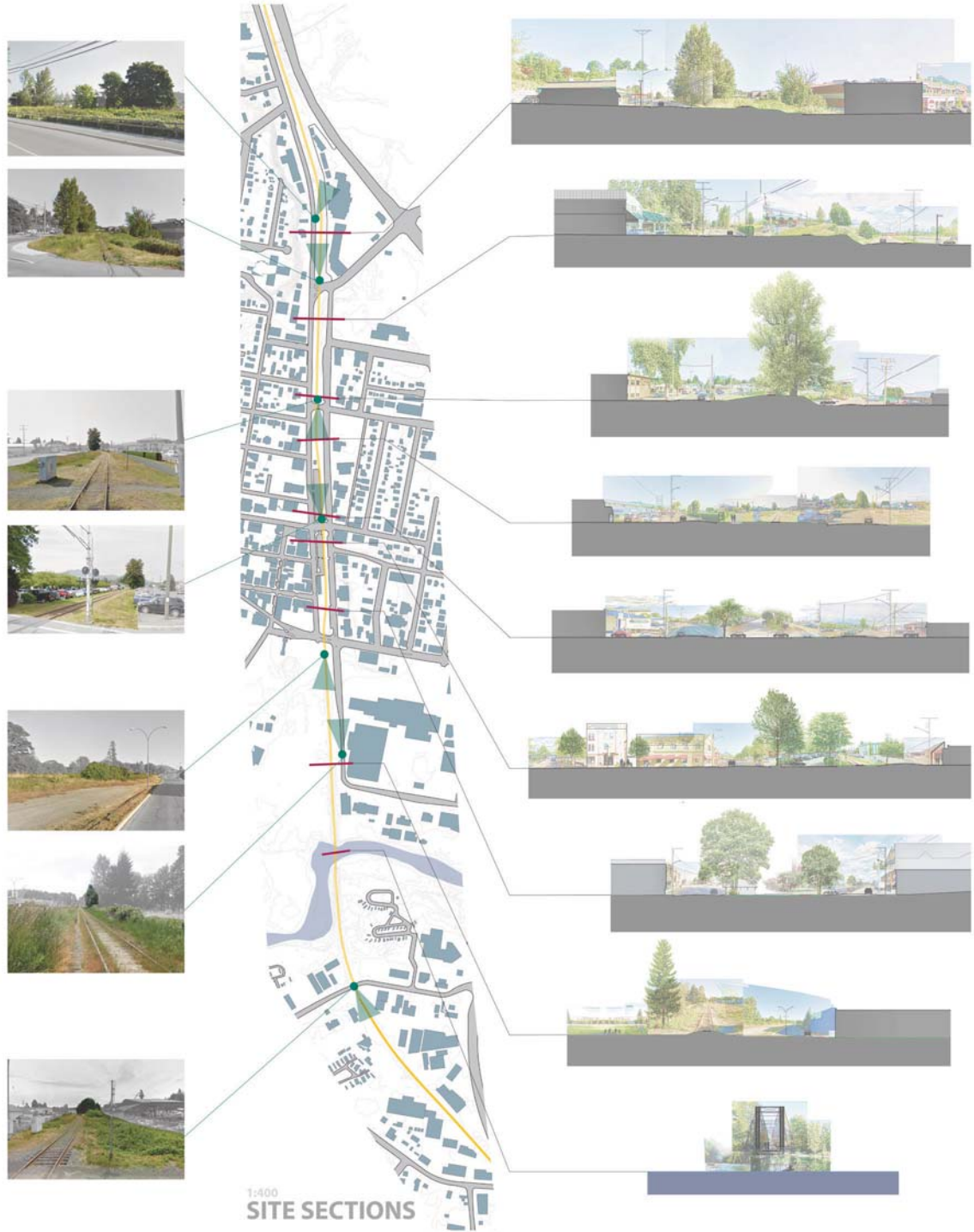
cent streets on either side.

The city grew gradually contained by the surrounding natural features. The introduction of the Island Highway in 1953 increased access to Duncan and promoted a sprawl in growth. Since this rapid growth the city became programmatically fragmented and the undeveloped rail corridor has remained a significant divide in the downtown. Due to the way the city has grown over time the rail corridor divides city and acts as a barrier to the historic downtown.

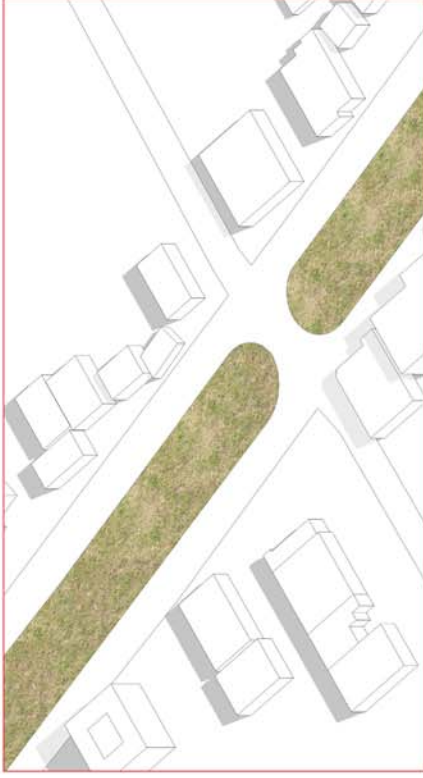
The creation of the highway and the increased capabilities of shipping exports having slowly rendered the use of the railway obsolete overtime. Passenger and freighting usage slowed and budgets were cut until 2011 when the Southern Vancouver Island railway was terminated due to track deterioration.



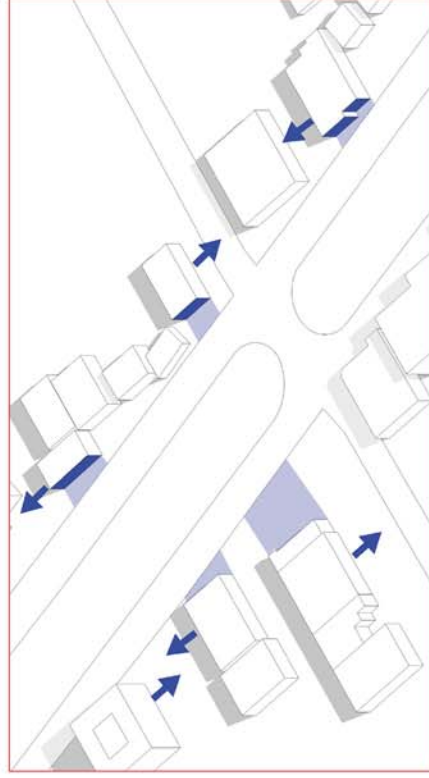
Downtown growth overtime as defined by natural feature limitations, with rail corridor acting as an urban divide.



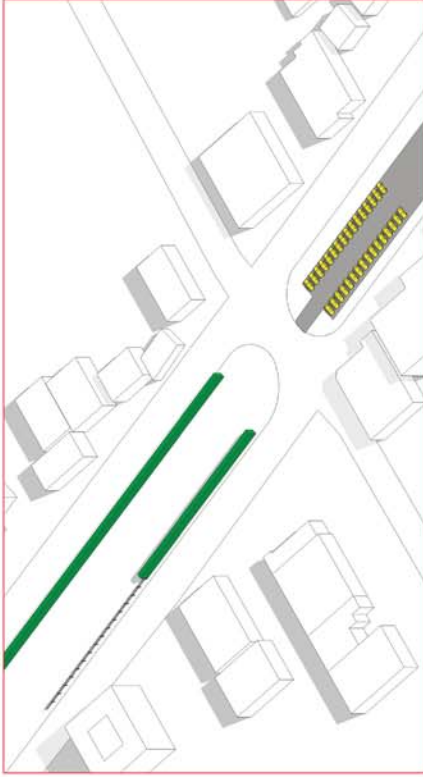
Existing rail corridor conditions  
Left: Existing condition photographs  
Middle: Location on site of photographs and sections  
Right: Existing condition sections



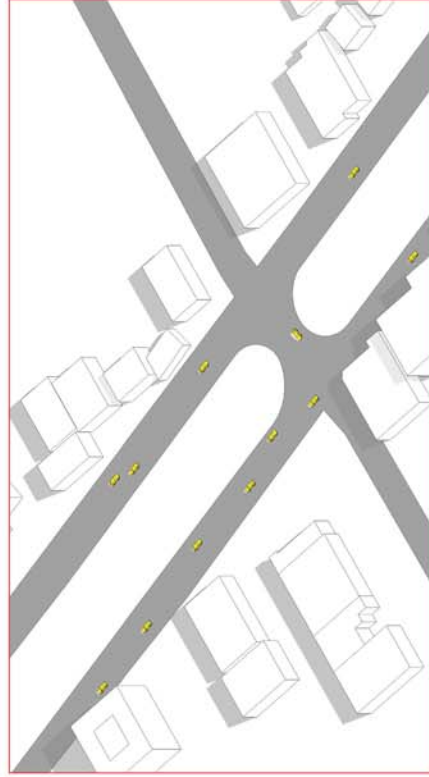
**Placelessness**



**Building Address**



**Inaccessibility**



**Traffic and Roadways**

Diagrammatic elements that render the corridor space a divide through downtown Duncan

The corridor's current condition renders it not only a void in the downtown core but also a divide through the heart of the city. The space allowed for the rail between the two streets has mainly been left to go to seed or turned into parking spaces. Only a small part of the corridor beside the historic Train Station (now turned into a museum) is well used as it is a well maintained city park.

Identified from the site analysis were four main reasons that the current corridor space is an urban and programmatic void:

1. Inaccessibility – Much of the corridor does not invite crossing or access. Access is either intentionally blocked by fences or hedges; highly undesirable because of thick wild vegetation; or else not meant for pedestrians as it would be through car parking.
2. Placelessness – The land space of the corridor is for the almost entirely without function or program and does not invite use or crossing.
3. Vehicular Traffic – Canada Ave, one of the abutting roads to the railway corridor, is one the cities' main traffic arteries. Pedestrian crossing is limited and confined to the few existing crosswalks.
4. Building Address – For almost the entire length of the corridor the neighboring buildings do not address it. Mostly buildings are set back from the corridor to allow for parking in-front with entrances off the side.

The fact that the rail corridor is no longer required for the original infrastructure use it was intended make it the ideal site for this project and sets the stage for the thesis question:

*How can architecture transform an unused rail corridor in Duncan BC into a space which facilitates urban and social connection?*

## **Precedents**

A number of case studies were conducted to provide precedents and insight for the design. While the chosen case studies do not specifically focus on promoting local production they represent strategic approaches to return the human scale and connection that was lost through industrialization and motor age city planning. The resulting spaces have been successful in engaging the community and promoting foot traffic to and from the site. From each project successful design elements that inform the proposed design within the context of Duncan were identified.

### ***Cheonggyecheon Restoration Project***

Seoul, South Korea

The Conggyecheon is a river flowing through the heart of downtown Seoul. In 1968 the road was covered with an elevated highway. The restoration project began in 2003 and removed the elevated highway to restore the river and develop parks and public spaces along its length through the city.

On an urban level the restoration of the river re-connected this entire district of the city. The construction of 22 bridges to cross the river knit the previously fragmented districts together. The treatment of the river and parks as one continuous space further unites the area along its entire length. The entire projects makes use of its key feature (the river) to bring nature back into a dense urban core while also creating a highly popular social gathering and event space.

This project shows exactly how a city can place a higher priority on pedestrian circulation and connection rather than the vehicular flow of the past. Due to this reordering of priorities the mayor of Seoul has created a unified public space that connects the city and does so through the utilization of the site's wondrous natural element: the river.



Highway system on site before restoration project. <http://lafoundation.org>



Site after restoration project. <http://sustainabilitywriter.wordpress.com>



Site plan of restoration project. <http://lafoundation.org>

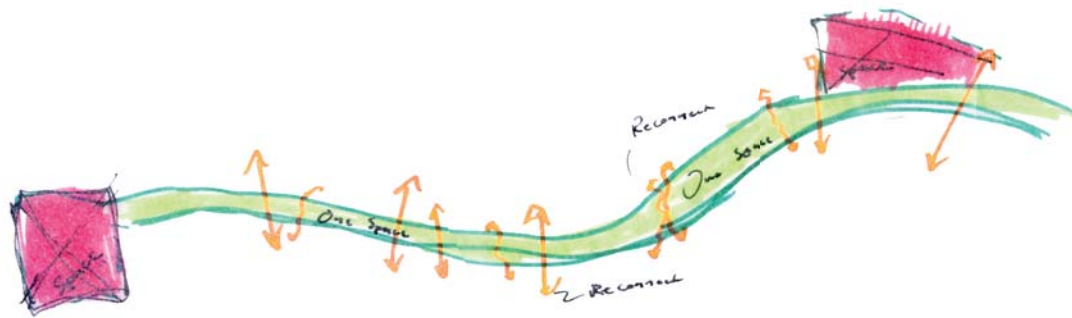


Diagram of public spaces and pedestrian connections



Finished project in everyday use. <http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk>

### ***El Palmeral of Surprises***

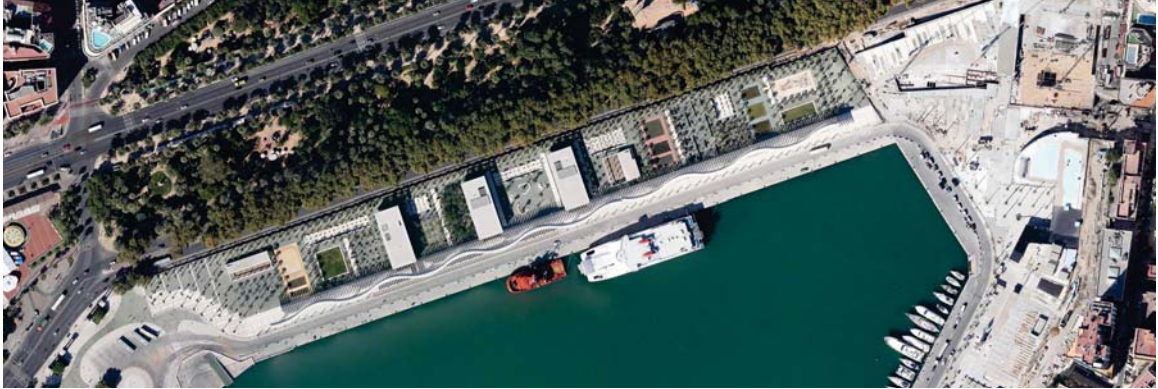
Malaga, Spain - Jenquera Arquitectos

Intended to be a benchmark public space in the city of Malaga, El Palmeral of Surprises is a multi-use development intended to create a new pedestrian route along the waterfront.

El Palmeral of Surprises emphasizes a route. The grand and intriguing space of the pergola draws people in and along its path parallel to the water. The pergola acts as a porch to different programs and spaces segmented off the circulation path that users have the opportunity to experience. The concept of the palm tree as the project's defining element is used throughout to unite the programs and spaces.

The project does use a common architectural motif to provide one identify to the project and the people. In addition the airy yet sheltered space it creates is quite successful. The provision of specific programs off the path animate it and increase pedestrian usage.

### ***Rose Fitzgerald Kennedy Greenway***



Completed project in context. *Google Earth*

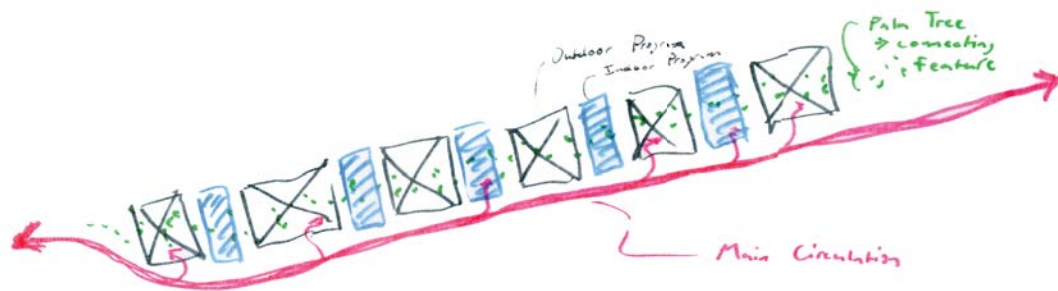


Diagram of the program variation enhancing the path





Use of an architectural of the common architectural element to create space and unify project identify. <http://www.junqueraarquitectos.com/>

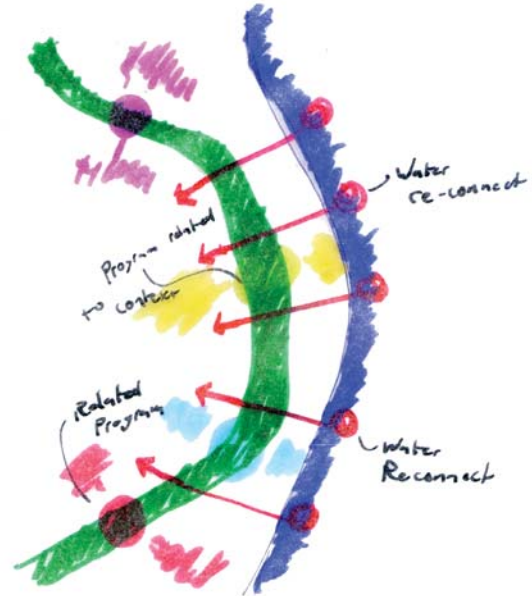
#### Boston, USA

The 'Big Dig' was a major infrastructure project in Boston that rerouted the chief highway through the heart of the city into an underground tunnel. The space above ground previously used for the highway was then transformed into the 15 acre Rose Fitzgerald Kennedy Greenway - a linear urban park.

The project re-connects the city in two capacities: eliminating the cross divide created by the freeway and instead creating an easy-to-cross space that invites people to cross it into other parts of the city; and creating a linear connecting space that encourages pedestrian use down its length into parts of the city that may not have before seemed as inviting. One of these re-connections established is the re-connection with the waterfront which is much more accessible than when the space was a freeway. Specific program (such as a plaza, carousel, or splash park) is provided at certain points in the space. Each of the spaces or moments corresponds to the urban fabric - such as a specific cross street or certain city district.



Before and after photographs of the infrastructure project. <http://www.bostonmagazine.com>



Project site plan. <http://www.rosekennedy-greenway.org>

Diagram showing the programmatic and urban connection the Boston greenway cre-



Greenway in everyday use. <http://www.asla.org>

## CHAPTER 2: DESIGN

### Overview

The design proposes to conceptualize the rail corridor as a unified public space - a linear park which bridges the distinct programmatic districts of the city and provides the incentive for social interaction in its use.

The first aspect of the proposed developed corridor is to trace it with a new active transit path which promotes increase walking and cycling as methods of inner-city transportation. The transit path links to local walking paths, dedicated city trails, wilderness areas, and the Trans-Canada trail network.

The second aspect of the project proposal is to develop three specific sites into community hubs with architectural intervention. These specific locations were identified from their urban, programmatic, and social problems as 'acupuncture' points in the city. "Urban Acupuncture" theorizes that small urban interventions at key locations can have a greatly improving effect on the greater urban area (Parsons 2010). This philosophy is exactly the approach taken to the three identified acupuncture sites along the path. The project proposes that each of these sites is interceded with a minor architectural intervention to act as infrastructure to facilitate the community involvement and activity being called for in those areas. These three community hubs are united by a common underlying focus on local production while each are designed individually to address the problems of their acupuncture sites.

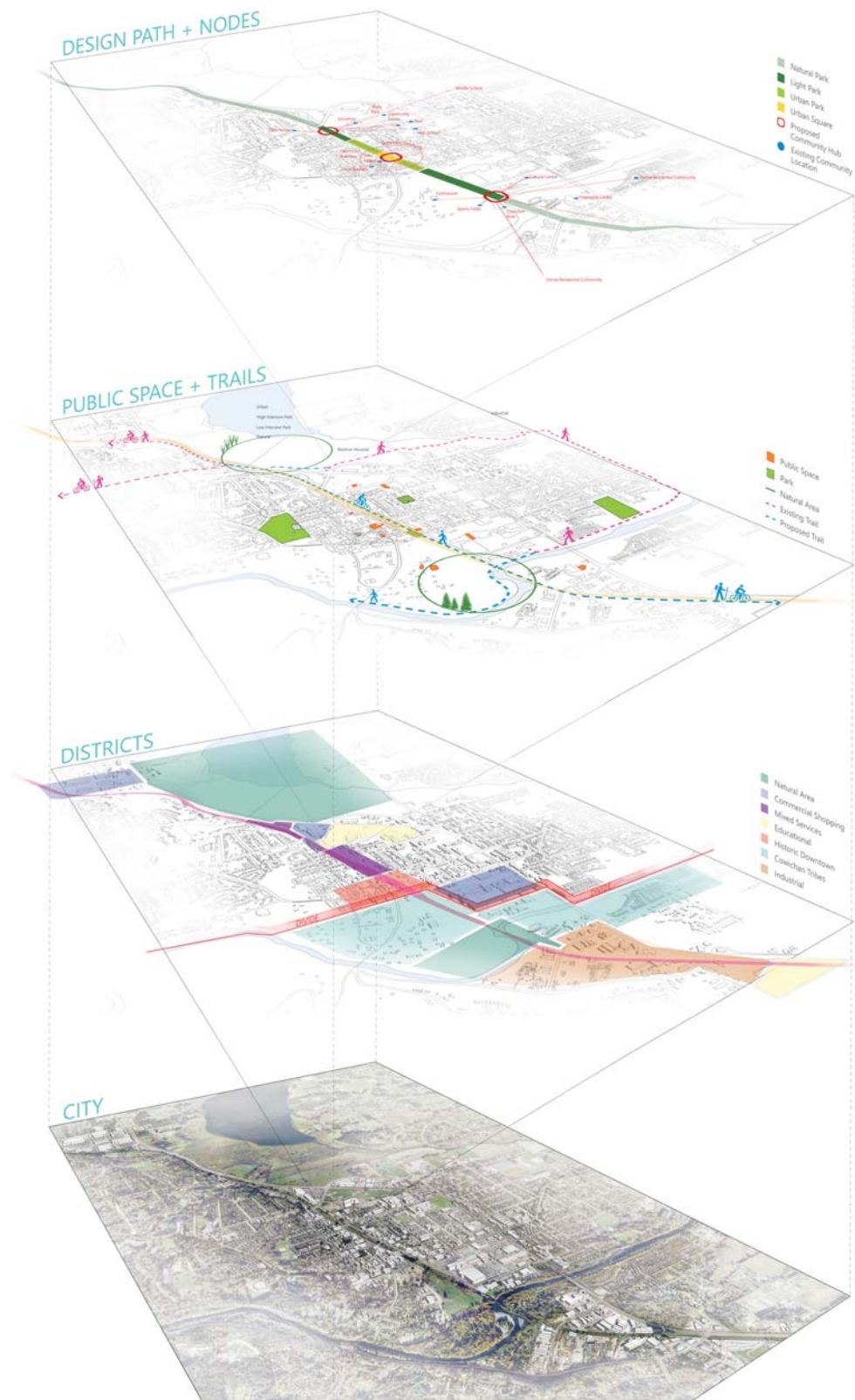


Diagram of the City of Duncan with Districts, Public Spaces, and Design Concept

## The Path

The idea of an active transit path as an aspect of the design to promote pedestrian and cyclist transport emerged directly from the site of the unused rail corridor. While the concept of the path could be used in any city to promote alternative modes of transit and informal social gathering in this thesis the design is specific to Duncan and the presence of the shutdown railway. The existing rail corridor makes an excellent site to develop an active transit path as it is a wide space that has been kept clear over-time, it follows a direct route, and it has relatively little hills of grade changes along its length. As the rail founded the town the majority of the central city and its public spaces are stretched along the north / south axis of the railway. Providing a centralized transit route along this axis will link these spaces and districts together.

The proposed active transit path along the rail corridor would be part of a larger trail system. The proposed path would extend the 4.3 km to connect two sections of the Cowichan Valley trail and the Trans-Canada trail. Linking the proposed path up to these scenic well used recreation trails has the potential to increase recreational hiking and cycling day trips from the city as well as increase cycling traffic from nearby towns through the downtown. It would also link to the smaller well used local dyke trail and unofficial Cowichan river trail. Lastly the path would connect two highly prized wilderness areas around the Cowichan River and Somenous Marsh.

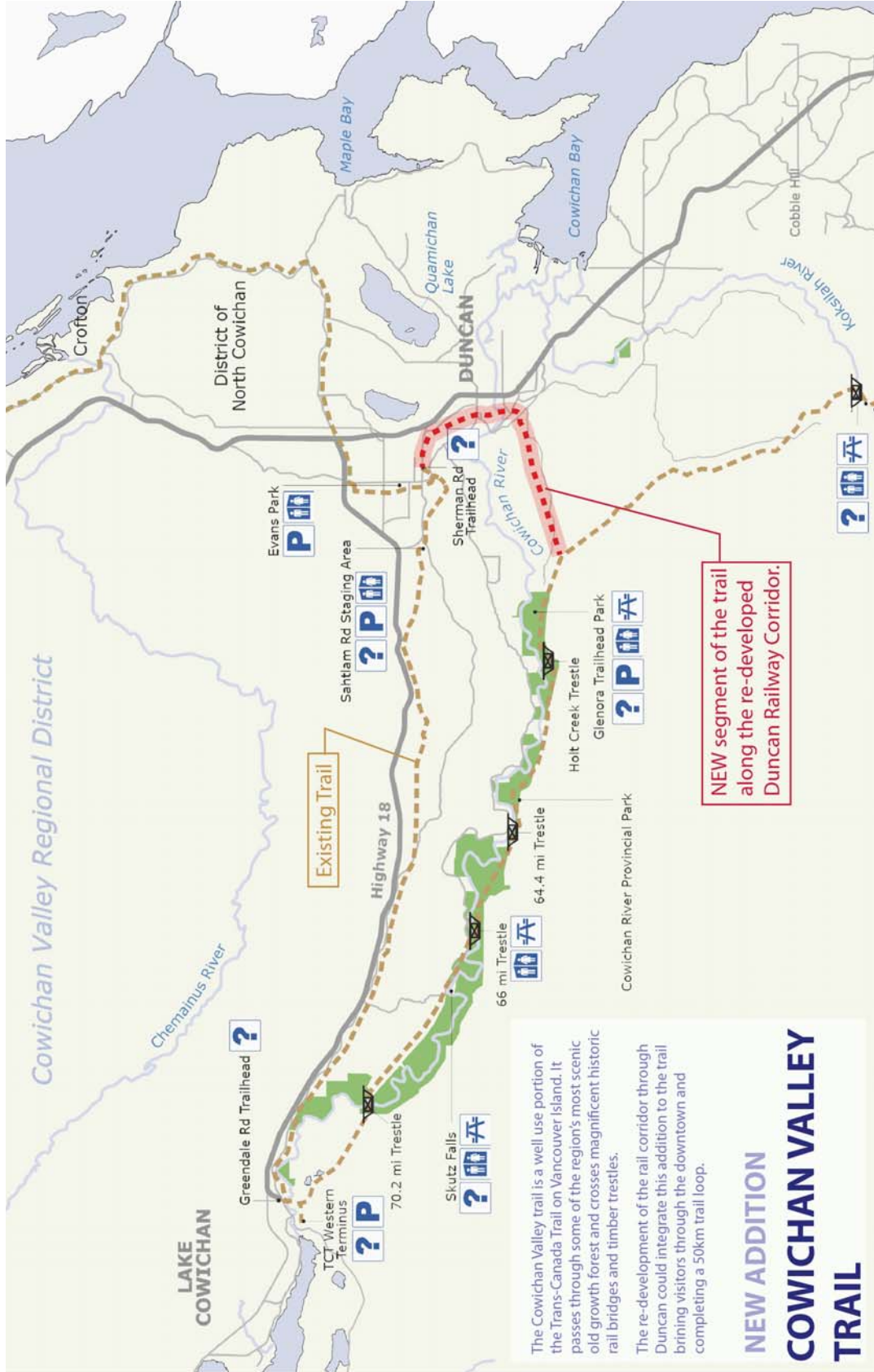


Diagram showing proposed active transit path as part of the larger trail network. [www.tourismcowichan.com](http://www.tourismcowichan.com)

The active transit path can also be used as part of the daily commute and transportation of the city. It passes along the densest residential areas just outside the city where walking to and from the city is common practice. While 81% of the people who live in the surrounding area commute to the city by driving (Statistics Canada 2011), the proposed transit path would be a good first step at increasing the opportunity to switch to walking or cycling.

The active transit path is designed to promote the use of bicycles and walking as the key methods of day-to-day and recreational transportation within the city. To truly promote this path the city would have to give it precedents over downtown traffic and roadways. This hierarchy could be established by eliminating vehicle access to one of the rail corridor's adjacent roads and main traffic artery: Canada Avenue. The road closing would be possible because traffic access is still available through the other adjacent road: Duncan Street. Closing Canada Avenue to vehicular traffic would give precedents to the active transit path for a number of reasons:

- It would make downtown vehicle traffic circulation slower and more difficult, prompting people to park and walk instead.
- It would provide that vehicle traffic would have to stop before crossing the active transit path – not the other way around.
- It would increase accessibility between the downtown core and the path dramatically.

The path itself would be made of wood boards as it is a readily available local material which can be supplied and milled in the local economy. The boards running across the path would also be reminiscent of the rail ties from which it conceptually stems. The railway itself would be preserved as a part of the local history, an interest element to the path, and to allow for future re-development of the rail service in the future. As often as possible the existing railway would be visible and embedded in the new path.

The design of the path would be such that it would respond to the surrounding landscape and natural conditions. The wood boards of the path pull back to reveal plating, natural landscape, or trees. Alternatively they can extend beyond the usual extents of the path to create places off the path for sitting or gathering. This system of 'cutting back' or 'adding'

boards creates a flexibility to the path so that it can expand, narrow, or split as required by the program or natural landscape. Additionally the flexibility provides the opportunity for the city and community to add or subtract from the path as they see fit in the future.

While the path has to have a direct and unobstructed component to logistically work for cycling and commuters, programmatically ‘the path’ covers a larger concept. While a piece of the path will be straight and barrier free the rest of the path can expand to become the market, or grow to encompass a seating area, or pass through the cultural centre to the river. The entire course of the conceptual path as it passes through the city is articulated by the wood boards of which it is constructed.



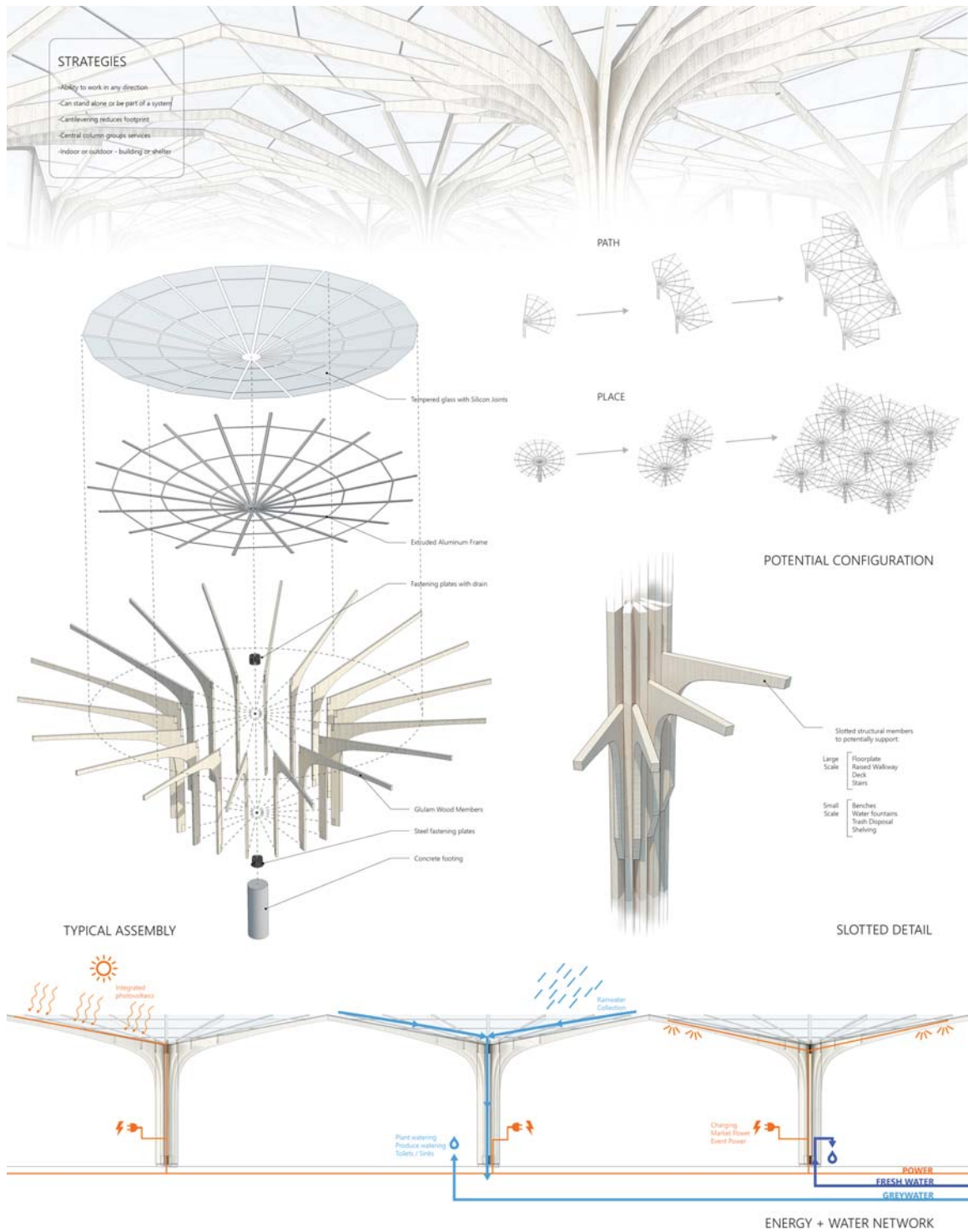
Plan diagram of the proposed path design strategy to vegetation and the existing railway

## Architectural Threads

### *Canopy Form*

A common architectural form is used throughout the three community hub designs and along the path. Use of a repeating architectural motif unites the project identity and creates a unity to the path and hub designs which cross the city. This common form was chosen predominately for its versatility in fulfilling the program requirements of the three





COMMON ARCHITECTURAL FORM

Diagram of the common architectural form used throughout the project. Included are its construction and usage strategies.

sites and path. Use of wood as the material for these forms was chosen for similar reasons as it was for the construction of the path: it is a local, abundant material that can contribute to the economy and has a sense of 'belonging' to the place. The use of a glulam technology allows for graceful cantilevering forms that would have not been possible with more traditional methods of construction. The arching forms are reminiscent of organic growth which is a common theme with the focus on local production and growing of food.

These forms also work as a service providing system. They can work to collect rainwater for use as greywater in the hub bathrooms or for plant watering. Solar panels on the south facing side of some of these forms can power the path and canopy system lighting it at night and allowing for power supply to the market and for device charging along the path.

### ***Earth Boxes***

Each of the community hub designs includes housing the services in more solid architectural elements. These service buildings or boxes are made using a natural building technique out of cob. The sand, clay and water makeup of the cob can likely be directly sourced from the site or else nearby. The process of construction is quite simple and can avoid the use of heavy machinery allowing for the preservation of nearby trees which would not have been possible (or much more difficult) with the pouring of concrete. Additionally the construction process can easily involve members of the community to assist in the construction - shortening the construction time and already beginning involvement in a space that should be identified as theirs. The cob elements are finished with a earth plaster made from local clays and capped with an overhanging green roof to protect the cob walls.

## Community Hubs

### Hub 1: The Market

Time and time again the importance of ‘the market’ in the vitality of a city has been witnessed. “The use of food to foster urban renewal” is a concept that been employed with great success in many cities (Steel 2008, 109). Within the context of the market the customer gets a direct relationship to the supplier and understanding of the food that is just not possible when buying from a commercial grocer. Additionally the social aspects of the market cannot be ignored: it is a place of “belonging”, people not only come to purchase but to socialize and mingle and “the need for such a space is as great now as it ever has been, arguably greater” (Steel 2008, 111).

The Farmer’s Market of Duncan is already quite successful and has the potential to become the thriving social hub and centre for local commerce that Carolyn Steel alludes to. Its community agenda and focus on local businesses has been an invaluable asset to people of Duncan. What this design project has to offer to the already successful market are solutions to a number of problems they are currently facing while increasing its presence in the city to draw even greater numbers of customers and vendors.

The site of the market hub is central downtown Duncan. Here the rail corridor runs past the historic train station. While the train station building may no longer have relevance to the day to day life of most residents the surrounding area remains the heart of the city. The existing market is located close to the rail corridor space behind city hall. While this is a good location for the market space is limited. The market is at max capacity for space yet is rapidly growing in size more than ever before (J. Lockwood, personal communication, January 23, 2015). This fact is the main driving force for the design hub proposal: to provide expansion space for the market to facilitate its current number of vendors and allow for future growth. Additionally the hub design can provide sorely needed amenities for the market to function which it is currently lacking: power supply, water supply, and bathrooms.

Even though the market area is a well situated area that gets a lot of pedestrian traffic it does not act as a gathering or event place for the town. The proposed market hub seeks





Diagram of design strategy towards the Market Hub

to remedy this problem by designing the space to be a multi-use covered plaza that could be used for any number of community events or small gatherings. This would also allow for the hub to be of value to the community on the off-days when vendors have not set-up to sell their goods. The value of covering the plaza is to provide shelter in a climate that sees rain many days of the year yet remaining open to the comfortable temperatures of the temperate climate. While it is difficult to predict the success of any potential public plaza, the covered space of the path suggested in the design has a number of attributes which have been found to be very positive in plaza success including extensive public seating, natural vegetation, a prominent accessible location, and high amounts of foot traffic. (Whyte 1980, 353-354)

The design of this community hub is centered on the idea of the market off the path. That is to say the path becomes the market. The path enters under the canopy overhead with only a gentle grade shift and expands to become the market plaza. One row of columns for the canopy delineates what is still the 'moving' zone of the path for cyclist, while the other delineates the 'transaction' zone of the path where vendors offer their goods.

To further promote non-vehicular transportation the market hub also acts as the downtown bus terminal. The city is currently without a terminal and this hub location is centrally located in downtown along the major bus routes. The market design already includes covered area with public seating and amenities, the essential requirements for a public transit hub. Additionally the presence of the public transit waiting area will increase pedestrian traffic to the market vendors and provide the transit commuters with the opportunity to buy local goods directly on their route home or too work.

The architectural hub anchors the path in this part of the city by expanding it into a 'place' with program relevant to the city's current needs. Additionally the architecture creates a dialogue with the surrounding urban environment by establishing a number of threshold conditions between the edge of downtown and the transit path. Each of these thresholds transitions is carefully considered in terms of level changes and vegetation so that a number of zones exist between the existing downtown and proposed path.

## Hub 2: Cowichan River Centre

The design of the Cowichan Centre community hub is to prompt bridging of cultural and demographic divides that have existed in the city. While it is a hub that is open to all it is programmatically focused on fulfilling needs that exist within the Cowichan First Nations community (H. Reid, personal communication, January 30, 2015). The program desired in the community is space for aboriginal arts and culture to be celebrated, taught, and passed from the elder generation to the younger generation. The forms of art to be facilitated include carving, knitting, painting, and music. Another focus that the hub can facilitate is the production of and education on native food sources as well natural medicines.

The site is located right at the intersection of the Cowichan River and the railway. This is located on the First Nations Reserve. Just across the railway is the Quw'utsun' Cultural & Conference Centre, a landmark in the Cowichan First Nations community. Opposite the railway from the cultural centre are sports and recreational fields as well as a gymnasium. An informal walking trail has developed along the rivers edge that leads from the road and city dyke trail up to another trail network around the river. The whole river area and trail network make up the Cowichan River wilderness area that is one of the connection of the active transit path. This area can be used for many recreational activities including hiking, swimming and river tubing.

Aside from facilitating the programmatic requirements outlined by the community the building has a side design agenda of re-connecting with the river. The Cowichan River was the historical lifeblood of the Cowichan Tribes and the original settlement that would become the city. As the current city's development was from the railway all connection to the river from the downtown has been lost. With very few exceptions all of the building development in the city near the river have no address or access to it. The design of the proposed Cowichan Centre hub would host the dialogue between the path and the river. The building itself would be the route from the path to the river – it would provide the gradual descent down the otherwise steep grade change from elevated railway to river. The architecture would allow river swimming and tubing during the warm summer months and viewing and access to the river year around.

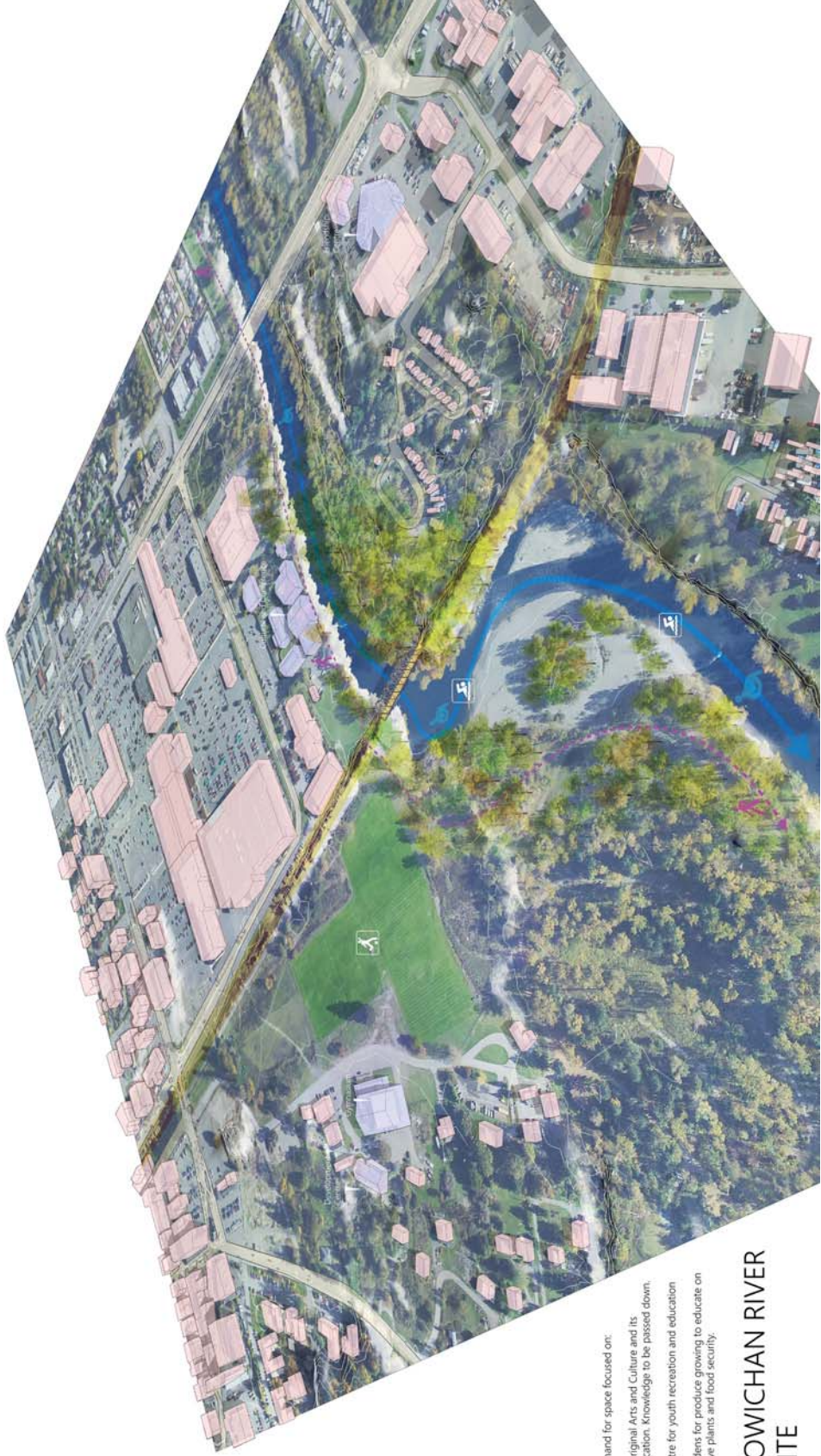


Diagram of existing Cowichan River site





Diagram of design strategy towards the Cowichan River Hub

As in all of the community hub proposals the architecture and building are subservient to the path. The Cowichan River Hub animates and engages the path by spilling its celebration and education of arts and culture onto the path. An exhibition gallery of outdoor art viewing begins along the path and leads into the main building where more exhibition is experienced. The hub design creates an entry courtyard space between building and path. The large open space which facilitates hand's on art opens directly onto the courtyard and path so that activities may spill out to the path if they desire to be outside or are directly visible along the path if they would remain indoors. Lastly off the courtyard is a small built-in amphitheater overlooking the river to host educational talks, cultural performances, or just act as a seating area in the sun with a view.

The site and functions of this hub were chosen for multiple reasons but one of the most essential is that the combination of location and program have the potential to bridge significant cultural divides that exist within the city. On one level this hub would create an open space for people of any background to learn, experience, and appreciate aspects of the indigenous culture. On another level the attraction of the hub would draw all residents across the pronounced divide of the first Nations Reserve. Increasing foot traffic and visiting to the reserve would as potential for vastly increasing non-aboriginal resident's involvement in the First Nation's community, their awareness of everyday life on the reserve, and even just their social connection with the Cowichan community.

### **Hub 3: University Agricultural Hub**

The site of the hub is currently a programmatic void. The adjacent streets lack any cohesive program or function being used for services such as furniture sale and auto-repair. The site itself is mostly a flat area of dirt and weeds but one edge possesses some significant tall trees. This edge also has an irrigation slope that has promoted a small area of natural wetlands vegetation such as long grass and cattails. The neighbouring university campus is new, consists of one building so far, and does not currently address the site or any of the surrounding urban area.

The agriculture innovation hub beside the university campus is a chance to accomplish a number of goals. The first and foremost in accordance with the thesis topics is to involve and educate the community on the growing of local produce. By sharing the growing beds



Program Desires:  
Residence building  
Agriculture Education and  
Innovation hub with Greenhouses  
Industrial Kitchen  
Trades Shops

## UNIVERSITY SITE

Diagram of existing University Food Hub site



Diagram of design strategy towards the University Food Hub

and greenhouses used by the university with the community residents will have year-around access to being able to grow (or be involved in growing) their own food. In conjunction with the agriculture production aspect of the program would be a culinary aspect. The university requires a large commercial kitchen space to host their culinary and baking programs (W. Weir, personal communication, January 27, 2015). This space goes beyond a commercial educational kitchen to become a community kitchen open to all residents. The kitchen is designed as the heart of this community hub, the place for education about food, eating and social gathering. As the space relates to the transit path: the path runs through the kitchen. In that way the active kitchen, eating and gathering space are located on the path. This engages the program with the path, animates and promotes use of the path, and increases accessibility to the kitchen.

The aspects of the local production of food are arrayed along the path. As you move along the path the opportunity is present to be involved in the growing, harvesting, cooking, then eating of the food. The focus on local food provides a means of socially connecting members of the community. By combining the use of the infrastructure for both community and university use it engages the introverted university and opens the up the opportunity for community members to receive a deeper education into local food processes.

## CHAPTER 3: CONCLUSION

The desire of many communities in North America to focus on contributing to local production and increase use of non-vehicular modes of transportation cannot be ignored. Local and municipal governments must re-asses their values and priorities regarding these two issues to meet community needs. Facilitating these two movements has the potential to greatly increase community involvement and social connection amongst residents. It also has the opportunity of opening up previously divided cities to bring differing demographics and cultures together. A city's re-prioritizing of the hierarchy placed on modes of transportation and scale of business / producer could take many forms. Multiple strategies to address both of these issues were explored through the design proposal including the provision of centralized bike and pedestrian pathways, pedestrianizing of a downtown street, and allocating significant funds to provide infrastructure to allow for community involvement in local production.

The design proposal cannot be directly translated to other cities. The proposal stems from the presence of an unused rail corridor cutting through the heart of downtown which is not commonplace; however, the heart of the proposal is to utilize a feature that is unique to the city for the betterment of the community: a concept that can be adapted to fit any city.

When considering the project as a whole one step that could have been completed with more careful consideration was the assigning of an architectural form to the large conceptual project. While the use of the branching canopy form may have numerous positive attributes as outlined in the thesis it may not be as rooted in the sense of place as the project's proposed programs or the specific hub locations. While this step would be difficult in any project it may have been beneficial to do further form studies, research, and community consultation to reveal a form truly rooted and specific to the local culture and economy.

One of the most informative and useful processes I went through for this project was the careful consultation with actual residents and community members. Being able to understand the desires and everyday needs of the people who would be using the architecture gave the design process a drive and reasoning that would not have been possible otherwise. However basic this process may be it is one I will never forget to undergo in any future design work I do - especially that which is intended to improve a community.

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