

Grandview-Woodland Community Plan  
**NW Commercial & Venables Event**  
**SUMMARY OF FEEDBACK RECEIVED**

May 4, 2015 | WISE Hall, 6pm - 9pm

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## **Background:**

On May 4, 2015, the City hosted an event to gather input on the future of the NW corner of Venables and Commercial. This block is bounded by Commercial Drive, the Commercial Diversion, Adanac Street, and Venables Street. It contains the Kettle Friendship Centre (a social service agency serving low-income individuals and mental health consumers), two buildings owned by Boffo Properties (the former Astorino's Banquet Hall and Ace of Suedes drycleaner), and a City-owned parking lot and lane.

Both the Kettle Friendship Society, and Boffo have created an agreement wherein they are proposing to develop a facility that would:

- Significantly expand the Kettle Friendship Centre,
- Create up to 30 units of supported housing,
- Create market housing units.

This concept, as currently being discussed by these parties, assumes land assembly, and further assumes the sale of the City-owned lane and parking lot at the north end of the site. Given limited to non-existent senior government funding, the proposed social infrastructure (Kettle facilities and supported housing) would be financed through the sale of freehold housing that would be developed on site.

**While this redevelopment concept has been discussed publically, it is important to note that no formal application for redevelopment or rezoning has been received by the City.** As such, the intent of the workshop was not to seek input on a specific development proposal.

The purpose of the event was to:

- Share feedback gathered by the City to date;
- Allow community members to provide the City with further commentary on urban design principles, building form, and proposed social amenities as per September 2013 motion of City Council<sup>1</sup>;
- Gather input that could be shared with the Citizens' Assembly to assist with their deliberations on this topic; and
- Through these means, provide City planners with material with which to develop an appropriate policy statement for this area of the neighbourhood.

Community members were invited to review information boards on display, and share their thoughts via a feedback form. City staff were also on hand to answer any questions. Representatives from the Kettle Friendship Centre and Boffo Properties

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<sup>1</sup> Link: <http://former.vancouver.ca/ctyclerk/cclerk/20130925/documents/cfsc20130925min.pdf>

were in attendance. In addition, a number of members of the Grandview-Woodland Citizens' Assembly attended the event, engaging in discussions with community members. The Assembly members shared and discussed details of this event with the broader Assembly later that month.

Materials were posted online for those community members not able to attend in person. The deadline to receive comments was May 18, 2015.

The display boards can be viewed here:

<http://vancouver.ca/files/cov/grandview-woodlands-northwest-venables-commercial-workshop.pdf>

### **Who responded:**

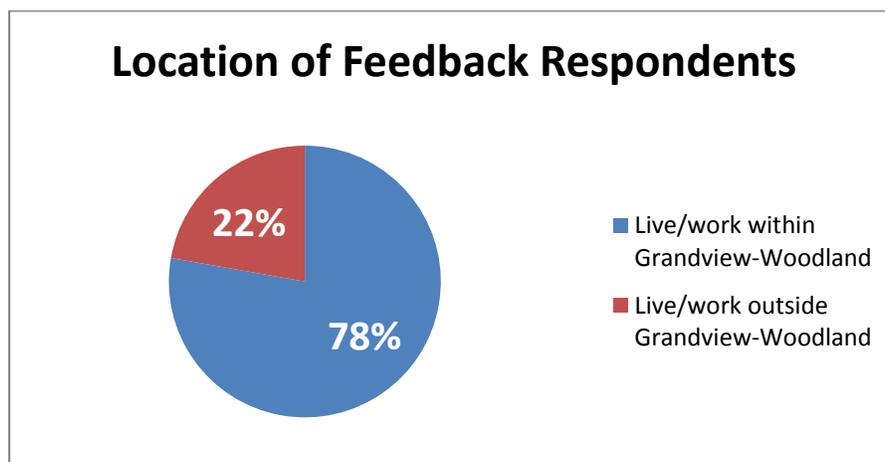
Approximately 140 people attended the event in person and a total of 128 feedback submissions were received (87 completed paper forms were returned at the event, 41 additional responses were received via email).

Age (n=85)	#	%
>20	0	0
20-24	1	1.2
25-34	13	15.3
35-44	13	15.3
45-54	20	23.5
55-64	21	24.7
65-74	14	16.5
75+	3	3.5

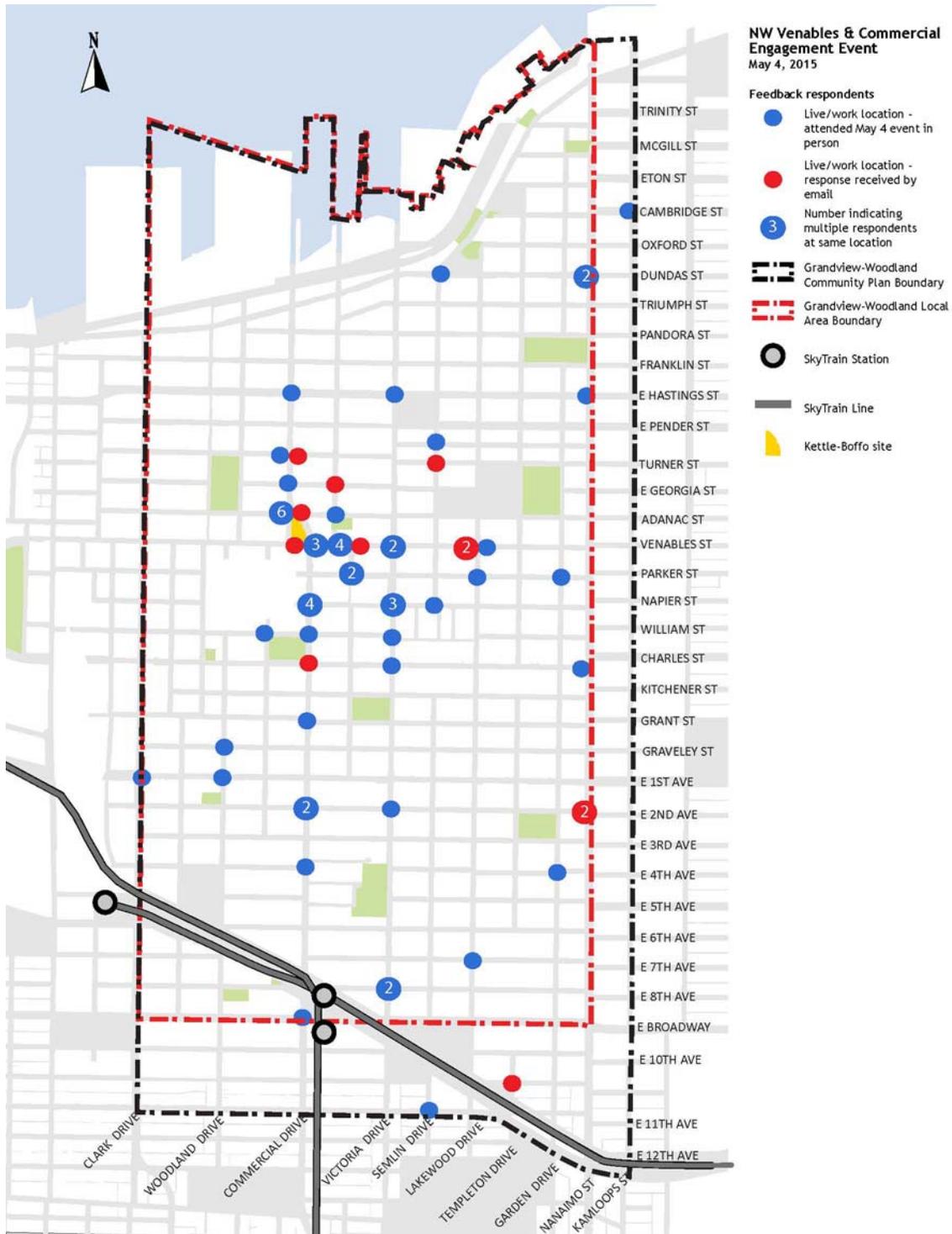
Sex (n=120)	#	%
Female	59	49.2
Male	60	50
Trans	1	0.8

Tenure (n=87*)	#
Rent in G-W	17
Own in G-W	33
Co-op in G-W	4
Work in G-W	21
School in G-W	1
Don't live / work in G-W	20
<i>*9 multiple responses</i>	

A total of 90 respondents also provided the nearest intersection of their residence or place of employment. Of these, 70 (78%) indicated an intersection in the Grandview-Woodland study area, while 20 (22%) indicated an intersection outside of the area.



The 70 respondents who indicated that they lived or worked in the Grandview-Woodland study area identified the closest intersection to their home or work as follows:



## **Responses/feedback:**

Participants were asked to comment on four key areas of consideration:

1. A set of proposed planning and design principles that had been developed by City staff;
2. An emerging design synthesis for the NW corner, also developed by City staff;
3. The inclusion/importance of social facilities and amenities at this site;
4. The possible ways to achieve social facilities and amenities on site.

Each of the questions was open-ended, and responses to the first three areas of consideration have been coded depending on whether or not they indicated support, (e.g. "I like the principles as proposed"), were neutral, or non-support, (e.g. "I don't agree with the synthesis").

### ***1) Planning and Design Principles (Boards #12-13)***

*Based on the process to date, a number of possible design principles related to the future development of the site are proposed:*

- *Hug the Curve - Building(s) should maximize interaction with the public by being placed up against the sidewalk, further reinforcing the curve of the street.*
- *"Front Porches" - Building(s) should orient ground floor commercial frontages and apartment balconies to enliven the space for public use.*
- *Announce the Shift/Hierarchy - A strong architectural element and higher forms should be located on the northern end of the site.*
- *Walk Through/Urban Discovery - The site should allow for multiple public pathways throughout, and the possibility of new and inviting public open space.*
- *Social inclusion, interaction, and well-being - The site's relation to other social facilities means that it should support goals of inclusion, interaction and community-building.*
- *Multiple pieces - The size and shape of the site suggest the possibility of multiple "pieces" rather than one monolithic building.*
- *Architectural excellence - The prominence of the site requires an equally prominent architectural statement.*

86 respondents provided feedback on the proposed principles:

	<b>Support</b>	<b>Neutral</b>	<b>Do not support</b>
Count	67	13	6
Percentage	77.9%	15.1%	7.0%

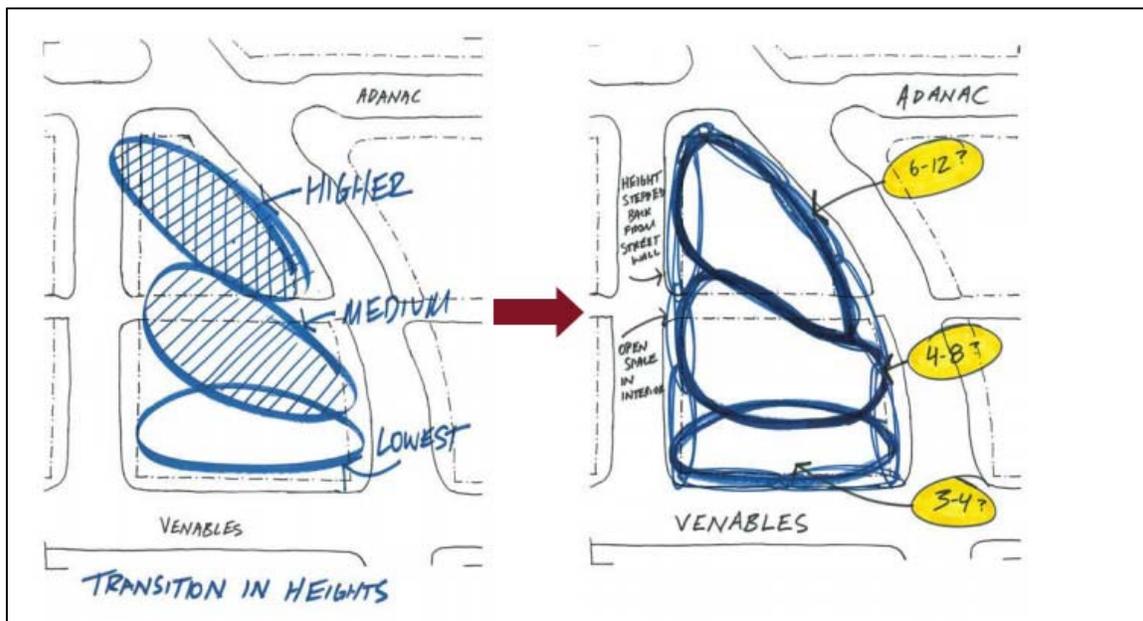
## 2) Emerging Design Synthesis (Board #14)

To help provide direction, a synthesis of the aforementioned urban design principles was combined with feedback received on this site from earlier in the planning process - in response to the Emerging Directions (July 2013), the Kettle petition (September 2013), the Commercial Drive workshop (March 2015), and the discussions of the Grandview-Woodland Citizens' Assembly (2014-15).

Based on this, the following synthesis was proposed:

- *Treat the whole site as several building "pieces"; rather than one uniform structure*
- *Respond to surrounding context and zoning*
- *Ensure a variety of heights and hierarchy - and a reasonable transition between them - but reduce the heights from those proposed in the Emerging Directions ("up to 14 storeys")*
- *Ensure active street frontages and a human-scaled design*
- *Enrich the site with strong public realm components, good design, and high-quality architecture*
- *Tie higher buildings on site to the provision of significant social benefits*

The accompanying illustration was also included as part of the discussion:



A total of 108 respondents provided comments on the proposed principles:

	Support	Neutral	Do not support
Count	72	24	12
Percentage	66.7%	22.2%	11.1%

The question of building height was referenced in a number of submissions, with a total of 59 respondents (46%) making reference to a preferred height (or maximum height limit) for any future buildings on the site.<sup>2</sup> The following tables summarizes these references:

**Specific references to height, all respondents (n=59)**

Storeys	Count	Percentage
2	2	3.4
4	9	15.3
6	9	15.3
8	3	5.1
10	4	6.8
12	11	18.6
14	9	15.3
15	11	18.6
16+	1	1.7

A total of 18.6% of the 59 respondents preferred a height that was equivalent (or less than) the current zoning - of four storeys. An additional 27.2% indicated a height preference between six and 10 storeys. 33.9% indicated a preference for heights of 12 or 14 storeys (generally the height proposed in Emerging Directions), while 20.3% indicated preference for a height of 15 or more storeys.

Given the significance of this topic for many, staff further reviewed the responses and created a second table that contains input only from respondents who lived or worked in the Grandview-Woodland study area. (This removes 17 responses from the first table).

**Specific references to height, live/work in G-W only (n=42)**

Storeys	Count	Percentage
2	2	4.8
4	9	21.4
6	9	21.4
8	3	7.1
10	3	7.1
12	6	14.3
14	4	9.5
15	5	11.9
16+	1	2.4

Of the 42 responses, 26.2% indicated a preference for two or four storeys, while 35.6% indicated a preference between 6 and 10 storeys. 23.8% of respondents were in favour of 12 or 14-storey heights, while 14.3% are comfortable with buildings of 15 or more storeys.

<sup>2</sup> This analysis was based on responses that contained a specific reference to building heights. It omitted any general statements of support or disagreement for the "Kettle/Boffo proposal."

**3) The inclusion/importance of social facilities and amenities on this site (various boards, including #5 and 6.)**

The NW corner of Venables and Commercial is located in close proximity to existing social and community facilities, including the Lions Den Seniors Centre and the Britannia Community Centre. It is also home to the existing Kettle Friendship Centre, which has been operating at this location for a number of years.

A total of 98 respondents provided feedback on the matter of inclusion of social facilities and amenities as part of any future redevelopment of the site, with responses distributed as follows:

	<b>Support</b>	<b>Neutral</b>	<b>Do not support</b>
Count	75	20	3
Percentage	76.5%	20.4%	3.1%

**4) How social facilities and social housing could be achieved on this site**

Participants who supported the inclusion of social facilities on this site were invited to share ideas on how these amenities might be achieved. As indicated on the event materials, the concept currently being discussed by the Kettle Friendship Centre and Boffo would see the social facilities and housing financed through the sale of on-site ownership housing (i.e. market condominiums).

A total of 77 responses were received on this matter, with many continuing to voice general support for the inclusion of social facilities. Where specific ideas were included on *how* these could be achieved, respondents provided a fairly limited number of ideas. These can be summarized as follows:

- *Role of private development: a difference of opinion*
  - Support for financing the project and creating social amenities through private development/sale of freehold market units
  - Concerns about financing project/social amenities through private development
- *Senior government funding:* Desire to see greater involvement/funding from senior levels of government; concern that this support has not been forthcoming
- *City financing/land:* City financing through transfer of CACs and/or City-owned land at reduced cost
- *Amount of social facilities:* Reducing the amount of social amenities to reduce the overall cost of the project that is being discussed.