WHAT WE HEARD, WHAT WE SAW

On June 16, 2014, the City of Vancouver hosted a workshop for the community to explore ideas for Norquay’s public realm, focusing on Ravine Way and plazas and open spaces. Twenty-five participants joined City staff and consultants from PWL Partnership Landscape Architects to envision what these spaces could look like. Ideas were captured on flipcharts, drawn on maps, and translated into graphic illustrations.

Here is a summary of what we heard and what we saw.

1. Ravine Way

Big Ideas

- Don’t sell off any City-owned land
- A continuous green pedestrian connection between Norquay and Slocan Parks should begin as soon as possible.
- Keep this connection as natural as possible through design and materials: “Less manicured, more wild.”
- Narrow or close off (temporarily or permanently) partial or entire streets to strengthen continuity.
- Incorporate both ‘open’ and ‘closed’ spaces similar to that of the Central Valley Greenway.

Possible Names

Participants were asked to name Ravine Way.

- ‘Still Creek Greenway’
- ‘Ravine Way’
- ‘Creek Way’
Design Elements

*Participants were asked what design elements should be included in Ravine Way.*

- Water: e.g. continuous water feature that is reflective of the original water course, provides play opportunities
- Permeable crushed limestone material for the walkway surface
- Natural materials could include wood and stone, plants, trees, flowers
- Small trees to allow for visual surveillance; some fruit production
- Lighting could be LED lighting drawing its source from solar storage cells or perhaps the running water from Still Creek; lighting at ground level
- Shelter from the elements
- Community-oriented public art and mosaics
- A variety of seating such as rocks, logs and benches
- Garbage cans and recycling cans
- Educational signage
- Raised walkways to connect pathway across streets

Activities

*Participants were asked to imagine the type of activities possible.*

- Small activations e.g. community gardens, Tai Chi, public art, interpretive historic signage, book exchange
- At least one kids play area
- Picnic areas
- Programmable meeting space
- Bee hives and an orchard

Stewardship Ideas

- Involve schools; Ravine Way can act as outdoor classrooms
- Involve youth in the design

Other (Process)

- Incremental implementation with some immediate action
- Participants preferred Ravine Way to be built in multiple phases, rather than waiting until all the land has been assembled. Small pieces seen as valuable ‘demonstration projects’ in the short-term.
2. Purdy’s Chocolate Factory Site (2777 Kingsway)

**Big Ideas**
- The plaza sites along Kingsway should be well connected. A defined walking route between them should be explored.

**Plaza Location**
*Participants were asked where a plaza should be located on the site.*

Four options explored for plaza siting:
- Centre of property
- Centre of block, fronting Kingsway
- Rear of property, fronting Earles
- Locate the plaza on the site on the northwest corner of Earles and Kingsway (Harvey’s Appliances) due to its likeliness of sale.

- Reluctance to place plaza next to Kingsway – participants viewed it as too noisy and unattractive for users. Buffering between busy street recommended.
- Recognition that an interior or rear plaza may feel ‘too private’ and would need to be designed to ensure it remains truly public.
- Preference for a square space, rather than linear (Canadian Tire plaza cited as a poor example).

**Activities**
*Participants were asked to imagine the type of activities possible*

- Plaza activations encouraged, including markets, movie nights, food trucks
- Seniors activities such as chess boards or exercise equipment

**Design Elements**
- A green/landscape buffer to mitigate the noise and pollution of Kingsway
- Keep existing mature trees on site
- Water features, greenery
- An art element (e.g. artifact) that acknowledges the industrial history (including Purdy’s and former Canada Dry plant) of the site
3. 2400 Kingsway

Big Ideas
- This space is seen as the heart of the community and more of a place for active recreation. It could be designed with a large central space that can accommodate large public gatherings, surrounded by active edges.

Plaza Location
*Participants were asked where a plaza should be located on the site.*

Four options were explored:
- One with the community space immediately adjacent at rear of the site along E 33rd Ave.
- The second with the community space fronting Kingsway, to bring people in from the street.
- The third, combining the larger and smaller plazas, with an asymmetrical ‘bowtie’ shape connecting the larger part of the ‘bow’ facing 33rd Ave with the smaller part facing Kingsway.
- The fourth considered a meandering non-linear shape running east-west through the site.

Activities
*Participants were asked to imagine the type of activities possible.*
- Frame the space with retail – cafes, restaurants, and the future community facility.
- Activate the space with a farmer’s market, Tai Chi, festivals.
- Art exhibitions.
- Live performances.
- Outdoor movies.

Design Elements
- Preserving or enhancing the view of the mountains. Terraced grass spaces may enhance this (e.g. grass knoll on Granville Island.)
- Moveable roof/shelter for rain protection.
- Visibility through the site to the plaza space.
- A variety of seating options.
- A small ledge for skateboarders.
- Mid-block crossings could help tame Kingsway, make it more inviting and safer.