

Northwest Venables and Commercial

Kettle, Boffo and City Sites

May 2015

Grandview-Woodland Community Plan

Welcome!

Today's workshop is designed to gather input on the future of the NW corner of Venables and Commercial. Combined, this site contains the Kettle Friendship Centre, two buildings owned by Boffo Properties, and a City-owned parking lot and lane.

As a key component of Grandview-Woodland, thinking around this part of the neighbourhood has continued to evolve. The event will share feedback gathered to date, and allow community members to provide further input on urban design principles, building form, and proposed social amenities.

How to Share Feedback

Use the comment sheet to note any feedback that you might have on today's session.

If you prefer to send your feedback electronically, please email the planning team at grandviewplan@vancouver.ca

Feedback should be sent no later than **Monday, May 18, 2015.**



Grandview-Woodland's location in Vancouver



NW corner of Venables and Commercial

We are here

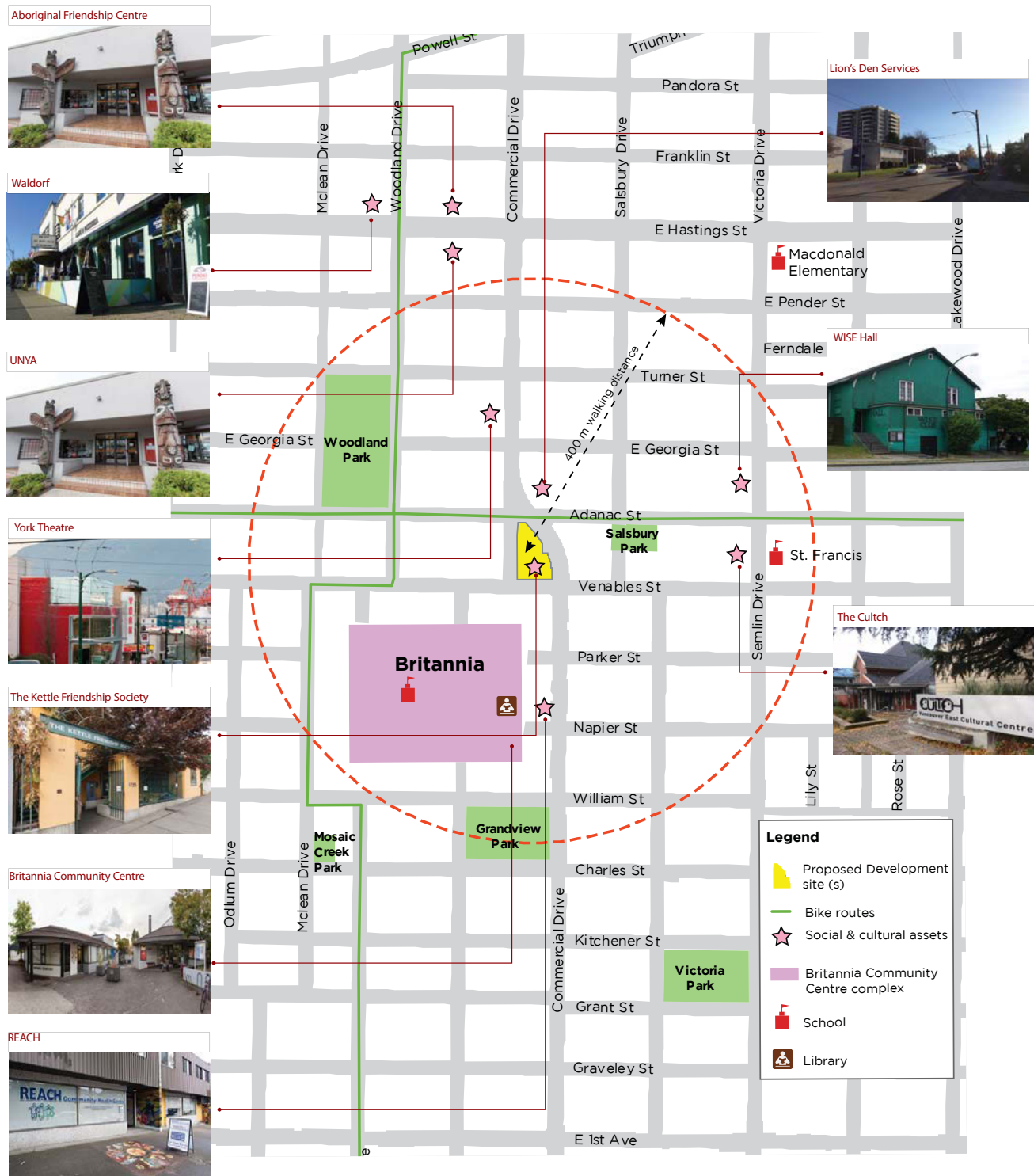


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Context Map



The Site

A Closer Look



Current Situation

- The Kettle Friendship Society, with Boffo Properties, are proposing to jointly 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 assumes land assembly, and further assumes the sale of the City-owned lane and parking lot at the north end of the site.
- The project would be self-sustaining and not involve outside funding. The proposed social infrastructure would be financed through the creation of ownership housing.

Core Assumptions

- The planning process for Grandview-Woodland is still underway. No decisions on this site have been made.
- There is no rezoning application for the site.
- City supports, in principle, the idea of land assembly as a means to optimize the opportunities associated with the site.
- Due process will be followed related to any sale of City-owned lands.

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Thinking about the site

The NW corner of Venables is part of an important node on Commercial Drive:

- Site follows the curve of Commercial Drive (along the Commercial Drive diversion)
- Meeting point of the commercial zone to the south, the industrial zone to the west, and the residential zone to the north.
- Surrounding buildings include low-rise apartments, duplex housing, a mid-rise (13-storey) seniors housing facility, 2-4 storey commercial and residential buildings, and various light-industrial buildings.
- Situated in close proximity to key social services (Kettle Friendship Centre, Britannia Community Centre, Lions Den), and other cultural and recreation facilities
- Located adjacent to two transit stops (#20 bus) and the Adanac bike route



Social Planning and Community Well-being

The NW corner of Venables and Commercial is home to the Kettle Friendship Centre. The Kettle owns their facility and offers a variety of programs and services to low-income individuals and families and mental health consumers.

Background: The Kettle Friendship Society

The Kettle Friendship Society is a non-profit provider of community and housing services that has served Vancouver for over 35 years. Today, they are seeking to expand their offerings but are limited by the constraints of their facility.



Expanding services to meet a critical need

Demand for homeless, low-income and mental health services is acute. As part of the combined Kettle/Boffo concept, the Kettle is proposing to expand their present array of services. This expansion would include a significant increase in space for expanded programs and services, as well as the creation of up to 30 units of supported housing.



What We've Heard

- Strong support for the Kettle's services – organization described as a 'neighbourhood asset' in early asset-mapping work
- Concern about street homelessness in Grandview-Woodland - and a strong desire to see 'housing for all.' Support for the expansion of services for homeless/street-involved individuals
- Support for the creation of additional supported housing in the neighbourhood

Supportive Housing - Supportive housing is affordable housing that also provides access to support staff. Supports help tenants stabilize their lives, enhance their independent living skills, and reconnect with their communities. The services provided to tenants are flexible, and vary from building to building. Some services are provided by on-site staff, and some services are delivered through outreach programs.

Emerging Directions (June 2013)

The City has received feedback on the Kettle Friendship Centre and the proposed Kettle/Boffo concept. The following boards provide a summary of community commentary.

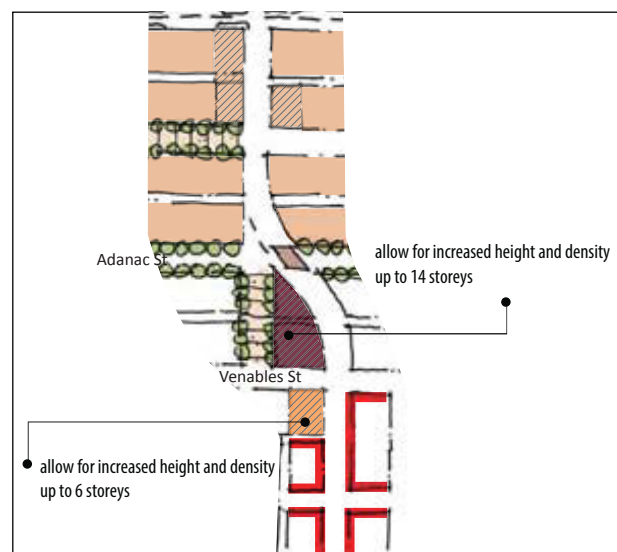
In response to preliminary discussions regarding the site, the City's draft Emerging Directions included the following policy ideas.

Note that the proposed directions for Commercial Drive retained the existing zoning for the bulk of the street. The following specific policies were proposed for Commercial Drive:

- CD-2: Limit additional height and mixed use development at selected locations along Commercial Drive, including:

- a. Astorino's/Kettle - NW Corner of Commercial and Venables (up to 14 storeys)

- CD-7: Support expansion of key social, health, and community services (Britannia, Kettle, REACH)



What We've Heard

Emerging Directions (June 2013)

Specific to the NW corner and the Kettle/Boffo concept:

- Strong support for expansion of key social, health and community services, and general support for the expansion of the existing services at the Kettle;
- While some support exists for a new site "up to 14 storeys," a sizeable portion of feedback indicates a preference for a building (or buildings) with less than 14 storeys. There were various opinions about what this should mean – "nothing above four storeys", "four to five", "four to six", "up to six storeys", "six to eight", "under eight", "up to 10-storeys", "nothing higher than 10," "capped at 12 storeys".
- Additional recognition that the Kettle/Astorino's site is in an important location. Need to ensure good architecture and urban design.
- In general, there was concern that higher buildings would be 'out of scale' with the surrounding neighbourhood.
- Suggestion that the expansion of social amenities should be financed through means other than market development.

A few other more general considerations should be noted:

- Broad support for the idea of creating a 'diversity of housing' in the neighbourhood;
- Reference to concern about condominiums related to the form of some condominium buildings (height, glass, "Yaletown" look), rather than the issue of ownership tenure ;
- In general there was also concern that new development could lead to gentrification of the neighbourhood and displacement of existing residents and businesses

What We've Heard

Kettle Petition (September 2013)

An online and door-to-door petition was created by Kettle Friendship Society and was signed by several hundred people.

The petition requested that Council:

- Move forward to secure turn-key social housing and a desperately needed, new and expanded drop-in centre for The Kettle."
- "Permit an application for the expansion and renewal of the Kettle."

The petition further noted:

- "The Kettle has a real opportunity to renew and expand its facility on Venables. Funding from higher levels of government is nowhere in sight, so The Kettle has formed an innovative partnership with Boffo Properties."

LETTER TO
Vancouver City Hall Mayor and Council

It has come to our attention that on September 24th, Council will consider a motion that may lead to an extension of the community consultation process for the Grandview-Woodland Community Plan. We support the City's goals towards ending homelessness in Vancouver by 2015 and supporting social housing. We applaud the City for setting such ambitious and worthy goals and as such, urge Council to move forward to secure turn-key social housing and a desperately needed, new and expanded drop-in centre for The Kettle Society on Venables Street. This opportunity could be lost with this potential delay in finalising a plan.

The Kettle has a real opportunity to renew and expand its facility on Venables. Funding from higher levels of government is nowhere in sight, so The Kettle has formed an innovative partnership with Boffo Properties. Partnerships like the one proposed for Venables are rare; a partnership which will allow The Kettle to house those in need and support hundreds more. Every day that this expansion is delayed is another missed opportunity for The Kettle to help even more in need.

Not only will this opportunity allow The Kettle to achieve its much needed expansion, but this partnership promises to add to the local social fabric of the community. The two open houses held to date on The Kettle renewal also mention enhanced open space, improved street level interaction, and offer a mix of retail and housing opportunities that in principle seem to provide benefits to both The Kettle and the community. However, none is more important or pressing than the need for The Kettle renewal.

While Council may consider delaying the plan, we, the undersigned, strongly urge you to permit an application for the expansion and renewal of The Kettle space on Venables to proceed immediately.



View of the proposed Kettle Friendship Society site

What We've Heard

Commercial Drive Workshop (March 2015)

Commentary from the workshop participants notes:

- Support for the Kettle and its program of social services
- General support for buildings in a “4-6 storey” range, and less support for “6-8 storeys” or “8-10 storeys.” There was nominal support at the workshop for anything above this height.
- There was more support for height if social objectives or greater public amenities were achieved in the redevelopment.
- Some participants suggested ‘spreading the development’ across multiple sites along the Drive north of Venables, rather than concentrating it in a single, higher development.

A few other general comments to note:

- Strong support for extending the core retail area of the Drive north of Venables to Hastings.
- General support for improvements to Venables (including public realm, or “greenway” treatment).
- Strong support for the social housing that is found in the Commercial Drive area. More non-market housing is needed to serve the present and future neighbourhood population.

What We've Heard

Citizens' Assembly (2014-2015)

Assembly members are reaching some consensus on the following points related to this site:

- There should be an expansion of social services throughout Grandview-Woodland.
- Any project on this site should conform to design guidelines.
- This site should be used as a connector to extend the “vibe” of Commercial Drive North after Venables.
- The project should foster an active, pedestrian-friendly environment with retail and restaurants.
- The project should include public space.
- Greater height should be located at lower points [meaning: the north end, where the grade is lower].
- Additional height should be tied to expansion of social services and support for the Kettle.

- Alternatives have been suggested (6 storeys, 8 storeys, 12 storeys), but this conversation is ongoing.



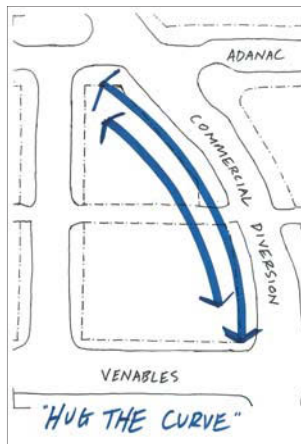
Proposed Design Principles

Shape, Form, and Function

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

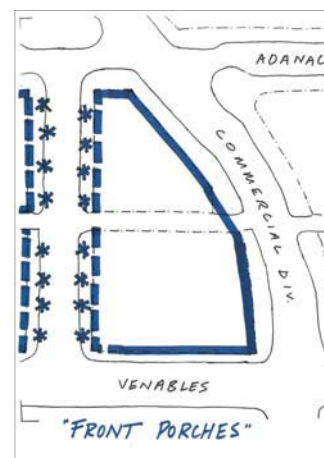
Hug the Curve

In the classic way that almost all of the Drive's buildings are sited, building(s) should maximize interaction with the public by being placed up against the sidewalk, further reinforcing the curve of the street.



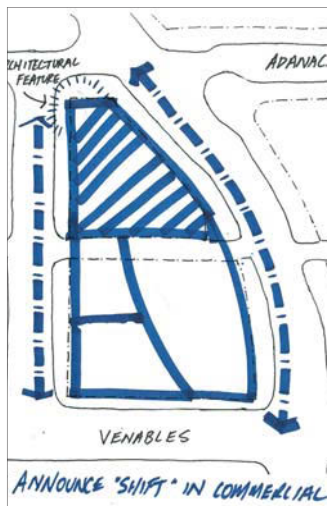
"Front Porches"

Building(s) should orient ground-floor commercial frontages and apartment balconies to enliven the space for public use. The intent would be to create a public "living room" on this segment of the Drive, and to draw pedestrian activity around the curve.



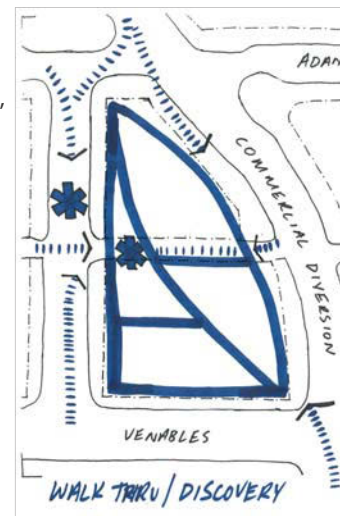
Announce the Shift/ Hierarchy

A strong architectural element and higher forms should be located on the northern end of the site, acting as a physical denotation of Commercial Drive's shift in its north-south delineation.



Walk Through/Urban Discovery

The size of the site should allow for multiple public pathways throughout, and the possibility of new and inviting public open space.



Other Principles

Based on the process to date, other principles related to the future development of the site are proposed:

Social inclusion, interaction and well-being

The prominent placement of the site in relation to other social facilities denotes a key role for future buildings in supporting 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. This could allow for variation in heights and uses, while reinforcing visual interest.

Architectural excellence

The prominence of the site requires an equally prominent architectural statement – one that respects elements of neighbourhood character but which allows for boldness of design.



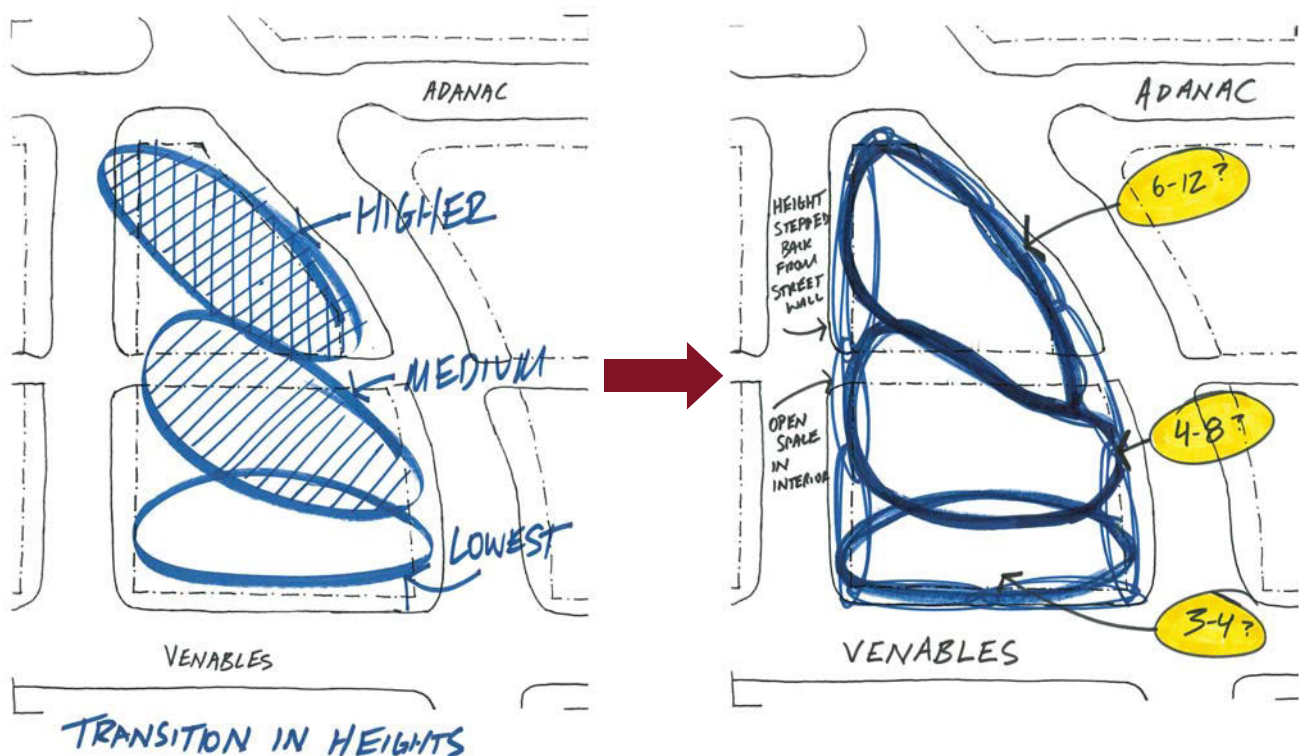
Synthesis

Applying the Principles, Reflecting Input

The principles discussed on the previous two boards have been developed based on the process to date.

To help provide direction, a synthesis of the urban design principles has been combined with what we've heard throughout the process. This suggests the following:

- Treating the whole site as several building “pieces”; rather than one uniform structure
- Responding to surrounding context and zoning
- Ensuring a variety of heights and hierarchy - and a reasonable transition between them - but reducing the heights from those proposed in the Emerging Directions
- Ensuring active street frontages and a human-scaled design
- Enriching the site with strong public realm components, good design, and high-quality architecture
- Higher buildings are tied to the provision of significant social benefits



What do you think?

An Ongoing Discussion

Please provide your feedback on:

- 1) The proposed planning principles
- 2) The emerging design synthesis
- 3) The inclusion/importance of social facilities and amenities on this site
- 4) How social facilities and social housing could be achieved on this site

What's Next?

Upcoming Events

Thank you for participating in today's community planning event.

To share your feedback, please fill out the comment sheet and hand it to a City staff member before you leave.

You can also send your commentary to the Grandview-Woodland Planning team at grandviewplan@vancouver.ca

Please send your feedback by **Monday, May 18, 2015.**

Community feedback will be shared with members of the Citizens' Assembly, and will be used to inform the overall community plan.



Stay Involved

Planning is an ongoing conversation and we look to gather feedback from the public throughout the process. If you want to stay involved, ask questions, or offer suggestions, please contact City staff at your convenience.



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