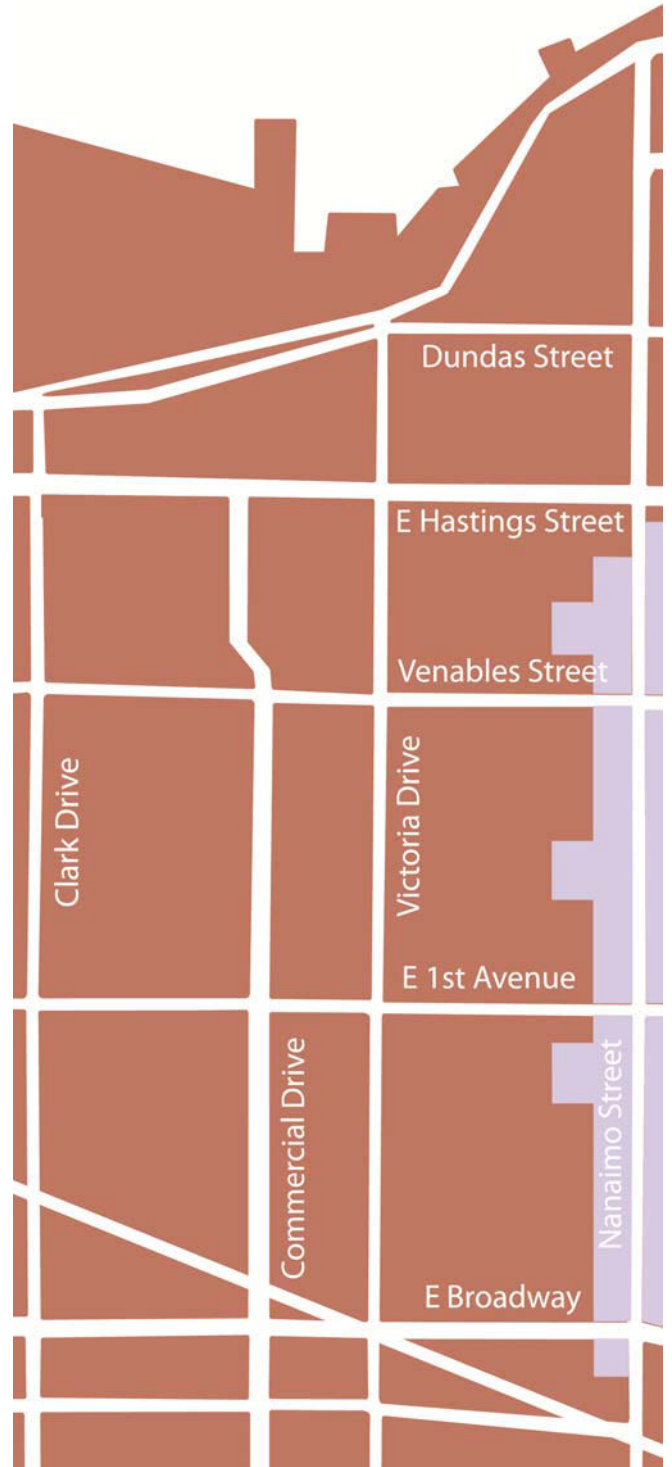


Nanaimo

Synopsis of Sub-Area Workshop



May 2015

Introduction

The following document provides a synopsis of the ideas that were generated in the Nanaimo Street sub area workshop (January 17, 2015) and Cantonese/Mandarin Focus Group (February 28, 2015). These events were among several held between November 2014 and March 2015 as part of the Grandview-Woodland Community Plan process.

The document contains a short overview of the workshop and focus group, a discussion of sub-area character, and an overview of the key areas of focus identified by workshop participants. These areas of focus are then explored in greater detail under the following headings:

- Public realm & transportation
- Housing & built form
- Local economy
- Services, amenities and other planning themes

In each of these four areas, Planning staff have identified the *general* areas of convergence and divergence amongst workshop and focus group participants. This material was distilled from small-group discussion table notes and maps that were produced by participants, as well as from the ‘report out’ sessions that occurred throughout the day.

It is important to note that this document provides an *overview* of the dialogue. Given that each of the small-group tables discussed a wide variety of items (and often in a very lively and free-flowing manner), creating a summary that incorporates every idea discussed is impossible. Instead, the Planning team has taken every effort to present the material in a fashion that does justice to the spirit of the conversation. Those wishing to review the complete set of notes from the events are invited to download them from the vancouver.ca/gw webpage.

A draft version of this summary was published in April 2015. Workshop and focus group participants were also encouraged to submit any corrections or clarifications to the Grandview-Woodland Community Plan team. A total of six pieces of correspondence were received, several of which also contained feedback on the Grandview sub-area synopsis. Subsequently, minor edits to both documents were made. The present document is now finalized as of June 1, 2015.

Workshop Details

The Nanaimo sub-area workshop was held on Saturday, January 17, 2015, at the WISE Hall.

Workshop participants undertook four key activities:

1. Creating neighbourhood character statements - reflecting both present day and future (aspirational) character for the sub-area;
2. Reviewing proposed policy from the *Emerging Directions*, as well as the community feedback that was received;
3. Assessing possible areas of change or no-change in the sub-area (policy geography);
4. Generating ideas around possible built-form typologies and conditions connected with sub-area geography.

A total of 80 individuals registered to attend (38 residing inside the sub-area, and 42 residing outside of it). On event day 72 individuals participated in the session.

At the conclusion of the workshop, 47 participants completed an evaluation form (65% response rate). The following table provides an overview of the demographic profile of those participants that completed the evaluation form.

Of the 47 workshop respondents:

AGE	#	%	SEX	#	%	TENURE	
> 20	0	0	Male	20	43	Renter	4
20-24	0	0	Female	27	57	Owner	38
25-34	1	2.1				Co-op	0
35-44	10	21.3					
45-54	20	42.6				Work in N	4
55-64	9	19.2					
65-74	5	10.6					
75+	2	4.3					

On average, workshop participants had lived in Grandview-Woodland 18.8 years ($n=41$) and in Vancouver for 28.4 years ($n=40$).

Context and Character

The Nanaimo sub-area is bounded by Hastings (north) and Broadway (south). It spans Nanaimo Street, and includes the area between Garden Drive and Kamloops Street.¹

Most of the Nanaimo Street sub-area is currently zoned for single-family (“RS”) housing, while a small portion near Charles Street is zoned for duplex housing (“RT”). Notwithstanding the zoning labels, many of the households have secondary suites - providing an affordable rental option for the community. (Roughly 30% of households in the Nanaimo sub-area are renter households). Residents describe the area as “diverse,” “safe” and “family-friendly.”

The character of the sub-area is shaped by the street gives it its name. At 99 feet, Nanaimo Street’s right-of-way is particularly wide - especially given its traffic volumes. It currently allows for six lanes of automotive traffic (two lanes N and S plus parking), and there are a relatively limited number of stop lights or pedestrian crossings. Concerns have also been expressed about high transportation speeds, as well as the frequency of transit service.

One of Nanaimo’s key features is the fact that its street-fronting blocks change their orientation. Some (e.g. between E 6th and E 7th), face east/west, toward the street. Others (e.g. between E 2nd and E 3rd) face north/south. This feature means that some blocks face directly onto the busy street, while other are more ‘inward’ focussed - oriented onto flanking residential streets.

The sub-area also bisected by E 1st Avenue - which, with its high traffic volumes (and speeds), is seen by many residents as a barrier between the north and south ‘halves’ of the neighbourhood.

Nanaimo Street contains three distinct commercial nodes, located at Broadway, E 1st Ave and Charles Street. These are intended to provide neighbourhood-oriented shops and services for nearby residents. There has been strong interest throughout the planning process in seeing these areas enhanced and expanded - improved either through modest expansion and/or variation in retail services. These three ‘nodes’ supplement the two nearby shopping areas (Commercial Drive and E Hastings Street).

The area is home to many leafy streets, well-used parks (Garden Park and Templeton) and several prominent views of the north shore mountains. Key community services in (or adjacent to) the sub-area include two elementary school and one high school, the Templeton pool and fitness centre, the David Pranteau Aboriginal Children’s Village, and Kiwassa Neighbourhood House.

¹ In the initial *Emerging Directions* document, the eastern border ran along Garden Drive and jogged around Garden Park, Lord Nelson and Templeton schools. As noted in The Grandview and Nanaimo sub-area backgrounders, this boundary generated some concern among community members.

Present Day Character - Wordcloud

Participants at the January 17 workshop were asked to identify short (1-3 word) statements about both the present-day character of Nanaimo Street, and the ideal character in the future (anywhere from five to 30 years hence). Participants could write as many of these statements as they wished.

At the conclusion of the exercise, statements were typed up and, using Wordle software, assembled into a word cloud. The resulting image resizes the top words or phrases depending on their frequency of use. (The larger the word or phrase, the more often it was used).

Word cloud: Key statements about the present day character of Nanaimo Street



Word cloud: Key statements about the (ideal) future character of Nanaimo Street



Key Areas of Focus

Public Realm & Transportation

Key ideas

Workshop participants explored various issues related to the improvement of Nanaimo Street, the enhancement and expansion of parks and greenspace, and opportunities to support a focus on pedestrian and cycling mobility.

Areas of general convergence at workshop

Participants were in *general* agreement about the following:

- a) There is support for public realm improvements along Nanaimo Street, and interest in the creation of gathering places via parklets, cafes, benches, and street trees. There is a desire to improve the street so that it becomes a healthy and sociable space for people.
- b) Pedestrian safety needs to be improved along Nanaimo. Among the suggested solutions: more pedestrian-activated crossings, lower traffic speeds and stricter enforcement of speed limits.
- c) Additional concerns noted around traffic speeds and volumes on E 1st Avenue - and a desire to see the 'intensity' of this street better managed.
- d) There is a desire to see qualitative improvements made Templeton and Garden Parks, as well as a general increase in green spaces to offset any future
- e) General suggestion that larger/taller buildings on Nanaimo could have the potential to be massed, creating more room for plazas/green spaces on those sites. (Note: in general, discussion around higher-buildings focused on commercial nodes).
- f) There was interest in the creation of two parallel 'greenway' streets on Garden Drive and Kamloops - with strong pedestrian and cycling friendly public realm treatment, gathering areas and mini-parks, as well as the possibility of small-scale retail. In general, there is interest in more greening initiatives, including additional street trees on sub-area streets, mini-parks and additional community garden plots.
- g) There was additional interest in introducing east/west 'greenway' treatments on one or more residential streets (e.g. E 3rd or Templeton) - to help with traffic calming, and also provide a strong pedestrian connection with Nanaimo.
- h) Concern expressed that the sub-area was not well-served by transit, and there is a desire to improvements to bus services (and SkyTrain connections).
- i) Participants noted interest in traffic calming along side streets - via traffic circles, speed humps and diverters - so as to discourage through traffic (and short-cutting) on local streets
- j) Concerns expressed that parking around park areas can be challenging - and that visitor/resident space conflicts are a problem.

Areas of general divergence at workshop

A small number of divergent opinions were noted, related to larger scale public realm changes on Nanaimo and East 1st, as well as the appropriate location for cycling infrastructure.

- a) A variety of ideas were discussed for public realm improvements along Nanaimo Street. These included: wider sidewalks (with more street trees and other features), a centre boulevard or median (to help break up the width of the street), a separated bike lane, a series of enhanced intersections (with corner bulges, etc.) There was no clear consensus on which of these would be the best approach.
- b) Regarding the introduction of new cycling facilities: there was some suggestion that they might be more appropriate on residential streets, versus Nanaimo.
- c) A few ideas regarding the ways and means to improve E 1st Avenue were discussed, though these were not explored in great detail. Discussion included reference to the architectural response of buildings, public realm improvements (sidewalks and street trees), the introduction of street parking, the introduction of transit, and creative solutions that involved tunnelling road space.

Housing and Built Form

Key Ideas

In general, participants at the Nanaimo Street workshop were supportive of new housing options, especially typologies that are suitable for families and have ground-oriented access. New housing should be sensitive in form and height to the existing single-family character, particularly on the east-west streets that extend off Nanaimo.

Areas of general convergence at workshop

Participants were in *general* agreement about the following:

- a) General agreement that Nanaimo Street could be considered for new housing development, and possibly new housing typologies; however no consensus on appropriate typology, building height, or appropriate (specific) locations (see areas of divergence, below).
- b) New construction, regardless of height, should retain ground-orientation. Taller buildings should have step backs at higher levels to lessen their impacts. Design guidelines would assist in allowing a variety of styles with various shapes and materials. There was particular interest in limiting lot assembly to ensure that there was not a continuous corridor of the same type (or look) of housing.
- c) In general, there was support for expanding and enhancing the existing commercial areas via the introduction of new mixed-use (commercial + residential) opportunities. While there was general agreement that E 1st should allow for a modest increase (“up to 4 storeys”), there were divergent opinions

- about commercial nodes at Broadway and Charles, as well as at the intersection of Hastings (see areas of divergence, below).
- d) General agreement that there are opportunities to increase density in the surrounding single-family area with duplex forms, infill, secondary suites and laneway/coach suites with potential to strata-title.
 - e) New building forms should be compatible with surrounding single-family stock and allow for sensitive transitions to lower-density neighbours with concerns about height, shadows, views, and privacy.
 - f) Provide seniors housing that allows aging in place and responds to the unique needs of people as they age.
 - g) Commercial nodes can provide locations for infill and purpose-built rental, and density at places like Adanac where there are cyclists and pedestrians using the greenway
 - h) Concerns about lot assembly sizes and a desire to restrict these to ensure smaller buildings at a more human scale. Avoid block-long buildings. Suggestions included limiting assemblies to 2-3 lots.
 - i) Some participants noted that residents of the sub-area had prepared a petition in response to the Emerging Directions document. The petition noted concerns about: the potential introduction of 6-storey mixed-use forms at East 2nd and Nanaimo; 4-storey apartment or townhouse form on East 1st Avenue, the 2300-block of East 2nd and East 3rd ; and, 3-4 storey townhouse form on the 2200 or 2300-block of Grandview.

Areas of general divergence at workshop

Most areas of disagreement centred about the ‘fingers’ of townhouses that would extend from Nanaimo Street west, around parks and schools near Garden Drive. Some felt that this was acceptable, if the new housing’s form was sensitive to the existing single-family character, while others felt any new housing redevelopment should be limited exclusively to Nanaimo. There was also debate about potential height limits on Nanaimo itself, and around potential commercial nodes.

- a) Various views about Nanaimo. While there was general (but not universal) agreement that Nanaimo Street presented an opportunity for new development, there were various opinion on what this might mean. With regard to location: some participants felt the entire street represented a possibility, while others felt that it should be the Nanaimo-facing portions of blocks. Still other participants felt that change should be restricted to areas with N/S oriented blocks/lanes. The role of topography was also raised - with the suggestion that it help to guide the location of new building typologies. With regard to height: Participants varied in their opinions as to whether allowable height should be “up to 2,” “up to 3,” and “up to 4 storeys.” Some participants wished to see a specific height limit of 35 feet. With regard to typology: there were various opinions about the merits of town-house, row-house and duplex forms, while less preference was expressed for stacked town-houses.
- b) Many tables felt that the ‘fingers’ or ‘teeth’ around the parks should be removed from the proposed *Emerging Directions* policy (and that they should also be included in the Grandview sub-area, rather than the Nanaimo sub-area). There was a general desire to maintain existing zoning and land use around parks/schools. Some tables supported 2-3 storey townhouse options

- with options for multi-generational living, while others felt the area should only allow duplex or gentler forms of density. As with Nanaimo, some participants supported a 35 foot height limit.
- c) With regard to E 1st and Nanaimo: there is general (though not unanimous) agreement that this area could see some new development “up to 4 storeys”; however, there are divergent opinions about land-use and building form. Follow-up correspondence from a local business owner notes support for “up to six-storeys” (see also, note (i) in *Convergence*.) Some participants felt that this location should be commercial and is a poor residential habitat. Others did not think the location was pleasant for a commercial node either. Some participants were comfortable with low-rise buildings, while others favoured townhouse-style development.
 - d) Broadway and Nanaimo: Some tables felt that this commercial node should be limited to 4 storeys of mixed use, with retail at grade and residential above. Other tables were comfortable with 6-8 storeys.
 - e) Charles and Nanaimo: Divergent opinions as to whether or not “up to 4 storeys” or “4-6 stories.
 - f) Hastings and Nanaimo: Various opinions as to whether the intersection could see additional height “up to 4 storeys”, “up to 6” or “up to 8” - though general agreement on mixed-use development.
 - g) There was limited discussion about the possibility for residential development “up to 4 storeys” at Nanaimo and Adanac.

Local Economy

Key ideas

Participants focussed attention on the commercial nodes located along Nanaimo. There is general support for the expansion and enhancement of these areas, and the ensuing discussions explored elements of appropriate change in these areas.

Areas of general convergence at workshop

Participants were in *general* agreement about the following:

- a) There is support for enhanced and expanded commercial nodes at Broadway, E 1st, and Charles Street - as well as Hastings Street, and related interest in seeing a broader array of shops and services available for residents of the sub-area.
- b) As noted in the *Housing and Built Form* section, there is some divergence in opinion regarding acceptable allowable heights at Broadway, Charles and Nanaimo; however, in general workshop participants were fairly consistent in supporting a very modest increase in allowable height at E 1st (up to 4-storey from its present-day 3-storey, C-2 zoned maximum).
- c) There is a desire to see existing commercial nodes replicate the character of nearby streets like Victoria Drive and Commercial Drive - i.e. via smaller storefronts, fine-grained, independent shops and services.

- d) There is additional support for smaller ‘mom and pop’ shops and cafes within the residential portion of the sub-area - though recognition that such businesses would require a sufficient customer base in order to be economically viable.

Areas of general divergence at workshop

Two key areas of divergence were noted with respect to the commercial nodes:

- a) There is some difference of opinion as to whether commercial uses (or mixed-use) should be expanded north or south along Nanaimo (from the current commercial-zoned areas at Broadway, E 1st or Charles).
- b) As noted in the *Housing and Built Form* section, there are divergent opinions as to the appropriate allowable height for commercial nodes located at Broadway (suggestions ranged from 4 to 8 storeys), and Charles Street (from 4 to 6-storeys).
- c) There was a similar divergence of opinion with respect to the appropriate allowable height at the intersection of Hastings and Nanaimo. (Suggestions ranged from “up to four storeys”, “up to six,” and “up to eight storeys”).

Services, amenities, other planning themes

Key ideas

A number of general ideas and statements were recorded pertaining to social and cultural facilities in the Nanaimo Street area. These

Areas of general convergence at workshop

Participants were in *general* agreement about the following:

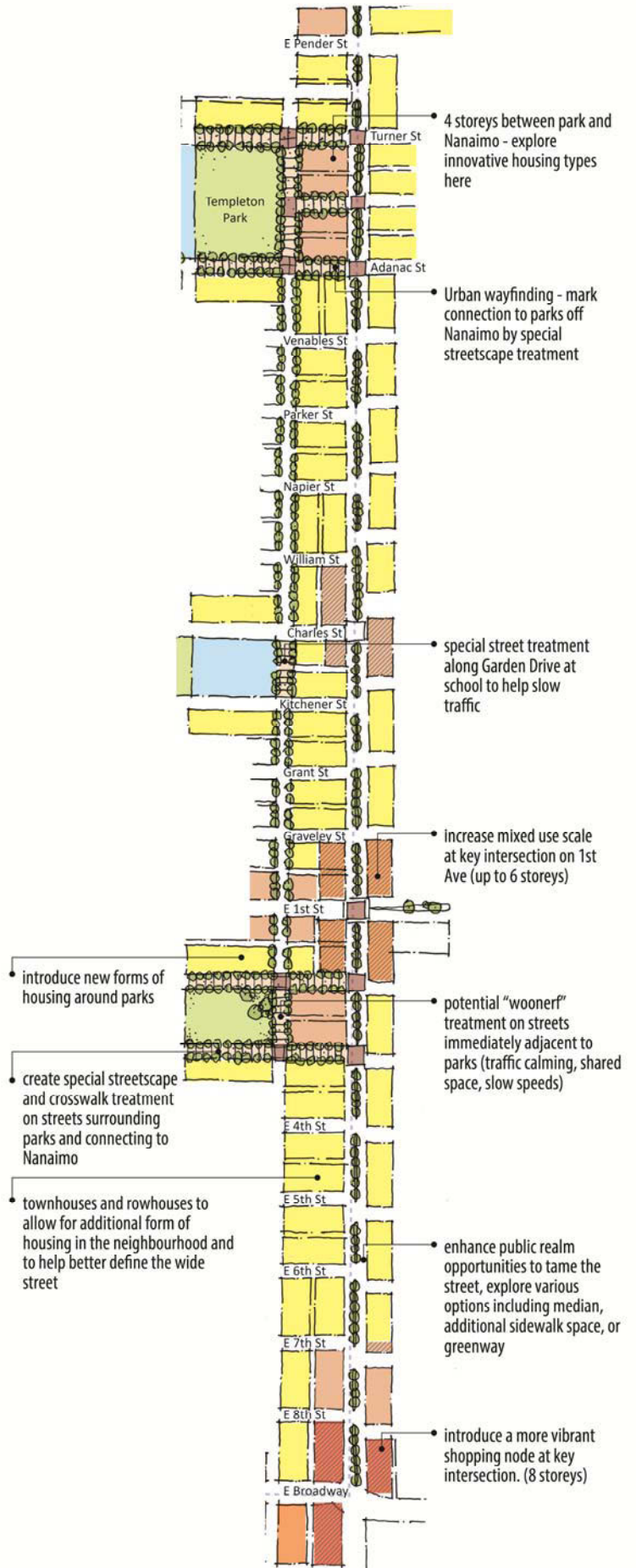
- a) Additional amenities and services will be needed in order to offset the impact of neighbourhood growth.
- b) There is strong support for the educational facilities in the neighbourhood, and concern that schools such as Lord Nelson Elementary will not be able to accommodate an increase in population.
- c) Neighbourhood safety could be supported through additional pedestrian supports - crossings and improved sidewalks.
- d) Sub-area heritage needs to be protected and celebrated. There is a need to ensure a broad definition heritage is utilized in order to encompass various types of neighbourhood history and character.

Appendix: Nanaimo Street Sub-area - Emerging Directions Draft Policies (June 2013)

LEGEND

-  schools
-  park
-  Britannia
-  commercial required at grade
-  apartment (up to 12 storeys)
-  apartment (up to 8 storeys)
-  apartment (up to 6 storeys)
-  apartment (up to 4 storeys) stacked townhouse
-  townhouse/rowhouse (3-4 storeys)
-  mixed-use (12-15 storeys)
-  mixed-use (up to 12 storeys)
-  mixed-use (up to 10 storeys)
-  mixed-use (up to 8 storeys)
-  mixed-use (up to 6 storeys)
-  mixed-use (up to 4 storeys)
-  industrial / mixed employment
-  **Commercial Drive where no change is expected**

The legend identifies all land use types located within Grandview-Woodlands. Not all types are found in the individual sub-areas.



Draft Policies *Emerging Directions* (pg. 27)

- NS-1: Introduce new multi-family housing forms along the street (stacked townhouses, townhouses and rowhouses) to create additional ground-oriented family dwellings.
- NS-2: Enhance retail/commercial opportunities at existing retail nodes - to support neighbourhood-scale shopping activities.
- NS-3: Allow for increased height as part of mixed-use development at retail nodes:
 - Nanaimo & Hastings - up to 8 storeys
 - Nanaimo & Charles - up to 4-storeys
 - Nanaimo & E 1st - up to 6-storeys
 - Nanaimo & Broadway - up to 8-storeys
- NS-4: Enhance public realm opportunities to ‘tame’ the street - and explore the various possibilities to make this happen.
- NS-5: Introduce new pedestrian safety measures (one or more crossing lights) to moderate traffic flow and facilitate easier crossings.

Additional *Emerging Directions* Policy Ideas - Land Use Map

- Introduction of new forms of housing (stacked townhouse, townhouse, row house) around parks and schools.
- 4-storeys between Templeton Park and Nanaimo - explore innovative housing types here.
- Townhouses and rowhouses to allow for additional form of housing in neighbourhood and to help better define the wide street.
- Urban wayfinding - mark connection to parks off Nanaimo with special streetscape treatment.
- Create special streetscape and crosswalk treatments surrounding parks/schools - (e.g. traffic calming/shared space).
- Special street treatment along Garden Drive at school to help slow traffic.
- Potential “woonerf” treatment on streets immediately adjacent to parks (traffic calming, shared space, slow speeds). Create special streetscape and crosswalk treatments surrounding parks and connecting to Nanaimo.
- Introduce revised streetscape typology with median [boulevard], additional sidewalk space, or greenway.