

confederation plaza
christine bachinsky

neighbourhood nodes masterplan : hastings corridor individual design

Context

A cluster of civic amenities sits just north of the busy intersection of Willingdon and Hastings including The Burnaby Public Library (McGill Branch), the Eileen Daily Leisure Center, the Burnaby Heights Center and Confederation Center a seniors day facility. All of these amenities sit to the south of Confederation Park, an expansive green space filled with sports amenities, children's play spaces, picnic areas and a elementary school. This collection of amenities is used regularly by the neighborhood and provides a destination for physical activity and socializing.

The amenities are in close proximity to one another but lack a cohesive spatial organization. The space between the buildings functions as car territory made up of wide driving lanes and parking lots. The amenities function as a place for the community to visit and use, however walking to and from the buildings can be a dangerous endeavor. It is the intent of this design to create a spatial relationship between existing amenities that functions as pedestrian oriented space. In addition to this goal the design aims to create a strong connection to the Hastings corridor that provides a safe and delightful environment for pedestrian movement.

Currently the Hastings corridor acts as a commercial wall that protects the surrounding residential neighborhoods from the busy thoroughfare. The proposed design seeks to permeate the thick wall of Hastings and draw passersby into a pedestrian only environment. Breaking through the Hastings facade provides views towards amenities located to the north of Hastings otherwise hidden by the the commercial strip. The deconstruction of the Hastings wall also provides a pedestrian only access route to these amenities.

Space making

In Patrick Condon's paper "Cubist Space, Volumetric Space and Landscape Architecture" he questions Corbusier and Geidion's understanding of space "as an ever changing perceptual field associated with the moving viewer rather than as positioned volumes formed by solids." Through my design process I intend to explore this notion of cubist versus volumetric space and examine how these two vastly different spatial understandings function in design.

Within my design process I intend to apply my knowledge of volumetric space and apply it to place making within the landscape. Volumetric space is made by the placement of solids to enclose or contain space allowing for the creation of a defined place. Defining place allows people to arrive and enter into a specific place infused with meaning. Conversely, cubist space is able to shift and change as the

viewer moves through the world. The space which immediately surrounds that person makes up the place they occupy. With that concept in mind we can envision each person moving through the world with their own solar system of place orbiting around them. From these two understandings of space making we can see how volumetric space functions as an expression of shared space or shared experience, while cubist space is derived from the experience of the individual. From this we can see how volumetric space not only defines space through form making but also defines experience as shared. From this idea the public realm then becomes a place for communal enjoyment and experience thereby placing value on the function of the community as a whole.

Public Space

In Jan Gehl's article "Public Space for a Changing Public Life" in *Topos Magazine* Vol. 61 he identifies three major points which need to be addressed in order to make a successful pedestrian oriented public space in the urban environment, protection, invitations and delight.

Protection addresses three topics including vehicular traffic, crime/violence and sensory experiences. Pedestrians need to be highly visible to drivers within the street scape to prevent injury and create a sense of pedestrian territory while also being protected from pollution such as fumes and noise created by vehicles. The environment needs to be well lit and have a variety of functions so passive surveillance can take place. Public spaces also need to function as a refuge for people to be protected from extreme weather conditions, pollution and harsh visual environments.

Invitation refers to the need for public places to be welcoming environments that invite people to walk or stroll through the space, to pause within defined spots and to sit in areas including public and cafe settings to ensure defined places for rest. Invitation also involves the encouragement of visual, audio and verbal contact that enables people to talk with one another without distractions of ambient noise or visual disruption. Public space should encourage play, recreation (festivals, markets) and provide citizens with an opportunity to interact with people in the public realm. These activities need to happen all throughout the year and at all times of the day thereby creating a space that is never deserted but always tended to whether actively or passively.

Delight addresses the need for spaces to be built in response to the scale of the human body. Spaces that are scaled to fit the human body helps to create a sense of defined

pedestrian territory. Human scaled design can also reference details such as fine craftsmanship that stand out as being special and specific to the public place. Finally, in order for delight to ensue these places also need to take advantage of positive aspects of climate such as warm summer sunshine.

Water

Current design trends that use rain water as material within design are explained in depth within Herbert Dreiseitl's text *New Waterscapes*. Within my project I propose to enhance the sensory experience of the West Coast climate through design. Dreiseitl's designs explore a myriad of ways to include water within the urban context in a sustainable manner. I intend to use storm water collection as a way to increase on site infiltration, eliminate dependence on existing engineered storm water systems, improve regeneration of ground water supply and add an element of fascination and delight within the urban landscape. The storm water collection pond and storm water channel included within the design meets the requirements and exceeds the 1 inch a day rule for storm water collection.

Resources

Condon, Patrick. "Cubist Space, Volumetric Space and Landscape Architecture." *Landscape Journal*. 1-14.

Condon, Patrick. "A Built Landscape Typology: A Language of the Land We Live In." *Ordering Space : Types in Architecture and Design*. Eds. Franck, Karen A., and Lynda H. Schneekloth. New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold, 1994. 79-94.

Dreiseitl, Herbert and Dieter Grau. *New Waterscapes: Planning, Building and Designing with Water*. Basel: Birkhauser. 2005.

Gehl, Jan. "Public Space for a Changing Public Life." *Topos* Vol. 61 (2007): 16-22.

Krier, Rob. *Urban Space*. New York: Rizzoli International Publications Ltd. 1979.

precedents

confederation plaza



Piazza San Marco

Venice, Italy

Plaza surrounded by buildings of various uses.



Piazza San Marco

Venice, Italy

Used throughout all times of the day and seasons. Evening provides an opportunity for a unique and magical experience.



Piazza Del Campo

Siena, Italy

Many opportunities for pausing within the plaza. Sitting, standing, leaning, looking, listening.



Old Market Square

Nottingham, England

Gustafson Porter

Plaza surrounded by buildings of various uses. Plaza becomes a central location for meeting and socializing.



Old Market Square

Nottingham, England

Gustafson Porter

The programming of the plaza is flexible so as to accommodate a wide variety of events and activities.



Marion Oliver McCaw Hall

Seattle, Washington

LMN Architects

Gustafson Guthrie Nichol Ltd

Seating beneath shelter area allows for outdoor enjoyment throughout the year.

goal and objectives

confederation plaza

goal:

To create a public gathering place along Hastings street that responds to existing civic amenities and serves as a location for community functions, social events and day to day use.

objectives:

social

- Create a relationship between existing civic institutions.
- Create a place that is inviting to all ages of people.
- Create a place that is active throughout all times of day. A place where people live, shop, work, play and socialize.
- Foster the presentation of art and cultural events such as live music and theatre.
- Create a room to celebrate the community.

ecological

- Create a connection to existing green spaces.
- Bring surrounding landscape into the plaza room.
- Create a space that celebrates the landscape and unique climatic conditions of the region. ie the magnitude of the mountains and force of the rain storms.
- Implement source control storm water management.

economic

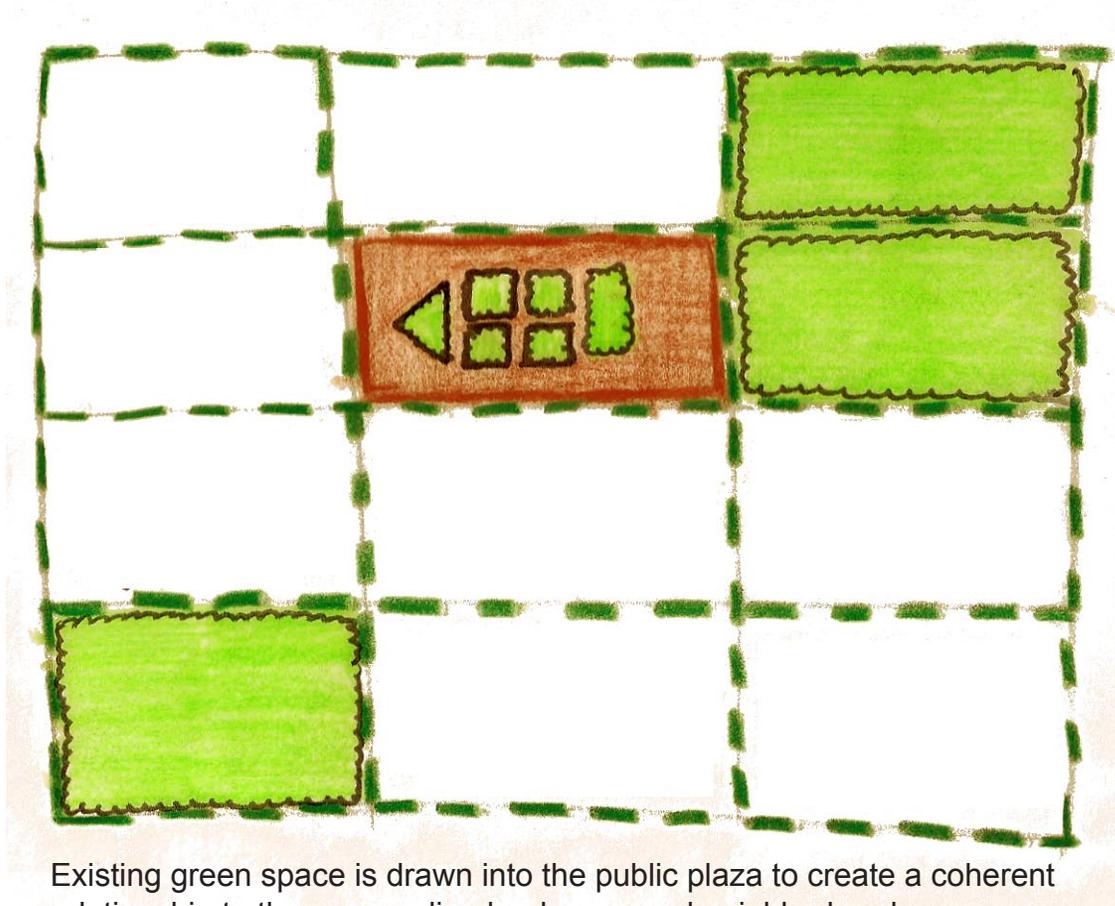
- Eliminate the use of expensive engineered storm water facilities.
- Provide a public venue for selling goods.
- Have a mixed use space that supports a diverse selection of commercial possibilities.

Let the plaza become a unique extension of existing green spaces within the community.

Within the plaza use source control storm water methods to eliminate the need for expensive storm water sewage systems. Instead of depending on off site stormwater deposition, the plaza will function as the collection point for storm water from surrounding buildings and plaza surfaces.

Through the implementation of source control storm water methods the plaza will become an exciting location to integrate storm water cleansing and storage within a public venue. Making the process of storm water cleansing and storage visible to the community will bring attention to the natural processes of the local watershed and ecosystem.

The physical form of the plaza will enhance pedestrian and visual connections between Confederation Park, existing amenities and Hastings Street. The plaza will function as both a transition space between amenities and a destination space for social gatherings and civic activities.



Existing green space is drawn into the public plaza to create a coherent relationship to the surrounding landscape and neighborhood.

Solutions:

- Source control storm water design.
- Reduce need for engineered storm water facilities through integration of green infrastructure system.



- 24 hour city
- safety and security (traffic and crime)
- variety of building uses.
- variety of housing types.
- civic centre
- public venue for events and informal gatherings

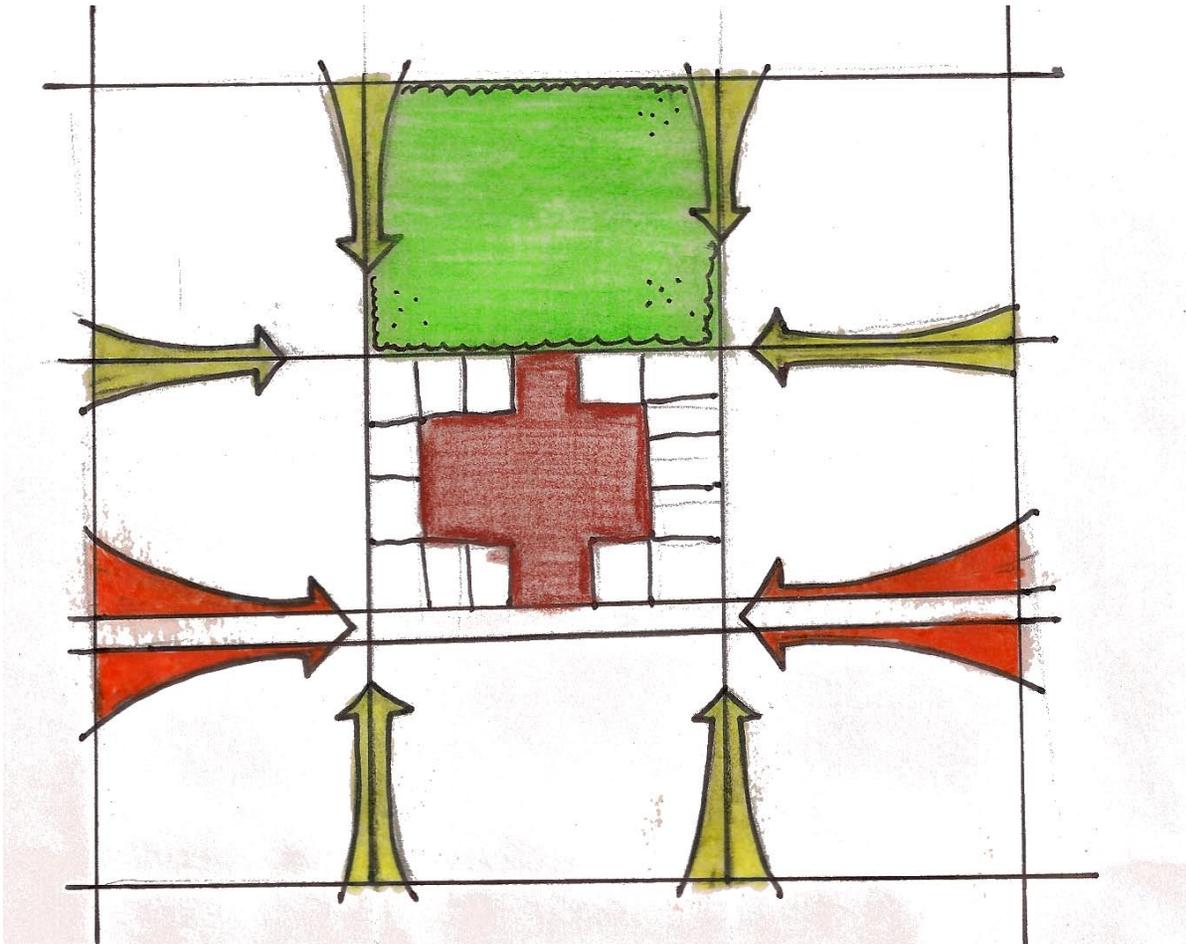
Integrate public plaza activities into daily life.

Designing a public plaza with a variety of building types such as business, commercial and residential will create a public space that is actively and passively supervised by neighbors throughout all seasons of the year and times of the day. Having people use the plaza during various times of the day will create a sense of security and safety for those who use the site. The plaza will take on the character of a community house where the citizens will always feel as if someone is home.

Activities that would take place within the plaza would range from informal social gathering to programmed events such as farmers markets and music performances. The intent of the plaza is to create an outdoor room that ties existing amenities together while also functioning as a public meeting point for the entire community.

In order for the plaza to function well it needs to respond to existing site conditions. Therefore it is necessary that a strong relationship be formed between the residential portion of the neighborhood and the busy Hastings Corridor.

Attention must also be paid to the diversity people who currently use the site. It is therefore important to make a public space that is inviting to all ages and is programmed to provide a place that can host a wide variety of cultural events



The plaza becomes an outdoor room that connects existing amenities.

Change the function of Hastings street by creating a network of civic amenities that originate at a public plaza.

The linear form and vehicle dominated structure of the Hastings Corridor contributes to a neighborhood that functions predominately as a thoroughfare for vehicle traffic. The large residential community that exists beyond Hastings is in need of public space that creates an anchor within the neighborhood.

Willington and Hastings is an intersection of two major vehicle routes. To the north of the busy corner is a cluster of well loved civic amenities and beautiful Confederation Park behind it. Though these amenities exist next to one another there lacks a distinct spatial relationship between them. Implementing a public plaza will unify existing amenities while creating a pedestrian oriented connection to Hastings Street.

Solutions:

- Form a spacial relationship between amenities and the plaza to create a sense of arrival and destination.
- Create a formal gateway between Hastings Street and the residential community.
- Let the plaza function as a spacial pause within the flow of the corridor.

Celebrate the West Coast climate and geography by enhancing sensory experiences.

The unique geography and climate of the West Coast defines the natural character of the region. It is important to respond to these natural geological forms and climatic conditions in order to make design solutions that are specific to the site. Through site specific design less negative impact will be made upon natural systems of the site while enhancing the inherent beauty of the place.

The Hasting Corridor runs parallel to Burrard Inlet and the North Shore Mountains. It is the intent of the plaza to bring attention to the natural water shed systems of the area, the mountainous terrain and the West Coast climate that sees torrential rain in the fall, winter and spring months and drought in the summer months.

Solutions:

- Through design find ways to accentuate views to the mountains.
- Design spaces that allow people to experience rain and water in an enticing and exciting way.

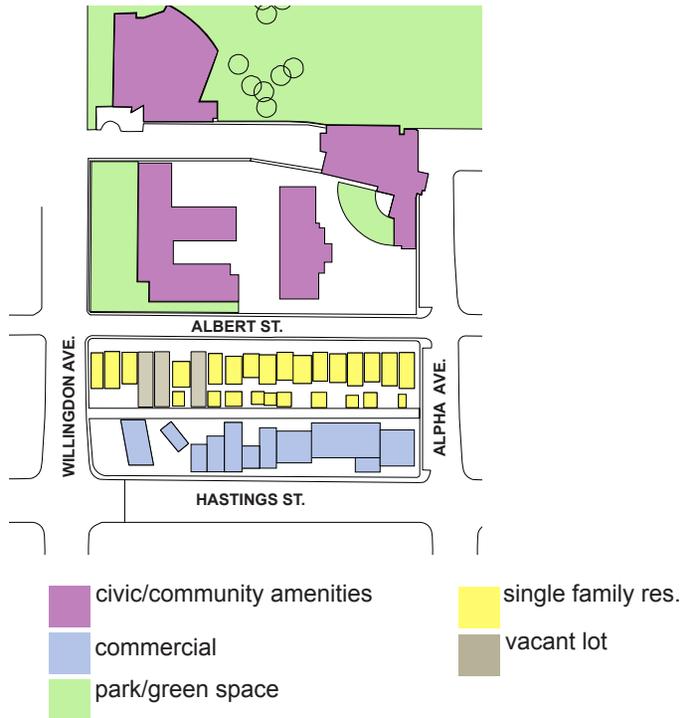


Sensory experiences and invitation for play within the landscape



Bring attention to surrounding landscape and natural systems.

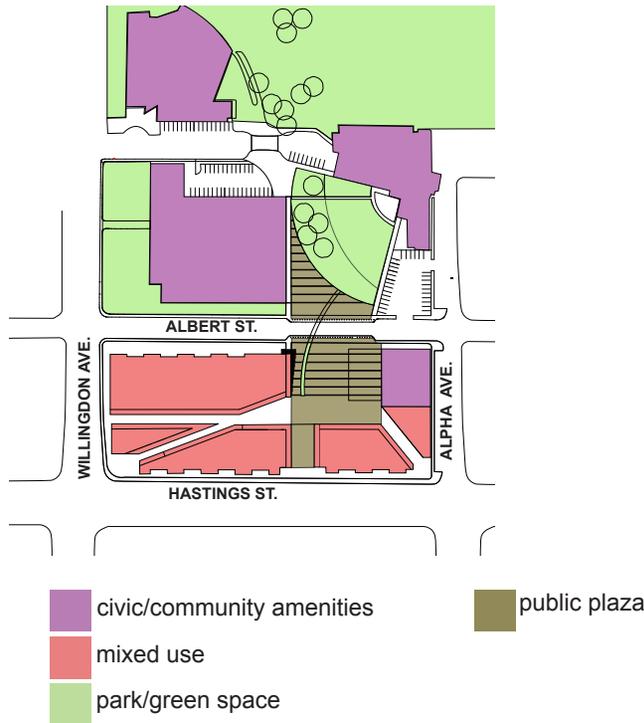
existing site conditions



- single family homes
- many well loved civic amenities
- beautiful green space
- family oriented neighborhood
- busy vehicle corridor
- commercial corridor



proposed 50 year design

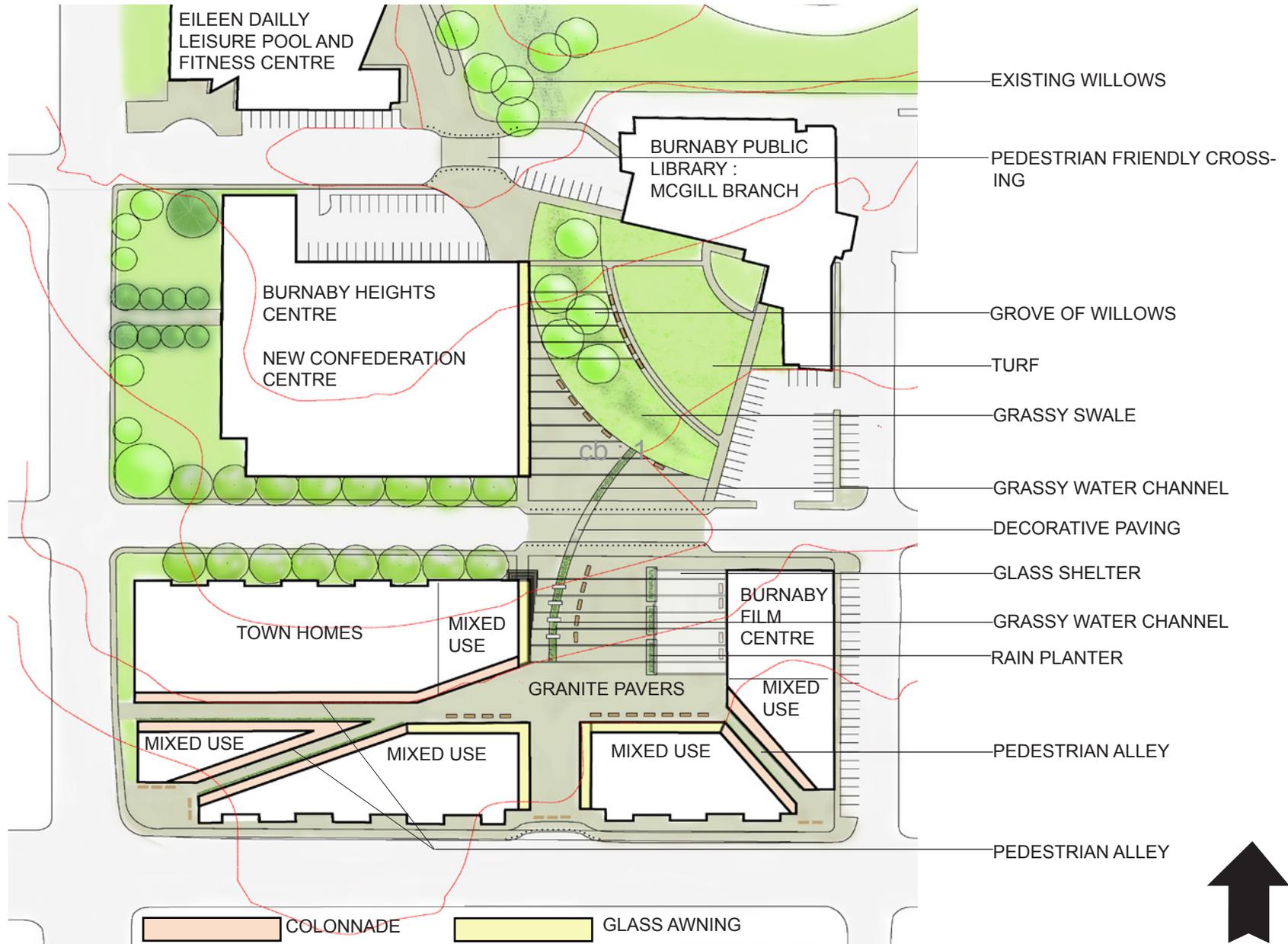


- increased diversity and density of housing types
- increased diversity and density of job types
- public plaza ties existing amenities together
- plaza provides an outdoor room for events and informal gatherings
- improved pedestrian movement between amenities
- enhanced connection to Confederation Park
- permeation of Hastings 'wall'



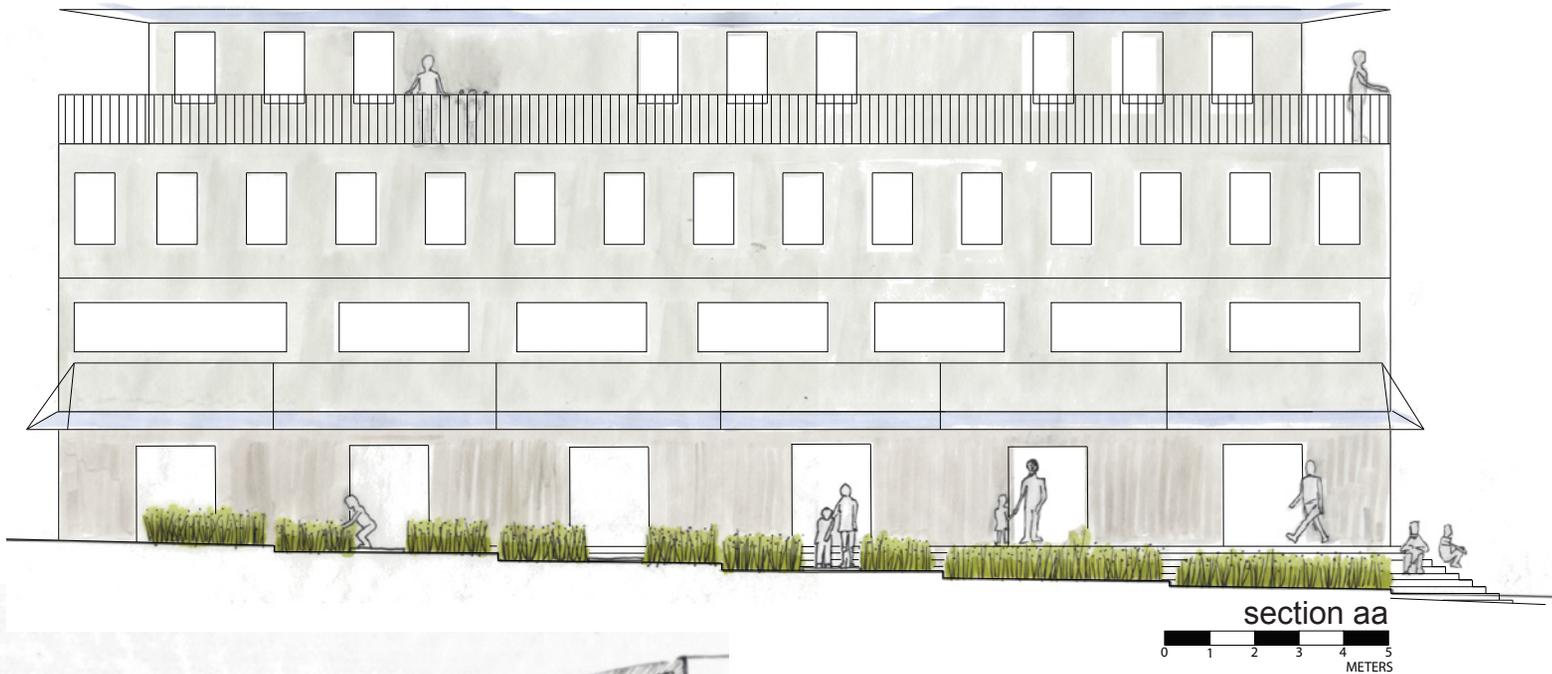
proposed 50 year design for confederation plaza

confederation plaza



celebrate west coast climate and geography by enhancing sensory experiences.

confederation plaza

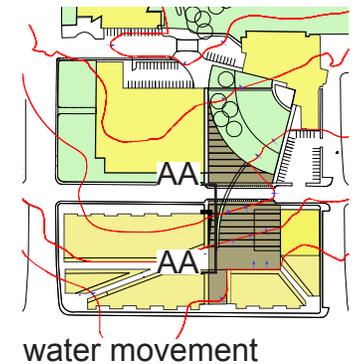


- plaza is a **collection point** for storm water from surrounding hard scape and rooftops.

- grass filled storm water collection channel **infiltrates water and recharges ground water system.**

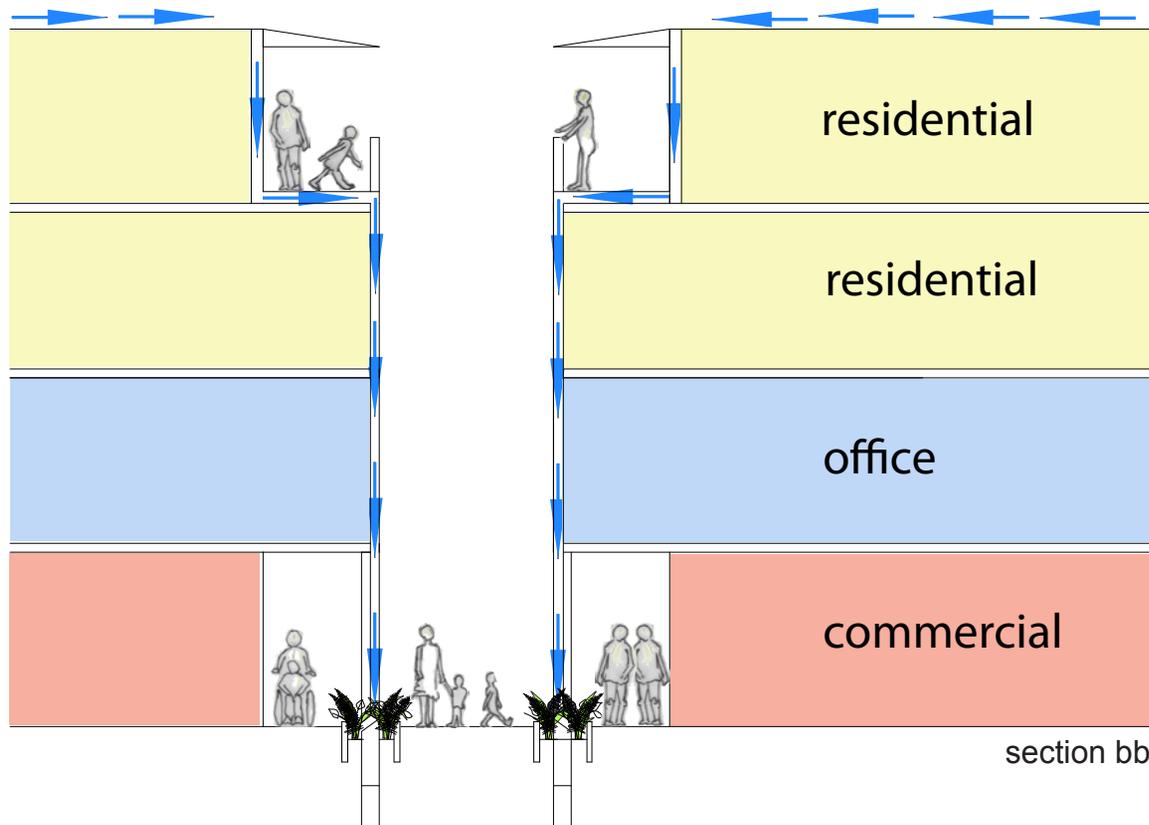
- storm water collection channel becomes a **point of interest** and activity during rainy days.

- plaza paving pattern **reflects the movement of water** over its surface.



change the function of hastings street by creating a network of civic amenities that originate at a public plaza.

confederation plaza



- pedestrian alley move through the buildings and provide **two access points** for foot traffic at street intersections.
- colonnade **widens pedestrian right of way** while providing a sheltered area from rainy weather.
- colonnade **thickens the wall** of the building making movement an exterior and interior experience.



Montefioralle (Florence)

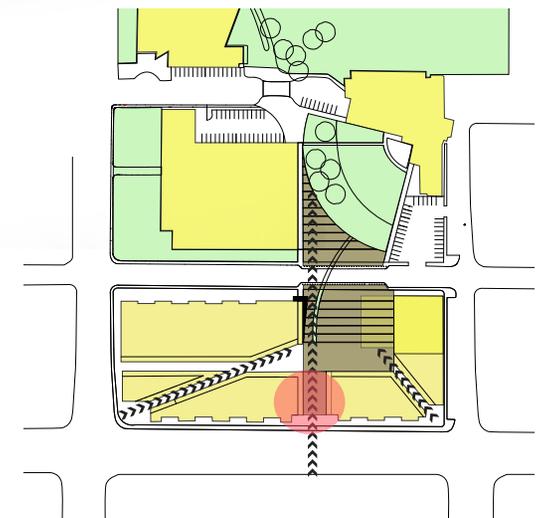


pedestrian alleys

change the function of hastings street by creating a network of civic amenities that originate at a public plaza.



- central entrance draws pedestrian movement and attention of passersby into the heart of the plaza.
- the thick 'wall' of hastings corridor is broken allowing for pedestrian to **permeate** through the block.
- the central entrance that provides views towards the grove of willows and green space **lures pedestrians off the bustling street** into a calm pedestrian only



views in, entrances

let the plaza become a unique extension of the existing green space.



- willows are pulled into plaza **extending existing site conditions into new plaza space**. willows demarcate where the lowest and wet-test points are within the site.

- design responds to existing topography and natural drainage channels present in Confederation Park.

- the gently dipped vegetated swale within the northern half of the plaza **mimics existing drainage patterns** found in Confederation Park.

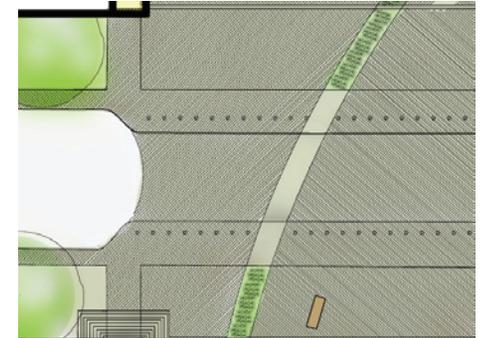
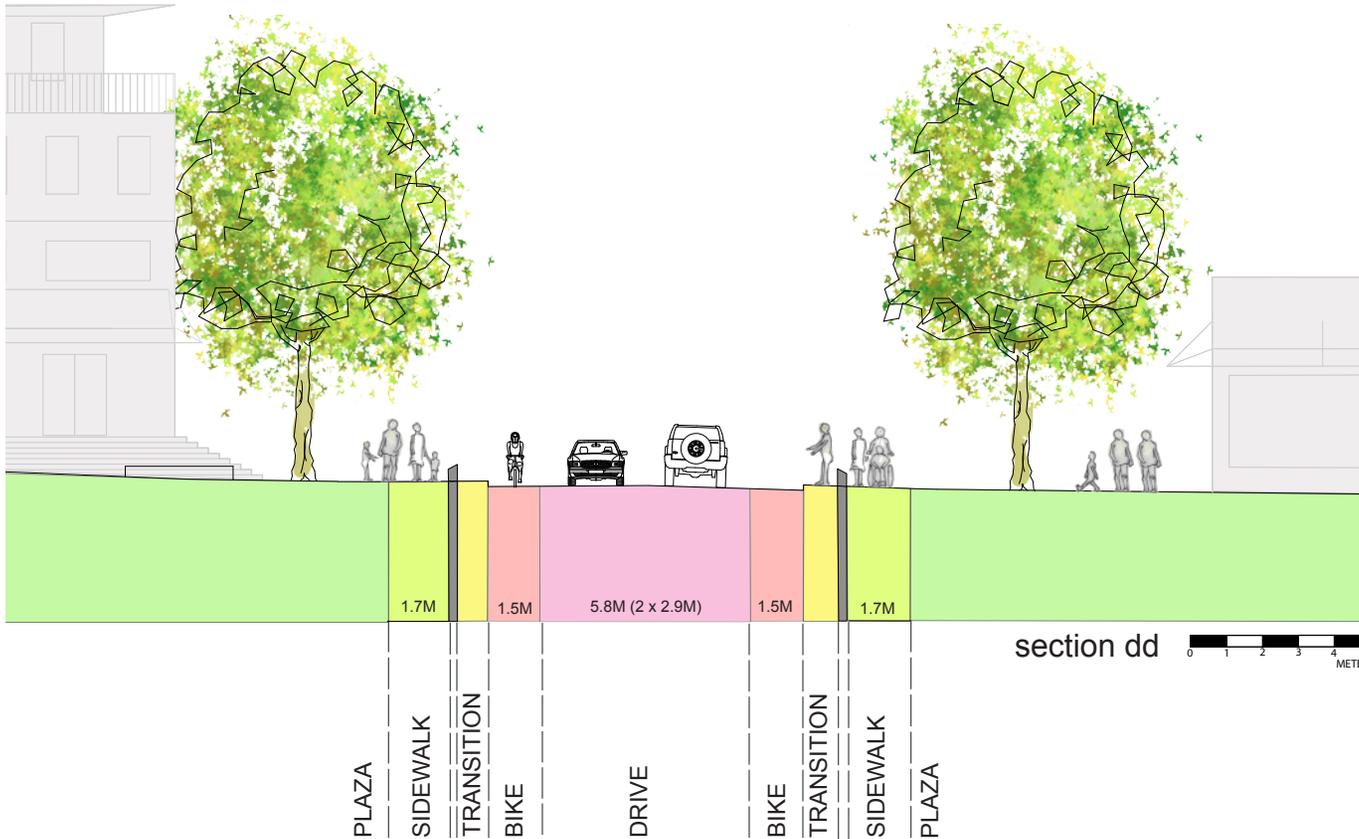


section cc

existing green space

let the plaza become a unique extension of the existing green space.

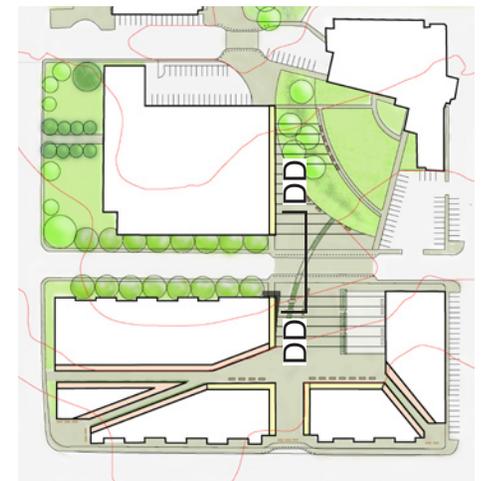
confederation plaza



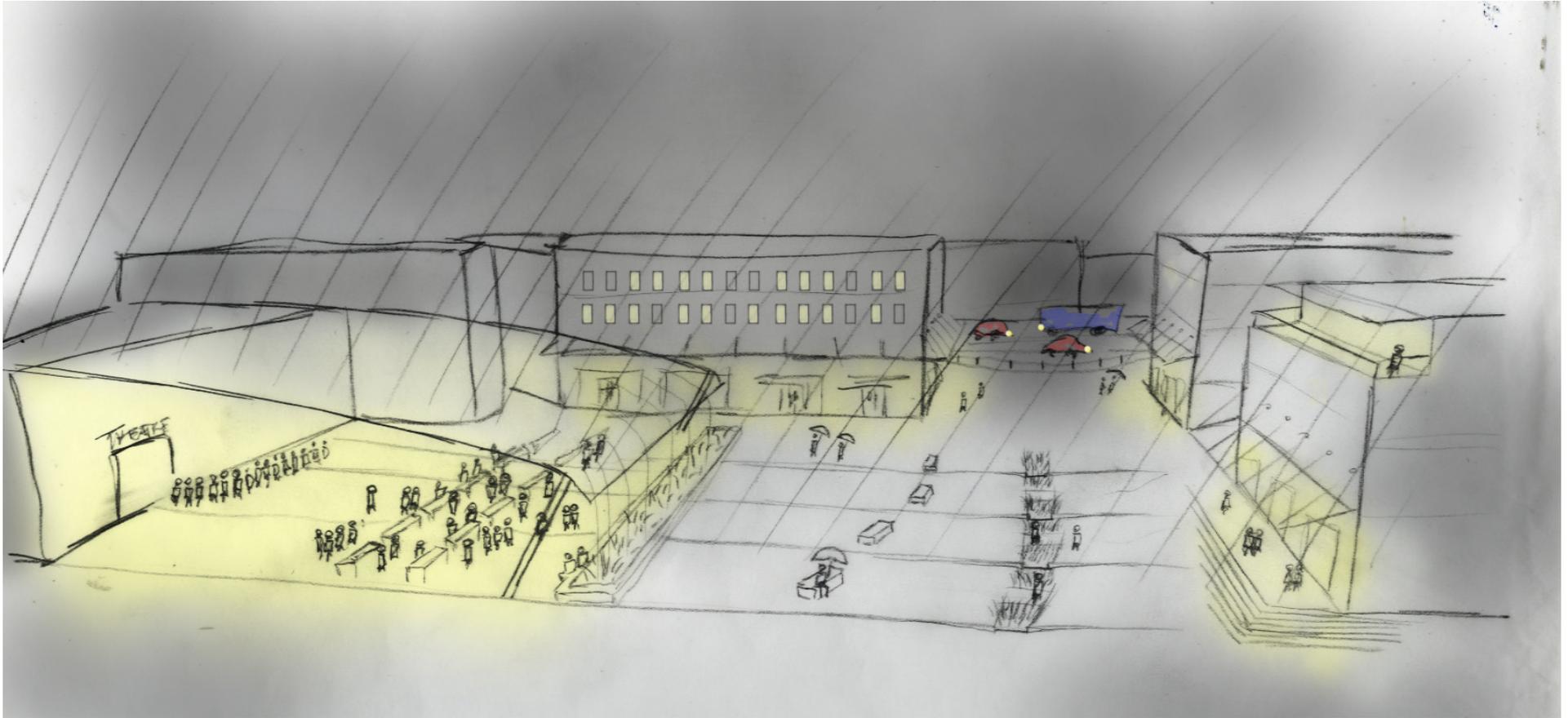
pedestrian paving



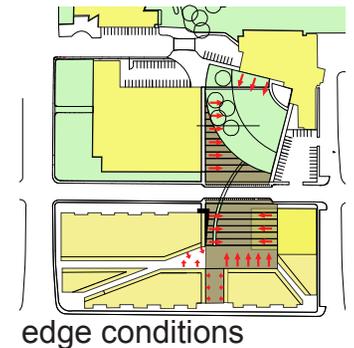
- plaza crosses over Albert Street with a **pedestrian friendly crossing**.
- **side friction** : visual indicators of pedestrian space results in slowing of traffic
street narrows where crossing occurs
- pedestrian paving across the width of crossing
- **bollards** demarcate pedestrian and vehicular spaces, alerts drivers of pedestrian space

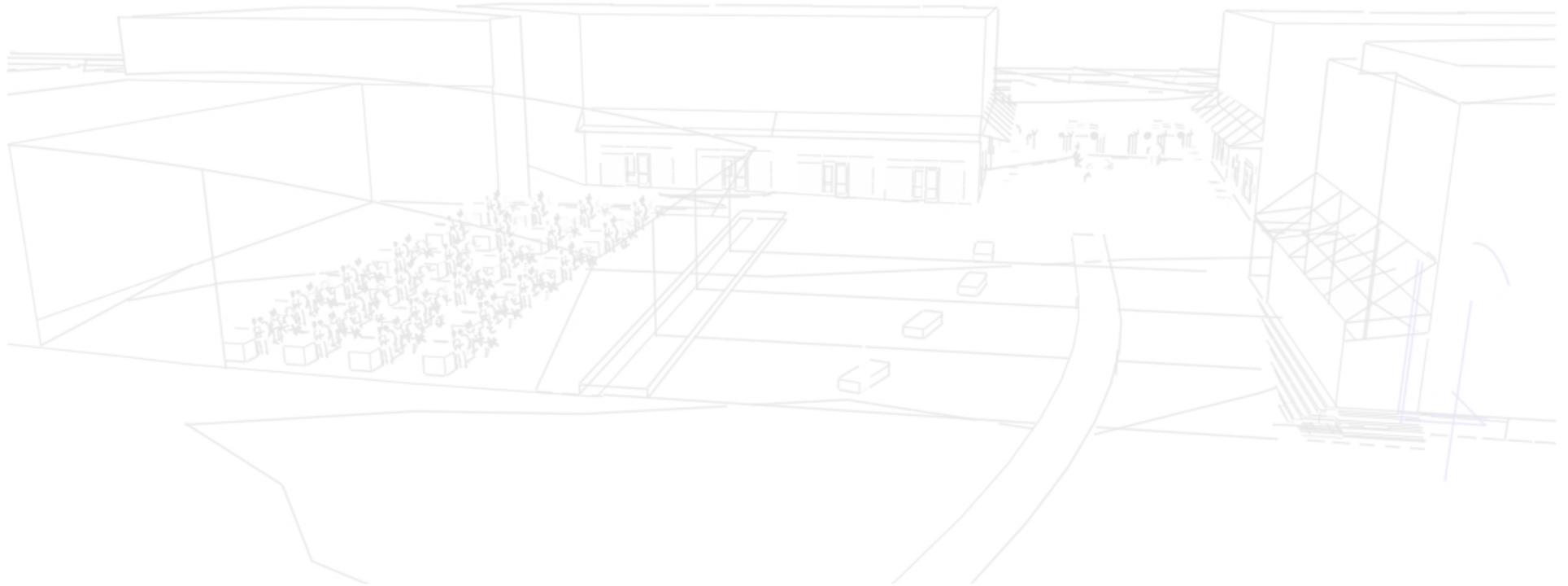


section dd



- housing located on top 2 floors of the mixed use buildings provides **passive surveillance** throughout the day.
- restaurants, cafes and the theatre provide day and **evening activities** for the community.
- the glass shelter of the new Dolphin Film Centre provides a **large covered area for year round use**.
- plaza becomes **meeting place** for friends and colleagues during lunch hours.
- throughout the summer months thousands of visitors come to enjoy live music and buy produce and wares at the **farmers market**.
- edge conditions surround the market with economic activity.





Within a neighborhood there needs to be places where people can gather as a community. Parades, protests, art events and public markets all provide opportunity for people to come together and socialize outside of commercial environments or their homes. Building public spaces into our communities ensures that people have places to pause and meet one another.

In the context of the Hastings Corridor the layout of civic amenities expresses a desire for public gathering to take place. However due to auto dependence within the community the spaces between the amenities have been given over to the car. Instead of allowing for ease of movement of people between the buildings pedestrians are instead confronted with obstacles such as wide road widths and parking lots filled with cars.

Through a different lens this space appears to be filled with opportunity for a major civic centre within the community. The surrounding residential neighborhood and expected doubling of residents within the next 50 years could easily support a public plaza of this scale.

A shift from auto dependent transportation towards walkable local living is the backbone to the future sustainability of the corridor. Providing vibrant public places for shopping, living, working and playing will help nurture the future evolution of the Hastings Corridor.