

# NICOMEKL RIVER DISTRICT NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

## NEXUS OF COMMUNITY: IMPLEMENTATION

In 2018, Council adopted a new vision strategy for Langley City: **Nexus of Community**. The vision is the foundation of Langley City's future and builds upon four cornerstones:

COMMUNITY CONNECTED EXPERIENCES INTEGRATION



A part of this vision for the future, the **Nicomekl River District Neighbourhood Plan** is being created. This is being done at the same time as the City is reviewing its Official Community Plan (OCP) & Zoning Bylaw.

## WHAT IS A NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN?

A Neighbourhood Plan is a planning document created to guide land use change, development, and public space improvements within a specific area in Langley City. This Neighbourhood Plan is to become a part of the broader Official Community Plan.

The City of Langley's OCP is a more general land use and policy document that outlines long-term goals achieved through the implementation of neighbourhood plans, the Zoning Bylaw, and other master plans and strategic documents.

Visit [langleycity.ca](http://langleycity.ca) for more information as it becomes available!

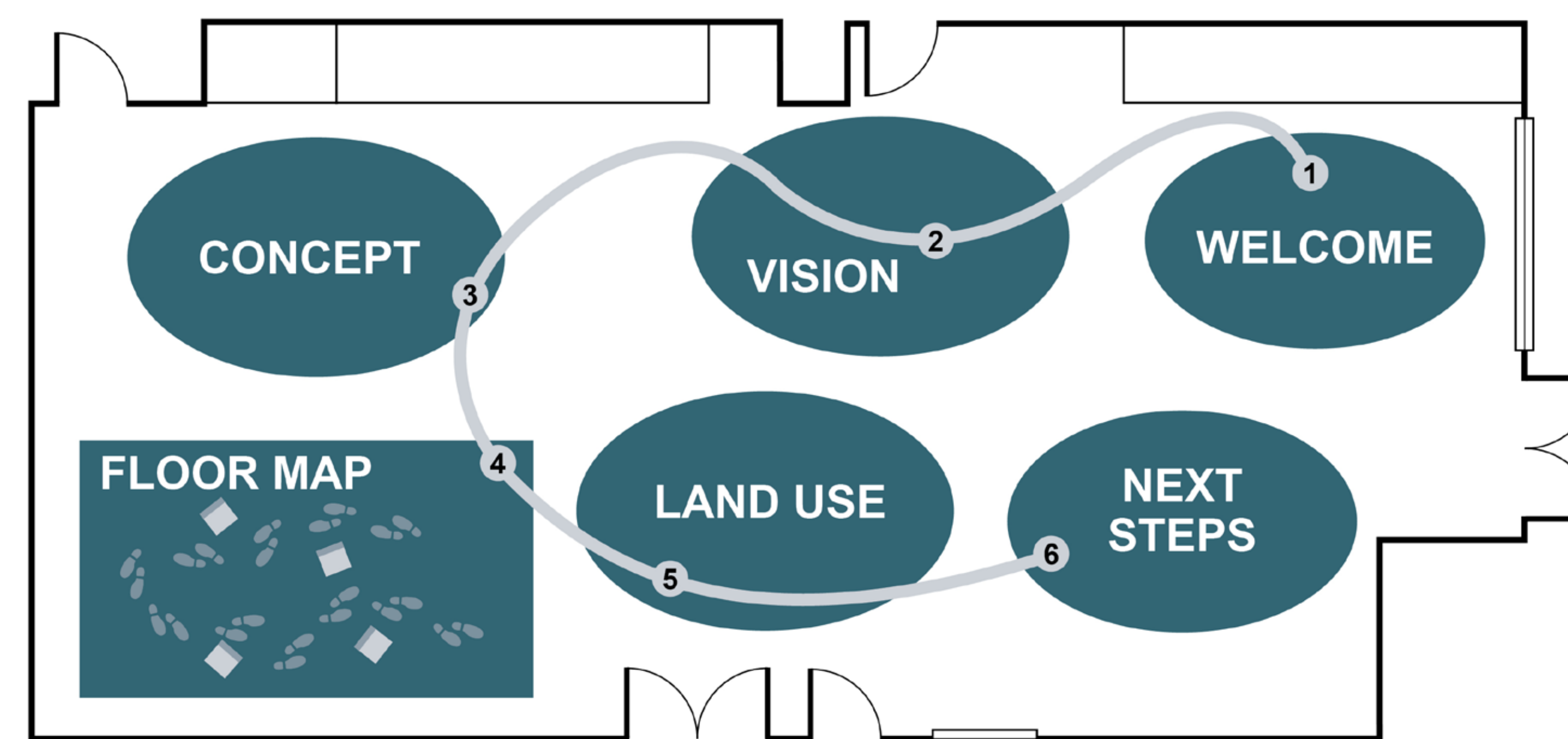
## WHY THE NICOMEKL RIVER?

The word Nicomekl is from the Halq'emeylem language used by the Sto:lo people, meaning "always flooding". As Langley City continues to grow and develop along the river's floodplain, the presence and value of this beautiful and dynamic ecological feature can be enhanced. A Neighbourhood Plan can help make the river safer, and more visible, accessible, and attractive to the broader community.

Few places within the City offer such a diverse and rich opportunity for ecological enhancement, placemaking, and neighbourhood design!



## OPEN HOUSE FORMAT





# PROCESS TO DATE

## WHAT IS THE PROCESS?

We're following a 3 phase process to create the Nicomekl River District Neighbourhood Plan and we anticipate integrating it into a new and updated OCP by summer 2020.

### COMMUNITY & STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT



## ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES

Several events and activities have been held so far to ensure we are engaging the community, with residents and stakeholders in attendance, so that the plan is reflective of their input. Once the neighbourhood plan is drafted there will be a final open house to ensure the plan reflects community desires and technical planning analysis. Engagement events have included:

- Neighbourhood Meetings
- Design Workshop
- Open House
- Online Survey
- Stakeholder Workshop
- and more!



## WHAT HAVE WE HEARD?

On June 25, 2019, residents, property owners, community organizations, City staff & Council, and the broader public were invited to participate in an idea generating design workshop. This workshop gave participants the opportunity to assess draft design principles, help shape the land use concept and share feedback on issues that matter. The following is a summary of feedback from workshop and open house participants:

### General Excitement

People were genuinely impressed and grateful for the ability to participate in the process and contribute to its progress.

### Welcoming of Change

Many felt a mix of uses and increased densities both north and south of the river in strategic locations may be appropriate.

### Recreation Activities

Participants reacted positively to the idea of an ecological interpretive centre, safe walking/jogging/biking paths, bike rentals, wildlife viewing, and community gardens.

### Active Transportation

Several people noted concerns about traffic and felt transit, cycling, and walking would need to be highly convenient, safe, and comfortable for people to use.

### Ecological Apprehension

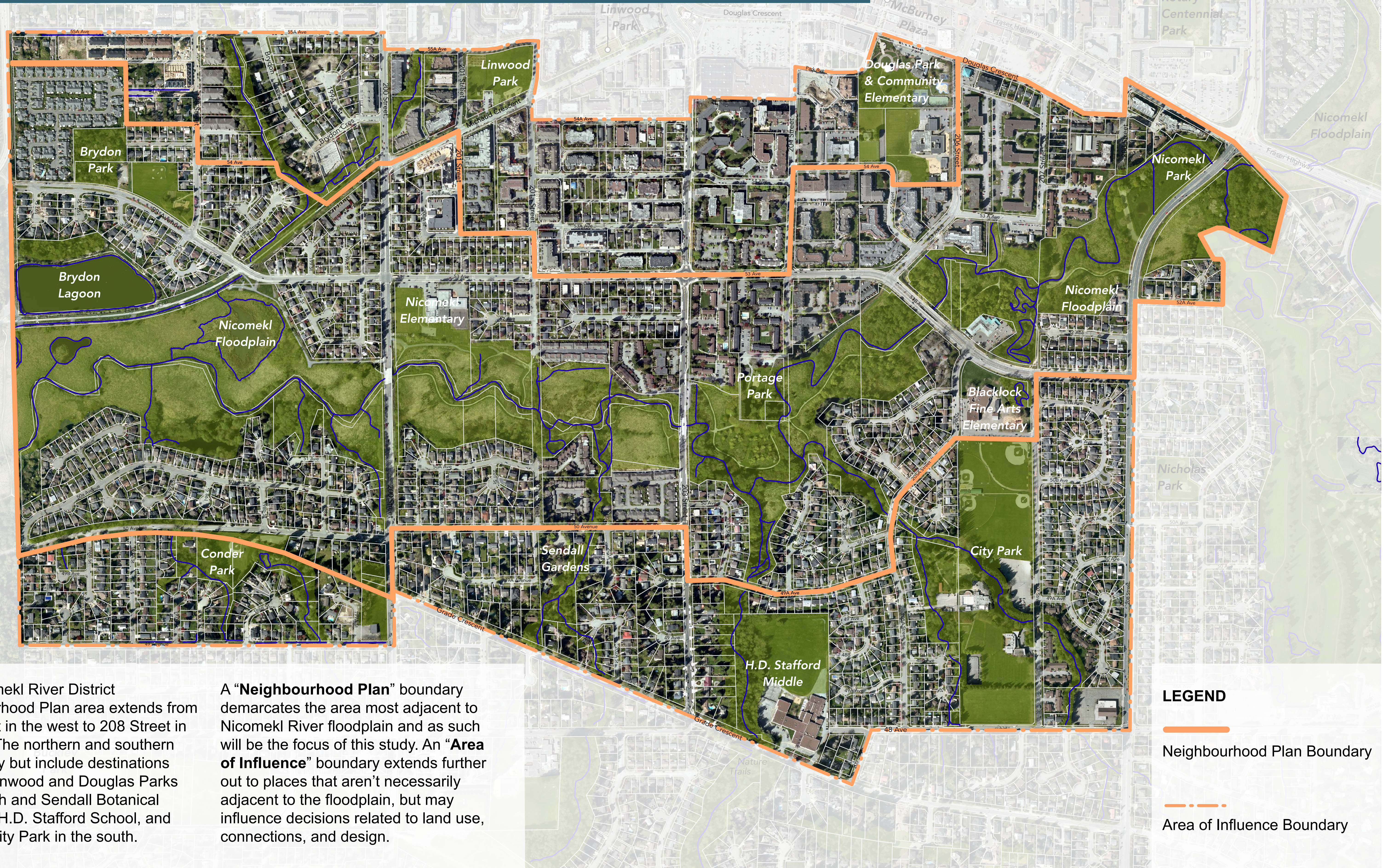
Some felt any type of intervention within the floodplain could disturb existing plant and animal life.

### Fear of Density

Some voices were concerned with increased densities in their neighbourhood and the impact it would have on the city's infrastructure.



# NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN AREA



The Nicomekl River District Neighbourhood Plan area extends from 196 Street in the west to 208 Street in the east. The northern and southern edges vary but include destinations such as Linwood and Douglas Parks in the north and Sendall Botanical Gardens, H.D. Stafford School, and Langley City Park in the south.

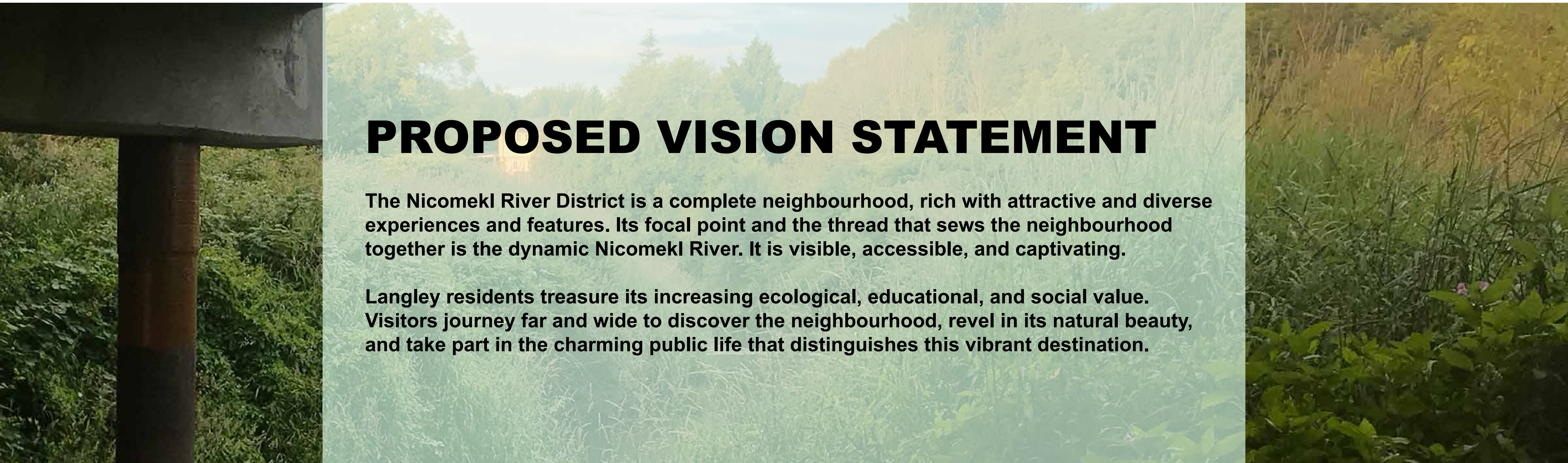
A “Neighbourhood Plan” boundary demarcates the area most adjacent to Nicomekl River floodplain and as such will be the focus of this study. An “Area of Influence” boundary extends further out to places that aren’t necessarily adjacent to the floodplain, but may influence decisions related to land use, connections, and design.

## LEGEND

Neighbourhood Plan Boundary

Area of Influence Boundary





## PROPOSED VISION STATEMENT

The Nicomekl River District is a complete neighbourhood, rich with attractive and diverse experiences and features. Its focal point and the thread that sews the neighbourhood together is the dynamic Nicomekl River. It is visible, accessible, and captivating.

Langley residents treasure its increasing ecological, educational, and social value. Visitors journey far and wide to discover the neighbourhood, revel in its natural beauty, and take part in the charming public life that distinguishes this vibrant destination.

## KEY PLANNING PRINCIPLES



### WALKABLE & ACCESSIBLE

People-oriented street designs and inviting pathway connections will make walking a delightful activity and allow people of all abilities to move around safely and comfortably.



### MIX OF USES

A mix of uses, including small-scale shops and cafes within the neighbourhood will help create a complete community. A place where individuals and families can get to their daily needs all within a short walking-distance from home.



### ECOLOGICALLY SENSITIVE

Careful stewardship of the Nicomekl River and its floodplain will ensure it stays healthy and full of biodiverse life for generations to come.



### HERITAGE CONSCIOUS

Recollecting the past and animating the landscape with the stories and imagery of those who inhabited the area prior to us will help us understand the present and provide context for the future.



### PLAYFUL & SAFE

Planning and designing for fun and whimsical play across all ages will help bring people together and foster a sense of security and ownership in the community.



Do you agree with the vision and principles? Vote here!

Yes, completely!	Mostly	Somewhat	Not really	No way!



# THE LIVING RIVER



As the defining feature of the neighbourhood, the Nicomekl River and the enhancement of its riparian corridor is central to the creation of this Neighbourhood Plan.

The boldest actions reflect the desire to transform the river corridor into a place where people from across Langley City and its surroundings gather, learn, play, socialize, discover, rest, exercise, contemplate, nurture, and more importantly, participate in community life.

## SAFETY FIRST

Planning and design should reduce risks related to flood damage (to people and property), and enhance safety for passive recreational uses within the river corridor.

## NET GAINS TO THE TRIPLE BOTTOM LINE

**ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH** | by enhancing habitat quality through the containment and management of invasive species, restoration of native riparian vegetation, and the creation of new off-channel habitat.

**SOCIAL COHESION** | by creating places to gather together and unite the City's northern and southern neighbourhoods.

**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT** | by establishing the Nicomekl River District as a unique and beloved regional destination.

## WE BELONG TO THIS PLACE

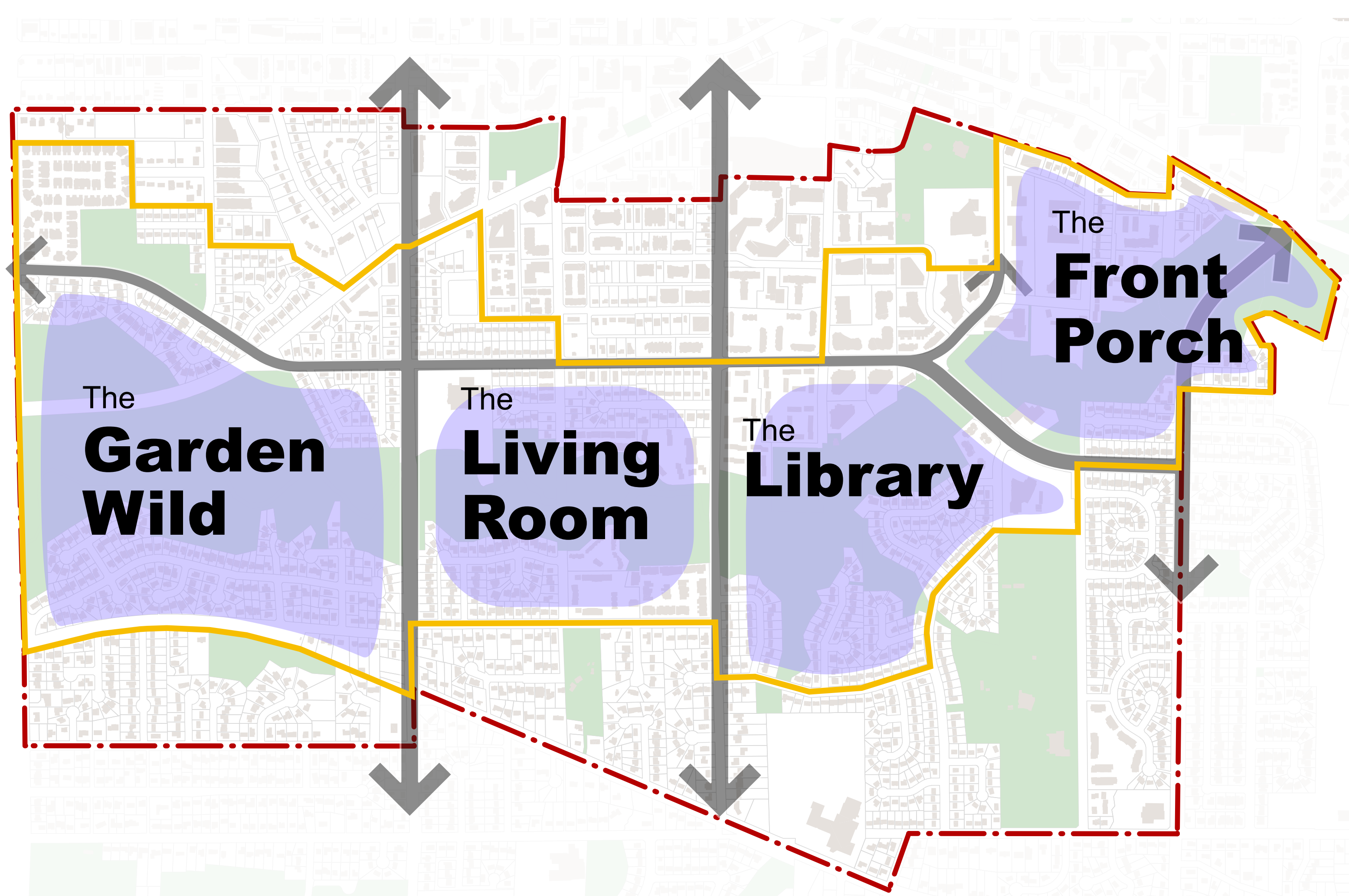
Planning and design for the Nicomekl River District Neighbourhood Plan recognizes and celebrates the people and their place within the river corridor: from Indigenous traditional uses to the portage route of early settlers; from agricultural cultivation of the floodplain to a multi-purpose recreational destination within a rapidly growing and interconnected region.

**We have shaped and have been shaped by the River!**



## THE FOUR ROOMS

The Living River is characterized by four rooms that together create a “home” for all of Langley City residents. More information on the four rooms can be found on the following presentation boards.



### THE GARDEN WILD



### THE LIVING ROOM



### THE LIBRARY



### THE FRONT PORCH

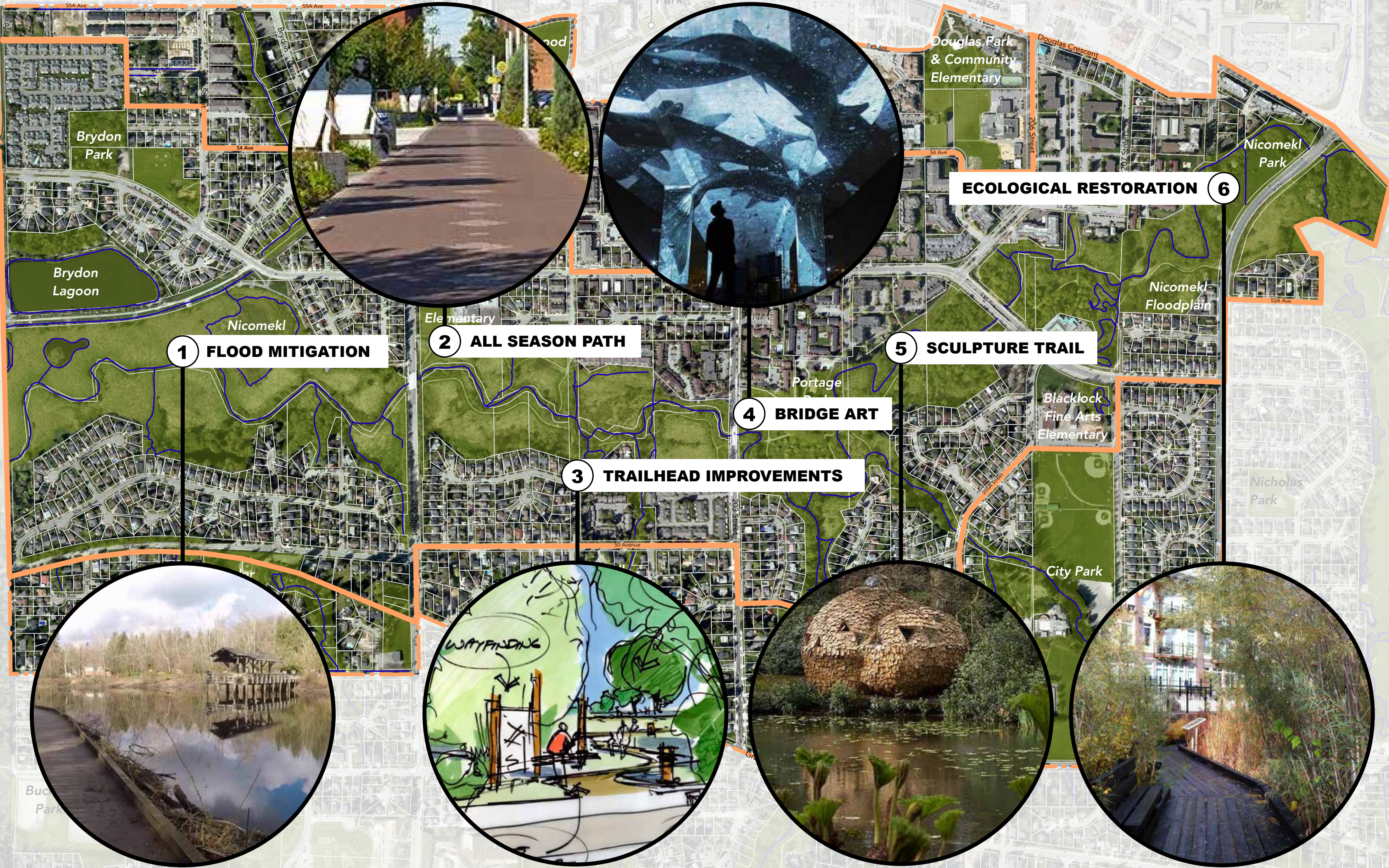




# CORRIDOR CONCEPT



## SIX NEIGHBOURHOOD-SCALE PROJECTS



### 1 FLOOD MITIGATION

Even with existing flood control measures, the Nicomekl River floods regularly. The large floodplain surrounding the watercourse is generally able to support 1:10 year flood events. However, east of 203 Street, a 1:200 year flood event extends well into existing developed urban areas.

Controlling the Nicomekl River's floods is a complex, regional challenge that cannot be addressed solely within Langley City. Increasing the amount of permeable surface within the urban area and requiring redevelopment to build infiltration systems, where appropriate, can help divert stormwater into the ground. Other flood mitigation strategies involve increased development setbacks and new building flood elevations.

At a regional scale, the creation of new retention ponds, wetlands, and river channels may also have an impact.



### 4 BRIDGE ART

Four major transportation crossings over the Nicomekl River exist within the Plan area at 200, 203, and 208 Streets, and 51b Avenue. These crossings were identified as being underwhelming and unsafe from a design perspective.

One way to make the River District more welcoming and attractive is to integrate art with the bridges. These could illuminate, enliven, and add colour to an environment that is presently cold and uninviting.



### 2 ALL SEASON PATH

As a major improvement to the vitality and visibility of the Nicomekl River corridor, an all season path is proposed along the entire northern edge of the floodplain. This path should be constructed above regular flood levels where possible. Elsewhere, if needed the path may weave back into the developed urban area or be constructed as a floatable dock that lowers and rises with water levels.

The path should meet safety and accessibility standards for those requiring mobility aids, be cycle-friendly, and it should have a consistent design palette across the neighbourhood. The path would eventually connect Langley's Downtown at Michaud Crescent and 207 Street to create a beautiful and engaging, walkable "loop" that links Langley's most cherished destinations.



### 5 SCULPTURE TRAIL

Along the various trails that meander in the floodplain, an opportunity exists to place sculptures in interesting locations to add whimsy to the experience of the floodplain.

Ideally, the sculptures would have a similar aesthetic quality (i.e. similar material palette, background inspiration, and/or artist) helping tie them all together. Discovering all sculptures along the trail system would become a family-friendly activity and draw art enthusiasts to the neighbourhood.



### 3 TRAILHEAD IMPROVEMENTS

There are numerous trailheads across the neighbourhood, each with a unique context requiring a specialized design to create inviting entrances into the natural spaces.

Including elements like wayfinding maps, interpretative signage, benches, lighting, and public art at entrances would help people orient themselves within the system of paths, trails, and amenities. Pruning overgrown foliage would provide more direct sightlines into the floodplain and help with safety and comfort. Finally, adding a small amount of parking stalls, specifically for those with mobility challenges would help make the trail system more inclusive.



### 6 ECOLOGICAL RESTORATION

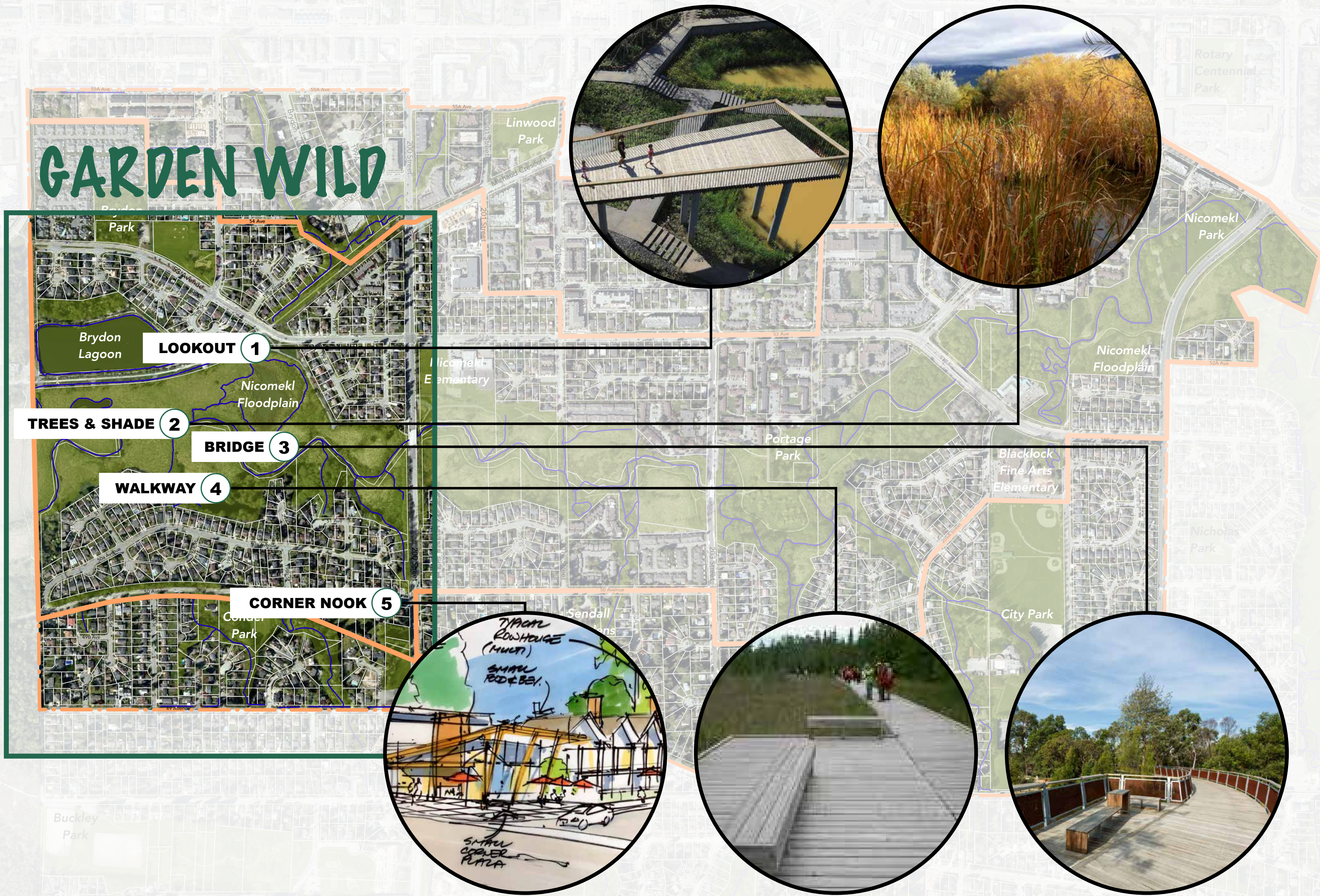
Trees, shrubs, and other tall plants in strategic locations would help shade the Nicomekl watercourse and protect fish habitat from direct sunlight and heat. This is a priority for ecological restoration west of 203 Street, where the primary vegetation are grasses that are remnants of old agricultural practices.

Himalayan Blackberry bushes are rampant in certain parts of the floodplain. This is an invasive species and efforts are needed to contain and manage this non-native vegetation and restore the ecological integrity of the River and its surroundings.





# GARDEN WILD



The Garden Wild is about discovery of natural systems and how they impact us and interact with urban conditions. Here we learn about wildlife, ecosystems, flooding, climate change, and many other important natural functions of the floodplain. The garden wild includes new educational and interpretative opportunities at Bryden Lagoon and a small scale mixed use “village nook” at 50th Avenue and 200th Street.

## 1 LOOKOUT

A lookout tower/platform near the intersection of 53 Avenue and the Michaud Crescent path would provide a beautiful overview of the ecological restoration projects, and trail systems. It would act as a landmark, identifying the entrance into the floodplain and its various trails and paths.



## 2 TREES & SHADE

Trees, shrubs, and other tall vegetation forms in strategic locations would help shade the Nicomekl watercourse and protect fish habitat from direct sunlight and heat. This is a priority for ecological restoration west of 203 Street, where grass expanses are remnants of old agricultural practices.



## 3 BRIDGE

The Garden Wild is the only of the four rooms that doesn't presently have a pedestrian bridge crossing the Nicomekl River. To increase connectivity between the north and south of the City, a new bridge is proposed leading from the **Lookout** to the **Walkway** along the floodplain's southern edge. Environmental impact will be assessed.



## 4 WALKWAY

Along the southern edge of the Garden Wild, no path currently exists. To increase connectivity in this area a walkway is proposed that would meander along the urban edge. It is intended to be slightly elevated from the grasses, wetlands, and other floodplain features to minimize impacts on wildlife habitat.



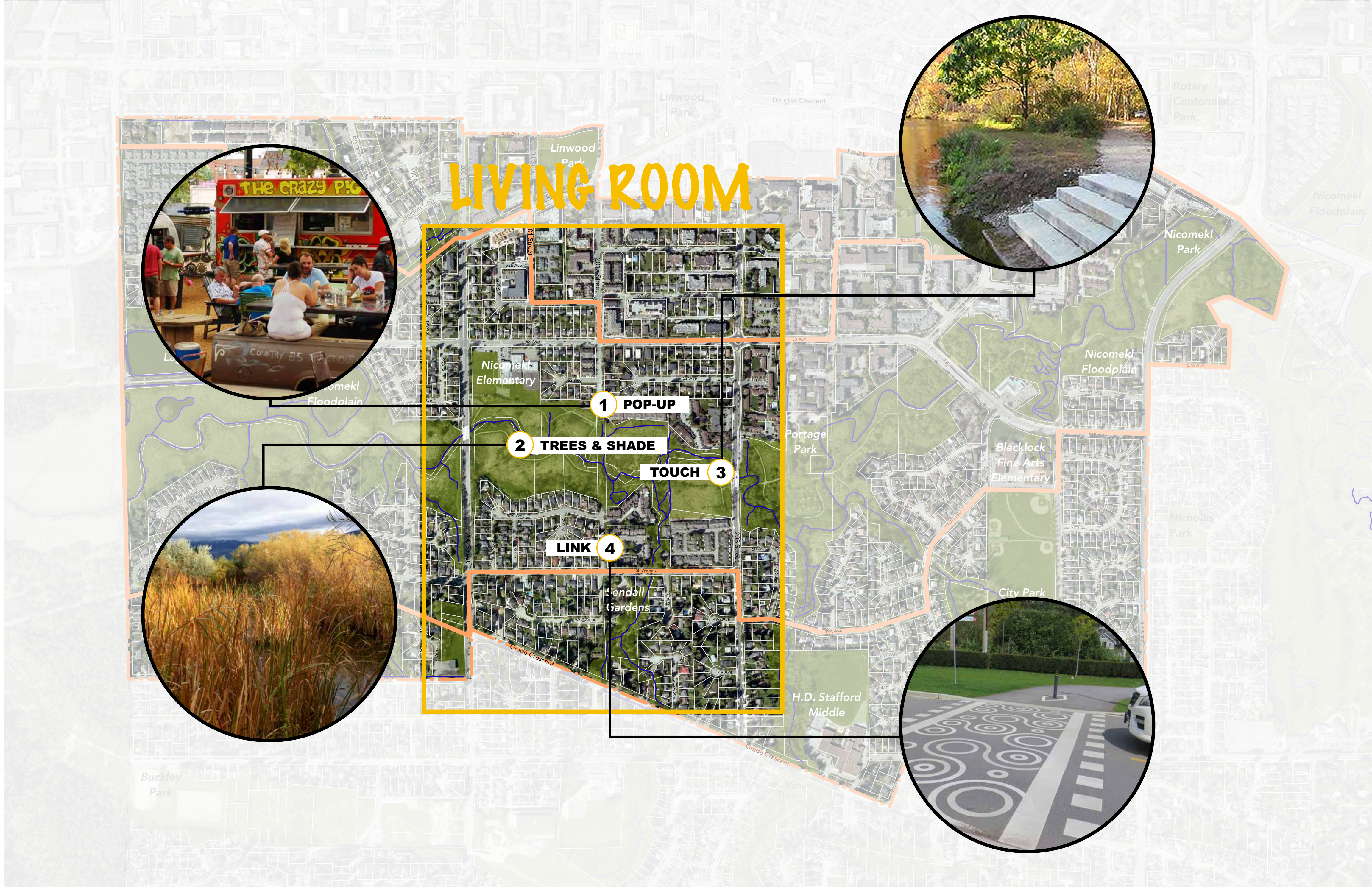
## 5 CORNER NOOK

Several properties at the corner of 200 Street and 50 Avenue are owned by the City and could be developed into a neighbourhood amenity as a small corner retail shop and/or live-work opportunity. This gentle land use intervention would help bring a much needed commercial destination to an area lacking in walkability.





# LIVING ROOM



The Living Room is a place to socialize between friends, families, neighbours, and colleagues. It's an inviting place, vibrant with strong public spaces designed to bring people together and closer to the water. Here, people share stories, play cards, and relax in a comforting and peaceful atmosphere. The living room includes an opportunity for "Pop-up" activities (such as food trucks) on the northern edge of the floodplain at 201a Street. It connects Linwood Park to Sendall Gardens and beyond.

## 1 POP-UP

Near the end of 201a Street, an opportunity exists to incorporate a small or mobile vendor in the form of a seasonal cafe or ice cream shop. It would add a rest stop along the **All Season Path** and make the eventual **Link** to Sendall Gardens even more attractive.



## 2 TREES & SHADE

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## 3 TOUCH

People have a natural inclination and desire to be near water. The Nicomekl River - as a peaceful and meandering water feature - will attract visitors who'll want to get up close and personal, regardless if there's formal access or not.



## 4 LINK

South of the Nicomekl, along 201a Street, there is an opportunity to redesign the right-of-way and include a more attractive pedestrian environment. This would increase the visibility of the Sendall Gardens and establish a formal link from the Nicomekl floodplain to Simonds Elementary and the Hydro corridor.







The Library is all about cultural discovery, where our heritage is put front and centre. It is a place of activity and storytelling that reveals the history of the watercourse and its surrounding landscapes. Here, we gain an appreciation of the Nicomekl and its rich contributions to human life in the Fraser Valley. The library includes Portage Park, Michaud House, and connections to City Park. A large new village development takes advantage of these adjacent public amenities and enlivens the area into a strong destination.

1 VILLAGE

The Village is a place where people gather. Potential redevelopment adjacent to Portage Park would lead to a vibrant, mixed-use, transit-oriented, and walkable area. With shops and cafes next to the park and improved connections and public realm design, a focus on heritage is essential.



2 DISCOVERY

The historic Michaud House presents a great opportunity to be the foundation for several cultural pavilions within the Library, linked by the Nicomekl trails, all within short distance of one another, and each telling the stories that make this area unique and special.



3 ADVENTURE PLAY

Near or within Portage Park, an engaging and interactive play structure would blend into the natural surroundings and landscape. The structures would prioritize children's play and adventure with physically challenging structures and facilities. Learning about nature and wildlife would occur through interpretative elements.



4 INTERPRETATION

Telling the story of the Indigenous people who inhabited this area for millenia, and still do, is important. As is the story of early settlers and their use of the watercourse. Adding interpretative and story-telling signage throughout Portage Park would enhance local & historical knowledge for residents and visitors alike.



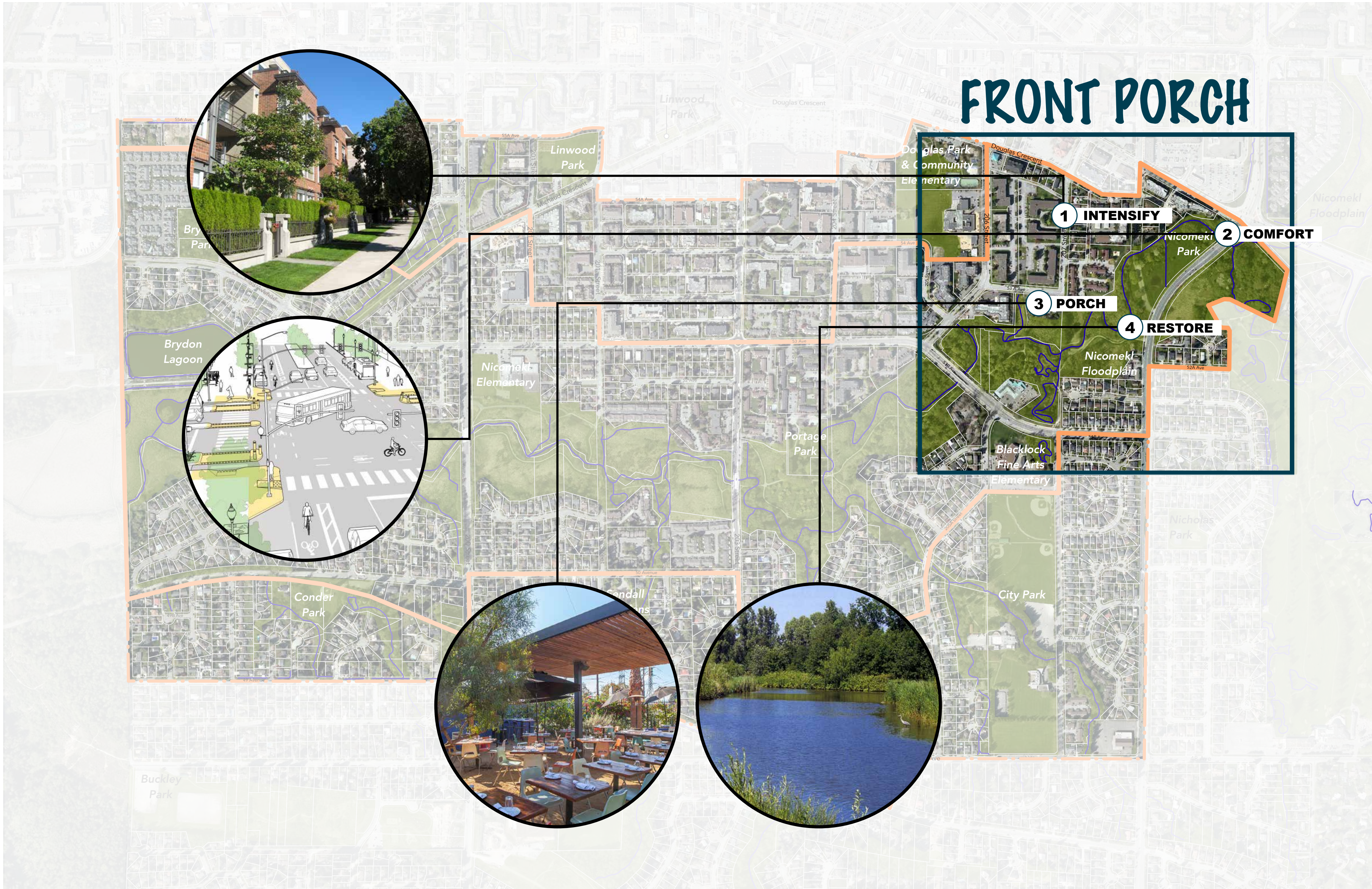
5 RESTORE

Himalayan Blackberry bushes are rampant in certain parts of the floodplain. This is an invasive species and efforts are needed to contain and manage this non-native vegetation and restore the ecological integrity of the River and its surroundings.





# FRONT PORCH



The Front Porch is defined by direct entry into the river corridor. It presents a “friendly face” to the outside world, and is a place that draws visitors in. Within the River District, the front porch provides a beautiful and welcoming vista into the larger sequence of spaces. The front porch includes a major intersection redesign (Fraser Highway and 208 Street) and provides access from the downtown core to the river corridor from Douglas Park.

## 1 INTENSIFY

The density maximums along 207 Street from Douglas Crescent to 53A Avenue could be increased to create an attractive and inviting street corridor that draws people from Downtown Langley. 207 Street is seen as the connection for the **All Season Path** “loop” and redevelopment here would enable its construction.



## 3 PORCH

As the gateway to the Nicomekl, the City-owned property on 53A Avenue has redevelopment potential. The plan envisions a community and cultural destination with retail and a patio overlooking the Nicomekl River. Enhanced streetscaping and wayfinding will improve the connection to Douglas Park.



## 2 COMFORT

The intersection of Fraser Highway at 208 Street is large, busy, and intimidating for pedestrians and cyclists. It's also a barrier for further trail connections to the Derek Doubleday Arboretum and beyond. The plan proposes redesigning the intersection and greening 208 Street (ie. street trees, cycling facilities) to improve the comfort and safety for those using active transportation modes in the area.



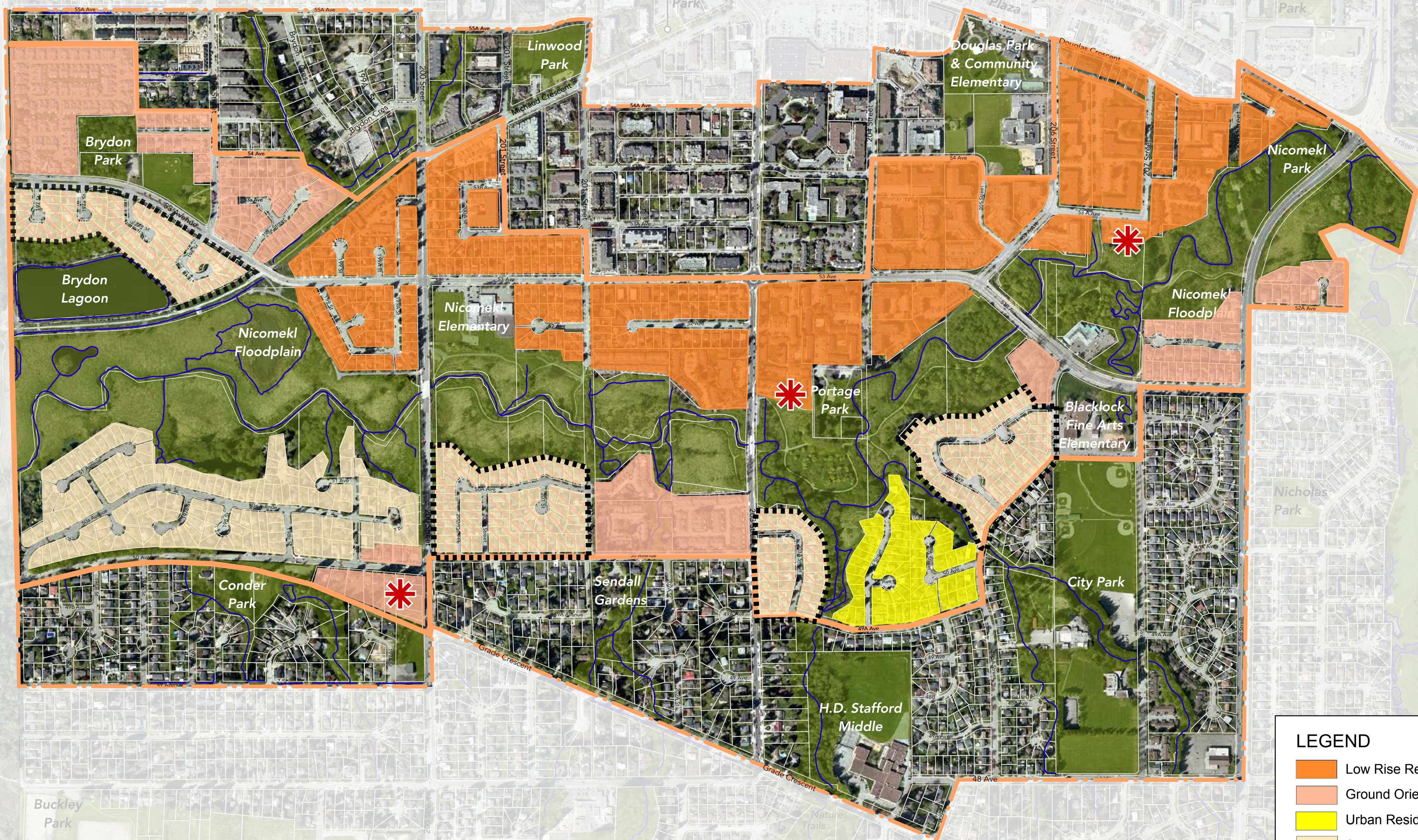
## 4 RESTORE







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# LAND USE CONCEPT



LEGEND	
	Low Rise Residential
	Ground Oriented
	Urban Residential
	Suburban
	Potential Study Area for Ground Oriented
	Retail Node

To achieve many of the major objectives of the neighbourhood plan, targeted redevelopment is essential.

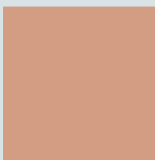
When a property redevelops it allows us to ask developers for important improvements and funding, such as:

- ★ **greater setbacks and buffers from the floodplain for flood protection**
- ★ **Community Amenity Contributions that help pay for new neighbourhood amenities like the ones noted in the proposed concept**
- ★ **new streets, bike lanes, sidewalks, and other transportation infrastructure to help improve connectivity and ease congestion**



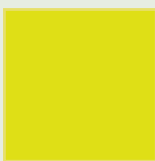
## Low Rise Residential

- Mix of low rise apartments & ground oriented buildings
- Ground oriented along Nicomekl floodplain
- 3-6 storeys



## Ground Oriented

- Townhomes and du-tri-four-plexes Max 3 storeys
- **Potential study areas** are conceptual and require further review prior to changing existing OCP land use



## Urban Residential

- Single detached form with potential for gentle infill
- Secondary accessory units (garden suites, coach homes)



## Suburban

- Single detached homes

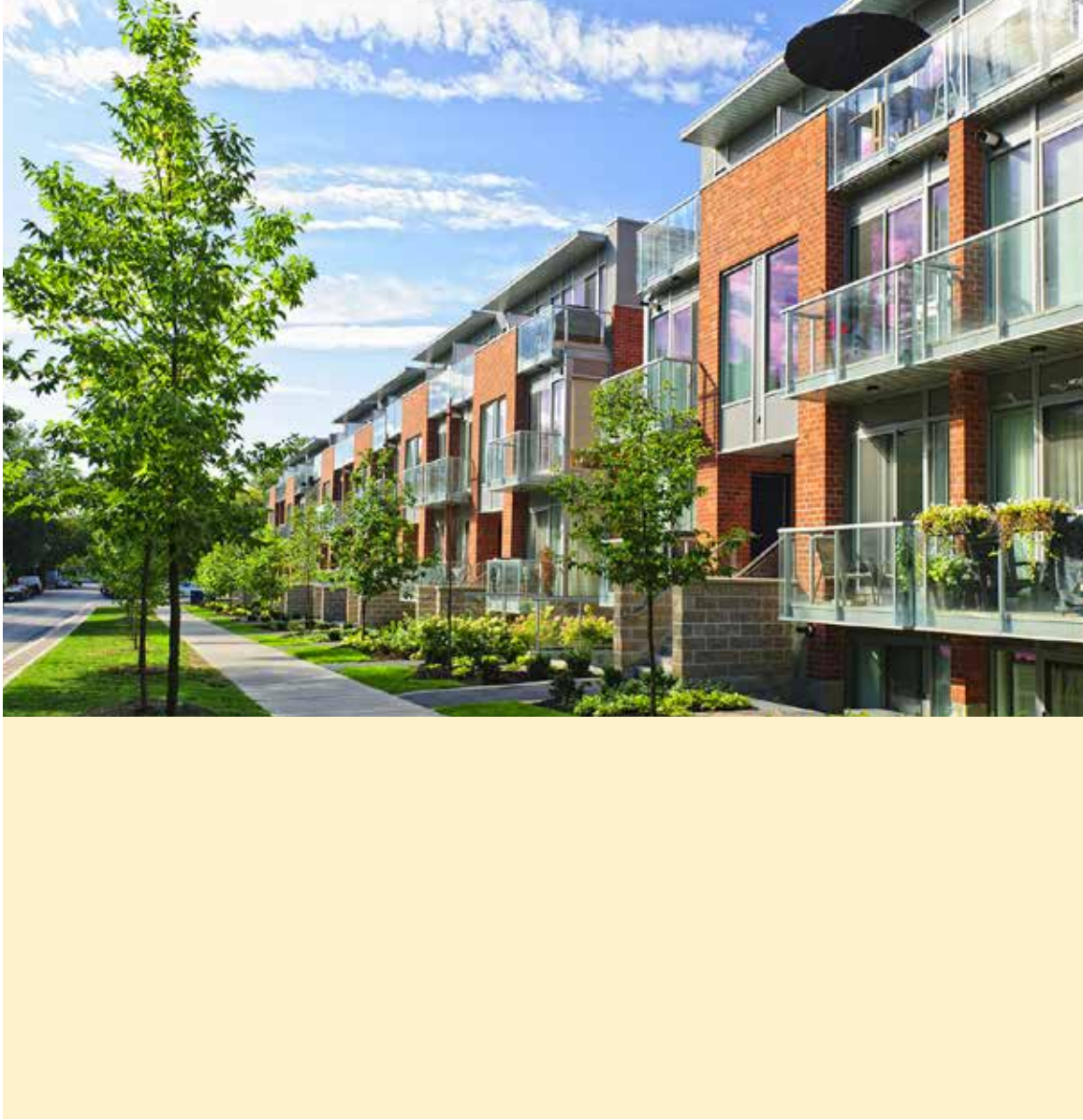


# FORM & CHARACTER

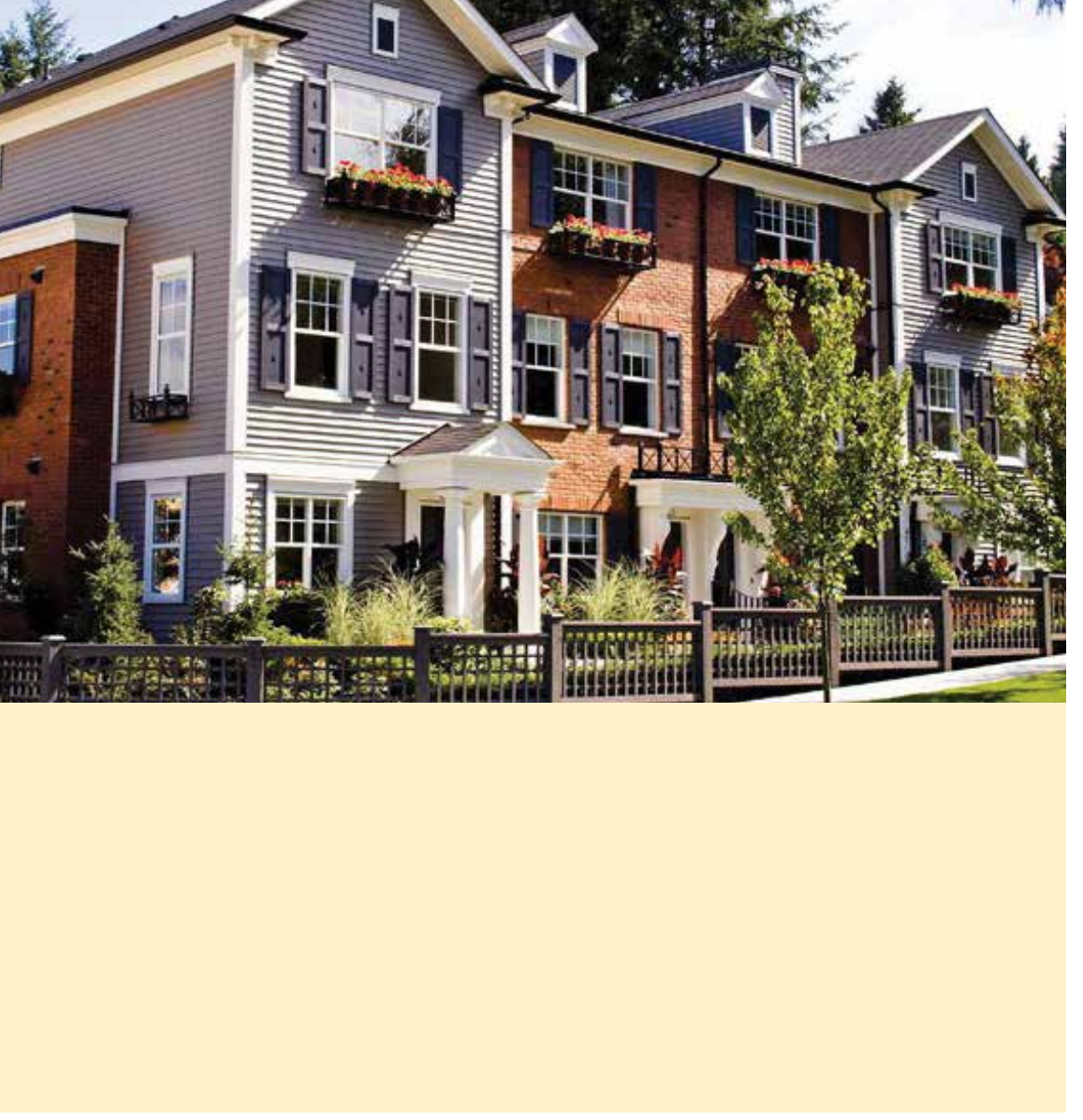
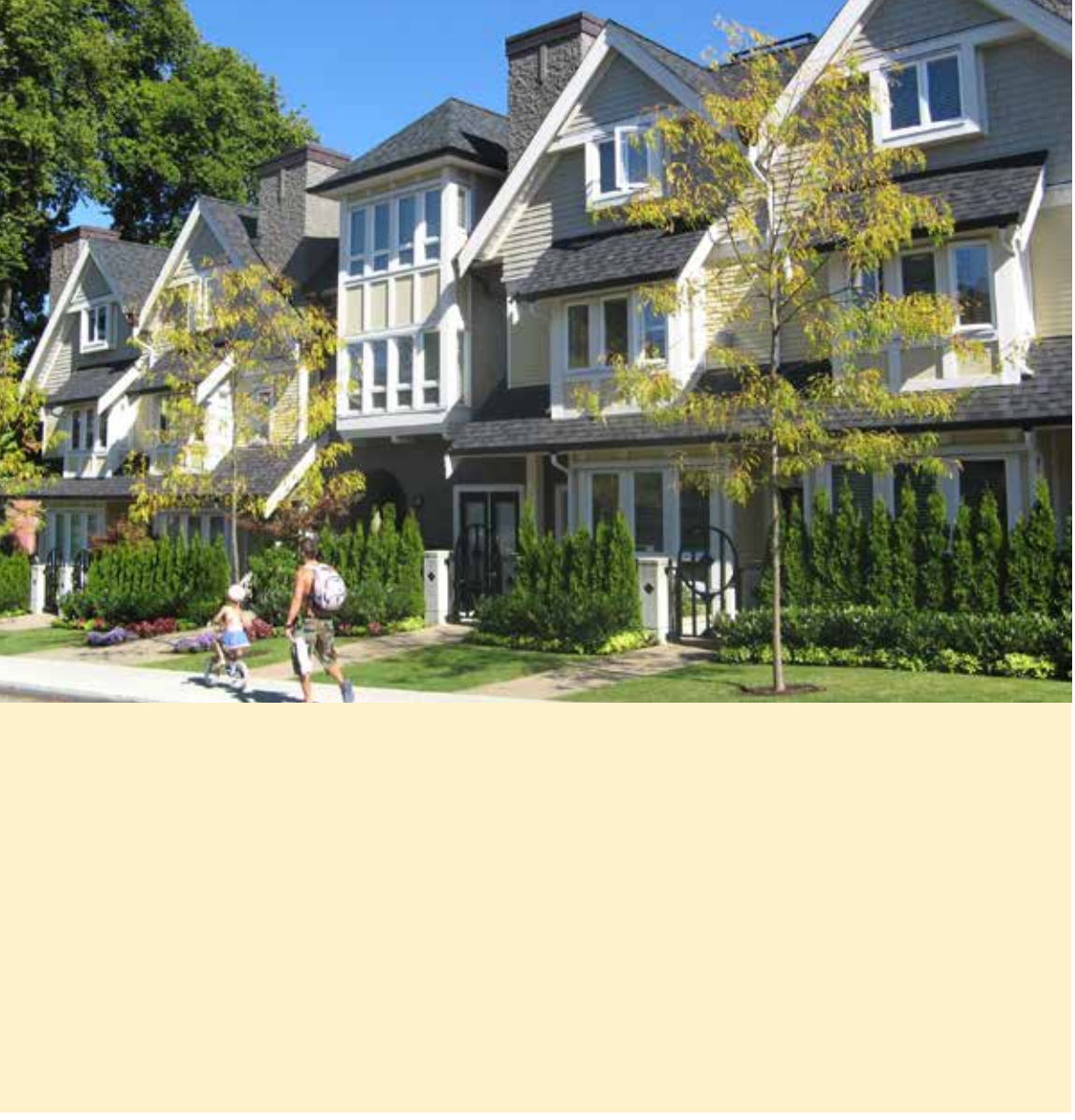


Through Form & Character Guidelines in the Neighbourhood Plan, we can influence the look and feel of multi-family buildings, landscaping, and amenities. Place a dot under the image you prefer and the results of this preference survey will help us craft guidelines for projects in the Nicomekl River District.

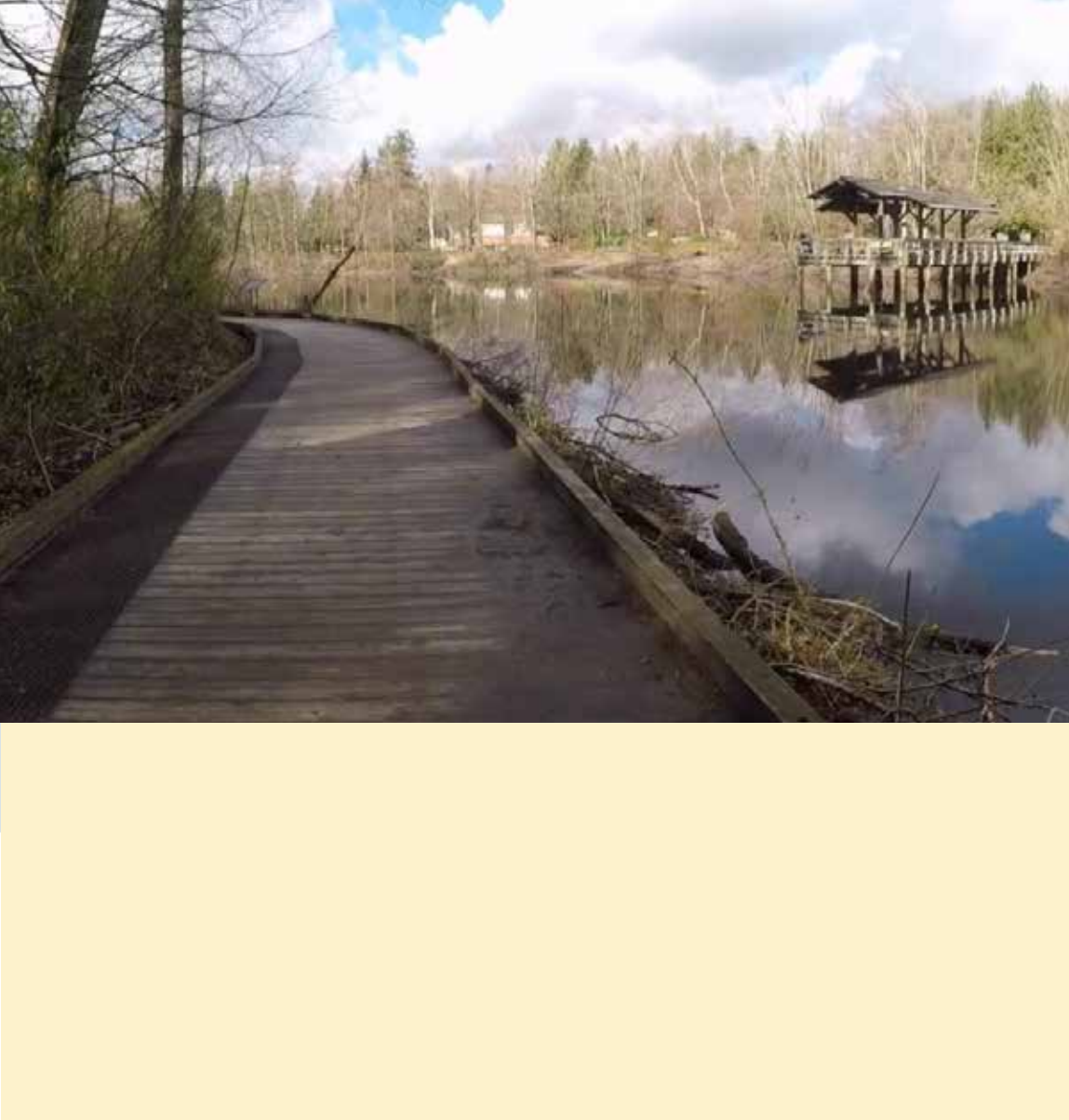
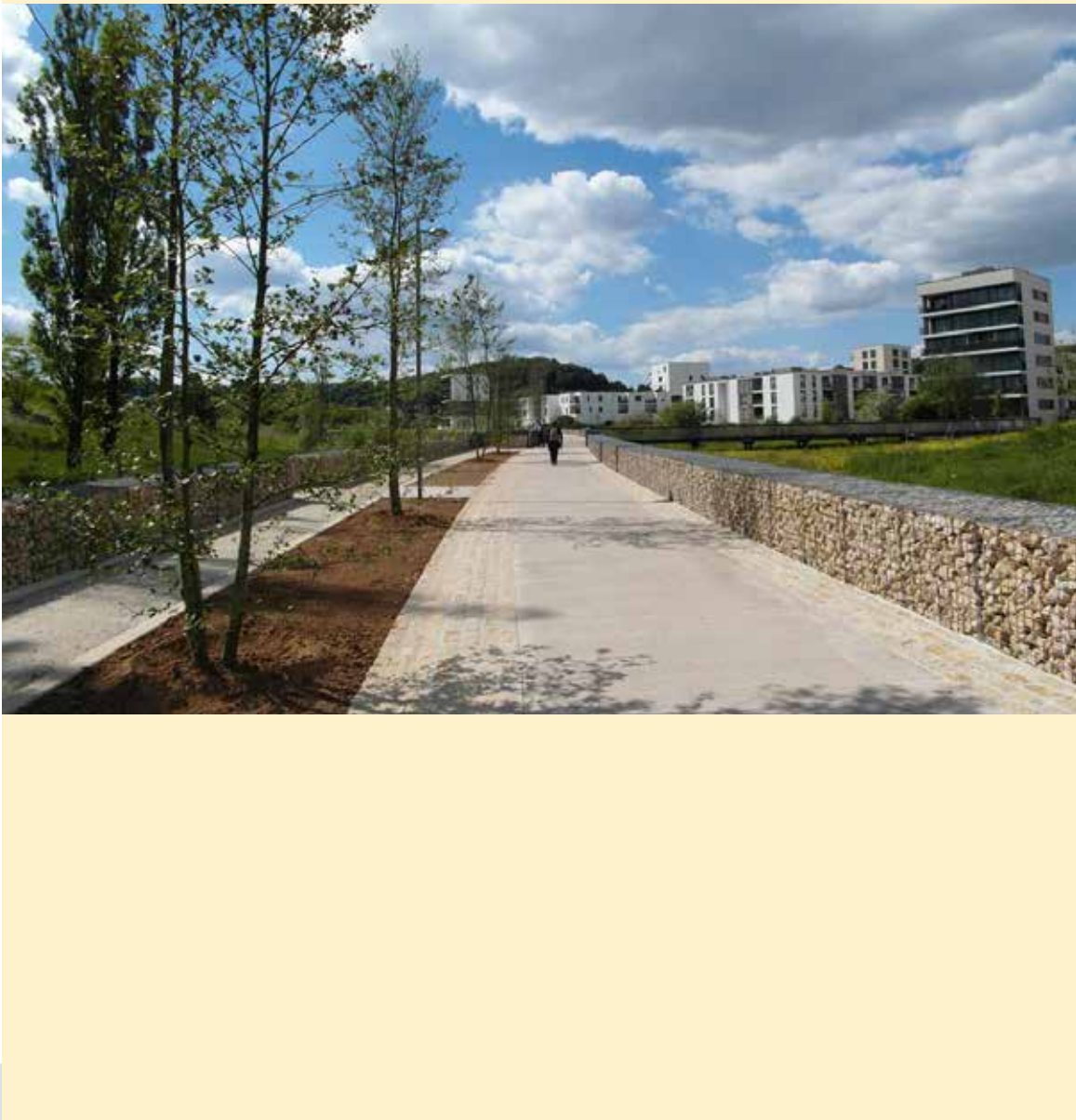
## APARTMENT BUILDINGS



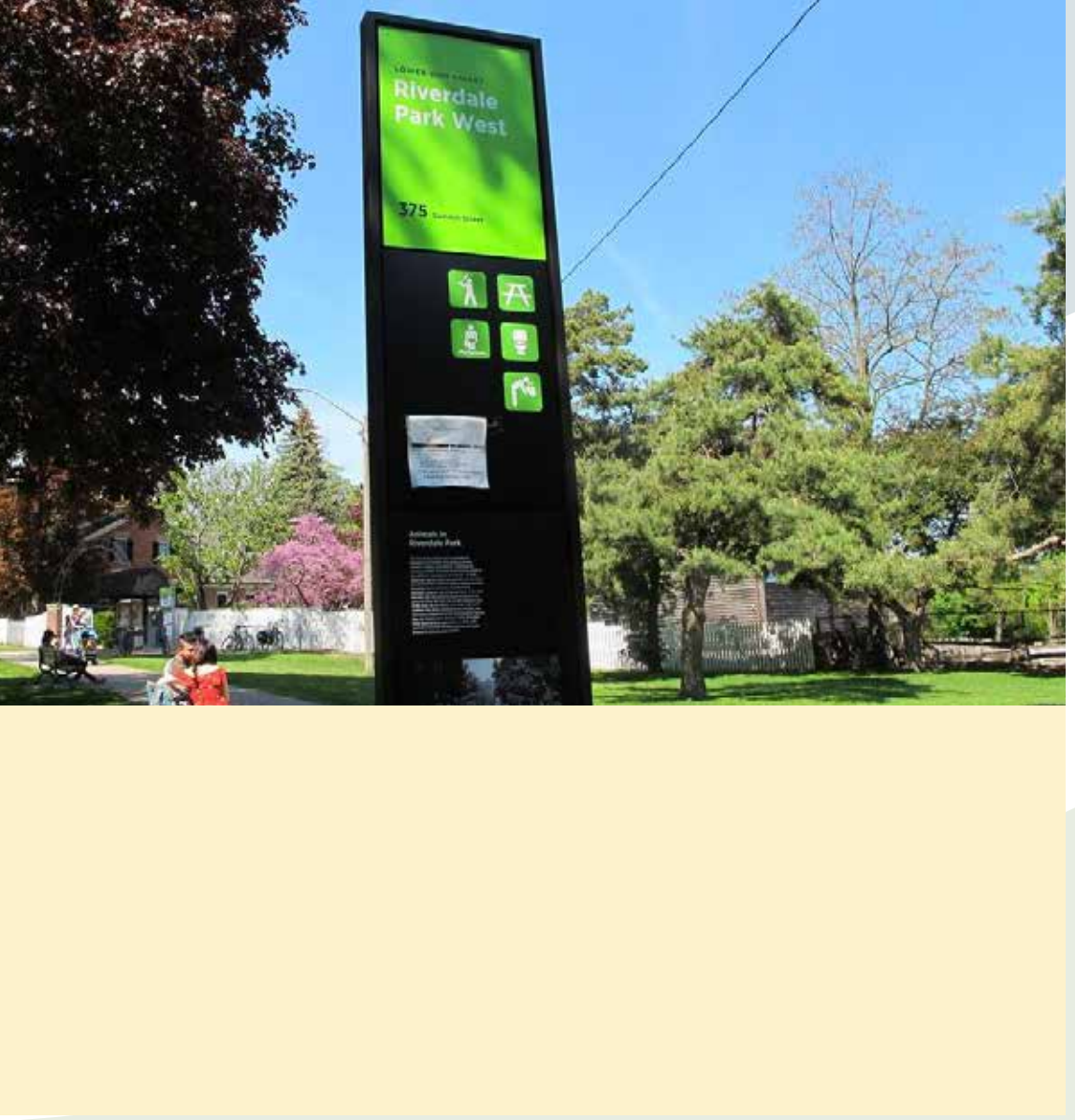
## TOWNHOMES



## PATHS & TRAILS



## SIGNAGE & WAYFINDING







DRAFT OCP LAND USE CONCEPT

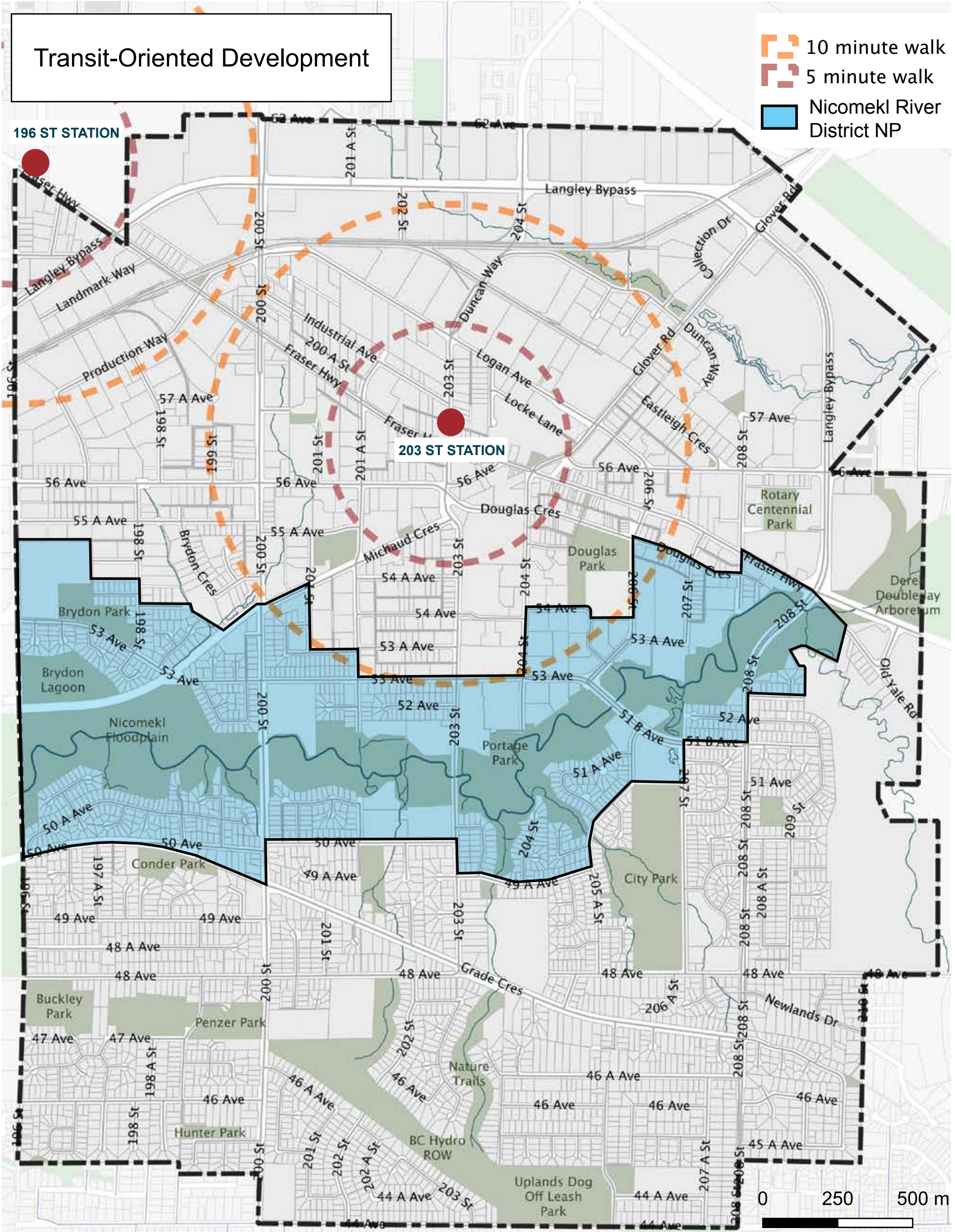
As we work to create the Nicomekl River District neighbourhood plan, we are also updating the City’s Official Community Plan (OCP). It’s a great opportunity to ensure both the neighbourhood plan and the OCP’s land use policies are aligned and fit within Council’s broader strategic vision and goals.

One example of this is the way in which the Nicomekl River District Neighbourhood Plan fits within a city-wide Transit-Oriented Development strategy. This is very important as Langley City prepares for the arrival of SkyTrain. Transit-Oriented Development is about ensuring the highest densities, destinations, connectivity, and most mix in uses are within close proximity of transit stations.

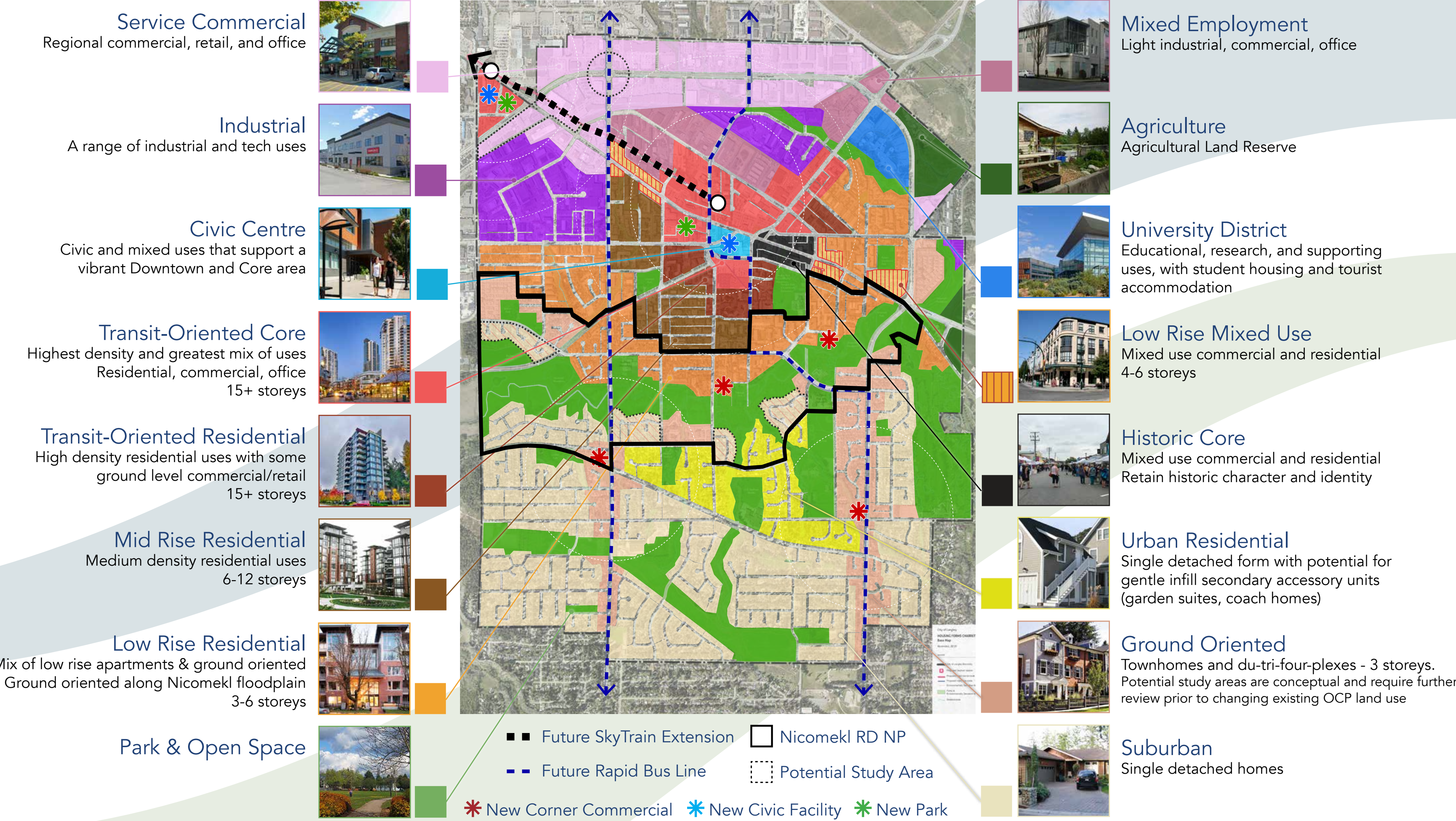
The diagram to the right shows the two proposed SkyTrain stations in Langley City with a 400m (5 minute walk) and 800m (10 minute walk) radius. The Nicomekl River District Neighbourhood Plan (highlighted in blue) mostly falls just outside the 800m radius of the proposed 203 St Station. That’s part of the reason why we are planning for medium to low densities within the neighbourhood plan. Broadly speaking that means 4-6 storey apartments and townhomes north of the river and townhomes, duplexes, secondary suites, and single detached homes south of the river.

Below is the city-wide land use concept that was developed using the input from a Housing Forms Workshop held on November 27. This concept will be adapted and refined as input and feedback is provided. What the concept shows is the highest land use densities (Transit-Oriented Core, Transit-Oriented Residential, and Mid-Rise Residential) located within 400m and 800m of the future SkyTrain stations.

Make sure to stay tuned for more information on the Official Community Plan and Zoning Bylaw updates, by visiting [langleycity.ca](http://langleycity.ca)



DRAFT OCP LAND USE MAP





# NEXT STEPS



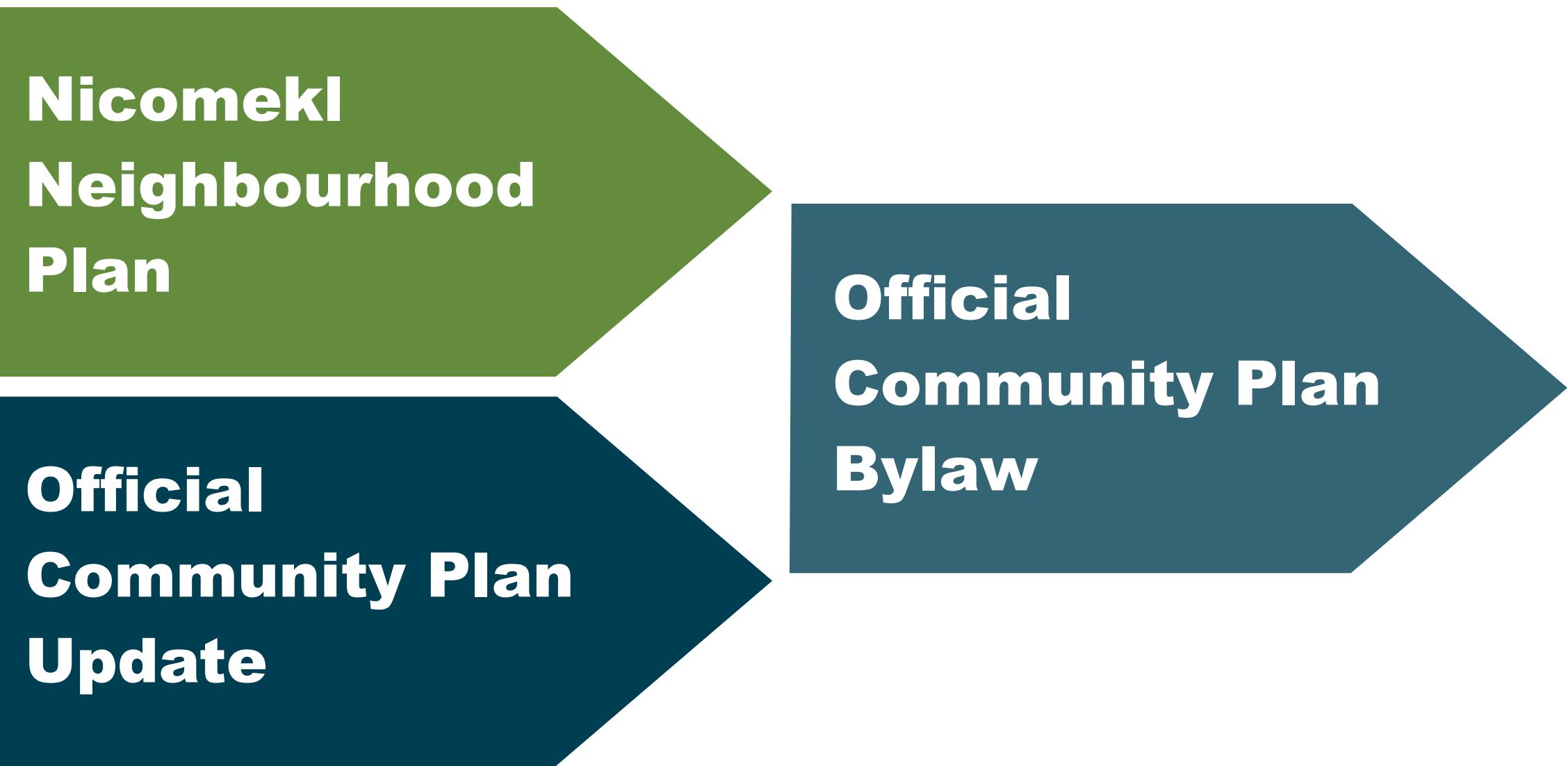
## PROCESS & ENGAGEMENT

Once we have compiled the results of this open house we will move into Phase 3 of the Nicomekl River District Neighbourhood Plan process. That means we will draft the neighbourhood plan and prepare a final engagement event to present it to the community.



## MERGING THE PLANS

Once we've completed the final engagement event in Phase 3 and received your feedback, we will refine the plan and merge it into the updated Official Community Plan. The Nicomekl River District Neighbourhood Plan will have its own dedicated chapter with its own policies and design guidelines.



## THANK YOU!

Your input is valuable and is helping shape Langley City's future!

Make sure to stay involved in the process to have your say and see the final product.

Visit [langleycity.ca](http://langleycity.ca) for more information.

