Departure Bay’s Arrival into the 21st Century:
A Re-imagining of the Departure Bay
Neighbourhood Commercial Centre

by
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BA, Vancouver Island University, 2018

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Abstract

This major project addresses a link between the academic experience and professional practice by creating a Vision Plan for Departure Bay in Nanaimo, British Columbia. Departure Bay is often called the ‘Gem of Nanaimo’ for it’s pristine natural beauty and prime location, however for the last few decades this gem has lost its shine. The proposed vision for Departure Bay focuses on the Neighbourhood Commercial Center (NCC) to re-imagine a vision in line with today’s current planning practices. The vision plan will be used to explore the typical processes that a development permit application would go through to prepare a Development Permit.

This vision plan for Departure Bay’s NCC has been created through information gained on the history, culture, and daily life in the Departure Bay neighbourhood. Using a literature review, interviews with local stakeholders, and a comparative context analysis of the City’s NCCs this project aims to create a rationale for the decisions made throughout the preparation of the Vision Plan. A key outcome of the major project is a Vision Plan, supported with a full urban design context analysis, schematic development plans, renderings, and a property cost acquisition analysis.

Keywords: Departure Bay Neighbourhood Commercial Centre; Nanaimo BC; Development Permit; Vision Plan; Urban Design
Dedication

This project is dedicated to my Mom, Dad, Corey, and Cole. Thanks for keeping life weird, putting a roof over my head, and pushing me to go this far in life. I couldn’t have done any of this without you guys.
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<td>Documents issued by a city's planning department to oversee and approve any changes to structures.</td>
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<td><strong>Development Permit</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Midden</strong></td>
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Concept Designs for Departure Bay Neighbourhood Commercial Center Re-Imagining
Chapter 1. Introduction

1.1. Introduction to the Departure Bay Neighbourhood Commercial Centre

This major project addresses a link between academic experience and professional practice by creating a Vision Plan for Departure Bay in Nanaimo, British Columbia. This project is used as an example of hypothetical planning work focusing on the Departure Bay Neighbourhood Commercial Centre (DBNCC). This project is guided by a literature review along with additional research to help inform the development proposed in the Vision Plan. The principles that direct the proposed vision include increasing the social, cultural, and economic capitals in the area while addressing present and future concerns. This includes the preservation of historical archaeological sites, protection of sensitive ecosystems and features, and creation of complete walkable neighbourhoods. Ultimately the proposed vision is not intended to create a waterfront tourist attraction, or to replicate other successful parts of the city. This project is meant to create a vision for a vibrant centre with “good-quality grocery store[s] and plenty of small, locally owned, independent retailers that produce active streets,” as outlined in the City’s Official Community Plan (OCP) and something that is desired by people young and old, (Talen, p. 332, 2017). Flashy attractions and new waterfronts “are great for the occasional outing or when visitors come to town, but are less important as a means to improving daily life,” (Talen, p. 332, 2017).

The DBNCC is located in the central eastern portion of the City of Nanaimo and is one of five designated NCCs within the city limits. Sitting adjacent to the Pacific Ocean the bay is often described as the “gem of Nanaimo,” however, over time this gem has been neglected, (Abassi, 2018).

Inhabited since time immemorial by the Snuneymuxw First Nations (SFN) and the greater Coast Salish peoples, Departure Bay has had a long history of importance to the communities that have called, what is present day Nanaimo, their home. The area has
transitioned from a year long village, to a seasonal winter village for the SFN and later became an area for farming by early colonial settlers. Today it acts as a NCC for those currently living their today supporting residential, commercial, and community uses. The Centre’s long standing history and context is imperative to explore prior to discussing what will come next. As the area has long been home to multiple groups of people over the past several millennia, the bay itself is rich in artifacts and other important archaeological discoveries, some of which have caused delays and have added a contentious layer of consideration for past developers.

The intent behind the NCC as described in PlanNanaimo 2008, the City’s current OCP, is to meet the day-to-day shopping needs of the local community. However, in its current state the DBNCC does not meet the commercial needs of the surrounding residences due to the lack of commercial amenities. The two community centres, the Kin Hut and the Departure Bay Activity Centre are aged, and the Snuneymuxw’s cultural and historical ties to the area could be better exposed and promoted to the public. While there is nothing inherently wrong with the DBNCC that would require a complete redesign, there is a lot of room for future improvements to the historic neighbourhood’s form, character, and general use. The practice of conservative surgery, taken from Patrick Geddes promotes “large-scale change precipitated by changes in microcosm,” as a way of making several smaller improvements to create a larger change to the overall area (Haworth, p. 38, 2000). The re-imagining of the DBNCC to something that supports the day-to-day needs of it’s immediate community while only affecting two blocks would effect all the lives of those living around it by giving them amenities supportive of their lifestyles while working towards a more complete neighbourhood.
1.2. Purpose of Major Project

The reason for selecting the DBNCC site for the basis of this project is in part due to an increase in development activity in the NCC over the past couple years. Even with the presence of known burial sites, the mixed-use Legasea Condo’s + Drip Coffee building has been encouraging in its demonstration that future development is achievable. The mixed-use development in the area has acted a much needed change from the usual Single Family Dwellings (SFDs) that take up a large amount of buildable land in the NCC. While the area was beautiful and teeming with aesthetic natural community amenities such as the beach it was lacking in a customary commercial presence for what was designated a commercial centre.

The re-imagining of the DBNCC not only focuses on bringing much needed commercial uses to the NCC but also aims to increase the amount of diverse housing options will be available. As the City of Nanaimo is a diverse city of people in varying living situations, it is important that the plan for the area is developed with this principle in mind. While it is common practice to create high-end luxury housing in an area with such a high natural capital, it is best practice to strive for mixed income housing that is inclusive to a wide range of incomes whenever possible, (Kenny, 2016; Krause, 2013). However, due to the archaeological and environmental sensitivities present in the centre, ensuring affordability amongst unit prices has proven to be difficult. Therefore, creating a plan with a mix of housing and unit types which would better encapsulate the missing middle housing is important to the success of this Vision Plan. Missing middle housing is described to include but not be limited to “laneway housing and secondary suites in single-family home zones, townhouses, and apartment multiplexes,” (Black, Matheson, Silvester, 2017), thus ensuring more options than solely a ¼ acre lot to perspective buyers.

Increasing density through a variety of housing options is an approach often employed to provide a range of housing typologies to support income inclusivity in developments, (Krause, 2013). Increasing the density of an area through multi-family and mixed-use developments will often require variances needed for decreasing parking minimums required for commercial uses and to promote increased transit frequency routing, (Talen, 2012). This acts as an opportunity for cities like Nanaimo to begin moving
away from auto-dependency within its population towards one that is accepting of alternate modes of transportation, (Baca, 2018). By increasing walkable day-to-day commercial spaces within neighbourhoods and alternative modes of together with a mix of housing typologies the DBNCC can act as a jumping-off point towards these contemporary planning approaches throughout the rest of the neighbourhood.
1.3. **Project Goal and Questions**

The overarching goal for this project is to create a vision of the DBNCC that is corresponding to the other established NCCs in the City of Nanaimo. The vision is presented in a plan report format, consistent with normal planning practice and attached to the written component of this major project. The value this project provides comes from pairing a written thesis and literature review with a vision plan to illustrate the links between theory and practice, which in turn will help to support the imagined future development of this area. An assessment of which amenities or services are missing and/or needed, how increased density may affect the surrounding area, how height increases can be mitigated, and how the development vision can respect and enhance the current form and character of the neighbourhood are all aspects this major project addresses. The vision created through this major project will help ensure the re-imagining of the DBNCC is guided by contemporary planning principles that benefits the NCC and the city as a whole.

A literature review is carried out to gain a better understanding on the contextual themes of the project such as history, ethics, and theory, while the interviews and subsequent comparative analysis are essential in gaining information specific to the DBNCC. Additionally, interviews and informal meetings with relevant professionals including the SFN, Nanaimo city staffers, local developers, and a local resident (chosen through convenience sampling) will help to provide insights into what they envision for the area. The knowledge gained throughout this process is crucial in reinforcing certain decisions or guiding others towards better outcomes using their specific and unique knowledge in their respective realms. Several research questions have been formulated to help guide the project and keep a scope on the goal of the research. The questions are as follows:

i) How can the DBNCC best promote and enhance the SFNs deep historic ties to the area?

ii) What is the best way to increase the units per hectare (UPH) density of the DBNCC while maintaining and improving upon the current neighbourhood form and character?

iii) How can public transportation options be increased in the DBNCC and its surrounding neighbourhood area?
iv) What is the best way to enhance the social, cultural, and commercial capitals present in the DBNCC?
Chapter 2. Literature Review

2.1. History

Understanding the context of the site is not as easy as touring the area from Google Maps. Instead it requires learning the history of the people who originally occupied the land through to the present day. This historical analysis provides a more robust context analysis. Without the historical context of Departure Bay guiding this vision, the sense of place and character illuminating the neighbourhood could be lost. Instead, this rich historical provenance could be reduced to subjectively aesthetic buildings and infrastructure without character or a relation to those living there presently and those who lived there in the past.

The Snuneumuxw First Nations have a long history in the bay, spanning several millennia based on archaeological remains that have been found throughout it. Understanding and learning their history in Departure Bay as more than just a seasonal village used throughout the winter months is vital in keeping the integrity of the vision.

The history between the First Nations of Canada and the European Colonial Settlers has been a contested one, especially here in British Columbia where a large amount of the Province either remains unceded territory or is in the process of negotiating Treaties. While the SFN have had a long history in Departure Bay, theirs is not the only culture that has called the Bay their home. While this may be seen as a loaded remark it is not intended to invoke a political statement on either side of the cultural coin but rather to note that Departure Bay, and the greater City, have been shaped by multiple communities, cultures, and peoples throughout the thousands of years it has been inhabited and it is important to ascertain the full historical context when attempting to envision something in it.
2.1.1. **The Snuneymuxw First Nations**

2.1.1.1. **Pre-Contact**

For thousands of years prior to European contact in 1792, this geographic location known as Stl’i lup had been an important location to the Snuneymuxw First Nation, (City of Nanaimo, 2006; Davidson, 2006). The name Stl’i lup has two possible translations discovered through investigations, the first meaning ‘Water Runs Deep’ in reference to the deep waters of the Bay or ‘The Base of the Mountain’ in reference to Mount Benson, (Bodaly, 2020; City of Nanaimo, 2006). The Snuneymuxw, translated to ‘The Great People’, were composed of five families approximating 10,000 people who had long used Stl’i lup as a village site due to it’s location and geography, (Bodaly, 2020). It was not until after European contact and the decimation of the SFNs population through war and diseases that Stl’i lup had become a winter village where they would perform their winter dances and the annual cycle of food gathering would begin with the arrival of the herring in January, (Bodaly, 2020; City of Nanaimo, 2006).

In the months leading up to December the Snuneymuxw would be spread throughout the region from the Nanaimo River in the south to the far north end of Departure Bay gathering food for the upcoming winter, (Davidson, 2006). The late-winter to spring months saw the men hunting ducks, waterfowls, and seals for meat as well as material and other crafting goods, (Davidson, 2006). The late-spring to summer months saw the people gathering plants, edible roots, berries, and other plant based foods and materials as well as travel to their traditional summer fishing village at the mouth of the Fraser River before returning to Nanaimo in late-October to November for the chum salmon run before returning to Departure Bay, (Davidson, 2006).

While the year is not specified, Davidson (2006) notes that sometime before the arrival of Europeans to Nanaimo, the Departure Bay village was left abandoned after “a band of raiding Haida’s arrived by canoe and killed over 400 of their people,” with a few remaining survivors returning to bury their dead before leaving again never to return, (Davidson, p. 18, 2006). According to Dave Bodaly a member of the SFN, this raid was in part due to a threat made by a man from the Penelakut Indian Band by grabbing the leg of a member of the Haida Nation from underneath a dividing wall during a Potlach. A
famous Snuneymuxw Chief named Sak’nasten had held the Potlatch between the Nations as he missed his sister who had married a man from the Haida Nation, (Bodaly, 2020). Bodaly (2020) mentioned during an interview that this is considered the “Last War of the Nations,” as after this it was decided that petty wars could not continue. This was in part due to diseases ravaging their populations and the immanent fear of European settlers.

2.1.1.2. *Post Contact*

The earliest documented contact with Europeans happened in 1792 with the arrival of the Spanish, represented by Captain Juan de Fuca, who had been exploring and naming the continent since 1592, (City of Nanaimo, 2006). When Capitan James Vancouver had first come to the island to register it he was greeted by the SFN. When asked where he was, they had answered “Snuneymuxw” which he misunderstood and “announced it out as Nanaimo,” (Bodaly, 2020). In 1852 the Hudson Bay Company (HBC) had set up a trading post in Nanaimo as part of the British Columbia colony in order for the settlers to access the rich coal deposits located throughout the region, (Snuneymuxw History, 2013).

In 1854 the SFN entered into a Treaty with the Crown which was supposed to recognize the SFNs way of life and title to their village sites and encompassing fields among other things, (Snuneymuxw, 2013). It “specifically confirmed protection for Snuneymuxw fisheries and hunting,” in return for the aforementioned rich coal deposits present under Snuneymuxw territory that were of immense value to the colonial settlers, (Snuneymuxw, 2013). However, like all Treaties signed past and present, most of the promises made were broken and not upheld, mainly due to the impending railway line that stretched across Canada. This resulted in the unlawful annexation of Snuneymuxw villages, fields, and lands to the Dunsmuir family for the rail line construction, (Snuneymuxw, 2013).

The arrival of the European settlers had taken a massive toll on the Snuneymuxw people who had seen their populations decimated through diseases like smallpox and tuberculosis, (Davidson, p. 19, 2006). By 1905 the Snuneymuxw had seen their population of 10,000 reduced to 260 a 96-97% reduction, (Bodaly, 2020). Their lands were appropriated and scoured for resources and furs, and their culture and way of life
attempted to be taken from them while the “lives of the white settlers had been made easier by the local Native people, who were friendly and eager to engage in trade”, (Davidson, p. 19, 2006).

The events that occurred in the 1890s and early 1900s had ultimately resulted in the displacement of the Snuneymuxw from this site, (Bodaly, 2020). The arrival of settlers led to more disease, the construction of the Dunsmuir Colliery wharfs, the CIL dynamite plant in what is now the Cilaire Subdivision, and continued residential settlement throughout the Bay area led to further displacement. This influx of people and development activity led to disturbance of the environment and traditional fishing patterns of the SFN, (Bodaly, 2020, City of Nanaimo, 2015).

2.1.1.3. Today

Today, the SFN are still recovering from the atrocities forced onto them by the early settlers and subsequent generations. Now however, some historical and ongoing disputes are being addressed. Several court cases have upheld their 1854 Treaty as valid giving the SFN the right to hunt over unoccupied lands with the seminal case being White & Bob (1965), (Snuneymuxw: Treaty Implementation and Relationship with the Crown, 2013). On November 14, 2016 the SFN and Canada entered into the “Snuneymuxw First Nations 79 Acre Reserve Specific Claim Settlement Agreement” which would see the lands unlawfully taken from them prior returned under a land claim launched in 1993 against the country, (Snuneymuxw: Trust Agreement, 2013).

Currently, the SFN population is approximately 2,000, a fifth of the reported number prior to European settlement, (Bodaly, 2020). However, being one of the few Nations in BC to have a Pre-Confederation Treaty with the Crown that is affirmed and protected under Section 35 of the Constitution of Canada and proven by the Supreme Court of Canada (on several occasions) puts them as a Nation at a huge advantage on how their future will unfold, (Snuneymuxw: Nation, 2013). This future is already being seen as favourable as the SFN have begun to receive reparations from the government and private bodies which had previously made money off of the SFNs land, (Bodaly, 2020).
2.1.2. Colonial Settlers

2.1.2.1. First Contact

The Spanish were the first Europeans to explore Vancouver Island and chart its coastlines before relinquishing all claim in the late 16th Century, apparent today by several place names: Quadra, Valdes, Cortes, Juan de Fuca, (Davidson, 2006). The English, represented by Captain James Cook, had arrived later in 1778, (City of Nanaimo, 2006). The discovery of coal in the region had attracted the British and the HBC into the area and in 1852 miners were brought in from Prince Rupert to extract the resource from what would now be known as downtown Nanaimo, (City of Nanaimo, 2006). Departure Bay was also given its name in 1852 by HBC officials for two reason. The first relating to the recently departed SFN after the aforementioned raid, the second being that it was seen as a “good departure point for shipping” (Davidson, p. 47, 2006).

Over the next few years the town would continue to grow as more mining families were brought in from Europe to work the mines. One example is John Christie and his new wife Barbara Campbell, who on April 23, 1858 had decided to leave their hometown of Leith, Scotland for a new life in the New World, (Davidson, 2006). The voyage was a 27-week long expedition (pre Panama Canal) around Cape Horn, the southern tip of South America to Vancouver Island, (Davidson, 2006).

2.1.2.2. Early Settlement

On May 6, 1861 John Christie had become the first person to pre-empt land at Departure Bay; 100 acres of land which ran roughly 550 meters along the beach and 730 meters’ perpendicular encompassing the abandoned SFN winter village and what is the Departure Bay neighbourhood today, (Davidson, 2006). The Christie’s lived at Departure Bay their entire lives farming the land. Upon John’s death in 1888 the land was portioned off and parts sold to take care of his widow and daughter Ruth, (Davidson, 2006). Ruth Christie had continued to live on the land in Departure Bay until her death in 1911 when the pre-empted land was acquired by the Hamilton Powder Company who operated on Northfield Road, (Davidson, 2006). In later years the area was farmed once again by a
Chinese man known only as “Number 4”, a residual of the racist outlook towards Chinese immigrants during the time, until the land was eventually sold for residential housing years later, (Peterson, p. 196, 2003; Davidson, 2006).

Davidson (2006) notes that during peak coal mining times Departure Bay was a bustling little port. This had changed when the Wellington mine was closed and operations moved to the Extension mine to the south leaving the once booming port seemingly uninhabited. It is also noted by Davidson (2006) that it did not take long for the area to once again become a booming destination, although this time as a place for leisure with family and friends rather than for manufacturing and shipping. In 1906 the waterfront properties had become available for purchase which gave the more well-off families a summer home right on the beach. As the years passed and electricity, water and other utilities were beginning to become more common the ability to continue to live in Departure Bay year round had become possible and by 1922 twelve families were living there full-time.

The Departure Bay Road was and still is to this day the main transportation route into the Neighbourhood. Davidson (2006) remarks that as early as 1874 the Provincial Government recognized the importance of the route and distributed funding in order to continue upgrading and maintaining the road. The author goes on to mention that with the constant road and bridge repairs that had to be made in order to keep the road traversable neither the City nor the Province would take ownership of the road, (Davidson, 2006). For several decades the road would continue to be flooded and ravaged by natural processes until 1931 when it was widened and relocated further from the shore. In 1949 the Departure Bay Road was once again restructured to it’s current position, (Davidson, 2006).

2.1.2.3. Today

Today Departure Bay is an established neighbourhood in the City of Nanaimo predominately made up of SFDs leading to a lower neighbourhood density than other parts of the city. The Bay’s long standing use as a family recreational area has continued to the present day with several parks and other local amenities throughout the Neighbourhood. The NCC itself encompasses Centennial Park, developed in 1958 as a project to
commemorate one hundred years in Departure Bay (Gogo, 1995). The Kin Hut and Kin Park were built in 1931 when Departure Bay Road was widened, while the Seawall came from a campaign promise made by Frank Ney during his 1969 MLA election under the Social Credit Party, (Gogo, 1995).

Having called Departure Bay his home for much of his life, Frank Ney the Mayor of Nanaimo for 21 years (1968 to 1984 and again from 1987 to 1990) was a seminal actor in creating a sense of place in the Bay. In 1957 Ney had organized the first Boxing Day Polar Bear Swim event where people all over the city were welcomed to gather in the Bay to take turns jumping into the freezing cold Pacific waters in order to “clear any cobwebs from Christmas,” (Ney in Gogo, p. 54, 1995). Ney himself did not participate in the swim but rather he was around in his usual flamboyant outfits socializing with the crowd, cracking jokes, and handing out souvenirs to each participant. This annual event continues on to this day.

Presently the Departure Bay neighbourhood and its core NCC have fallen behind the rest of Nanaimo in terms of infill development, increasing its density and infrastructure. This can be partly attributed to the beach and much of the land adjacent to it being designated as a Provincial Archaeological Site due to the “documented burial site at the northern end of the beachfront strip” as well as recent developments unearthing middens, human remains, and other cultural artifacts, (Departure Bay Neighbourhood Plan, 2006).

Due to its location off of the main thoroughfare and transit lines of the City – the north-south corridor of Island Highway – the public transportation options connecting the area to the rest of the city are not as robust as they should be. This is in part due to the lower neighbourhood density from the predominately SFDs which make up the majority of the housing stock in the area. With many important public amenities within or adjacent to the DBNCC such as community centres, recreation and dog parks, and elementary schools to name a few, it is important to increase the permeability in and out of the NCC for those without access to personal vehicles.
2.2. Theoretical Frameworks

Theory guides planners in understanding difficult choices which they will undoubtedly have to make throughout their careers, regardless of being in the public sector working for a municipality or an Non-Governmental Organization, or in the private sector as a developer or a consultant. Understanding and being current in planning theory can be a vital tool for planners to stay informed on the current trends and general direction that the profession is taking. As the profession continues to grow and we as a species continue to understand more of the psychological and physiological nuances of the human experience as well as the benefits of our surrounding’s respective ecosystems, this understanding can be downloaded into the built environment through theory. Using this understanding of the physical, psychological, biological, and ecological spaces planners can create communities that function to their optimal level in their individual geographical environments.

Three theoretical frameworks are discussed in this portion of the paper. Each addresses one or more of the aforementioned understandings. The theories that will be discussed in relation to the vision of the DBNCC are:

i) Utilitarian Ethical theory to and its application on the public interest/public good;

ii) Sense of Place theory and the importance of maintaining and enhancing place; and

iii) New Urbanist theory and the potential positive and negative impacts of the theory’s application to the neighbourhood centre.

The outcome of exploring these themes in depth will be to gain a better understanding of the project’s contextual information, that is the background knowledge of the site in order to make informed rational decisions. This is important in determining why a New Urbanist theory may best fit the Vision Plan. Additionally, which important or potentially sensitive cultural sites (past and present) are critical to preserve or highlight will also be informed from these theoretical frameworks. The review of theoretical frameworks also establishes a rationale for the selection of properties chosen in this re-imagining. As this project is not in a greenfield subdivision certain properties have to be chosen for the infill development of this project.
2.2.1. Ethical Frameworks (Utilitarianism)

The theories of Public Planning and Ethics share a similar origin and intent. Ethical theory was generated as a means of giving “an account of moral goodness and the morally good life,” whereas Public Planning is described as stemming from “the commitment of social reformers (Friedmann 1987) and designers to create a good life for ordinary people (Klosterman 1978),” (Harper & Stein, p. 105, 1992). Despite having similar origins and trajectories for a time the two theories eventually diverged following World War II with Public Planning theory moving more towards a normative ethical approach due to it’s new acceptance as a mainstream profession, (Harper & Stein, 1992). The normative ethical approach can be broken into two streams: the substantive and the procedural. The two forms of normative ethics advocate for different themes within ethical theory. Substantive ethics can be defined as teleological or consequential in nature, more simply put, it “focuses attention on whether the outcomes of action are in themselves good or bad,” (Campbell, p. 466, 1999). Procedural ethics in contrast is deontological in nature and “concentrates on the rightness of the action taken,” rather than the perceived benefits of the outcome, (Campbell, p. 466, 1999).

Utilitarian theory will be used as the ethical guidance for this project which originates from the substantive, consequentialist branch of ethical theory. The theory weighs the self-interests which can be assumed as the public interest to create good public policy by maximizing individual pleasure to ensure the general mantra of greatest happiness for the greatest number, (Campbell, 1999). However, the general consensus on what has equated to the “greatest happiness” has often been measured through a cost-benefit analysis and in turn associated with a “world of neoclassical economics in which the market is supreme,” which has led scholars towards critiquing the theory as being “inadequate and result[ing] in many injustices,” (Campbell p. 466, 1999; Harper & Stein, p. 106, 1992).

The critiques on Utilitarianism are justified and merited as the theory itself has been described as being the most influential of the consequentialist branch of the normative ethical theories, (Campbell, 1999). While there is no argument for the prior mismanagements of Utilitarianism it will be argued that when it is scoped to include the interests of all (the public interest) and not just the economic bottom line of those in power,
utilitarian ethics can be a tool used for moving forward in certain circumstances. Planners have to face contentious sects of the public when putting through rezonings, OCP amendments, and development applications while advising the councillors that vote on these who can often be swayed or mislead by NIMBY groups and other vocal minorities representing their personal interests and not those of the larger community. A utilitarian stance on these oppositions would be that their collective dismay towards a transformation to their neighbourhood and slight change of their way of life (ie: increased traffic, limited parking at certain times, etc.) does not outweigh the “greatest happiness” that is brought from a minor-moderate density increase or the addition of bike lanes. Especially when the housing is affordable and bike lanes result in more active transportation usage.

2.2.1.1. Application to the DBNCC

Utilitarian theory has been chosen to guide the ethical questions as they relate to the preparation of the Vision Plan. Under the premise of a utilitarian theory, land acquisition, community wide objectives and sustainability imperatives are viewed as outweighing private land rights for the purpose of creating a hypothetical Vision Plan for the Departure Bay Neighbourhood. This is not uncommon for a professional planning exercise, where often future park acquisition or waterfront properties are identified for acquisition to serve a wider community vision, (Solomon, 2015).

Working under the premise of a utilitarian theory is not intended to diminish the role of public engagement from the overall process of creating a Vision Plan. Public engagement would normally form a key component of a Vision Plan and consultation is also required of planners through governmental legislation. Not only is consultation required, but also, it is vital in creating meaningful development. Rather, to provide a lens through which consultation outcomes can be weighed, utilitarian theory can give planners an ethical rationale for supporting and promoting a project or a Vision Plan. Regarding the DBNCC, Utilitarianism would argue that enhancing the economic, commercial, and social aspects of the NCC would result in the greatest happiness for the greatest number of people. Currently the land designated as NCC is largely zoned for and occupied by SFDs which are not complimentary land use designations.
Giving more people with diverse living arrangements, incomes, and ages the opportunity to live and settle in the Departure Bay area is what this project considers the public good. Increasing their walkability to local stores, more frequent transit routes, and improved public amenities at the cost of potentially increased traffic congestion and a slightly higher density will benefit the greater public over quieter streets and lower density which correlates to a lack of amenities and services, (Vine, Buys, Aird, 2012). However, it is understandable how this approach may be seen as unfavourable to those living in the bay currently and for this reason it is important to maintain the form, character, and sense of place that people have come to associate the Departure Bay neighbourhood with. That being said, it does not mean that the area can not be brought up to a 21st century standard while enhancing it.
2.2.2. Sense of Place

Enhancing the current sense of place within the Departure Bay neighbourhood and core NCC is a key part of this re-imagining. Before applying the theme to the project area it is first important to fully understand what a sense of place is. A sense of place refers to the feeling of comfort, familiarity, and connection certain spaces have with individuals. By creating, maintaining, and continuing to build the relationship that locals have with Departure Bay is ultimately what will lead to the success of the re-imagining and the NCC. After all a good cup of coffee can be bought almost anywhere, however, having a sentimental place to enjoy it with friends or family can not be.

The connections and feelings which form a sense of place can be manifested from a prolonged exposure to somewhere such as a childhood home or there may just be a certain je ne c’est quoi about the place. Put more factually, a sense of place is “the subjective perception of people about their environment and their conscious feeling about places,” (Erdiaw-Kwasie & Basson, 2018). The sense of place of an area can differ between individuals and groups depending on their level of involvement in or dependence on the area and how they use it for leisure, work, or recreation, (Enqvist, Johan, Campbell, Lindsay, et al., 2019).

Beidler and Morrison (2016) in their article “Sense of place: Inquiry and application” organize the theories regarding sense of place into an “overlapping four dimensional model involving the physical environment, the psychology of the self, and the sociocultural circumstances, all of which vary over the course of time,” (Beidler & Morrison, p. 206, 2016). The themes expressed by the authors act as a foundation for the theory, each a supportive pillar that the larger theory rests on. This section of the literature review will be focused on examining the four elements of place described by the authors and how gaining a better understanding on what creates a sense of place may help in enhancing the sense of place in the DBNCC.

It would be hard to argue against there being a strong sense of place found within Departure Bay currently. As the bay had been used as a place of refuge for thousands of years prior to the intervention of colonizers, there was undoubtedly some appeal which drew the first people to it’s beaches. Whether that sense is established by the beauty of
the beach and green spaces or the natural geographic backdrop of the ocean and coastal mountains of the region, it is up to the individual to pinpoint which aspect speaks to them the strongest.

2.2.2.1. The Dimension of Self

The first dimension explored by the authors is that of ‘the self’ as the individual is the one at centre of all experience and is therefore the one engaged in the experience which is the role that is vital to “understanding the transformation of space into place,” (Beidler & Morrison, p. 206, 2016). Humanistic geographers in the past who “largely drew on phenomenology and existentialism,” had linked the “notion of place as a source of both individual attachment and identity,” which were conceptually linked under different terms, some of these include: topophilia, insideness, rootedness, and of course sense of place, (Atonnsich, p. 121, 2009). Just as the individual is able to shape their environment with an excavator the environment in which people spend their time will begin to shape them on an level specific to that person. This can be done in both a positive and negative sense.

The term sense of place is often used to express a feeling one has in a given environment, more often than not this expression is a positive one, however, some authors have instead chosen to “explore the darker side of place attachment in the context of displacement and social housing,” and other forms of post-structural, post-colonial, and post-modern theories to “articulate this subject in terms of her/his gender, class, age, race, or ethnicity,” (Manzo, 2014 in Beidler & Morrison, p. 207, 2016; Rose, 1992 in Atonsich, p. 121, 2009). It is important to explore opposing sides of an issue in order to better understand said issue. It can also be argued that the more culture shifts towards newer critical humanist geography which relates place as an area of contestation, oppression, and/or resistance, the more the theory loses much of its prior emphasis on the personal, existential dimension of the subject. By focusing too heavily on the collective’s identification of place risks losing much of what exists on the individual level, which can not be found on higher tiers. For this reason, it is important to ensure a balance between what is felt on both the individual level and the societal level.
2.2.2.2. The Dimension of the Environment

Place relating to the self had been largely explored by humanistic geographers while the theme of environment and its role in understanding and establishing a sense of place has historically been covered by environmental psychologists, (Atonsich, 2009). The environment acts as the physical plane in creating and maintaining a sense of place for the individual which gives people the ability to connect with others in meaningful ways in a particular space, (Woodgate & Skarlato, 2015). The effect the environment has on the individual in shaping who they are is immense. The physical setting of the city, the unique geographies and ecologies in conjunction with the man-made monuments and distinctive form and character work in unison to create a unique representation of itself. One unique to each individual who lives in, passes through, or reads about the city. Many “authors and designers working from this perspective often refer to preserving or maintaining the local vernacular and unique features in developing or preserving a sense of place,” as that sense of place is unique to that location, and maintaining the dialect of the town or city’s vernacular architecture is essential in reinforcing the local sense of place. (Hester, 1993 and Pocius, 1991 in Beidler & Morrison, p. 208, 2016).

The environment that one spends their life in can have detrimental impacts to their psychological and physical well being as “place matters in relation to lived experience, emotional ties and meanings,” and “[f]actors such as meaning, value, symbolic landscapes and experiences in a sense of place are seen as sources of health and well-being,” (Williams, 1998 in Lengen & Kistermann, p. 1163, 2012). However, not all environments invoke a strong sense of place, and more importantly, not all environments invoke a positive sense of place. Often the studies done on the theory “have been based on the underlying assumption that it is positive, and have not even attempted to investigate the possibility of a negative sense of place,” (Manzo, 2003 in Shamai & Shamai, 2018). As the term itself elicits “positive socialization towards the place in which one lives. It is the difference between the neutral concept of a house and the subjective term, home,” the authors go on to remark that “some people, for a variety of reasons do not like their place of residence,” (Shamai & Shamai, p. 1352, 2018).

The environmental dimension of place can lead to both positive and negative emotions in an individual depending on key variables. The underlying geographies and
aesthetic natural beauty may aid in maintaining the positivity of place. However, it is oftentimes the social interactions within the place that ultimately decide on whether one’s overall place dependence, defined as “an individual’s perceived positive or negative association between himself or herself and a particular place,” is positive or negative, (Stokols & Shumaker, 1981 in McCunn, p. 8, 2011). It can be interpreted then that while the physical has a “primary influence on the development of sense of place,” it is the experiences with others which can be just as important in creating an attachment to place, a component of sense of place which is conceptualized as emotional ties and affiliations with place,” (Beidler & Morrison, p. 208, 2016; Shamai & Shamai, p. 1350, 2018).

### 2.2.2.3. The Dimension of Social Interaction

Contrasting the first dimensions which focused on the individual, the third dimension – social interaction – relies on the other as a catalyst for establishing a sense of place. It is argued by phenomenological research stemming from cultural geographers that ‘lived experience’ is central to place interpretation, (Buttimer, 1980; Relph, 1976; Seamon 1989 in Beidler & Morrison, 2016). This perspective makes the assertion that an element of social interaction is vital in creating a sense of place. While the place itself plays a large role in creating the feeling within the self, it is how the place is experienced and who it is experienced with which garners the attachment with one’s surroundings. Research has found that the emotions generated from places are tied to “memories, experiences, and social relations, whereas the physical attributes that comprised the setting were found to be less significant” and it is suggested that the “relationships between people are stronger than relationships between a person and a place,” (Beidler and Morrison, p. 208, 2016).

Kyle and Chick (2007) note that the meanings evoked from place “emerge and evolve through ongoing interactions with others and the environment,” and that the “meanings individuals and collectives ascribe to a place are reflections of culture and individual identity,” (Kyle & Chick, p. 212, 2007). Place meanings may be unique to the individual and how they had experienced and interacted with that place, however, often those individual feelings are felt equally with others which can create a collective sense of place which may add another layer onto the individual’s experience.
2.2.2.4. The Dimension of Time

The final dimension of place as discussed by Beidler and Morrison is the dimension of time. While the individual, the environment, and the collective are all important in establishing the initial sense of place, it is noted throughout the literature that the frequency and/or extent that one spends within a certain place creates the sense of ‘rootedness’ one has with that environment, (Beidler and Morrison, 2016; Tuan, 1980). Extended periods of time in conjunction with strong social influences have been noted to have had the greater influences on creating a strong sense of place, (Beidler & Morrison, 2016). While it is rightfully argued that strong ancestral ties and prolonged exposure to certain geographic areas can produce a deeper meaning with them, a sense of place can emerge within the individual despite the lack of social and temporal experiences. These bonds whether they are social or environmental bonds with place need to be created at some point in order for them to grow and enhance, (Raymond, Brown & Weber, 2010). This is apparent in the DBNCC which is a historically and culturally important place to the SFN with their deep-seated ancestral ties, as well as those who have lived in Nanaimo for only a short time.

Time on the individual scale can give a sense of rootedness with the land from long ancestral ties, or an immediate attraction to first time visitors; on a grander scale time has a greater role to play in shaping a village, town, or city’s sense of place. The dimension of time is important in creating a sense of place in that the “experience of peculiar and localized concepts of time, together with natural influences (e.g., weather), determine the rhythm and pace of each place,” (Campelo, et al., p. 159, 2013). Time in conjunction with the other dimensions have the potential of creating unique atmospheres and ways of life. Chatham Islanders in New Zealand for example have found that their lives start and stop with the weather and the ships rather than on a more routine schedule or a clock, which has led the Islanders to adopting more flexible day-to-day behaviour, (Campelo, et al., 2013). This use of time as an influence on sense of place while abstract does demonstrate the multi-faceted nature of place and how certain, unique places can shape the routines, schedules, and lifestyles of those living there.
2.2.2.5. **Application to the DBNCC**

How this can be transferred and applied to the re-imagining of Departure Bay is simple when the components that were just outlined as the dimensions of a sense of place are broken down and the bay is examined through them. The self, the environment, social interaction, and time exist and function separately and in unison to create a sense of place unique to the Departure Bay neighbourhood and its core NCC. Fostering that sense of place for the DBNCC is a way to ensure the success of the reimagining.

Place has a direct link in shaping the identity of people, as noted in the cited literature. The topophilic response that certain places have on individuals and their lives can generate a place attachment, a key component of a sense of place “refer[ing] to the phenomenon of human-place bonding,” which draws them back to their favourite café, trail, or bench, (Morita, Takano, Nakamura, Kizuki, & Seino, 2010; Kyle & Chick, p. 210, 2007). Increasing the access to Departure Bay through increased density from multi-family residential developments, added commercial units for day-to-day needs, and increased amenities for recreation and leisure time will give more opportunities for individuals to establish and build on their current place attachment with Departure Bay.

The environmental dimension plays the biggest role in the theory as it is a biophysical plane which gives us something to establish a piece of oneself in, it is what we are drawn to whether natural or manmade. The DBNCC is fortunate to be located adjacent to the Pacific Ocean with the Coastal Mountains on the other side creating a beautiful backdrop for one’s day-to-day activities. Beautiful natural scenery is only one aspect of the environment, the other being the man-made built environment. When done correctly, these two realms can have a complimentary symbiotic relationship with one another, sheltering people from some elements while exemplifying others.

The collective place attachment that Departure Bay has with those who have deep ancestral roots, those who live there, those who frequent the beach or parks, or those who are visiting for their first time is what is needed to be captured and enhanced during the re-imagining. The DBNCC has the potential to be the stage for people to experience socially defining moments, a first kiss, a place to meet new friends, or somewhere to teach your kids how to make a sandcastle. As social interactions are a vital part in creating
place attachment, increasing the amount of interactions one has in the DBNCC and thus increasing the chance of place attachment is important to the success of the re-imagining. This is possible through on-going experiences and socially welcoming environments which create more opportunities for social interactions to take place, both planned and spontaneous.

Time has a key role to play in the sense of place of the DBNCC due to the thousands of years of history the SFN have in the area, as well as the effect seasonal weather has on limiting the activities and use of the NCC. The long history of residence in Departure Bay is a testament to the natural sense of place exhibited by the environment which drew the first inhabitants and those following. The temporal effect that the seasonal weather has on the DBNCC also shapes the community’s perception of the DBNCC and thus its sense of place. As the DBNCC is one of the few beach front areas within city limits, visitor frequency increases as the warmer months begin. However, there is little to do as the colder, wetter months of the year take over unless you are in an organized sport which uses the recreational fields at Centennial Park.

Looking at the DBNCC through the four dimensions of place: the self, the environment, social interaction, and time has been beneficial to the project by understanding the sense of place that is present in the NCC. The beautiful natural geography in conjunction with the long established history of the SFN and the comparatively shorter one of the colonial settlers in the mid 19th century have framed the area and established a sense of place that spans time and cultures. For these reasons it is important in continuing the natural and historical preservation and enhancement of the DBNCC throughout the re-imagining. Maintaining this unique sense will be important in allowing further generations of Nanaimo residents and visitors the opportunity in establishing and building their own attachment to the NCC.
2.2.3. New Urbanism

The vision outlined in the cities OCP *planNanaimo* 2008 for the Departure Bay neighbourhood area speaks heavily to the theories of New Urbanism, a term coined in 1991 by one of the theory’s founders Stefanos Polyzoides, (CNU History, n.d.). The scope of this section will be focused on understanding how New Urbanism (NU) as a theory can help guide the choices that will be made during this project. While it has several positive attributes as a theory the test of practical application has displayed rather unsavoury characteristics that have become attributed with the theory of NU, (Talen, 2010). For this reason, it is important to understand the short-comings of the theory when using it as a theoretical base for my vision. Therefore, this portion of the literature review will consider:

i) the existing theoretical literature to review the New Urbanist movement and distinguish it’s positive and negative attributes;

ii) the current policies in both Nanaimo and the DBNCC as well as the extended Neighbourhood designated area and their alignment to the principles of New Urbanism; and

iii) the gathered literature and prior analysis of the DBNCC as a means of helping to deliberate the choices that need to be made to the NCC re-imagining.

NU has existed in principle for centuries prior to it’s early 1990’s re-emergence. The idea of creating complete, walkable, transit-oriented, mixed-use neighbourhoods was the basis of the planning profession up until the creation of the automobile in the 1920s appropriating the focus of the planning, engineering, and architecture professions “which in turn caused traffic congestion and environmental concerns,” (Wey & Hsu, p. 165, 2014). Despite this, writers such as Jane Jacobs continually stressed these New Urbanist principles, although semantically, throughout the mid 20th century in books such as *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* (1961) where she dissects the then-mundane urban concepts such as the use of sidewalks, greenspaces, diversity, and small blocks. While these theories were mostly ignored by the professionals up until the turn of the century, amateurs and pseudo-planners continued to see their values, (Wey & Hsu, p. 165, 2014). Even now New Urbanist theories and concepts are not welcomed by every one within these and other professions which is evident from a conversation about transit with the average Nanaimonite (or any other auto-centric city resident). However, with the
ever increasing need for an affordable housing market, the looming threat of climate change, the recent Covid-19 pandemic, and other millennial woes the theories and policies proposed by NU are increasingly being seen as a welcomed change to what had become the status quo since the 1950s, (Nelson, 2012).

2.2.3.1. **Principles of New Urbanism**

NU in principle has existed long before the term was coined as noted previously through the writings of Jane Jacobs since the 1960s, as just the popular example. It was not until the late 80s-early 90s that a group of architects – Andres Duany, Elizabeth Plater-Zyberk, Elizabeth Moule, Steanos Polyzoides, Peter Calthorpe, and Daniel Solomon – together formed the first Congress for the New Urbanism (CNU), (CNU History, n.d.). NU was not the only urban theory growing in popularity over the time. Other similar theories such as Smart Growth and the Sustainable City are noted by authors to have begun their foundation in the urban planning realm in the same era, (MacLeod, 2013; Nelson, 2010). Grant (2012) remarks that since the preliminary years of the theories they have grown to become synonymous with each other, adopting many of the same principles and regulatory approaches to one another.

Created as a foil to the Congrès internationaux d’architecture modern CIAM, a group which promoted modernist architecture and planning throughout the 20th century, the CNU’s main intent was to promote three related urban design ideas which would combat the “damage inspired by CIAM, such as ‘urban renewal’ that eradicated whole neighbourhoods and streets,” (CNU History, n.d.) The three related urban design ideas that spawned the New Urbanist principles are: i) urban infill supporting walkable blocks and streets, ii) traditional neighbourhood development (TND), and iii) transit-oriented development (TOD), these establishing ideas would later be formed into the ten guiding principles of New Urbanism, (CNU History, n.d.). The ten guiding principles of NU can be thought of as a guideline of ideas and values that when followed can help navigate a city, town, or community into turning the theories of NU into reality. This is done through increasing walkability, connections and permeability, mixed housing, and other codes that NU communities strive to uphold.
What else goes into creating a New Urbanist community apart from the former three mentioned? Depending on the scale of what is being addressed, the literature offers multiple solutions. The CNU has nine main principles each of which addresses a concern on a different scale: the region, the neighbourhood, and the block which equates to twenty-seven total principles; however, at the scale of the neighbourhood the notion of “Quality of Life” is taken into account turning the total to ten and twenty-eight respectively. Below outlined in Table 1 are the ten principles of NU at the neighbourhood scale, which is what the crux of this project is ultimately concerned with, the commercial core on the neighbourhood scale rather than the town or city. Distinguishing scale is important as it can be the difference between proposed UPH, street widths, amenities and more.

Table 1 – New Urbanist Principles (Neighbourhood)  
(www.newurbanism.org/newurbanism/principles.html)

<table>
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<th>Principle</th>
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| Walkability                         | Day-to-day needs within a 10-minute/400m (ped-shed) walk of home and work.  
Pedestrian friendly street design (active streets; porches, windows & doors; tree-lined streets; on street and hidden parking lots; garages in rear laneways; narrow streets creates slower car speeds.)  
Pedestrian streets free of cars in special cases. |
| Connectivity                        | Interconnected street grid network disperses traffic & eases walking.  
A hierarchy of narrow streets, boulevards, and alleys.  
High quality pedestrian network and public realm makes walking pleasurable. |
| Mixed-Use and Diversity             | A mix of shops, offices, apartments, and homes on site.  Mixed-use within neighbourhoods, within blocks, and within buildings.  
A diversity of people – of ages, income levels, cultures, and races. |
| Mixed Housing                       | A range of types, sizes, and prices in closer proximity. |
| Quality Architecture and Urban Design | Attention paid to beauty, aesthetics, human comfort and scale, and creating a sense of place (special placement of civic uses and sites within community. Human scale architecture & spirit nourishing surroundings.) |
| Traditional Neighbourhood Structure | Discernable centre and edges.  
Public space at centre.  
Importance of quality public realm; public open space designed as civic art.  
Contains wide range of uses and densities within ped-shed. |
| Increased Density                   | More buildings, residences, shops, and services closer together creating a more enjoyable place to live; ease of walking to enable a more efficient use of services and resources. |
Green (Smart) Transportation
- A network of high-quality trains connecting cities, towns, and neighbourhoods together.
- Pedestrian-friendly design that encourages an active use as a viable means of transportation

Sustainability
- Minimal environment impact of development and its operations.
- Eco-friendly technologies, respect for ecology and value of natural systems.
  - Energy efficiency & less use of finite fuels.
  - More local production.
  - More walking, less driving.

Quality of Life
- Applied in unison, these principles add up to a higher quality of life than the one most of us currently live.

Whereas different authors may choose varying nomenclatures to describe a certain use of an area, the basis of that is grounded in the above list. Though terms or words may vary, this is the original refined list created by the CNU to guide the ideology in a unison direction. While it is not stated directly, when reading the steps from first to last it is easy to see how beginning with increasing walkability can lead to better connectivity, which can be best achieved by creating a mixed-use and diverse neighbourhood with a mixed range of housing in both scale and price. One can imagine how the four remaining principles are able to fit into that flow which ultimately leads to a higher quality of life for those living in the community, (Elshater, 2012).

Since the 2000s the New Urbanist movement has spread globally in an effort to combat the “car dependant cities … where the state government has recognised the need for redress of conventional development policy,” (Falconer, Newman, Giles-Corti, p. 287, 2010). With the reputation and attractiveness that NU as a theory exhibits, it is evident why it has been utilized by so many communities, towns, and cities to frame their policies and objectives. It is apparent from planNanaimo that the principles listed above had a level of influence over the crafting of their plans and policies. Years after the critiques of NU have been sussed out through practice and experience it is hopeful that the City is able to learn from other cities examples on how to execute NU theories properly to include everyone.
i. **Critiques of New Urbanism**

For all its attractive traits and qualities NU theory unfortunately comes with several unattractive and/or negative aspects that some literature does not mention. Increased walkability, sustainable, mixed housing options, and quality architecture unfortunately come with a literal price tag attached to them. While it would be ideal for the NU theory and quality of life to reach all parts of the city it is an unfortunate truth that the “vast majority of New Urbanist projects are not within reach of middle and low-income families,” (Talen, p. 495, 2010). NU is a great theory to prescribe to some communities, but not for those looking to achieve affordable solutions to housing, (Talen, 2010). The higher costs of housing and infrastructure acts to gate keep the neighbourhood from those in lower socio-economic tiers which diminishes the diversity in the neighbourhood and continues to drive a certain homogeneity of residents, (Grant & Perrott, 2009). However, high price tags are not the only critique that researchers have with the NU theory.

Lush boulevards, greenery, and street trees are an important part in creating a NU feeling and/or sense of place however there have been unanticipated issues revolving Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) associated with the increased vegetative areas, (Hooper, Giles-Corti, & Knuiman, 2014; Foster et al., 2016). Researchers have found that smaller trees more often associated with residential lots were more impactful on impeding visibility and correlated more with increased crime while taller street trees were associated with lower crime rates and “a more pleasant environment,” (Cervero & Kockelman, 1997 in Foster et al., p. 154, 2016). Although increased vegetation does not lead to an increased crime rate per say, it can be inferred through the literature that certain vegetative patterns should be favoured over others.

Several authors were critical on the theory attempting to “evoke a past that never existed, in which the sentiment is promoted and a past image of a small village is idealized,” (Harvey, 2007 in Retana, Pena, & Ortega, p. 11, 2014). This idealized village is noted to be homogenous by race, income, and family size where diversity is not present, similar to the Seaside master-planned community in Florida, (Ellis, 2002).

While these critiques can be deemed reasonable when looking to examples such as Seaside, it would be wrong to think this one example encapsulates the entire theory.
Rather, what it displays is how the theory may be used to create something homogenous if that is what is desired by the developers and residents. NU theory does not dictate that communities must be homogenous, unfortunately it seems that due to external factors such as location or a high entry price point these communities often end up being less diverse and more indistinguishable regardless of the intended targeted market, (Grant & Perrott, 2009). Understanding the critiques to NU is vital in ensuring that they are avoidable at all costs in the re-imagined Departure Bay.

With the ten guiding principles of New Urbanism as well as the theory’s critiques as a basis for comparison the next part of this section will examine the current policy in the city’s OCP and to narrow the scope: The Departure Bay Neighbourhood Commercial Area policy outlined in the 2006 Neighbourhood Area Plan (NAP). This will be done in order to arrive at a verdict on what both the city and the neighbourhood will allow through their policies and guidelines, thus ensuring that the vision will remain consistent with the remainder of the neighbourhood’s form and character. The knowledge gathered here will be key in the context analysis used later in the project to evaluate the DBNCC against the other NCCs in the city.

2.2.3.2. New Urbanism in Nanaimo Policy

i. planNanaimo 2008 Policy

The Departure Bay Neighbourhood falls under two different designations within “Part C: Plan Goals, Objectives and Policies” section of Nanaimo’s OCP: Section 2.2 “Corridors and Commercial Centres” in relation to the core Neighbourhood Commercial Centres, as well as Section 2.3 “Neighbourhoods” in relation to the area encompassing the core (see: figure 1). To begin, the overarching policies that guide the whole city will be examined for the two designated areas prior to the more narrowed policies within the Neighbourhood Area Plan (NAP) are examined. As a caveat prior to the review, the Neighbourhood Area Plan was developed two years prior to the cities current OCP in 2006 through a collaboration with UBC SCARP thus drawing on policies and guidelines in the previous OCP, (Sholberg, 2020). As both plans are over a decade old there may be reference to outdated ideals or visions for the City and/or Departure Bay.
The first area to examine is the Commercial Centre of Departure Bay. The OCP has separated Commercial Centres into two separate categories: City and Neighbourhood. For the purposes of this analysis only the Neighbourhood Commercial Centre policies and/or portions of the policies will be examined as the other does not apply to the project area. The OCP notes that Commercial Centres exist within Corridors and “are existing concentrations of commercial uses distributed across the city,” which are “generally characterized by the provision of retail services as a stand alone format, but may also contain a significant component of surrounding residential, amenity, and public uses,” (Nanaimo. Official Community Plan, p. 42, 2008). From this description it is apparent that the city intended for these NCCs to act as major activity nodes echoing NU policies on Mixed-use and Diversity. The listed objectives for the Corridor and Commercial Centre designated areas also mirror NU theories and policies. This includes, but is not limited to: Supporting higher intensity land uses in corridors, increasing residential

Figure 1 – The Departure Bay Neighbourhood and it’s corresponding designated NCC. Source: maps.nanaimo.ca
densities and the mix of land uses, providing public places and spaces, and encouraging sustainability in transit and other alternative modes of transportation. From this truncated list of objectives, the parallels to the CNU’s 10 Principles on New Urbanism (10 Principles) are quite visible. While the objectives are not much more than guiding visions, the following section of policies help to embed NU theories into the OCP.

*planNanaimo 2008* has a list of fourteen policies for their Corridor and Commercial Centre designated areas. Of these fourteen policies four are relevant to the Neighbourhood Commercial Centres, two of which are directed at both designations (City and Neighbourhood) leaving only two policies (2.2.2 and 2.2.3) specified towards NCCs. The first policy is in relation to general Commercial Centre uses includes: “community services and facilities, and personal services, commercial and retail facilities. Local service, institutional (including schools),” with higher density residential uses also being supported in the Commercial Centres designation, (Nanaimo. Official Community Plan, p. 43, 2008). The second policy permits residential densities of “50 to 150 units per hectare in two to six storey building forms,” however, outside of the designated NCC area the residential density is lowered to 10-50 UPH and two to four storey building forms, (Nanaimo. Official Community Plan, p. 43, 2008). Though the OCP seems lacking in policies towards NCCs, it states under Part C: Section 2.3 “Neighbourhood” that each of the designated commercial centres “completed Neighbourhood and Area Plans are adopted as amendments and form part of the OCP,” which allows each neighbourhood to construct suitable policies that fit their individual needs (Nanaimo. Official Community Plan, p. 45, 2008). Nonetheless, these two policies do fall inline with the guiding principles of New Urbanism listed above, most notably 3) Mixed-Use and Diversity, 4) Mixed Housing, and 7) Increased Density.

The Neighbourhood designated portion of the OCP outlines objectives and policies to ensure that each neighbourhood will retain its unique character composed of “a combination of history, housing style, physical setting, location and people,” (Nanaimo. Official Community Plan, p. 45, 2008).

Seventeen Neighbourhood designated policies were written framed by seven listed objectives in order to guide the cities future decisions, of which it is apparent many
of the NU principles had been followed when drafting. However, not all of the policies in the OCP fall in line with the aforementioned list. The areas of NU that are addressed throughout Part C: Section 2.3 “Neighbourhood” are 1) Walkability, 2) Connectivity, 3) Mixed-use and Diversity, 4) Mixed Housing, 5) Quality Architecture and Urban Design, and 9) Sustainability. While the other principles may have been lightly referenced, there was not enough in the way of policy to denote a principle as being fulfilled such as with traditional neighbourhood structure, or green transportation. Although the OCP may seem a bit shallow in regards to NU neighbourhood policies, it is an important reminder that the OCP is over a decade old and currently being reviewed.


The *Departure Bay Neighbourhood Plan* itself outdates the current OCP by two years therefore referring to the objectives and policies that were outlined in the previous plan adopted in 1996. For this reason, many of the objectives and policies outlined in the document may be slightly dated and no longer apply to what the City or the current Departure Bay neighbourhood and community desire. Regardless, this is currently the policy that guides the built form of the neighbourhood and is important to review as it still holds power over the decisions that can be made when developing in the area.

The objectives and policies are found in the latter two sections of the 44-page NAP with the objectives being found in “Section 4: Action and Implementation” while the policies are found in “Section 5: Appendices C. Plan Nanaimo Density Objectives and Policies for Areas Designated Neighbourhood in the OCP”, respectively. The objectives outlined are related to aspects of community planning regarding the relationship of the built and unbuilt environments while the policies are mostly written to limit the density of the neighbourhood to what is specified in the NAP.

As an example the first policy declaration states: “The target gross density for Neighbourhoods is 15 units per ha. (6 units per acre),” which is then followed in the second policy by “a target mix of 60% single family and 40% multi-family should be used as a guide for achieving neighbourhood densities of 15 units per hectare,” (Nanaimo. Neighbourhood & Area Plans, p. 43, 2006). While the 40% multi-family seems generous, in reality that is taken up almost completely by the single 52-unit Seaside apartment
building on Departure Bay Road. While this is a critique of the policy, it is also an observation into the desires of the neighbourhood in the mid-2000s.

As most general policies are covered within the OCP, the NAP does not offer much outside of what is listed above in terms of policy. The NAP however, does allow for guidance of the built form in other ways through the Design Guidelines found in “Section 5: Appendices A. Departure Bay Design Guidelines for Village Core”. The twenty-six guidelines listed are used to control the form and character of the built form. Considerations for residential, store and shop signs, frontage, façades, and other exhausting details can be found within the guidelines which are utilized to create and maintain a familiar feeling within the neighbourhood which in turn helps to maintain the areas unique sense of place. The NU principles relating to the built form, aesthetics, and architecture are addressed within this section.

2.2.3.3. What can Nanaimo policy learn from New Urbanism

The age of both the OCP and Neighbourhood Plan are something that needs to be addressed to put the analysis into perspective. A lot has changed in the past twelve to fourteen years not only regarding Nanaimo and the planning profession, but in respects to technologies and lifestyles. As an example, when discussing the age of the NAP with a planner at the City he remarked that many of the active members of the Neighbourhood Association (NA) were not involved with the NAP in 2006. Therefore, the current NA could not have the same ideals that the previous groups members may have regarding density or traffic. For these reasons much of the policy that has been reviewed previously and will be analyzed below, while fault-finding, should be taken under the consideration of the age of the documents, specifically the Departure Bay Neighbourhood Plan, written under the context of the 1996 Nanaimo OCP.

i. planNanaimo 2008 Analysis

The policies written for “Section 2.2: Corridor/Commercial Centres” in planNanaimo (2008) regardless of their age remain somewhat up to date with the cities current desire towards complete communities, and the other shared aspects that are pertinent to the NU principles outlined prior. Despite much of the policy in this section dominated by the Corridor designated areas which are not present in Departure Bay, the
two policies, 2.2.2 and 2.2.3 mentioned previously, were designed to increase density allowing for “residential densities of 50 to 150 unites per hectare in two to six storey buildings,” and mixed-uses within the area to include “community services and facilities, and personal services, commercial and retail facilities,” directly within the NCCs, (Nanaimo, Official Community Plan, p. 43, 2008). While the other policies under Section 2.2 speak to the other New Urbanist principles such as connectivity, sustainability, and urban form, these are concerning the Corridor and City Commercial Centres and therefore not relevant to the Departure Bay and other NCCs.

A better analysis of the principles can be done through “Section 2.3 Neighbourhood” of the 2008 OCP as more of the policies in this section are related to the Neighbourhood Commercial Centres. As with the previous section, much of the policy is written to direct the designated areas towards a complete community. Smaller lots, mixed-uses, sustainable developments, ecological preservation, and increased mixed modes of transportation are some of the themes present. The issue that arises from this section, and the others, is the constant lack of policy towards transit; increasing transit ridership, frequency, modes, and other issues around transit oriented transportation are not outlined in these two sections of the OCP. However, in 2014 the city approved their Transit Master Plan which acts as the guiding document to consult when inquiring into the future transit patterns for this area. The Nanaimo Transit Master Plan (NTMP) will “guide decision making over the next 25 years and recommend improvements for all modes of transportation,” (City of Nanaimo, n.d.). The NTMP lists a long-term project in the DBNCC on Departure Bay Road with project drivers being: Alternate Transportation/Land Use/Complete Streets; Capacity/Congestion; and Road Safety, (Nanaimo Transportation Master Plan, 2014).

The Departure Bay Neighbourhood Plan written in context of the 1996 OCP pays little attention to the principles of New Urbanism, which could be due to the fact that the theory had only been formed earlier that decade and had not seeped out into the mainstreams focus yet. The plans policy which continues to remain in effect in 2020 and is still relevant for decision making for the area becomes an issue when looking towards increasing residential density of the neighbourhood. As discussed prior, the first two policies restrict the density of the area from it’s allotted 2-6 storey, 50-150 UPH, in the Neighbourhood Centre respectively, to a low 15 UPH throughout with no more than 3 storeys in the “Village Core” (the previous designation of NCC prior to the 2008 OCP) as seen in figure 2, (Nanaimo. Official Community Plan, 2008).

![Figure 2 – DBNCC Outlined in the 2006 Neighbourhood Area Plan. Source: Departure Bay Neighbourhood Plan](image)

While this is not an argument to displace the waterfront with towering 6+ storey structures, it is an argument towards updating the policy to allow additional density to the Commercial Centre and the encompassing Neighbourhood areas. Gordon and Janzen
point out in their 2013 article “Suburban Nation? Estimating the Size of Canada’s Suburban Population” that “[t]ransit-supportive suburbs require a gross residential density greater than 17 housing UPH, which is the requirement for an intermediate level of bus transit service,” (Gordon & Janzen, p. 210, 2013). Though the 2006 plan does allow an increase to 25 UPH for the purpose of “[r]ezoning for townhouse residential forms,” it does caution that increase in traffic may occur, which is clearly an underlying issue. This issue however, could most likely be solved with an intermediate level of bus transit service and some neighbourhood commercial spaces, (Nanaimo. Neighbourhood & Area Plans, p. 43, 2006). The addition of a reliable, frequent transit service may be enough to sway future residents into giving up their cars in favour of public transit, thus mitigating the amount of active vehicles in the area.

The DBNCC has approximately 101 residential dwelling units within an approximate area of 6.56 hectares (ha) which equates to a UPH of 15.2. While the NCC barely exceeds the maximum allowed 15 UPH it does not meet the minimum for an intermediate level of bus transit service, according to Gordon & Janzen (2013). Additional density would strengthen the argument for increased transit frequency. Even raising the density across the whole NCC to 25 UPH, which the NAP allows for townhouse residential, would allow for a more substantial amount of mixed use multifamily residential without taking away from the neighbourhood’s form and character.

Increased traffic and congestion are obvious reasons to not allow further density, especially in such an auto-monopolized, non-central neighbourhood like Departure Bay. By following the 10 Principles appropriately these nuisances have the potential to be avoided, or at least mitigated. With an active and complete Commercial Centre fulfilling the day-to-day needs of those in the area and a responsive transit system connecting to the other Commercial Centres throughout the City a rationale emerges for decreasing the site’s parking maximums. While this is undeniably a simple answer to a complex and expensive question it is a common one throughout this City and one that may as well be explored due to the inability to go underground for parking because of limiting environmental and archaeological factors.
2.3. Case Study: 2385 Departure Bay Road (Legasea Condos)

The burial site at the property of 2855 Departure Bay Road was discovered in 2007 with the preliminary excavation for the Tides housing developments. Due to the discovery of the Departure Bay midden DhRx 16 which spans the shoreline the bay had been flagged as an archaeologically sensitive area, (Curtin, 2002; Hunter, 2007). According to Dave Bodaly, a cultural tour guide and member of the SFN, the area was not traditionally used for burials until post European contact and due to the SFNs cultural practices not allowing a body to be disturbed post-mortem the ethnicity of the individual found is unverified, (Bodaly, 2020). Regardless, the construction of this development was halted and an additional barrier for any future projects along the bay and further back into the neighbourhood was created. However, the 2018 mixed-use Legasea building from Tony Harris Developments Inc. at 2835 Departure Bay Road was able to proceed due to a close relationship and transparency with the SFN throughout the development process as well as by utilizing building techniques which left the underlying archaeological artifacts to remain unaffected.

The Legasea development has shown that current building techniques along with some variances on parking and good relations with local First Nations can allow future construction to continue on sensitive sites without disturbing the remains underneath. Because the development was on a known archaeological site discovered years before, an Impact Assessment Study would have been needed prior to the approval of the development permit as per the Heritage Conservation Act [RSBC 1996] c. 187, s. 12.2 “Heritage inspection and heritage investigation permit.”. Upon completion of the study one of three recommendations would be made if the required assessment determined that “the archaeological site has significant heritage value and if there are expected impacts to the site,” which this site did, (Ministry of Forests Lands and Natural Resource Operations, 2019). The three recommendations are:

i) “Changing the building site or footprint to reduce or avoid impacts to an archaeological site;” or,
ii) “Changing the construction technique to reduce the degree of site impact, for example, substituting an above ground basement or building on pads and or pilings instead of in-ground foundation;” or,

iii) “Completing additional archaeological excavations to recover information that will be impacted by development.”

The Harris team chose the second recommendation of altering their building technique in order to reduce the disturbance to the site. In an 18 June, 2019 article with Business Examiner Harris explains that the project was accomplished via “floating, reinforced concrete slabs” which had eliminated the need to excavate “allowing the builders to be sensitive to the history hidden beneath,” (MacDonald, 2019). While the slab building technique was an excellent option for this project, and seems like a great alternative to the usual methods of construction when in certain situations, it is not without its downsides.

Two major disadvantages that can be brought to the forefront of the conversation would be the cost associated with this form of architecture and the prevention of archaeological retrieval of anything buried underneath. The first argument against the proposed building comes from the same Business Examiner article where Harris explained that due to the project requiring “a lot of additional engineering” they needed to “create a luxury product at a high price point to justify all the costs,” (MacDonald, 2019). This comment is not mentioned as a slight towards the development or presence of luxury condos at a waterfront location, which is generally where they are developed. Rather, this comment is highlighted to bring light to the issue that the higher price point as a result of the less common construction technique used had inadvertently priced all but the most fortunate out of the waterfront. An issue that was also a prevalent disadvantage in NU communities and something that was previously noted to avoid during this re-imagining of the DBNCC through increased density and diversity of housing types.

Development within this area will undoubtedly have several obstacles to overcome due to the sensitivities unique to the bay. If future developments in the area are able to transfer the knowledge learned at all levels of this prior development into future developments than it may decrease costs enough to allow for more affordable units in the
immediate area. However, creating more ways to construct on these sensitive sites will leave them incapable of any excavation or study for decades, or centuries.

The second argument towards the non-intrusive construction style may not be applicable to all Nation’s but may to some. The field of archaeology has increasingly become more pursued by the Aboriginal peoples of Canada as either a means of discovering their past, or as a way of settling land claims using discovered artifacts, (Walker & Ostove, 1995). By erecting a building on a site it is effectively confining the history underneath it for the life of that building which averages 50-70 years, (Gelman, 2012). While this may be a non-issue to some Aboriginal peoples of Canada others may find this to be a point of concern. Rather than spending the time and money to excavate the site and retrieve some potentially important artifacts to the Snuneymuxw they are now irretrievable until the next time the Departure Bay gets developed.

The construction of the Legasea building in 2018 has acted as a catalyst for further development in the area. Since the completion of the project, several other developments permits have been issued for other parcels in the area, including a new building permit for the recently demolished Amrikko’s restaurant at 1400 Wingrove Street as of March 03, 2020 which was destroyed in a fire in 2013. Although the floating concrete slab construction utilized by the Harris development team is not the most cost effective construction method currently and restricts access to the artifacts underneath, presently it is the appropriate method of constructing in this area. The lack of foundation and inability to build down may cause issues in regards to limitations on parking areas and utilities however these are concerns which can be mitigated elsewhere.
Chapter 3. Research Methodologies

3.1. Research Design

The research design was developed to inform the re-imagining of the DBNCC based on a process that would reflect a municipality’s development permit (DP) application, albeit a robust one. To do this, the literature review informed best practices which analyzed and developed principles through an ethical and place attachment lens. The review of NU approaches evaluated current planning practice trends and used a recent development as a case study. This approach was taken to gain contextual knowledge on the site through the first three sections of the literature review while the case study was used to ground that knowledge in practical application.

Understanding the nuances of a site through multiple perspectives using differing lens such as history, ethics, and place attachment can better inform a design and be the difference between the success or failure of envisioning of place. While the literature was vital for grasping the theoretical information regarding the re-imagining the research methods employed were used to procure more site-specific information for this project.

The first method was accomplished through interviews with key stakeholders in the DBNCC. The purpose behind this part of the research was to interview significant individuals who were associated with the project area in either a social, cultural, or economic way, or were able to speak to my re-imagining of the project area based on their professional knowledge. The interviews were intended to acquire qualitative information to help guide the re-imagining of the DBNCC based on some of the proposed changes that had been made prior to speaking with the interviewees. The stakeholders chosen for interviews included: two local developers, a cultural tour guide and member of the SFN, a local City of Nanaimo planner, and a local residents chosen through convenient sampling.

The second method evaluated the DBNCC against the other 4 NCCs within the Nanaimo city limits through a comparative context analysis. This comparison assessed
the current residential types and NCC densities, the current and proposed commercial developments, the street connections within and access to the NCC, along with other aspects vital to creating a complete neighbourhood as outlined in the 10 Principles discussed in the prior chapter. Both research methods will be discussed more in depth in the following subsections.

### 3.1.1. Interviews

Semi-structured interviews were chosen as one of the methods of data collection for this project which felt to be the most practical given the limited time and resources available. Ensuring a diverse representation of the main stakeholders of the Departure Bay area was important as it would give a wide range of perspectives. This wider range of perspective would help in determining the best possible decisions to make in the re-imagining.

Prior to the interviews, a context analysis of the site was completed and an initial site plan was created in order to give those interviewed the opportunity to see which properties may be affected throughout the re-imagining and what was proposed in their place. It was vital to go into the interviews with a first draft design not only for the aforementioned reason but also to probe the more professional interviewees into their thoughts on the current plan, as well as the residents on their initial thoughts and reaction to the proposed changes. This was done to gain a more experienced insight from them on which elements of the re-imagining seemed to be successful and which would either need to be improved or reconsidered. The advice and critiques that were given to me during my interviews were then reflected upon and changes were made to the site plan if they seemed appropriate.

An example of this was after speaking with Dave Bodaly of the SFN, his idea of doing a non-permanent open air market on the SFNs site (2855 Departure Bay Road) was later used in future interviews for my plan. While Dave does not speak for the Nation as a whole and ultimately what the SFN does with their property is for the Nation to decide, his idea for the market was something that I felt would be an appropriate choice for the reimagining. The suggestion of a non-permanent community amenity both fit with the site
and appeared to be the more appropriate option rather than affixing a permanent structure to a lot owned by the SFN or leaving it vacant. Throughout future interviews I would include the market as part of my plan, giving credit to Dave of course. As the questions asked were open ended it allowed for the participants to go further into their answer and often led to a discussion regarding something that was brought up during their initial answer.

3.1.1.1. **Collection Methods**

After receiving consent from the participants the interview was audio recorded with the occasional written notes taken alongside to add better context for the transcription period. After each interview the recorded audio was transcribed into a digital word format and sent to the participant for their approval. Upon approval from the interviewed participants the transcribed interviews were analyzed in order to discern trends and other things that would help give rationale to the neighbourhood re-imagining.

3.1.1.2. **Population and Sampling**

The population chosen for the interviews consisted of five stakeholders in the DBNCC, these include: a local resident, two local developers, a local city planner, and a member of the SFN. This population was chosen through convenience rather than at random. Each person was chosen as they represent a different perspective in the Bay and therefore each hold a valuable insight into the neighbourhood and its future.
3.1.2. Neighbourhood Commercial Centres Comparison

The second form of data collection that was chosen for this project was in the form of a comparative context analysis of the DBNCC against the other four NCCs within the City of Nanaimo. This includes: The Long Lake NCC (LLNCC), the South End NCC (SENCC), the University Village NCC (UVNCC), and the Harewood NCC (HWNCC) (figure 3). The purpose of the comparative context analysis was to observe and compare the NCCs by exploring each under five different themes relating to the build environment using the 10 Principles to further bolster each theme as a basis for the comparative analysis. The five themes examined OCP Land Use and Zoning, Neighbourhood Structure, Density, Circulation, and the Environment. Throughout each theme elements of the 10 principles were incorporated where applicable in order to add an extra lens to the analysis. Rather than comparing the DBNCC as a whole against the other four NCCs it was determined that breaking the comparison down further to examine individual aspects of the NCCs based on the general context analysis themes would give a better outcome for discussing the results.

The format for this context analysis would discuss each of these themes with the use of visual aids in presenting the information. A write up is included to ensure the
analysis would be coherent and not solely rely on interpreting the images. The purpose of using visual aids as the crux of this section was to better present details that may be cumbersome in explaining through writing. This was also done as another way of mirroring a DP application, albeit a more extensive analysis than what would typically be done.
3.2. Limitations

While attempts were made to reduce the number of limitations through preparation and oversight, several remain. The main limiting factor for this project is the lack of public engagement with the Departure Bay community. While attempts were made to mitigate this drawback through the interview process, the fact remains that the larger community voice would not be captured. The obvious professional, ethical, and legal arguments exist for the importance of community engagement, especially when considering best practices. However, there is an argument to be made against having an extensive public engagement period, especially one for a hypothetical Vision Plan. Prominent urbanists such as Tom Campanella and Andrés Duany have criticized the practice remarking that it slows down and extends the process to the point that development costs rise while little to nothing can be done, (Hooper, 2011; Zeetser, 2011). While this may be true in some towns or cities there most definitely is a time and place in the planning and development process for public engagement. For this project unfortunately that element was not present and while it is noted as a limitation efforts were made to mitigate this deficiency.

Several environmental and archaeological issues with the site had caused some issues. Departure Bay Creek running through a number of properties in the north of the NCC limits development activity due to setbacks imposed by the Riparian Areas Protection Regulations (RAPR). A high water table and low elevation from sea level meant the area was prone to flooding in certain spots which again, limited what was able to be developed. Archaeological remains and artifacts found throughout the bay area was another limiting factor in the re-imagining. As this project was supposed to stay as grounded to reality as possible, ignoring these factors would have taken any practical application out of this project.

The world happens when you are busy making plans, something that is valid in both life and the planning profession. One of the main draws to this area for the re-imagining was the lack of substantial development activity that had been happening at 1400 Wingrove Street, the site of the Amrikko’s Restaurant that was destroyed in a fire in 2013. Over the two year course of this project there had been little to no activity on the site with the DP set to expire in early 2020. On March 03, 2020 a building permit (BP)
was filed with the city extending the possibility of development taking place. This sudden activity was unfortunate for this project as that property was a key piece in the re-imagining, however it was a stark reminder of how volatile and unexpected development can be. While this project will be completed before any new information on the property will likely become available it has been noted but not taken into account for the re-imagining. That said, the initial plans for the property have been acquired and have been considered in the overall vision of both the NCC and that site specifically.
3.3. Ethical Considerations

Ethical approval was received by the Vancouver Island University’s Research Ethics Board (REB). Despite any risk to the participants being small precautions had to be taken nonetheless. All participants had been given consent forms to sign prior to any interview taking place which outlined the general risks and opportunities to redact statements or withdraw from the study. To add a level of comfort to the participants, they were given the choice to opt for a level of anonymity through the use of a pseudonym as well, this option was not taken by any of the interviewees.

While the information collected during the interviews are likely to be uncontroversial, the potential for certain opinions or views expressed by the participants towards the DBNCC re-imagining to be seen negatively by some was a possibility. Had this been viewed as a problem an option to mitigate the risks was given to the participants via use of a pseudonym. However, depending on the information that they had provided, the possibility of their identity being accidentally uncovered remained a possibility which was outlined on the consent form that was read and signed prior to the interview taking place.

Upon the completion of the interview the audio recording was transcribed and sent to the participants to review and redact or make any changes needed before giving their approval. Each interviewee was told in the consent form and again in the follow up email that they had two weeks from when the email goes out to rescind or amend any comments they had made, or their identity. Had the participants not responded within the two-week period a follow up email was sent exclaiming that if nothing was heard within the next week it would be assumed that the transcription was satisfactory. Fortunately, this was not the case for any of the participants that I had spoken with.
Chapter 4. Research Analysis

4.1. Interviews

The interviews that took place between the months of January to March 2020 were important in determining the vision of the built environment and guiding the overall image of this project. By interviewing key stakeholders in the neighbourhood such as local residents, planners, and developers, I was able to gain important insights into how each of those parties would react towards the initial proposed changes. While aspects like increased density and commercial uses may have been seen as a positive to one group, another may have view it as a negative. These varied opinions were important to understand for this project as the NCC is not a homogenous group of users or uses. Not only this, but other important things to consider were discovered through the interviews that had not been looked at before.

Without being able to complete a thorough observational report of the area, the interviews with the local resident, as an example, were necessary as they were able to give a better insight and understanding into more of the day-to-day life of the NCC. Whereas the developers and city staffers that were chosen were able to dispel some of the questions and concerns that I had regarding commercial uses, parking, and the more technical issues regarding sensitive environments and geotechnical knowledge. After stating their name and occupation each participant was given between five to eight questions (including follow up questions) to answer pertaining to the project. As the questions asked were open ended it allowed for the participants to go further into their answer and often led to a discussion regarding a theme that was brought up during their initial response.

In order to properly evaluate the information that had been gained over the course of the research the interviews had been analyzed together thematically rather than based on stakeholder type. The questions that were chosen for each stakeholder, while tailored to the individual groups, had a level of continuity between them. Questions regarding density, walkability, and neighbourhood amenities for instance were asked in each interview but for a different audience. A question about UPH density would illicit a different
response from the developers as it would from the residents. For this reason, it was decided that it would be best to analyze the themes of the interviews in order to better interpret the data rather than analyzing them based on stakeholder groups.

4.1.1. Culture and the Snuneymuxw First Nation

As outlined throughout the literature review the SFN have a very long history and deep cultural ties to Departure Bay. Having lived on the shores for millennia prior to European contact remnants of their past village still remain under the bay. The discovery of archaeological evidence being found in 2007 during the initial assessment for the 2855 Departure Bay Road property as well as other cultural artifacts being found nearby relating to the SFN’s previous village sites have acted as a barrier toward future development in the area. According to Chris Sholberg a Cultural Planner with the City of Nanaimo the previous SFN Chief Viola Wyse met with then Premier Campbell to discuss the purchase of the property from the developer to hold in trust for the Nation after several remains had been found.

With the SFN owning and having ties to properties in the area it was important to speak with someone from the Nation to include them in the process. While a single person can not speak for the whole Nation, it was still important to interview someone who could share more of the SFN’s history and shed light on which properties the Nation owned or were involved in. Dave Bodaly a Cultural Tour Guide of Saysutchun (New Castle) Island, a division of Petroglyphs Development Group was more than helpful in sharing more of the Nation’s history in the bay and gave insight into some of his and the Nation’s idea’s for the sites.

Speaking only for himself Bodaly remarked that the re-imagining seemed like a sound project and said it was “really nice to see something developed there and kept in record with First Nations in consistency with other locations recognizing Snuneymuxw territory,” (Bodaly, 2020). While others from the Nation may not share the same opinion on the re-imagining, it remained a beneficial comment to the vision.

Sholberg also spoke of past discussions where there had been a desire to replace the Kin Hut with a cultural interpretive centre which would have been a conjoined project
between the City and the SFN however he was unsure if that option was still up for
discussion. The inclusion of a cultural interpretive centre to replace the existing Kin Hut
and Activity Centre was also seen positively by both Bodaly and Sholberg. Bodaly
mentioned the importance of retaining a smaller more intimate space which the Kin Hut
provided was essential. Sholberg noted that a larger facility to substitute the Activity
Centre was still required to accommodate normal functions and events such as voting and
amateur wrestling.

4.1.2. Density and Building Height

Density and building height were two of the most important themes throughout the
interviews with the five participants. The success of this re-imagining depended on
increasing the density to a level that would be able to support more frequent transit
services and the commercial businesses through walk in traffic. As the current density in
the NCC was just over 15 at 15.2 UPH it was important to see that number increase to
both support local amenities and create more affordable housing options.

The preliminary plans that were brought into the interviews saw much of the
development occurring down Wingrove Street and several of the periphery lots. This first
proposal would have the density increased to 30-35 UPH with the inclusion of several four
storey apartment buildings. The responses received from the proposed increase to the
NCCs density were polarizing between the groups of interviewees. The local resident
Raechel Heglin was hesitant on the increased density citing increased traffic and vehicle
congestion which could “potentially impact the air quality,” of those living there, (Heglin,
2020). Sholberg stated that from his memory the main argument against a higher density
during the drafting of the 2006 DBNCC NAP was due to the views of the surrounding
neighbourhood residents being impeded by buildings larger than 3 storeys, (Sholberg,
2020).

The local developers however were keen on the increased density and even
pushed for it to go higher. Al Benjamin the president of Island Creek Developments (ICD)
“believe[d] that there’s some density required and needed” in the DBNCC and pushed for
a higher density than what was originally proposed in the initial plans stating “the higher
the density the better,” (Benjamin, 2020). The developer’s rationale behind pushing for the higher UPH was in order to support the new commercial units. Pat Maloney the Senior Planner at Dillon Consulting Limited supported this remarking that unless the density is increased in the immediate area than “you’re not going to get the walk in [traffic], because you’re not getting further than 400 meters,” (Maloney, 2020). Locating the day-to-day commercial within a five to ten-minute walk of a large amount of residents will be a determining factor in how successful the businesses will be.

While the resident was not excited about a proposed increase to the density in her beachfront neighbourhood as she stated that it was “already kind of busy with just local people” coming to the bay, (Heglin, 2020). However, she also understood that change happens within cities and ultimately knew it would be something she could adjust to. Her attitude towards the increase to UPH also began to shift when informed that the increased density would correlate to an increase in day-to-day amenities in the area something that she noted was severely lacking.

4.1.3. Neighbourhood Amenities

The reception to an increase in density had produced mixed reactions from the varying stakeholder groups interviewed however, the responses to questions relating to the local amenities were fairly unanimous. All groups found that the local amenities that were offered, both community and commercial, were lacking and did not fulfill the OCPs desire to develop “neighbourhood commercial centres and local service centres in existing neighbourhoods to move Nanaimo’s neighbourhoods towards more complete communities,” (Nanaimo. Official Community Plan, p. 46, 2008). Chris Sholberg spoke to the community amenity spaces such as the Departure Bay Activity Centre and the Kin Hut. Both spaces are actively used by many different groups in the community and have been for decades making them vital to both the Departure Bay and greater Nanaimo community. The spaces are aged however, with the Activity Centre being built in 1960 and the Kin Hut in the 1930s during the reconstruction of the Departure Bay Road, (Gogo, 1995).
Other community amenity spaces such as the beach and waterfront area as well as the recreational fields at Centennial Park were brought up during the interview with the local resident. She had remarked that she was impressed with how well the waterfront was kept and managed by the City. However, she did not think the same of the other recreational amenities. While the baseball and soccer fields used by organized sports teams during their respective seasons were kept well, the basketball and tennis courts were in need of repair. Her overall feeling with the community amenities in the NCC was that the “bones are good” but it “wouldn’t be bad to have a little revamp,” (Heglin, 2020). It was also made clear that there was a lack of recreational amenities geared towards adults as the fields mostly serviced youth activities and organizations.

The neighbourhood’s community amenities may not be in the best physical shape in regards to their condition, however it was discovered through the interviews from those living and working in the area that they were heavily used and an important part of the neighbourhood. Unfortunately, the same could not be said for the commercial amenities available to residents. The lack of small-scale daily shops was apparent and a point of contention to those living there. The resident desired “to go grocery shopping near my house and be able to walk there,” for things like milk without having “to buy it from 7/11” where such items are almost double in price or to “walk up the hill 45 minutes to Save-On,” (Heglin, 2020). The need for small-scale commercial spaces for bakers, butchers, grocers, pharmacies, and other like businesses was a constant that was brought up by the varying stakeholders.

Bringing new commercial amenities into the NCC and renewing the ones actively used by the community is the main purpose for the re-imagining of the DBNCC. Through interviews with the local developers it was clear that in order to support the new businesses economically it would require an increase in the area’s overall density. The walk in traffic generated from the added density and new connections with other neighbourhoods would be a greater benefit to the businesses rather than relying on shoppers driving into the area. Maloney stated that bringing in a variety of unit types and sizes to the area through the re-imagining was also beneficial. Giving people an option of detached single family cluster homes, condo apartments, townhouses, and live/work
housing types rather than “just putting in small one bedroom apartments,” was noted as a community amenity in itself.

The intent of the NCC outlined in the city’s OCP is to be able to provide services to those in the immediate vicinity creating complete neighbourhoods rather than acting as an anchor point to the City. Supporting the commercial amenities with local walk in traffic and from those using the parks for recreation or leisure is the main purpose of the commercial spaces being proposed.

4.1.4. Walkability and Connectivity

Increasing walkability within and connectivity to the NCC was another important theme that arose throughout the interview process. As discussed in the previous two sections walkability is closely related to an increased density and the addition of future commercial amenities in the centres. As noted, NCCs in the City are not intended to be used as anchoring points for large-scale commercial uses rather this responsibility is designated to the City Commercial Centres such as Country Club Mall. For this reason, promoting an increase in vehicle traffic is not the intent for the vision of the area.

The geography of the bay plays a large role in this. The NCC is located a few meters from sea level at the bottom of a geographical bowl with the Pacific Ocean to the east and every access road leading up a hill. The slope from the beachfront to the top of Wingrove Street is only a 6% incline (35 m / 528.47 m) though if it is started from the edge of the NCC at Elk Street to the same terminus point that almost doubles to 11% (30 m / 275.3 m). While 11% is not an unmanageable slope to some it becomes problematic when dealing with an aging population. This was brought up by Chris Sholberg who stated that as a resident of an adjacent neighbourhood walking up and down the hills to get into and out of Departure Bay has proven difficult for him and others.

Increasing the permeability and connectivity to the rest of the city via the waterfront by “connecting the waterfront walkway all the way through to Brechin and right over to the ferry terminal” was stated by the planner as “the ultimate desire” for the city, (Sholberg, 2020). The construction of a multi-neighbourhood boardwalk down the coast would be an amazing addition to the city and would increase the connectivity to the city’s downtown
core (DTC) bypassing the steep terrain for those on foot. Not only that, but it would also bring in a substantial amount of additional walk-in traffic to the commercial amenities from those trekking up from the Brechin Hill neighbourhood and the DTC.

The geography of the bay making it difficult to enter/exit the area by anything other than a vehicle, especially for those with limited mobility, spoke to the lack of connectivity with the rest of the city by alternate modes of transportation. To add to this, there is only a single bus route along Departure Bay Road with another several blocks west on Glenayr Drive neither of which efficiently connect well to the rest of the city. Having moved from Vancouver years prior the local resident found the lack of transit service in her area a major barrier to her daily life. As both her and her husband are currently full time nursing students and both work full time the limiting transit options have made their lives exceedingly difficult with a single vehicle.

Enhancing the connectivity and walkability of the site helps on multiple levels. Not only does it give rationale for the success of the commercial amenities through new walk in traffic, but it is also an argument for decreasing the parking requirements for those commercial spaces. The increased UPH and better transit connections means store owners will not have to rely solely on those driving in for business and residents will not have to rely on a vehicle to perform their daily duties. As this re-imagining is confined within the designated NCC area there is only a limited amount of space to make the best use of it and parking is increasingly being seen as not the best use.

4.1.5. Traffic and Parking

The themes of traffic and parking were not as spoken to throughout the interviews that other themes were such as density or neighbourhood amenities. Throughout the initial plans it was necessary to account for the correct number of parking spaces that would be required for the residential, commercial, and other land use proposals as form follows parking. As issues with space and congestion were brought up by several parties, it did not exclude the themes entirely from the analysis.

As noted under the Density and Building Height section, the local resident saw an increase in density positively correlating with an increase in traffic and congestion
problems on Departure Bay Road. Acting as the main thoroughfare through the bay the local resident noted this may potentially lead to a lower air quality for those living there. The traffic associated with the rise in density was to be mitigated through increased walkability to the amenities for the immediate residents. However, that does not solve the issue of those choosing to drive into the NCC to shop and leisure as well as those taking part in recreational activities such as weekend youth soccer matches. While these factors may not be as easily mitigated due to their nature (choice and commitment) they are taken into account. Fortunately, the NCC is accessible from multiple routes from the north (Hammond Bay Road) and west (Bay Street) which could possibly help with relieving traffic from the south (Departure Bay Road). The gridded layout of both the NCC and its surrounding neighbourhood is also useful in dispersing traffic, if drivers are aware of the alternate routes.

While the permeability may aid in mitigating the traffic along the connecting thoroughfares it does not help in containing the amount of parking spaces that are not just required, but needed during peak periods. However, that does not mean that a sea of parking spaces needs to be available at all times. Maloney suggested methods such as shared parking agreements in the mixed-use areas to help alleviate concerns. While residential spaces are potentially empty during the day they could be used by the customers of the small-scale businesses. Other suggestions such as covering parking “by utilizing some of the structures as much as possible” in the multi-family and live/work buildings were also mentioned as both a means of using the limited space efficiently as well as screening the parking from other residences and the public, (Maloney, 2020).

4.1.6. Final Thoughts

Although the interviews were very insightful and brought forward great ideas that had not been thought of, they also brought with them the weight of developing in the real world, especially the ones with Pat Maloney and Al Benjamin the two developers. While I had considered parking, traffic, utilities and other obvious development hurdles. Things such as garbage pick up, screening, fire, storm water and other more technical elements had slipped my mind during the initial planning stages. While this was unfortunate it was not devastating to the project in that it gave the opportunity to take another look at the site
with this new knowledge and to make the corrections needed. It is very rare that development plans will be 100% correct the first time and therefore this was an unintentional way the project had mirrored a proposal process.

Further uncovering the history of the bay from the perspectives of the SFN and the City was a valuable experience and lesson throughout this project. While it helped give context to the site through its historical uses by both First Nations and Europeans it also gave insight into the future of key properties within the NCC. Without this context there would have been a good chance that the re-imagining would have crossed a cultural boundary due to ignorance.

The information that was gained through the interviews regarding the proposed increased density to the neighbourhood were polarizing between the groups as expected. The developers were pushing for a high enough density to be able to support the commercial spaces on Wingrove Street. The city staffer was neutral on the notion stating it would be appropriate to consult the NAP for Departure Bay. While the resident was apprehensive on the increased density until it was coupled with the increase to commercial spaces in the NCC. However, it appears that the three-storey cap on the properties was put in place to ensure the view corridors remained intact for the greater neighbourhood, something which should be respected when possible.

Speaking to the stakeholders regarding the neighbourhood amenities was useful in shedding light onto what was working well in the bay and where there was room for improvement. As the recreational fields were actively used by youth sports organization it was apparent that they would need to remain intact during the re-imagining as they remained in good condition. Whereas the condition of the Activity Centre and Kin Hut overshadowed their community use, while this did not mean the amenities complete removal it did give rationale for replacement with a single multi-use centre. Speaking to the resident and local developers regarding appropriate commercial amenities was also valuable as several proposed commercial uses were discovered throughout the interviews that were not thought of prior.

While increasing the connectivity and walkability to support the commercial amenities was not new information gained through the interviews, it was beneficial to the
project having the professionals able to speak to the concept with their own practical
experience and reinforce it. As the geographical bowl nature of the bay is not something
that can be changed realizing it as a barrier to some and attempting to alleviate it through
other means of transportation and alternative routes such as the waterfront boardwalk
were again beneficial to the overall success of the vision.

Mitigating the increased traffic and parking to the NCC was another theme that
was valuable in exploring throughout the interviews. As stated previously, questions
directly relating to parking or traffic were not as focused on throughout the interviews.
Most of the required parking had been accounted for in the initial plans with rationale to
vary the rest. However, it was insightful to be explained concepts such as shared parking
and methods of screening residential parking from the centres users to reduce the
required spaces needed and impermeable footprint.

While not explicitly stated by any one person through the interviews, it became
apparent that creating a good design would accomplish multiple things. The resident,
while apprehensive at first about the increase to density eventually conceded to it if it was
done tastefully and brought new amenities useful to her daily life to the NCC. It was not
the density that worried her, considering she had lived in Vancouver for years prior, it was
the fear of it not being done right, whether that was explicit or not. This same concept
could be applied to all themes sussed out of the interview: in order for something to work
efficiently and effectively it had to perform multiple tasks at once. Parking needed to be
available for residents and customers without monopolizing the valuable limited space
which could only be accomplished through concepts such as shared parking.

Overall the interviews were successful in bringing light to some of the nuances in
both Departure Bay and the development process that were not made apparent prior.
While the low number of responses and lack of certain key stakeholder groups (such as
local business owners) was concerning at first, I found that by the end of the last interview
much of my questions and/or concerns regarding the re-imagined Departure Bay had been
answered. That being said, it would still have been beneficial to the project to have heard
from those missing groups, however it was not too impairing in the end.
4.2. Neighbourhood Commercial Centres Comparative Context Analysis

This section assesses the DBNCC against the other four NCC within the City of Nanaimo. Figure 4 below shows the locations and surrounding land uses of the five NCC within the City with the NCC distinguished in red. The upper-right NCC (1) is the Departure Bay NCC, following is (2) Long Lake NCC (LLNCC), (3) South End NCC (SENCC), (4) University Village NCC (UVNCC), and the (5) Harewood NCC (HWNCC). While just acting as an overview of the city, this image begins to shed light on some of the stark

Figure 4 – City of Nanaimo Neighbourhood Commercial Centre locations.  
Source: www.nanaimo.ca
differences between the DBNCC and the other designated NCC. Most noticeably the DBNCC and the area surrounding it are devoid of any Corridor designated land uses (Orange). Rather, the designation around the centre is homogenously Neighbourhood (Beige). The DBNCCs location adjacency to the ocean as well as the large parcel of park area in the centre and edges (Green) act as an environmental difference. While the SENCC, the UVNCC, and the HWNCC are within a kilometre of each other, the DBNCC as well as the LLNCC are separated by several kilometres acting as a physical difference.

Comparing the DBNCC against the other neighbourhood centres was vital to this project to illuminate both commonalities between the five NCCs and differences such as those noted above. The contrasting differences will help in giving rationale towards aspects of the re-imagining such as increased density or additional amenities. As an example, if the DBNCC has a far lower density than other centres within the city it would only strengthen the reasoning for increasing it to a level on par with the others. The context analysis will focus on five aspects of the neighbourhood centres and how they compare with the DBNCC:

i) a Figure Ground Analysis of the NCCs examining the neighbourhood structures and layouts;

ii) the OCP and Zoning designations in the NCC and their immediate neighbourhood;

iii) a Density Analysis comparing the UPH of the NCCs, including their surrounding neighbourhoods;

iv) a Circulation Analysis analyzing the walkability and connectivity within and with the city; and

v) an Environmental Analysis examining the underlying geography, and other natural features of the sites.

This context analysis focuses on comparing the DBNCC against the other NCCs in Nanaimo. As such, an emphasis was put on analyzing the DBNCC against the others, rather than analyzing the five as individuals. To do this, the DBNCC was examined and discussed and then compared against the others. Less effort has been spent in examining the nuances of the compared centres as they are not the focus of the re-imagining, rather they have been used as something to contrasts against.
4.2.1. **Figure Ground Analysis**

The figure ground analysis shows the relationships between the built and unbuilt urban spaces. The information shown in these maps will not be as obvious as they would be in others such as the Circulation Analysis. The Figure Ground Analysis of the DBNCC (figure 5) reveals much of the neighbourhood centre. Most noticeably is the NCCs location adjacent to the Pacific Ocean which distinguishes it from the other centres in multiple ways. Aside from the obvious natural aesthetics that will be further analyzed during the environmental analysis, it’s position on the bay also limits much of what is able to be built despite having the largest area at approx. 66,500 m². This is due to the limiting space to the east as well as both natural and cultural factors such as a high water table and archaeological findings along the bay. The DBNCC has a large park areas at it’s center.
and peripheries, while there are some green spaces in the other NCCs they do not have nearly as much which can be a benefit or a barrier depending on the lens it is viewed from.

The DBNCC is made up of two irregularly shaped square blocks with the remainder of the neighbourhood being comprised of two unit wide long blocks in a north/south layout with this continuing to the west and south. Further north into Hammond Bay the blocks begin to lose their conformity and begin aligning with the steep geography. The two blocks have an area of approximately 66,500 m\(^2\) making it the largest of the five centres by roughly 20,000 m\(^2\) which is just shy of the area of the central park land. While the DBNCC has mostly been subdivided into smaller lots, there remains several larger ones and some pot-handle lots which are considered legally non-conforming in the City of Nanaimo.

Comparing the DBNCC against the other remaining centres (figure 6) reveals several similarities and differences. As mentioned, while not having as much green space

![Figure 6 – Figure Ground Analysis for the Remaining four NCC](image)
in or adjacent to the NCCs, the LLNCC (2) and the UVNCC (4) do have park land within a 5-minute walk from their centers with the LLNCC also being close to a body of water,
albeit a lake rather than the ocean. The SENCC (3) which sits adjacent to the Snuneymuxw Indian Reserve #1 also has limited room to expand to the east.

Despite all being at a 1:1500 scale, the area block layout and sizes vary between the five centres. The SENCC has an area of approx. 26,000 m² and is positioned outside the DTC of Nanaimo which has led it towards smaller denser lots. A uniform grid pattern is present within all neighbourhoods with the LLNCC (approx. 25,500 m²) being at a slight angle due to it’s position next to Island Highway 19. The UVNCC (approx. 45,800 m²) and the HWNCC (approx. 28,800 m²) have a residential neighbourhood location which preserves some of the larger blocks and subdivides several together for larger developments such as cluster and townhouse complexes as well as larger commercial malls in their centers. This separates the NCCs themselves into two distinct categories: Mall Neighbourhood Commercial Centres (MNCC) such as HWNCC and UVNCC and the Mixed-Use Neighbourhood Commercial Centres (MUNCC) such as the DBNCC, LLNCC, and SENCC. While the MUNCC combines commercial, residential, and other land uses within the designated centre, the MNCC is comprised of one large neighbourhood shopping centre.

4.2.2. OCP and Zoning Designations

4.2.2.1. OCP Land Use Designations

The OCP and Zoning designations of the NCCs and their surrounding properties determine what is presently allowed in terms of current applicable uses and what future uses and zones would be allowed or considered. While a zoning bylaw states what uses are presently allowed on the site and provides restrictions to the built forms siting, size, and setbacks the OCP acts as a guiding vision for what future uses the city would like to see on these lots. The DBNCC, as stated previously, is starkly different from the others in that the surrounding land use designation is homogenously neighbourhood with no other buildable land uses for several km to the north, west, and south (figure 7).
Contrasting this, the other four NCCs do not have homogenously designated surrounding areas. As seen in figure 8 below much of the surrounding land uses in the

Figure 7 – Departure Bay NCC Surrounding Land Uses

Figure 8 – Land Use Designations for the remaining four NCC
remaining centres are an even mix of Corridor and Neighbourhood designations with the SENCC (3) having downtown land uses to the north where it boarders the DTC of the city.

Two issues arise from this lack of diverse land uses, the first being the zoning and development potential that is lost to the low-density neighbourhood designation. Urban Nodes and Corridors are supposed to “support higher densities and a wider range of amenities and services than found in the surrounding residential neighbourhoods,” (Nanaimo. Official Community Plan, p. 28, 2008). Lower densities and less amenities and services correlate to a lower transit frequency which acts as the second issue in the homogenized neighbourhood land uses around the DBNCC.

4.2.2.2. NCC Zoning

While the surrounding land uses of the DBNCC were kept to a lower density designation, the zoning within the NCC is slightly more diverse (figure 9). Although

![Figure 9 - Current Zoning for the Departure Bay NCC](image)
around the NCC zoned to allow a higher density which include R4 Duplex Residential, and R6 Townhouse Residential. The orange Commercial Centre 2 (CC2) zoned lots on the eastside of the NCC allow for higher density mixed-use developments, however due to archaeological findings most of this area is challenging to develop. The neighbourhood parks zoned PRC1 PRC2 and PRC3 allow a wide range of activities at each such as the Kin Hut, recreational fields, and the Wardropper Dog Park.

Similar to the DBNCC the use of the CC2 zones are used within the designated NCCs (figure 10). However, the main difference being that in the LLNCC (2) and HWNCC (5) each property within the NCC is zoned CC2 with the UVNCC (4) being zoned CC1 and CC3 rather than CC2. Whereas the DBNCC only zones a swathe along the side as it’s intended CC2 designation. The exception to this is the SENCC (3) although this is alleviated by having the remaining properties within the designated NCC zoned R5 Three.

Figure 10 - Current Zones for the remaining four NCC
and Four Unit Residential. The other difference between the DBNCC and the others is the use of higher density zones surrounding the neighbourhood centres. While the DBNCC does have a handful of higher residentially zoned properties (this does not include the Seaside apartments as they are zoned CC2), they only account for an additional 14 units while the UVNCC (4) as an example has several larger R6 Townhouse subdivisions adjacent to the centre.

4.2.3. Density Analysis

Currently the density in the DBNCC and its surrounding area puts it in the middle of the five NCCs in terms of UPH at 7.32, to note, the average mean density of the five centres is 7.22 UPH. However, when not accounting for the surrounding residential it surpasses all with just over 15 UPH. Table 2 below shows the breakdown of the NCCs and their surrounding properties respective units as well as the density of the centre itself.

Table 2 - Density Analysis of the five NCC

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Neighbourhood Commercial Centre</th>
<th>NCC Area (m²)</th>
<th>NCC Area (ha)</th>
<th>Number of Map Units*</th>
<th>Number of NCC Units</th>
<th>Map UPH*</th>
<th>NCC UPH</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Departure Bay</td>
<td>66,500</td>
<td>6.65</td>
<td>189</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>7.33</td>
<td>15.19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Long Lake</td>
<td>25,500</td>
<td>2.55</td>
<td>147</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5.70</td>
<td>1.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South End</td>
<td>26,000</td>
<td>2.60</td>
<td>151</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>5.85</td>
<td>3.46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University Village</td>
<td>45,800</td>
<td>4.58</td>
<td>231</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>8.95</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harewood</td>
<td>28,800</td>
<td>2.88</td>
<td>214</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8.29</td>
<td>0.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mean Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>38,520</strong></td>
<td><strong>3.85</strong></td>
<td><strong>186.4</strong></td>
<td><strong>22.8</strong></td>
<td><strong>7.22</strong></td>
<td><strong>4.03</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*This includes all units on the given maps scaled 1:1500 with an area of 0.25km²

The density map for the DBNCC (figure 11) shows where the majority of the density is distributed in the neighbourhood centre. The Seaside apartment at 2835 Departure Bay Road holds 52 units which accounts for over half (51.5%) of the 101 units within the NCC. While the apartment does add much needed density to the NCC, especially considering much of the landmass is taken up with the central park land, the remainder of the properties are sitting at a low to low-medium density with SFDs accounting for the majority of the developable land within and surrounding the DBNCC.
This lack of diverse housing types and density can be attributed to the previously analysed homogenous Residential land use designations.

Despite the previously claimed impediments, the DBNCC acts as the median of the five NCCs in the city in regards to density. This can be associated to the established neighbourhood and consistent 1/8-acre lot sizes present throughout much of the centre and its surrounding neighbourhood. In comparison to centres such as the LLNCC (2) and SENCC (3) (figure 12) which have several vacant lots and several that are lacking adequate developable land when accounting for setbacks and the like. The LLNCC and the SENCC also are lacking in higher density properties with the SENCC having little to none despite it’s R5 Three and Four Unit Residential zoning. Whereas the LLNCC despite having several higher density buildings, only has three units in the centre itself.
with the multi-family buildings account for just over a quarter of the total units on the map (25.8%).

The two remaining NCCs while just as dense as the SENCC make better use of their OCP designations and zoning and allow for more multi-family buildings which helps push their UPH higher. Despite utilizing more multi-family buildings in the HWNCC (5) they still only account for just under a quarter of the overall UPH of the area (23.8%). While the LLNCC has a similar mix of multi-family units, the surrounding area of the HWNCC much like the DBNCC maintains standardized lot sizes throughout the centre and is in more of a residential neighbourhood while the LLNCC is adjacent to the Island Highway. The UVNCC (4) however is able to maintain standardized lot sizes due to it’s position in a residential neighbourhood while utilizing its Corridor land use designations.

Figure 12 - Dot Density Maps of Remaining four NCC
and Residential zoning in order to increase the amount of multi-family units (64.5%) despite having it’s whole NCC devoid of any residential.

When looking at just the centres without their surrounding neighbourhoods the DBNCC is the clear winner with 101 units due the presence of several multi-family buildings including the 52-unit Seaside apartments. The HWNCC comes in second with 31 units, next the SENCC with 9, then the LLNCC with 3 and finally the UVNCC with no residential units within it’s designated area, instead it is solely commercial. However, scaling out to including the surrounding neighbourhoods the DBNCC falls to third place at a 1:1500 scale.

4.2.4. Circulation Analysis

The gridded block pattern of the Departure Bay neighbourhood (figure 13), along with the other five NCCs allows for easy navigation and aids in efficiently using the space available, especially in such diverse terrain, as seen from the figure below. Departure Bay

Figure 13 - Transit and Circulation Map of the Departure Bay NCC
Road, to the east is a major collector road connecting the centre to the rest of the city. The 500-meter walking circle around the DBNCC displays the easy walkability from the surrounding neighbourhood.

Acting as the main thoroughfare for much of the population living to the north in Hammond Bay and its adjacent neighbourhoods, the Departure Bay Road sees a lot of traffic throughout the day with the DBNCC NAP citing 13,000 – 15,000 vehicles passing through per day as of the study, (Nanaimo. Neighbourhood & Area Plans, p. 4, 2006). As the population has increased in both the city and the neighbourhoods that number has only risen. While the connectivity of the centre is well defined due to the structure, the surrounding terrain (5 m contours) can prove to be difficult for some groups ascending the hill. The only transit route in the ped-shed of the DBNCC is the #20 bus connecting Hammond/Dover Bay to the DTC. However, the #1 bus which connects Country Club to Downtown is only a couple blocks outside of the centre, although that is uphill.

The geography of the other NCCs are quite level save for the SENCC (3) which has a 15% grade (15 m / 100m) as seen in figure 14 below. Despite the SENCC and LLNCC (2) both being adjacent to Island Highway there is a major difference in their activity and complexity which is due to their adjacent land uses. the LLNCC is next to Country Club Mall, a highly active commercial region while the SENCC is outside the DTC in a more residential part of the neighbourhood.

Due to the proximity of the of the UVNCC (4) to the local university as well as being the only major grocery store in Harewood until recently (2018) it is well connected via transit to much of the city. While the transit connections are more in numbers and frequency in the higher commercial areas, the more residentially associated centres have less transfer points which results in users having to walk further in order to ride a different bus.
Environmental Analysis

Departure Bay is one of the city’s most coveted natural locations. With morning sunrises over the ocean and coastal mountains, a cool breeze coming off the ocean during the day and warm winds blowing out into the ocean at night due to the atmospheric pressure change. Despite it’s amazing natural features, which are frankly not comparable by the other NCCs the centre has several environmental downsides.

The Departure Bay Creek which runs through the northern properties of the centre (figure 15) requires a 15 m buffers from the top of bank as per the Riparian Areas Protection Regulations (RAPR) due to it’s status as a fish bearing stream. Recently the

Figure 14 - Remaining four NCC Transit and Circulation Map
City performed a rerouting of the Departure Bay Creek in an effort to aid in the salmons journey up and down the creek. While the proximity to the Pacific Ocean is a natural amenity to the site, with the changing climate and inevitable sea level rise (SLR) it will be an expensive hurdle for the city to overcome. While a sea wall is currently in place as mentioned in the literature review, it will most likely need to be enhanced in the near future. The proximity also entails a higher water table in the Bay area which results in some flooding issues at certain locations throughout the centre such as the northern portion of the central park, and properties at the top of the southern block.

The steep terrain of each site has already been covered in the previous section and therefore will not be explored in this section. However, it is worth noting that while the terrain may make it difficult to maneuver for some individuals, it does allow for terraced
streets which gives more homeowners and renters the opportunity to enjoy the scenic views from their homes.

The remaining NCCs (figure 16) while not possessing immediate beach and ocean access are not without their own natural merits, something common within the City of Nanaimo. The SENCC (3) is also in close proximity to the ocean, roughly 300 m to the east, however it lacks the amenities that the Bay provides. The LLNCC (2) is obviously adjacent to Long Lake which has Loudan Park running along the south side, one block north of the NCC. While the UVNCC and HWNCC are both in close proximity to several parks and trails such as Colliery Dam, Morrell Sanctuary, and the Chase River Watercourse Park.

Figure 16 - Environmental Analysis of remaining NCC
4.2.6. Analytical Findings

Comparing, contrasting, and evaluating the DBNCC against the four other NCCs in the City of Nanaimo proved to be a useful exercise for this project. Many discoveries were made throughout this process which will help bolster the arguments and rationales made for the proposed changes from this re-imagining of the Departure Bay’s Neighbourhood Commercial Centre. To support and inform the proposed changes as part of this project, it was crucial to have something local to compare the centre against. Fortunately, there were four examples within Nanaimo.

Without the use of a context analysis several aspects of the site such as the immediate and surrounding zoning and OCP designations and the density may have not been known or well understood. What was discovered through this analysis was how moderate the site was compared to the others. While there is no clear winner between any of the five it was discovered through this evaluation that each of the five neighbourhood centres were strong in their own way respective of the themes. However, this did not mean there would not be room for improvement within the DBNCC or the other four centres.

The Figure Ground Analysis illustrated how the five centres were all arranged in a gridded pattern which made travel and circulation easier, although the more neighbourhood oriented centres did have culs-de-sac. While the DBNCC has the largest area of the five at 66,500 m² roughly 18,000 m² is occupied by Centennial Park and a parking lot to the north. While this area may not be developable, park space for recreational purposes benefits both the adjacent home’s value and the community.

Despite having the largest developable land area, even excluding Centennial Park, the DBNCCs density is the third lowest of the five when including the surrounding neighbourhood. With the highest density going to the UVNCC at 231 units and a UPH of 8.5 and the lowest belonging to the LLNCC with 147 units and a UPH of 5.7 based on the 0.25km² areas used. The DBNCC sits in the middle close to the median at 7.33 UPH with 189 units. However, it does have the most in respects to NCC designated properties with 101 units. While this could be used to argue against the proposed increased to density that comes along with this project, the OCP designates NCCs up to 50 UPH.
While the permeability of the centres are very similar each with a grid street pattern allowing for easier vehicle and pedestrian navigation the amount of access into and out of the sites varied with transit. The more commercially dominate areas such as the LLNCC and the UVNCC had better transit connections over the more residential ones which includes the DBNCC. While each of the latter three centres only had one bus route running through them, there were others within a 10-minute walk, although as stated the hilly terrain of each site could prove difficult for some with limiting abilities.

Finally, the Environmental Analysis yielded problem-occurring results such as the creek running through the property and the high water table which have proven difficult to design around. This also included the archaeological remnants under the bay, something that the remaining 4 NCC do not have to contend with. Despite these downsides the centre is sitting adjacent to the Pacific Ocean with the morning mountainous sunrises and cool ocean breezes which has put this NCC at the forefront of the City of Nanaimo’s natural amenities rightfully earning the Gem of Nanaimo title.

Overall as mentioned at the beginning of this section, apart from the natural aesthetics of the site it is on par with the rest of the neighbourhood centers in the city. While it does have the highest density per NCC by far with more than doubled all combined there is plenty of room to bring in more density before reaching the OCPs cap. The rough terrain and sparse transit stops are a contention in the site although these problems are not limited to just this site as shown. While a central transit exchange may alleviate this issue it would only be a treatment to the symptom and not the overlying problem of infrequent transit in the city as a whole. However, this problem could be overcome with increased density and amenities as evidenced through the other NCCs. As it was stated in the interview by the local resident: the DBNCC has good bones it just needs a little revamp, which is what this project intends to do.
Chapter 5. Neighbourhood Commercial Center Re-Imagining Rationale and Goals

5.1. Project Description and Deliverables

The purpose of this thesis major project and the following section is to present a re-imagined vision of the Departure Bay Neighbourhood Commercial Center. The re-imagining uses the literature review and multiple forms of research to provide context that informs the basis of this project. While the idea of reimagining an established neighbourhood in the City of Nanaimo had been the goal of this project it was not until visiting the DBNCC one day by chance that it was apparent how little attention had been paid to the bay neighbourhood.

Due to its status as one of the few areas in the city with beach access adjacent to commercial and residential land uses the DBNCC was seen to have the potential for much more than what was currently allotted to it. The presence of archaeological remains under the bay area puts a limit on what can be developed due to the inability to build down however, the recently developed mixed-use building had been a positive sign that development was possible. While this project is a hypothetical re-imagining of the DBNCC if developed with current best practices in mind, it will remain grounded to what is feasible given the limiting environment.

This Vision Plan acts as a hypothetical proposal for a re-imagined DBNCC through the transformation of three key sites within the bay. While attempting to keep this project as close to reality as possible it is assumed that the lots in question have been acquired overtime as they became available from the homeowners.

The main focus of the re-imagining takes place on Wingrove Street which passes through the centre separating the north and south blocks as well as a multifamily development on Elk Street. As it was mentioned by several parties throughout the interviews the Kin Hut and Departure Bay Activity Centre remain integral parts of the neighbourhood. While the two buildings will be removed due to their age and condition, they will be replaced with a larger centre in order to continue to serve the needs of the
community. A restoration and enhancement of the Departure Bay Creek along the northern properties will also be included in the Vision Plan however it will not be considered part of the development, rather as a municipal endeavour. The concept for enhancing the creek was given by a city staffer during the investigative period. The rationale that was received was that due to the environmental sensitivity of that area it would be in the city’s best interest to acquire the properties over time in order to eventually restore the area to its natural form. The properties would be acquired by the city over time and remain on the market as rentals until the restoration could take place. This would give the centre another natural amenity and continue the trail further from Woodstream Park across the NCC to the beach.

The deliverables for the project will be in a 25-page document that will marginally reflect the development permit application process. Some aspects of the application will inevitably be missing such as a geotechnical, archaeological, and an environmental report as they are not within the means of this project. The rest of the documents relevant to the permit application process such as site plans, massing models, cross sections, shadow studies, and others will be completed and included.

5.1.1. Project Costs

The intent of this project was to create a development for the DBNCC that would increase density, activate the streets and become a new hotspot for the city of Nanaimo. The hope from the start of this project was to keep the final sale prices affordable. That goal was unsuccessful. Due to the environmental and archaeological sensitivities of the area the option of building down was not possible, or rather would be too expensive, which in-turn limited the developable area of the site and therefore the total amount of units that could be built. While this could have been mitigated by building one-bedroom towers, this projects intent was to create a mix of housing types for people at all stages of their lives. For these reasons the sale price of the units would have to be much higher than originally intended for the 87 new units. The UPH for the site was not the problem at 24.3, slightly lower than what the NAP allowed for townhouse units. The issue was in the parking.
The reality was that parking could not go underground due to the aforementioned sensitivities related to the site. Due to the site partially resting on top of an archaeologically sensitive area as well as the high water table from it’s location going was not feasible. As a result, the form of the redesigned NCC would have to follow the parking. Variances and shared parking agreements were requested to alleviate some of the pressures of parking however there is only so much that the city can reasonably allow. For this reason, the prices of the units had to be raised substantially from where they began in order to receive a 15% return on investment for the project.

The sale prices of the units ranged from $400-600,000 for the one and two bedroom apartments while the fourteen townhouses sold for just over $1 million each. When beginning the proforma the initial sale price for these units was 30-40% lower. While these prices did somewhat match current market rate on new-builds in the city it remains unaffordable for many first time homebuyers.

5.1.2. **Affected Properties and Rationale**

This project will assume that rezonings have already gone through and passed council on the key properties needed in the NCC. As the project site is already designated as a Neighbourhood Commercial Center in the OCP an amendment to the OCP will not be required. These properties have also already been subdivided and consolidated into their new configurations. A list of the affected properties and all changes made will be available in the final document.

A written rationale for the changes to the NCC will also be included as required by the City of Nanaimo’s Development Permit application form. This written statement will be used to give rationale to the proposed changes being made to the DBNCC. This rationale which has been built off an extensive literature review, interviews with local stakeholders, and a comparative analysis against the city’s remaining neighbourhood centres will ultimately be the main factor in the success of this project. As a poor rationale can lead to a project not being accepted by the city’s staff or it's Mayor and Council. Ensuring this rationale is precise is important.
Chapter 6.  Conclusion

The purpose of this major project thesis was to create a Vision Plan for a new NCC in the Departure Bay neighbourhood in Nanaimo, British Columbia. This Vision Plan would partially reflect the process that would be gone through by practicing planners preparing a Development Permit. Despite being located in a prime location, the DBNCC was lacking in several of the day to day needs that it was intended to fulfill for the local residents as per the city's OCP. It was the goal of this project to fill this gap within Nanaimo’s planning developments and bring it up to standards with current planning practices. As Departure Bay is a location unique to Nanaimo it was important to re-imagine the area in order to build on and enhance the sense of place that is present in the neighbourhood centre.

Many things were uncovered during the research process of this thesis. The literature review proved useful in gaining new and further insights on the histories and theoretical contexts pertaining to the centre. Incorporating the theory that was used for this project was vital in creating a re-imagining that would be beneficial to the City of Nanaimo. Discovering more about the Snuneymuxw and their use for the bay as a village site and hub for travel acted as inspiration for much of the overall vision. Understanding the context of an area through not just a geographical lens but a historical one as well was important in creating a good design which is an important part of gaining the acceptance of the neighbourhood.

Comparing the DBNCC against the other four NCC in the city highlighted several pros and cons of the centre. The major issues found were the absence of Corridor and abundance of Neighbourhood designated land uses which accounted for the lower UPH of the surrounding neighbourhood. This resulted in a lack of public transportation options in the neighbourhood which is again due to the lower density land use designations and smaller UPH when contrasted against the other NCC. However, despite it's deficiencies the DBNCC has a larger overall area and closer access to natural and community amenities. Overall the DBNCC was proven to be no better or worse than the other centres in the city, something that was somewhat relieving to discover. As the local resident stated during her interview, the DBNCC has good bones.
The Vision Plan that was created along with the written portion of the Thesis was completed to better exhibit practical knowledge of the development process. The Vision Plan was intended to act as an aid in mirroring the process gone through when drafting a development permit application, albeit a robust one. The plan examines the goals and visions of the project. The context analysis of zoning, land use designations, and other analyses. The site analysis which contains the site plan, project and parking data, massing models, cross sections, variances and rationales, and other schematic development plans required for a complete development permit. The final part of the vision plan includes a cost analysis of the project. While this is not something that is normally included in Development Permit applications, it was incorporated to demonstrate further practical knowledge that is required of planners.

The original intention was made to keep the sale price of the units affordable and to not create more luxury waterfront homes in Nanaimo however, after working through the cost analysis this had proven to be impossible. Unfortunately, in order to reach this 15% return on investment the units had to be priced a lot higher than what I had originally intended, a similar issue faced by the 2018 Legasea development. Due to circumstances pertaining to the site the ability to raise the density to a point where it remained profitable but affordable was futile. This was unfortunate but it was the reality of the situation and something to reflect on in future projects. A different design may have led to a higher density and more affordable units however; it was not discovered until the project was well underway. Regardless, the overall sale price of the units was similar to what is charged currently in the City of Nanaimo for luxury new built homes.

To conclude, the DBNCC acting as one of five NCC within the City of Nanaimo gives it an important role to fulfill for the local community. In it’s current state that role is not being fulfilled which was the catalyst for beginning this project. The purpose of this major project thesis was to create a Vision Plan for the Departure Bay Neighbourhood Commercial Centre in order to better exhibit practical knowledge of the development process. Despite being located in a prime location, the DBNCC was lacking in several of the day to day needs that it was intended to fulfill for local residents as per the city’s OCP. It was the goal of this project to fill this gap within Nanaimo’s planning developments and bring it up to standards with current planning practices. As Departure Bay is a location
unique to Nanaimo it was important to re-imagine the area in order to build on and enhance the sense of place that is present in the neighbourhood centre.

Throughout the course of this project many realities of the planning and development process had to be realized and overcome. Realities such as unique site conditions, historical and cultural understandings, cost evaluation, navigating municipal bylaws and plans, and most importantly project scope. Each of these barriers while frustrating at times, gave me a better understanding of what is required of practicing planners when working on a new or existing development. While the final deliverable ended up being different than what was originally envisioned at the beginning of the project over a year ago, I’ve learned that that is just the reality of developing. In order to be successful in development, it is important not get stuck on a single idea and be flexible to the changing circumstances, whether that be the design, price, or the purpose of the project.
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doi:10.1080/10511482.2017.1278655


doi:10.1080/10511482.2017.1278655


doi:10.1016/j.healthplace.2014.11.008

Appendix A.

Research Documents

Interview Questionnaires and Consent Forms

Interviewee: Local Resident (Raechel Heglin)

1) How long have you lived in the Departure Bay Neighbourhood Commercial Centre (DBNCC)?
   a. What kind of dwelling do you live in? (SF, TH, Apt, DP, _____)
   b. Are you happy with it? Why/why not?

2) What is your main mode of transportation? Does it adequately fulfil your day-to-day for your needs?
   a. Do you take public transit? If no why not?

3) What is your favourite part about living in the DBNCC?
   a. What is your least favourite part of living in the DBNCC?

4) Nanaimo’s Official Community Plan (OCP) states that Commercial Centres (like the DBNCC) are to include small scale shopping to providing for the day to day needs of local residents, do you feel these day to day needs are currently met?
   a. If no, what could be added to help meet your needs?

5) My proposed redesign would see the number of units per hectare (UPH) go up significantly (currently it is at 15). How would you feel about an increase in density in the DNCC?
   a. In order to help accommodate the density increase the proposed redesign would see the maximum allowable building height to raise from 3-storeys to 4-storeys. How would you feel about an increase in building height in the DBNCC?

6) How would an increase in density effect your daily life?

7) Are you happy with the current amenities in the DBNCC?
   a. If not, what could be added/improved?
computer. Signed consent forms and paper copies of interview transcripts will be stored in a
locked file cabinet in my home. Data will be deleted, pulverized, and shredded at the end of the
project, approximately May 31st, 2021.

Use of Research Information
The results of this study will be published in my Master’s thesis, and may also be used for
conference publications, presentations, and published in peer-reviewed journals.

Participation and withdrawal
Your participation is completely voluntary. You may withdraw from the study at any time where
practicable, for any reason, and without explanation. If you would like to review and potentially
make changes to the transcript of the interview, you may withdraw up to two weeks from the
time of being provided a copy of the transcript. If you decline to review the transcript, you may
withdraw up to two weeks from the date of our interview. If you choose to withdraw from the
study, all information you provided during the interview would be withdrawn from the study
and destroyed.

Consent and Conditions of Consent
I have read and understand the information provided above, and hereby consent to participate in this research
under the following conditions:

☐ Yes  ☐ No  ☑ I consent to the interview being audio recorded.

☐ Yes  ☐ No  ☑ I consent to having my personal identity disclosed in the products of
the research.

☐ Yes  ☐ No  ☑ I consent to being quoted in the products of the research.

Participant Name: [Signature]

Commitment of Principal Investigator
I, Spencer Croft, promise to adhere to the procedures described in this consent form.

Principal Investigator Signature: [Signature]  Date: [Date]

Concerns about your Treatment in the Research
If you have any concerns about your treatment as a research participant in this study, please
contact the VIU Research Ethics Board by telephone at 250-740-6631 or by email at reb@viu.ca.
Departure Bay Neighbourhood Commercial Centre Semi-Structured Interview Questions

Interviewee: Nanaimo City Staffer (Chris Sholberg)

1) How long have you been with the City of Nanaimo?
   a. What is your current position with the city?

2) Do you live in Nanaimo?
   a. If yes, how long?
   b. If no, where do you currently live?

3) From a staffer perspective, how do you see the DBNCC?

4) Does the city currently have any major plans or expectations for the DBNCC that you can speak of?

5) My proposed redesign would see the DBNCC be rezoned completely to CC2 to accommodate more mixed use residential/commercial developments. Do you agree with this rezoning, why or why not?

6) Along with a rezoning the redesign would see the number of units per hectare (UPH) go up significantly (currently it is limited to 15 in the neighbourhood area plan). Do you agree with the increase in density in the DNCC?

7) In order to help accommodate the mixed-use and density increase the proposed redesign would see the maximum allowable building height to raise from 3-storeys to 4-storeys. Do you think this would be possible or would it interfere with the viewpoints from the surrounding dwellings?
computer. Signed consent forms and paper copies of interview transcripts will be stored in a locked file cabinet in my home. Data will be deleted, pulverized, and shredded at the end of the project, approximately May 31st, 2021.

Use of Research Information
The results of this study will be published in my Master’s thesis, and may also be used for conference publications, presentations, and published in peer-reviewed journals.

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☐ Yes  ☐ No
I consent to the interview being audio recorded.

☐ Yes  ☐ No
I consent to having my personal identity disclosed in the products of the research.

☐ Yes  ☐ No
I consent to being quoted in the products of the research.

Participant Name: Chris Strickland
Participant Signature: [Signature]

Commitment of Principal Investigator
I, Spencer Croft, promise to adhere to the procedures described in this consent form.

Principal Investigator Signature: [Signature]
Date: [Date]

Concerns about your Treatment in the Research
If you have any concerns about your treatment as a research participant in this study, please contact the VIU Research Ethics Board by telephone at 250-740-6631 or by email at reb@viu.ca.
Departure Bay Neighbourhood Commercial Centre Semi-Structured Interview Questions

Interviewee: Snuneymuxw First Nations Member (Dave Bodaly)

1) Can you tell me your name and what your place is with the Snuneymuxw First Nations?

2) What can you tell me about the Snuneymuxw First Nations?
   a. How long have the Snuneymuxw been living on Vancouver Island in this area?
   b. What can you tell me about life before colonial settlement?

3) What can you tell me about the area that we know as Departure Bay, in particular Departure Bay Neighbourhood Commercial Centre?
   a. As Departure Bay was only a seasonal village for the Snuneymuxw, where were else did they live?
   b. What did they do when they weren’t living in Departure Bay seasonally?

I want to promote the Snuneymuxw First Nations history and ties to the DBNCC in elements of my redesign of the area. Some of the ways I was thinking of doing this would be through a "history walk", promotion of local SFN artists through public art, and a cultural centre. How do you feel about these, and are there any other ways you would want to help promote the SFN history in the bay?
computer. Signed consent forms and paper copies of interview transcripts will be stored in a locked file cabinet in my home. Data will be deleted, pulverized, and shredded at the end of the project, approximately May 31st, 2021.

Use of Research Information
The results of this study will be published in my Master’s thesis, and may also be used for conference publications, presentations, and published in peer-reviewed journals.

Participation and withdrawal
Your participation is completely voluntary. You may withdraw from the study at any time where practicable, for any reason, and without explanation. If you would like to review and potentially make changes to the transcript of the interview, you may withdraw up to two weeks from the time of being provided a copy of the transcript. If you decline to review the transcript, you may withdraw up to two weeks from the date of our interview. If you choose to withdraw from the study, all information you provided during the interview would be withdrawn from the study and destroyed.

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I consent to the interview being audio recorded.

☐ Yes  ☐ No  
I consent to having my personal identity disclosed in the products of the research.

☐ Yes  ☐ No  
I consent to being quoted in the products of the research.

Participant Name: [Name]
Participant Signature: [Signature]

Commitment of Principal Investigator
I, Spencer Croft, promise to adhere to the procedures described in this consent form.

Principal Investigator Signature: [Signature]  Date: [Date]

Concerns about your Treatment in the Research
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Departure Bay Neighbourhood Commercial Centre Semi-Structured Interview Questions

Interviewee: Local Developer (Al Benjamin, Patricia Maloney)

1) How long have you been with your current employer?
   a. What is your current title at your job and what duties does it entail?

2) Do you live in Nanaimo?
   a. If yes, how long?
   b. If no, where do you currently live?

3) As a developer, do you think the DBNCC is currently in need of a redesign? Why or why not?

4) My proposed redesign would see the DBNCC be rezoned completely to CC2 to accommodate more mixed use residential/commercial developments. Do you agree with this rezoning, why or why not?

5) My proposed redesign would see the number of units per hectare (UPH) go up significantly (currently it is limited to 15). Do you agree with the increase in density in the DNCC?
   a. In order to help accommodate the density increase the proposed redesign would see the maximum allowable building height to raise from 3-storeys to 4-storeys. Do you think this would be possible or would it interfere with the viewpoints from the surrounding dwellings?

6) Given your experience and knowledge, what do you believe I should be focusing my attention towards on my redesign?
computer. Signed consent forms and paper copies of interview transcripts will be stored in a locked file cabinet in my home. Data will be deleted, pulverized, and shredded at the end of the project, approximately May 31st, 2021.

Use of Research Information
The results of this study will be published in my Master’s thesis, and may also be used for conference publications, presentations, and published in peer-reviewed journals.

Participation and withdrawal
Your participation is completely voluntary. You may withdraw from the study at any time where practicable, for any reason, and without explanation. If you would like to review and potentially make changes to the transcript of the interview, you may withdraw up to two weeks from the time of being provided a copy of the transcript. If you decline to review the transcript, you may withdraw up to two weeks from the date of our interview. If you choose to withdraw from the study, all information you provided during the interview would be withdrawn from the study and destroyed.

Consent and Conditions of Consent
I have read and understand the information provided above, and hereby consent to participate in this research under the following conditions:

☐ Yes  ☐ No
I consent to the interview being audio recorded.

☐ Yes  ☐ No
I consent to having my personal identity disclosed in the products of the research.

☐ Yes  ☐ No
I consent to being quoted in the products of the research.

Participant Name: Alvin Gogan

Participant Signature:

Commitment of Principal Investigator
I, Spencer Crock, promise to adhere to the procedures described in this consent form.

Principal Investigator Signature: [Signature]

Date: [Date]

Concerns about your Treatment in the Research
If you have any concerns about your treatment as a research participant in this study, please contact the VIU Research Ethics Board by telephone at 250-740-6631 or by email at reb@viu.ca.
computer. Signed consent forms and paper copies of interview transcripts will be stored in a locked file cabinet in my home. Data will be deleted, pulverized, and shredded at the end of the project, approximately May 31st, 2021.

Use of Research Information
The results of this study will be published in my Master’s thesis, and may also be used for conference publications, presentations, and published in peer-reviewed journals.

Participation and withdrawal
Your participation is completely voluntary. You may withdraw from the study at any time where practicable, for any reason, and without explanation. If you would like to review and potentially make changes to the transcript of the interview, you may withdraw up to two weeks from the time of being provided a copy of the transcript. If you decline to review the transcript, you may withdraw up to two weeks from the date of our interview. If you choose to withdraw from the study, all information you provided during the interview would be withdrawn from the study and destroyed.

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I consent to the interview being audio recorded. [✓] Yes [ ] No

I consent to having my personal identity disclosed in the products of the research. [✓] Yes [ ] No

I consent to being quoted in the products of the research. [✓] Yes [ ] No

Participant Name: Patricia Maloney
Participant Signature: 

Commitment of Principal Investigator
I, Spencer Croft, promise to adhere to the procedures described in this consent form.

Principal Investigator Signature: 
Date: 10/13/2010

Concerns about your Treatment in the Research
If you have any concerns about your treatment as a research participant in this study, please contact the VIU Research Ethics Board by telephone at 250-740-6631 or by email at reb@viu.ca.
Appendix B.
Departure Bay Neighbourhood Commercial Centre
Reimagining
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PROJECT VISIONS AND GOALS

- Increase Density in the NCC
  Increasing density will be important in supporting development and transit.
- Promotion of Suねneymuwx Culture
  Representing the SNs' longstanding history in the bay through art, design, and education.
- Enhance Neighbourhood Amenities
  Bringing new commercial and community amenities for residents and city locals.
- Increase Circulation
  Improved transit and active transportation circulation within and out of the Bay.

INTRODUCTION TO PROJECT SITE

- Departure Bay Neighbourhood Context
  The Departure Bay Neighbourhood Commercial Centre (DBNCC) is situated on the Pacific Ocean in the central-eastern portion of Nanaimo, BC. The bay area has deep historical and cultural ties to the Suねneymuwx First Nations (SNFN) who have lived on its shores for millennia prior to European contact.
  The first European settlers to make Departure Bay their home was in 1861, three years after the City of Nanaimo had been founded. Since then, the DBNCC has been an important part to the city over the last 150 years. Today it is known as the "Gem of Nanaimo" due to its pristine natural features.

- Neighbourhood Commercial Centres
  The DBNCC is one of five Neighbourhood Commercial Centres (NCC) within the City of Nanaimo. NCCs are described in the City's Official Community Plan (OCP) as "service centres in new neighbourhoods which support the development of neighbourhood commercial centres and local service centres in existing neighbourhoods to move Nanaimo’s neighbourhoods towards more complete communities." (Nanaimo, 2008, Official Community Plan).

CONTEXT ANALYSIS: ZONING

- Rezoned Properties
  A rezoning application was approved for several properties before the submission of this development permit. The rezoning of these properties was necessary as the lower zoning would not support the increased density from the project.
  - City Commercial (CC) to expanded downtown Wingrove street replacing residential
  - Additional Park (PPC-2.3) added replacing R-1, 4 zones on Bay Street to allow for pedestrian
  - Properties on Park will remain legally non-conforming until the time of rezoned
  - Commercial Section (CC) to expand PPC-3 on Wingrove to allow for pedestrian

- Subdivided Properties:
  Several properties have been subdivided to accommodate the future development.
  - Lot lines have been consolidated and moved in order to create the zones supportive of this development.
**CONTEXT ANALYSIS: LAND USE**

- **Current Land Use:**
  - Currently the land uses within Departure Bay and its surrounding area are designated predominately Neighborhood.
  - For those living north in the Hammond Bay neighborhood, the DBNCC is their closest shopping centre.
  - The DBNCC is the only centre in the City that has no designated Corridor land uses which limits transit amenities and density.

While Brooks Landing and Country Club Mall are within a short distance of the DBNCC, the geography of the bay and the distance makes it difficult for those without a vehicle to conveniently acquire their daily needs.

**CONTEXT ANALYSIS: DENSITY**

- **Current Density:**
  - The density within the DBNCC is currently at 101 units, slightly higher than the alloted Neighbourhood Area Plan (NAP) allows (15 units per hectare (UPH)) at 17 UPH.

While the DBNCC has the highest density of the five NCCs within its centre, its surrounding neighbourhood is more homogeneous/ single family than the other NCCs equalling to a lower UPH on a larger scale.

- **Proposed Density:**
  - The proposed developments will result in 87 new units, an addition of 62 units added to the areas density which will raise it to approximately 23.7 UPH.
  - The Higher density will help to support the increased commercial amenities while being accommodated by increased transit services.

**CONTEXT ANALYSIS: FIGURE GROUND**

- **Neighbourhood Structure:**
  - The DBNCC is made up of two irregular shaped blocks with an approximate area of 55,500 m² or 5.65 ha (6.65 ha with the inclusion of Wingrove Street). The DBNCC is the largest of the five centres within the city.
    - North Block: 40,000 m²
    - South Block: 15,500 m²
    - Total Area: 55,500 m²

The gridced layout of the blocks which continues to the west and south allows for permeability with the surrounding neighbourhood.

The large park parcel at the middle of the centre accounts for one third of the area of approximately 20,000 m² (2.0 ha). Excluding this undevelopable park area the DBNCC remains the largest of the five NCCs within the city.

**CONTEXT ANALYSIS: CIRCULATION**

- **Walkability:**
  - Sidewalks are present throughout the Major and Neighbourhood roads with wide shoulders on the local roads for walking traffic.
    - The development will see the addition of sidewalks and bike lanes throughout the DBNCC with an emphasis on creating a more complete walkable neighbourhood.

- **Transit:**
  - The DBNCC has one transit line running through it on Departure Bay Road connecting Hammond/ Dover Bay with the Downtown Core (DTC).
    - The #1 line to the west of the DBNCC on Greyjoy Drive connects Country Club Mall with the DTC, however, it is at the top of an 11% incline which is difficult for those with mobility issues to access.
    - Creating a transit exchange at the bottom of Wingrove Street and redirecting routes would help alleviate the issues some have with the undulating geography of the region.
**CONTEXT ANALYSIS: ENVIRONMENTAL**

- **Geography:**
  While the DBNCC is relatively flat at a 2% incline, outside of the core the slope becomes much steeper at roughly 11% beginning from the 5 m interval.

- **Sun Path:**
  The DBNCC’s location on the east of Vancouver Island gives morning sunrises over the Pacific Ocean to the east.

- **Wind Directions:**
  The Pacific Ocean causes atmospheric pressure changes at the land coast causing cool easterly winds to come off the water during the day with warm westerly winds blowing in during the night.

- **Departure Bay Creek:**
  Departure Bay Creek running through the northern properties requires a 13 m buffer on both sides from the top of the bank. For this reason future development in this area of the centre would not be allowed under the Riparian Areas Protection Regulations (RAPR).

**CONTEXT ANALYSIS: AMENITIES**

- **Commercial Amenities:**
  The intent of the City’s OCP for the NCC is to accommodate daily shopping for local residents, currently there is a lack of small scale shops to meet those day to day needs.
  - The development will bring much needed small scale commercial units to the DBNCC to provide space for future commercial use.
  - The intent is for a variety of daily shopping amenities to occupy these spaces, i.e. Grocery, Bakery, Doctors Office, Pharmacy, Restaurant)

- **Community Amenities:**
  The DBNCC has a good amount of community amenities for recreational and leisure purposes.
  - Beachfront, Kinman Park, Cultural Gateway, youth soccer and baseball playing fields.
  - However, some amenities are aged and in need of repair or replacement.

**SITE ANALYSIS: SITE PLAN**

- 36 Unit Apartments
- 14 Townhouse Retail
- 13 Unit Apartment
- 8 Live / Work Units
- 20 Mixed-Use Units
- 16 Beachfront Ave. Retail
- Cultural Interpretive Centre
- Woodstream Park Extension
- SFP Open Air Market*
- Departure Bay Boardwalk

**SITE ANALYSIS: PROJECT DATA**

- **Site Ground Floor Area (GFA) and Buildings**
  A total of 87 new Residential units, 14 new Commercial units, and 2 new Community Service buildings

**SITE ANALYSIS: PROJECT DATA**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Unit Count</th>
<th>Total GFA</th>
<th>Commercial GFA</th>
<th>Residential GFA</th>
<th>Community Services GFA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Units</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
SITE ANALYSIS: PARKING DATA

- Off-Street Parking Requirements and Calculations
  - The project exceeds the required number of parking spaces and adds an additional 48 spaces at Centennial for overflow parking for the residents, businesses, and those visiting the beach or park.
  - The additional spaces are intended to be used as shared parking for residents and their visitors, shoppers, and those attending the park for recreation and leisure.
  - The location of shared parking is to be expanded upon throughout the Wingrove Street development (area for private driveways) as well as the EK St. apartments.
  - Variances will need to be acquired for the multifamily buildings (A), (C), (D) as they do not fully meet the minimum allowable parking per the No. 7226 Bylaw. This will be mitigated through a shared parking agreement with commercial and residential properties.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total Spaces Required</th>
<th>255 Spaces</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Off-Street Parking</td>
<td>204 Spaces</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total On-Street Parking</td>
<td>36 Spaces</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total New Parking Added</td>
<td>299 Spaces</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

SITE ANALYSIS: ARCHAEOLOGICAL

- Archaeological Impact Assessment
  - As the eastern portion of the project site was within a known archaeological area an AIA was needed in order continue with the project.
  - The results yielded from the impact assessment showed there being a low potential for archaeological evidence under the project site.
  - While the potential to low the project will remain as untested as possible in order to avoid disturbing any archaeological artifacts beneath the site. Any testing done in the project area will be done cautiously with any discovery holding work until a future assessment is completed.
  - The buildings will be constructed on floating slab-on-grade which will minimize the amount of deep infrastructures into the ground throughout the project.
  - This process will enable the construction to incorporate of previous projects in the area.

SITE ANALYSIS: SUBDIVISION

- Lot Line Consolidation:
  - To prepare for the higher density developments in the centre, the previously rezoned lots around the park will be consolidated in order to funnel up spaces of land larger enough to support the new buildings. Lots intended to be restored and added to Woodstream will not be consolidated.

SITE ANALYSIS: CREEK RESTORATION

- Departure Bay Creek Restoration
  - The Riparian Area Protection Regulations (RAPR) requires a 1.5 m buffer from the top of bank along the Departure Bay Creek due to it's status as a fish bearing stream.
  - The buffer leaves little developable area left on the northern properties of the CNCC.
  - Due to the restrictions set by RAPR any future developments will be limited in what is able to be built.
  - A restoration will take place on the properties affected by the creek in order to maintain the environmentally sensitive area. This will also give another natural amenity to the neighbourhood.
SITE ANALYSIS: CROSS SECTIONS

Mixed Use: Wingrove St. (South)
Live / Work: New Strata Access (East)
Live / Work: Wingrove St. (South)

Apartment #1: New Strata Access (East)
Apartment #1: New Strata Road (South)
Townhouses: New Strata Access (West)

SITE ANALYSIS: CROSS SECTIONS

Apartment #2: EK St Access. (West)

SITE ANALYSIS: SHADOW STUDY

Winter AM
Winter PM
**SITE ANALYSIS: SHADOW STUDY**

- **Summer AM**
- **Summer PM**

**SITE ANALYSIS: VARIANCE RATIONALE**

- **Increase to NCC Density**
  - The Departure Bay NAP sets a maximum density of 15 UPH (with an exception for townhouses to 23). The project will raise the density to approximately 24 UPH.
  - The FSR of both the Wingrove St. strata development and the Ek St. apartments are below the required bylaw FSR at 0.63 and 0.73.

- **Decrease to NCC Parking**
  - A variance of 47 parking spaces is requested. This is a reduction of the minimum allowable parking by 22.7%. The variance will be requested for buildings (A), (C), and (E).
  - Increased commercial amenities and the Wingrove St. transit exchange reduce the need for those within the neighbourhood to use their car.
  - Shared parking between commercial and residential units will be established.
  - The 52 unit Seaside Apartments at 2635 Departure Bay Rd, which has 45 parking spaces for residents, rarely is more than 2/3 full.

- **Yard Setbacks**
  - The Wingrove St. strata development will need to have variances for several yard setbacks.
  - Front Yard setbacks from 4.5 m to 6.0 to allow commercial units to activate street.
  - Side Yard setbacks from 3.0 m to 2.0 m for the Townhouse units (B).
  - Flanking Side Yard setbacks from 4.0 m to 2.7 m for the Mixed-Use building (E).
  - Back Yard Setbacks from 4.5 m to 1.9 m for #1 Apartment building (A).

**SITE ANALYSIS: MASSING MODEL**

**COST ANALYSIS: DCCs AND CACs**

- **Development Cost Charges:**
  - The DCCs required will be put towards constructing, altering and expanding sewage, water, drainage, and new roadways within the development sites.
  - Townhouse DCCs (3 lots): $31,219.83
  - Multi Family DCCs: $364,174.40
  - • Apartment 1: $230,501.07
  -  • Apartment 2: $233,044.82
  - Mixed Use DCCs: $125,572.99
  - • Residential: $79,934.68
  -  • Commercial: $45,638.31
  - Use/Work: $66,853.94
  - • Residential: $69,703.36
  -  • Commercial: $28,051.58
  - Institutional DCCs: $53,055.67
  - Total DCC Cost: $610,853.57

- **Community Amenity Contributions:**
  - Through the prior rezoning process a CAC of $119,687.60 was provided to the City of Nanaimo based on the number of residential units added and the amount of commercial GFA built from the project.
  - $1,000 * 87 new units = $87,000.00
  - $34 * 961.4 m² of commercial = $33,687.60

The CACs gained throughout the rezoning process were to be put towards the construction of the Departure Bay boardwalk which would connect the Departure Bay beach with the Waterfront boardwalk to the south which ends at Towsme St.
### Cost Analysis: Property Costs

#### Breakdown of Costs

The total cost for the properties acquired for the project is $43.5 million, inclusive of site improvements. The revised timeline is as follows:

- **Phase 1:**
  - Construction
  - Site Improvements
  - Landscaping

- **Phase 2:**
  - Building
  - Additional amenities

**Total Cost:** $43.5 million

**Scheduled revenue:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Revenue</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rent</td>
<td>$38.5 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sales</td>
<td>$5.0 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Revenue</td>
<td>$43.5 million</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Return on Investment:**

- **Rate of Return:** 15.11%
- **Rate of Return for Equity:** 15.11%
- **Rate of Return for Debt:** 15.11%
- **Total Debt:** $28.5 million
- **Total Equity:** $15.0 million
- **Total Costs:** $43.5 million

**Net Present Value:**

- **NPV:** $5.0 million

**Cash Flow:**

- **Annual Cash Flow:** $3.8 million
- **Net Cash Flow:** $4.8 million

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**Notes:**

- Properties acquired will be rented out to tenants.
- Landscaping and improvements are expected to be completed within 24 months.
- The project is expected to generate a total revenue of $43.5 million, with a net present value of $5.0 million.