

Reconstructing The Commons

Temporary Living Infrastructure in Squamish, BC

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Figure1. Vehicle Dwelling and Picturesque Locations.

Abstract

Reconstructing The Commons looks at the visibility of vehicle dwelling and the shrinking space available for “wild camping”. The project proposes creating a network of temporary living spaces empowering the remnant memories of communal use in the landscape.

Using the town of Squamish as a test case, the recreational capital of Canada contends with a collision of many elements. Dealing with residents priced out of the community, a NIMBY mentality, and seasonal campers swell populations, the town has been forced to take steps to manage vehicle dwellers, whose numbers explode and overrun it in the summer months. A microcosm of a larger conversation surrounding property, and the right to belong, this thesis imagines a series of accommodations for the valley’s informal residents.

Pushing for the evolution of the dispersed camps around the town, the project explores how investment into sites of informal occupation can transform problematic overused areas into a positive opportunity for inclusion into the community. Empowering our right to roam, the project seeks to balance the needs of different users in the local landscape.

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Statement

As our cities move further into the 21st century, the divide between rich and poor is growing ever larger. Real Estate has ballooned to unreachable levels, out of grasp for many. Increasingly those that rely on informal occupation methods are being pushed further from services as gentrification and policy create an ever-expanding zone of exclusion.

Situated in Squamish BC my thesis explores the transition from a small mountain town into the recreational capital of Canada. As its popularity has grown so too have the property prices within the town, pricing out many. Record number of visitors have pushed local resources beyond their capacities, with an ever increasing number of nomadic locals' and seasonal visitors alike taking up occupation within the periphery crown lands surrounding the town. Exceeding peak densities for the infrastructure available in many sites: environmental sensitivity, waste, wildfire concern, and environmental impact are some of the chief complaints vocalized by property owners.

As the numbers of vehicle dwellers have increased, so too has private property owner's resistance. With local no camping bylaws Effectively creating zones of exclusion defining who has a right to belong within this community.

Launching off from the local discussion surrounding vehicle dwellers and the town, my thesis asks can Squamish continue to accommodate its transient residents and visitors who come to make use of its varied landscapes? By providing supporting infrastructure to a network of informal occupation, this added layer in the urban fabric would not only increase the support available to those priced out of real estate, but could foster more inclusive community dynamics, as well as add an additional demographic from which the local economy would profit from.

When legitimate affordable forms of housing, and spatial occupation are increasingly out of reach, what role can alternate forms of living play to maintain integrated inclusive communities?

Glossary

Affordability

In Canada housing costs are considered affordable when households spend less than 30% of their before tax income on it (CMHC). Affordable housing covers a wide range of shelter types provided by private, public and non-profit sectors, with a variety of housing occupation models: Renting, co-ownership, ownership, temporary and permanent housing (CMHC).

Priced out

Refers to being unable to afford something as inflation and price increases have driven up costs (Halton). When the high cost becomes prohibitive to individuals, those people are considered to be priced out of the market (Halton). People who are priced out traditionally became renters but increasingly more often the high cost of living is pushing people out of the city altogether. Priced out, then pushed out, forced into uncertain and vulnerable situations, the lack of affordable housing options are creating barriers excluding the non-rich from our urban centres (Staff).

The Commons

Common Land is defined as an area of land which is held in trust based on traditional rights of access, and are managed collectively by the community at large. Often they are not recognized until access to these spaces is endangered, the idea of the commons comes into being as a social political space once continued access and use is challenged based on changing social contexts (Caperchi).

Between 1750-1850 the Enclosure Acts, fenced in and privatized a large portion

of public land within England, with land going to control of large agricultural companies or local estates. With this, the land annexed was turned into an aesthetic resource for the wealthy, embodying their taste and status. In essence the land became the exclusive cultural capital of the elite (Hardin, 1243). It was once access was limited, that the social idea of the commons began to emerge within English cultural identity. Based on estate owners disputes with rambles, crystallizing in the trespass of Morgan Scout, the Commons emerged into the popular collective consciousness (Ilgunas, 30-34)

The Commons present a social dilemma in which short term selfish interest are at odds with the long-term interest and common good. The tragedy of the commons as raised by Garret Hardin, is that all members capitalise upon their ability to profit individually off of the Commons, with little consideration of their effect on the whole (1243). Inherent in this is the risk that the Commons will be overworked, with critical thresholds exceeded, leading to the land becoming depleted. (Hardin, 1244)

Locked within this tragic narrative, the perception that the commons cannot be managed collectively has led to these spaces being parceled up, with private management taking over (Caperchi). Elinor Ostrom brings voice to multiple case studies, in which communities have successfully self-governed their resources, where they "have relied on institutions resembling neither the state nor the market to govern some resource systems with reasonable degrees of success over long periods of time" (1).

Bill M 223 -2017

The restriction of access to common land has led for a call within BC specifically reinstating the right to roam to combat restricting access to public land through private property, with the closure of public access roads (Todd). The RIGHT TO ROAM ACT, 2017 pushed to ensure British Columbians right to access public lands, rivers, streams, and lakes, ensuring the right to hunt fish and enjoy outdoor recreation in accordance with the law is protected moving into the future (Weaver). It recognizes outdoor recreation as an important part of collective heritage in the landscape and vital to the fabric of present-day BC (Weaver).

Not In my Back Yard (Nimby)

Is a characterisation of opposition by local residents to a proposed development in their vicinity. Often it's the product of policies which are meant as incentives for homeownership and a regulations which benefit and encourage opposition (Florida). It carries the connotations that residents are only opposed to development because of the perceived negative impact it would have on their quality of life. Some claimed reasons against development includes increased traffic, harm to local small business, environmental pollution of land, air and water, loss of community, strained public resources, and increases in crime (Florida). The effects of Nimby resistance are playing out across communities as NIMBY resistance has slowed change within low density subdivisions, helping to fuel unaffordability within cities (Florida).

Informal Occupation

Based off the need to survive, people begin to occupy unused spaces where they are not actively pushed out of. Taking form of informal settlements as populations increase, these spaces are typically located in the left over, neglected piece of land, at the edges of cities. The legitimacy of an individual's right to exist there is based on the legality of ones right to permanently dwell in the Common's (Spatial Agency). Potentially viewed as squatting, Informal occupation claims the right to use the common land for all, imagining a different relationship with the world as opposed to the dominant paradigm (Spatial Agency).

#Vanlife

Where people convert vehicles into rolling homes, lowering the cost of accommodations, while allowing them to travel further, explore longer, and dive deeper (Westfalia). A Hashtag on Instagram, it has brought a lot of attention to the movement and is helping destigmatize vehicle dwelling by bringing it into the mainstream (Monroe). However, it often frames the lifestyle in a very romantic and aestheticized way, hiding the not so glamorous aspects (Monroe).

The #Vanlife has really formed itself into a social media movement on Instagram, where one can begin to see a few dominant narrative of this novel relationship with landscape and experience emerge. Intimacy, living small, connecting to and living in the nature are a few of the main themes which begin to emerge.

Framing the Context

The year is 2019, and all across the world division is growing. The Gini Index, one of the most widely used tools in mapping income inequality shows that wealth inequality between the rich and poor has never been greater (Ventura). The housing crisis within North America has grown to unprecedented proportions, with current definitions of affordable housing unable to keep pace with the rising value of real estate and resources. With owning a home an unrealistic dream for an increasing number of lower- and middle-income earners, the current cost of living is just continuing to rise (Noack). Presently the current data shows the gap between the rich and the poor has never been wider than it is today (Ventura).

With home building slowing, and NIMBY resistance stagnating action, we have driven ourselves deeper into crisis (Florida). A growing number of people are looking for alternate options amidst high rents, and unaffordable homes. With less resources being put towards constructing starter homes, (those under 1800 square feet) it is less and less possible for citizens to enter into the housing markets (Hobbs). James Madden an affordable housing developer in Seattle says, "In a lot of cities, the housing market can't supply housing for people making less than six figures" (Hobbs).



Figure 2. #Vanlife

Faced with the choice of rent or transportation, people are minimizing their belongings buying a van, or simply moving into whatever vehicle they can. Finding this to be an affordable option, a growing number have turned to vehicle dwelling to manage life within the city (Pollard). Minimizing cost and footprint, they are finding freedom to pursue their own interests and passion while removing high rents for “home spaces” that are increasingly used less (Payne). Vehicles provide doors that lock, a waterproof roof and a sense of safety, privacy and autonomy that tents, shelters and other emergency services do not (Pollard). Serving as a lifeline to the vulnerable, or those in search of adventure, Vehicle Dwelling offers a roof overhead and can provide a stable sense of community (Ho).

Generally, Vehicle Dwellers fall into one of two demographics.

The first are those who have been forced into this situation, priced out of the city. They can be the working poor, doing their best, working hard, but unable to escape high costs of living (Pollard). Often having fallen on hard times, the mobile homeless occupy their last major possession, their vehicles, as it is one of the last lines of protection that they have left (Ho).

The second are those that pursue the #Vanlife experience. In hand with their Instagram handle, they are off in search of their own frontier, where they can challenge them-

selves physically and emotionally, as they pursue adventure and experience, recording it all through a camera lens (Monroe). Forgoing home ownership, they pursue experiences, connecting with themselves, other travellers, and communities along the way (Monroe).

There is not a silver bullet of an answer to the affordable housing crisis (Garrison et al.). Yet increasingly vehicle dwelling is being turned to as a flexible last resort which helps people manage the unaffordable urban condition (Pollard). With many reasons leading people to move into their vehicle, there is a wide gradient of users, yet all increasingly rely on their ability and traditional right to occupy and access the Commons.

The Role of the Commons

Living lightly, the modern nomad wanders the Commons, occupying and roaming. Existing, working, and always on the move, their vehicle acts as transport, home, kitchen and bed. They sleep in the in-between spaces, undercover within the cities, roaming free on Crown land, their lives in transit. One of the remaining things that separates vehicle dweller's identity from being homeless is their right to exist within their vehicles on the transportation network, one of the last remnants of the Common (Payne). The control and conscientiousness that this lifestyle offers, fulfills individuals by maintaining one's autonomy, independence, and spatial agency (Ho). As these qualities continue to be priced out of our control within the standard urban paradigm, more people are making the trade-offs that vehicle dwelling offers (Pollard).

The Commons is a cultural and traditional resource available to all, through which they are entitled to use, to enjoy, and to prosper off. Collectively groups are able to invest in the landscape, enriching and managing it for the benefit of all. Some spaces which are still considered common spaces include the community garden, the transportation networks, the library, government services, and crown land (Ilgunas,23-40).

Emerging into cultural vernacular, Garret Hardin's 'Tragedy of the Commons', proposes that selfish overuse, and individualistic notions of profit have eroded the community trust which traditionally enforced maintained consideration

and management of one's use amongst many (Hardin, 1243). With the open unfilled frontier divided up into parcels the vast expanse where the cultural imagination roamed wild has been rationalized (Ilgunas,25). Sold off, and parceled up, connection to and access into these wildernesses are lost as barbed wire, and no trespassing signs have helped to reinforce the right to exclude the public (Ilgunas,10).

As the restrictions of property become more exclusive, citizens increasingly need an alternative solution to find freedom and the right to roam and wander that is unimpeded by division and enclosed spaces within a restricted landscape. As the right to exclude all other from private property has grown, our ability to wander, get lost, explore and live life on our own terms is diminishing (Ilgunas, 11).

As common space erodes, and private property owners' right to influence use and action expand, what spaces are left for the imagination to wander? Restricted by lines and logic, the meandering path has been made efficient and straight. Our cultural imagination and potential has become increasingly constrained by what is deemed socially acceptable by society. Increasingly public space is being privatized, leading less fortunate citizens of our urban fabrics no place left to go.

An Affordability Crisis

Throughout North America real estate prices have ballooned to unreasonable levels, and zoning practices have run up against NIMBY resistance (Florida). Unable to offer new solutions for affordable housing without modifying or upsetting the existing urban fabric initiatives are often gridlocked in bureaucracy (Maryman). The stark contrasts continue to grow between the unfortunate and the affluent, with the solutions implemented, often too limited in scope to really affect the divide between demographics. In a new gilded age, the tale of two cities has manifested, with vastly different opportunities available depending on wealth (Slater).

This issue of affordability is universal within North America, found throughout British Columbia. Vancouver was recently ranked the 2nd least affordable city the world, after Hong Kong (Crawford 2019). Inequality increasingly runs rampant with a growing number of homeless taking extreme measures in the way they claim spatial agency in the commons. The long-term recurring camps at Oppenheimer Park in Vancouver is a prime example of the less fortunate exerting their spatial agency and claiming space within a city which has failed to provide affordable shelter (Woodvine).

With social housing failing to meet the need of those seeking shelter, where else can we expect people to go except the streets or their cars?



Figure 3. Crowded Parking lot Conditions

Squamish: Introduction

Situated within the lower mainland of British Columbia, at the end of the Howe Sound sits the town of Squamish. Dubbed the recreation capital of Canada, it is currently grappling with an oversaturation of people wild camping within the surrounding commons. With an ever-increasing percentage of users informally occupying spaces longer, the town recently outlawed sleeping in ones vehicle within hotspot areas. Citing a number of sanitation, safety, and ecological concerns, the common spaces which facilitated an informal low cost, and a flexible form of shelter and visitation was shut down. Displaced, and spatially segregated, there is little formal camping infrastructure that successfully accommodates the vehicle dwelling demographic. My thesis begins to trace the thread of recreation and informal occupation within this town, and proposes an alternative paradigm. Where rather than criminalizing vehicle dwelling, I propose that they can act as a catalyst to reinvigorate the property paradigm and explore ways of integrating networks of informal occupation and recreational uses alongside existing land use patterns. Building off of the Commons, and the right to roam, my thesis proposes to energize the urban edges. By hardwiring the periphery spaces with synergistic land uses, policies could be used to promote inclusivity, enriching the community fabric and maintaining the rich benefits of the towns wilder edges into the future.

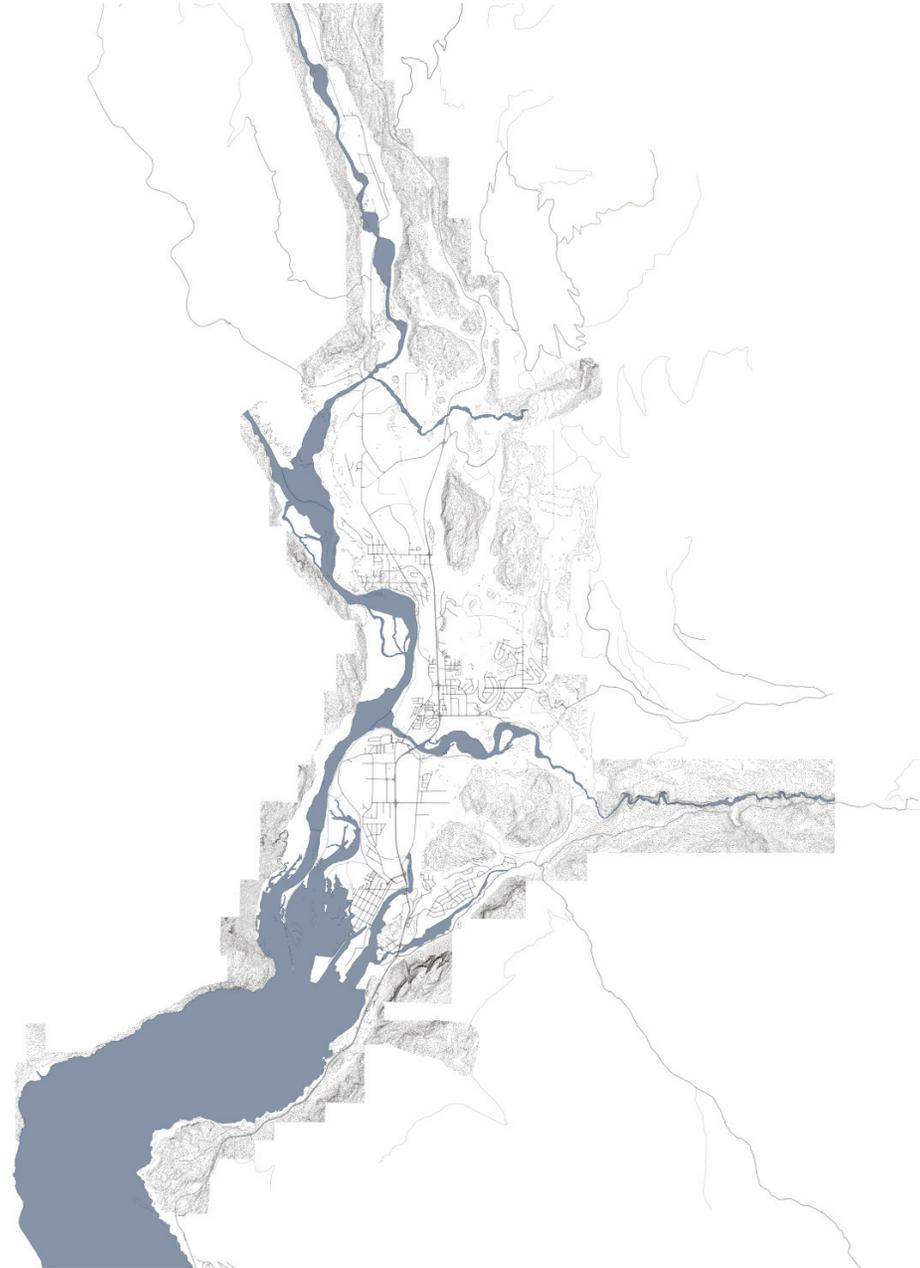


Figure 4. 10m Contours and Waterways within the Squamish Valley

Squamish: A History

Squamish has been occupied by the Squohomish tribe, it is thought for over 5000 years. Named ‘the mother of the winds’ the strong gusts common to the Howe Sound nurtured a resourceful population that grew and flourished on the cedar, shellfish, and oolichan’s (a smelt like fish) provided by the land. Many generations of ancestors lived their lives in the same soils and fostered a powerful intimacy with the land (Mclane). A sense of stewardship and fostering the landscape in common for future generations was embedded at the core of this relationship (Mclane).

It was only a short while after the arrival of the first settlers, when the Cariboo gold rush of 1858 began, that the peaceful equilibrium between Europeans and Squamish people came to an end (Black Tusk). Never formally ceding their territory, the large influx of people seeking possession of land for intensive industrial scale uses, eventually began dividing up the landscape, regardless of indigenous consent (Mclane). By 1892, 35 families lived in Brackendale, farming, mining, and logging (Mclane). With the advent of the steam donkey, and mechanized saws, the face of forestry was changed forever in the valley, as the hills surrounding began to be logged.

In 1907, Atwall Duncan Francis Joseph King led the first ascent of Mount Garibaldi, the best-known volcano in BC (Woodsworth). This was the beginning recreational pursuits intertwining into this town’s history and social fabric (Black Tusk).

With the advent of the chainsaw, production output for the forestry industry was able to be increased tenfold, this resulted in the valley’s timber giants falling to the hum of gas-powered engines. Opening in 1900, the Woodfibre pulp mill remained in steady operation for 100 years, employing people from the town and area throughout that time (Zuvelek).

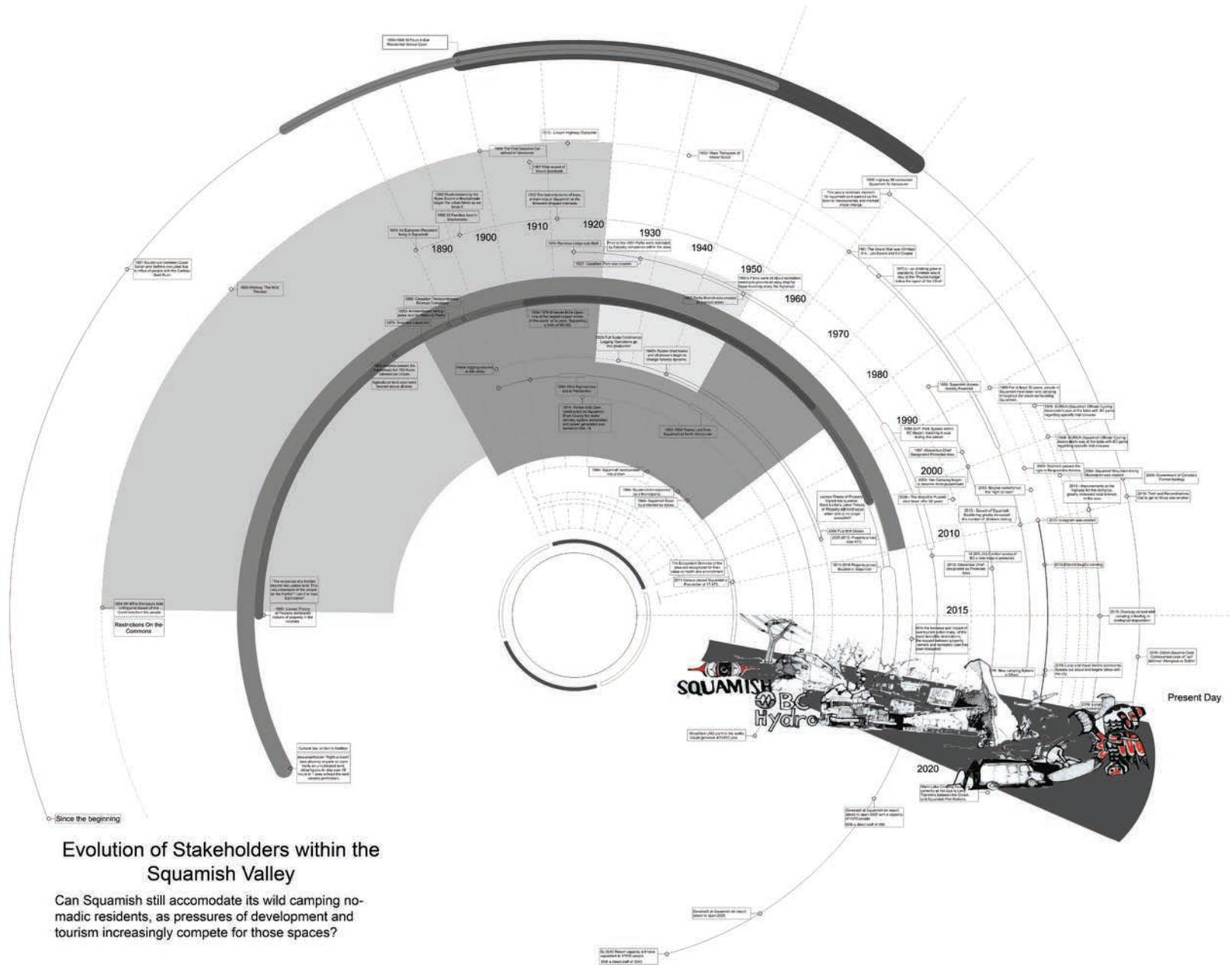
Isolated and spatially separate, it wasn’t until 1959 when the highway and rail-line were completed, that Squamish was connected to Vancouver. Prior to that it was necessary to take a ferry from Lions Bay to Squamish in order to pass between the two. (Mclane). Completed in the 60’s the highway acted as a major turning point within the town’s history, connecting the valley through from Whistler to Vancouver (Mclane). Recognized for its potential by climbers and mountain bikers since the 60’s in later years it has exploded in popularity after highway improvements constructed in 2010 for the Olympics made the area much more accessible by car.

This excerpt is taken from the Original A Climbers Guide to Squamish Chief and surrounding area printed in 1967.

“The best camping spots are found along the dirt road which leaves the highway opposite the South South Gully of the Chief. Good water is available from the creek at the end of this road.” (Woodsworth, 5)



Figure 5. Squamish Estuary



Evolution of Stakeholders within the Squamish Valley

Can Squamish still accommodate its wild camping nomadic residents, as pressures of development and tourism increasingly compete for those spaces?

Figure 6. Stakeholder Timeline

As Industry has slowed to a halt within the Valley, the face of forestry has changed, with the closing of the area's hundred-year-old pulp mill (Zuvelek). Out of the empty spaces left by industry, tourism and recreation has risen as the new employer and economic driver within this mountain town (Mclane). The remnant infrastructure of industry has been gradually co-opted and commandeered. The tourists, climbers, hikers, campers, vehicle dwellers all temporarily lay claim to these areas through the ritualistic act of pitching camp and creating trailheads that spider off from industry corridors into the wilds.

With the formation of the Squamish Access Society (SAS) in 1985 and the Squamish Off-Road Cycling Association (SORCA) in 1994, recreational interests in the way the land is managed and continued access to experiences and sites is only increasing as growth in popularity continues to bring record numbers to the valley.

With a trail masterplan, for the area, Squamish's intimate ties with recreation are here to stay and grow (District of Squamish). In one century, the landscape of Squamish was exploited and harvested for the resources it could provide for the community. But now the question has become what rich experiences can those landscapes provide for the community (Mclane).

Situated between Vancouver and Whistler, for a while the housing bubbles and development pressures from these popular peripheral destinations remained localized, but over the

years their effect on this small town has grown. From 2005-2015 property prices within Squamish rose 41%. Since 2015 the average detached home price has gone up 82% (Whistler City Council). With the housing pressures in Vancouver and Whistler out of control more and more people are using Squamish as a bedroom community (Zuvelek). Due to transportation upgrades, commuting daily is easier than ever before, with many residents car dependant to access the areas amenities. With a vacancy rate of 0% for rental units (Whistler City Council), more people are turning to informal occupation as an affordable last resort.

No Camping In the Valley

Thousands of visitors come to Squamish flocking to its landscapes in the summers to take advantage of its rich recreational opportunities. This large influx of recreation users has pushed the towns infrastructure past capacity. This resulted in a letter from the Squamish access society in 2018 to request for temporary campground provisions in the summer months to fully accommodate the influx of recreation seekers. (Squamish Access Society) Within this letter, they bring attention to the loss of the town's ability to absorb visitors and transients as property prices have pushed developers to increase availability of high-end real estate over creating campgrounds (Squamish Access Society). With a lack of affordable and easily accessible sites, the informal occupation which has been allowed to run rampant is now a problematic issue.

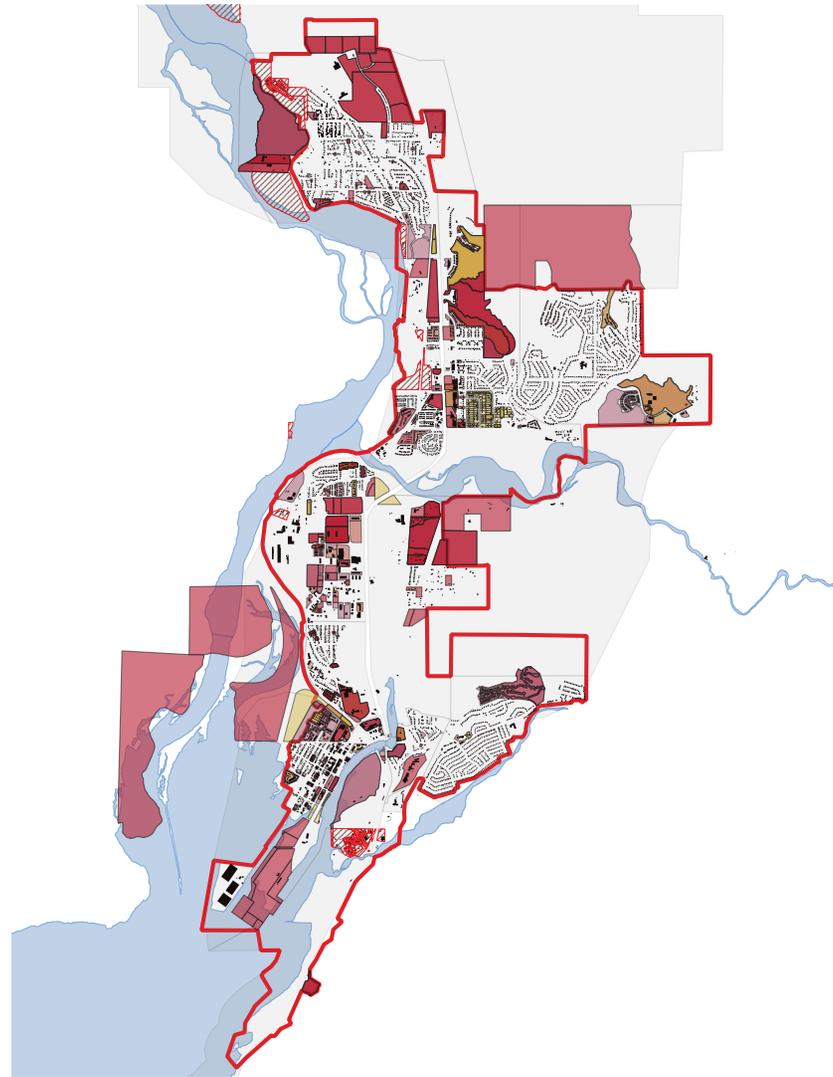
Since 2010, a growing number of vehicle dwellers have increased the use of local recreational seasonal camp spots (Squamish Access Society). Sites have become trashed through constant heavy use, poor sanitary practices and improper waste disposal (District of Squamish). As the city has expanded, these wild camp spot's are no longer beyond the periphery edges, but now encroach onto people's backyards.

Occupied for the complete tourist season, once lightly used spaces are now packed with cars and people, often abusing the privilege of wild camping. With peak densities for sustainable

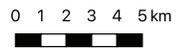
occupation exceeded, the valley's sensitive ecosystems cannot support these kinds of intense centralized use (District of Squamish). With numbers ever on the rise, this past summer the city of Squamish decided to act and passed a bylaw restricting camping within the crown land in the municipal boundary. Intending to stem social and environmental impacts, the bylaw aims to direct camping into more formal locations while mitigating impacts on the environment (District of Squamish).

Providing a toolset for law enforcement to use against vandalism and unlawful dumping, the law is loosely worded, giving wide flexibility empowering enforcement with potential tickets up to \$10,000 (District of Squamish). In reality the bylaw enforces "an out of sight out of mind" policy (Pidgeon et al.). A symptom of a larger issue, all the bylaw seems to achieve is to push vehicle dwellers away from living in close proximity to city services and amenities, creating additional barriers for inclusion (Pidgeon et al.). Restricting a lot more than the negative impacts of wild camping on crown land in the valley, the bylaw paints the act of sleeping in one's vehicle as criminal.

As the pressures of its own popularity increase, can Squamish continue to accommodate its nomadic and wild camping residents? Moving into the future, how can the towns slogan of "hardwired for adventure" become a strategy for creating a more inclusive urban fabric?



Development of Squamish



- Building_Footprint
- Development Permits 1899-1990
- Development Permits 1990-2000
- Development Permits 2000-2004
- Development Permits 2005-2009
- Development Permits 2010-2010
- Squamish Nation reserve
- Neighbourhoods
- Growth_Management_Bounds

Figure 7. Diagramming Development Expansion

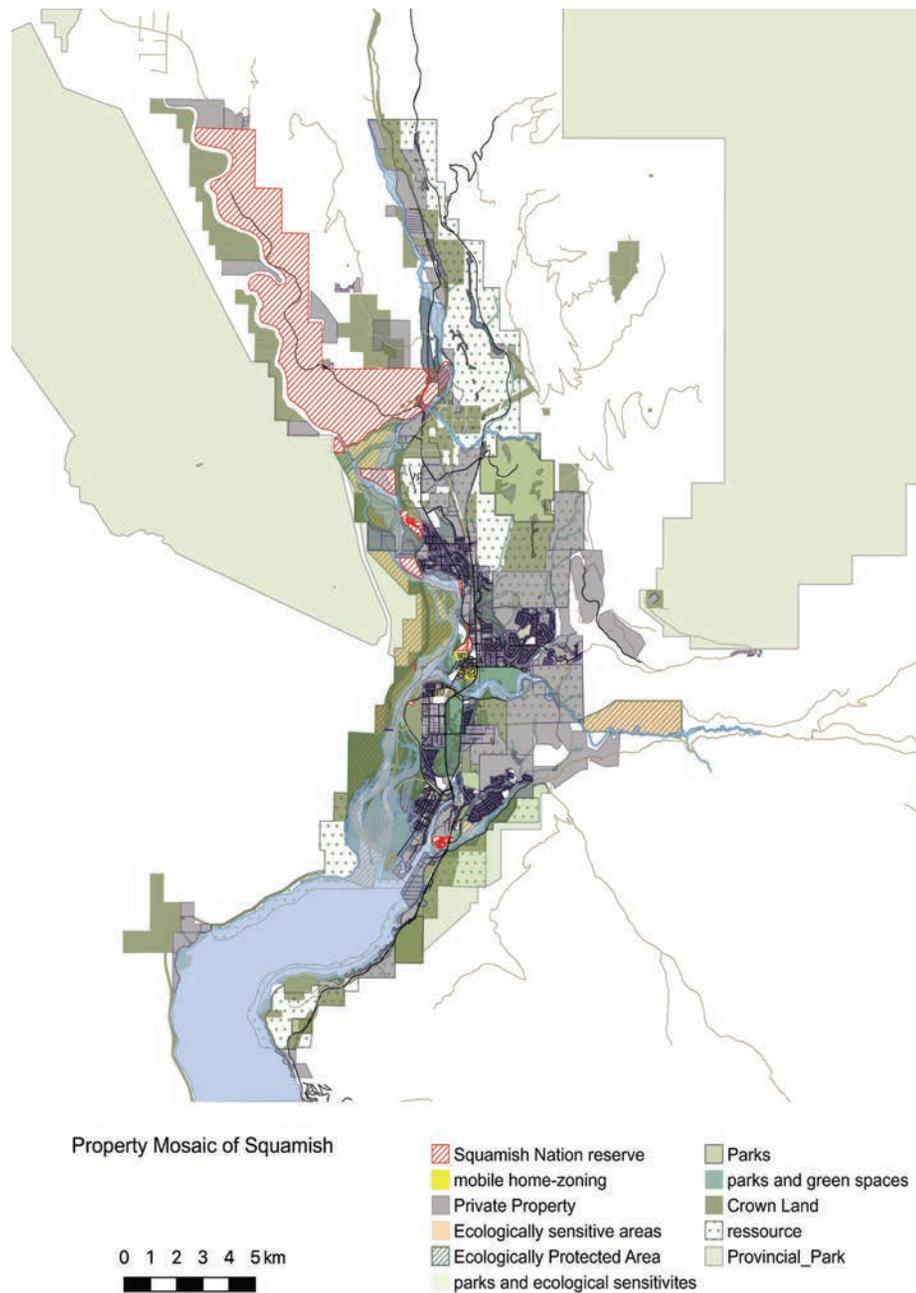


Figure 8. Property Mosaic of Public/Private within Squamish

Overwhelmed Resources

Since 2010, the presence of Vehicle Dwellers has increased, with hordes of visitors descending on the local informal camp spots, parking on the sides of the back roads. Those seeking out the romanticized dirtbag adventure are leading to its decline within the district as local resources are overwhelmed by the influx of tourists throughout the summer (Peruzzi). With little infrastructure to support this unofficial occupation, and the favored areas lying within valuable ecosystems which are very sensitive to use, management has become necessary (District of Squamish).

Raised in a letter to the town, the Climbers Access Society has asked for additional resources for visitors (in 2018), yet little has been done about it. Recognizing the lack of affordable official campsites, many climbers turn to “wild camping” (Squamish Access Society). With few options for camping under \$35 dollars a night, many recreation seekers opt for more informal yet affordable conditions, and camp in the lower Chief parking lots and Mamquam Forest Service road at night. Without the proper infrastructure, issues surrounding density and overuse will persist, just spreading beyond site of the town.

Priced Out

Within the past 5 years the lower mainland's real estate boom has hit this small town and challenged affordable housing in the area. Doubling home prices in the valley since 2015, land within the valley is far from affordable (Zuvelek). Due to this, many of the local residents and members of the community who work in Squamish are being priced out of the place that they call home (Pidgeon et al.). Existing within this context, wild camping, and vehicle dwelling is not just something that the tourists do, but a very real reality for many Squamish residents as they navigate rising costs of living with stagnant wages (Pidgeon et al.).

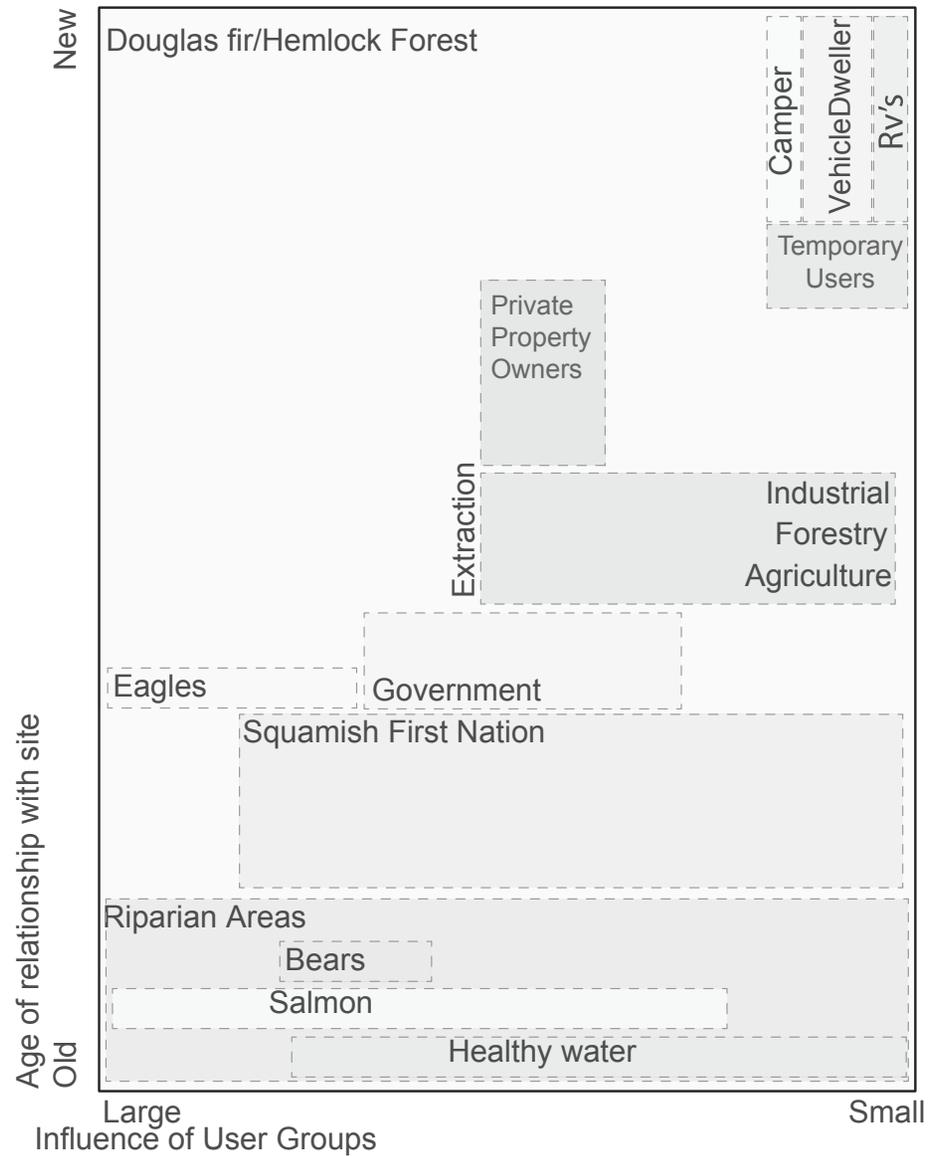


Figure 9. Stakeholder Relationships

Changing the Perspective

Squamish's recent "No Camping" Bylaw has criminalized an act that is used as a last resort for many to stay off the streets and retain agency over their own lives.

A lack of diverse formal and informal occupation options within the landscape is brought to a head as an increase in recreation seekers further stresses the existing informal settlement options within the valley.

Failing to address the real issue at hand, the bylaw does little to support the limited, overwhelmed and overpriced resources which are currently available to support nomadic locals as well as the volume of seasonal visitors. Only successfully criminalizing homelessness and unaffordability, this bylaw had an opportunity to manage irresponsible campers through education, and stewardship. Falling short, I believe it has missed an opportunity to enhance, enrich, and local economies to profit from the unique social fabric Squamish has with varied user groups. Intentionally or not, the Bylaw's zone of exclusion creates a spatial segregating space, legitimizing the right to belong within the town to those residents who can afford to own or rent a home, and pushing out those that cannot afford it to live on the edges.

Building off of the concerns raised in a petition contesting the bylaw written by local vehicle dwellers, this thesis seeks to provide a potential framework to what could come next.

How can a town "hardwired for adventure" become just that? Is there a way to create sustainable interventions that enable access to adventure to become an integral part of this town's urban fabric? Could accommodating vehicle dwelling be an answer for increasing density, and provide affordable housing without compromising the village scale feel of this growing town? Can we avoid turning our urban centers into a trailer park but rather through smart policies encourage relationships which reinvigorate the social Commons within our neighborhoods? Can a transient population be included into the town fabric in a way which helps empower and enrich local business's and economies (Pidgeon et al.), while managing property owners concerns and mitigating environmental impacts?

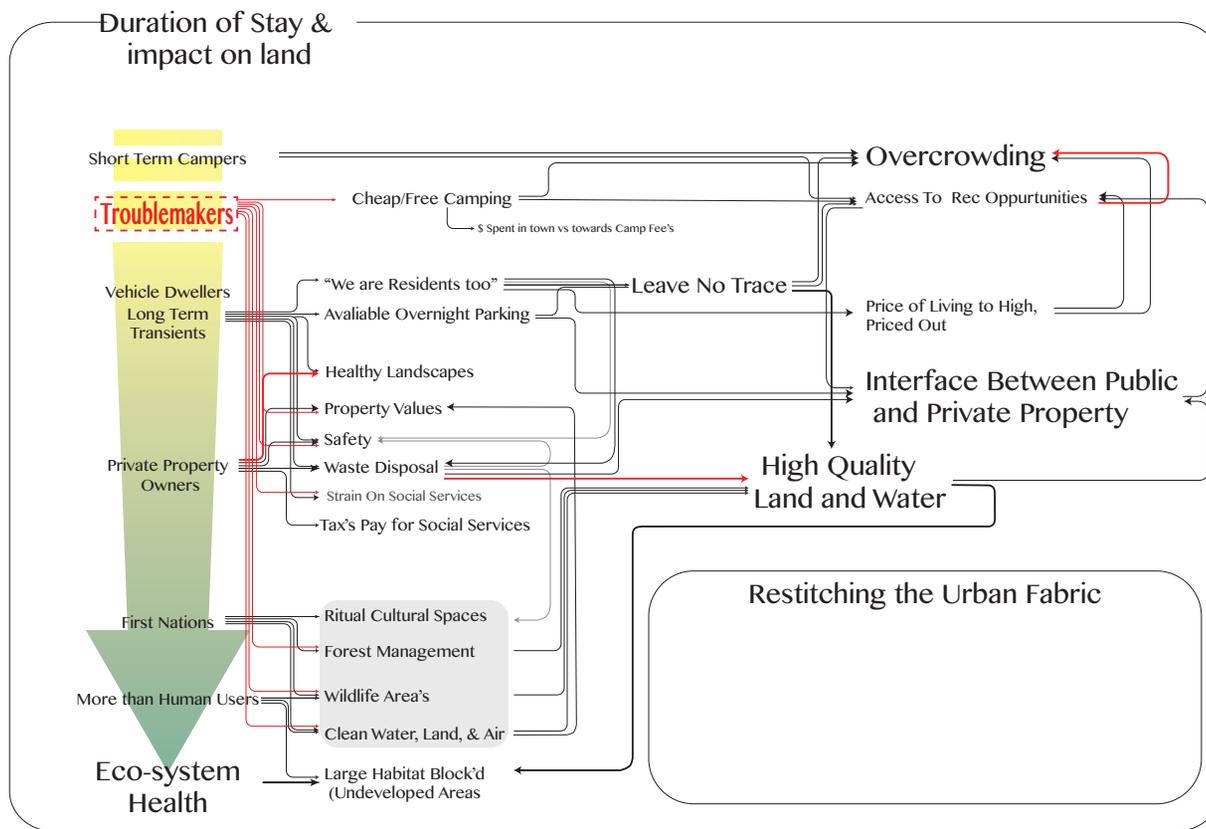


Figure 10. Duration of Stay and Impact on Land Diagram

I am proposing to legitimize this contested sub-city, within the urban fabric, and expand on its current sites of occupation. My thesis proposes making room for its nomadic residents and facilitate the wild camping experience into the future. A network of occupation would be proposed, in which infrastructure armatures would help to define boundaries, from which a rational set of social responsibilities could be understood. If and when those boundaries are stepped over, then clear enforcement principles could be employed.

A multiple tiered permit system for locals and tourist alike, this network could be integrated into both urban and crown land. By creating recreational edge conditions, this alternate layer of land use, would help to protect the rich ecological areas at the valley bottoms, by educating communities in stewardship, while providing them efficient access to the recreation centers that they enjoy. Acting as an additional layer on current land uses, additional synergies between community, industry, and landscape.

Building off existing right to roam models, this network would enrich the zoning and land use gradient within the landscape. By interweaving the commons back into the public private edge, perhaps empathy, inclusivity and community can be strengthened within the urban fabric.

Design Method

My design method will involve the use a series of strategies to determine the intervntions of best fit

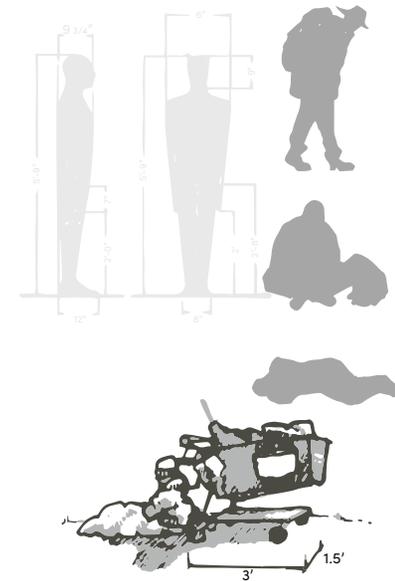
1. Using a series of map overlays and offsets, I will map out the urban fabric of Squamish, from the most sensitive ecological area's, critical habitat, and sacred First Nation Sites. Based on precedent and best practice, offsets will reveal the best sites for long term informal occupation.
2. Building a topographical model of the valley, I plan to explore a series of network designs. The design would be visualized in 3 dimensional space placing it within the context existing constraints in the landscape. The model will help to spatially legitimize the transient occupation of spacee through a visual representation of rationalized key network nodes.
3. Conducting a series of typological studies, I plan to uncover what the key issues currently surrounding each site of occupation are. Through these typologies a toolkit will be developed for each type of site to better integrate multiple gradients of land use.
4. I plan on creating a new user guide for vehicle dwelling within the town, educating Vehicle Dwellers on information, permits, regulations, and seasonal restrictions surrounding vehicle dwelling network.

5. I plan on creating information brochures which would speak to private property owners, and strategies for bridging comfortabilities surrounding accepting new transient neighbors into one's community.

Recognizing that my project takes place on the ancestral and traditional land of the Squamish Nation, that was never ceded. I understand that the Squamish Nation has a critical voice in determining the valley's land use future as it lies within their traditional territory. I look forward to further educating myself on their valuation of land, places of significance and sensitive area's, as I analyze the valley and move forward with design iterations. But for complexities sake I have chosen to focus my energies on what this project means within the western property paradigm, and the current context of the conversation between the town of Squamish and its vehicle residents.

However, I recognize a much larger project exists advocating for the right to roam as a means to begin decolonizing the landscape (Anderson). I welcome the opportunity in the future to explore the ways in which the right to roam and the Commons can act as an empowering tool, to begin the divide between Western and First Nation cultures within Canada.

Typology Studies



Typologies: Occupying small spaces

These Diagrams explore the tiny spaces people choose to occupy. Stemming from the formal to informal, these typologies are a gathering of precedents for the different spaces people willingly or not occupy. The forms begin to showcase the small spaces people reside in if they have to. With each occupation of the small spaces, a new relationship with the urban fabric begins to emerge.

Shopping Carts

The Street

Informal Occupation

Transportation: By foot

Roof: Whatever overhead cover can be found

Security: No security, belongings exposed in cart

Insulation: Clothes, cardboard (Exposed to elements)

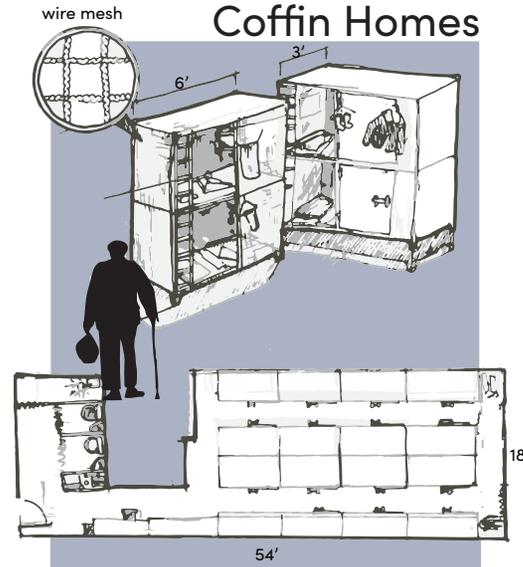
Figure 11. Case Study Drawings

Tents



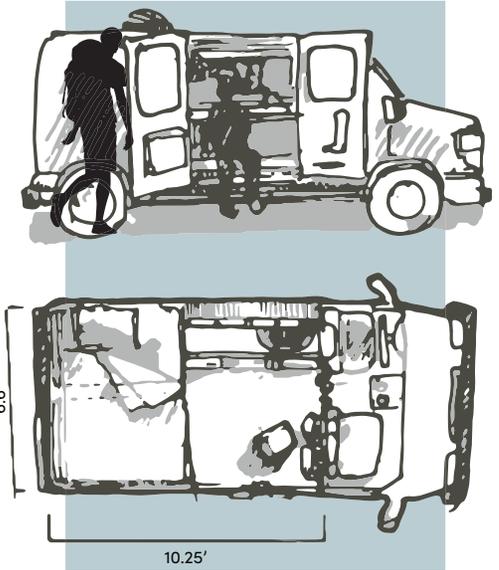
Tents
 Informal Occupation
 Transportation: By foot
 Shelter: Canvas tent, with rain cover
 Security: Minimal, Belongings in tents
 Insulation: Semi dry space, tent walls, clothes, and sleeping gear
 (exposed to environmental conditions)

Coffin Homes



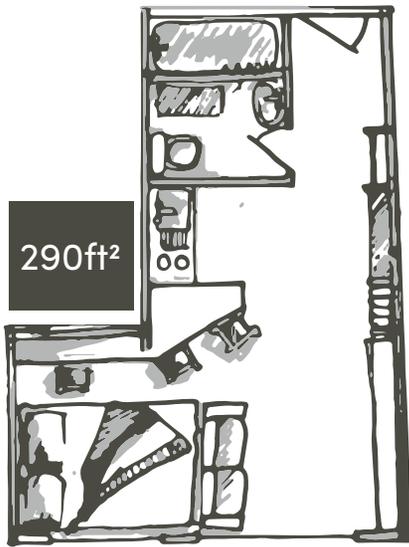
Subdivided Apartments house up to 30 people in small dormitory style room.

Coffin Homes
 Formalized Informal Occupation
 Transportation: By Foot
 Shelter: Apartment building, private space limited to box.
 Security: Neutral. Belongings within secure private space.
 Insulation: Dry Personal space + Buildings temperature control + clothes + sleeping gear
 (Inside, protected from elements)

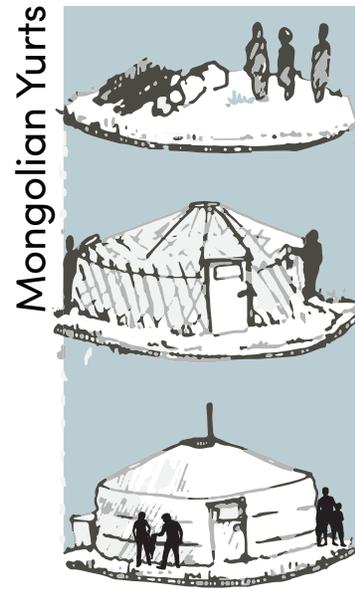


Vehicle Dwelling

Vehicle Dwelling
 Informal Occupation
 Transportation: By foot, vehicle
 Shelter: watertight roof, lockable doors, independent private space. (little to no amenities)
 Security: Basic, Lockable doors, belongings can sit within private space.
 Insulation: Dry watertight space, can use car heater to warmup. + clothes + sleeping gear.
 (Outside, weather does not affect Interior of vehicle)

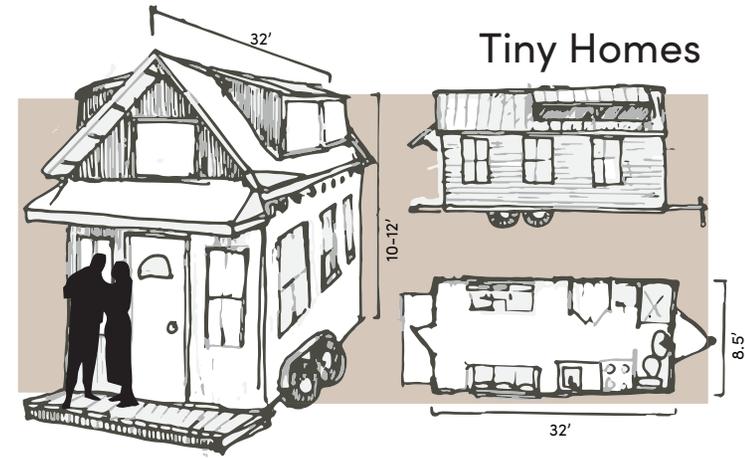


Micro Apartments



Mongolian Yurts

90 minutes to setup



Tiny Homes

Micro Apartments

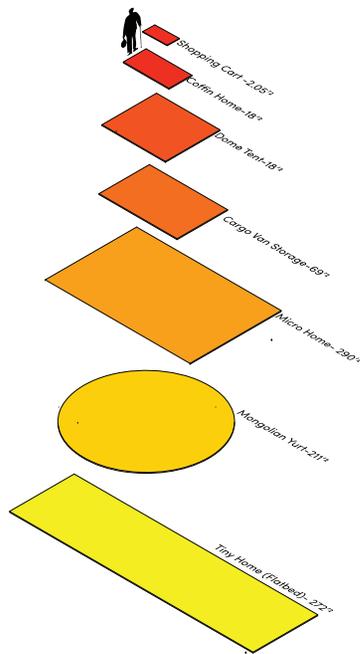
Consisting of a one room living space designed to include all the regular amenities within a smaller floorplan (KTGY). The ergonomic design and space saving efficiency within the details, creates a space that is easily rearranged to facilitate different uses. By marketing living small, micro apartments focus on selling proximity to key locations, shrinking costs and footprint without sacrificing style or luxury.

Ger

A multi seasonal dwelling, the ger is cool in the summer, with additional layers warming it in the cold months. Centered around the hearth, this traditional home has served the Mongolian nomads for thousands of years, with many reluctant to give up this unique way of life (Sinclair,5). A unique construction, the layered circular nature of the structure helps to make the shape resistant to winds from any direction (Faegre). Circular in form, these tents are easily cooled and efficiently heated with a stove at the centre of the hearth. Traditionally Yurts were constructed with the door south, reserving the northern most space for an altar (Sinclair,4).

Tiny house

A common definition one finds is a home with area between 100 and 400 ft. Most commonly independent moveable structures, tiny homes are generally parked on land with a larger home or building. Seen as a way to provide affordable housing, by living smaller, homeownership and security are much more accessible to lower income earners (Krista, 34). Through tiny living, and the smaller environmental footprints, people live small to find gain greater financial independence, living life on their own terms. Yet within many municipalities there are a number of zoning restrictions which prevent tiny homes due to limited size constraints (Krista,37).



Exploring the different footprint sizes that people have occupied within the urban realm, the scale of formal and informal occupation methods begins to offer insight into amenities, and services within these shelters. Through these we begin to understand the symbiotic relationships that begin to form between user groups and urban space.

Precedent Studies

Life on the Commons

The Modern Day Travellers, The Roma

The Roma are one of the few demographics which has never had a strong connection to place, or stationary communities (McGarry, 35). Legitimately or otherwise, they have been categorized and typified as nomadic travelers (McGarry, 37). Not wanting or needing to set down roots, rarely has space been created that welcomes them into the urban fabric's centers. This has resulted in an imposed spatial segregation from the rest of society (McGarry, 79). Forming at the peripheries of development, Gypsy Ghettos exist, understood as a form of socio spatial exclusion that legitimizes those who belong to a place versus those who do not. (McGarry, 79) Increasingly this spatial exclusion is being recognized as a form of social injustice as it deprives and stigmatizes the Roma from ever truly feeling like they belong or can settle in a place. (McGarry, 81) These ghettos serve to further reinforce the lack of belonging, creating hierarchies of citizenship, creating inferior classes of non-humans who threaten the formation of a desired territory, inhabited by those who "deserve to belong" (McGarry, 81). Socially acceptable racism surrounding this group through stigma and stereotype continue to reinforce their sense of "otherness" with their local communities (McGarry, 81).

By advocating for small scale sites, interspersed throughout the towns Roma have been successfully included within residential subdivisions. Creating spatially inclusive spaces and removing barriers which separate them greater social cohesion is encouraged (McGarry, 104).

Historically claiming the Right to Roam, the Roma offer a valuable precedent on how a nomadic community can exist in the modern day, integrating within existing urban spaces, while retaining their ability to travel and roam as they

wish (Communities and Local Government). The Roma and larger community dynamics offer valuable insight into the social and spatial conditions to be weary of. Giving additional insight into how spatial segregation which has resulted in racial tensions is a way of creating feelings of resentment and second class citizenship (McGarry 128).

Though layered with racism and prejudices, the Roma are a valuable case study, as travelling sites are a prime example of how when legitimized an alternative lifestyle can act as a catalyst to reinvigorate community relations. Seen as an example of integrating Nomadic communities within an existing urban fabric, they raise the question of what critical infrastructure is need to make these nomadic members of the community feel like they belong and are welcome?

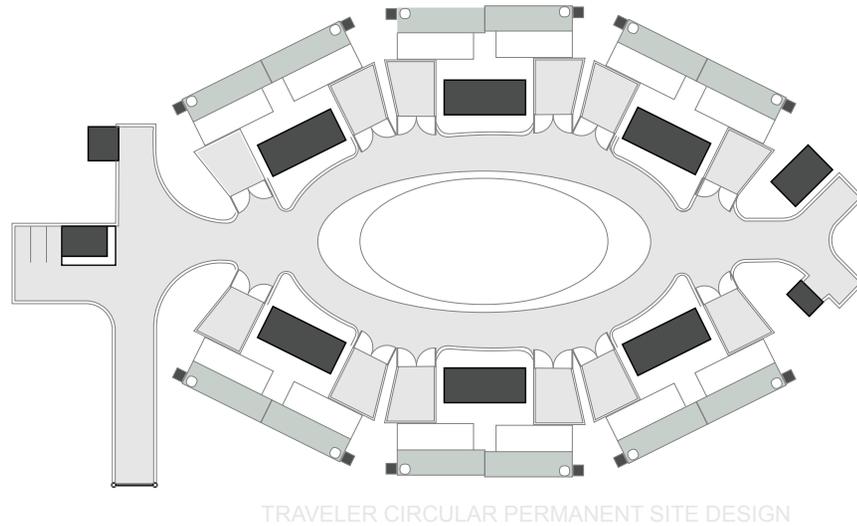


Figure 12. Circular Traveller Site

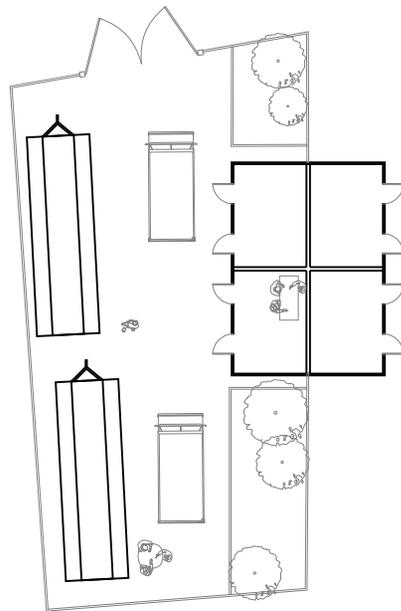


Figure 13. Traditional Traveller Site

In 2004 the lack of traveller sites and amenities was recognized as a crisis in England which led to the design book guideline. Within this guideline, key issues are raised which speak to integration of these spaces into the urban fabric, while providing necessary amenities for long term and seasonal occupation (Communities and Local Government). As many communities were struggling with providing adequate solutions which welcomed the Roma, the guidelines act as a toolkit to mediate between the human rights to shelter, access and education while managing community concerns of integrating the Roma into the social fabric.

Life on the Commons

The Informal Ger settlements

A sprawling vast barren landscape, the Mongolian steppe is one of the least populated places on earth (Bayartsetseg). For thousands of years wandering on the steppe has been part of the traditional way of life, the land held in common for centuries. Herdsman life was difficult with a variety of hardships, yet undeniable in its benefits and rich rewards consistently recognized by communities. (Sinclair,4) Having a vast comprehensive understanding of their unique environment, the nomads understood their symbiotic role they played within the ecosystems they occupied (Sinclair,5).

Following the collapse of the Soviet Union, Ulaanbaatar, the capital of Mongolia urbanized at a rapid rate. A lack of housing supply has led to an explosive growth of informal settlements on the outskirts of the city. Data shows 60% of the urban population resides in informal ger districts (Bayartsetseg) Increasingly accepted is the understanding that this informal occupation has happened in response to government policy (Park et al., 2). With the option of claiming their land title, and through a series of self-help improvements, residents have gradually built up their investment of local infrastructure within their occupied spaces.

Separated by their proximity to the urban centre, three types of informal ger settlements present themselves: the Central, Middle and Peripheral. Within each of the informal settlements urban fabric takes 3 generalized forms depending on the length of occupation

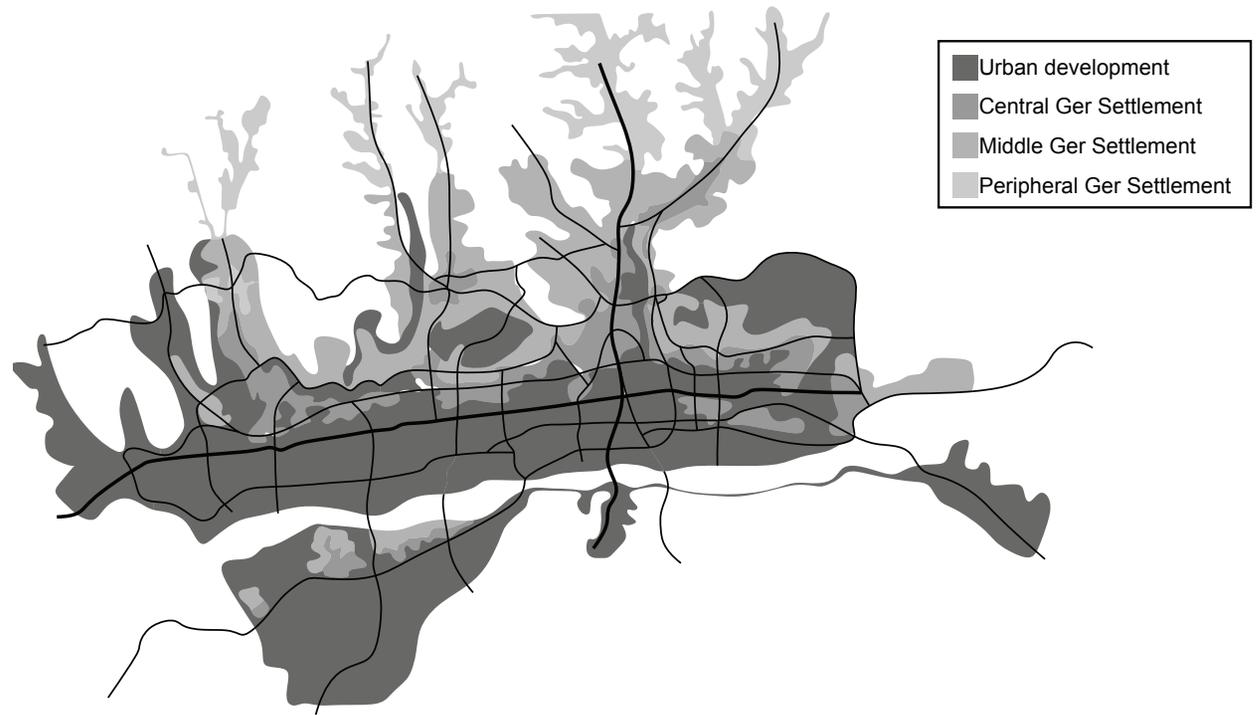


Figure 14. Tiers of Informal Ger Settlement diagram. Based off Ulaanbaatar City Development Strategy (Bayartsetseg)



Figure 15. Linear, Spillover, Infill, & leapfrogging. Common Informal Settlement Growth In light grey. (Park et al.)

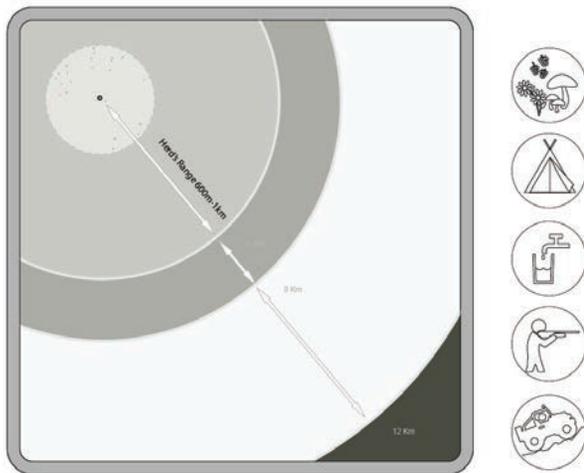


Figure 16. Historic range of travel determined by seasonal herd migrations.

The infant, consolidation, and mature settlement (Park et al., 7-8). Differing slightly in layout, the prolonged length of their occupation is reflected in the built infrastructure of the site (Park et al., 9).

As the city continues to urbanize, and ger districts become more formalized some key concerns have arisen.

-Due to the peripheral nature of settlement, many residents feel excluded from the mainstream as access and availability of public transport to the edges is rare (Bayartsetseg).

-There exists a limited access to bank credit due to the lack of land ownership. With little incentive for migrants to claim the land they settle on, only about 7.5% of Ulaanbaatar residents own their properties (Bayartsetseg).

-Due to disorganization and a poorly developed address system, information is quite difficult to disseminate and meetings problematic to organize. With neither residents or government taking responsibility, this lack of foresight and planning continue to make management of urbanization difficult (Bayartsetseg).

Many rural migrant's who travel to the city are ill prepared and unequipped to assimilate into urban life. With an atmosphere of chaos, uncertainty and disruption, adopting into urban life can be very difficult (Sinclair, 7)

The informal occupation at the edges of Ulaanbaatar is a rich precedent of a group, who have a long history of occupying the commons, and a cultural tradition of roaming. They offer insight into planning and organizational challenges that emerge with unstructured occupation. With their expanding urban Centre, the Ger districts offer rich understanding into the ways informal occupation can be formalized into communities.

The Ger Mapping Centre is an initiative whose goal is to create a tool to empower communities, by addressing and visualizing urban and environmental challenges. Their mapping seeks to empower communities through the spatialization and communication of the challenges within their urban fabric ("GER COMMUNITY MAPPING CENTER").

Some questions which are raised include, how can the challenges of this way of life be visualized? How can problems surrounding the community be visualized in a way which empowers and supports?

4 ways informal settlements form are:

- Linear Aggregation, informal ger district expands and builds outwards from transportation corridors.
- Spillover, universal condition throughout. People move to the periphery, spilling over and expanding outwards.
- Infill development, happened as areas became enclosed, people moved to fill the open space in the edges.
- Leap Frogging, In search of safer, less chaotic, less populated space, people move to fresh locations as old ones reached capacity. (Park et al., 8)

Life on the Commons Allemaänstratten (Everymans Right)

In Sweden and other Nordic countries, the right to roam has emerged as a cultural symbol. The “Everyman’s right” allows one to cross private land without the express permission of a landowner (Andersen). Following a series of setbacks that mitigate visitor’s intrusion upon landowners’ activities, the phrase “Don’t Disturb and Don’t Destroy” sums up this unique relationship between recreational users in the landscape (Ministry of the Environment). Enshrined within cultural tradition and the constitution, laws guide these interactions yet do not dictate what those could be.

As recreation has changed so too have landowners and user relationships. With landowners being asked to tolerate a certain amount of intrusion depending on the scale of the recreational activity (Ministry of the Environment). Often it is quite popular for natural resources to not be degraded by use, with recreational activities acting as a parallel land use to other resource type uses, existing side by side. Recognized by the countries that protect their right to roam, outdoor recreation is dependent upon the right to access rich local landscapes (Andersen).

The right of public access is a valuable precedent as it offers a form of recreational land use which is applied across the landscape. Increasingly the need within Canada and British Columbia for the right of public access has been called for to balance the

management and use of lands and resources by private property owners versus the public rights to access these spaces (Todd). Bill M 223 brought forward by the Green Party within BC in 2007 sought to legitimize the right to roam within BC. Recognizing the inherent value within this tradition, the bill seeks to protect and enforce the public right to roam and access recreational resources within the province (Weaver).

Another very valuable precedent, Allemaänstratten showcases how access to the outdoors can still be employed as a democratizing agent within our society. Creating access to greenspace for all, Allemaänstratten enriches social ties to the landscape and increases the community sense of stewardship for the spaces that they use through the intimate ties and experiences which it helps to facilitate.

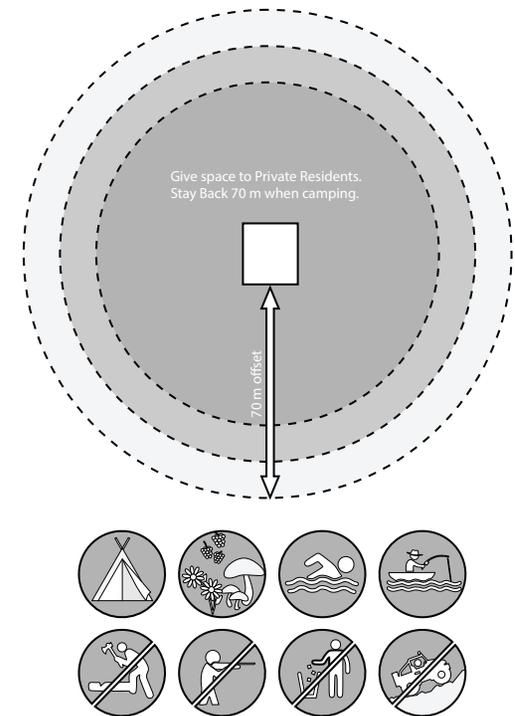


Figure 17. Everyman’s Rights allowed and restricted activities

The Ritual Acts of Camping

Examining the act of camping, Martin Hogue peels back the layer of ritual, and experience dissecting the cultural significance of claiming and setting up a temporary camp. He examines the repetition of the act of camping, recording the many variations of cookie cutter armatures facilitating these actions. A gradually evolved set of infrastructure helps to facilitate, enjoyable temporal occupation of these spaces. Facilitated actions allow one to claim space and exert their agency, while rarely expanding on the interaction and experience that one shares with the site and landscape itself. His work explores the intersection of many elements including narratives wilderness, individuality, access, speed, comfort nostalgia and profit. All of which intertwine and hybridize within the camping experience (Hogue). The modern camper uses the site as a stage upon which frontier fantasies can be conducted in full view of an audience likewise interested in sharing and participating within the “wilderness experience”(Hogue, A Short History).

Hogue’s work offers a rich precedent in the way he dissects a ritual that has existed for a hundred years, organizing and making legible the subtle shifts in experience that have taken place through the introduction of spatial controls meant to mitigate long term impact (Hogue, A Short History). His diagrams explore the evolution of the wild camp off the side of the road into the spatial organization of the hub and spoke model most of us are familiar with today. The ritualistic actions

it supports provide a consistent “frontier” experience for its participants (Hogue, A Short History).

As the camping experience itself within Squamish is faced with this evolution, Squamish is grappling with how the frontier experience of wild camping be retained as the act of camping evolves on site.

HomeLand Lab

“Exploring the intersection of public space and homelessness, HomeLand lab is a landscape architect hosted podcast which attempts to bridge the gap between different demographics within the city through compassion and empathy. Presenting forward thinking strategies that engage with the spatial manifestation of informal occupation within the city. the podcast presents inclusive ideas which empower rather than condemn.

Created by Brice Maryman, his podcast won the 2019 Washington ASLA award, and engages in the discussion surrounding homelessness (WASLA). Offering a sensitive, diverse and nuanced set of perspectives, it offers insight into how public space can act as a tool to empower communities. By drawing out myths, first person experiences, and political debates his podcasts present a platform to introduce landscape architects to the many complexities around this topic, and ways in which our design capacity have the ability to influence and improve the quality of life for all demographics within public space(Maryman, Ep 6).

On the 1st episode, the homeless crisis within Seattle is discussed, and the different strategies being used by communities and the city. In it, Sally Bragshaw a Seattle council member discusses the value of communication,

synergies, and inclusive strategies which act as tools to knit a more inclusive community fabric, for all demographics (Maryman, Ep 1). Again and again throughout multiple episodes the value of communication is emphasized, as it promotes understanding and empathy for the different challenges faced by different groups.

The value of this precedent is the sensitivity to which it engages with homelessness and opening up the conversation to landscape architects. Through the different design employed in urban space, the vulnerable nature of many peoples everyday can be eased or stressed further. By exploring diverse points of view and experiences, it provides a very valuable insight into the challenges navigating the role of vulnerable communities, neighbourhoods, landowners, and policy

Through the use of a spatial-solutions based focus, within its many episodes, the podcast offers insight into diverse strategies encouraging a richer mosaic of community complexity (Maryman).

Conclusion

The Commons, acts as the thread which ties all of these precedents together. From integrating traveller sites into communities, nomads settling at the edges of the urban fabric, the ritualistic nature of pitching camp on structured sites, to homelessness and its intersection within our Public Spaces. Each precedent offers insight into the challenges the Commons faces in the modern day, flexible in the many roles it plays for different user groups. Exceeded peak densities, a lack of strong collective management, or individualism and NIMBY resistance all serve to unstitch the fabric of communities and create socially exclusive spaces which are no longer universally inclusive within the urban system.

Armed with these precedents I hope that my sensitivity to the role the Commons can play to those in need, increases. By providing the starting blocks from which to build, the conversation surrounding informal occupation and use of our common spaces is vast.

Yet it is increasingly clear that without advocating for these spaces, or rebuilding community interest, investment and management of these spaces, that abuse within them will proliferate. With abuse an excuse to sell off and privatize these space, social exclusion, and disparity will only seems to grow, as our access to the

commons is lost.

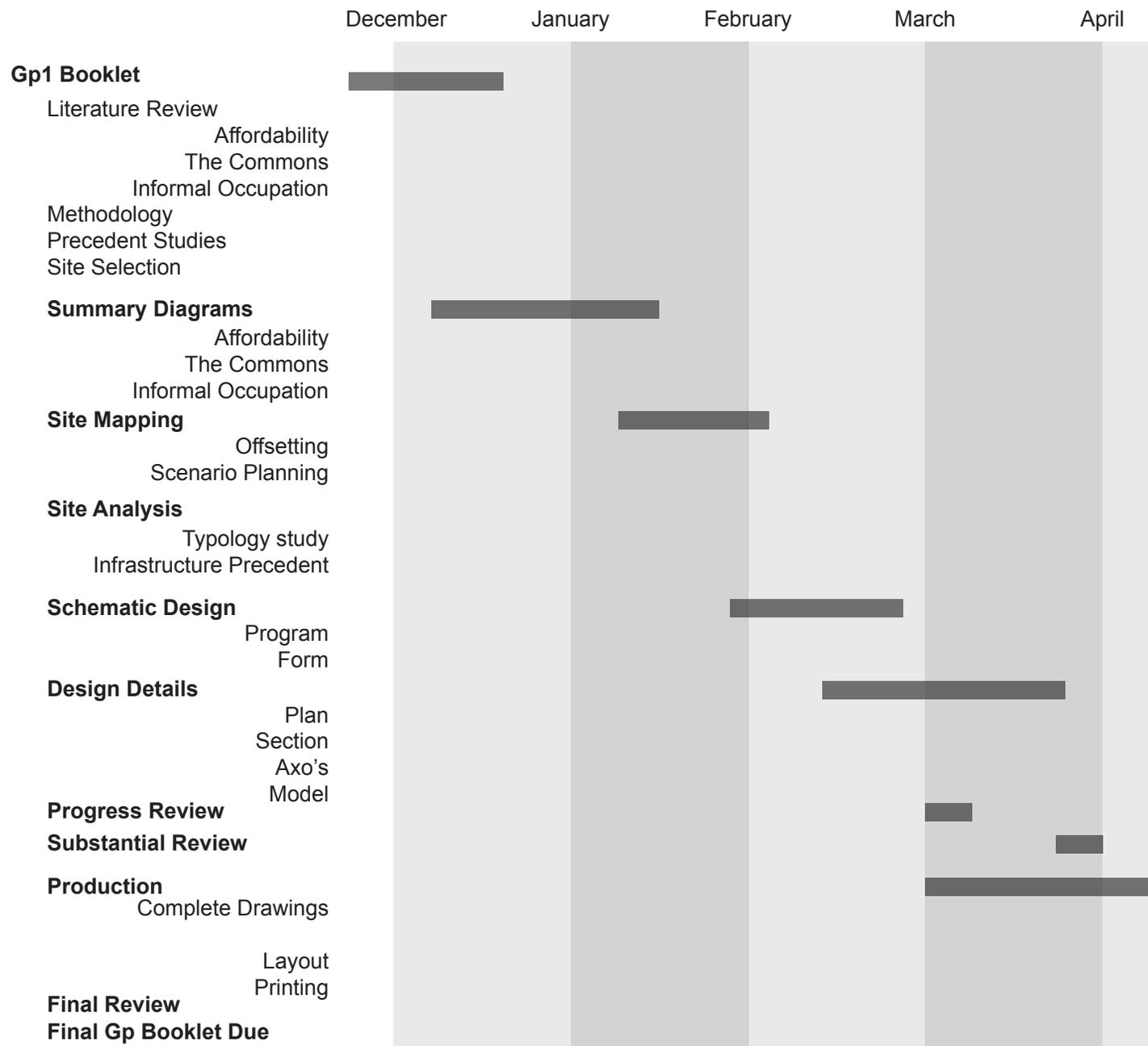
Therefore as this thesis presents, it becomes increasingly important for the commons to be invested in to be able to manage the use and challenges it faces in the 21st century.

A Role to Play

Within the discipline of Landscape Architecture this is a valuable project because it begins to highlight the importance of existing synergies within the urban fabric. The project engages with the in between spaces, the leftovers, those that don't make the cut. Increasingly a major problem within our urban centres, the ability for multiple income levels to live alongside one another within our urban centres is diminishing.

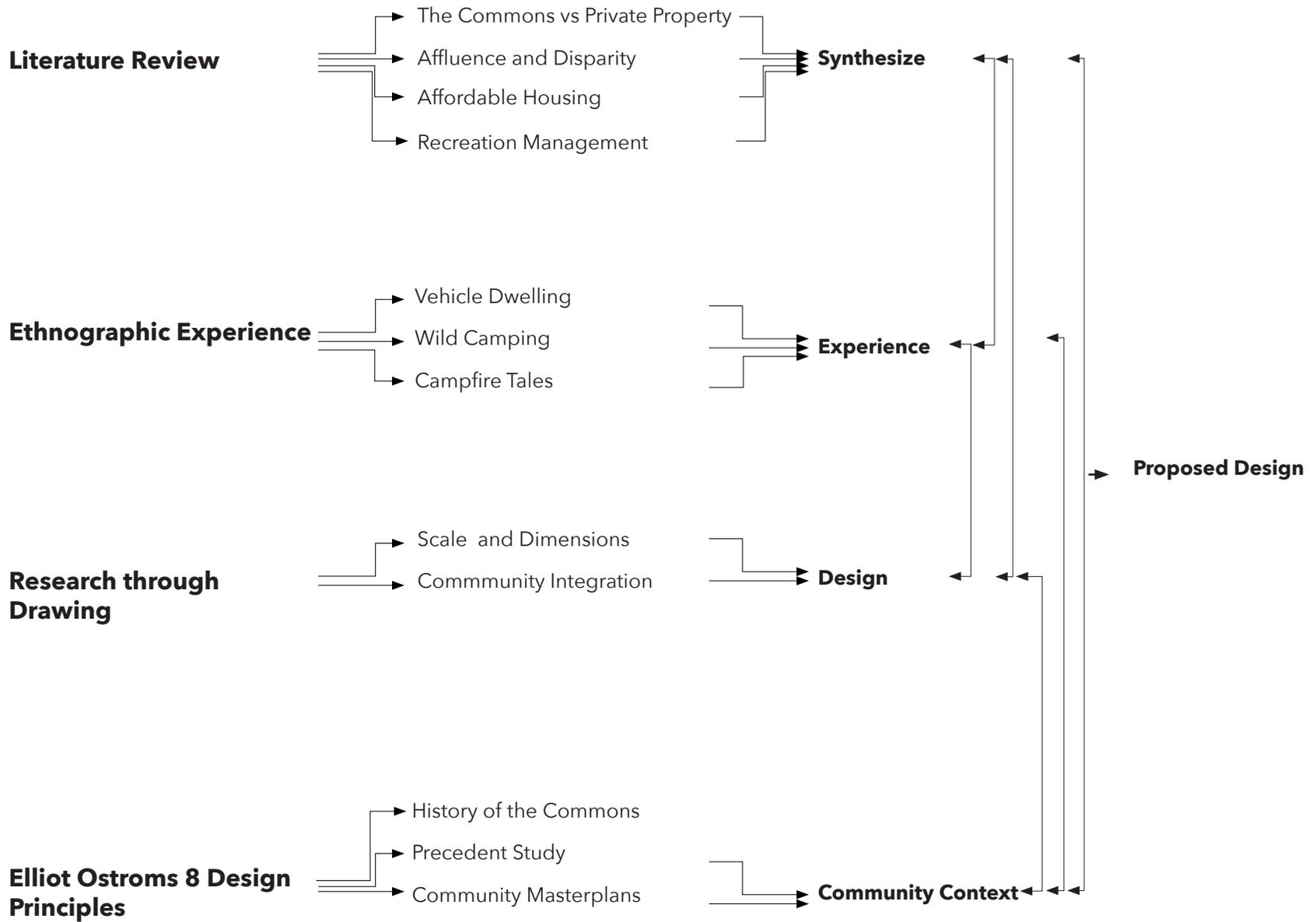
Recognizing the history of landscape architects and the Commons I see it of increasing importance for us to understand the ways in which as designers, we can help to facilitate open ended urban fabric which are inclusive and accommodating for all walks of life. How can we use the landscape and the community of place to help enrich, empower, and improve the social fabric this small town.

Projected Schedule



GP 2-Design Proposal

Design Methodology



Design Approach

Employing ethnographic research, the design problem surrounding Vehicle Dwelling was broken down into the relevant areas of concern, the targeted audience, the needed strategies, and a design engaging with a local context.

The remnants of cultural memory and the right to roam empower Vehicle Dwellers within the social fabric of places.

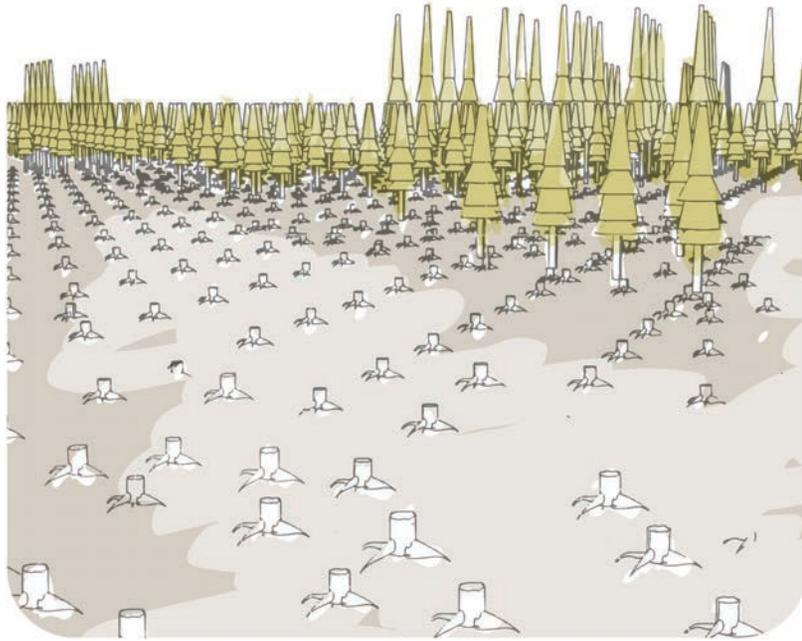
Through observation, and collection of my own site investigations, I tried to understand the values of this community, proposing an evolution to existing urban and wildland interfaces.

A literature review conducted surrounding temporary living and house lessness provided the issues which became central to the design.

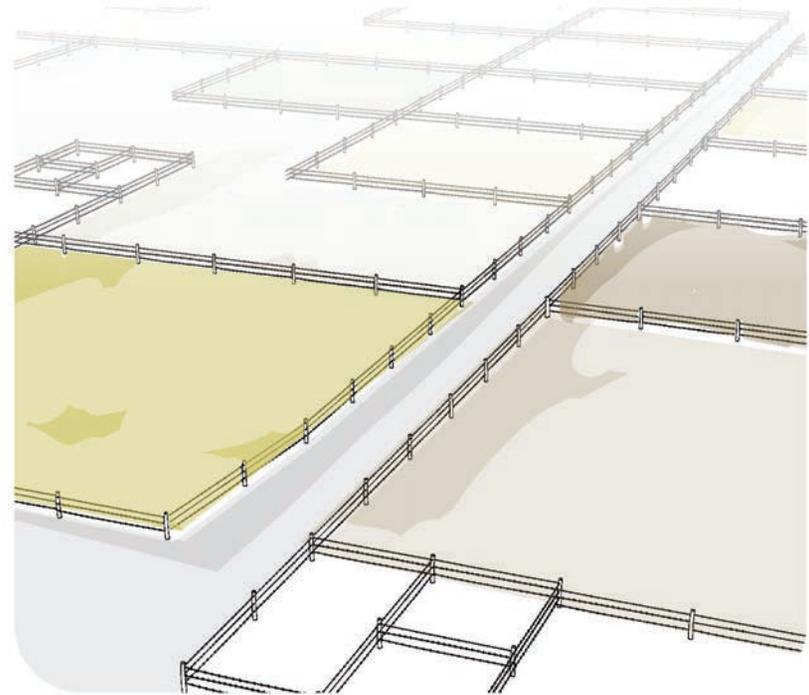
The solution found sought to find a balance for inclusion and empowerment through the legitimization of specific areas where vehicle dwelling could happen.

Creating a network approach, sites are chosen based on areas of best fit for Common use to compliment a second zoning type. Bringing multiple stakeholders into consideration it seeks to invest in adjacencies, where different zonings collide and the potential for additional use and value to the community arises. Encouraging a shared collective use and pooling, collaboration between all users is inspired.

Why the Commons?



LABOUR TRANSFORMS NATURE INTO PROPERTY,
COLONIZING THE LANDSCAPE



THE RIGHT TO EXCLUDE ERASES THE HISTORY OF COMMON USE FROM THE LANDSCAPE.

Figure 18. Land Transformed into Property through labor.

Grown out of John Locke's, Labour theory of property in which one's own work transforms the terra nullius, an unclaimed nature into their possession. The institution of Private Property allows users to appropriate space, claiming exclusive use over land, and has contributed to the erosion of the vast "wild frontier" in Canada. A colonizing tool still in use today, space that can be claimed as new pieces of territory no longer exists. As single use zoning has increased, the right to exclude has restricted landscapes

to industry and ownership, erasing others' right to belong. This right of claiming space is an especially contentious issue in British Columbia, as the majority of land sits on unceded First Nation Territory, and the imagining of Canada as a blank unpopulated nature, erases First Nations from the cultural history of the country. The Commons challenges and stands in opposition to the institution of exclusive property use. Existing as an ideological intersection where First Nation, settler and

European philosophies have met. These areas exist as an open use resource, in which all members of a community can find benefit. Managed collectivity, the Commons promotes stewardship, communication, and a flexible dialog, allowing different stakeholders to benefit from changing roles in the landscape with the seasons. Managed improperly they can be taken advantage of and degraded when people selfishly overextend the resources.



**THE COMMONS EXISTS AS A SHARED RESSOURCE WHOSE REPONSIBLE STEWARDSHIP
BENEFITS ALL.**

Figure 19. Commons exist as a collaborative resource.

DEMOGRAPHIC'S

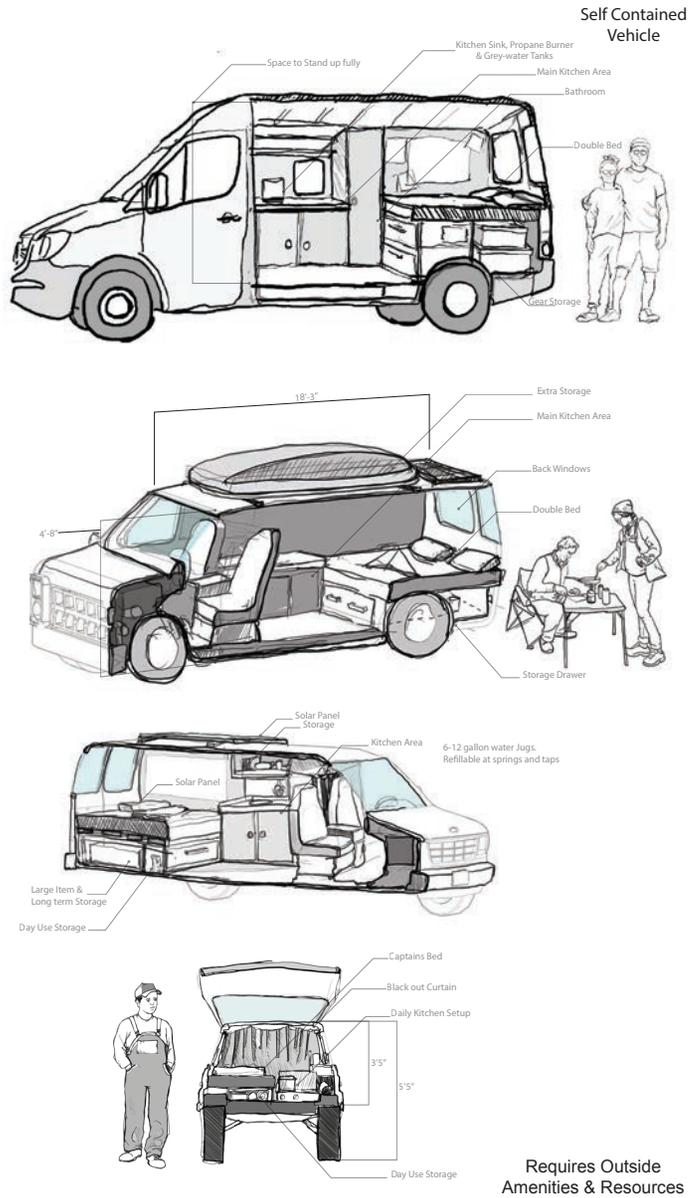


Figure 20. Dimensions And Varying Degees of Built In Infrastructures.

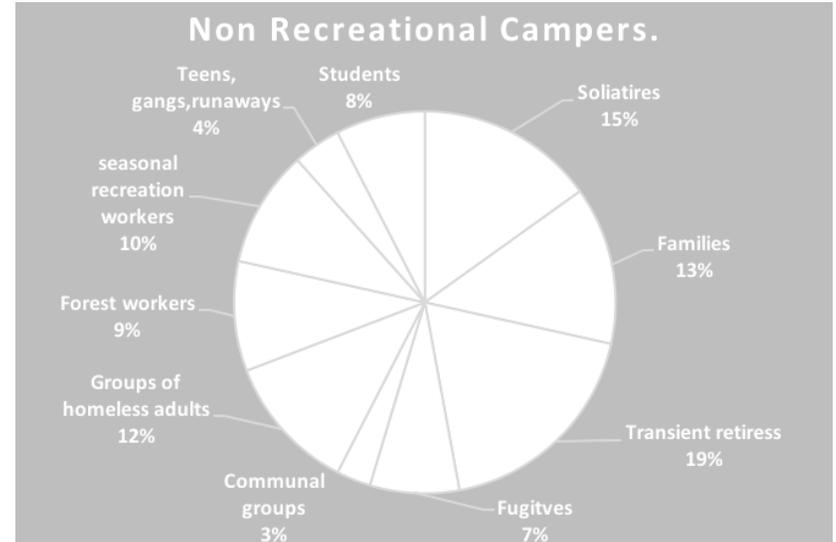


Figure 21. Homeless And Nonrecreational Campers On National Forests And Graslands. Survey 2015 (Cerveny and Baur, 145)

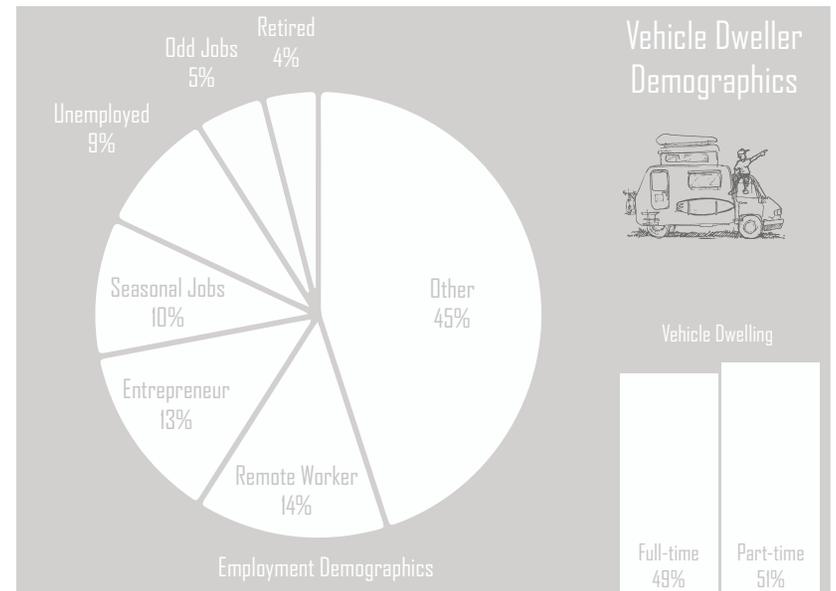


Figure 22. Outbound Vanlife Statistics Report 2018 (Outbound)

CAMPING-A FORM OF IMMERSION

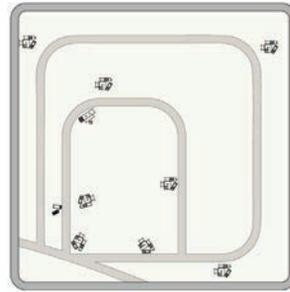
The Camping Experience

Vehicle dwellers, camping and the #vanlife. All use camping gear as the same set of tools to empower their living experiences.

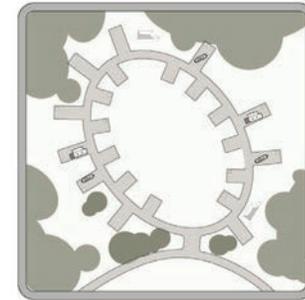
Built to support a continual reoccupation of a space, the campsite is meant to provide a temporary replacement for home. Claiming a space to dwell, dine, sleep and socialize, the experience of the modern campsite allows a user to be surrounded by the great outdoors. With the novelty of being immersed in nature, the central theme to the experience. The modern campground supports a choreographed set of actions which place little responsibility on the user.

The evolution of the Campsite is something that has happened as density of users increased to the point in which an increase in infrastructure and site controls are needed to sustainably manage long term responsible use of these spaces. As user impacts became unsustainable, increasingly stringent spatial boundaries defining supported types of use are created.

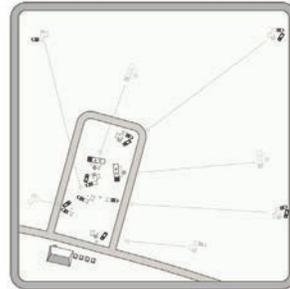
An Evolution of The Campsite



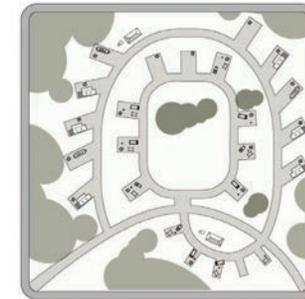
Dispersed Camping



Parking Spur developed to manage automobiles destructive impact on landscape.



Organized Campgrounds provided basic services



With varying degrees of services, separate circulation loops supported RV's vs campers.



Campfires acted as Social Centre's, creating rich social dynamics

Figure 23. The Evolution Of Spatial Controls And The Campground (Hogue)

Rituals Of Camping

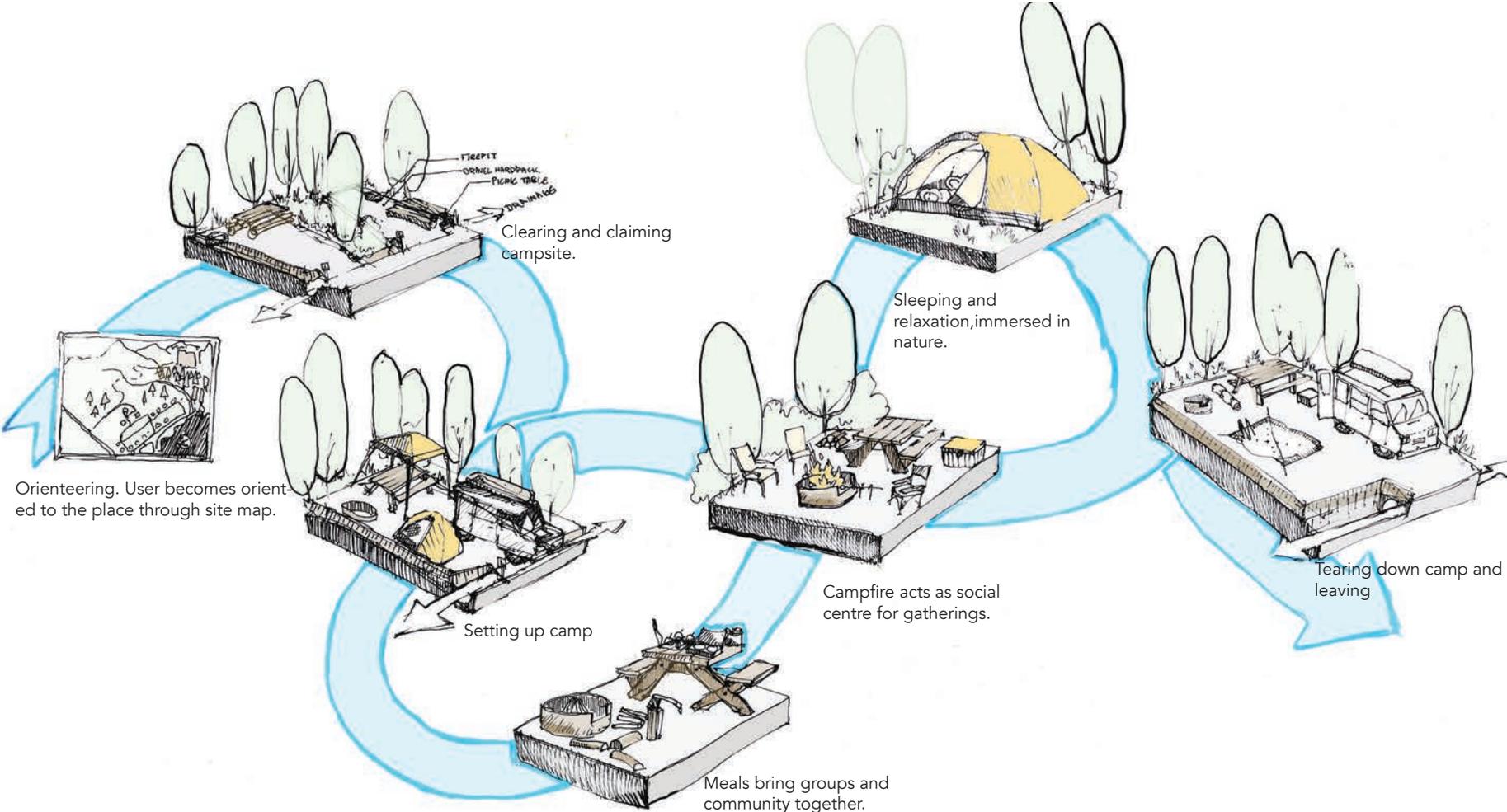
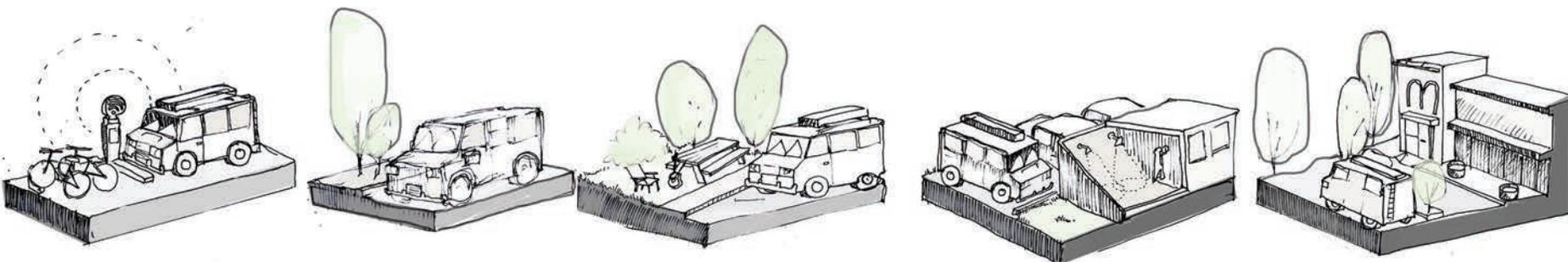
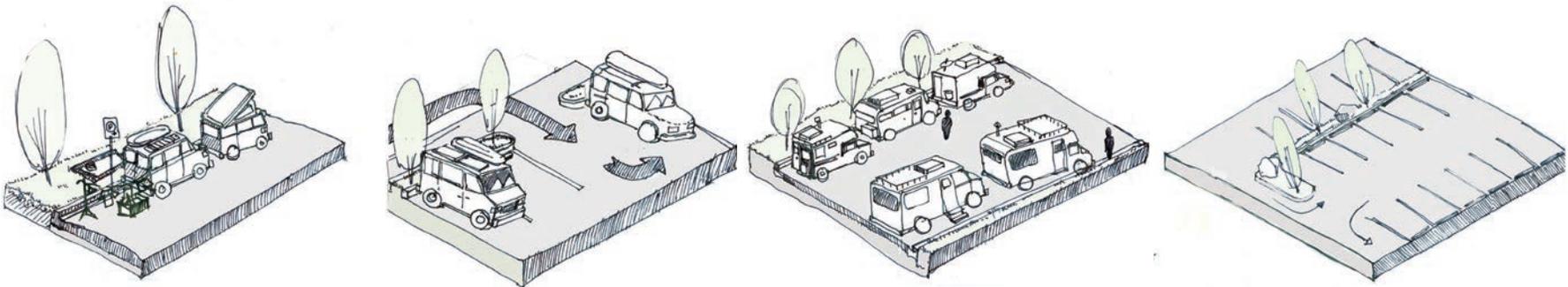


Figure 24. Supported Experience of the Modern Campsite

Camping Typologies

These drawings show the infrastructure of a place acting as an extension of the vehicle dwellers home. Washrooms are found at local businesses and cafes, the living room are found in the parks and libraries. With Gyms and community centres the places where showers are found. Though beneficial for local business's its these very same relationships reliant on external support which disqualifies vehicle dwelling from meeting the definitions of adequate housing.

VEHICLE DWELLING TYPICAL URBAN SCENARIOS



Co-opting Wi-fi hotspots Stealth camping Private lives on display Using existing infrastructure Third Places as living spaces

WILD CAMPING UNMANAGED CROWN LAND SCENARIOS

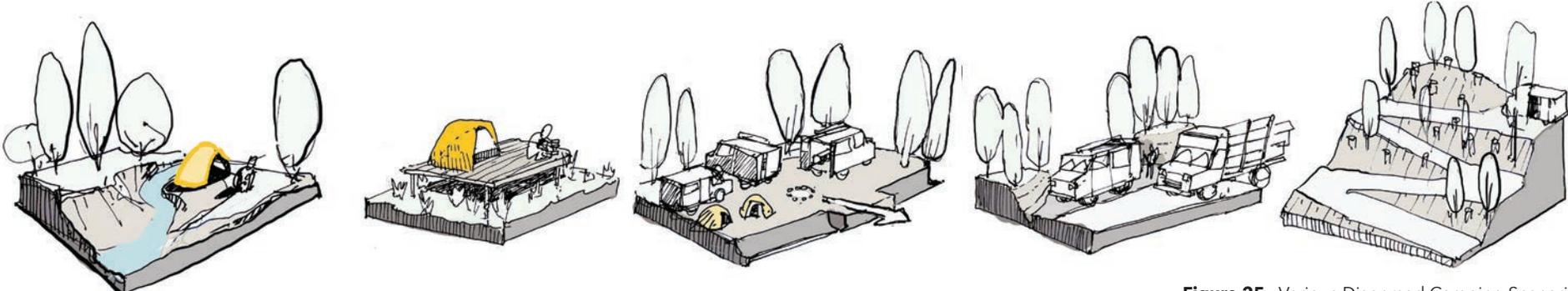


Figure 25. Various Dispersed Camping Scenarios

#Vanlife

Strongly influenced by the #vanlife movement, an Instagram hashtag that's been used over 1.5 million times since 2013. The Wild camping experience off the beaten trail, immersed in nature, while offering the most scenic locations, is romanticized and idealized. Glossing over the hardships and compromises made while vehicle dwelling, this narrative does a disservice to this marginalized way of life. Just adding additional numbers of users to already overwhelmed communally used locations.

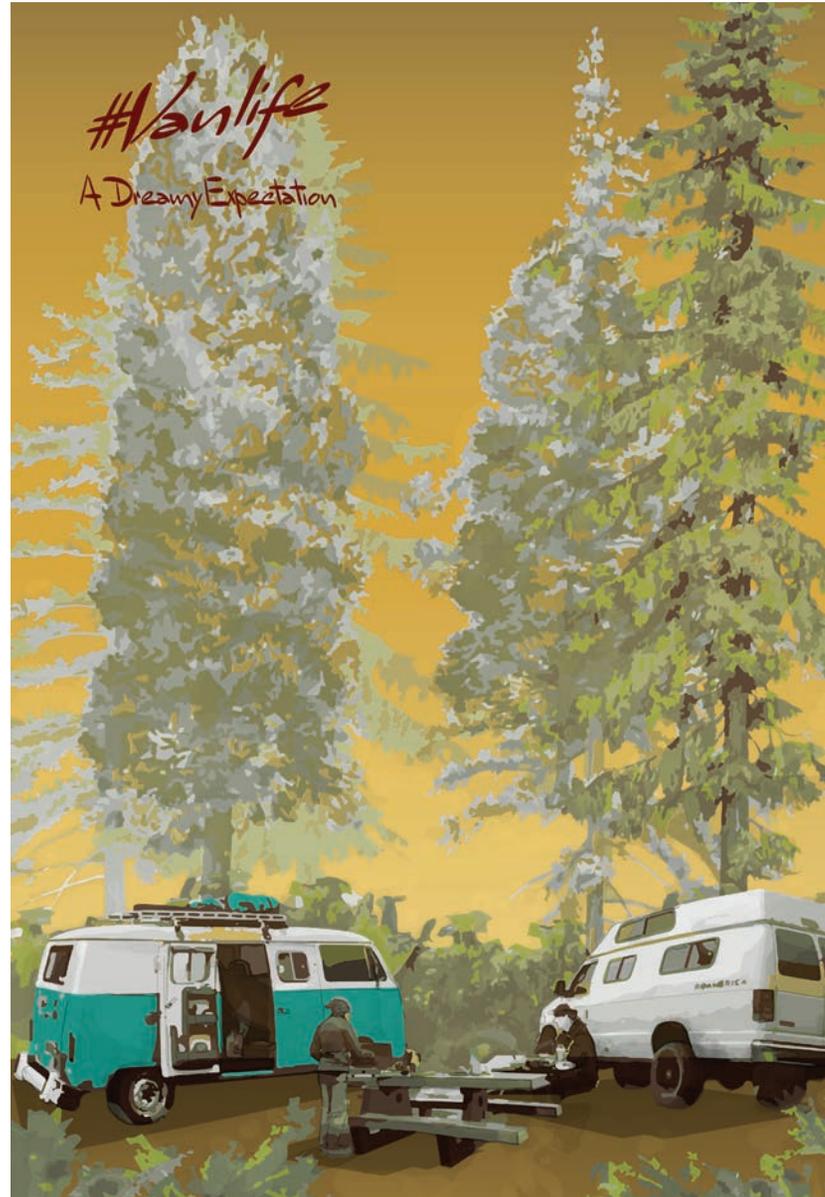


Figure 26. Idealizing the #vanlife.

Renderings

Building a critical dialogue with the cultural narratives surrounding vehicle dwelling these renderings draw inspiration from punchy propaganda posters of the past. Highlighting the compromises and reality of vehicle dwelling, these posters seek to challenge the viewers perceptions and the lack of inclusion which surround the transient demographics.



Figure 27. Priced out from home



Figure 28. Unlikely Places with Welcome Spaces.



Figure 29. An Empty Space(before intervention)

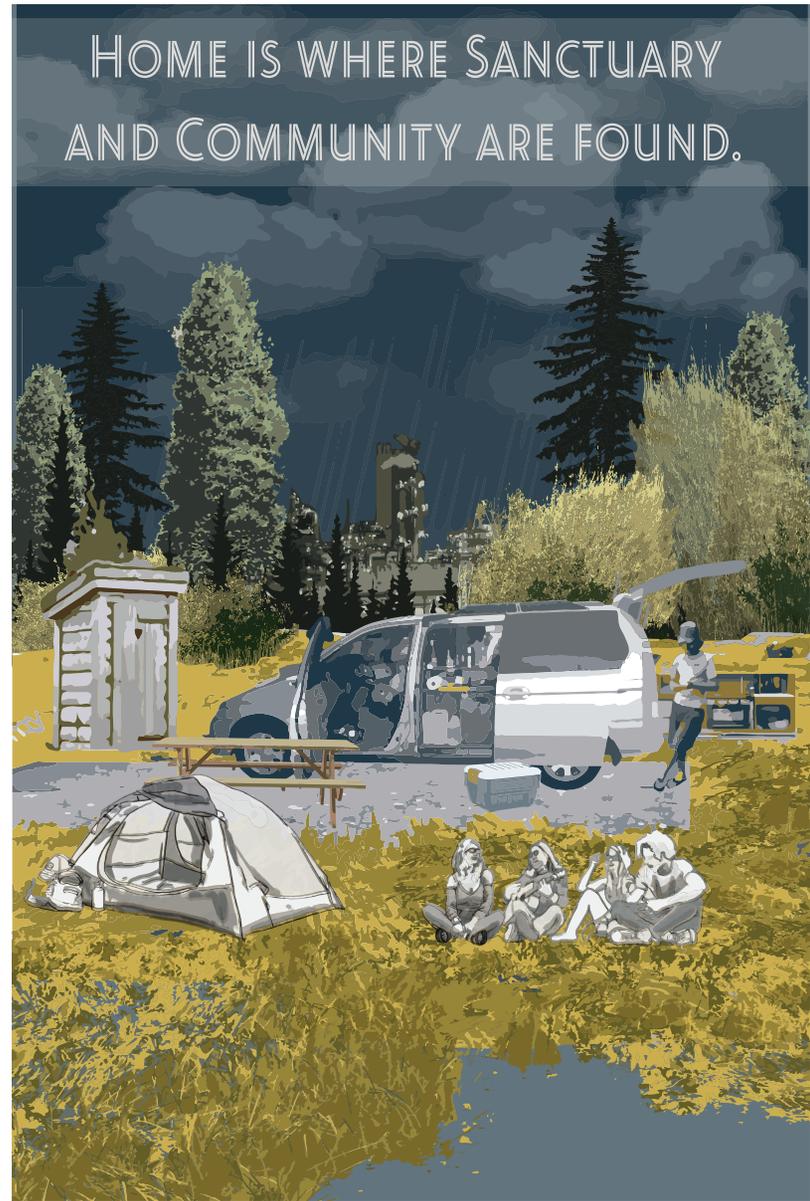


Figure 30. A homely place (post intervention)

A PLACE CALLED SQUAMISH

Squamish Context Map

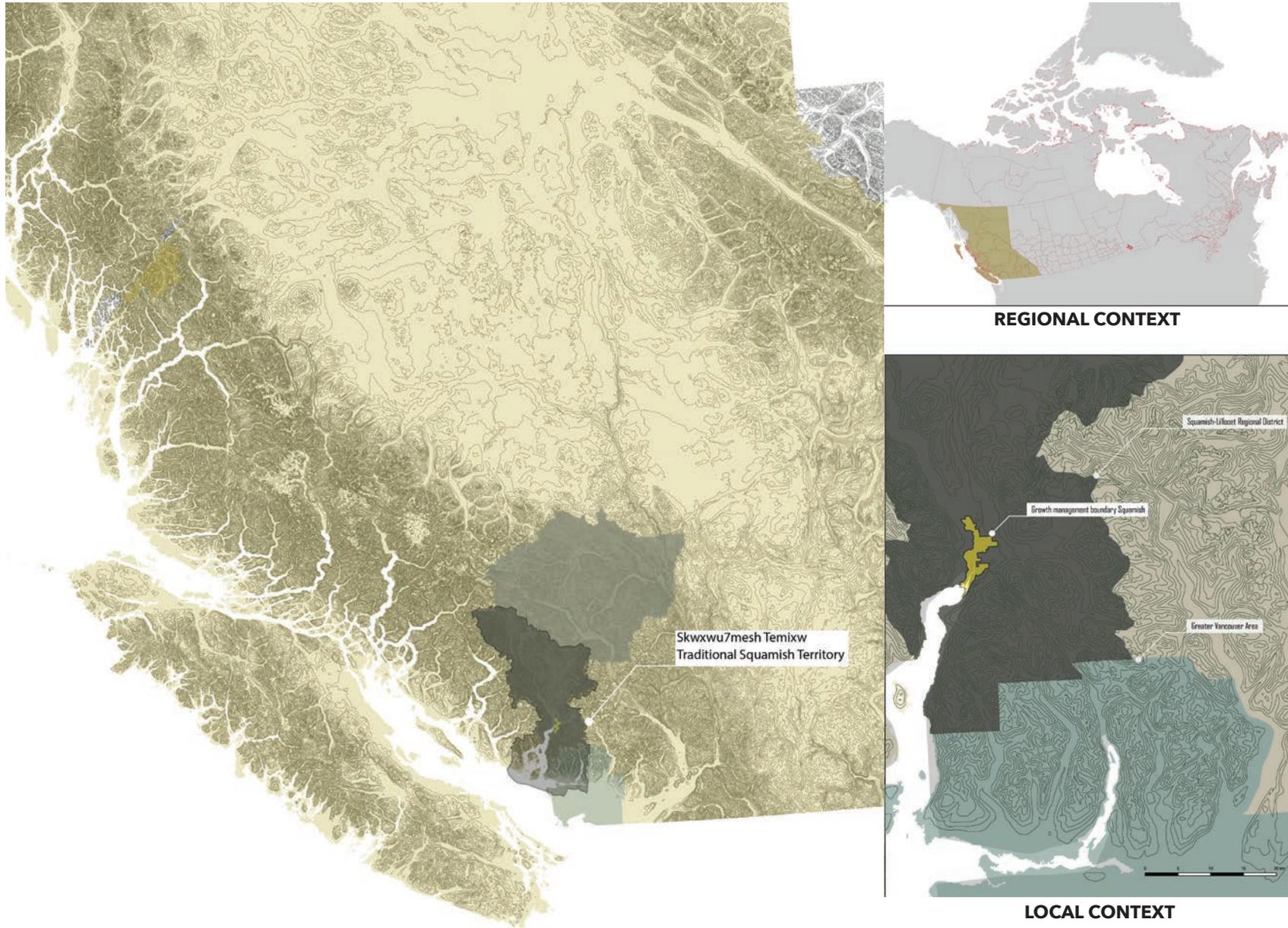


Figure 31. Regional Context Map

Squamish Historical Stakeholders

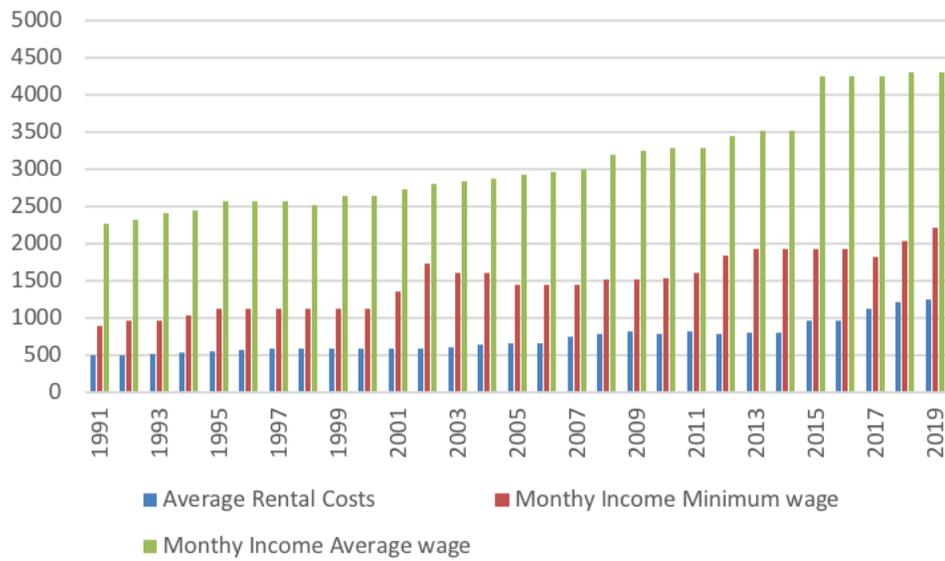
The town of Squamish is situated on unceded Traditional Squamish First Nation land, settlers have colonized the area since the early 1900's.

Overtime the industrial pressures in the valley have given way to recreational ones. Now called the recreation capital of Canada, Squamish's rich landscape offers a wide variety of easily accessible adventures. A mountain town, it has to contend with being a popular tourist destination, large seasonal swell populations of campers, and those struggling with finding an affordable home. A microcosm of the larger conversation surrounding belonging and exclusivity, this mountain town is now being faced with the consequence of its own popularity.

With a range of affluence, money and power this needs of these varying stakeholders are sacrificed to varying degrees in the name of development.

Figure 32. Historical Stakeholders In the Valley

Squamish's Rising Costs Of Living



AFFORDABLE RENT FOR MINIMUM WAGE AND AVERAGE INCOME EARNERS VS SQUAMISH RENTAL COSTS



PERCENTAGE OF MINIMUM AND AVERAGE WAGE INCOMES SPENT ON RENT

Figure 32. Graph Data from Townfolio Squamish, BC - Housing and Stats Canada Yearly Income Report

MAPPING ANALYSIS

These Maps are the result of my analysis of Squamish's land use, and history. Each map reveals a different way of looking at the landscape. Speaking to different interpretations of Commons in the landscape as viewed through lenses of the past. As well as deconstructing the existing land uses to reveal key adjacencies where space for temporary occupation still exists.

All these maps highlight lenses of the land and our relationship to it. Drawing from history, personal experience, and research all that exists is a faint memory of the Commons in the way those spaces are used today.

Mapping The Commons UNMANAGED CROWN LAND SCENARIOS

Squamish is a property mosaic that has private property interlaced with crown land, greenspaces, the Squamish First Nation and sensitive ecosystems. In visualizing historic interpretations of the commons, the landscape of the Squamish valley reveals a memory of common use within the valley.

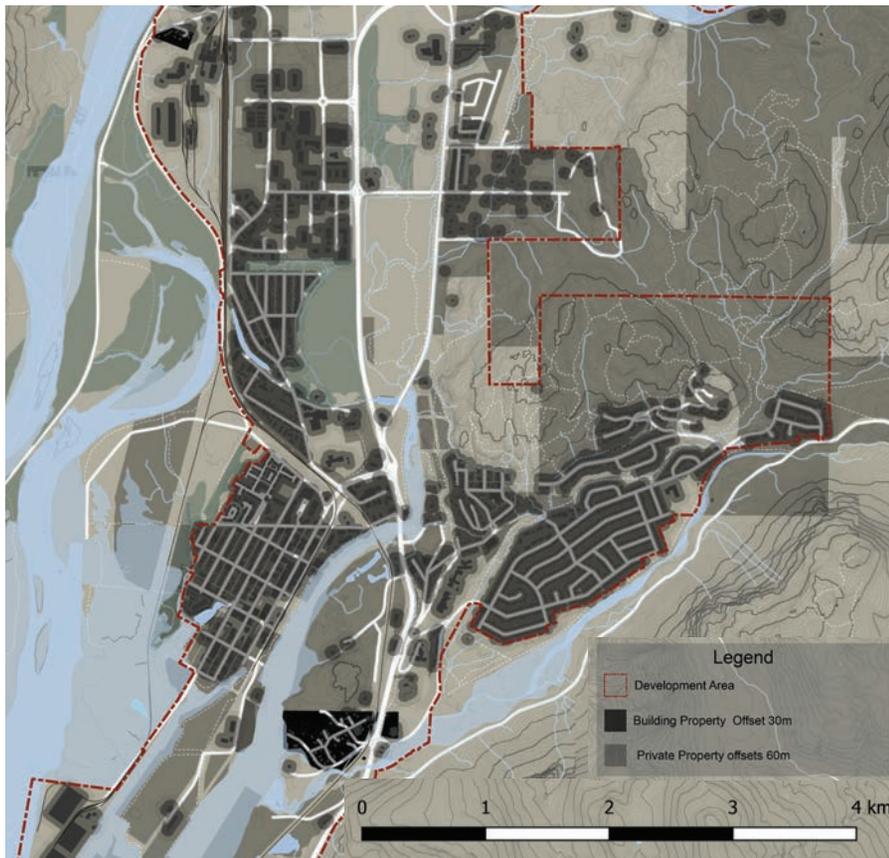


Figure 33. 30 Meter Building Offsets Vs Transportation Commons

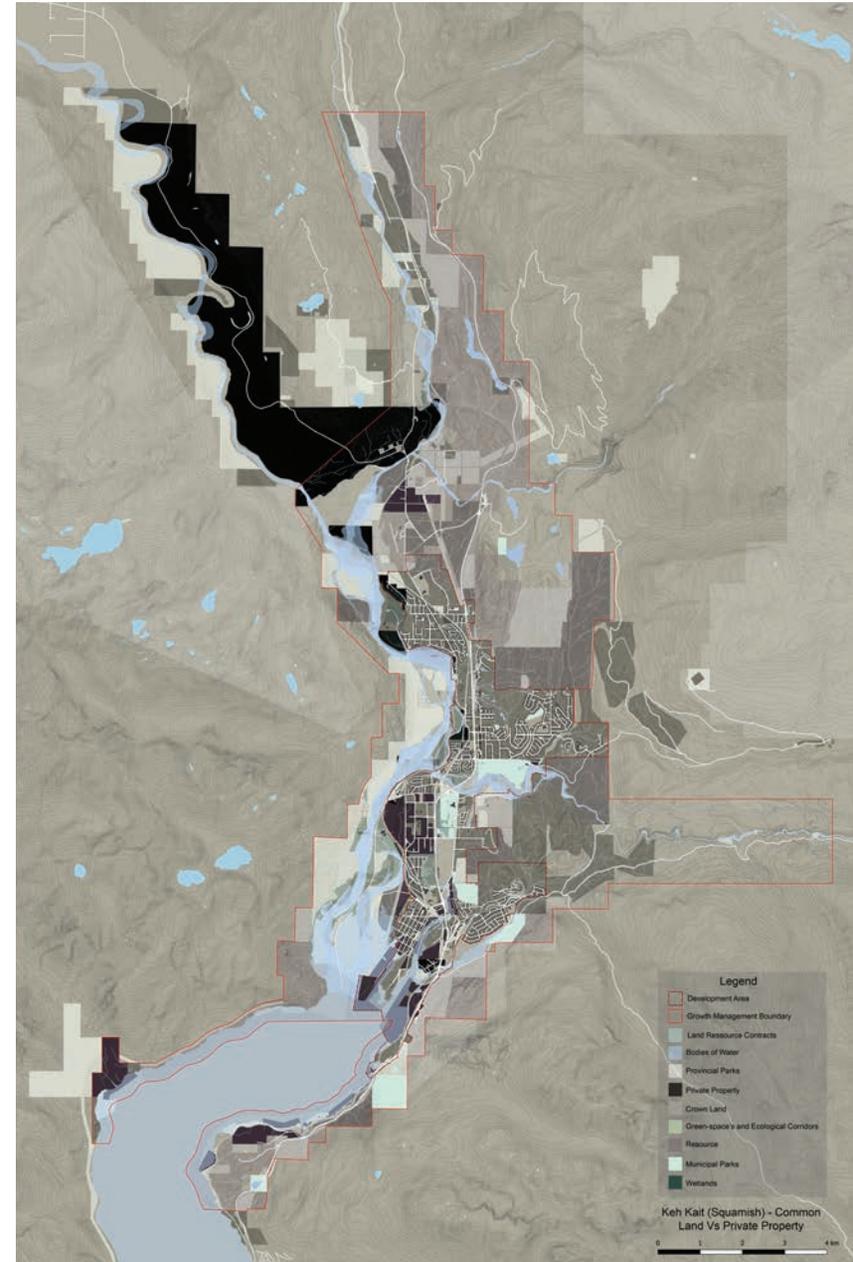


Figure 33. Common Land vs. Private Property

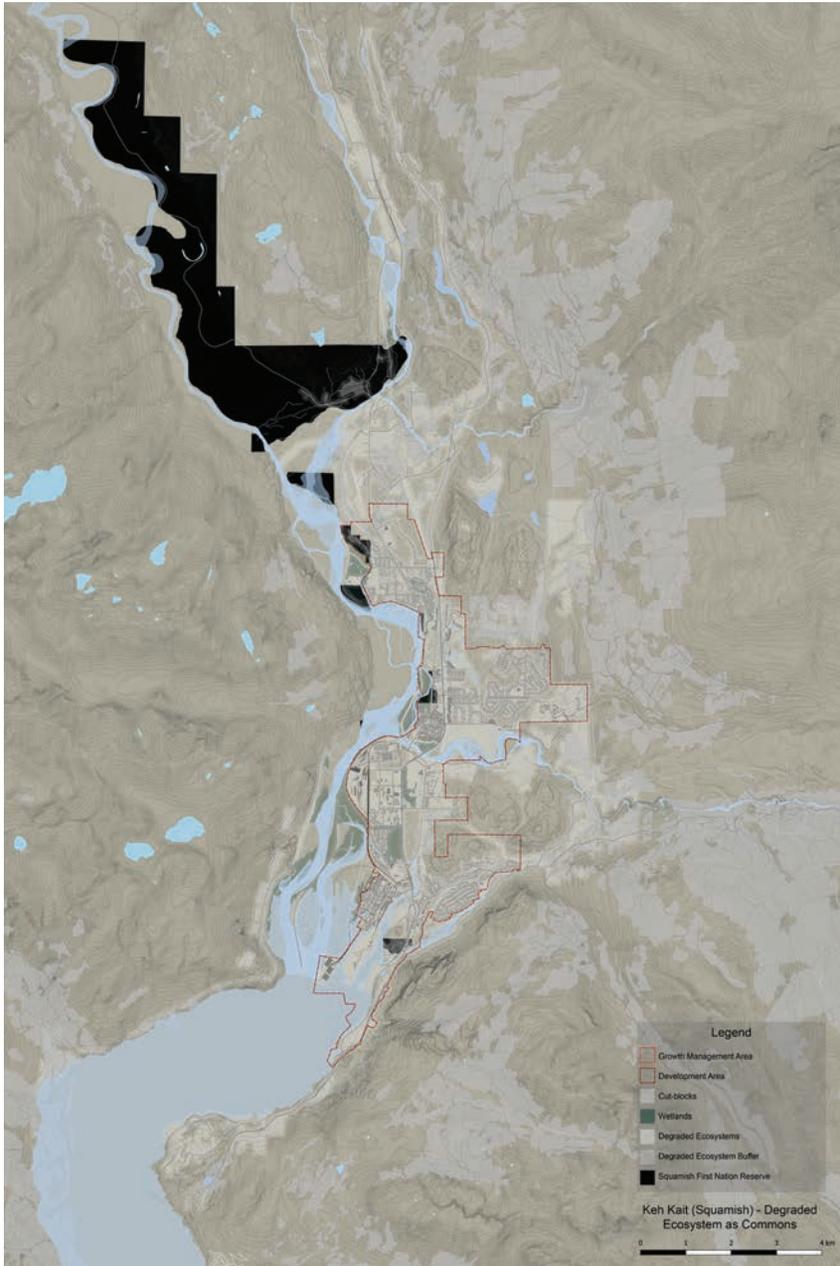


Figure 35. Degraded sites hold memories of use and value.

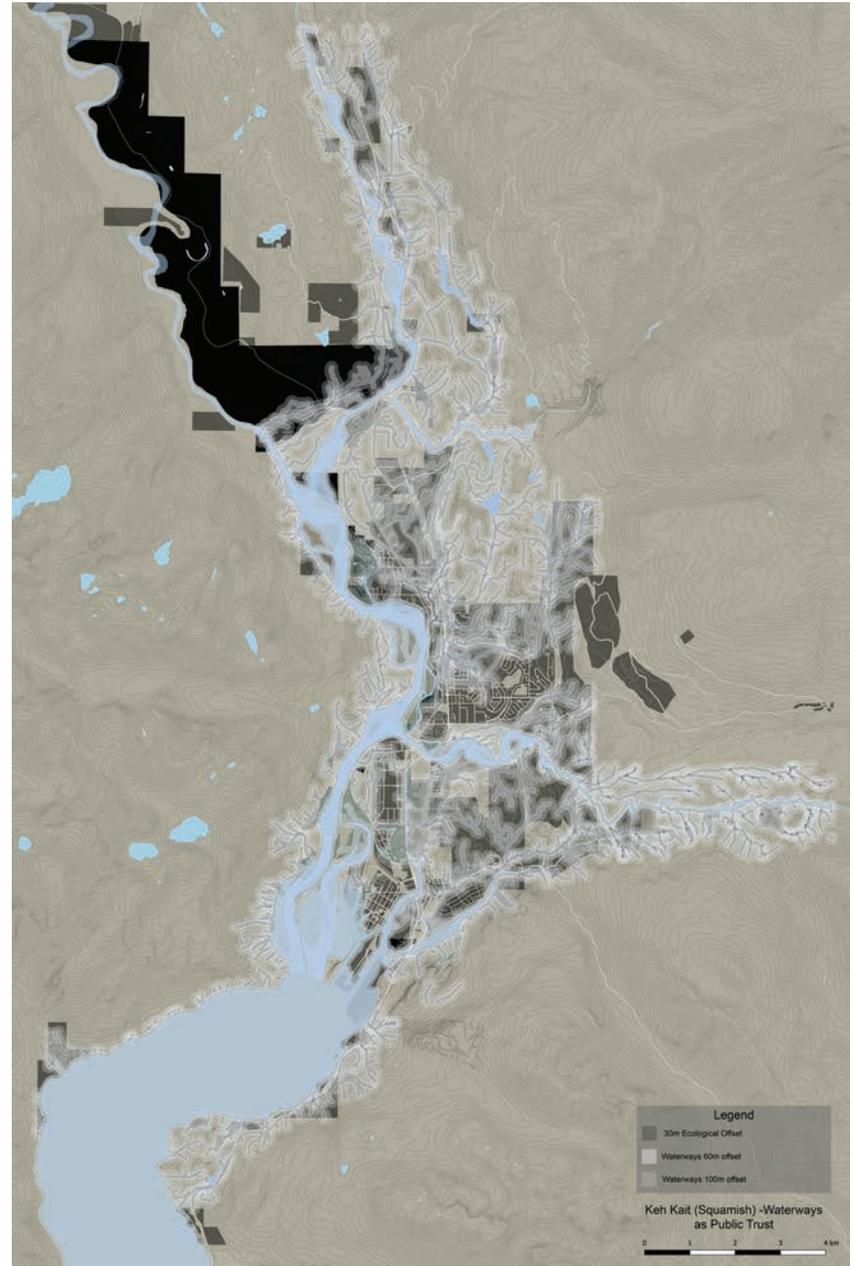


Figure 36. Waterways held for the common good.

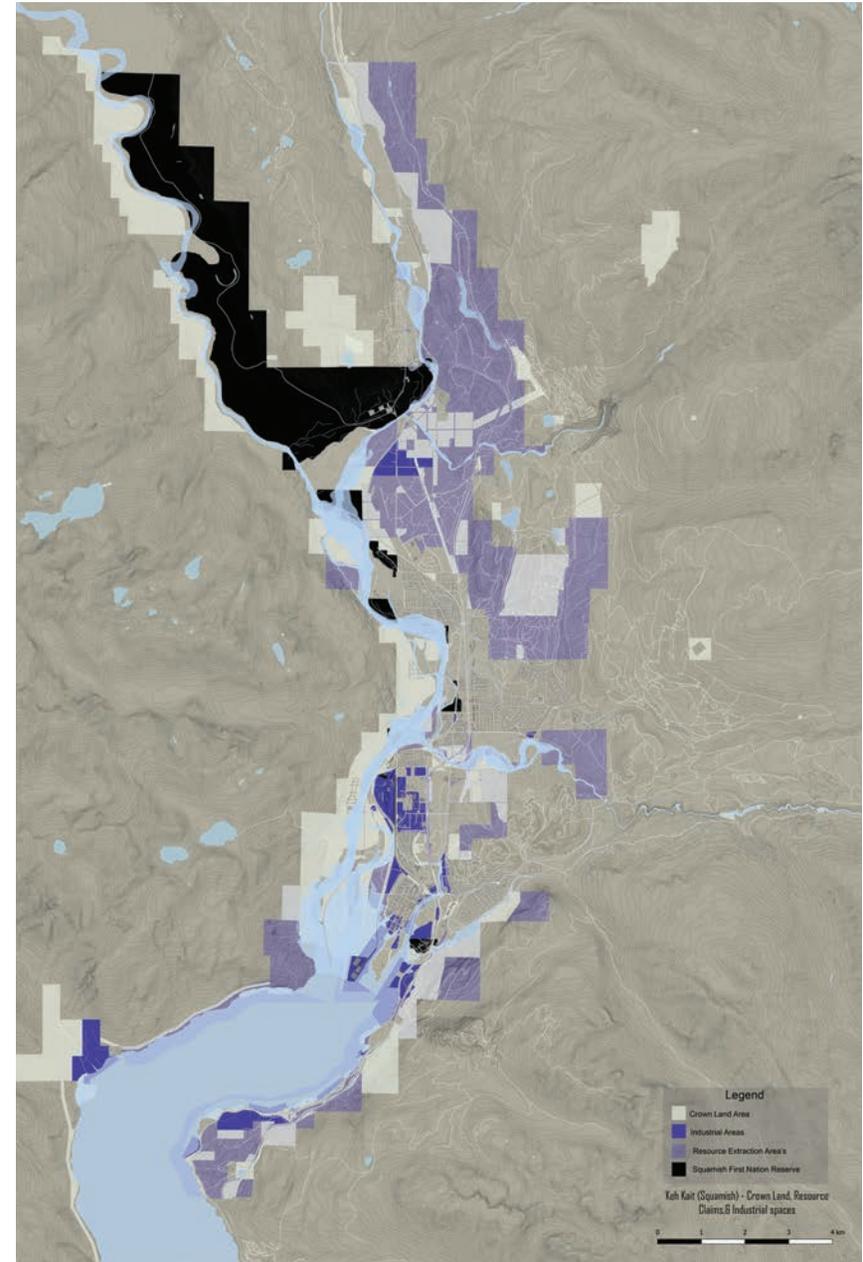
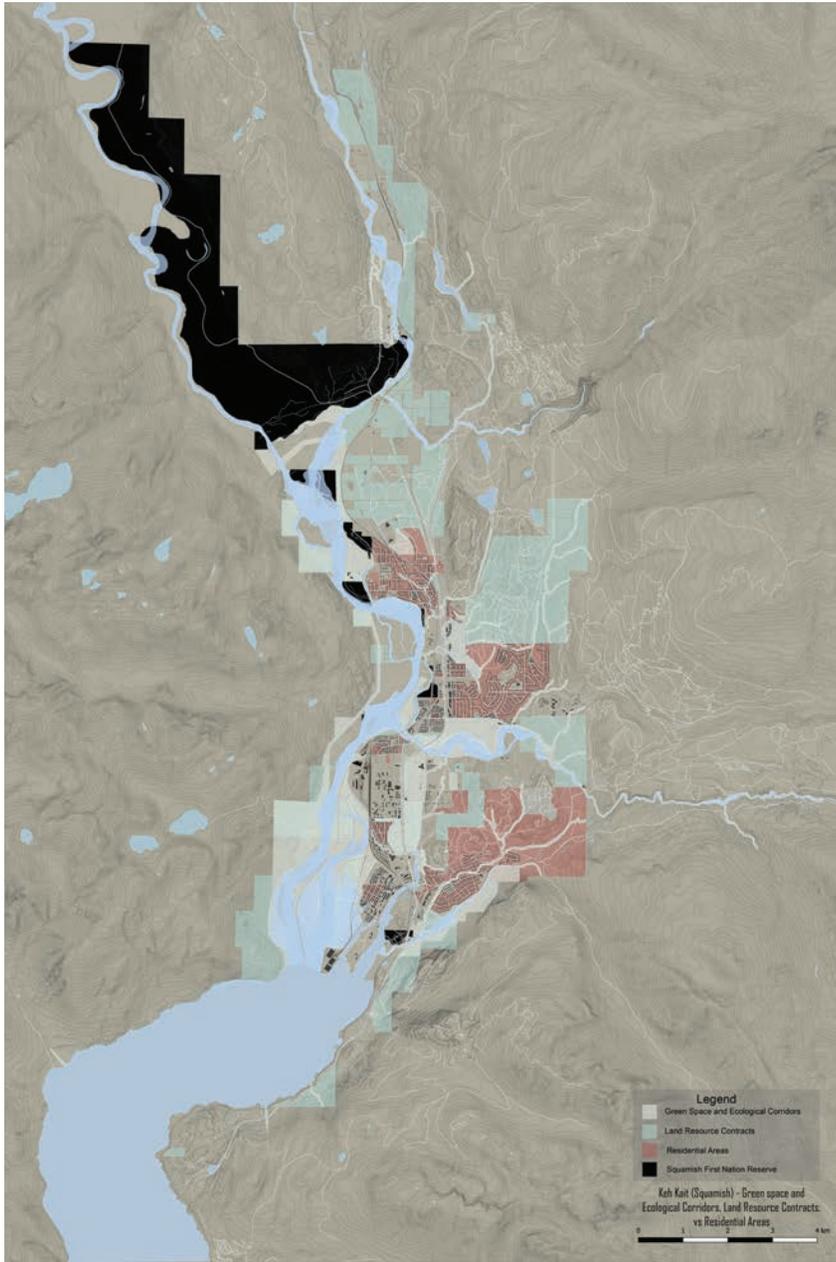


Figure 37. Ecological and Greenspaces vs Residential Area

Figure 38. Industrial, Resource Areas vs Crown Land

Major Design Strategies

ISSUE: **CHAOTIC CONGESTION OF VANS AND CAMPERS**

STRATEGY: **FORMAL SITE ORGANIZATION**



Figure 39. Typical Problematic Street Conditions.

Current street conditions do not accommodate campers or pedestrians. Large vehicles parked on the side of the street, create a visual wall, enclosing pedestrians and restricting sight lines.

The first strategy addresses the congestion of Vans in local neighbourhoods, through formal site organization.

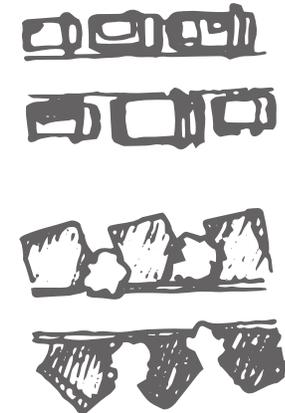
Taking the scattered dispersed campers throughout an area, users are localized in sites which accommodate vehicle dwelling and provide a clear spatial hierarchy of use. Mediating the interface between property owners and travellers by establishing defined areas where rules of use are

understood and compromises surrounding sites are able to be agreed upon by both groups.

Rotating out parallel parking would create pockets offsetting the street, breaking up the visual barrier between camper and pedestrian.



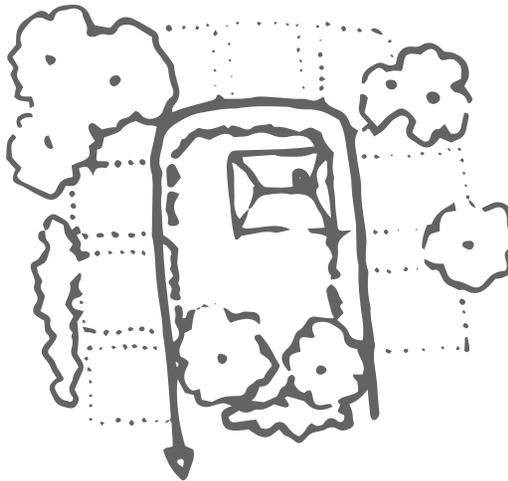
CONCENTRATING DISPERSED CAMPERS



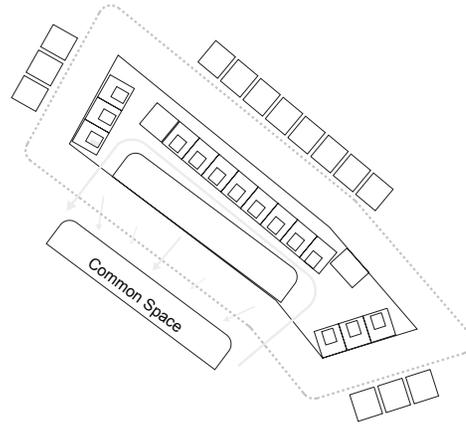
Rotating Parking by 45

Figure 40-41. Design Diagrams 1 & 2

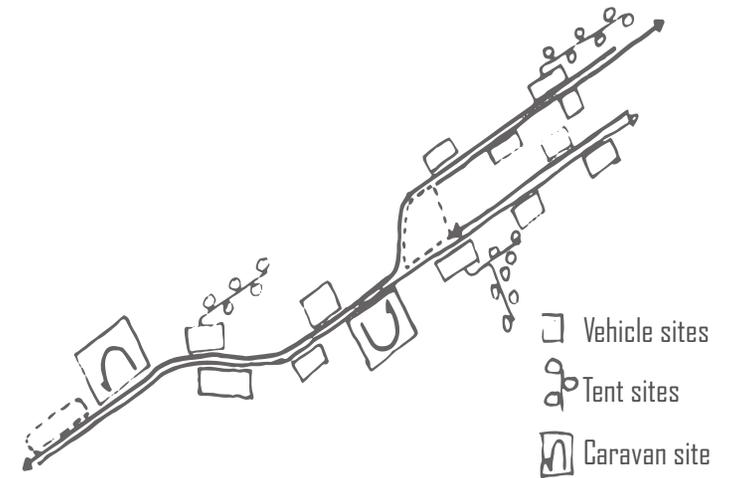
ACTION: "LOGICAL SPATIAL HIERARCHY INTEGRATED INTO THE TOWN FABRIC



POCKET NEIGHBOURHOOD



HUB & SPOKE



LINEAR CAMPSITE

"Stealth camping" refers to the practise of camping within city limits without notice. By welcoming "stealth campers" into sites with supporting infrastructure, a logical spatial hierarchy forms a clear structure of use that community can be built around. Transforming degraded areas into greenspaces, and investing in the infrastructure needed to accomodate long term temporary accomodation.

Cetralizing common use infrastructure encourages social coheision in the same way pocket neighbourhood's use common use area's as the heart of the community.

"Hub and spoke" circulation patterns create one clear direction of travel with individual

sites extending off of it. individual sites around a central communal use area. An organized clear spatia use allows for a continuous flow of incoming and outgoing users throughout the site.

Linear Campsites work to centralize impact around developed circulation routes. Localizes Infrasrtructure in concentrated points along the route.

Figure 42-44. Layout Diagrams 1-3

ISSUE: **LACK OF PRIVACY FOR BOTH PROPERTY OWNERS AND VEHICLE DWELLERS**
 STRATEGY: **BUFFER**

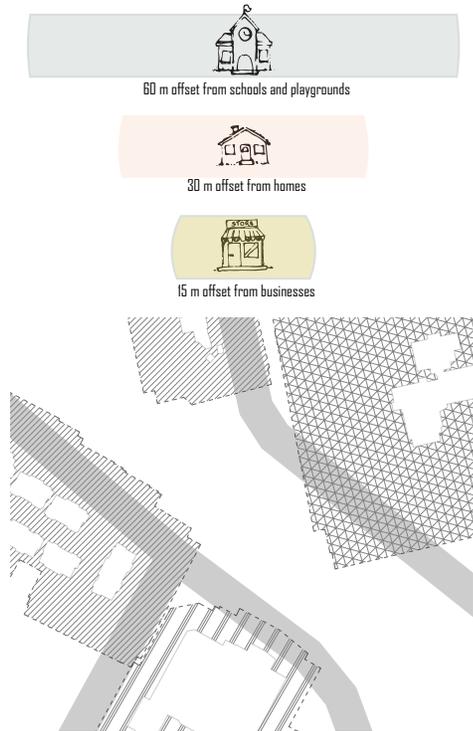


Figure 45-46. Spatial Buffer Diagrams

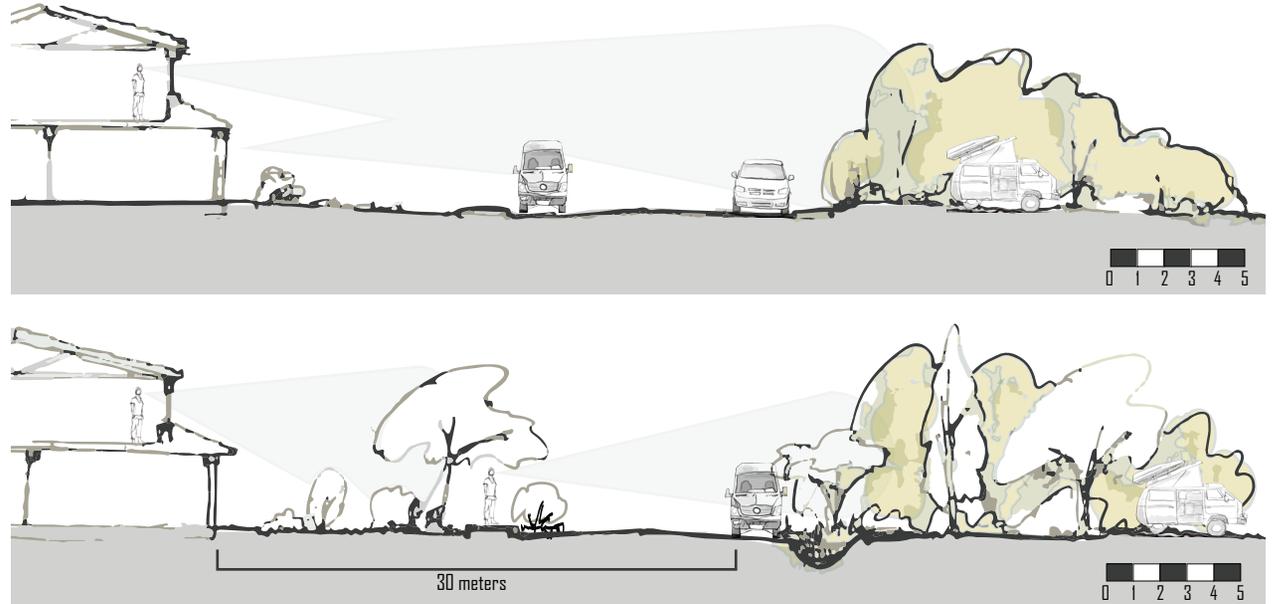


Figure 47-48. Pre and Post screening streetscapes

Maintaining an appropriate spatial buffer adjusted for different property types ensures privacy and feeling of public safety. Spatial buffers respect private property owner's dwellings, and the right of children to privacy while playing within schools and playgrounds.

Shielding them from private eyes, the temporary pitch sites create rooms protected from line of sight. The vegetation planted in layered screens allows different users to live in closer proximity.

Permeable, these walls of plants, give users a sense of security and private spaces.

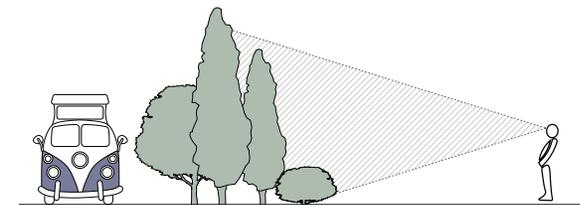
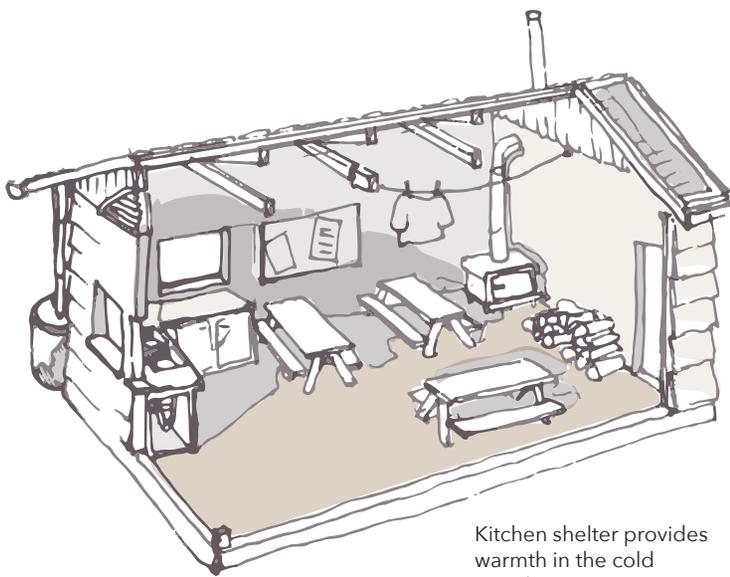
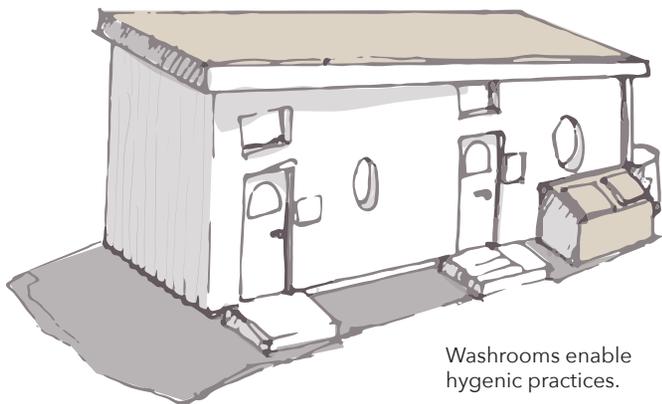


Figure 49. Visual Screens establish Privacy

ISSUE: **LACK OF PHYSICAL INFRASTRUCTURE AND SOCIAL SUPPORT**
 STRATEGY: **INSTALLING SUPPORTING INFRASTRUCTURES**

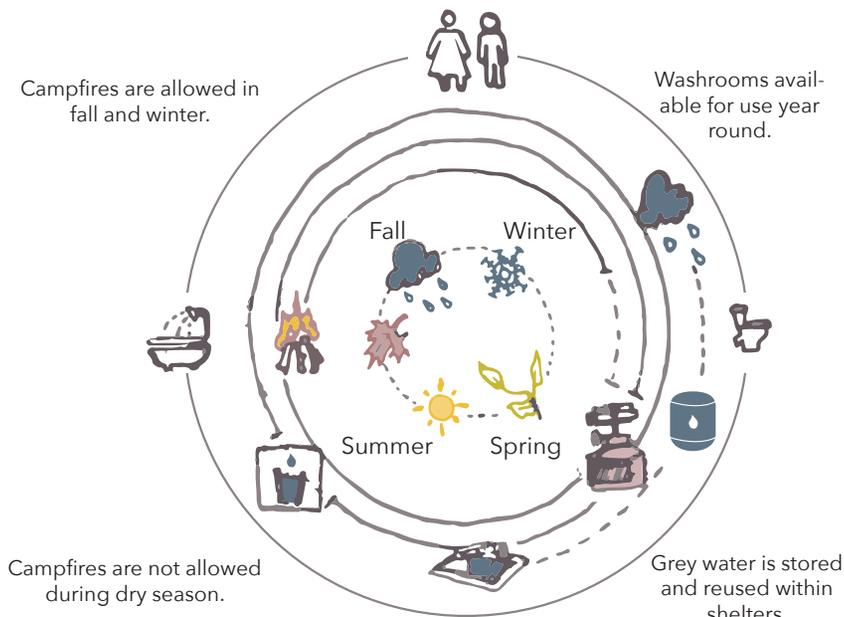


Kitchen shelter provides warmth in the cold months.



Washrooms enable hygienic practices.

Figure 50-51. Commons Community Infrastructure



Recognizing the need for different management strategies throughout the year, regulations on fire and water use change to accommodate seasonal restrictions.

By investing in the capacity for the landscape to better support informal camping in the frontcountry, community concerns regarding safety and sanitation would be addressed. Provided with electricity, heat, water and access to waste infrastructure, the Commons act as an extension of the vehicle dwellers home. Providing the additional amenities and living space needed to meet definitions of adequate housing.

ISSUE: **DEGRADATION OF ECOLOGICAL SITES**
 STRATEGY: **CATALYZE ECOLOGICAL BENEFITS**

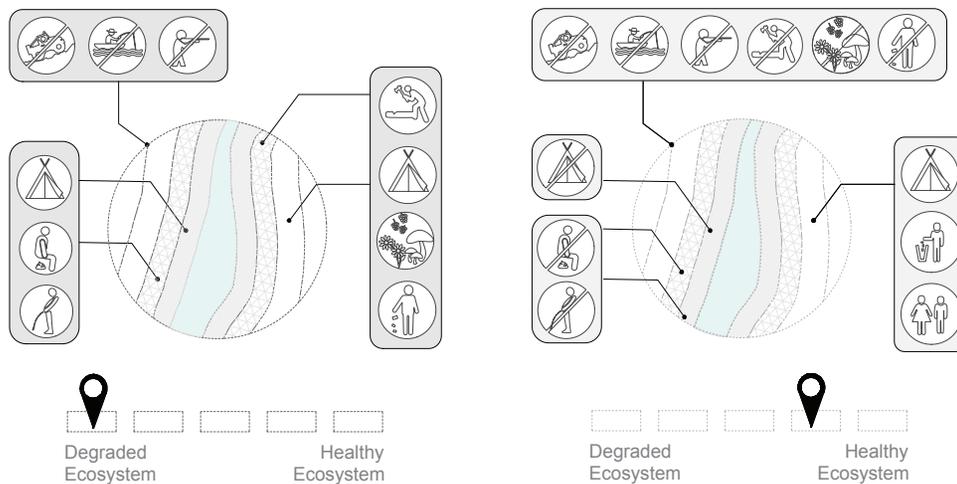
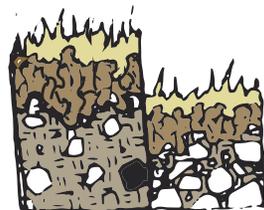


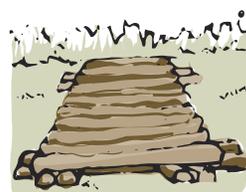
Figure 53. Gradient Management Scenarios



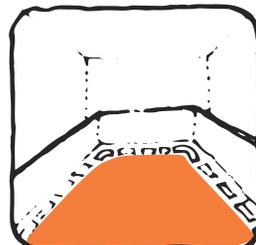
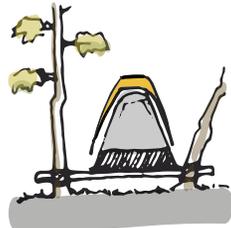
Camping degrading sensitive ecological areas is managed by providing properly surfaced sites.



Soil compaction degrades the areas future ability to support healthy vegetation. Platforms constructed in a similar fashion to corduroy roads can help to reduce this.



Trampling and erosion is managed by creating raised platforms for heavy use areas.



Defining spatial boundaries will help prevent micro sites from ever expanding outwards.



Figure 54. Current Condition vs Resolution

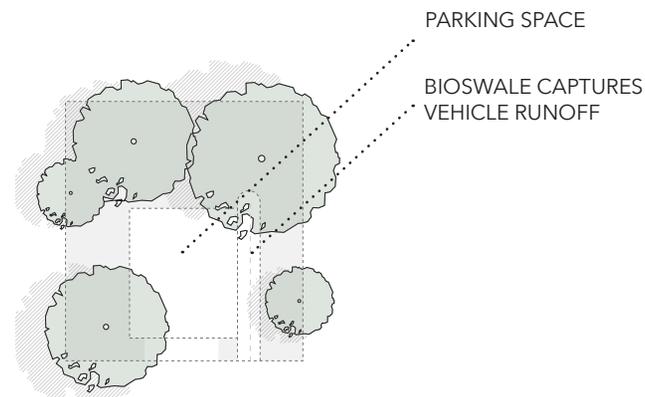


Figure 55. 1/3 Living Space, 2/3 restored habitat

Dispersed camping adjacent to sensitive ecologies often results in abuse and degradation of the area due to lack of structured sites.

With proper management, sustainable use is achievable with investment into the proper services to support occupation and a diversity of activity types.

Bioswales capture the runoff and pollution from the vehicles. Greenspace around each site preserves vegetation with a strong canopy, allowing for camping to take place with low impact while integrating human use and ecological benefit.



Figure 56. Rain Garden Section & Plant Palette

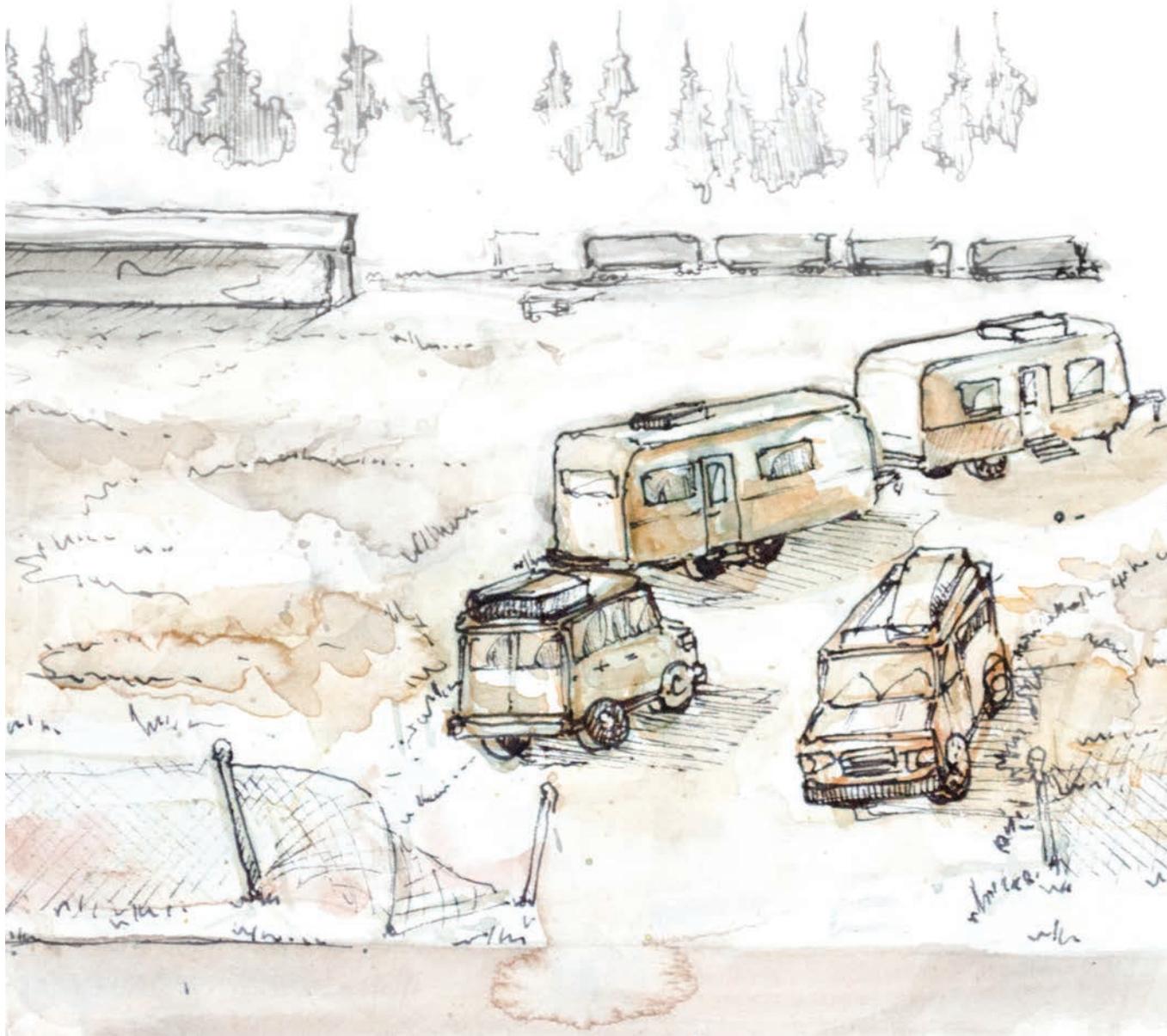


Figure 57. "Wild" Semi-Urban Camping

A Networked Approach

A network of Temporary Living Spaces

THE COMMONS

An open accessed managed area that allows for recreation, accomodation and low impact use alongside the dominant zoning of the area.

The term the “Commons” refers to areas where the community can use and access the land.

THE INNER COMMONS

Creates a space for residents who have been priced out of affordable living. It seeks to provide inexpensive accomodation's within the township boundaries.

THE OUTER COMMONS

Geared towards serving short term campers and recreation users. By supporting popular locations with infrastructure, a structured balance between user impact and ecology is found.



Figure 58. Informal Camping acts as a catalyst to invest in overused and degraded area's.

Situated in the gaps between the existing campgrounds in green, the two types of Commons invest in areas with the infrastructure needed to effectively support vehicle dwelling.

The Inner Commons highlighted in yellows is focused in the downtown core, situating itself in the heart of the community. In close proximity to business and amenities, it deconstructs barriers restricting access and supports vehicle dwellers with enough infrastructure to make available all the services of home. Supporting local members ability to operate responsibly within town boundaries, it allows users a right to roam between the sites of the inner commons.

The outer commons are meant to serve short term campers and visitors. Situated outside of the growth management boundary, it provides the base infrastructure needed to support a more rustic experience. The outer commons help to relieve tensions between stationary and transient residents, and reduce wild camping pressures on sensitive ecological areas, by providing a space where informal occupation is welcomed.

The two Commons, each have varying degrees of refined infrastructure supporting their use for different lengths of stay.

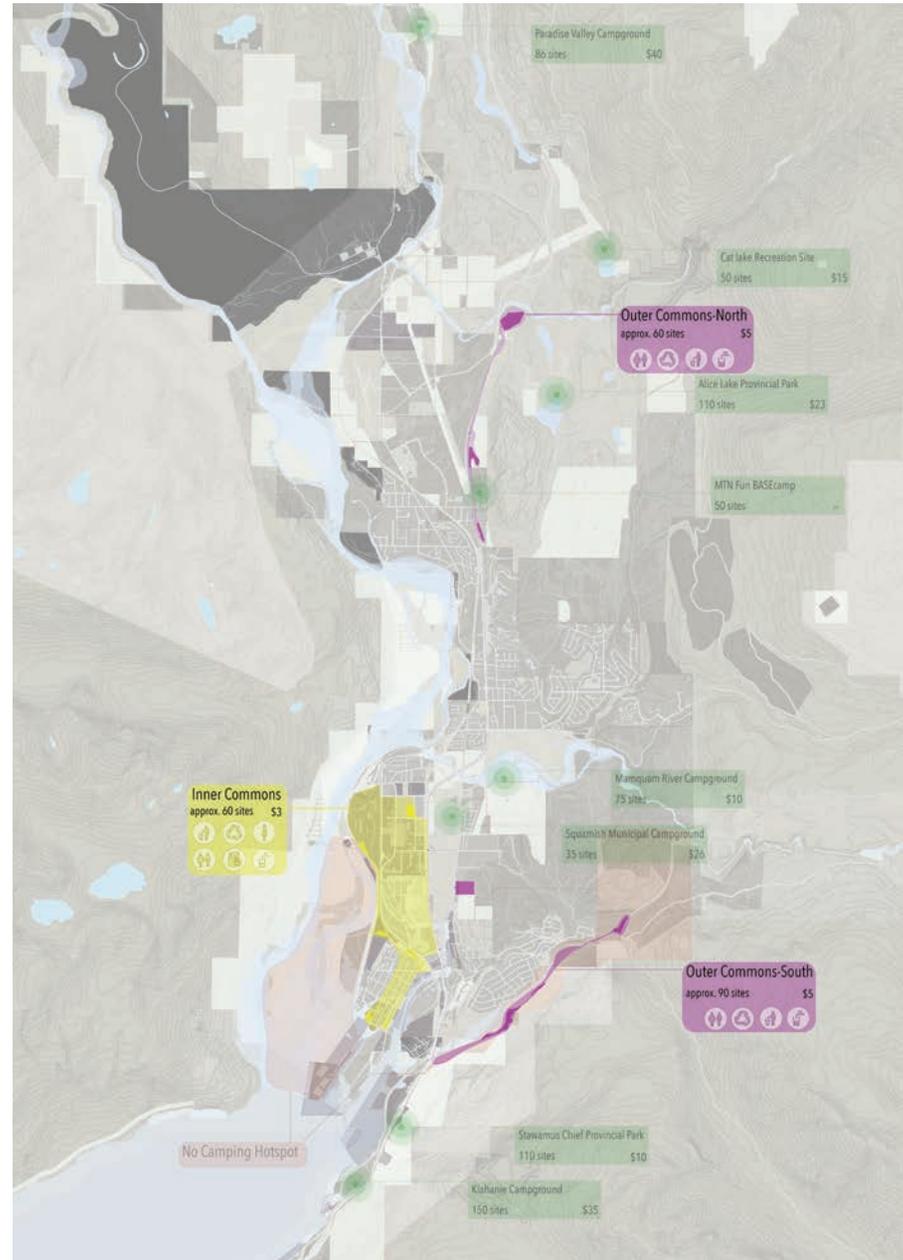


Figure 59. The Commons Network

Program Timeline Of Seasonal Use

With an interest in balancing both its ecological and human communities, a multitude of small sites offers an elasticity which allows appropriate responses to seasonal concerns in the valley. The Commons allows users to tread lightly on the land that is shared. Accommodating the needs and pressures of various stakeholders throughout the seasons.

The Inner Commons Program is represented by the elements in the grey circle in the centre. Its intervals of use represented by the green and red bars. At 2 week intervals the use of these inner common spaces rotates. Dispersing use throughout the inner commons allows the area to change from a temporary living site, to a community space, to a period of no use allowing the landscape to recover. With this rotating schedule of use, the inner commons can double as a space for community markets and festivals, playing multiple supporting roles for the local community.

The Outer Commons is represented by elements in the beige bar. Highlighting the areas of active management, the length of stay and cost of stay changes based on the season, and popularity of use during that time. Managed from spring to fall, these areas charge a small fee to manage maintenance and infrastructure costs.

The blue bars for both commons represent times when the user groups of each area are encouraged to come together for maintenance of these spaces.

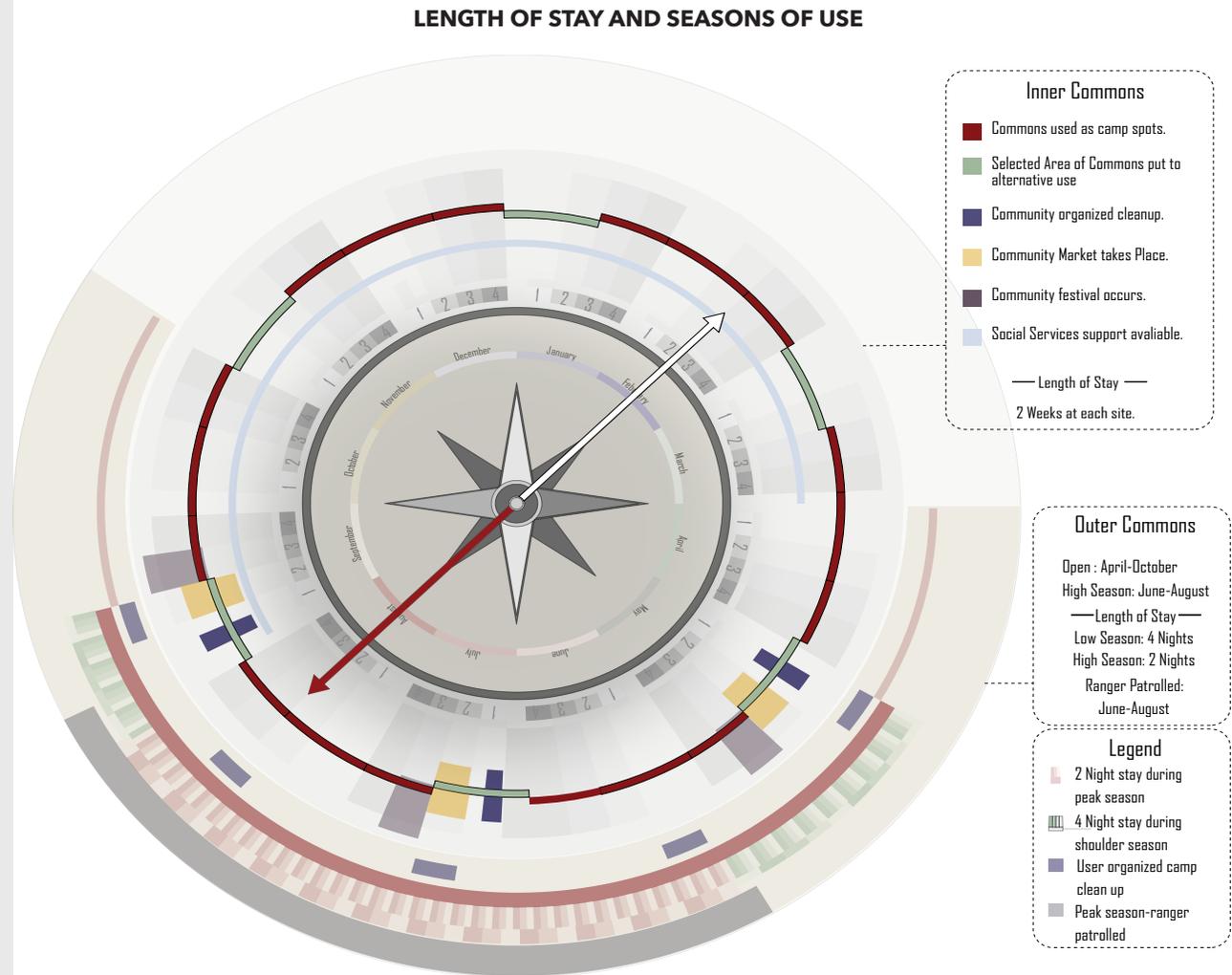


Figure 60. Program timeline

The Inner Commons

THE INNER COMMONS INNER CITY COMMONS

As development in Squamish has expanded, the areas open for “wild” camping have decreased, which has resulted in greater numbers of people “Stealth Camping” in urban areas. With people living on streetsides and in residential neighborhoods conflict has arisen between property owners and vehicle dwellers. The inner commons creates a space for Locals who have been priced out of accommodations in the town.

By providing specific locations for vehicle dwelling, integration and inclusion in key community areas is insured. By concentrating users, spatial strategies can be employed to mediate between the needs of property owners and transient residents. Managed collectively by active participants, The Inner Commons uses ecological enhancement strategies to provide spaces that do more than just act as a place to park.

Investing in edge conditions, these enhanced greenspaces are then able to act as housing accommodation and an additional filter for polluted runoff from the town.

Woven into the landscape, these interventions help to support different uses previously overlooked. Transforming edge conditions into areas which play a vital role in helping to establish a cohesive community

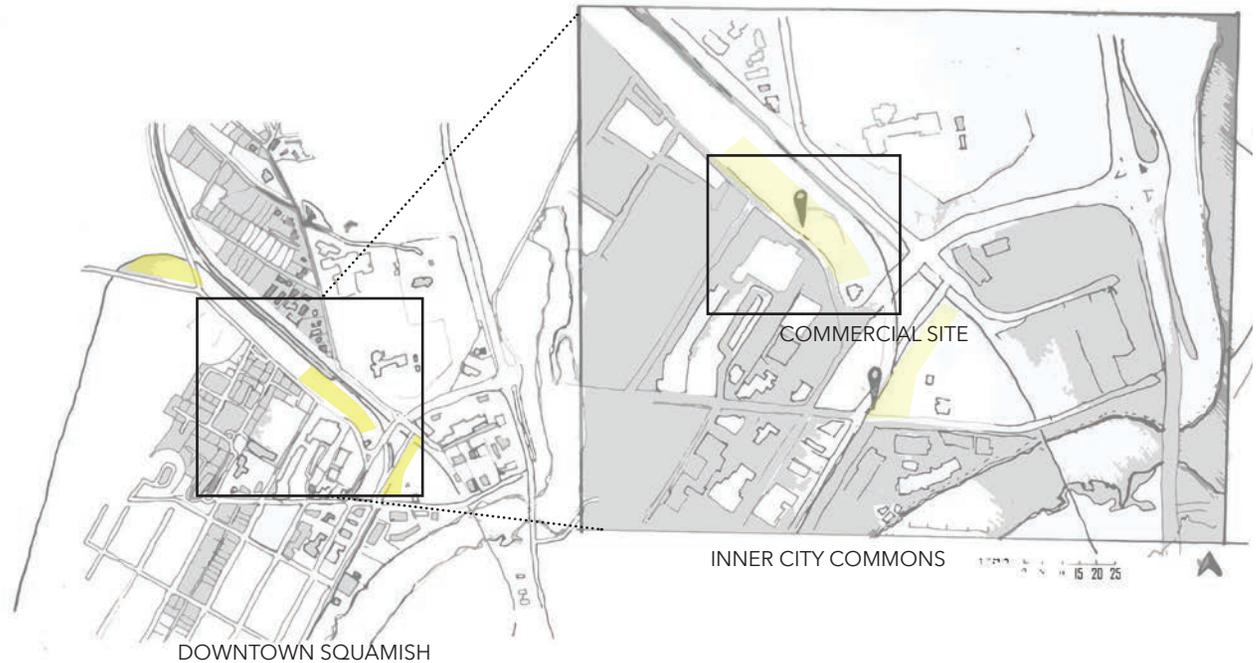


Figure 61. Inner Commons- Downtown 1:10000

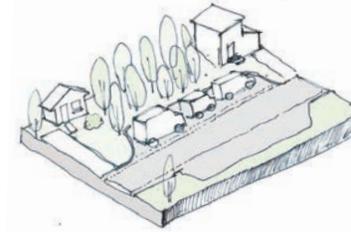
Figure 62. Inner City Commons Plan 1:2500

THE INNER CITY COMMONS COMMERCIAL SITE

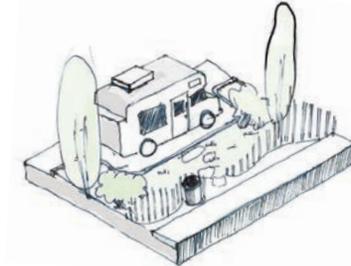


COMMERCIAL SITE

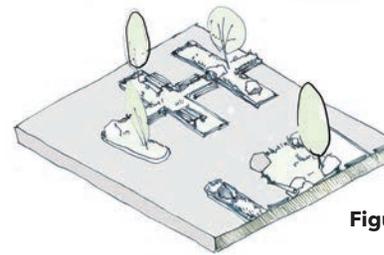
Figure 63. Commercial Site Plan 1:500



Privacy created using vegetation.

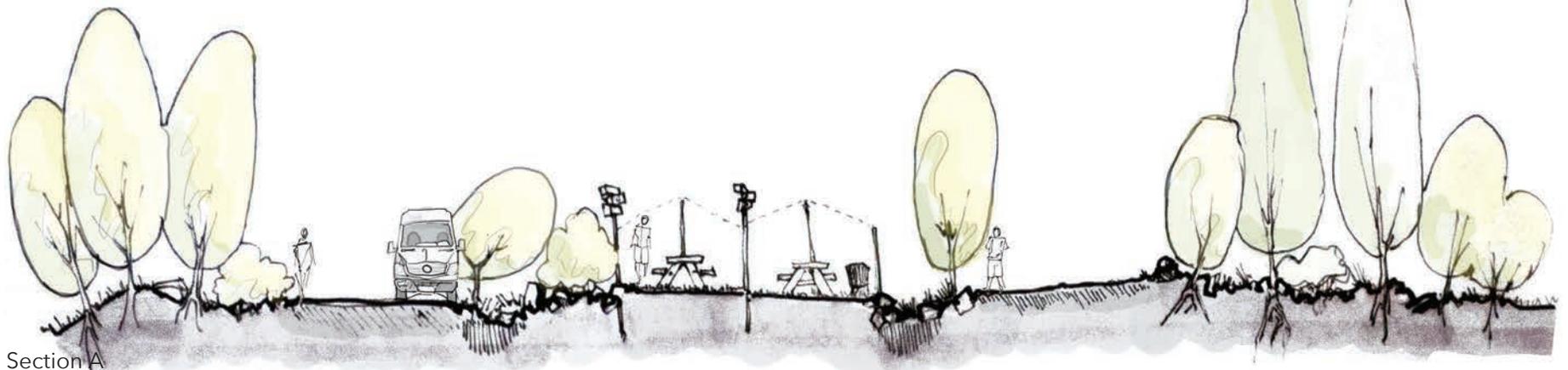


Screens and buffers delineate public and private use.



Parking lots altered to accommodate dwellings.

Figure 64. Inner Commons Design Strategies



Section A

0 1 2 3 4 5

Figure 65. Commercial Site - Section A 1:200

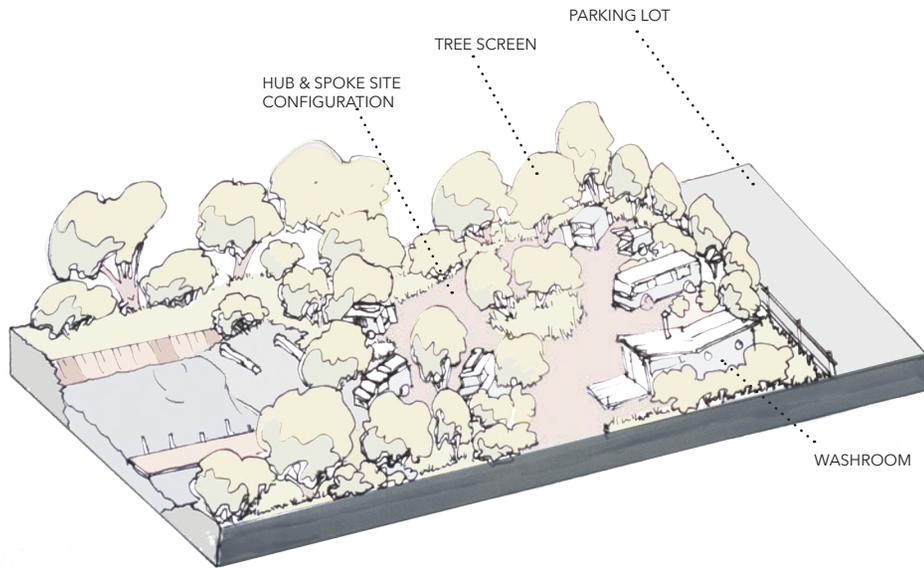
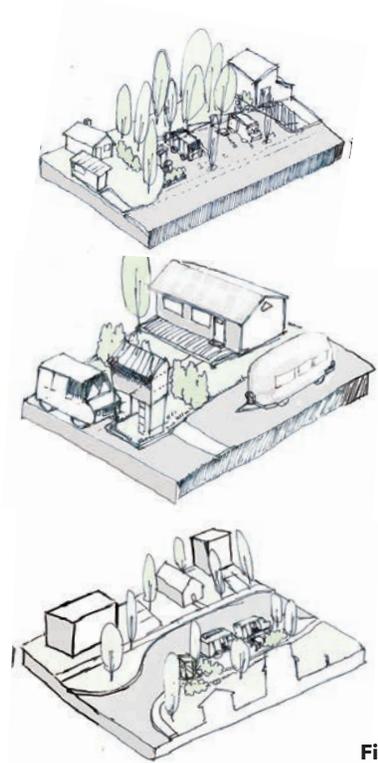


Figure 66. Restored Greenspace & temporary encampment-Axonometric

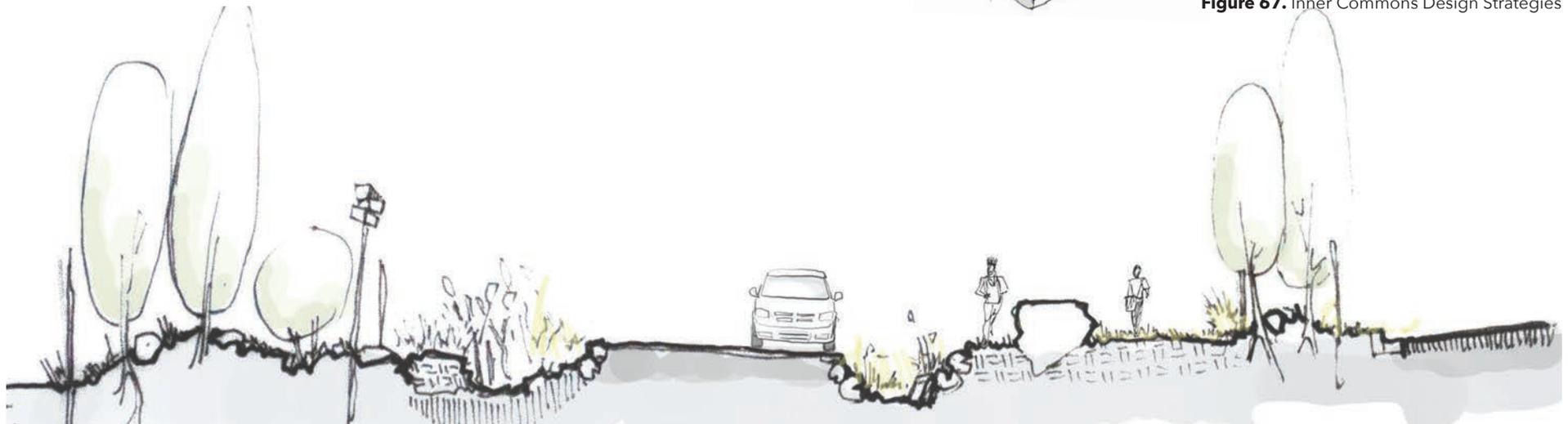


Edges expanded to accommodate temporary users.

Temporary residents can create village and courtyard spaces by building off of existing structures.

Pockets of inclusion integrated within neighbourhoods.

Figure 67. Inner Commons Design Strategies



Section B
0 1 2 3 4 5

Figure 68. Commercial Site - Section B 1:200

The Outer Commons

THE OUTER COMMONS - SOUTH

The Outer Commons - South is comprised of The Mamquam Commons and the Backcountry Staging area.

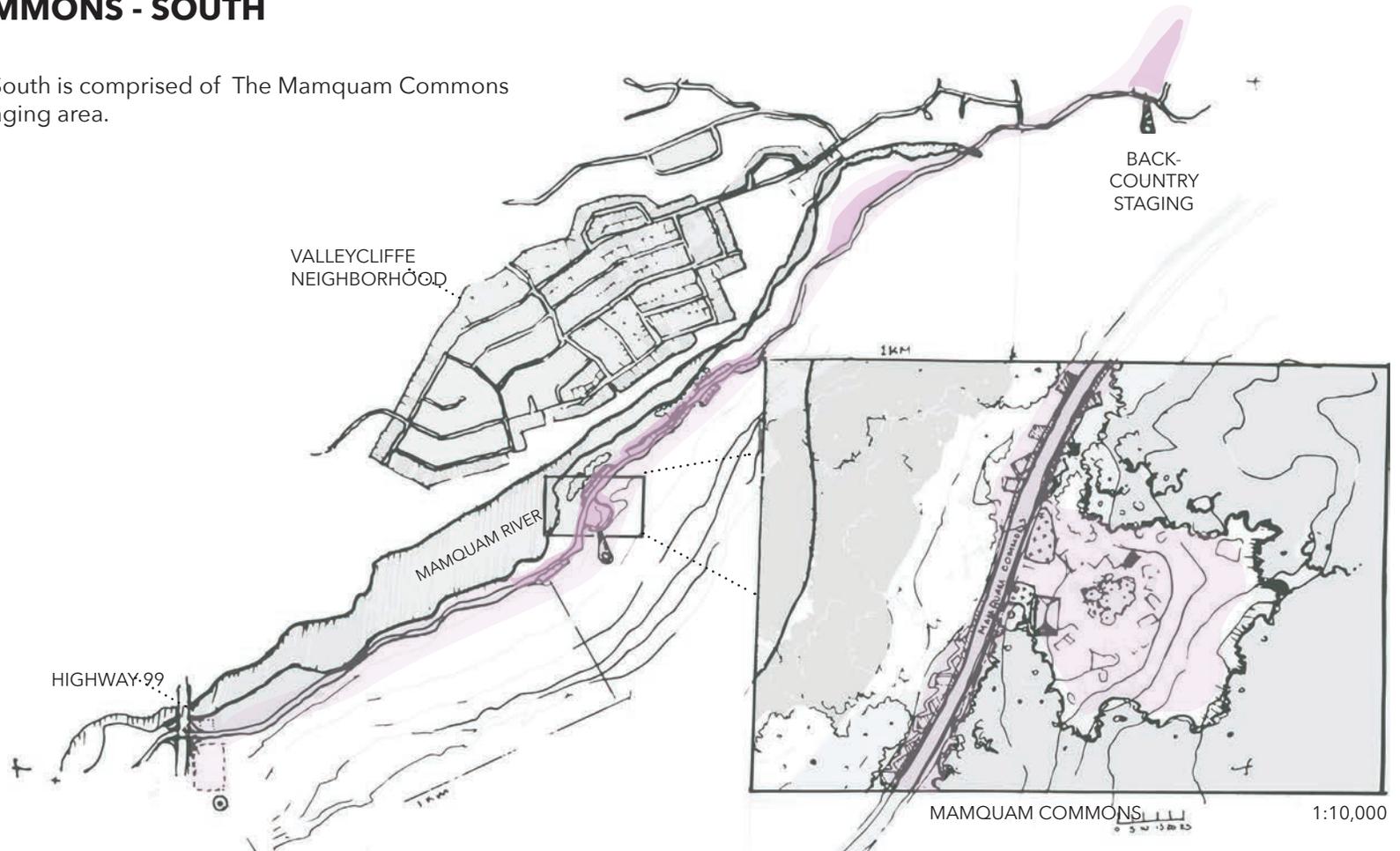


Figure 69. Outer Commons - Linear Campsite along the Mamquam forest Service Road

Overwhelmed in the summer months due to record numbers coming to the valley to enjoy recreation opportunities, Squamish lacks the infrastructure needed to accommodate this high number of temporary occupants. Seeking the cheapest way to live, many campers have turned to the crown lands surrounding the town.

Legitimizing The Outer Commons would provide a formal space for a marginalized group that is currently viewed as a nuisance. Through the provision of infrastructure and services (waste disposal, improved sanitation,

and fire suppression tactics) the impacts on key sites would be managed and mitigated. By taking a growing problem and turning it into an opportunity for inclusion, communities would benefit from the economic and social inputs. Social cohesion between property owners and users of The Commons would continue to grow through collective participation.

THE OUTER COMMONS - SOUTH THE MAMQUAM RIVER COMMONS

The Mamquam River area has been used for dispersed camping and vehicle dwelling since highway access started in the 1960s. As interest in recreation has exploded over the years, the numbers of users has increased, surpassing peak density. "Leave no trace" strategies have become inadequate to accommodate the increased use, and a new strategy is needed to reduce habitat degradation.

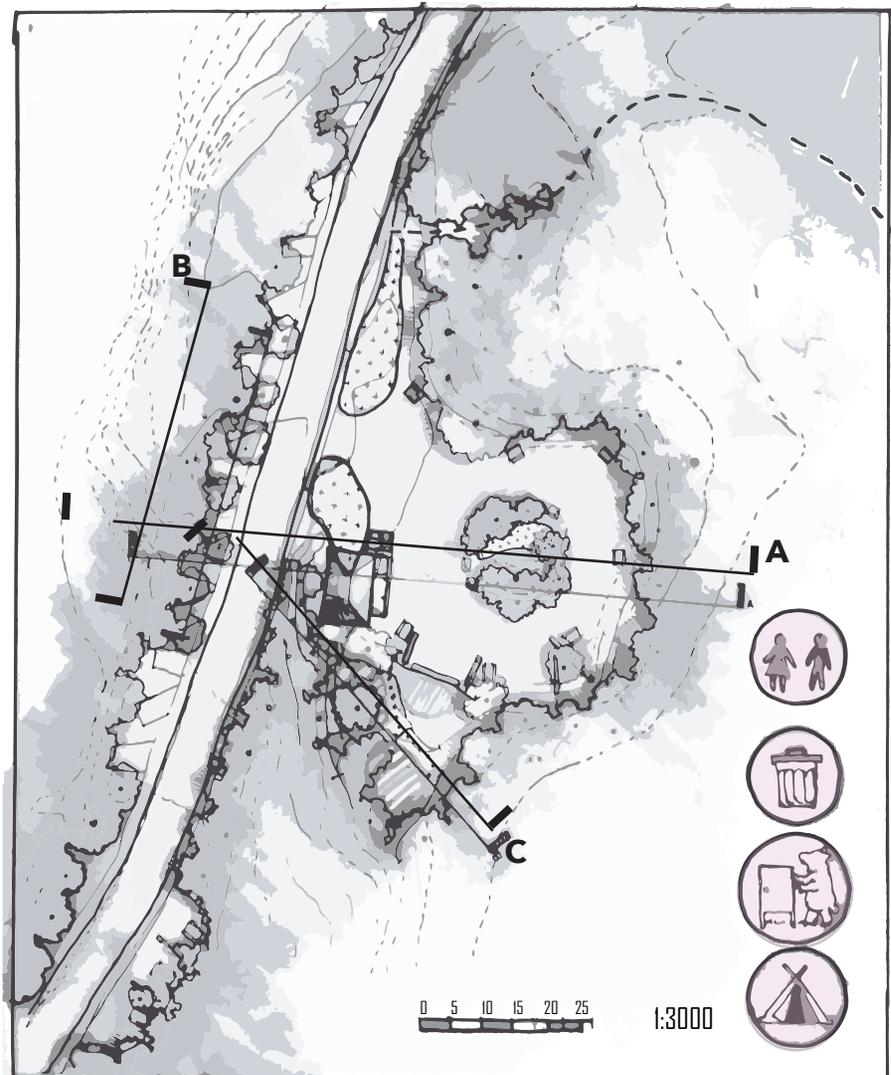
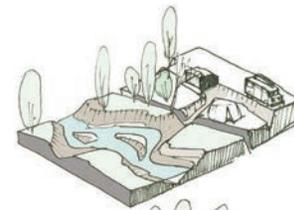


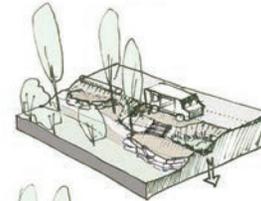
Figure 70. Mamquam River Commons Plan



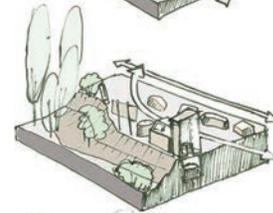
Appropriate offsets safeguard sensitive ecologies.



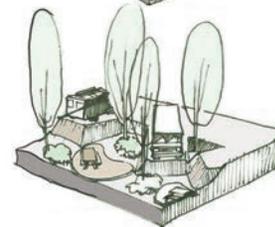
Camping platforms reduce soil compaction on and around sites.



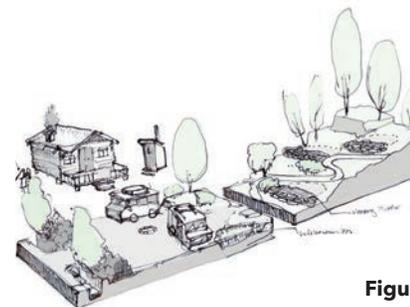
Sites are centralized in disturbed areas



Waste and sanitation infrastructure stations are installed in a linear configuration along the road, providing easy access for users and maintenance vehicles.



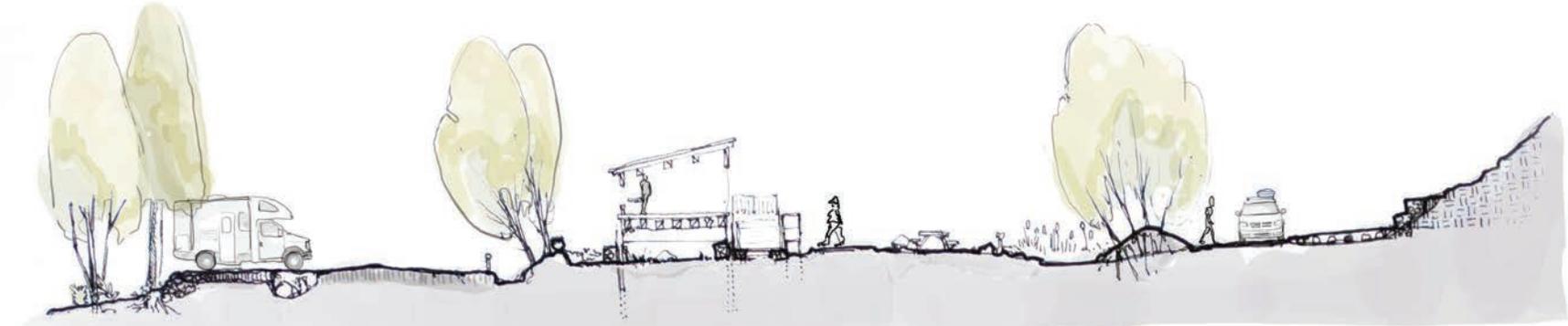
Sites are integrated into existing openings between vegetation, preserving existing habitat.



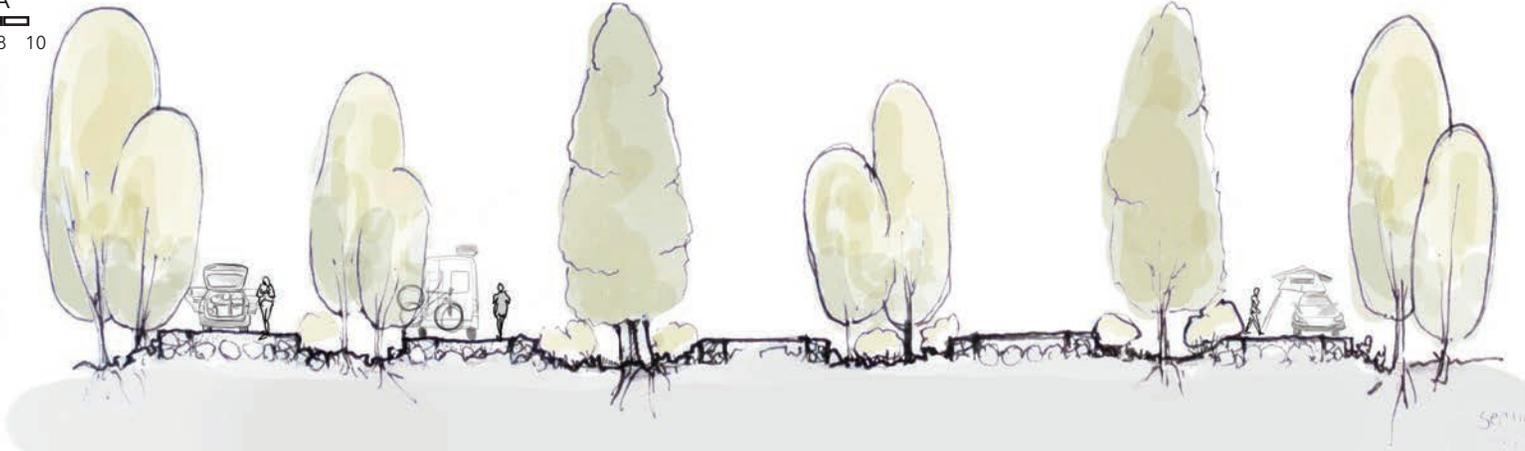
Centralized clusters of sites and infrastructure allow for clearly delineated boundaries.

Figure 71. Outer Commons Management Strategies

THE MAMQUAM RIVER COMMONS



Section A
1:400
0 2 4 6 8 10



Section B-1:400
0 2 4 6 8 10



Section C 1:200
0 1 2 3 4 5

Figure 72. Mamquam River Commons Section A-C

THE OUTER COMMONS - SOUTH BACKCOUNTRY STAGING

Building onto areas already affected by development, The Outer Commons seeks to integrate itself into the fabric of the surrounding forest. Using sites with degraded ecological conditions due to logging, camping is placed into the existing condition as the forest recovers. By providing clear boundaries of use, The Commons creates sustainable pockets for people to camp. The Backcountry Staging site, uses the establishment of a formal camp to act as an incentive to restore these degraded areas. In Pairing and layering camping and ecological restoration a sense of stewardship is empowered for the surrounding landscape.

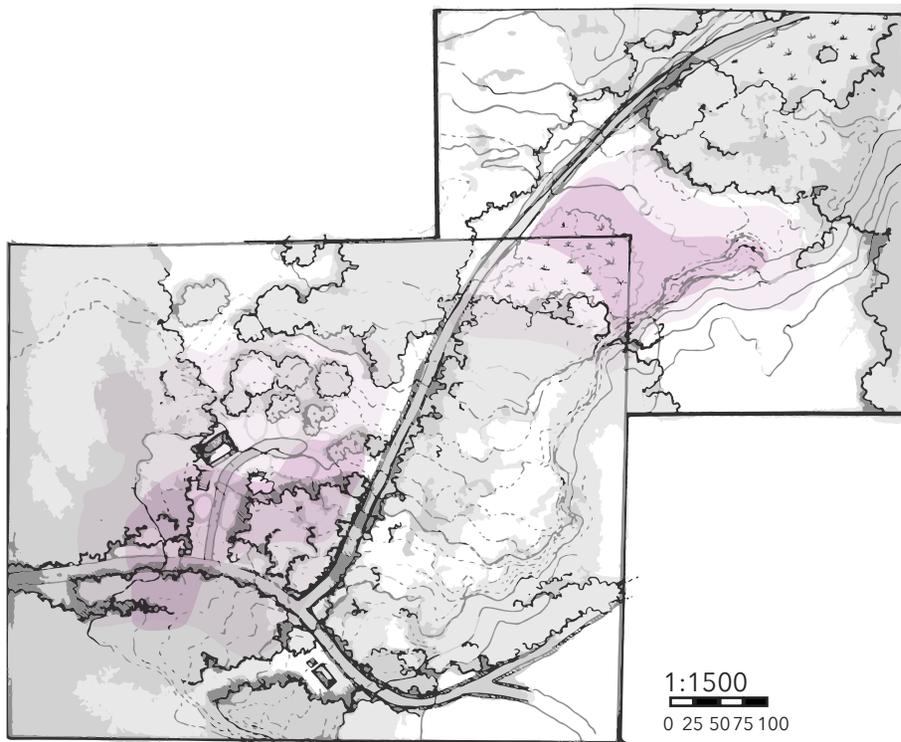
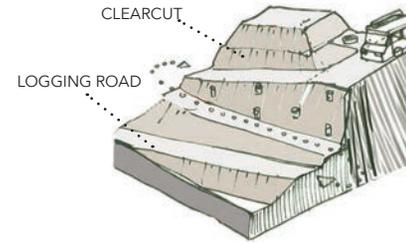
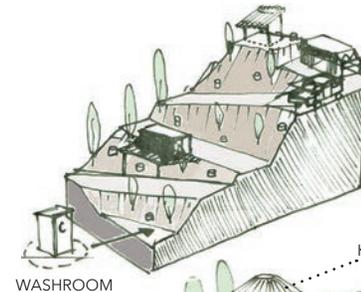


Figure 73. Backcountry Staging Area Plan - 1:1400

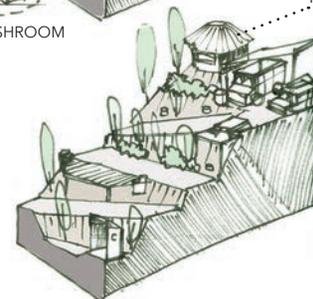
CAMPSITE STRATEGIES



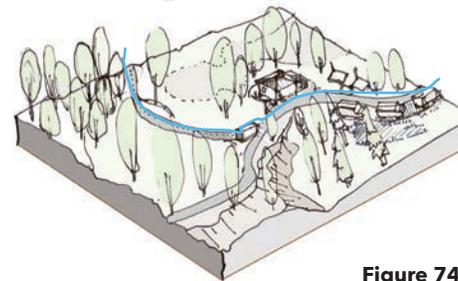
Investing in disturbed areas layers an additional use onto a recovering area.



Over time working with succession of silviculture regeneration.



Integrate needed infrastructure into site.



Accomodate and create synergies between existing uses, zoning and infrastructure.

Figure 74. Additional Commons Design Strategies.

BACKCOUNTRY STAGING

By accommodating campers in cut blocks, these harvested landscapes are able to play a new role for the community as they regrow. Throughout the years, campers immersed in the site will experience the change in the landscape as the Canopy grows around them.

Establishing a proper spatial layout for site use, allows for integrating space for temporary campers alongside spaces reserved for long term strategies to regrow mature vegetation. With the provision of basic supporting infrastructure, user impacts and sanitation concerns are managed.

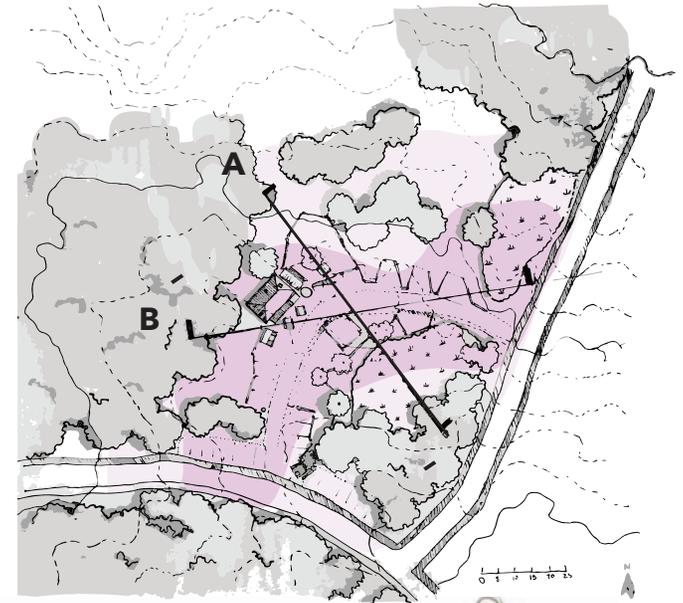
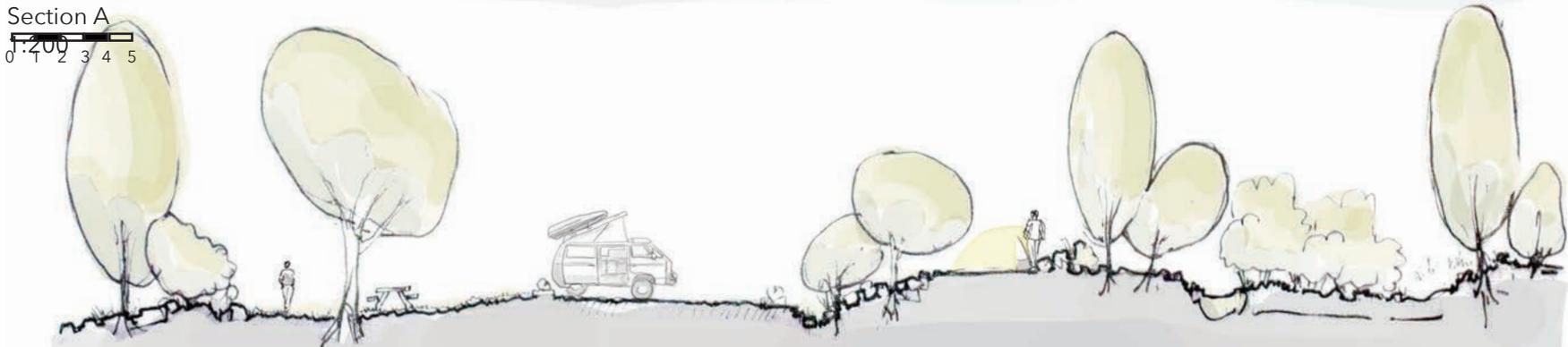


Figure 75. Backcountry Staging Area Plan



Section A
0 1 2 3 4 5



Section B
0 1 2 3 4 5

Figure 76. Back Country Staging Sections A, B



Figure 77. Occupied Commons, the beginning of a collaborative community space.

GP2 Conclusion

Reconstructing The Commons emerged in opposition to the trajectory many rural and mountain towns move towards. The narrative of the “wilds” and our ability to access and experience these landscapes has been commodified. With camping cost’s, the same as expensive rent, and private property increasingly restricting access, the ability to travel and freely enjoy the landscapes is being lost. Priced out and locked out, local landscapes are lost from communal and generational use. With access restricted, informal use becomes the way generations find their own autonomy.

In my experience Vehicle dwelling and the Vanlife are strategies that allows agency, autonomy, and an independence. Offering a new frontier to go explore, a new lens to frame their travels through, weekend glampers have flocked to the Vanlife. Not just an Instagram hashtag though, vehicle dwelling is a flexible strategy used to manage cost of living in many places with high rents. With a boom in popularity, vehicle dwelling is increasingly visible. Those struggling with cost of living are mixed together with those pursuing weekend adventures.

With Restricting use and access seeming to be the only viable option, more towns are passing no camping bylaws. As an out of sight out of mind policy does little but push informal occupants to new sites and further empower barriers of exclusion, I felt an urgency to present an alternative. A networked approach of integrated sites through which informal occupation becomes formalized in the community. Reconstructing the Commons offers an opportunity for our

relationship to the land to begin reflecting the diverse needs and use of what is being asked of it today.

It is my belief that affordability and vehicle dwelling are issues which are growing, and the exclusionary and unaffordable nature of urban areas has led to a need for towns to consider experimental approaches to accommodate alternative housing needs.

If towns wish to deal with problematic demographics, and alternative users and strengthen their community, they must first address the institution of private property that they formed around.

As an exercise, this project has taught me to stitch together multiple experiences and narratives while constructing my understanding of a place. And that sometimes the best design moves are not always what you build, but by the open-ended possibilities of use which remain in the landscape.

Appendix A -Site Inventory

Squamish Plant Textures



Informal Camping Sites



Typical Found Conditions



Figure 78. Site Photos (All photos by author)

Appendix B -Cost of Camping

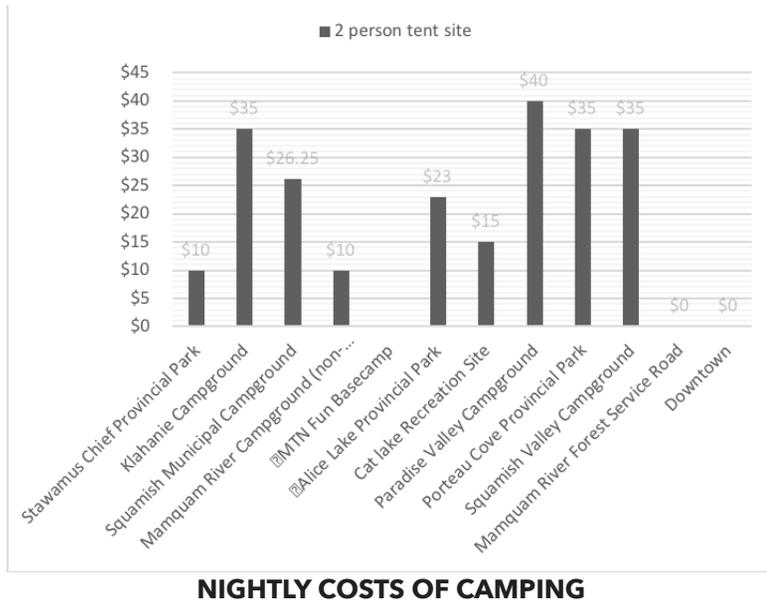
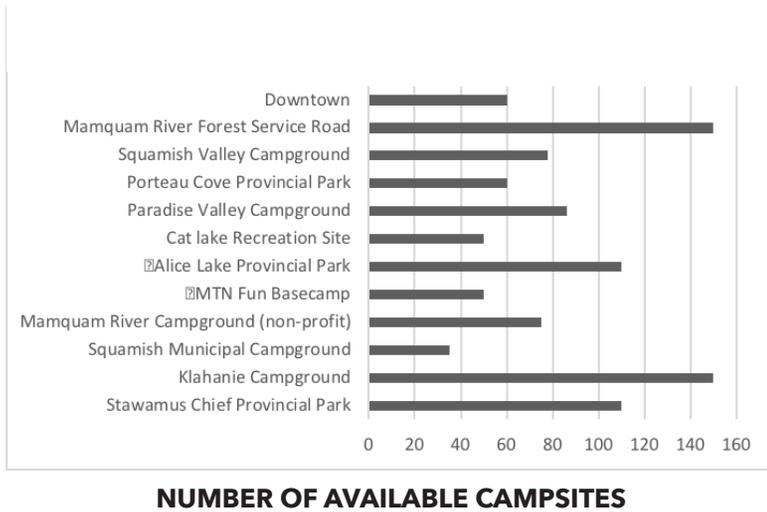


Figure 79-80. Camping Costs and Availability

Appendix C -Ecological Stakeholders



Figure 81. Ecological Stakeholders

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