

# SIMPLE SMALL THINGS FIRST

A global pandemic can be the catalyst that challenges the traditional way of living-forcing most to adapt to new habits, routines, jobs and social interactions.

This project provides families with the flexibility to evolve, diversify and strengthen their community over time through an incrementally phased process. By incentivizing the simple, small thing first, it can capture the imagination of the community to make growth possible.

Conventional development predicts community needs, often leaving little room for the adaptability required for bottom-up change. This project proposes a new Neighbourhood Zone "NZ" zone which removes the focus from specific building use to mixed-use and introduces new typologies. Rezoning from Single Family Residential zone to NZ would be expedited for properties meeting a specific criterion.



## PROJECT DATA SUMMARY

**Location**  
Surrey within Fleetwood

**Project Area**  
16.5 ha [40.5 acres]

**Lots**  
170 existing lots

**Existing Dwellings**  
293 total dwellings (170 single family homes + 123 secondary suites)

**Existing Density Ratio**  
17.7 dwellings per ha

**Proposed Dwelling**  
Up to 1020 dwellings (4 dwelling units per lot + 2 secondary suites)

**Proposed Neighbourhood Commercial**  
Up to 170 NCU (neighbourhood commercial unit)

**Proposed Density Ratio**  
61.1 dwellings per ha

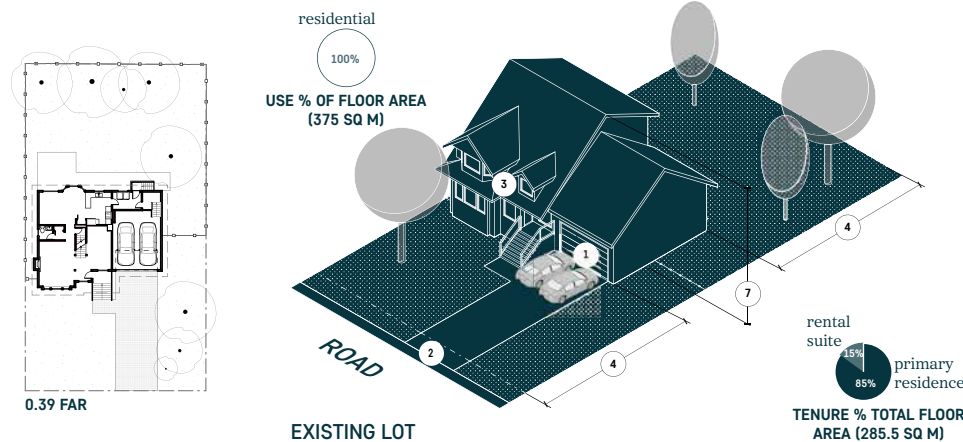
**Storeys**  
3.5 storeys

**Finance**  
Rent-to-own, Equity Loans, Co-ownership

**Tenure**  
Ownership + Rental

## EXISTING LOT CHALLENGES

- 1 3 vehicle parking minimum, with no requirements for bike storage.
- 2 Not all streets have sidewalks, but all have driveways that are 8m wide (min) with an opportunity to increase to 53% of either front or side yard. This increases the hazard for pedestrians on the street.
- 3 There is a lack of safe and easy access to non-residential amenities. This results in the need to venture outside the community for basic needs. Auto-dependant neighbourhoods discourage pedestrian or cycling mobility – which in turn isolates those unable to drive, resulting in low autonomy.
- 4 Deep front yard, and backyard setback (7.5m), with a requirement for only 40% lot coverage.
- 5 Back to back lots without lanes, makes adding density to backyards currently challenging.
- 6 Use of private fences at property line, discourages friendly neighbourhood interactions
- 7 Building height, no higher than 9m (7.3m if sloped less than 1:4) – therefore 2.5 storeys.

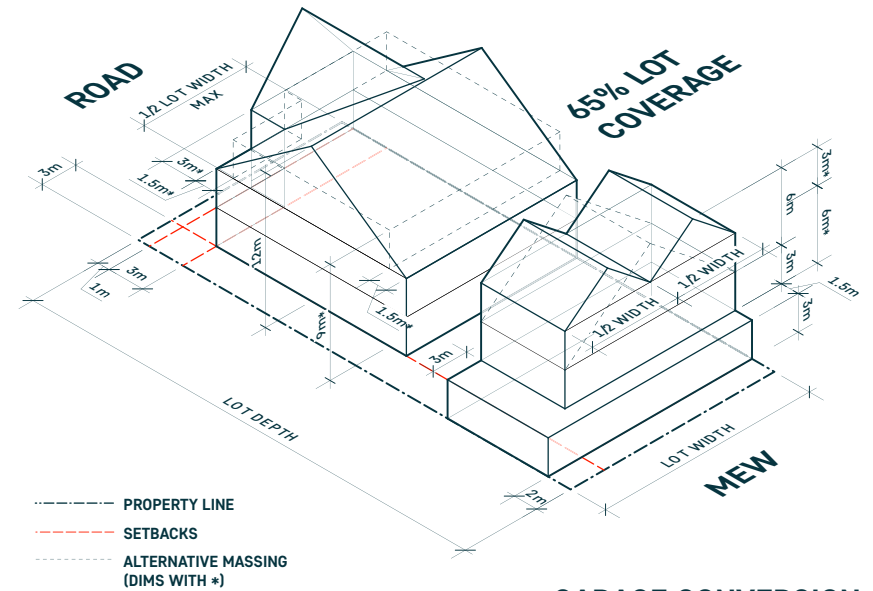


# 1 STEP. ONE.

## remove barriers for change

Remove the barriers that make having a family oriented, amenity rich, connected local community possible.

- 1 Create a new Neighbourhood Zone 'NZ'. It enables owners whose primary residence remains in the neighbourhood to rezone their lot from any Residential zone to the Neighbourhood Zone.
- 2 Once rezoned, it gives homeowners the flexibility to incrementally adapt their property to suit the needs of their community without re-engagement with the City, which removes red tape and encourages small-scale incremental change.
- 3 Remove parking minimums – encourage alternative modes of travel, by removing a requirement for parking. Most projects will still want to have parking – however it does not need to be a requirement.
- 4 Where surface parking is created, the parking pad or surface must be permeable paving. This ensures that open space on the lot isn't covered in asphalt and remains natural in aesthetic.
- 5 Create a 2m rear yard setback - when lots are mirrored, this creates a mew up to 4m wide to be used for pedestrian and cyclists. These well-lit paths improve safety, mobility and connectivity through the block.



**GARAGE CONVERSION**



## NEIGHBOURHOOD ZONE "NZ"

### Principal Use

Up to 4 ground oriented residential dwelling units on each lot + 2 accessory units

### Height

3.5 storeys  
[12m sloped roofs]  
[9m flat roofs]

### Lot Coverage

Max. 65% lot coverage

### Floor Space Ratio [FSR]

1.5 FSR

### Surface Parking

Permeable paving

### Accessory Use

Ground-level locally owned commercial space that directly serves the immediate community. Is no more than 25% of the principal use.

### Setbacks

Front - 1m + 3m  
Side - 3m + 0m [or 1.5m each side]  
Rear - 2m

### Building Widths

Preference to break up large massing with 1/2 width offsets

### Parking Requirements

Minimum [None]  
Maximum [ Three]

# 2 STEP. TWO. encourage the smallest first step

Policy should encourage the smallest first steps before it can assume the next.

## 1 Commercial Conversions

By removing barriers in Step 1, homeowners have the liberty to convert portions of their existing home to spaces that contribute to a local neighbourhood community.

### Financing + Tenure

The average value of homes in the neighbourhood is \$1.4 million. The simplest financing option is the use of an equity loan to complete the build-out of the conversion.

Once complete, a new mortgage can be used for both the house and the loan for construction.

Homeowners can choose to rent the space themselves for their own business, or to another

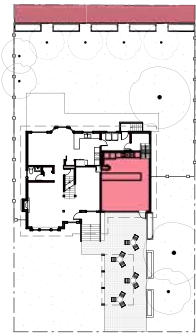
outside business, depending on their own needs.

## 2 Encourage Mews

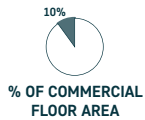
The mews provides multi-modal routes that connect the community to each other and to amenities beyond. Mews are free from cars, so they ensure that the community has safe and convenient routes that encourage autonomy no matter of age, ability, or financial standing.

### Policy

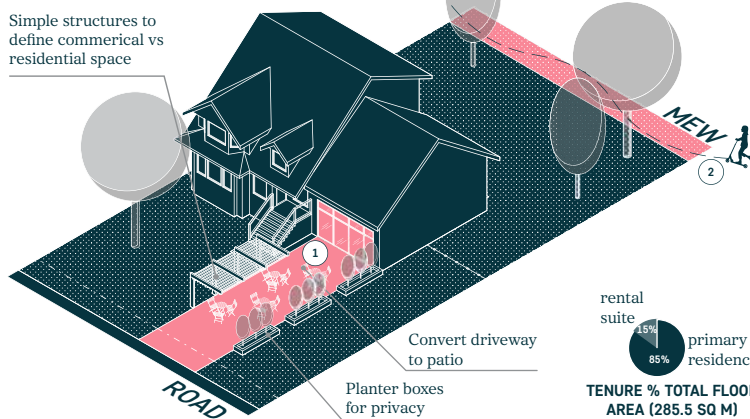
Provide property tax relaxation for homeowners who remove their rear yard fence and provide a 2m setback easements to create mews.



0.39 FAR



Simple structures to define commercial vs residential space



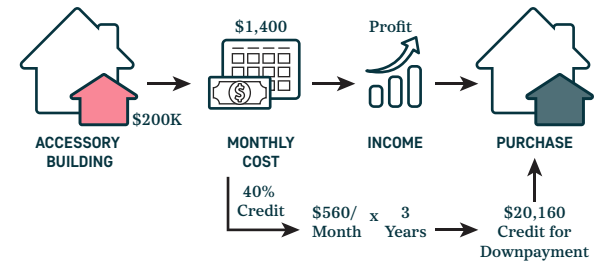
## GARAGE CONVERSION

# 3 STEP. THREE. develop a low risk solution as an additive process

The financing and building process for infill projects can be complicated and difficult, which acts as a barrier for community driven development. For homeowners who don't have access to additional capital or who haven't built enough equity in their home - entering into a lease agreement might be the best option.

It gives owners the chance to build an accessory building and purchase in the future at today's prices. It also reduces the risk of commitment to the purchase should it not work as intended.

## LEASE PROGRAM



## 1 Prefabricated Accessory Building Leasing Program

Made possible by a Public-Private Partnership model, homeowners would have the option to enter into a lease agreement for a prefabricated accessory building that can effectively fit within the front and rear setbacks of the existing single family zoning requirements. The program would allow the homeowner to

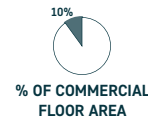
occupy or rent the additional building for either residential use, or commercial use for a period of time before having the option to buy the structure or return it, where it could then be relocated to a different property.

## 2 Simple Permitting Process

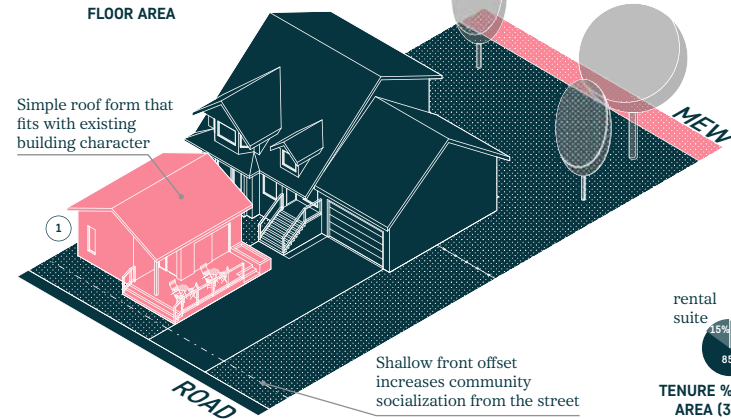
With a prefabricated building (fitting within the current Single Family zoned front and

rear yard setbacks), processing at the city can be expedited.

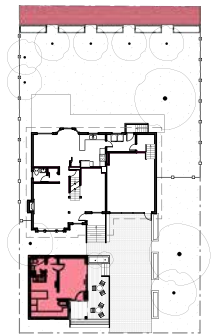
- Initial collaboration with the city on the design of the building gives the city confidence for compliance.
- Simple design and layout means that only a site plan is required when submitting a building permit.



Simple roof form that fits with existing building character



## ACCESSORY BUILDING



0.46 FAR

# 4 STEP. FOUR. building on the progress

Over time, as property owners begin building more equity –in addition to increased rental and business income– the owners might decide to further invest their equity into their property and community.

## 1 Home Equity Loan Option

The average cost of homes in this neighbourhood is \$1.4 million, homeowners can use an equity loan to finance the cost of construction, then refinance the home + new addition together with a new residential mortgage.

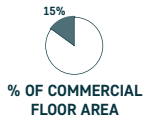
Residential mortgage will cover homes up to 4 units with no more than at least 75% primary use being for residential. Ensuring that the Neighborhood Zone does not trigger commercial loans makes financing simpler and less expensive for the homeowners– this is key!

## Policy

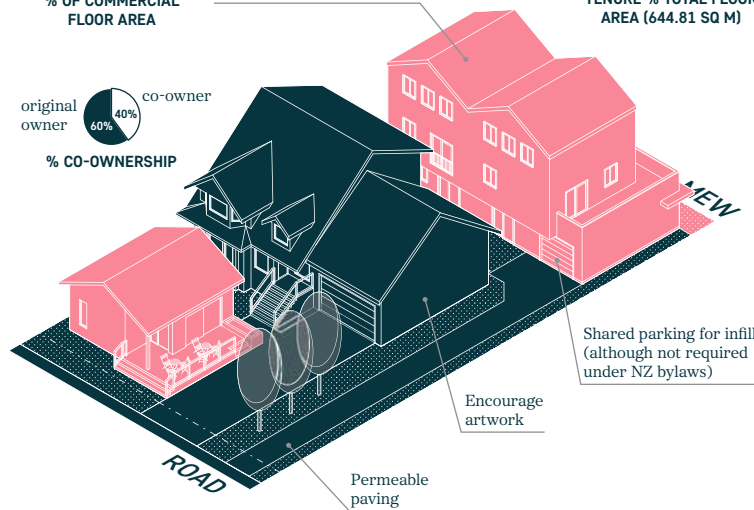
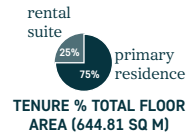
In order to encourage bottom-up, small-scale development, an expedited building permit process should be available to existing homeowners occupying the property and who are (a) providing services directly to the immediate community (b) adding density in terms of ground-oriented housing options.



0.90 FAR



Break up large roof forms to fit within the existing character homes



## INFILL BUILDING

# 5 STEP. FIVE. sharing the costs

Replacing an existing single-family home that already has value, into something with increased density is a big ask for most homeowners. Traditionally, this requires homeowners to have a considerable amount of equity and capital to be feasible. This is why projects tend to

be financed by real estate investors or developers who have the capital ready.

This top-down and profit-driven process generally leads to projects that neglect to promote community building or improve livability.

## 1 Co-Ownership

This project proposes co-ownership as a better model to redevelop existing properties. This incentivizes friends or family members to become co-owners of the property with percentage shares of the property and title to become "owners in common". The benefits include:

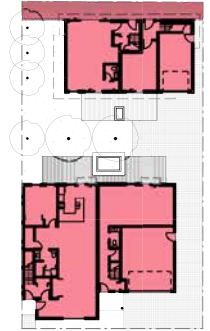
- Combining greater capital to complete the project
- Work done to the property would increase the property value for the owners in common

- Building a community for family and friends to live close by
- Sharing costs (maintenance, tax, utilities, etc.)
- Avoids high fees related to strata conversion

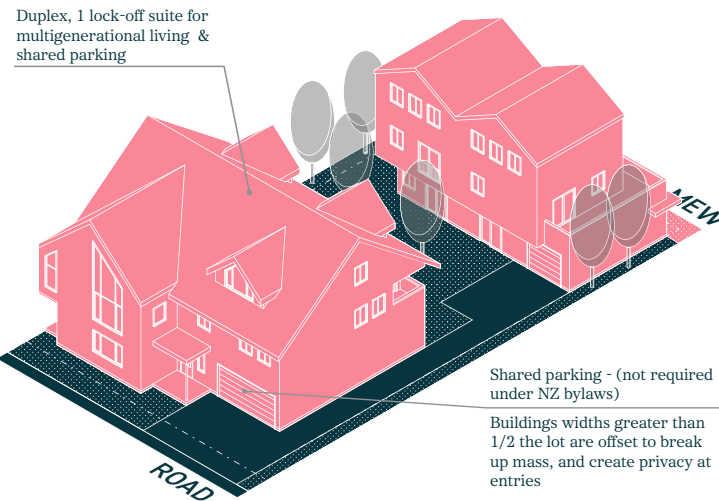
## Policy

For small scale redevelopment completed by the occupying homeowner(s) where the number of dwellings reaches 4 units, the city will provide the following incentives:

- Expedited building permits



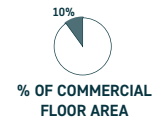
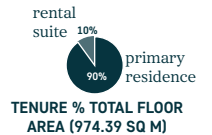
1.35 FAR



## LOT REDEVELOPMENT

- Property tax relaxation for first year after build

The city will benefit by an increase in the number of property taxes following the redevelopment, as well as the overall infrastructure cost saving resulting from reduced sprawl.





## ACCESS & AUTONOMY

What if kids had the autonomy to safely journey within their neighborhood? Although municipalities are slowly transitioning to pedestrian and cyclist friendly infrastructure, much of the existing road network is still primarily designed for vehicles. Instead of parents letting their kids walk with their friends to get some ice-cream, well-meaning parents might instead opt to drive their kids to the ice-cream shop to ensure a safe arrival.

Having a family friendly neighbourhood involves ensuring those of any age can travel to the places they need to on their own. Proximity is important; the first step is allowing community-focused commercial spaces within residential areas, though there are additional tactics that can be done within the public realm to increase access and autonomy.

The 4 main interventions proposed within the public realm are:

1. Reintegrate the Grid
2. Integrate the Cul-de-sac
3. Establish Mews
4. Connect Urban Parks

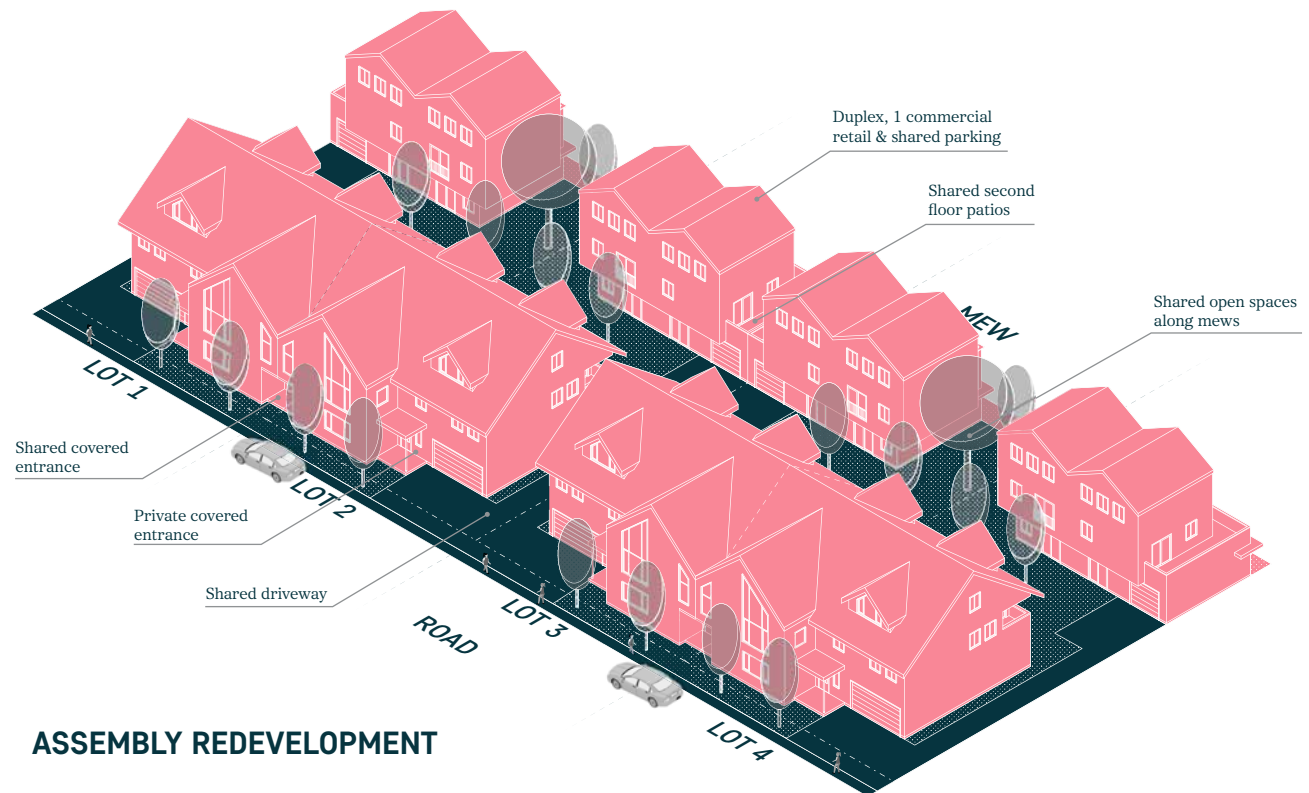
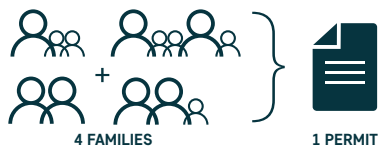
## 6 STEP. SIX. assemble together

Similar to Step 5 – the ability for large lot assembly redevelopment becomes even more financially difficult for small-scale developers or homeowners. It would require massive amounts of capital, resources and motivation. This is again – is why redevelopments by developers are so common.

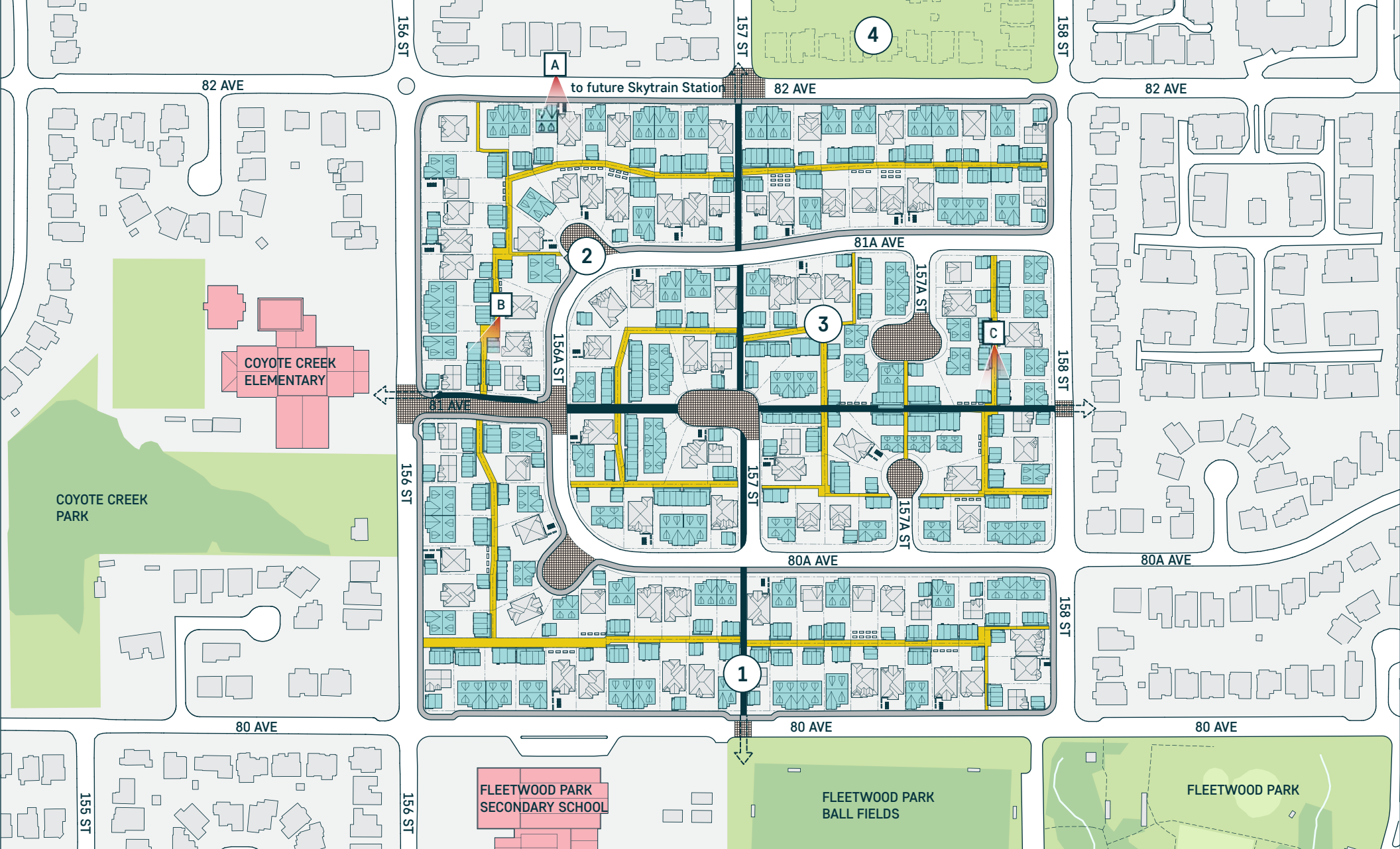
In order to make bottom-up change, smaller and simpler steps are preferred. Land assembly type redevelopments might be possible if the city allows each property owner(s) to work together.

### Policy

Owners of adjacent lots can work together to redevelop, design, plan and submit an application for a single building permit while also saving on consultant fees and building permit fees.



**ASSEMBLY REDEVELOPMENT**



**1 Reintegrate the Grid**

Disrupt the meandering street grid, by creating direct car-free pathways North-South & East-West to connect to existing community amenities.

**2 Integrate the Cul-de-sac**

Raised crosswalks and public plazas to reduce vehicular speed, increase safety and accessibility for pedestrians.



CUL-DE-SAC RAISED PLAZA - section

**3 Establish Mews**

By-laws promoting mews and alleys between neighbouring rear yards. Space formed by homeowners to connect community focused commercial spaces for those to traverse, without hazards from vehicles.

**4 Future Park**

Area outlined for future parks and open space in the Draft Fleetwood Plan.



0 15 30 60 90m



84 EXISTING HOMES



79 NEW INTERVENTIONS Infill



84 Duplex



61 Accessory Building