Towards a Suburban Agora:
Expanding an intermodal node into
a community marketplace

by

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Author's Declaration

I hereby declare that I am the sole author of this thesis. This is a true copy of the thesis, including any required final revisions, as accepted by my examiners.

I understand that my thesis may be made electronically available to the public.

Abstract

This thesis investigates the condition of the contemporary suburban landscape and the potential of transit infrastructure in re-establishing the continuity of the fragmented social fabric. It follows the emerging discourse in addressing low-density environment as a phenomenon that is becoming the dominant form in our individualistic and consumption-based society. The investigation focuses on Mid-Scarborough, Ontario, as a case study of a suburban ethnic community. Recognizing that high-intensity activity nodes are potential incubators of density and social meaning within the otherwise dispersed and fragmented suburban setting, this thesis proposes to expand an existing intermodal station into a mixed-use complex. Through diversifying the function of transit infrastructure with public and commerical programming, the design proposal channels existing intensity towards activating the social potential of interstitial public space. Ultimately, improved interconnectivity and communications between public fragments will foster social integration and the development of regional identity.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank my family for their patience in allowing my selfish endulgence in this long academic journey, Rick and Jeff for believing in this thesis, as well as Lola for her input and guidance. My sincere thanks also go to Duncan for polishing my writing.

Table of Contents

List of Illustrations

Chapter 6 Epilogue

Chapter 1 Introduction

Fig 1.1 Image of the typical urban streetscape in Hong Kong

Fig 1.2 Image my suburban home in Richmond Hill, Ontario

Growing up in Hong Kong and being a frequent traveller throughout my adult life, I am no stranger to the urban city. My tastes, values and personal identity are fundamentally shaped by the qualities of two urban metropolises, Hong Kong during my childhood and teenage years, and New York City during my early adulthood. Yet, like many immigrants coming to Canada, my family ultimately chose to settle in suburbia. This decision was not only due to the draw of its reasonable real estate market, but our choice also reflects a yearning for the "American Dream" based on ownership, privacy, and social mobility that is typical among new immigrants. For my family, the suburban lifestyle represents the "good life" that we are striving for, a fact that is reflected in a recent American survey, showing that suburbanites are found significantly more satisfied with their communities than residents of cities.[1] In a separate study, people living in suburbs were found to develop more stable social relationships and be more involved in their communities than urbanites living in dense urban environments.[2]

At the same time, the suburban landscape, where the majority of the North American population lives and that it represents over 75% of contemporary development, has drawn sharp criticism from academic communities from cultural theorists, architects, and urban planners since its emergence in the early 1950s.[3] As an apprentice of architecture, I am educated to despise the low-density, mobility-driven typology. It represents an un-urban and an unsustainable pattern that is detrimental to both our physical environment in its monotonous placelessness and to a community's social fabric through homogenization and isolation. As a result, numerous attempts have been made to provide alternative models for a more sustainable and urban environment, from the New Urbanists' Traditional Neighbourhood Development and Transit-Oriented Development, to the recent Smart Growth Strategies, all aiming to provide a more diverse and pedestrianized, hence urbanized alternatives to replace the unsustainable suburban model.

However, waves of young families, first time home owners, and new immigrants continue to flow into suburbia, and factors from market speculation to political and cultural inertia continue to propel the dominance of the suburban model within the contemporary landscape. There thus exists a sharp discrepancy between the image supported by academic discourses and the existing reality of suburbia.

This thesis follows recent academic discourse in addressing the dispersed suburban environment as a spatial and social phenomenon in the contemporary landscape. Dunham-Jones and Williamson, for example, address intensification and urbanization possibilities in the suburban landscape through a retrofitting approach that

1 Morin, Richard & Taylor, Paul. (2009, February). Suburbs Not Most Popular, But Suburbanites Most Content, Pew Research Center: Social & Demographic Trends. Retrieved on August 08, 2009, from http://pewresearch.org/pubs/1134/content-in-american-suburbs

2 The Edmonton Journal. (2006, November). People happier in suburbs. Retrieved on Auguest 08, 2009, from http://www.canada.com/edmontonjournal/news/story.html?id=ffefb731-6a56-4d38-aabd-d9da0b2b57c1

3 Dunham-Jones, Ellen. (2000). Seventy-Five Percent: The Next Big Architectural Project, Harvard Design Magazine, 12: 4-12.

operates within its embedded operational logics.[4] A recent issue of Architectural Design, "Cities of Dispersal", was dedicated to the discussion of the low-density environment as a new hybrid urbanism and to exploring design opportunities within such a dispersed landscape.[5] Rather than dismissing the suburban ideology and the lifestyle it represents, this thesis focuses instead on adaptations to the suburban ethos and on opportunities for improving the quality of the low-density suburban landscape, in order to enrich and urbanize the individualized and privatized suburban lifestyle. This thesis focuses specifically on the design and implementation of public space as a transformative social interface within the dispersed and socially fragmented suburban landscape. Beyond providing shelter for protection, at its core, architecture is a catalyst for social changes and development of social and cultural identity through the construction of a physical environment. The design and implementation of public space, as the spatial manifestation of a society therefore plays an important role in the construction of social and cultural identities. Especially in a contemporary multicultural city such as Toronto, public spaces function as the only remaining social interfaces and infrastructure that cut across the diverse social and cultural segments which are no longer bonded by shared heritages, customs, or values. Successful design and implementation of public space within the dispersed suburban environment has the potential to build bridges across segregated micro-public segments and can re-energize the placelessness of contemporary suburbs through diversity.

This thesis begins in **Chapter Two** with an investigation of the contemporary identity of suburbia. The suburban phenomenon is unpacked into three discussions: its evolution and identity within the contemporary metropolis, the typology and structure of its public realm, and the social dynamic within multi-ethnic suburbs. Through historical reviews, typological and statistical analyses, as well as the writings and critiques of several architects, cultural theorists, and urban planners, this thesis examines physical, social, and cultural identities in order to construct a contemporary understanding of the suburban landscape.

Chapter Three explores the design strategies of public spaces within the dispersed suburban landscape. The discussion is divided into three specific theoretical frameworks that address this contemporary landscape. Based on the principles distilled from theoretical frameworks, this thesis then proposes a general design guideline for the design and implementation of public space as a public infrastructure and a social interface in the urbanized suburban context.

Chapter Four examines detailed analyses of Mid-Scarborough in Ontario as a case study of an urbanized multi-ethnic suburb. The analyses focus on its typology, spatial organization, and its social structure to inform the decision-making and design strategies. Through reviewing existing development proposals within the area, this thesis also explores design opportunities within the focus study site.

Chapter Five presents the design proposal of a suburban public space in the form of a community

4 Dunham-Jones, Ellen & Williamson, June. 2009. Retrofitting Suburbia: Urban Design Solutions for Redesigning Suburbs. New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons.

5 Segal, Rafi & Verbakel, Els. (Eds.) (2008). Cities of Dispersal. Chichester: John Wiley & Sons Ltd.

complex located at the study site, Mid-Scarborough. It includes a detailed description of the site-specific design intervention, as well as analyses of its mechanics as a social interface in terms of circulation and programming.

Chapter Six summarizes the thesis and examines the effectiveness of the design intervention, taking into account its limitations and its success in fulfilling the thesis objective.

Fig 2.1 Image of the Los Angeles Suburb, 1930s

Chapter 2 Defining Suburbia

"I know all the arguments against suburbia…We had stay for the kids, we told ourselves, and because we couldn't afford anything better. But the kids have been gone for years, and we're still here. Without my noticing, my heels have dug in…The change has been in me, not in my surroundings. I have become attached to this place, and to my own three-quarters of an acre in particular."

Charles McGrath.[1]

1 McGarth, C. (2000, April 9). We Stayed for the Kids…and Stayed and Stayed: The Pleasures of Tending an Empty Nest. In B. M. Nicolaides & A. Wiese (Eds.), *The Suburb Reader,* 495-497. New York: Routledge.

Fig 2.2 Image of a typical 20th century North American suburbia

The etymology of suburbia reflects a traditional understanding of a subordinate "sub-urban" function to the city region.[2] Because of the unhindered suburban sprawl of the last 50 years and the dispersed car-dependent typology of suburbia, it has since replaced the compact city form of the city centre as the dominant typology. While retaining its hybrid characteristics and its threshold condition between the city and the countryside, suburbia has evolved beyond exclusively residential bedroom communities at the fringe of the city, into a new emerging economic region as well as a social and cultural incubator. This is especially true for developed countries like the U.S. and Canada, where prosperity has caused a decentralization of population.[3] From cities like Los Angeles in the U.S. to Flanders in Belgium, the dispersed landscapes produced by urban sprawl now represent their primary city models.[4] In Canada, though the extent of suburbanization is less severe than in the U.S., suburban regions still play a significant role in establishing the identities of many of our major metropolitan regions. The Greater Toronto Area, for example, is made up of some of the largest suburban municipalities in North America.[5]

Because of its unsustainable development and typology, the suburban landscape has drawn heavy criticism and has been widely regarded as an 'urban wasteland' by cultural theorists, urban planners, and architects alike. However, as the predominant spatial condition of the contemporary urban landscape, it should therefore be understood at face value. Rather than dismissing its form or insisting on its replacement, architects must understand the mechanics of this dispersed landscape in terms of its organizational ethos, its social dynamics, and the participants in its public space, before we begin to intervening and attempting to improve the social conditions within this environment.

2 Suburb. Wiktionary. Retrieved on August 04, 2009, from http://en.wiktionary.org/wiki/conurbation

3 Cox, Wendell. (2009). Suburbs and Cities: the unexpected truth. New Geography. Retrieved on August 6th, 2009, from http://www.newgeography.com/content/00805-suburbs-and-cities-the-unexpected-truth

4 Segal, Rafi & Verbakel, Els. (Eds). 2008). *Cities of Dispersal*. Chichester, England: Wiley.

5 Census 2006. Statistic Canada.

2.1. Suburban evolution

Fig 2.3 Image of the first highway project in the U.S. through the Federal and Highway act.

Fig 2.4 War veterans demanding housing aids at a public Rally

The emergence of the suburb dates back to the early industrial period in London, England when a small portion of the bourgeois escaped from the polluted and overpopulated city core. The scale of suburban development expanded exponentially in the U.S. during the postwar reconstruction period. During that time, a low-density suburban development strategy was adopted as a fast and cheap solution to the national housing crisis and provided immediate housing available on the outskirts of cities. Two events have facilitated the new developments in the city peripheries in the U.S.: the passing of the National Housing Act in 1934 that streamlined the mortgage loan process, and the passing of the Highway Act in 1956 that expanded the national-scale transportation network. Together these acts laid the financial and the infrastructural foundation that made the mass urban exodus possible. Moreover, political decentralization was also used as a way to reduce urban vulnerability during the Cold War era between the 40s and 60s.[6] The combined effects of advancements in technology, transportation infrastructure, as well as economic and political incentives provided the basis for a large-scale migration to suburban areas in the U.S. unprecedented in human history. [7]

This population redistribution at the same time set off a decentralization of urban activities. Businesses and industries followed their labour forces and relocated their services closer to the new mass of suburbanites. Peter O. Muller has detailed this geographical reorganization of the economy and the underlying socio-economic factors associated with the urban restructuring

6 Tobin, Kathleen. (2002). "The Reduction of Urban Vulnerability: Revisiting 1950s American Suburbanization as Civil Defence. Cold War History, 2:2, 1-32.

7 Fishman, R. (1987). *Bourgeois utopias: The rise and fall of suburbia.* New York: Basic Books.

in the U.S.[8] As a larger portion of the American population and their economic activities moved from city centres to peripheral suburbs, new generations became habituated to the new low-density physical and social environment. Thus an auto-catalytic loop was created that has been perpetuating suburban sprawl ever since.

Similar urban restructuring and suburbanization occurred in other countries during the postwar reconstruction period.[9] Bunting and Filion have chronicled the urban transitions in major Canadian cities from the prewar period until the beginning of 21st century. They identified suburban development and urbanization as the prevailing pattern since 1945, characterized by intensive expansion and decentralization, followed by economic booms at suburban edges.[10] Between 1951 and 2001 the population growth in suburban regions was a primary contributor to the overall growth of major metropolitan regions in Canada, including Toronto, Montreal, Vancouver, and Ottawa.[11] The lower growth rate exhibited in these city centres when compared to their peri-urban regions reflects a general growth tendency outside the city proper. Toronto and Vancouver, despite their dense urban fabric, are also surrounded by large suburban regions such as Mississauga and Brampton outside of Toronto, and Surrey, Burnaby, and Richmond outside of Vancouver.

8 Muller, Peter. (1976). The Outer City: The geographical consequences of the urbanization of the suburbs. In B. M. Nichlaides & A. Wiese (Eds.), *The Suburb Reader*, 362-368. New York: Routledge.

9 In Canada, the Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) was created in 1946 to coordinate a national housing program in order to accommodate returning war veterans.

10 Filion & Bunting. (2006). *Canadian Cities in Transition: Local through Global Perspectives*. Toronto. Oxford University Press.

11 Cox, Wendell. (2009).

Fig 2.5 Lee Centre and condominium at Scarborough Town Center

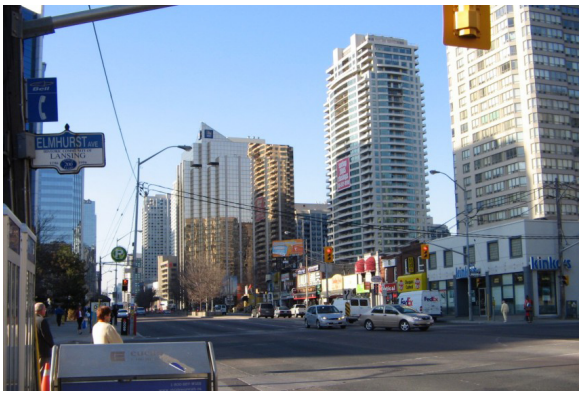


Fig 2.6 North York's urban center along Yonge Street

Fig 2.7 Honda's new headquarter along Hwy 404

2.2. Emergence of urban-suburban continuum

When describing the contemporary suburban model, the early definition of subordinate residential districts is no longer appropriate. Population redistribution and urban restructuring since the mid-60s has produced a very different urban landscape than that which existed in the prewar period. The effects of globalization have further accelerated the suburbanization process from a regional to a global scale. Today, economic success no longer hinges on density and proximity but on transportation and information access, which allows companies to favour locations with lower operating overheads.[12] Today, corporate headquarters, big-box outlets, and trans-national enterprises often prefer to settle in large parcels of low-cost suburban land along major transportation corridors. In Toronto, these businesses are clustered along the 400-series highways. At the same time, manufacturing activities have moved closer to airports and shipyards in the outskirts of cities, and many even relocated to developing countries with fewer government restrictions, cheaper labour, and closer proximity to raw materials.

On the other hand, contemporary social structures have dispersed from neighbourhood networks into regional if not global networks due to advances in communication and transportation technologies as well as increased permeability of national borders. Social relationships therefore are no longer defined by geographical proximity and local boundaries. As argued by urban planners

12 Filion & Bunting. (2006).

and researchers Qadeer and Sandeep, contemporary social relations are built on individual and professional affiliations and communities of interest, replacing local relationships based on geo-spatial proximity as in traditional close-knit communities.

The combined effect is a stretching of the traditional compact urban pattern into a dispersed fabric, blurring the hierarchical spatial distinctions between city and suburb towards a new urban-suburban continuum. Because the extent of such decentralization has been less severe in Canada than in the U.S., the overall pattern leans more towards regional specialization than the development of a homogeneous field of conurbations as seen south of the border. In Metropolitan Toronto, for example, while downtown Toronto remains the cultural and economic centre within Greater Toronto Area, second-generation and older suburban regions have evolved from residential districts into dynamic multifunctional and socially diverse regions, buzzing with business, manufacturing, and cultural activities that cater to their respective residents. Scarborough, North York, Mississauga, Brampton, Vaughan, Richmond Hill, and Markham have developed their own downtown areas that offer the full range of urban services as well as civic life.[13] This regional specialization has lead to a more complex and symbiotic city-suburb relationship; while cities retain their roles as cultural and civil centres for the region, its economic activities rely on a matrix of retail malls, office parks, distribution centres, manufacturing warehouses, call centres, as well as the labour pool located in the peripheral suburbs. The city model, therefore, is more accurately understood as a dispersed heterogeneous field connected by layers of transit and communication infrastructures.

13 In 2001, 66% suburban resident-workers worked within and in adjacent suburban municipalities, compared to 34% in central Toronto; in Vancouver 77% worked in suburban municipalities compared to 23% in the central city. Census 2001, Statistic Canada.

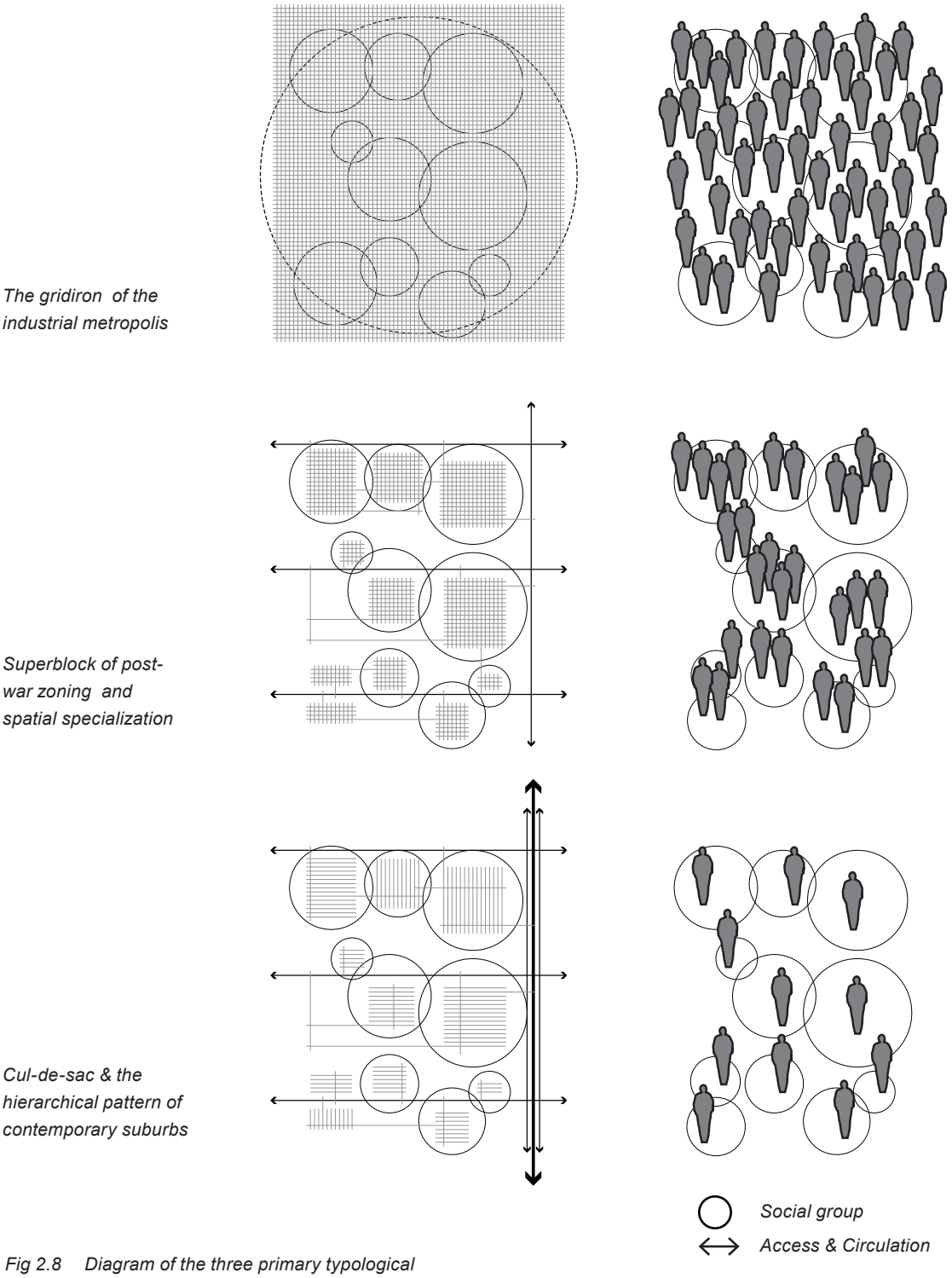


Fig 2.8 *Diagram of the three primary typological organizations representing the primary spatial pattern in the 20th century and their embedded social organizations.*
From Pope, A. (2008). Terminal Distribution. In R. Segal & E. Verbakel (Eds), Cities of Dispersal. (pp. 16-21). Chichester, England: Wiley.

2.3. Fragmentation and marginalization of the Public

The dispersal and suburbanization of contemporary urban typology has had a profound effect on cultural identities as well as the social organizations within it. The typological organization of the street grid, for example, has significant impact on the social fabric beyond its utilitarian function as spatial connector. Jane Jacobs described the street together with the sidewalk and public spaces as "the vital organs" and the social mixer of a city (fig.11).[14] Albert Pope has argued that, as the street grid forms the framework for the development of social organization and its choreography thereafter, its organization thus encodes the fundamental quality of the particular urban existence within.[15] In his analysis of three spatial patterns of street organization representing its development in the 20th century, including the prewar urban gridiron, postwar superblock, and the contemporary cul-de-sac, he reveals the progressive social fragmentation leading towards individuation, as a result of the shift from an urban to a suburban typology (fig. 2.8). He argues that the cognitive awareness of the collective public represented in the gridiron pattern is replaced by an individuated subjectivity that typifies the postmodern condition.[16] Though Pope's abstraction of the social mapping through grouping oversimplifies the complexity of the contemporary multicultural landscape, it does illustrate the effects of typological reorganization from the gridiron to the cul-de-sac and demonstrates how the newer model breaks down the collective public into an individualized social organization typical of the suburban landscape, ultimately dissolving collective awareness through the marginalization of public space.

14 Jacobs, J. (1961). *The Death and Life of Great American Cities.* New York: Random House.

15 Pope, A. (2008).

16 Ibid

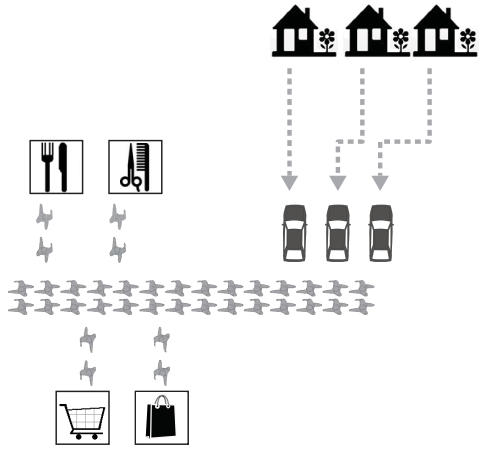


Fig 2.9 Spatial organization of the interstitial public realm in the urban pedestrian-oriented typology

Fig 2.11 Urban interstitial public realm in downtown Toronto

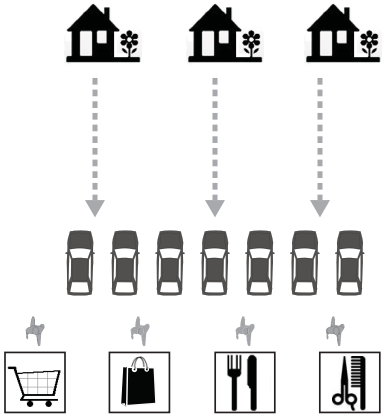


Fig 2.10 Compression of the public-private threshold in the suburban car-oriented typology

Fig 2.12 Suburban interstitial public space at a strip mall in Scarborough

Despite the urbanization and densification processes, the suburbs tend to preserve their original low-density characteristics. These characteristics include a hierarchical and spread-out street arrangement centred along wide arterial roads, fragmented organization based on large homogeneous program blocks, and an extensive vehicular and transportation infrastructure that caters to the car-dependent suburban lifestyle.[17] Within this mobility-driven and privatized environment, where private vehicles function as appendages of private spaces, public space the interstitial public realm as a result tends to be marginalized. The public-private threshold, for example, is compressed between doorways of destinations (fig 2.10). Public activities, if present, are internalized within individual institutions or private zones, each prescribing a different degree of exclusionary control. The car-dominant suburban typology therefore diminishes marginalizes all the social functions supported by public space in fostering diversity as well as a sense of social identity and belonging, including free social and cultural exchanges, chance encounters, and temporary appropriation. In the suburban environment, public interface has largely disappeared, resulting in a shift towards highly individualized lifestyles.

17 Fishman, R. (1987).

Principles of New Urbanism:

- *Walkability*
- *Connectivity*
- *Mixed-Use & Diversity*
- *Mixed Housing*
- *Quality Architecture & Urban Design*
- *Traditional Neighbourhood Structure*
- *Increased Density*
- *Smart Transportation*
- *Sustainability*
- *Quality of LIfe*

Fig 2.13 Seaside, Florida

Fig 2.14 Residential subdivision in Markham, Canada

2.4. Suburbanization of society

Although the low-density typology represents the majority of land developments in the last few centuries as well as the dominant form in contemporary landscape, the suburbs have long been shunned by architects. The domain of suburbia, the "Seventy-five Percent" as Dunham-Jones has described it, was left mostly to private developers.[18] The result is an uncontrolled and uncoordinated sprawl of a monotonous cookie-cutter typology based on short-term and profit-driven land speculation. From manufacturing and distribution warehouses, to suburban strip malls, to individual single family homes, suburban development typifies a bottom-line design approach based on the capitalist dogmas of mass production and maximization of profit. Systematization of urban planning and zoning laws developed in the 60s still dictate suburban land use and development in terms of spatial specialization and segregation of the everyday functions of home, work, and leisure. The resulting effect is the car-dependent environment that we see today that emphasizes individuality and privacy instead of community.

This fragmented and monotonous environment produced by suburban sprawl has sparked sharp criticisms since the 60s and has been blamed for many of the problems we are facing today. Lewis Mumford describes suburbia as "a low-grade uniform environment from which escape is impossible".[19] James Howard Kunstler has famously illustrated in his book *Geography of Nowhere* the wide-spread detrimental effects of suburban sprawl, from the degradation of the natural and urban environment, to the depletion of fiscal resources, to the fragmentation of social

18 Dunham-Jones, Ellen. (2000). Seventy-Five Percent: The Next Big Architectural Project, *Harvard Design Magazine*, 12: 4-12.

19 Mumford, Lewis. (1961). The City in History: Its Origins, Its Transformation, and Its Prospects. In B. M. Nicolaides & A. Wiese (Eds.), *The Suburb Reader,* 495-497. New York: Routledge.

Fig 2.15 The Richmond Hill Downtown Design Land Use Strategy and a rendering of Yonge St. transit corridor

fabric and erosion of social values.[20] In dismissing the suburban typology, Kunstler proposes a return to traditional design parameters such as the compact city model and a pedestrian-oriented environment. Various sustainable alternative models based on these design parameters have emerged in recent years, including the Traditional Neighbourhood Development (TND), the transit-oriented development, the Smart Growth concept, and the Urban Village concept popular in the United Kingdom. These development alternatives are characterized by a reversal of the car-oriented typology back to a compact urban environment based on a neighbourhood structure, featuring intimate public spaces integrated with high-density mixed-use typologies and pedestrian streets as urban connectors.[21] Smart Growth and TOD, further broaden their scope by recognizing the importance of mobility in today's dispersed environment through an integrated public transit system in their models (fig.15). Despite their often prescriptive visions in terms of social values and lifestyles embedded in their spatial design and aesthetics, these formats are generally successful in providing sustainable alternatives to the conventional suburban development, offering a better living environment and more vibrant community identities. These models have been adopted by urban planning agencies across North America, including Portland, San Francisco, Vancouver, and Calgary, to reduce car dependency and to counteract suburban sprawl.

20 Kunstler, J. H. (1993). *Geography of nowhere: the rise and decline of America's man-made landscape.* New York: Simon & Schuster.

21 Franklin, B. & Tait, M.. (2002). Constructing an Image: The Urban Village Concept in the UK. *Planning Theory,* 1(3), 250-272.

"As places around us change, both the communities that shelter us and the larger regions that support them, we all undergo changes inside. Our relationship with the place we know and meet up with, where you are right now, where you've been earlier today, and wherever you'll be in another few hours, is a close bond, intricate in nature, and not abstract, not remote in all: It's enveloping, almost a continuum with all we are and think"

Tony Hiss[22]

22 Hiss, Tony. (1990). *The experience of place*. New York: Knopt.

Fig 2.16 Covers of Suburban Life, a lifestyle magazine devoted specifically to suburban living in Southern Ontario

Despite strong and persistent critiques and the emergences of successful development alternatives, the suburban model prevails. In reality, though New Urbanist projects present a more sustainable and better living environment, they remain atypical isolated urban scenarios within a larger suburban culture. The machinery supporting suburbanization is complex, involving political inertia, economic incentives, and often self-perpetuating social and cultural processes. This subject has been analyzed extensively by cultural historians and urban theorists, and therefore will not be elaborated on here. One of the fundamental reasons for suburbia's continuing success lies in its manufactured image of the "American Dream", or as Robert Fishman described, "bourgeois utopia". This romantic image has a powerful grip on the cultural imagination, especially for the middle class. It reflects the core American values such as proximity to nature, individuality, freedom of mobility, personal ownership, and privacy. The phenomenon of suburbia thus represents, in Lewis Mumford's words, a "collective effort to live a private life".[23] Over time, habituation to car dependence and individualized lifestyles have changed our way of life. To second and third generation suburbanites who have grown up in low-density environments, private hyper-mobility and mobile hyper-connectivity represents are simply a part of everyday life, while the city becomes a tourist attraction and destination for a trip or a weekend getaway.

There exists a sharp discrepancy between the image supported by academic discourse and the reality sustained by mass cultural values. Kunstler, after devoting the majority of his book to criticizing suburbia, acknowledged in the end the difficulty in changing the status quo, stating that it will require a shift in "the comprehensive world view shared by a critical mass of citizens" in order to replace the suburban typology.[24] Though increased environmental awareness is beginning to change our lifestyle in recent years towards a more sustainable way of living, a more fundamental change in ideology may be necessary to alter our habituation to suburbia and its lifestyle. Until such drastic changes take place, however, the prevailing suburban model is not likely to be replaced any time soon. Meanwhile, rather than adapting to new conditions of dispersal, architects and urban planners continue to adhere to traditional design ideas, thus are rendering themselves increasingly ineffective in altering the larger urban social fabric.

23 Fishman, Robert. (1987).

24 Kunstler, J. H. (1993).

Fig 2.17 Concord Pacific Development, Vancouver

Fig 2.18 Remington Centre proposal for the redevelopment of Market Village in Markham, Ontario

2.5. Effects of immigration the development of ethnic centers

Along with economic restructuring and the effects of globalization, immigration has been identified as a primary force in shaping contemporary societies, as a result of increased permeability of national borders and mobility. In Canada, immigration has accounted for much of the urban economic and population growth, creating a strong tie between immigrants and cities. Immigration accounted for 70% of the population growth in the 1990s, 65% of the population growth in 2003, and by 2017 it is estimated that about half of the population of the Toronto and Vancouver CMAs (Census Metropolitan Area) will represent visible minority groups.[25] The effects of this trend on the urban fabric are reflected in the housing boom and subsequent densification of downtown Vancouver. The Concord Pacific development of a 204-acre former Expo site on the Vancouver waterfront, for example, was a response to mass immigration from Hong Kong to Canada in the 1990s due to the political instability of the country. Its effect has been instrumental in the densification of downtown Vancouver.[26] Immigrant settlement regions such as Scarborough, Richmond Hill, and Markham outside Toronto have also been drastically transformed within the last 20 years due to the influx of immigrants.

Two studies have analyzed the effect of immigration on general urban changes in Canada, Hoernig and Walton-Robertson on socioeconomic changes and Murdie and Teixeira on spatial changes in settlement patterns. Both studies found that a shift in the origin countries of immigrants since the 60s, from European to Asian and African countries, has resulted in a greater distribution of new immigrants in large urban centres. While these results reflects their propensity towards urban living, these

25 Census 2001, Statistic Canada

26 Hong Kong Changes us. Straight.com. Retrieved on June 6, 2009, from http://www.straight.com/article-97208/hong-kong-changed-us

new urban immigrants tend to settle in urbanized suburbs close to co-ethnic communities for social support and cultural security, instead of choosing the central city as their new home.[27],[28] This is progressively changing the demographics in the suburbs towards predominantly ethnic minorities.

Increases in ethnic concentration in the suburbs have affected both physical and social fabrics in several ways. On the physical level, cultural preferences in goods and services have created a demand for small-scale private and community initiatives to meet needs. However, the wave of immigration during the 1990s coincided with severe federal and provincial government fiscal cutbacks, especially in social spending. Hoernig and Walton-Roberts also suggest that indifference in immigration and planning policies towards ethnic settlement patterns and cultural behaviours may have compounded the effects of the cutbacks. As a result, provisions for social and cultural services have lagged behind local needs in those urbanized suburbs during the 90s.

Meanwhile, small-scale community initiatives and individual entrepreneurs began to take matters into their own hands and set up their own ethnic retail and services for their respective local clients. These privately-owned destinations formed a new network of privatized social spaces over time that resemble "third places" as described by sociologist Ray Oldenburg, becoming local anchors that support communal life and social networking.[29] These private initiatives and entrepreneurship

27 Murdie, R.A. & Teixeira, C. (2006) Urban Social Space. In T. Bunting & P. Filion (Eds.). *Canadian Cities in Transition: Local through Global Perspectives,*154-170. New York: Oxford University Press.

28 Hoernig, Heidi & Walton-Roberts, Margaret. (2006) Immigration and Urban change: National, Regional, and Local Perspective. In T. Bunting & P. Filion (Eds.), *Canadian Cities in Transition: Local through Global Perspectives,* 154-170. New York: Oxford University Press.

29 Oldenburg, R. (1999). *Great good place: Cafés, coffee shops, bookstores, bars, hair salons, and other hangouts at the heart of a community.* New York: [Berkeley, Calif.]: Marlowe ; Distributed by Publishers Group West.

become essential in filling the gaps in community and social services, especially in low-income ethnic neighbourhoods.

While fostering the development of local social relationships, the spatial specialization represented by these ethnocentric social spaces also encourages patterns of segregation in these ethnic enclaves. These new privatized social spaces such as fast food takeout restaurants, food markets, social clubs, and beauty salons are generally ethnocentric in both programming and their clientele, thus limiting opportunities for intergroup social interactions. Subsequently, in these ethnic centres, ethnic retail and private services have replaced the social and communal functions of traditional public and social infrastructure such as community centres and neighbourhood parks. The provision of public services and social spaces in turn has shifted from the hands of government agencies and urban planners to private sectors, local organizations, and individual initiatives.


Mr Sub (deli sandwich)
Private residence
European Coiffures
Private residence
First Step (children shoes)
Private residence
McBrien (courier & UPS Service)
Jeyasaji Super Centre
(indian silk Brocade & Saree)
Nirrma Silk (indian silk
Brocade & Saree)
Un-named hair & beauty salon
Le Michell (nail salon)
Un-named convenience store
Kuiaran (nail & beauty salon)
Powell Catering (west indian cuisine)
Pizza Panzo
Lowfare travel agency
JJ Electronics
Teak Gallery (furniture)
Chris Bread Bakery (west indian bakery)
Abbirami (east indian fast food)
Eye care & opticians
EUROPEAN
FIRST STEP
NAIL
KUIARAN
NIRRMA SILK
JEYASAJI SUPER
Pizza Panzo
TEAK GALLERY
OPTICIANS
Doris Shoes

Angie's Restaurant (caribbean & east indian)

A1 ACME Photo (photo processing & digital printing

Private residence

TEC Data Computers & Electionics

Mac Tax Canada (tax, accounting, mortgage, & business loan)

Sheldon Sherman's Law Office (legal service)

Adult Video & DVDs

SP Electronics & Computer

Myuraa Jewellers

Vision Fashion (eye glasses & optometry)

Unknown indian business

Rashi Silks (Brocade & Saree)

Un-named Internet cafe

C & D Variety (convenience store)

Bantry Auto Parts

Rainbow Travel

Luary Spa & Nails

Tara Inn (irish pub & restaurant))

Eraa Supermarket

Arajen Beauty Centre (nail & beauty salon)

Food market

Fig 2.19 Program mapping of a strip mall in Mid Scarborough

2.6. Summary

In discussing suburbia, our perception based on a traditional hierarchical structure, demands retooling in order to understand structural and social complexity within this low-density environment. The three trends illustrated in the discussion above, namely the smoothing of the city-suburb paradigm, the suburbanization of society, and the development of suburban ethnic centers, together have exerted significant effects on suburbia in overall structural and social organization, creating a new hybrid urban-suburban environment that escapes our conventional understanding of the urban model.[30] Meanwhile, urban discourse has only begun to put aside its criticism in recent years and look at the urban-suburban structure from a more positive perspective. Slow to react to the new urban condition, the top-down design and planning culture continues to adhere to the status quo rather than revising their strategies to address densification and demographic changes. The result of this discrepancy is reflected in the progressive shrinking of public space within these urban-suburban, car-dominated landscapes. Ill-equipped for these new social and spatial conditions, design and planning institutions have been ineffective in affecting the social fabric within these ethnic enclaves in any meaningful way. The provision of social infrastructure as a result has shifted from the public to the private sectors through ethnic entrepreneurships and local community organizations. Although they are meeting local needs, these ethnocentric community organizations are contributing to progressive privatization of urban landscape and the fragmentation of the social fabric.

While re-defining suburbia provides a new understanding of environment, this discussion also illustrates the inherent complexity within the landscape. In these low-density areas, regional circumstances, including spatial organization and

30 The term "urban-suburban " refers to the hybrid urban condition, due to the disappearing of the hierarchical structure and distinctions between urban and suburban environments.

social composition determine the identity and character of the suburban environment. In addressing the design and planning of public space in these suburban areas, one is required to develop a deeper understanding of the specificities of each site in order to respond to its particular physical, social, political, cultural, and the temporal factors.

Chapter 3 Design Frameworks & Strategies

"If there is to be a 'new urbanism' it will not be based on the twin fantasies of order and omnipotence; it will be the staging of uncertainty; it will no longer be concerned with the arrangement of more or less permanent objects but with the irrigation of territories with potential; it will no longer aim for stable configurations but for the creation of enabling fields that accommodate processes that refuse to be crystallized into definitive form; it will no longer be about meticulous definition, the imposition of limits, but about expanding notions, denying boundaries, not about separating and defining entities, but about discovering unnameable hybrids; it will no longer be obsessed with the city but with the manipulation of infrastructure for endless intensifications and diversifications, shortcuts and redistributions – the reinvention of psychological space."[1]

Rem Koolhaas

1 Koolhaas, R. (1994). "What Ever Happened to Urbanism?". In B. Mau (Ed.), *S,M,L,XL, OMA*, 959-971. New York: The Monicelli Press.

3.1. Defining the question

Suburbanization, globalization, and changes in social and cultural values are pushing contemporary post-urban society towards individualization, privatization, social stratification and segregation. The physical landscape at the same time has dispersed from a centralized to a polycentric form, further stretching and expanding the social fabric. This physical landscape has a strong influence on the development of social identity and cultural sensitivity. Children growing up in an ethnically diverse and collective environment tend to present better cultural understanding and tolerance and to develop inter-social and inter-ethnic relationships. Contrary to the popular perception that density facilitates social relationships, dense urban fabric in fact encourages selective social interactions based on shared interests, occupations, cultural values, and class identities, a form of "segregation by choice". Improved mobility and telecommunications have extended informal social networks and relationships beyond local boundaries, favouring the development of social networks based on shared participation rather than geographical proximity.[2]

These circumstances thus underscore the importance of public space as the remaining interface of unregulated social interactions. The structure of this interstitial public realm is essential to our understanding of urbanity and the expression of democracy. Its integrity not only provides an inclusive forum for social and cultural mixing, but also a safe and informal place to resolve conflicts and to facilitate collaboration and

2 Fong, E. & Isajiw, W.W. (2000). Determinant of friendship choice in multiethnic society, *Sociological Forum*, vol. 15(2), 249-271.

communication. It helps to accumulate what the political scientist, Robert Putnam, calls "social capital", the level of trust and social relationships in counteracting intolerance and prejudice brought about by the lack of density and diversity.[3]

Because of the instrumental role of public spaces in mediating the private-public and individual-collective spheres, their disappearance in the dispersed suburban landscape demands our design focus as producers of the physical environment. The issue takes on a particular importance for gateway cities such as Toronto, one of the major destinations for immigrants in North America. While immigration policy in Canada encourages and respects local cultural development, equal efforts should be made in reaching out and integrating newcomers into the larger society so as to develop a sense of belonging. Ian Chodikoff has argued that instead of focusing on cultural development primarily in central Toronto, new urbanized suburbs s should be equally supported, as they are becoming regional cultural innovators and incubators.[4] Public investment in suburban areas therefore is essential to adequate social and cultural supports to foster not only local development of ethnic communities but also inter-ethnic interactions.

This thesis addresses the issue of the implementation of public spaces in the dispersed urban condition that now defines our contemporary physical landscape. Specifically, it begs the question: **how do we design and implement public spaces to re-establish the continuity of the social fabric wit**hin our contemporary dispersed urban landscape? To inform the design strategies, three theoretical frameworks are identified, including Landscape Urbanism, Everyday Urbanism, and Participatory Approach. These three frameworks represent new lenses in looking at our contemporary suburban condition that emphasizes mobility, individuality, and fragmentation. By unpacking this complex question into specific issues, it allows specific strategies emerge from the matrix of organizational, physical, social, and political parameters. This hybrid approach in turn helps to reimage and rehabilitate public space in suburban environments and informs specific spatial, programming, and operational strategies. Although the design intervention at the end may run the risk of jeopardising the design's overall coherence, it is however more reflective of the complex and fragmented contemporary condition of our society.

3 Mattson, K. (Summer, 1999). Reclaiming and Re-making Public Spaces: Toward an Architecture for American Democracy, *National Civic Review*, vol. 88(2), 133-144.

4 Chodikoff, I. (2008) Fringe Benefits: Cosmopolitan Dynamics of a Multicultural City. In P. Poletto, P. Beesley, et (Eds.), *Ourtopias: Cities and the role of design*, 41-52. Cambridge: Riverside Architectural Press.

3.2. Design Frameworks

Landscape Urbanism

In low-density dispersed environments, public transportation, including transit infrastructures and intermodal nodes, replaces the functions of the pedestrian street network that constituting the public connective tissue in conjunction with the privatized mobility represented by personal vehicles. When designing public space in the suburban landscape, it is necessary to adopt an infrastructure framework rather than simply envisioning public spaces as bounded entities. Landscape urbanism is useful in its focus on the instrumental function of infrastructures in organizing urban experience and introduces the idea of public space as a connective tissue.[5] In addressing the dispersed and socially segregated conditions of urban landscape, Stan Allen identifies three main considerations in design interventions:[6]

Connectivity:

Connectivity captures the potential in discontinuities and fragmentations while maintaining an overall coherence through design. When designing for the suburban landscape, interventions should allow for the independence of elements within a flexible framework, while maintaining overall legibility and inter-connectivity through the singularity of a shared boundary. The balance between fragmentation and overall

5 Corner, J. (2006). Terra Fluxus. In C. Waldheim, (Ed.), *The Landscape Urbanism Reader*, p15-54. New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 2006.

6 Allen, S. (1999). *Points + Lines: diagrams and projects for the city*. New York: Princeton Architectural Press.

coherence allows for adaptations to programmatic requirements and user needs.

Indeterminacy:

Indeterminacy addresses the transient quality of mobility-oriented society and opts for flexibility through non-scripted design. When applied to the suburban setting, design interventions should allow maximum flexibility by resisting both programmatic and aesthetic prescriptions, in order to accommodate the cultural diversity and the temporal flux in local programming demands.

Emergence:

Emergence deals with the unpredictable and fast-changing urban and social environment through an open-ended design that allows for the emergence of future events and programs. The social composition of ethnic suburbs will continue to evolve as a result of the continued immigrant settlement. Public space design in suburbia should therefore opt for a non-scripted and a generic supportive framework in order to accommodate incremental and future changes in both user demographic and social and cultural needs.

When designing infrastructure, Allen proposes that the design should remain flexible in order to accommodate diverse cultural and social activities and future events by providing service supports and network connections within a loose framework. Rather than prescribing rules or codes, the spatial design should specify only points of service, access, and a structural framework from which collective users are encouraged to create, improvise, and express their individuality. In this model, the boundary of the public space functions as a permeable membrane. The structure and qualities within the public space then depend on the permeability and activities of its adjacent programs. Movements within this public space are then organized and managed by diverse field conditions.[7]

7 Ibid.

Everyday Urbanism

While contemporary social fabric is made of overlapping layers of social networks, such fragmentation is heightened by the structural specialization of home, work, and leisure. Everyday Urbanism finds its traction in describing this decentralized urban environment in focusing on the micro-tissues of everyday activities in this decentralized urban environment.. Described by Margaret Crawford, Everyday Urbanism explores the urban environment as a collective social product, an amalgam of experiences of and actions by its inhabitants.[8] It focuses on potential in the everyday spaces within our physical environment beyond the primary elements of home, work, and institutions. Bus stops, parking lots, food markets, beauty salons, shopping malls, sport clubs, churches, and transit terminals, they all possess latent social potential that is waiting to be activated. For example, through reconfigurating and diversifying parking lots in strip malls with green social spaces and other commercial and public programs, she argues that these areas could be transformed into vibrant social spaces. Grounded in social and spatial practices as well as the ephemeral and transient quality of the everyday life, this framework emphasizes "the primacy of human actions and the structural organization based around daily itineraries and rhythms imposed by patterns of work and leisure, weeks and weekends, as well as the repetitious gestures of commuting and consumption"[9].

Beyond the organizational significances of these everyday spaces, economic geographer Ash Amin proposes that their informal qualities also provide ideal settings for prosaic negotiations and intergroup communication. In addressing cultural diversity and ethnic segregation in urban environments, he proposes that social interactions could be intensified in these everyday micro-public spaces such as workplaces, schools, youth centres and sport clubs. Through integrating public and social spaces into these spaces, one could displace the social pattern of "parallel lives" that characterizes contemporary social organization. As the informality of the settings encourages people to "step out of their routine environment", these micro-public spaces function as "sites of unnoticeable cultural questioning and transgression". This process fosters intergroup communication and helps to develop social and cultural tolerance.[10]

8 Chase, J., Crawford, M., & Kaliski, J. (1999). *Everyday urbanism*. New York: Monacelli Press.

9 Chase, J., Crawford, M., & Kaliski, J. (1999).

10 Amin, A. (2002). Ethnicity and the multicultural city: Living with diversity. *Environment and Planning A*, 34(6), 959-980.

Participatory Approach

The participatory approach refers to an inclusive process that emphasizes the importance of active participation and local perspectives in planning, design, and management.[11] In architectural discourse, the term "participation" refers to a collaborative process where end-users are involved in project design and construction. It reflects the "collective and individual desires" of micro-social and often marginalized groups such as neighbourhood associations, informal local organizations, small institutions, and individual users themselves.[12] This approach has been widely adopted in community planning and design of public space, including organizations such as Project for Public Spaces (PPS) in New York.

In addition to the involvement and contributions of local users, this process also takes on a political dimension through active participation and democratizion of conventional top-down processes, thus empowering local and marginalized users with a sense of ownership through their representation, participation and efficacy. This approach reflects the general strategies used in community building initiatives such as Action for Neighbourhood Change (ANC). During my involvement in ANC when researching my project site, I noted that the participatory strategies adopted by ANC were successful in eliciting public participation, and the emergence of local leadership (appendix A).

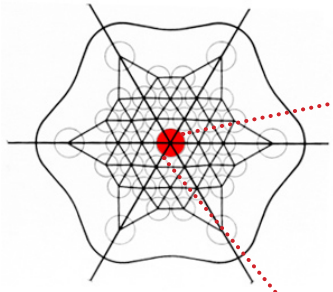
In contrast to the standardized approach of top-down processes that cater to coherence and efficiency, the bottom-up format in participatory design is often more time consuming and messy, thus deterring both architects and planners. Miessen, however, argues that participation should be understood beyond the romantic model of consensus and harmony. Rather, the conflicts that emerge should be re-conceptualized as "producers of a productive environment" that are more effective in re-calibrating different expectations through critical conversations. Designers and architects act as outsiders in mapping out sites for possible fields of conflict, and the spatial practice of architecture becomes the management of spatial and social conflicts.[13]

When adopting a participatory approach in public space design, public spaces should be viewed as a stage transformed into a lived place only by the collective social activities of its users. An architect's role therefore lies on organize and create a spatial framework; the actual design and the realization of the place are relinquished instead to the collective actions of its participants.

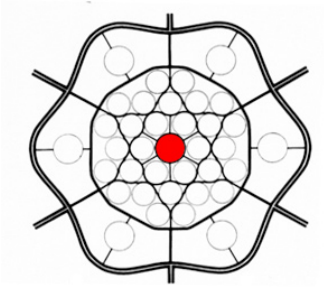
11 Participatory Approach. Wikipedia. Retrieved on August 01, 2009, from http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Participatory_design

12 PEPARV. How to make a community as well as the space for it. Retrieved on Nov 24, 2007, from http://www.peprav.net/tool/spip.php?article31

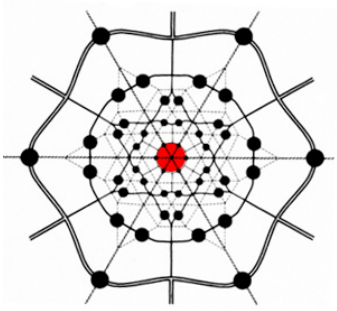
13 Miessen, Markus. The Violence of Participation (Spatial Practice Beyond Models of Consensus), Roundtable: Research Architecture. Retrieved on 2008, from http://roundtable.kein.org/node/548



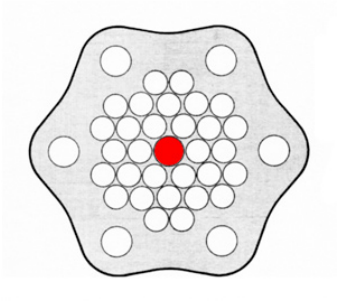
Public Transport through the core community center



Perimeter private circulation



Inner public spaces, internodal hubs, & outer freight transport hubs



Built up elements and green spaces

Fig 3.1 Aerial view of Southdale (regional suburban shopping centre) designed by Gruen in 1956

Fig 3.2 Left: Gruen's space diagram for the Cellular Metropolis of Tormorrow; from A. Wall. (2005).

"By affording opportunities for social life and recreation in a protected pedestrian environment, by incorporating civic and educational facilities, shopping centers can fill an existing void. They can provide the needed place and opportunity for participation in modern community life that the ancient Greek Agora, the Medieval market Place and our own Town Squares provided in the past."[14]

Victor Gruen

14 Gruen, V. & Smith, L. (1960). Shopping Towns USA: the Planning of Shopping Centers. New York: Reinhold.

3.3. Design Approaches & Strategies

A nodal development approach

A nodal development approach is adopted in this thesis. The strategy find its lineage from Victor Gruen's vision for the Cellular Metropolis of Tomorrow, in which he proposed a large-scale mixed-use retail centre as a community center and an economic catalyst for the region. Residential developments, infrastructure layout, and all other urban activities are oriented to this core community hub (fig 3.2).[15] While the model was first developed for suburbs, Gruen also envisioned the model to be applicable for urban environment in downtown revitalization. For the contemporary dispersed urban landscape, Alex Wall argued that this model, when undertaken within a public-private partnership based on social as well as economic goals, may become a new form of "relaxed urbanity" to foster urban development in low-density area.[16]

In this thesis, because it is situated and operated within an existing developed urban environment, the scope of potential development therefore is limited by the established specific logic and ethos. Successful operations of the various suburban plazas and strip malls, for example, require direct car accesses and a minimal number of parking spaces. Instead of the masterplanning approach proposed by Gruen, the design intervention in this thesis adopts an infill approach of intensification. Although there exists the opportunity to explore other potentials in existing typology, for example, in the redressing and intensification of the strip mall typology as has been proposed by others, it is beyond the scope of this thesis proposal.[17]

15 Wall, A. (2005). *Victor gruen : From urban shop to new city*. Barcelona: Actar.

16 Wall, A. (2008). Public Lifestyle in the Low-Density City. In R. Segal & E. Verbakel (Eds.), *Cities of Dispersal*, 22-27. Chichester, England: Wiley.

17 Robbins, M. & Smiley, D.I. (Eds.) (2002). *Sprawl and Public Space: Redressing the Mall*. New York: Princeton Architecture Press.

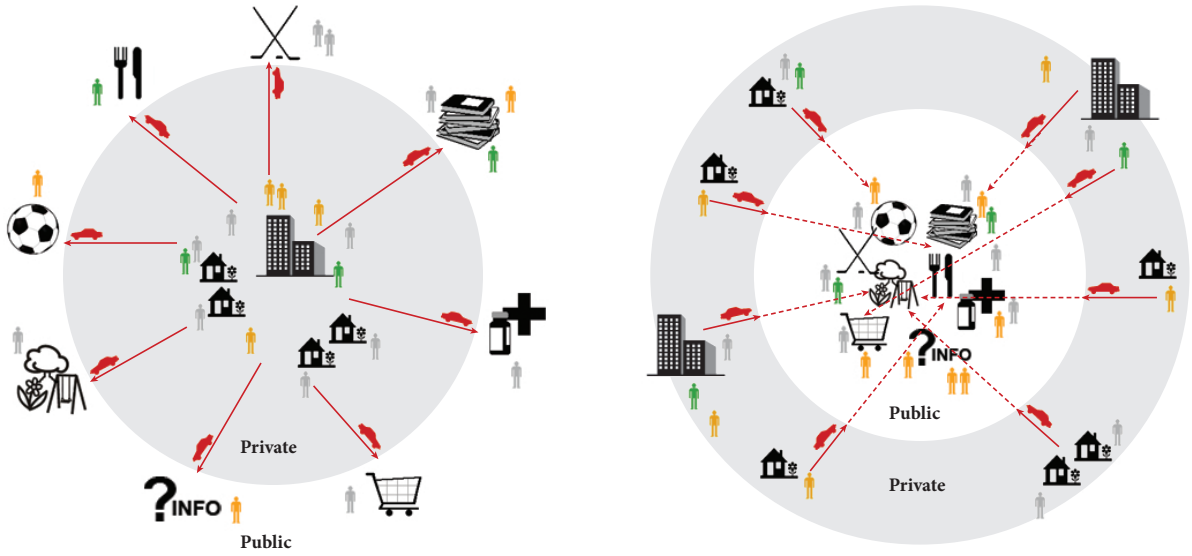


Fig 3.3 Mono-function programming typical in suburban development vs. multi-function programming in nodal mixed-use development

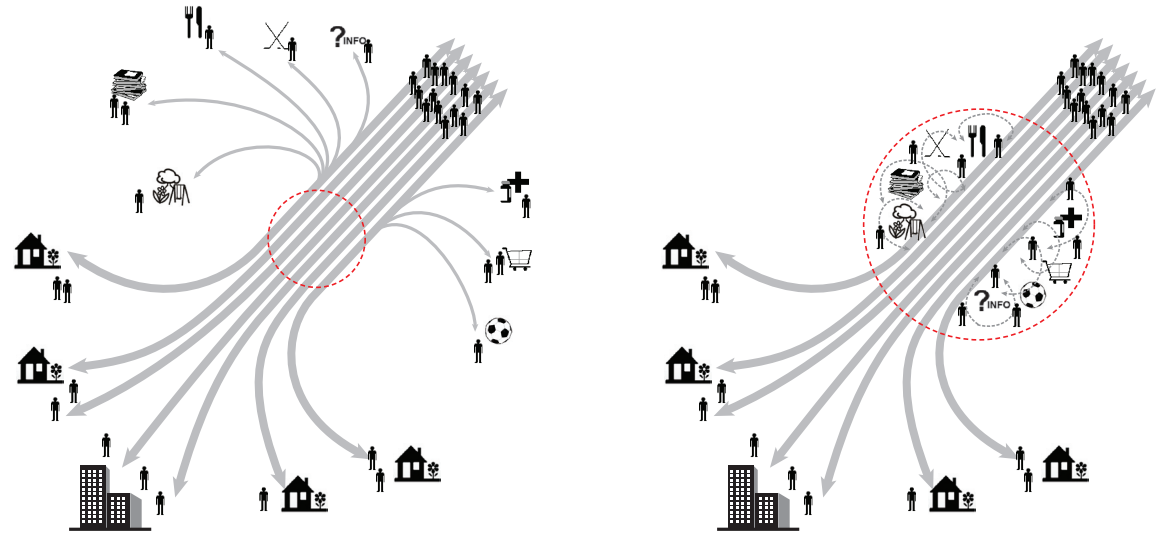


Fig 3.4 The laminar pattern in utilitarian intermodal hub vs. aggregation of urban activities and emergence of eddies

Mixed-use programming

In order to effectively activate the social and transformative potential of the public space, a mixed-use heterogeneous built-up is required to support successful public spaces in the suburban context. A diverse range of programs, including commercial, retail, social, recreational, and community-based programs, are brought together from their mono-programmed setting into a single mixed-use environment. They are selected based on their publicness and the respective producers and end-users they serve, they also represent the different levels of actors in the spatial production on any particular landscape, including regional, community, local, and individual. The convergence of different programs and actors creates a urban heterogeneous environment while their juxtapositions encourage program interactions and transparency.

Within this mixed-use setting, programs are allowed to operate independently according to their own logic. This flexibility allows for adaptations and avoids the overall static prescription in terms of programmatic relationship that could limit their responsiveness to future programming. By only specifying spatial relationships between program elements, this flexibility allows local changes and self-organization over time. Programming is therefore open-ended. Instead of being the focus of a design proposal, programs are props to set up the spatial setting . Over time, the program compositions are allowed to evolve in order to respond to changes in the local demographics and market speculation.

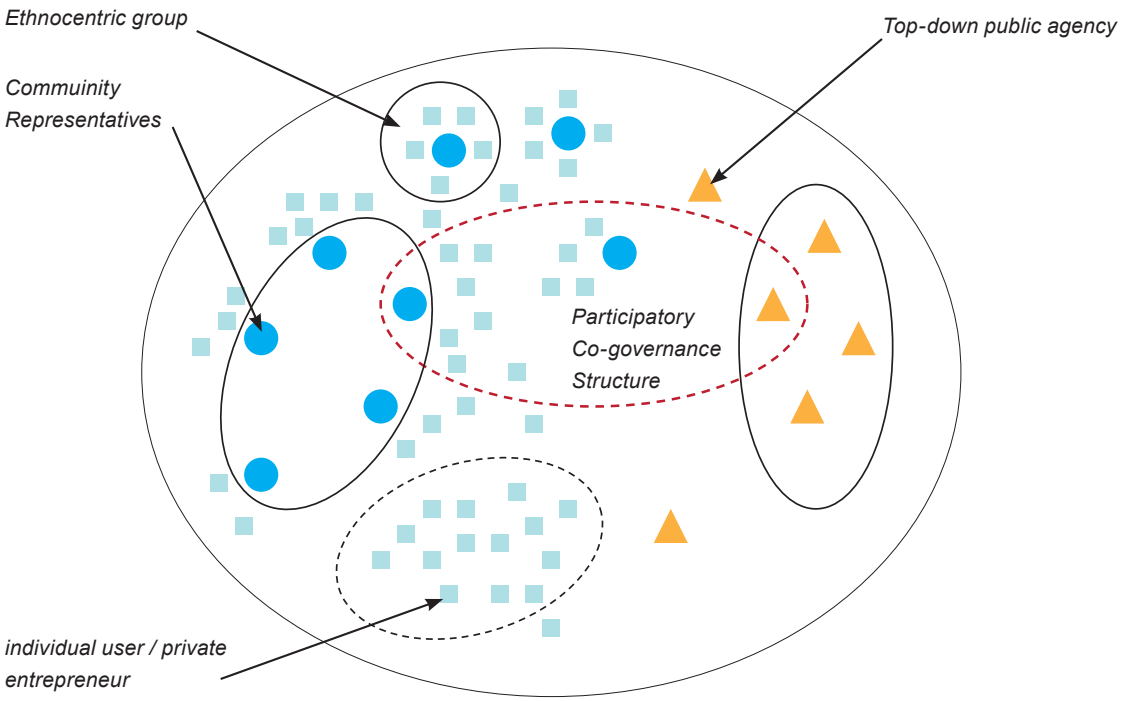


Fig 3.5 The participatory co-governance framework

Fig 3.6 Parking lot at Metro Square Plaza, Markham (top left)

Fig 3.7 Annual Night Market in Metro Square Plaza parking lot (bottom left)

Fig 3.8 Aerial photo of Metro Square Plaza, Markham (right)

Open-endedness & non-script programming

Because of the social diversity and the programmatic flux within the contemporary suburban context, the design of public spaces in suburbia demands a flexible and open-ended framework in order to allow for future adaptations. This open-ended design strategy is similar to that to that of a stage set. Their structures are defined in terms of connections and spatial relationships rather than internal programming and boundaries, thus replacing the absolute definition with relative qualifiers such as adjacency and permeability. Void of programming themselves, they acquire their identities from projections as well as oppositions against their surrounding contexts. Hence, these contemporary public spaces become spaces of permanent mobility, socially, physically, and politically based on evolving relations and perpetual negotiations.[18]

This design strategy extends the boundary of public spaces beyond the existing practice as bounded spatial objects onto other amorphous landscapes such as circulatory and service infrastructures. These non-places, from transit interchanges to parking lots, can be re-imagined as new collective spaces in the contemporary urban landscape. A utilitarian parking lot of a suburban shopping mall, for example, could double as a ready-made modular marketplace at night, ready to accommodate different user groups (fig 3.2). Along with traditional and formalized public spaces such as parks, museums, public squares, these public spaces represent the diverse spectrum of spatial conditions of contemporary urban topography.

When applying this strategy in the suburban context, design attentions are focused on access, the specifications of surrounding context, and their spatial relationship in supporting a heterogeneous environment. Different from public spaces in urban environments, where they are situated as voids in opposition to their dense urban fabric, suburban public spaces are situated in a low-density environment that lacks both intensity and diversity. To develop this intensity and diversity, surrounding areas must be developed to illicit participation from the suburban actors. The Night Market in Markham, for example, relies on importing other business and activities in addition to existing local activities in order to create a cross-culture backdrop for the public event.

18 PEPRAV. How to Make a community as well as the space for it. Retrieved on Dec 08, 2008, from http://www.peprav.net/tool/spip.php?article31

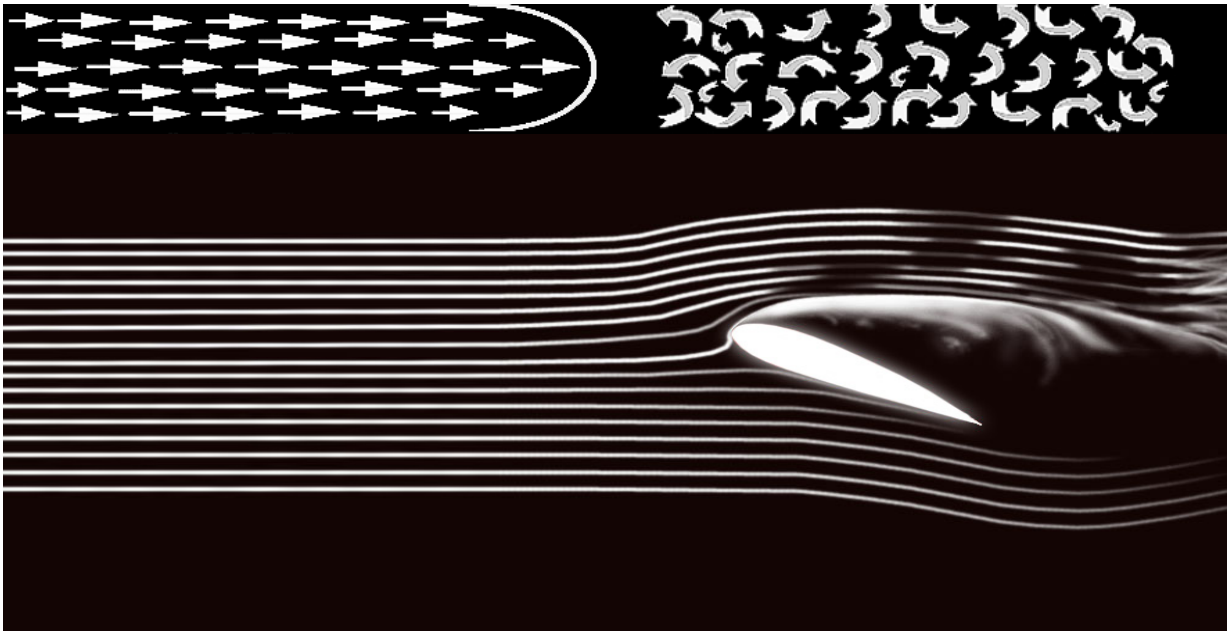


Fig 3.9 Laminar and turbulent flows

Laminar and Eddy flows

When examining public space as infrastructure, its spatial design in terms of flow can be understood through two distinct concepts: laminar and eddy flows. A laminar flow is generally used to describe the character of air and viscous liquid flow. It describes the manner in which fluid travels smoothly or in regular paths in thin layers parallel to each other. Instead of interacting with each other, the layers slide over each other in a well-ordered and non-intersecting manner.[19] An eddy, on the other hand, describes the turbulent fluid current in the presence of obstacles "whose flow direction differs from than the general flow".[20] Its interactions with its surroundings are able to produce, and at the same time dissolve, spaces around its edges.[21]

In our mobility-oriented society, strategies are generally used to facilitate and speed up the laminar flow. While fluidity is essential in our mobility-oriented society, this thesis proposes to couple public spaces with circulatory infrastructure as a way of slowing down travel from one site to another and providing opportunities for residents to linger and mix. In order to balance the fluidity of circulation with social interactions and mixing, these public spaces are introduced at the edge of the circulatory path. Acting in conjunction with other program aggregates, it functions as disturbance and friction to encourage eddy within the parallel flow pattern. The resulting eddies in form of participations in the surrounding environment and social interactions in turn transform the space into a "lived" place through collective social experiences and repetitions. This strategy recognizes both the importance of mobility in the dispersed environment and the individual's freedom to participate and interact in our pluralistic contemporary society.

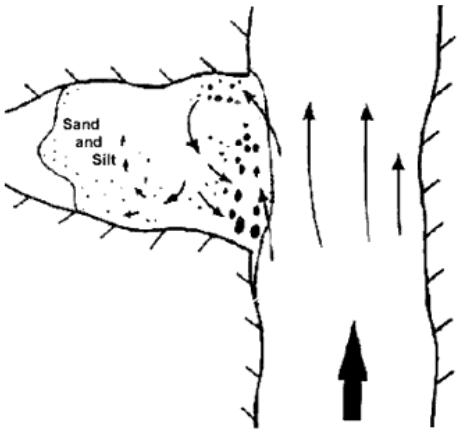


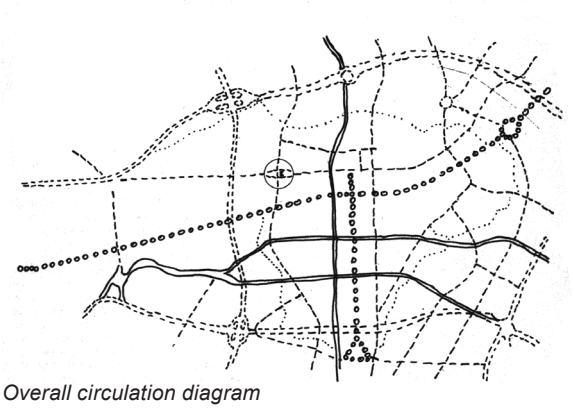
Fig 3.10 Erosion of potholes and formation of sediment deposits by eddy currents along a riverbank

Fig 3.11 Commuters at a train station in Japan

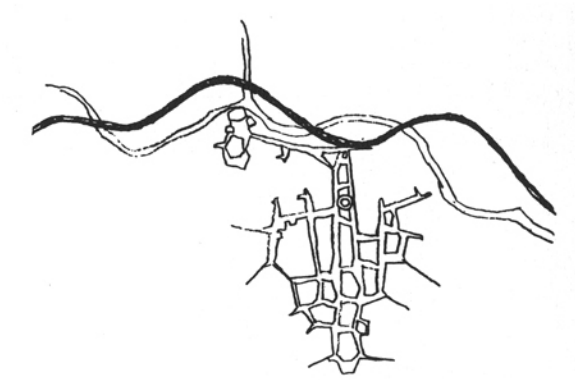
19 Laminar flow. Encyclopedia Britannica. Retrieved on June 4, 2009, from http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/328742/laminar-flow

20 "Eddy flow, Wikipedia: the free encyclopedia. Retrieved on June 4, 2009, from http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eddy_(fluid_dynamics)

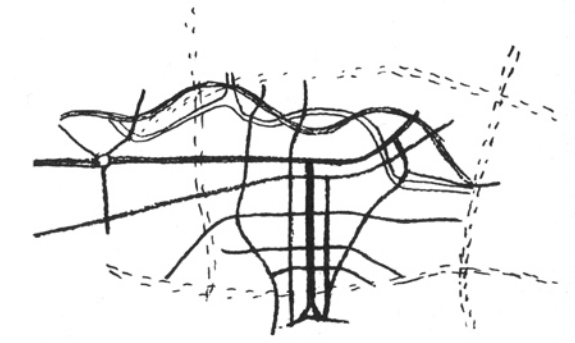
21 What is an Eddy. Retrieved on June 4, 2009, from http://imnh.isu.edu/digitalatlas/hydr/concepts/surf-hyd/main/eddy.htm



Overall circulation diagram



Pedestrian net



Ground traffic net

Fig 3.12 Circulation diagrams of Hauptstadt Berlin proposal

Stratification of movement

In the design of an intermodal hub, one is confronted with the conflict between the independence of different circulation systems and overall interconnectivity. The same inquiry could find its lineage in the modernist and the postwar 1960s, when the marginalization of the urban fabric by the automobile prompted investigation into a new ways of restructuring mobility. Reacting against the prewar functional specialization and strict instrumentalization of movement that was epitomized in the imagery of Ville Radieuse proposed by Le Corbusier, architectural discourse in the postwar period adopted a humanistic perspective and opted for the integration of urban activities. Recognizing the instrumental function of mobility as an essential physical and urban connective tissue Team 10 and other young architects during this postwar period instead shifted their focus to the re-implementation of the "street" and the pedestrian environment, i.e. the idea of the "man on the street".[22,23]

In their attempt to reconcile the conflict of speed between pedestrian and vehicular traffic, the Smithsons reintroduced the traditional network of streets as an overlay over the vehicular ground network, thus allowing independent operations and continuity of both pedestrian and vehicular networks within the layered structure. In both the

22 Feld, G., & Tashima, C. (1999). *Free university, Berlin: Candilis, Josic, Woods,Sschiedhelm*. London: Architectural Association.

23 Lewis, J. (Ed.) 1967. *Urban Restructuring: Studies of Alison and Peter Smithson*. New York: Reinhold Publishing Corp.

Golden Lane Housing scheme and the Hauptstadt Berlin competition, for example, the continuity and freedom of pedestrian mobility was achieved by peeling the pedestrian infrastructure along with other everyday and urban functions, from the ground plane onto a new elevated public space through a network of elevated walkways. The two levels, the ground vehicular networks and the elevated pedestrian level, were connected at strategic midway points and road intersections through vertical carriers like the escalator. Though visionary in their attempts to reconcile the relationship between car and pedestrian, these approaches have been criticized for creating equally alienating pedestrian spaces segregated from the

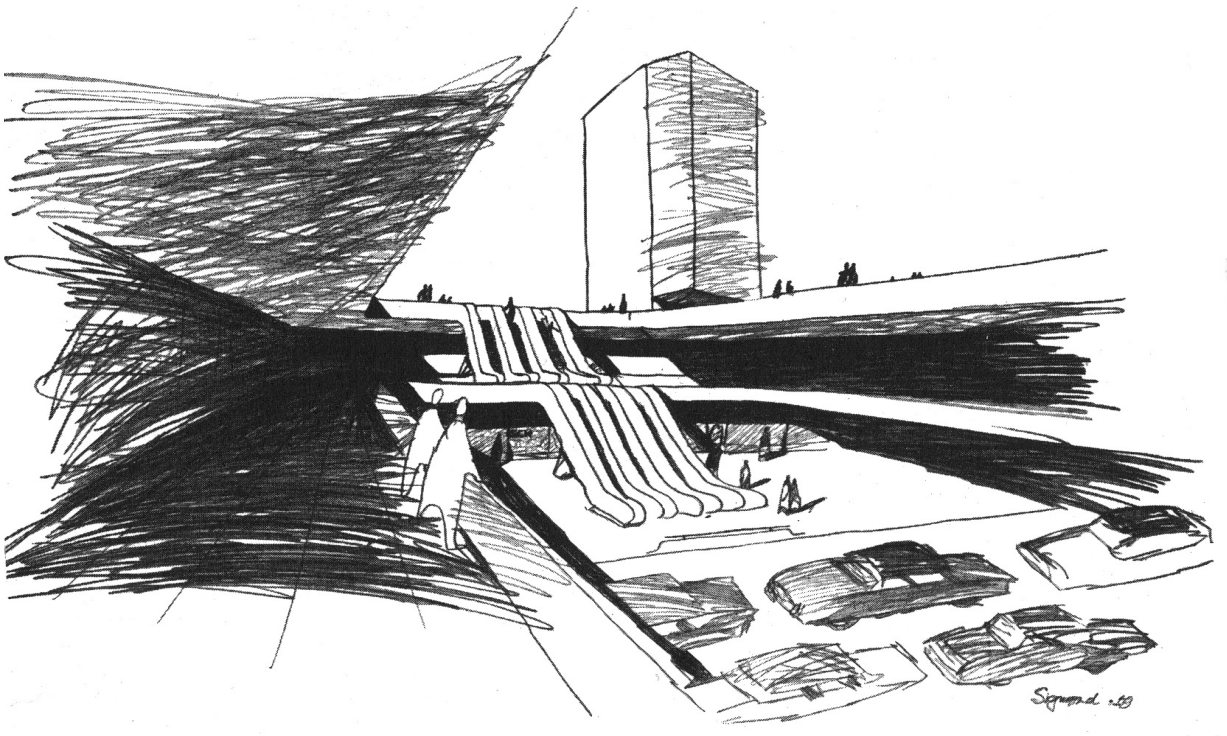


Fig 3.13 Image of vertical connections in the Hauptstadt Berlin proposal

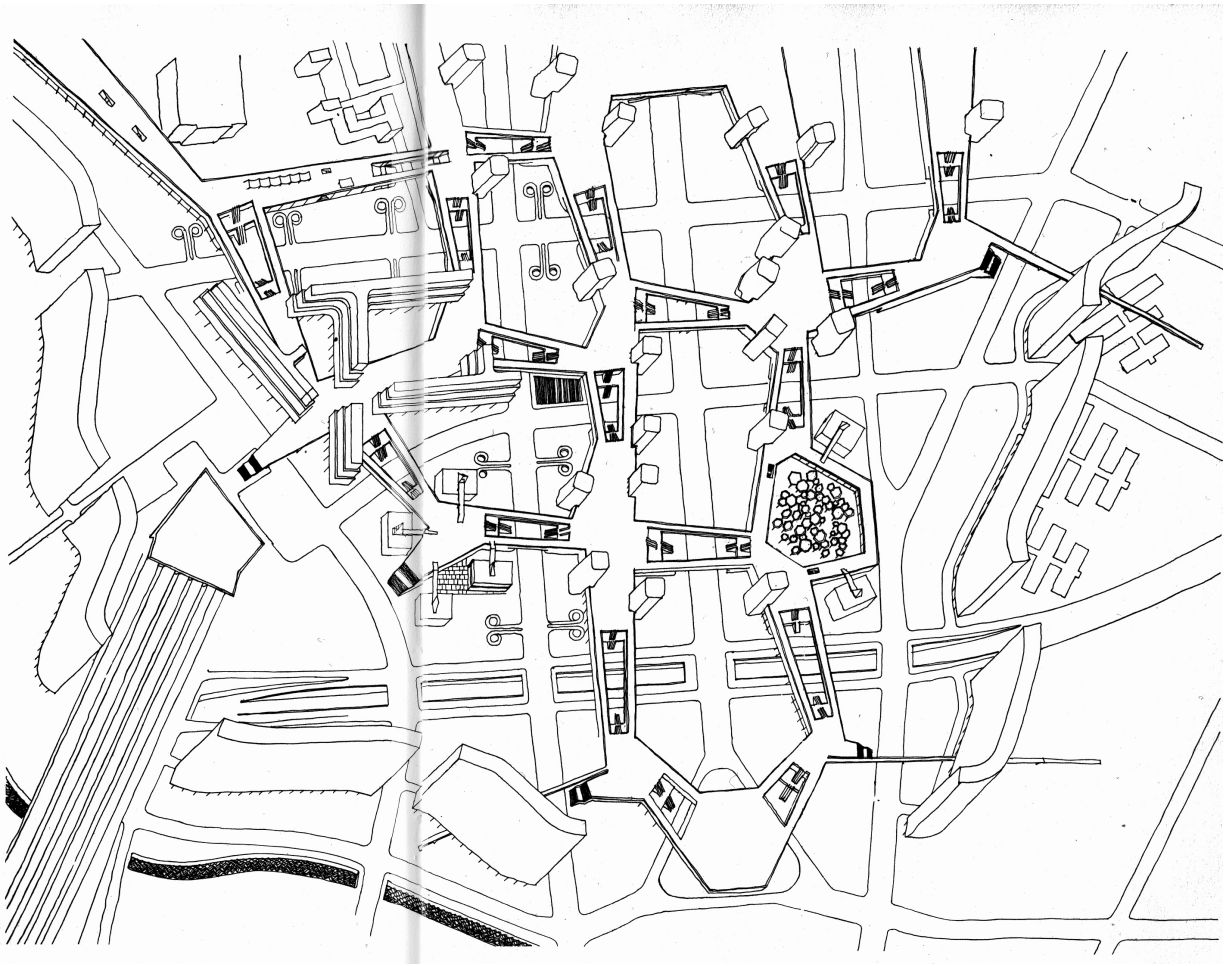


Fig 3.14 Plan of the South portion of the Hauptstadt Berlin scheme

surrounding urban fabric.[24] Despite efforts to integrate different modes of circulation into the urban fabric, the overall structure has never achieved a high level of integration between the two circulation networks.

This stratified scheme in structuring mobility continues to be adopted in contemporary design of transit nodes. To achieve a high level of integration in this stratified landscape, design attention should focus on the interconnectivity between the different strata, for example, using multiple vertical connections, as well as the connections with its surroundings as grounding elements. Rather than segregated into separate strata, the pedestrian realm and public spaces could be integrated within or along a transit circulation network. While vehicular networks functioned as a physical connector between localized community pockets in the postwar period, the extent of privatization in contemporary society has extended beyond the boundaries of communities closer to the exchange thresholds between public and private mobility. The interstitial connections between different transit modes then become the important connecting tissue within the stratified zone of mobility and public spaces.

24 Lewis, J. (1967).

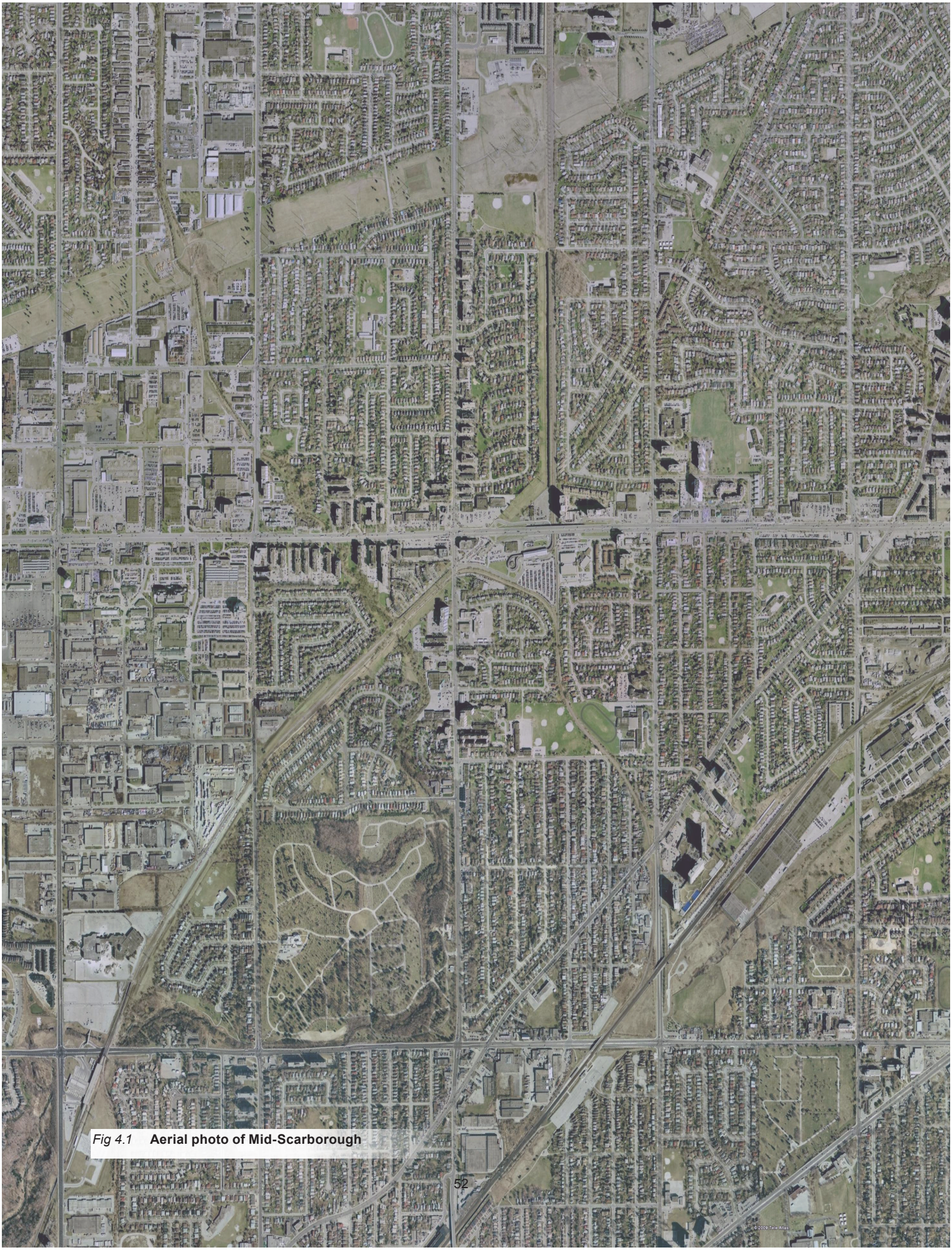


Fig 4.1 **Aerial photo of Mid-Scarborough**

Chapter 4 Site Documentation

"Once we accept that our cities will not be like cities of the past, it will become possible to see what they might become. Combining lessons from the past with the present will not produce a unified city, but a combination of disparate elements, old and new dense and diffuse, private and public: Frank Lloyd Wright's Broadacre City meets Jane Jacob's Greenwich Village. This will please neither the advocates of traditional urbanism nor the edge-city boosters, but its chaotic, ideological impurity may be a more truthful accommodation to the way we live today".

Witold Rybczynski.[1]

1 Rybczynski, W. (1995). *City life: Urban expectations in a new world*. New York: Scribner.

Fig 4.2 **Site boundaries**

4.1. Site selection and descriptions

The study area of this thesis is located in the Mid-Scarborough region in Toronto. The site's evolution and its current condition reflects a typical typology of a inner suburbs as well as all its challenges. They include a fractured physical landscape, a general neglect from both government and design professionals, a disappearing public interface, and a fragmented social fabric due to privatization and segregation. Although the site presents several site-specific conditions, including a high residential density, a regional transportation hub, as well as a large amount of under-developed public land, these conditions are not atypical in suburban settings. Through detailed site documentation, and subsequent identification of both general as well as site-specific conditions, this thesis aims to discover potentials within this dispersed urban environment that could inform design interventions.

4.2. Site Boundary

Scarborough is bordered on the north by Steeles Ave. East, on the east by the Rouge River and the Scarborough-Pickering Townline, on the south by Lake Ontario and on the west by Victoria Park Ave. The region is composed of a number of neighbourhoods, many of which have their own distinct local character.

The Mid-Scarborough area is not an officially designated area. Its name originates from the Mid Scarborough Community Recreation Centre (MSCRC) within the area. The centre however was renamed in 2007 the Don Montgomery Community Recreation Centre (DMCRC), to honoured the late president of the Scarborough Hockey Association. The Mid-Scarborough region lies between 3 wards boundaries, as well as 3 different neighbourhoods including Kennedy Park, Ionview, and Eglinton East. (Fig 3.2) Despite this ambiguity, the area is outlined by a clear boundary: on the east by Birchmont Road and an industrial strip, on the west by Brimley Road, on the north by Lawrence Ave East, and on the south by the combined edges of St. Clair Ave East, Danforth Road, and a rail corridor.

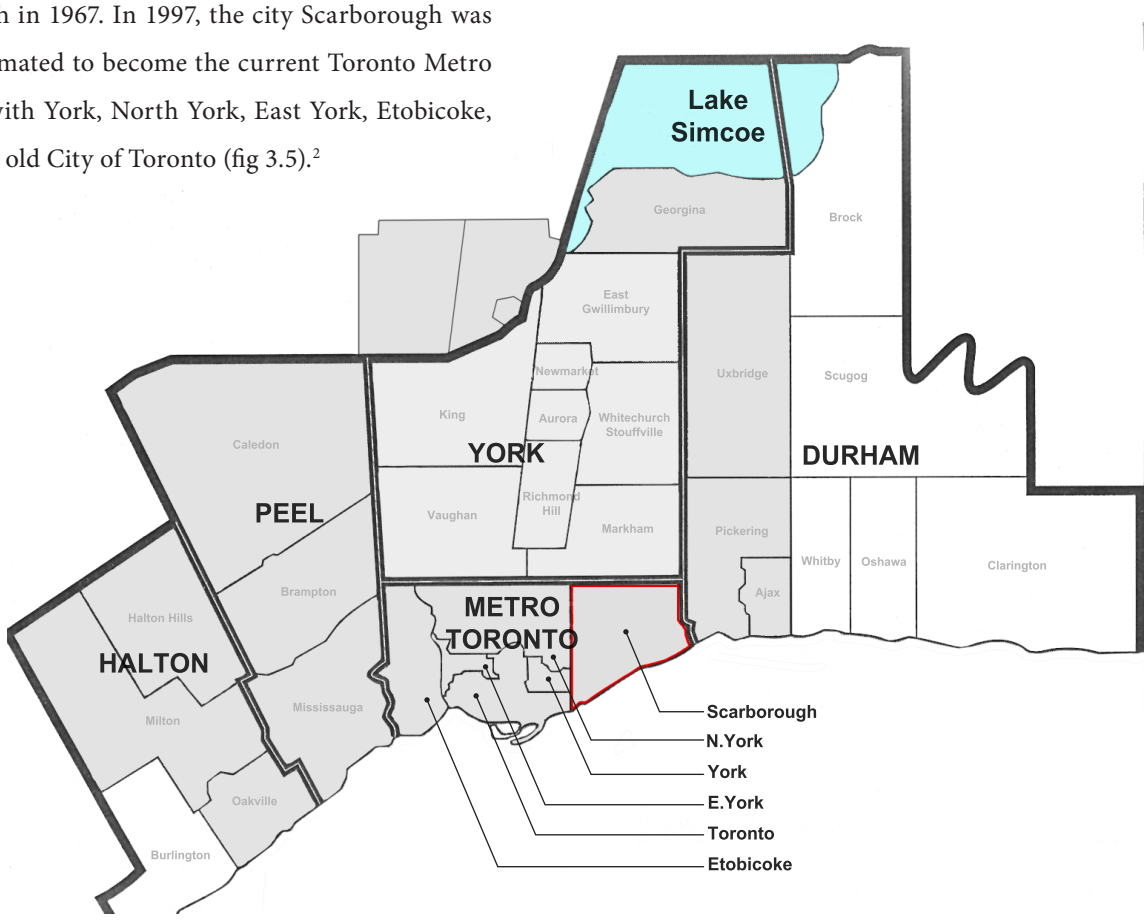
Fig 4.3 **West view at Kingston Rd & Scarborough Rd in 1922**

Fig 4.4 West view at Kingston Rd & Victoria Park, 1922

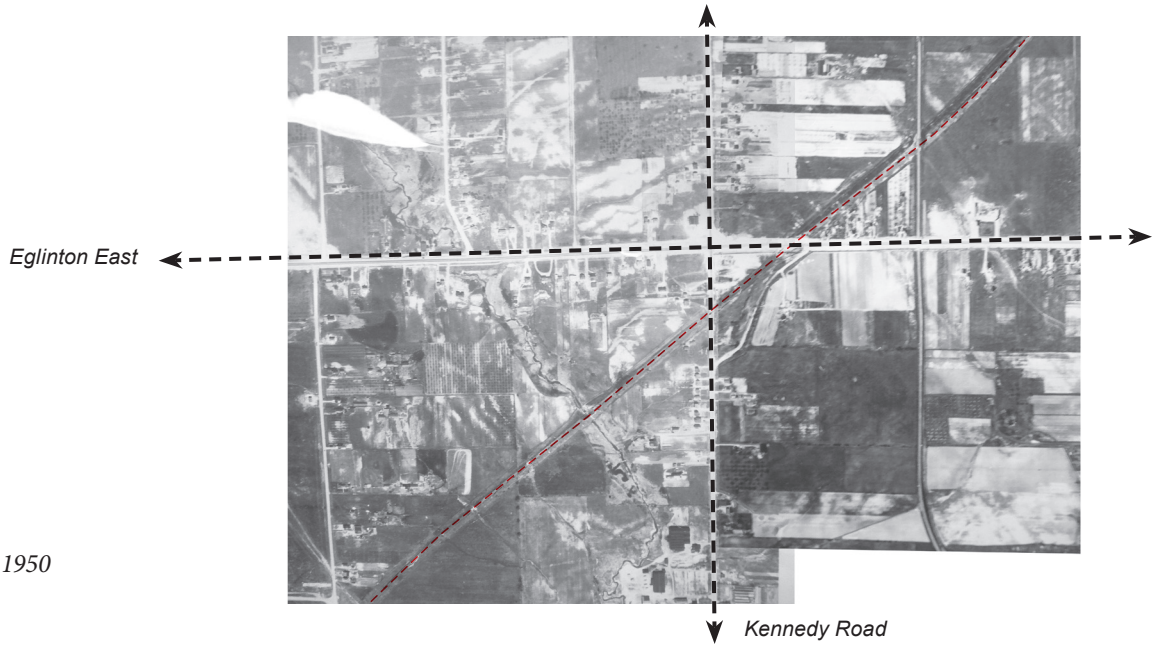
4.3. Historical Evolution

The area of Mid-Scarborough began as a rural farming community adjacent to the City of York in the early 19th century. After the railway came to the area in 1893 the community began to grow around the rail corridor along Kingston Road up to West Hill in the north. During the postwar period, similar to other peripheral regions in Toronto, Mid-Scarborough's population gradually increased as a consequence of the effects of the suburbanization and expansion of the City of Toronto. In 1953, the Scarborough township became part of Toronto Metro, which was in turn incorporated as a borough in 1967. In 1997, the city Scarborough was amalgamated to become the current Toronto Metro along with York, North York, East York, Etobicoke, and the old City of Toronto (fig 3.5).[2]

Fig 4.5 Regional boundaries of GTA

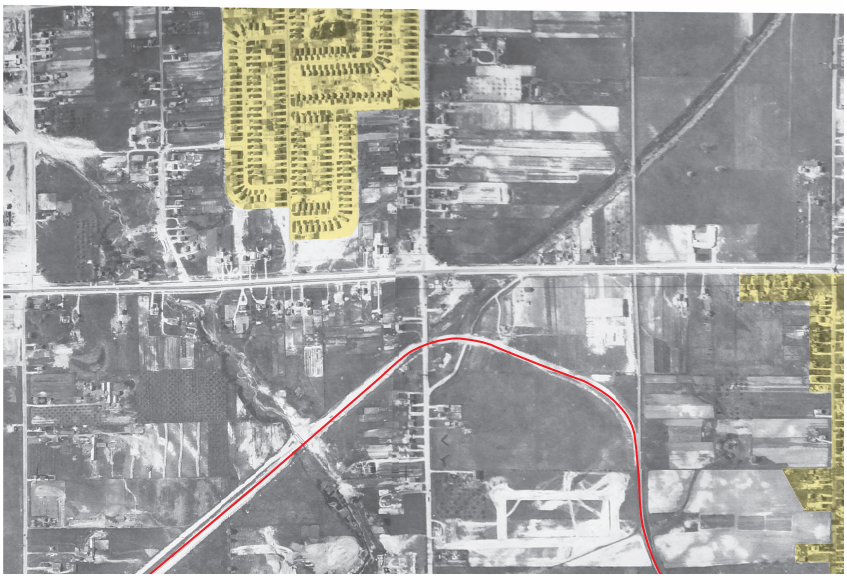


2 Scarborough Toronto. Wikipedia. Retrieved on August 05, 2009, from http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Scarborough,_Ontario



Before 1950

A collection of farming communities aggregated along Eglinton East and Kennedy Rd. There was the imprint of a single-radial rail track. It ran diagonally across the area from Kingston Rd to West Hill in the 1920s and was demolished later in 1930s.

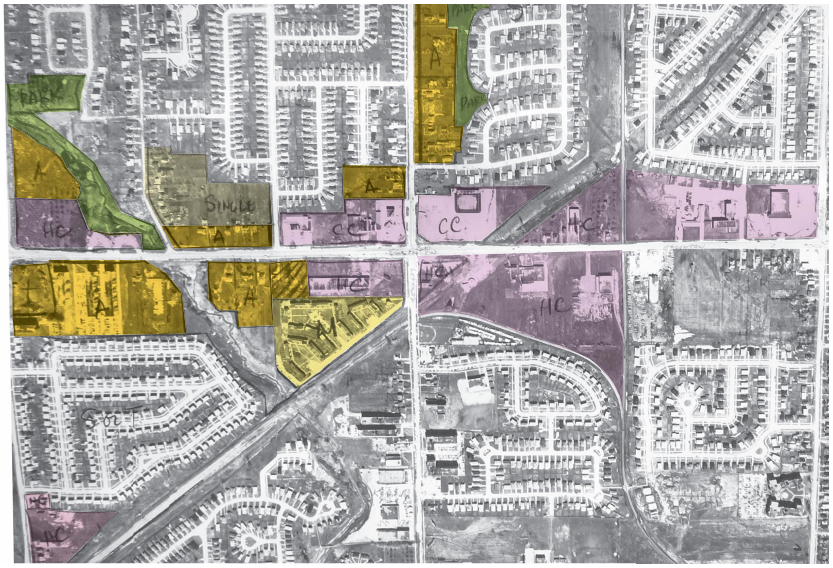


1953

A new CN railway was completed mostly for transportation of goods. Large-scale suburban development began to emerge along the Eglinton corridor in Ionview neighbourhood to provide housing stock for the expanding City of Toronto.

1956

Developments continued in form of residential subdivisions. A new Post Office depot and the Mid-Scarborough Recreational Centre, were built to service the expanding suburban communities.

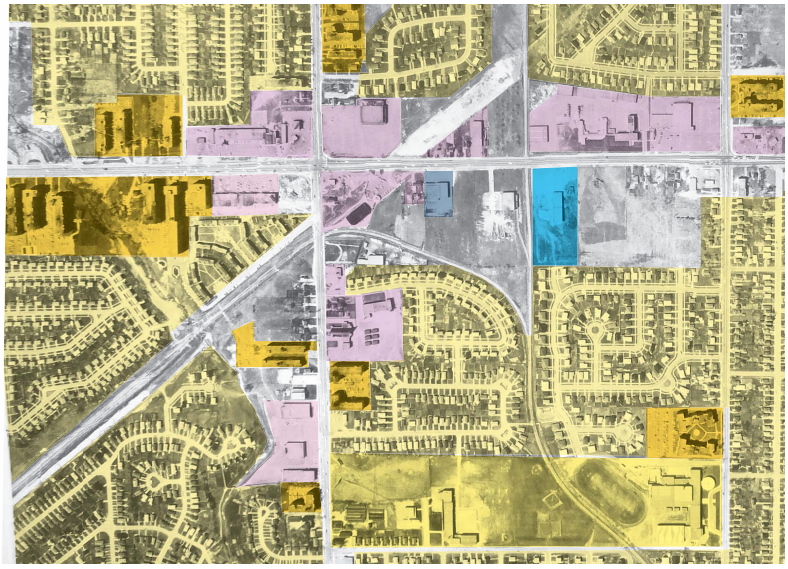


1960

Low density Residential
Mid density Residential
High density Residential
Retail & Commerical
Neightbourhood Park
Community services
Recreational facilities

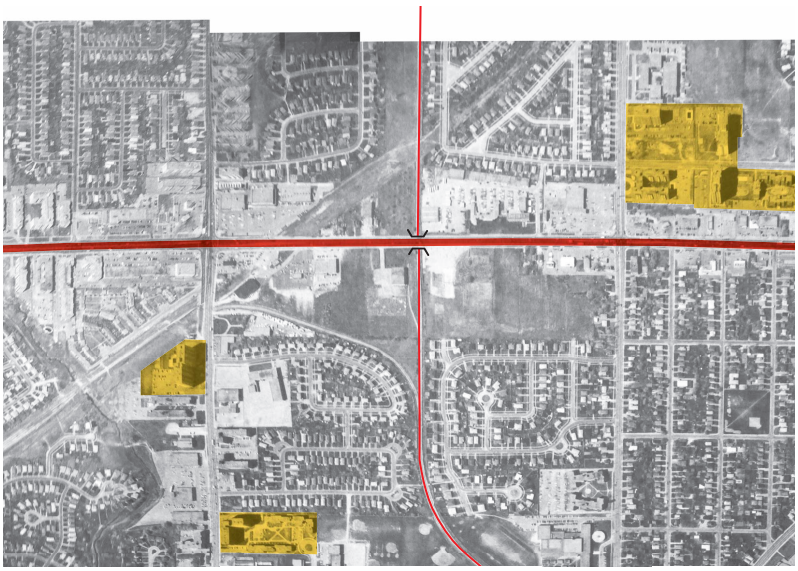
Along with continued expansion and the development of residential subdivisions, a masterplan was drafted for the area along Eglinton corridor. The plan reflected the overall strategy to concentrate urban activities and to densify along major arterial roads such as Eglinton and Kennedy Rd.

Fig 4.6 Historical analyses, Mid-Scarborough pre 1950-1960



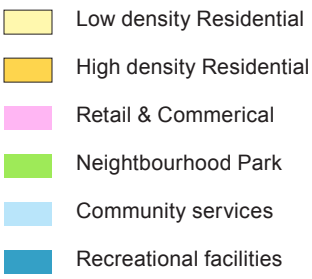
1964

Retail and commercial developments began to appear along arterial roads precribed by the masterplan, in forms of shopping plazas and suburban strip malls. Densification of the area demanded construction of several new schools to serve the expanding suburban middle class family. A suburban plan was realized.



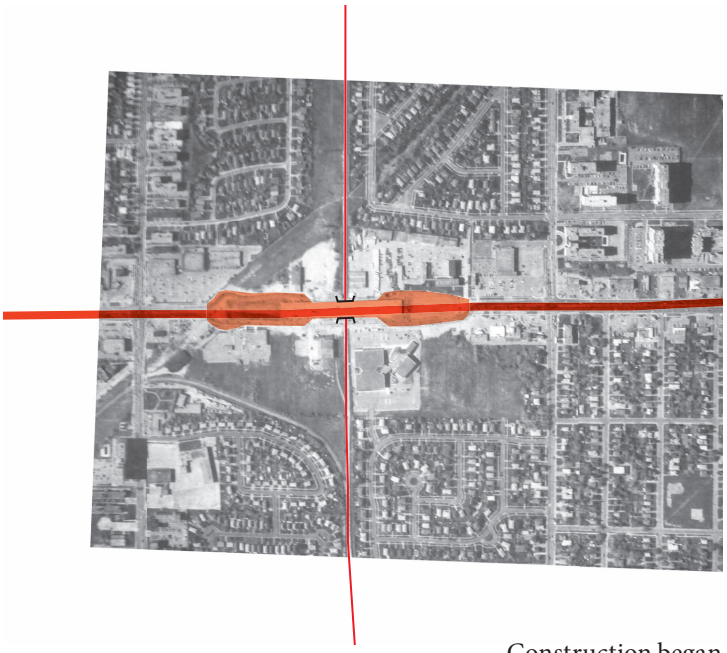
1973

The original Mid-Scarborough Community Recreation Centre (MSCRC) was destroyed in a fire. To improve safety and traffic flow along Eglinton, a overpass was built to allow Eglinton Road to run over the existing CN railway. Several high density community housing projects, including the Glider housing development, were built.



1975

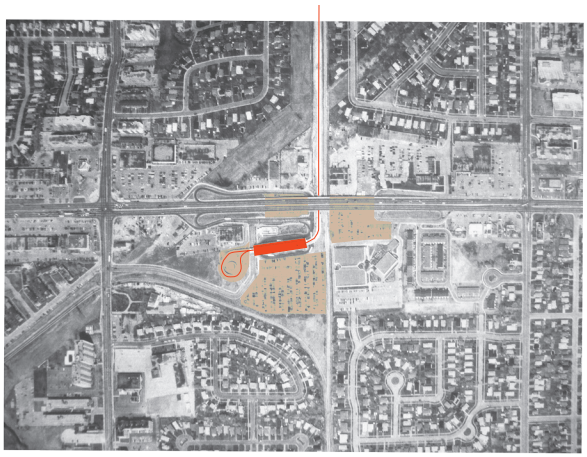
Durng the mid '70s and '80s, several large infrastructure projects dominated the development in the area. The current Mid Scarborough Community Recreation Centre (MSCRC) was completed to provide social, cultural, and recreational services for the neighbourhood. The 2-level facilities included a senior centre, a youth centre, a multipurpose gymnasium, as well as 2 hockey arenas.



1977

Construction began on the new TTC Kennedy Station as part of the Bloor-Danforth subway extension. To allow efficient bus access and overall traffic movement into and around the new station and the regional bus depot, a new overpass spanning over the CN rail track, and two service road loops were included as a part of the project.

Fig 4.7 Historical analyses, Mid-Scarborough 1964-1977



1983

Kennedy station opened in 1980 to connect Scarborough to Toronto along the Bloor-Danforth subway line. Construction of Scarborough Light Rail (SRT) along an existing rail track was completed by 1985 extending northeast to Scarborough Town Centre. Increase in station usages due to urbanization of the area demanded successive expansions of commuter parking around Kennedy Station

2005

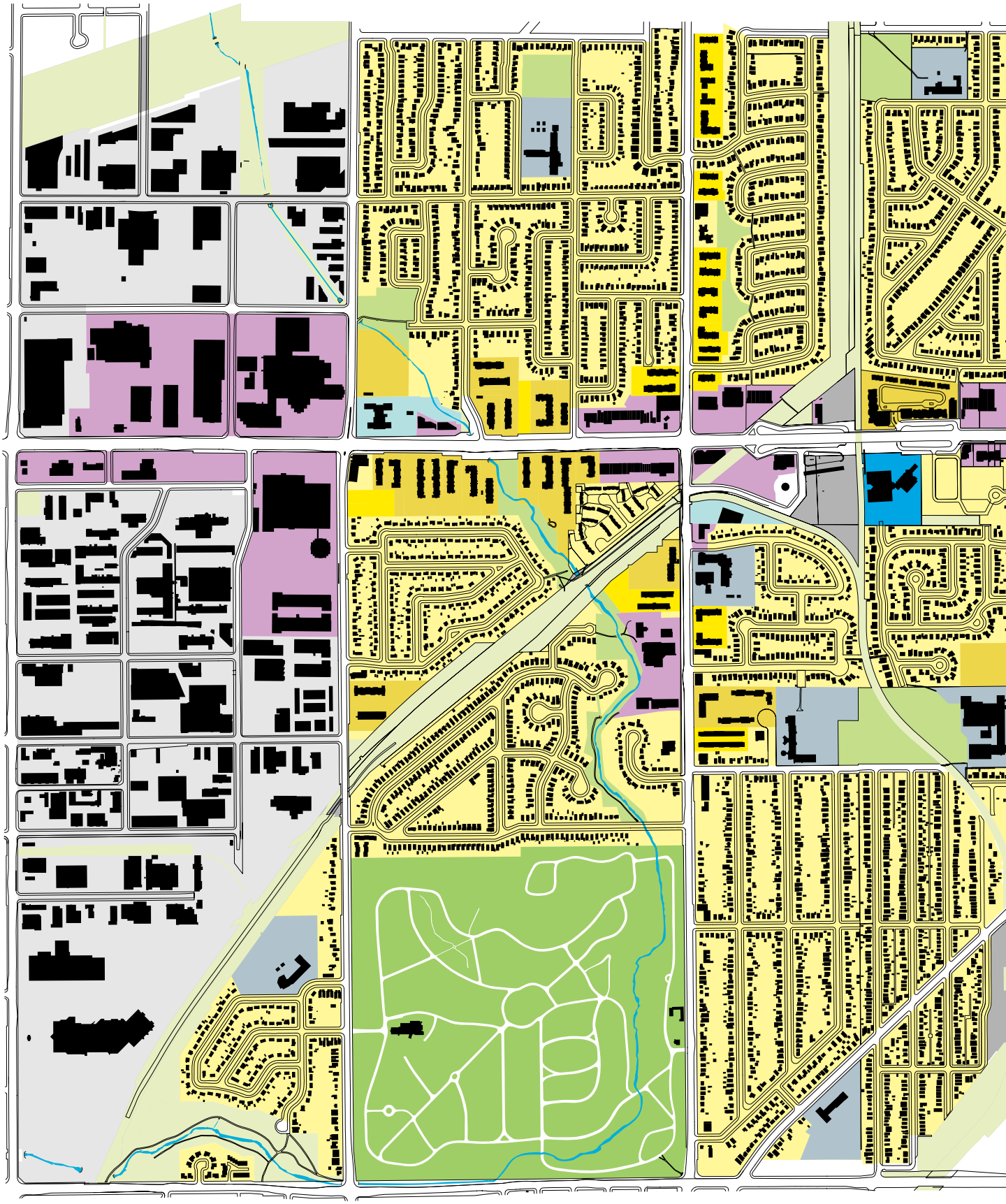
Commuter Parking

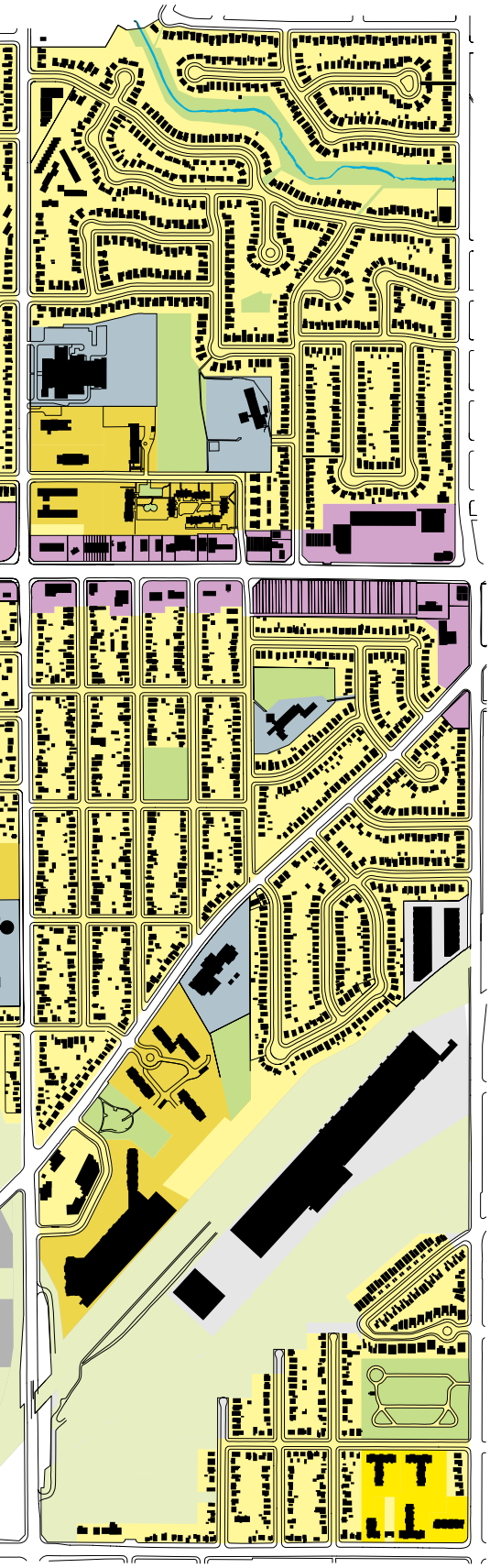
Railway

In 2005, GO transit adopted an existing rail corridor to improve its commuter train service with a new commuter train service between Union Station in downtown north up to Markham-Stouffville. A new walk-in train platform was constructed across Kennedy Station, and the two stations are connected through an underground pedestrian tunnel.

Fig 4.8 Historical analyses, Mid-Scarborough 1983-2005

Fig 4.9 Aerial photo of Kennedy Station after openning in 1985 and photo of the steel framework of the SRT





4.4. Typology and Physical Characteristics

The general typology in Mid-Scarborough reflects one of an urbanized suburban centre: large mono-programmed blocks stitched together by collector and arterial road corridors. Urban activities, including retail, commercial, social, cultural, and recreational, are segregated from residential fabric as strip malls, shopping plazas, stand-alone big-box retails, and institutions along the 2 major arterial roads, Eglinton Ave. east and Kennedy Rd. Apart from a few protected natural green strips along the ravines, there is a general lack of public green space. Recreational and social activities on one hand are consolidated and formalized into recreational facilities and community centers such as DMCRC. On the other hand, neighbourhood parks, an important infrastructure for informal everyday social and recreational activities, are often left underdeveloped as grassy green lawn, without the proper spatial differentiation or infastructure to support different activities. Their locations are often coupled with school sites to improve land use and program efficiency, thus often being absorbed as part of school playgrounds and sport fields. For the remaining interstitial spaces, i.e. the pedestrian sidewalk and roadways, after all the programs and functions being either stripped away or formalized into built objects, is reduced to "Non-Places"; they are no longer destinations or carry any specific functions within the vehicular-oriented environment except as primarily circulatory connections within the built environment.[3]

Fig 4.10 Composite zoning map of Mid-Scarborough

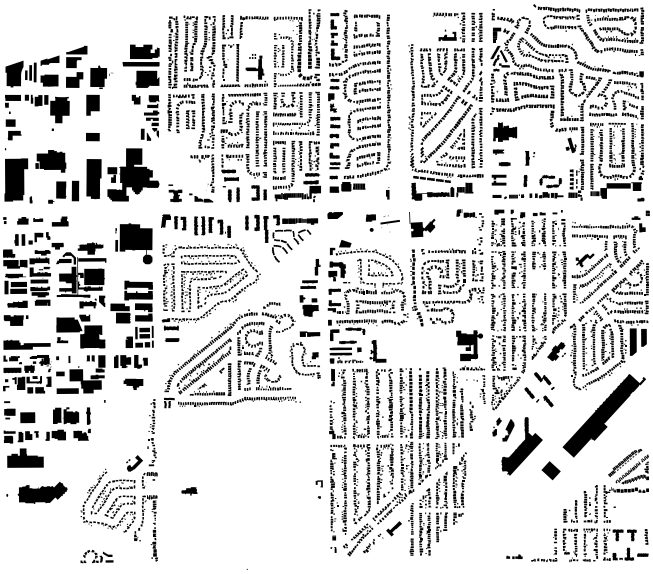
Low density residential
Medium density residential
High density residential

Community
Recreational
Educational

Retail & Commercial
Industrial

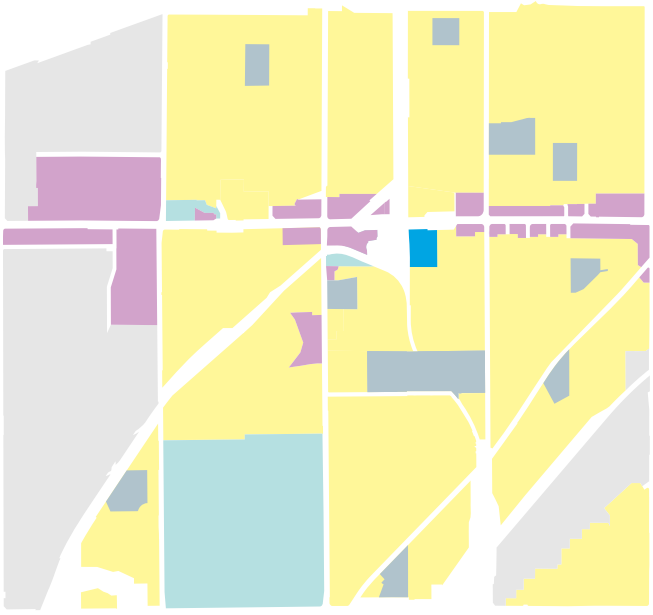
Residual green buffer
Natural reserve & park

3 Auge, Marc. (1995). Non-Places: Introduction to an anthropology of supermodernity. New York:Verso



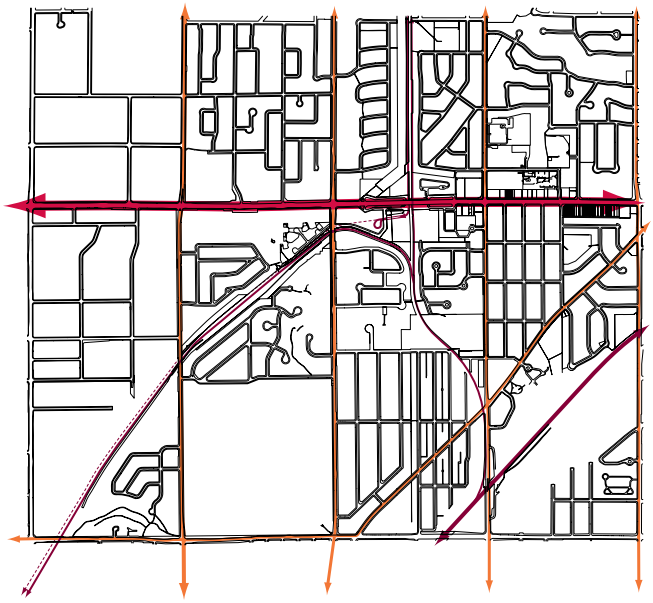
Built Fabric

Mid-Scarborough reflects a typical suburban fabric. It is characterized fine-grain single-family residential housing organized in large residential blocks. A zone of a larger grain congregates along Eglinton Ave E as strip malls and stand-alone retail chains. The area is bordered by an industrial strip along its western edge, shown as the coarse and dispersed fabric.



Program block

The large block developments due to zoning regulations produce a fragmented and segregated fabric that reflects the typical suburban landscape. This spatial pattern discourages interaction and communication between different programs.



Arterial road (>6 lanes)

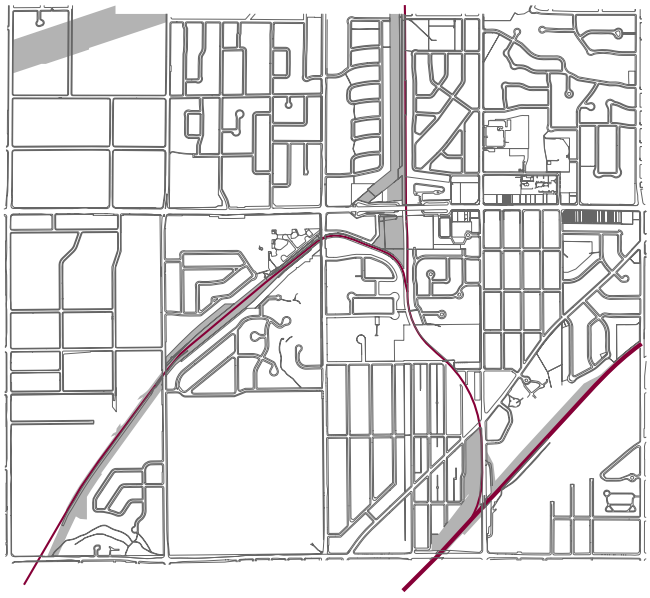
Collector road (<4 lanes)

Underground Subway

Surface railway

Connectivity

The large program blocks are connected through a hierarchy of road and rail infrastructure.



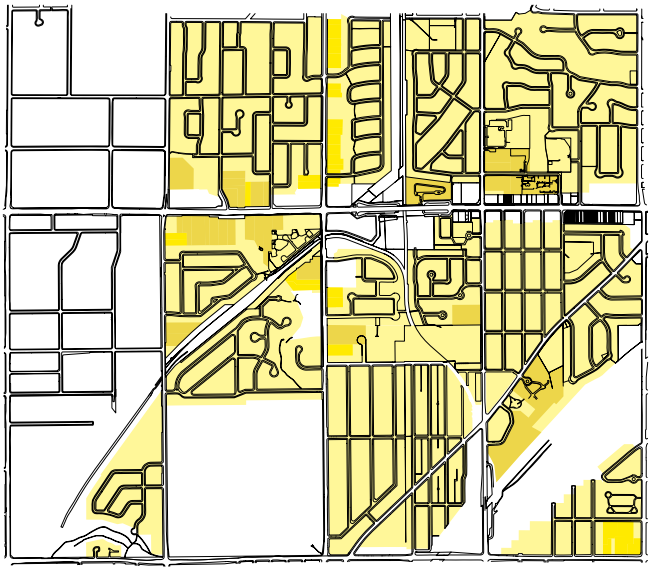
Surface rail corridor

Powerline zone

Physical boundary

On the other hand, the surface rail corridor, together with the unbuildable zone associated with the powerline, create the physical boundary that discourage physical connections betweens the different parcels.

Fig 4.11 Site analyses, Mid-Scarborough



Low density residential

Medium density residential

High density residential

Reesidential density

The overall density of Mid-Scarborough reflects the typical low density suburban environment. Medium and high density housing developments are concentrated along the major arterial road including Eglinton, Kennedy, Danforth.

Community services

Recreational facility

Retail & Commercial

Arterial road (>6 lanes)

Collector road (<4 lanes)

Retail and commerical corridor

Urban activities, including retail, commercial, recreational, and community services, tend to congregate along main traffic corridor for easy vehicular access, though they become segregated from the residential district they are intended to serve.

Protected natural reserve

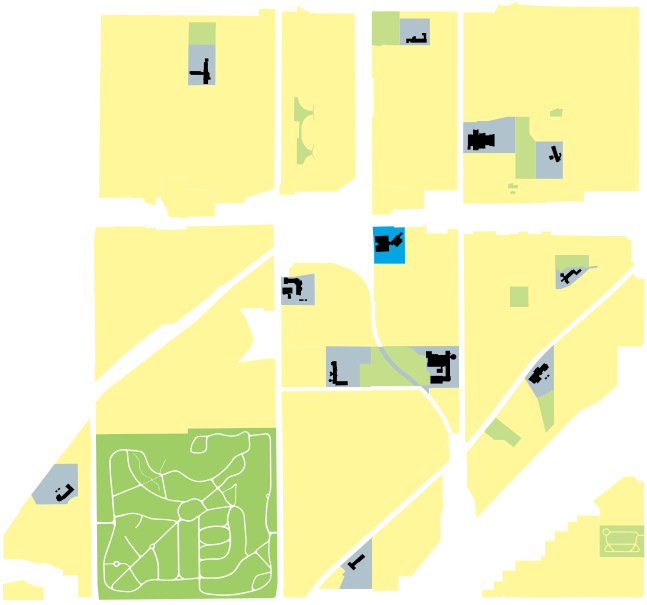
Green buffer & residual land from development

Surface railway

Ravine system

Natural System

Public spaces are reduced to zoness of green buffers, protected natural reserves along the ravine system, and residual leftover spaces from development such as grass fields and strips along rail corridor and powerlines.



Residential block

Schools

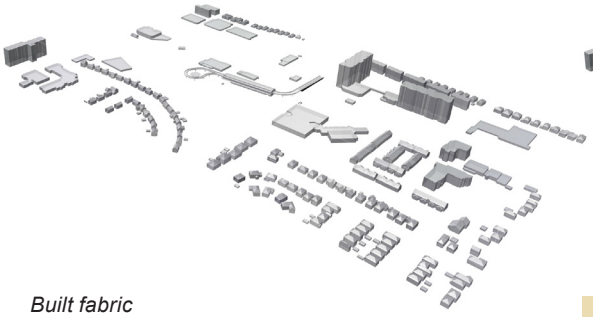
Neighbourhood park network

Recreation programs

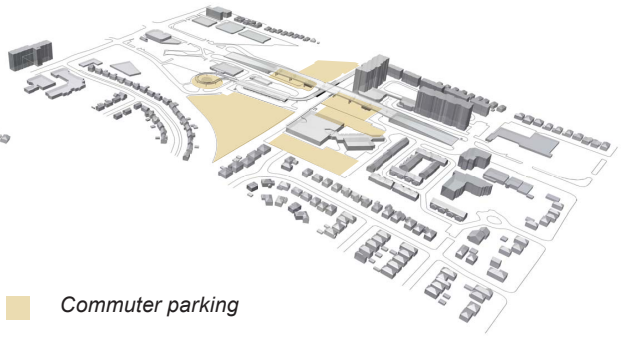
Institutional and recreational paring

Neighbourhood park system is often consolidated and paired up with regional institutional system as a method of increasing efficiency in land and resource uses.

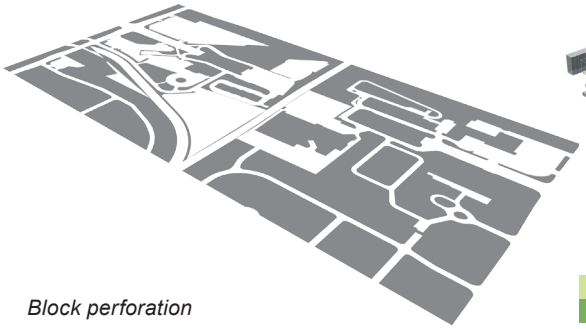
Fig 4.12 Site analyses, Mid-Scarborough



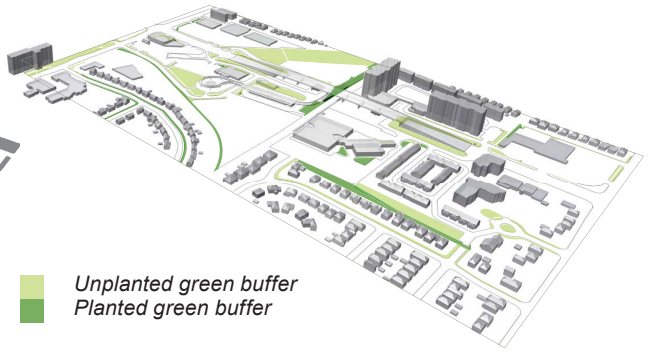
Built fabric



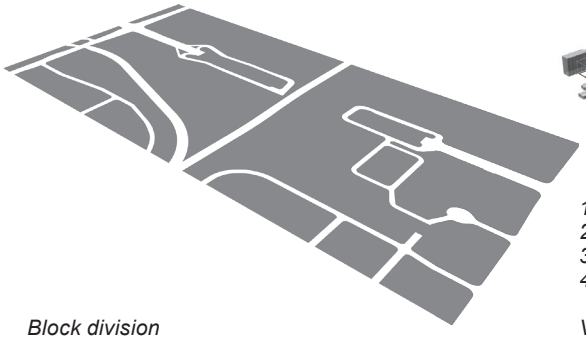
Commuter parking



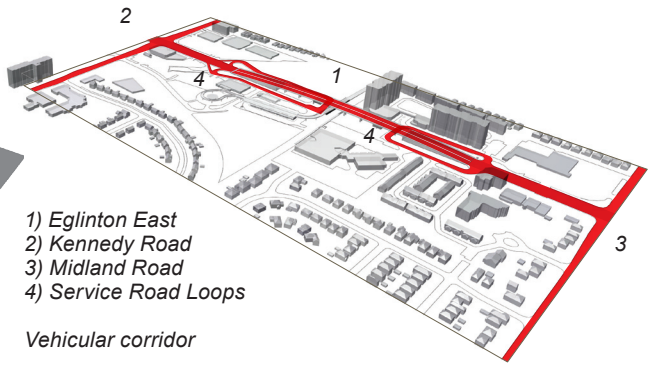
Block perforation



Unplanted green buffer
Planted green buffer



Block division

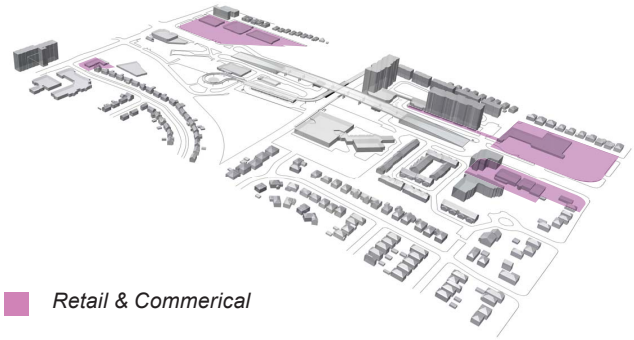


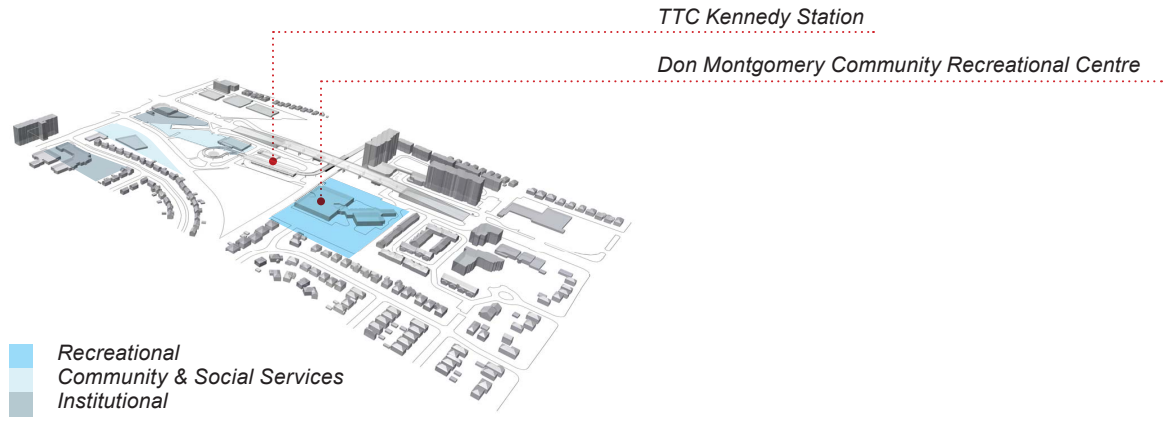
1) Eglinton East
2) Kennedy Road
3) Midland Road
4) Service Road Loops

Vehicular corridor

Fig 4.13 Site analysis, focus study area

This thesis focuses the area around Kennedy Station and Don Montgomery Community Recreational Centre (DMCRC) as the detailed study site. The two buildings make up the primary physical element wihtin the focus site. They also represents the public programming within Mid-Scarborough region.





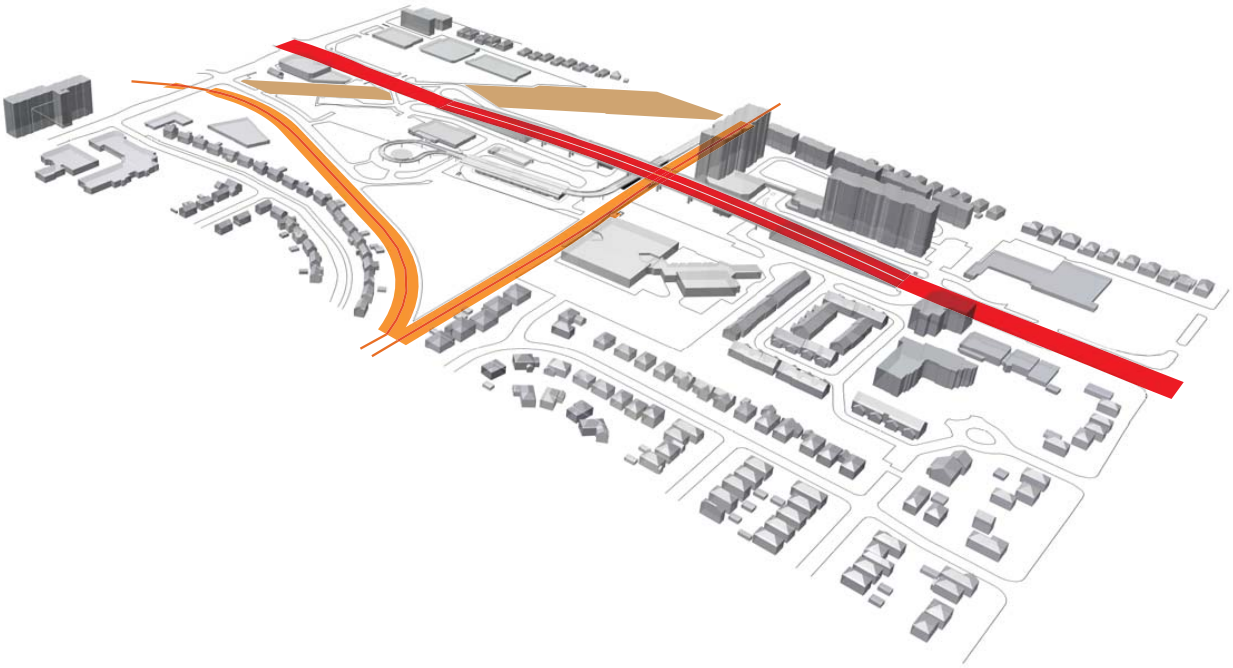


Fig 4.14 Site analyses, physical boundaries

Vehicular arterial corridor

Powerline zone

Railway & Light rail

In additional to the general spatial and organizational characteristics typical of a suburban typology, Mid-Scarborough also presents a set of unique site conditions. The area has a higher residential density than a typical suburban typology due to the large accummulation of social housing developments. Its physical fabric, however, is highly fragmented due to incremental and often uncoordinated projects over the years as described previously in the historical documentation. In particular, the GO rail track running north-south cut across Eglinton Ave. at grade, thus preventing any east-west movement on ground surface. On the other hand, the Eglinton overpass runs for over 450m in length over the Go rail track, and its highest point it is close to 10m from the ground surface. Although it allows passage underneath at its center portion, the ramps at both ends block any north-south movement. These two large local infrastructures together roughly parcel the physical landscape into four quadrants, with only limited and often convuluted cross-circulation between. For the passage across Eglinton Ave, if you are not dashing across the 6-lane traffic, the choices are either the pedestrian crossings 800m apart at Kennedy and Midland Roads or the passage under Eglinton Overpass through commuter parking lots. For the east-west passage across the rail track, one might have to choose between a half-kilometre walk along a 6-lane overpass, or a convoluted path around the service road, through the subway station and an underground pedestrian tunnel, then coming out onto the edge of a commuter parking lot (fig 3.16-7).

In addition, the subsequent change of the ground plane and the physical barrier created by the overpass are especially damaging to the local physical fabric, as it has skewed all previous street relations along its edges. For example, the driveway and entrances of DMCRC are no longer facing Eglinton Ave but are instead "hidden" by the volume of the overpass in front. The overall physical design of the area with expansive service road loops is generally catered towards streamlining various traffic flows through the area, including regional bus, private vehicles, and commuter trains. The condition in Mid-Scarborough reflects an extreme case of the pedestrian neglect common in the typical suburban design and planning culture often condemned by Howard Kunstler.[4]

4 Kunstler, J. H. (1993). Geography of nowhere: the rise and decline of America's man-made landscape. New York: Simon & Schuster.

Fig 4.15 Images of transportation infrastructure within the site.

1) Kennedy Station

2) SRT elevated rail track

3) Go rail corridor

4) Eglinton overpass


3


4

Fig 4.16 South view of the Eglinton Overpass from Kennedy Station and the commuter parking lot underneath

Fig 4.17 Pedestrian Passages across the site

1) *Sidewalk along service road*
2) *East Parking Lot underneath Eglinton Overpass*
3) *Main subway entrance*
4) *Underpass below rail track*
5) *A gap in the low fence around the parking lot*
6) *Sidewalk on Eglinton Overpass*
7) *East entrance from parking lot*
8) *Stair onto south parking lot*


5


6


7


4
EXIT
Parking Lot


food prices
nofrills
1


5


2


STOP
6


3


7


264-4119
FOREIGN DOMESTIC
4


8

4.5. Existing Site Programming

In the manner of a typical suburban development, Mid-Scarborough is dominated by large residential blocks. However, along the two main arterial roads, Eglinton Ave. East and Kennedy Road, there are situated several large regional programs and cultural institutions that set the area apart from the typical suburban area (fig. 3.18). In particular, the two large buildings, the TTC Kennedy Station and the Don Montgomery Recreation and Community Centre, are the regional transportation hub and the only community facility in the area, thus making Mid-Scarborough a functionally significant area within the regional context.

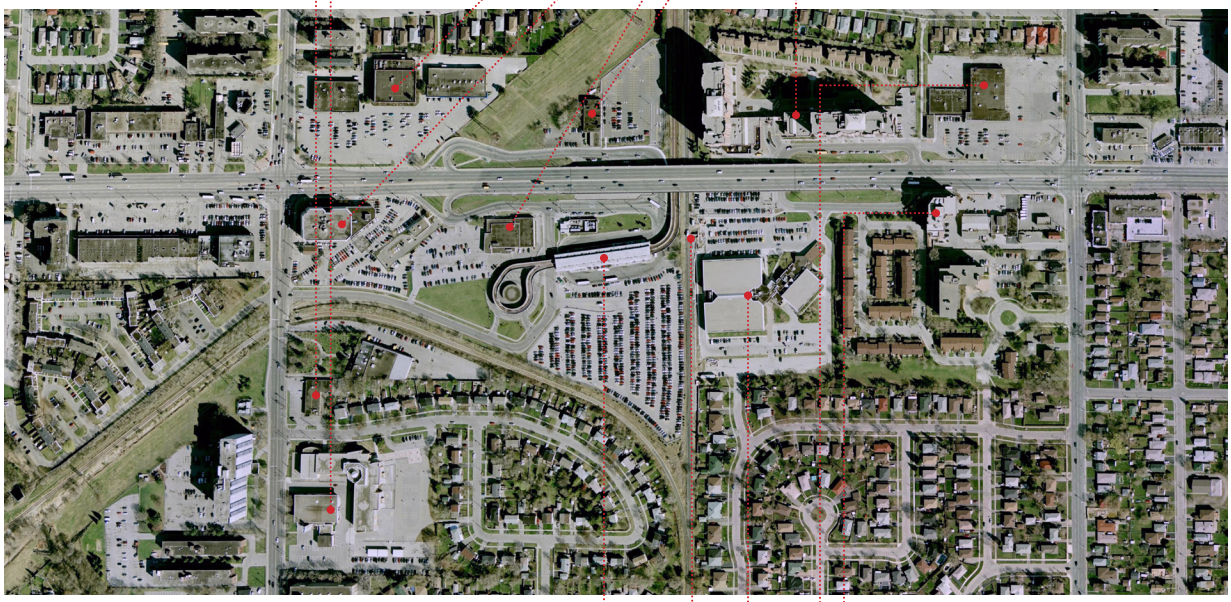


Fig 4.18 Images of buildings around the study site (left)

Fig 4.19 Existing Local Programming (top)

Fig 4.20 Regional distribution of community and recreation facilities

Don Montgomery Community and Recreation Centre ((DMCRC)

The current two-level Don Montgomery Community and Recreation Centre was built in 1975 to replaced a former building destroyed by a fire. The facility and its programming are managed by the Park and Recreation Department of the City of Toronto. It is the only recreational facility serving the Eglinton East and Kennedy Park neighbourhoods. The center consists of 4 main components: a multi-purpose gymnasium, a hockey arena with 2 indoor hockey rinks, a small youth centre, and a modest senior center. There are three entrances into the building. A north entrance from the service road and the TTC East Parking Lot leads to the upper lobby designated for the senior programs. One could also enter from the East Parking Lot through a sunken court into a lower lobby designated for youth programs. The lower lobby is also open to the user parking area to the south.

Although both the senior and youth programs are located in an 'activity wing' between the two lobbies, the two programs are stratified and are therefore somewhat segregated from one another. The upper level of the activity wing is designated for the senior programs, while the lower level is for the youth programs. The activity areas are also visually blocked off from the lobbies at both ends by doorways, as well as from the surroundings, as there are no windows from any of the multi-purpose activity rooms.

DMCRC was formally named Mid-Scarborough Community Recreation Center. In 2007, the municipal council proposed a name change to to honour the late president of Scarborough Hockey Association and his contributions and volunteer services to the local community. The proposal sparked objections from the local ethnic community as it felt that they would be symbolically alienated by the new name that skewed the community focus of the facility. The concern however was disregarded at the council meeting and the center adopted its new name in the fall of 2007.

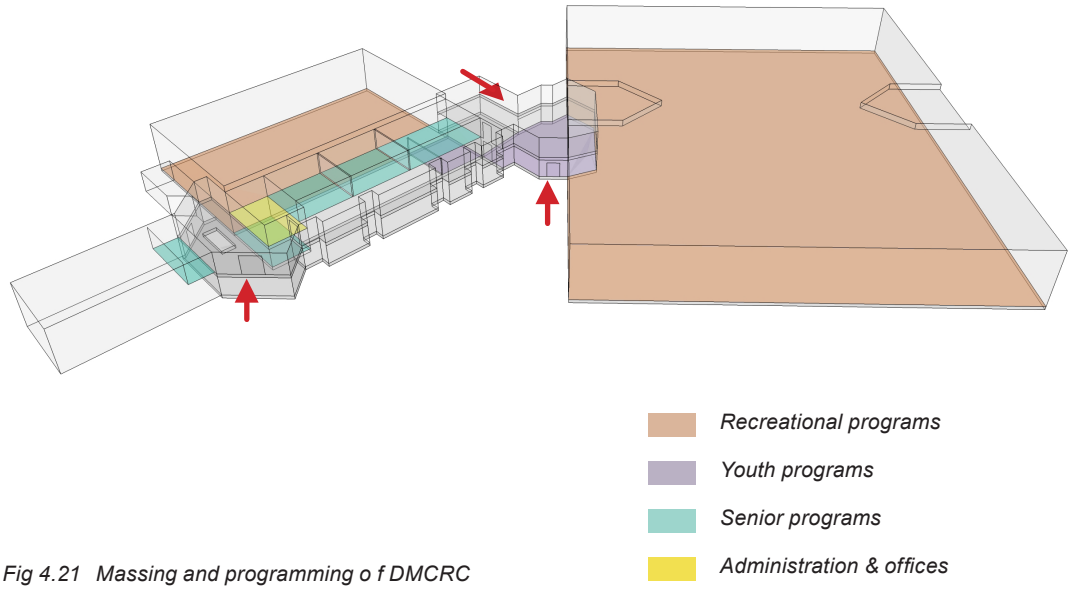


Fig 4.21 Massing and programming o f DMCRC

Fig 4.22 Mid Scarborough Community Recreation Centre (MSCRC). West view along Eglinton Ave. East, 1975

Fig 4.23 MSCRC. East view along Eglinton Ave. East, 1975

Fig 4.24 MSCRC. South view from Eglinton Ave. East, 1975

Fig 4.25 Don Montgomery Community & Recreation Centre (formerly MSCRC). East view from commuter parking, 2008

Fig 4.26 Don Montgomery Community Recreation Centre

1) *North elevation of the two entrances*
2) *Upper lobby*
3) *Senior activity area*
4) *Upper concession area for the hockey arena*
5) *Lower level senior area*
6) *Youth activity area*
7) *Lower lobby looking at parking lot beyond*
8) *Hockey rink*
9) *North entrance to the lower lobby*
10) *South entrance to the lower lobby from parking*


Don Montgomery
Community Recreation Centre
2467


HOME
VISITORS
8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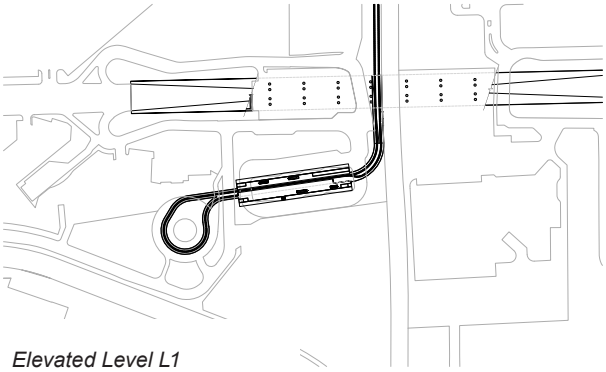
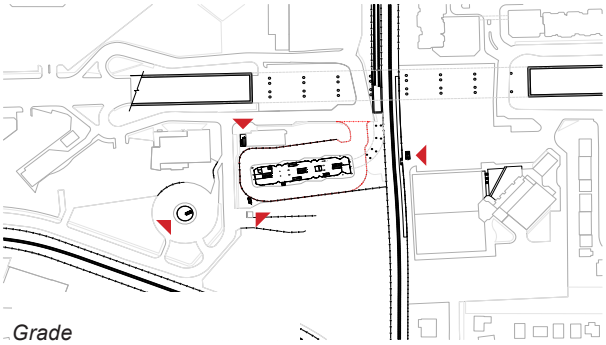
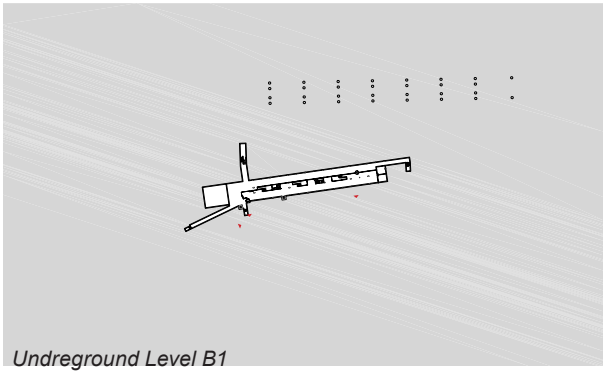


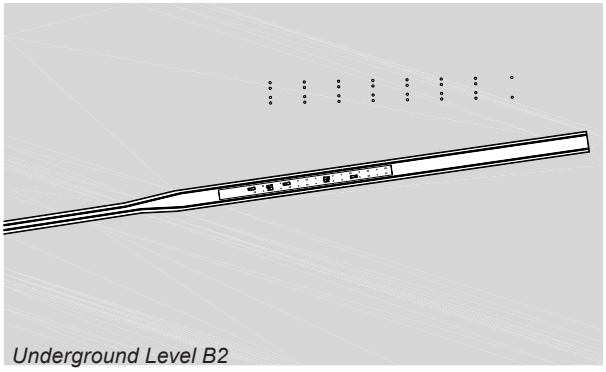
Elevated Level L1



Grade



Undreground Level B1



Underground Level B2

Fig 4.27 Building plans of existing Kennedy Station

TTC Kennedy Station

Kennedy Station is located on the south side of the Eglinton Overpass along a service road between Kennedy Road. and Midland Road. Built in 1980s, it serves as the east terminal of the crosstown Bloor-Danforth subway line and the south terminal of the Scarborough Rapid Transit (SRT) connecting Scarborough Town Centre. As the east gateway into subway network, it also functions as a regional bus depot for 11 different bus routes along Eglinton Ave and from Kennedy Road. In addition, the station is also located next to a rail corridor of which GO transit is currently running a limited-service commuter train line between Unision station and Markham-Stouffville. Thus Kennedy Station serves as a strategic regional intermodal station connecting different public transit networks.

The existing Kennedy Station is stratified into 4 levels, each accommodating a particular mode of transit: the subway platform at the bottom level (B2), main pedestrian entrance lobby on the underground mezzanine level (B1), the bus terminal at grade, and the SRT platform on the elevated level (L1). The 4 levels are connected through a series of stairs and escalators, though intermodal transfers generally require passing through other levels to reach the destinations. Because of the large numbers of public transit networks that feed into the station, the local circulation patterns are centered around Kennedy Station.

There are 4 surface entrances that lead to the main station lobby underground (fig4.27-2). The main entrance of the station is located on the service road in front of the station. Two other entrances

serve the commuters from adjacent parking lots: one to the South Parking Lot and the other through a tunnel onto the Kiss N' Ride area. This entrance also serves as the west entrance for users coming from Kennedy Road. The newest east entrance is located at the edge of the East Parking Lot across the GO rail track. It leads to an underpass and then onto the mezzanine level to allow access across the surface rail track. Similar to other TTC stations, the immediate boundary around Kennedy Station is a fare-restricted area accessible to paid patrons only. It is a strategy generally adopted by the TTC to eliminate control points at the various interchanges thus allowing smooth intermodal transfers between the different modes within the system. On the mezzanine level however, a east-west corridor is left open for use as throughway across the Go rail track during TTC operating hours. being the only passage across the CN rail corridor, the Kennedy Station therefore also functions as part of the local pedestrian infrastruction in additon to being the regional intermodal junction.

Currently, Kennedy Station is currently the third busiest station in terms of the combined subway ridership within the TTC system after the two major interchanges Bloor-Yonge and St. George

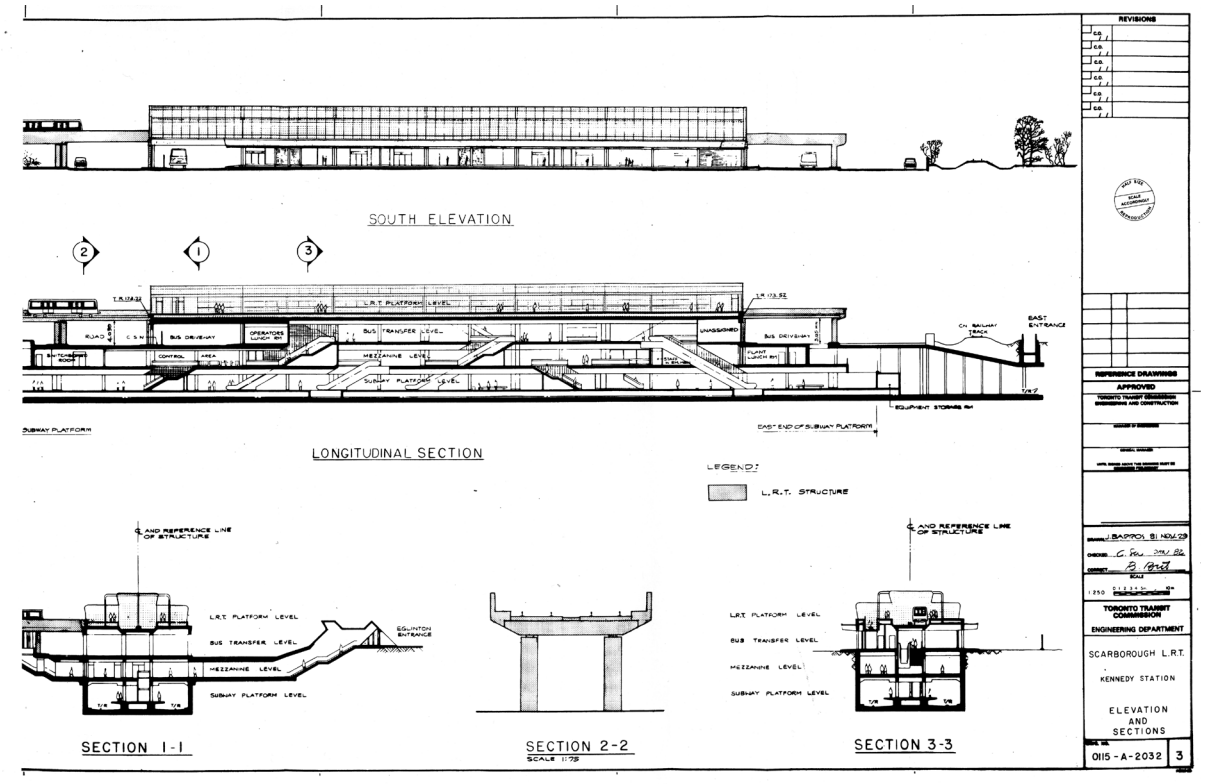


Fig 4.28 Sections and elevations of Kennedy Station

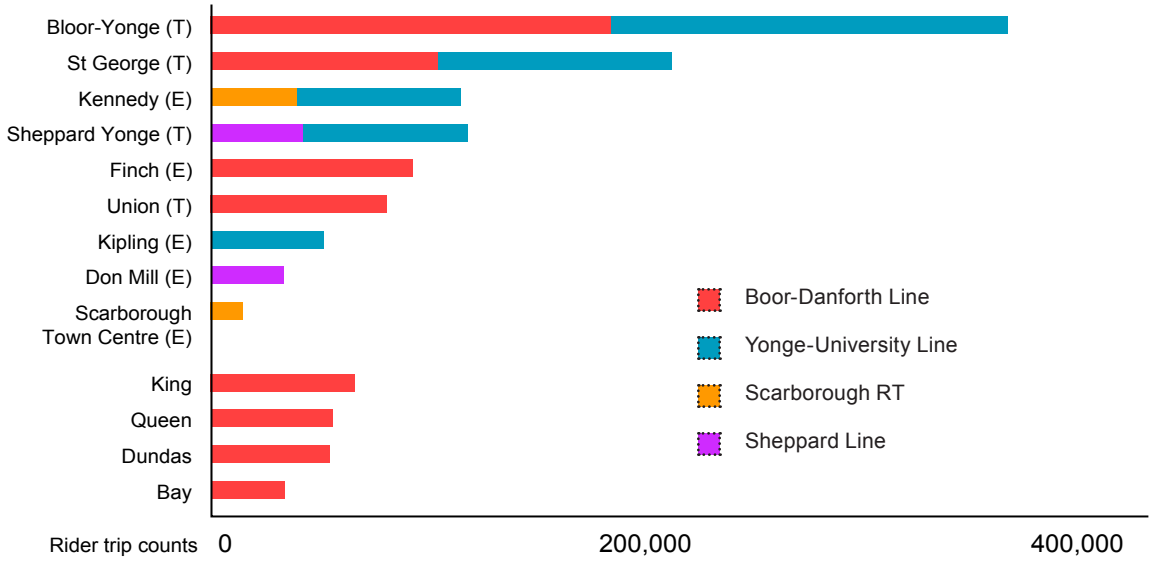


Fig 4.29 TTC Subway Ridership Summary 2007-2008

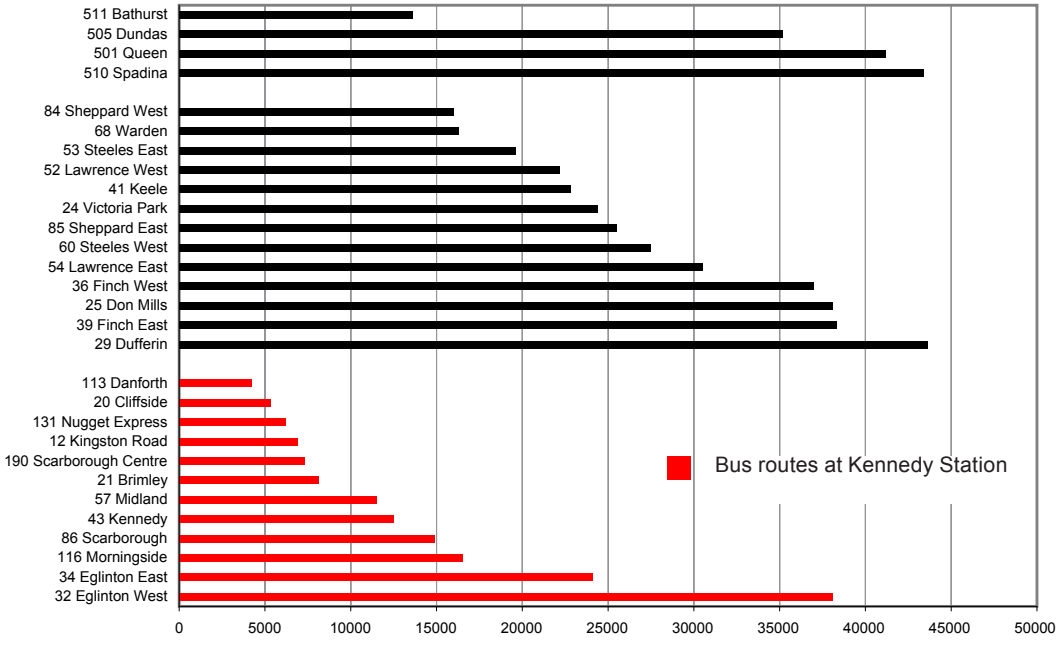


Fig 4.30 TTC Bus Ridership Summary 2005-2006

stations. It is the third busiest system terminal after Finch (another TTC terminal) and Union stations (also the GO transit downtown terminal). Commuter parking, currently with a total capacity of 1138 parking spaces, has been operating over its capacity since 1981 despite its continuous expansions. However, currently the usage of the commuter parking has drastically reduced since the TTC stopped offering complimentary free commuter parking for Metrocard users and began charging a parking fee for its commuter parking. There are no statistics available yet to evaluate the effects of this policy change on public transit usage. Whether the $7 per day parking fee is enough to discourage public transit usage or whether the Park-N-Ride commuters are becoming Kiss-N-Ride commuters or local bus users therefore is yet to be accurately assessed.

There have been two past proposals for the Kennedy Station expansion. Because of the population growth in the area and subsequently increase in transit usage, a bus bay expansion of the bus terminal was proposed in 1992 to ease the overcrowding of the station. The proposal recommended a second service island to relieve both traffic as well as the passager congestion of the station, which serves a total of 11 bus routes. After lengthy design and consultation processes, however, due to budget constraints, the proposed expansion was never realized.[5] Also, the infrastructure of the 10-year-old SRT is due for an upgarde. A proposal was outlined in the TTC strategic report in 2006, though it has yet to be implemented, also due to budget constraints.[6]

5 Toronto Transit Commission. (1992).Kennedy Station Bus Bay Expansion.

6 Toronto Transit Commission. (2001). Rapid Transit Expansion Study.

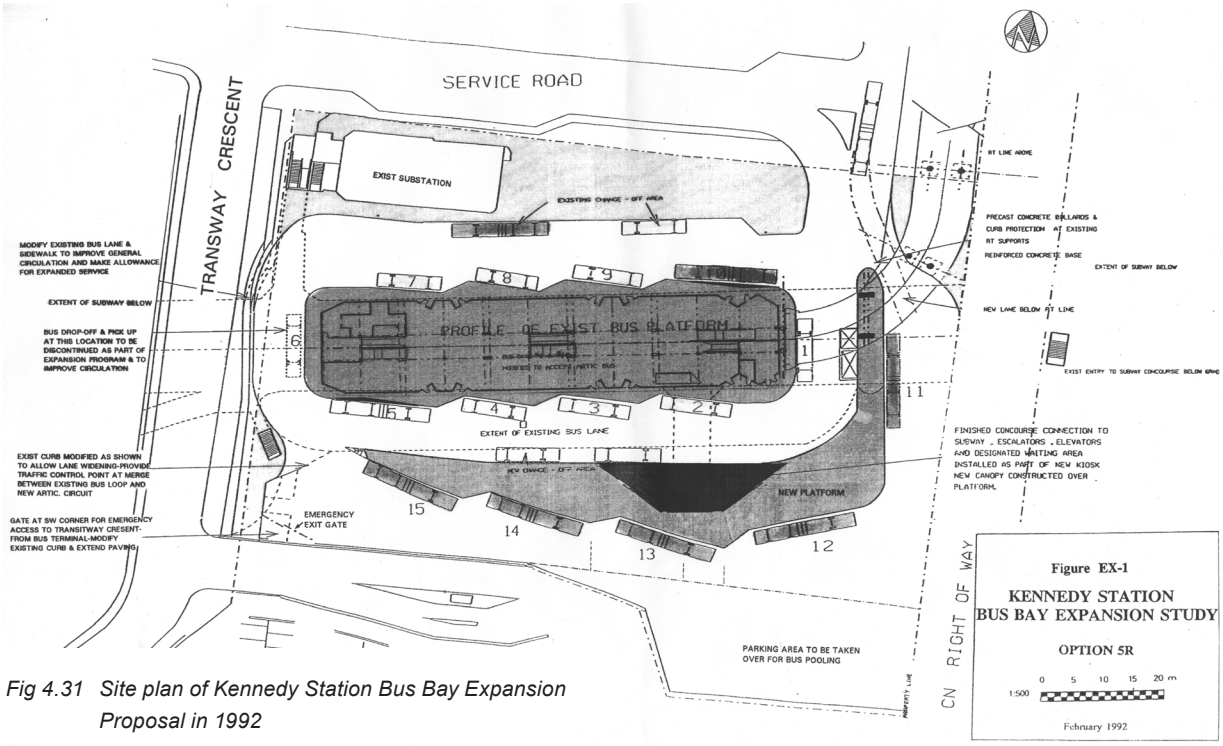


Fig 4.31 Site plan of Kennedy Station Bus Bay Expansion Proposal in 1992

Fig 4.32 Site photos inside Kennedy Station

1) *Kiss-N-Ride and the SRT elevated loop*
2) *SRT platform*
3) *The abandoned SRT elevated rail loop from the SRT platform*
4) *Abandoned rail loop*
5) *Entrance gate on the mezzanine level*


DWA
Designated Waiting Area

2


EMERG.
MODE
CURVE
10
MAX

3

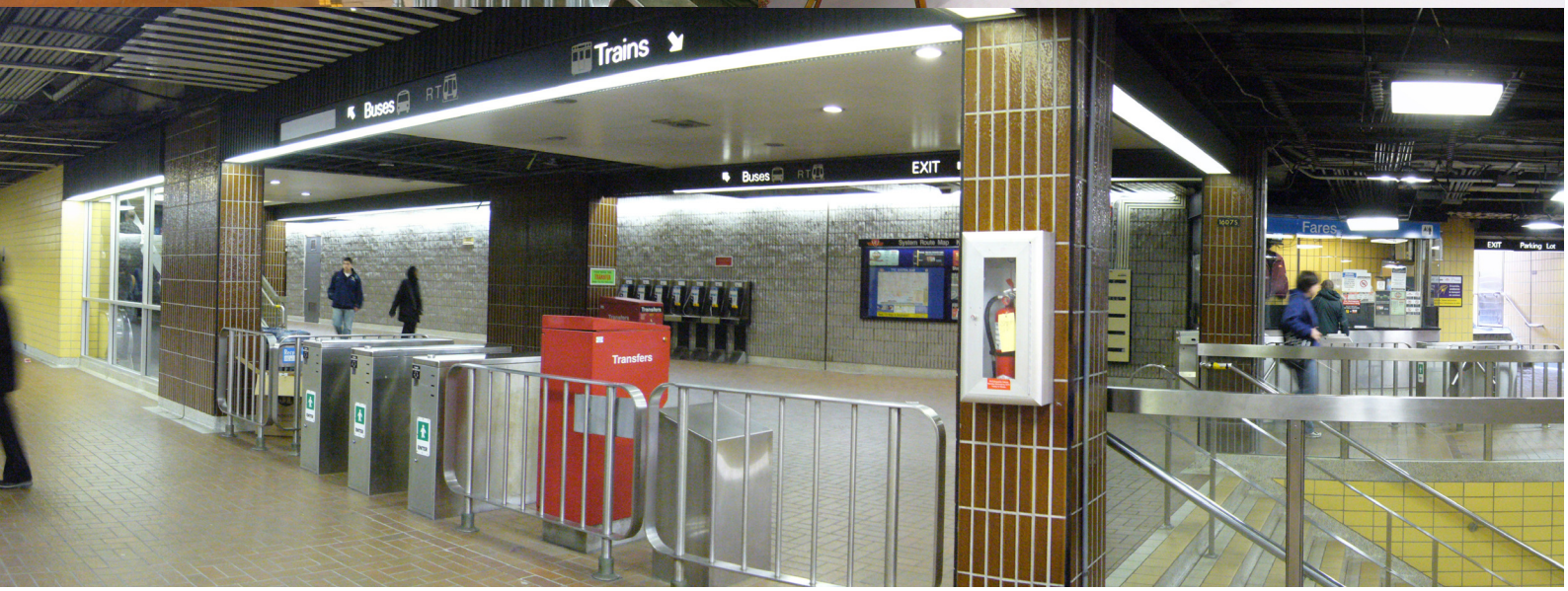

Trains
Buses
RT
Buses
RT
EXIT
Transfers
Fares
EXIT
Parking Lot

Fig 4.33 Site photos around Kennedy Station

1) *View of the service road from kennedy Road*
2) *Southwest view of Kennedy Station*
3) *The main Eglinton entrance*
4) *View of the south commuter parking lot*
5) *View of the east commuter parking lot in front of DMCRC*
6) *Viewof the North commuter parking lot besides the Go rail track*

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6

4.9. Site Circulation

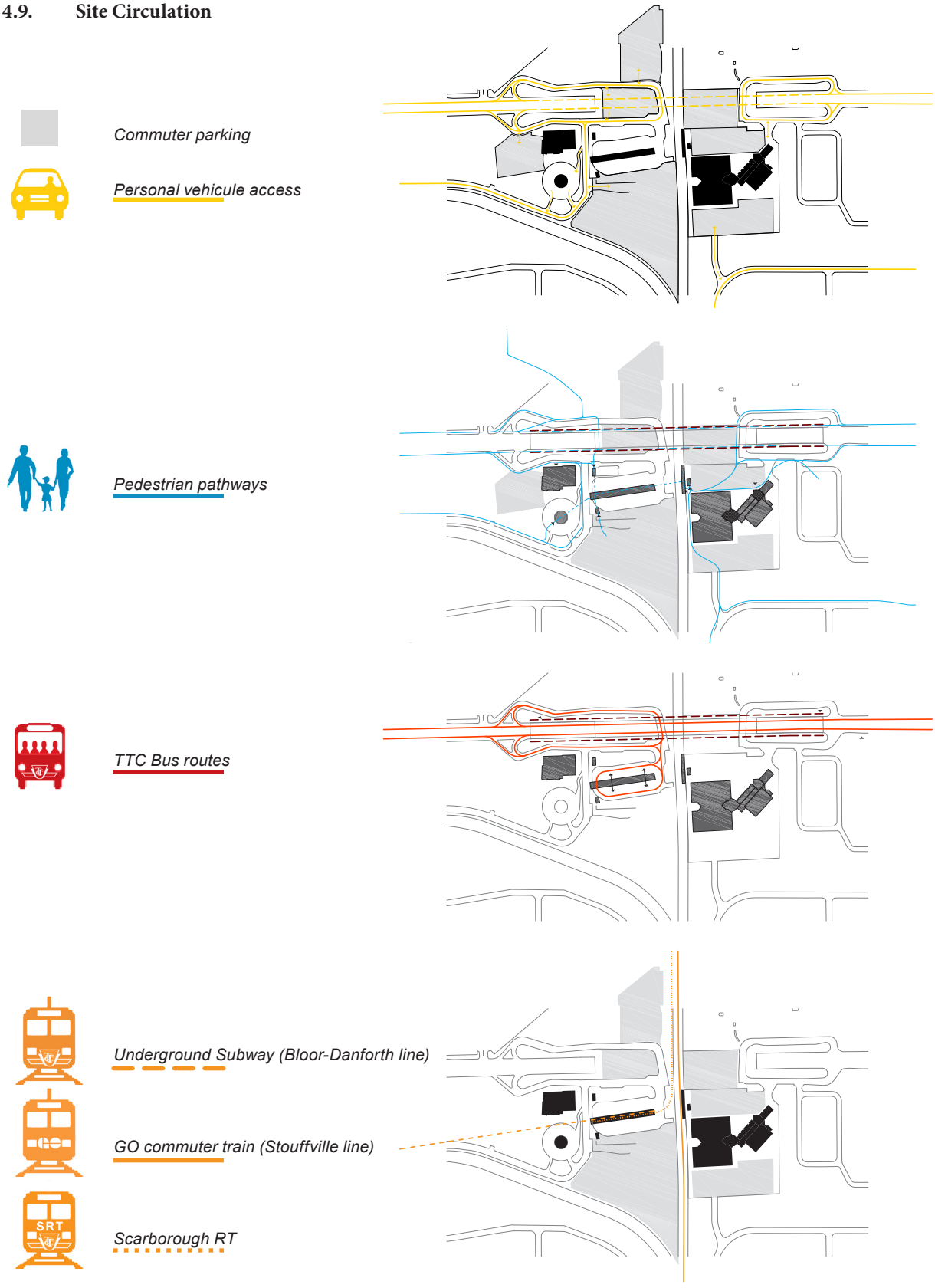


Fig 4.34 Site Circulation

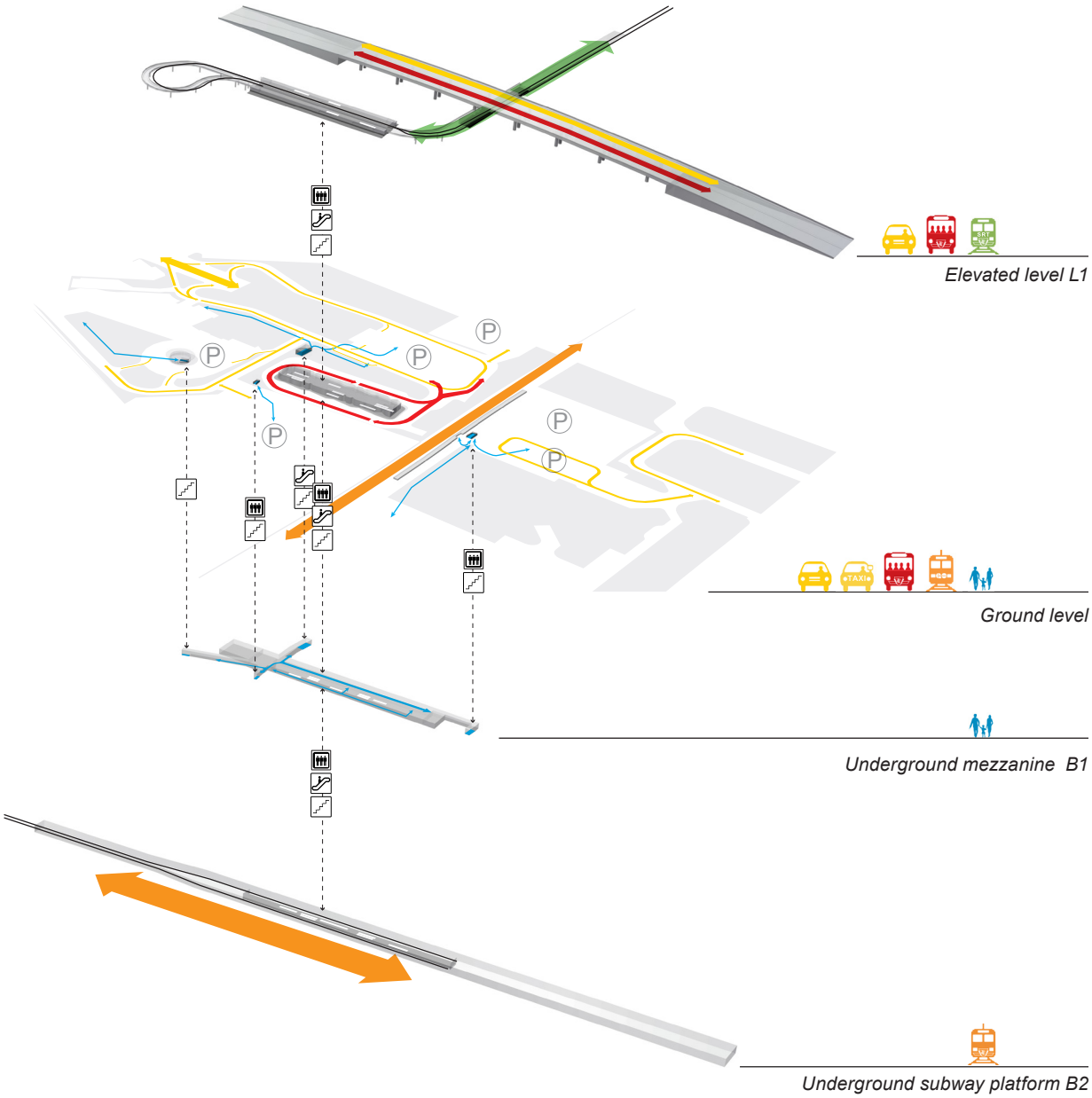


Fig 4.35 Intermodal Circulation

While speed and volume characterizes the local morning traffic patterns, the pace slows down during the evening. There is a greater tendency to choose walking rather than to wait for local buses, as well as to choose public transit over car pickup. The slower pedestrian flow also has a higher interaction level with adjacent programs on site.

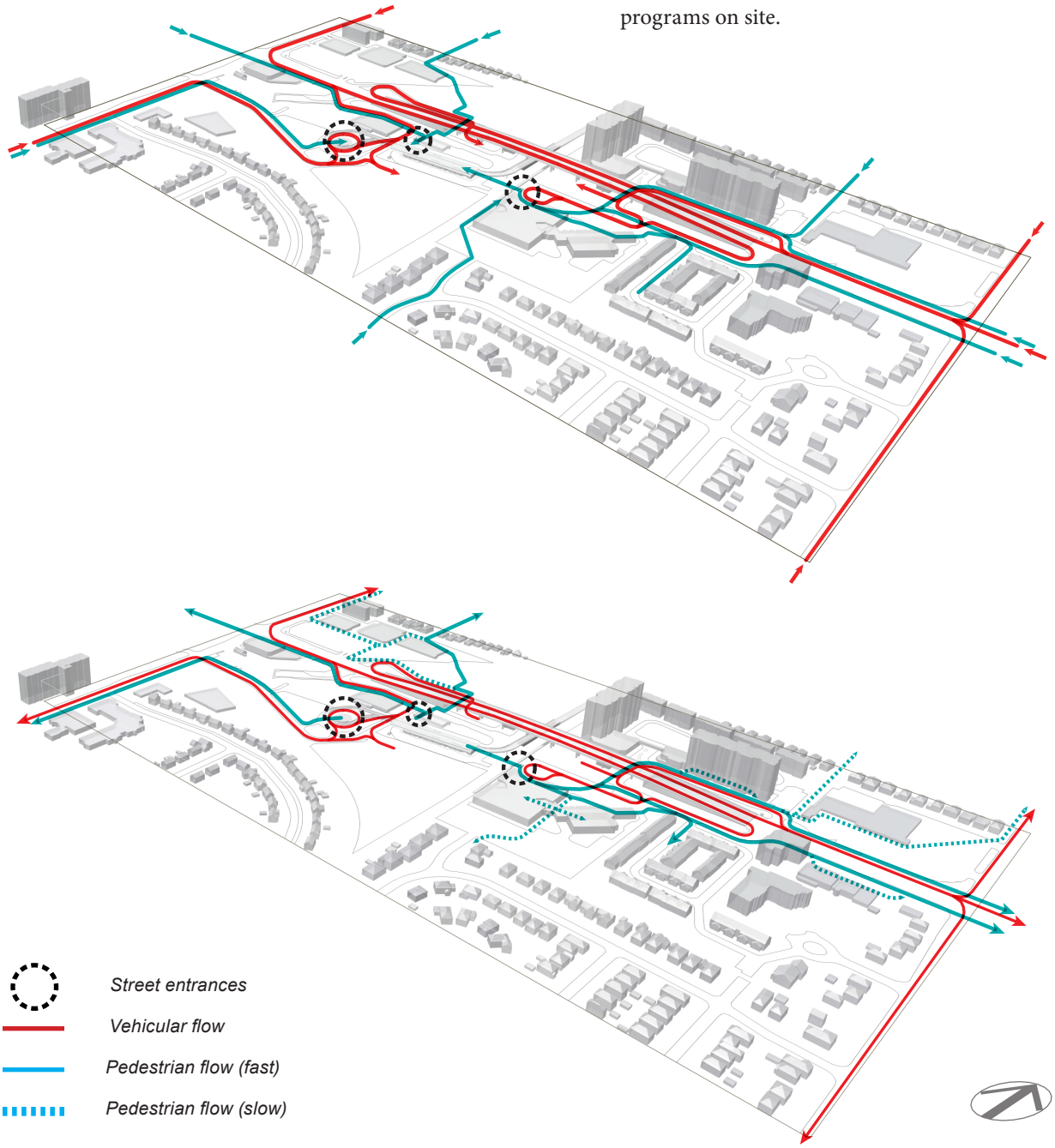


Fig 4.36 Circulation pattern: Morning verse evening rush-hours

4.6. Social Characteristisc

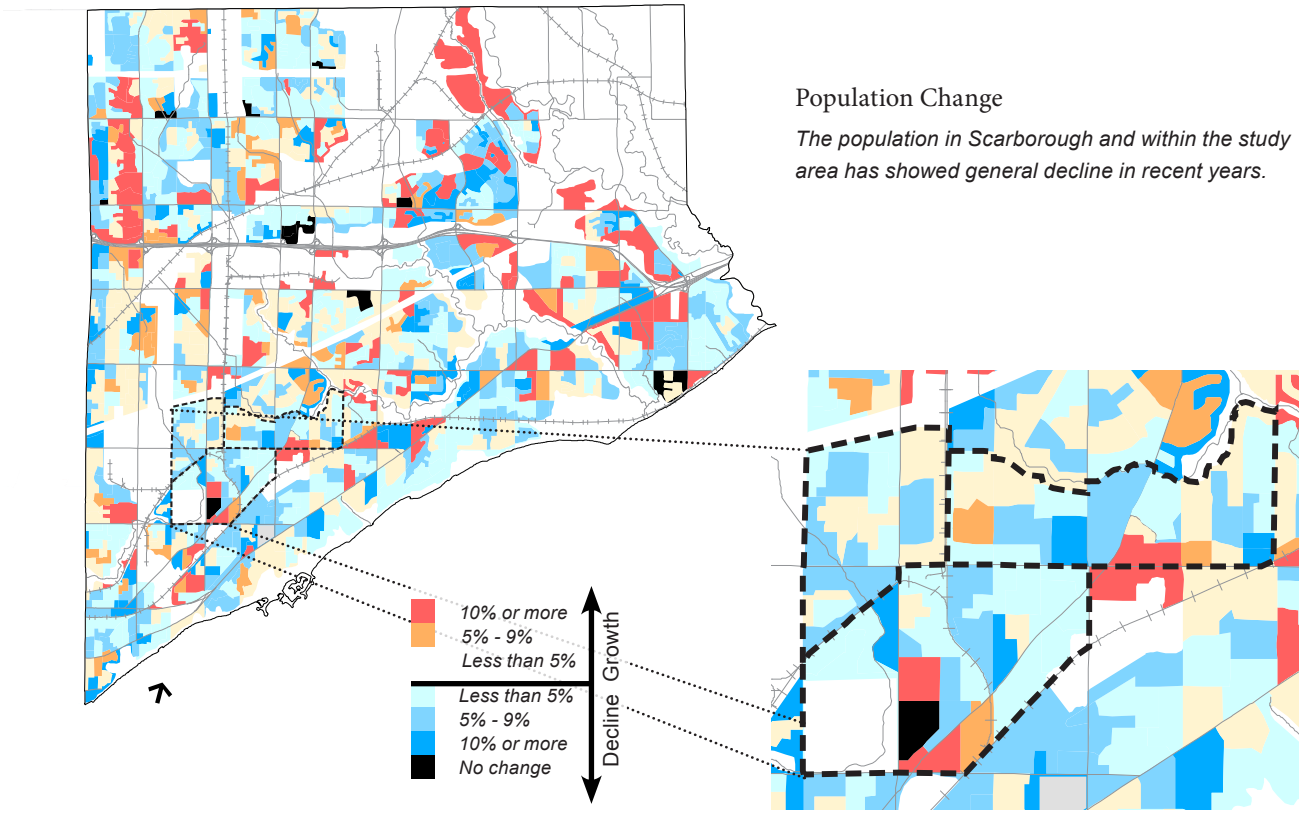
Since the '60s, Scarborough has been experiencing a steady influx of immigrants through suburban migration. Between 1996 and 2001, its population grew by 6%, and it had the highest population growth as well as being one of the most densely populated regions among GTA municipalities. Besides the suburbanization of the middle class, new immigrants also contribute to the steady increase in the regional population, as they look for affordable housing as well as job opportunities in the new exurban centers. The gradual build-up of immigrant concentration has helped to establish an ethnocentric character to Scarborough, which catalyzes further immigrant congregation due to their propensity towards a co-ethnic environment.[7] From 1986 to 2006, the visible minority population increased from 26.7% to 57%, compared to a 47% total visible minority population in the City of Toronto in 2006. In many neighbourhoods, including those in Mid-Scarborough, immigrants account for up to 74-75% of local residents, making them the dominant actors in shaping both the physical and social landscapes of these neighbourhoods.

In Mid-Scarborough, because of the large amount of social housing and its convenient transit connection, the population density is substantially higher than in surrounding areas, including the new exurban centers such as Richmond Hill and Mississauga. In both Ionview and Kennedy Park neighbourhoods, population densities are over 5000 person/sq. km, compared to the average 3972 person/sq. km within City of Toronto. In 2006, the number of residents living in high-rise apartments was almost equal to that living in single-detached housing in the Mid-Scarborough area. The highly dense social fabric, however, is skewed toward a lower income bracket, with 24-38% of residents lied within the category of low household income before tax. In 2006, 48% of its local residents were immigrants, most of which came

to Canada since the '80s from East Asia, South Asia, and Southeast Asia. Among the immigrant population, over one-third are allophones, i.e. their mother tongue and home language are neither the official languages English nor French. Even though most of the residents can functionally communicate in English, Chinese, Filipino, and Tamil are the top home languages in the area. [8]

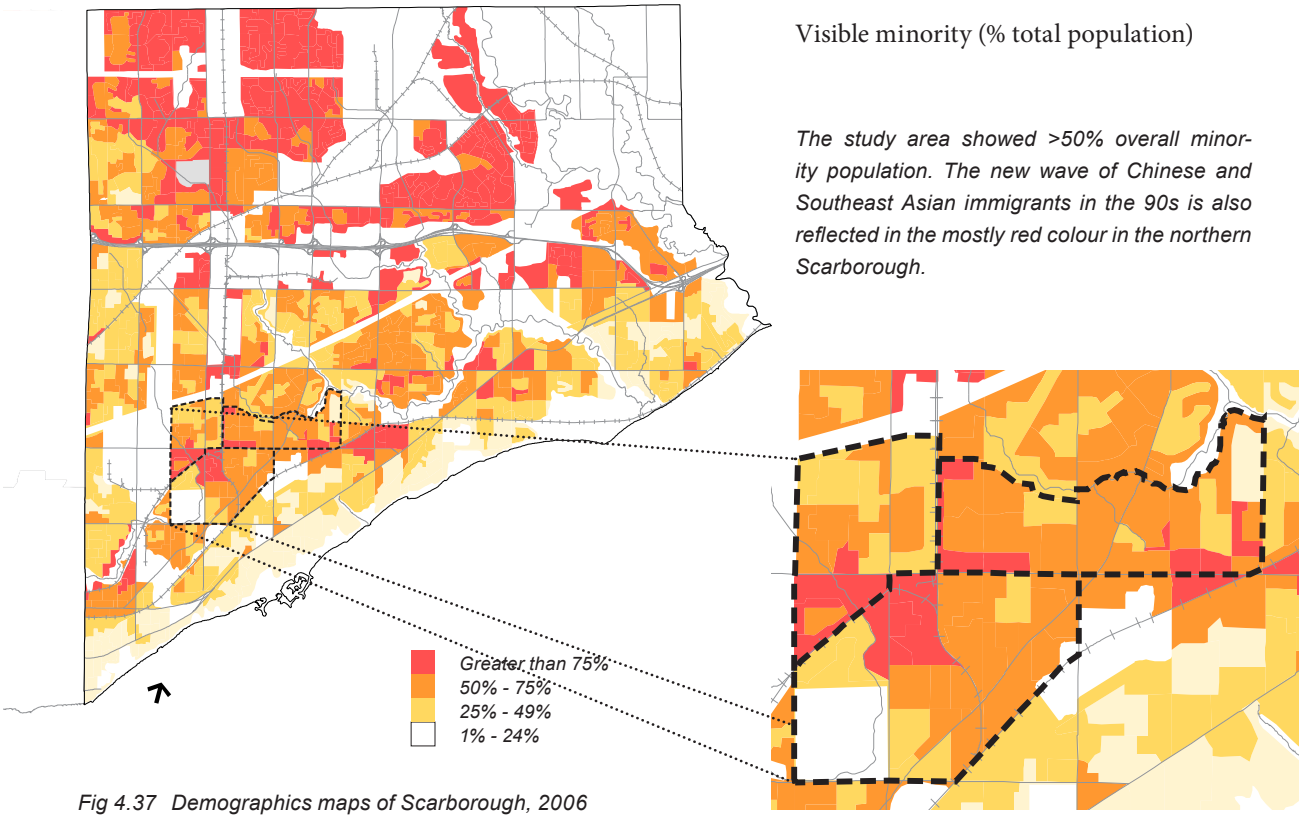
7 Murdie, R.A. & Teixeira, C. (2006)

8 Census 2006. Statistics Canada.



Population Change

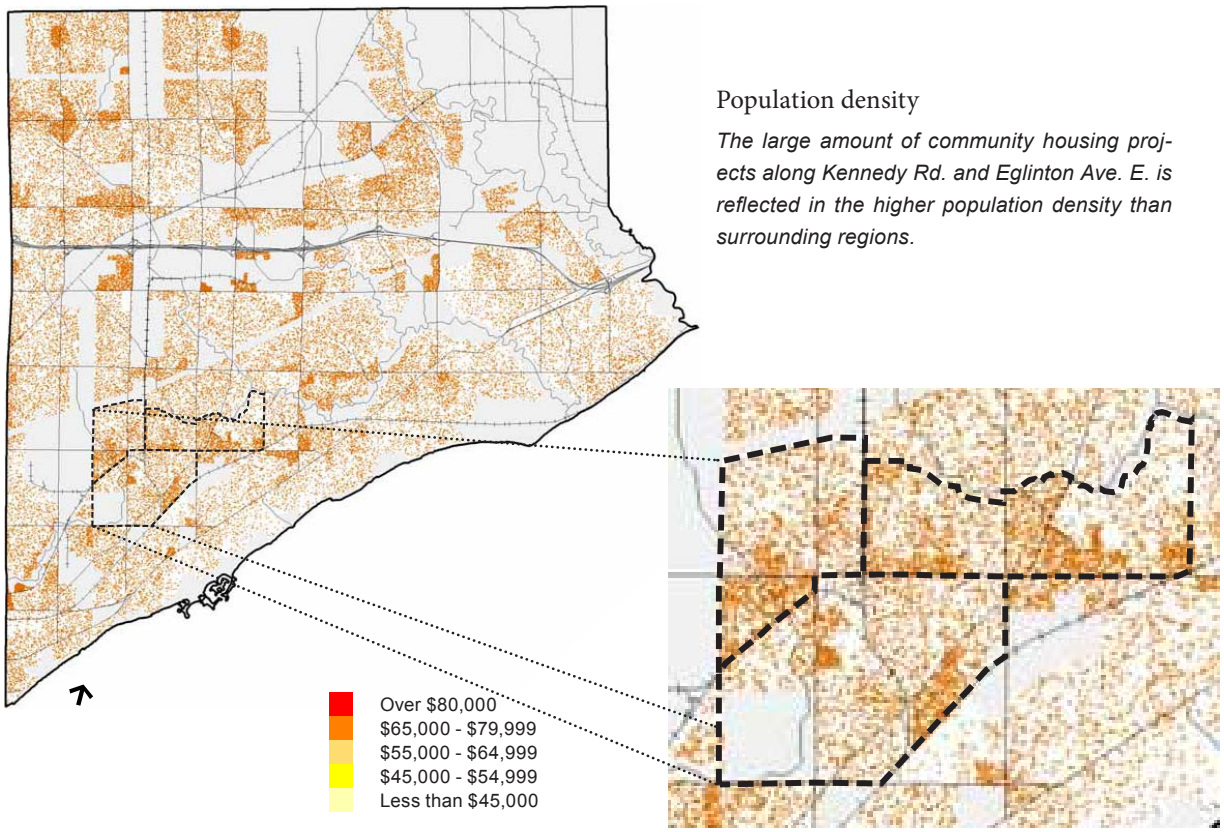
The population in Scarborough and within the study area has showed general decline in recent years.



Visible minority (% total population)

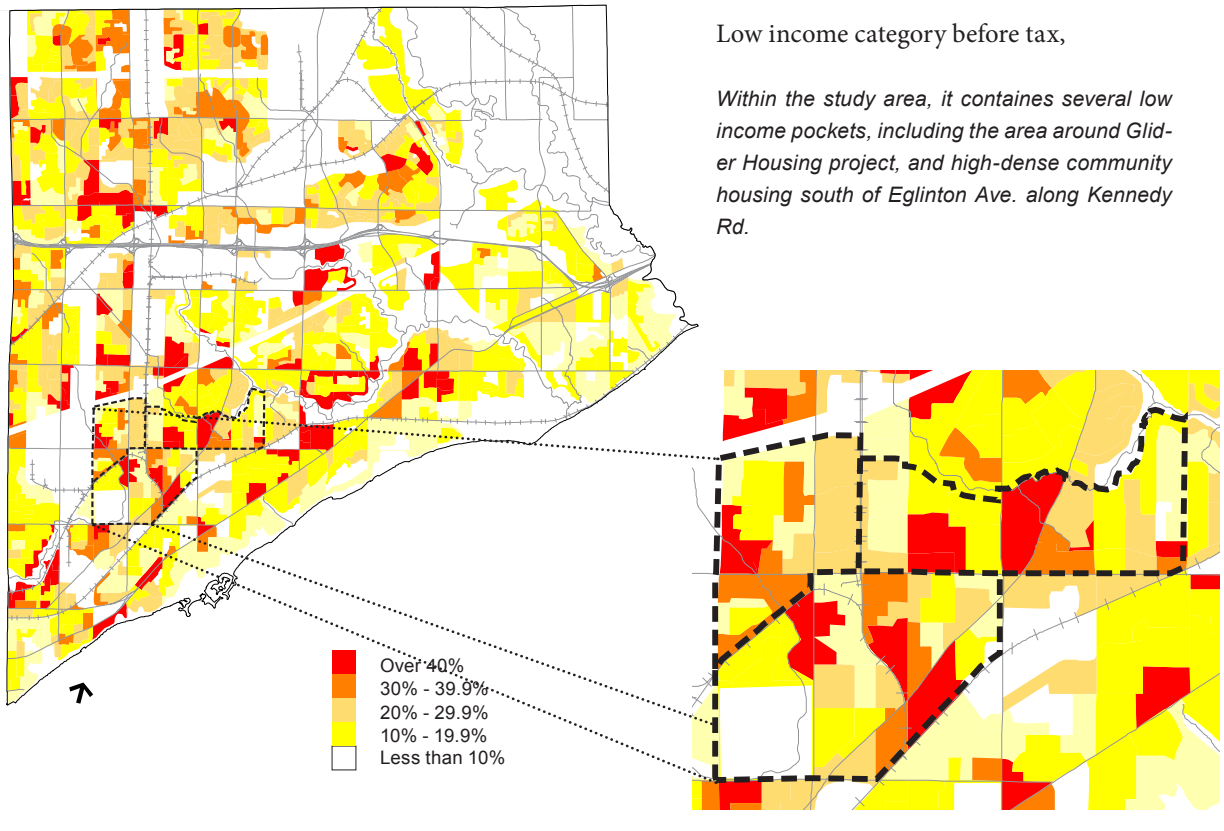
The study area showed >50% overall minority population. The new wave of Chinese and Southeast Asian immigrants in the 90s is also reflected in the mostly red colour in the northern Scarborough.

Fig 4.37 Demographics maps of Scarborough, 2006



Population density

The large amount of community housing projects along Kennedy Rd. and Eglinton Ave. E. is reflected in the higher population density than surrounding regions.



Low income category before tax,

Within the study area, it containes several low income pockets, including the area around Glider Housing project, and high-dense community housing south of Eglinton Ave. along Kennedy Rd.

4.7. Analysis summary

From the detailed analyses of both the physical and the social landscape in the Mid-Scarborough area, they yield the following observations in regard to the physical, social, and political landscape:

» *The overall typology in Mid-Scarborough reflects that of an urbanized suburban landscape, composed of large and segregated mono-programmed block, with urban activities concentrated along main vehicular arterials within a hierarchical road network.*

» *Its physical landscape is dominated and at the same time fractured by the number of infrastructure corridors, including the GO commuter rail, SRT, powerline, as well as extensive commuter parking associated with the TTC Kennedy Station.*

» *Mid-Scarborough exhibits the potential of a dense urban environment due to the high concentration of high-density housing developments in the area. The regioin also contains large parcels of land under the jurisdictions of different public agencies including TTC, Park & Recreation, and the Canada Post.*

» *Programmatically, Mid-Scarborough functions as a gateway into Scarborough as well as a regional intermodal transfer node.*

» *Demographically, Mid-Scarborough presents a culturally diverse but at the same time socially fragmented landscape typical of an urbanized ethnic center. There is a lack of community leadership, a collective social network, as well as collaborations between the different ethnic and social subgroups. The fine differentiations within ethnic groups in terms of heritages, customs, and preferences function as social barrier within the multicultural social fabric. Despite the cultural diversity it presents, the social dynamic observed in Mid-Scarborough very much reflects the "parallel lives" existence typically found in dispersed urban environment.*[9]

9 Amin, A. (2002). Ethnicity and the multicultural city: Living with diversity. Environment and Planning A, 34(6), 959-980.

4.8. Site Potential & Design Opportunities

Currently there are two development proposals that focus on the Mid-Scarborough area. These new public investments in the region represent opportunities to intensify and urbanize the area, through infilling and bridging the fractured landscape and through extending its role as a regional node. At the same time, when implementing within a community-based design approach, the new investments could further the development of community identity as the next step in community development in the area.

New investment in local social and community infrastructure

From a 2005 community survey done by the United Way in conjunction with the City of Toronto, Mid-Scarborough along with 7 other neighbourhoods were identified as priority neighbourhoods that are lagging behind in public assets.[10] In the report, a list of strategies were recommended to to amend the service gaps and to strengthen existing social infrastructure. In addition to the ANC project initiated by the United Way, among the recommendations is a new community hub to provide social and health services. Currently, a proposal is on the table for the new center to be administered by the non-profit West Hill Community Group. The new West Hill Community Centre will accommodate a new health service centre, a dental clinic, a multi-purpose room, a community kitchen, as well as classrooms and community meeting spaces.

Looking at the proposed siting of the new centre, it is easy to see that it misses the opportunity to develop a new regional anchor to strengthen existing community identity. Under the current proposal, the centre will to be built on the location of an existing Chinese grocer in a shopping plaza at the corner of Eglinton Ave and Brimley Rd, while the displaced Chinese grocer will be relocated across the streent onto the parking lot. Though it will be located at a busy intersection between Eglinton, Brimley, and Danforth, the new enter when realized will be embedded within a shopping plaza recessed from the street edge, thus fail to create new legible icon in strengthening the regional identity.

10 Toronto City Summit Alliance, 2005

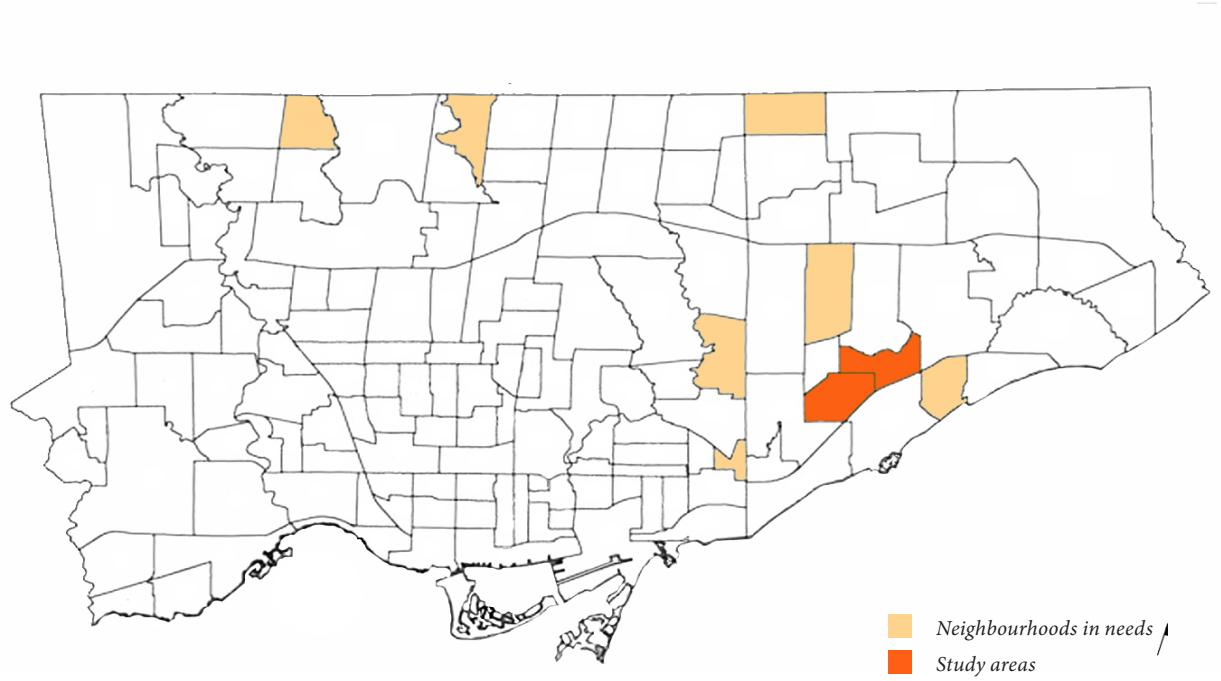


Fig 4.38 Priority Neighbourhoods
A map showing the 9 priority neighbourhoods identified by Toronto City Summit Alliance

Fig 4.39 Schematic design for the new West Hill Community Centre: ground floor (left) & 2nd floor (right)

Fig 4.40 Location of the proposed West Hill Community Centre

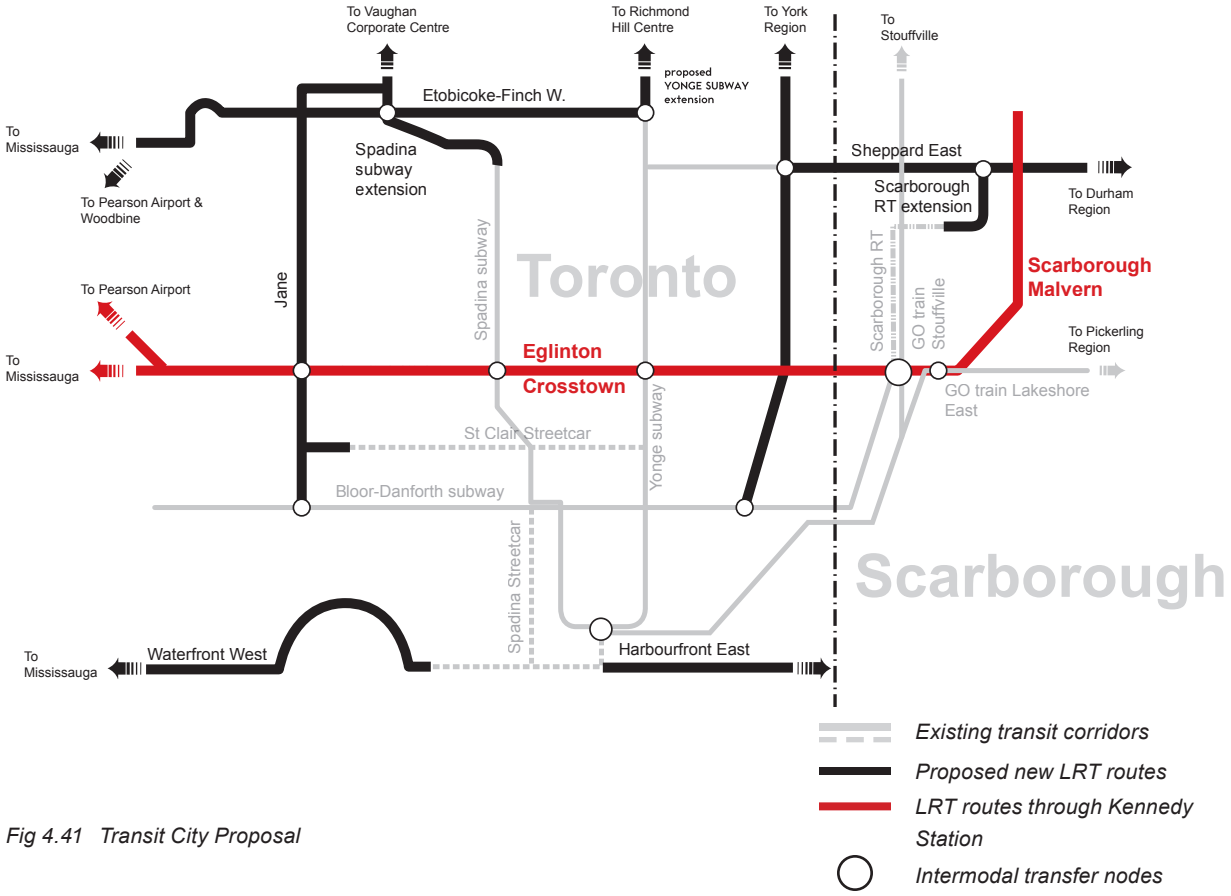


Fig 4.41 Transit City Proposal

Fig 4.42 Confluence of proposed transit network and existing high density clusters

Transit City Proposal

Transit City is a new public transit vision for the City of Toronto proposed in 2008 by the Toronto Transit Commission. It represents the city's effort to catch up its lagging transit infrastructure development since it was halted in the mid '90s due to fiscal budget constraints, as well as to provide a solution to the increasing traffic congestion in the Metro area. Through implementing eight new light rail rapid transit lines (LRT) across the city within 15 years, the proposal aims to vastly improve volume, speed, and inter-connectivity of the existing public transit network through multiple transfer nodes between separate lines and between different transit modes. While Toronto has a poor track record on new transit developments and upgrades, the Eglinton Crosstown LRT will likely be realized, as it has already received $4.6 billion in support from the Ontario government and the construction is expected to begin in 2010 to be fully operational in 2016.[11][12]

According to the proposal, two new LRT lines will replace existing bus services and terminate at Kennedy Station, including the Eglinton Crosstown and Scarborough-Malvern lines . The 31km-Eglinton Crosstown LRT line will run from Scarborough across midtown Toronto along Eglinton, and it will directly connect to the Pearson International Airport. The 15-km Scarborough-Malvern line, on the other hand, will run northeast connecting to other suburbs in northern Scarborough and Markham-Stouffville, as well as to University of Toronto at Scarborough and Centennial College's Ellesmere Campus. In addition, part of the Transit City funding is allocated for upgrading the aging SRT infrastructure. Though details and the extent of the upgrade is yet to be determined, it is most likely that it will be upgraded to be compatible with the new LRT infrastructure.[13]

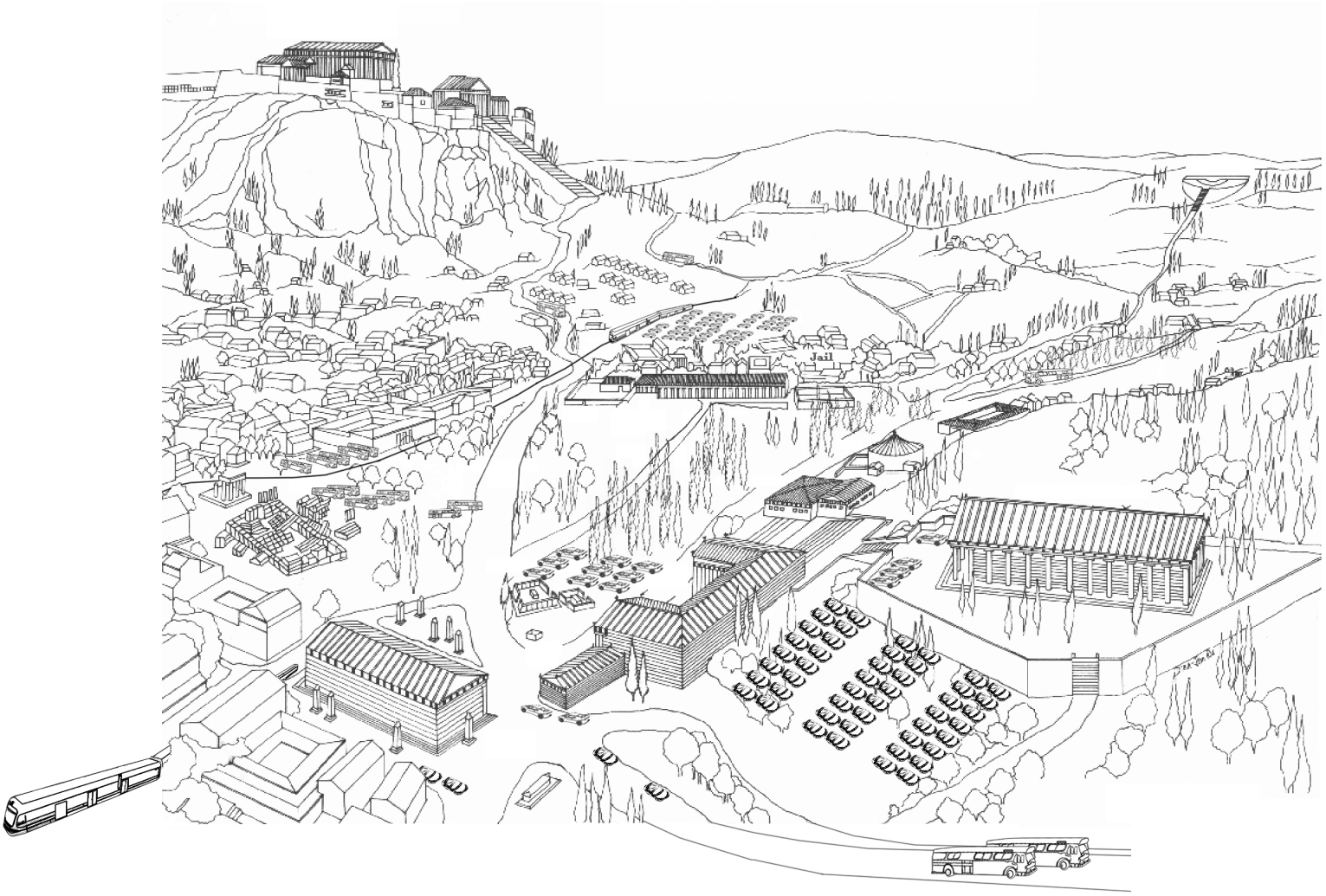
Under the Transit City proposal, Kennedy station will become even more important in its function as a gateway as well as a regional intermodal node, connecting north to Scarborough Town Centre, west to midtown Toronto and directly to Pearson Airport, and south to downtown and the City of Toronto through Bloor-Danforth subway. It will become an intermodal interchange for 3 LRT lines, the GO commuter train service, 7 regional buses routes, the subway, as well as continue to be part of the pedestrian infrastructure within the local physical landscape.

Fig 4.43 Image of the proposed Low-floor LRT car

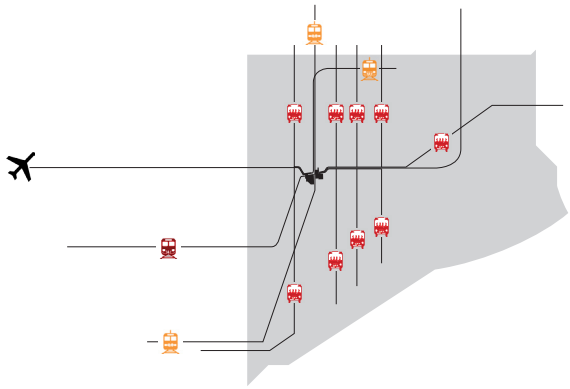
11 Hanes, Allison. (2009, April 01). Province gives Toronto billions for Eglinton light rail line, transit plan. National Post, Retrieved on April 21, 2009, from http://network.nationalpost.com/np/blogs/toronto/archive/2009/04/01/province-gives-toronto-billions-for-eglinton-light-rail-line-transit-plan.aspx

12 Toronto Transit commission. (2009, July 09). Transit City Funding Request. Retrieved on August 13, 2009, from http://www3.ttc.ca/About_the_TTC/Commission_reports_and_information/Commission_meetings/2009/July_9_2009/Reports/Transit_City_Funding.pdf

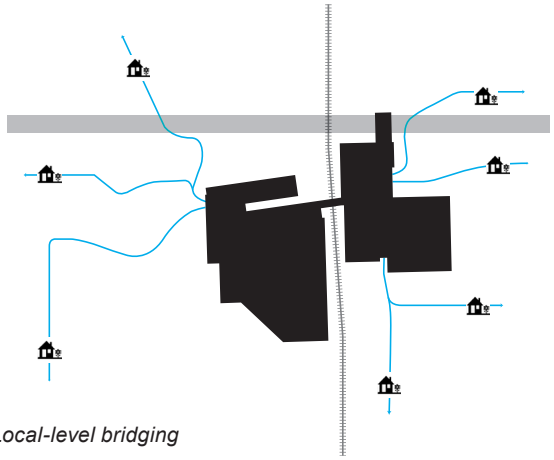
13 Ibid.


Jail

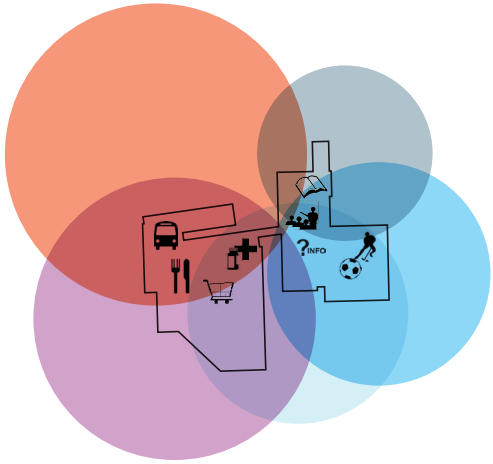
Chapter 5 Design Proposal



Regional level bridging



Local-level bridging



Community-level bridging

Fig 5.1 Three level of bridging

5.1. Design Proposal Summary

As identified in the previous chapters, there are currently two development proposals on the table within the study area Mid-Scarborough: the Transit City proposal whereby 2 new LRT lines will terminate at Kennedy Station, and a proposal for a new community centre to bridge the service gap in the area. The two projects resonate each other as public infrastructural projects - one on the public transit system and the other a part of the regional community services network. Thus, there exists a potential to capture their latent synergy as well as to consolidate resources by coupling them into a larger development project.

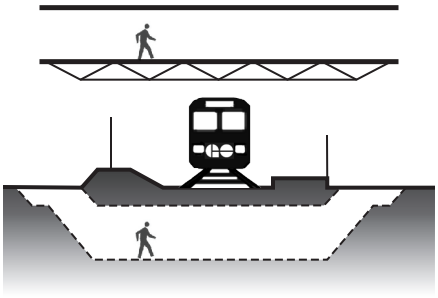
This thesis proposes to hybridize the two building types into a regional mixed-use community complex. The hybrid proposal would function as both physical and social interfaces within the fragmented fabric of the study area. The proposed community complex, *Kennedy Exchange,* signifies its role on 3 scales: regionally, it functions as a regional transit connection as well as gateway into Scarborough; locally, it functions as a physical connector within a compartmentalized landscape; and on the community level it acts as a social and communicative interface between the different ethnic and social strata in the local area (fig 5.1). Through the act of bridging, this thesis aims to re-establish the continuity of the local urban fabric on three levels. Physically, the design intends to strengthen pedestrian connectivity between program pockets. Socially, it intends to foster interactions between segregated micro-social segments as a social interface at this private-public threshold. Politically, through encouraging a cooperative environment, this thesis aims to foster

negotiations and collaborations between the different levels of agencies in the production of local landscape.

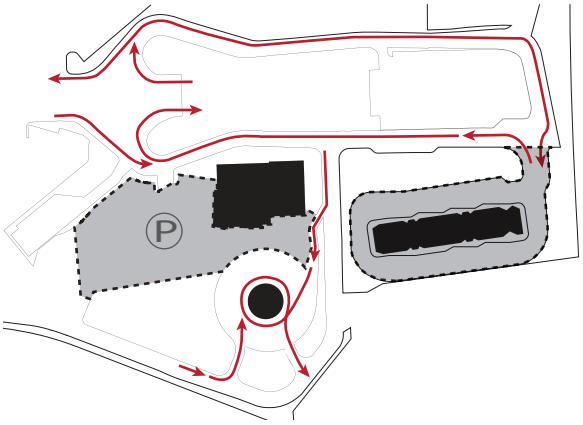
Exploring the transit intermodal node as a suburban equivalent of pedestrian street in urban context, this thesis proposes to intensify and expand upon the existing semi-public site. Through capturing latent potential within existing patterns, this approach guarantees participation from the public, as it demands initially minimal social, spatial, or behavioural adaptations but only changes of perception. By aggregating and juxtapositing a mixture of commercial, social, and cultural programs along its circulation corridors, existing mono-programmed circulation spaces are thickened through both diurnal usages and diversified functions, hence expanding its public-ness through diversity and repetition.

5.2. Design Constraints

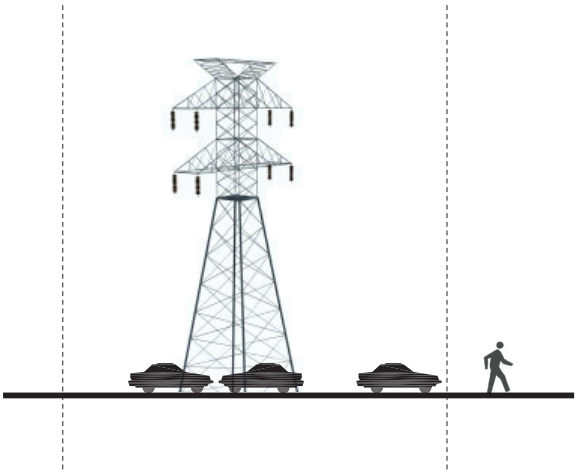
Recognizing that the integrity of the various infrastructures and transit corridors are essential in proper functioning of the various transit modes, this thesis assumes 6 specific design constraints in response to local boundaries and physical objects within the site.



a) GO rail corridor and pedestrian passage



b) Restricted boundaries and layouts



c) Unbuildable zone

Fig 5.2 Site and Design constraints

1. *For safety reasons, pedestrian traffic is segregated from the rail corridor at grade as either an underpass, or as a pedestrian bridge with at least 5m underside clearance (fig 5.2a).*

2. *The existing layout of Kennedy station follows a typical protocal for all TTC intermodal stations, which minimizes the number of checkpoints and facilitates the fluidity of the intermodal transfer within the TTC system. The existing TTC fare-restricted boundary therefore is respected as a discrete zone that does not allow public passage. In the same manner, the existing boundary of Canada Post office will also be respected as the extent of parking and loading area is integral to its daily function as a regional collecting and distributing facility (fig 5.2b).*

3. *The power line strip diagonally cutting across the site is assumed to be uninhabitable. Because of its magnetic field and the subsequent adverse health effects, its use is therefore restricted to being a green unplanted buffer and for intermittent use only, for example as surface parking similar to the existing condition south of Eglinton Ave (fig 5.2c).*

4. *Currently, there are a total of 11 different bus routes pooling into Kennedy Station from both east and west directions, with over 1,000 commuters using the commuter parking spaces, and close to 3,000 passenger pickups and drop-offs occurring at the Kiss-N-Ride everyday. The layout of the existing vehicular network permits high volume and fast traffic movement across the site, which essentially ensures the proper functioning of Kennedy Station as an intermodal hub. The Eglinton overpass, for example, allows both uninterrupted under-passages of both the SRT and GO train. The service road loops allows uninterrupted bus access to the station. The circular layout of the Kiss-N-Ride also allows quick stop-&-run trips. Thus any attempt to change to the existing vehicular layout will require detailed traffic engineering to prevent traffic congestions (fig 5.2b).*

5. *Because of the structural support of the Eglinton overpass, north access to Kennedy Station is restricted to only spaces between the structural columns. Any excavation below the Eglinton overpass or any attempt to integrate the SRT with the subway will be difficult, apart from the spatial constraints to accommodate a 90- degree turning radius. Instead, the existing scheme of the SRT will be adopted and its technology will be upgraded to the standards of the new LRT system.*

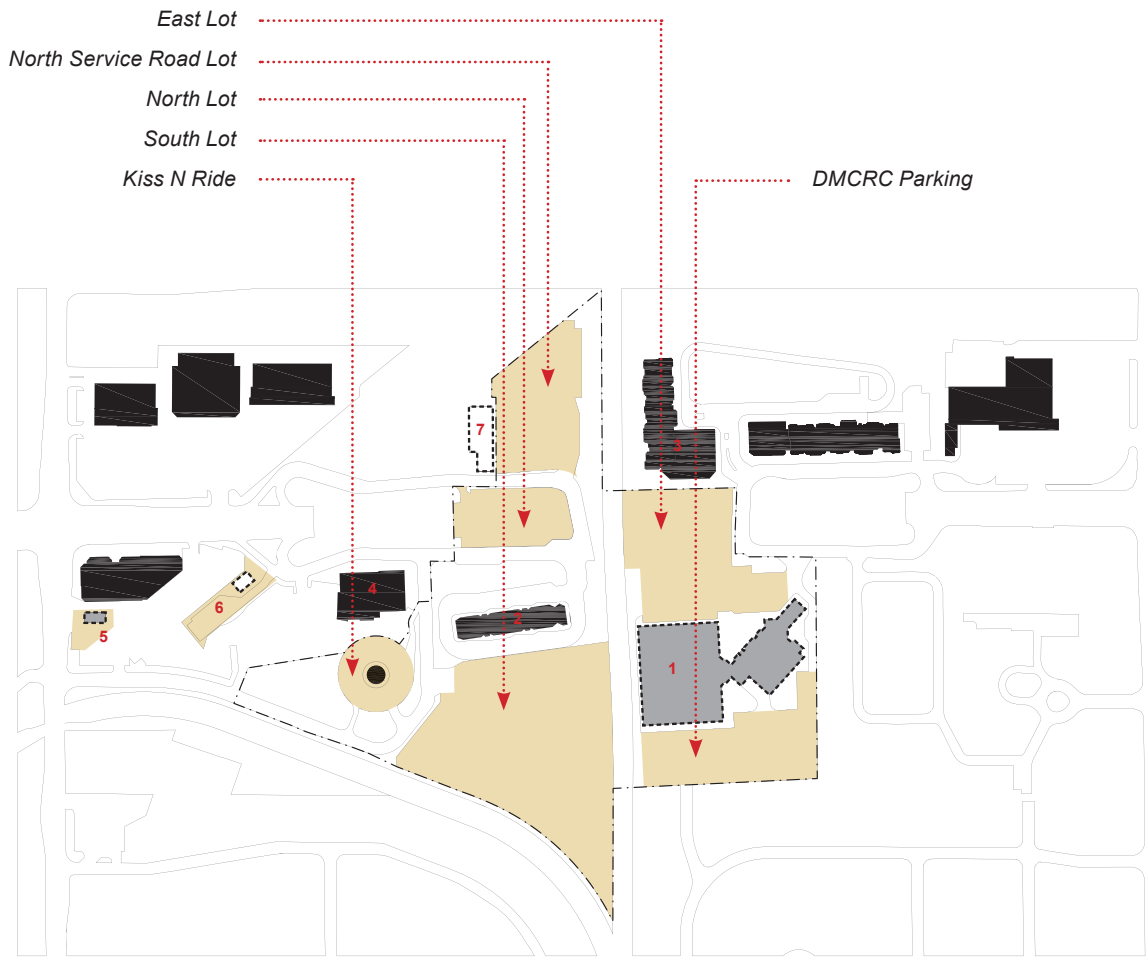


Fig 5.3 Scope of Design & Site Boundary

1) *DMCRC (to be replaced)*
2) *Kennedy Station*
3) *Rainbow Village*
4) *Canada Post Office*
5) *Used car dealership (to be replaced)*
6) *Donut Shop (vacant)*
7) *Car Repair Shop (vacant)*

5.3. Scope of Design

The boundary of the proposal is composed of the properties under the transportation authority and other government jurisdictions hence assumed to be public lands. It includes the Don Montgomery Community Recreation Centre (DMCRC) under Park and Recreation, the Go transit station, TTC Kennedy Station and its commuter parking lots, as well as the Kiss N' Ride short-term parking lot east of the subway station (fig 5.3). A parking garage is proposed to consolidate the extensive surface parking to free up available land for the new proposal. The extent of the site proposal further extends west to include the service road as part of the proposal of a new pedestrian corridor. Thus the scope of the site proposal spans the length of one and a half suburban blocks from Kennedy Road to the edge of Don Montgomery Community Recreational Centre (DMCRC) in the east.

Under the design proposal, the existing DMCRC will be replaced with a larger building to house additional programs. Although the existing DMCRC, built in the mid 70s, is adequately supporting its programs, to accommodate additional programs it would require a major renovation of the low-end concrete-block building. Spatially, it has been alienated from its context by the overpass as illustrated earlier. Therefore, from both design and cost effectiveness points of view, it is therefore reasonable to justifiy a new building that better responds to both its surrounding urban fabric as well as its current user constituency. At the same time, replacing the sport-oriented DMCRC with a new multifunctional design also symbolically recognises the social and cultural changes that have occurred in the local area over the last 20 years.

Because of the proposal covers over 84,000 sq metres (8.4 hectres), it operates at the scale of a mega-projects similar to the planning and the design of a town centre which lies between architecture and urban planning. It negotiates the balance between specificities in program functionality, especially in regard to the intermodal hub, and a schematic design proposal specifying only diagrammatic program components and land use recommendations. The design proposal therefore limits its focus primarily in the design of the public realm and its relationships with adjacent programs. Programs are treated as aggregates of activities, and their juxtaposition and interactions are used to activate the connecting public realm.

Despite the large scale of this proposal, the design proposal therefor is not intended as a masterplan. Rather, it operates as a incremental infill development at a strategic intermodal hub that explores existing opportunities while respecting local conditions and the suburban functional logics. It focuses on intensifying the social transformative potential of informal public spaces within the specific pluralistic post-urban dispersed suburban conditions illustrated in the previous site analyses and literature reviews. The overall site proposal is therefore limited to infilling the existing two vacant properties, the redevelopment of the small-scale used car dealership at the corner of Kennedy Road and the service road, and the development of the property associated with the commuter parking facilities.

6.4. Design Proposal Descriptions

The new ***Kennedy Exchange*** expands the functions of both the existing TTC Kennedy Station and DMCRC. As both an intermodal hub and a community cnetre, the new community complex carries two main functions: as a physical connector to improve interconnectivity of the intermodal as well as local pedestrian circulations within the area, and as a community infrastructure to provide flexible and multi-functional spaces for the diverse range of local users in strengthening community ownership and local social networks.

On one hand, the two themes compliment each other. In streamlining and strengthening the connectivity between different programming and with the interstitial public realm, it maximizes access and the public-ness hence intensifying the social transformative potential of public spaces. at Ahe same time, the coupling of diverse programs and public spaces along the pedestrian corridors thickens the utilitarian experiences of daily commute with new urban activities.

On the other hand, while streamlining transit and pedestrian flows across the site, injecting urban activities and public spaces along the edges as disruptions and frictions creates opportunities to slow down traffic into eddy flows. In this design proposal therefore set up this tension to charge the interstitial connective tissue within the intermodal hub, where opportunities for transient social interactions are located.

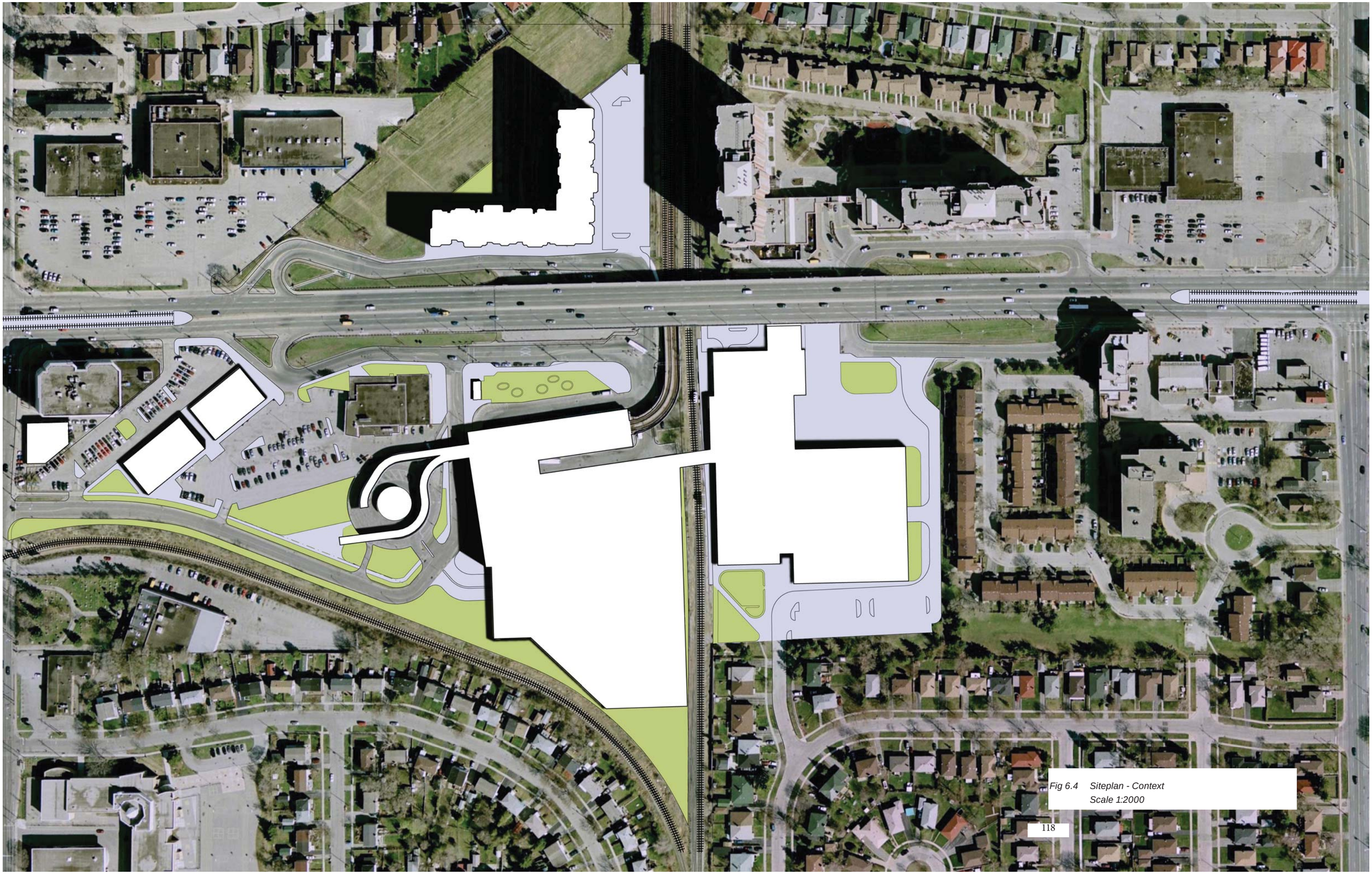


Fig 6.4 Siteplan - Context
Scale 1:2000

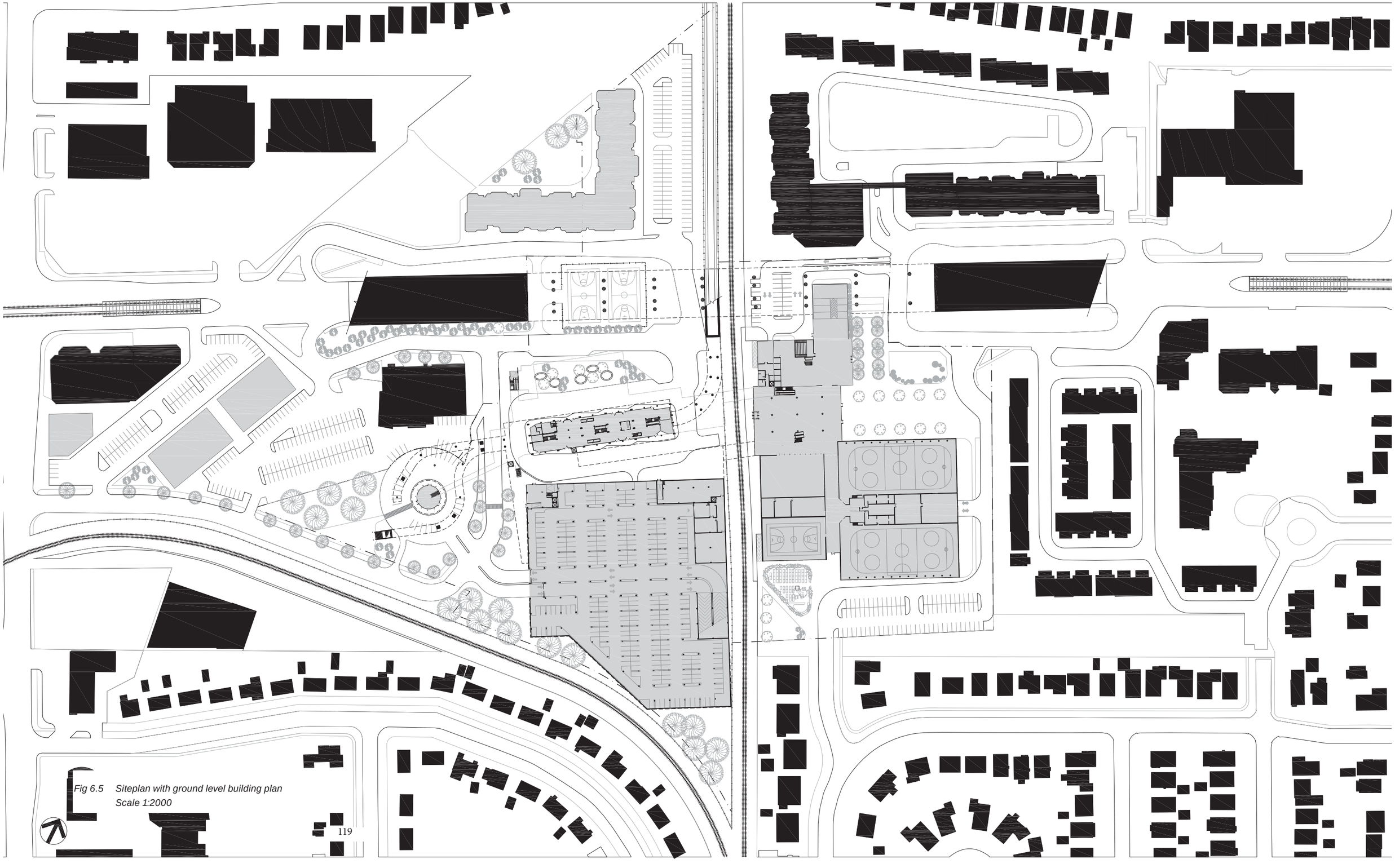


Fig 6.5 Siteplan with ground level building plan
Scale 1:2000

6.5. Site Programming

1. In the combined property of the existing North Lot and the adjacent vacant car repair shop, a new 24-storey high-density residential development is proposed that mirrors the existing Rainbow Village east of the rail corridor (1). At its ground level, mixed-used retail and commercial spaces are proposed which would infill urban activities along its street edge. The proposed building is recessed on one side from the rail corridor to provide a resident parking facility that also serves as a buffer against the train track. At the other side of the building, a open green space could be development as an allotment garden and playground for the residents. Activities from the green space could spill into the unbuildable greenfield of the power line zone.
2. Immediate south of the new residential development and underneath the Eglinton overpass, the existing parking lot is to be developed into an informal recreational space with two public basketball courts within a chain-link fence that serves the densifying neighbourhood.
3. At the corner of Kennedy Road and the sevice road, the small-scale used car dealership at the north corner will be redeveloped as a marker for the new pedestrian corridor. A new retail or commercial program such as a bank or a coffee shop could inhabit the new building, which would serve to define that street corner while complimenting the functions of the existing CDI College immediately north of the site.
4. The vacant donut shop will be infilled as a new mixed-use strip mall to intensify local programming. The new strip mall will share the use of existing parking spaces around the professional college and Canada Post. The new built mass will help to break up the large expanse of surface parking along the corridor, while intensifying the daily experience of commuters along the otherwise utilitarian pedestrian corridor.
5. The main program proposal is concentrated within the new community complex. The new Kennedy Exchange is an agglomeration of five main building aggregates, including an intermodal transit hub expanded from the existing Kennedy Station (5), a new commuter 4-level parking garage with a double-height marketplace podium at the 3rd level (6), a new local library (7), a community program building (8) and a new recreational complex at the existing DMCRC site (9). A public atrium is proposed as a east entrance lobby that also functions as a public room and event space for local community(fig).

a-f. A series of open and public spaces is included in the proposal. Two new parkettes are located close to the entrances into Kennedy Station. An open public square in front of the new atrium serves as a flexible public event space. South of the new commmunity centre are an allotment garden and a playground to serve the local community.

Proposed programs:

1). New high-density residential with ground retail
2). Basketball courts
3). New commerical building
4). Mixed-use strip mall
5). Expansion of existing Kennedy Station
6). 4-level Parking Garage (1000 parking spaces)
7). Library
8). Community Centre
9). Recreational Complex
10). Public Atrium

Proposed open public spaces:

a). Parkette
b). Parkette
c). Open public square
d). Reading garden
e). Community allotment garden
f). Playground
g). Wetland and bioswale

Existing programs:

A). Canada Post
B). TTC Kiss-N-Ride
C). CDI College (professional medical school & offices)
D). Salahuddin Masjid (a cemetary and a school)
E). St Maria Goretti Elementary School
F). Shopping Plaza (with No Frills & Shopper Drug Mart)
G). Rainbow Village
H). Shopping Plaza
I). Shopping strip mall (will a chinese grocery)

Fig 6.6 Siteplan - Programming
Scale 1:2000

Fig 6.7 Overall site massing - northwest aerial view

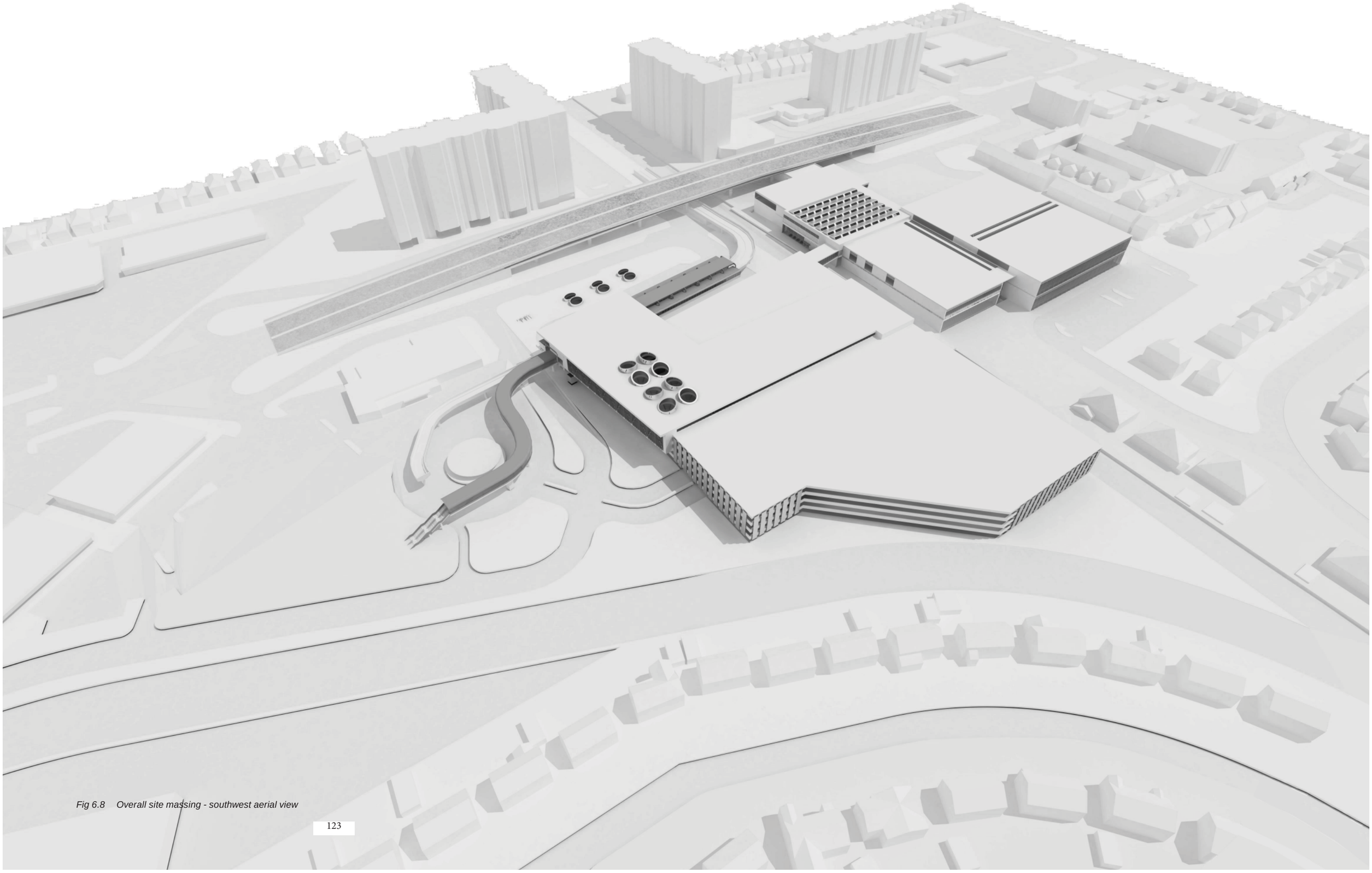
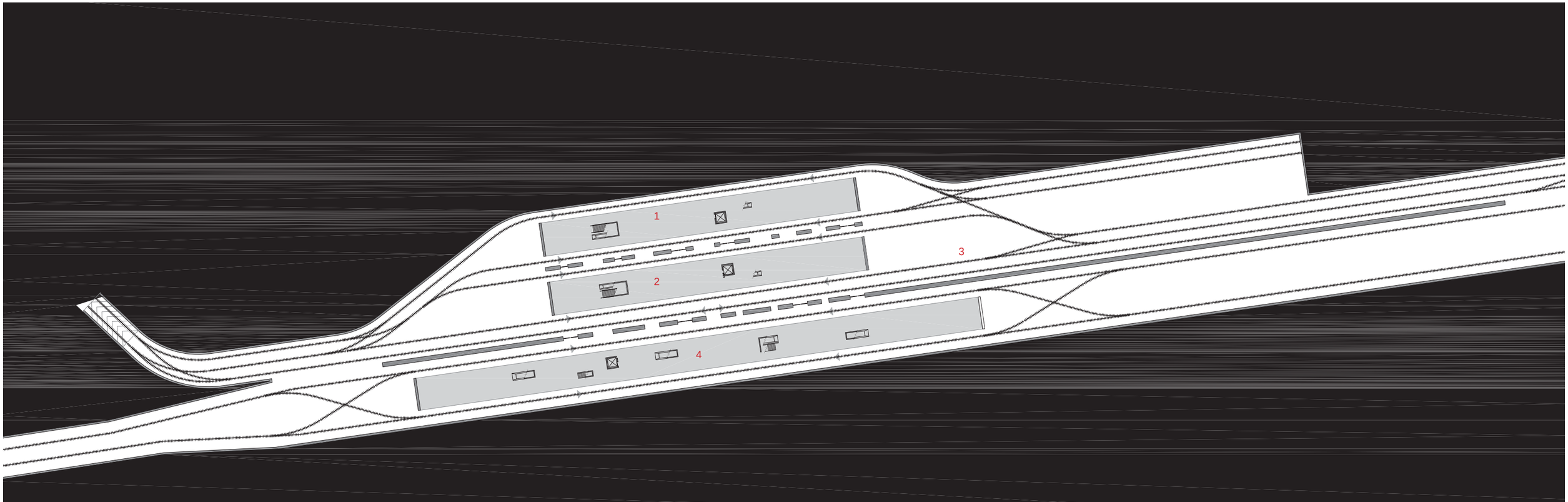


Fig 6.8 Overall site massing - southwest aerial view



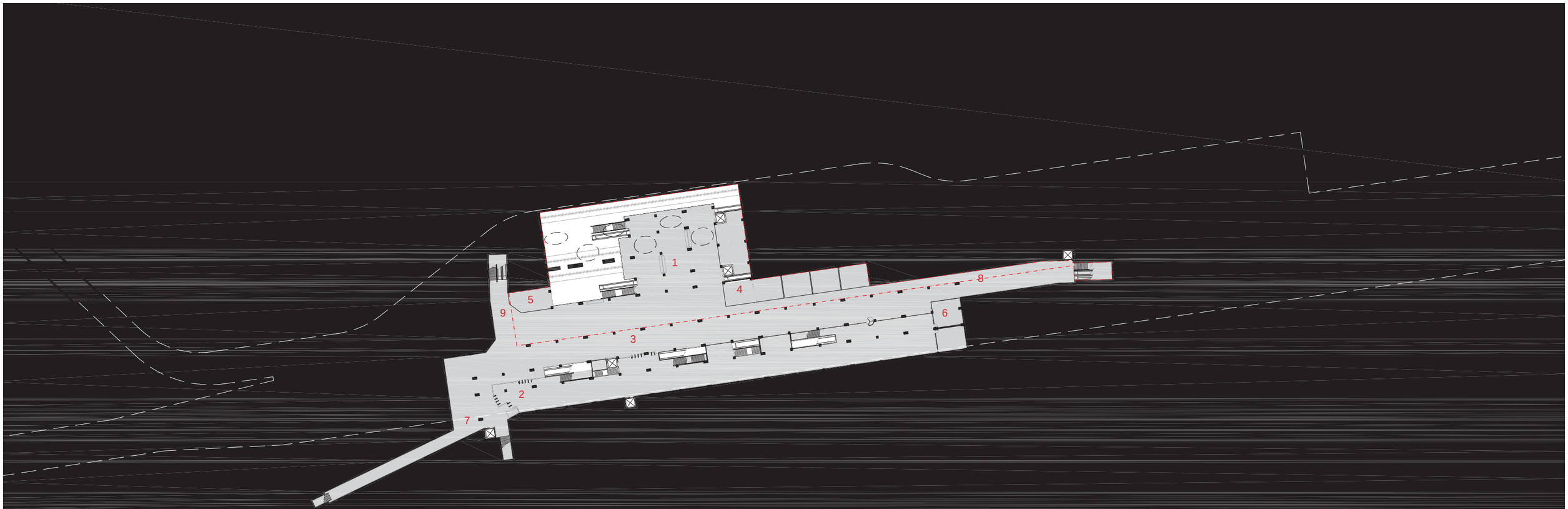
1. *Proposed Eglinton Crosstown LRT terminal platform*
2. *Proposed Scarborough-Malvern LRT terminal platform*
3. *Connecting service track*
4. *Existing TTC subway terminal platform*

Fig 6.9 Building Plan underground platform level B2
Scale 1:1000

Building Plan - B2 level

(Elev. -8.5m)

B2 level is made up of the LRT and subway platforms. Expanded north from the existing subway platform, two new LRT platforms services as terminals for two new LRT lines: Eglinton Crosstown coming from the west and Scarborough-Malvern from the east. The extent of the proposed platforms and tunnels covers mostly unbuilt area and parking lots and disruptions of local circulation, and demolitions are therefore kept at minimum. Besides spaces allocated for temporary queuing of LRT cars at the end of the platforms, an additional service track serves as a communication link between the two lines and to allow access to a remote service station. The independences of the two LRT services are intended to allow flexibility and responsiveness of the overall transit system. The longer Eglinton Crosstown service travelling across midtown Toronto and connecting to Pearson Airport will likely demand more cars and a more frequent service than the shorter Scarborough-Malvern commuter service.



Building Plan - B1 level

(Elev. -4m)

B1 level consists of the existing subway lobby and the new transit concourse. The new concourse expands upon the existing mezzanine level to connect with the new LRT platforms below. Rather than integrated with the existing fare-restricted zone, it is left unrestricted as a submerged pedestrian infrastructure across the site. The proposed LRT station will function similar to a typical streetcar stop, and system access and fare control is confined at the level of car drivers in form of a "Proof-of-Payment" system similar to the one adopted by VIVA bus system of York Regional Transit[1]. A new mid-station subway entrance is added to facilitate intermodal connections between the different public transit system. Though jeodardising seamless intermodal connections between LRT and the rest of the TTC system, this design does however allow more public use of the concourse. Along the edges of the new pedestrian concourse, new small-scale "Stop-N-Run" retail programs (a newsstand, a coffee bar, a dry-cleaner, a local bakery, a flower shop, etc.) are added to service daily commuters as well as to animate the space with activities, thus transforming the utilitarian transit interchange into a social space.

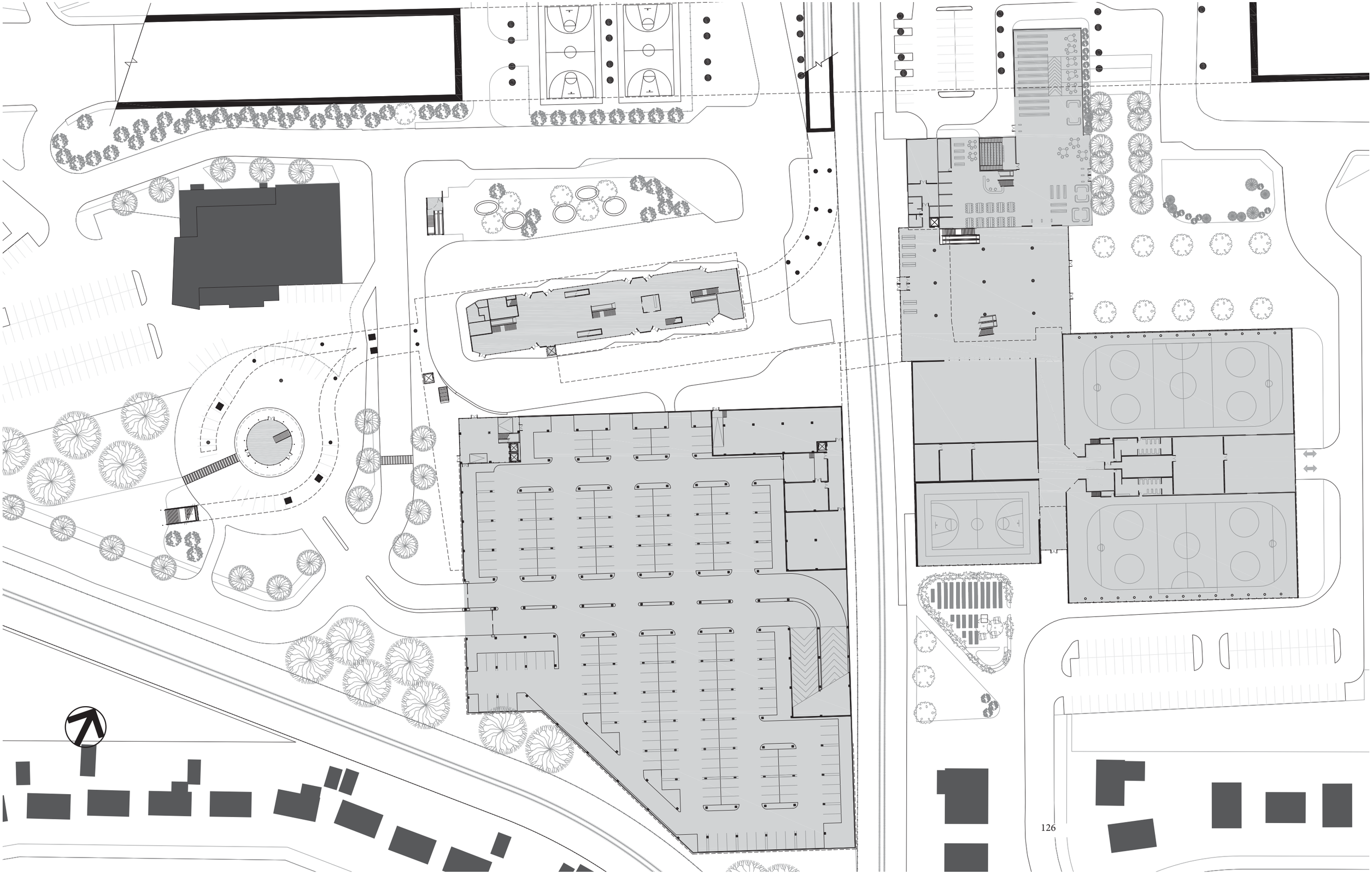
1 Transfers and Proof-of-Payment, York Region Transit VIVA. Retrieved on June 27, 2009, from http://www.yorkregiontransit.com/fares/transfers-and-proof-of-payment.asp

Extent of proposed expansion

Outline of B1 level below

1. *LRT waiting area*
2. *Existing TTC ticket service and entrance*
3. *Proposed new subway entrance*
4. *Grab-N-Run retails*
5. *Newstand / Corner store*
6. *Washrooms (for commuter only)*
7. *Pedestrian tunnel to Kiss-N-Ride*
8. *Pedestrian tunnel to proposed new Atrium*
9. *Connection to main Eglinton entrance*

Fig 6.10 Building plan transit concourse level B1
Scale 1:1000



Building Plan - Ground level

(Elev. +0m)

GO train platform

- *A new indoor waiting area for the GO train service is allocated at the end of the proposed public atrium to accommodate future increase of commuter train usage. The parking facility behind the new library will double as temporary commuter drop-off & pick-up.*

Commuter parking garage

- *The new 4-level parking garage will consolidate all commuter parking within the site. Its ground lobby also serves as grade access to the upper level SRT platform and the marketplace.*

Library

- *The new library is located north of the new public atrium. On the lower level, the main entrance lobby opens onto the new atrium, and it is conceived as a public living room. At each side of the entrance lobby are two program areas that provide everyday services to local users. The "Cyber-lounge" provides public internet terminals as information portals as well as an informal social gathering space, while the "Everyday media" section features everyday reading materials such as newspaper, popular fictions, as well as multicultural multi-media such as DVD movies and music. Its easy access allows this area to function as an everyday grab-&-runs for local commuters as well as a local hangout for retired seniors and after-school youths.*

Community Centre

- *The new community centre is located south of the new atrium. It is made up of two buildings, a recreational complex and a community wing. On ground level, the recreational complex houses two hockey rinks adopted from the old centre. Between the rinks are service facilities, including changing rooms, locker/ storages, and loading and delivery. In the community wing, a multi-purpose room opens onto the public atrium, serving as a public event and exhibition space. There are also a community kitchen with a dining area and a multi-purpose gymnasium. South of the community building are an allotment garden for the local community and a playground area.*

- *The two community centre buildings are connected by an interstitial circulation spine. At ground level, the circulation spine allows passages from the new atrium through the building to the residential area in the south, and it serves as a part of local pedestrian circulation. Hence the new centre is de-institutionalized from a specialized destination as part of the everyday fabric. Daily commuter passages become parts of the experiences along with special social and cultural events such as cultural festivals, car shows, summer youth camps, seasonal intramural tournaments, and so on. Events and activities on the other hand thicken the monotonous experience of the everyday commuting.*

a) Existing bus station
b) New noth parkette
c) Parking garage entrance lobby
d) Existing Kiss-N-Ride
e) New west parkette
f) New GO train lobby
g) Parking facility

Fig 6.11 Building plan grade level
Scale 1:1000

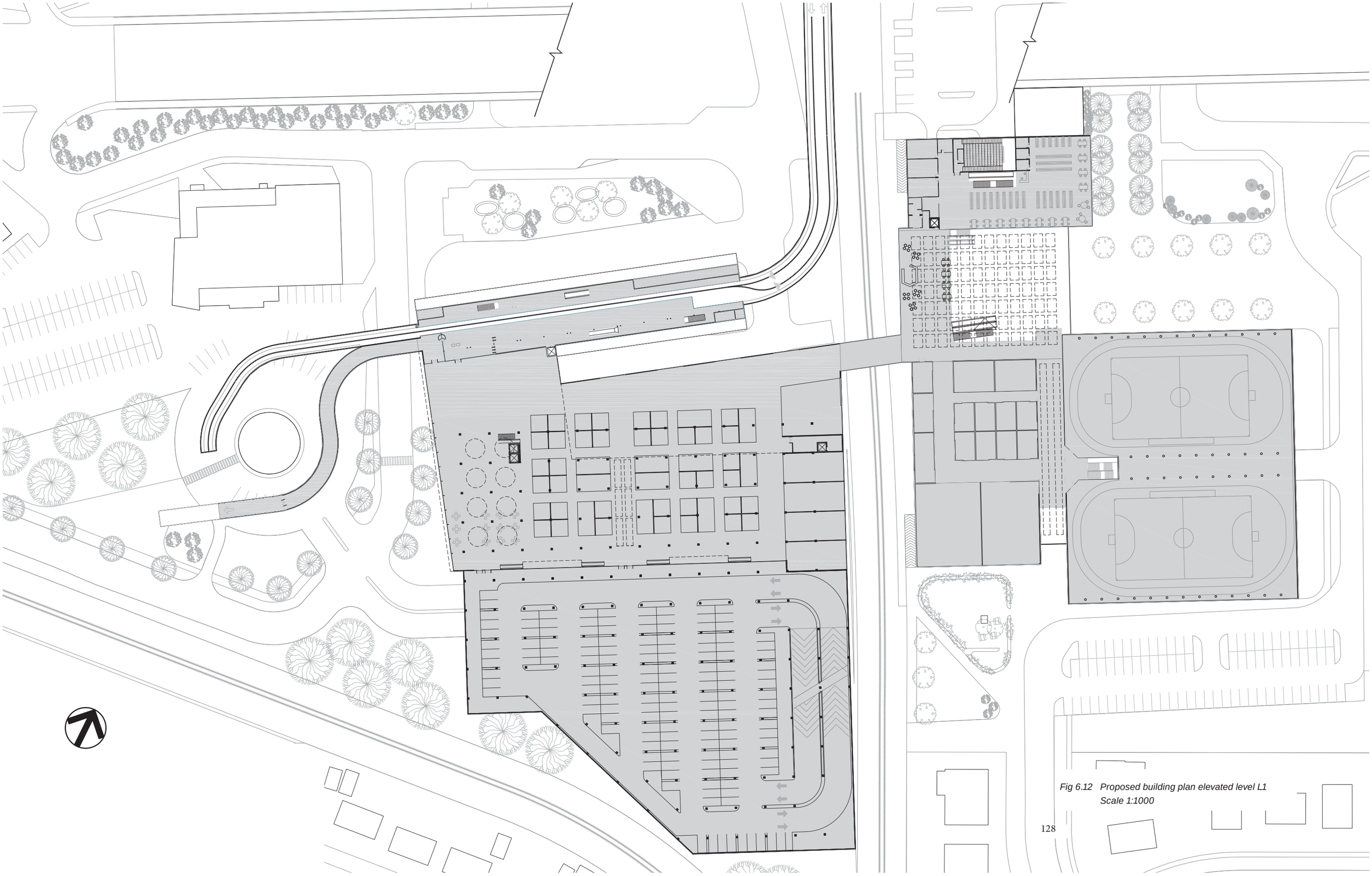


Fig 6.12 Proposed building plan elevated level L1
Scale 1:1000

Building Plan - Upper level L1

(Elev. +0m)

SRT platform

- *The west end of the existing SRT platform is renovated into a new entrances to provide direct access from the new pedestrian bridge and from the proposed marketplace. Park-N-Ride commuters could connect from the new parking facility to Kennedy Station and to the GO train platfrom on this level through the marketplace and the new pedestrian overpass.*

Market Square

- *The Market Square is located at P3 level of the new parking garage. Besides opening directly to the parking garage, it connects directly to the SRT platform as well as the new public atrium through a pedestrian overpass across the rail track. The typology of this marketplace is organized in a grid framework that permits leasing or selling of stall units as individual commodities. The flexible stall spaces could be combined and recombined based on specific spatial requirement of the leaser or buyers. Rather than controlled by either a single developer or a management company as in typical shopping malls, this organization encourages local entrepreneurship that foster a sense of ownership of local environment, and provides flexibilitiy to respond to changing local needs through individual initiatives and adaptations. Pollitically, instead of controlled by a special interest group, the facility is governed by the collective initiatives of each private stall owners through a co-governance approach that makes it possible to balance different interests as well as responsive to local changes.*

Library

- *The upper level of the new library is consisted of the study area and a learning centre that provides both ESL services for new immigrants as well as multi-language learning for encourage cultural exchanges. A stadium theatre opens onto both the upper and lower levels, and it serves as a lecture space for the language centre as well as a flexible space for public and community events, such as public lectures, movie screenings, and public and community meetings.*

Community Centre

- *In the new community centre, different programs are grouped, stacked, and superimposed. Art classes, a senior pool hall, a sewing club, a youth centre, and a daycare are all grouped within the flexible activity area on the upper level, while hockey rinks, indoor soccer pitches, and a jogging track are stacked and superimposed in the recreational complex that share the same storage and change facility. This consolidation of space and services not only improve efficiency and 24-hour usages, the juxtaposition at the same time fosters informal negotiations and intergroup mixings during everyday encounters. The corridors and changing rooms become meeting place of diverse user groups. Rather than stratifying or specializing different activities into mono-programmed spaces that promote social and cultural homogeneity, the mixed programming encourages a socially and culturally diverse multi-programmed environment.*

a) Existing SRT platform
b) New SRT entrance
c) New converted pedestrian bridge
d) New pedestrian overpass
e) Commuter parking P3
f) New Marketplace

Fig 6.13 Proposed building plan elevated level L1 Scale 1:1000

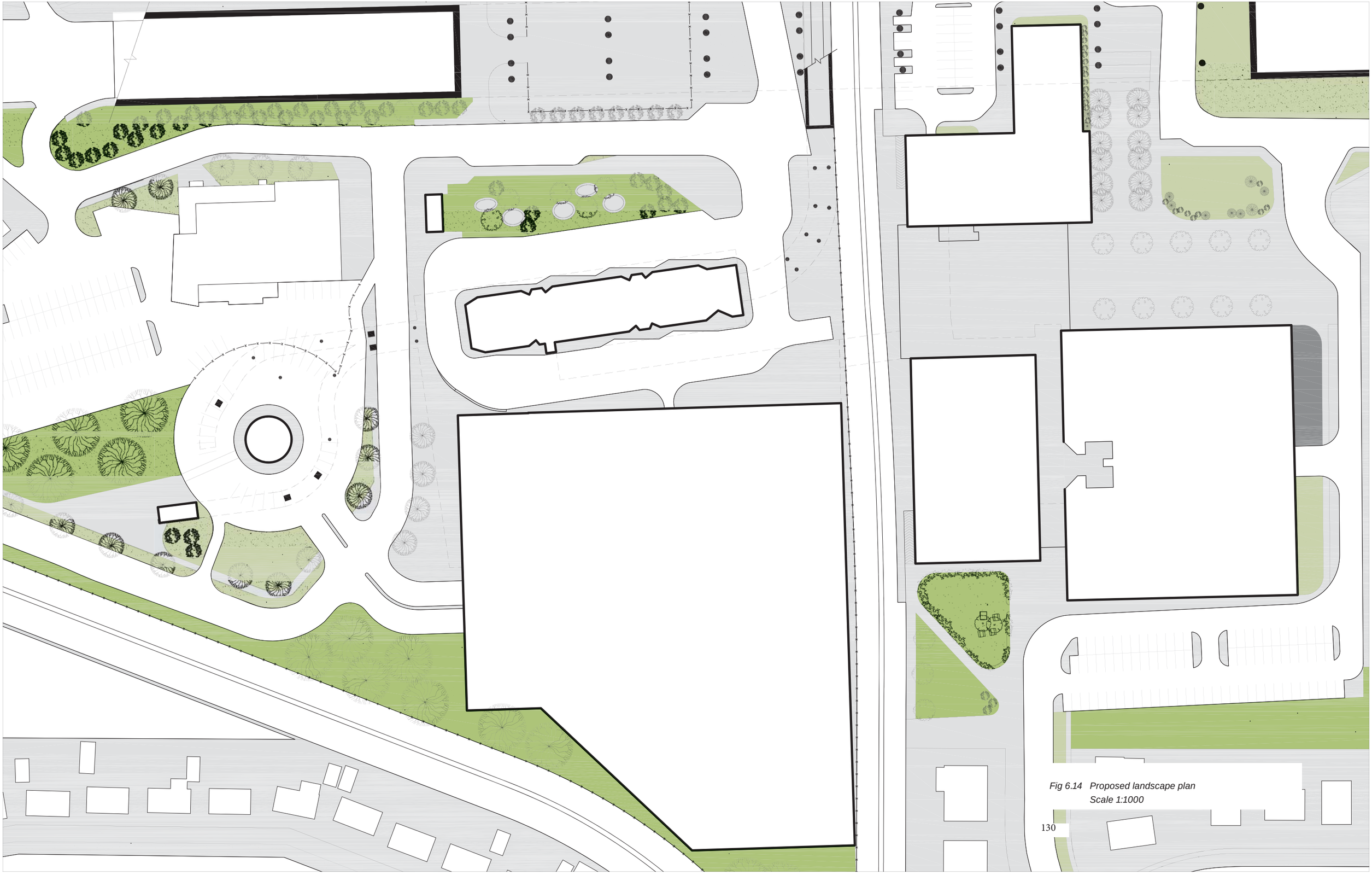


Fig 6.14 Proposed landscape plan
Scale 1:1000

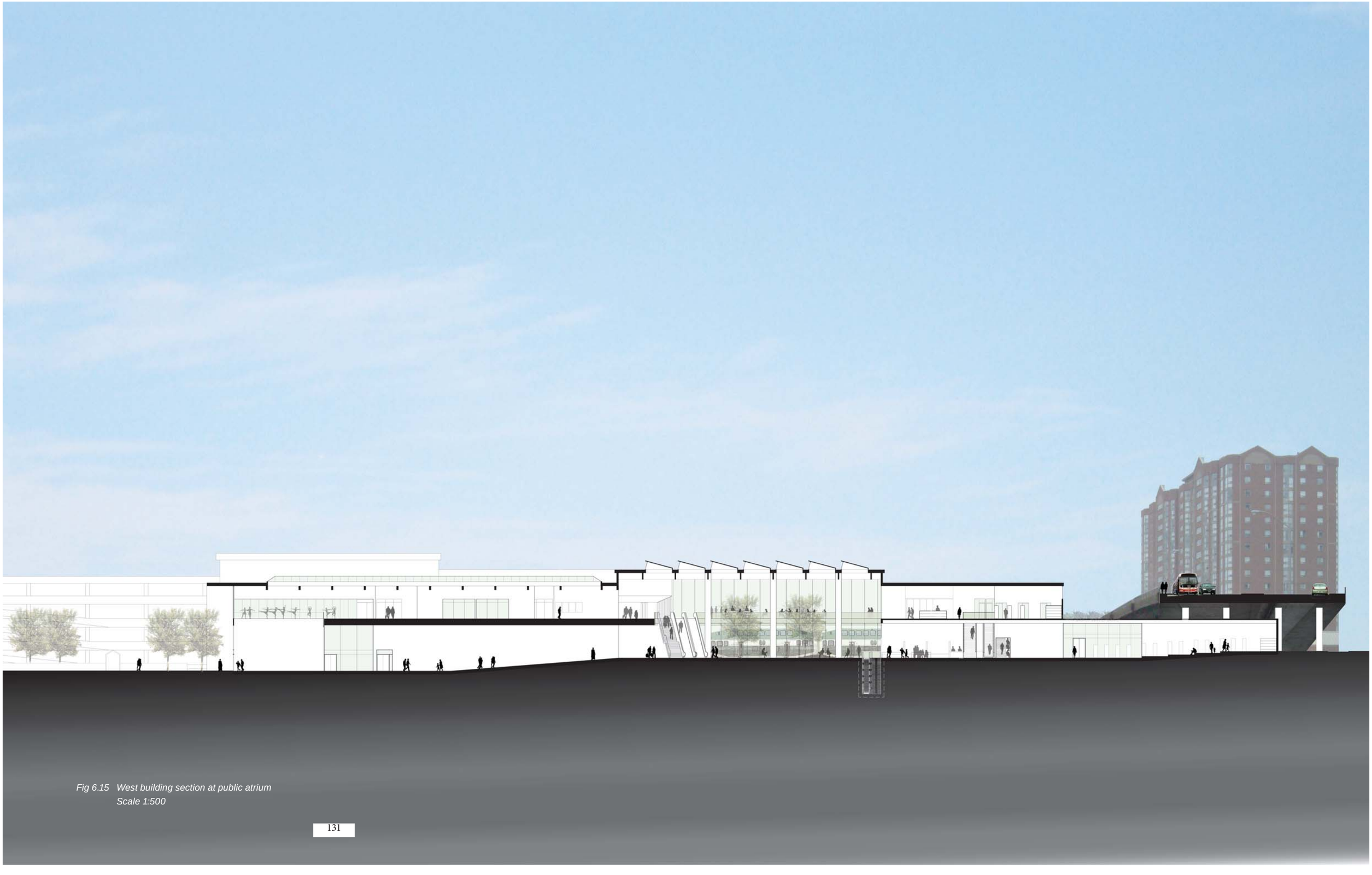


Fig 6.15 West building section at public atrium
Scale 1:500

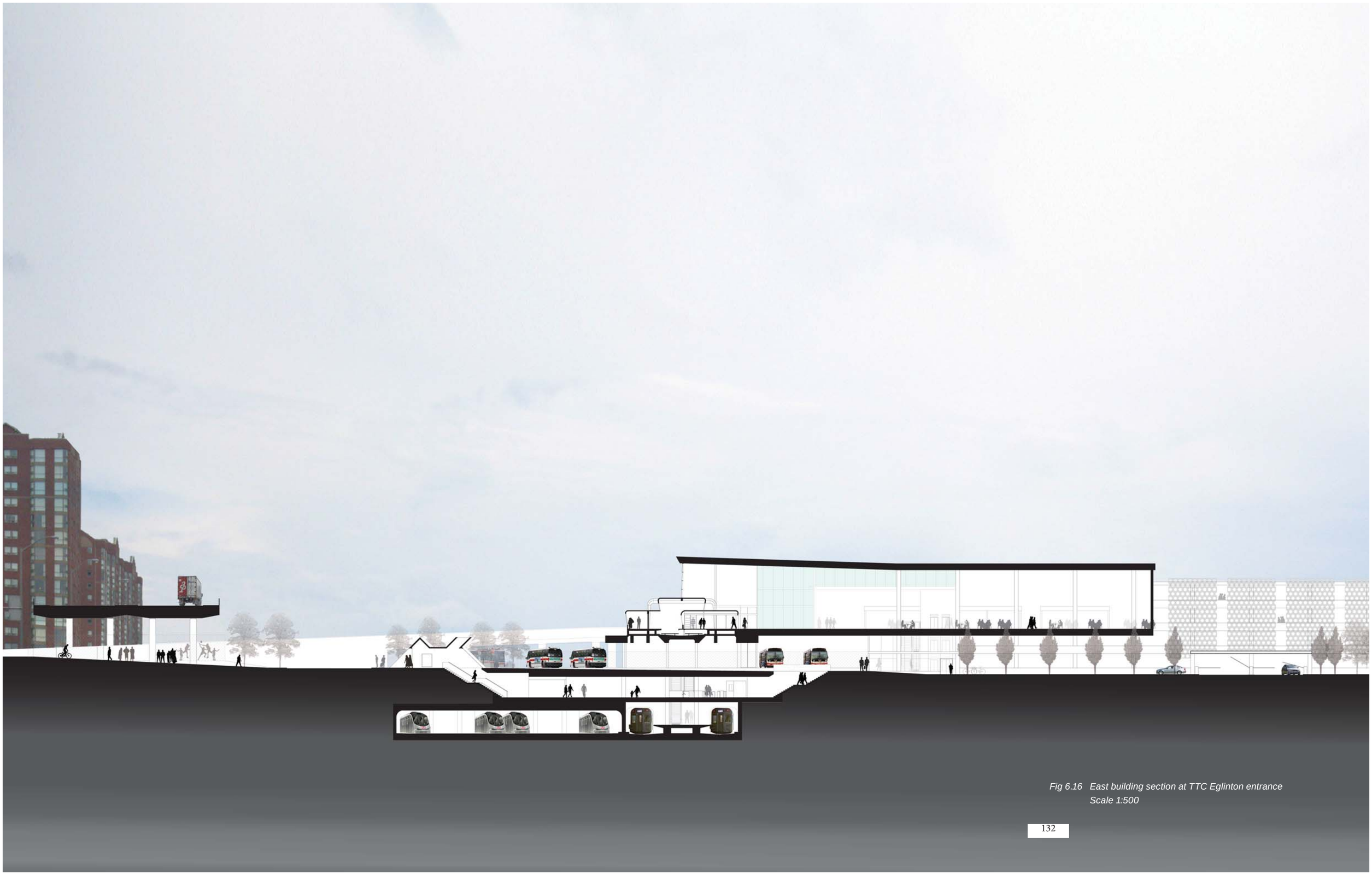


Fig 6.16 East building section at TTC Eglinton entrance
Scale 1:500

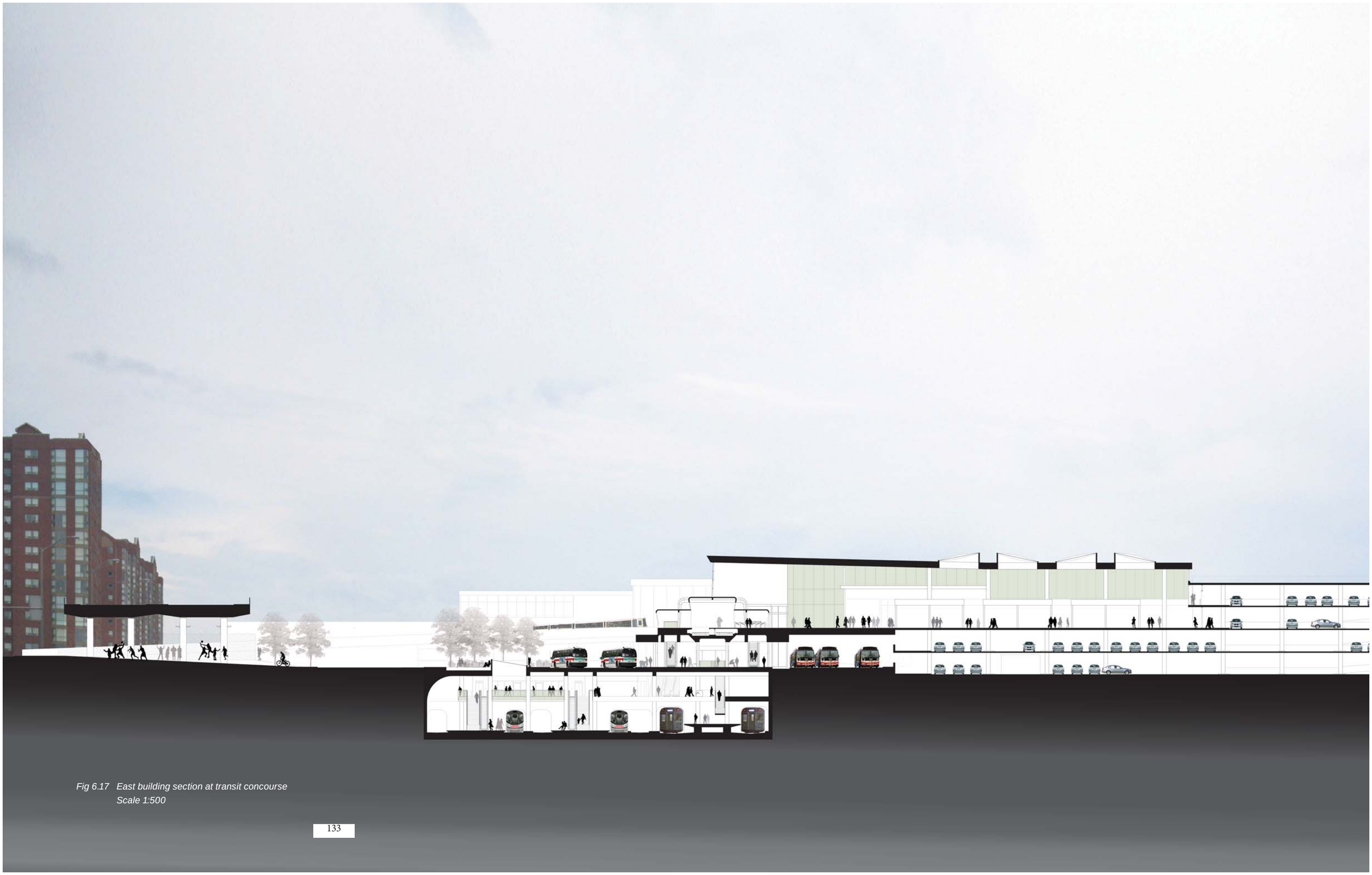


Fig 6.17 East building section at transit concourse
Scale 1:500

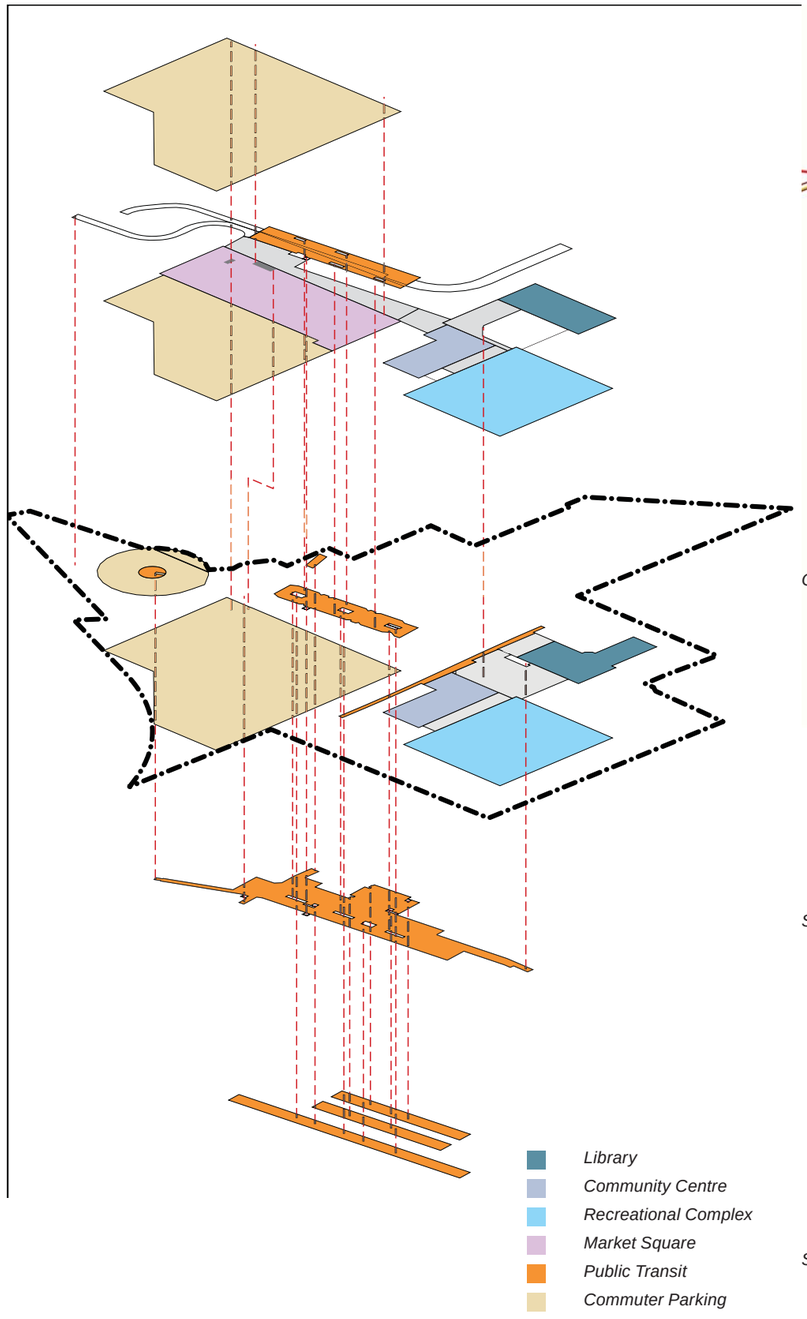
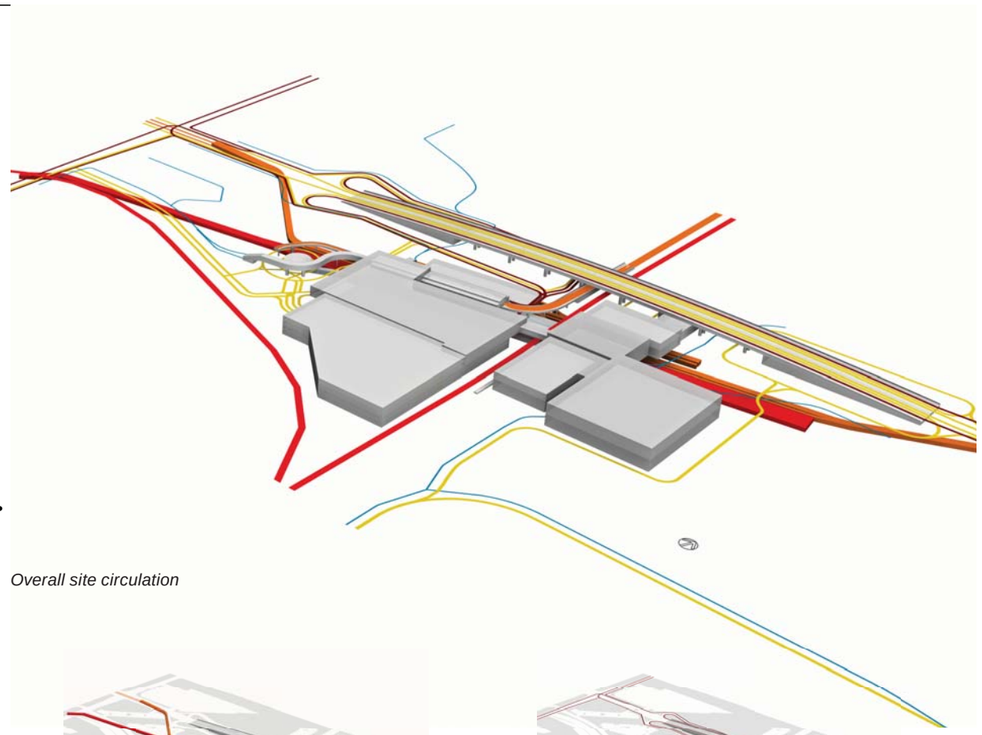
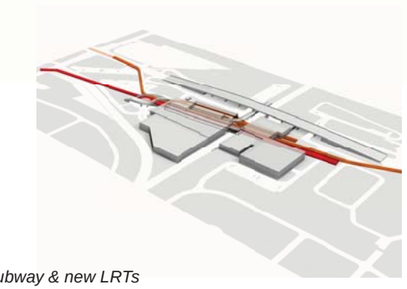


Fig 6.18 Building axo & vertical connectivity

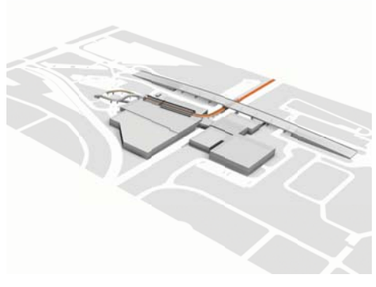


Overall site circulation



Subway & new LRTs

Regional bus access



SRT

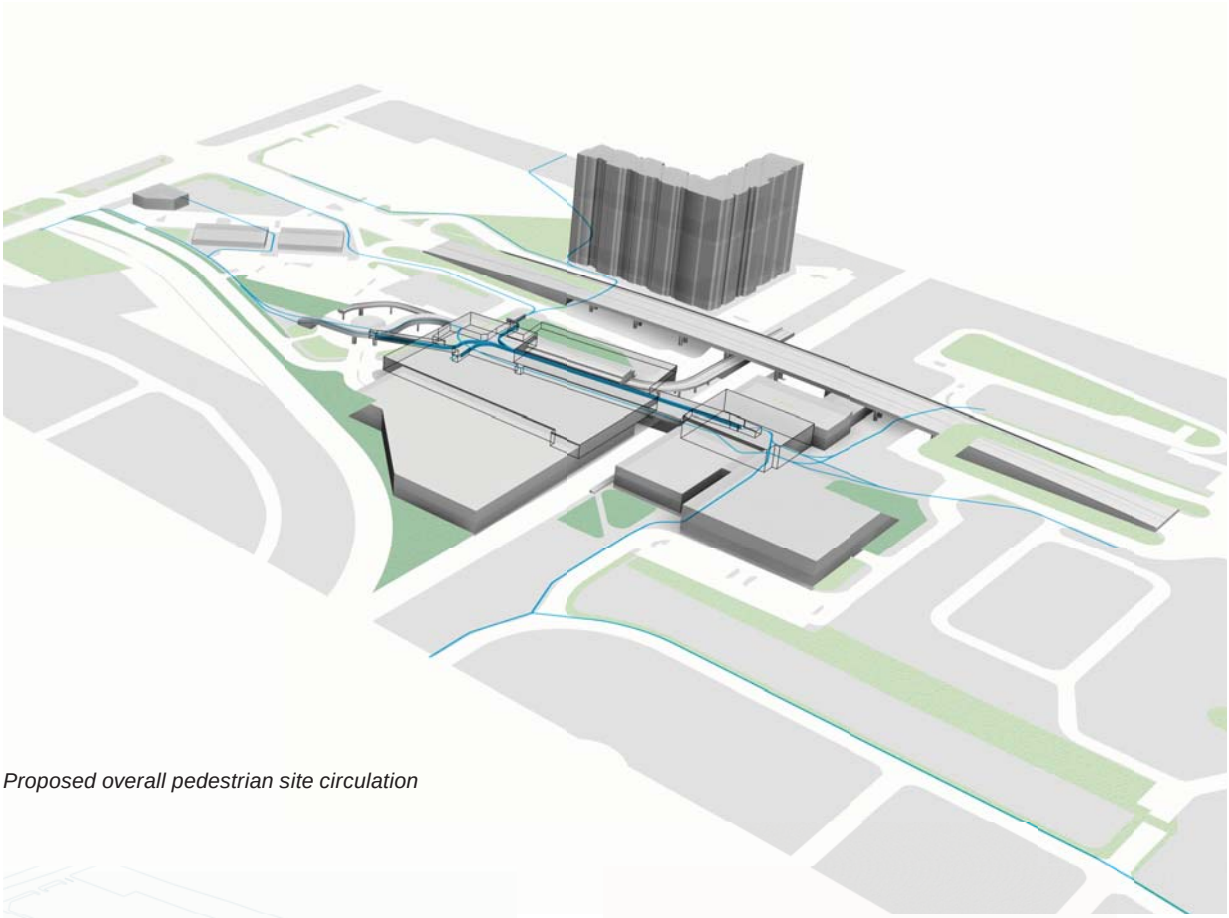
Private vehicular access

Fig 6.19 Site Circulation Diagram

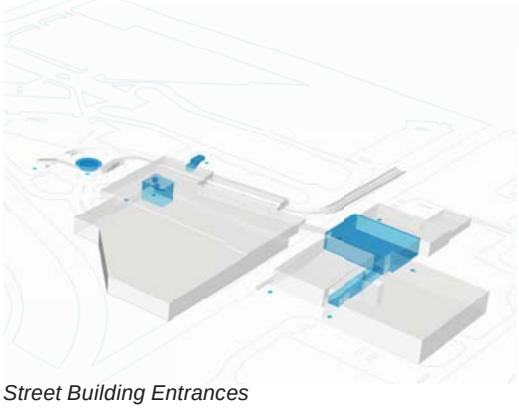
5.6. Site Circulation

In the expansion of the existing TTC station, the existing station design of as well as the layout of service roads connecting to Kennedy Station remain unchanged in this design proposal. They are recognized as being essential to the proper functioning of the intermodal hub. This design proposes 4 major changes to the existing roadway layout and to Kennedy Station itself.

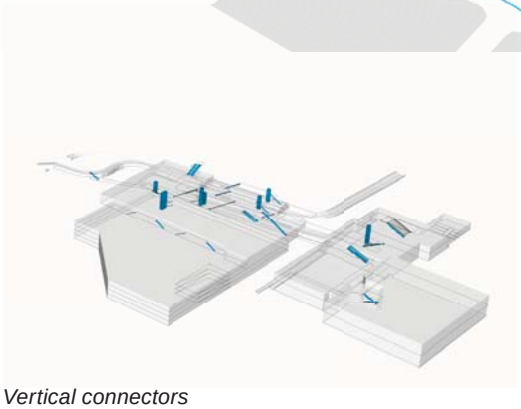
1. A new parking garage is proposed to consolidate all existing surface commuter parkings. Its entrance is aligned with that of existing Kiss-N-Ride asa new 4-way stop to minimize traffic disruptions and thus streamlines the traffic flow along the service road.
2. The new expansion in the Kennedy Station will provide two new underground platforms as terminals for the LRT lines, as well as expanding the existing pedestrian throughway into a pedestrian concourse. From the new terminals, the two LRT lines will run in their respective underground tunnels, then ramps up to continue as surface-run LRT services.
3. The SRT will remain at the upper level. It will be upgraded to be compatible with the new proposed LRT system. A new entrance gate at the west end of the platform will allow weather-protected commuter access from a new pedestrian bridge and from the proposed parking garage. The new entrance will also open onto the proposed marketplace that takes up part of the 3rd level of the new parking garage.
4. To the west of the SRT platform, the southern portion of the SRT turning loop will be renovated into a new pedestrian enclosed bridge above the service road, which will introduce new usage to the unused structure beyond a residual artefact. The remaining north portion of the turning loop will continued to be used as car storage for the SRT. The new enclosed pedestrian bridge will be extended and descend onto the new parkette next to the existing Kiss-N-Ride that will provide the new west entrance into the community complex.



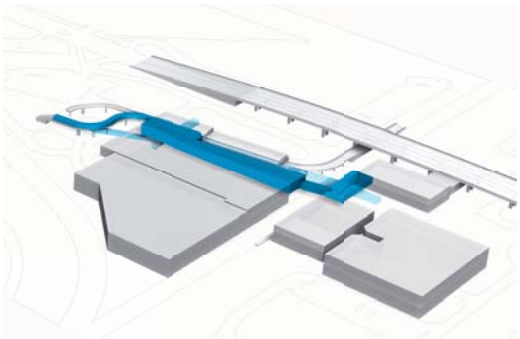
Proposed overall pedestrian site circulation



Street Building Entrances



Vertical connectors



Elevated & submerged Internal Pedestrian zones

Fig 5.20 Proposed Pedestrian Circulation Diagram

Pedestrian circulation & interstitial public spaces

For the pedestrian circulation across the site, this design proposes to improve the pedestrian experiences and legibility of existing pedestrian corridors through landscaping and infilling new urban activities. The juxtaposition of new urban activities and public open spaces along its edges at the same time diversifies its utilitarian function, creating an urban mixed-use environment (fig 5.6).

As pedestrian movements within the study area are oriented towards Kennedy Station, the internal pedestrian circulation of the new complex and Kennedy Station therefore are conceived as parts of the public pedestrian spine across the site. The pedestrian movement and access are organized into 2 levels in order to negotiate the web of existing transit corridors and roadways.

As the connective tissue between different program aggregates, the pedestrian corridors along with proposed open spaces make up the public realm in the proposal. Left unscripted and adaptable, these spaces allows spontaneous activities as well as transient appropriation by its users. Though unprogrammed, they are spatially structured and organized to encourage particular qualities and rhythms, through volumetric configuration, program adjacency, and permeability.

Fig 5.21 Proposed pedestrian corridors

Fig 5.22 Rendering of the transit concourse on underground mezzanine level B1

The submerged pedestrian plane expands upon existing public circulation at the mezzanine level within Kennedy Station, connecting west from Kiss N-Ride to the east entrance underneath the rail track. The proposed transit concourse will be integrated with this underground pathway serving as a part of the public pedestrian infrastructure across the site. New everyday and small-scale "stop-&-run" retail programs (a newsstand, a coffee bar, a dry-cleaner, a local bakery, a flower shop) are inserted at the edges to service daily commuters as well as to animate the space with activities.

Fig 5.23 Rendering of the proposed LRT platform at level B2

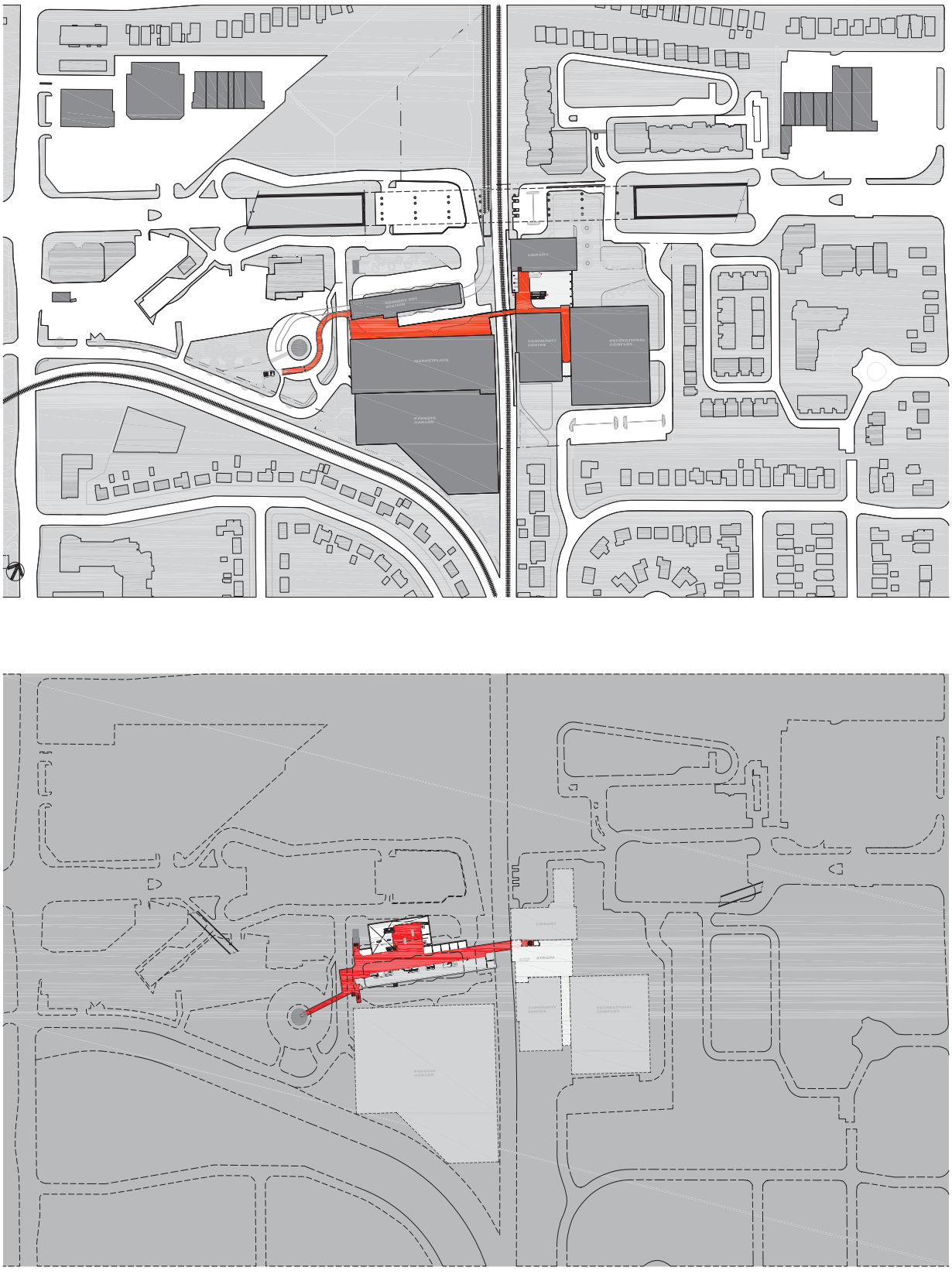


Fig 5.24 Pedestrian circulation diagrams, underground mezzanine level B1 (bottom), & above-ground level L1 (top); not to scale

The elevated pedestrian plane consists of the interstital space of the proposed marketplace and two new pedestrian bridges, the east one spanning over the GO rail track and the other over Kiss-N-Ride and the service road. The marketplace is connected onto the ground surface through a series of parking lobbies which functions to connect both physically and visually of the proposed elevated plane with the street plane.

The two proposed pedestrian planes within the community complex converge at both ends. At the east end the converted pedestrian bridge descends onto a new parkette next to the existing Kiss N Ride. The parkette serves as a new marker for the two entrances. Park furniture, sitting area and tree shading and landscaping create opportunities for social activities and lingering in the new parkette. Commuters waiting for pick-up, for example, may spill and occupy the parkette, where street vendors could appropriate the area during evening rush hours and weekends.

The pedestrian corridor continues along the service road. Its quality and identity is improved through strengthening its definition along its edges with landscaping. The new mixed-use strip mall would help to visually break up the large expanse of parking along the corridor. The new urban activities would diversify the existing utilitarian use of the pedestrian corridor. Daily commuters could conveniently access the different services in the new strip mall on their daily commute to and from Kennedy Station.

At the west end the two pedestrian planes spill onto the new public atrium. On ground level, the back of the atrium opens directly onto the GO train platform serving as the waiting area for GO train commuters in the morning and in the evening. it is connected to the various modes of transit as well as the convergence junctions of all pedestrian movement from the east. It serves therefore as the east entrance gateway to the different transit modes as well as a public living room to the local communities. Its adjacency to the library and the multi-purpose space encourages diverse range of events, including book sales, community meetings, art exhibitions, as well as weekend farmer and flee markets.

Fig 5.25 Rendering of the proposed parkette next to existing Kiss-N-Ride


TO KENNEDY EXCHANGE

Fig 5.26 Interior rendering of the elevated Market Square

Fig 5.27 Interior rendering of the new public atrium

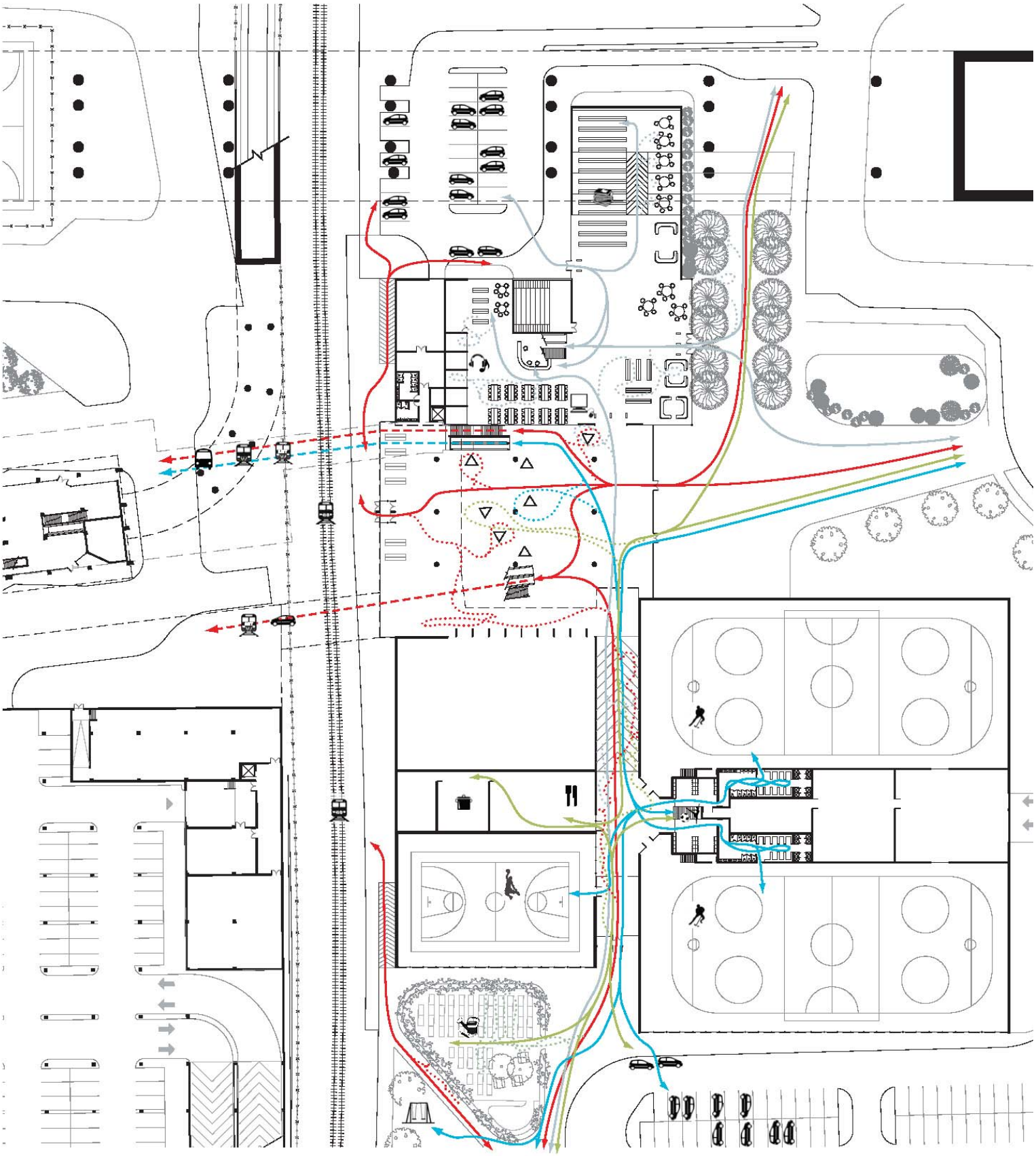


Fig 5.28 User Access and Circulation, Atrium lower level

Cross-Site Pedestrian Throughway

Community Centre Users

Library and Language Centre Users

Recreational Facility Users

Detour / Distractions

Detailed Programming


Food / Dining


Community Bulletin / Temporary Art Exhibit


Media booth


Reading / Studying


Bookstore / Library


Internet Terminal


Instructional Classes


Dance Studio


Hockey


Indoor Soccer


Social Dance


Jogging


Basketball


Community Kitchen


Community Garden


Playground


Subway


LRT


Bus


GO Train

Parking / Pickup

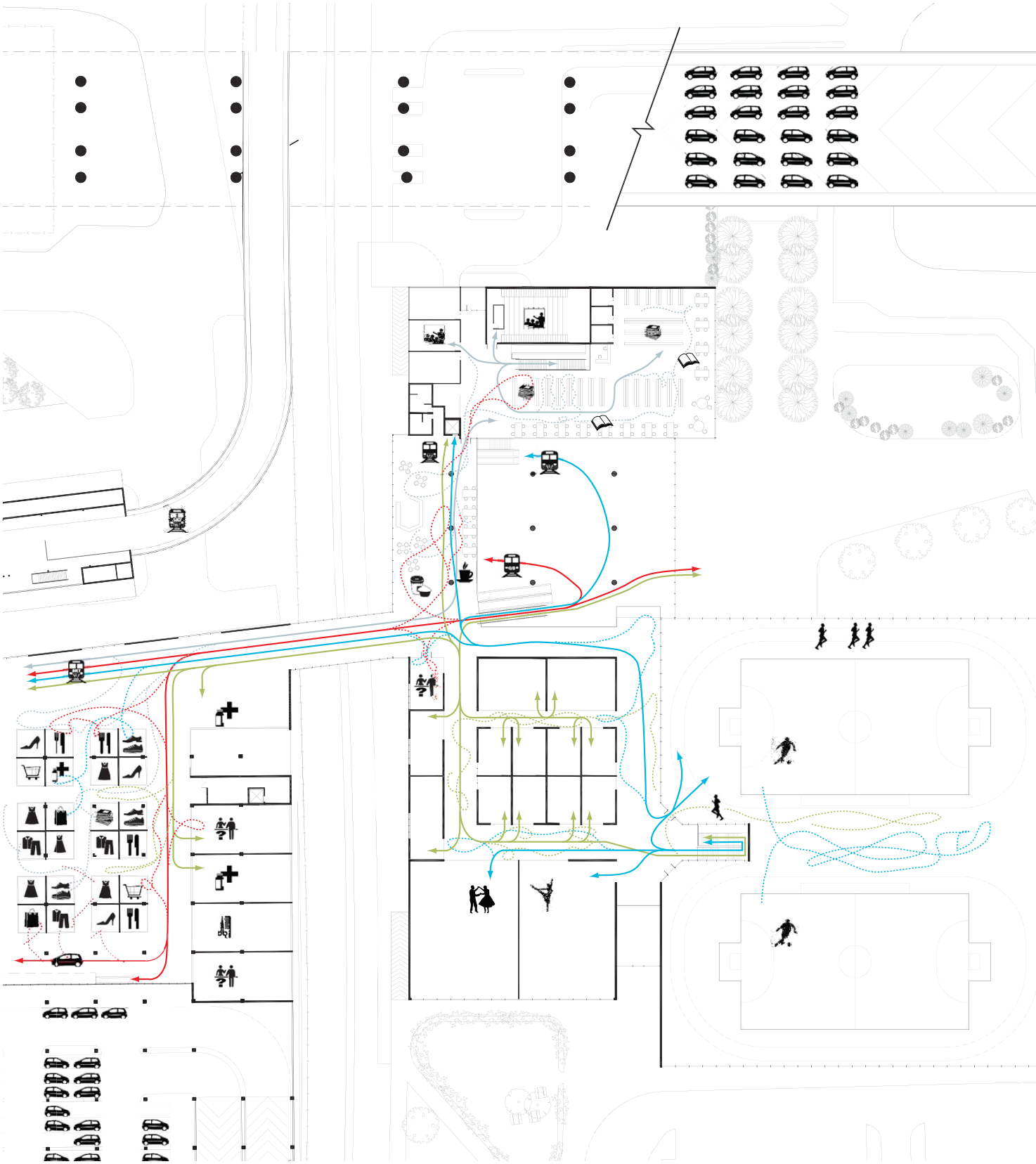


Fig 5.29 User Access and Circulation, Atrium upper level

Cross-Site Pedestrian Throughway

Community Centre Users

Library and Language Centre Users

Recreational Facility Users

Detour / Distractions

Detailed Programming

Women's Clothing

Men's Clothing

Household Retail

Food / Dining

Grocery

Women's Shoes

Men's Shoes / Sport

Cafe

Personal Grooming

Reading / Studying

Bookstore / Library

Instructional Classes

Family Clinic

Dance Studio

Indoor Soccer

Social Dance

Jogging

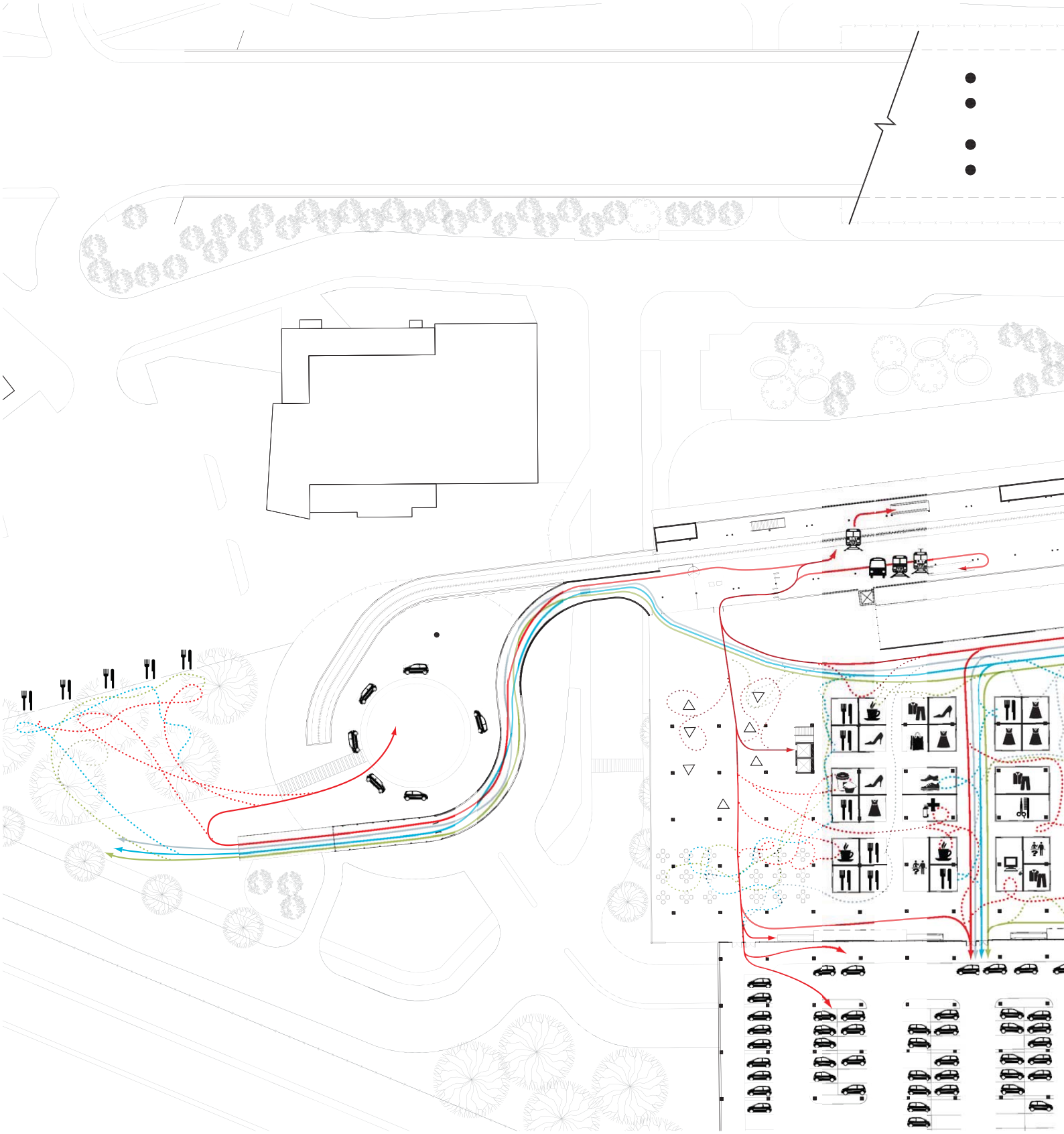
Subway

LRT

Bus

GO Train

Parking / Pickup



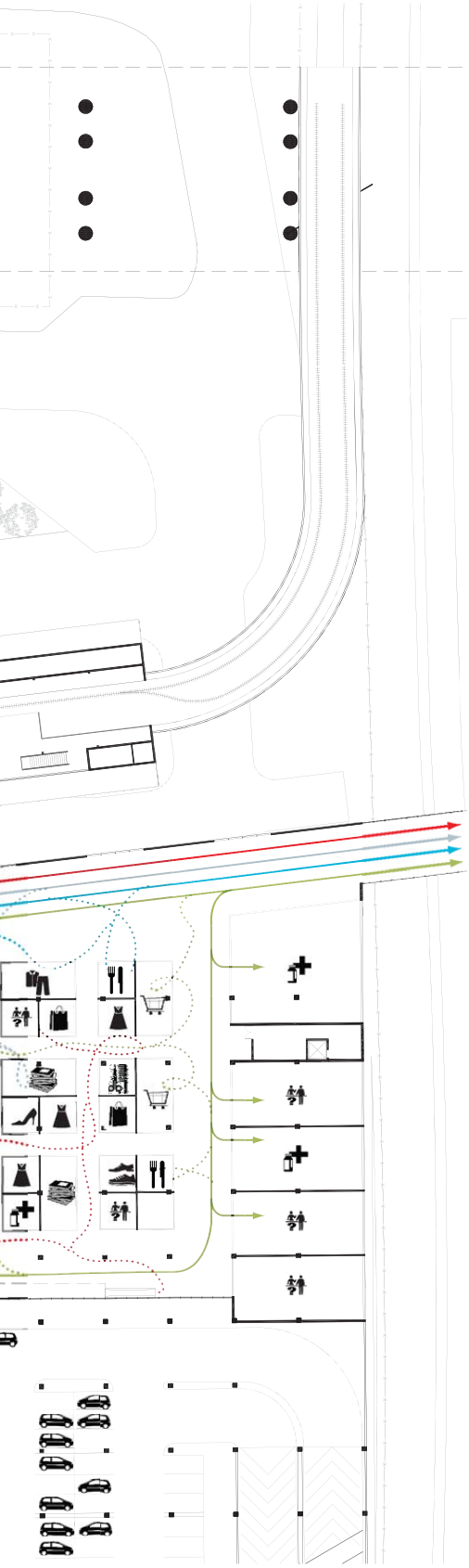


Fig 5.30 User Access and Circulation, marketplace

Cross-Site Pedestrian Throughway

Community Centre Users

Library and Language Centre Users

Recreational Facility Users

Detour / Distractions

Detailed Programming

Women's Clothing

Men's Clothing

Household Retail

Food / Dining

Grocery

Women's Shoes

Men's Shoes / Sport

Cafe

Personal Grooming

Media booth

Reading / Studying

Bookstore / Library

Family Clinic

Subway

LRT

Bus

GO Train

Parking / Pickup

Chapter 6 Epilogue

This thesis began as a personal and professional quest to uncover potentials for urbanizing suburbia. The preambles identifies the principle concern of this thesis as how to design and implement public spaces, in order to re-establish the continuity of the social fabric within our contemporary suburban landscape. However, site documentations have illustrated the complexities of this urban-suburban landscape and its ideological differences from the urban environment. Such differences are illustrated by the recent oil crisis. While the higher gas price catalyzed the switch from personal to collective mobility reflected in increased public transit usage, at the same time a parallel compensatory mechanism served to preserve the individualistic and privatized lifestyle was reflected by the increased sale in electric or more sustainable hybrid alternatives. Once the gas prices returned back to the affordable range, the gas-heavy SUVs were back on the road and the old-habit of car-dependency and "segregation by choice" returned. Rather than "how to", the thesis question should therefore be more properly phrased as "is it possible to", that reflects the difficulties in arriving at a responsive design in this pluralistic environment.

Appending to this thesis is the project ANC-EEKP that I participated during my site research. It is highlighted for two reasons. Besides as a discrete research study of the social dynamic of the site, it also crystallizes the design challenges of our pluralistic multicultural environment. The insights from this research, including the mediative role of the architect-consultant, the fragmentation of both public and design communities, the unpredictability of social participation, and the importance of local understanding, inform the organic and humanistic design approach of this thesis that emphasizes incremental adaptations, everyday programming, and the participatory process. The design ethos in turn is translated into a design framework triad rather than a singular coherent framework in order to adequately address the typology, programming and the organic process of a humanistic.

In exploring the research question, this thesis selects a site that epitomizes the contemporary condition between public and private. The transient and utilitarian place is the emblem of

the laminar pattern in our postmodern society. This non-place, traditionally viewed as utilitarian hence without social significance, is re-imaged instead as a quintessential social infrastructure in the suburban context, replacing the function of urban street as the social mixer. As the suburban equivalents of the pedestrian, this thesis proposes to integrate public spaces into these suburban intermodal junctions beyond their physical connective functions. A hybrid approach is therefore adopted in negotiating these urban intentions within suburban constraints. The term "urban-suburban" therefore could be extended to reflect the contradictions in the overall hybrid approach, what Mumford described as "the collective attempts to lead a private life"[1]. While the design proposal aims to intensify and simulate an urban landscape, it succumbs at the same time to the prescriptive ethos of the suburban context that is based on individualization and privatization, the ideological antithesis to the collectivism and publicity of the city. Themes of "hybridization" and "fragmentation" therefore are highlighted throughout this thesis.

Typologically, instead of a single collaged mat building, the complex is organized as 5 aggregates collectively supporting an interstitial communal space within a loose container. This organization aims to reflect the nature of the participatory process, i.e. rather than seeing it as an harmonious process towards a cohesive consensus, it is more realistically seeing as a collaborative process of conflict management made up of voluntary compromises. Programs are therefore packed together as independent objects within an inter-dependent framework rather than integrated with each others. Individuals and program fragments are encouraged rather than "forced" to participate from the periphery, hence they are not displaced from their normal situations which might run the risk of alienation.[2]

Programmatically, this proposal also adopts personal mobility as fundamental to the suburban ethos, instead of outwardly outlawing vehicular access and parking as in other pedestrian-friendly proposals. The marketplace, the most public and local program within the design, therefore spans between the transit building and the parking facility to accommodate the dichotomy. The overall site planning is limited to infill only vacant properties and parking lots. The approach reflects a sensibility of incremental growth in contrast of the "tabula vasa" or a prescriptive approach. The site is allowed to adapt and evolve from the initial disposition towards a better refinement according to the framework setup in the design proposal. New developments along the service road, for example, would strengthen the identity and quality of that pedestrian corridor, which would catalyze future development at adjacent lots or intensification of existing programs. This service road therefore will eventually be urbanized through incremental developments along its edges.

Overall, this thesis should not be viewed as a bold declaration on the importance of public transit in the epoch of a new urbanism; rather, the fragmented design is a reflection of the difficulties and the messy and incremental process of affecting social and behavioural changes. The design proposal should be distinguished from monumental public

1 Fishman, R. (1987).

2 Miessen, M. (2007). The Violence of Participation: Spatial Practices beyond Models of Consensus. Retrieved on September 11, 2009, from Roundtable: Research Architecture, http://roundtable.kein.org/node/548

squares such as Dundas Square or Nathan Philip Square. Here, the public space is transient and banal, its publicity characterized by the coming and going of people and banality of everyday activities. Its design is ordinary and subdue rather than spectacular, reflecting a humanistic approach. Despite its scale, it is intended as a catalyst and a developmental framework that guides an organic process. Mid-Scarborough is bound to be intensified in the next 5-10 years due to its location as a strategic node within the regional transit system. Inevitably, the local fabric will be drastically transformed due to market speculation. A new residential condominium, for example, could adopt the structure grid and build atop the parking garage. Increased density may further translate into retail and commercial opportunities. The marketplace may expand to take up the entire 3-level parking garage to accommodate additional activities, leaving only the circulatory access to the upper parking level and drop-off areas. The extensive parking lot of the Canada Post as well as all the public open spaces in the proposal may also cave-in to the development pressure. Though one may view intensification and gentrification as the progressive marginalization of the public realm, it is also important to understand that this is part of the organic process of the evolution of public space and the city. The parkettes may disappear, but the new urban activities would at the same time strengthen the identity and intensity of the service road as a pedestrian street. Within the complex, the integration with the public transit system and the 2-level pedestrian spine will guarantee its preservation as the main connective tissue and social interface between the evolving program aggregates along its edges.

Limitations and Applications

Because the design proposal and strategies are tailored to the condition of a nodal development of a transit infrastructure, these site specificities create constraints for the application of the proposed strategies. Fundamentally, the proposed design strategies are hinged on the high intensity and pedestrian traffic specific to an intermodal node in activating the social potential of the connective tissues as public spaces. The strategy outlined in this thesis therefore is limited to the development of existing nodes of intensity. For low-intensity and decentralized sites such as neighbourhood parks and strip malls, this design approach for public spaces may not be appropriate, as the lack of existing diversity and pedestrian traffic will limit the potential and the degree of social mixing, hence the transformative function of the public realm in these environments. Other intensification strategies such as those discussed in Retrofitting Suburbia and Redressing the Mall may be more appropriate in hybridizing and activating these low-density decentralized sites.[3] [4] The centralized approach adopted in this thesis thus illustrates only one example within a wide spectrum of approaches towards addressing the suburban context.

The design strategy of a mixed programming also limits the scale of its application. In order to acquire a high degree of publicity for the public spaces to create a cooperative environment, this thesis opts for a large-scale development with a diverse range of program elements. To be financially feasible and to remain community-oriented, this approach will require public funding and a high degree of public-private partnership. The proposed design as an enclosed private environment should be viewed as a double-edged sword. While the enclosed setting allows local innovations and encourages interactions and collaboration through continuity, it is subjected to local and prescriptive controls similar to that of a

3 Dunham-Jones, E. & Williamson, J. (2009).

4 Smiley, D.J. & Robbins, M. (Eds). (2002).

shopping mall. Similarly, the quality of the proposed non-scripted public spaces will depend on the level of user participations. Thus, whether the design will evolve into a successful community-based public complex or will fragment into individual program pockets is ultimately dependent on the level of local participation, despite the specificity in the organizational and spatial coding intended to nurture a fertile public realm. The inclusion of public programming, the public-private partnership, and the co-governance framework therefore serve as assurance and safety valves to encourage participation and a regional focus.

In this design exploration within the suburban landscape, I have identified two important strategies in designing a responsive social environment, including mixed-use programming and public-private partnership. They are especially important in neutralizing the prescriptive and exclusionary practices in the typical mono-function suburban developments in favour of a more democratic and diverse environment. Currently, the City of Toronto is planning a new community center on St. Claire Ave. across from the TTC Warden Station. While the proposed community building will be connected to the subway station with a bridge over St. Claire Ave., the approach proposed in this thesis could be applied to the Warden project in hybridizing the existing subway station into a new local community infrastructure. Similarly, the design strategies articulated in this thesis could be employed in developing the new transit nodes in the Transit City proposal into a new network of urban and suburban public spaces. As our society continues to shift towards a post-carbon economy, high gas price will inevitably catalyze a shift from personal to collective mobility. Public transit nodes will therefore become increasingly important as physical connectors within the dispersed contemporary landscape. The proposed hybrid typology of the transit-community complex thus serves as an opportunity to develop intermodal nodes and other public transit junctions into a new social infrastructure network within the contemporary dispersed landscape.

Appendix

Appendix A

Site Research Project: Action for Neighbourhood Change (ANC-EEKP)

In conducting researches on a neigbourhood park, Glen Ravine Park, in Mid Scaborough, I became aware of the local community initiative, Action for Neighbourhood Change - Eglinton East Kennedy Park (ANC-EEKP), which was coincidentally also working on the same site surveying the community needs in the local area. To further my understanding of the local area as well as the general approach in community building, between March 2007 and August 2008, I participated as a student volunteer on the community initiative project as part of my research.

The ANC-EEKP initiative is organized and funded by United Way of Greater Toronto in partnership with the West hill Community Service as part of a larger city-wide community development project.[1] The project is part of the Toronto Strong Neighbourhoods Strategy mandated by a 2005 survey study done by Toronto City Summit Alliance together with the City of Toronto to assess and identify community needs across Toronto neighbourhoods.[2] In the report, 12 priority neighbourhoods were identified where social and community resources lagged behind recent population growth and demographic changes. Both Eglinton East and Kennedy Park were identified in the report, and in summer 2006 ANC-EEKP was initiated as a 3-year project to help build local leadership and social networks. A pilot project in Scarborough Village neighbourhood in 2005 had a similar format to the one in Eglinton East - Kennedy Park, and the 3-year project has produced excellent results. For example, it has helped to catalyze the emergence of local community leadership as well as the development of inter-ethnic and intra-ethnic social networks.

The specific goals of ANC are:

» *Strengthing influences of local residents on their surrounding*

» *Enhancing the quality of neighbourhood life*

» *Increasing access to resources*

Adopting these approaches in engaging the local residents and community, ANC assists residents in organizing local and community events and developing local programs. For example, it helps local residents in applying for the Quick Start Fund, a form of public funding for small local community development projects, for small-scale grassroot projects initiated and managed by local residents.[3]

1 Action for Neighbourhood Change. From Community Social Planning, Council of Toronto. Retrieved on Jun 16, 2009, from http://socialplanningtoronto.org/Mt%20Dennis/ANC%20Brochure%20UWGT%20Oct06.pdf

2 United Way of Greater Toronto. Retrieved on Nov 9, 2007, from http://www.unitedwaytoronto.com

3 Ibid

Fig 6.1 ANC -EEKP Community Picnic

Fig 6.4 EEKP Summer Community Festival

Fig 6.2 ANC -EEKP Community Picnic

Fig 6.5 EEKP Summer Community Festival

Fig 6.3 ANC -EEKP Community Picnic

Fig 6.6 Mid-Scarborough Sewing Club

Fig 6.7 Community garden information session and the visioning exercise at the park site

My involvement in the ANC-EEKP project carrried two basic objectives. On one hand, through attending bi-weekly community meetings, community workshops, and project meetings among different public agencies, I aimed to acquire a deeper understanding of the operational mechanics and the strategies in the community building process adopted by local non-profit groups such as ANC. On the other hand, social contacts and personal relationships with local residents developed through community meetings also allowed me to gain a more in-depth knowledge regarding the invisible social dynamics and potential conflicts within the study area.

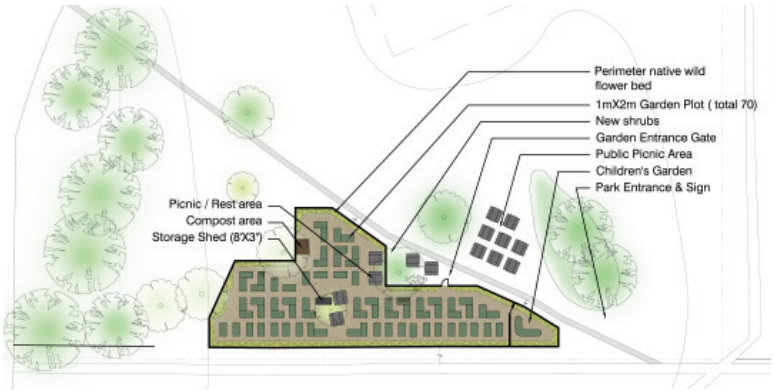
Thus my role in the project reflects the contradictions and difficulties typicaly experienced by designers involved in community and participatory projects, i.e., walking the fine line between being an elite specialist as a design expert and playing a supportive role in respecting and nurturing the creative ideas of the local community and individual users. This paradox has been discussed exensively within the planning discipline and the discourse of participatory design. Jana Carp in her analyses of four community planning case studies has outlined two main categories of participatory approaches that are determined by the subjectivity of the designer in entrusting decision-makings to local users and their perception of their projects.[4] The degree of involvement therefore depends on the specific parameters of each scenario based on the significance of the site and programs, user characteristics, design constraints, and the design process, thus there is no clear guideline in determining the optimal level and style of involvement.[5]

For example, in the two separate proposals for a community garden and a senior area, the design parameters as well as the preferred spatial layout were mainly determined by

4 Carp, Jana. 2004. Wit, Style, and Substance: How Planners Shape Public Participation. Journal of Planning Education and Research, 23, 242-254.

5 Glover, T.D., Stewart, W.P., & Gladdys, K. 2008. Social Ethnics of Landscape Change: Towards Community-based Land-Use Planning. Qualitative Inquiry, 14(3), 384-401.

the local participants. While having my own design preference for the community garden, my contributions were consciously restricted within a supportive-consultant role in order to respond to the needs of the community users. Thus my involvement included helping the residents in their visioning exercise to visualize their needs, educating the local users regarding the pros and cons in site selection and adjacencies of programs, maximizing space usage in the design, and laying out of the circulation framework to ensure accessibility. The design of the community garden proposal at the end resembled a sketch drawing done by one of the residents during a visioning exercise at the site. On the other hand, in the summer festival project, my role was that of an active designer-specialist within a multi-disciplinary design team made up of different agency stakeholders and community representatives. In the design and planning for the festival, my role therefore was shifted from being a passive supportor to an active decision-maker instrumental in determining the spatial layout and space usage requirement of the different events, as well as an active participant in the selection of activities and events for the festival.



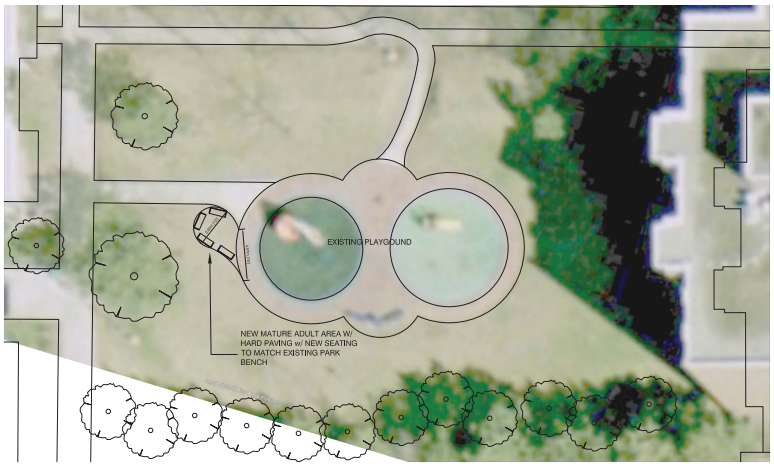


Fig 6.8 Residents' sketches of the garden design (left)

Fig 6.9 The final proposal for the community allotment garden (top right)

Fig 6.10 Proposal for the senior hangout area (bottom right)

Observation 1: Efficacy in representing the multifaceted public

In working within a participatory approach in a community-based project, one difficulty lies in the representation of the public. This difficulty in respresenting the multi-faceted public in contempoary society was clearly observed in the planning of the Summer Community Festival. Event selections, for example, were mainly based on the preferences of the various organizing agencies and the available funding and sponsorship by different private organizations. Resident input in the event planning was limited to only additional events and activity suggestions. Because the non-profit youth organizations Youthlink and YouUnited were the primary sponsors of the festival, events and activities in the festival were pre-determined to be mostly youth-centered, in order to fulfill the sponsorhip obligations. Programs that reflected the multicultural character of the neighbourhood, such as the ethnic fashion show and ethnic food fair, were included in the events only through negotiations and insistences by the ANC. At the end, the multi-cultural food fair was replaced by free hamburgers sponsored by the local food retailer M&M. Thus, despite the grass-root approaches of the various community agencies, because of the specificities of each of these agencies in terms of clientelles and mandates, it required a full collaboration of the multiple agencies in order to represent the complexity of the multcultural public.

Fig 6.11 Event poster for the EEKP Summer Community Festival 2008

In comparison, the social service fair and the flee market at the festival were more successful in representing the multicultural landscape of Mid-Scarborough. By only providing the space and services and eliciting participation through an open call, the the social service fair represents a diverse array of public agencies, from employment agencies, social services for different ethnic communities, youth and child services, as well as language schools. The flee market on the other hand featured a diverse range of local entrepeneurs selling hand-made jewelry, ethnic clothing, artworks, etc. By providing ic framework it was therefore more successful in allowing self-organization in representing and responding to the local environment.

Observation 2: Inter-group and intra-group social interactions

The social fabric in Mid Scarborough, despite its high concentration of co-ethnic immigrants, is as fragmented and isolated as any other suburban and exurban neighbourhood. There is a general lack of co-ethnic and inter-ethnic social networks despite the higher ethnic density. For example, in the planning of a local weekend flee market at a strip mall, issues of business competition and personal prejudice were raised, which in the end led to the abandonment of the proposal, despite the social benefit to the community. When social networks do exist, they are often defined and bounded by the a spatial environment, for example, within individual buildings or programs.

Observation 3: Efficacy in eliciting community leadership

Within Mid-Scarborough, there appears to be no clear community leadership identifiable in the area. An informal youth group was observed in the Gilder housing apartment complex, organized by a musician with weekly social gatherings. However, it is an exclusive group only for specific and like-minded male youth, and thus does not represent the larger community or the housing project. At the end of the third year, despite efforts by ANC organizers, no community leader emerged from the process, mostly due to the differences in attitude towards politic activism and personalities. On the government level, the effort of ANC was largely ignored by the regional councillor, despite its social mandate and repeated efforts to get his attention. Thus the success of community activism seems largely hinged on individual initiatives and leadership instead of the supporting process. One can only plant the seed, provide a fertile soil, and hope for the best.

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