



# R

# RESEARCH REPORT

## CITY OF YORKTON DOWNTOWN REDEVELOPMENT PLANNING CHARRETTE



# CMHC—HOME TO CANADIANS

Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) is Canada's national housing agency. We contribute to improving the living conditions and the well-being of Canadians.

Our housing finance activities centre around giving Canadians access to affordable financing solutions. The main tool to achieve this goal is our mortgage loan insurance program.

We help lower-income households — seniors, people with disabilities, Aboriginals, women and children fleeing family violence, youth at risk, and individuals who are homeless or at risk of homelessness — to gain access to safe, affordable housing.

Through our research, we encourage innovation in housing design and technology, community planning, housing choice and finance. We offer a wide variety of information products to consumers and the housing industry to help them make informed purchasing and business decisions.

We also work with our government partners and industry to promote Canadian products and expertise in foreign markets, thereby creating jobs for Canadians here at home.

In everything that we do, we are committed to helping Canadians access a wide choice of quality, affordable homes, and making vibrant and sustainable communities a reality across the country. CMHC is home to Canadians.

Visit us at [www.cmhc.ca](http://www.cmhc.ca)

You can also reach us by phone at 1 800 668-2642  
(outside Canada call 613 748-2003)  
By fax at 1 800 245-9274  
(outside Canada 613 748-2016)

Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation supports the Government of Canada policy on access to information for people with disabilities. If you wish to obtain this publication in alternative formats, call 1 800 668-2642.

**City of Yorkton**

**Downtown Redevelopment Planning Charrette**

**RESEARCH REPORT**

**JANUARY 2005**



## Acknowledgements

*The City of Yorkton would like to express its sincere gratitude to Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, particularly Jacquie Bevill, Saskatchewan Corporate Representative, for making available the funding necessary to host the three day Downtown Yorkton Charrette. Special thanks to Halyna Tataryn, CMHC, as well as Sandra Marshall, CMHC, Doug Pollard, CMHC and FCM, and Wil Mayhew, NRC, for sharing their experience and expertise in organizing and facilitating the Charrette. The City would also like to thank Tom McDermott from the Saskatchewan Research Council, as well as Teresa Jeannine Paul from Solar Nexus Corporation for their valuable insight into green building technologies. The City's Downtown Redevelopment Consultants consisting of: Jeff Frank and Heather Cram from Hilderman Thomas Frank Cram; Roger Green and Laureen Snook from Crosby Hannah Landscape Architects; and, Derek Kindrachuk from Kindrachuk Agrey Architecture, are to be commended for their hard work in preparing for and directing the Charrette. Finally, to all the stakeholder participants who volunteered their time, effort, and invaluable input toward the redesign of Yorkton's Downtown cornerstone precinct. Thank you to all of the above for making the Charrette a success.*

Report Prepared for Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation

By

City of Yorkton

This research project was financed by Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC). The content, views and editorial quality of this report are the responsibility of the author(s) and CMHC accepts no responsibility for them or any consequences arising from the reader's use of the information, material and techniques described herein.



## Table of Contents

Executive Summary.....	ii
1.0 Background.....	1
1.1 Charrette Focus.....	1
1.2 Design Considerations.....	2
1.3 Planning.....	3
2.0 The Integrated Design Charrette.....	5
2.1 Teams.....	5
2.2 Charrette Day One.....	6
2.3 Charrette Day Two.....	8
2.4 Charrette Day Three.....	11
3.0 General Points of Consensus.....	14
3.1 Transportation and Mobility.....	14
3.2 Quality of Life.....	15
4.0 Conclusion.....	16
List of Appendices.....	18

## CITY OF YORKTON DOWNTOWN REDEVELOPMENT PLANNING CHARRETTE DECEMBER 2004

### Executive Summary

The Downtown Redevelopment Charrette was hosted by the City of Yorkton from October 28<sup>th</sup> – 30<sup>th</sup> of 2004, to generate buildable and sustainable plans for a 12.1 hectare (30 acre) brownfield site located in the heart of the City. What types of development will revitalize the Downtown Core and will they be supported by the community?

The multi-day, multi-disciplinary working session explored various design options related to sustainable development, urban design, land use scenarios, site planning principles and architectural details. Free from most planning constraints, teams designed the Study Area how they saw fit. Dense mix-use developments, sustainable housing options, area amenities and community-sensitive elements were incorporated into the Study Area. With the aid of various professionals, participants created development solutions that addressed the future of Downtown Yorkton.

Sustainability was a focal point on the agenda. The Charrette helped foster community ownership and commitment towards sustainable strategies that integrated economic, social and environmental development objectives. By linking the short term goals of viable transportation planning with the long term goals of responsible development ideas, for example, energy-efficient housing, the City of Yorkton can plan for *existing* generations without impeding the growth of *future* generations.

Designs generated throughout the integrated design process will contribute to achievable plans for the future redevelopment of the Study Area, and ultimately the reinvestment for the City of Yorkton. The degree of commonality in plan designs reflects the community consensus for land use planning in Yorkton and the benefits of having a well thought-out, well-supported community vision.

## CHARRETTE DE PLANIFICATION DU RÉAMÉNAGEMENT DU CENTRE-VILLE DE YORKTON - DÉCEMBRE 2004

### Résumé

La charrette de réaménagement du centre-ville a été organisée par la Ville de Yorkton du 28 au 30 octobre 2004 dans le but de produire des plans réalisables et viables relativement à un terrain contaminé de 12,1 hectares (30 acres) situé au cœur de la ville. Il s'agissait de déterminer quels types d'aménagement seraient en mesure de revitaliser le centre-ville et si ces aménagements recevraient l'appui de la population.

Étalée sur plusieurs jours, cette séance de travail réunissant des experts de nombreuses disciplines a servi à explorer les divers concepts possibles sur le plan du développement durable, de l'esthétique urbaine, de l'occupation des sols, des principes d'aménagement du territoire et des détails architecturaux. Libérées de la plupart des contraintes associées à la planification, des équipes ont aménagé le secteur à l'étude comme elles le voulaient. Des lotissements denses à usage mixte, des habitations respectant les principes du développement durable, des commodités de quartier et des éléments axés sur les gens ont été inclus dans le secteur à l'étude. Avec l'aide de divers professionnels, les participants ont imaginé des solutions d'aménagement prenant en compte les besoins futurs du centre-ville de Yorkton.

La viabilité était au centre des préoccupations. La charrette a contribué à responsabiliser les gens du milieu en vue d'élaborer des stratégies durables intégrant des objectifs d'aménagement d'ordre économique, social et environnemental. En établissant des liens entre les objectifs à court terme, comme la planification du transport viable, et les objectifs à long terme propres à la responsabilité en matière d'aménagement, par exemple les habitations éconergétiques, la Ville de Yorkton peut planifier en fonction des générations *actuelles* sans compromettre la croissance des générations *futures*.

Les concepts imaginés tout au long de ce processus intégré contribueront à la création de plans réalisables pour le réaménagement futur du secteur à l'étude et, au bout du compte, au réinvestissement à Yorkton. Le degré de standardisation dans la réalisation des plans traduit un consensus du milieu à l'endroit de l'aménagement du territoire à Yorkton. S'ensuivent un certain nombre d'avantages associés au fait de s'être donné une vision commune bien pensée et soutenue par la collectivité.



National Office

Bureau national

700 Montreal Road  
Ottawa ON K1A 0P7  
Telephone: (613) 748-2000

700 chemin de Montréal  
Ottawa ON K1A 0P7  
Téléphone : (613) 748-2000

Puisqu'on prévoit une demande restreinte pour ce document de recherche, seul le résumé a été traduit.

La SCHL fera traduire le document si la demande le justifie.

Pour nous aider à déterminer si la demande justifie que ce rapport soit traduit en français, veuillez remplir la partie ci-dessous et la retourner à l'adresse suivante :

Centre canadien de documentation sur l'habitation  
Société canadienne d'hypothèques et de logement  
700, chemin Montréal, bureau CI-200  
Ottawa (Ontario)  
K1A 0P7

Titre du rapport: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Je préférerais que ce rapport soit disponible en français.

NOM \_\_\_\_\_

ADRESSE \_\_\_\_\_

rue

App.

ville

province

Code postal

No de téléphone ( ) \_\_\_\_\_



## **1.0 Background**

### **1.1 Charrette Focus**

The CMHC sponsored Downtown Redevelopment Planning Charrette, for the City of Yorkton, engaged more than 80 participants over a three-day period (October 28–30, 2004). In consultation with *Hilderman, Thomas, Frank, Cram*, the Charrette focused on generating downtown redevelopment plans and sustainable design solutions for an area in blight, referred to as the Study Area. The Study Area had been previously identified as an area of concern by the general public via focus groups and survey questionnaires conducted in November 2003. This area has remained an underutilized parcel of prime land for several decades, and the growing need to capitalize on it is now stronger than ever. The successful revitalization of the Study Area is an essential component to strengthening the Downtown Core and, ultimately the City of Yorkton.



The Northwest corner of the Study Area precinct (above) has high redevelopment potential and may be targeted primarily for commercial and mixed land uses.

Photo Credit: Hilderman Thomas Frank Cram



Seventh Avenue South (above) is located on the east side of the Study Area and illustrates the redevelopment potential for adding pedestrian-friendly design elements, which include streetscaping and landscaping.

Photo Credit: Hilderman Thomas Frank Cram



The Northeast corner of the Study Area (above).

Photo Credit: Hilderman Thomas Frank Cram

## 1.2 Design Considerations

The integrated design process involved several overarching design considerations that were pre-established to help ensure a solid focus: **(1) Zoning:** Establish zoning configuration that promotes an attractive community that includes a wide range of land

use scenarios; **(2) Existing Land Use and Neighborhood Character:** Preserve the existing character and history of the City while encouraging creativity in growth and development options; **(3) Traffic and Circulation Patterns:** Explore various circulation improvements that address outstanding transportation issues, such as the railway tracks and possible roadway extensions and closures; **(4) Park and Green Space:** Incorporate park and green space into the Study Area at the outset; **(5) Housing Options:** Increase housing options to accommodate future populations such as seniors, students, young professionals and young families; and **(6) Streetscaping and Urban Design:** Incorporate urban design features into the Study Area such as landscaping, sculpture, murals and decorative lighting and sidewalks. These issues are context-sensitive and would steer the Charrette to guide participants' designs and plans.

Over the course of the Charrette, community visioning was integrated into the municipal land use and development process. Participants were challenged to create robust designs for the Study Area that could be implemented over time with little negative impact on future generations. Green policy development, energy-efficient design, xeriscape landscaping concepts, housing options and establishing a definitive community unit were all contributors to the sustainable focus. The Charrette promoted an educational and enabling environment that involved broad community participation.

### 1.3 Planning

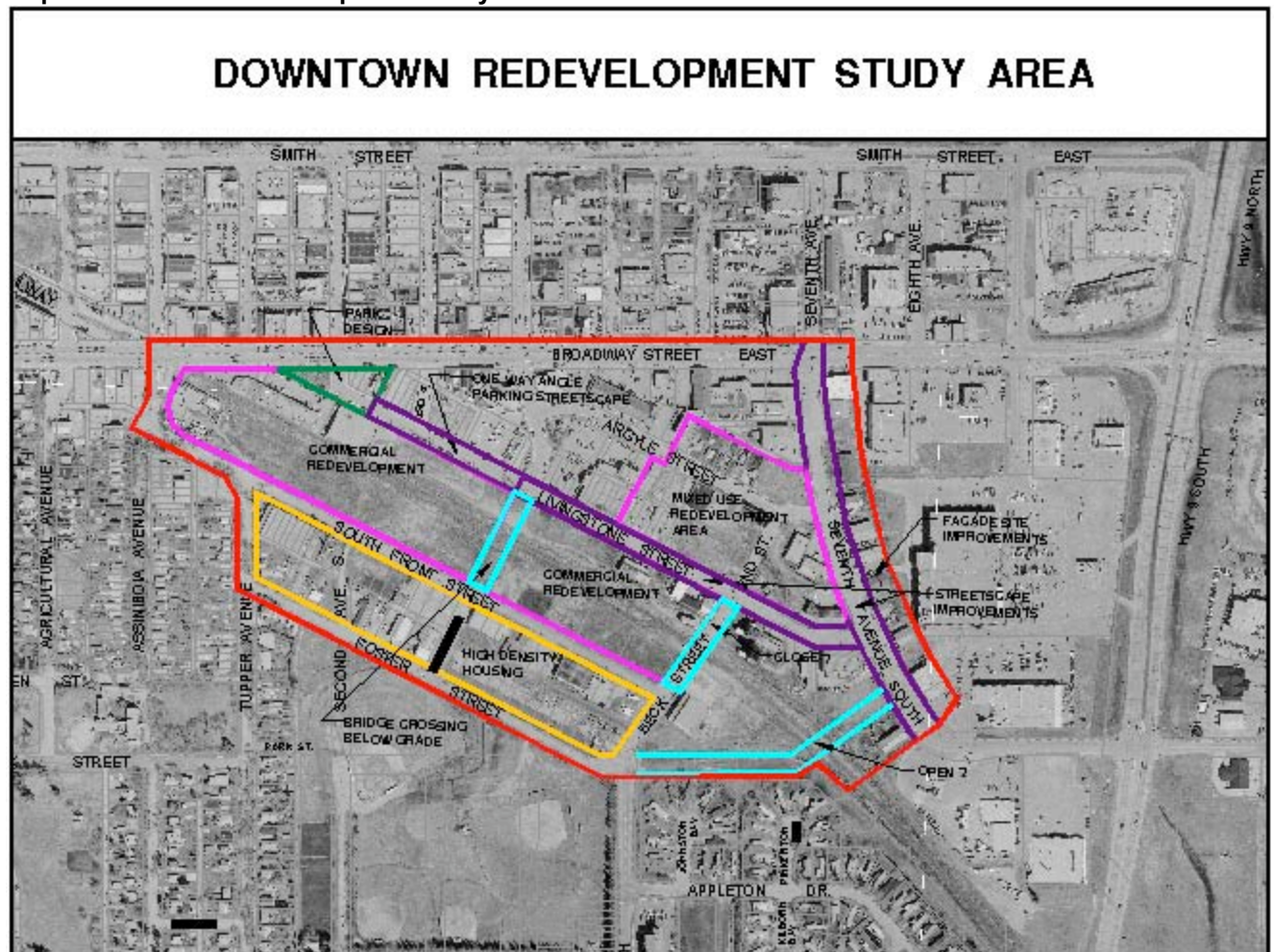
The main project team consisted of *CMHC* representatives, consultants and City employees. The team sought to structure the integrated design process through a sustainable development lens. Not to be overburdened by ambiguous definitions, the project team designed a framework that integrated environmental, social and economical development objectives while meshing with participant capacity. The team created a community-sensitive dialogue that focused on achieving a responsible and viable future.

#### 1.3.1 The Project

The Charrette built upon extensive redevelopment work that was done by the City, the Downtown Steering Committee, the Municipal Planning Commission, public focus groups, and local and provincial agencies in the last year. The Study Area is the current focus of the cornerstone redevelopment initiative and the charrette (refer to *Map 1*).



Map 1: Downtown Redevelopment Study Area



A large majority of the site is vacant and undeveloped, and there is a concern with introducing the right type of growth necessary to establish the Study Area as an economic contributor to the Downtown Core. Future development should enhance the general prosperity and quality of life of its residents. The redevelopment plan should incorporate mixed-use, affordable development that reflects the interests and needs of this vibrant community. To achieve this plan, the Charrette addressed several key redevelopment strategies:

- **Park Development:** Create the design elements of a half-acre park for the purpose of passive recreation and the hosting of special events. The park should serve as a catalyst for commercial growth, increased pedestrian activity, and communicate a “theme” for Yorkton.

- **Railway Crossing Design:** Improve vehicular and pedestrian traffic over the CPR tracks by incorporating an aesthetically attractive at grade, tunnel or overpass crossing between Fourth Avenue North and Third Avenue South. A design concept should be developed which improves vehicular and pedestrian flow.
- **Street Closures and Extensions:** Explore the circulation possibility of closing and extending Foster Street to Seventh Avenue South, as recommended by a 2003 Transportation Study conducted by Wardrop Engineering.
- **Streetscape Design:** Create a streetscape design for Livingstone Avenue and Seventh Avenue South that would create a pedestrian friendly atmosphere and highlight key highway connectors.
- **Architectural Principles and Guidelines:** Be mindful of architectural guidelines for new construction, which support the historic character and overall “theme” of the Downtown. Give consideration to building materials, colour, texture, scale and form of buildings.
- **Housing Concept Plans:** Target identified sites and types of housing options for the Study Area with appropriate mixture of housing type, density, and design. Concept plans should accommodate for +200 additional units for Downtown over a 15-year period.

## **2.0 The Integrated Design Charrette**

### **2.1 Teams**

The collaborative design effort that concentrated on revitalization and reinvestment in the Yorkton’s Downtown Core, brought together teams composed of local citizens, business owners and officials, urban designers, architects, landscape architects, engineers and senior researchers from across Canada. The various stakeholders represented differing interests and expertise, and brought a creative group dynamic to the table.

Each teams’ makeup was predetermined to ensure an eclectic mix of background, expertise and interests. Typically, the per group breakdown of interests involved representatives from the following organizations/ associations:

- Project Team: Architects, Landscape Architects, Engineers, Senior Researchers, Planners;
- City Officials and Staff;
- Yorkton Downtown Business Association;
- Municipal Planning Commission;
- Municipal Heritage Commission;

- Yorkton Chamber of Commerce;
- Renaissance Yorkton;
- Local Business and Property Owners;
- Yorkton Ministerial Associations;
- Yorkton and Saskatchewan Housing Authorities;
- Protective Services; and,
- Yorkton Service Clubs.

Initially, members of the Project Team facilitated the working groups; however, over the course of the integrated design process, participants demonstrated a real interest to get involved. They ultimately assumed lead roles in both presenting design options and facilitating discussions. Unlike many charrettes, citizens who are not design professionals dominated the teams. Participants were divided up into groups and were asked to discuss ideas and designs for their community vision.

## 2.2 Charrette Day One

The first day of the Charrette, October 28, 2004, divided attendees into eight groups of eight to ten participants. The Charrette structure involved a series of professional presentations and subsequent break out sessions. After an official welcome from Mayor Phil DeVos, lead consultants of the Project Team provided an overview of the Charrette, its process and the Study Area. Following opening presentations, each group was asked to collectively engage in discussions about their community:

- *As a group, brainstorm qualitative images and emotional touchstones related to your City or other cities you like; answer the questions, “What do you like about your City? What would you like to see more of?” As a group, collectively generate design ideas that address development possibilities for the Study Area, and avoid focusing on constraints; and,*
- *Using the Charrette “tool kit”<sup>1</sup>, develop group ideas. Summarize your visioning process and prepare to present findings.*

A representative from each group presented their work to the rest of the participants and opportunities for discussion followed. Commonalities were emerging as members from each group identified the City’s abundance of culture, arts, natural green space and recreational opportunities. Group members focused on Yorkton’s expanses of park and waterways, successful local sports teams, popular film festivals, and arts exhibits and fairs. The activity’s feedback loops produced an imagery that spoke to positive qualities the City is trying to capture in the redevelopment plan. These commonalities provide a

---

<sup>1</sup> Charrette “tool kits” included a laminated aerial map of the Study Area delineating property lines, railway lines, existing traffic routes and future road closures (1:1000); a laminated blank map of the Study Area (1:1000); tracing paper; mylar paper; flip charts; markers; pencil crayons; a scale ruler; scale housing icons; and, a small map of existing municipal infrastructure.

framework of ideas that can be organized and built upon; they will provide a foundation for future actions and plans.

Afternoon presentations considered key area networks for the downtown. Topics of the day included sustainable development, urban design and pedestrian and vehicular linkages. Networks of alternative modes of non-motorized transportation were introduced by groups and created an availability of options necessary to promote sustainable community consumption. As a green policy, a pedestrian-oriented focus encourages energy conservation and a collective responsibility that endorses environmentally sound travel options. Day One activities sought to collect impressions of the Study Area and generate design options for open space, greenways, roadways and pathway systems.



(Left to right) 1. Tom MacDermott of the Saskatchewan Research Council presents his group's work that retained much of the existing circulation networks in the Study Area; 2. A cooperative effort presents a design that installs a major traffic artery dividing the Study Area that extends to the very north and south boundaries; and 3. Councillor Chris Wyatt focuses on a core section of the Study Area and its corresponding green infrastructure.

Photo Credit: Hilderman Thomas Frank Cram

Plans that were produced for primary circulation patterns addressed difficult issues like the feasibility and impact of installing at grade, above, or below grade railway crossings, and extending or closing roadways throughout the site. Attention focused on bringing significant traffic flow into the "cornerstone" redevelopment area while maintaining viable circulation corridors, avoiding congestion, providing for parking and creating a boulevard spine of greenways and pathways. Such linkages divided the area into developable parcels. Groups harnessed and preserved natural lands while considering linkages to future land use scenarios.

Sustainable development in the form of community preservation and environmentally sensitive design assumed a major role during this stage of the Charrette. Parallel to ideas known as "new urbanism", participants designed corridors that offered alternative modes of transportation in a pedestrian-oriented unit. Public open spaces and a healthy natural environment also took precedence. Groups incorporated water-efficient landscaping, consistent with xeriscaping rationale, into designs to provide buffers for corridors. These landscaping ideas considered maintenance, topography, practical turf areas and grading possibilities in redevelopment design. Rainwater reclamation could be accomplished via Study Area storm water retention ponds and landscaping to ensure



maximum water retention and minimum run-off and loading of municipal infrastructure. Smart landscaping would enhance the natural environment, provide vehicular buffers and conserve water.

### 2.2.1 Study Area Linkages: Opportunities and Concerns

Opportunities	Concerns
Defining vehicular and recreational pathways, sustainable greenways, roadways and networks	Designing pathways, linkages and vehicular networks that are appropriate and supportive to existing traffic patterns and will not impede future development
Engage in transportation planning by designing below, above or at grade railway crossings for Third and Fourth Avenues South	Being cognizant of the safety issues for pedestrians and cyclists
Improving existing traffic network	Providing appropriate direction for through-traffic
Understanding the current travel patterns	Providing a sufficient buffer and screen for land adjacent to railway tracks.



The above photographs illustrate the process of design and discussion between group members; teams get to “talk, doodle, then draw”.

Photo Credit: Hilderman Thomas Frank Cram

## 2.3 Charrette Day Two

On the following day, the work groups collaborated to take the best elements of their first drafts and combine them into a new overall plan concept that considered key issues from the second day. The presentations provided a focus for the day’s primary activities: devising key land use scenarios that correspond to the City’s demographic and socioeconomic trends, and considering sustainable building form, housing options and site planning for the Study Area. Environmental design, minimizing building impact and the reduction of energy usage were also important issues for the day.



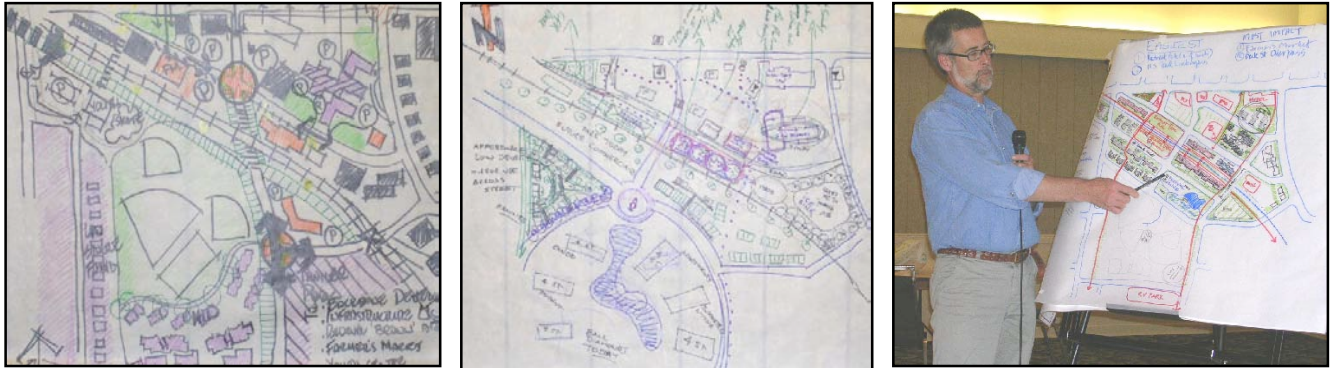
Teams developed land use scenarios for the Study Area, which included dense mixed uses and area amenities that met the forecasted needs of the community. Context-sensitive land use scenarios reflected Yorkton's strengths and were considerate of the City's future demographics (a significant senior population, a growing Aboriginal population, a future workforce, young families and young professionals). Groups generated an inventory of development ideas and expressed them via the "tool kit". The popular focus included area amenities such as downtown retail combined with housing options, venues for cultural events, direct-marketing value-added agricultural venues, local galleries, neighbourhood centres, affordable housing options, town homes, civic squares, community parks, and medical and educational facilities. Sustainable housing options were consistent with their intended populations; senior and student housing were small in area size and accessed near-by, proposed medical and educational facilities in a centralized location. Amenities were oriented in pedestrian-friendly design and scale, and accommodated populations who do not typically own or operate vehicles. Designing a walkable community was important to the groups and enhances community sustainability and a sense of place (Refer to Appendix D).

Among other sustainable strategies, groups were introduced to Natural Resources Canada's Commercial Building Incentive Program (CBIP). Reducing green house gas emissions via energy efficient building features was connected with financial incentive. Groups considered green building technologies that are realizable through efficient models of development construction, renovation, operation and maintenance. Design options that uphold CBIP standards translate into many building alternatives which include improving wall and roof insulation, enforcing tight construction, using high performance windows, and considering material acquisition, waste management, and resource recycling. Sustainability assumes many roles, and participants understood that the Study Area could reflect this at various stages of development.

Group visions and ideas represented an evolving consensus. Every team designed buildable plans that introduced a Farmer's Market, public-gathering spaces, mixed land uses with various housing options and amenities into the Study Area. They presented scenarios that highlighted the strengths of Yorkton; introducing land uses that offered opportunities for arts and culture, tourism, agriculture and education while preserving the character and history of the City.

### 2.3.1 Study Area Mixed Use Development: Opportunities and Concerns

Opportunities	Concerns
Creating a range of employment opportunities offered by mutually supportive businesses	Striking the right makeup of mixed land uses
Integrating successful land uses that play to the City's strengths	Creating jobs to housing imbalance
Planning for neighborhoods and not simply "developments"	Preserving some element of open space
CBIP and Municipal Green Funds offer funding strategies to pursue energy efficient building design	Separating educational facilities from Gladstone Avenue to the Study Area
Increasing the density of downtown and engaging pedestrian activity	
Adaptive reuse of existing downtown building stock should be considered as well to accommodate some of the identified needs	
Integrate opportunities for youth in to the planning	
Increasing the density of downtown and engaging pedestrians	



The above photos demonstrate a sample of the plans and designs generated on the second day. The nature of the integrated design process is growth, and these plans also include ideas expressed on Day One. (Left to right) 1. Plans convey a centralized community anchor in orange, ample parking provisions and a major youth recreational centre directly south of the tracks; 2. Plans convey a large housing development south of the railway tracks (includes apartments, condominiums and student housing), significant buffering and park space directly south of the tracks and a major educational facility in the northeast corner of the Study Area; 3. Roger Green, *Crosby Hanna and Associates*, presents his group's plan that includes retail flanking the railway tracks on either side, retention of existing urban fabric in the north and major housing development south of the tracks.

Photo Credit: Hilderman Thomas Frank Cram

At the end of Day Two, each group was asked to identify the “most important” and the “most doable” aspects of the plans they had developed to date. Two items appeared on most groups’ lists: some type of Farmers Market and the development of the Third/Fourth Avenue railway crossing. The Project Team decided to focus on the Farmer’s Market as the key exercise for the next day’s morning session.

## 2.4 Charrette Day Three

The morning of Day Three was devoted to exploring the location, potential form and important relationships for a Farmer’s Market. Groups were also asked to describe the attributes that they saw the market providing and how it might be financially sustainable.

All of the Market proposals were located on a strip of land between Livingstone and the Railway either east or west of a proposed Third/Fourth Avenue rail crossing. Some of the concepts included the following features (refer to Appendix E):

- Utilize railway station and freight shed architectural forms for buildings;
- Seasonal market for fresh produce as well as a year round shop for farm products, including foods and crafts;
- Outdoor and indoor facilities;
- Develop an incubator type facility that allows people to develop their products and skills;
- Incorporate space for other allied groups such as artisans and performing artists;
- Consider providing space for offices to supplement the potential revenue streams;

- Potential to relate to a railway themed park / interpretive facility;
- Potential relationship with a restaurant that specializes in local produce;
- Potential relationship with other agri-foods businesses and incubators;
- Potential relationship with Co-Op store, Elevator and mill, and “the House” gift boutique;
- Utilize rail side platform type boardwalk to link market to rail history;
- Consider pedestrian bridge over rail line to proposed railway park south of tracks; and,
- Consider at grade pedestrian crossings along existing desired lines. Develop appropriate crossing protocol with railway to ensure safety.

On the afternoon of the third day, groups were instructed to develop housing options for the Study Area while managing specific constraints. Participants explored housing options that would reflect the cost of long-term operations and maintenance requirements along with the future needs of the community. In keeping with the goal of sustainable development, housing built today, dictated by current demographic trends, should still be beneficial to the populations of tomorrow. The groups utilized the high potential of the Study Area and designed housing developments that would create an affordable and desirable community.

Group designs incorporated various housing options in the Study Area that accommodated people with a mix of incomes. Groups discussed locating high-density, multi-story housing developments directly north of the railway tracks while medium to lower density housing would be placed south of the tracks and adjacent to existing neighborhoods (refer to Appendix F). Types of popular housing developments included seniors housing, condominiums, single-family townhomes, secondary suites, flex units and student housing. Participants created a flexible blend of housing options that provides choice for residents in a sustainable atmosphere.

The outcome of this workshop exercise was eight differing interpretations of the appropriate form, location and interrelationship on housing types. The following describes some of the key findings (refer to Appendix G).

- All of the schemes incorporated a significant green space in their plan. Half the groups retained an existing baseball field as part of the area’s open space, and one of these groups envisioned developing the baseball fields in the future as demand warrants. The remaining groups targeted all or part of the existing recreational fields for redevelopment and recommended that new types of open space be introduced;
- Several groups indicated surface storm water drainage and retention features be integrated into their scheme;
- For the most part, family housing took the form of zero lot line units and townhouse units;
- Family housing was always related to the open space component of the plan configuration located south of the tracks;

- Seniors housing was located either in the existing downtown area (adjacent to the Co-Op store) or adjacent to the planned open space south of the tracks. All locations south of the tracks took into consideration the walking route to the downtown (particularly to the Co-Op store);
- The location of housing for singles and adults without children was particularly diverse. Most groups indicated a higher density solution (multi story apartments/condos) with a mixed use commercial at grade component. The suggested locations included the Dedman site, south of Livingstone north of the tracks, north of South Front Street south of the tracks, and redevelopment within the existing ball fields;
- Several groups identified the adaptive reuse of the old curling rink and area for a youth recreation centre. This development could incorporate an indoor skate park as well as outdoor recreation facilities associated with public open space. This location was thought to have very good access and visibility for such activities;
- Several schemes indicated green buffers along the south side of the tracks to insulate new development from railway noise and visual impact. This buffer was often thought of as a portion of a greenway development that would connect this site to the educational precinct on Gladstone using the wide railway right of way as the corridor; and,
- Other distinctive ideas included an “innovation market place” where prairie products could be developed and sold, a technical college in downtown with associated residences, an arts centre and a conference centre.



(Left to right) 1. Tourism Yorkton representative and City Councillor Randy Goulden presents her group's designs for the “Olde Towne Market” themed multi-story Farmer's Market. This revised design involves a multi-story, mixed-use development in the southwest corner of the Study Area and includes a venue for artisans, culture and dining. 2. A photograph of the core contingent of participants that attended the better part of the three-day Charrette.

Photo Credit: Hilderman Thomas Frank Cram



### **3.0 General Points of Consensus**

The intensive, multi-day work session is responsible for eliciting a community-based recommendation for the future development of the Study Area, and ultimately the face of their City. Diverse teams addressed the same development questions and reconvened several times to present and discuss their findings and designs. Summarizing the Charrette process represents the contributions of over 80 participants over the course of three days, and revealed the common themes.

The Study Area is a large parcel of land that offers a wide range of development opportunities and, by reviewing, discussing and comparing notes; individual groups expressed “points of consensus”. These commonalities work towards creating a community-wide vision for the Study Area and have been broken down into two main areas: Transportation and Mobility, and Quality of Life.

#### **3.1 Transportation and Mobility**

**Railway Crossing.** The CPR tracks have been an impediment to meaningful, large-scale development in the Study Area since their inception, and incorporating a railway crossing between Fourth Avenue North and Third Avenue South would greatly improve vehicular and pedestrian traffic over the tracks. An at-grade crossing at Fourth Avenue South would be feasible in the near future. Interest was expressed for a long-term goal of installing a grade separated crossing (underpass or bridge). The grade separation would be very desirable for emergency vehicle access. In addition to vehicular railway crossing, there was a lot of support for incorporating safe pedestrian crossings over the tracks at several key locations along important desired lines and incorporating an “old railway station” theme into adjacent buildings.

**Roadway Closures and Extensions.** A Traffic Study, commissioned by the City and conducted in 2003 by Wardrop Engineering, made several transportation planning suggestions for the Study Area in the form of roadway closures and extensions. The Traffic Study indicated that a roadway extension from Foster Street at Beck/ Fifth Street South through towards Seventh Avenue South would accommodate the installation of an additional railway crossing, and provide better access to the regional mall. This connection would permit Park Street to become a more effective major collector.

It was also suggested to extend Argyle Street past Seventh Avenue to the mall. This would require the acquisition of one building, but would provide much more rational access and egress to the mall.

Six of eight groups suggested closing the Beck Street railway crossing once the Third/ Fourth Avenue crossing is developed. This closure would free up opportunity for contiguous development along both sides of the rail line. Two groups were reluctant to consider closing Beck Street South as participants argued that this was a major artery into Broadway Avenue for residential developments located south of the Study Area. One of these groups suggested locating the grade separated crossing on Beck rather than Third/ Fourth.

**Walkability.** Provide a large network of pedestrian linkages throughout the Study Area to reconnect with the surrounding urban fabric to the north and to compliment future, compact developments. Easily walkable streets are accessible to a variety of populations, safe and connected to anchor destinations such as a central Farmer's Market, an arts convention centre or community park space. Neighborhoods and housing should be tied to nature pathways that run along rail corridors and other points of interest.

### 3.2 Quality of Life

**Arts and Culture.** Emphasize community arts and culture via establishing large retail venues, arts cooperatives and performance space in a central location in the Study Area. A significant arts development such as a convention centre located north of the tracks would act as a major anchor for Downtown, and would encourage diverse cultural activities and increase economic profit.

**Local Agriculture.** To follow economic trends, community farmers should look to assume more processing steps and sell products through direct marketing techniques. A Farmer's Market was the most widely accepted development idea in the Charrette and groups looked to include a centre that would preserve and promote local agriculture and economics. A Farmer's Market should be found in a centralized location that is easily visible and accessible from Broadway Avenue. Several groups also developed ideas to incorporate agri-foods and other farm goods into incubator type settings and innovation parks. The relationship between new development and the existing mill and elevator was also considered in many schemes.

**Green Infrastructure.** Create an area in the Downtown Core that embraces green infrastructure and that offers expanses of green space, park space and an ecological reserve. The railway tracks and future vehicular linkages should be sufficiently buffered and the Study Area should provide for ample environmental and recreational opportunities. Environmental resources in the Study Area should be created, protected and preserved. The integration of surface drainage and storm water retention was a common theme in the proposed development schemes.

**Seniors.** Anticipate and plan for the significant senior population that exists in the community. Provide medical facilities in mixed-use developments, either located near future seniors housing developments or flanking the tracks, to promote adequate health care services and provide an economic engine in the area.

**Youth.** Recognize the need for a youth-focused activity centre in Yorkton. The redevelopment of this area can provide excellent opportunities to accommodate the youth of the community with a place to 'hang out', meet peers and participate in various activities with each other. The message from youth was that they wish to be leaders in the design of their places and spaces. Many teams identified the old curling club as a facility that would be appropriate for this development. Some of the activities identified were a drop-in style centre and outdoor facilities, such as basketball and a skateboard park.

**Housing Options.** Increase affordable housing in the City by providing various options: seniors housing, townhouses, condominiums, student housing, secondary suites, flex-units, small units and single room occupancies. Developing diverse housing types in the Study Area provides a mix that caters to various populations in the City and brings people into the Downtown. Medium to low-density housing should be located at the south end of the Study Area whereas higher density options should be towards the northern end. Medium to higher density housing in the Study Area will promote a village atmosphere and upholds the principles of sustainability as it relates to community preservation.

#### **4.0 Conclusion**

The Charrette demonstrated the success of the integrated design process, and produced achievable plans for the City of Yorkton's redevelopment area. Teams were encouraged to deal with complex design and building issues over a short period of time and were able to reach viable redevelopment goals with the use of relatively few measures.

Initially, the participants were unfamiliar with the Charrette concept but over time became comfortable with its format and structure. The integrated design process introduced relatively unexplored ideas of sustainability to Yorkton, but was embraced by the community and proved to be a unifying and educational experience. Groups explored green policies and designs that promoted alternative, environmentally conscious modes of transportation; and many different types of building developments that upheld energy-efficient principles and minimized community consumption. Additionally, all landscaping ideas were consistent with xeriscaping and preserving the natural environment. Redevelopment ideas were a testament to the Charrette's focus on sustainable progress and reflected the flexibility of its keen participants.

Due to the creative nature of the process, a technical focus was shelved in favour of fostering unrestrained ideas. The plans developed by the participants will be fully synthesized through a professional planning approach. These preliminary designs provide a clear indication of the preferred land use relationships and development components that need to be considered in future work. Group thinking coalesced around several key ideas including the Farmers Market as a priority, integrated open space, mixed use development of the Dedman property, major vehicular and pedestrian circulation patterns, and integration of youth recreation facilities. One major item of contention is the future of the ball diamonds and the appropriateness of this land use in its current location, something for another day.

The teams continuously modified their development ideas and experienced the evolution of design first-hand. New perspectives were created and valuable feedback was acquired. The participants, guided by their mutual investment and commitment to the Downtown Core, were able to make a vital contribution to the future of their City in a supportive atmosphere. The community participants, design professionals and government representatives were all very satisfied with the Charrette outcomes.



Consistent attendance, creative design options and community energy demonstrated the success of the Downtown Redevelopment Planning Charrette. The general conclusion was that this had been a very productive process and most participants felt optimistic about the possibilities for redevelopment of the downtown core.

## **List of Appendices**

APPENDIX A: Project Team

APPENDIX B: List of Participants

APPENDIX C: Charrette Presentations

APPENDIX D: Pedestrian-Oriented Neighbourhood Designs

APPENDIX E: Concepts Generated for Farmer's Markets

APPENDIX F: Housing Orientation Option

APPENDIX G: Housing Types

APPENDIX H: Cornerstone Site

## **Appendix A: PROJECT TEAM**

The following individuals make up the project team responsible for designing, implementing and facilitating the Downtown Redevelopment Planning Charrette for the City of Yorkton. They generously committed their time and expertise into ensuring the success of the three-day event.

### **Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) Project Manager:**

Jacquie Bevill, CMHC

### **City of Yorkton Project Manager:**

Jeffrey Humble, Director of Planning and Engineering, City of Yorkton

### **Project Leader:**

Jeffrey Frank, Hilderman Thomas Frank Cram Landscape Architecture

### **Project Team:**

Heather Cram, Hilderman Thomas Frank Cram Landscape Architecture

Sandra Marshall, CMHC

Halyna Skala Tataryn, CMHC

Wil Mayhew, Natural Resources Canada

Doug Pollard, FCM, CMHC

Roger Green, Crosby Hanna & Associates Landscape Architecture and Planning

Laureen Snook, Crosby Hanna & Associates Landscape Architecture and Planning

Jillian Savage, City of Yorkton

## Appendix B: LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

The following list of names represents the general participant makeup that took part in the Charrette. The integrated design process fosters a dynamic working environment; groups were not static, they had an open dialogue that allowed for constant participant movement and interaction. Over the course of the three-day event some participant attrition was observed, but overall membership was relatively consistent and satisfaction was high.

**Table 1:**

- Roger Green, Crosby Hanna & Associates
- Anne Sandor, Property Owner
- Barry Sharpe, Business Owner, Downtown Business Association
- Lonnie Kaal, Finances, City of Yorkton
- Gerry Gourlay, Protective Services
- Merle Sherwin, Renaissance Yorkton
- Brad Smorodin, Provincial Utilities
- Gerry Muir, Business Owner, Renaissance Yorkton

**Table 2:**

- Laureen Snook, Crosby Hanna & Associates
- Councillor Chris Wyatt, City of Yorkton
- Galen Tracy, Ministerial Associations
- Gerry Peppler, Yorkton Housing Authorities
- Kevin Fandrey, Downtown Business Association
- Randy Holfeld, Renaissance Yorkton
- Dorothy Ostopowich, Municipal Planning Commission
- Doug Kitsch, Business Owner Representative

**Table 3:**

- Doug Pollard, CMHC
- Councillor Janet Hill, City of Yorkton
- Wayne Jenson, City Manager, City of Yorkton
- Gene Denischuk, Business Owner, Municipal Heritage Commission
- Gino Astolf, Property Owner
- Laurie Renton, Business Owner, Downtown Business Association
- Sheila Harris, Realty representative
- Eleanor Shumay, Municipal Planning Commission
- Ron Skinner, Business Owner
- Tony Hallet, Ministerial Associations
- Ross Young, Protective Services
- Sheila Lavender, Ministerial Associations

**Table 4:**

- Halyna Tataryn, CMHC
- Derek Kindrachuk, Kindrachuk Agrey Architecture
- Councillor Randy Goulden, City of Yorkton
- Terri Lefebvre Prince, Historian, City of Yorkton
- Don Tatton, HRDC
- Mark Bell, Saskatchewan Housing Authorities

- Shelly Chase, Hotel and Motel Associations
- Todd Haas, Yorkton Chamber of Commerce
- Gord Bulmer, Economic Development

**Table 5:**

- Jeffrey Humble, Planning and Engineering, City of Yorkton
- Brian Dudar, Parks Facilities, City of Yorkton
- Dennis Popowich, Municipal Planning Commission
- Donna Brown, Renaissance Yorkton
- Irving Frasier, Yorkton Housing Authority
- Joe Paydli, Ministerial Associations
- Whitney Skinner, Youth Representative
- Karen Muir, Business Owner, Renaissance Yorkton

**Table 6:**

- Jacquie Bevill, CMHC
- Jillian Savage, Planning and Engineering, City of Yorkton
- Fran Brimacombe, Planning and Engineering, City of Yorkton
- Dennis Nelson, Protective Services
- Donna Brothwell, Yorkton Chamber of Commerce
- Joe Sandor, Property Owner
- Mary Haley, Yorkton Housing Authority
- Tony Mazur, Municipal Planning Commission
- Rick Dawson, Business Owner

**Table 7:**

- Heather Cram, Hilderman Thomas Frank Cram
- Greg Pidperyhora, Planning and Engineering, City of Yorkton
- Calvin Daniels, Media
- Dianne Holdfeld, Renaissance Yorkton
- Jason Farrell, Yorkton Chamber of Commerce
- Margaret Cugnet, Leisure Services Commission
- Suzanne Reed, Saskatchewan Housing Authority
- Dave Rusnak, Business Owner

**Table 8:**

- Jeffrey Frank, Hilderman Thomas Frank Cram
- Kriss Sarson, Planning and Engineering, City of Yorkton
- Laurie Anne Rusnak, City Clerk, City of Yorkton
- Douglas Poier, Business Owner
- Marlene Schrader, Finances
- Sandra McColl, Renaissance Yorkton
- Kent Latimer, Business Owner

## Appendix C: CHARRETTE PRESENTATIONS

A series of brief presentations and corresponding break out sessions occurred over the three-day event and set the stage for a successful integrated design process. Various professionals led presentations with an emphasis on sustainable community development:

- Lead consultant Jeff Frank (*Hilderman, Thomas, Frank, Cram*) led the Charrette in collecting impressions of the City, outlining the process and facilitating the smooth transitions between presentations and activities.
- Director of Planning and Engineering, Jeffrey Humble and Junior Planner Jillian Savage (*City of Yorkton*) presented future demographic projections for the province and the municipality, as well as related land use scenarios. These demographic projections help dictate appropriate future development strategies and contribute to a smart planning process.
- Doug Pollard (*Canada Housing and Mortgage Corporation*) familiarized the groups with sustainable community planning and outlined the implications of using resources efficiently and incorporating environmentally sensitive design into developments.
- Teresa Jeannine Paul (*Nexus Solar Corporation*) presented case studies of alternative energy systems for new developments and outlined how technology and design can offer achievable solutions for environmental concerns.
- Tom MacDermott (*Saskatchewan Research Council*) offered funding strategies for new developments that are energy efficient. Through the CBIP program, Yorkton developments can promote highly energy-efficient designs while saving clients money and reducing Canadian green house gas emissions.
- Halyna Tataryn (*Canada Housing and Mortgage Corporation*) introduced the relationship between housing and sustainable development. She presented housing options that improve affordability and choice for future generations while considering the long-term planning process for Yorkton's evolving community.
- Lead consultant Heather Cram (*Hilderman Thomas Frank Cram*) demonstrated the elements in achieving exciting, vibrant and "cool" urban space.
- Derek Kindrachuk (*Kindrachuk Agrey Architecture*) described the scale, texture and "delight" of architecture and offered key building strategies for future developments.

This series of presentations encouraged participants to interact, ask questions and voice concerns. The host of professionals from across Canada, along with an energized group of participants, secured the productivity of the Downtown Redevelopment Planning Charrette.

## Appendix D: PEDESTRIAN-ORIENTED NEIGHBOURHOOD DESIGNS

The following two figures are synthesized work yielded by the Charrette. When read in conjunction with each other, they illustrate pedestrian-friendly designs and neighbourhoods that are population sensitive. Housing is in a centralized location that fosters public gathering places, creates a focal point for redevelopment activities and orients populations to adjacent area amenities such as the Farmer's Market.

Housing within or near the core serves to provide a certain sector of the population with easy access to shopping, services, and entertainment. Filling this need is most attractive to seniors, low-income groups, young professionals, and starter families.

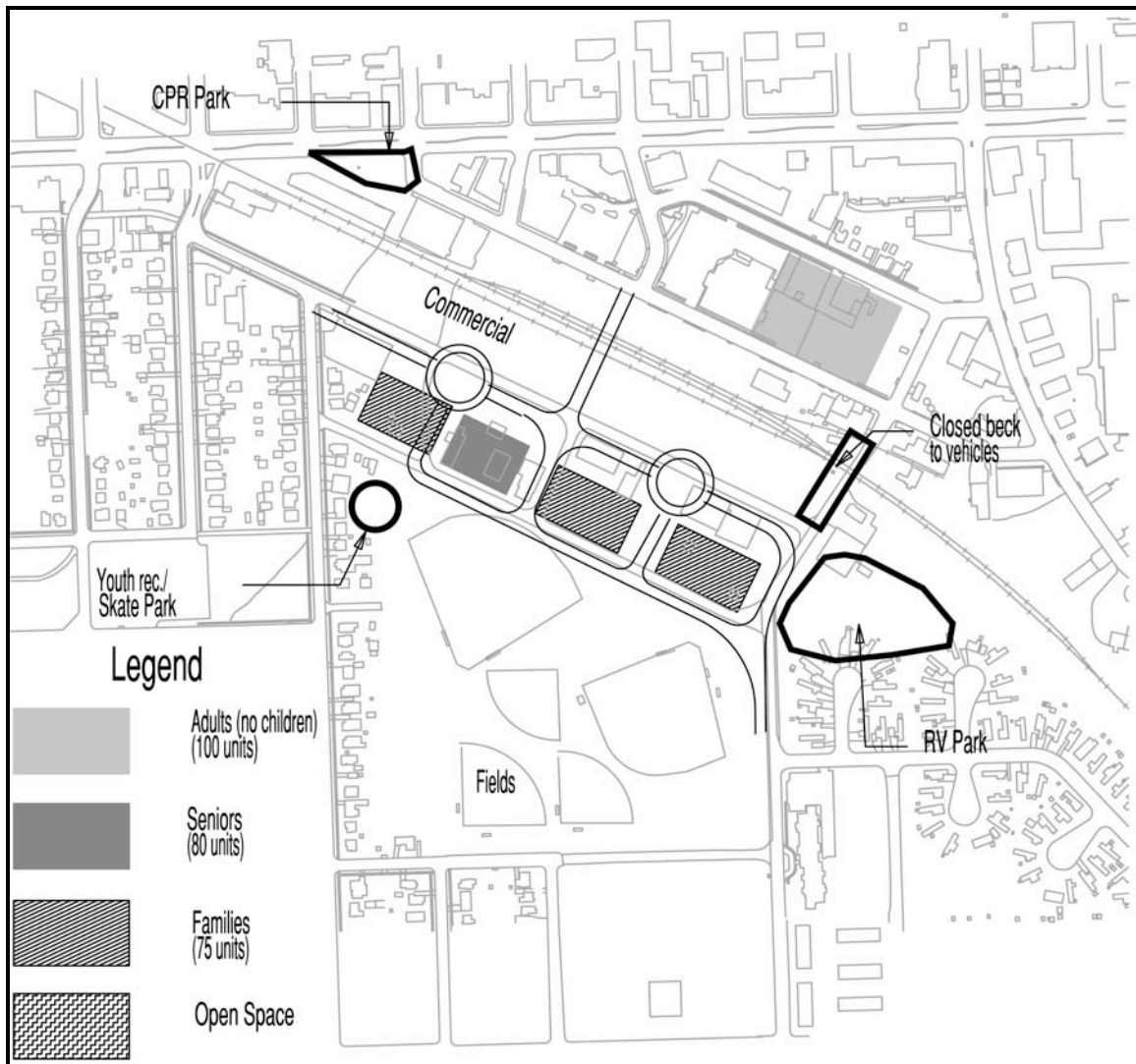
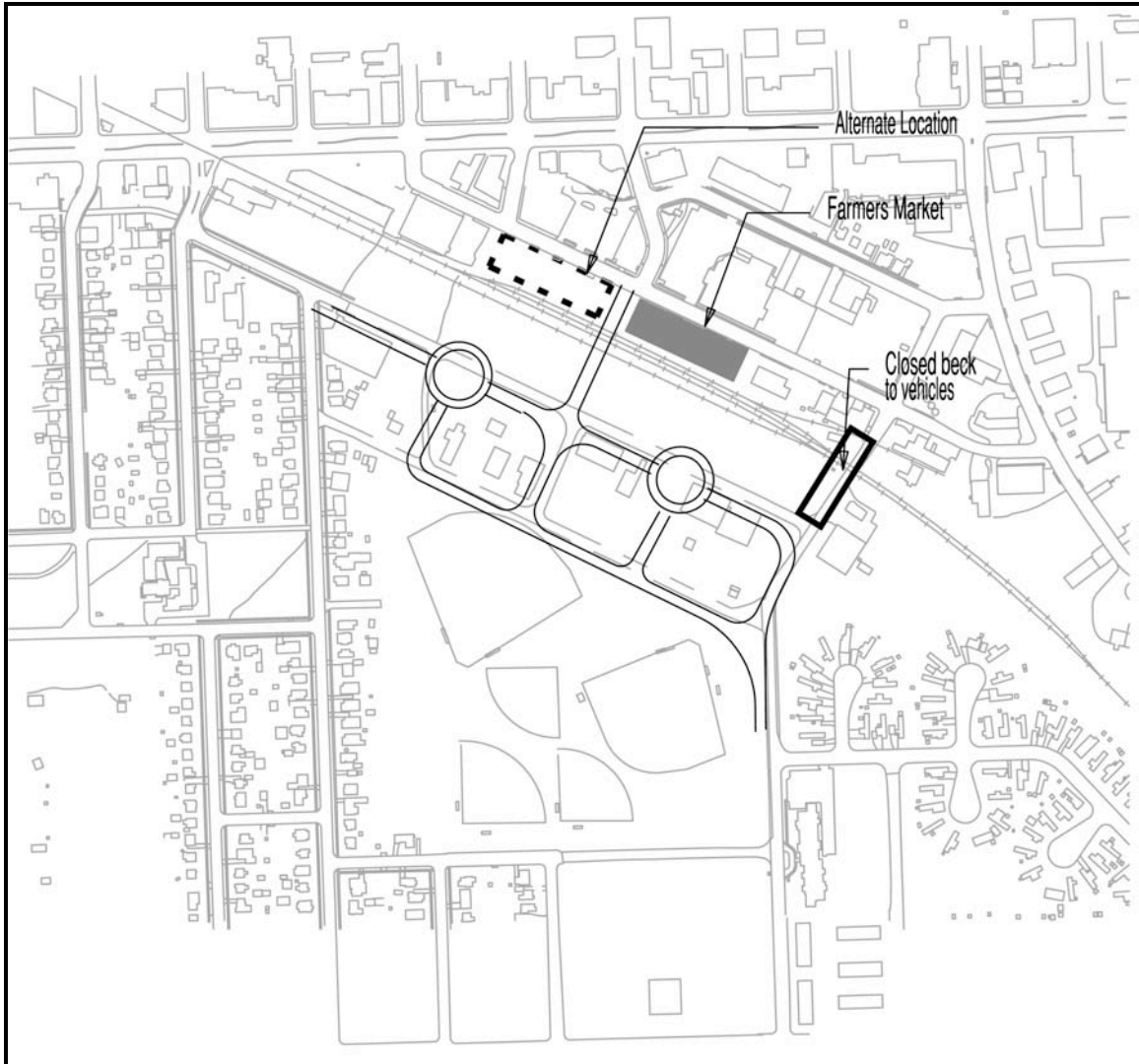


Figure 1: Housing

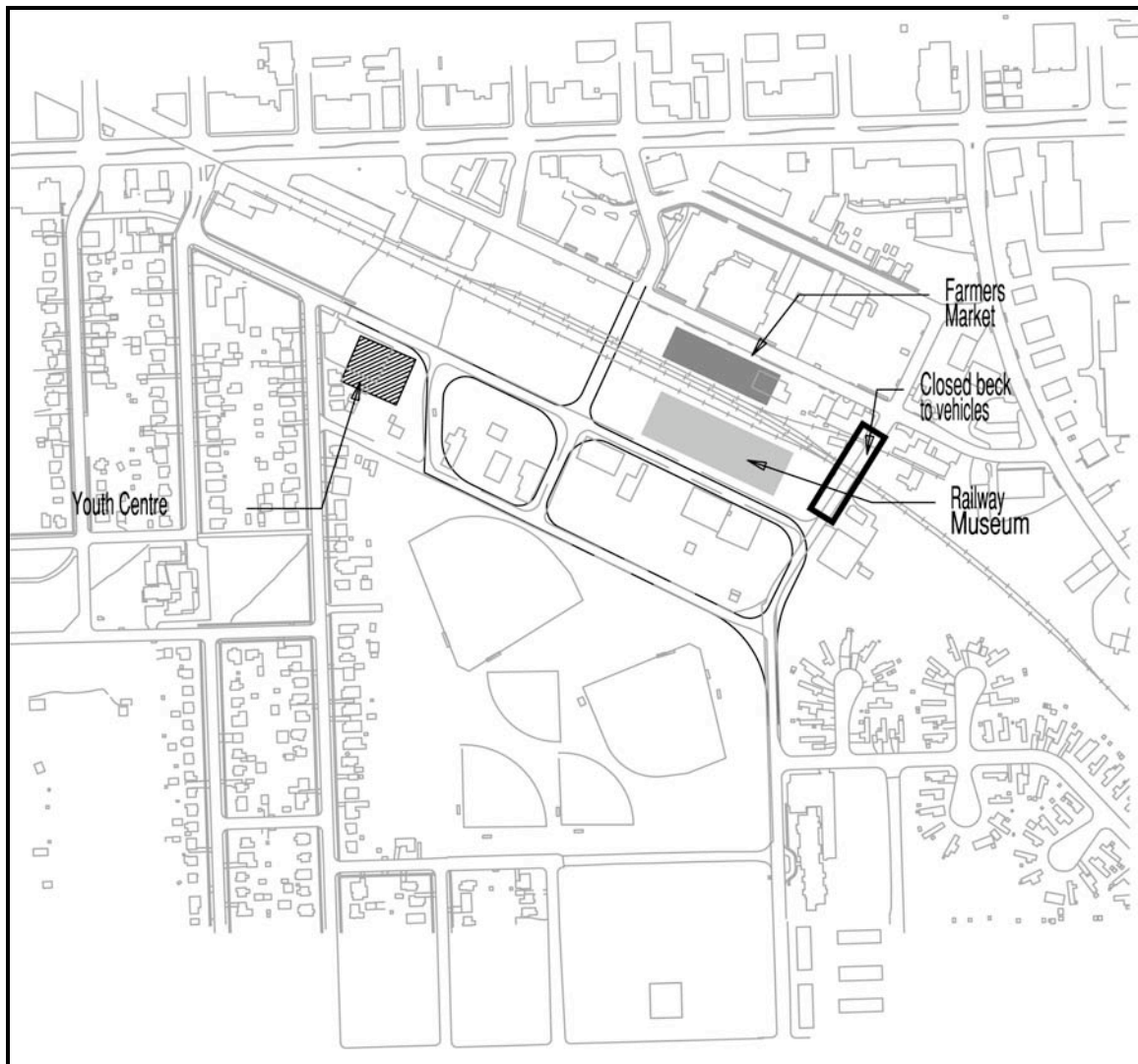


**Figure 2:** Farmer's Market

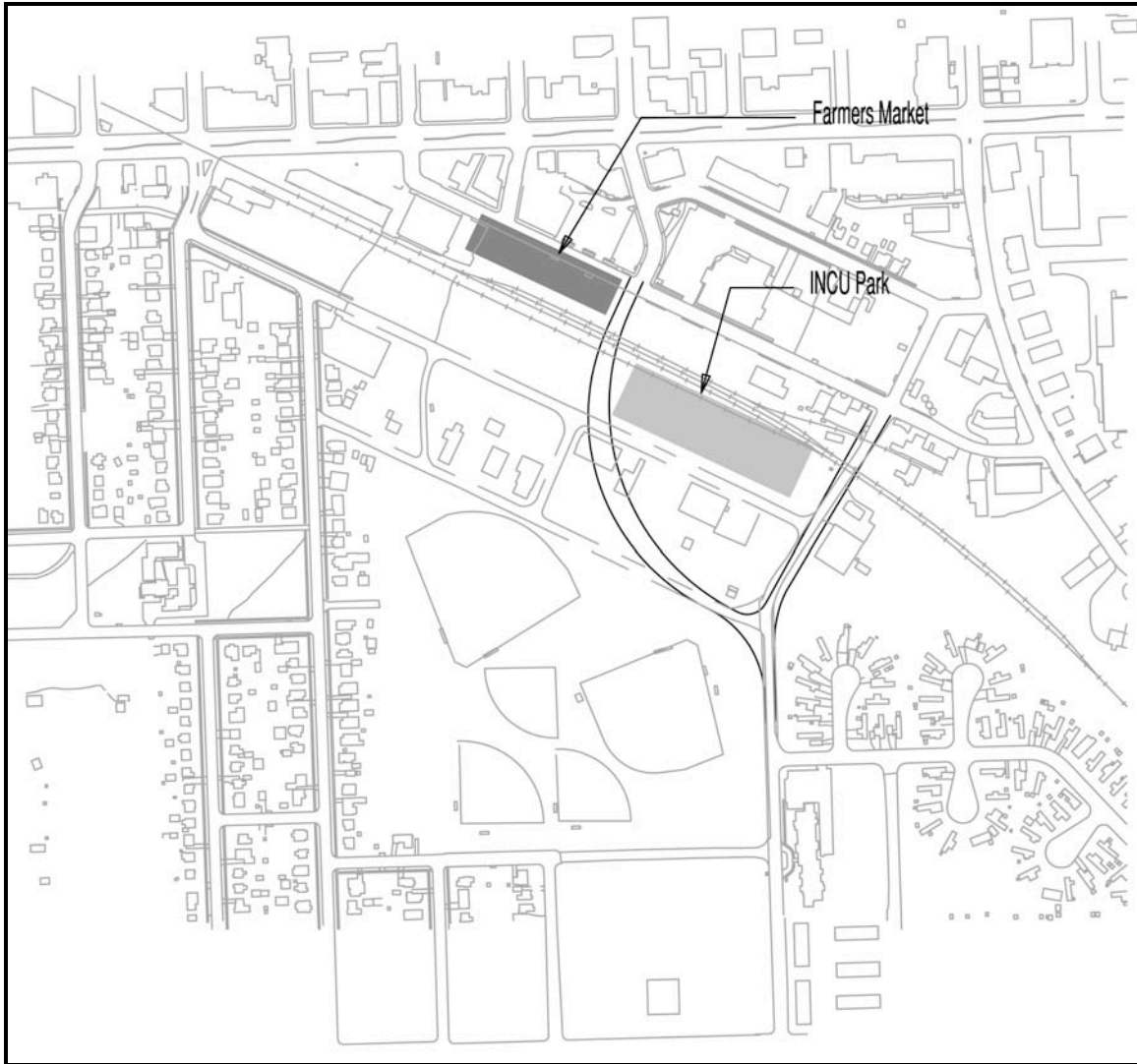


## Appendix E: CONCEPTS GENERATED FOR FARMER'S MARKETS

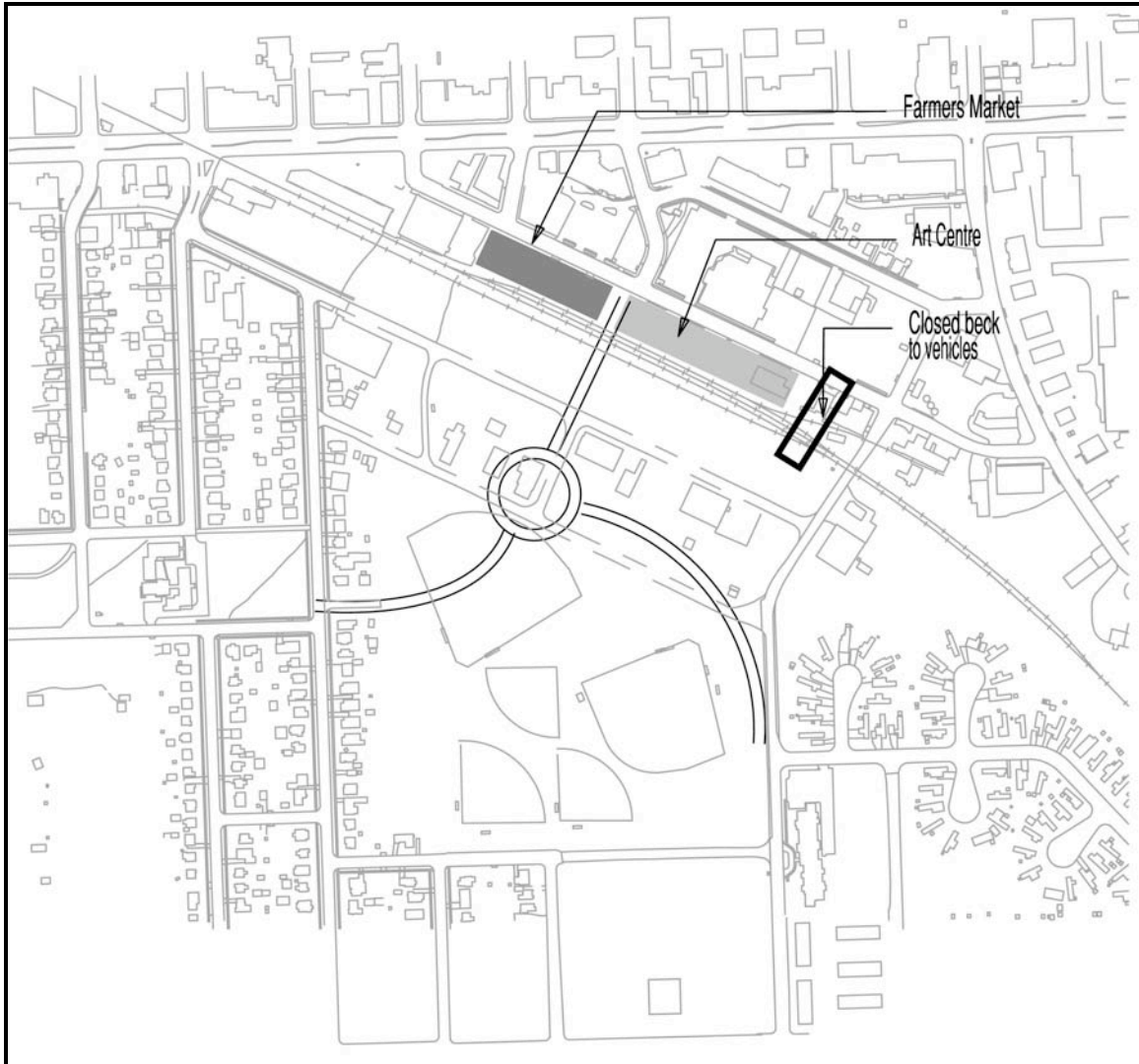
The following three figures represent synthesized group work yielded by the Charrette. The tables illustrate the strong support for homegrown niche market industries, the most popular being a year-round Farmer's Market. This venue would support growers in the region by providing organic produce and locally made foods. Groups highlighted several popular design features for the Market including utilizing a railway station theme, developing incubator type facilities, and incorporating space for local artisans.



**Figure 3:** Farmer's Market highlights a railway museum and youth centre in addition to a Market



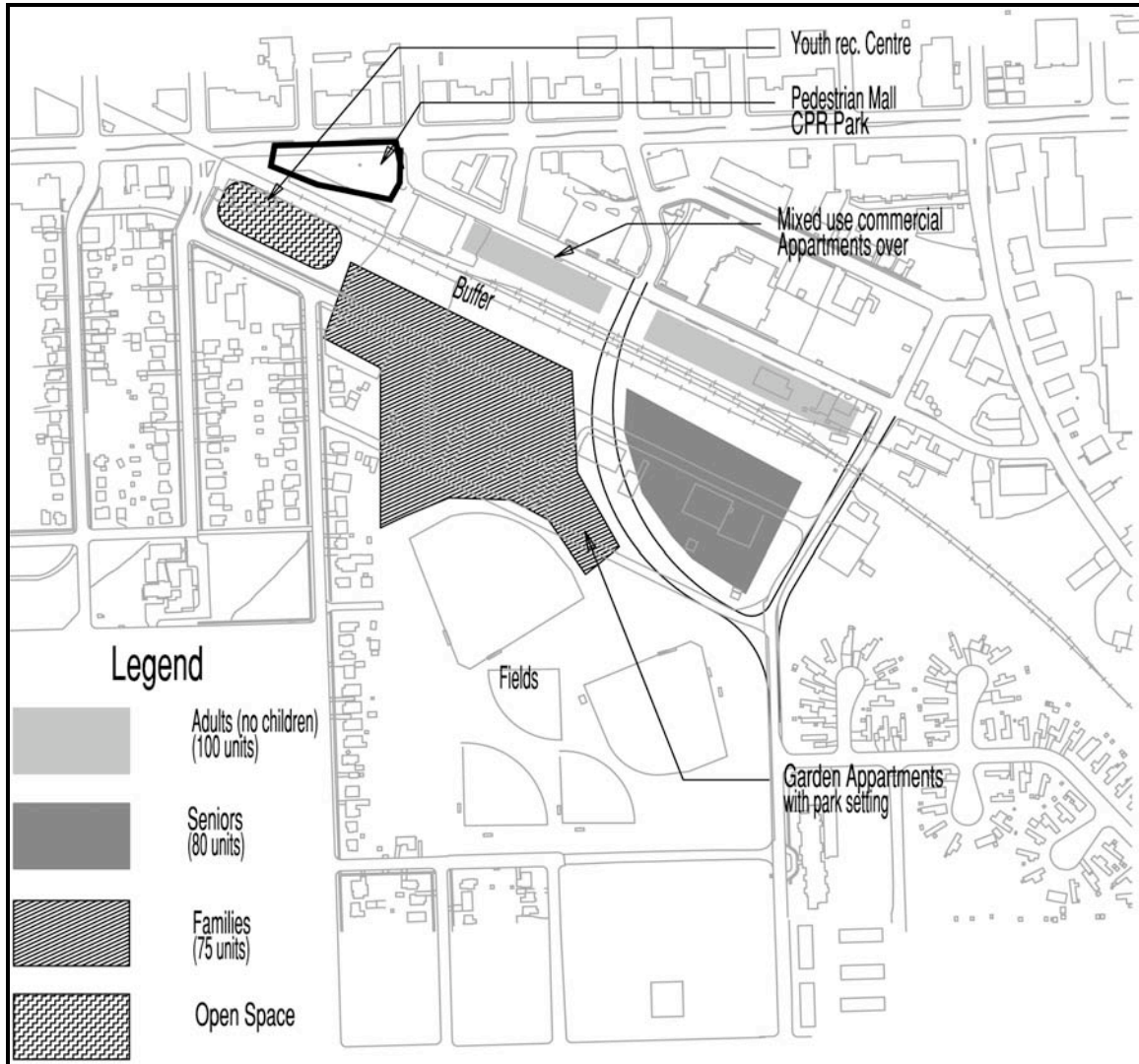
**Figure 4:** Farmer's Market highlights an incubation park, which could support local agri-businesses preparing for expansion, in addition to a Market



**Figure 5:** Farmer's Market highlights an art centre adjacent to the proposed Market that is connected to a major transportation artery to the south

## Appendix F: HOUSING ORIENTATION OPTION

The following figure is a synthesis of Charrette activities that focused on providing high-density housing in the downtown core, north of the railway tracks. Housing is an important component of downtown revitalization as it serves to support local business and increase pedestrian activity. Although Yorkton has little in the way of high-density housing in or near the core, Charrette groups supported the concept of developing housing in the Downtown area with medium density housing south of the railway tracks to help retain the urban fabric of the surrounding community.



**Figure 6:** Housing highlights mixed-use high-density housing for single adults in a centralized area



## Appendix G: HOUSING TYPES

The outcome of the workshop exercise on Charrette Day Three was a set of eight differing interpretations of the appropriate form, location and interrelationship on housing types. The following figures offer a synthesis of several key findings including incorporating significant green space into design plans, retaining existing baseball fields as part of the area's open space, targeting all or part of the existing recreational fields for redevelopment, and relating family housing options to open space in plan configuration located south of the tracks.

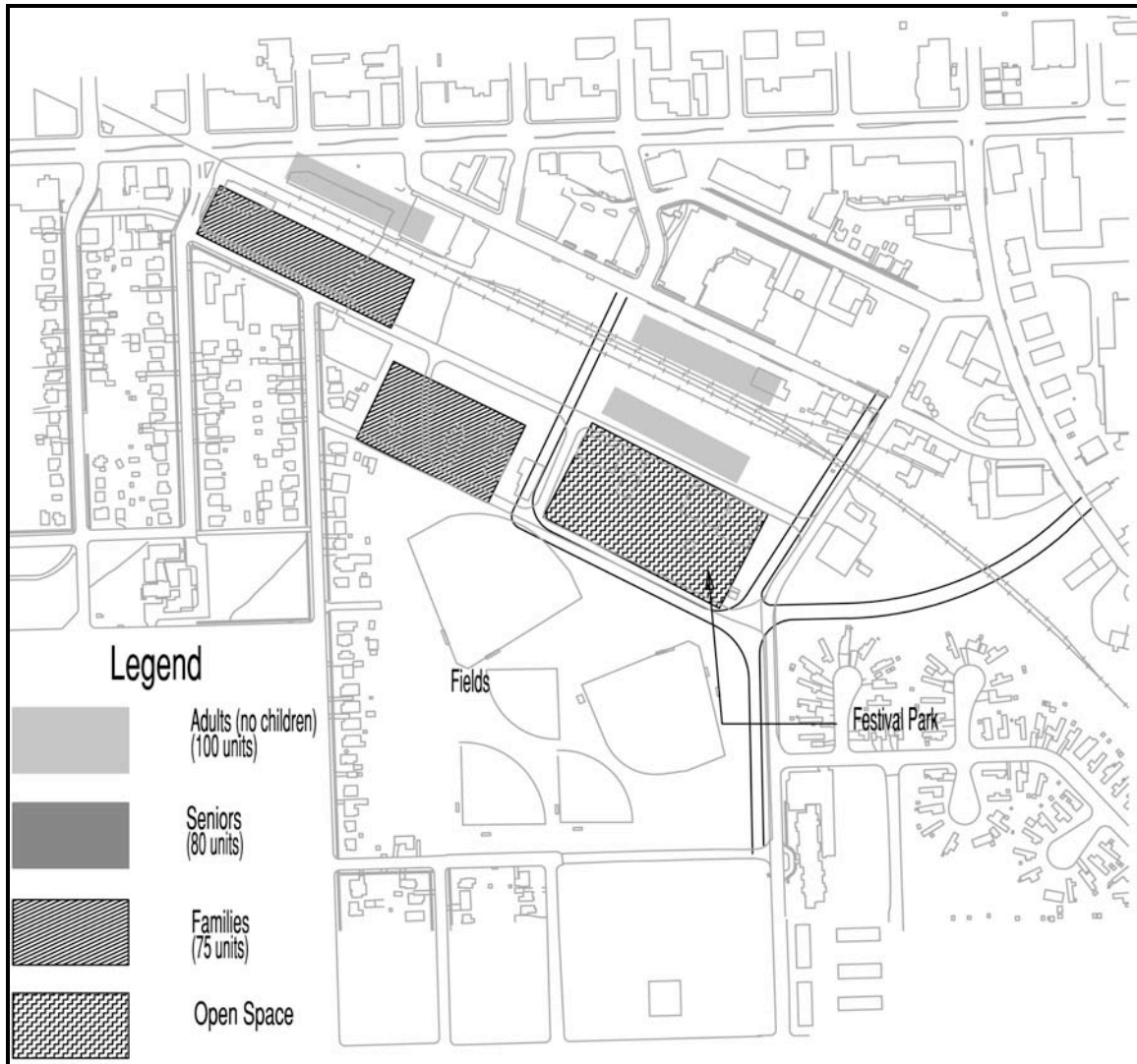
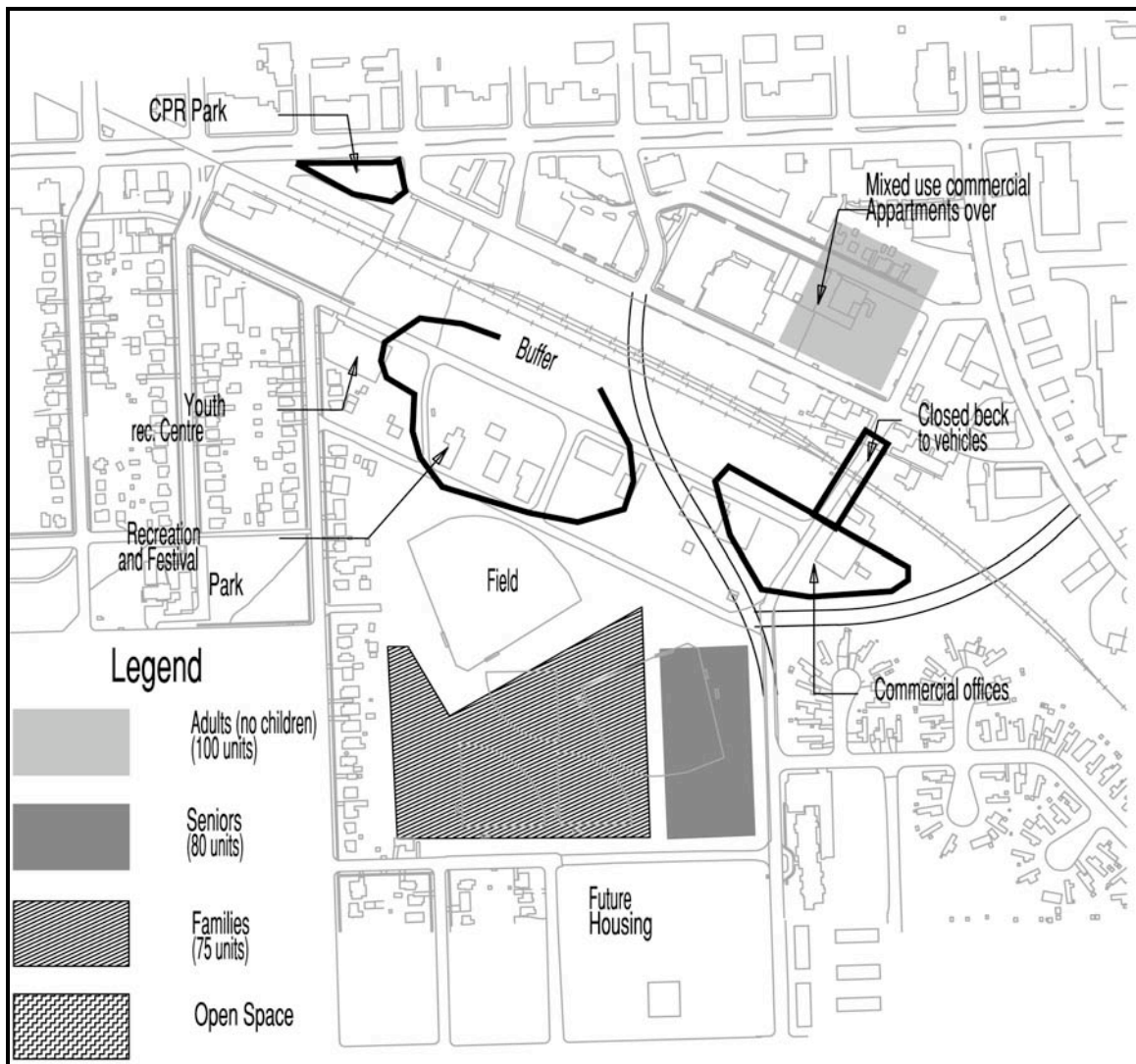


Figure 7: Housing Type



**Figure 8:** Housing Type

## Appendix H: CORNERSTONE SITE

The Downtown Redevelopment Plan will be used to generate buildable plans for the above-mentioned 30-acre brownfield site located in the City Of Yorkton. The following concept plan illustrates all the synthesized ideas of one option that was discussed at the Design Charrette.

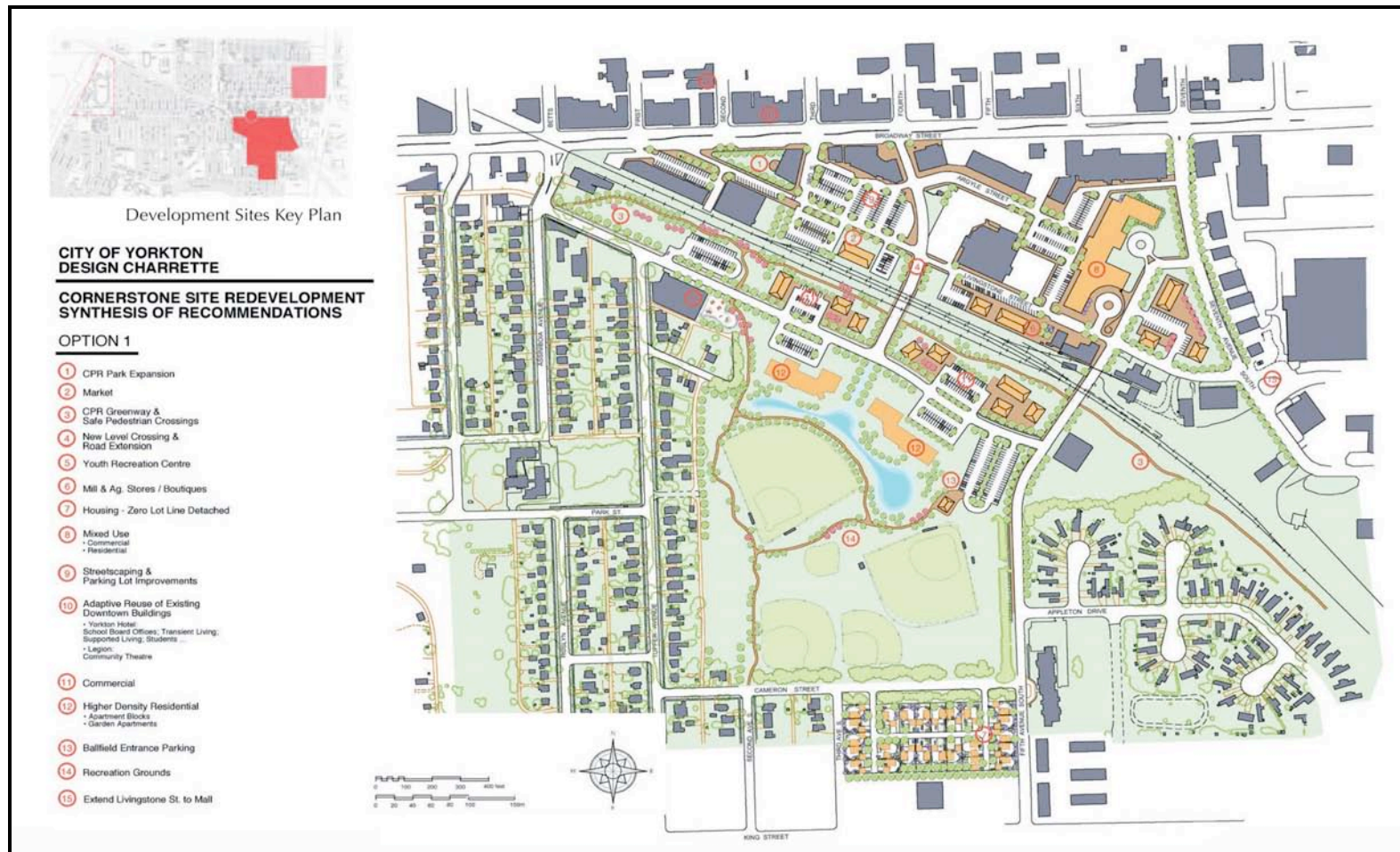


Figure 9: The Cornerstone Site

City of Yorkton Downtown Redevelopment Planning Charrette  
January, 2005





Visit our home page at [www.cmhc.ca](http://www.cmhc.ca)