

# **LOWER LONSDALE: EXISTING CONTEXT ANALYSIS - 01**

### **Geography and the Lower Lonsdale Neighbourhood**

Exploring the “best site” and “best use of site” potentials for the cultural amenities under discussion in this planning exercise meant understanding geographic context. Both the Lower Lonsdale neighbourhood and the Lonsdale Avenue corridor, which is designated as the north shore’s Regional Town Centre, came under scrutiny as shown in the diagrams. Demographics, growth and employment patterns were studied. In addition, the area’s connections to the rest of the region and ease of cultural access were reviewed. A very brief description of these contexts follows.

There are many things that make Lower Lonsdale distinct; most of these are associated with its position within the tri-municipal North Shore area. Beyond the City’s boundaries is North Vancouver District, a highly suburban municipality, and beyond that lies Metro Vancouver’s watershed management area and several ski and outdoor recreation holdings.

Lower Lonsdale is a highly visible and beckoning sea-side destination for the many residents of Vancouver’s Coal Harbour. Visitors to the downtown convention centres, cruise ship terminus and hotels can easily see and get to Lower Lonsdale without a car or tour bus. It contains the mountain view that all heads turn to when they visit Vancouver. In the foreground, North Vancouver’s buildings, climbing picturesquely and gently up the south facing hill, promise access to a City that has a human scale.

Lower Lonsdale is also extremely compact in an old-world way. It currently encompasses six to eight square blocks of space – easily walk-able. It is well known that visitors are drawn to places smaller than those they live in and intimidated by those that are larger. With the attributes of scale, location and ease of access, all Lower Lonsdale needs is to give people more reasons to cross the water to work, to visit, to linger longer and to come back repeatedly.

The fact that so many people already commute through the Lower Lonsdale water and transit terminal make the City’s aspirations for a cultural neighbourhood achievable. The fact that Lower Lonsdale already has an historically authentic built environment is also an asset. But these are just starting points.

### **Governance Complexity**

The area has a complex interweaving of governance. It is home to several aboriginal communities functioning under band councils. The federally regulated Port Authority with lands under its jurisdiction is located just to the east of Lower Lonsdale. Historically, some of this land and foreshore was the site of a corporate “company town” named Moodyville with extensive lands and timber rights. This area has always been outside the planning and disposition jurisdiction of the City. The shore holds some water lots and is subject to navigable waters and foreshore regulations. It has, as already stated, excellent access to public transit.



**View of North Vancouver from the SeaBus**

The North Shore, during the last decade, has been the slowest growth sub-area in the Greater Vancouver Region. The exceptions to this general statistic are Central and Lower Lonsdale. Employment growth has also been mainly concentrated in this corridor and south of Marine Drive.

North Vancouver is a relatively large population area within the Metro Vancouver region, with 127,727 citizens according to the 2006 census. Its ability to act as a unit is complicated by its division into two municipalities – The City of North Vancouver and the District of North Vancouver – early in the 20th century. Agreements for shared services that cross municipal boundaries have been negotiated between local councils and their staffs, but administering these and dealing with their complexities consumes time and resources. This reality has shaped many of the City of North Vancouver's civic choices and constrained its ability to meet the needs associated with a population of considerable scale.

Each municipality has its own different character; the City is very urban and the District is quite sub-urban. Each municipality also views itself as being unique and small in regional terms. Each sees itself as having limited individual resources with which to provide public services. Yet the boundary between the two municipalities is exceptionally porous for citizens and the services accessed by them. The perception of residents is that they should have services appropriate to a city of almost 130,000 people, not 56,000 (City) nor 84,000 (District). A City of 130,000 people would have public buildings for a museum, public art gallery, producing theatre and

dedicated arts centre as part of its basic service to residents. *“The population on the North Shore, as a whole, tends to be more stable in size and older than the regional average. It is generally more affluent with higher than average car ownership.” (Census Canada 2006)* These statistics do not apply to North Vancouver City, which has generally faster growth, higher densities and lower per capita car ownership. The City has higher transit use than is found in the Districts of North Vancouver and West Vancouver.

The City of North Vancouver's population is currently about 46,000. The official census of 2006 counted 45,165 people and a growth rate of 1.9% over 5 years. This translates to 862 people. There has been some discussion about the accuracy of this census; many believe the City's residents were underrepresented in 2006.

## Lonsdale: A Regional Town Centre

Lonsdale is a designated Regional Town Centre and is expected to provide a service environment and density appropriate to this status.

The GVRD (now Metro Vancouver Region) count of growth in designated Town Centres indicates that between 2001 and 2006 the Lonsdale Town Centre alone increased its population by 1,025 residents, representing a population change of almost 4% . In addition, the City of North Vancouver's Economic Development Strategy (2008) assessed the City's growth to be about 4% per year.

Of the three municipalities with Regional Town Centres and closest in size to North Vancouver City, none had a real numbers growth rate as high as North Vancouver City. Maple Ridge's Town Centre saw an increase of 5% but this only represented 435 residents. New Westminster's Town Centre grew by 14% but this only represented 880 people.

In addition, Metros' figures for numbers of dwellings in North Vancouver City shows that in 2001 there were 21,217 private dwellings and in 2006 this had increased to 22,643, a change of 1,426 dwellings and a change, over five years, of 6.7%. **(see pg. 4)**

## Mixed Urban Growth Patterns Compared to Single Family Suburban Patterns

Assuming no change in census growth rate for either municipality in the North Vancouver area, the population of the City will grow to about 46,989 by 2016 and the population of the District will grow to about 83,058 in the same time. This brings the total combined population to over 130,000 in the next 6 years. It also closes the gap in relative scale of the two municipalities. The City itself forecasts a population of 55, 400 by 2021 and considers its population capacity to be about 62,000 people (Official Community Plan 2002).

The City sees itself as an urban, rather than suburban, environment. The majority of residents are renters. It has a wide

range of self-owned and rental housing stock. Much of the rental stock is affordable relative to Metro Vancouver costs. It also has a good stock of low cost rental housing and social housing. Its density is high, with about 80% of its housing stock listed in the OCP as multi-family dwellings. It will be able to increase density in the town centres designated for such use. The age of housing stock also varies in a healthy way. A mixture of housing types creates vibrancy through in-migration, encourages a younger demographic and allows income earners of varying means to live in, and contribute to, the City.

Employment

The number of people who work in the City is almost equal to the number of employed people who live in the City. The City counts 24,095 jobs inside its boundaries and a labour force of 25,160. Many North Vancouver Residents work across the region, mainly in Vancouver (OCP). The stock of industrial and commercial lands and their protection allows this balance of employment. This is not true of all other regional municipalities that either have an abundance of retirees or are bedroom communities for other, nearby cities.

“7% of North Vancouver’s resident labour force is primarily engaged in activities associated with arts and culture.”

Economic Development Strategy

Lonsdale Town Centre is considered mixed use: commercial, institutional and residential. All of these attributes bode well for the future of North Vancouver City and for its cultural amenities.

Population Growth for Regional Town Centre of Lonsdale as one of Metro Vancouver’s Growth Concentration Areas

	2001	2006	Actual Population Growth	Population Change	Total Municipal Population
Lonsdale TC	22,815	23,840	1,025	4%	45,165
Maple Ridge TC	8,305	8,740	435	5%	68,949
New Westminster TC	6,490	7,370	880	14%	58,549

Total Private Dwelling Units by Metro Municipality

	2001 no. Of homes	2006 no. Of homes	Change	% Change
North Vancouver City	21,217	22,643	1426	6.7%
North Vancouver District	29,528	30,957	1429	4.6%

\*A point of information: North Vancouver District had a census population of 82,562 in 2006 and almost no growth in population while their dwelling numbers increased by 1,429.

Population of North Vancouver: Current Census and Growth

	2001	2006	2011	2016	population growth	% change
North Vancouver City	44,303	45,165	46,068	46,989	2,686	2.00%
North Vancouver District	82,310	82,562	82,810	83,058	748	0.30%
TOTAL	126,613	127,727	128,878	130,047	3,434	

Unique Transportation Nexus

Ease of access is important to cultural and visitor focused enterprises. TransLink did a formal study of SeaBus service to North Vancouver in 2000. The effect on Lower Lonsdale is substantial and has grown since.

Annual ridership on the SeaBus from downtown Vancouver’s Waterfront Station to Lower Lonsdale was 10 million people in 2000 and expected to rise by 12%, to 11,200,000 by 2003. A 2% annual ridership growth was expected after that. Peak hour-peak direction ridership was expected to reach 100% of year 2000 capacity by 2008. TransLink responded by increasing boat capacity, first providing more standing room and then providing larger boats. The SeaBus can now deliver over 400 passengers to Lower Lonsdale every 15 minutes.

Trips by SeaBus are competitive with the automobile due to travel time, reliability and the cost and scarcity of parking in Vancouver. Traffic congestion delays on the bridge crossings occur regularly. Accommodating increased automobile traffic over the Burrard Inlet is unlikely in the foreseeable future. SeaBus service, by contrast, is very reliable (99.9% January to October 2000) and has enjoyed consistently high customer satisfaction ratings since it started in 1977. Now that SeaBus is connected to three SkyTrain routes, time and reliability is an even greater factor.

According to TransLink’s “Journey-to-Work data set”, the highest single concentration of North Shore workers -- 20% -- travel to downtown Vancouver. Of all North Shore commuter trips to downtown Vancouver 35% are travel-by-transit. Most people travel through the Transit terminal and SeaBus station in Lower Lonsdale. The North Vancouver Bus depot has a design capacity of 60 buses and by 2000, the most recent statistic available, had 92 buses being served there. Transit usage is highest along the major activity corridors of Marine Drive and Lonsdale Avenue. This nexus of travel, both to, from and within North Vancouver, makes Lower Lonsdale highly distinctive.

Visitor Travel

The North Shore is also a major tourist destination according to TransLink studies. One in six riders on SeaBus is a visitor to the City. Some bus routes that serve the Capilano Road corridor, Grouse Mountain and the Horseshoe Bay Ferry terminal carry significant numbers of tourists. The Lower Lonsdale embarkation environment represents a significant potential market for tourists and day-trippers.

The significance of Lower Lonsdale as a “port of entry” for visitors to, and residents of, the North Shore is guaranteed well into the future. Adding other docking points on the North Shore has been carefully studied. TransLink has concluded that these would not be cost effective. Increasing SeaBus size (and eventually numbers), trip frequency, and hours of operation through Lower Lonsdale has been deemed the appropriate strategy.



SeaBus terminal seen from Lonsdale Quay



It may be possible for a private operator to offer a boat shuttle service from the North Shore to Vancouver. At the time of this writing an experimental service is underway from Ambleside in West Vancouver across Burrard inlet. It remains to be seen whether such a business model can succeed when a subsidized system like TransLink cannot make a financial and ridership case for it. Even if established, any independent service will be highly localized. The Lower Lonsdale will continue to be a primary embarkation point and link between North Vancouver and all points south in the foreseeable future. This makes the area worthy of development for cultural and visitor amenities.

### **Connection and Interaction with Greater Vancouver's Cultural Practitioners**

There are already some strong interactions between North Vancouver cultural organizations and those from other parts of the lower mainland. Individual examples are given in other parts of this report about these exchanges. The question is, can North Vancouver draw these organizations to relocate to a cultural neighbourhood here?

At this time, those from outside the community who are looking for low cost studio space are unlikely to find it in North Vancouver. East Vancouver still has the highest concentrations of such spaces available and Vancouver has a strong policy program to maintain them and create new ones. They will continue to lead for some time. Artists can sell their work directly from their studios rather than through commercial galleries. These sales are not a large part of the trade in artists' work, but it can be an important factor in the choice of studio location.

While North Vancouver may not be able to entice artists from across the water to establish their production spaces here, they can and should retain their own artists.

There are a substantial number of artists living in North Vancouver who would benefit from access to simple studios, "dirty" production space and equipment-heavy shop space in their home city. Such spaces and studios need to be made available, and encouraged through policy, over the next ten years. Rehearsal space for the many professional ensemble orchestras and choirs as well as drama producers will also help sustain artists through the incubation stage of their work. Losing these artists and their work is counterproductive to economic vitality in the same way that the loss of any other business is counterproductive.

The attendant loss of cultural vitality is an added concern, especially when the city has the aspiration to become a visitor destination and the potential of a cultural neighbourhood.

### **Organizations**

The relocation of entire organizations to North Vancouver City poses a problem – does the city have the capacity to provide core operating funding? Those currently operating in other municipalities, and wishing to relocate a portion of their production capacity to North Vancouver, risk losing their existing residency status and all or some of their existing grant funding. It is unlikely that North Vancouver could make up the shortfall.

In addition, Vancouver media, even those who claim regional scope,



**Lonsdale Quay, part of the pedestrian path leading out of the SeaBus terminal**

do not cover events outside their home territory very often. This balkanizing of the region, particularly by print media, makes it difficult for productions and exhibits that depend on ticket sales to get the publicity they need once they leave Vancouver.

### **Example of a Successful Strategy - Presentation House Theatre**

The best strategy for bringing cultural organizations to North Vancouver is to encourage and support local practitioners like Presentation House Theatre (PHT) when they engage with a company or artist in a project partnership.

To use the theatre as an example, the like-minded producers they would pursue partnerships with include:

- Green Thumb theatre
- Western Gold Theatre
- Blackbird Theatre
- Touchstone Theatre
- Felix Culpa
- Newworld Theatre
- Only Animal Theatre
- Pi Theatre
- Theatre Replacement
- Boca Del Lupo Theatre
- Ruby Slippers Theatre

PHT already has relationships with Sea Theatre. It has been a resident company at Presentation House since 2000. PHT has also been working with Grand Theft Improv and Creative Dominion, run by Eury Chang. The theatre has a relationship with Laughing Matters Theatre - though it is on again off again. This is common to start up organizations that do not receive any public funding -- their activities are random. But that makes supporting them via partnerships more important. Partnership and facility access offers support in the same way a "research and development" lab might do in other circumstances.

These activities currently spring out of PHT's provision of low cost, or no cost, rehearsal time in which to create the work. In this way, PHT acts as an incubation space for new pieces and new performing artists, writers and directors. But it also springs out of direct knowledge -- who is doing quality professional work, even if on a shoestring? The inside track, colleague-to-colleague connections and judgement that Presentation House Theatre's leadership brings to these acts of creation is what makes them work. This organization, therefore, is pivotal to any long range strength in a cultural neighbourhood and, indeed to the "organic" development of a North Vancouver professional cultural community.

It is for this reason that we recommend that any new rehearsal space developed in the city be placed in proximity to Presentation House Theatre. Though the PERC report recommends a rehearsal hall on the Harry Jerome site, this is mostly a response to a need

expressed in the community for more rehearsal space through general surveys. Centennial Theatre has, in recent renovations, added a small rehearsal space; but there has been little uptake of its rental potential for this purpose. It is unlikely that a second rehearsal space on the Harry Jerome site will fare any better. In contrast, Presentation House and its ancillary space, Anne MacDonald Hall, are very busy with rehearsals. These are spawned by collaborations, long-standing relationships and the substantial history of Presentation House as an incubation site.

We recommend that the City respond to the need for additional rehearsal space expressed by its citizens, but place it on the site where these citizens habitually and successfully engage in this activity.

### **Gallery and Museum Connections and Attendance**

The NV Museum and the PH Gallery also have strong professional relationships that can enrich their home community. These, like the theatre's, include like minded institutions across the country and beyond. Locally, Capilano University would like to be seen as "the partner of choice" to work with the gallery's programs and be part of a cultural neighbourhood.

The impediments of grant boundaries apply to the PH Gallery and NV Museum as well, and they too will create partnerships around

specific projects when it is appropriate. They will share exhibits, best practices and talented contributors. Their activities will bring compelling cultural experiences to local residents and visitors. They will keep museum, conservator, curatorial and support staff engaged and contributing economically in their own community. Over time, their strength will lead to the concentration of artists and cultural workers that make a cultural neighbourhood.

### **Attendance Tracking**

Audiences too are a big part of creating successful cultural resources and facilities. Audiences and art gallery attendees are already coming in large numbers from across the region to North Vancouver.

Ticket sales tracking indicates that as many as 50% of attendees to some events are from “across the water”. Given that some of the facilities that they come to are currently less than ideal, this speaks well for the professional level of programming and production taking place. With better buildings, services and technical capabilities these numbers will rise.

Attendees are showing their willingness to come to North Vancouver for shows and events. The City can, through improved facilities and accessible, integrated sites, capitalize on that willingness. In doing so, it can also help fulfill several of its OCP Cultural Objectives - 10.6.1 “arts as a sustainable source of economic growth, particularly for increasing employment and tourism” and 10.6.3 “To support the development of a network of community and regional arts and cultural facilities that are [sic] easily accessible to the general public.”



Many previously published studies were explored but of greatest significance were those that set civic policy and goals. It was important to judge whether there were any discordances between stated policy, strategies and plans and the purposes set out for this planning exercise. Of particular significance were the Official Community Plan, the Economic Development Strategy and the North Vancouver Cultural Plan. Happily, the alignment is good. Each is discussed here.

Equally important were the citizen comments found in the surveys and meeting minutes attendant to these documents. Our process, as noted in the methodology section (**page 118**) included interviews and meetings with community stakeholders and city representatives. These determined how confident the respondents were about the data and what the prevailing attitudes and outlooks were at the present time. We considered these instructive and begin with a brief exploration of them.

Study Fatigue and Some Sources of Frustration

We found a general recognition that the needs and benefits of arts practices and community support of culture was well documented. The sense was that at the City, administratively and politically, the needs and benefits were philosophically embraced but materially marginalized.

**Analysis of cultural service delivery**

- Capital Planning requires immediate attention
- Staffing structures and human resources are inadequate to deliver program expectations
- Opportunities for cultural tourism are being missed
- Seizing opportunities / addressing gaps is important to cultural delivery in North Vancouver

*Executive Summary of the Joint Review: Municipal Arts & Cultural Services Delivery and Funding (2006)*

Support for recreational and sports services to residents, as a civic responsibility, is widely accepted at policy levels. By contrast, those residents and children with interests in arts, culture, music and theatre are generally expected to provide and fund services for themselves through volunteer or commercial means. Even children engaged in the highly athletic pursuit of dance are left in the domain of private enterprise. This makes dance an inaccessible recreational activity for those with restricted means, particularly disadvantaged girls.

There is also a persistent belief that cultural practices and activities are elitist or do not have mass appeal. Therefore, they should not claim political and tax-based support.

The fact is that the City has more artists as residents than most municipalities. In this, North Vancouver City is very much like New Westminster. Each has a high number of residents identifying themselves as arts workers. In both municipalities these worker access a reasonable quality of life for their families while living close to the exhibition facilities for arts and culture in Vancouver and to the “buyers” of their work.

Many artists also live economically disadvantaged lives. As producers of tangible goods, they are likely to fit into the working class fiscally. Their work is creative but not elitist. They and their families are often in great need of the social and rental housing (and even industrial sites) available in North Vancouver City.

Optimism

We also found optimism. People expressed a hope that perhaps, at last, a plan will be put into action using both new information and that already at hand.

Progress has been made toward an increasingly livable city. Governance has been improved with the creation of the Office of Cultural Affairs. Though culture is often poorly understood and the last to see its needs met, built infrastructure for an art gallery, producing theatre and community museum are on the City’s capital planning list.

“Without implementation, a vision is a dream unlikely ever to come true.”

*Official Community Plan  
Implementation and Participation*

The City of North Vancouver has accomplished a great deal. We can applaud those efforts, and craft a plan to turn attention to achieving the City’s cultural, commercial, and visitor aspirations.

**Alignment with Official Community Plan (OCP)**

Official Community Plans have become vital documents to steer municipal governments. They provide a vision for the future, guiding principles, values, goals and objectives. They are created using community consultations of all kinds. Many special areas of interest and concern to citizens are addressed. They hold valuable information and are open to public view. All city departments use them to guide decision making. The City of North Vancouver will soon embark on a review of its OCP. Many existing principles will be carried forward into the new document. It is important to highlight what the OCP’s core values and plans for arts and culture are, to think about what goals have been accomplished, and to review what remains to be done.

In broad terms, the OCP (approved in October 2002) states that the City’s development will be urban, not suburban, with a strong and identifiable centre [Lonsdale], visibly linked to its natural and cultural past and with a unique sense of place. It says, “This includes the local environment and culture. There should be vibrant public spaces that allow people to gather, interact and share experiences.” The result desired is that people will “enjoy living, working and visiting here.”

The OCP also states that “... City wishes to supply as many of our community needs locally as is practical” reducing demands on transportation and on the environment. And it declares that one of its objectives (4.10.10) is to “support strategies that develop, support and celebrate the city’s distinctive cultural identity.” It then zeros in on Lower Lonsdale: “the city is planning for new or upgraded cultural facilities as redevelopment occurs in Lower Lonsdale.” Lower Lonsdale was designated as the City’s recreational and entertainment district. Though the word ‘entertainment’ has proven occasionally problematic as increased residential use rubs against the late night use of pubs and bars, the development of cultural facilities has been widely supported in previous and subsequent planning studies. Lower Lonsdale Land Use planning acknowledges (5.13.4) that a “broader range of land uses which include more emphasis on art, commercial uses and potentially live-work studios have been suggested by owners in the area.”

“...the city is planning for new or upgraded cultural facilities as re-development occurs in Lower Lonsdale.” **(OCP 2002)**

**Providing Cultural Facilities**

Commitments to arts and culture are made in the OCP’s overarching vision. Objective 7.3.9 promises “to support and enhance the arts, cultural and heritage sector as a vital component of City life.” Under Leisure and Cultural Goals it also promises to “operate, maintain, increase, improve and encourage the provision of cultural ... facilities”. And it envisions “a network of community

and regional arts and cultural facilities” giving a strong nod to the idea of spatial connectivity and a desire to be a regional player in this sector.

“60% of residents declared themselves to be very willing to pay higher taxes for better cultural venues and products”

*Consumer Scan Report*

It acknowledges the arts as a sustainable source of economic growth, particularly for increasing employment and tourism, and promises to ensure that facilities are accessible for mobility, hearing and visual special needs.

The OCP makes a strong commitment to the provision of these cultural facilities: “The City is working towards providing the following new or upgraded facilities: Lower Lonsdale Community Centre, Museum, Media Art Gallery, Presentation House Theatre and City Library.” In the intervening years the Lower Lonsdale Community Centre (John Braithwaite Centre), which focuses on recreational services, and the City Library have been funded and built. A fortuitous amenity bonus also saw the CityScape Gallery, at 335 Lonsdale, created to serve the administrative needs of the Community Arts Council and to provide exhibition space to local community artists.

The cultural facilities still to be provided, according to the OCP, are the Museum, Media Art Gallery and Presentation House Theatre.

It should be acknowledged that the Museum has been partially served through the creation of the Community History Centre – an archival space – in Lynn Valley where it now has administrative offices. However, exhibition, storage and programming space is still needed. The Community History Centre does not meet the OCP’s objective (4.10.13) “To locate major institutional uses and public gathering spaces within the Town Centre to maximize public access and spin-off benefits to nearby businesses.” Nor does its space in Presentation House allow even a fraction of its artefacts to be accessed by the public.

It is fair to say that the Presentation House facilities currently occupied by the NV Museum, the PH Gallery and the PH Theatre cannot contribute appropriately to most of the OCP’s stated goals. The quality of their facilities does not match their programming excellence. Each of these organizations could contribute in a much greater way to the economic and social vitality of North Vancouver. It is time to “provide new or upgraded facilities” as the OCP promises so they can reach their potential.

The OCP’s objective to “increase participation of the local arts community in city planning processes” is on a good footing with the establishment of the Office of Cultural Affairs. The OCA is the voice for cultural practitioners and artists at both North Vancouver municipal tables. But it will be important for the City, having listened, to take action.

Attendance is driven down by poor quality facilities. Price point resistance is engaged and perceptions of excellence are influenced by the quality of facilities.

*Consumer Scan Report*

**The Means for Implementation**  
When the current OCP was adopted in 2002, the city had no debt and reserves of \$56 million including \$30 million in Tax Sale Land Reserves. In addition to any funds taken from reserves, its annual operating budget allows for capital expenditures of \$5.5 million. Unspent annual capital allocations go to a reserve for capital expenditures. Reserves are not used for operating expenditures.

The City has a stock of land that it periodically used to accommodate public facilities or that it sells to acquire capital resources. This decreases the cost of providing public infrastructure, since land purchase is not required, and it can also be used to leverage funding from senior levels of government. The value of land may become, in some circumstances, part of the City’s cost-sharing arrangements.

The City attempts to allocate land sales revenues to projects in the neighbourhoods from which these land sales are made. In extraordinary circumstances land sales revenues may support projects across the City but it is generally acknowledged that neighbourhood resources should benefit the neighbourhood from which they came.

City funds available to provide for the remaining OCP cultural facilities have increased considerably since 2002. However, as stated earlier, the provision of cultural facilities is not viewed in the same way as the provision of community centres, pools, ice rinks, playing fields or libraries. Therefore access to funding for implementation is often seen as especially difficult. Arts and cultural practitioners and their constituencies are frequently unseen and uncounted. Public support for implementation should be made manifest to lend confidence to the City’s efforts to provide these facilities.

It is important for the cultural community to note that one Financial Planning objective (13.4.3) is to “require requests for funding ... to specifically address the ways in which they support the implementation of the goals and objectives of the [OCP].”

**Alignment with Economic Development Strategy**

The city’s Economic Development Strategy is a relatively recent document and is quite relevant. The City desires sustainability and defines it as integration between economic, social and environmental spheres. Its instruction is that the compatibility of all three should be pursued in a holistic fashion.

Given its balanced view of sustainability this planning document makes several strong statements in support of the cultural industries.

The Strategy acknowledges that employment will grow through smaller companies and through arts and culture and other tourism-related industries. It also says that fully 7% of North Vancouver’s resident labour force is primarily engaged in activities associated with arts and culture.

- The Economic Strategy’s over-arching goals are to:
- Have a strong economic development function in cooperation with stakeholder groups.
  - Create an attractive environment for economic development
  - Provide high quality infrastructure to support economic development.

It is in the details that we see references to arts and culture.

Goal A-5 refers to marketing the city as a “complete, sustainable and innovative community.”

You cannot market something until you have it to offer, of course. Innovation requires a community that attracts creativity. Creativity should be a core value. Creative people may be educators, filmmakers, artists and writers, engineers, architects or dancers. Such people are attracted to a community that can function as a lab, with facilities, tools and colleague-collaborators.

Innovation requires a community that attracts creativity.

Goal B speaks of “... high quality infrastructure and public

service, high quality of life with cultural, educational, recreational, entertainment and shopping opportunities ...”

Goal B-4 speaks of encouraging a broad array of arts and cultural experiences.

It is no accident that the word ‘quality’ appears so frequently, nor that a broad offering of cultural experiences is required to achieve strong economic gains. Expert advice about the need to improve the quality of North Shore cultural facilities has been given for many years. The connection to economic performance is clear: if I (the business owner, consumer, developer, audience member, festival attendee, art buyer, gallery patron) have a choice, I will build/ buy/live/set up shop or attend at the best building in the liveliest neighbourhood, in the most attractive, innovative town.

The City aspires to be that innovative, competitive town. But there is a gap in its cultural infrastructure.

The quality of cultural facilities is a strong indicator of sophistication in a community. Quality facilities lead to a better earnings cycle for culture producers, more adequate staffing and, in turn, better service to the community and visitors. They can also allow a city to be attractive to visitors and residents even if it has other shortcomings. A great theatre company, gallery or museum can be a point of pride even to those who do not necessarily use them regularly.

Goal B also recommends the economic strategy of supporting goals set out in [the] North Vancouver Cultural Plan.”

Goal C, which speaks to the need for infrastructure, asks us to “Ensure the city provides appropriate indoor and outdoor venues [in terms of quality] for hosting festivals, events and performances” (Goal C-1 Action Strategy). This strategy acknowledges that current venues are not appropriate to the purpose of attracting tourists, visitors and economic activity.

It is interesting to note that in the Competitive Assessment (SWOT) “Opportunities” include festivals, events and arts and cultural products, while “Threats” include employment generating lands being converted to residential use, a post 2010 economic downturn, a rising dollar and competition from other communities. It would appear that some of these threats have materialized. Others, like protecting commercial and industrial lands, are enshrined in North Vancouver’s OCP. Cultural products and their producers are extraordinarily resilient in competitive times. Their economic opportunity value can continue to be pursued and their social value allows a community to remain competitive.

Alignment With North Vancouver Cultural Plan

The Cultural Plan, a very thorough and comprehensive document, was completed in 2002. It identified more than 300 commercial arts businesses, over 80 not-for-profit arts organizations (all



representing many members) and a large number of individual artists. At the time statistics were gathered (in 2000-2001) 5,000 residents were directly employed in the arts and culture sector. This is high. It probably relates to the relatively low cost of housing and business leases, the availability of rental housing and the proximity to work in the arts across the region, especially in nearby Vancouver.

The sector is extremely diverse with genres and practices spread across many disciplines. Even so, these numbers indicate strong affinity to culture, a strong market for culture, a great need for facilities and services and many economic implications for the City.

The Cultural Plan gathered a wide array of opinion and input from the general public and stakeholders to determine what the needs were and what the perceived priorities and benefits were for cultural activities.

Our discussion of the Cultural Plan will focus mainly on those issues which intersect with the provision of cultural facilities and the development of the Lower Lonsdale. There are seven goals identified in the Plan.

- Goal Four identifies the need “to provide spaces for cultural and artistic activities.” The community’s desired outcomes were:
- Proactive planning for facility needs and issues
  - Greater use of existing and non-traditional venues
  - Cultural neighbourhood established
  - Escalation of Public art program and developer participation

There was strong support for the capital development of cultural facilities in Lower Lonsdale. It was recommended that the City “develop new spaces for arts exhibition and performances” (goal 4.3) and noted that “The City is engaged in a 10 year capital plan with major dollars committed to cultural facilities clustered in the Lower Lonsdale and old shipyards areas ...”

The Plan encourages the City to deploy its leadership role: “municipal investment in infrastructure has a leveraging effect on local economic activity. i.e. tourism benefits from municipally supported cultural facilities.” This leveraging, however, is only effective if the facilities have perceived quality for attendees in their comfort, aesthetics, technical excellence and the excellence of their programming.

“The major gaps in North Vancouver’s cultural infrastructure are qualitative.”

*North Shore Regional Cultural Facilities Study Phase 2 1994*

Addressing Gaps

Internationally, there is recognition that local level arts support may be the most important and least resourced level of cultural development. In Canada federal and provincial funding supports the creation of the artistic work. Where this work lives, is performed, exhibited, preserved and made available to the public is a concern that must often be addressed at the local level. Quite often, this creates a gap in support.

The North Vancouver Cultural Plan addresses this gap in delivery noting that, municipally, the “primary role of government is as a catalyst”. It goes on to say that filling this gap will “require sufficient resources dedicated ...to cultural economic development”.

Part of the challenge, noted in its competitive position analysis (SWOT) is that “there is currently not a strong central cultural precinct in North Vancouver that can act as the focal point for cultural tourism and as a place of interaction and collaboration for the artistic community.”

There is considerable support for the development of such a focal point in the Lower Lonsdale area. In fact, the comments of many Cultural Plan respondents indicate that this is a generally expected outcome.

The plan for a cultural district in lower Lonsdale should be “fast-tracked”. Planning and implementation should be “aggressively pursued.” There should be “no hesitation” to create “cultural critical mass”.

*Cultural Plan respondents on the subject of Lower Lonsdale*

There are recorded requests that this plan be “fast-tracked”, that planning and implementation should be “aggressively pursued,” that there should be “no hesitation” to create “cultural critical mass.” Respondents also noted that the area has space for and could support “additional arts infrastructure,” and that this would “support tourism.”

Clearly the benefits of Lower Lonsdale as a cultural focal point were already well understood and supported in 2001/2002. The benefits and challenges of the area’s redevelopment were on peoples minds: “Lower Lonsdale needs bold thinking and great leadership; hopefully the cultural plan can encourage both” said one respondent. Another said, “Lower Lonsdale is ideal for encouraging the vibrant urban arts environment we would all like to see.” By 2001 many respondents were also focussed on the details of how such a neighbourhood would function: “Yes, an arts precinct in Lower Lonsdale should be supported but don’t shut it down at 4:30 in the evening” and “create linkages to a waterfront park through

Lower Lonsdale; make it welcoming; make it a hub, connecting studios, cafes, venues, performance spaces ...” In other words, people could see it becoming a reality.

**Facility Needs Dominate**

There were also many needs expressed for venues and buildings generally. There were multiple areas of study where facility needs and their condition arose in comments, discussions and submissions. The North Vancouver Cultural report team seems to have had a hard time drawing people back to other subjects like mentoring, marketing and funding. Even the subject of Municipal Regulations was dominated by facility comments: such as this one: “Every major development should be required to include arts and culture venues or spaces.” And there were very blunt statements indeed, like this one: “Presentation House needs ‘deshabifying’.”

**Conclusion**

The Cultural Plan, in assessing the City’s Competitive position, declared that “assisting existing organizations to grow and prosper should be the priority.” Under challenges needing to be addressed, it also declared that: “there is currently not a strong central cultural precinct in NV that can act as the focal point for cultural tourism and as a place of interaction and collaboration for the artistic community.” (pg. 29, *Cultural Plan*) These are the two strands of necessary action that this current planning exercise is designed to address.

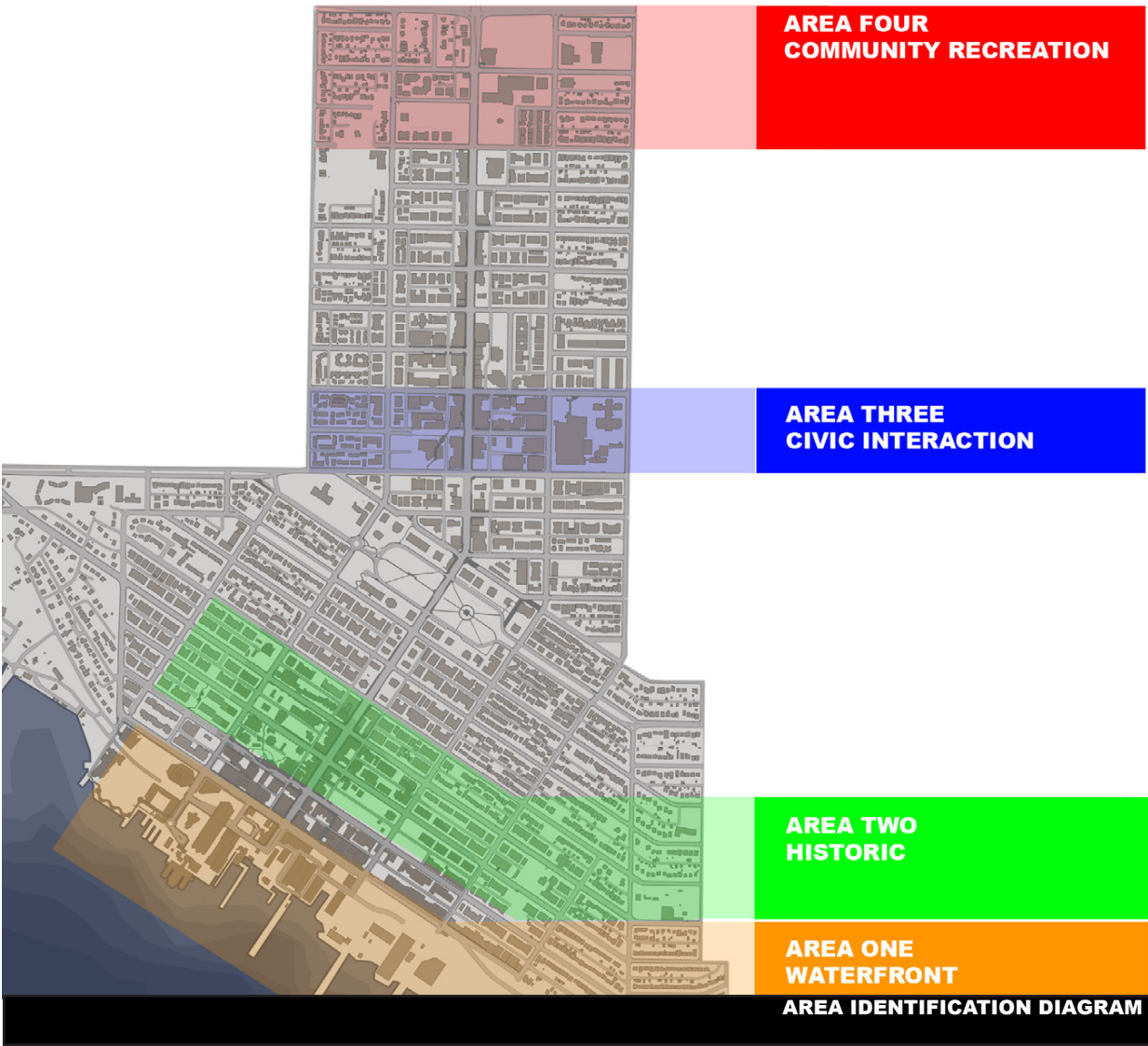
**The two strands of necessary action:**

- Assisting existing organizations to grow and prosper
- Creating a focal point for cultural tourism and collaboration for the artistic community

One of the OCA and City mandates, outlined in the original Request for Proposal, was to “bring one or more cultural components together effectively and where appropriate on one or more development sites; and / or to enhance and maximize the effectiveness of an existing amenity” - the Presentation House Centre.

The RFP thereby acknowledged a common understanding that placing several arts and cultural facilities in close proximity creates the connectivity that allows artistic collaborations to occur and increases the success of individual organizations. It also heightens public awareness about the variety of offerings that exist. Cultural connectivity, associated with population density and a pedestrian-friendly environment, creates ease of access for citizens and visitors, and in turn allows cultural organizations to flourish.

The RFP declared that it wanted the consulting team to consider the entire City as having potential sites, but that it had a particular interest in Lower Lonsdale as a location for such a cluster of cultural components. As the team considered the land use functions that had evolved in the City, certain characteristics emerged that informed site evaluation and selection. The following descriptions identify the areas by their location, defining characteristics, available cultural amenities, and existing and proposed development. They examine the strengths and challenges as well as possible sites for the relocation of key cultural facilities.



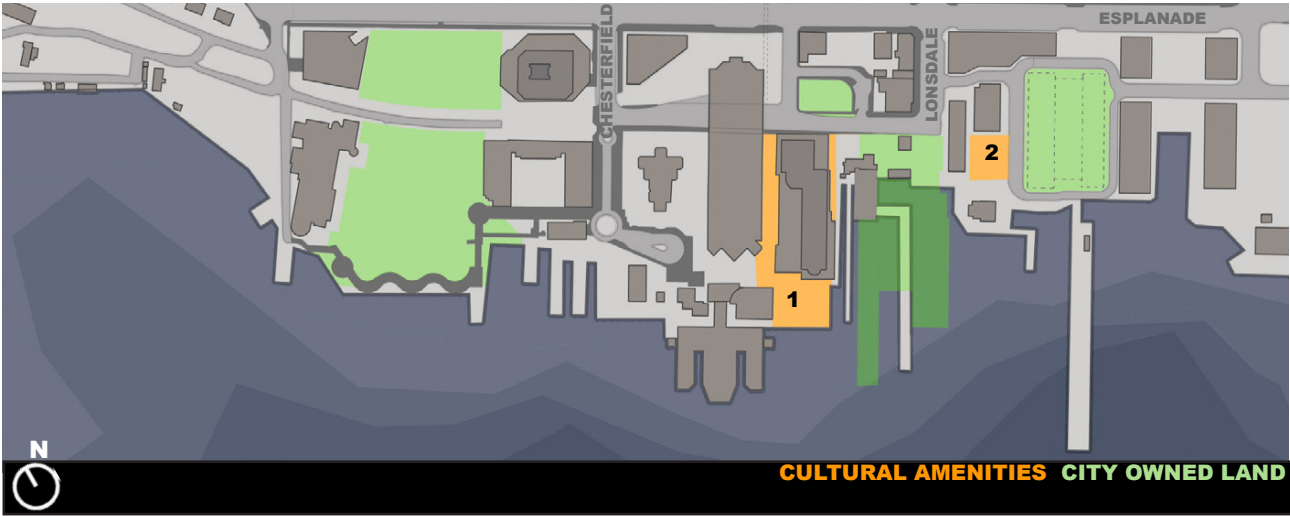


The vision of Lower Lonsdale as an active entertainment and cultural district is embodied in Area One which has the highest tourist draw and the most valuable land. It is bordered to the north by Esplanade and extends to the waterfront development along the northern shore of the Burrard Inlet. This area already contains many public facilities, including the Lonsdale Quay and SeaBus Terminal, the Pier Development including outdoor stage, walkways and piers, the Waterfront Pedestrian Promenade which connects to the Spirit Trail and the future development of the Foot of Lonsdale Plaza. This area also contains the site for the formerly proposed National Maritime Centre, a site that will be held for a future public attraction. Characterized by major developments, this area pays tribute to the City's shipbuilding history and rich marine heritage. Increasing amenities in this area will provide more public access to the waterfront.

Area One consists of predominantly waterfront property, with the best views through to the harbour and beyond. Any development in this area will be equally visible upon approach from Vancouver. Controversial development at Site 8 proposed in the past has recognized the desire and authority of the public to preserve views. Accordingly, the redevelopment of this site is currently under negotiation.

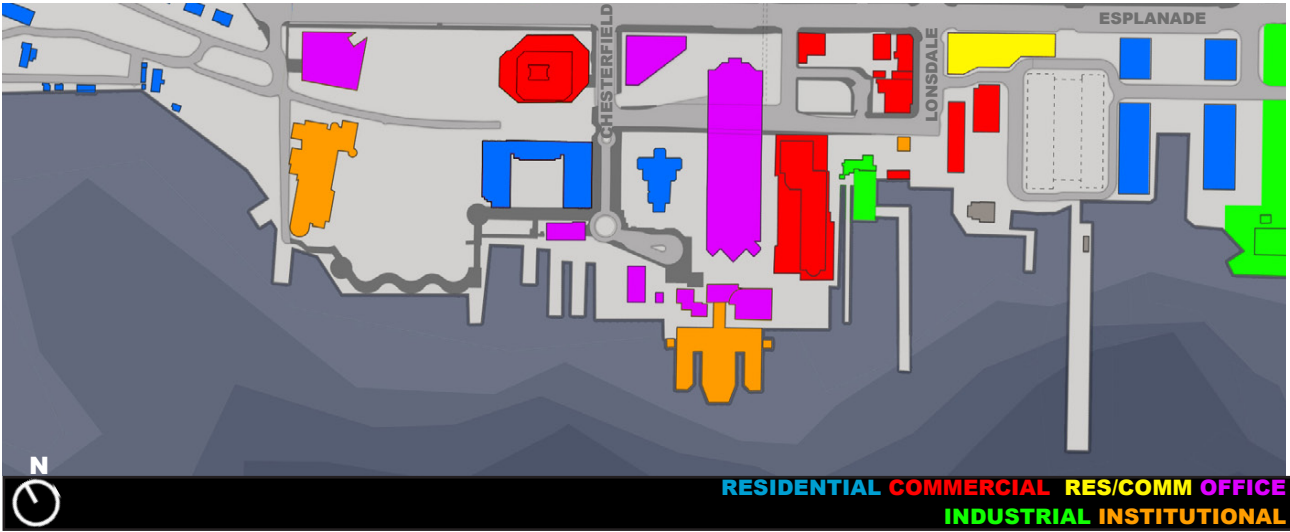
With the support of dense residential development to the north, and the intensity of pedestrian traffic from the SeaBus Terminal, Area One offers the greatest drawing capacity for active, usable cultural facilities. Although Esplanade acts as a barrier to pedestrian movement into Historic Lower Lonsdale, pedestrian paths to the east and west of Lonsdale Avenue make its connection to other areas possible. Currently, however, developments in this area and beyond lack the connectivity necessary to create a strong neighbourhood.

AREA 1: CULTURAL AMENITIES / CITY OWNED LAND



1- LONSDALE QUAY 2- OUTDOOR STAGE

AREA 1: LAND USE CATEGORIES





The strengths and challenges of Area One for cultural amenities are as follows:

#### Area Strengths

- Easily accessible to tourists
- Dominated by pedestrian traffic
- Several existing attractions
- Strong potential for 'walk-by' patrons
- Good views of harbor
- Good visibility from water
- Strong sense of place and connection to local history
- Contributes to development of Waterfront Path
- Availability of City owned land
- Sophisticated contemporary urban cityscape containing new or renewed buildings

#### Area Challenges

- Highest land value in Lower Lonsdale
- Site requires density - not feasible to under-develop a site with a standalone facility
- Negotiation may be required with private ownership
- Apparent lack of parking
- Lack of loading space
- Some sites are contentious with outstanding decisions regarding future development
- Political reluctance to invest more in the area
- Does not draw tourists into Historic Lower Lonsdale

#### Conclusions

This area is a good location for the PH Gallery. It promises a significant amount of pedestrian traffic, high visibility from the water, good views of the harbor and will compliment other uses in the area.

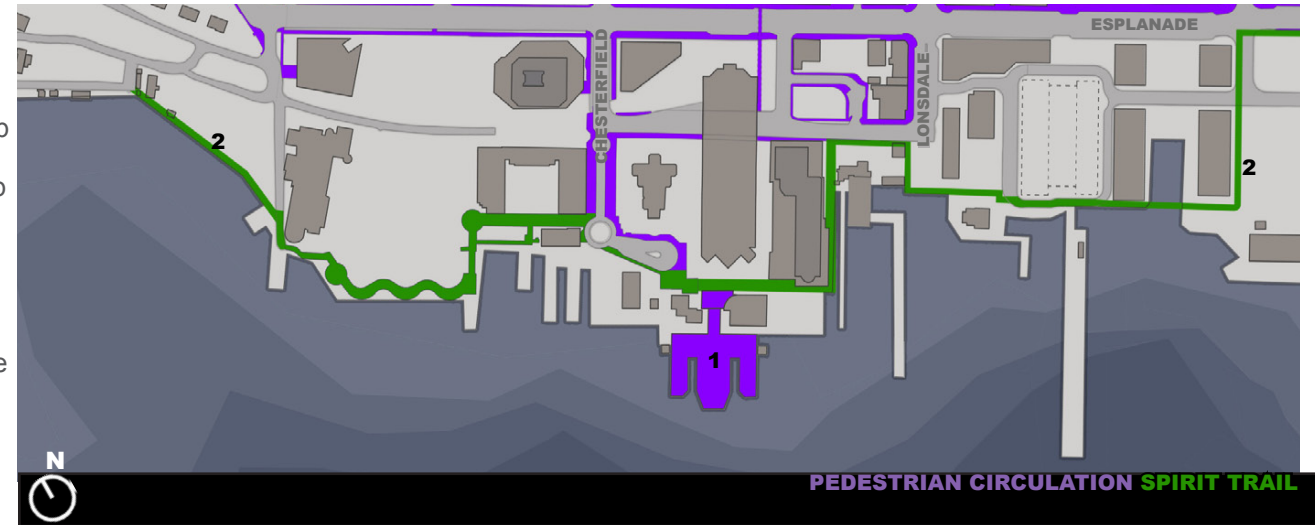
This area is not a good location for the NV Museum, which needs strong partner organizations. This area is not a good location for the PH Theatre. It will not be economically feasible as a stand-alone facility, and does not easily pair with other potential uses of the sites. Both PH Theatre and NV Museum rely predominantly on vehicle access and substantial parking capacity.

#### Sites of Interest

- 1 - Site 8
- 2 - Carrie Cates Building
- 3 - Shipyards Site

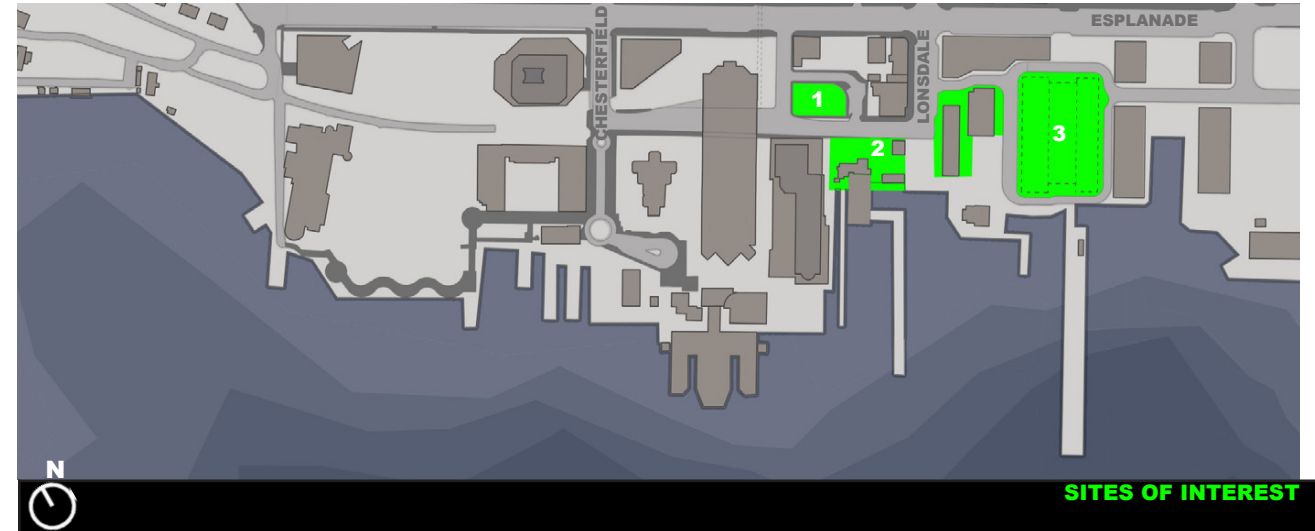
Sites 1 & 2 can only accommodate the gallery. Site 3 is capable of accommodating all, but it should be noted that while the Maritime Centre is not going ahead, it is our understanding that Council intends to reserve this site for a future major attraction.

#### AREA 1: PEDESTRIAN CIRCULATION



1- SEABUS TERMINAL 2- SPIRIT TRAIL

#### AREA 1: SITES OF INTEREST



1- SITE 8 2- CARRIE CATES BUILDING 3- SHIPYARDS SITE

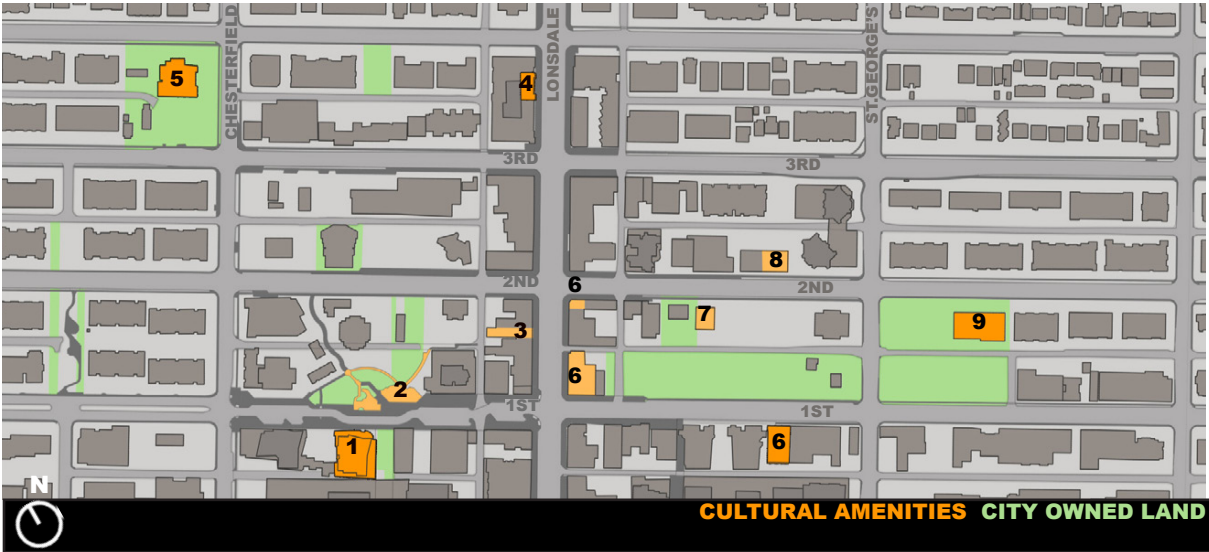


This encompasses the area north of Esplanade to 4th Street roughly between Chesterfield Avenue and St. George’s Avenue. The current Neighbourhood House at 225 E 2nd Street and Presentation House at 333 Chesterfield Avenue can be considered the east / west boundaries. This area is characterized by the strong presence of heritage buildings along Lonsdale Avenue, clustered mainly around the intersection at 1st Street. With a strong visual connection to the harbour this vantage offers the greatest sense of old North Vancouver. Prominent heritage buildings in this area include the Bank of Hamilton Chambers (1910-11), the Keith Block (1908), the Beasley Block (1904), the Aberdeen Block (1910-11), and the Syndicate Block (1903).

Because of its close proximity to the SeaBus Terminal and easily accessible transit, Area Two offers the potential to draw tourists into Lower Lonsdale. However, the noticeable slope upwards to the north makes pedestrian travel in this direction perceptually undesirable. It encourages, instead, east-west travel.

Over the past 10 years, the area to the west of Lonsdale has undergone considerable development, and plans are underway to continue this development to the east.

AREA 2: CULTURAL AMENITIES / CITY OWNED LAND



- 1- JOHN BRAITHWAITE CENTRE 2- JACK LOUCKS' COURT 3- FRAMING SHOP 4- ARTS COUNCIL  
5- PRESENTATION HOUSE 6- ART SUPPLY STORE 7- HERITAGE HOUSE 8- COSTUME RENTAL  
9- NEIGHBOURHOOD HOUSE

### West Side of Lonsdale

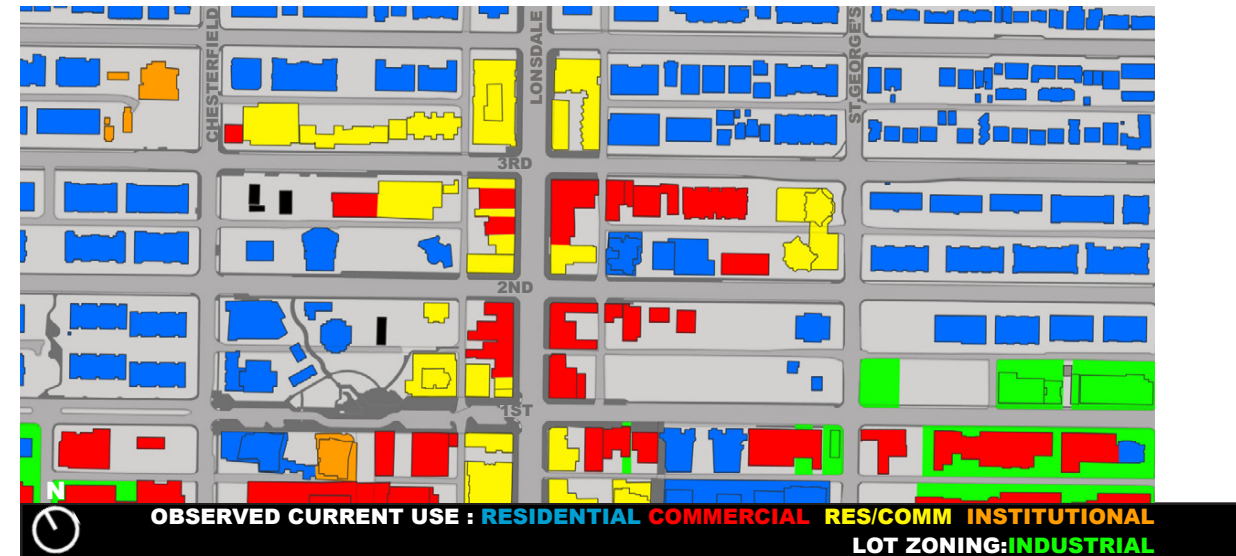
The 1997/98 amendments to the OCP enabled redevelopment of public and private properties in this area allowing vacant lots and surface level parking to be replaced by high-density residential developments and community amenity spaces. Consequently the new development in the area to the west of Lonsdale Avenue is characterized by high density residential towers which provide public amenities in their podiums.

This area currently contains the existing Presentation House as well as the John Braithwaite Community Centre, and features an accessible (barrier-free) path from the SeaBus Terminal to W 2nd Street. Part of this path includes a public plaza on W 1st Street currently used as an outdoor stage during local festivals. City staff believe that, compared to other similar neighbourhood densities, parking space is unlikely to be an issue. However it should be examined. A perceived lack of parking & park space have been identified in this area by the public due to the new development. (see **pg. 97**)

### East Side of Lonsdale

City Council is currently reviewing options for development in this area to mirror that of the west side of Lonsdale Avenue. Consequently, this area contains the most valuable land for generating revenue for the City. All development planned for this area is sensitive to the desire to maintain parking and park space. This area is currently characterized by 1 and 2 storey light industrial buildings, and features a pedestrian path from the Pier development to E 1st Street effectively connecting it to the waterfront. (see **pg. 20**) It contains Neighbourhood House as well as several smaller arts related facilities.

### AREA 2: LAND USE CATEGORIES



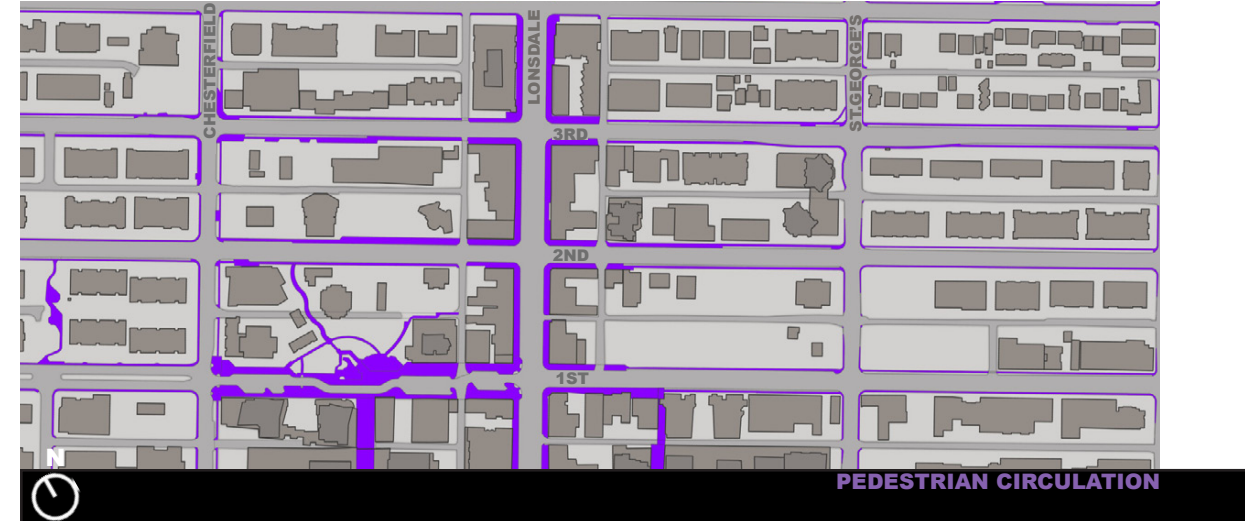
### Area Strengths

- Availability of City owned land east of Lonsdale.
- Existing accessible path and public outdoor areas
- Existing arts and cultural facilities
- Existing pedestrian connections to SeaBus Terminal and waterfront
- Accessible to tourists
- Draws tourists into Lower Lonsdale
- Views of harbor
- Visibility from water
- Expressed interest in this area by Presentation House Tenants
- Heritage flavor and architecture
- Available social services
- Currently underdeveloped with potential for cultural amenity spaces east of Lonsdale
- Light industrial use could support artist studios
- Partnership possibilities with Neighbourhood House east of Lonsdale
- Affordable lease and land values for studios

### Area Challenges

- Already mostly developed west of Lonsdale
- Undeveloped City owned land west of Lonsdale requires discussion with adjacent private ownership
- Negotiation of slope
- Public perception of a lack of parking.
- Boundary areas distant from waterfront SeaBus Terminal
- Limited partnership opportunities for current Presentation House Tenants
- Development plans and land value may prohibit standalone facilities
- Only 1st and 2nd floors (podium) may be available east of Lonsdale
- Any displaced parking and park space should be recovered
- Potentially too far from waterfront SeaBus Terminal
- Minimal public transit east of Lonsdale (especially for artist studios)

### AREA 2: PEDESTRIAN CIRCULATION





Conclusions

This area can accommodate the PH Gallery, but is not viewed as desirable due to lack of pedestrian movement. It is easily accessible from the SeaBus Terminal and has a strong potential for views to the harbor. Timing, however, is critical for the PH Gallery, and the potential must exist for redevelopment within the next 3-5 years.

This area could be a good location for the NV Museum. However, it is likely to be a secondary site - due to other areas providing more benefits. The spatial requirements of the museum can be accommodated on City owned undeveloped sites, and partnership opportunities exist with Neighbourhood House.

This area can accommodate the PH Theatre. There is good vehicle access, proximity to public transit and parking, and potential views to the water. However, plans for future residential development on East 1st may not easily pair with a theatre use east of Lonsdale.

This area does provide numerous warehouse opportunities for “dirty space” for artists. Artist studios and specialized shop space is in demand on the North Shore.

Sites of Interest

- 1 - Sites 9,10,11 and 12
- 2 - Neighbourhood House Site
- 3 - 135 W 1st Street
- 4 - Site 3b
- 5 - Presentation House Site

Site 3 & 4 are not appropriate due to size, timing and ownership issues for any of the three key tenants. They should remain sites of interest for future arts related uses and amenities.

AREA 2: SITES OF INTEREST



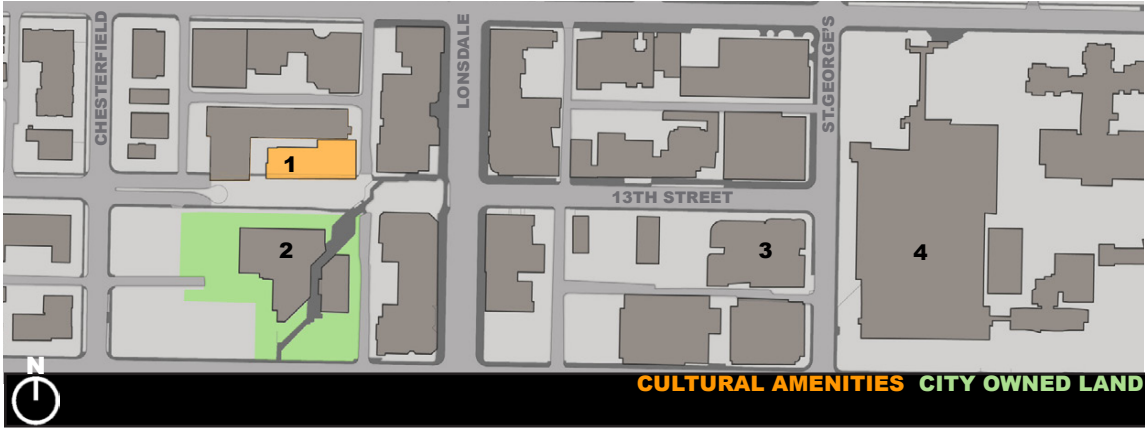
1- SITES 9,10,11,12 2- NEIGHBOURHOOD HOUSE SITE 3- 135 WEST FIRST 4- SITE 3B 5- PRESENTATION HOUSE SITE



Area Three describes the neighbourhood on and around Lonsdale Avenue between 13th and 15th Street. It is characterized by high density development with a heavy commercial presence, and a concentration of civic facilities. These include North Vancouver City Hall, the City Library, RCMP Headquarters, the City Fire Hall and Lion’s Gate Hospital, all key facilities for the Regional Town Centre. A civic plaza and fountain along E 14th Street successfully connect City Hall and the Library through well-used public space.

According to the Central Lonsdale Planning Study Stakeholder Committee, 51% of the properties in the Central Lonsdale Study Area are underdeveloped compared to the OCP capacity. Through the study, the City has expressed a strong desire for, and the financial feasibility of, redevelopment to the east of Lonsdale Avenue. This would increase density, make public transit more viable and create a stronger sense of place. The existing facilities in this area already contribute to a strong civic presence that could be complimented by the addition of cultural facilities.

AREA 3: CULTURAL AMENITIES / CITY OWNED LAND



1- NORTH VANCOUVER LIBRARY 2- CITY HALL 3- RCMP 4- LION'S GATE HOSPITAL

AREA 3: LAND USE CATEGORIES



The following outlines the strengths and challenges of Area Three for cultural amenities.

**Area Strengths**

- Opportunities for cross programming with civic facilities
- Opportunities for density transfer to create civic amenity space
- Potential for a ‘free’ facility excluding fit-outs
- Active 7 days a week, daytime and evening
- Strong draw from surrounding residential
- Strong potential for ‘walk-by’ patrons
- Good vehicular and public transit accessibility
- Potential parking
- Several existing civic services (Library, Hospital, City Hall, RCMP)

**Area Challenges**

- Falls outside of parameters for a cultural neighbourhood in Lower Lonsdale
- Too far from waterfront
- No relationship to SeaBus Terminal tourists
- Proximity to Centennial Theatre
- Limited partnership opportunities with Lower Lonsdale facilities
- Lower Lonsdale may suffer from relocation of any facility to this area

**Conclusions**

This area is not a good location for the PH Gallery. Their facilities could easily be located here, but their highest priority is to be in Lower Lonsdale at the waterfront, in close proximity to the SeaBus Terminal and tourist activity.

This area is a good location for the NV Museum. It provides vehicle access, as well as public transit and pedestrian links. The NV Museum would strengthen the civic identity of this area by building relationships with City Hall and the Library, which have the strong support of the local community. The opportunity for density transfer lends itself to an economically feasible solution.

This area is not a good location for the PH Theatre as it would be in competition with Centennial Theatre.

**Sites of Interest**

1 - Safeway Site

Site 1, the Safeway Site, is of note for its proximity to City hall and the North Vancouver Library, as well as the potential for inclusion as a cultural amenity bonus in any developer project that moves forward.

**AREA 3: PEDESTRIAN CIRCULATION**



**AREA 3: SITES OF INTEREST**



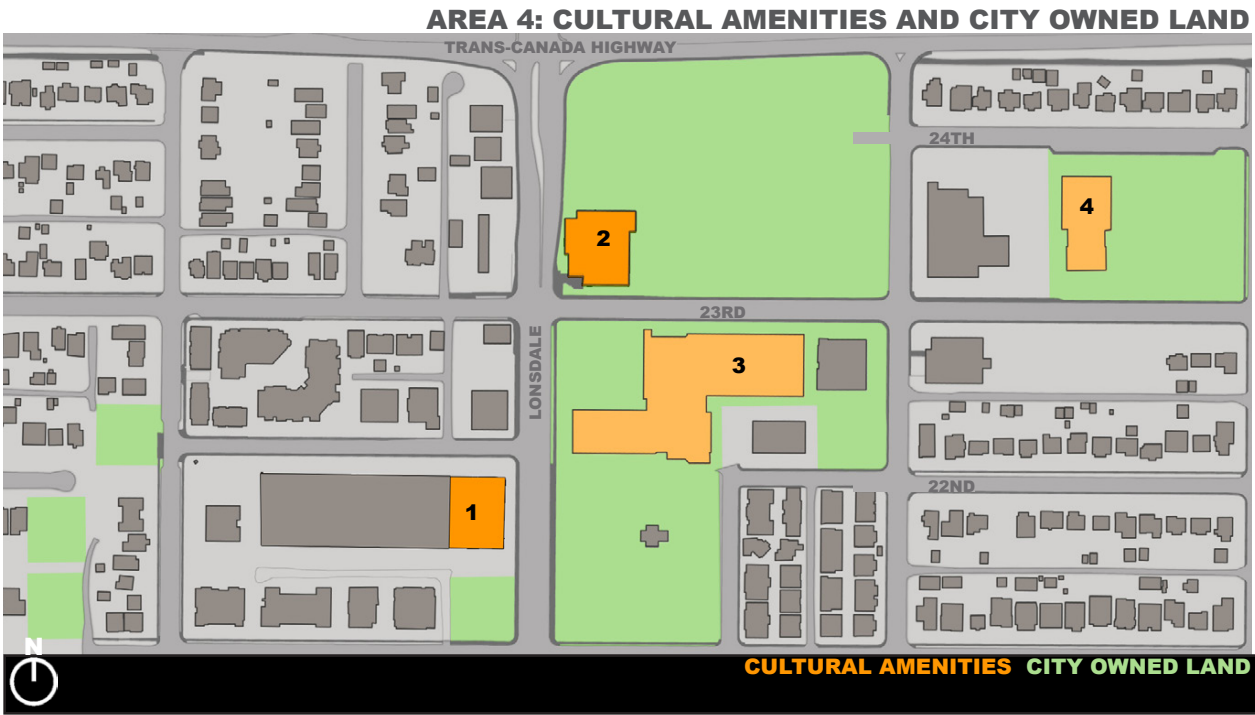
1- SAFEWAY SITE



Bound by the TransCanada Highway to the north and 21st Street to the south, this area is characterized by predominantly recreation and community based facilities. At this point Lonsdale Avenue transitions from low-rise high density in the south to park and recreation land to the north. It is the area furthest removed from the Lower Lonsdale study area, but most central to the population of North Vancouver.

Two large development sites dominate this area. The block to the west of Lonsdale Avenue between W 21st and W 22nd Street will become the new Administration Centre for the North Vancouver School Board with the added arts presence of the Artists for Kids Trust and gallery. To the east of Lonsdale Avenue sits a large parcel of City owned land referred to as the Harry Jerome Recreation Centre Precinct which contains recreational facilities, cultural facilities, open space and a senior’s centre, including tennis and lawn bowling courts, a track, sports fields, a skate park, Centennial Theatre and the Harry Jerome Community Recreation Centre. The City is in the process of analyzing options for the redevelopment of the complex.

Currently, the facilities here are functional but don’t interrelate and consequently are unable to capitalize on their proximity to each other. Although the Presentation House facilities are not specifically identified among the recommended facilities for this site, they may be included among its potential cultural uses.



1- FUTURE ARTISTS FOR KIDS 2- CENTENNIAL THEATRE 3- HARRY JEROME CENTRE  
4- MICKEY MCDUGALL CENTRE



**AREA 4: LAND USE CATEGORIES**

The following outlines the strengths and challenges of Area Four for cultural amenities:

**Area Strengths**

- Available City owned land slated for redevelopment
- Opportunities for cross programming with recreation facilities
- Several proposed cultural uses
- Existing arts presence
- Strong potential for 'walk-by' patrons
- Potential parking
- Proximity to TransCanada Highway
- Central location to North Vancouver City and District
- Popular local community resource
- Phased development improves economic feasibility and integration of facility

**Area Challenges**

- Falls outside of parameters for a cultural neighbourhood in Lower Lonsdale
- Too far from waterfront
- No relationship to SeaBus Terminal tourists
- Doesn't draw tourists into Lower Lonsdale
- Proximity to Centennial Theatre
- Limited partnership opportunities with Lower Lonsdale facilities
- Lower Lonsdale may suffer from relocation of any facility to this area
- Long timeline for development with ongoing negotiations and analysis

**Conclusions**

This area is not a good location for the PH Gallery. Its facility could easily be located here, but the highest priority is to be in Lower Lonsdale at the waterfront, in close proximity to the SeaBus Terminal and tourist activity.

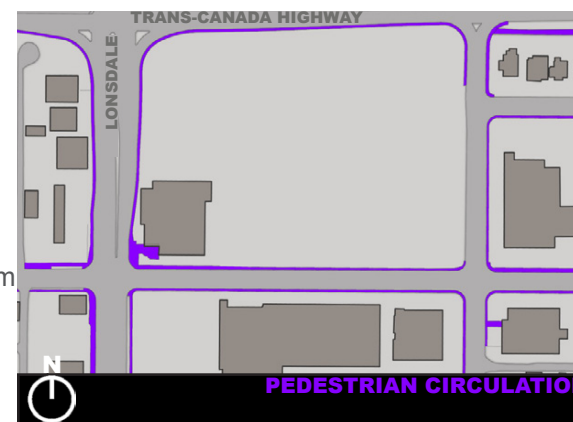
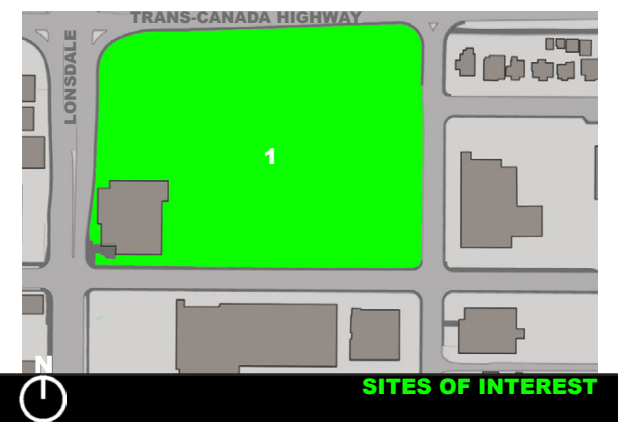
This area is a good location for the NV Museum. It provides good vehicle access, as well as public transit and pedestrian links. The NV Museum's programming will be compatible with the Recreation Centre and the opportunity could exist to share spaces, there are potential good synergies between these two entities.

This area is not a good location for the PH Theatre as it would be in competition with Centennial Theatre for revenue.

**Sites of Interest**

1 - Harry Jerome Site

Site 1, the Harry Jerome Site, is appealing for the museum because of potential partnerships with the Harry Jerome organization. The distance from the cultural neighbourhood is of little concern; the museum sees its future as a community serving destination, not a regional or tourist draw.

**AREA 4: PEDESTRIAN CIRCULATION****AREA 4: SITES OF INTEREST**

## Public Development Implications of the Site

The site for the formerly proposed National Maritime Centre for the Pacific and the Arctic, located along the waterfront to the east of Lonsdale Avenue and south of Esplanade, is a substantial piece of property that could easily accommodate all three institutions discussed in this report – the PH Theatre, NV Museum and PH Gallery. It is currently owned by the City of North Vancouver and includes Parcels 9 and 10 as well as the Wallace Yard in between. As part of the Pier Development by Pinnacle International, the site is surrounded by a new hotel, conference centre, mix of commercial and public amenities, and up to 1,000 units of residential development.

In exchange for additional height for the towers, the Pier Development includes the rehabilitation of select heritage buildings which will be leased to the City for 50 years beginning in 2010 as well as the construction and refurbishment of public walkways, plazas and piers.

The centerpiece of the development was to be the National Maritime Centre for the Pacific and the Arctic (NMC); a focal point for the west coast maritime community. The current Maritime Centre is located in Vancouver on the Kitsilano, or south, side of False Creek. Its artifacts, particularly the ship “St. Roche”, a vessel built in 1928 at the NMC site, when it was an active shipyard, would be moved. The North Vancouver site, located on the former Versatile Pacific/Burrard Shipyards, speaks to the history of the North Shore and the region. The NMC development was eagerly anticipated by both the City and the community.

Funding for the project was structured as a 3-way partnership of local, provincial and federal government resources as well as private sector funding. The Federal Government had made an unofficial

partial commitment to the initiative subject to a matching commitment from the Province.

In January 2010, the City of North Vancouver announced it would not be proceeding with plans for the NMC due to lack of financial contribution by the Provincial Government. The City, in its press release of January 12, 2010 acknowledges that it will “move forward and determine a strategy for this significant waterfront property...creating a waterfront that is a highly desirable destination for our residents and visitors.” It also refers to use of the site to bring economic benefits to the City and the waterfront business community; however, it is unlikely it will become available for one or more of the three current Presentation House tenant organizations because:

- the property is extremely valuable due to its location on the waterfront
- the rehabilitated heritage buildings do not meet the space requirements of any of the organizations
- the 50 year lease provision will not provide the stability and longevity the organizations need
- a waterfront location makes it difficult to provide appropriate and aesthetically desirable loading access as well as audience and attendee frontages.
- the implementation time lines of the organization, particularly those of the Gallery, need to be attended to in the short term.

The site is best suited for the operation of a regional visitor destination of considerable stature. There is sufficient commercial space being provided through the Pinnacle Development, therefore the site is intended to serve a public building or purpose. The City intends to review its options and prepare a revised plan for use of the site. Such planning will take time and careful consideration.



Proposed National Maritime Centre Site

Fulfilling Cultural and Economic Goals

We have concluded that it will be advantageous to address the needs and capture the benefits of cultural practitioners via a cultural neighbourhood in Lower Lonsdale. The Museum’s contributions can best be harnessed with partnerships in Area Four, linked with community recreation. This is consistent with Lonsdale as a Regional Town Centre. The criteria used to make this determination are as follows:

Answering Local Need and Attracting Cultural Workers and Visitors.

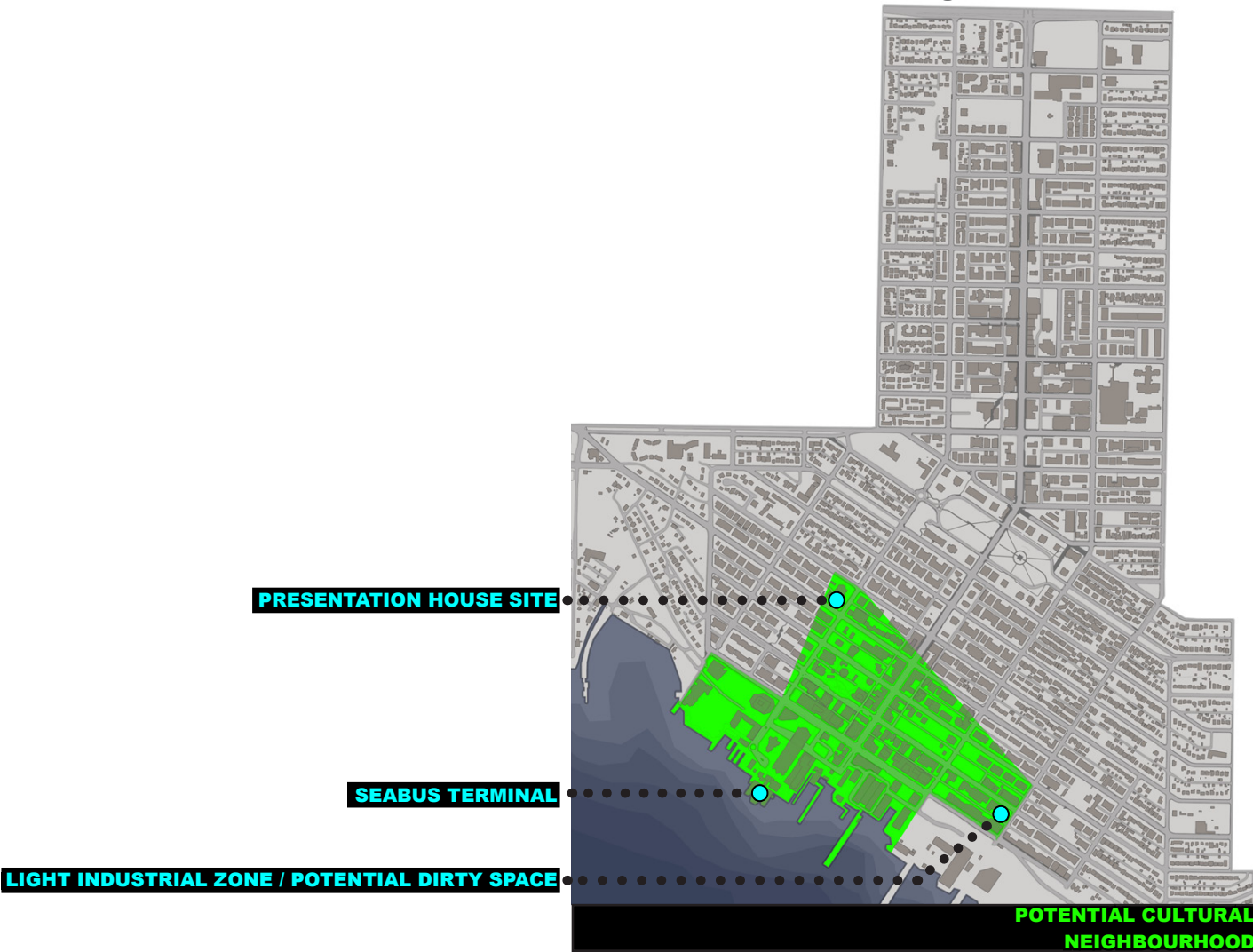
The local need is for professional, high level cultural activity and culturally specific buildings. This matches well with what attracts visitors. They look for quality events, artefacts, exhibits and artistic products as well as full service, aesthetically attractive buildings in which to access such experiences.

There are enough visitors to Lower Lonsdale – the SeaBus alone delivers over 400 passengers to Lower Lonsdale every 15 minutes; one in six of these are tourists.

Demographics indicate that the local attendee/consumer for cultural activity is growing in Lower Lonsdale. While the rest of the North Shore is relatively stable in population, the potential neighbourhood area is growing at a rate of 4% a year. With more density proposed, growth is assured allowing both commercial and cultural activity to thrive.

The geography has many attractants for local and visitors: it is highly

Potential Cultural Neighbourhood Boundaries





visible from the most dense urban area in the region (downtown Vancouver), it has waterfront, great views, an authentic historical area and city owned property with which to develop cultural infrastructure. Public spaces, stages and plazas have already been developed and walking paths and piers are giving the area a destination-setting.

There are already three highly functioning professional producers in core disciplines – visual, dramatic and museum practices – these can become “anchor tenants” and cultural activity leaders.

Lower Lonsdale has nearby light industrial and warehouse spaces whose zoning is protected. These are important to the development of working spaces for artists and cultural workers. They are part of a successful ecology in a cultural neighbourhood.

A North Vancouver cultural neighbourhood cannot, in its fledgling years, draw many artists away from their studios in Vancouver’s east side, but the North Shore has many local artists who will prefer to work close to home if they have the opportunity. This contingent can form the core of the cultural work force, creating studios, incubation spaces, teaching and learning opportunities and giving a cultural neighbourhood its initial heft.

#### **Civic goals are aligned with those necessary for a cultural neighbourhood.**

The goals, strategies and policies of the Official Community Plan (OCP), the Economic Development Plan and the Cultural Plan align well with the creation of a cultural neighbourhood. Plans to provide purpose-built facilities for the City’s core cultural organizations are an existing priority.

#### **Planning for waterfront development is being vigorously pursued by City Departments.**

The Economic Development Office, Business Improvement Association and Tourism are all ready to play their parts to make the streets of the neighbourhood lively. Capilano University wishes to pursue long range options for satellite campus activity in Lower Lonsdale. Other partnerships are forming and ready to grasp opportunities as they arise.

#### **Financial and administrative capacity to take action is in place**

The City is actively re-conceiving itself and its relation to the region. It has various financial reserves set aside for public projects and has a stock of land that it periodically uses to accommodate public facilities or that it sells to acquire capital resources with which to provide such facilities.

It also uses density bonusing and other means of inserting public facilities into developer funded projects. The City has the financial capacity and, with the Office of Cultural Affairs, the development experience to support the creation of a cultural neighbourhood in Lower Lonsdale and to add a cultural component to its recreational area in upper Lonsdale.

#### **Land and development sites in Lower and Upper Lonsdale can accommodate the core cultural practitioners**

In Lower Lonsdale development sites are available and spaced at intervals that can make the neighbourhood walk-able. They are appropriate for visitor, loading and cultural worker access. Some are publicly owned. Other sites appropriate for cultural amenities within proposed private developments have also been identified in this study.

A large public site is being held on the waterfront for a significant new cultural attraction.

#### **Commercial mixed with cultural activity creates synergies for both**

Mixed use commercial activity in Lower Lonsdale is being increased substantially through the development of new waterfront retail/ restaurant buildings. Public cultural buildings and experiences are needed to draw visitors to the area in support of these enterprises.

#### **Support exists for a Lower Lonsdale cultural neighbourhood initiative**

The study process found considerable evidence that residents and stakeholders are in favour of the creation of a cultural neighbourhood in Lower Lonsdale. In fact, many seem to believe that the decision was taken from 10 to 15 years ago. They wonder why more active and substantial pursuit of this initiative has not been undertaken since then. They wish it to enter the lexicon of the OCP more strongly and for at least one major component to be undertaken in the near term. There is support from cultural stakeholders for that component to be the Gallery.

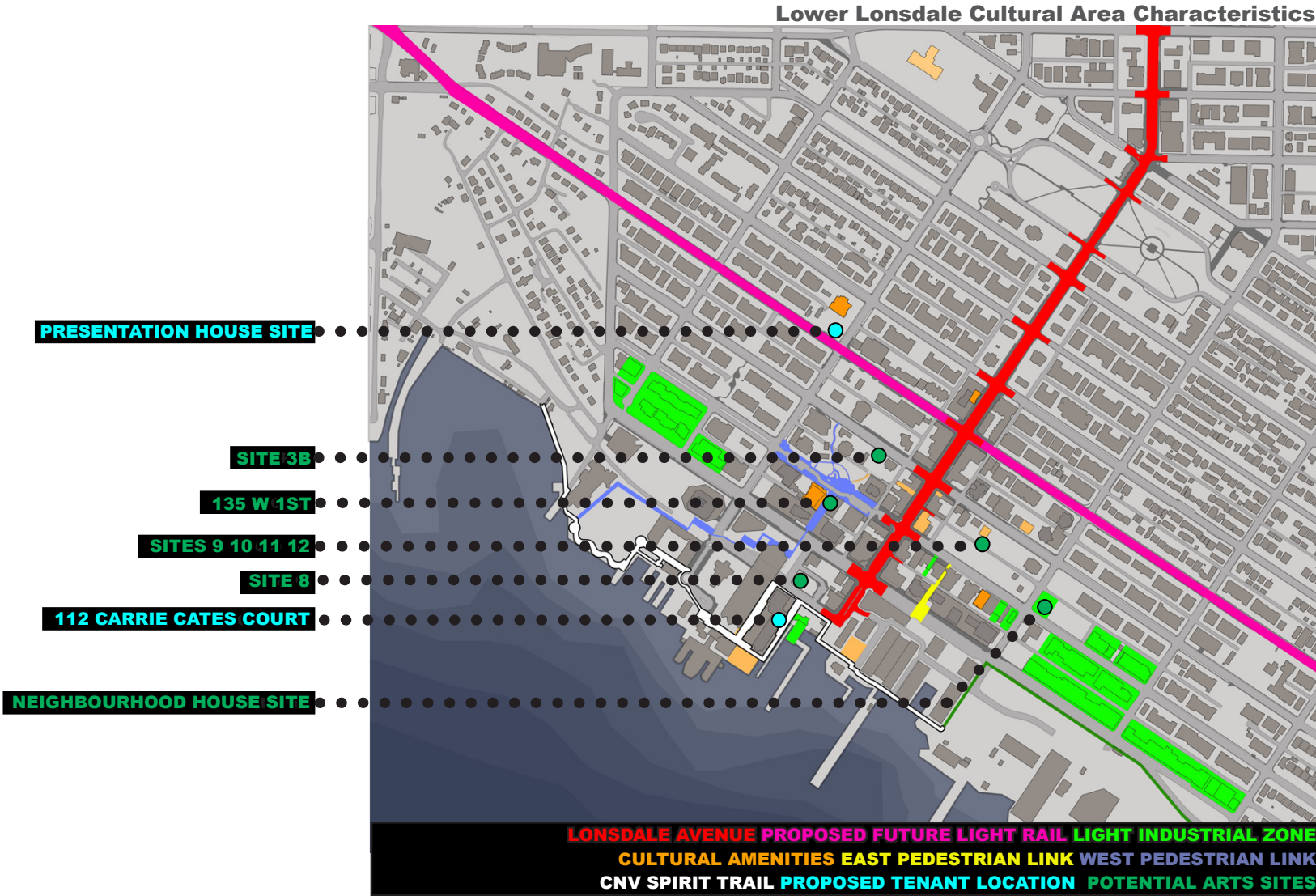


**Support exists for the inclusion of the Museum in the Harry Jerome redevelopment**

The Museum wishes to concentrate on new practices directed to local participants and to work with partner organizations. Both its administration and that of the Recreation Commission thinks such a partnership could be found in its redeveloped lands in Upper Lonsdale.

**Lower Lonsdale Cultural Area Details**

The map to the right (*Lower Lonsdale Cultural Area Characteristics*) shows the Lower Lonsdale 'neighbourhood's' key amenity clusters and attributes. The Presentation House Theatre and its proposed adjacent Cultural Centre act as a destination for visitors from the waterfront and as an entry point to the Lower Lonsdale from the community to its North and West. This is reinforced by the Arts Council's CityScape Gallery just a block away. The Presentation House Gallery relocated at Carrie Cates Court, acts as its waterfront entry point. Each proposed amenity site leads toward the apex of the triangle and toward the two light industrial areas where studios and workshops can be encouraged. There are already a number of cultural and social enterprises and public performance plazas operating in the area.



Lower Lonsdale Cultural Area Characteristics Summary

	GALLERY	MUSEUM	THEATRE	STUDIO SPACES	SUPPORT / DIRTY SPACE
AREA 1	YES	NO	NO	NO	NO
Site 8 Carrie Cates Building Shipyards Site					
AREA 2	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
Sites 9, 10, 11, 12 Neighbourhood House Site 135 West 1st Site 3b Presentation House Site					
AREA 3	NO	YES	NO	NO	NO
Safeway Site					
AREA 4	NO	YES	NO	NO	NO
Harry Jerome Center					

The above chart summarizes the conclusions presented in the individual area analysis regarding relocation of tenant organizations and supporting facilities. Evaluation was in terms of site size, characteristics and context as it relates to tenant needs.