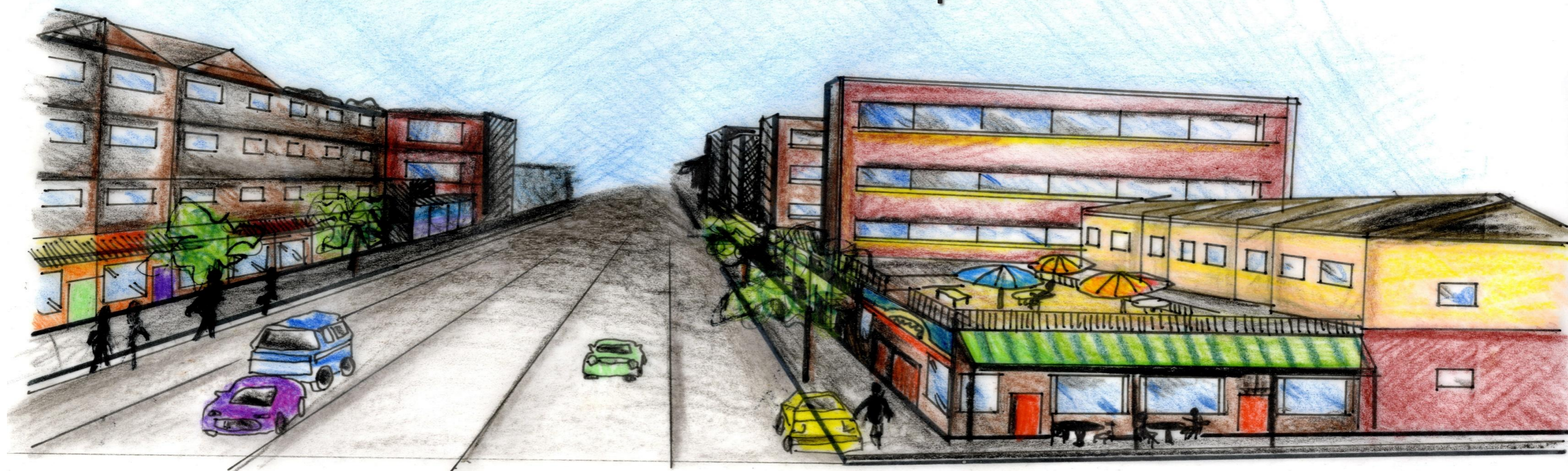


TOWARDS A DIVERSE AND LIVELY POINTE-CLAIRE

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Summary

The city of Pointe-Claire released a planning program in November 2010, its goals to this new planning program is clearly to revitalize Pointe-Claire, renew its image bring in new developments to the city and is ambitiously aiming to become the city center of the West Island of Montreal.

Pointe-Claire is a Post-World War II suburb; it is victim of deindustrialization leading to many vacant and underused buildings and lands. Today Pointe-Claire is mostly viewed as a dormitory suburb. Pointe-Claire has a rapidly ageing population; about 18% of their population are aged 65 or older. The city is a relatively low-density area, interesting activities are usually situated away from residential areas, and there are very or none street-life.

In support of their revitalization, we propose to introduce a new lifestyle to attract people's interest to live, work and stay in Pointe-Claire. The goal of our project is to attract and hold a new population with a metropolitan lifestyle by increasing street life, community and neighbourhood's sense of belonging. To achieve this goal, some changes in city of Pointe-Claire will be inevitable; such as implementing mixed use planning, increase in building density, increase in job opportunities and affordable housing.

To implement this project we have chosen to start with the Civic Center's neighbourhood and Boulevard Saint-Jean; this area already has numerous community activities, sport facilities that are quite busy in Pointe-Claire. Also, Plaza Pointe-Claire already is a commercial location that may generate interesting activities along St-Jean. St-Jean Boulevard is perfect for the development of street life; it is currently the most important North-South corridor of Pointe-Claire.

After a series of analysis of the landscape, built form, massing, network movement and connectivity of the site, the targeted elements include the low density, the lack of connectivity between nodes, hazardous pedestrian environment and the lack of mixed use of the area. Numerous actions and decisions are taken to increase the area's accessibility, diversity, and lively atmosphere in the hopes to achieve an interesting living environment for the new population.

Programme Requirements

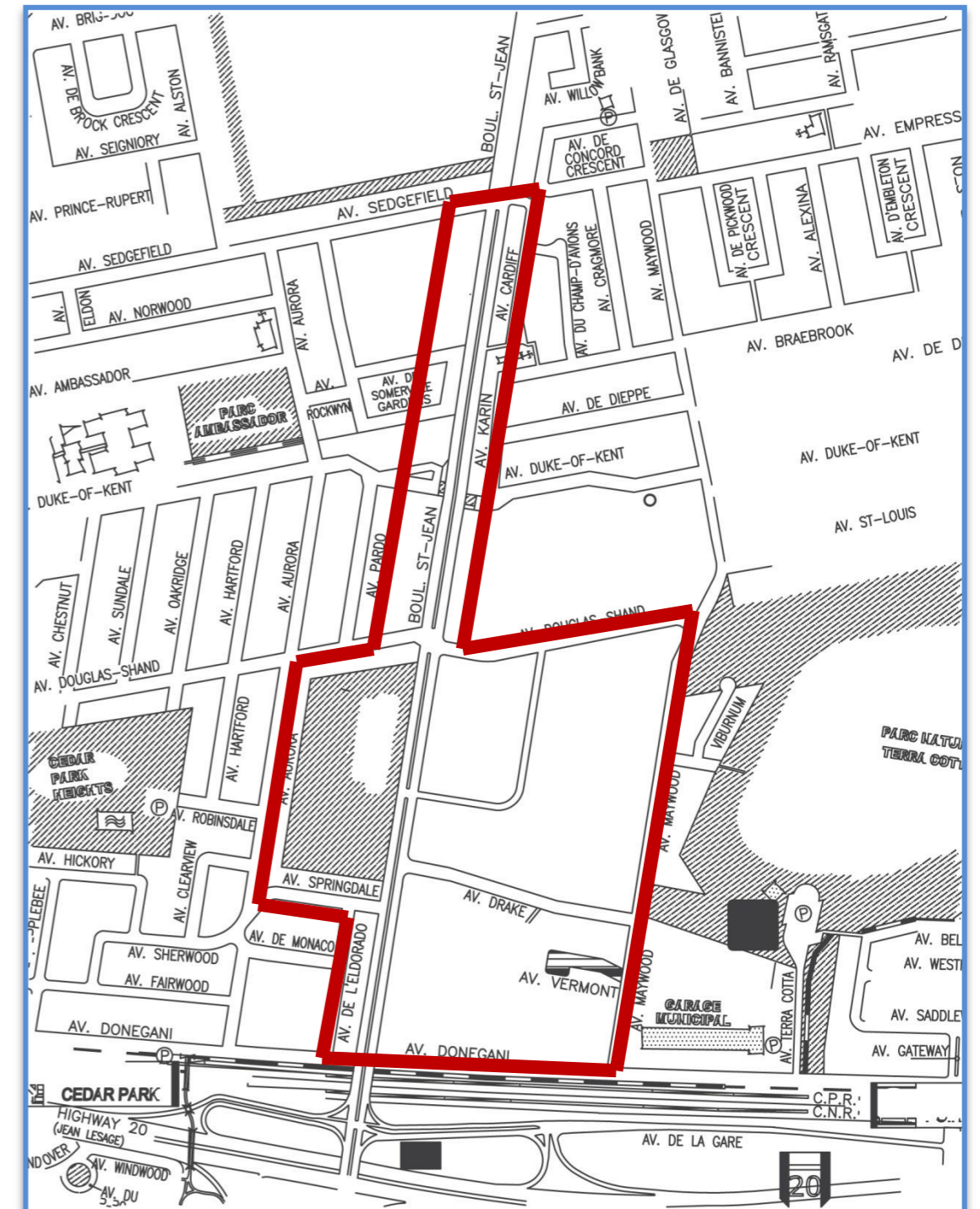
Pointe-Claire is a city characterized by a community-oriented perspective supported by investment in high quality educational and recreational infrastructure and facilities, the preservation and appreciation of nature areas and a neighbourhood feel. Pointe-Claire also faces challenges, however- as demographic trends of a rapidly aging population and decline in birth rates threaten to significantly decrease the population, and subsequently the sustainability and quality of life in the city at large.

Programmatic requirements of Pointe-Claire include the need for a compelling *cachet* of character and culture to attract and maintain a new population to counter the existing demographic trends. The fostering and encouragement of a metropolitan lifestyle and environment in Pointe-Claire will cater to diverse individuals and families to repopulate and rejuvenate the city by promoting appealing, urban features: a lively and interesting atmosphere, street life, increased accessibility, socioeconomic and cultural diversity and active lifestyles. These metropolitan characteristics will build upon Pointe-Claire's existing assets, particularly the city's important investment in the Civic Centre- a distinguishing community and recreation hub in the West Island and the island at large.

Our intervention site includes the Civic Centre and adjacent woods, Plaza Pointe-Claire shopping centre and St-Jean Boulevard from the intersections of Donegani to Sedgefield. St-Jean Boulevard was chosen because of its vital function in the fabric and function of Pointe Claire: the only direct North-South corridor in the city, St-Jean acts as an arterial road for movement by car and bus, linking major activity nodes of Fairview Pointe-Claire shopping centre, the Civic Centre and Plaza Pointe-Claire. St-Jean is lined by mostly low-density one to two story residential buildings with large setbacks- providing great development opportunities, particularly infill projects. While functionally vital from a transportation movement perspective, the boulevard poses the problems of segregating West from East, and being six to seven lanes wide, lined by fences and with limited intersections- acts as a barrier to overall movement and accessibility (especially for pedestrians) while being an eyesore. In its current state, St-Jean is an integral component to be addressed in relation to virtually any project to be undertaken in Pointe-Claire. The challenges posed act as great deterrents to success in that, no matter the time or fiscal investment in an area such as the Civic Centre, a given project will only be as successful as the accessibility, integration and mobility associated with it and its surrounding environment.

In addition to this reasoning, St-Jean was chosen among considered alternatives of Maywood and Aurora avenue routes to link the Civic Centre area to Northern Pointe-Claire in the direction of Fairview because it was the most direct and a linear (1.2km compared to 1.36km and 1.5km, respectively) and had ample open land opportunities. Both alternatives are characterized by solely single-family, detached housing and possibilities of arising friction because development and community and owner interests acted as deterrents. In addition, both alternative corridors coincide with St-Jean at some point, an that must be addressed regardless.

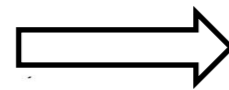
Chosen Site



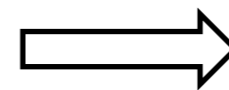
100m 500m

Landscape and Massing

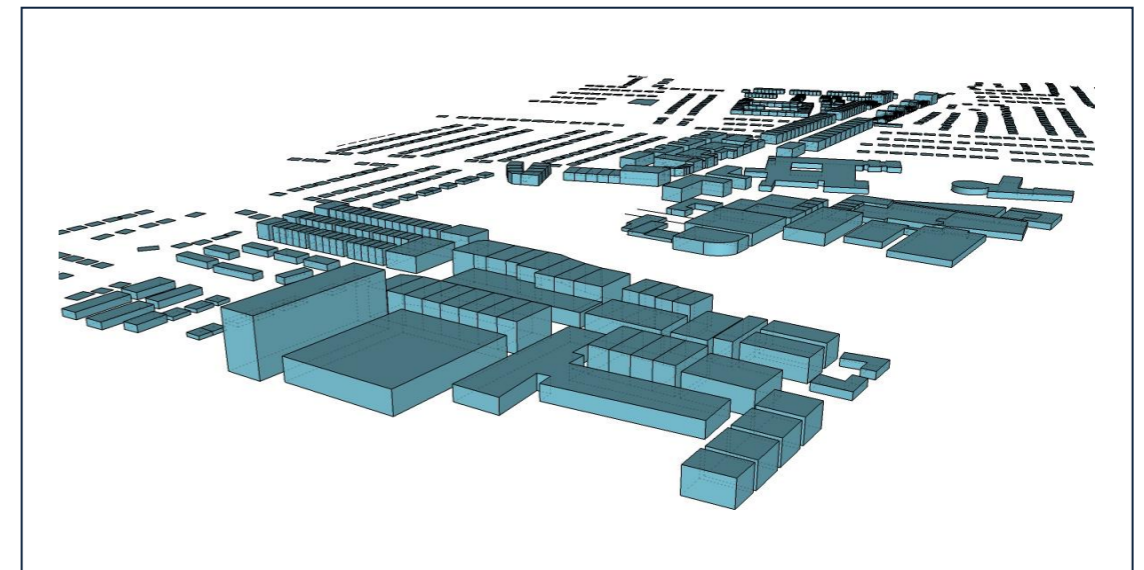
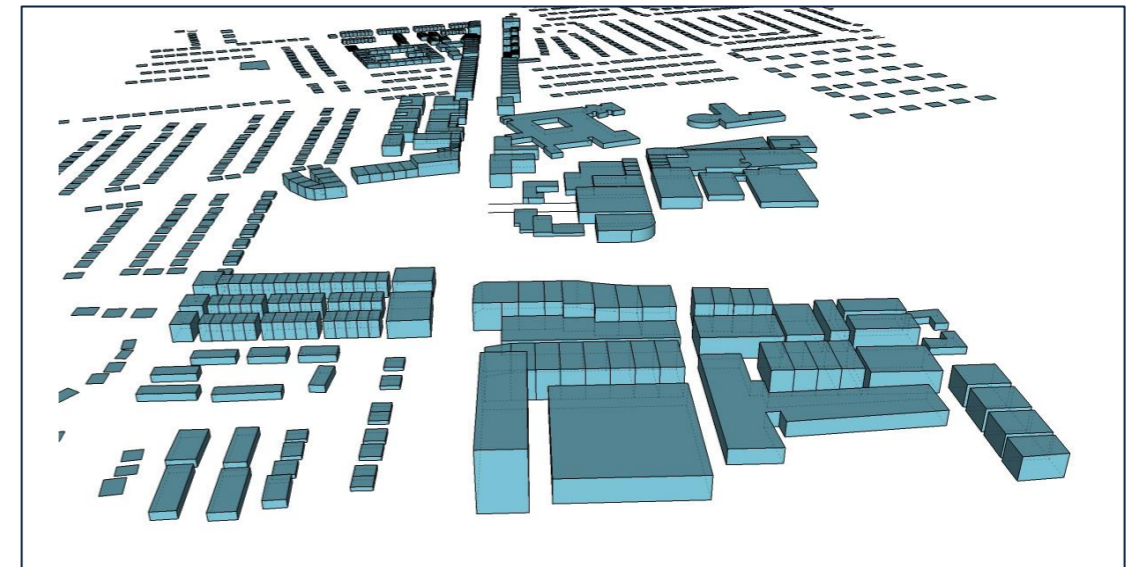
Current Massing



New Massing



3D model of the landscape



This map shows the massing of our area. It is dominated by one to two story high buildings (in yellow), followed by a few 3-5 story buildings in the area surround the intersection of Douglas-Shand and St-Jean, including the newly built aquatic centre at the Civic Centre. The only 6-8 story structures are found near Drake Av. above the Pointe-Claire Plaza and St-Jean - these are residences for elderly people. By interpreting this map, we can conclude that the overall density is very low.

Building heights will be increased along our focus areas of St-Jean, Civic Centre and Pointe-Claire Plaza. The highest zones will be in the Plaza area- an area with already the highest heights (6 story apartment blocks) and which is least likely to seem too imposing on neighbouring, small residential areas as it is relatively removed from this type of fabric and enveloped by the 20 highway and the municipal garage to the East. The corner of Douglas-Shand and St-Jean will be another high area (6-8 stories), from which it 'fades out' in height with distance.

The 3D models illustrate how the intervened area is envisioned with the new building heights.

Networks and Movements

From an analysis of the existing site, several key features to be addressed were noted:

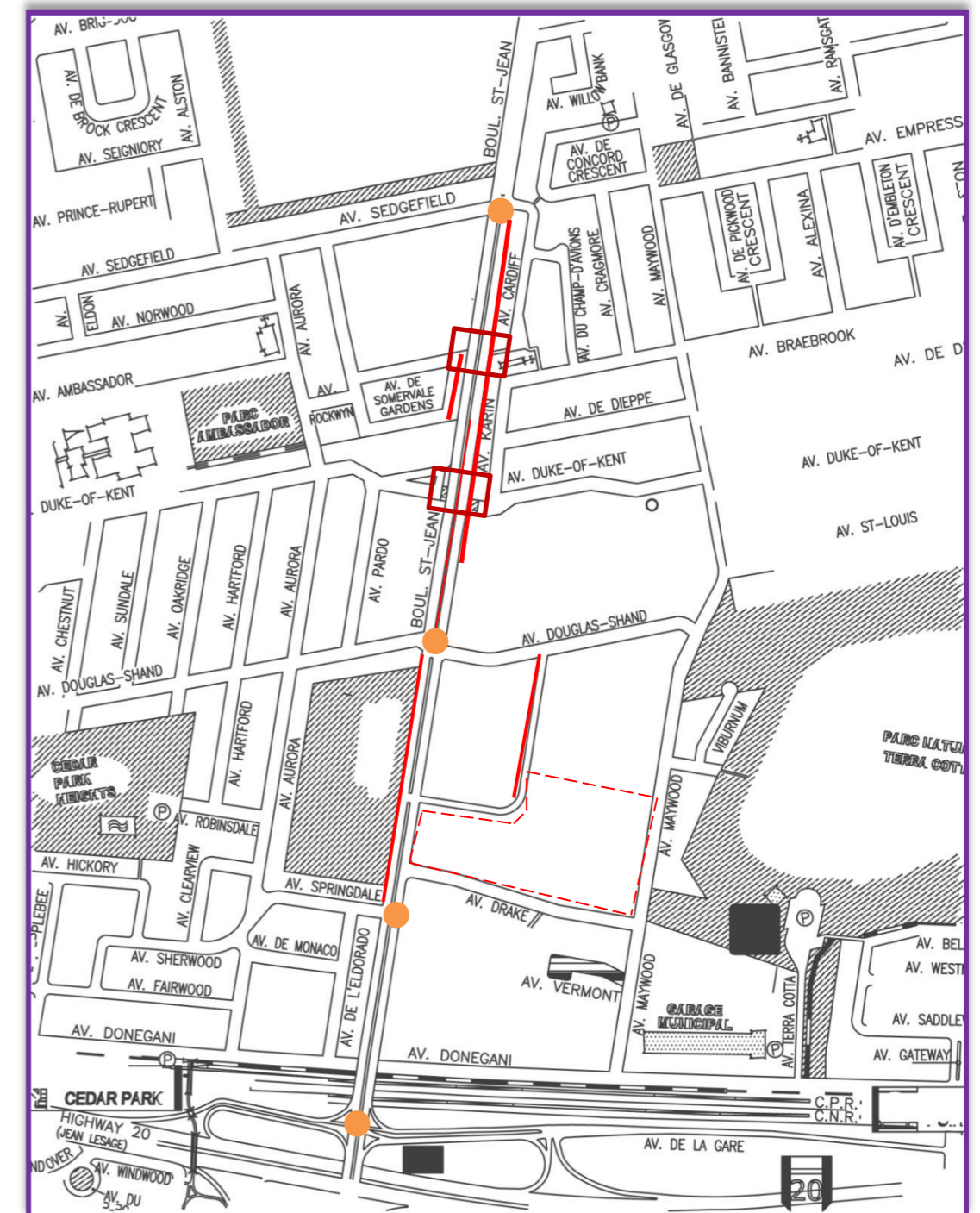
Intersections and Available Paths:

There are only four existing intersections with traffic lights (represented by the orange dots) along the 1.2km long section of the boulevard selected as our intervention area. For automobiles, there are limited intersections to choose from, making it difficult to access neighbouring streets while driving along St-Jean. This may lead to move driving in that turn-off options and specific area access are limited. Places where there are obvious, desirable routes for movement that was impeded were identified at cul-de-sacs (such as on Duke-of-Kent), blocking accessibility. For pedestrian movement along the corridor, it is more difficult; due in part obviously to the lack of intersections, but also because of the small sidewalks (approximately 1 meter wide) making it hazardous to walk alongside the high traffic volume and speeds. Sidewalk width also makes walking side-by-side with another person near impossible and passing other pedestrians dangerous as walkers are often forced to step in to the road to pass.

Barriers and Fences:

An analysis of physical barriers to movement was conducted- solid lines representing “impermeable” (e.g. fences) barriers and dashed lines as “permeable” (e.g. trees/woods that impede movement to an extent, but not entirely). Almost the entire length of St-Jean in enclosed by barriers along its edges- tall fences (10 ft) separating housing areas, the school and cemetery from contact with the boulevard. In particular, a 4.5 ft fence along the island in the middle of St-Jean from Av. De Dieppe to Av. Douglas-Shand posed a particular problem to movement for pedestrians wishing to cross the street- especially since this section is between two fairly far apart intersections. An inventory of current cul-de-sacs (represented by the squares) that (almost) touch St-Jean and that currently impede movement for cars, and often for pedestrians as well, was conducted. In some cases, pedestrian-only walking paths are provided but these are often too small or are the indirect result of peoples’ desire lines that need to be improved.

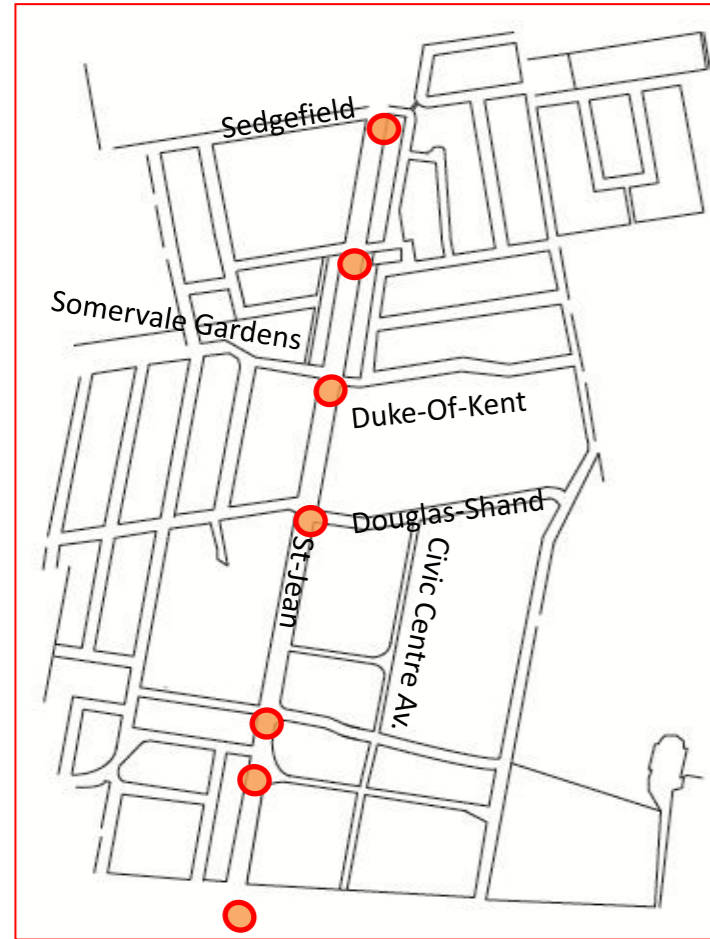
Current Intersections and Barriers



- Intersection
- Cul-de-sac
- Impermeable Barrier
- - - Permeable Barrier

Proposed Networks and Movements

New Intersections

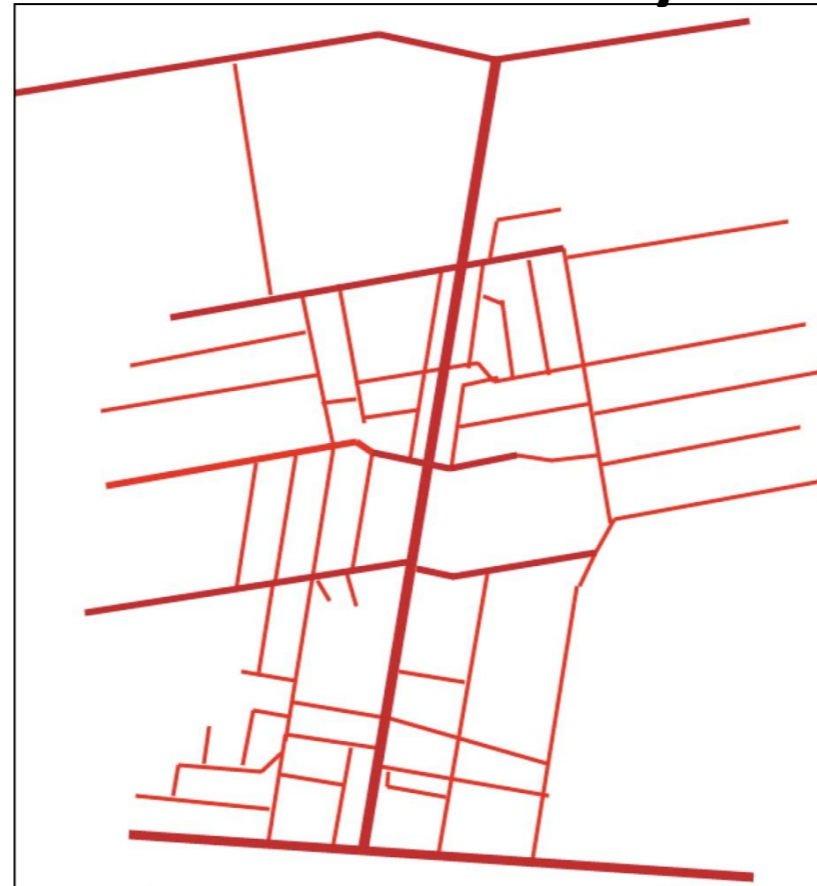


Automobile: ● Intersections

Accessibility by car to areas within and surrounding the intervention site will be facilitated by the creation of three new intersections at Somervale Gardens, Duke-Of-Kent and Drake streets, thereby offering more turn-off options and greater precision in area-access- reducing car mileage.

Traffic on St-Jean will be toned down slightly given the elimination of one lane as sidewalk widths are expanded by 300% to 3 meters in width along both sides. The greater accessibility and route options in alternative to St-Jean provided in the form of new intersections will counter the possibility of road congestion as a result of the lane elimination.

Automobile Pathways



In terms of new roads, the Civic Centre road will be extended southward to Donegani, through the woods and Plaza Pointe-Claire- linking the two activity nodes and providing further accessibility. Within the Plaza, two new roads perpendicular in the Civic Centre road addition will facilitate access and practical considerations such as loading heavy groceries. In changing the Somervale Gardens cul-de-sac in to an intersection, a small, intersecting back service alley will be added alongside the back of the mixed-use buildings on St-Jean from Duke of Kent to Sedgefield.

St-Jean still acts as a main artery, followed by Sedgefield and Donegani, while other intersections gain new importance- especially Douglas-Shand, as it crosses St-Jean and links the cemetery, school and Civic Centre.

Pedestrian Pathways



Pedestrian:

St-Jean, with added pedestrian amenities and a lively streetscape, will be the area's main pedestrian artery. Similarly, pedestrian movement paths are to be of high volume delimitating and within the Civic Centre and Plaza area. Pedestrian-only paths (or shared with bicycles) will be found through the cemetery, surrounding the Civic Centre in path and plaza networks and within the woods adjacent. The woods will also have open areas (fountain, picnic tables) that pedestrians will use along with steps leading up to the woods. Like car movement, new intersections along St-Jean are expected to be used heavily.

Proposed Networks and Movements

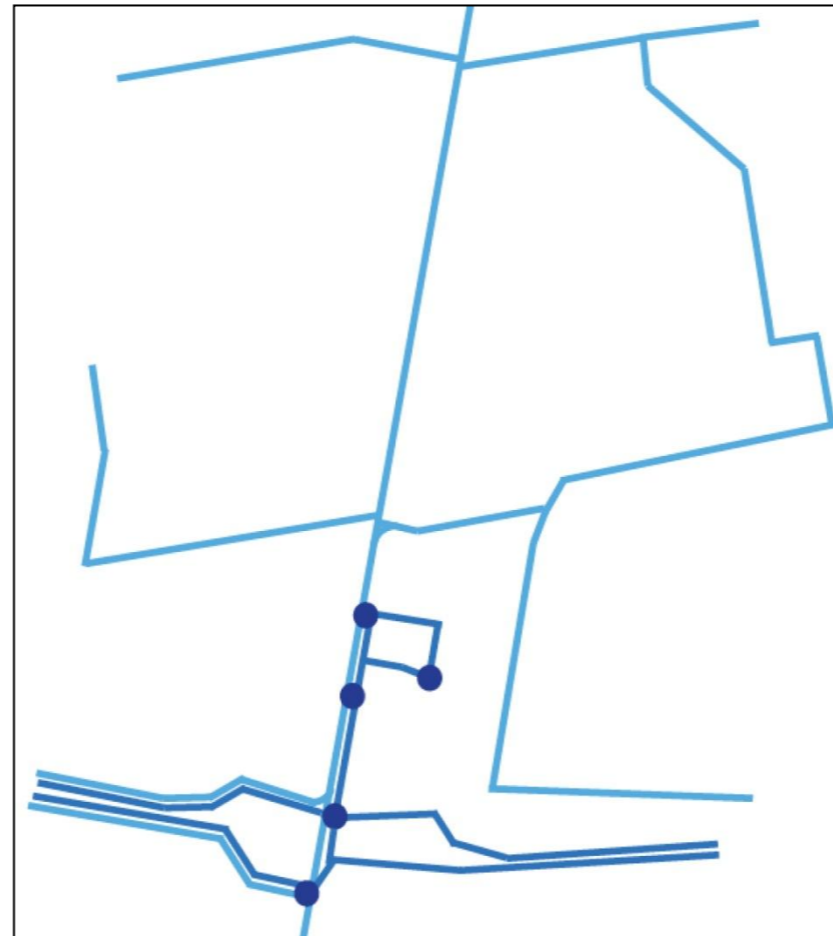
Bicycle Pathways



Bikes:

The implementation of newly designated ‘shared roads’ for bikes and cars will serve to link up with existing bike paths while remaining sensitive to the new needs and activities introduced. Shared roads, visibly shown via the demarcating of an on-road bike lane or painted bike figures will encourage modal mix and sensitize people of different (non)motorized modes to be aware of the presence of the ‘other’. This will encourage slower speeds for cars and less accidents in comparison with traditional, segregated bike-only paths with few intersections of roads used by automobiles. Heavily used paths are, again, expected down St-Jean, as well as surrounding the Civic Centre (as ‘active’ citizens bicycle to the area to participate in the various recreational and community activities available), through the woods, and the Plaza. Roads at new intersections will also be used sufficiently.

Bus Routes



Bus:

Existing 201, 202, 203 and 211 bus routes through our intervention site of Pointe-Claire will be maintained as they are viewed as well-placed along the 20 highway (211) to downtown, and along St-Jean boulevard. The 211 route to and from downtown will be rerouted in each directly slightly by a stop-over off the highway and into the Civic Centre area. This will easily connect the Civic Centre to the rest of the West Island (westward) and downtown Montreal, as there is a current disconnect between the 211 route along the 20 and St-Jean boulevard with bus stops on and alongside the far side of the highway with no connection to the main artery. Bus frequency and quality of service will grow alongside increased ridership due to the development of our site- catering to the mobility needs of new users and also serving as an incentive for commutes to the area by outside residents.

All Routes and Pathways

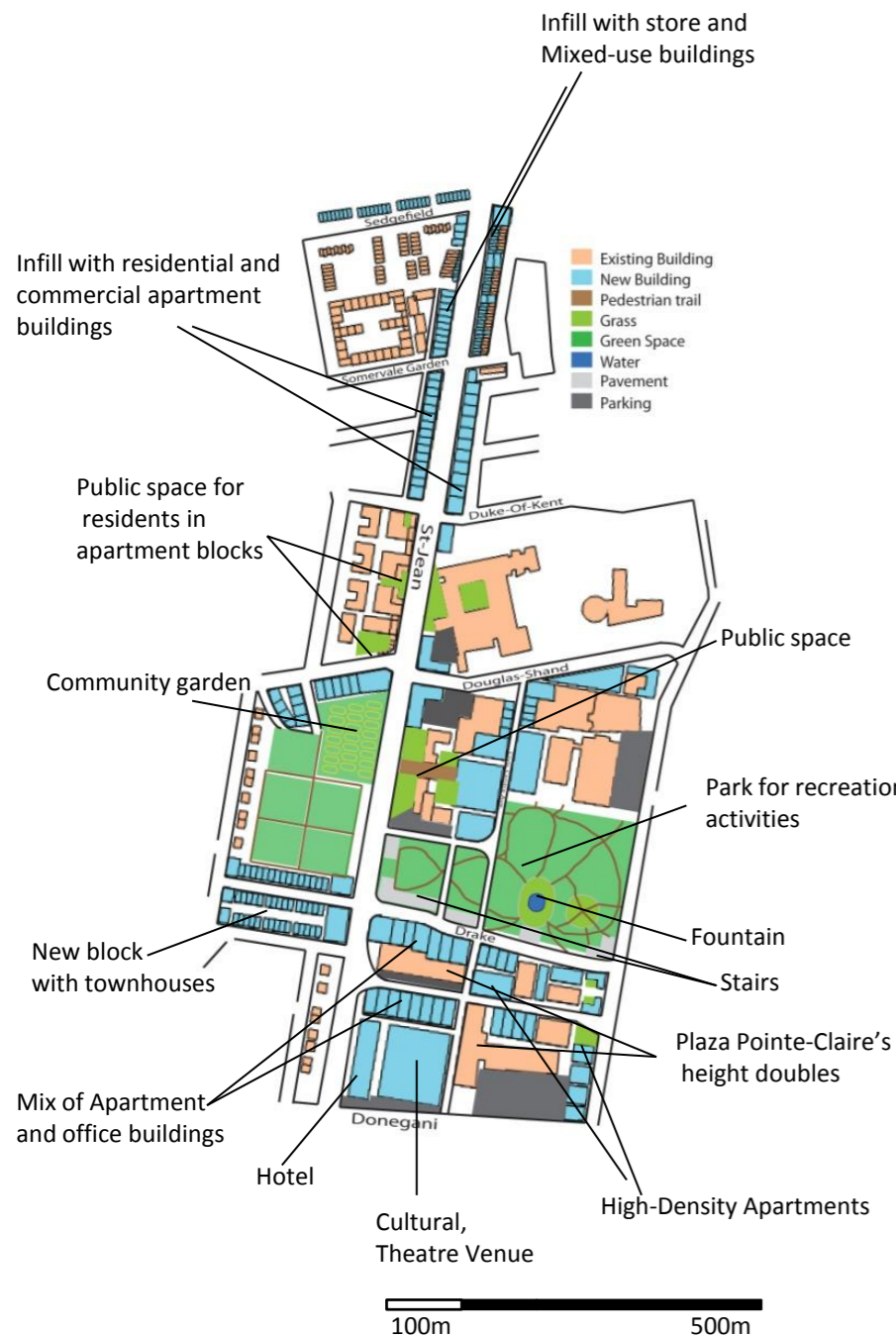


Combined:

In look at the combined car, pedestrian, bike and bus movement paths, it becomes clear that modal share of roads is a key feature of the mixed, metropolitan environment sought to be created. Road sharing and diverse modal integration will promote various accessibility options to desirable areas and encourage a lively street environment that is sensitive to the needs of non-motorized transportation, as well. High presence of such types of pedestrian and bicycle activity will be due to increased amenities and interesting activities and streetscapes, prompting active lifestyles and walkability in the area. St-Jean will remain the main arterial route for movement, while movement with Civic Centre and Plaza areas will be heightened due to the addition of new roads and activities.

Concept Plan

Ground Plan



Land Use:

The land use of our site is intended to be composed of mixed and integrated activities. Residential areas are present to the North of St-Jean and surround the area of the Civic Centre, Plaza and cemetery. New residential infill is added to the North and South ends of the cemetery, while new infill blocks are added on the West side of the Plaza.

Mixed use (commercial and residential) buildings are interspersed over the intervention zone, with a particular concentration along upper St-Jean and in the North West end of the Plaza Pointe Claire.

Commercial activities are shown in red- with small scale businesses along the North end of St-Jean, moderate scale along Duke-of-Kent and large scale (and higher density) in the Plaza.

Community and recreational activities are to be found in blue zones, and open land with the same use in a lighter shade of blue. These are congregated in the Civic Centre area specifically and in the neighbouring community gardens in the cemetery and school (and its grounds).

Open Space:

Similarly to the new programming and use of activities for our intervention site, open space was conceptualized in a like fashion, with complementary and linked open spaces. Open spaces such as the cemetery, grassy areas and gardens are shown in green. When coupled with the large woods in the Civic Centre, these open green spaces create a large network of nature-oriented spaces, effectively linking the Civic Centre at large to the cemetery to its West, and the cemetery (although more indirectly) to the green spaces surrounding the intersection of St-Jean and Duke-of-Kent at the school.

Dark grey areas represent the parking lot infrastructure that has been allotted to our new metropolitan-conceptualized site. This presents a reduction and redistribution of the provided lots for car parking- justified by the increased pedestrian, bike and public transport movement possibilities, infrastructure and amenities.

Zones designated in purple are activities which are of a commercial, for-profit nature but also serve the community and cultural interests of residents. These include a new daycare centre in the Civic Centre's North-East corner along Duke-of-Kent, an open transformable area for activities such as a farmer's market along Drake Street, and the performing arts theatre in the Plaza.

The placement of activities took into consideration the existing assets of the various areas of our intervention site and their relation to one-another. The community and recreational aspects of the Civic Centre were built upon and enhanced by the presence of commercial and mixed activity such as places to have coffee or eat (which were absent before). The relationship between the Civic Centre and the school along Duke-of-Kent was also of great importance, as the assets of both were assessed and enhanced with complementary activities such as the possibility of the animation of the Civic Centre woods by nature walks for children, and the use of the football and soccer field at the school for activities pertaining to the Civic Centre.

Land Use



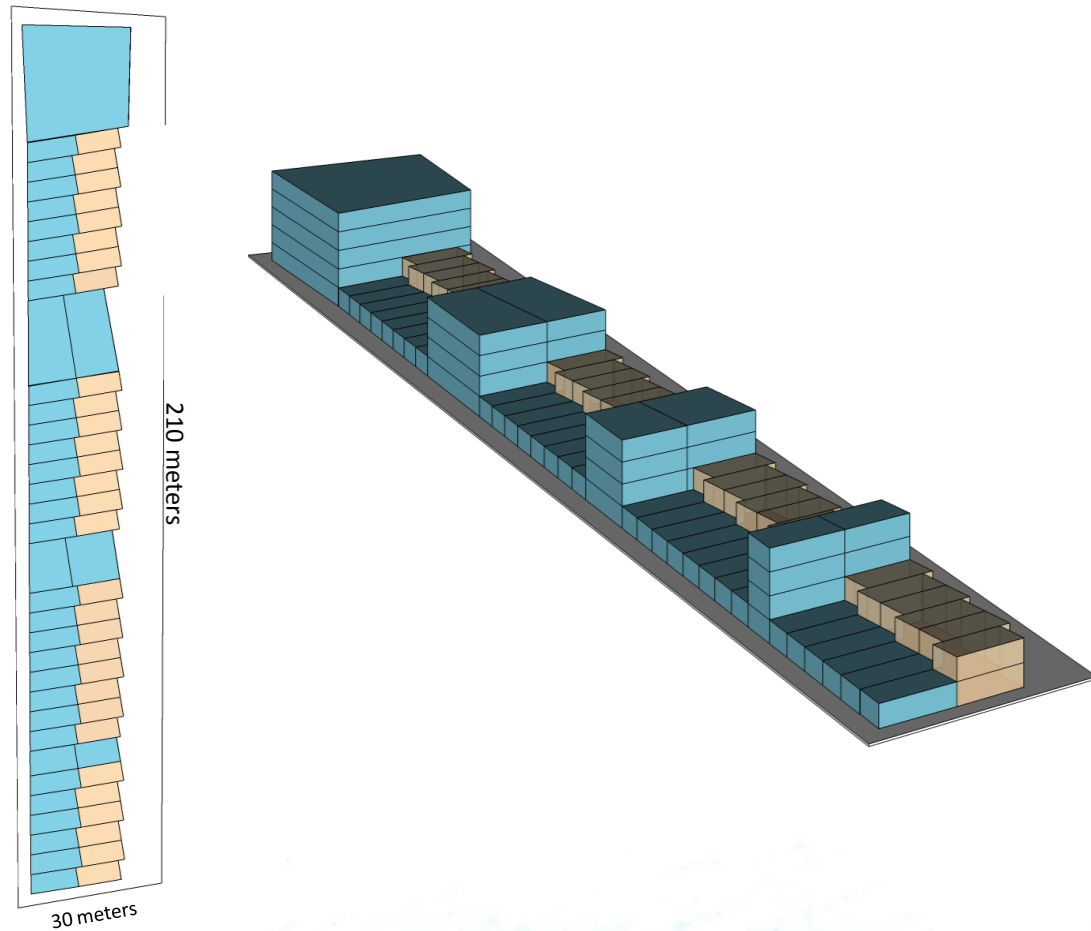
Open Space



Pedestrian-only paths are shown in brown. The existing pedestrian paths of the cemetery were maintained and expanded slightly to surrounding streets to increase accessibility to the space and provide through-movement possibilities on to St-Jean and the Civic Centre. Larger, plaza-like areas are to be found in the Civic Centre surrounding the recreational activities and build on the model of the existing plaza space between the hockey arenas and the newly constructed swimming pool, making for a very high accessibility to all buildings and a pedestrian environment. These spaces are linked to the South to the pedestrian and jogging paths in the woods that are curvilinear and in some routes shared by cyclists. Pedestrian paths are also found in the Plaza as well along new commercial strips.

Zones in yellow represent open space that houses public activity zones such as the community garden plots in the cemetery, steps leading up to the woods along St-Jean and Drake street and the land of the daycare.

Concept Plan



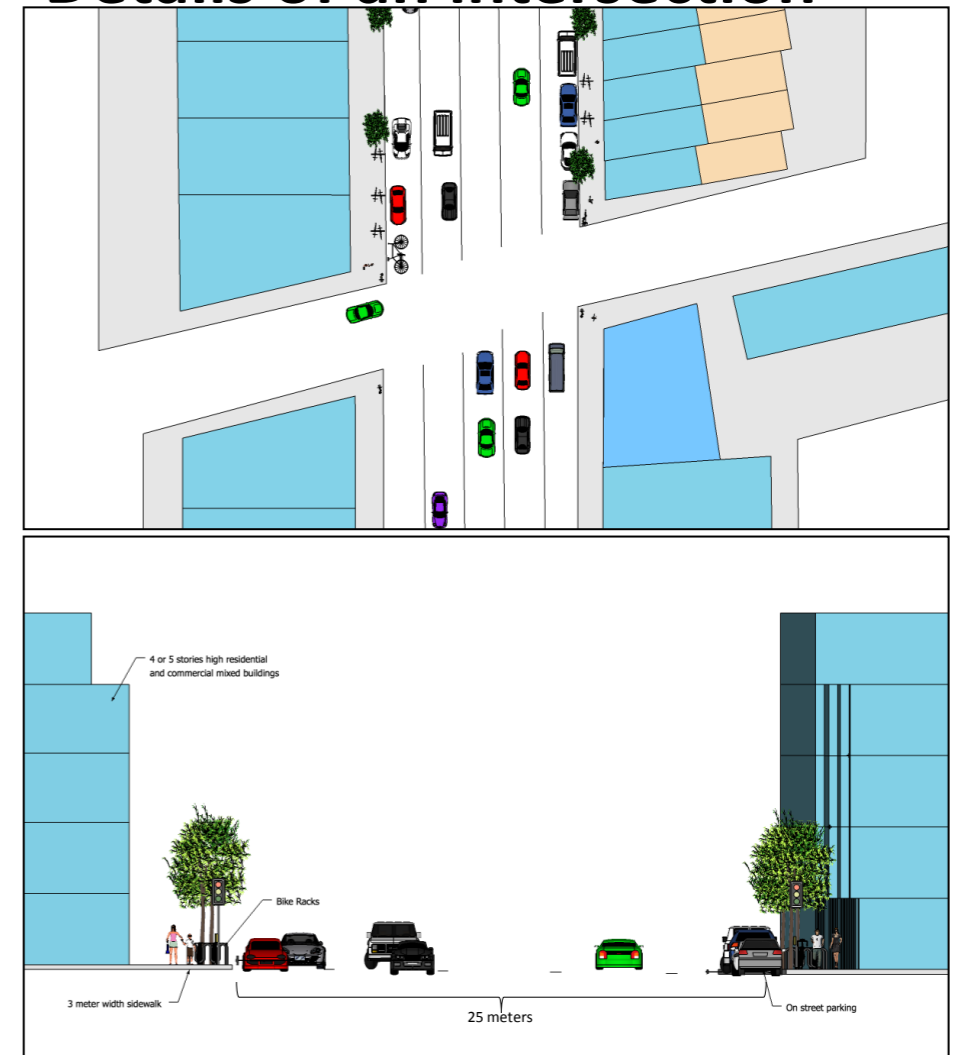
Massing: view of detailed block:

A detailed view of the block along St-Jean's East side between Somervale Gardens and Sedgefield gives an example of the type of infill planned for the area. One story additions will be added on the current backs (and backyards) of diagonal row-houses of 2.5 stories and face directly on to St-Jean. These additions (shown in blue) will accomplish our goal for St-Jean: to promote continuous, commercial store frontage at ground level and an overall more mixed building use. The heights of these additions will be non-intrusive in to the current environment and will allow for sufficient sunlight in to the houses that will be kept as residential units behind. In theory, it would be logical to expect the 1 story commercial additions to expand backward in to the full 1st floor and basement of the buildings behind in the future.



This 3D perspective drawing shows our envisioned environment along St-Jean street: mixed use buildings with a diverse range of commercial activities with full frontage to the street on the ground floors (new additions to row-houses), a friendly walking and biking environment while still taking the concerns of automobile transportation in to account, and a lively street life.

Details of an intersection



New Intersections:

New intersections will be added at the intersections of Somervale Gardens and Duke of Kent at St-Jean and will be readjusted and enhanced with the implementation of traffic lights at the entrance to the Pointe-Claire Plaza. These new intersections will be characterized by a reduction in width by one lane (from six to five lanes, reducing the street width from 30 to 25 m) along St-Jean as sidewalks are widened on each side by 2 meters- for a total of 3 meters each- to enhance pedestrian street-life and use walkability and on-street car parking is introduced on either side. The island (and fence) in the middle of St-Jean will be removed, making room for a lane in its place. Three lanes will be North-bound and two will be South-bound. The implementation of traffic lights and pedestrian crosswalks at each new intersection will serve their obvious function of directing traffic and also promote the slowing of traffic at (closer) intervals, decreasing high volume traffic speeds and increasing safety for all modes of transportation. Shared automobile-bike lanes will be implemented in the lanes closest to each side in each direction and increased bike infrastructure such as racks will be added to the streetscape.

Appendices

Preliminary Concept Plan



Built Form of the site and surroundings

