

# 3120

## Washington Ave

### Rezoning Application Rationale

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City of Victoria Planning and Development Department  
City of Victoria | 1 Centennial Square, Victoria, BC V8W 1P6

January 10, 2020



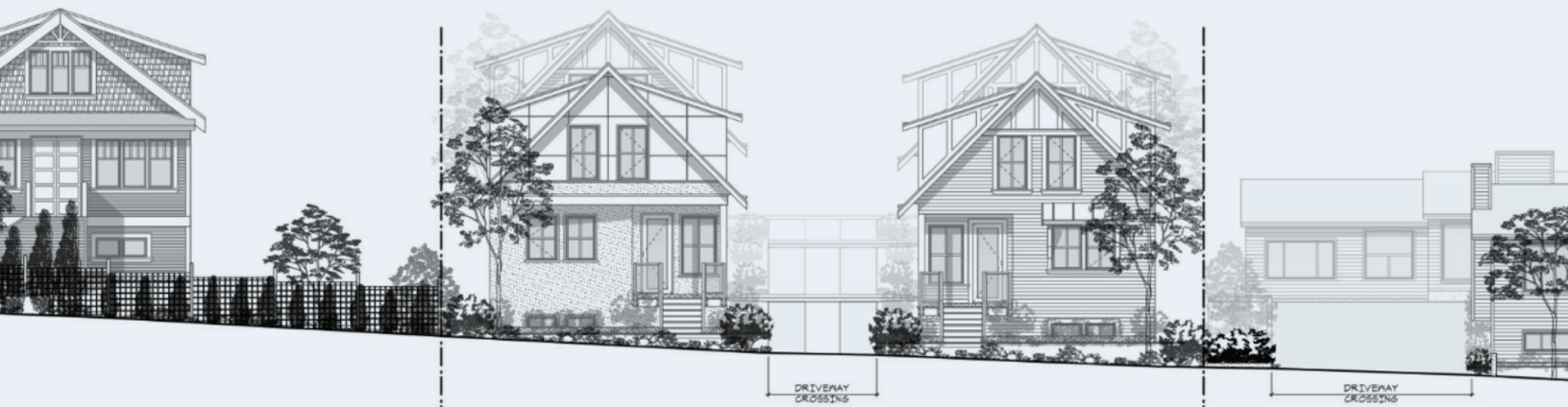


## Introduction

It is our pleasure to present the “**Washington 8” rezoning application for the property at 3210 Washington Avenue within the Burnside Gorge neighbourhood area.** The property is currently zoned R1-B – Single Family Residential. This application is for a site – specific rezoning with the objective of providing eight affordable,

small detached family townhomes with a shared common space and neighbourhood garden. This project is a neighbourhood – influenced alternative to traditional townhouses/row houses and apartment or condominium buildings.

**NOTE:**  
See page 10,11 for Application  
Revisions & Enhancements





# Context

The map above is Figure Map 9: Future Land Use Map for Gorge Residential Sub-Area. This Gorge Sub Area Plan recommends “a mix of unit types, including units attractive to families with children, is encouraged along Gorge Road (12.2.5) and in ground-oriented infill development in the large lots along Washington Avenue.”

The location of this property provides options for family-oriented households who are seeking housing with access to usable outdoor amenity space. The diversity in housing choices that we are proposing bridges the higher density development

patterns along Burnside Road with the lower density developments envisioned for the traditional neighbourhood areas on Washington Avenue and Carroll Street. The Burnside Gorge Neighbourhood Plan is supportive of two storey housing forms that maintain and honour the neighbourhood character of “landscaped front and rear yards, tree-lined streets, a rhythm of housing units oriented to the street, and building massing which mitigates impacts on neighbours through appropriate design and building separation” (Burnside Gorge Neighbourhood Plan p. 52).



# Supporting Policies

This proposal is supported by both the Burnside Gorge Neighbourhood Plan (2017) and overall City of Victoria Official Community Plan (2016). Both plans call for applicants to provide diverse housing choices and to increase support for people who walk and bicycle were two of the top ten objectives of the 2015–2016 Community Engagement summary. The Washington 8 area falls within the Gorge Sub-Area of the Neighbourhood Plan which calls for Traditional Neighbourhood types of housing typology and we believe that this plan creatively and appropriately honours the intent of that policy

The creation of a community garden on the property will provide enhanced food system development for the neighbours at Washington 8. This aligns with the “Food Systems” policies within the City of Victoria Official Community Plan (p.119):

- ✓ 17 (A) A healthy share of the food that supplies Victoria’s daily needs is sustainably grown, processed and packaged in the city, in surrounding agricultural areas, and on Vancouver Island.
- ✓ 17 (B) Victorians have access to skills, knowledge and resources to produce and process their own food in urban areas.



## Traditional Neighbourhood Infill Housing:

The Washington 8 property is in the heart of the area designated for ground oriented ‘Traditional Neighbourhood’ infill housing in the Burnside Gorge Neighbourhood Plan. The intent of this land use direction is to support appropriate intensification through primarily ground oriented forms of housing within the Traditional Residential areas of Burnside Gorge. Upon review of the neighbourhood plan and through discussions with the neighbourhood, it was highlighted that 75% of housing in Burnside Gorge is multi family or apartment housing and only 10% of the housing in the area is single family housing. We believe that the Washington 8 proposal creates a more diverse neighbourhood by injecting 8 modest, single family houses in a neighbourhood intended for more traditional housing typologies.

This local area plan and the City of Victoria Official Community Plan also supports infill developments with appropriate lot size and configurations in order to “support efficient site layouts that reduce the impacts of surface access and circulation” p. 52). The design of the Washington 8 property provides for an efficient use of internal streets, parking, bicycle parking and storage, and also a dedicated road connection which is intended to provide access for future development on the neighbouring property at 3106 Washington Avenue with the deliberate intent of providing additional homes while conserving the existing house at 3106 and preserving it’s identified heritage merit.





Map Legend from the Burnside Gorge Neighbourhood Plan p.51



## Existing Conditions

The Washington Avenue and Carroll Street neighbourhoods are currently comprised of residential properties, ranging from single family detached dwellings to apartments and multi-family buildings. The middle of Washington Avenue is currently settled by mid to modest sized single family residential lots; whereas, the periphery of Washington Avenue scale-up to a series of duplexes, townhouse developments, apartments, and multi-family buildings.

The Northern and Western boundaries of the property are single family housing units. The South-Eastern portion of the property is bordered by a duplex and the North-Eastern portion of the property is bordered by a low-rise townhouse development. Across the street is a series of

detached family townhomes and the property directly South of the subject lot is the four-unit cluster housing that was rezoned by Zebra Properties at 3103 Washington Avenue.

Like the cluster housing that was approved at 3103 Washington Avenue, the Washington 8 proposal provides a bridge between the existing single family homes in the area and the higher density townhouses along Burnside Road West and Gorge Road East. The design of our homes will be inspired and influenced by the traditional arts and crafts and craftsman-style architecture in the current neighbourhood.

# Consultation

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At the outset, we began by canvassing nearby neighbours and property owners to determine if they were in favour of such a proposal, and found that they were. We also had conversations with the Area Planner and the Engineering Department of City of Victoria, to introduce the concept and find out if the existing services on the street were viable for a development of this nature, and what Development Services might think of the idea in principle. Similarly we contacted representatives from the Burnside Gorge Community Association and City of Victoria Council members to see if this

was a supportable project in their opinions. We encountered encouraging responses from all these parties as well.

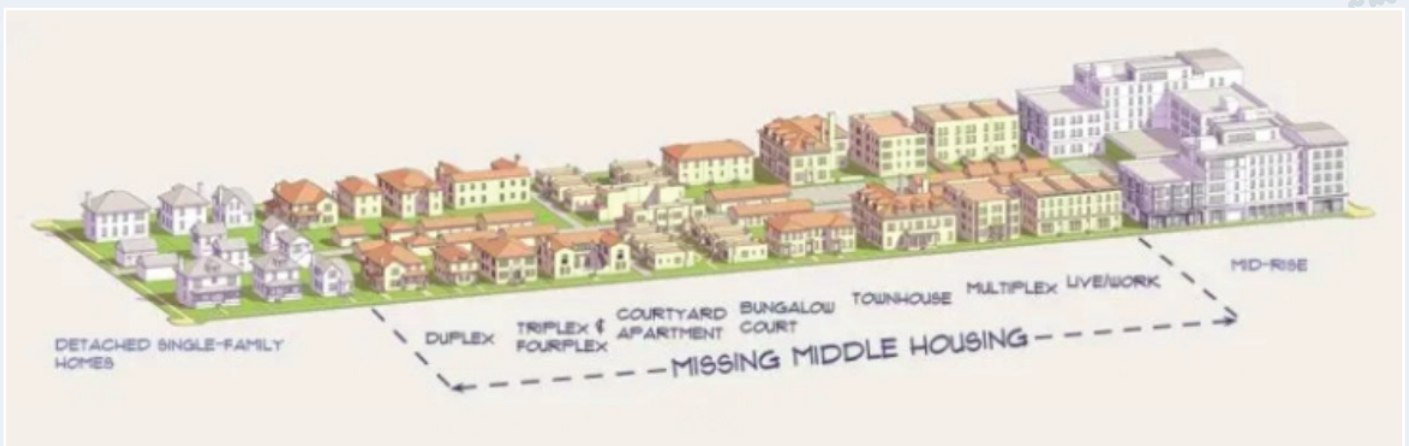
Following official submission of this proposal, we have designed a website to inform residents and provide an additional means of feedback. The proponent also intends to host a follow-up open house and to provide opportunity for additional feedback from both the neighbourhood and from the Burnside Gorge Community Association.

## Missing Middle Housing

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Missing Middle Housing is defined in the City of Victoria's Phase Two Housing Strategy as "ground-oriented housing such as townhouses, houseplexes, duplexes, row houses, lock-off suites, and other housing forms that fit well within neighbourhoods to help increase housing choice, affordability and the achievement of citywide liveability and sustainability goals."

The City of Victoria has outlined a series of housing initiatives under objective 3 of the strategic plan. This application works to balance the need for missing middle infill housing while also include: maintaining greenspace and the urban forest, protecting and enhancing neighbourhood character, and following a reasonable pace and scale of change.



**We believe this proposal will help the City meet the following affordable housing objectives under the 2019 - 2022 Strategic Plan:**

- ✓ Decrease in number of people spending more than 30 per cent of income on housing
- ✓ Quadruple the number of 'Missing Middle' housing unit
- ✓ Increase in percentage of Victoria residents who own their own homes
- ✓ Victoria is seen as development friendly
- ✓ Neighbourhoods are diverse, accessible and affordable across all ages, incomes and abilities

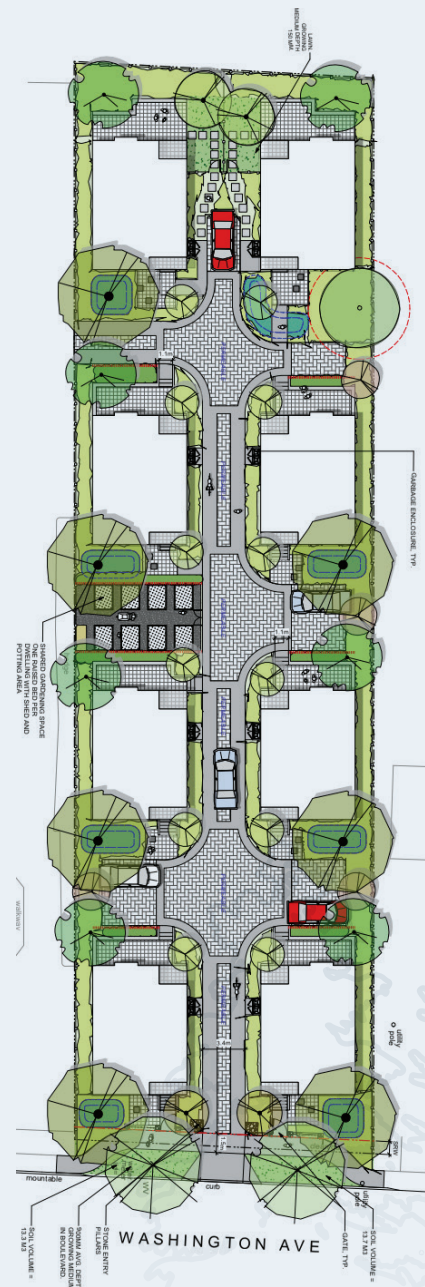
We believe that this rezoning proposal will provide a net-benefit gain to the future owners, the existing neighbourhood and the City of Victoria. The current zoning only allows for up to four large-format houses with carriage suites.

These houses would be out of character with the existing neighbourhood and would not meet the City of Victoria Official Community Plan targets for infill, small lot residential housing, and development in established neighbourhoods. It is our opinion that from both a planning and architectural perspective that modest-sized houses will have a smaller impact in the "fit" of the existing neighbourhood and will help address the housing shortage in the Greater Victoria region.

These houses are market houses and therefore the price will be more attainable with 8 smaller family-oriented lots as opposed to four large lots. This demand and fit has been demonstrated with other recent small lot subdivisions and rezoning in the Burnside Gorge neighbourhood.

## Proposed Layout

The Washington 8 layout provides a modern take on the traditional "cluster housing" seen in many European communities. 8 modest-sized detached townhomes will be accessed by a single laneway, reducing the overall number of driveways and potential vehicle and pedestrian interactions. A pattern of permeable paving materials and concrete bands will be placed in order to visually break up the internal road and to improve rainwater runoff.

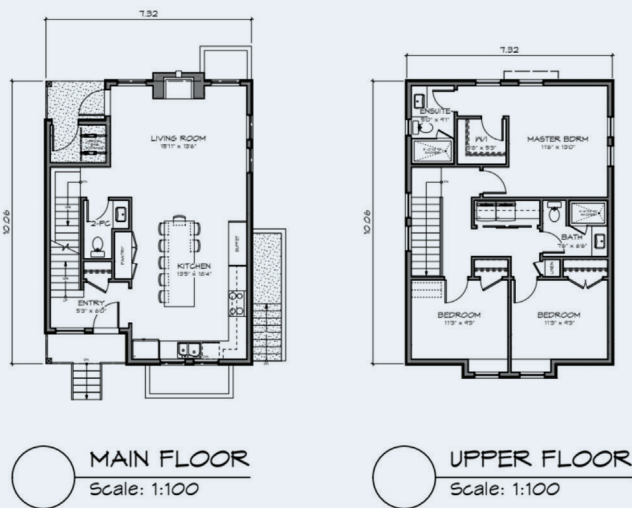




## Homes:

Each home will be no more than two storeys in height. They will each have an open concept main floor living space with three bedrooms on the second floor. Each Washington 8 home is designed to be modest, family-oriented with ground-oriented living spaces, and efficient layouts.

The exterior of each home will be tastefully designed with architectural character which reflects the existing neighbourhood. The team at Zebra designs will draw from the existing traditional and heritage values of neighbouring properties on Washington Avenue. Each home will have a private exterior patio with ample room for gathering and entertaining as an additional living space.



## Parking:

Each Washington 8 home will have a single, on grade parking stall. During our consultation with the neighbourhood and with the neighbourhood association, it was determined that open, on grade parking stalls were preferred to enclosed structures as they encouraged owners to use their stalls for vehicle parking as opposed to storage. Each home will also have an enclosed bike storage locker. This will be designed to be a dry, safe storage with electrical capabilities to service e-bikes and scooters.

## Neighbourhood Garden:

The landscape team at Murdoch DeGreef have included a neighbourhood garden in the centre of the property. This south-facing garden will be maintained by the residents living at the proposed Washington 8 development and the Washington 8 strata.

### The objectives of this neighbourhood garden include:

1. Enhance the availability of nutritious, affordable food for Victoria residents.
2. Provide a creative, edible, landscape within a new neighbourhood development.
3. Increase the amount of productive greenspace and open space on this property.
4. Enhance the City of Victoria's net overall urban food production.
5. Provide a creative outlet for rainwater runoff.

Details of the neighbourhood garden, implementation, and maintenance are included in the landscape plan.

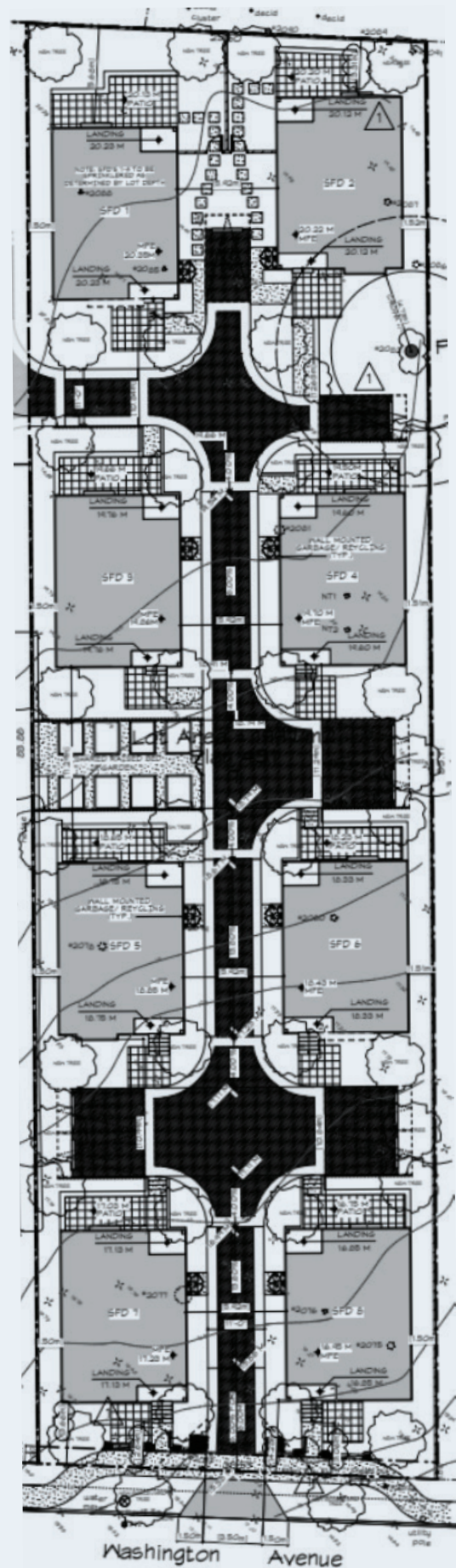




## Servicing

In our preliminary meetings with City Engineering and Planning it was understood that the City has adequate infrastructure services (sewer, water, and road) to service the new lots. It should also be noted that the number of dwellings allowed in the new zone will actually reduce the potential maximum number of residents living on the properties and therefore wear of the City system will be negligible.

Arborists reports and site surveys have been conducted to ensure that the proposed development is compliant with the City of Victoria's newly adopted tree preservation and urban forest bylaw.



# Rain Water Management:

The proposed development at Washington 8 employs a series of methods from the City of Vancouver's Rain Water Management Best Practices (BMP) Toolkit (2016). These tools are in common use in other jurisdictions around Metro Vancouver, the Pacific Northwest, and in developed areas around the world

**The following BMP practices have been employed on the Washington 8 property:.**



## Absorbent Landscapes



**Benefits:** Intercept and clean rainwater through soil pores, allowing gradual infiltration into subsoils to recharge groundwater.



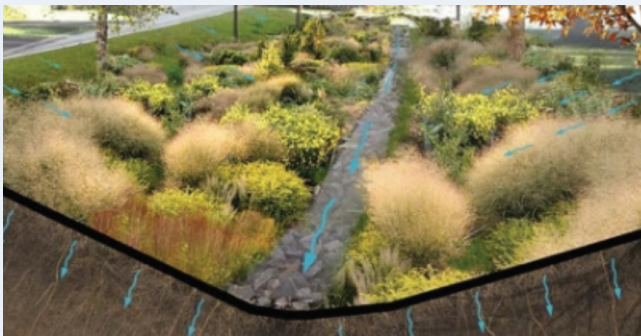
## Rain Gardens



**Benefits:** Reduce runoff volume and improve water quality by infiltrating, capturing, and filtering stormwater an overflow conveys extreme rainfall volumes.



## Infiltration Swales



**Benefits:** Reduce runoff volume and increase water quality by capturing, detaining, treating, and conveying stormwater.



## Pervious Paving



**Benefits:** Reduce runoff volume and improve water quality by infiltrating and treating stormwater while still providing a hard, drivable surface.

Arborists reports and site surveys have been conducted to ensure that the proposed development is compliant with the City of Victoria's newly adopted tree preservation and urban forest bylaw.



# Application Revisions & Enhancements

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This application has gone through a series of iterative design changes since the initial site-design and layout was contemplated in the fall of 2018. Through review with the City of Victoria planning and engineering department, meetings with representatives of the Burnside – Gorge Community Association, and through a series of formal and informal discussions with the neighbours, we are pleased to present our final site plan and design.

In March of 2020, concerns around public gatherings during COVID-19 virus outbreak meant the Washington8 project team had to rethink their

conventional neighbourhood engagement strategy and decided to provide an online Virtual Public Meeting on the project website: [washington8.ca](http://washington8.ca). This Virtual Public Meeting became a confidential and secure opportunity for residents, neighbours, and community members to learn more about the proposal and provide feedback to the applicant. This feedback has also been taken into account during this project resubmission.

Below is a summary of the key application revisions and enhancements that have been made since the initial project proposal was discussed with the City of Victoria and neighbourhood members.

**A Included the laneway to support the future development of the neighbours property at 3106 Washington Avenue** - During our first meeting with our immediate neighbours, it was made clear that they were interested in gaining access to the rear of their lot for the purposes of future development and to protect their existing home which has been identified in the Burnside-Gorge Neighbourhood Plan as having Heritage Merit.

The Burnside-Gorge Neighbourhood Plan supports “the retention of homes with heritage designation, listed on the Heritage Register, or of heritage merit is encouraged as a condition of a rezoning which adds density. Ways of incentivizing heritage conservation may include added density or the relaxation or varying of requirements (such as on-site parking or maximum lot coverage) if a heritage property is designated” (p. 52).

**B Plan each home to feature a unique, traditional design which reflects the heritage qualities of existing homes along Washington Avenue** - Discussions with Zebra Design saw many iterative considerations for our proposed building aesthetics and designs. Finally, through discussions with our neighbours, we chose to design each home with unique and distinct features which act as a ‘nod’ to the traditional heritage qualities that many existing homes on Washington Avenue possess.

The Burnside-Gorge Neighbourhood Plan supports developments that enhance its environment through appropriate and attractive design: Different parts of the neighbourhood call for unique design guidelines – whether for emerging urban villages, residential corridors, working industrial lands and areas with heritage value.

**C Moved the north-western home to accommodate for protecting an existing Gary Oak tree** - While not in the initial application, the applicant, through work with our architect, landscape architect, and arborist identified a means to move the property and introduce foundation and building techniques which will protect the root zone and integrity of a large gary oak tree on the property;

**D Introduced rain garden stormwater management technology** - In speaking with the City of Victoria planning and parks staff, we identified areas along the internal laneway where rain gardens could be introduced. This will help clean and divert rainwater throughout the property as the grade slowly runs towards the southern frontage on Washington Avenue.

**E Introduction of a raised-bed community garden for the Washington8 strata** - Through a great suggestion by the City of Victoria Planner, a south-west facing parking space was removed in favour of a fenced, raised set of garden beds which provides each family in the Washington8 strata with a plot of land to focus on enhancing local food security and growing connectivity as a neighbourhood and community.

**F Removed basements in the ground level** - following significant discussions with the neighbourhood association and neighbours, concerns around the possibility of including basement suites were made loud and clear. The reduction of these suites provided our team with ample room to include the aforementioned rain gardens throughout the site.