

THE
MANUAL
OF CO-



Households are a friendship.

- Aristotle

Oikia d esti tis philia.

**We hold that
collective action and
collective ownership
are fundamentally
anti-capitalist
movements.**

We demand

**COLLECTIVE
DESIGN,
COLLECTIVE
OWNERSHIP**

In British Columbia, this requires overcoming prevailing perceptions of cooperative models as less viable forms of housing delivery and land use. All levels of government must better understand user-based models in order to invest in their implementation, and institute reforms aimed at the regulatory and financial hurdles to their widespread proliferation. Bold steps must be taken to carve clear pathways for these projects.

We demand financial and policy reform to propel a collective housing revolution.

We demand housing with collective forms of tenure [Co-ops!] and project delivery [Cohousing!] that increase affordability, inclusion and social cohesion, and create de-commodified, user-focused housing.

Our approach is two-fold:



REGULATORY

FINANCIAL

LOBBY MUNICIPALITIES

to acknowledge our demand and commit to the incorporation of guidelines in policy documents which prioritize cooperative housing over speculative real estate development.

ENGAGE FINANCIAL

INSTITUTIONS including credit units, banks and other financial backers to outline roadblocks and pathways to alternative financing models which aid cooperative models.

This lobbying effort would be accompanied by a nationwide mobilization effort. Existing local, regional, and national collectives and organizations could build a combined base of tenant solidarity and action, and provide support for future research, workshops, and pilot programs. Academics and policy think tanks should be engaged to provide white papers and other official submissions outlining policy reforms.

This work could follow this formula:

Review planning docs and identify places where policy is:

- discriminatory towards communal forms of housing
- controlling and excludes certain groups from access to housing
- assuming colonial approaches to land use or types of household

2. Dismantle the above.

Cohousing projects find it hard currently to get traditional financing in cases of non-standard forms of ownership or development, and perceived risk as one-off projects with no track record. This unduly raises the financial burden on these projects (especially when it comes to land costs) to self finance. Pilot projects may need a municipal guarantor to spearhead early projects through financing until a successful track record is established.

This work could follow this formula:

Identify financial experts and industry allies (CMHC, Vancity).

Craft financial policy that will enable municipalities to pressure/incentivize loans specific to cooperative models of project delivery.

**We further demand
that the province
sets targets for
municipalities
to reach
60% NON-MARKET
HOUSING BY 2050.**

**To get to 60%
non-market housing,
A HEALTHY MIX OF
“CO-” TYPOLOGIES
ARE NEEDED.**

But not all “Co-”s are created equal, nor are they mutually exclusive. “Co” can stand for collaborative, cooperative, collective, communal, community, co-living, or co-housing, each with a different focus, and different implications for residents. The residential frameworks listed below are flexible, may take on different forms and sizes, and can be combined with other frameworks.

GLOSSARY OF CO-

CO-HOUSING

Households typically have a fully self-contained unit and share spaces with other households, which often include a large kitchen/dining room, children's play room, guest room(s), workshop, etc.

Most projects are initiated by future residents who are involved in the building design. Residents will often make decisions by consensus, and usually share common meals at least once weekly.

CO-LIVING

Residents typically have a bedroom, and sometimes a private bathroom plus a small fridge and/or food heating ability in their private space. Common spaces are shared with other residents; these may include a kitchen, living room(s), shared baths, and a flexible area where meals and other social gatherings may occur.

CO-OP HOUSING

In Canada, most housing co-operatives (co-ops) were developed during the 1970/80s under social housing programs targeted to people with low-to-moderate income levels. Each housing co-op is controlled by members; there is no outside landlord or management group. They provide at-cost housing for members at three levels: standard rate, and basic or subsidy levels, depending on income.

CO-DESIGN

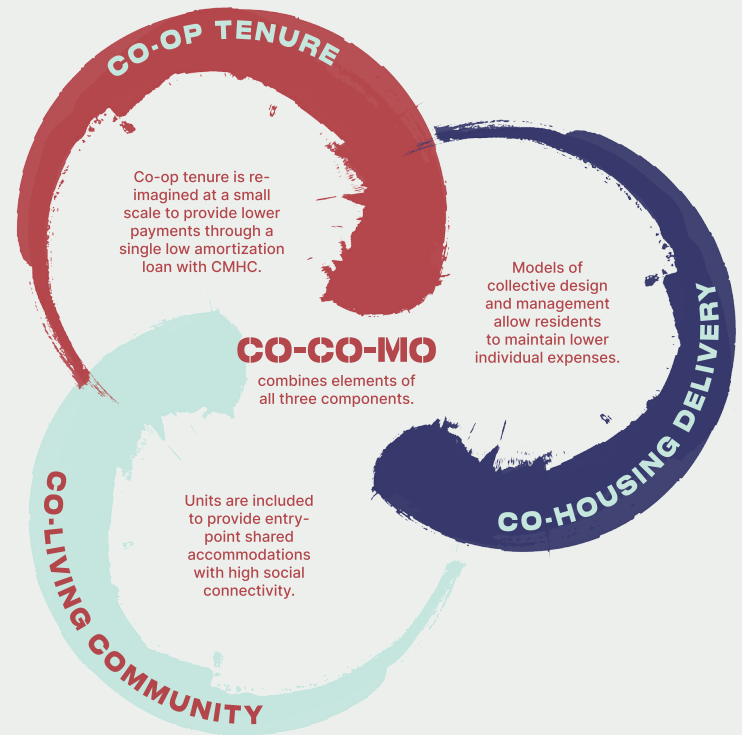
Also known as participatory design or collaborative design, this is a design strategy in many "co"-residential projects, wherein initial plans are developed with future residents (or in real time alongside user participation). A team of professionals later develop the building design, landscape design, and budget through a multi-staged process with regular user feedback.

Introducing the CO-CO-MO

This proposal represents a case study of CO-, where facets of various collective housing approaches are combined in a single intentional community located in Richmond, BC, a prominent ethnoburb of Vancouver.

The study rejects a “one size fits all” housing approach, opting to develop a user-led design and project delivery process that aligns with cooperative project financing and community-focused lifestyles. By developing layered “personas” based on demographic data, interviews, and direct observation, we enacted an expert-led workshop, operating empathetically to develop critical design criteria.

The site is a leftover from Richmond’s agrarian past, a large lot with double street frontage in a largely developed area. Richmond’s unique history and geo-location support a cultural mosaic and a large number of working and middle class families, resulting in a rich opportunity for diverse intentional communities.



GARDEN CITY

CO-CO-MO is located in the McLennan North (MN) superblock on the outskirts of the Richmond City Centre Official Community Plan (OCP). The goal of the OCP for MN, to “achieve a highly liveable, urban neighbourhood in a park-like setting” by 2021, has largely been realized. Most of the MN block has already been rezoned from Single Family zoning and developed to 3-storey townhomes, and the school and park sites have also been established as a cherished community hub. But the rampant development of the last ten years has fallen short of stated OCP goals in its lack of shops and amenities. Originally envisioned as a “distinct downtown,” MN was intended to be a “complete community” with housing within an easy walk of essential goods and services. Instead it is a primarily residential enclave where even a loaf of bread or quart of milk requires transit to a separate neighbourhood.

site



Richmond, BC, 1980

Photo: Richmond Archives

ETHNOBURB

Richmond is a classic ethnoburb, as defined by Wei Li in "Anatomy of a New Ethnic Settlement." Characterized as a largely residential area with a notable cluster of (often wealthy) G1 and G2 Chinese and East Asian populations, Richmond's globalized demographic differs substantially from classic North American Chinatowns. Due to the high degree of ethnic similarity, the area fosters cultural preservation, including a thriving "shadow economy" of goods and services rendered from private homes and disseminated through personal networks and cash payments.

Richmond, BC, 1992

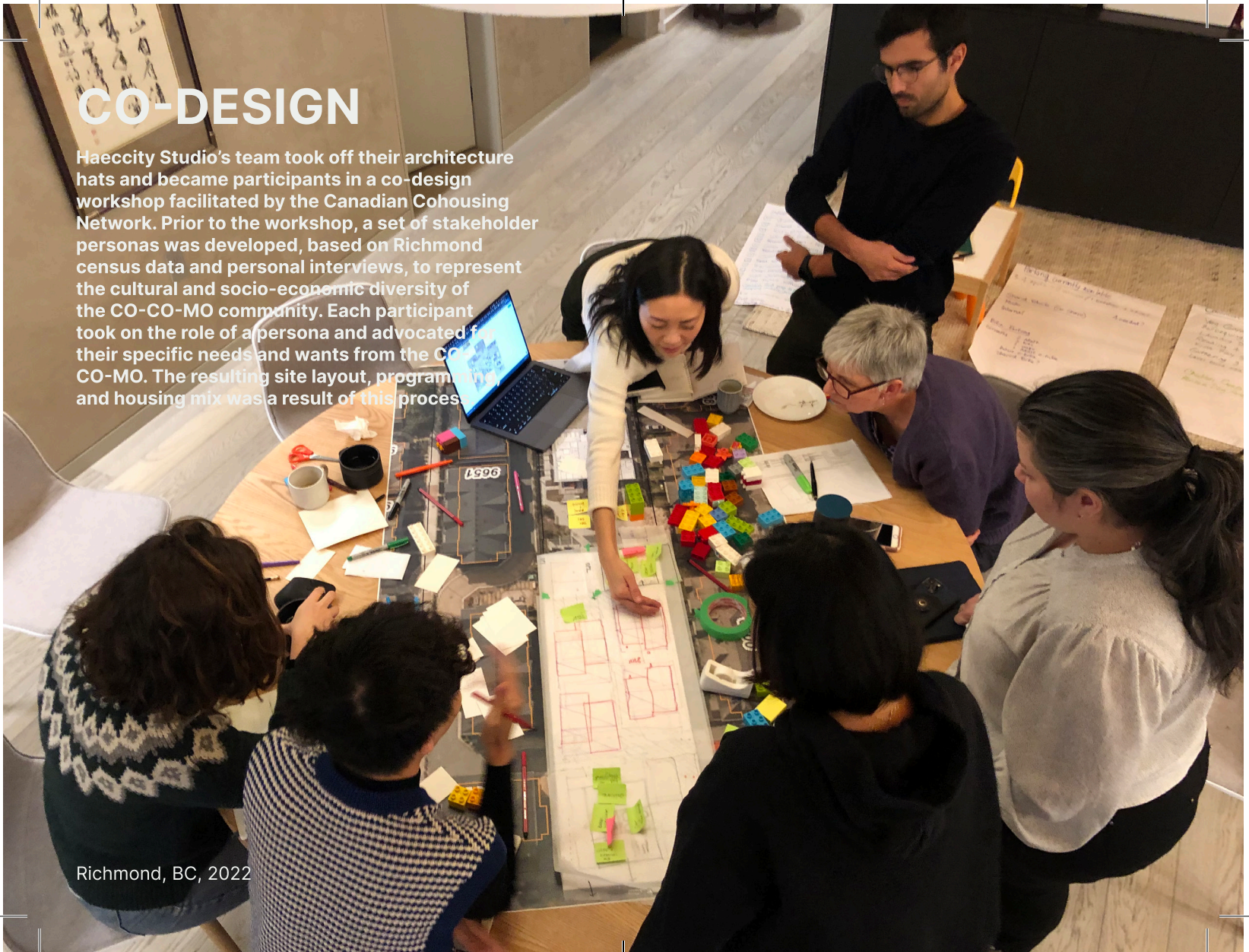
Photo: Richmond Archives



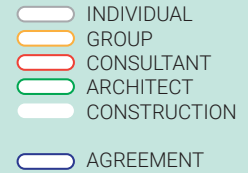
CO-DESIGN

Haecceity Studio's team took off their architecture hats and became participants in a co-design workshop facilitated by the Canadian Cohousing Network. Prior to the workshop, a set of stakeholder personas was developed, based on Richmond census data and personal interviews, to represent the cultural and socio-economic diversity of the CO-CO-MO community. Each participant took on the role of a persona and advocated for their specific needs and wants from the CO-CO-MO. The resulting site layout, program, and housing mix was a result of this process.

Richmond, BC, 2022



CO-DESIGN PROCESS



ESTABLISHMENT AND EXPLORATION

ESTABLISH COHOUSING GROUP

Postulate ideas to like-minded individuals and gain community interest

DISCUSS OPERATIONAL LOGISTICS

Breakdown organizational structure (committees and coordination)
 Establish consistent meeting structure
 Membership fees, responsibilities, expectations
 Means of communication
 Assess financial capability

SOURCE PROCESS CONSULTANT

PRE-SITE ACQUISITION AGREEMENT

Outlines the group's purpose, membership definitions, decision making procedures, and fees. Allows the group to open up a bank account

TEAM BUILDING

Determine individual expectations and priorities
 Explore shared values and goals

DEFINE COMMUNITY VISION STATEMENT

DETERMINE PROJECT MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE

Outsourced to developer, group management team?

SITE SPECIFICATION

SITE CRITERIA

Identify site requirements (number of units, density, region, neighbourhood)

SITE SEARCH + VISITS

Assisted by consultants and/or real estate broker

SITE EVALUATION

Analysis (soil, toxin, and water percolation tests)
 Documentation of existing conditions
 Negotiation of land purchase contract
 Preliminary feasibility studies

INCORPORATE AS A PARTNERSHIP or use a LIMITED LIABILITY COMPANY

Establish a more intensive legal agreement prior to purchasing property and hiring consultants

ATTAIN SITE UNDER CONTRACT

Formulate development strategy
 Develop feasibility budget
 Establish project timeline

DESIGN PROCESS AND CONSTRUCTION DOCUMENTATION

PARTICIPATORY DESIGN PROCESS

Pre-design programming with architect to identify goals, priorities, and design criteria

SCHEMATIC DESIGN PROPOSAL

LAND DEVELOPMENT

Prepare to submit for planning approvals

DESIGN DEVELOPMENT

Group reviews with architect
 Group secures construction financing

CONSTRUCTION DRAWINGS AND BUILDING SPECIFICATIONS

OBTAIN BUILDING PERMITS

SOLICIT AND NEGOTIATE CONSTRUCTION BIDS

SELECT CONTRACTOR

FINALIZE CONSTRUCTION CONTRACT, LOAN, AND SCHEDULE

CONSTRUCTION

REVIEW CONSTRUCTION WORK

OCCUPANCY

Establish long term ownership structure agreements

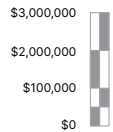
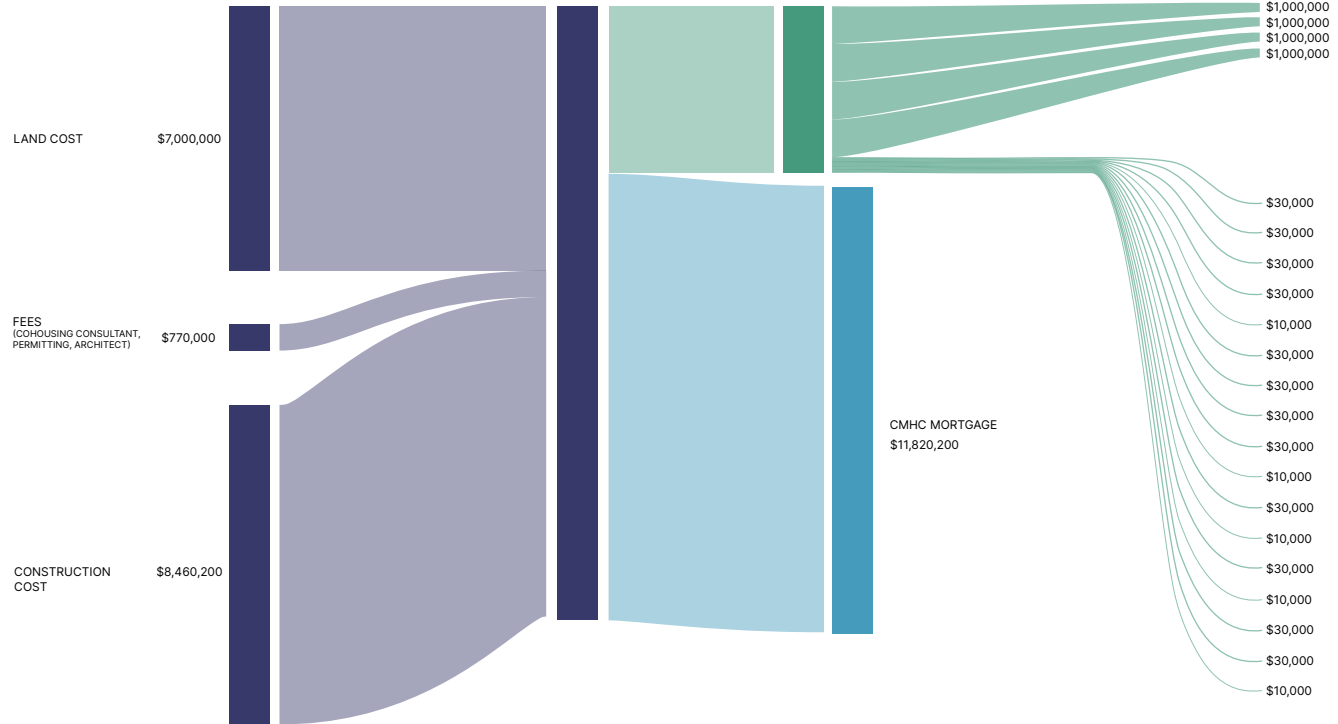
DEVELOPMENT FINANCING

DEVELOPMENT EXPENSES

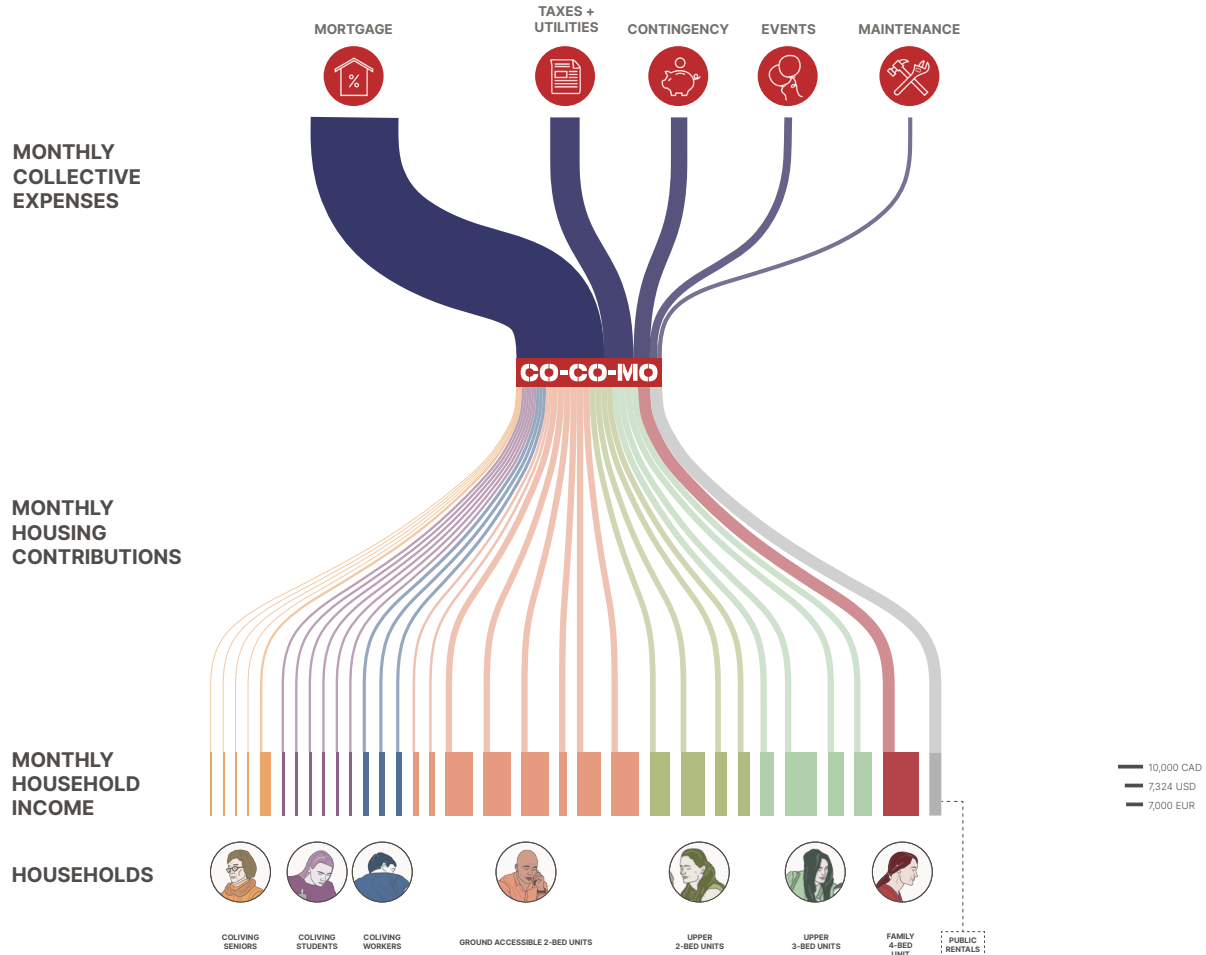
TOTAL DEVELOPMENT COST
\$16,230,200

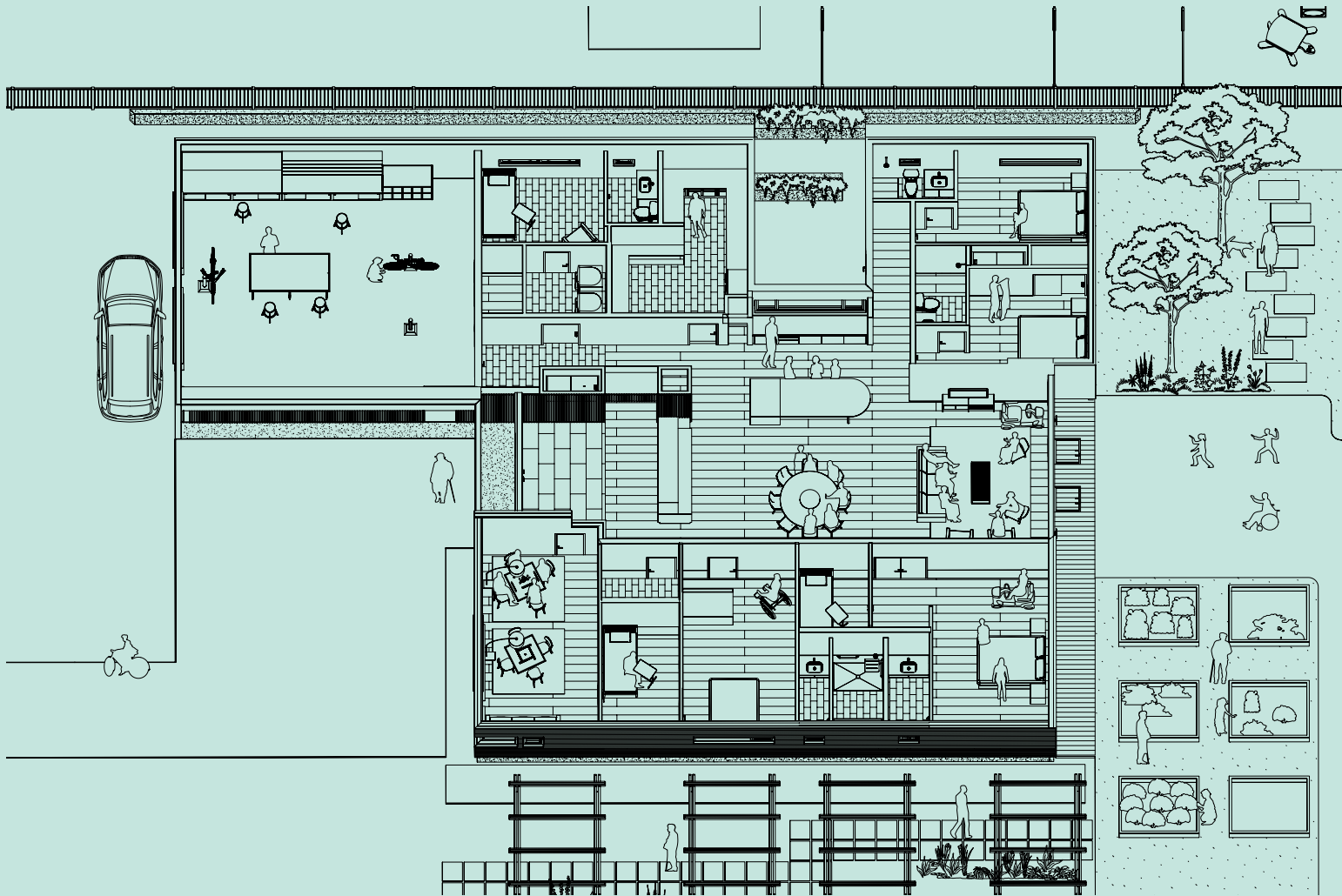
DOWN PAYMENT
\$4,410,000

FOUNDING BUY IN



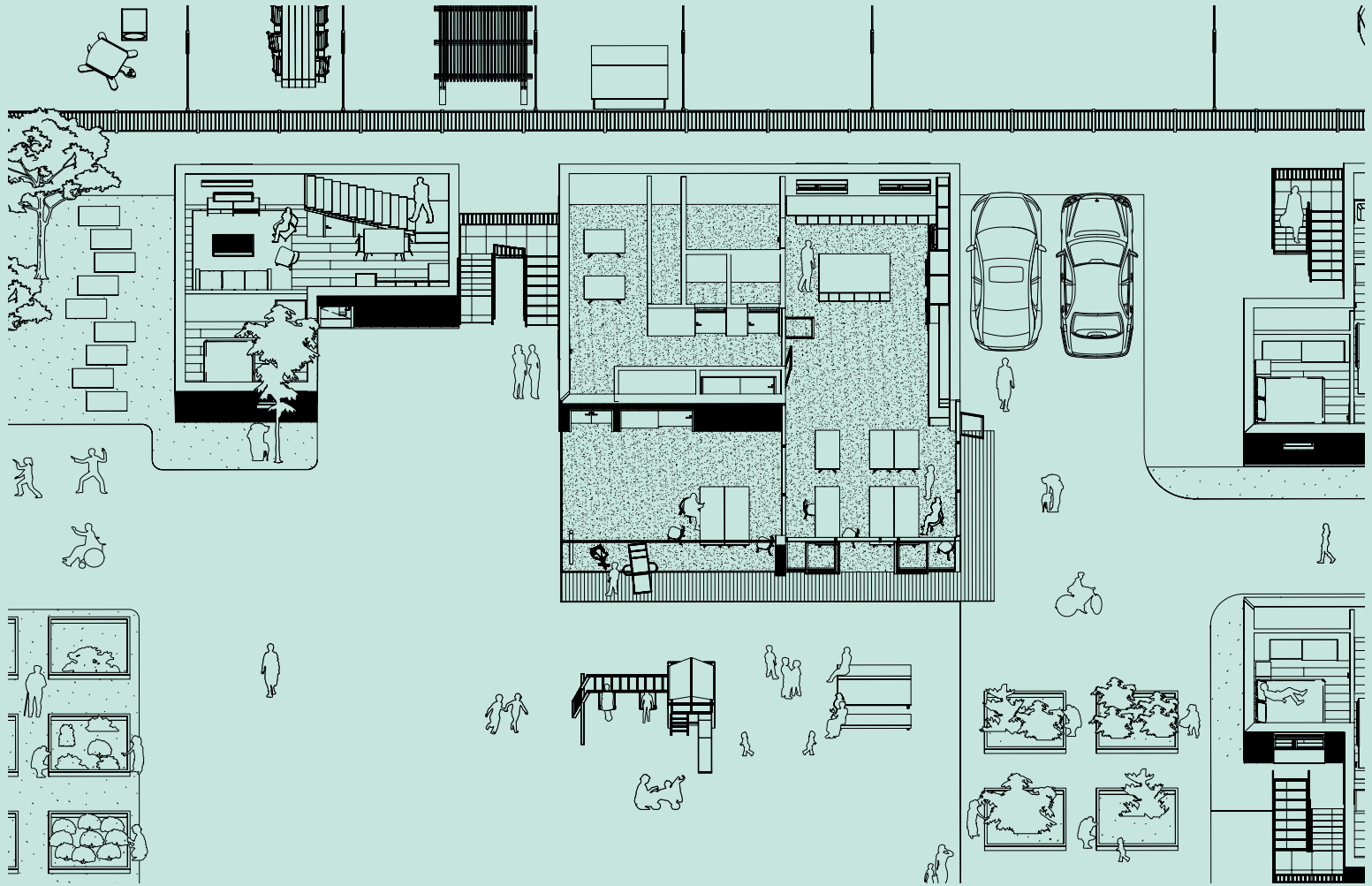
HOUSEHOLD ECONOMICS





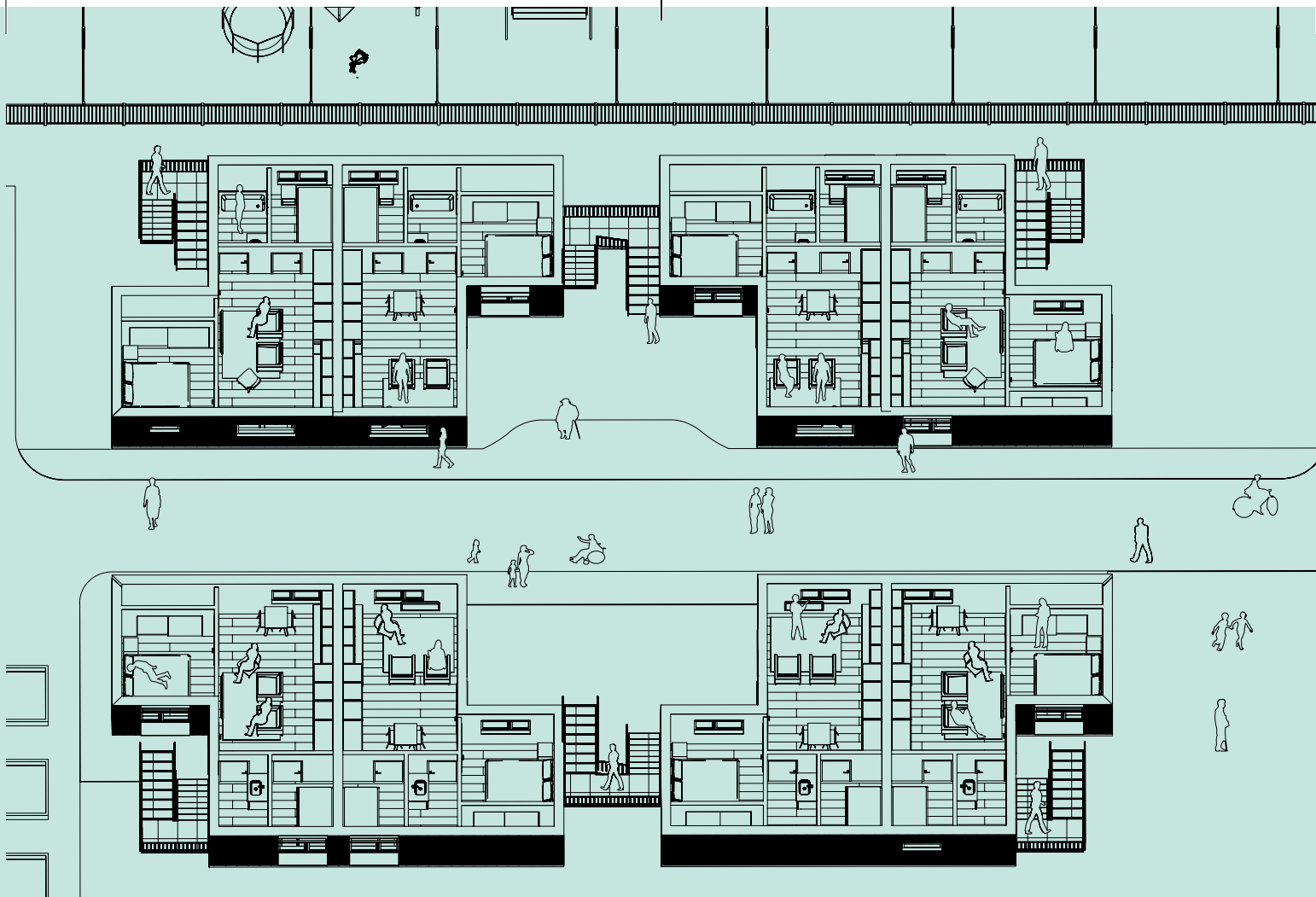
Seniors Co-living Pod
1:200

Seniors who are downsizing and vulnerable to isolation benefit from co-living structures because shared spaces, hobbies, and caretakers contribute to increased health and affordability.



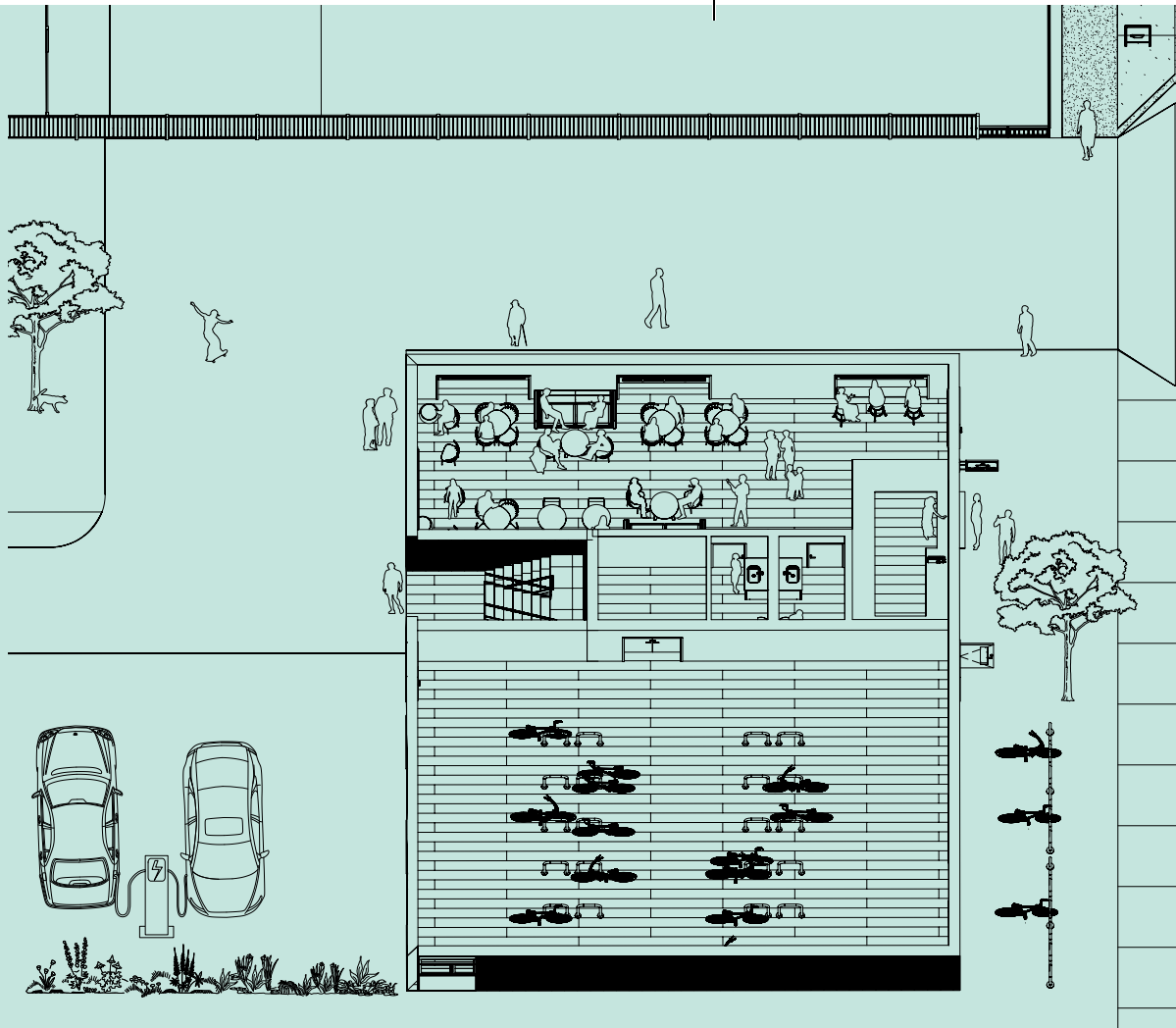
Family Unit, Guest Suite & Common House
1:200

Oversized units are designed to house families over a centralized commons for large-scale cooking, socializing, and organizing. A guest house allows for visitors as well as flex units in transition (upsizing, downsizing, onboarding...).



Cohousing Units
1:200

Standardized floor plates with flexible layouts accommodate the bulk of residents in the centre of the site with walkable access to various shared amenities.



Pub Hub
1:200

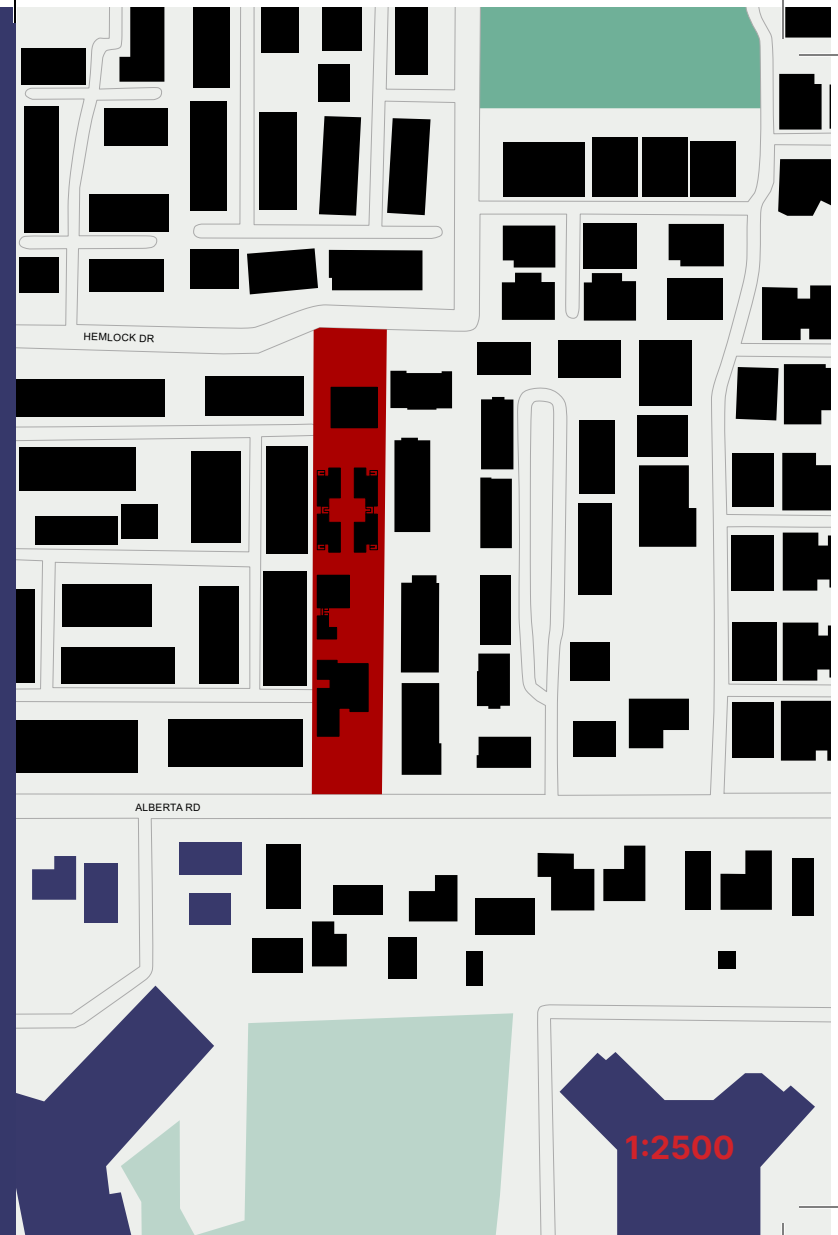
A bicycle-oriented cafe and community gathering place on the ground floor anchor a live-work building with co-living lofts and co-working spaces.

SCALING STRATEGY

USE CASE: RICHMOND MULTI-FAMILY ZONE

DO THE COCOMO

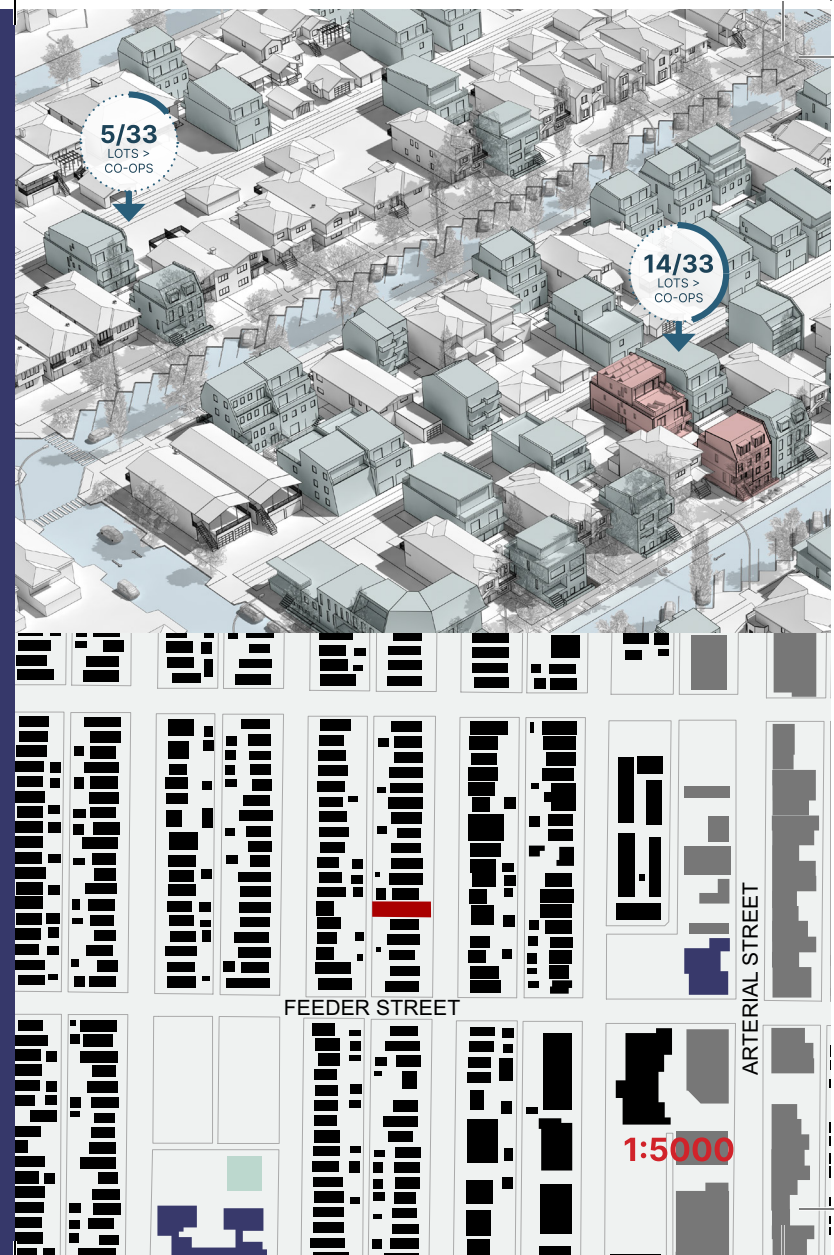
This novel process of Co- can be implemented in a series of PILOT PROJECTS across the province in order to compare and evaluate results against traditional housing approaches prior to launching more expansive programs and reforms. But ultimately, this approach works best at the scale of 20-30 households (where direct participation is manageable), and on select sites that can accommodate that scale. In order for the CO-revolution to truly be widespread, adjustments to the process must also be considered at various scales.



USE CASE: BURNABY SINGLE FAMILY ZONE

DO THE MICRO-OP

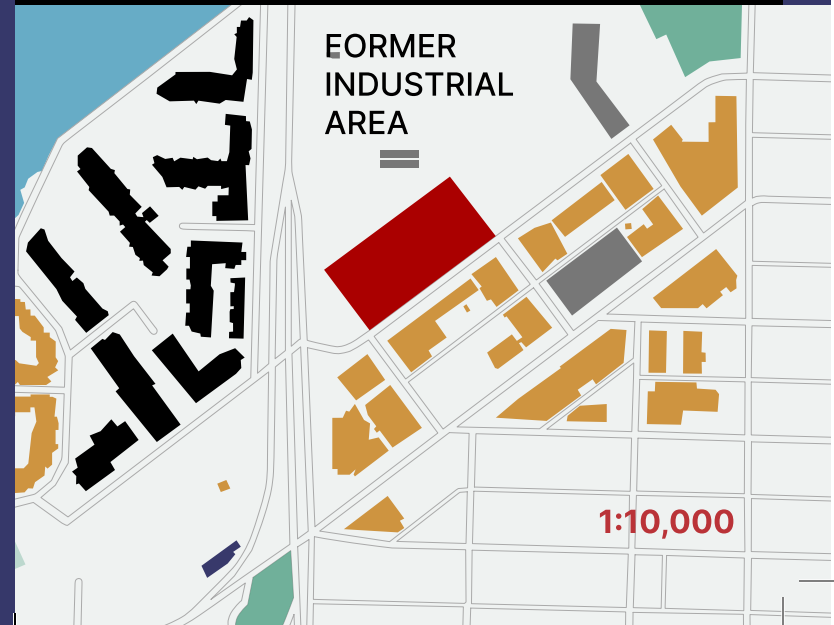
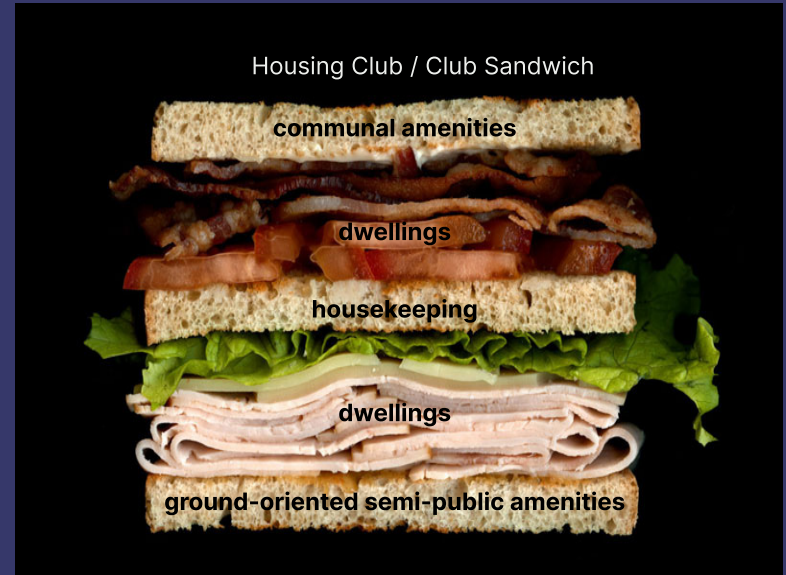
Vancouver, like many North American cities, still retains large areas of Single Family Zoning. These historically exclusionary zones should immediately prioritize small-scale but higher density infill developments of cooperative housing. Municipalities should galvanize legal tenure frameworks for resident-led co-ops that are as widely recognized and accepted as Strata titles, which would unlock a wave of investment in distributed, affordable, resilient, user-focused communities that will incrementally revitalize, diversify, and densify urban sprawl.



USE CASE: VANCOUVER HIGH DENSITY ZONE

DO THE HOUSING CLUB

Underused municipal assets (Public Land) near urban centres could engender innovation in larger building typologies. These could take the form of early 20th Century housing clubs such as the Chelsea Hotel in New York, which approached ownership and design from a collective standpoint. Community serving restaurants and retail at grade, social amenities at roof, and centralized housekeeping bracket highly diversified units, supporting deep affordability and complete communities. Various collective user groups would send representatives to the participatory design process.



CREDITS

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We would like to acknowledge that this project was conceived of on the unceded territories and traditional home lands of the Musqueam First Nations.

haeccity
STUDIO ARCHITECTURE