

THE MIXING MIDDLE COMPETITION

IMAGINING
MIXED-USE
NEIGHBOURHOODS



URBANARIUM
FOR SMART CITIES

COMPETITION BRIEF
UPDATED 2021.10.05

THE MIXING MIDDLE COMPETITION

IMAGINING MIXED-USE NEIGHBOURHOODS

PRESENTED BY the Vancouver Urbanarium Society

APPROVED BY the Architectural Institute of British Columbia

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1. LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The Vancouver Urbanarium Society acknowledges that we are uninvited guests on the unceded, traditional, and ancestral territory of the xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish), səlílwətaʔ (Tsleil-Waututh) and the kʷikʷəłəm (Kwkwetlem) Nations. The Mixing Middle Competition, anchored programming, policy impact proposals, and other outputs from the competition will work to reflect and honour Indigenous perspectives and elevate respectful approaches to land use and land rights planning, policy, practices and governance.

2. INTRODUCTION

Although in many parts of the world the pandemic is still raging, in Canada, one can see life returning to what can only be described as an uncertain new normal. In cities and neighbourhoods, many people experienced the COVID-19 pandemic with a deeper attachment to and attention paid to their residential

neighbourhoods, whether working from home, providing more care for others, or self-isolating due to exposures. These experiences have stimulated latent creativity in terms of living and working possibilities.

This competition is intended to explore some of these new possibilities, as well as other old ideas, that enhance community vitality. The generation of ideas through the competition is intended to show the public what may be possible and to stimulate informed discussion.

Urbanarium's 2018 design competition, The Missing Middle, spurred new thinking about how to develop transitional residential densification in single family zones and build shared resiliency in a 5-minute walkable/accessible city. This competition takes the next step. It asks entrants to rethink life in a small residential neighborhood area and to build on lessons learned from life while working from home during the pandemic.

Technological innovation in terms of video conferencing as well as in making, food distribution, sales and marketing, have gone hand in hand, to facilitate what has been for many a successful change of lifestyle. Sociological changes in North America have also transformed many urban regions into diverse "Arrival Cities," embedding new cultural practices and needs into what remain to be rigid, single-family zoned neighbourhoods.

The challenge is for the entrants to conceive of imaginative new relationships between the myriad of unplanned alternative uses that have cropped up in single-family zones of cities and municipalities, mixing uses within close proximity to one another. The question will be whether this mixing will lead to a lifestyle that is more viable in the working world and can be made more satisfying, walkable/accessible, sociable, culturally inclusive, healthy and sustainable.

Single use zoning was developed in order to eliminate conflicts that inevitably arise with the juxtaposition of perceived incompatible uses. The entrants are challenged to consider and propose mitigating design solutions to these issues.

Having a finely grained mix of uses will inevitably alter the normal transportation and access needs of residents. How these altered needs, be they for pedestrians, cyclists and micro-mobility, automobiles, busses or rapid transit, goods delivery are dealt with as well as street network and public realm changes related to those needs will be of interest to the jurors.

The Mixing Middle Competition sites have been chosen in four municipalities in the Lower Mainland of British Columbia, all in single family residential use zones. Some of these municipalities permit basement suites and laneway houses but they do not permit other uses. It is the intelligent and imaginative mixing of new uses in these zones that the competition seeks to explore.

The intention, as with the previous Urbanarium Missing Middle Competition, is that competitors will make proposals that could be developed by a single homeowner, or by a single home owner and one adjoining neighbour, that includes facilities for themselves and their families. Proposals should foster community-based solutions and inter-generational living. The competitors are encouraged to look at and propose scenarios that may be developed, perhaps over time, for the full four block competition sites.

3. **PROCEDURAL RULES AND CONDITIONS**

Procedural rules and conditions as they apply to this competition have been approved by the Architectural Institute of British Columbia. This is an AIBC approved open ideas competition that does not lead to a commission for architectural services.

4. **OBJECTIVES OF THE COMPETITION**

The Vancouver Urbanarium Society is presenting an open design competition to solicit ideas that explore a wide range of ways to expand opportunities for people in Lower Mainland of British Columbia to live, work, and create within traditionally residential-only areas while making their neighbourhoods more animated, engaging, complete, and multi-functioning for their residents.

5. **PRODUCERS**

The Competition is presented by The Vancouver Urbanarium Society
598 West Georgia Street
Vancouver, BC
V6B 2A3
Attention: Amy Nugent, amy@urbanarium.org

Co-Chairs of The Mixing Middle Competition Committee:
Catherine Alkenbrack, Marta Farevaag and Sara Stevens

Competition Committee Members:
Richard Henriquez, Scot Hein, Sam Mohamad-Khany, Kari Dow and Zoe Acton

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CO-SPONSORS

Wesgroup and Scotiabank

PARTNERS

City of Vancouver, Microsoft and Rethink Canada

SUPPORTING SPONSORS

HDR and HPA

ITC Group and Perkins & Will

Acton Ostry Architects and Franci Architecture

NSDA and Dialog

RWA and Smallworks

space2place and Shift Architecture

PWL and The Real Estate Foundation of BC

PFS and Ramsay Worden Architects

Cushman & Wakefield and Blue Sky Architecture

Beasley & Associates and Liveable Cities Planning

6. ELIGIBILITY

This is a competition open to anyone from anywhere.

a) Entrants need not be registered professionals or local.

b) Entrants may be teams or individuals.

c) Multi-disciplinary teams and teams that include youth members are encouraged.

d) A competitor may submit more than one entry provided they are registered separately.

Entrants that have business relationships with members of the jury or advisors of the competition should not discuss their entries with those members. Jury members will not know the identity of the entries until the winners have been decided. Jury sees only anonymous entries. Those affiliated with a firm that is sponsoring the competition are eligible to enter as are those that work for the same municipalities as members on the Planners' Advisory Group.

Immediate family members and employees of design firms of jury members are not eligible to enter.

7. **PROFESSIONAL ADVISOR**

The Professional Advisor is John Hemsworth, Architect AIBC.

Should a Juror be unable to serve, the Professional Advisor shall select a replacement.

8. **JURY AND PLANNERS' ADVISORY GROUP**

The Jury will name the Overall Prize winners, as well as the Planners Prize on advice from the Planners Advisory Group. As an approved AIBC Competition, the Jury will be composed with a majority of architects. The Planners' Advisory Group will be nominees from the planning departments of the four municipalities in which the sites are located alongside one additional invited guest, who will choose the winner of the Planners' Prize. The Overall Prize category will be an AIBC Competition, which requires that a jury for an endorsed competition must be composed of a majority of architects.

The Juries shall have unlimited authority and discretion in their role as the final arbiter of the competition. Their decisions shall be final. The jury shall appoint a chairperson whose role will be managing the work of the Jury and taking the Jury's votes.

The following ten individuals will make up the Overall Prize Jury:

1. Caterina Gomes
2. Collette Griffiths
3. Travis Hanks, Architect AIBC
4. Richard Henriquez, Architect AIBC
5. Jennifer Lipka, Architect AIBC
6. Paul Lebofsky, Architect AIBC
7. Tracey Mactavish, Architect AIBC
8. Rebecca Meyers
9. Shirley Shen, Registered Architect, WA
10. Ding Yu

The following five individuals will make up the Planners Advisory Group:

1. Genevieve Bucher, Director of Community Planning, City of Coquitlam
2. Michael Epp, Director of Planning, City of North Vancouver
3. Gary Hack, Fellow of the American Institute of Certified Planners
4. Ann McLean, Architect AIBC, City Architect, City of Surrey
5. Theresa O'Donnell, General Manager of Planning, Urban Design, and Sustainability, City of Vancouver

9. TECHNICAL ADVISORS

The following technical advisors will be available to the jury for technical questions arising during the evaluation process: (Names to come but will include advisors in the areas of sustainability, transportation, land use and land rights)

10. REGISTRATION

Each entry shall be registered in advance (see schedule) by filling out the online registration form on themixingmiddle.ca. There is a registration fee of \$120 Canadian, payable to the Vancouver Urbanarium Society. Payment is made on the online form. If you wish to pay by cheque please contact competition@urbanarium.org

Four locations have been selected within which entrants may select a block and individual site on which to base their submissions. The entrants will be asked to state their first, second, and third preferences among choices for their entry. Each entrant will be assigned a site based on their stated preference and to assure distribution across all sites. Digital site plans of the four sites, including topography and legal parcelization, will be available for download on the competition website. Additional context information can be obtained from Google Earth, Bing Maps, and the websites of the four cities in which the sites are located.

11. AWARDS AND PAYMENTS TO COMPETITORS

11.1 Overall Prize Awards

Overall Winner	\$10,000 CAD
Second Prize	\$5,000 CAD
Third Prize	\$3,000 CAD
5 Honorable Mentions	\$1,500 CAD each

11.2 Planners' Prize Award

Planners' Prize	\$10,000 CAD
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12. COMPETITION SCHEDULE

Registration Opens	Wednesday, September 8th, 2021
Registration Deadline	Tuesday, November 2nd, 2021
Deadline for Questions	Tuesday, November 16th, 2021
Answers Posted	Thursday November 22nd, 2021
Submission Deadline	Friday, January 14, 2022
Jury Deliberation	Saturday, January 29, 2022
Award Presentation	Friday, February 11, 2022

13. NEIGHBOURHOOD SITES

This will be a regional competition, with each entrant working on one of four sites in Vancouver, Coquitlam, Surrey or North Vancouver - all in British Columbia, Canada. The sites each consist of four city blocks located near a strong neighbourhood commercial street or node.

Coquitlam

Austin Heights between Dansey Ave and Rochester Ave, and Marmont St and Lebleu St

North Vancouver

Moodyville between East 4th and East 6th Streets and Ridgeway and Queensbury Avenues

Surrey

Fleetwood between 80th Ave and 82nd Ave, and 156th and 158th St

Vancouver

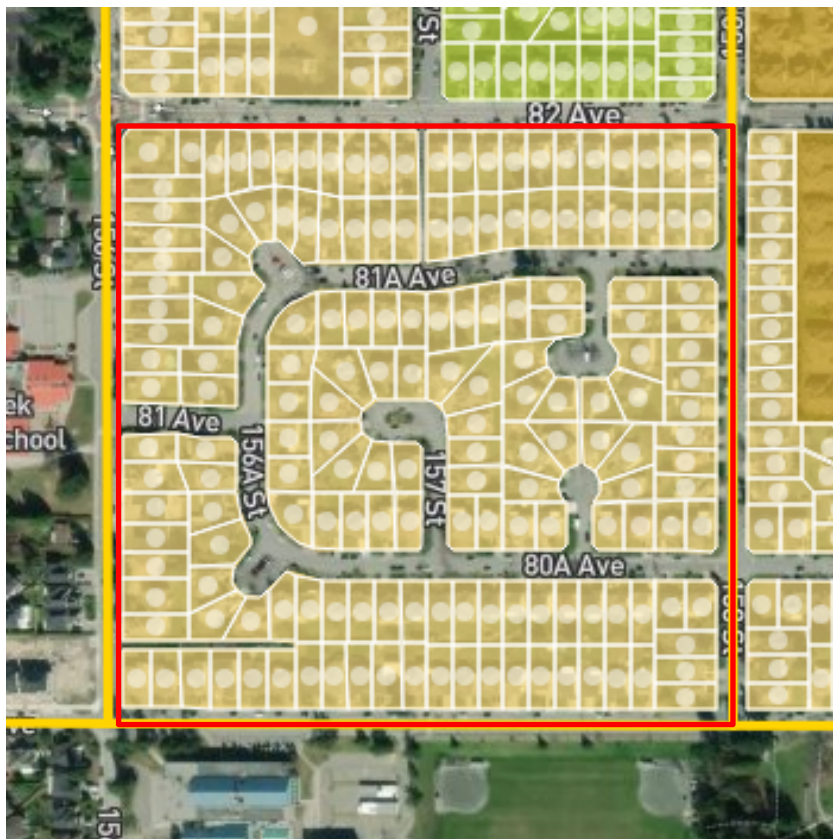
Riley Park between E 29th Ave and Sophia St (bounded by E 29th Ave to the north, E 32nd Ave to the south, Main St. to the west, and to the alley immediately east of Sophia St)

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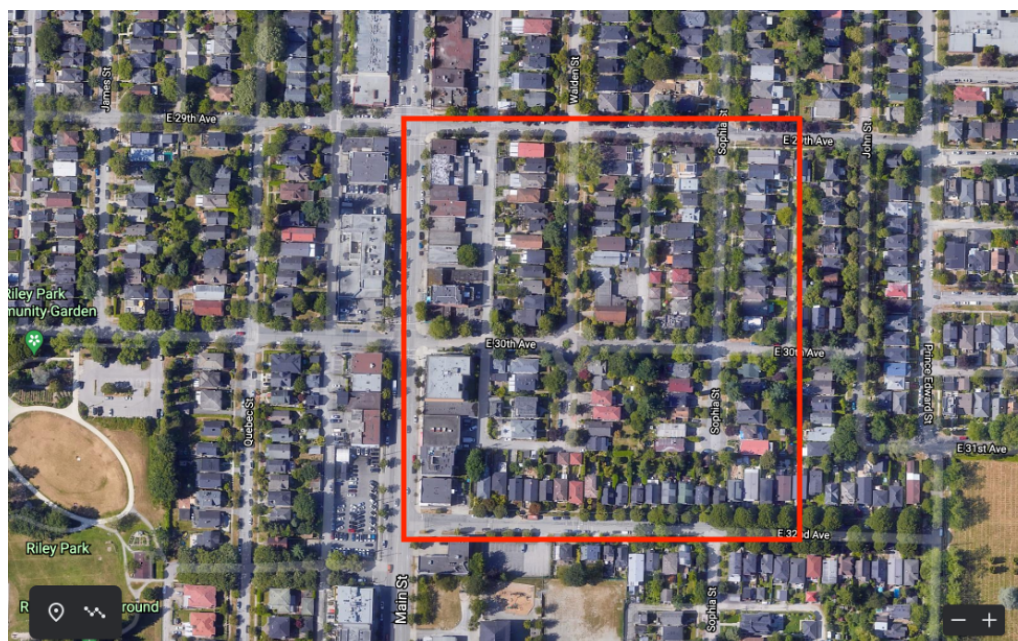


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Surrey Site



Vancouver Site

Entrants will be assigned a site based on their ranked preference. The assigned four-block site will be the context area for the detailed proposal. Within the context site, each entrant should select as context a blockface for their design intervention; this blockface can be the street that the existing buildings address with their front entries, the lane blockface, or a blockface on a side street of the block as suits their design purpose.

Within the selected blockface, the entrant should propose detailed ideas for redevelopment at a density of between FSR 1.2 and 1.5, of one lot or two adjacent lots. [FSR is floor space ratio, the ratio of the areas of all of the enclosed spaces in a building to site area.] This will not be about large lot redevelopment, but rather generating inspiring possibilities for a single lot landowner or a pair of neighbours to integrate non-residential land uses that benefit them as places to work, create, or provide services that will also enrich and help complete their neighbourhood.

The intent is to allow experimentation with different land uses and public realm configurations. Competitors are encouraged to ask questions that challenge current zoning and traditional street/lot layouts.

The purpose of asking entrants to address the neighborhood scale is to contextualize the small lot designs that are the heart of the competition. Entrants can choose to leave the neighborhood as is or explore the potential of their intervention to catalyze new uses on their blockface and within the four-block context area.

It is not a requirement that the proposed development include residential, although it is assumed that the majority of the area of the block will contain residential uses.

The Jury is also interested to know how the proposed developments will be financed. A schematic business plan should be submitted to show the feasibility of the proposal that would include the assumption as to whether the land would be put into the proforma at no cost, low cost or at market value.

14. SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS

Submissions will be delivered in:

- (1) PDF should not exceed 10 MB or 6 pages
- (3) JPGs should not exceed 2 MB each
- (1) Video File should not exceed 50 MB or 1 minute

Format requirements are intended for the following purposes:

- Digital review by the jury (note that the entries will be anonymous to the juries during their deliberations)
- Digital publication on the Urbanarium website and social media (JPG's and video are mostly for social media, press and exhibition purposes. Cell phone quality of video is fine, ideal JPG dimensions are 1080 X1080 pixels and these can be a repeat of what is contained in the 6-page PDF. Content is up to you: the idea/key intentions of the submission, a before and after account of the site, an introduction to yourself and why you entered....)
- Print publication in the Urbanarium Competition publication (8.5 by 11 inches in landscape orientation)

Submissions selected for publication may be requested to provide InDesign files for layout and editing purposes.

Each submission should provide 6 PDF pages that can be printed on standard 8.5 by 11 inch paper with font sizes that can be read at that size. A digital model of the one or two lot design in SketchUp or similar format is requested in the submission.

The following is a suggested framework for the 6 pages of the submission; this outline lists information to be considered and included (on which page is optional) where relevant, with the design graphics and supporting text.

Pages 1, 2, and 3: Present the design solution for the selected one or two lots including:

- A statement of the key intentions
- Graphics: building massing drawing; floor plan of each floor

- **Project data:** land uses and areas, size of each unit in the project, key features and amenities
- **Design rationale:** integration with immediate neighbours, integration within the block, integration into the neighbourhood context blocks
- **Social rationale:** description of the land uses as contributions to the social life and structure of block and the neighbourhood
- **Economic rationale:** provide a business plan for the non-residential land uses included in the concept for the full development to explain how they could be viable and contribute to the feasibility of the development concept. State whether land value will be allocated in the business plan at market value, at no cost or other.
- **Relationship to existing zoning and plans:** where does it follow and where ignore existing zoning and guidelines, if applicable; how does it fit or ignore municipal plans for the area
- **Relationship and impacts to adjacent existing buildings** (shadow, privacy, loss of trees, etc.).

Pages 4 and 5: Present the master plan for the affected blockface and its block including:

- **With the proposal for the one or two lots in mind, what would be desirable to change within its blockface and block context?**
- **Graphics:** block master plan and any explanatory drawings including any proposed changes to adjacent roads and lanes and other aspects of the public realm
- **Proposed alterations to local circulation network:** vehicular, cyclist/micro-mobility, pedestrian, transit (may include alterations on public land including street closures, street designation changes and redesign and public realm enhancements), goods movement and delivery.
- **Zoning and design guideline provisions:** heights, setbacks, etc. that would be suggested to make the intended changes appropriate from an urban design standpoint
- **Proposed iterations to the planning approval process, legal mechanisms for ownership and financing etc.**

Page 6: Embed the proposal in the four-block neighbourhood, including:

- **Potential for competition idea to provide a catalyst for change in the neighbourhood as other land uses mix into the area**
- **Proposed ideas for improved connectivity, public realm amenities, and neighbourhood cohesiveness.**

15. JUDGING CRITERIA AND DISCRETION OF JURIES

The Jury will have discretion in the selection of prize awards considering such criteria as creativity, practicality, implementability, anticipated improvement in neighbourhood amenity and diversity, potential to promote social engagement, access, and inclusivity, and potential to support walking and cycling/micro-mobility access.

The Jury will have latitude in the award of the prizes and honourable mentions to highlight the features that they were impressed by in each submission and these features will be highlighted in the jury statements. They may for instance declare two winners and split the winner and runner up prize money equally between the two, or vary the number of winners, provided however the total value of the prize money shall not be reduced.

16. POST-COMPETITION ACTIVITIES

Activities will entail the preparation and release of the jury report, media releases, social media and website postings, an awards ceremony and exhibition, a video based on the winning entries, and a publication of selected submissions with wide circulation including to the council and staff of the affected municipalities.