



Visions for Surrey Volume Three

Guildford: Cornered

Place-Making at Mall's Edge



An Ideas Competition for Surrey's Town Centres

TOWNSHIFT

Suburb into City

Cloverdale | Fleetwood | Guildford | Semiahmoo | Newton

In early 2010, designers from around the world were asked to imagine futures for five of Surrey's key growth hubs, its 'town centres.' Different sets of rules were devised for each site, but in all cases designers were asked to imagine more walkable and livable town centres, with increased housing densities accompanied with public amenities. TownShift's goal is to generate visions of how architectural and urban design for new private and public development might "shift" Surrey from its suburban legacy towards a bolder, more inclusive, and more sustainable urban future.

As Whalley is the emerging downtown for all of Surrey, it was not included in this competition, but highly creative and innovative schemes were received for all five other town centres: Cloverdale, Fleetwood, Guildford, Newton and Semiahmoo. A distinguished international jury of architects, landscape architects, planners and developers met to select the winning schemes, and there were public exhibitions and discussions of suburban futures at SFU Surrey and Kwantlen Polytechnic University.

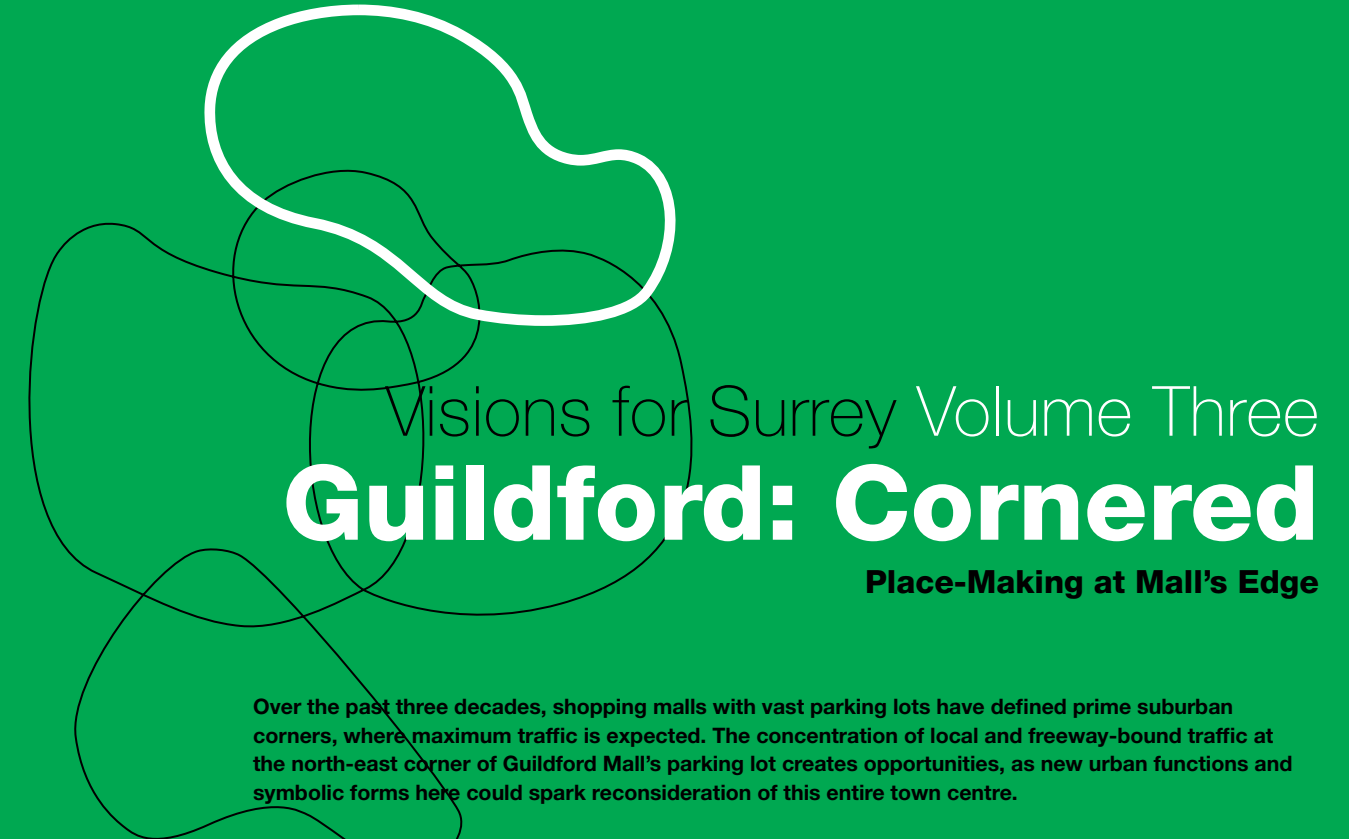
"TownShift: Suburb Into City" is the largest ideas competition ever mounted by a Canadian municipal government, attracting 137 different entries from more than twenty countries. Prizes totaling \$75,000 were distributed to winners for the five sites, and an overall best scheme was named. This is an ideas competition, where designers from all backgrounds (both amateur citizens and

professionals entered and won prizes) were given broad design freedom. While the City of Surrey is not committed to building any of these, it does own land and otherwise controls development for most sites. Some of TownShift's assumptions and results are already shaping building proposals. Cities are made from ideas as much as bricks and mortar, and TownShift is 'research and development for the next Surrey.'

This publication is one of five separate volumes that collect and interpret winning designs for each site. As competition organizers, we have chosen to also publish selected additional entries we think might shape Surrey for the better. The complete competition submission panels—with extra images for these and all other TownShift entries—can be found at www.townshift.ca.

We invite everyone to tell us what they think of TownShift's ideas in five public meetings in late fall of 2010, or via online comments. We will collect this feedback into a sixth and final volume of this publication in early 2011, with an eye to turning even more of our designer's ideas into built reality. Most urban design consultations are led by verbal evaluation and written check-lists/wish-lists, but this is a pioneering form of public engagement led by visual ideas—created by TownShift's talented and engaged entrants. Please enjoy the TownShift designs collected here, and do tell us what you think.

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Guildford: Cornered

Place-Making at Mall's Edge

Over the past three decades, shopping malls with vast parking lots have defined prime suburban corners, where maximum traffic is expected. The concentration of local and freeway-bound traffic at the north-east corner of Guildford Mall's parking lot creates opportunities, as new urban functions and symbolic forms here could spark reconsideration of this entire town centre.

Changes have already begun, with gas stations closed down and shopping and strip malls re-purposed - setting the stage for renewal. The TownShift design challenge here is to temper and humanize the Guildford Mall's parking lot corner at 104th Avenue and 152nd Street. Beginning with re-conceiving a former gas station site there, then extending their approach to the corner to the north, design competition entrants were asked to shape Guildford's formal entrance from the Trans-Canada Highway. They were asked to imagine new activities and bold visual forms there that would create a sense of arrival at one of Surrey's most important portals. Similar to TownShift's Fleetwood competition brief, entrants were given almost complete freedom in terms of buildings or no buildings, new urban activities or pure sculpture, to be built of any palette of construction or plant materials. Whether 'garden-plots' or 'gargantuan-tower,' competition entrants were granted latitude in invigorating one of Surrey's busiest and noisiest intersections. Designers were challenged to stimulate community dialogue, by proposing new uses and forms appropriate to a future less dominated by the automobile.



SITE LOCATION



Fundamental to North American suburban planning has been the notion of the ‘node’ - a nucleus of activity that becomes the organizing principle for surrounding environs. Typically, neighbourhoods would be organized around a primary school with walk-to-school distances determining the scale and character of subdivisions. With the increased pace of an automobile-dominated lifestyle, shopping malls usurped schools as the magnetic poles for neighbourhoods, subsequently altering the layout and character of surrounding streets and residential areas.

Guildford Mall—with its more than 200 stores at 1.7 million square feet—is one of the most important retail nodes in the entire Lower Mainland, with only Burnaby’s Metrotown being larger. Extending out in nearly every direction from the shopping centre and its large expanse of asphalt are long lines of retail and service strip malls in multiple variations: car dealerships, hotels, gas stations, fast food, and almost every franchise business imaginable. On a compact public campus to the west and north of 152nd Street and 104th Avenue is a grouping of community facilities which include a library and the Guildford Recreation Centre. Other than

this, there is precious little public realm, the entire area having difficult walking conditions and no open air civic square or place to gather or repose.

The area’s greatest claim to fame (or camp infamy, in the eyes of some) is, of course, the giant Canadian flag and flagpole, an over-sized legacy from Expo 86 that now serves as an icon for a car dealership, visible even to motorists passing by on the Trans-Canada Highway. This landmark may have un-intentionally increased perceptions of Guildford town centre as a zone of transience – a changeable retail area leading on to Surrey’s fast-growing residential neighbourhoods.

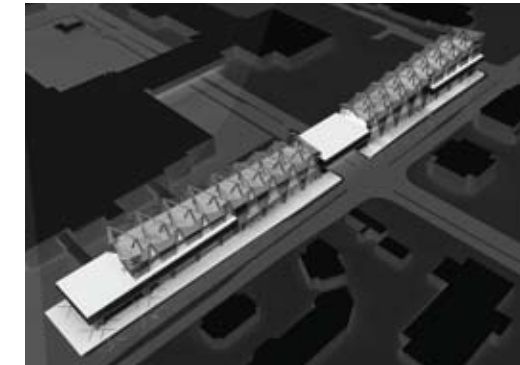
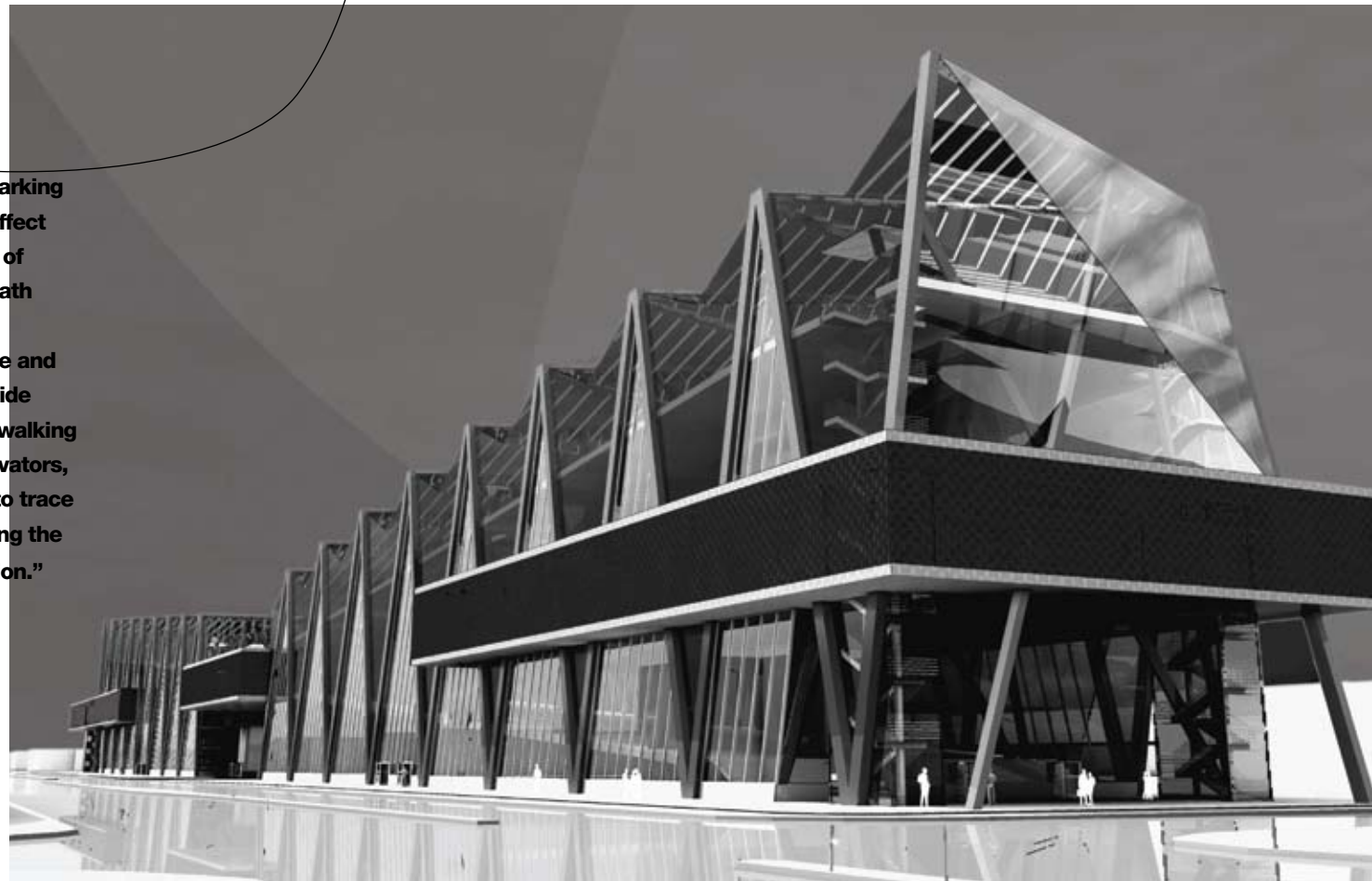
Dominated by this hyper-concentration of retail and automotive functions, Guildford might be thought of as Surrey’s ‘tin man town centre’— in need of a heart. The TownShift Competition schemes that follow are visions from designers from around the world for new ideas that would energize that heart.

Idea **Crystal Pavilion**

Vladimir Belsky / Moscow, Russia / Entry No. 38

“The concept is to create an object, marking the street corner and having a visual effect as an entrance gate. The main feature of the garden is the pedestrian walking path reaching the top level of the structure. Visitor movement through the structure and between the levels is designed to provide maximum flexibility and freedom. The walking surface itself and a combination of elevators, escalators and stairs allow the visitor to trace a unique and individual route, thus filling the whole space with lively movement action.”

— Vladimir Belsky



This entry proposes an elevated glazed garden pavilion that creates a strong visual presence (and buffer) along the parking lot perimeter. Flat and sloping slabs of concrete are suspended from a series of steel A-frame structures running along the length of 152nd Street, all of which are glazed, tempering the environment for the proposed gardens within. This idea is not without a bite of irony, as its all-paved surroundings are anything but garden-enhancing. This miniature version of 19th century ‘Crystal Palaces’ would benefit weary shoppers and drivers, as well as providing welcome rain- and exhaust-protected alternate pedestrian route. Most of all, it provides Surrey its first year-round interior garden, and “greens” the city’s busiest intersection.

The ‘Crystal Pavilion’s’ full range of interior functions are only hinted at, but might include receptions, exhibitions, and crafts sales. While its appearance might at first resemble a transportation terminal, the inner garden atrium would be a refuge from city streets. By way of comparison, Edmonton’s winter gardens located beside Diamond Myers Architect’s Citadel Theatre demonstrates how a multi-purpose interior green space can temper surrounding city streets.

This scheme’s architectural forms would not look out of place as a small World’s Fair pavilion, and recalls the Crystal Palace, that hugely influential design from the 1851 London Exhibition. While that was a design for a large park, this TownShift entry may be over-scaled along 152nd Street, and needs lateral links and activities on the street side. Large scale ambitions are understandable for Guildford, given that its neighbours are a giant flagpole, a monolithic mall, continuous strip malls, and acres of asphalt. Finally, changing this place’s character from transient commercial node to a balanced destination is achieved here through its notion of a hanging garden and public hall. This ‘build a hall and they will come’ theme is to be found among other Guildford design entries.

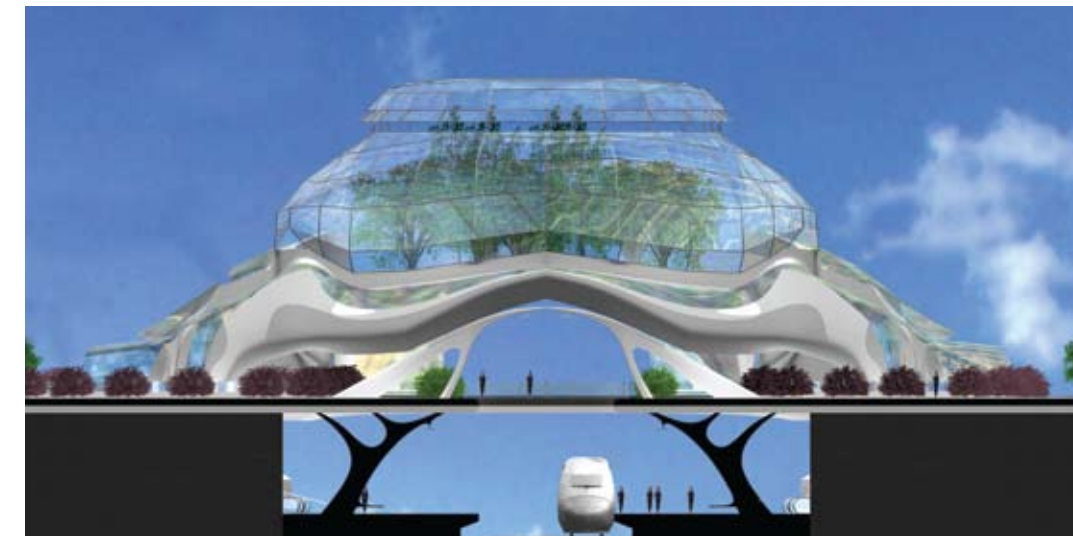
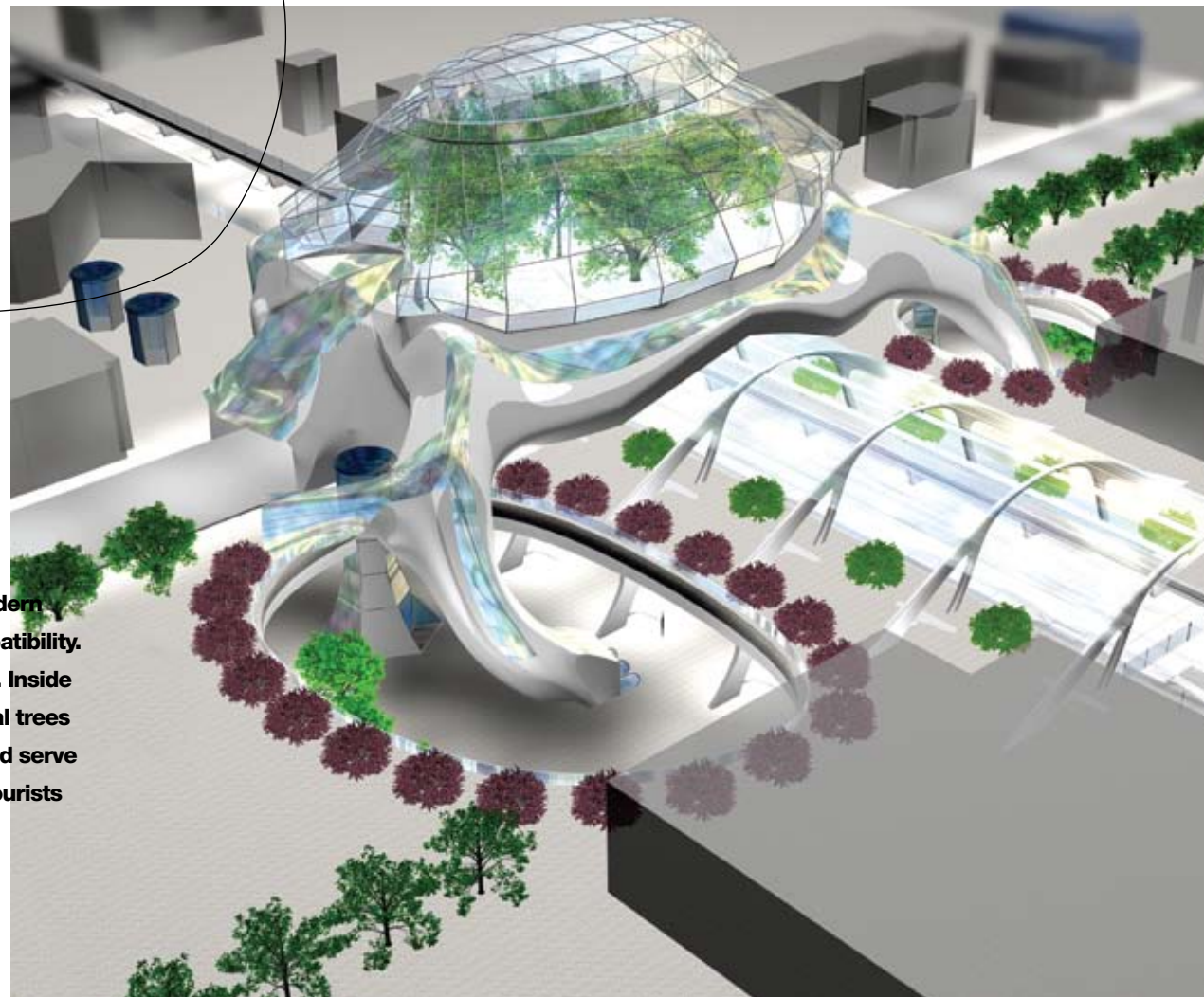
Idea Garden in Transit

Dmitry Dadyanov / St. Petersburg, Russia / Entry No. 43



“Guilford Crossroads Garden combines modern high-tech architecture and ecological compatibility. It is considered to be a three-level complex. Inside the garden various exotic plants and tropical trees are supposed to grow. Guilford Garden could serve as a place of repose for townspeople and tourists especially in a cold season of the year.”

— Dmitry Dadyanov



With the possibility of Light Rail Transit (LRT) running to Guildford Mall along 104th Avenue, this design proposes an elevated glazed garden above the busy intersection with 152nd Street. The design is creature-like, with curving stair-tentacles wrapping around the station, a winter garden forming a broad green head, and just the hint of a smile. This lush indoor park is filled with tall chestnut and maple trees elevated above the roadway, a ‘green brain’ for Guildford. A protected promenade serves as street level bus shelter for bus riders.

An organic design theme is constant, from the shaping of the concrete walls, curving glass and bone-like angled columns holding up the roadway that doubles as roof of the underground rail station. Of all the illustrative views produced for this scheme, the cross section of 104th Avenue is the most revealing, as it shows how street, LRT, and garden overhead relate to the scale of the pedestrian, bio-morphic forms running top to bottom.

While this entry has seductive visuals, it also benefits from being the most transit-oriented of all the Guildford designs. It is vital civic infrastructure that also seizes an opportunity to create gestural, continuously winding architectural forms. Digital design and new construction techniques have permitted architects a return to shapes directly inspired by nature, notably the ‘flock of birds-like’ bridges and pavilions (First Canadian Place, Toronto, etc.) of Spanish architect/engineer Santiago Calatrava. This bold creation would be a welcome contrast to Guildford’s marketplace of ordinariness, an instantly prominent icon, bolder than any flagpole, no matter how high.

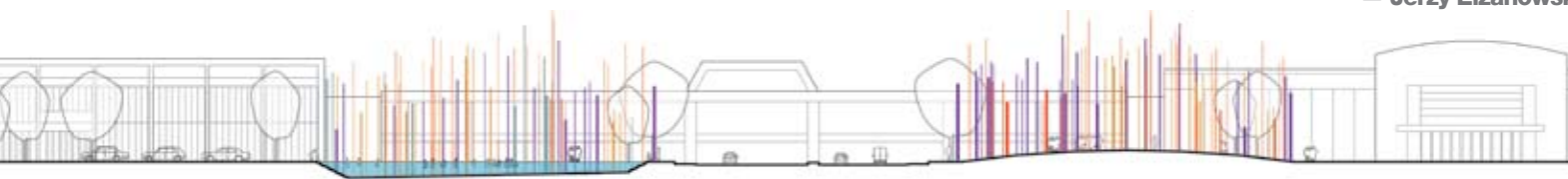
Idea Art Amenity

Jerzy Elzanowski / Vancouver, Canada / Entry No. 66



"The 'manufactured reeds' project gives Guildford a sense of place in a simple and cost-effective way. It creates a much needed bridge between the hurried driver and the marginalized pedestrian. The 'blue garden' is a place for children to splash in the summer and skate in the winter. The 'green garden' can be landscaped in any way as long as it remains a public park. It can be a field with wild flowers or a venue for a new kind of ball game; it can become a vegetable garden or a children's playground. The community will choose."

— Jerzy Elzanowski



This design deals with the site's brutal corners through a modest proposition of a public art installation that supports other public activities. A green play park is planned for the north corner (with swing sets and monkey bars), with the south one also having a water park/pool, which would double as an artificial ice winter skating rink.

Continuity is provided by its sculptural public art component, a field of 12 to 20 foot-tall multi-coloured plastic tubes of varying heights. Planted on both sides of the intersection, these tubes would undulate like wheat in the wind. They would temper the surrounding machine aesthetic with their eerie sound. This motion means an ever-changing panorama, accentuated by their construction from newly-developed plastics, which change colour in response to changes in air temperature. These tubes are nearly vandal-proof, and readily replaced.

Focused in effect, this proposal has the key advantage of being realizable on a modest budget quickly, with the

added bonus that it treads lightly on the earth, creating a space of repose without dominating it. This same modesty of built mass and new construction means it offers little in the way of noise and pollution mitigation, but these ephemeral tubes could certainly temper Guildford's 'visual pollution.'

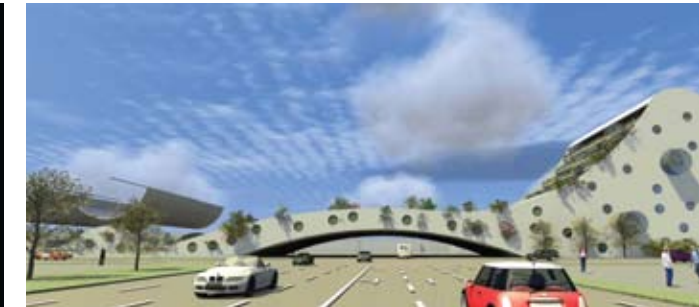
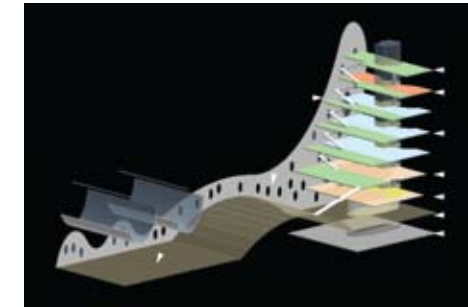
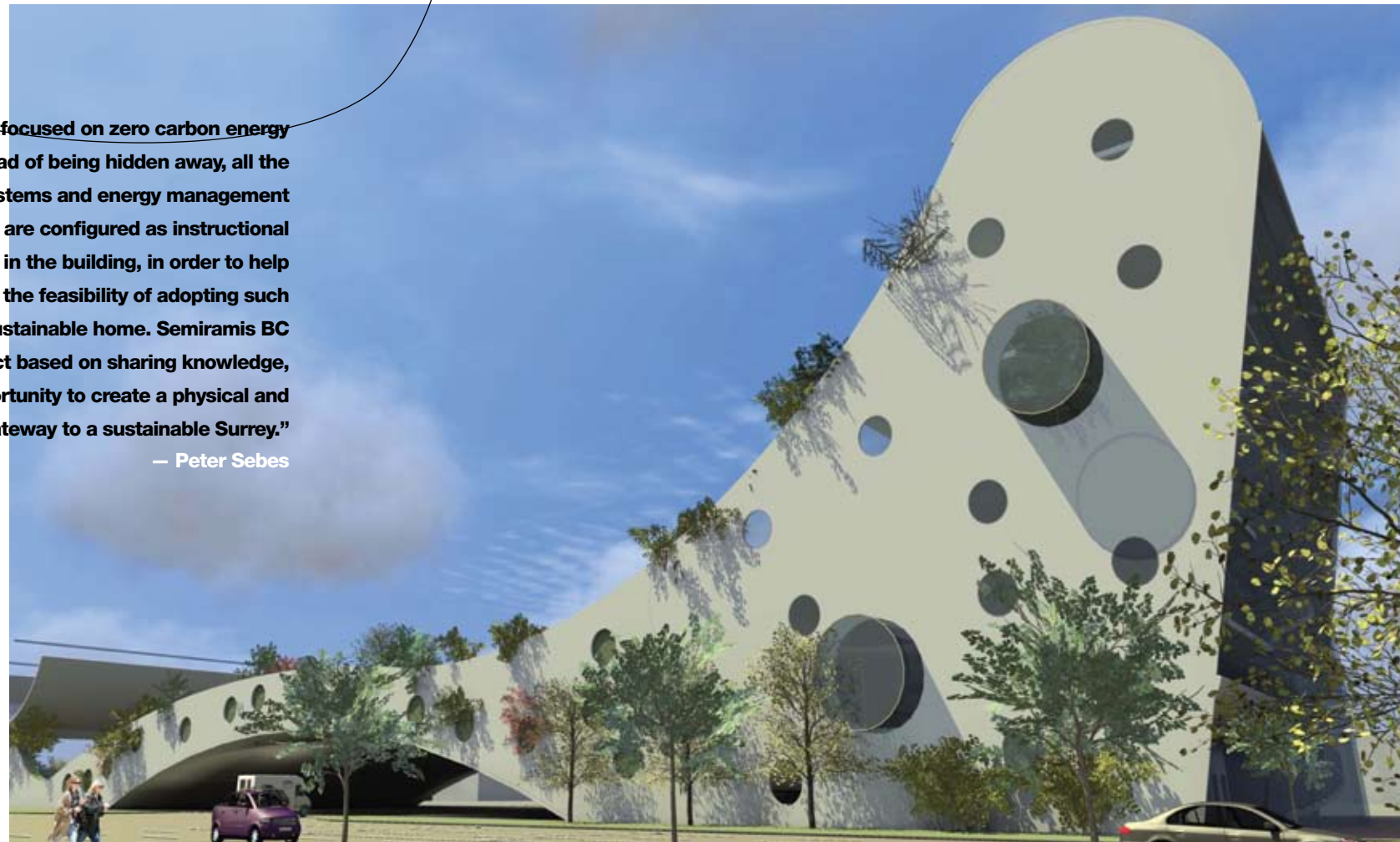
With new construction limited to pool/rink and playground, this project looks beyond bricks and mortar as a design strategy. Simultaneously, it acknowledges that in a setting so over-run with automotive elements, it does not suffice to plant a conventional park. The strength of this idea is less the particularity of its "manufactured reeds," than its integration of suburban landscapes through planting public art in an artificial forest done up in the colours of the latest automotive paint.

Idea School for Green

Peter Sebes / Budapest, Hungary / Entry No. 75

“The project is focused on zero carbon energy sources. Instead of being hidden away, all the heat recovery systems and energy management centers are configured as instructional showrooms in the building, in order to help understand the feasibility of adopting such systems into a sustainable home. Semiramis BC is then a project based on sharing knowledge, and is an opportunity to create a physical and intellectual gateway to a sustainable Surrey.”

— Peter Sebes



The design is straightforward, with the gentle arc of a monumental pedestrian bridge leading to a six storey classroom pavilion, round windows rising up across their elevations like bubbles in a glass of “7-Up.” The pavilion would be home to an urban version of national park environmental interpretive centres. Special topic classes and rotating exhibitions on green issues there would help catalyze environmental action by Surrey citizens. Both its social mission and architecture are simplistic and idealistic, but sometimes this is needed in the face of important issues.

Many TownShift entrants proposed such ‘green’ strategies as renewable energy concepts, the use of local building materials, and the minimization of new construction and reduction of long term running costs. ‘Semiramis BC’ adds an educational element to this green agenda with its proposition of a sustainable learning centre astride Guildford’s commercial core.

The conservation ideals promoted here would be a pointed contrast to the mall’s consumer ethos. For its name, the designers borrowed from Babylon’s famous hanging gardens, one of the Seven Wonders of the ancient world. “Semiramis BC” proposes a new type of “wonder” for the sustainability era, conservation promoted through the indulgence of a grand new building. With this, the world’s oldest civilization—which withered with the environmental degradation of its Tigris-Euphrates basin setting—fosters the leading edge thinking necessary for us to avoid the same fate.

Idea Living Bridge

Ania Grygorczuk / Surrey, Canada / Entry No. 86



“Guildford needs a distinctive point of entry, a modern version of the traditional gateway to the city. I suggest a row of three thirty foot high steel arches, a symbol of connection and an announcement that you have entered a unique area. What’s more, this device could easily be repeated in other places throughout the city.”

— Ania Grygorczuk



One of the more modest proposals of the 32 Guildford entries, this design proposes greening the mall’s existing retail bridge that spans across 104th Avenue. Three large green arches, 30’ high are arrayed over the roadway, extending towards the mall and newly greened pedestrian bridge, which acts as a showcase for the relatively new technique of continuous plantings on vertical surfaces to form living green walls. A long time local resident, this designer feels a reconsideration of this bridge-wing of Guildford Mall should serve as the town centre’s formal gateway, similar to the TownShift design requesting a marker for Fleetwood. The proposal also features large solar powered LED screens on the site’s corners, with information displayed at an urban scale, reminiscent of Times Square.

The core proposition here, a quasi-political one, is for these symbolic acts to serve as indicator of other initiatives, a literal ‘greening of the mall.’ There is no doubt our commercial sector could lead the reconsideration of suburbia, with wind turbines, solar collectors and green roofs not just for mall structures, but inspiring changes for such other large flat-roofed suburban buildings as factories, schools, warehouses, and big-box stores. This idea has real potential by suggesting the Guildford Mall become a factory of green power, headquarters for green leadership.

Idea Elevated Centre

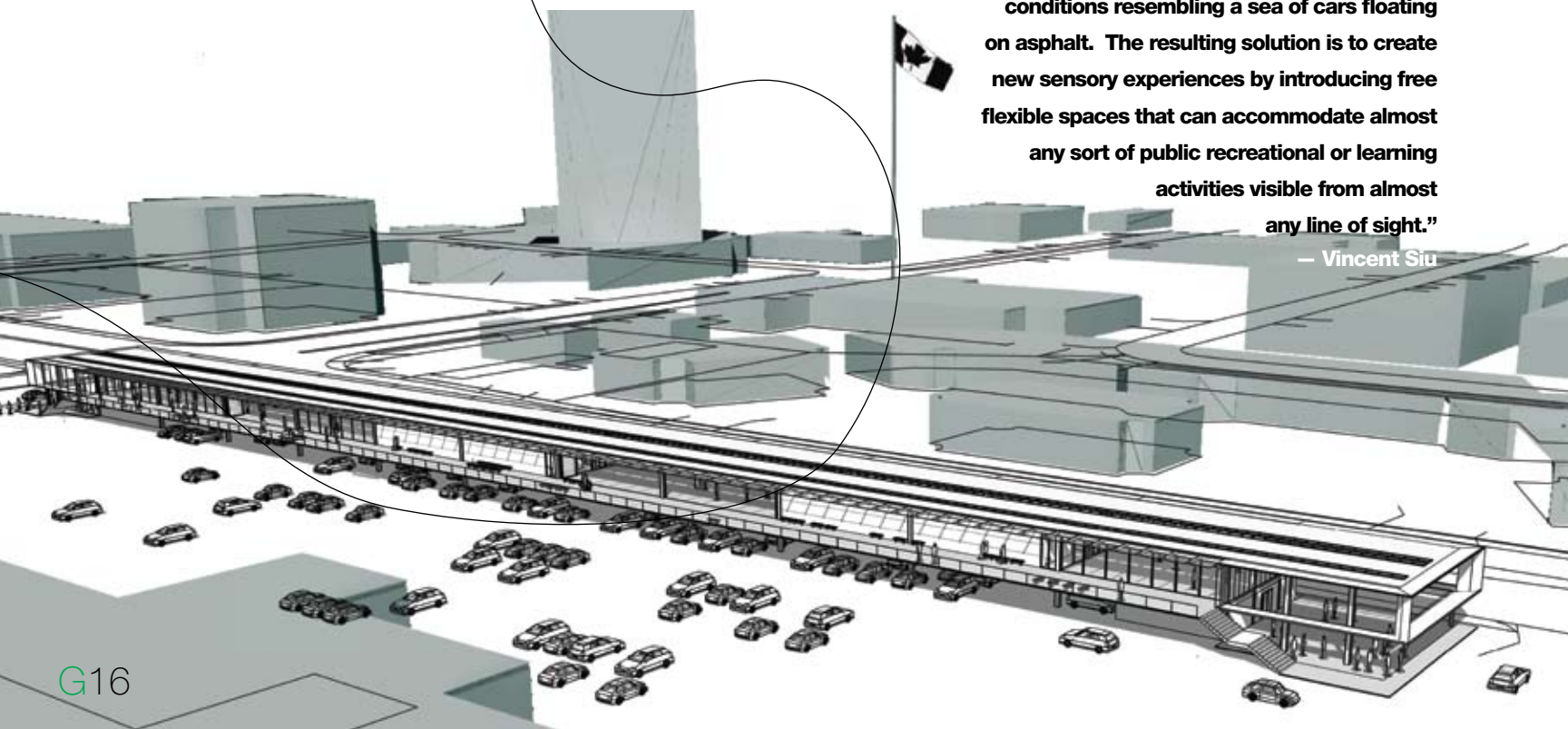
Vincent Siu / Vancouver, Canada / Entry No. 26

GUILDFORD SECOND PLACE



“The idea here is not to sever the relationship between public space and street, but rather to establish one given existing suburban conditions resembling a sea of cars floating on asphalt. The resulting solution is to create new sensory experiences by introducing free flexible spaces that can accommodate almost any sort of public recreational or learning activities visible from almost any line of sight.”

— Vincent Siu



The design focuses on a long 'glass-house' one level above the roadway, which will provide afternoon sun shading on the 152nd Street sidewalk. Very light and airy construction is proposed, with windows on both mall and roadway sides, making a public performance of the recreation activities proposed there (yoga, fencing, tai chi, and so on.) to be both flexible and highly visible to passing motorists and pedestrians. An intriguing idea for Guildford Mall's owners is that this is one of the few entries not to displace parking, maintaining existing slots below the glass pavilion. The design uses arrays of photovoltaic cells, passive solar shading, and cross ventilation, tempering environmental impact from so large a new construction.

Sharing some similarities with Felicismo Mecalino's entry no. 158, the previous "High Line" for an elevated park, this elevated glass pavilion chooses not to cross 104th Avenue with a pedestrian bridge, but instead occupies the southwest corner to form a single visual anchor there. Sharing environmental goals with many other schemes, this new construction would buffer sight and sound generated by traffic along 152nd Street.

Construction is minimal but considered: a simple extruded box in steel, concrete and glass. It can be thought of as a modern variation on the stoas of ancient Greece, multi-functional public buildings situated next to the agora, or marketplace. Stoic philosophers owe their name to this architectural form, and perhaps this design would inspire a similar line of thought. Some interesting details are dedicated solely to improving the life of pedestrians, such as the pavilion's angled mirrored soffit, which would allow observation of community recreation activities underway overhead by looking up while walking along the sidewalk (don't try this at home!) This design's transparency is inviting and unobtrusive, its scale sympathetic to passing pedestrians and street traffic both.

Idea Ritual Cityscapes

Renante Solivar / Vancouver, Canada / Entry No. 42

GUILDFORD FIRST PLACE & TOWNSHIFT OVERALL WINNER



“The vision for Guildford’s intersection is to create an amazing street; SUPERBIA. By emphasizing the corners, this design proposes to act as a catalyst for a new community along 152nd Street. The design seeks to replace the desert of surface parking through the insertion of spaces - filling the gap with new rituals besides driving, exploring the relationship of the public realm above the vehicles. Neighbourhood identity is created through colour. Colour has remarkable properties in making a place; it is emotional, it has smell, it has memory, it unites people like team jerseys of their favourite sports team or country of origin.”

— Renante Solivar



Cities are places for people—one by one, and together in groups. The pattern of neighbourhoods and civic spaces is determined by our patterns of activity, the daily rituals, both sublime and ordinary, by which we structure our lives. This scheme, the overall winner of the TownShift Ideas Competition, takes the notion of urban rituals as its core idea, then proposes public spaces, architectural forms, even a dynamic and unusual façade colour as means to encourage creative interaction.

This is one of the handful of TownShift entries that proposes architectural expression to Surrey’s status as a postmodern suburb, a diverse and rapidly growing city that has one of Canada’s highest levels of immigration. Designer Renante Solivar of Vancouver uses his own experience as an immigrant from the Philippines to enrich his design. Recognizing Surrey’s diversity means not privileging one of the many nations whose residents find new homes here. Rather, the great halls, theatres, terraces and galleries of this scheme provide platforms for the continuation and mutation of rituals as a means of reconciling cultural identity with engaged citizenship.



“Reacting to its location, the proposed building’s massing responds to its street and site orientation like stacked logs, creating a series of courtyards at ground level and above. The massing and expression are inspired by childhood memories of what was once and what could be. Courtyards for festivals and daily street markets, living beside your favourite places to meet friends, shelter from the rain, elevated walking trails, quiet places to feel the morning sun.”

— Renante Solivar

Specifically, the design integrates Solivar’s own personal memories of cultural performance and civic spaces, then devises multi-cultural names for the linguistic mosaic found in a new city like this: the South Asian “dawala,” the Philippine “buhay” courts, the First Nations “tatlo” for the 152nd Street promenade, and so on. The memory of these forms is abstracted not romantic, and the architectural language proposed for them is contemporary, in some zones almost minimal, bare stages for the kinds of rich contact only a living city can provide. It is less multi-cultural in the conventional sense than multi-stage, a civic setting as rich as our complex mixtures of Asian, European, Latin and Middle Eastern cuisines that constitute our contemporary diets.

Guildford town centre as proposed is then intended as a place where all residents can come to celebrate their own unique rituals, where one can witness the diversity of the customs, practices, and habits of others. With such a rich diversity of cultures representing Surrey’s varied neighbourhoods, it is not hard to imagine experiencing bhangra dancing, tai chi, a farmer’s market, flamenco and a show of avant-garde visual art all in the same afternoon here, all without ever having to get into one’s car. It should be pointed out that it is not the mere physical forms galleries and halls that make a town centre, but the lived experience of people, and this design is all about creating settings for life lived at the fullest.

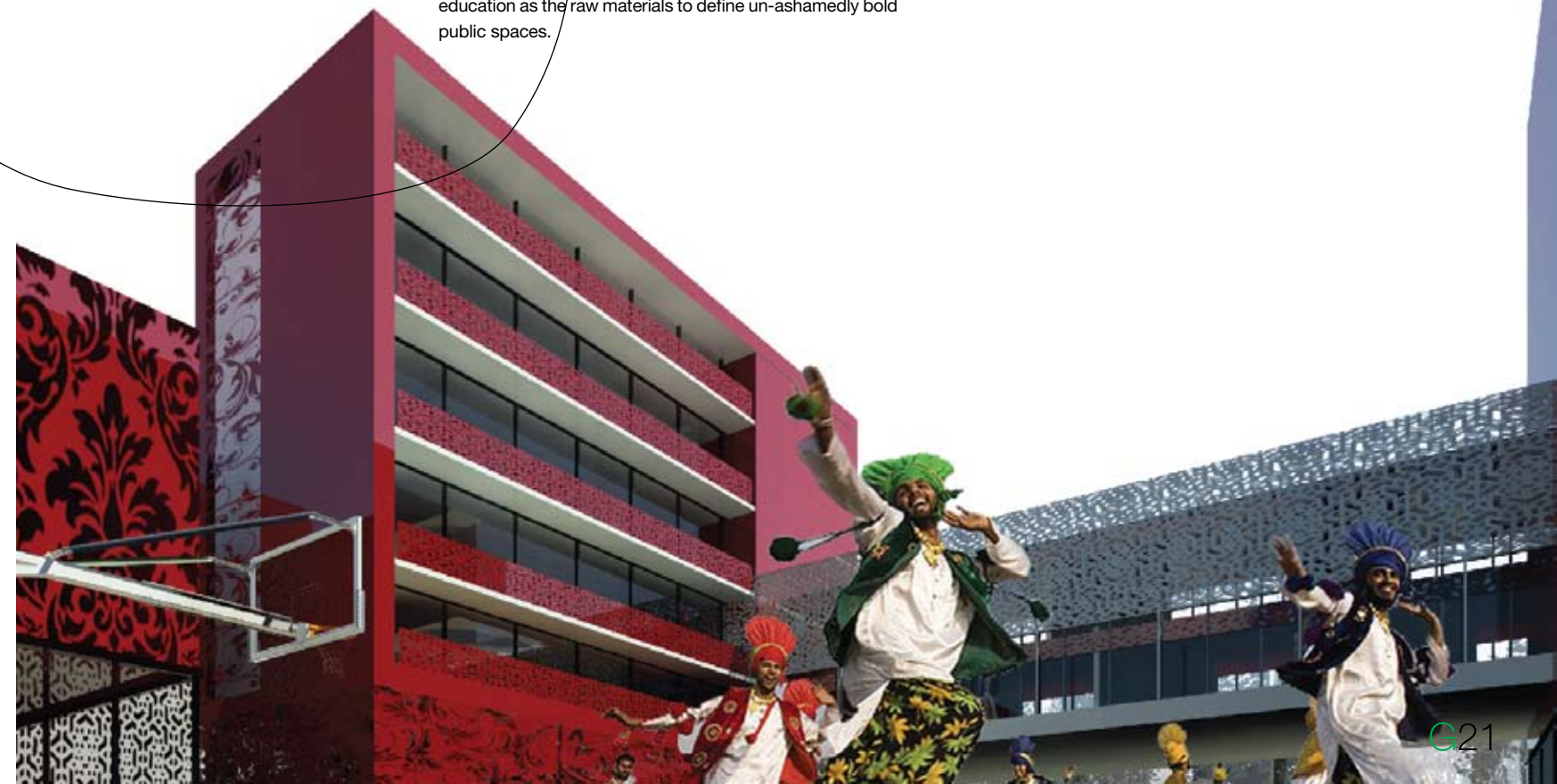
With parking reduced between the site and the mall, the idea reinforces the notion that a new LRT along 104th Avenue, will enable people to leave their cars at home, as well as bring those from nearby parts of the community to visit the cultural and recreational activities here. Furthermore, the buildings enclosing these proposed new uses would express collective and specific elements of ethno-cultural identities

As with a handful other Guildford TownShift designs, this scheme proceeds on a ‘more is more’ basis, hoping to spark a radical increase in residential and cultural uses along 152nd Street. The proposal is a string series of low-rise structures extending along the parking lot’s edge south from 104th Avenue a mix of retail, residences, and cultural buildings, varying between one and three-storeys, and stepping back from the street, while similar massing to the north includes a dance studio and senior’s complex.

A gateway for 104th avenue is formed by buildings stepping up at the corners. On one side is a proposed Surrey Centre for Contemporary Art (SURCA), along with a media centre, multi-ethnic retail space and affordable housing for assisted living seniors. The design gives special attention to the pedestrian experience, with many covered walkways and some large covered spaces between buildings, year-round zones for activity.

A persistent commonality for the elevations is their use of an evocative deep red colour, contrasting with the ornate perforated screens used as windows for the communal spaces. As well, this entrant’s vignette drawings offer further glimpses of possible cross-overs between the cultural and recreational activities to be contained there – such as a basketball court tripling duty as dance space and wedding hall. The SURCA and community centres have the overall effect of anchoring the site and shaping a gateway for 104th Avenue. The disposition of buildings along 152nd Street shape a well-defined street wall that has variety in massing, and a constant rhythm of opening and void, red coloured panel and clear glass. The overall effect would be to balance the daily rituals of shopping, recreation, and education as the raw materials to define un-ashamedly bold public spaces.

This is a passionate design, animated by the notion that Guildford’s dynamism could harness the diversity of its people into a reconceived shopping and cultural precinct. While it would require significant public investment in buildings and programming, this would make rich and variegated model for the maturation of the suburbs, with architecture as a stage set, all citizens as actors.



Idea High Line

Felicismo Macalino / Surrey, Canada / Entry No. 158

GUILDFORD HONOURABLE MENTION

This landscape-oriented solution turns a simple suspended slab structure into a graceful elevated garden with a pedestrian bridge that is park, gateway, and visual buffer all at once.

Extensive trees and pathways are proposed for the upper deck, with trees growing on top of and up through openings in the raised walkway. This notion is inspired by the High Line through New York's Chelsea neighbourhood - a park in the air built on an abandoned elevated rail line (itself inspired by the Promenade Plantee near Gare de Lyon which opened to Parisian's strollers and roller blades in 2000) - this design is very much in the spirit of civic spaces combining pedestrian movement with urban park functions.

A key merit here is leaving the existing mall and its parking lot virtually untouched while providing a bridge and mini-park, at a modest and realizable scale, focused in its use of materials and construction. With so much of Guildford's built environment consisting of hard surfaces lacking greenery and human scale, this proposal re-conceives the borders of arterials with an elevated and lushly planted pedestrian realm. Call it human viaduct or cultural conduit, this design proposes a place for pedestrians to co-exist happily with mall and roadway activity.



“The proposal is the efficient and multiple uses of expensive inner city commercial spaces. Instead of locating an on-ground recreational open space or park development – an elevated pedestrian podium across 104th Avenue is proposed. The podium shall contain greenery, mostly soft landscaping, park furniture, cafes, flower shops, kiosks, etc. the width shall be within the allowable three car slots as set in the criteria.”

— Felicismo Macalino



Idea Linear Park

Vladimir Konjevic / Novi Sad, Yugoslavia / Entry No. 173



“By creating the opportunity for pedestrians to inhabit their own space rather than the automobile's, the scheme achieves the effect of softening the edges between the mall and 152nd Street. Particular attention has been given to more intimate interactions - the change in paving surfaces and various plant species the pedestrian would encounter.”

— Vladimir Konjevic

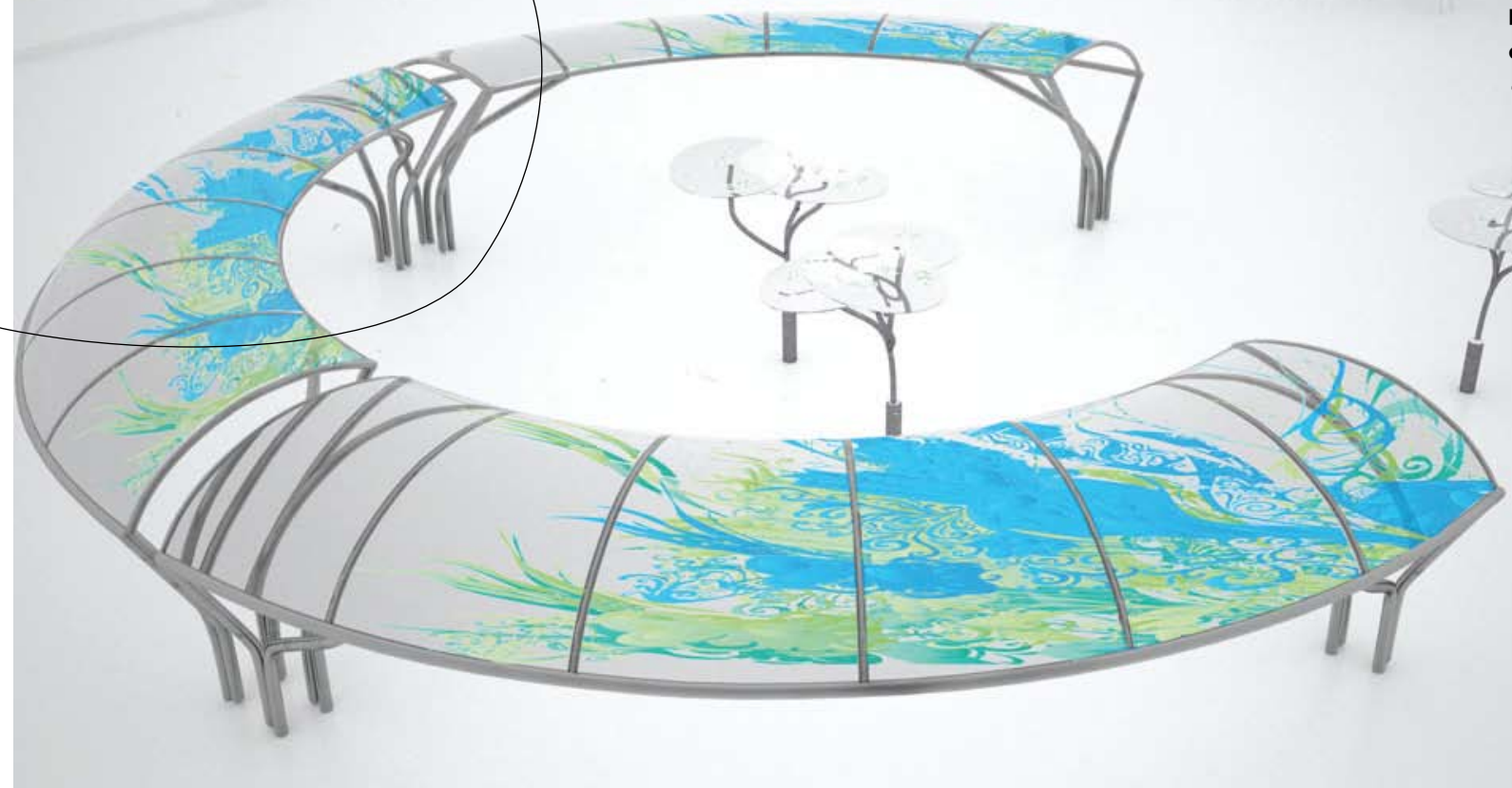


This entry uses a pedestrian bridge over 104th Avenue as a centerpiece for a street level linear park. It employs landscape elements to create a varied and interesting path, including features such as the wind farm, sculptural bridge ramps, variegated planting, continuous pergola and so on. Many other Guildford entries built barriers to block noise and exhaust from 152nd Street, but this scheme chooses to temper it visually, most successfully in the undulating forms of its pergola, (with integrated rain protection and lighting) which is a sculptural element in its own right. Finer grain detail includes the provision for separate thoroughfares for the pedestrian and cyclist, with kiosks and a café set here and there along a sinuous course.

With its small footprint and almost non-existent program, the park is an expressive landscape design – at times an art installation, at others performance art. It is both a curious object in the landscape, as well as an engaging space for pedestrians. Despite its modesty, this idea succeeds at being simultaneously a marker, a pedestrian bridge, and a gateway, providing some respite from the busy roadway.

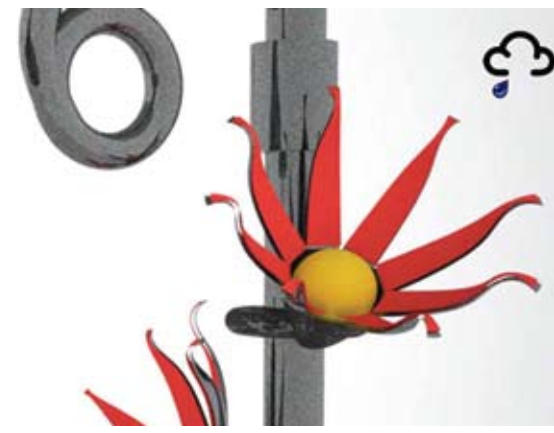
Idea Rain Hub

James Montgomery / Dunfermline, U.K. / Entry No. 96



“The concept aims to inspire ecological awareness through a reminder of our intrinsic link to the natural world; something often forgotten within sprawling urban environments. The design re-envisions the crossroads as a hub for local activity, providing a versatile platform for the organization of outdoor events of varying scale.”

— James Montgomery



While the lion's share of TownShift's Guildford entries propose additions to the mall's parking lot corners – buildings, gardens, bridges–this project takes a more subtle approach. By pointing out the volume of people coming and going, these entrants remind us that pedestrians have a continuing presence within parking lots themselves. Walking to and from their cars, pedestrian numbers within the lots are much higher than along adjacent city sidewalks. This scheme proposes the idea of simple rain shelters for parking lot pedestrians made of steel tubing and whimsically-painted Plexiglas roofs. Planted like so many artificial trees, shrubs and flowers along the lot's eastern edge, this proposal turns an otherwise overlooked public space into a place of visual pleasure.

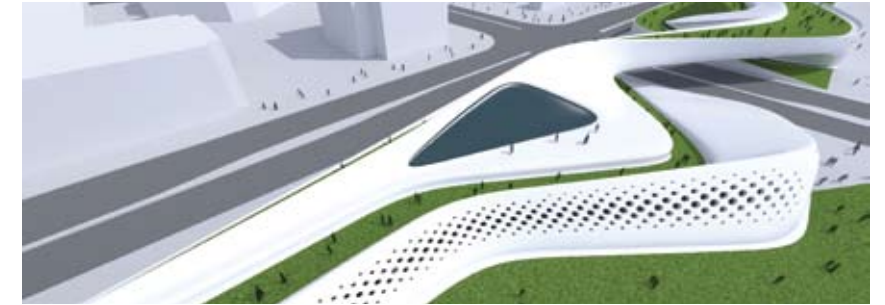
Rounded canopy structures are interspersed with playful tree-like objects, complete with Plexiglas foliage. Animating this is the notion of using hydro-chromatic paint, which has the effect of causing coated Plexiglas to change colour with variations in the weather. As well, piezoelectric pads (devices that generate electricity when pressure is applied) are to be embedded in the pavement that would generate energy sufficient to illuminate the artificial trees above them. This lively design has the potential to transform the parking lot's urban blight into a changing panorama of artificial forms, recalling the forests that once stood here.

Idea **Bilbao Effect**

Ayat Fadaifard / London, U.K. / Entry No. 111

“The main feature of this project is a network of public paths and greenways that connect the site to the surrounding area while improving the existing pedestrian and cyclist circulation. This greenbelt is an extension of the sidewalks that in effect is an evolution of pathways, public spaces, landscapes, buildings and signs that connect the public to the private and creates zones of the in-between.”

— Ayat Fadaifard



Many Guildford entries proposed pedestrian bridges across 104th Avenue near the 152nd street intersection, sisters to the mall's own retail bridge just west on the same block. This design similarly proposes a long pedestrian and cyclist's bridge that links with a huge double tower near the library/community centre. Seductive in its sinuous and curving form, with both tower and the bridge's separate zones for walking and bike-riding are interspersed with planted zones. Sinuous architecture (recalling the work of Pritzker prize winner Zaha Hadid) makes for a unified and continuous composition of infrastructure and condo tower. This use of dramatic forms at large scale are aimed at a 'Bilbao-effect' for Guildford, the sparking of urban transformation through iconic architecture (named after the famous Guggenheim Museum there by Frank Gehry), but as some iconic designs do not age well—the design forms here look too directly imitative of Hadid.

Curving bike and pedestrian bridge forms undulate then fold continuously into the residential tower's geometries. The notion here is that this public bridge would be financed by revenue from the tower, an entrepreneurial idea not found in other entries. With close proximity between the mall's public spaces/parking and the tower's private residential zones, there might be potential to activate an 'in-between' realm of activity and amenity.

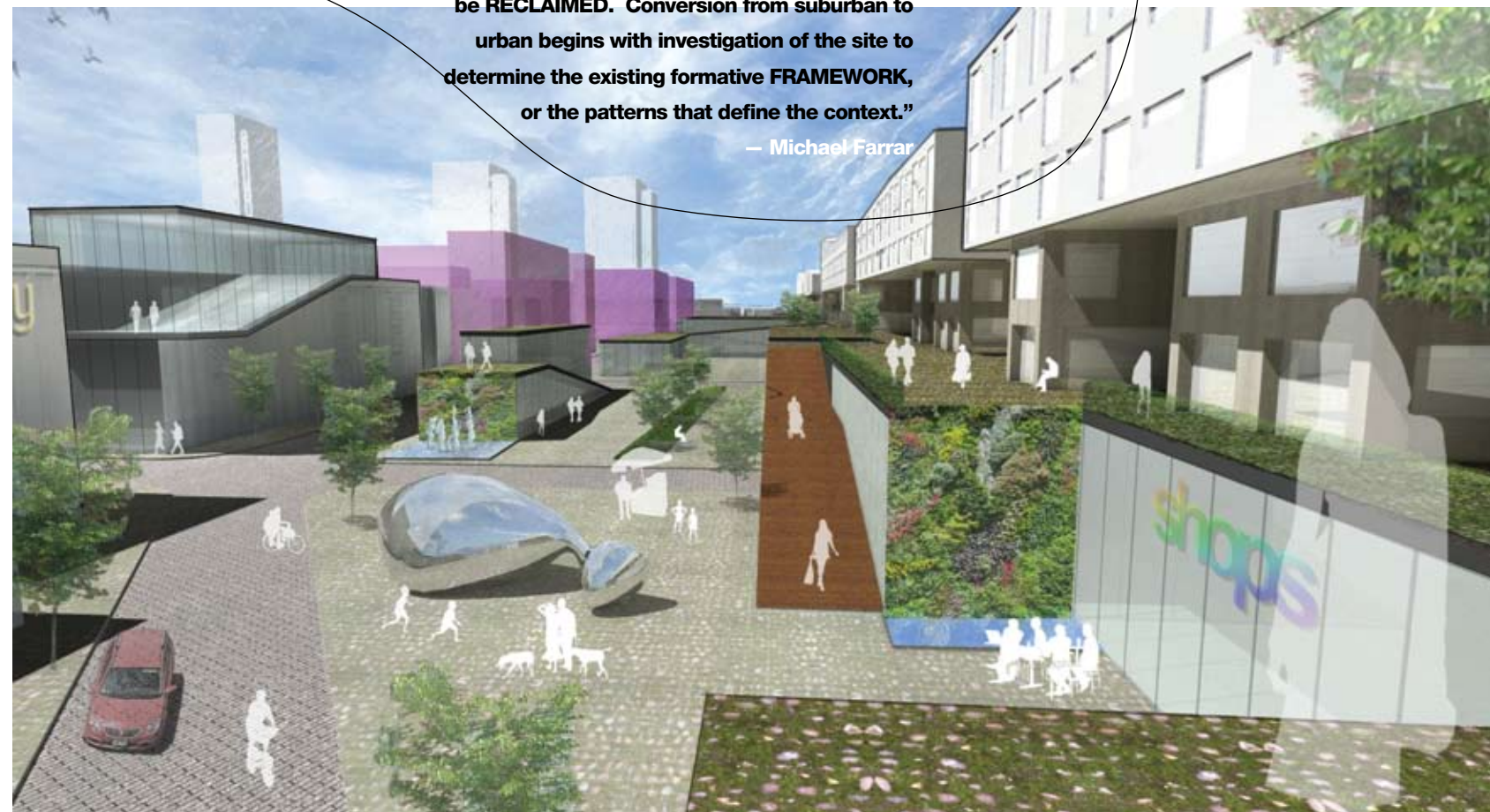
There would be spectacular views from the tower's higher floors - looking out over the fields of the Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR) to the south, Mt. Baker to the east, and mountains and islands on the other sides. If the recent housing boom does not collapse, private financing of public amenities via high density residential development might be used elsewhere in Surrey. For Guildford, this strategy might constitute, in every sense, "highest and best" public use.

Idea **Parking to Parks**

Michael Farrar / Calgary, Canada / Entry No. 130

“In order to transform a suburban site, the SURFACE which now belongs to the car must be RECLAIMED. Conversion from suburban to urban begins with investigation of the site to determine the existing formative FRAMEWORK, or the patterns that define the context.”

— Michael Farrar



This scheme envisions an elevated commuter rail transit hub, with a companion build-up of residential and commercial uses around it. It is one of the few schemes to propose a specific and detailed checklist of green strategies: green roofs, natural cross-ventilation, rain-water harvesting, on-site food production. It is a prototype for the evolution of shopping malls into true miniature cities, while also undertaking a kind of site reclamation.

With much new construction located at the raised rail platform level, the space underneath is left open for the passage of traffic. Multi-leveled housing blocks frame the site's edges, and regular gaps underneath these permit the passage of air, sun and walkers. At the centre of an ambitious mat of new development covering most of the site, the existing Guildford Mall remains almost untouched, with pathways in and out

arrayed to form new thoroughfares. This scheme proposes putting every bit of parking underground, freeing up the ground plane for retail, park and public space uses.

Densification at busy transit hubs is occurring region-wide, notably in Vancouver as part of its "Greenest City by 2020" (formerly known as EcoDensity) civic commitment. Surrey has its own means of surpassing these green goals through schemes as bold as this to "urbanize the suburbs." Shifting a parking lot into so diverse a range of urban functions means making a true city of Guildford town centre.

Idea Culture Mall

Martin Liew / Richmond, Canada / Entry No. 145

“The proposed facility is designed to provide a forum for Cultural activities and cross-pollinations within an ethnically-diverse population. The theme of transparency will ground these activities within the larger context of the surrounding community and will both encourage a sense of questioning and provide a platform for experimentation. This proposal will be an important gateway to the Central Surrey area and will provide a public space which will act as a spark or catalyst for future residential development.”

— Martin Liew



This TownShift scheme proposes a diverse mix of pavilions devoted to arts and culture along the parking lot's edge. Predicated on a large new cultural institution for teaching and presenting the visual and stage arts, the design proposes a linked string of pavilions along 152nd for theatre, dance, music recitals, a sculpture court, and a contemporary art gallery. The precinct would serve as civic forum for the benefit of the surrounding community, through a concentration of visual and performing art presentation and education. Proposing a compositional quality and scale seen in other great civic cultural precincts – Melbourne's Federation Square or the string of Smithsonian museums along Washington D.C.'s Mall – this 'culture mall' is a sister to the Guildford Mall. This design proposes a sequence of spaces not unlike the shopping centre, passing from one type of culture to the next in the manner one moves from shop to shop.

There is a finer street level grain and a more diverse approach to massing than winning entry no. 42 by Renante Solivar. The spaces around the linear string of buildings are rich

with possibilities – a walk along the reflecting pool in the sculpture court, looking through the windows of the theatre to the street. While each cultural component is expressed with a different physical form, unity is made with a consistent mid-20th century Modernist architecture of walls of glass and white concrete. The buildings aspire to complement the experience of art contained within, being as austere with colour and ornament as Solivar's scheme was exuberant.

While requiring a huge investment to build and run, the ensemble is a thoughtful urban composition, achieving many of TownShift's objectives – marker, gateway, buffer, anchor, pedestrian bridge – while hinting also at the possibility of future residential build-up in the area. This culture mall would provide balance to Guildford's over-concentration of retail and automotive functions.

Idea Courtyard Housing

Pauline Barlier / Nantes, France / Entry No. 147

While some Guildford entrants suggested incorporating residential housing into their designs, this scheme makes housing a focus. It proposes in-fill blocks between the mall and 152nd Street, all set around a linear courtyard. With a new Light Rail Transit (LRT) station on 104th Avenue, the idea is to fill in the existing parking lot with two and three-storey residences, focusing on a long ribbon of green space for privacy and family activities. The scheme proposes that a town centre is animated by its people more than buildings, and by setting a stage for new residents, Guildford would at last have a living heart.

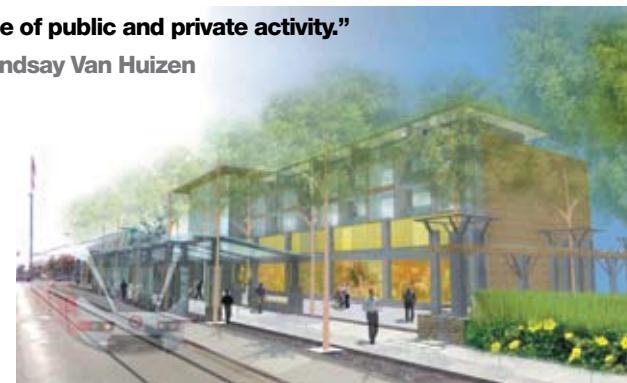
In their analysis of building context to determine the appropriate character and scale for this housing, the cross-sectional drawings are revealing. These show 152nd Street broadened into a large boulevard, with spaces for cars, transit, bikes and pedestrians. A new street edge of long low linear offices along 152nd Street side would obscure views to the mall from the roadway. The design is focused on the green oases of courtyard between rows of residences.

With 30 private residences at its core, this proposal is an island of housing with a semi-private green zone set within a sea of asphalt. The notion of in-filling parking lots with housing is a brave shift from current land use policy. What would purchasers think?



“The corners where streets converge can support an intensity of activity and act as strong centers for the community. Anchored by distinctive buildings and signage, permeable building edges, sheltering trees and generous open space setback from traffic, our proposal for 152nd and 104th convergence creates an attractive gateway to the Guildford neighbourhood, supports a desirable street experience, and allows for a range of public and private activity.”

— Lindsay Van Huizen



Idea Green Strip

Lindsay Van Huizen / Vancouver, B.C. / Entry No. 185

This scheme's strength is its proposition for a green street edge, with new two-storey commercial buildings along 152nd Street that together with planting screen mall and parking lot. The scheme greens the idea of the strip mall through its foregrounding of landscape design, providing scale and amenity to what is now a brutal and unfriendly zone. Running the entire length of the mall's edge on both sides of 104th Avenue, new buildings are generously set back from the roadway, leaving space for this boulevard cum linear park treatment. The scheme foresees an at-grade Light Rail Transit station along 104th Avenue as a catalyst for the new shops and offices filling these buildings.

Changes in urban form as a way of greeting new light rail public transit is an opportunity for Guildford to rebrand itself. A virtue of this scheme is its modesty – for the most part it takes the appearance of a typical row of commercial buildings that through scale and planting, enrich the pedestrian experience. With a relatively low-rise character, the commercial retail units along the street edge would be set back to allow for a broad green thoroughfare, allowing for a richer street culture – newsstands, buskers, and food vendors.



Idea **The Mall Dissolved**

Joy Martin / Vancouver, B.C. / Entry No. 196



This is perhaps the most radical of Guildford proposals, imagining the ultimate break up and disappearance of the shopping mall, stage by stage, over time.

The area devoted to asphalt is first reduced through automated vertical parking towers, then this area urbanized in steps to create a mini-city where once there were only cars. Detailed in three phases of evolution, this design replaces portions of mall buildings with swaths of green space – parks, recreation areas, planted landscape – while adding residential build-up to enliven them. While it does not suggest entirely removing shopping from this site, it does propose concentrating it in a more land-use friendly manner, stacked up, not sprawling.

With the revelation that 73% of the Guildford Mall's site is devoted to the automobile, the futuristic parking towers are symbols of a more carbon-conscious future. The design is intriguing in providing a vision of the digestion then elimination of the shopping mall, a new pedestrian-oriented zone taking its place. This scenario transcends our present notion that shopping malls are static or inevitable, and shows us how we can transform suburban landscapes in painless steps, inevitable as energy prices rise. This is one of the clearest TownShift expressions of "urbanizing the suburbs."

"Guildford is a community which is defined by the movements and storage patterns of automobiles. As long as cars dominate Guildford, there can be no Town Centre and no sustainable future. In order to establish a functioning town centre, with a sustainable mix of uses, the land must be freed of surface parking. Instead of jamming people in towers and giving cars all the land, cars will be jammed into towers releasing the land to the people of Guildford.

These are towers that generate rather than consume; these towers are beacons to a new sustainable community."

— Joy Martin

Visions for Surrey Volume Three **Guildford: Cornered**

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