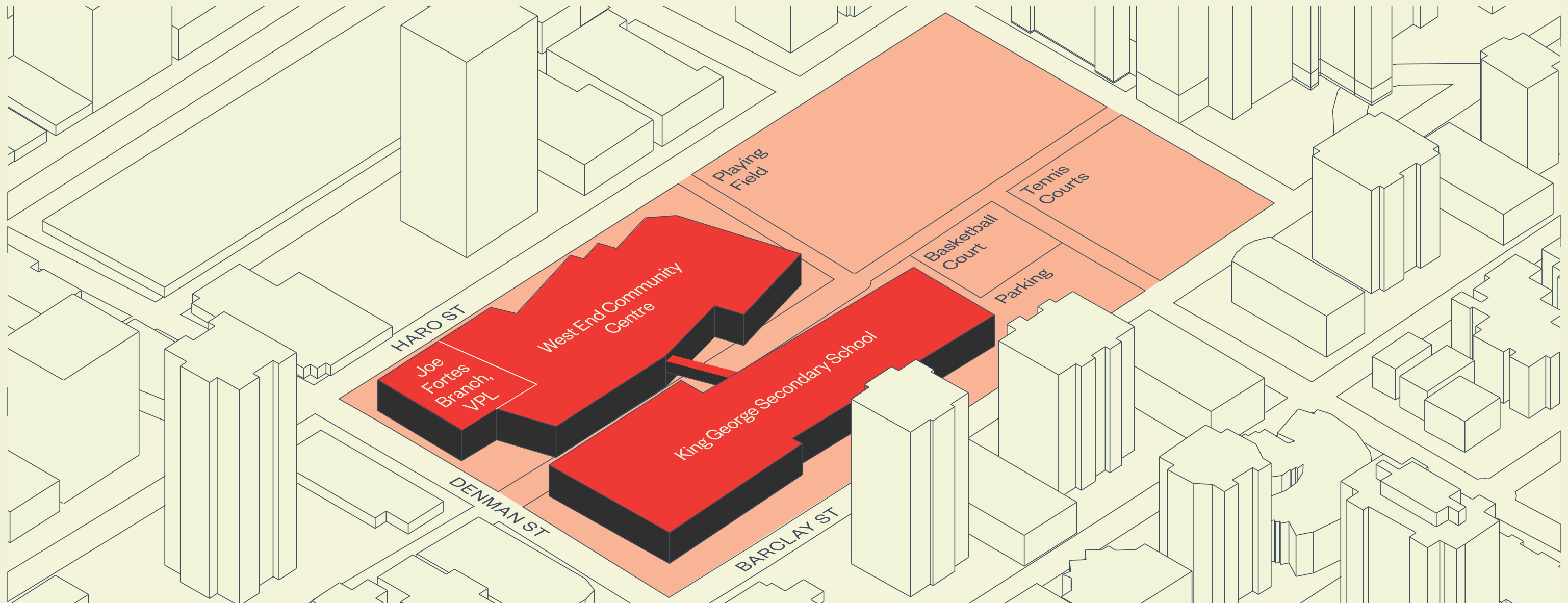


West End Community Hub Renewal Plan

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Phase 2 Report: Activities & Spaces

Issued: June 2022



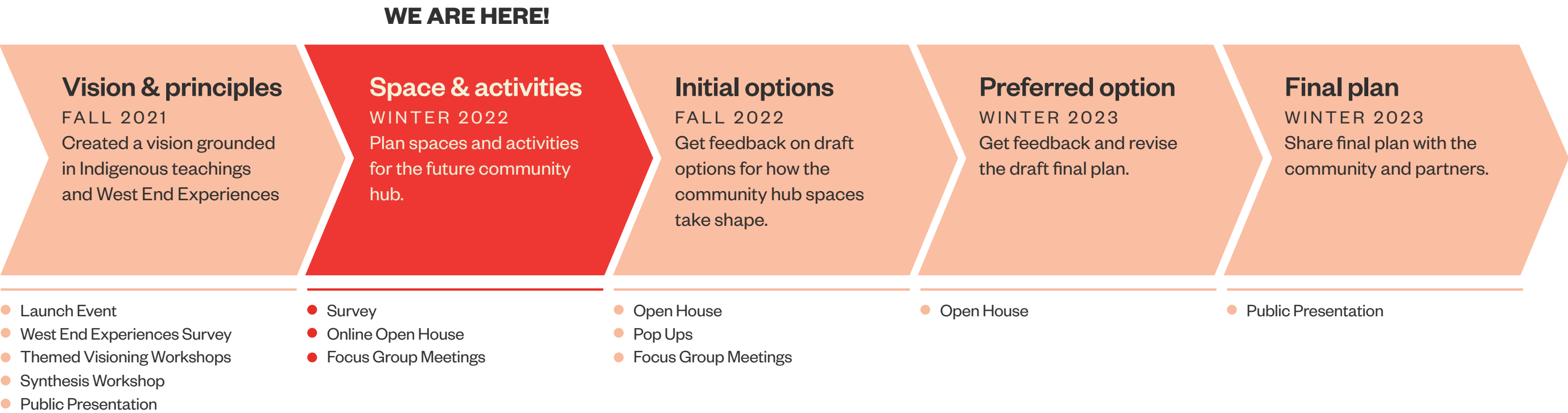
Introduction

What kinds of spaces and activities would people like to see at the site that currently houses the West End Community Centre, Joe Fortes Branch of the VPL, and King George Secondary School (KGSS)? How do people currently use this site? These were the questions we asked the community about the future West End Community Hub in February and March 2022.

This important West End community location is being re-imagined in a project led by the City of Vancouver in partnership with the Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation (VPB), Vancouver Public Library (VPL), Vancouver School District and the West End Community Centre Association (WECCA). This project is known as the West End Community Hub (WECH) Renewal Plan.

A key part of the WECH Renewal Plan is the project partners’ ongoing commitment to reconciliation with Indigenous peoples. The project’s community engagement process and its Vision and Principles were shaped by Knowledge Holders, artists and youth from each of the three Host Nations, xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish), and səlilwətał (Tsleil-Waututh).

The future community hub, which will renew and explore the expansion of existing services on site, with dedicated and shared programming space. The site is planned to feature a new seismically safe secondary school for between 1000-1200 students. The renewal will also explore the possibility of other potential uses that could serve the West End, including the relocation of Firehall No. 6, full-time childcare facilities (0 to 5 years), seniors’ spaces, and arts and culture facilities.



The project’s shared vision and principles, supported by a framework, were collaboratively developed during fall 2021 with the involvement of hundreds of people with connections to the West End.

Framework

The West End of Vancouver is a culturally and historically rich location for Coast Salish people. Given the importance of Coast Salish teachings to planning the future community hub, and the commitments to reconciliation made by all project partners, the WECH framework outlines how WECH Project Partners will advance reconciliation while supporting neighbourhood aspirations. See the full framework at shapeyourcity.ca/weconnect

Vision

Vision for the West End Community Hub :
The West End Community Hub celebrates Vancouver’s connection to xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish), and səliłwətał (Tsleil-Waututh) cultures, and supports play, learning, creativity and wellness for all people.



Principles

The West End Community Hub will...

make visible and strengthen connections to Coast Salish people, history, and culture.

weave the fabric of our communities together, creating a safe, inclusive, accessible, equitable place that is welcoming to all.

be integrated, flexible, and responsive to community needs for life -long learning and public education, recreation, social and cultural spaces.

bring in sounds, sights, and experiences of the natural environment.

provide spaces and plant the seeds for creativity, innovation and co-learning across cultures and generations.

offer a mix of social spaces for celebrating, ceremony, spontaneous connections, or finding quiet.

grow community and individual resilience by using seven-generation thinking.

** principle number 3 has been modified from the version previously developed with community to further emphasize the importance of the WECH for life-long learning and public education.*

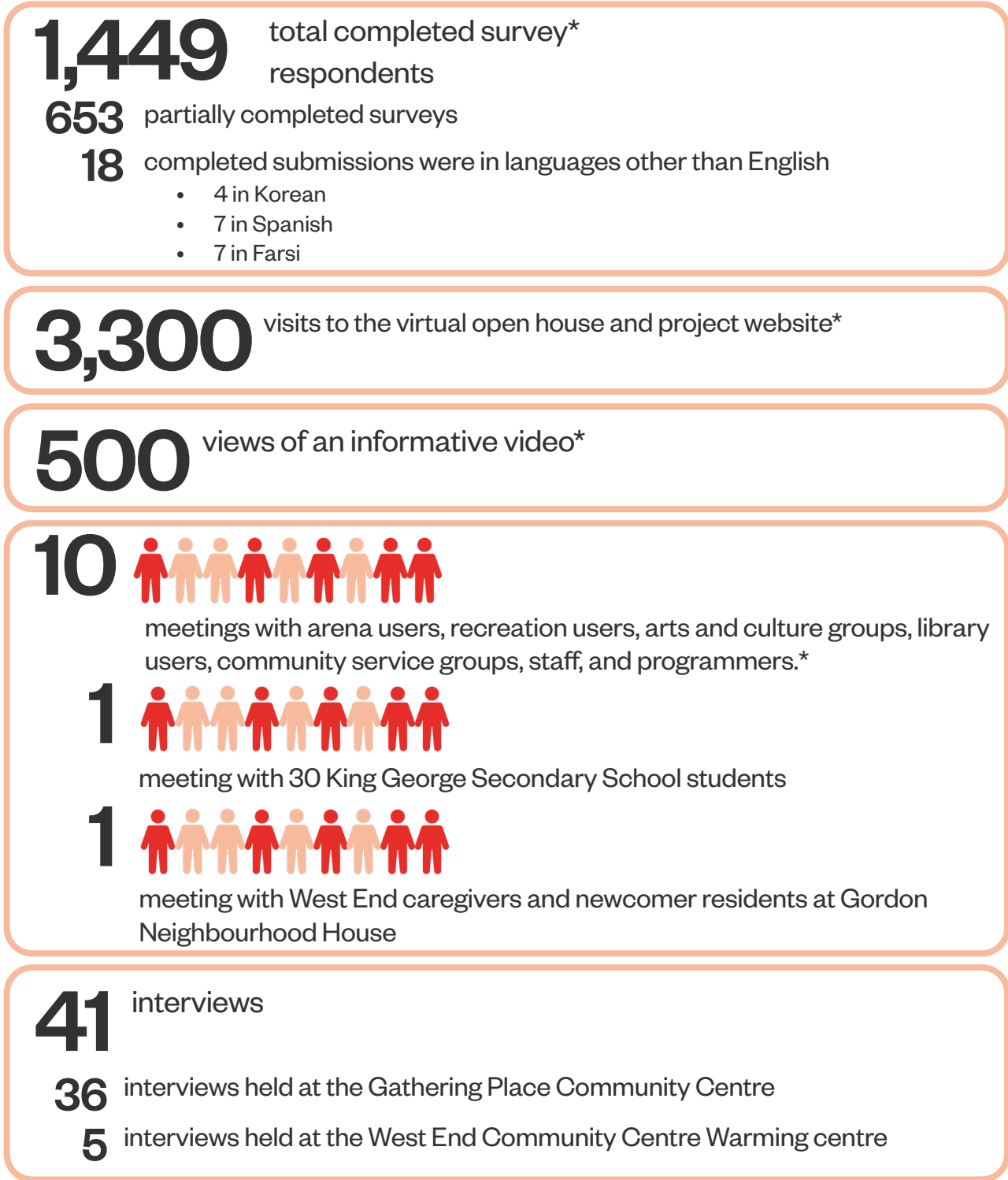
Community Engagement: Spaces & Activities

The community shared their ideas about spaces and activities for the future West End Community Hub, during community engagement conducted from February 2 to March 8, 2022. The purpose of this engagement was to understand how people currently use the site, and what they'd like to do at the future community hub.

In addition to survey respondents, the following engagement efforts helped the project team to hear from specific user groups:

- Meetings with King George Secondary School students and presentation to KGSS Parent Advisory Council
- Meetings with arena users, recreation users, arts and culture groups, library users, community service groups, staff, and programmers.
- Interviews with underhoused people at the Gathering Place Community Centre
- Meeting with West End caregivers and newcomer residents at Gordon Neighbourhood House
- Interviews with underhoused people at the West End Community Centre warming centre

Who participated:



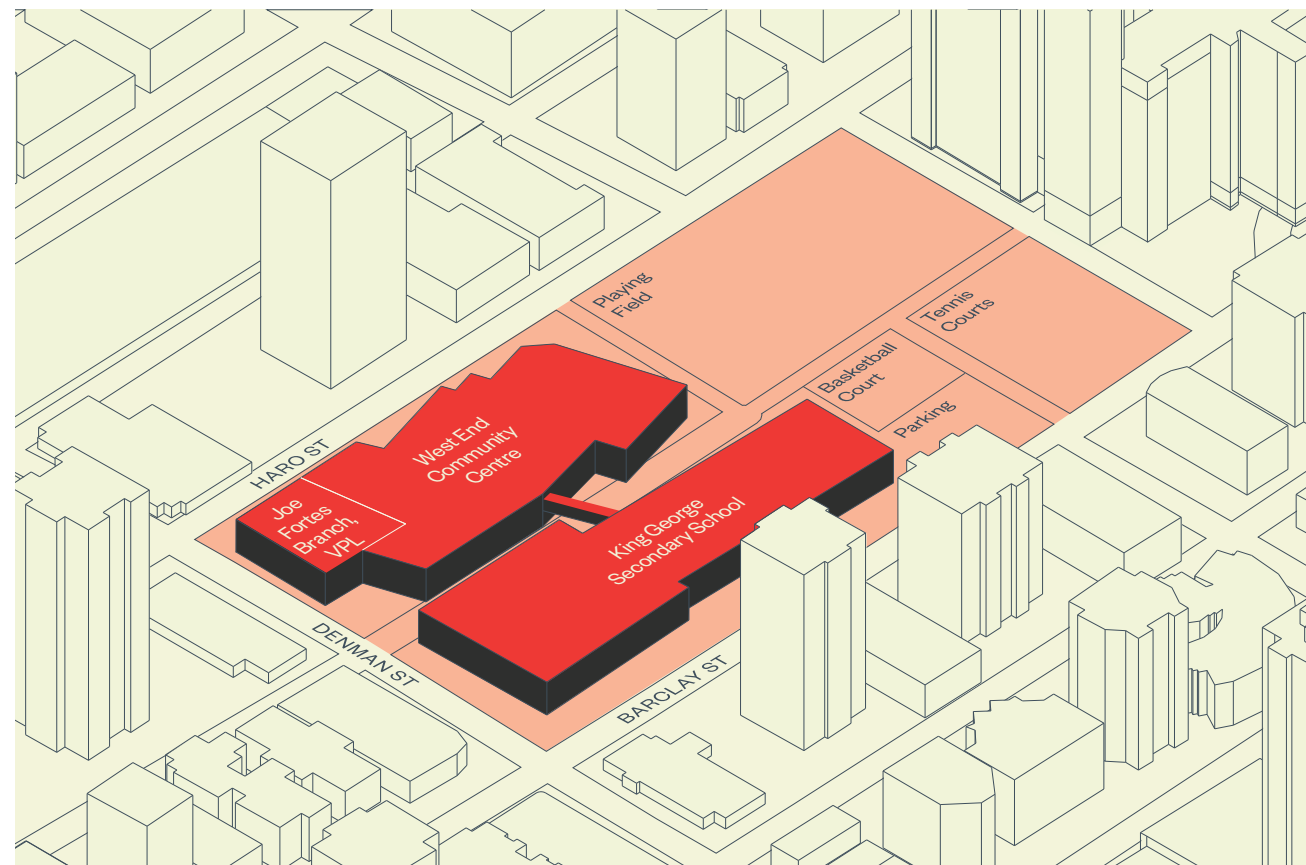
**Because of pandemic-related limits to public gatherings at the time, this engagement activity occurred online.*

What We Heard

In a survey, participants were asked to share their hopes for spaces and activities at the future WECH, and describe how they use the current site. The following are key themes of participant input:

What people value most about the current facilities

- Location of the site within Vancouver, as well as being along Denman Street.
- Co-location or connection between King George Secondary School, the West End Community Centre, and the Joe Fortes Branch Library.
- Accessibility via transit is valued by nearly all users.
- People go to the West End Community Centre to access fitness and sports facilities and programs offered above all else.



▲ Site area identifying existing amenities

Limitations of the current facilities

In general, the age and condition of facilities

• King George Secondary School:

- Insufficient social and quiet space
- Limited choices of programs
- Lack of outdoor spaces
- Too small size of the school

• West End Community Centre:

- Lack of programs
- Scheduling conflicts for programming
- Overcrowded facilities
- Lack of space in programs
- Competition with other opportunities elsewhere

• Joe Fortes Branch Library:

- Lack of social services and spaces offered
- Lack of programs offered
- Limited size of the library collection
- Lack of social or quiet spaces
- Overcrowding

• Outdoor Spaces of the West End Community Hub

- Lack of access to outdoor sports amenities (i.e. sports field locked outside site operating hours)
- Lack of outdoor spaces for the gathering of small groups
- Lack of weather- and season-appropriate design in outdoor spaces

Hopes for the future West End Community Hub

Participants were also asked to share the spaces and activities they'd like to see in the future community hub. Key themes of participant included:

Incorporating Indigenous design

- Ensure that Indigenous design and Indigenous knowledge are incorporated into the building.
- Many ideas were suggested to advance reconciliation, including having more Indigenous staff members, programs led by Indigenous persons, cross-cultural programming, dedicated space for reconciliation-focused programming, as well as hosting Indigenous events, games, and tournaments.

King George Secondary School

- Expand on programs for athletics and the arts.
- Provide a wider range of courses and programs.
- Provide more services for students with special needs.
- Improve outdoor facilities for students.
- Expand and update school equipment and facilities including more social and quiet spaces.

Social services

- Provide services and programs that meet the unique needs of underhoused people, LGBTQ2SAI+ people, and newcomers.
- Maintain and expand childcare services.
- Provide access to low-barrier services.

Arts and culture

- Maintain and expand arts and culture programs and facilities, including pottery and photography.

Sports, Fitness and Arena

- Near unanimous support for a fitness centre and fitness and wellness classes.
- Provide drop-in or casual sports, less interest in sports activities and sports-specific facilities (i.e. for rock climbing or gymnastics).
- Strong support for the ice rink, including drop-in programming
- Interest in aquatics programming. Aquatics spaces and activities are not planned for the WECH site. However, this feedback will be considered as the Park Board redevelops the Vancouver Aquatic Centre in the West End (1050 Beach Ave.).

Outdoor spaces and activities

- Include trees and plants in the outdoor landscape.
- Offer open space adjacent to the site facilities.
- Provide access to programmed outdoor space for community use off-hours.

Social and community spaces

- Offer seniors activities and programming for parents with young children.
- Offer support for newcomers, LGBTQ2SAI+ people, and underhoused people.
- Offer tool and equipment borrowing.
- Include places to study, read, and hang out.
- Offer places to gather for celebrations, ceremonies, or special events.
- Little interest in providing on-site affordable food purchasing options.

Joe Fortes Branch of the VPL

- Continue traditional uses for accessing print materials.
- Continue to provide Internet access and more computers.
- Ensure space for work and study, as well as for casual seating.
- Mixed levels of support for devoting early learning space for children at the library.
- Consider providing collaborative study tables and breakout meeting rooms, as well as maker space for crafts or digital creation.

Firehall

- The relocation of Firehall No. 6 is being considered for inclusion in the future WECH. Fire services were not a topic of the winter 2022 public input activities.

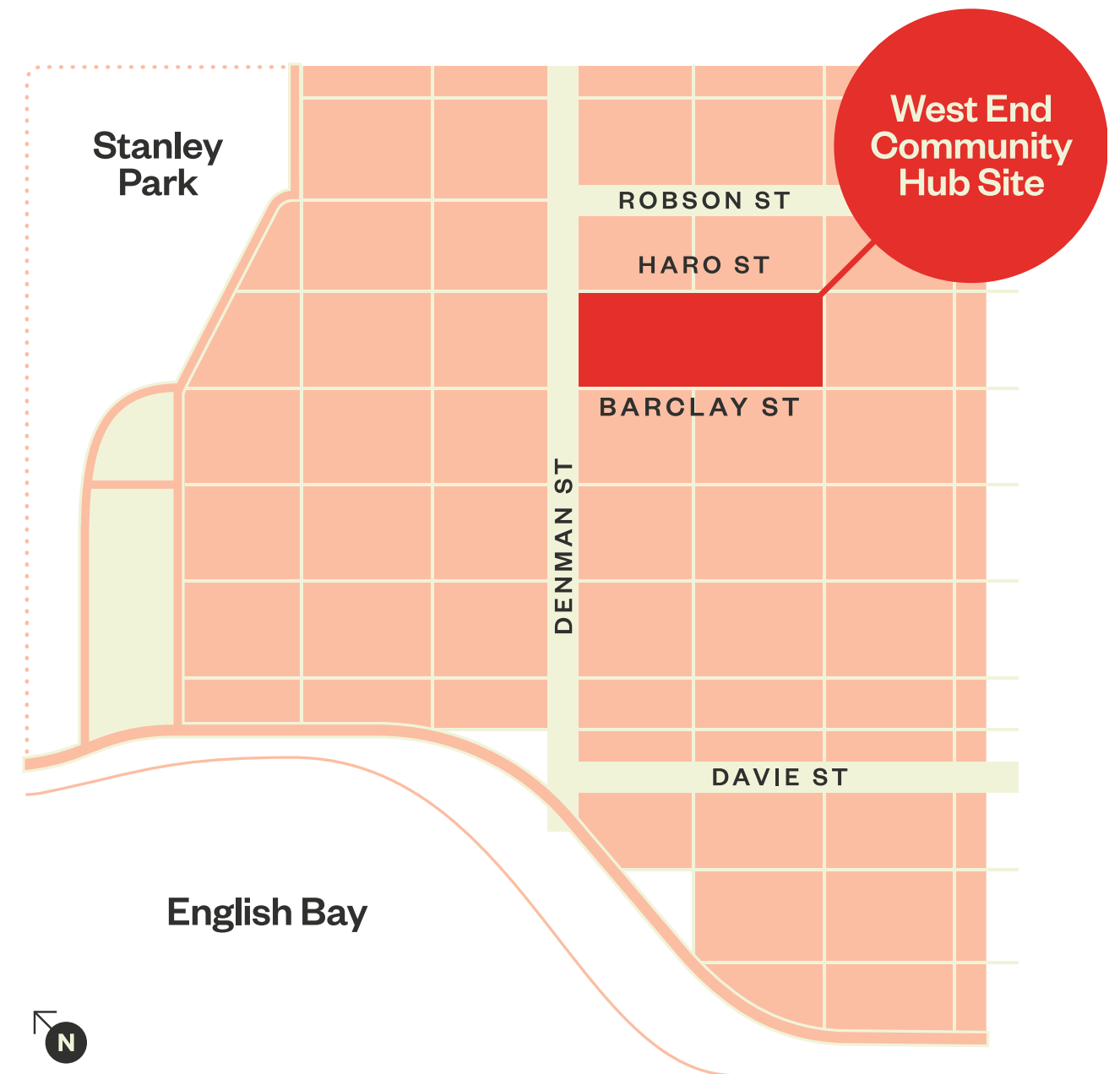
Directions for the Future West End Community Hub

The renewal plan will provide direction for the future West End Community Hub, to ensure it provides amenities and spaces that are accessible, inclusive, and aligned with current and anticipated community needs.

A complementary space needs assessment was developed during winter 2022 in addition to the public input reported on previous pages. The space needs assessment was conducted through focus group meetings, research into broader trends in recreation, leisure and culture, review of previous studies, and population and demographics characteristics.

Two key results of the space needs assessment and functional program are:

- In anticipation of future population growth, more community centre and public education facility space will need to be developed in the West End. Given existing downtown space constraints, this scale of community space may need to be accommodated across multiple sites in the neighbourhood.
- Opportunities to share community amenity space throughout the West End Community Hub should occur wherever possible to best meet the community need.



▲ Site plan identifying project location

Activities and Spaces

Recommended spaces for the future West End Community Hub:

In response to the input provided through the winter 2022 engagement, and the space needs assessment, the following spaces will be explored as options for the WECH:

- New and larger **branch library** with spaces that can be shared and ones that are dedicated for library use, including a service hub to foster intergenerational activities, a children's area with an early literacy focus, a teen zone, an Indigenous knowledge and cultural space, and adults collection area, and a staff work area.
- Pending approval and funding from the Ministry of Education the proposed expansion to provide a new seismically safe **1,000-1,200 student capacity secondary school**, which would respond to the growing youth population in the school catchment area.
- **Adult Learning Centre** incorporated into the secondary school facility.
- **Entrance and Atrium**, which could be the main reception point for the Community Hub, a large community gathering place, and the main area connecting all the major services located in the Hub together.
- **Gymnasium** that will serve as both a sports facility and multipurpose space that is dedicated for full-time community use, designed to be dividable and adjustable to allow for different activities.
- Mix of dedicated **arts and culture spaces**, which can accommodate a wide range of specialized programs, including music, performing arts, and other creative activities.
- **Community performance space** to support local performing arts and related activities, which would be ideally shared between the community and school.
- More **fitness centre space** and dedicated **fitness studios** along with associated support space, as well as non-gendered change rooms.

- Regulation-size **ice arena** that accommodates league games and practices, figure skating, short track speed skating and sledge hockey, community leisure rink, activities and also accommodates community events if the ice is removed during the summer months.
- Mix of **multi-purpose rooms** within the community centre and library that provide flexibility and can be reconfigured to meet a variety of community needs.
- Dedicated **youth spaces** that can primarily be used after school, including drop-in, informal, and structured social and recreational activities for young persons
- **Children's spaces**, that will include new licensed child care programs in addition to existing licensed childcare programs.
- **Seniors-focused spaces** that provide affordable, inclusive, and accessible opportunities for older adults to participate in a variety of active living and creative pursuits.
- **Indigenous-focused** spaces that may include collaborative spaces for cultural practices (ie. smudging), maker spaces, spaces for ceremony and performance, as well as spaces for accessing Indigenous knowledge, arts, history, and food.
- **Potential Fire Hall #6 Replacement**. The essential life safety services that VFRS provides from this location are constrained due to the site being too small to serve the growing population, and renewal options are limited due to the building's heritage status. A larger site would allow for enhanced efficiency. The feasibility of including it will be explored in future project phases.
- **Exterior spaces**, such as a public plaza, programmed outdoor activity areas, outdoor childcare spaces. Outdoor sports courts and a playing field to meet the requirements of the secondary school that could be open to public and other community program use when not needed by the school.
- **Administrative offices, building services, and back-of-house spaces**, which include the office and support space for programming and operation of the Community Hub.

Next Steps

The West End Community Hub (WECH) Renewal Plan will be the document that guides and directs the future site, including future renewal and expansion of all existing services. Next steps towards creating the renewal plan will include developing and getting feedback on initial options for how the Community Hub spaces take shape, followed by developing and inviting feedback on a preferred option. Lastly, the final WECH Renewal Plan will be submitted to the partners for approval.





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For more information, please visit shapeyourcity.ca/weconnect

For any inquiries, please contact weconnect@hcma.ca

