



PART 1: INTRODUCTION AND VISION

1.1 Context + Existing Conditions

1.2 Purpose + Scope

1.3 Plan Process

1.4 Vision





1.1 CONTEXT + EXISTING CONDITIONS

Context

The UDistrict is located within the City of Abbotsford and is unique, due to its location south of the Trans-Canada Highway. The neighbourhood is approximately 126 hectares (310 acres) in size, and is bounded by Jackson Street to the west, Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR) to the south, the Trans-Canada Highway to the north, and a steep escarpment just west of Riverside Road.



Figure 1 - Neighbourhood Context

The neighbourhood, although seemingly isolated, is connected to the northern and more populated side of the city by McCallum Road, an important arterial road in the city's street network. The UDistrict is home to Abbotsford's only major arena Abbotsford Centre (seats approximately 8,500). The other major anchor in the neighbourhood is the University of the Fraser Valley (UFV). The Abbotsford campus is UFV's largest, with approximately 5,200 full-time students in attendance.

Neighbourhood Profile Demographics

This section provides an overview of key demographic information based on the 2011 and 2016 Census, as well as the 2011 National Household Survey. Since the dissemination area boundaries do not fully align with the UDistrict boundary, the information should be considered as an approximation of existing conditions in the neighbourhood.

The neighbourhood has a population of 3,775 people. The average age of a resident within the neighbourhood is 39 years old, and this is slightly higher than the city's average age of 38 years old. UDistrict is a very diverse neighbourhood, and the largest immigrant group is Asian. The median household total income is \$69,696, and there is on average 3.08 persons per household. There are 1,400 dwellings within the neighbourhood, and the dominant housing type is low rise apartments.

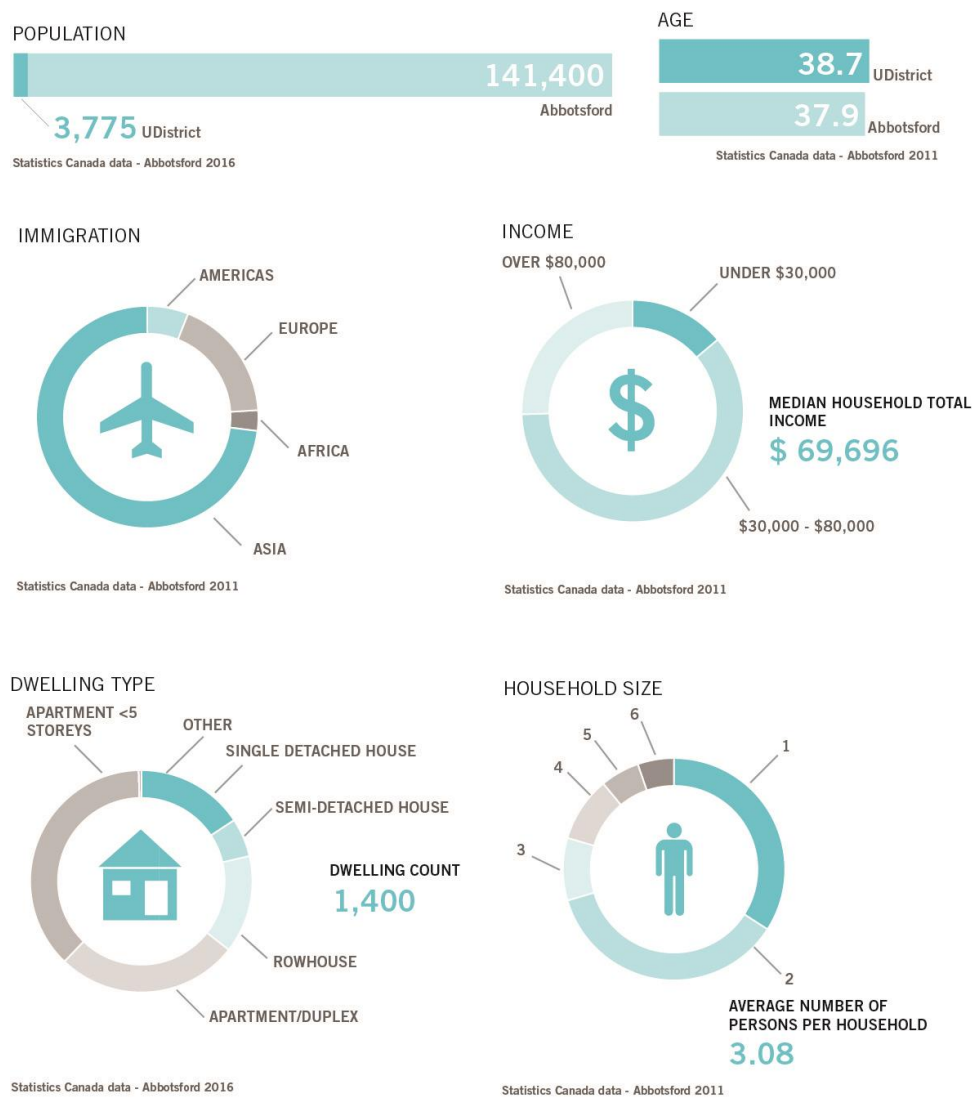


Figure 2 - Neighbourhood Profile

Businesses

Based on business licenses issued between June 2014 and June 2015, there are currently 40 active businesses with approximately 340 employees within the neighbourhood.

Churches and Schools

There are four church organizations that own either one or multiple properties in the UDistrict. These include:

- Canadian Reformed Church
- Central Heights Church
- Congregation of Jehovah's Witnesses
- Seventh-Day Adventist Church

There is one public elementary school (Jackson Elementary) located within the neighbourhood. Middle school and high school students will attend Abbotsford Middle School and Abbotsford Senior Secondary School.

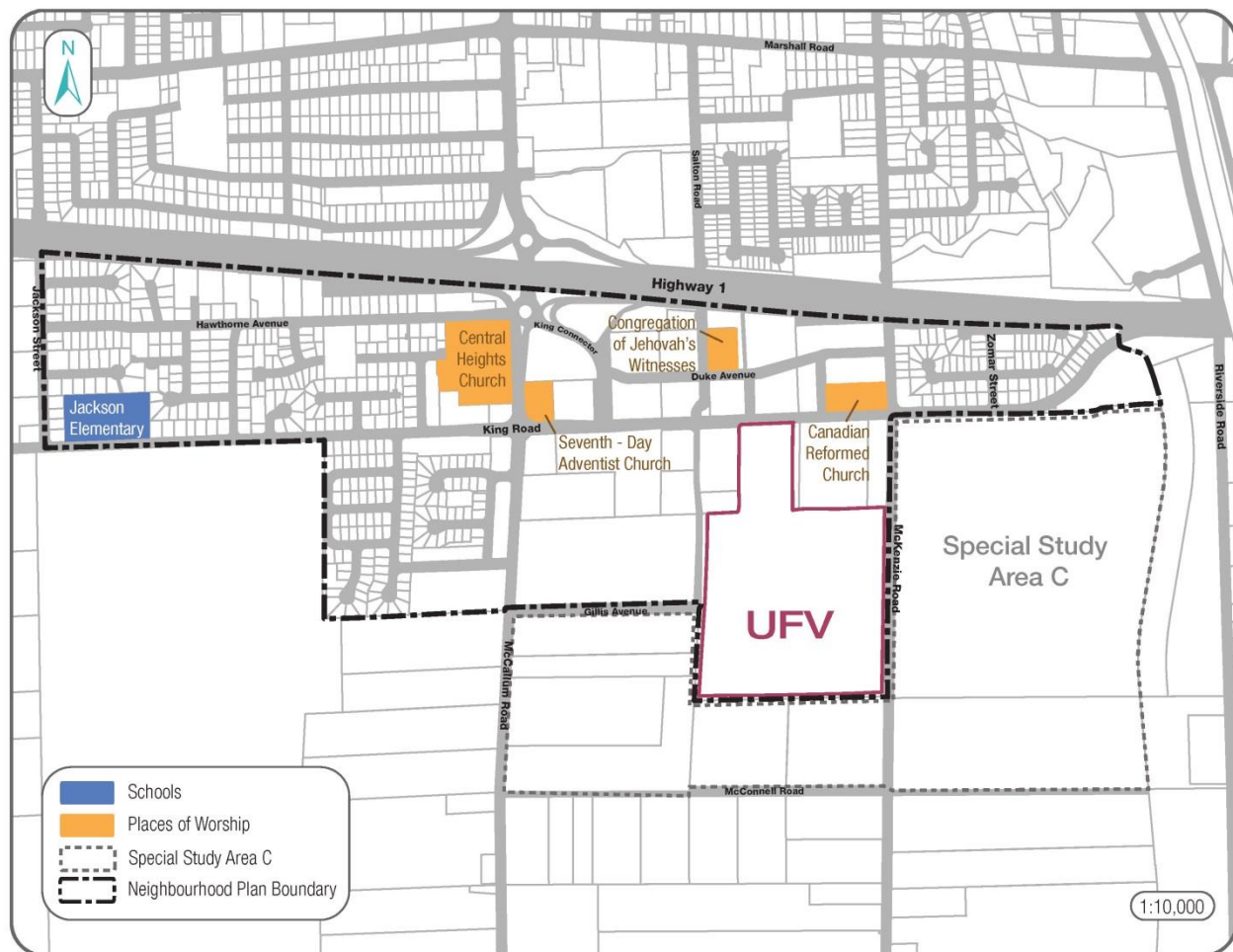


Figure 3 - Churches and Schools

1.2 PURPOSE + SCOPE

Purpose Neighbourhood Plan

In early 2011, City staff began developing a long-term vision for the area surrounding the University of the Fraser Valley (UFV), known as the 'UDistrict'. Over the course of that year, staff consulted area residents, business owners and students to help develop a vision for the neighbourhood. The purpose of the Vision document was to support the long-term growth and diversification of UFV, and establish a predictable development process to create a complete community. In May 2012, the UDistrict Vision document was endorsed by City Council.

The Vision document was a conceptual illustration of what the area could be. Beyond the illustration and high level policy, there was no critical land use planning and servicing detail, making it challenging for the development community to invest and implement the vision for the UDistrict.

In order to create a complete neighbourhood for the residents in the area, the City partnered with UFV to complete two separate but fully integrated plans. Both partners undertook a process in February 2015 to concurrently complete a Neighbourhood Plan for the City and a Campus Master Plan for UFV. The Neighbourhood Plan will provide the land use planning and servicing detail required to implement the 'Vision' for the neighbourhood, while the Campus Master Plan will lay out the direction for future campus growth.



Figure 4 - 2012 UDistrict Vision

Official Community Plan

In 2016, City of Abbotsford Council adopted a new and progressive Official Community Plan (OCP) through a process called ‘Abbotsforward’. The new OCP paints a picture of what Abbotsford will be like at 200,000 residents. The Plan reflects a turning point for Abbotsford as it aims to implement change in the face of significant challenges and tough choices. As a practical and evolving document, it will continue to be updated to address new opportunities in city building as they arise.

Urban Structure and Growth Plan

The OCP provides clear guidelines about how and where the City will grow in coming years. Abbotsford’s urban structure is defined by a hierarchy of mixed use centres which are connected by a primary transit corridor (see Figure 5). 75% of future residential growth will occur in existing neighbourhoods, and 25% in new neighbourhoods. The UDistrict is one of four mixed use Urban Centres. It is located at the southern terminus of the Primary Transit Corridor.

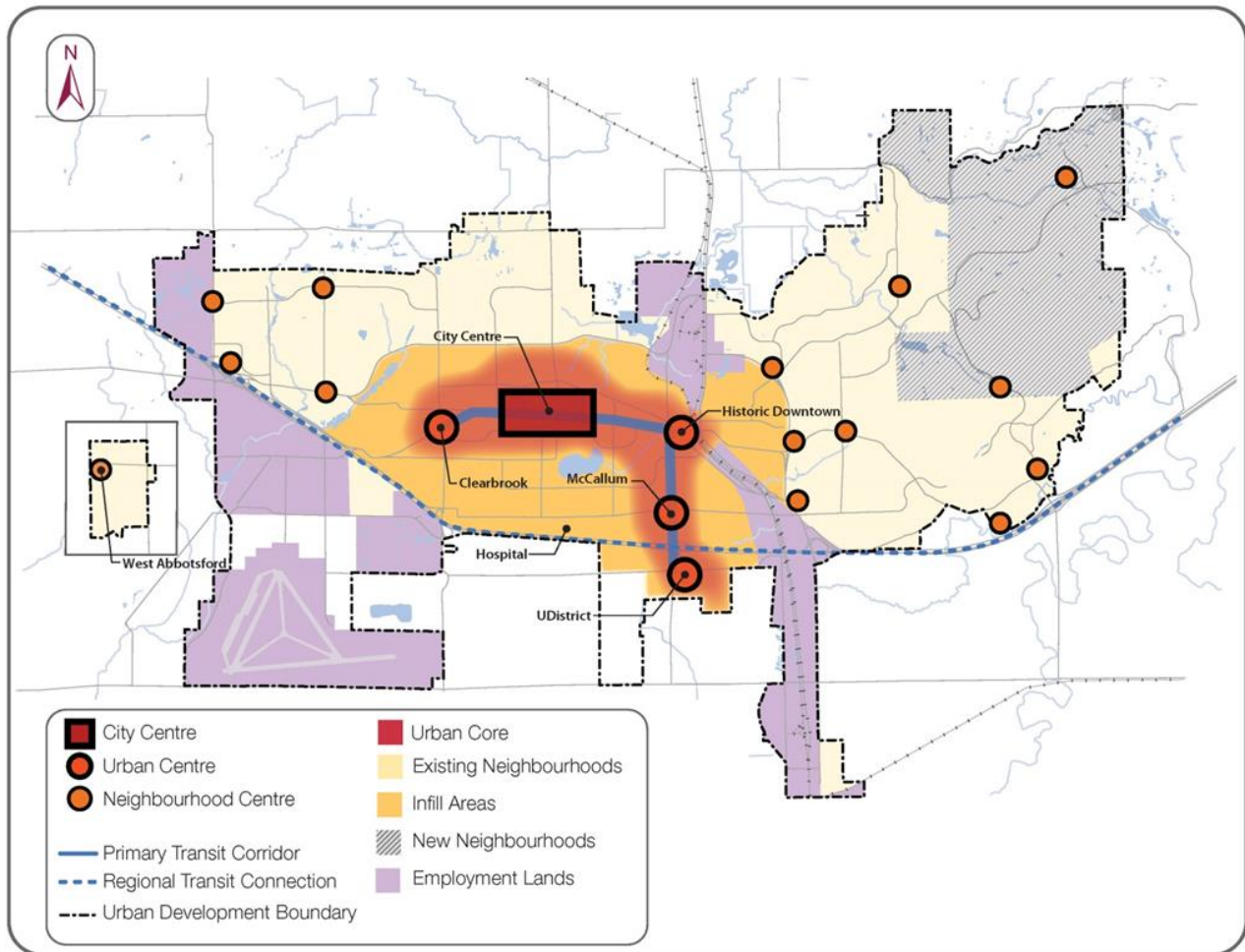


Figure 5 - OCP Urban Structure

OCP Conformance

When adopted, the UDistrict Neighbourhood Plan (UDNP) will form part of the City's OCP. As part of the OCP, the UDNP must be consistent with the overall policy framework and demonstrate how it conforms to the plan, realizes the 'Big Ideas', and supports the urban structure and overall growth objectives. However, where the UDNP provides greater detail or differs from the OCP, the neighbourhood plan will prevail. In the case where the UDNP does not contain guidance or direction, the OCP continues to apply.

Making the Plan Work: Plan For 200K

The OCP is a transformative document which sets the main policy direction for Abbotsford as it evolves into a community of 200,000 people. In order to realize the vision, the City will need to update many other plans and strategies to align them with the OCP and to ensure that they speak to each other. This will include updating engineering and transportation master plans, as well as creating new planning documents such as neighbourhood plans.



The City of Abbotsford has embarked on an unprecedented initiative, Plan For 200K, to coordinate various City departments as they update or create their plans and strategies to align with the OCP. The UDistrict Neighbourhood Plan is encompassed under the Plan For 200K project umbrella.

Plan Integration

In order for the 'UDistrict' concept to be successful, it was realized in the project conception stage that the planning processes would need to be completely integrated for the Abbotsford Campus Master Plan and the UDistrict Neighbourhood Plan. An integration committee was established (UDistrict Integration Team – UDIT), which met regularly throughout the process to ensure that for each stage of the planning process, the integration objective was upheld. The Guiding Principles were developed to provide a framework for integration, and both the Abbotsford Campus Master Plan and the UDistrict Neighbourhood Plan reference these principles as key elements in the formulation and development of the respective plans. Public engagement events were coordinated through the direction of the UDIT, and project staff from the City and UFV attended events held in the neighbourhood and on campus.

Both plans were presented together at each engagement event to illustrate to the public that the plans were 'speaking to each other'. To confirm this approach, the public was asked about their thoughts on integration of the campus and the neighbourhood. The response was overwhelmingly in support of the integrated approach, and the mixing of campus and community across boundaries and even within buildings.



1.3 PLAN PROCESS

The planning process was organized into four stages with opportunities for public and stakeholder input at key milestones to ensure broad support for the plan. The four stages of the process are illustrated in Figure 6 (below):

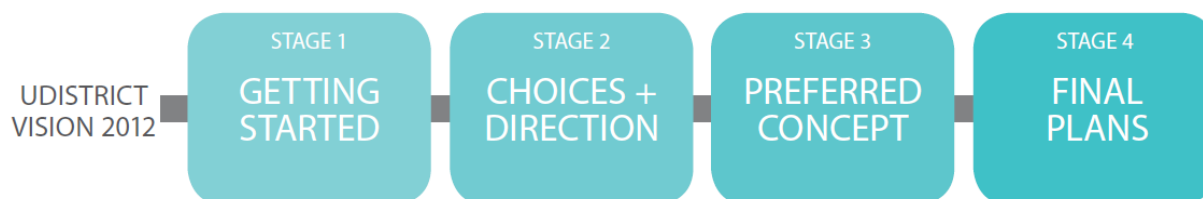


Figure 6 - Plan Process

Stage 1: Getting Started

This stage included a review and analysis of existing conditions and opportunities, and initial community and stakeholder engagement to raise awareness and gather input on future directions for the neighbourhood. Stage 1 wrapped up with the completion of the UDistrict Background Report, a key input into the development of growth concepts.

Stage 2: Choices and Direction

Two growth concepts were prepared in Stage 2. These concepts were shared with City Council prior to a public open house, where residents and stakeholders were asked to provide input on the draft concepts. The results from this public input session were shared with Council.

Stage 3: Preferred Concept

Input from Stage 2 was used to develop a preferred concept. Once the preferred concept was developed, infrastructure modelling took place. A Servicing Strategy and Transportation Assessment were completed, to ensure the concept could be adequately serviced with a reconfigured street network complete with water, storm, and sanitary sewer services. A draft plan was presented to City Council on January 22, 2018 prior to public and stakeholder input.

Stage 4: Final Plans

This final stage involved referrals to a number of senior government agencies for review and approval. Following this referral period, a Public Hearing was held to hear any concerns from the public.

Public Consultation

Stage 1

On April 8, 2015, the City of Abbotsford and the University of the Fraser Valley launched the UDistrict project. The purpose of the launch event was to raise awareness about the process and opportunities for involvement, communicate background research completed to date, and gather information from participants to inform concept options. The event was promoted by over 1,600 postcards, posters, newspaper advertisements, radio announcements, e-newsletters, and social media. Open houses were held at UFV in front of Abbotsford Centre. For those who were unable to attend the event in person, a questionnaire was made available on the project website.

Stage 2

Stage 2 open houses were held on October 15, 2015, at Abbotsford Centre and the Student Union Building at UFV. Advertising the events followed the same format as Stage 1, and once again an online survey was offered for those who could not attend the event. Consultation focused on getting input on various design elements of the plan. Two different concept options were presented to the public, and they were asked to provide their comments on various design elements, which were centered on land use, mobility and open space.



Figure 7 - Stage 1 Public Consultation



Figure 8 - Stage 2 Public Consultation

Stage 3

Stage 3 public consultation took place on February 6th, 2018 and open houses were held at Abbotsford Centre and the Library Rotunda at UFV. Both events were well attended, and advertising followed the same format as the previous stages. The presentation boards and the comment form were posted online for those who could not attend the event. Engagement was directed towards receiving feedback on the draft plan, and determining if any last changes needed to be incorporated.



Figure 9 - Stage 3 Public Consultation

Stakeholder Engagement

Stakeholders were engaged throughout each stage of the process. Planning staff met with strata councils, church groups, business owners, and land owners. During each round of public consultation, stakeholder meetings were held to ensure stakeholder comments and input were used to inform the development of the Plan.

A Design Charrette was held in June 2015 with various City Departments and representatives from UFV. The purpose of this design exercise was to brainstorm design elements that could be incorporated into the overall design of the neighbourhood and campus.



Figure 10 - Design Charrette with UFV



Figure 11 - Concept Drawings

1.4 UDISTRICT VISION

The UDistrict Neighbourhood Plan is based upon the principles of the original 2012 Vision. Neighbourhood residents, business owners, church groups and the University community provided their thoughts and aspirations in the hope of making the UDistrict a unique community that could support the long-term growth and diversification of UFV. The UDistrict neighbourhood planning process reconfirmed the principles of the previous process. The Neighbourhood Plan recognizes the previous hopes and desires for the neighbourhood, and took this to the next step by comprehensively ensuring that the campus and neighbourhood plans are fully integrated. The updated guiding principles will assist with the implementation and development of this unique project.

Vision:

The UDistrict will become a vibrant and distinct urban community that supports a walkable, transit-oriented lifestyle, focused around an innovative university village.

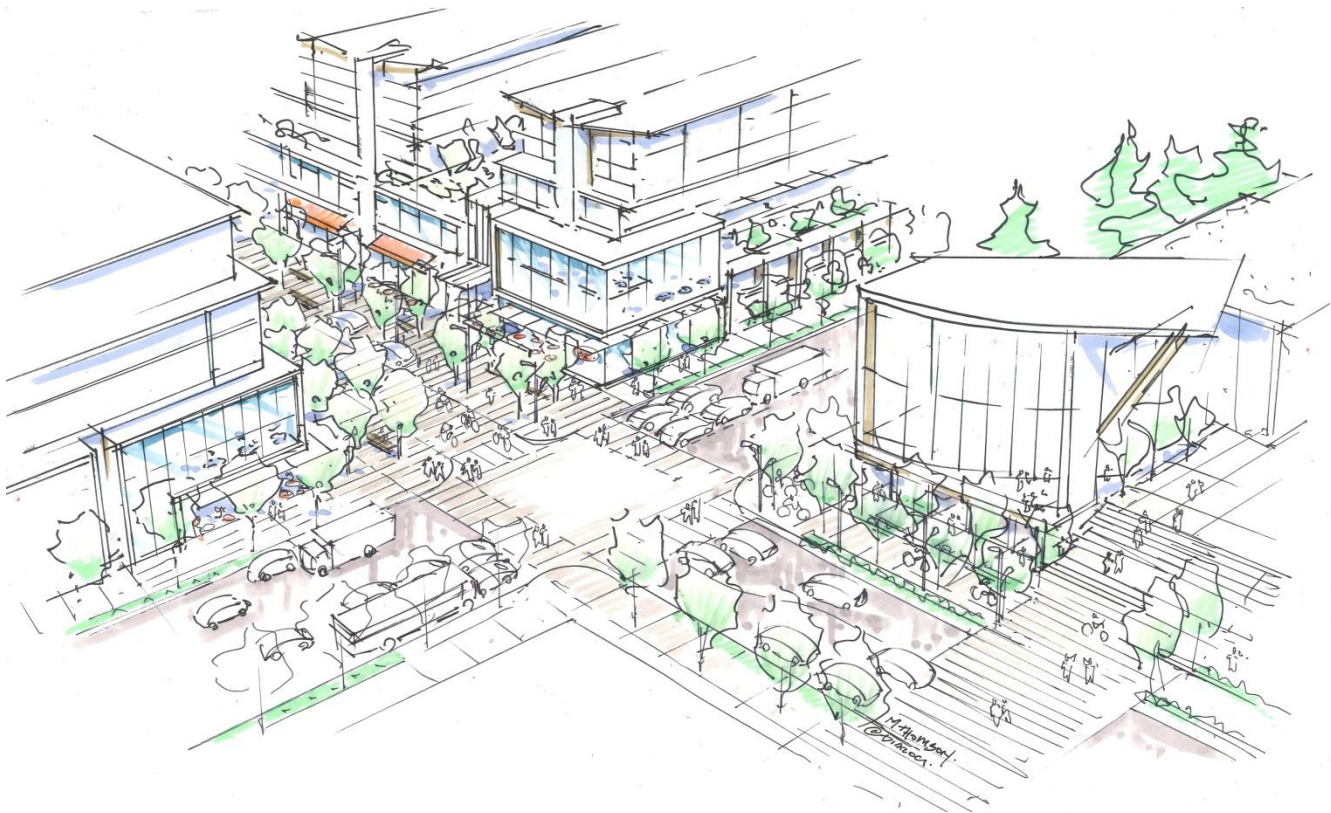


Figure 12 - UDistrict Vision