

urban structure

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INTRODUCTION

Urban structure is comprised of three elements:

1. **Space** is the underlying topography, the natural features and landscape of an area. Space influences the look and character of the districts and neighbourhoods, the parks and open spaces that exist upon the land base.
2. **Movement** is the system of roads, sidewalks, cycling lanes and pathways as well as the transportation infrastructure and services they accommodate.
3. **Building form** is the range of building types, as defined by their physical scale, mass, orientation and height, within an area. The interplay between building forms is what creates spaces, defines streets and influences a city's skyline. (SEE ILLUSTRATION 1 – URBAN STRUCTURE ELEMENTS)

The urban structure provides the foundation for the detailed design and planning of each element. Urban structure elements provide a framework to guide and influence the development of individual buildings, spaces or infrastructure. This Plan provides policies to ensure that the urban structure is well-planned and is able to provide the foundation for a livable urban community – a community that provides:

- A range of housing options;
- Services that meet people's daily needs;
- Transportation systems that connect neighbourhoods, parks and open spaces, other areas of the city and the broader region; and
- High quality and well-maintained public realm and private realm.

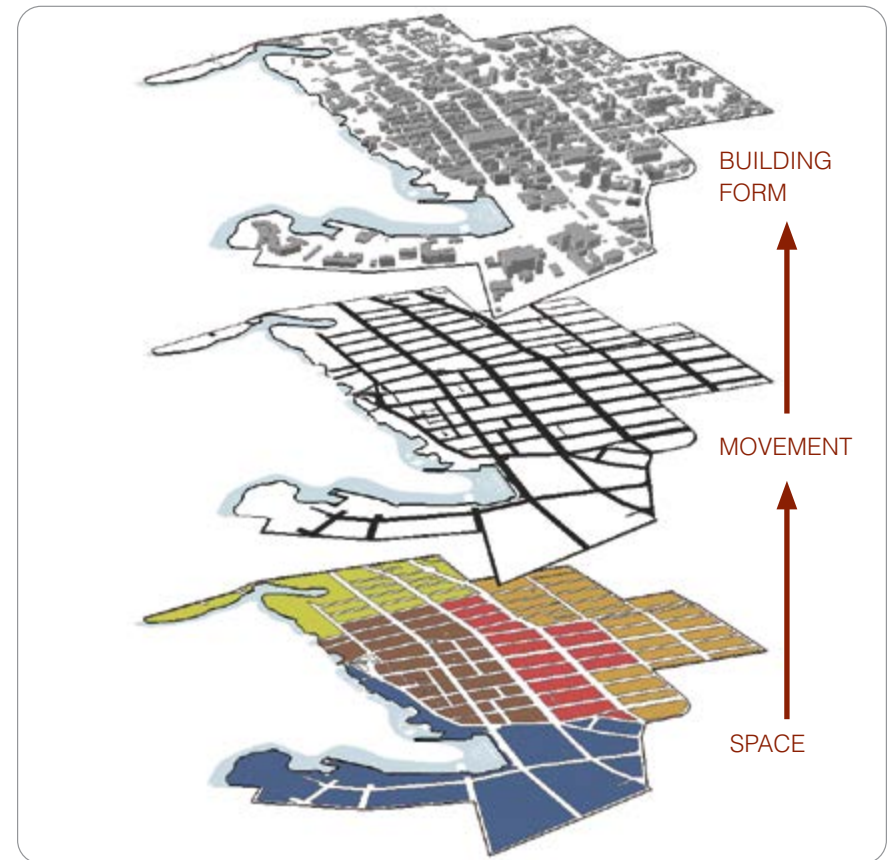


Illustration 1: Urban Structure Elements

SPACE

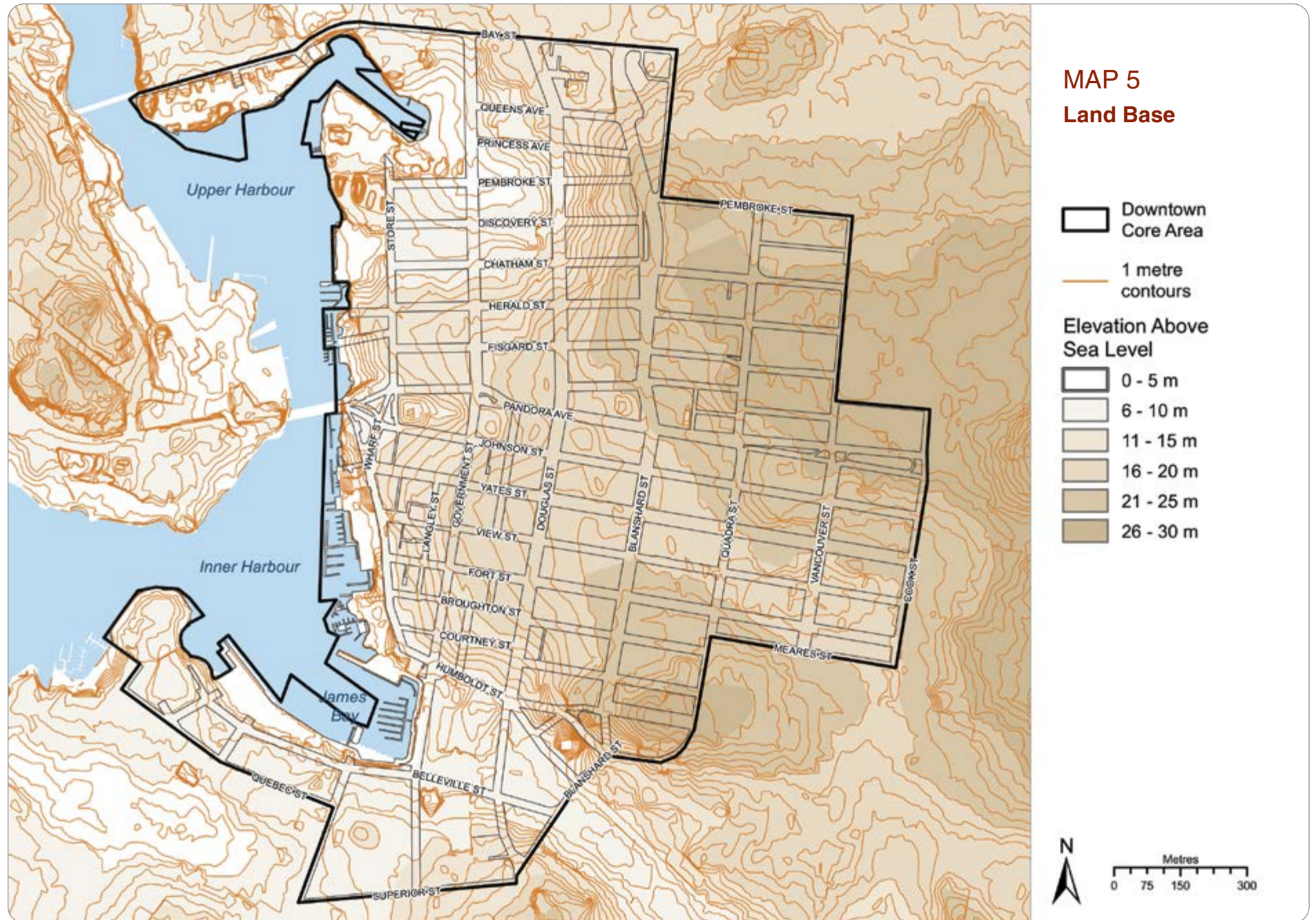
The Downtown Core Area is compact and walkable, covering approximately 188 hectares (465 acres). It gradually rises in elevation from the Inner Harbour towards Douglas Street and Blanshard Street; however, much of the central area is relatively level, with two lower basins around Rock Bay to the north and James Bay to the south. (SEE MAP 5: LAND BASE)

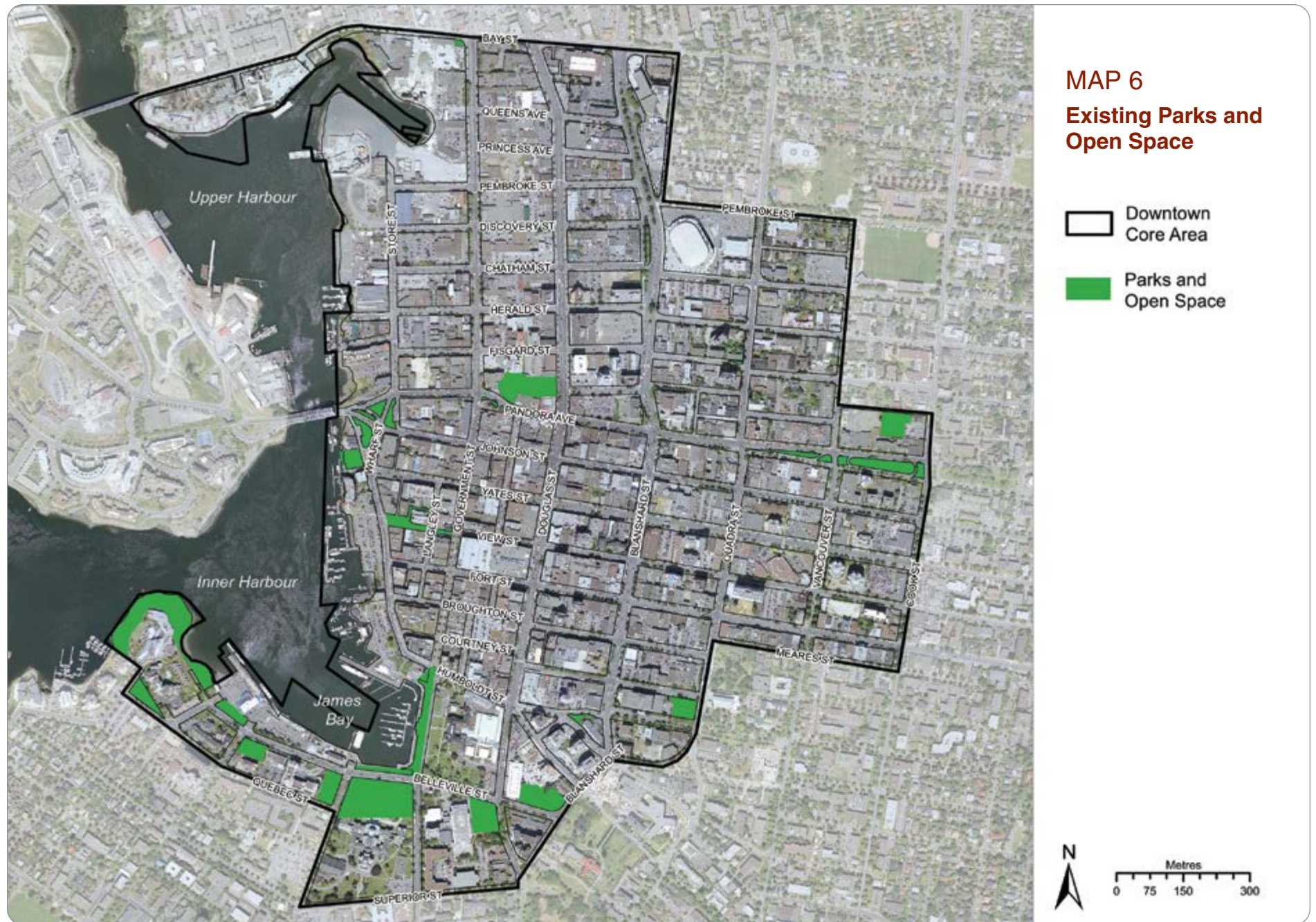
The neighbourhoods in the Downtown Core Area are predominantly mixed use, containing a range of commercial, institutional, residential, and industrial land uses and activities. Some neighbourhoods also contain special character areas that have design, architectural or historic significance. (SEE MAP 3: PLAN BOUNDARY AND NEIGHBOURHOODS)

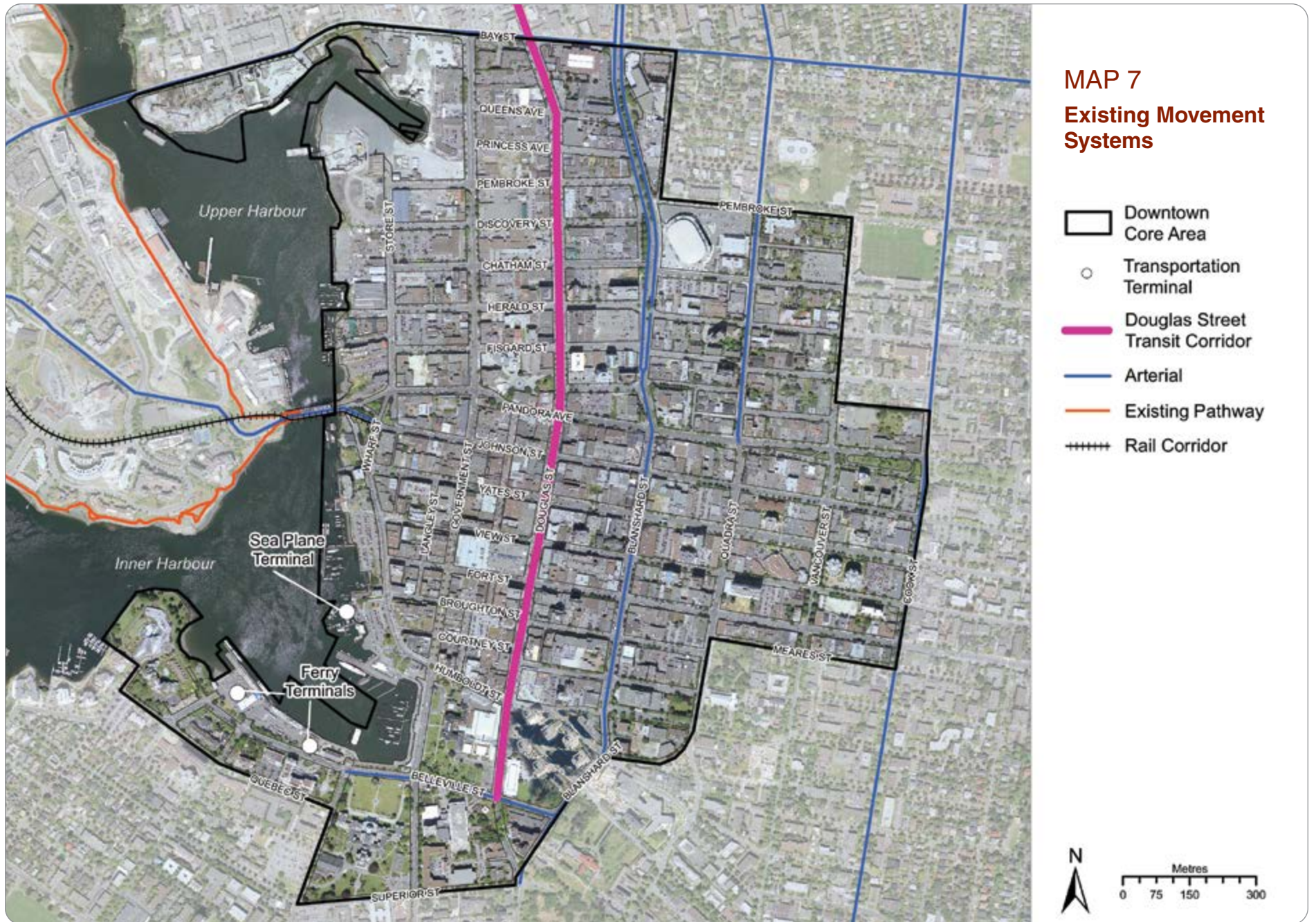
The Downtown Core Area is also defined by a variety of unique public parks and open spaces ranging from the intimate scale of Bastion Square to the large scale openness of the front lawn of the Parliament Building which serves as both a public open space and a place-defining characteristic of the Inner Harbour District. The Harbour Pathway (once complete) will provide a linear form of open space connecting much of the land along the Harbour. (SEE MAP 6: EXISTING PARKS AND OPEN SPACE)

MOVEMENT

Primary downtown streets from a transportation perspective include Douglas Street, Blanshard Street, Bay Street, Cook Street and the portion of Quadra Street located north of Johnson Street. These streets provide key links between the Downtown Core Area and other surrounding areas of the city and the region. (SEE MAP 7: EXISTING MOVEMENT SYSTEMS)

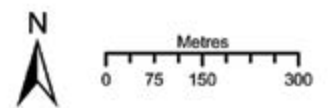






MAP 7
Existing Movement Systems

-  Downtown Core Area
-  Transportation Terminal
-  Douglas Street Transit Corridor
-  Arterial
-  Existing Pathway
-  Rail Corridor



BUILDING FORM

The Downtown Core Area's distinctive urban form rises steadily eastward from the Inner Harbour and the blend of low scale, historic streetscapes and rehabilitated heritage buildings to a concentration of newer, higher density commercial and residential buildings in the Central Business District and in the Residential Mixed-Use District. This gradual rise in building form helps to shape the city's undulating skyline. (SEE ILLUSTRATION 2: BUILDING FORM)



Illustration 2: Building Form

URBAN STRUCTURE – OBJECTIVES

To ensure the Downtown Core Area continues to be a livable urban community while it grows significantly over the next 30 years, the urban structure policies and actions seek to achieve the following objectives:

1. That the physical elements that define space, movement and building form serve to attract and retain residents, visitors and businesses.
2. That existing neighbourhoods and special character areas are recognized as intrinsic components of each District.
3. That support is provided to encourage the development of a range of building forms that respect and reflect the character of the Downtown Core Area and its neighbourhoods.
4. That the public realm of the Downtown Core Area is enhanced by the presence of active commercial uses, such as restaurants, retail stores and entertainment facilities.
5. That taller building forms are generally concentrated along the Douglas Street/Blanshard Street corridor and along the portion of Yates Street located between Douglas Street and Cook Street, as well as a blend of mid-rise and high-rise buildings in both the Rock Bay District and the Residential Mixed-Use District.
6. That the historic context of the Historical Commercial District is protected.
7. That new parks and open spaces are developed within the Rock Bay District and the Harris Green neighbourhoods.
8. That priority is given to pedestrians, cyclists and public transit in land use and transportation planning.
9. That transportation networks are integrated with neighbourhoods, provide optimal access and facilitate the delivery of goods and services. (SEE MAP 8: URBAN STRUCTURE CONCEPT)

URBAN STRUCTURE – POLICIES AND ACTIONS

DEVELOPMENT

- 2.1. Maintain lower scale buildings throughout the Historic Commercial District and along the waterfront to respect the lower scale context of the area, and gradually transition to taller buildings within the Central Business District.
- 2.2. Concentrate tall buildings between Douglas Street and Blanshard Street as well as along Yates Street east of Douglas Street.
- 2.3. Encourage the appropriate location of residential and commercial development to support the Downtown Core Area's current mixed-use character.

LAND USE

- 2.4. Ensure land use and related activities complement and enhance the form and function of each District.

CONNECTIVITY

- 2.5. Improve and enhance the physical public realm connections and transitions between Districts.
- 2.6. Improve connections for pedestrians and cyclists to public parks and open space through both design and maintenance.

PARKS AND OPEN SPACES

- 2.7. Support the development of additional public parks and open spaces to provide public amenity space within the Rock Bay District and the Residential Mixed-Use District (which includes the Harris Green neighbourhood).

HARBOUR PATHWAY

- 2.8. Complete the Harbour Pathway, including connections to the regional pathway network and the pedestrian network.

VACANT LANDS

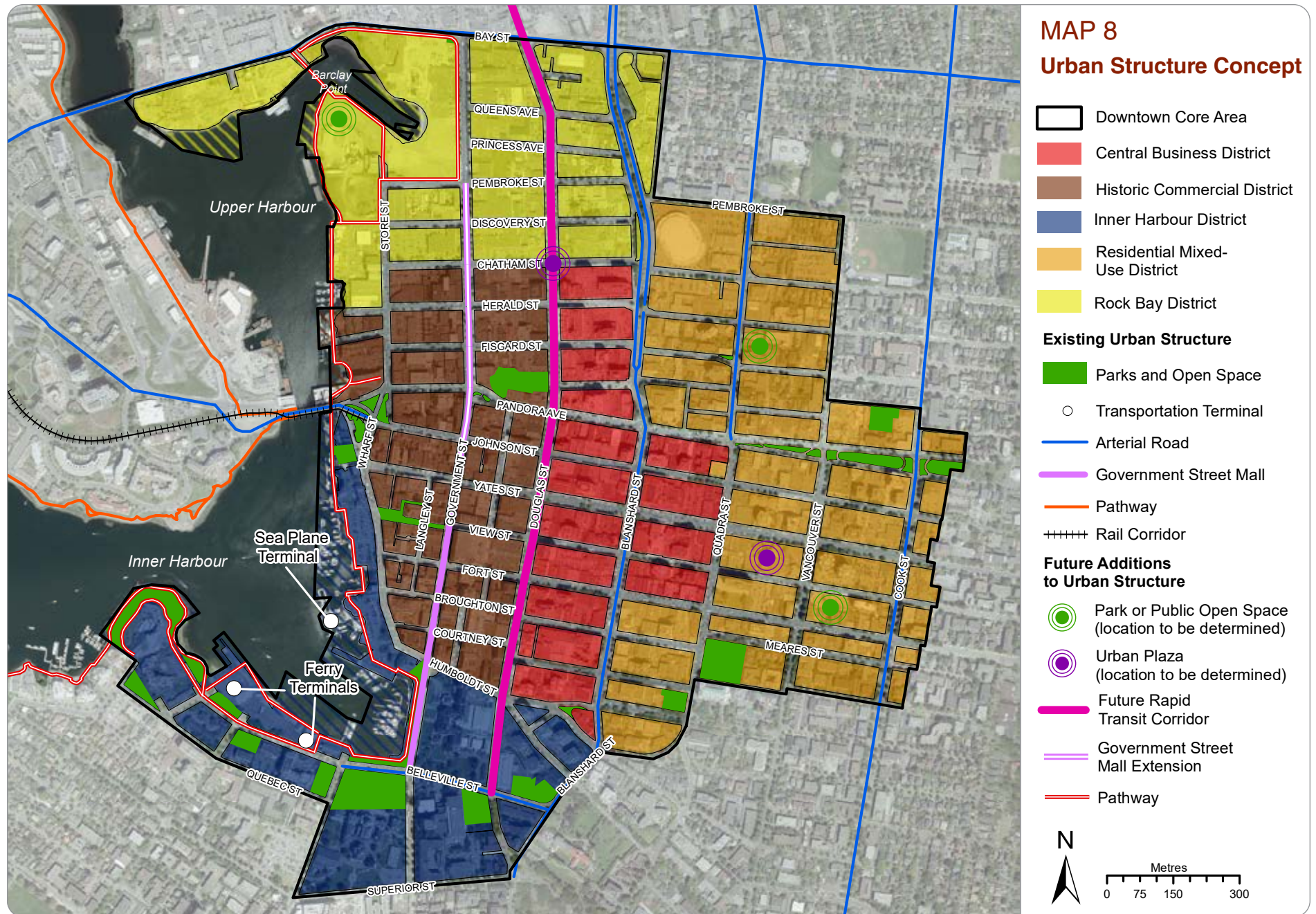
- 2.9. Support the redevelopment of vacant and under-developed sites, including surface parking lots, with more intensive uses that support the economic function of the Downtown Core Area.

OFFICE DEVELOPMENT

- 2.10. Support the development and location of higher density commercial buildings within the Central Business District.



Conceptual illustration of the Downtown Core Area including new development as a backdrop to the Historic Commercial District and the integration of the Harbour Pathway.



The Urban Structure Concept provides a summary of how existing and future urban structure elements will be organized within the Downtown Core Area.