



RAINIER BEACH

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The Neighborhood

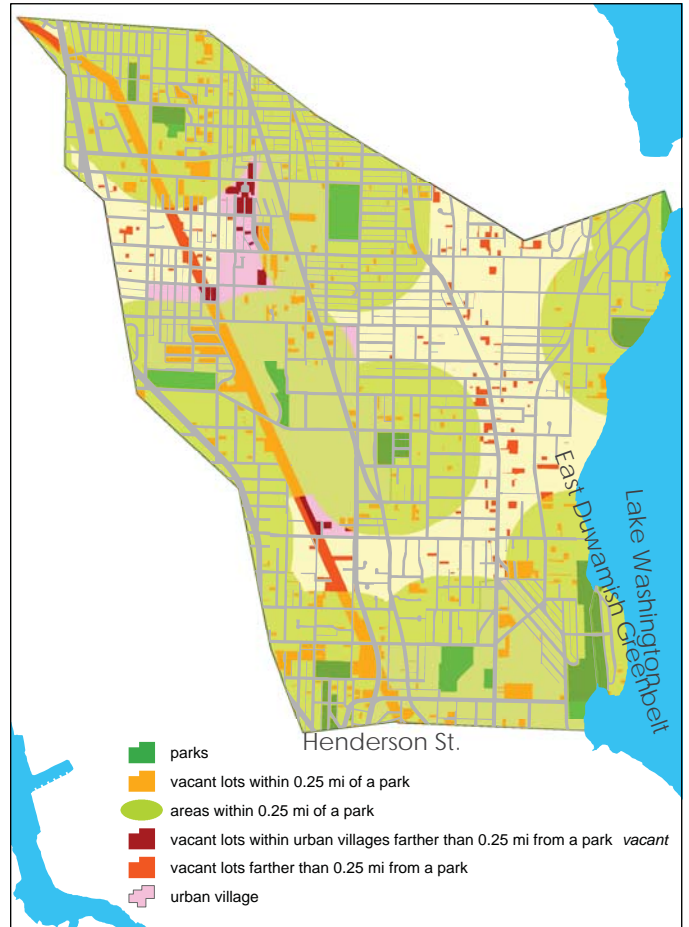
The Rainier Beach neighborhood harbors unique social and economic diversity, planned density in 3 urban villages including the New Holly development, planned light rail connections at New Holly and Henderson St. and a variety of distinct open space opportunities that will serve the area well as it continues to evolve into the future as a livable community. Located between the East Duwamish greenbelt to the west and the shores of Lake Washington to the east; the Henderson St. corridor anchors the southern end of the neighborhood and serves as a hub connecting the fingers of north/south ridges and the busy arterials of Beacon Ave., Martin Luther King Jr. Way South, Rainier Ave. South, and Seward Park Ave. The boundary of the study area are defined by the watershed encompassing small northern tributaries of Mapes Creek that historically flowed between the north/south ridges that run through the neighborhood.

Previous to the charrette, opportunity maps were created to call out opportunities within the neighborhood that would help guide the openspace planning decisions of the charrette team. Some of these opportunities included vacant lots or areas with large adjoining backyards, steep slopes and riparian zones. The key opportunities within the neighborhood are the utility corridor as well as the lake shore and the East Duwamish Greenbelt.

Charrette Process

The Rainier Beach charrette team was composed of 3 community members, 2 landscape architects, 1 urban designer, 1 planner and two students.

Together during the 2 day charrette process in a flurry of trace paper and flying pens we charted our goals, identified opportunities, created a concept that encompassed goals and opportunities and mapped out that concept in a 20 and 100 year plan respectively.

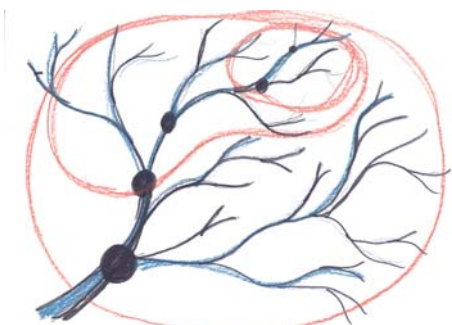


Map by Virginia Coffman

Opportunity Map: this map depicts current opportunities for park creation. The dark red patches are vacant lots within areas planned for density and in areas lacking in easy park access.



Guiding principles



Concept diagram by Kara Weaver

Our process started on the city wide scale. We created a wish list and then selected items from the list that were most important, both in terms of human/community and ecological needs for open space. From this brainstorming session we established a list of principles that encapsulated our values, interests and ideas. From that list, after some discussion, we arrived at a city wide concept. The guiding principles that we discussed and identified to direct our thoughts for the city and neighborhood scale were: connectivity, local, revealing ecosystems, democratic access and health.

Concept Development

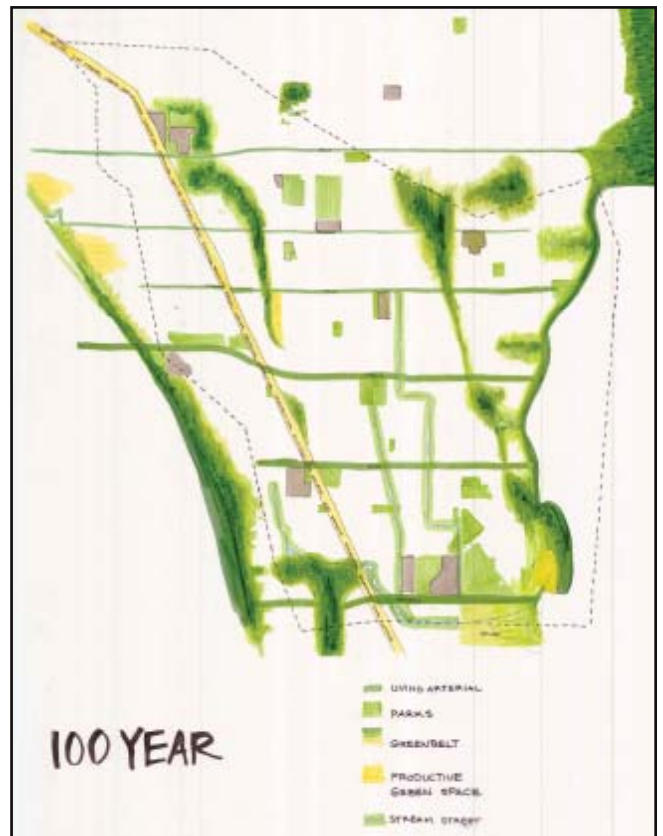
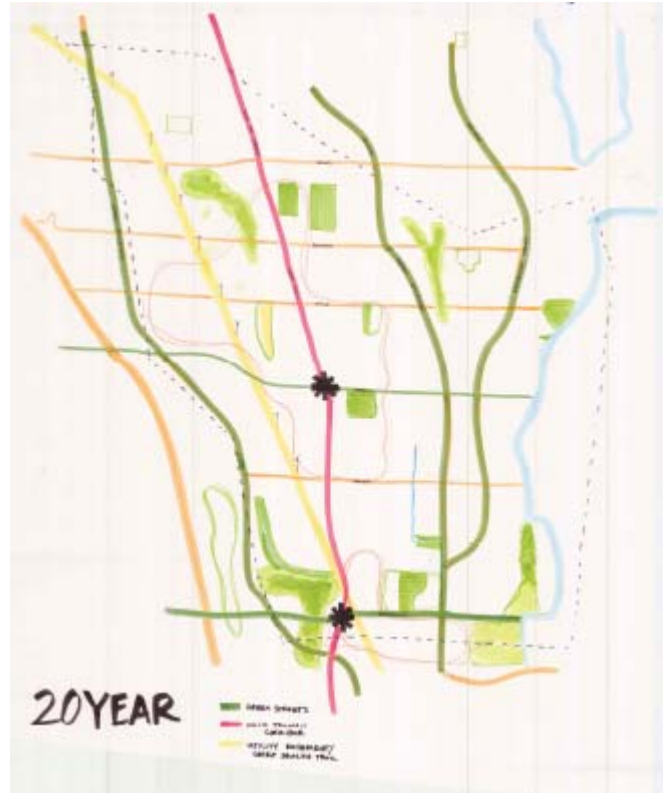
From these goals our concept emerged. Our primary concept was Neighborshed: a base unit within the larger city system that has a distinct ecological and social identity and function. Its borders define a catchment region of residents for local urban villages and local services, of water, wastes and energy for collection and processing with green infrastructure, of people as a collector area for transit nodes, of connected open space and greenbelts for healthy habitat creation. Healthy environments and open space are integrated with movement corridors and community nodes and locally managed. The neighborshed is the area that captures, directs and condenses all of these elements to form a livable place with a sense of local identity. This Neighborshed connects to others via the connective tissue of transit corridors, green corridors and large waterways.

After defining our concept we looked to the opportunity maps to identify what places and patterns were currently present and what could be built upon. The idea of local access was very important on a neighborhood scale. We identified the distance of 1/4 mile as a standard unit of accessibility from all homes to walkable streets, services and a variety of openspace options. Throughout the study area we identified a network of east/west streets as greenstreets at 1/4 mi intervals; where these green streets connect with major north/south street major transit hubs and services would be developed. The entire region would develop along the following strategies:

1. Urban nodes of service and openscape equally distributed for equality of access and walkability.
2. Urban hubs centered around transit connections-to include public gathering squares to facilitate democratic process, neighborhood identity building and support local social connections.
3. Commercial development along north/south spines. With greatest development in the Henderson corridor.
4. Backyard farming for local food production.
5. Backyard nature sanctuaries for habitat formation.
6. Historic stream and riparian zone recreation.
7. Lake riparian zone restoration.
8. Deomocratic shorelines.
9. Democratic views.
10. Distribution of p-patches for food production and formation of community activity.
11. Large boulevards on north/south corridors to improve on-street conditions.
12. Trail systems throughout to connect with major trails such as the Chief Sealth, newly created Lakefront greenbelt and Duwamish greenbelt.
13. Wind energy systems along ridgelines.

Open Space Planning

Much of our planning integrated many more facets of space than open space. We weren't so interested in areas for single-use recreation than we were for areas for what we called democratic access particularly along shorelines and where view are best. We felt the most important function for open space was for multi-purpose uses i.e. one corridor for human powered transit, wind power generation and food production or one swath for high density and high ecological function. Each space we created or rethought incorporated multiple functions within its boundaries.



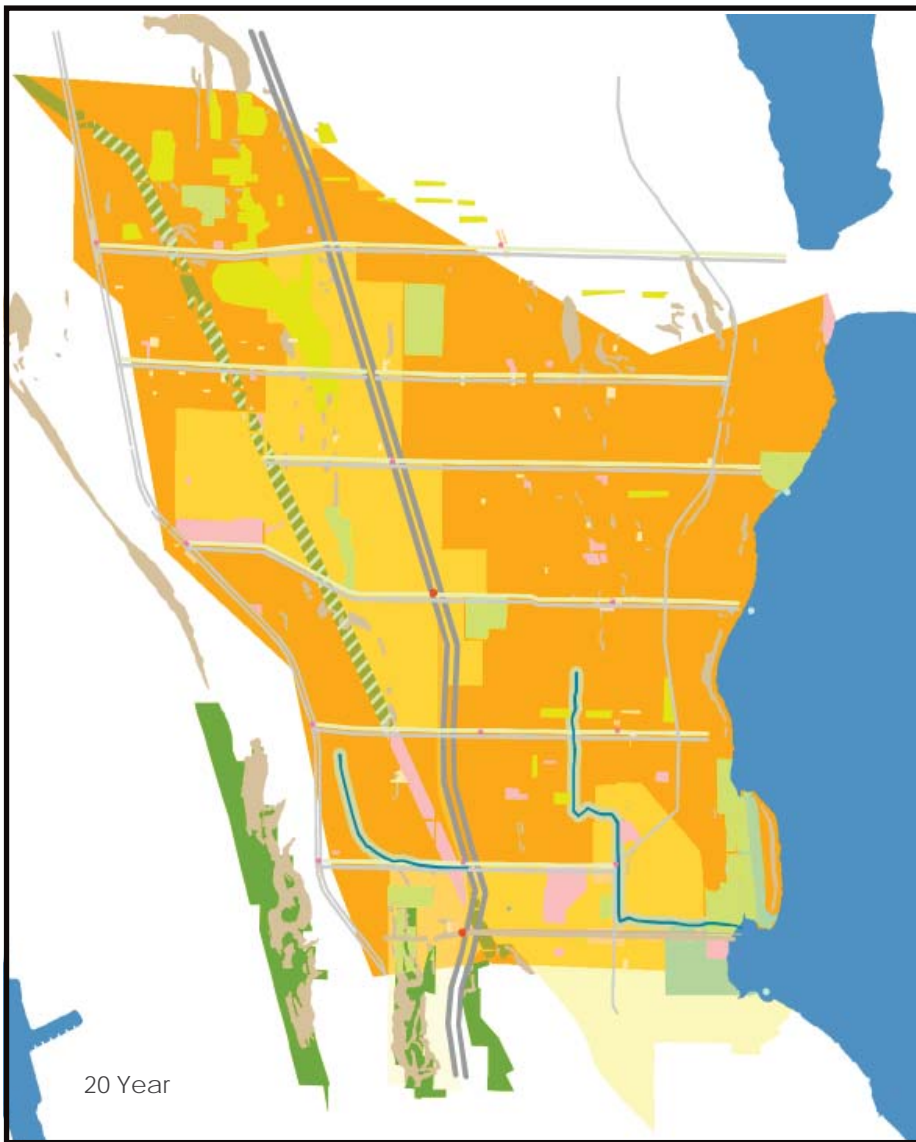
Maps by Kara Weaver and Sara Durkee



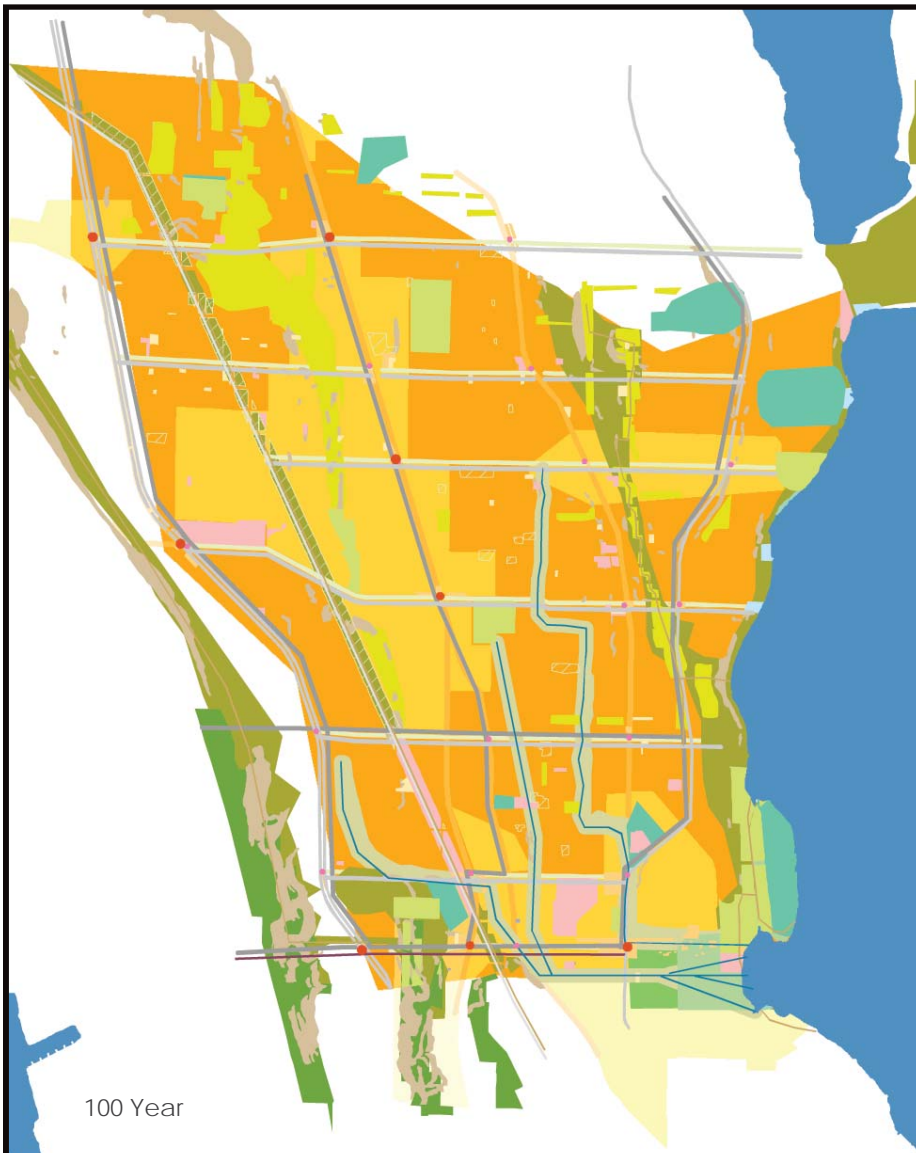
Drawing by Tauschia Copeland

Implementation

Our plan relies heavily on local involvement and stewardship created by people who care about and are invested in the area. They are partially responsible for defining, patronizing and maintaining these spaces.



- URBAN HUBS
- STUDY AREA
- COMMUNITY NODES
- URBAN VILLAGE
- GREEN STREETS
- BACKYARD SANCTUARY
- LIVING MACHINE
- DAYLIGHTED STREAM
- GREEN BELT
- HABITAT CORRIDOR
- LAKE RIPARIAN AREA
- STREAM RIPARIAN AREA
- STEEP SLOPE
- URBAN WATERFRONT HABITAT
- WETLAND
- EXISTING PARK
- ACTIVE PARK
- BEACH SWIMMING CENTER
- CIVIC SPACE
- PLAY GROUND
- PASSIVE PARK
- WATER TAXI
- DEDICATED BICYCLE CORRIDOR
- MASS TRANSIT
- ONSTREET BICYCLE CORRIDOR
- OFF STREET TRAIL
- PEDESTRIAN CORRIDOR

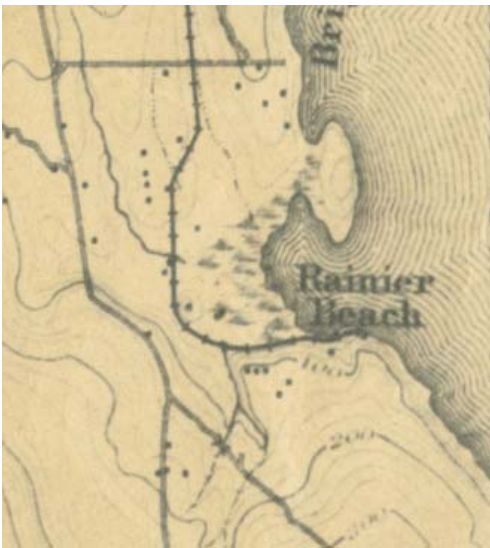


Rainier Beach

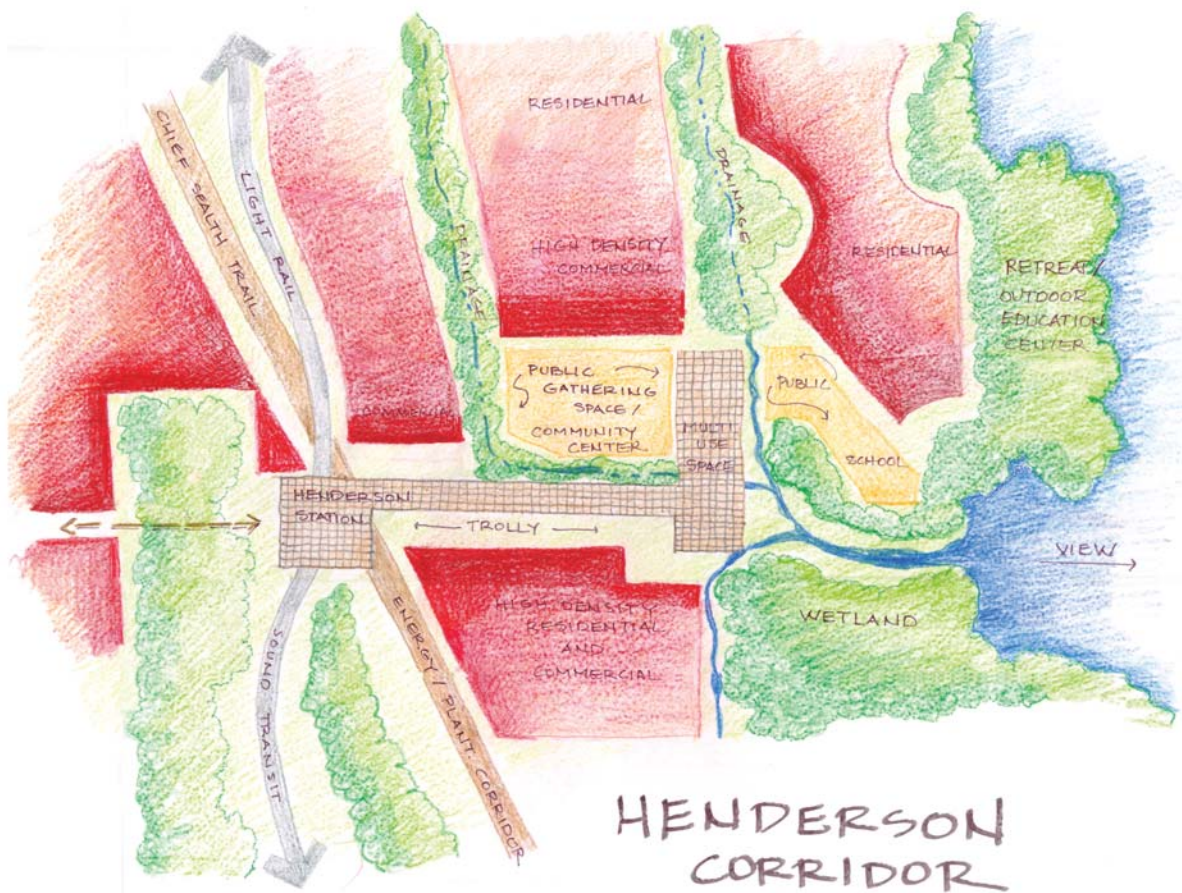
Maps by Virginia Coffman

Urban Sponge

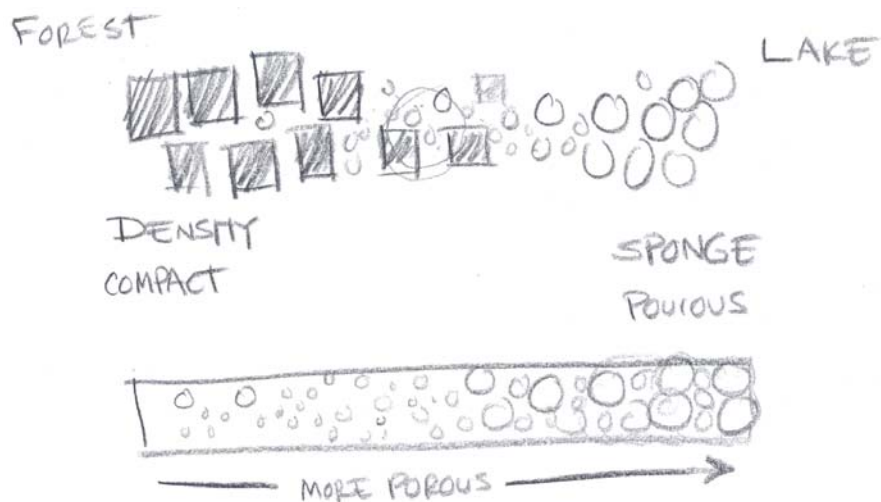
Building on the Neighborshed concept I looked to the focal point of the neighborhood: the Henderson Street Corridor to develop my design. The charrette team had identified this corridor as the highest density area within the neighborhood. In the Rainier Beach Neighborshed the catchment area of all up-stream activity is the Henderson Street corridor. This area historically was a wetland and in the future according to the concept it could be a dense, transit oriented Urban Village. This design proposes that in the future this area will function as both wetland and dense human residential and commercial area: a highly productive place. In the future it is assumed that buildings will be seamlessly integrated into the landscape in both form and function: capturing all Neighborshed wide waste and water and like a wetland, holding and processing before release into Lake Washington. The future vision for the corridor is an integrated built landscape where buildings and landscape function like the area did historically: a wetland.



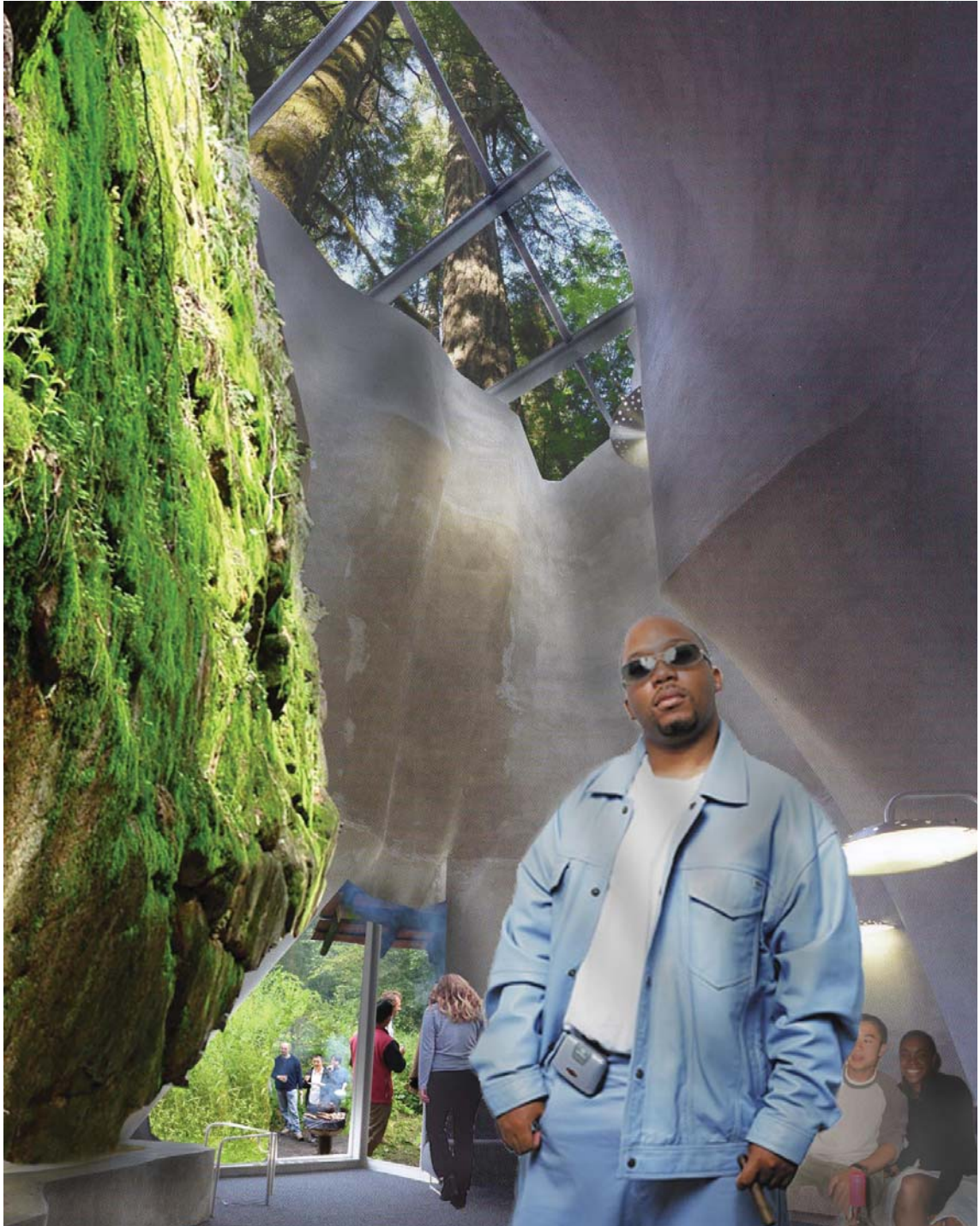
USGS map, 1893.



Drawing by Cheryl Eastberg

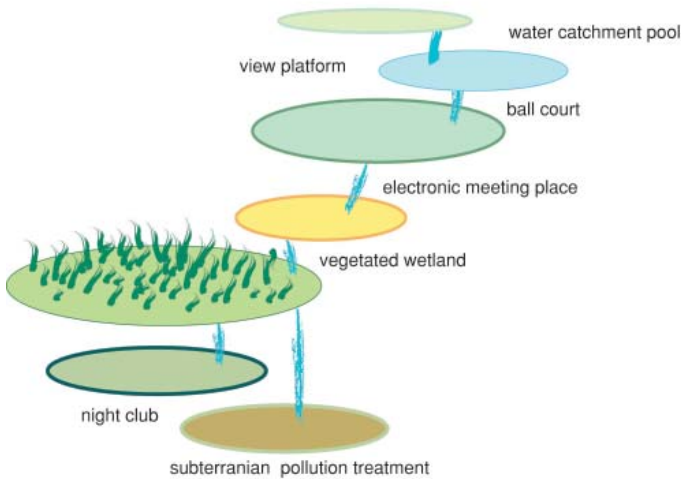


Sketch by Virginia Coffman



Living in a Pore: indoor, outdoor, building and landscape are all highly integrated, functional and fun.

Pores: functional, small-scale social areas within the sponge



Potential Pore composition

Continuing down in scale I investigated the small interstitial spaces that human would occupy within this functional and highly productive urban landscape. Within the productive urban landscape of the Henderson Corridor all social and ecological processes will be connected and revealed through pores. Pores are small scale spaces just outside the front door, between buildings, areas that integrate indoor and outdoor, landscape and building and serve a variety of functions. In the future offices my no longer exist, just as the telephone used to be a place and is no longer. Space will demand flexibility and multi-functionality. Pores will be the conduits for movement and the places for pause. Pores are the apertures that connect through the strata of social activity and ecological process and where integration of the two occurs.