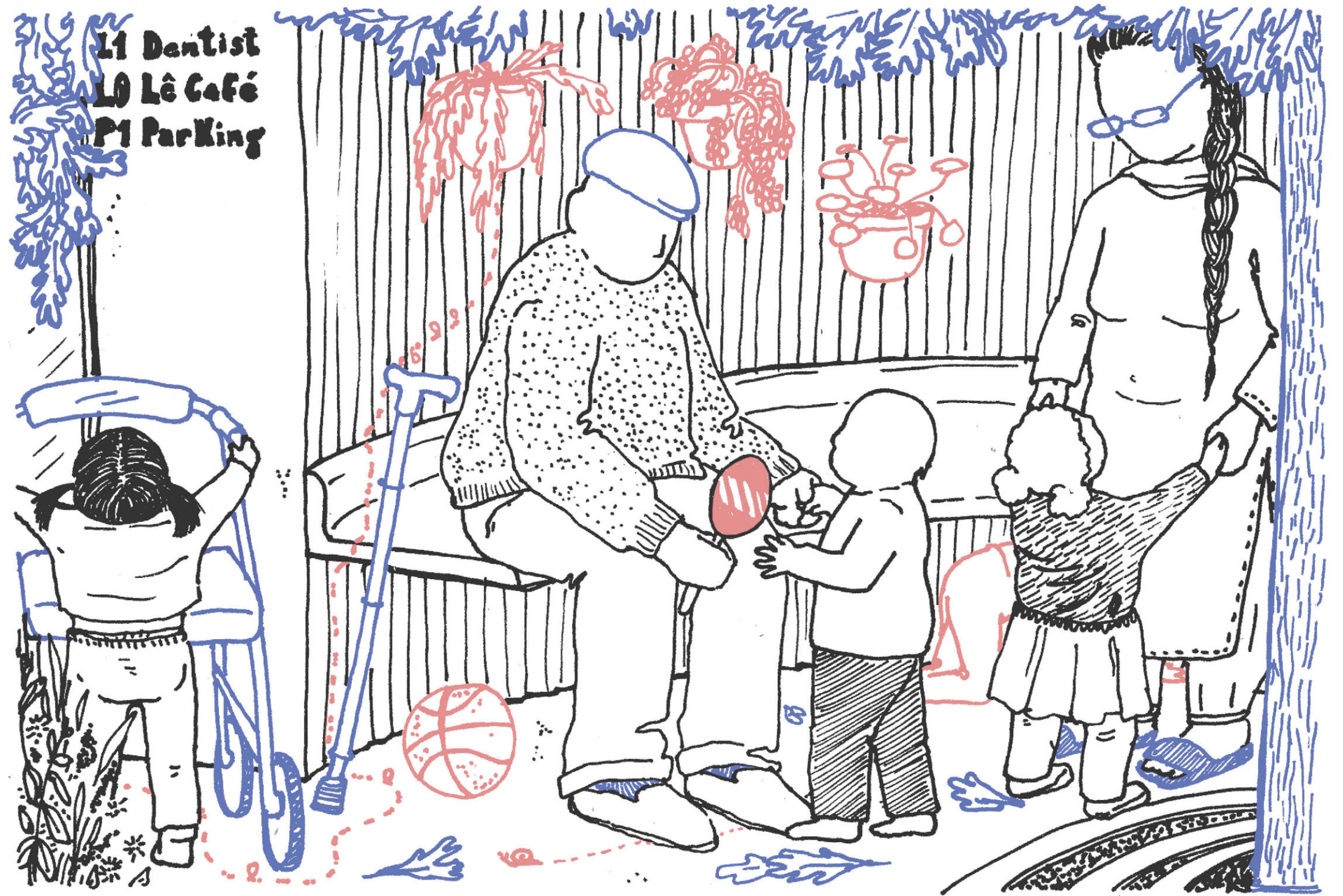


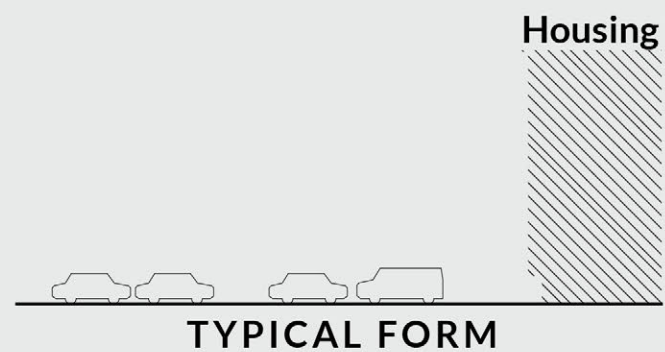
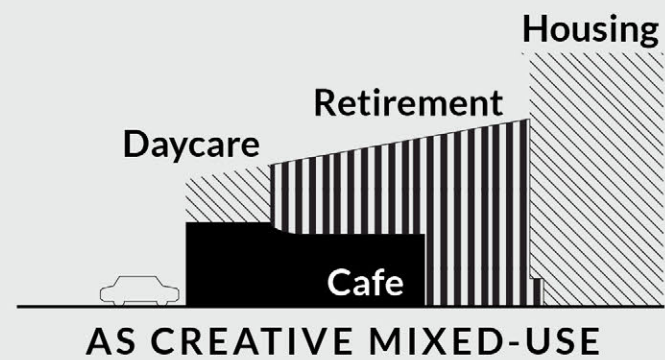
Gossip, Tea, and Care

CARE BLOCKS

GLOWING SUNSHINE
DAYCARE



**HOUSING + DAYCARE
RETIREMENT HOME +
CAFE + HEALTH CLINIC**



As urban populations get older, the need to increase health services for older residents is obvious. Less perceivable is the growing necessity for services that cater to their social needs. With 1 in 6 Canadian seniors as socially isolated, loneliness is the rising epidemic that increases health risks amongst vulnerable populations, including the elderly.

Creative city-building can combat this isolation by creating urban spaces that encourage a strong sense of belonging by co-locating various amenities within proximity and planning

cities around care. What if, instead of adopting a one-size-fits-all city model, we adopt one that is tailored to meet the needs of diverse groups of people, particularly for seniors?

Co-locating long-term care and early child-care provides an opportunity for children and elderly to benefit from meaningful interactions with one another. It helps to combat the social isolation that increases mortality amongst older citizens, increases the well-being of youth participating, and facilitates intergenerational knowledge while combatting ageism. In our cities, co-locating these uses allows elderly residents to age in place, with dignity, autonomy, and most importantly, community.



Toronto Fire Station 313

Always Ready

UNLOCKING PUBLIC FACILITIES
WITH EMERGENCY MIXED-USE

“ Yes we’ve talked about the [creative mixed-use] model for some time. Otherwise, how do we get into some locations where land isn’t available?... There is nothing that fire stations wouldn’t co-locate with. The restriction would be the other way. ”

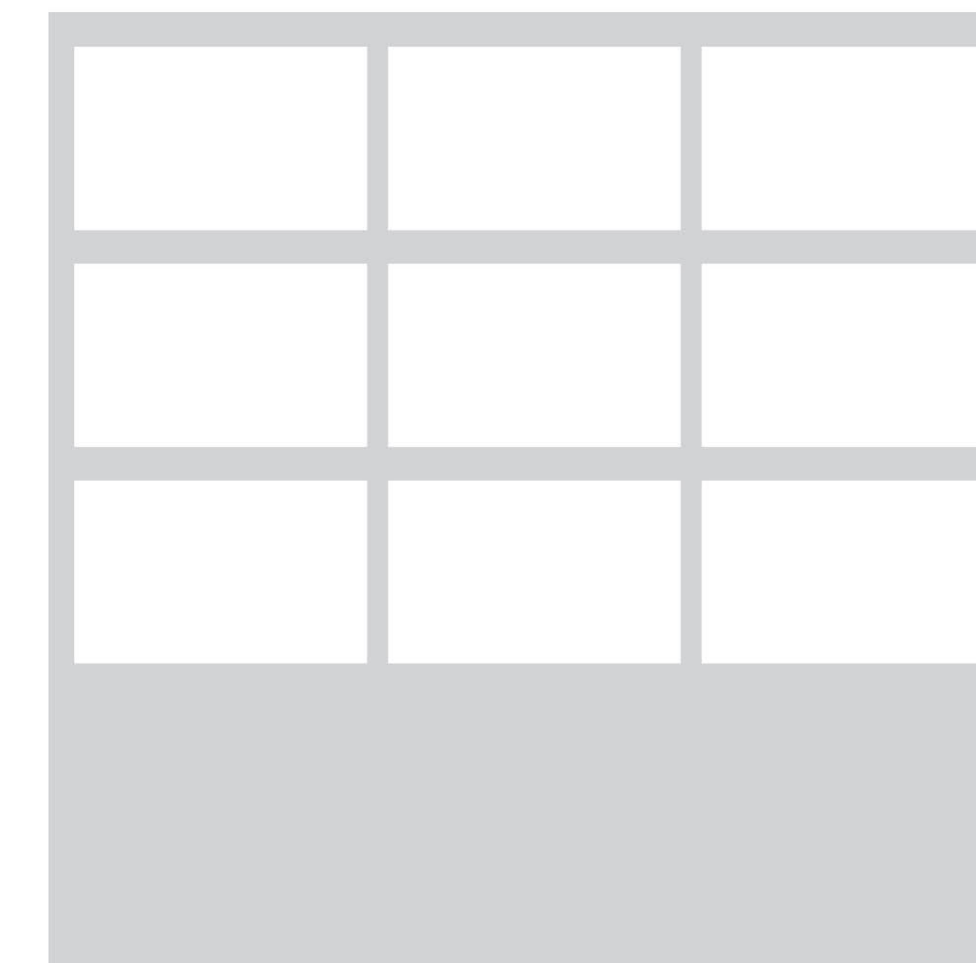
- TORONTO DEPUTY FIRE CHIEF, 2020

Fire halls hold immense potential to be co-located with other uses, which has been done successfully in many cities across North America for the past 40 years. Fire halls have been incorporated into mid-rise residential complexes, skyscrapers, or as part of larger master-planned communities. In many cases, partnership opportunities were leveraged to secure affordable housing.

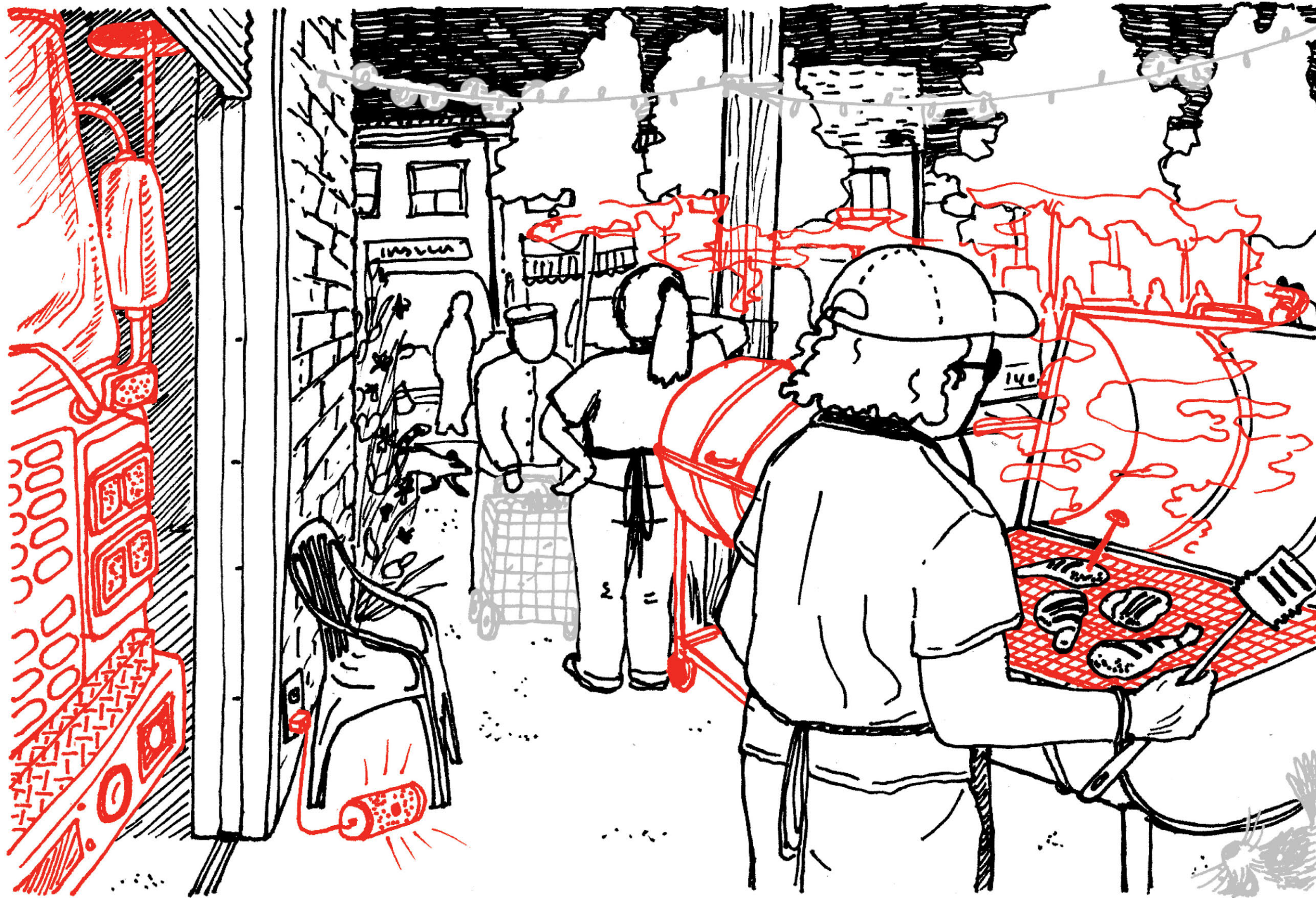
The Toronto Fire Services is the largest fire department in Canada and the fifth biggest in North America. Combined, there are over 120 fire and paramedic stations across the city. Most operate as

low-rise buildings in both rapidly growing areas and established neighbourhoods, often on major arterial roads near public transit. The need to rebuild stations in a poor state of repair comes with vast opportunities to deliver much-needed housing and community spaces. Re-imagining emergency service facilities as creative mixed-use provides a model that can become the blueprint for unlocking the value of city-owned real estate for community benefit.

Over the past two years, the Infrastructure Institute has worked closely with CreateTO, the City of Toronto’s real estate



agency, to examine opportunities for co-locating fire and paramedic stations with affordable housing, social services, and commercial uses. In the most recent phase of work, the Infrastructure Institute looked at Station 313, adjacent to Sherbourne subway station, as one pilot site for emergency mixed use. Demonstration concepts developed identified the ideal mix of uses, potential partnerships, and showed the enormous opportunity to deliver significant housing and space for social infrastructure above the rebuilt fire hall.



FIRE HALL +
COMMUNITY
SERVICES +
HOUSING

Housing



AS CREATIVE
MIXED-USE

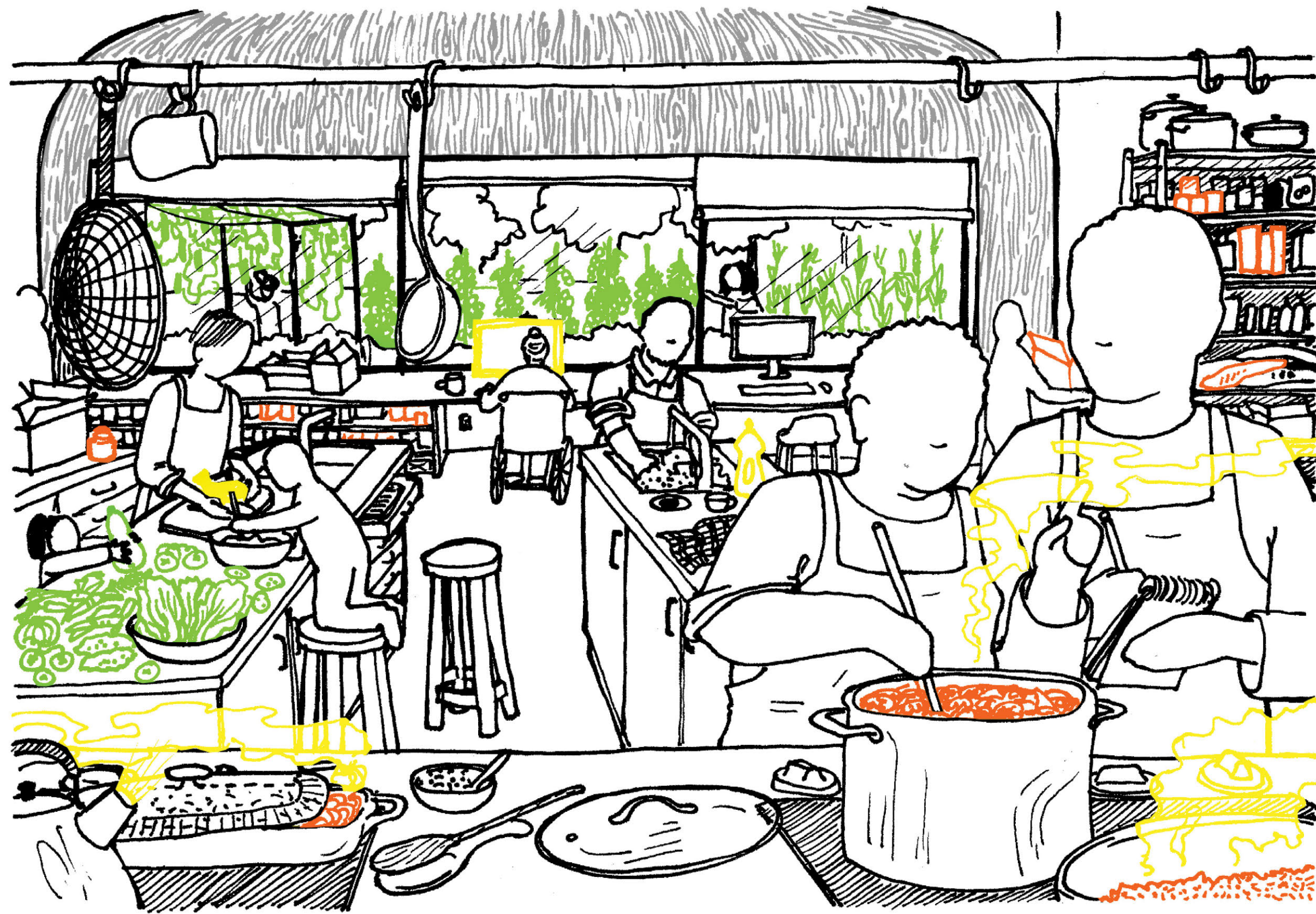
Fire Hall



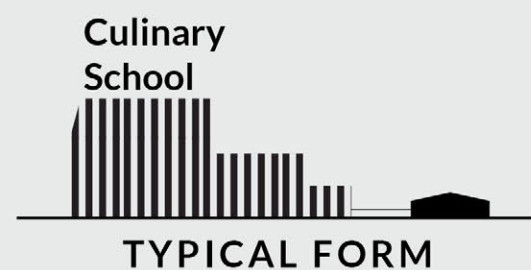
TYPICAL FORM

I've grown too much cabbage, do you want some?

FOOD ACCESSIBILITY AND THE TRANSFORMATION OF FOOD SECURITY



FOOD CENTRE + COMMUNITY GARDENS + HOUSING



“ 95% of CFC participants surveyed in 2017 felt they belonged to a community at their [community food centre], and 87% had made new friends who they feel close to...

- COMMUNITY FOOD CENTRES CANADA, 2018 ”

Toronto, like many cities across Canada, is dealing with heightened food insecurity, resulting in an increased demand for food bank services that is putting pressure on an already broken system. However, food banks alone cannot provide a sustainable solution to hunger. A resilient long-term solution requires cities to address the root cause of the hunger problem, poverty. Hunger is a poverty issue compounded by policies and infrastructure that shape the presence of (or lack thereof) employment opportunities, health services, affordable housing, and more. So, cities need to think beyond relying on food banks and move towards building equitable food systems supported by policies, strategies, and food centres that target the systemic issues causing food insecurity.



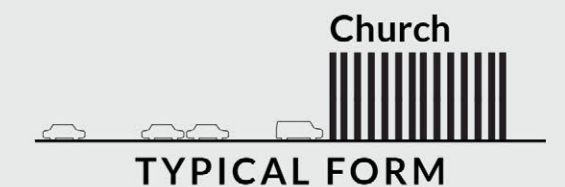
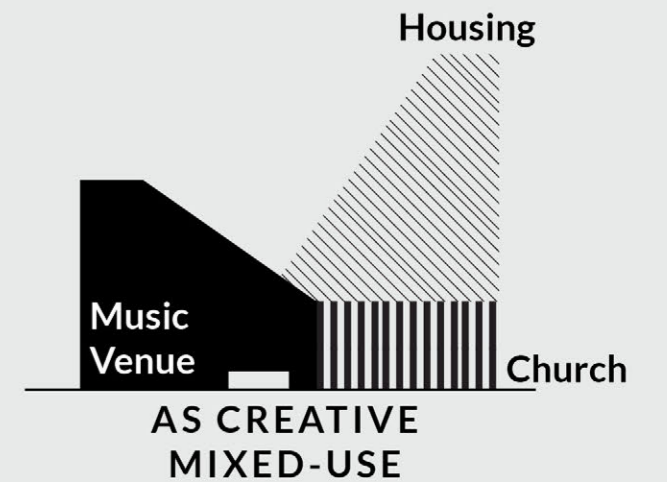
Food centres go beyond food provision - they build social capital by allowing users to not only learn agricultural skills but entrepreneurial and cultural ones that address the full 5 A's of food security: Availability, Accessibility, Adequacy, Acceptability, and Agency. Food centres offer a multifaceted approach to tackle food insecurity through mixing a number of uses and services often under one roof. They also rely on a mixture of community partners and organizations to collaborate and bring their programming to life. Ultimately, co-locating services in this way allows citizens to take the lead in creating, educating, and advocating for more sustainable food systems and building cities committed to growing strong communities.

Guess who's spinning at the church?! - are you coming?

SUPPORTING THE CITY'S MUSIC SECTOR THROUGH CO-LOCATION



CHURCH + MUSIC VENUE + HOUSING



“ Church properties are among Canada’s most underused assets — all the more so in recent years — and yet, these sites should never be sitting empty and idle.

- GRAHAM SINGH, 2021



”

It is estimated that 1/3 of faith buildings in Canada are in danger of closing, with many becoming secularized through adaptive reuse projects. But faith spaces offer great value to municipalities. They are critical pieces of social infrastructure that support diverse community groups, imparting a ‘halo effect’ whereby “for every \$1.00 in a religious congregation’s annual budget, a city gets an estimated \$3.39 of benefits”.

On the other hand, music is the lifeblood of our street festivals that make our summers so iconic, with Toronto being the largest centre for music in Canada. With a soundtrack of street buskers accompanying our early morning and late-night commutes, it’s no surprise that live music venues play a major role in fueling our economy. However, Toronto’s venues are similarly facing an affordability crisis and spaces are increasingly hard to find .

When you have uses that are so critical to the health of our cities, the challenges faced become opportunities. Faith groups have persevered through threats of closure through partnerships with private, public, and non-profit sectors to co-locate additional uses on their site, transforming them into places that are even better able to serve the community. Likewise, music venues have popped up in unexpected spaces like public libraries, churches, and even informal DIY spaces. There is even opportunity for both uses to co-locate when partnering allows for each mission to thrive. *Guess who’s spinning at the church?! - are you coming?* examines how two seemingly unlikely uses can support each other to make this a reality.

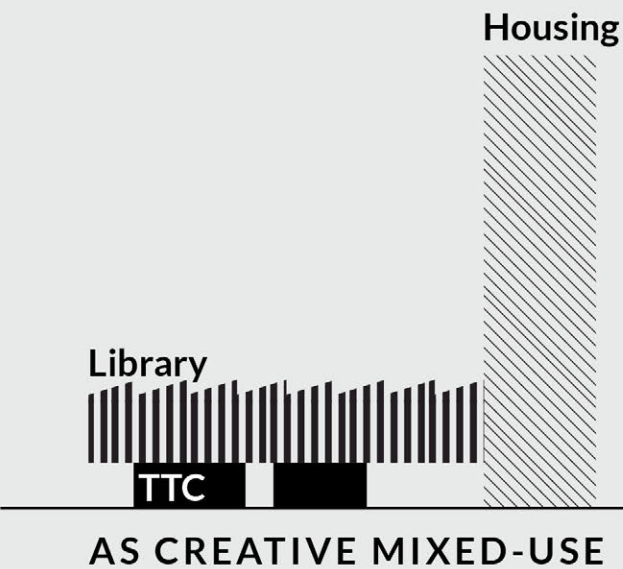


Whispering Softly by the Shelves

RETHINKING TRANSIT HUBS AS
CIVIC CENTRES



TRANSIT STATION +
LIBRARY + HOUSING



Public libraries provide vital social infrastructure for our cities that play an important role in community building, cultural exchange and wellbeing. They act as important third places—or the places you visit between home (first place) and work (second place) like nail salons, community centres, gyms, etc.—that are the cornerstone of healthy communities and support local economies, all while providing a variety of services ranging from children’s programming to employment

services. They are often front-line to crises like the opioid epidemic and COVID-19, and so their services evolve to meet society’s needs and boost local resiliency. The Toronto Public Library is the busiest urban public library system in the world and is home to 100 branches. And often outside these branches, you will find nearby a public transit stop which helps to increase accessibility and create meeting points that are essential for third places to thrive. This is just one of the many connections between public libraries and mobility.

In cities around the world such as Thessaloniki (Greece), Hubballi (India), Astana (Kazakhstan), Dallas (USA), and many more there are libraries incorporated into transit stops so that riders can read as they wait for their next bus or trains. In several other cities, libraries provide transit passes and tokens to library users in need. Located too far from your local branch? Then libraries in cities like Goma (Democratic Republic of Congo) and Toronto deploy buses to bring the books into the hardest-to-reach neighbourhoods.



“ Libraries don’t just provide free access to books and other cultural materials, they also offer things like companionship for older adults, de facto childcare for busy parents, language instruction for immigrants and welcoming public spaces for the poor, the homeless and young people.

- ERIC KLINENBERG, 2018

