

Disregarded & Disrespected:
Without anyone to speak up for it, this underutilized land has been treated horribly. From sub-surface toxins to highways which seem uncomfortable being there, North East False Creek needs a life-saving intervention.

Highways to Nowhere:
Usually, highways link one city to another. These raised highways link man-made hills to the escarpment they go up a kilometre away. How wierd is that?

Horizontal & Vertical Separation:
Downtown sits on an escarpment 13 metres above the False Creek level. The two viaducts extend this vertical separation one kilometre each. One way streets and a highway morphology further separate NEFC from the rest of the city.

Cement Pond and Astroturf:
What happened to nature? Are we really going surround the remaining edges of False Creek with concrete paths, riprap and plastic grass? Does False Creek need the makings of an open sewer or a healthy and supportive ecosystem?

What's It All About?
Psychological barrier? Yes.
Physical barrier? Yes.
Waste of land? Yes.
Waste of airspace? Yes.
Just ugly? Yes.



Question: OMG, if they take the viaducts away, how will I get downtown?
Answer: Drive, take transit, cycle or walk. But just like everywhere else, the roads will be on the ground.

Pavement or Paradise?

Untying the Gordian Knot of the Highway that Wasn't

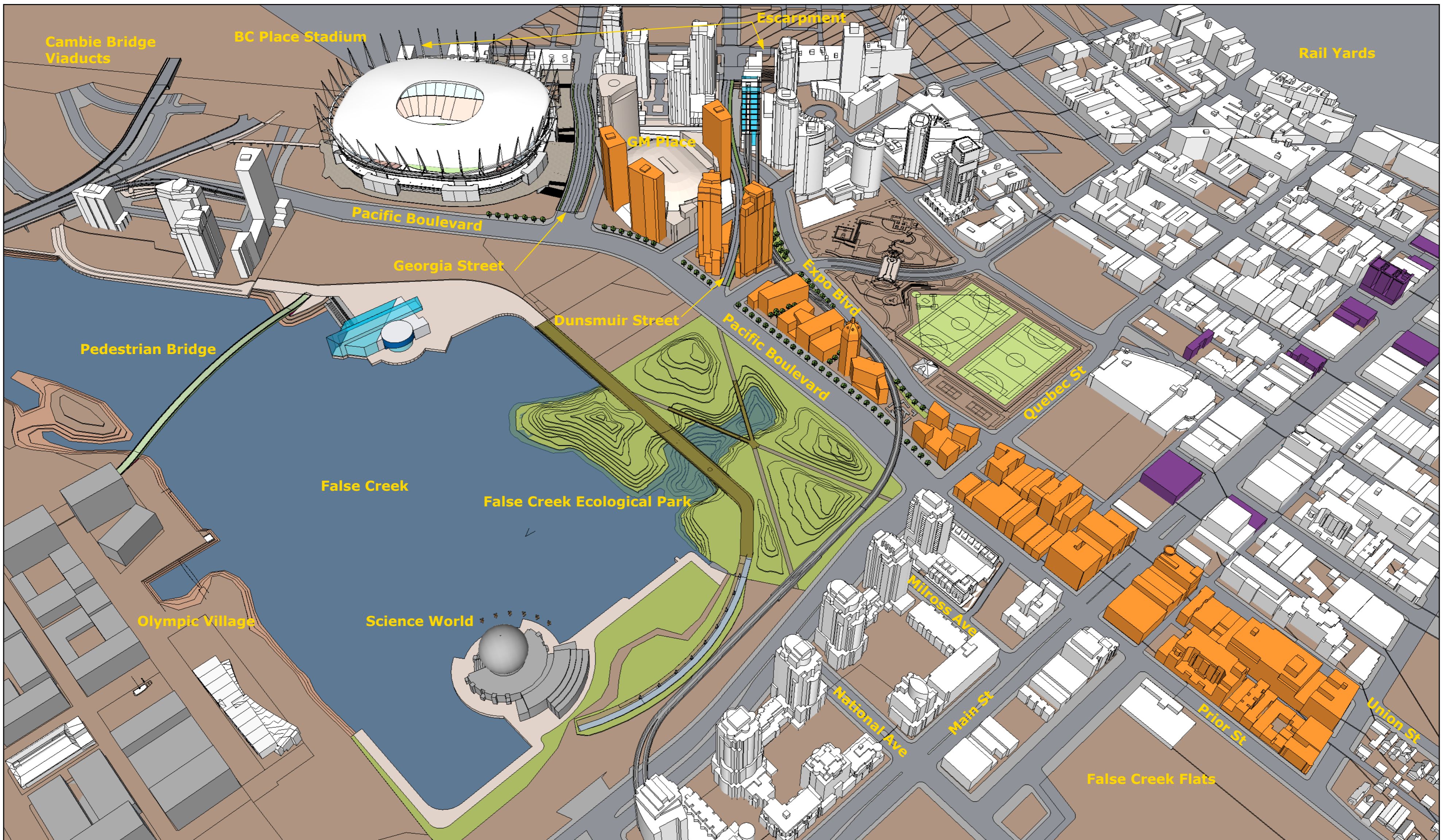
One of the great foundational stories of Vancouver was the public rejection of the highway which would have cut through the entire city.

But even after this rejection, the Georgia and Dunsmuir Street viaducts were built anyway. The Cambie Street viaducts followed. North East False Creek has become exactly what was rejected.

Development has rightly avoided these areas. They're just brutal. This development delay has given us the opportunity to repair these scars before we make them permanent. And it will pay for itself.

Separation Anxiety:

NEFC is not the only area which suffers from physical barriers and separation issues. The Cambie Bridge has its own raised and totally unnecessary viaducts. The Gastown Railyards unnecessarily separate the Downtown East Side from Burrard Inlet and North Shore views. Lowering the railyards would create huge amounts of new developable land above them, with easy access from Gastown to the ocean.



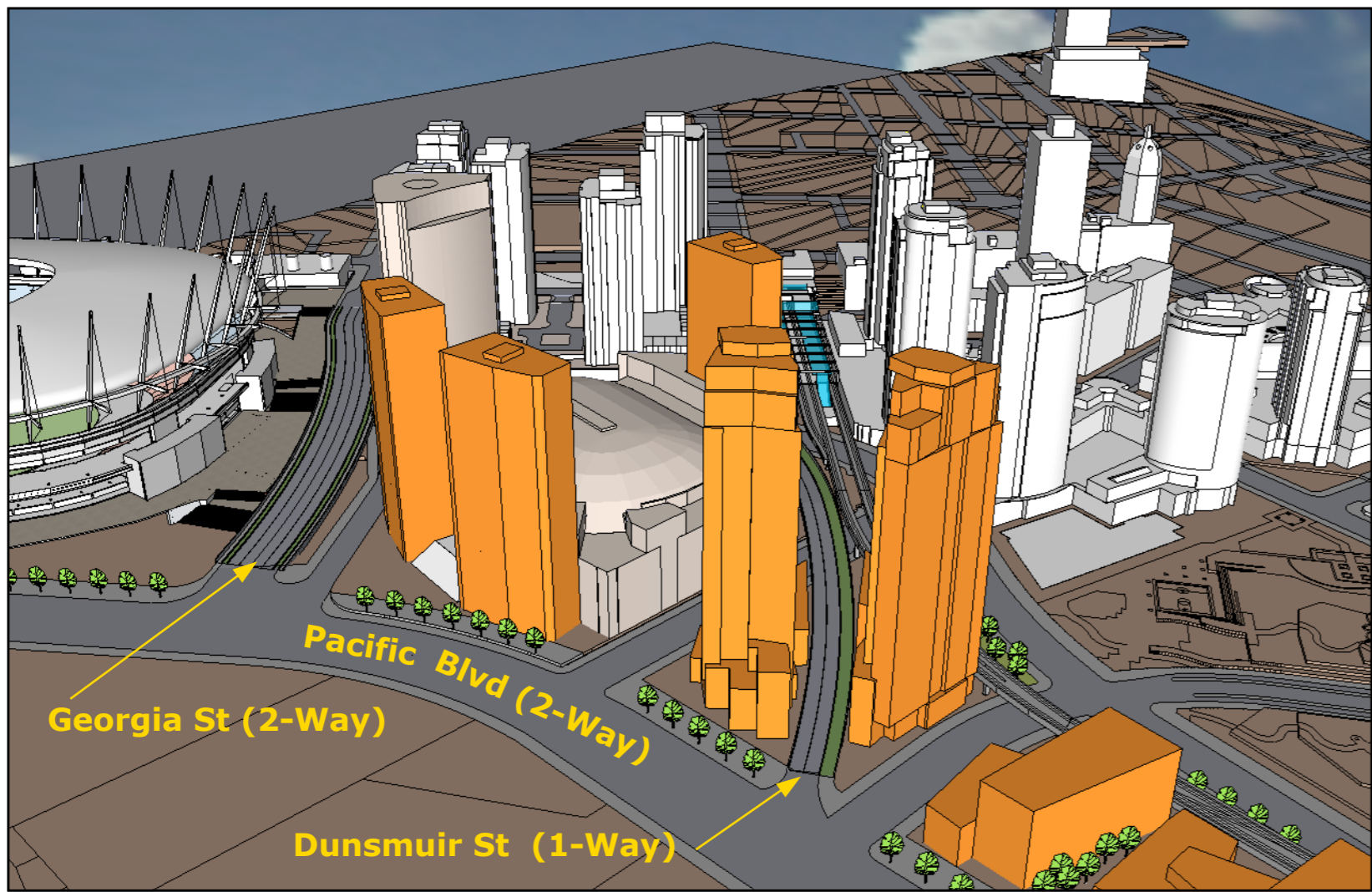
From Highways to Arterials:
If living in the middle of a highway interchange is not desirable, replace the interchange with normal arterial and neighbourhood roads. Put the roadways on the ground, where they belong. Build normal grades to deal with the escarpment. Replace one-way freeways with two-way streets.

Straight Paths for Foot & Cycle:
Commuting by foot or bicycle is much more likely to happen if routes are straight, safe and mostly level. They also need to be plentiful. They should follow the ancient principle of directly connecting where people are, to where they want to be. Not complicated. A pedestrian and cycle bridge connects Olympic Village to Yaletown and downtown.

Lungs & Gills for False Creek:
Without habitat, nature doesn't stand much of a chance. A naturalized park maximizes native biodiversity, biomass and biological activity. The riparian zone (natural shoreline) is enlarged by making it irregular instead of straight. Land surface is increased by adding hills instead of being flat.

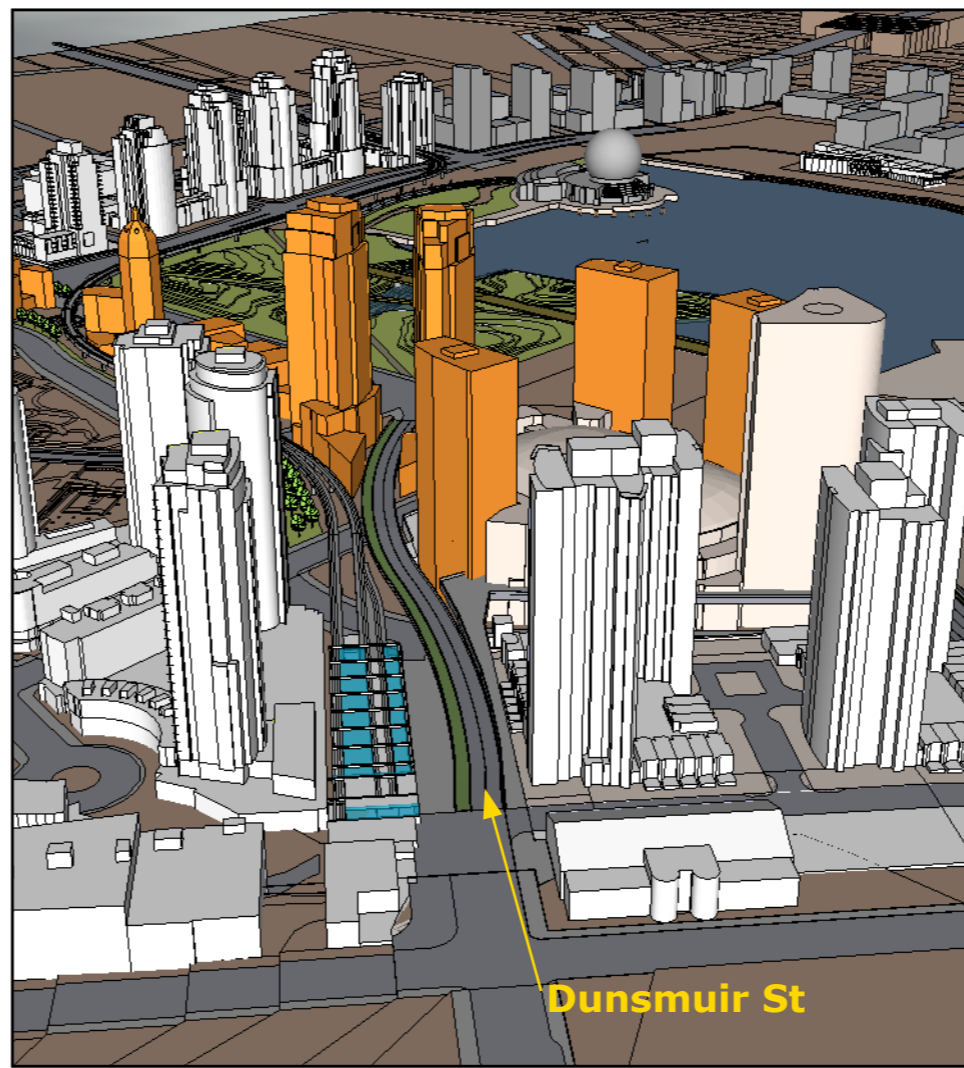
Creating Land for Development:
Removing the viaducts opens up new land for development, most of it without raised highways adjacent to third floor windows. The building form is mostly copied from adjacent areas to provide continuity.

Buildings Made Possible by Removing Viaducts



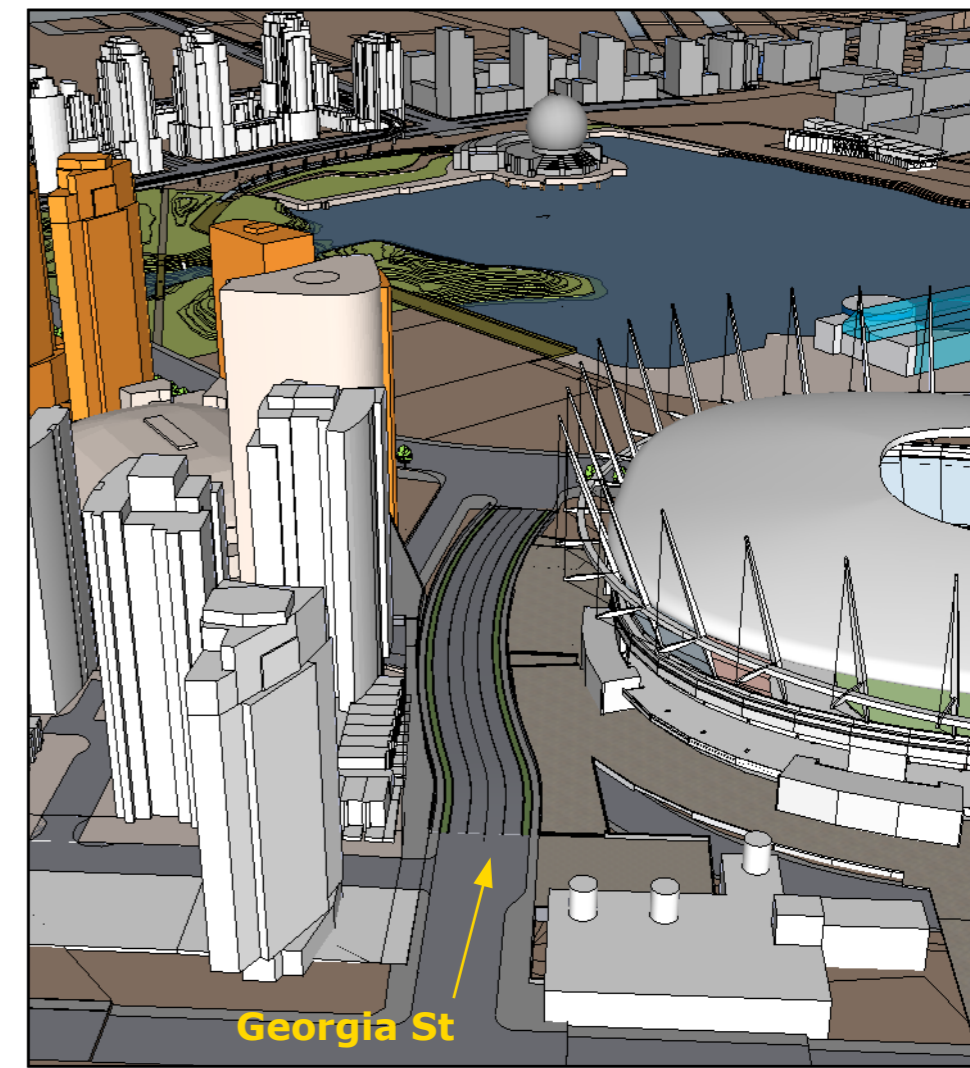
Shorten both viaducts as much as possible:

In this scenario, both viaducts terminate on Pacific Boulevard, have a minimum 5-metre clearance over roadways and a maximum 6% grade. Both ramps can accommodate level landing areas to make the walk or ride easier. Pacific Boulevard will be widened, to the south, and provide 4 lanes travelling east and three lanes west. There is space for bike lanes in both directions. A 12-metre wide sidewalk on the north side of Pacific Blvd provides an opportunity for pedestrian activities.



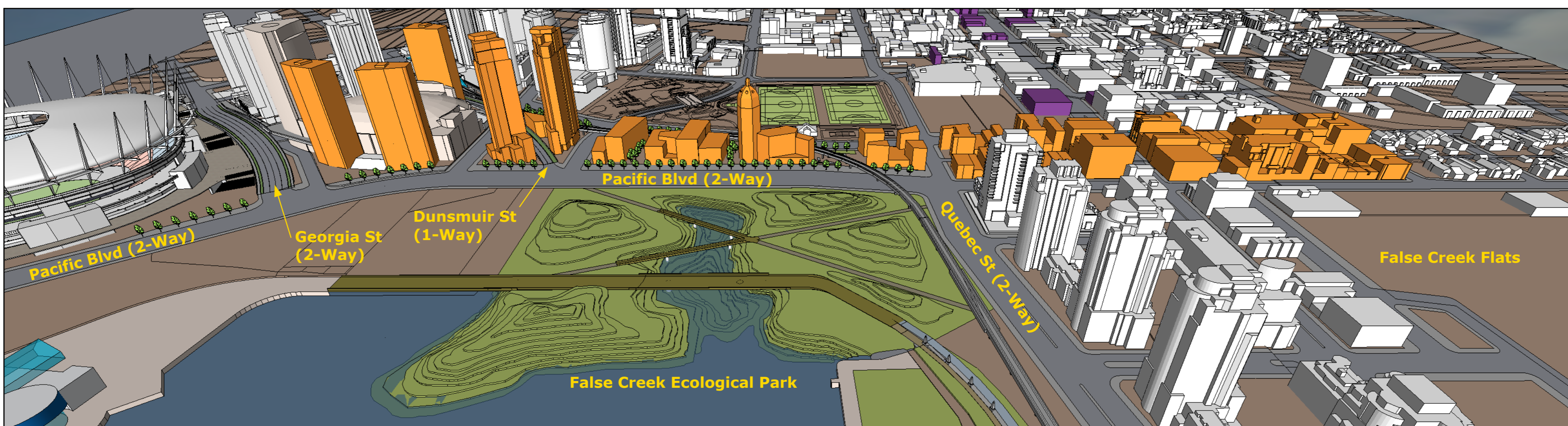
Dunsmuir Street Hill:

The Dunsmuir Street hill has two 4-metre wide vehicle lanes travelling east to west (up), and a 4-metre, two-way, shared bike and pedestrian lane. This provides the same capacity as the current viaduct.



Georgia Street Hill:

The Georgia Street hill has three 4-metre vehicle lanes travelling west to east (down) and one 4-metre lane (new) travelling east to west (up). There is also a 2-metre bike lane and sidewalk going each way (new). The south sidewalk joins to the BC Place terraces (new).



False Creek Eco-Park:

False Creek needs significant supporting ecology. People in the area need some naturalized ocean-side green space. More hard-edge sea walls, manicured lawns and plastic fields won't help.

Riparian & Terrestrial Habitat:

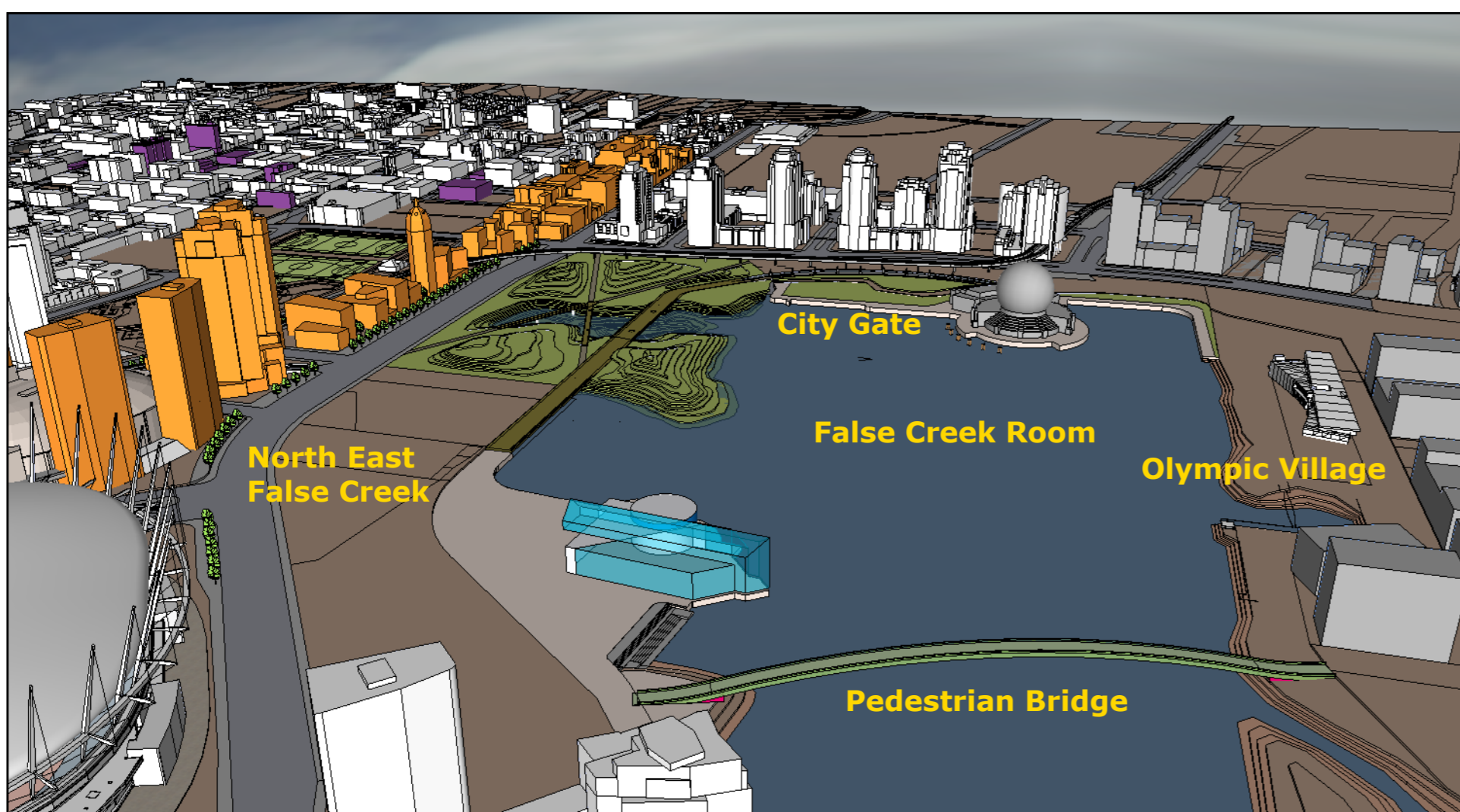
Habitat, especially riparian zone, is essential for the health of the False Creek ecosystem. Landforms should maximize the length, depth and biodiversity of the riparian zone, as well as the area and complexity of terrestrial habitat. Critical habitat areas should be protected with raised walkways.

Managing Site Toxins:

Whatever we do, dealing with existing site toxins is going to be tricky and somewhat costly. Capping and sealing can be done, but unlike other areas, capped terra-formed (artificial hills) and constructed wetlands can be used to support a vibrant False Creek ecology instead of just plastic grass. The B.C. Brownfield Renewal Program can help.

Ecological Failure:

We know what this looks like. We've seen it in waterfront cities throughout the world. Dead fish, oil slicks, algae blooms, species loss, odour and even flammable water. This is our last opportunity to secure the ecological health of False Creek.

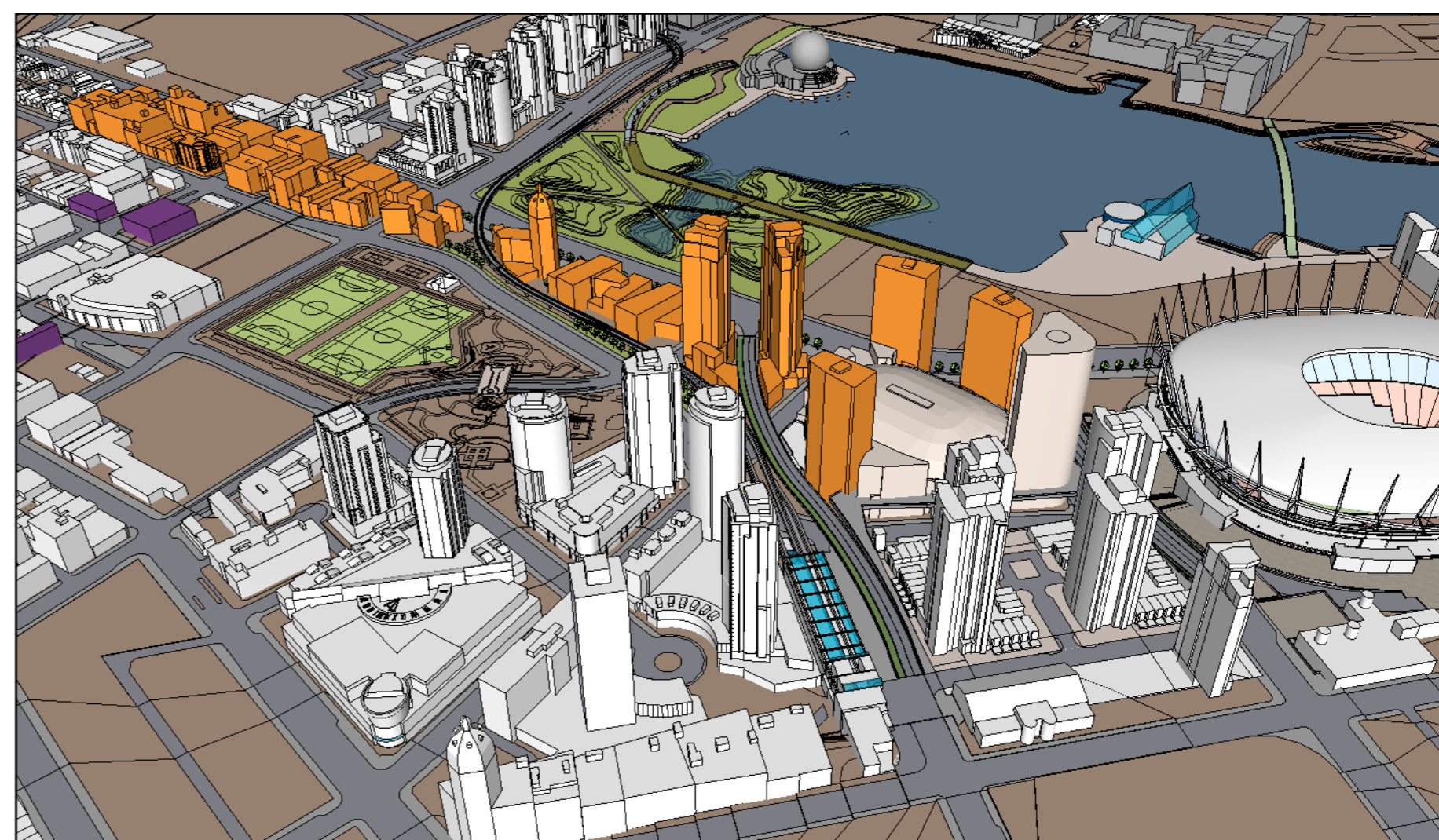


Room with a View:

The new development along Pacific Boulevard provides a strong street wall, completing the False Creek East Room. Think Central Park, NYC. View corridors are respected, except for a single, iconic, slender tower (Sun Tower sized). The street wall is pedestrian permeable.

False Creek Pedestrian Bridge:

Pedestrians and cyclists prefer straight paths to get where they're going. A pedestrian bridge over False Creek East can provide a direct connection between Olympic Village and Yaletown. The bridge will be a great place to enjoy False Creek events.

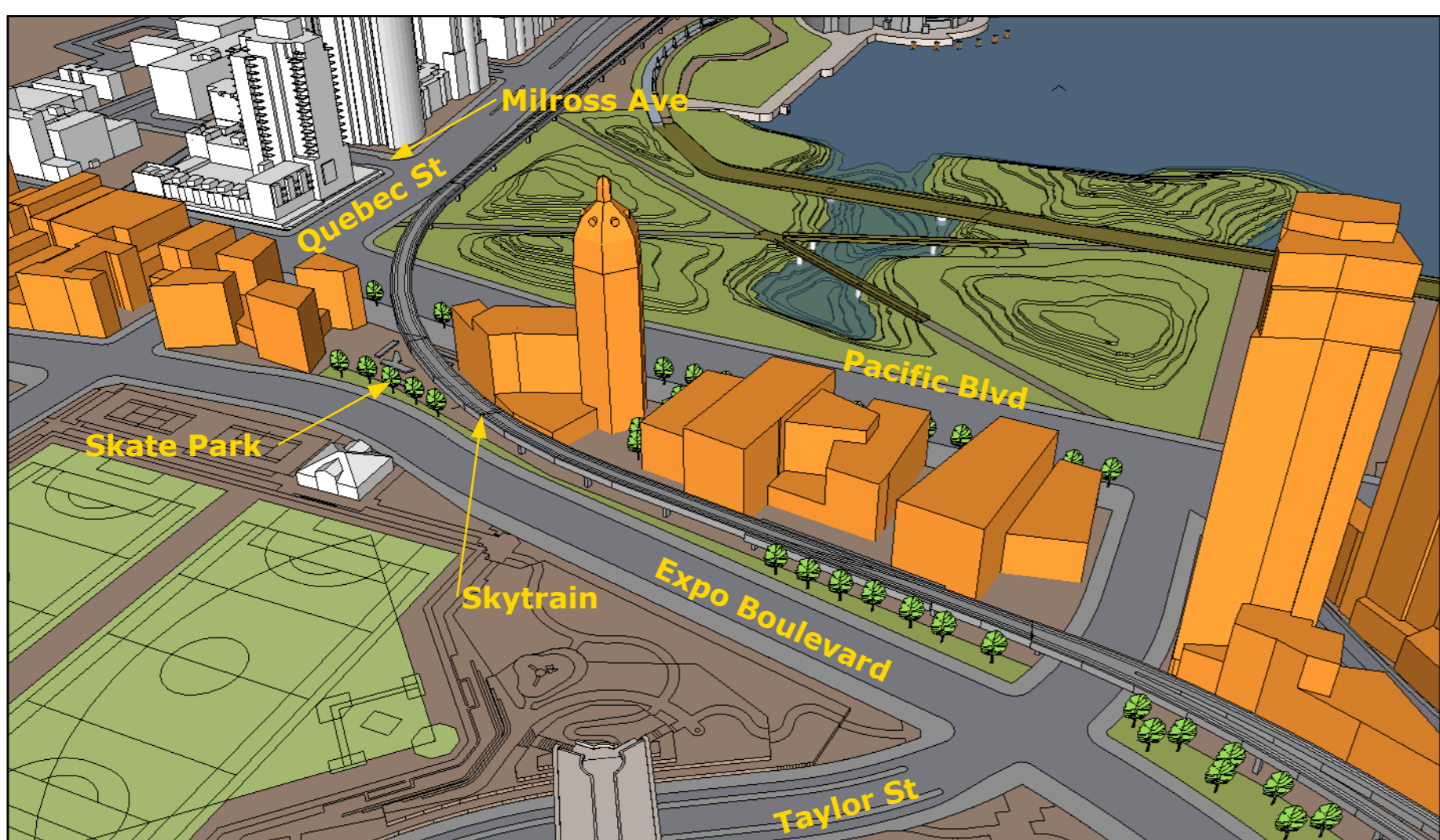


Creating Land for Development:

The opportunity cost of having the viaducts is the loss of developable land area. The viaducts sit on land which could have a much higher level of use. By putting the roadways back on the ground, about 4.5 hectares of developable land can be created.

Creating Land for Parks:

The concrete can be reused as fill for the False Creek terra-forming. The steel in the viaducts can be recycled. If there is extra concrete, the Portside Park could be expanded.



Skate Park & Courtyards:

The skateboard park is shown, slightly relocated to the west of its current location, adjacent to one of the plazas which provide north/south pedestrian and visual permeability. These provide courtyards for coffee, food and socializing.

Skytrain:

Raising the ground level portion of Skytrain (between Milross Ave and Taylor St) will allow Pacific Boulevard to connect to Quebec Street in a normal intersection, and free up land to add to the park. It also allows back-of-house access and parking for the new buildings between Skytrain and Pacific Boulevard; kind of like a lane with lots of trees.



Linking to False Creek Flats and Chinatown:

Just putting roads between places doesn't really link them. Along the way, there needs to be human endeavour, activity, a reason to be there. The link cannot be a wasteland. By linking NEFC to the Flats with an extension of the Chinatown building form, the Flats will be linked to downtown, Chinatown and Gastown.

Paying for It:

The creation of new, developable land can pay for the new roadway configuration and creation of the False Creek Ecological Park.

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