



**CityStudio**





## For Immediate Release

November 29, 2012

### Project: Orphaned Spaces of Marpole

Orphaned Spaces of Marpole, a CityStudio Vancouver project, targets underutilized spaces and imagines their potential activations through the Greenest City 2020 goals.

CityStudio students Emma Fennell, Alyssa Koehn, Steve Stanczyk and Logan Sturrock are pleased to announce the release of their project **Orphaned Spaces of Marpole**. This project is a comprehensive research study and proposed activation of orphaned (underutilized) urban green spaces in the Vancouver neighbourhood of Marpole.

The selection of these spaces, and their subsequent proposed reinventions, have been shaped by the Greenest City 2020 goal of Access to Nature, which details that all Vancouverites will live within a five minute walk of a green space. Additionally, the work provides insight for the developing Marpole Community Plan. This project builds on work undertaken in the Spring 2012 CityStudio course and will contribute to the Spring 2013 course starting in January.

The team set out to determine where orphaned spaces exist within Marpole, taking into account both the history and the future plans of the neighbourhood. Using thorough mapping and community surveys, the team analysed what kind of potential the identified spaces have for the future. Emerging from the photographs, sounds and renderings included in the work is the story of a neighbourhood in a state of change.

"Through Orphaned Spaces of Marpole, we've gone in-depth into the stories of these spaces," said Fennell, a fourth year Human Geography student at the University of British Columbia. "We hope to get the community excited about these places, and talking about what futures they see for their neighbourhood."

CityStudio Vancouver is an energetic hub of learning and leadership where students design and implement Greenest City 2020 Action Plan projects. CityStudio is co-led by Duane Elverum (Emily Carr University of Art and Design) and Dr. Janet Moore (Simon Fraser University – Centre for Dialogue). The project is a collaboration of the City of Vancouver, Vancouver Economic Commission (VEC), British Columbia Institute of Technology (BCIT), Emily Carr University of Art and Design, Langara College, Simon Fraser University (SFU), University of British Columbia (UBC) and Vancouver Community College (VCC). The project is supported by Vancouver's Campus City Collaborative (C3).

For more information please visit:

[citystudiovancouver.com](http://citystudiovancouver.com)

[@citystudiovan](https://twitter.com/citystudiovan)

[facebook.com/CityStudioVancouver](https://facebook.com/CityStudioVancouver)

or contact:

Lena Soots

CityStudio Coordinator

[604.874.6401citystudiocoordinator@email.com](mailto:604.874.6401citystudiocoordinator@email.com)

## **Project Summary**

**Project Title:** Orphaned Spaces of Marpole

**Project description:** Orphaned Spaces of Marpole targets underutilized spaces and imagines their potential activations through the Greenest City 2020 goals.

**City Staff Advisor:** Lil Ronalds, Marpole Community Planner

**Community Contacts:** Andrew Pask, Grandview-Woodlands Community Planner  
Michelle Tanner, ECUAD Undergraduate Student  
Ashley Guindon, Public Manager, chART: Public Art Marpole

**Project Team:** Emma Fennell, UBC Human Geography  
Alyssa Koehn, UBC Human Geography & Political Science  
Steven Stanczyk, ECUAD Visual Arts  
Logan Sturrock, ECUAD Visual Arts

### **Project Summary:**

Orphaned Spaces of Marpole is a comprehensive research study and proposed activation of orphaned (underutilized) urban green spaces in the Vancouver neighbourhood of Marpole. The selection of these spaces, and their subsequent proposed reinventions, have been shaped by the Greenest City 2020 goal of Access to Nature, which details that all Vancouverites will live within a five minute walk of a green space. The project entailed thorough mapping, with the identified spaces located and identified according to a typology. By establishing a research methodology, Orphaned Spaces of Marpole provides a template that can be applied to neighborhoods across the city. Additionally, the work provides insight for the developing Marpole Community Plan. This project builds on work undertaken in the Spring 2012 CityStudio course and will contribute to the Spring 2013 course starting in January.



## **Project Details**

### **Methodology:**

*What activities comprise your project? What did you do?*

Before we began the mapping process in Marpole, we created a method of collecting data. Through our precedent research, we established a preliminary typology and site qualifications. We then set out on foot and by vehicle, systematically mapping the community. We recorded data for each on typology, noise levels, view, and accessibility. As we mapped, we invested time in refining and perfecting our methodology, which we believe is a key contribution to the continued use of the project. Our initial process of data collection led to the creation of a short booklet, which acted as a directory of the spaces we had uncovered to that point. Still in the working stages, we presented the document to Lil Ronalds, Marpole Community Planner, and Andrew Pask, Grandview-Woodlands Community Planner. Their advice was invaluable to the next phase of the project. Suggestions included devising a prioritization system, incorporating community input and increasing the emphasis on qualitative observations. Using this feedback, we abandoned the scale system we had established in favour of descriptions and experiences. Using the data we had collected, we were able to rank the spaces according to proximity to park space, bike paths, schools and other centers of community. This ranking system allowed us to choose the top three spaces for activation.

We planned our reinventions around two main elements: the data we had collected in the field, and community feedback. We developed a survey intended to be distributed to the Marpole community, featuring our map and the types of reinventions that could be



implemented in these spaces. However, the initial iteration of our survey required reworking, and wasn't able to be completed in the space of the semester. However, we were not without insight into the community's feelings on park spaces. The Marpole Community Plan had created a questionnaire in the Summer of 2012 surrounding vision residents hold for their neighborhood. This questionnaire contained an extensive examination of current and potential green space, and proved to inform many of our decisions in the absence of our own directed study. While time constraints limited the extent of our reimaginings, we were able to combine the two streams of information to create visions for two orphaned spaces. These pictures invite the community to visualize the futures for these spaces, as well as share their visions with fellow residents.



### **Project Outcomes and Impact:**

*What specific changes have occurred, and will occur as a result of your project. How does your work will scale up? What do we need to know about your work? What are some key moments?*

Our project, Orphaned Spaces of Marpole, is firstly a project about mapping and creating awareness of these underutilised green spaces with a goal of connecting residents and providing the information needed to play an active role in the development of a more integrated natural and cultural environment. One foreseeable outcome for our work is that it will act as a bridge between residents, businesses and City staff, strengthening the network of ideas and possibilities for Marpole's future. The work is, in a sense, a tool for generating change. Another impact is that our work indexes Marpole's present condition as a one of a kind historical document.



## Key Challenges

*What were the greatest challenges in your work, and your key areas of learning?*

Our project was not without challenges. Our first setback occurred early in the process, with our initial project choice of a study of the privately owned public plazas being passed over by the city. While this development was discouraging, we were able to take the time to understand our individual motivations, and how those came together. The proposal of the Marpole mapping project was immediately attractive, due to our shared interest in the public realm. However, the application of this project was initially unclear to us, and this sense extended into the process of seeking out the orphaned spaces. What were we looking for? What are we missing? Who is our audience? In many ways, our challenge at this stage was having a methodology, without knowing what the process was working towards. Additionally, we vastly underestimated the amount of time mapping the neighborhood would require. Meeting with Lil Ronalds and Andrew Pask put many of these apprehensions to rest. Their suggestions not only strengthened our methodology, but also gave our project a context within the developing community plan for Marpole. After this point, our main challenge was time. While our community survey was developed quickly, the process of approval was lengthy, leaving us without a central piece of the plan for our reinventions. Subsequently, we had to scale back our vision for the book. Our early lesson in flexibility was invaluable at this stage. Throughout the process, our major challenge was balancing our research element with the 'on-the-ground' requirement. While our initial mapping process initially felt fruitless, the time we spent developing a solid methodology allowed our map to become the true strength of the project. A huge part of our success is attributed to our teamwork in overcoming challenges. Bumping heads, experimenting, putting in as much time as we could afford extracurricularly and polishing our emerging ideas until the very end was all part of the process of completing our project. This is a process in which the product is a direct success of - the product being the design and piloting of a method of mapping and documenting orphaned green spaces.



## Current Project Status

*What is the current state of your project? How much of your intended work did you accomplish? What still needs to be done? Is there a timeline of planned work or activities?*

We leave our project with a solid orphan spaces mapping methodology created and a concise but comprehensive mapping of Marpole completed. These were the two biggest goals of our project, and both were accomplished. Our project is in a very solid place at the current time, though unfortunately, a couple things we had hoped to complete did get left behind.

We did not complete as comprehensive a revisioning process as we hoped, partially because we did not get an online survey to the residents of Marpole as planned. In addition to the extra feedback we would have liked to add more visualisations or reinventions of spaces guided by the community feedback; an audio/video component including some sound mapping and landscape footage. Both of these are components that would enhance the experience of understanding Marpole's orphaned spaces but we did not have time to complete.

One other piece that is yet to be completed is to meet with the chART project from Emily Carr. This group provides an opportunity for stewardship and for our project to have an on the ground impact.



## Stewardship Plan

*What specific steps have you put in place that ensures the project will be maintained and continue without you?  
How have you created the capacity for others to contribute to the work of the project, or multiply its effect?*

There are 2 pieces to the stewardship plan of our project to ensure our work lives on beyond our time in the CityStudio classroom.

1. We are connecting with the chART project, an Emily Carr group doing community based art in Marpole. By connecting with this group, we can share our spaces and hope our work informs them of potential areas for activation. At the same time, they may also showcase our work and visions of reinvention.

2. Our methodology and mapping procedures can also be used to inform future CityStudio Orphaned Spaces research happening next term, having set a precedent for simply and effectively mapping Orphaned Spaces. Sharing our methodology with this class will allow them to more effectively take on their own mapping projects around the city. We hope that our work will one day be part of a larger body of Orphan Spaces mapping.





## Acknowledgements

Duane Elverum, *Co-Director -CityStudio*

Janet Moore, *Co-Director - CityStudio*

Lena Soots, *CityStudio Coordinator*

Andrew Pask, *Community Planner - Grandview-Woodlands*

Sean Pander, *Manager - City of Vancouver Climate Protection Program*

Neal Carley, *Director of Streets*

Rhys Williams, *Manager of Streets Design*

Lil Ronalds, *Marpole Community Planner*

Our CityStudio Colleagues!

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- <http://vancouverpublicspace.wordpress.com/>
- <http://www.pps.org/>
- <http://www.nyc.gov/html/dcp/html/priv/priv.shtml>
- <http://scottburnham.com/urbanplay/>
- [dotankbrooklyn.org](http://dotankbrooklyn.org)
- The Design Centre for Sustainability, *Greater Vancouver Green Guide : Seeding Sustainability*
- The Design Centre for Sustainability, *Sustainability by Design : A Vision For A Region Of 4 Million*
- Marpole Community Profile : <http://vancouver.ca/files/cov/marpole-community-profile-2012.pdf>
- Marpole Community Plan : [http://www.google.ca/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=2&ved=0CDoQFjAB&url=http%3A%2F%2Fvancouver.ca%2Ffiles%2Fcov%2Fmarpole-community-plan-questionnaire-results-2012-july.pdf&ei=1ljHUP7eN7HSigK1voHgCA&usg=AFQjCNEOEzIR5EAR\\_VBoxsCKQGYfhPfGvg&sig2=\\_1374Wqf9Oi5E7dQMdFCIQ&cad=rja](http://www.google.ca/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=2&ved=0CDoQFjAB&url=http%3A%2F%2Fvancouver.ca%2Ffiles%2Fcov%2Fmarpole-community-plan-questionnaire-results-2012-july.pdf&ei=1ljHUP7eN7HSigK1voHgCA&usg=AFQjCNEOEzIR5EAR_VBoxsCKQGYfhPfGvg&sig2=_1374Wqf9Oi5E7dQMdFCIQ&cad=rja)