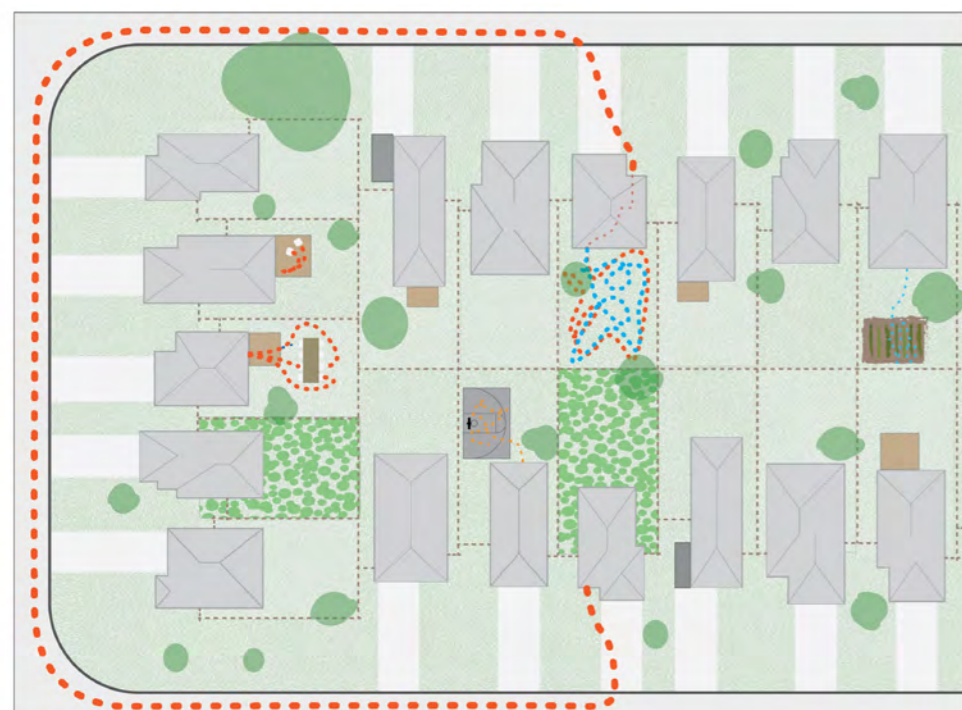# Suburban INVERSION

Suburbs are where we live - two of every three Canadians call the suburbs home. But does this model of living always reflect the values of the diverse communities inhabiting the space? Suburban Inversion seeks to address the confinement and social isolation generated by these ubiquitous built environments.

Through incremental removal of barriers and sharing of existing amenities, the relationship between the home and public realm would be inverted, redefining perceptions of the "front yard". A continuous outdoor living room would emerge, linking neighbors and providing a place for meaningful interaction and growth. The serendipitous encounters that strengthen bonds would flourish in a space created and owned by the community.

Suburban Inversion combines 'LANEWAY THINKING' (DIY, reclaiming, low-budget, democratic) with 'BACKYARD THINKING' (gathering, playing, relaxing, socializing) and ultimately asks —

What if all public spaces were designed by the communities they serve?

"Cities have the capacity of providing something for everybody, only because, and only when they are created by everyone"
— Jane Jacobs

The demolition of boundaries becomes a community event. Fences are removed, yards opened up.


1 — STATUS QUO

Typical configuration of a suburban neighbourhood. Paths between houses are indirect, barriers are clear and strong. Yards are walled-in, exclusive, underutilized.
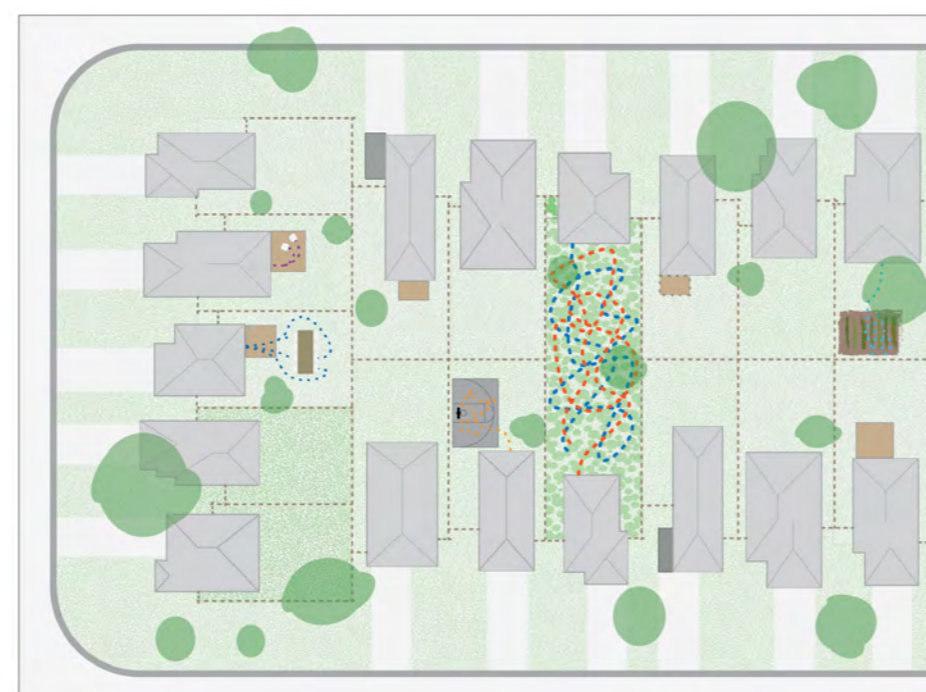
2 — INITIATION / ACTIVATION

Suburban Inversion is initiated when two neighbours decide to remove a fence. Paths become direct, recreation space is multiplied. Land remains individually owned.
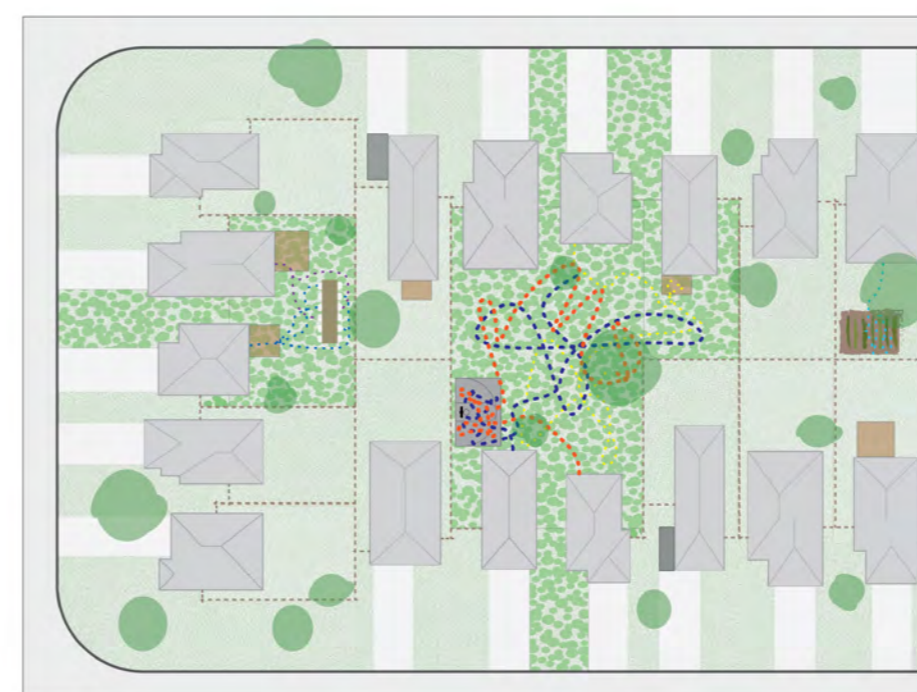
3 — EVOLUTION

Properties are added by community-minded neighbours. A network emerges, amenities such as patios are shared. Coming together to create a community rather than purchase a community.
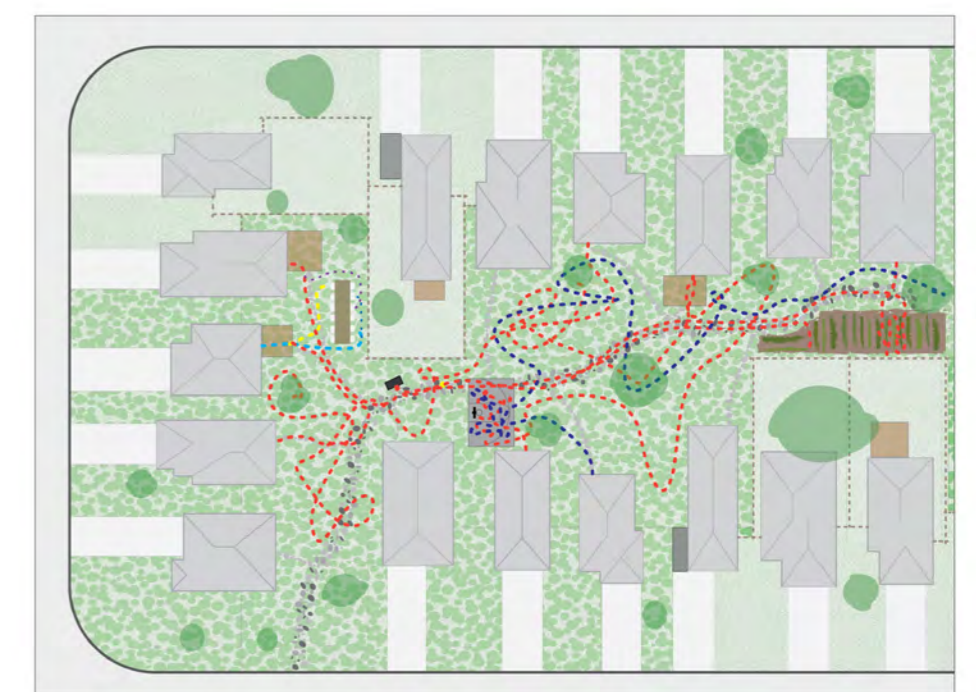
4 — ULTIMATE

More neighbours join the network, transforming the core of the block into a large common space. Community mailboxes, gardens and other amenities added as beacons of public access. The whole is greater than the sum of its parts.

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