

PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES

Vancouver City Hall – Council Chambers – 415 W. Sixth Street
PO Box 1995 – Vancouver, Washington 98668-1995
www.cityofvancouver.us

Marjorie Ledell • Steve Schulte • Larry Blaufus • Zachary Pyle • Nena Cavel

December 13, 2022

REGULAR MEETING

Vancouver City Hall - 415 W. Sixth Street, Vancouver WA

CALL TO ORDER

The December 13, 2022, meeting of the Planning Commission was called to order at 6:31 p.m. by Chair Ledell.

ROLL CALL

Present: Marjorie Ledell, Zachary Pyle, Larry Blaufus, Nena Cavel and Steve Schulte

ADOPTION OF MINUTES

Motion by Commissioner Schulte, second by Vice Chair Pyle, and carried unanimously to adopt the October 11, 2022, minutes.

COMMUNITY FORUM

Robert Wallis was present to speak to the Commission regarding the Interstate Bridge Replacement Program. He is a retired engineer and has researched the idea of a tunnel to replace the bridge. He reviewed the engineering report and noted flaws in the report. He wrote letters to the IBR Program as well as Vancouver City Council regarding the issue.

PUBLIC HEARING

6:40 P.M. 62ND AVENUE APARTMENTS REZONE

Bryan Snodgrass, Principal Planner, Community Development Department

Bryan Snodgrass presented an overview of the proposed zone change, the zoning in the adjacent properties, the anticipate site plan update if the rezone is approved to include two additional units, and the staff recommendation.

Jayson Taylor, PLS Engineering, representing the applicant, provided an update on the site, which is currently under construction. Approval of the zone change would allow for the interior of the building to add an additional two units and will move through the City's process to have those changes approved.

Commission Discussion

- What modifications were made to add two additional units in the same footprint? The applicant responded there is currently office and storage space on the bottom floor of the north building, and the space will be reconfigured to allow for the additional units.
- Are these apartments market rate? The applicant confirmed the apartments are market rate and in general will contribute to affordability in the area by providing more housing units.

Public Testimony

No members of the public were present to provide testimony.

Motion by Vice Chair Pyle and seconded by Commissioner Cavel to recommend approval of the proposed 62nd Avenue Apartments corner rezone proposal from R-18 to R-22 for the 0.3-acre northwest corner of property at 6115 NE 72nd Avenue, based on the staff report and discussion at the December 13, 2022 public hearing.

Roll Call Vote

Nena Cavel	Yes
Larry Blaufus	Yes
Steve Schulte	Yes
Zachary Pyle	Yes
Marjorie Ledell	Yes

The motion passes 5-0.

COMMUNICATIONS FROM CHAIR AND STAFF

The Chair thanked the Commissioners and staff for their work with the Planning Commission in 2022.

Rebecca Kennedy thanked the staff and Commissioners, highlighting the work accomplished in 2022 and the upcoming work in 2023.

ADJOURNMENT 7:03 P.M.

Marjorie Ledell, Chair

To request other formats, contact Julie Nischik, Community Development Department | 360-487-7813. WA Relay: 711 | julie.nischik@cityofvancouver.us

Evergreen and Grand Commercial Corridors Strategy Implementation

Planning Commission Workshop
February 14, 2023



Becky Coutinho, Associate Planner
Bryan Snodgrass, Principal Planner
Community Development Department

Pauline Ruegg, Senior Associate
Jamin Kimmel, Partner
Cascadia Partners

Agenda

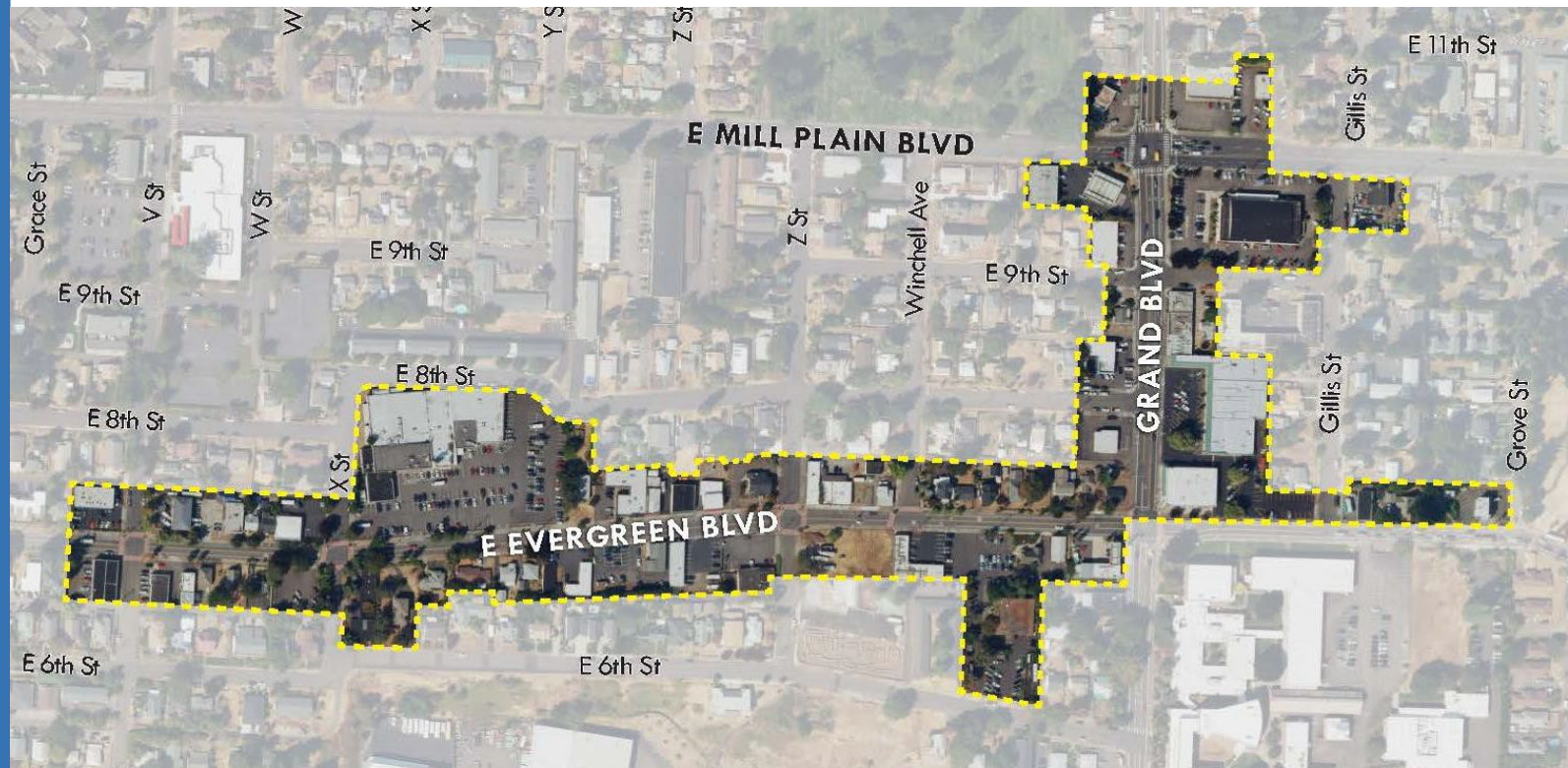
- Review project background and existing Strategy Document
- Presentation from Cascadia Partners on potential code concepts to implement strategy
- Planning Commission discussion and feedback
- Next Steps

Adoption Process

- **Planning Commission memorandum:** April 2020
- **Planning Commissions Workshops:** June 2020, February 2021, September 2021
- **Planning Commission Public Hearing:** December 14, 2021, Passed unanimously
- **City Council Workshops:** December 2019, May 2020, September 2020, March 2021, September 2021, January 2022
- **City Council Public Hearing:** February 28, 2022, passed unanimously
- **Community Outreach:** in person open house on February 13, 2020, online survey in early 2020, virtual open houses on August 26, 2020, August 27th, 2020, February 4th, 2021, October 21st, 2021

Evergreen and Grand Commercial Corridors Strategy Document Review

The Evergreen and Grand Commercial Corridors Strategy is a subarea plan for the study area below, and the culmination of the two-year community planning process that evaluated the types of uses that are allowed, regulatory standards for new development, parking and access, the pedestrian environment, and other issues identified by the community and stakeholders.



Alignment with City Council Priorities



Climate

- Strategy aims to create a sustainable community that promotes 15 minute neighborhoods, supporting multimodal transportation.



Equity

- Strategy seeks to promote equitable development that does not displace existing residents and encourages housing at all income levels.



Safety

- Strategy intends to support the creation of a safe transportation network for all users, either walking, biking, rolling, or transit riders.

Evergreen and Grand Commercial Corridors Strategy

VISION

Promote equitable and diverse corridor development that is vibrant, sustainable, and mixed-use.

Foster development that recognizes and builds upon the neighborhood's unique setting, history, culture, and character.

GOALS

LAND USE. Strengthen current businesses while providing an appropriate mix of commercial and residential uses.

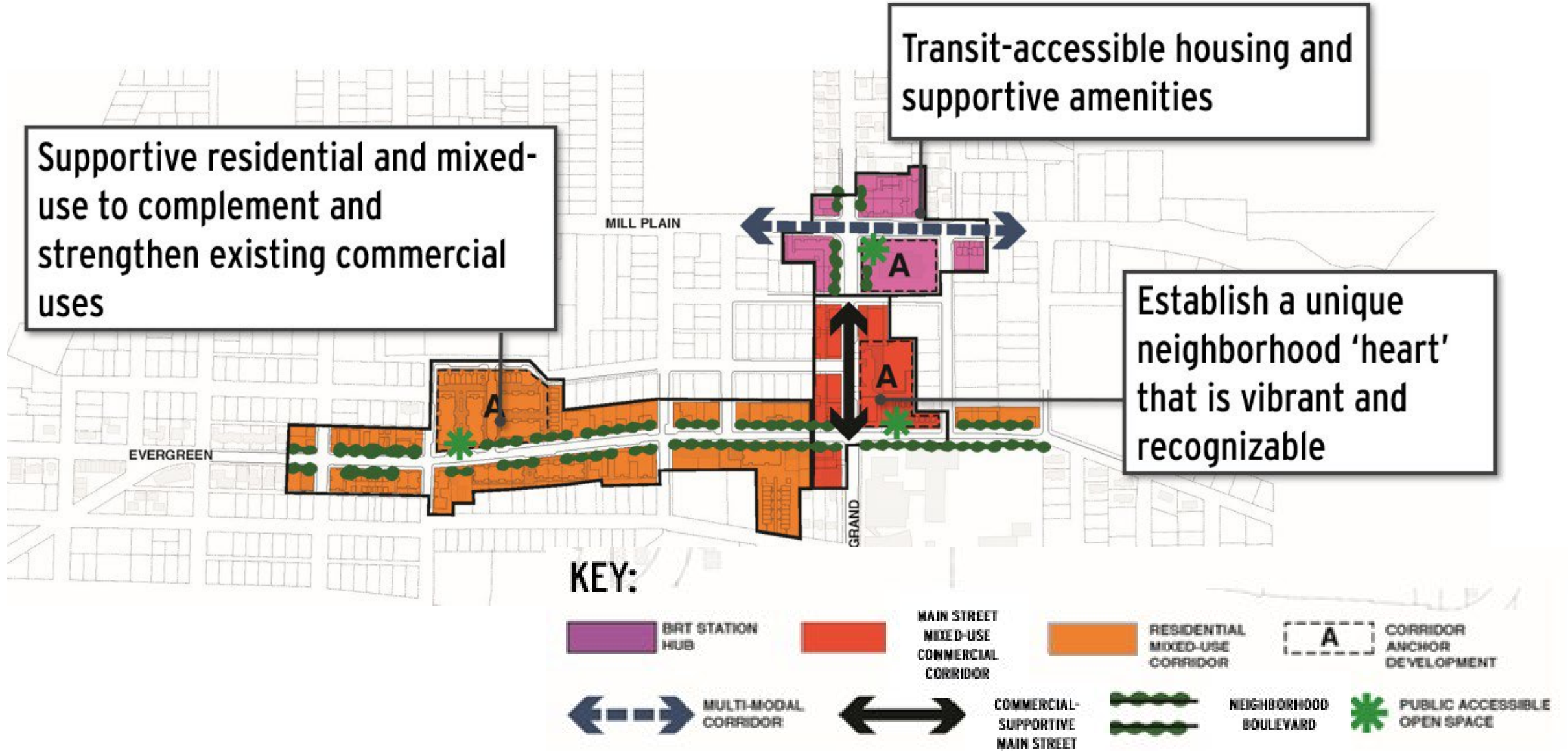
MOBILITY. Establish a balanced multi-modal network of motor vehicle, transit, walking, and biking routes through the corridors.

PARKING. Provide adequate parking to serve existing uses and future development.

URBAN DESIGN. Create public and private spaces that are inclusive, integrated, and contribute positively to the livability of the corridor.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT. Provide ample opportunities for small-scale, locally-owned business to thrive.

Evergreen and Grand Commercial Corridors Strategy Vision



Regulatory Recommendations

- Require ground floor commercial in the Grand Boulevard Commercial Mixed-Use Corridor, while providing flexibility to allow some ground floor residential outside the commercial ‘heart’ of the study area.
- Tailor maximum building heights to align with the corridor vision concepts from the study area.
- Adapt minimum off-street parking requirements that support commercial and residential uses and identify opportunities that promote walkability, vitality, and affordability to the corridors.
- Require a maximum front setback of 0-5 feet at the ground floor regardless of building height and support active edge development.

Regulatory Recommendations Cont.

- Prohibit new uses potentially inconsistent with corridor visions, such as big-box retail; motor vehicle repair, sales and rental; gas stations; self-storage; and drive-thru establishments. Existing uses can be maintained.
- Adopt standards that support activating vacant and underutilized spaces.
- Develop regulations that provide additional access enhancements in the BRT Hub corridor area that take into consideration first/last mile solutions and universal design best practices.
- Allow for non-mixed-use housing types on smaller parcels, where appropriate.
- Explore providing flexibility for nonconforming uses, such as existing small businesses, adaptively reused single-family homes fronting the corridors, etc.

Regulatory Recommendations Cont.

- Consider disincentivizing chains and capping commercial business sizes to accommodate small-scale retail and maintain the fine-grained development pattern of the corridors
- Explore allowances for interim/temporary uses such as food cart pods
- Create standards for ground floor residential to ensure street front activation and interest.
- Develop design guidelines bolstering local identity and street activation that considers development affordability
- Encourage streetscape improvements in all redevelopment projects.

Other Implementation Recommendations

- Create a business district to support art, events, and other placemaking
- Extend the Multi-Family Tax Exemption (MFTE) program calibrated to implement the vision and goals for the corridors and add workforce housing
- Attract and retain neighborhood-serving businesses
- Establish a storefront improvement program to support existing businesses
- Establish a signage and placemaking program along Grand Boulevard and in the BRT Hub
- Identify opportunities to support houseless communities and promote community safety

Other Implementation Recommendations

- Explore strategies to maintain economic diversity and housing affordability, especially for low-and moderate-income households
- Consider height bonuses in exchange for attainably priced workforce housing units
- Improve connectivity to nearby destinations such as downtown Vancouver, the Fort Vancouver National Historic Site, and the Pearson Field Airport as an economic development strategy.
- Leverage environmental remediation funding opportunities as an incentive to develop eligible sites

Transportation Recommendations

- Through the Vancouver Moves project, inform the upcoming citywide Transportation System Plan (TSP) update as follows:
 - **Overall:** Create a cohesive, safe, walkable, and multimodal environment. Increase signage, consider integrating stormwater and other sustainability best practices. Explore Demand Management strategies. Determine appropriate access management.
 - **Grand Boulevard:** Reduce speed limits and implement traffic calming. Add on-street parking. Allow parking space alternatives such as outdoor seating, or bike parking and other placemaking, temporarily or permanently.

Transportation Recommendations Cont.

- **Evergreen Boulevard:** Update street standards through TSP implementation; Widen sidewalks, increase street trees and other landscaping, add street furniture, lighting, and other features. Considering enhanced pedestrian crossing at V Street intersection.
- **Mill Plain/Grand Intersection BRT Hub:** Design transportation infrastructure and streetscape improvements to facilitate multi-modal access to transit for people of all abilities around the future BRT station platforms.

Strategy Implementation Code Changes

	Current Development Code	2022 Strategy Document	Proposed New Code
1) Maximum Building Height	50-feet throughout, typically 4 stories	3-5 stories, varying by parcel	4 stories along Evergreen and west Grand, 5 stories on east side of Grand
2) Bulk and Massing	- Silent beyond height limits and setbacks. Commercial abutting lower density residential requires 10-foot setback - Upper portions need ½ foot setback for each foot of building height above 20 feet.	No standard directly proposed to address the development form beyond active edge requirements, maximum front setback of 0-5 feet at the ground floor	- Maximum height step down only on rear face within 25 feet of a residentially zoned site - Maximum building width, with breaks within the building
3) Required Ground Floor Commercial	At least half of frontage along arterial/collector streets must be commercial or office	More flexibility along Evergreen, keep existing requirement on Grand	Allow for either ground floor commercial or residential along Evergreen. Require at least half of frontage along Grand be ground floor commercial with flexibility for how to meet this standard
4) Required Minimum Off-Street Parking Spaces	0.75 per multi-family unit near frequent transit such as Evergreen and Grand 1/300sf for goods and services, 1/250sf for eating and drinking, 1/400sf office	- Zero for ground floor retail 1/1000sf for commercial uses 1 per unit for residential	0.5 per multi-family unit, potential further reduction as incentive for desired uses/features 1/1000sf commercial, zero for ground floor retail

Cascadia Partners Presentation



EVERGREEN AND GRAND

Code Concepts



PLANNING COMMISSION WORK SESSION | 14 FEB 2023



EVERGREEN GRAND

PROJECT OVERVIEW

EVERGREEN GRAND CORRIDOR | STUDY AREA



EXISTING COMMERCIAL CORRIDOR

One of several important commercial corridors that are a focus for City long term to **infill older auto-oriented areas** of Vancouver.

Strategy adopted in 2022 to promote development and enhance livability.

CORRIDOR TYPES | EXISTING AND EXAMPLES

EVERGREEN BOULEVARD - 50 FT ROW



DIVISION AND 37TH - 50 FT ROW



GRAND BOULEVARD - 65 FT ROW



17TH AND MAIN - 65 FT ROW

EVERGREEN GRAND CORRIDOR | STUDY AREA

CURRENT



Older commercial corridor with some new businesses

Mix of single detached homes and single story commercial uses

Opportunities to improve streetscape/multi-modal

FUTURE



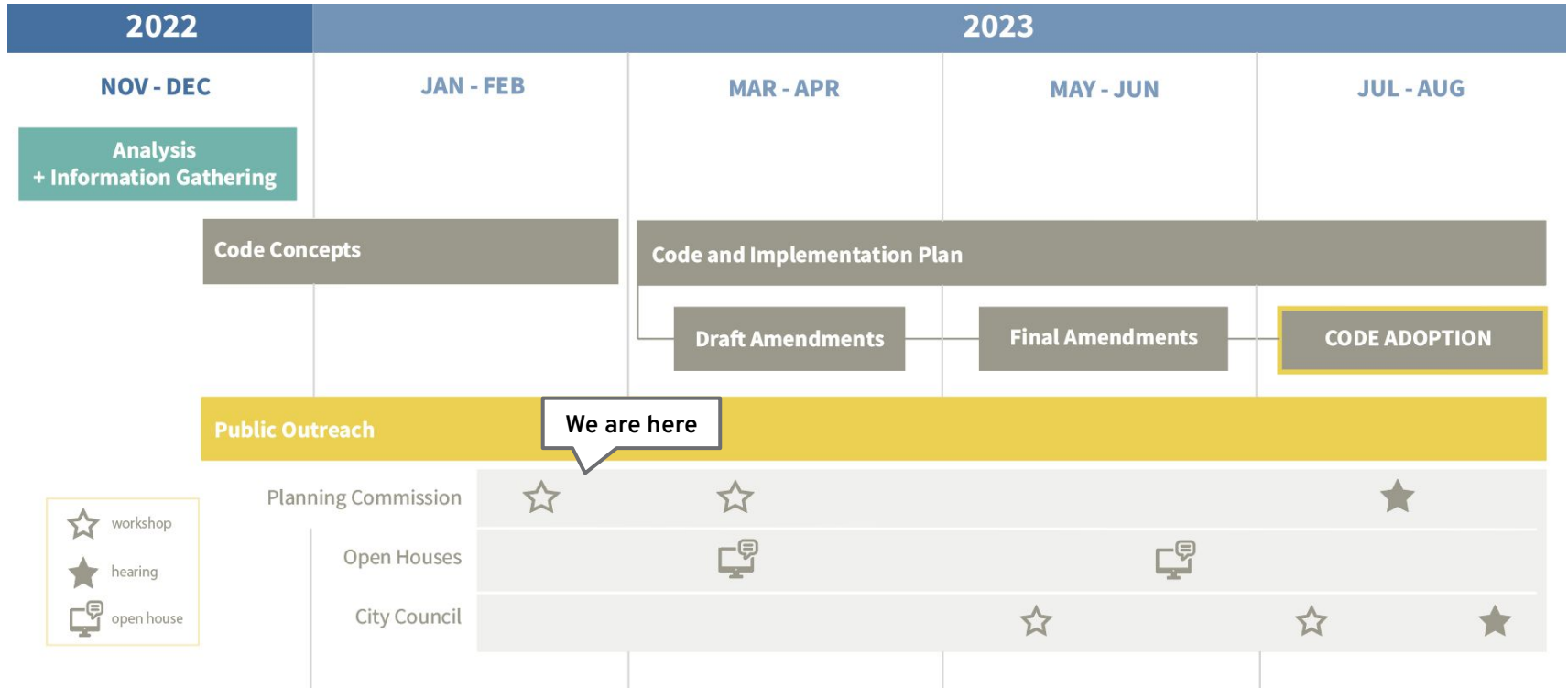
Mix of uses with higher intensities

Connected, appealing multi-modal corridor

Compatible development and scale

Opportunities for thriving local businesses

PROJECT OVERVIEW | TIMELINE



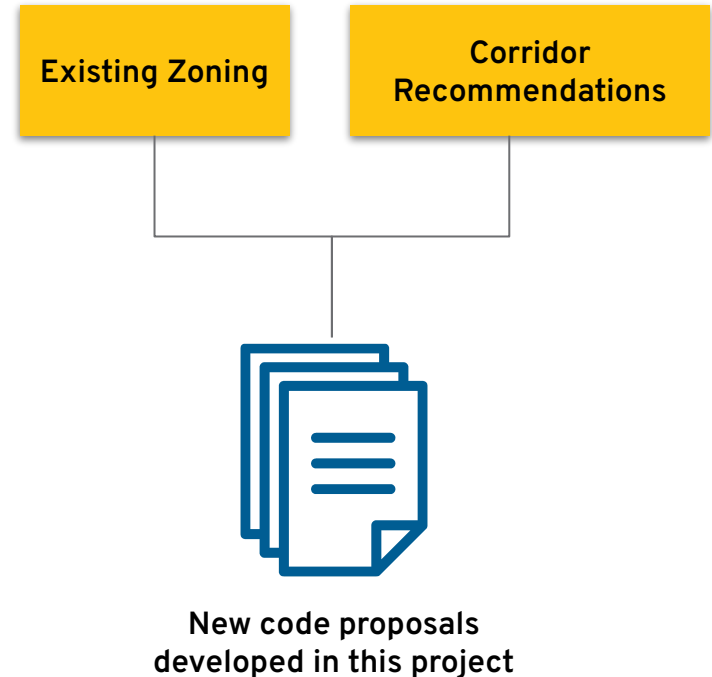


CODE CONCEPTS

OVERVIEW

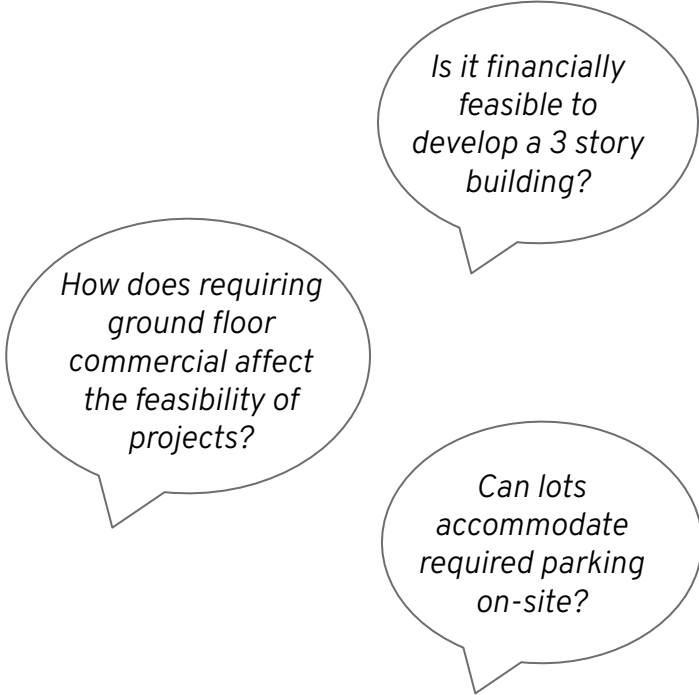
CODE CONCEPTS | APPROACH

- Code Concepts are **based on an in-depth audit of existing conditions** - both on the ground via a physical site inventory and through detailed review of existing code and policy documents. They respond to the existing character and context of the corridor.
- Code Concepts **further analyze and assess the Corridor Strategy** key goals and initial zoning recommendations.
- Code Concepts are **initial ideas that will be prioritized and refined** based on feedback from the Planning Commission and public.



CODE CONCEPTS | TESTING

- Code Concepts are **tested to ensure market feasibility** and encourage affordability.
- Using detailed pro formas and site plan models, various zoning approaches are analyzed to **determine the impact on cost of projects and potential returns**. There is a delicate balance between the effects of required on-site parking, maximum building heights, lot size, and potential rents.
- Current market conditions in the Evergreen Grand corridor are ripe for infill development. However, the **cost of development is high and the smaller sites on the corridor present unique challenges**.



How does requiring ground floor commercial affect the feasibility of projects?

Is it financially feasible to develop a 3 story building?

Can lots accommodate required parking on-site?



01

BUILDING HEIGHT
CODE CONCEPTS

BUILDING HEIGHTS | EXISTING CODE

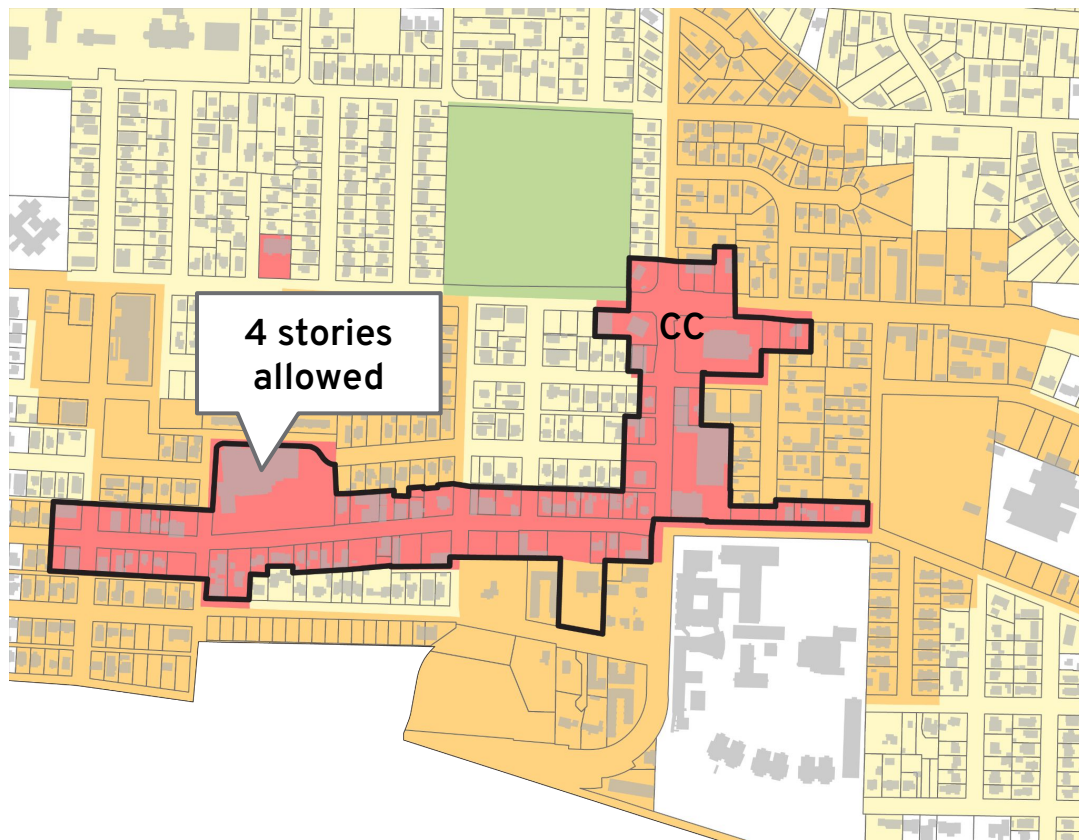
01

4 STORIES

50 feet permitted across entire CC zone, translates to 4 stories

NEW BUILDINGS

Several new buildings have been built and permitted at this height along Evergreen



RANGE OF HEIGHTS

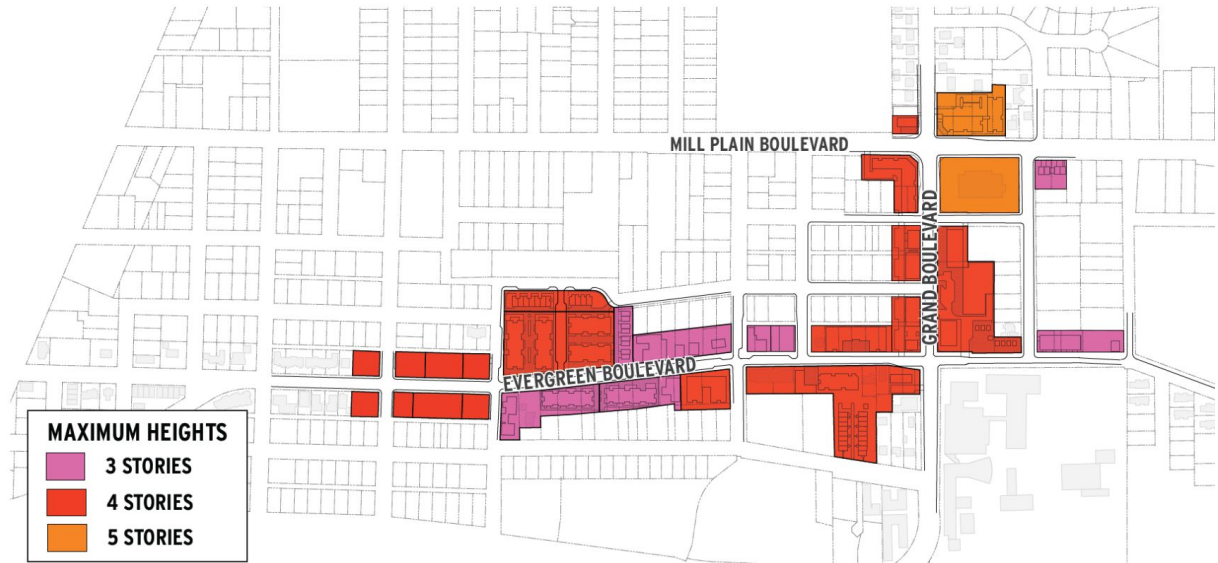
Height recommendations on a parcel level ranging from 3-5 stories

ALIGNED WITH TRANSIT

Increased height near transit stops

COMPATIBILITY

Heights decreased to 3 stories in certain areas along Evergreen to prevent 'canyoning'



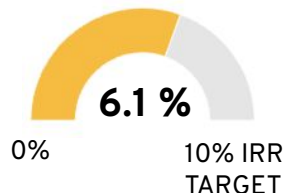
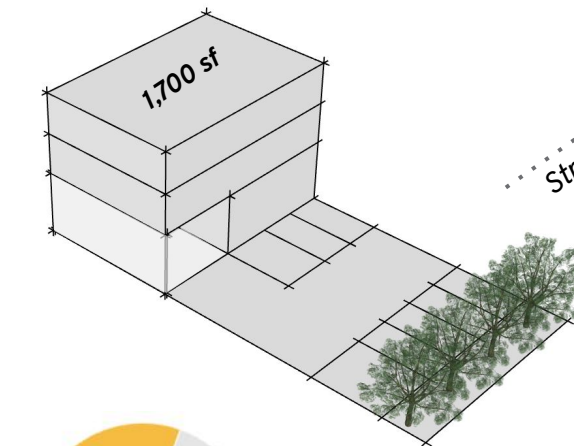
BUILDING HEIGHTS | TESTING

01

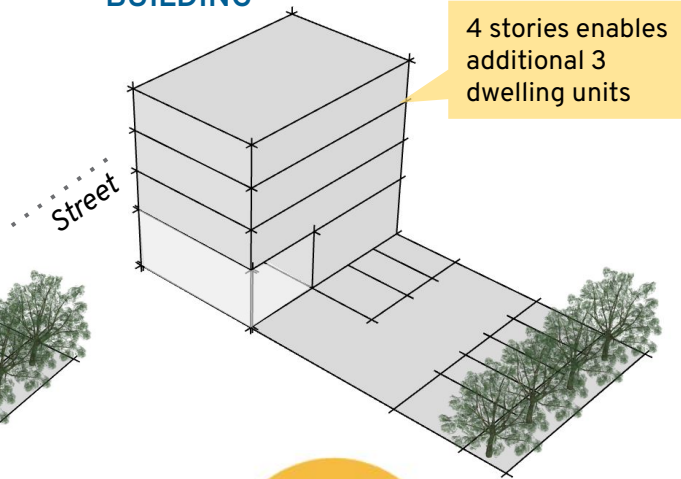
What is the impact of **reducing maximum heights** on development feasibility of residential projects?

- **Height increase from 3 to 4 stories has a significant positive impact on development feasibility.** The impact of increasing to 5 stories is also positive but not as significant as the increase from 3 to 4 stories. On smaller, constrained lots height is critical to achieving higher density.
- **The 10' rear landscaped buffer negatively impacts feasibility on smaller lots.** Allowing parking spaces, but not buildings, in this buffer area would have a meaningful impact on achievable densities on small lots.

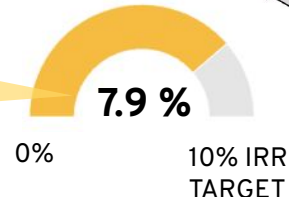
3 STORY RESIDENTIAL BUILDING



4 STORY RESIDENTIAL BUILDING



Significant increase in feasibility



RANGE OF HEIGHTS

Four stories along Evergreen and west side of Grand due to smaller lots

ALIGNED WITH TRANSIT

Five stories recommended near transit node at Mill Plain and Grand and on larger lots on east side of Grand.

COMPATIBILITY

Recommend using bulk/massing controls to address compatibility concerns while preserving feasibility





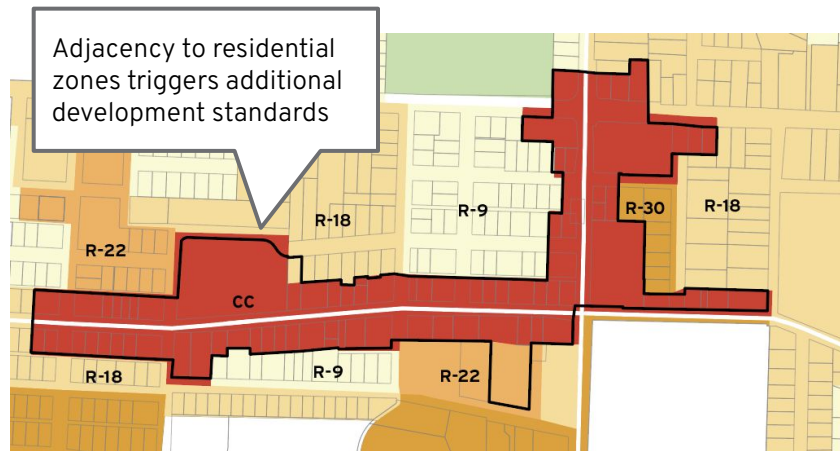
02

BULK AND
MASSING
CODE CONCEPTS

CC ZONE

All lots in Corridor share back lot lines with residential zones, only a few are separated by alleys

The intent of the Community Commercial (CC) Zone is “to provide a transition between more intense General Commercial areas and surrounding residential areas; or **is located along a major arterial where parcels are generally small or shallow, and are bordered by Lower Density Residential areas.**”



SETBACKS

When not separated by street, rear setbacks:

0 - 5 feet Commercial

10 feet Low-/High-Density Residential

SCREENING + BUFFERING

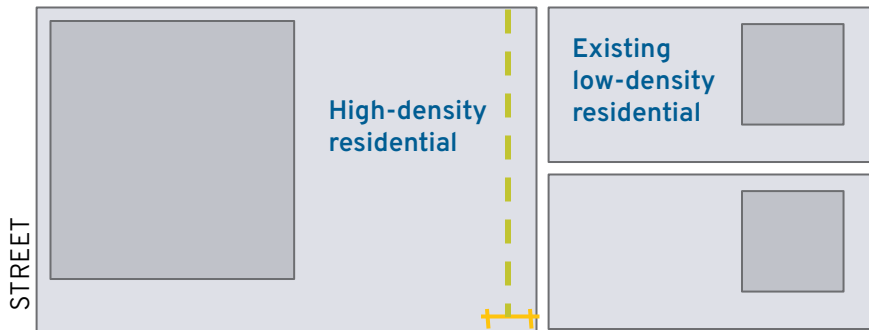
When not separated by street:

High Wall screening: extensive screening of visual and noise impacts is required to protect abutting sensitive uses and/or if there is little space for separation between uses.

- Four high shrubs required per 30 lineal feet of wall
- 6-feet with 100% sight-obscuring fence



10 ft
setback

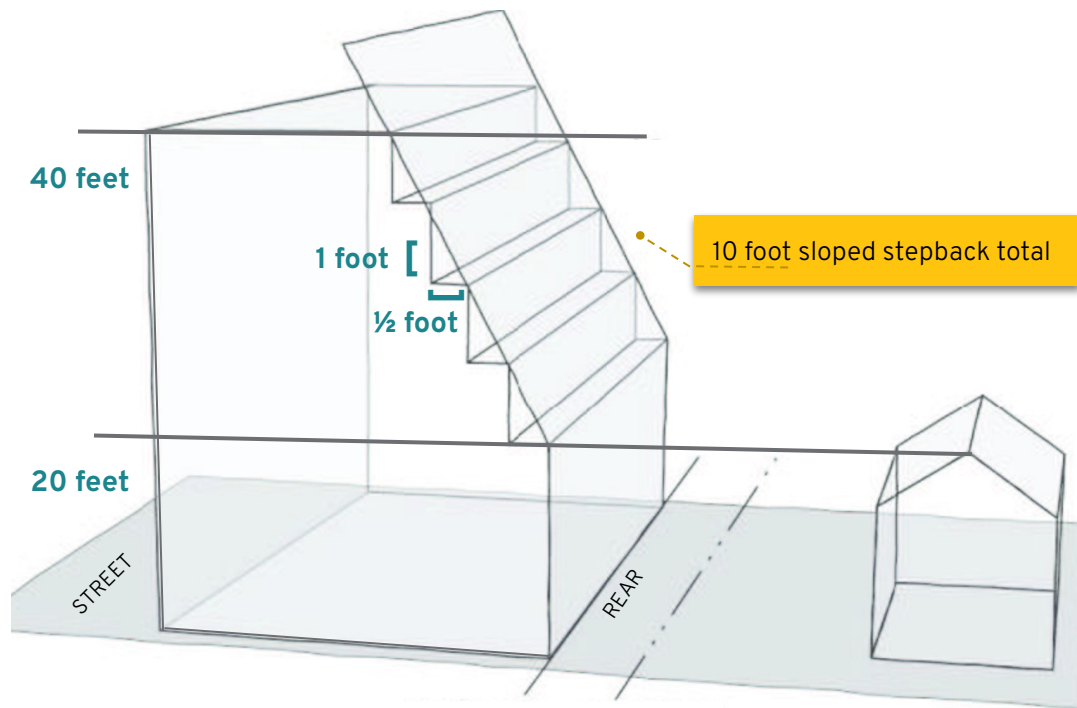


10 ft setback +
landscaping or wall

STEP BACK

½ foot setback for each foot building exceeds 20 feet in height up to maximum of 40 feet.

Buildings over 20 feet, may be stepped back.



BULK + MASSING | CORRIDOR STRATEGY

02

There were no specific standards noted in the Corridor Strategy document related to bulk and massing, but it did note goals related to new development being **context sensitive** to fit comfortably with surrounding character. **Design standards** addressing transparency and entrances were recommended.

FIG. 37: 3-STORY APARTMENT



FIG. 38: MIXED-USE 3-STORY APARTMENT



FIG. 39: MIXED-USE 4-STORY APARTMENT



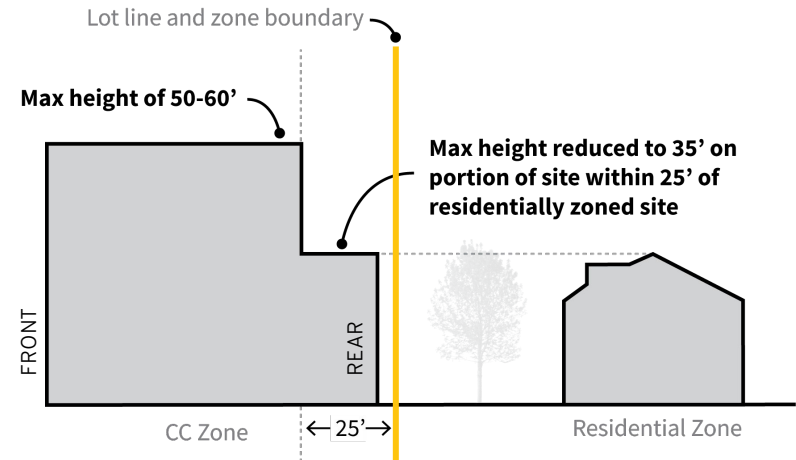
FIG. 40: MIXED-USE 4-STORY APARTMENT



BULK AND MASSING | CODE CONCEPT: REAR STEP DOWN

02

- The current standard of a continual slope requires **complex and costly building forms** in order to maximize the size of the building.
- The maximum **height step down** would function similarly to existing step down standards, but would be refined to lessen the negative impact on development feasibility.
- The **proposed standard** is to require a step down only on the portion of the building facing the rear property line that is within 25' of a residentially zoned site to achieve the appearance of transition between different uses and building types.



BULK AND MASSING | CODE CONCEPT: MAX BUILDING WIDTH

02

- The maximum building width is a **new proposed standard**. No current code provisions directly regulate the width of buildings (as measured along the street frontage).
- This standard is important because **building frontages impact the experience** of people walking along the street. Long, uninterrupted buildings are less interesting visually and large in scale.
- Additionally, older buildings on the corridor tend to be narrower (50-100 feet long). New buildings of a **similar scale will be more compatible** with this existing fabric.

EXAMPLE OF EXISTING BUILDINGS (35-50')



EXAMPLE OF WIDE NEW BUILDING (200')



BULK AND MASSING | CODE CONCEPT: MAX BUILDING WIDTH

02

In addition to a maximum building width, a break with minimum dimensions could be required of buildings of a certain total width. For example, a minimum 15 foot break could be required every 150 feet.

EXAMPLE (DIVISION STREET)



160' total building length
15'x40' opening in middle of building

EXAMPLE (ALBERTA STREET)



142' total building length
32'x48' patio in middle of building



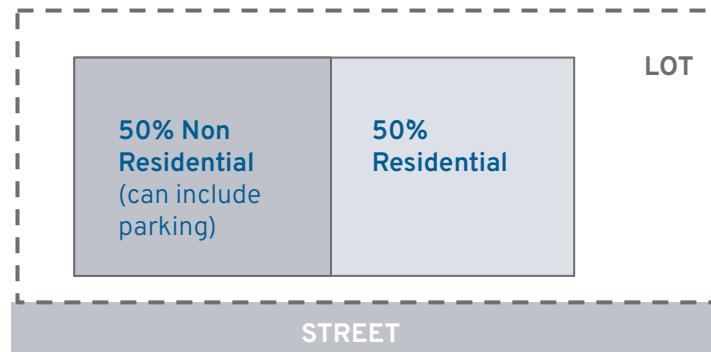
03

GROUND FLOOR
COMMERCIAL
CODE CONCEPTS

SINGLE MIXED USE BUILDING

A minimum of 50% of the lineal street front of the ground floor of mixed use buildings along arterial or collector streets **must be devoted to commercial or office uses.**

Live/Work uses are a permitted exception to the requirement.

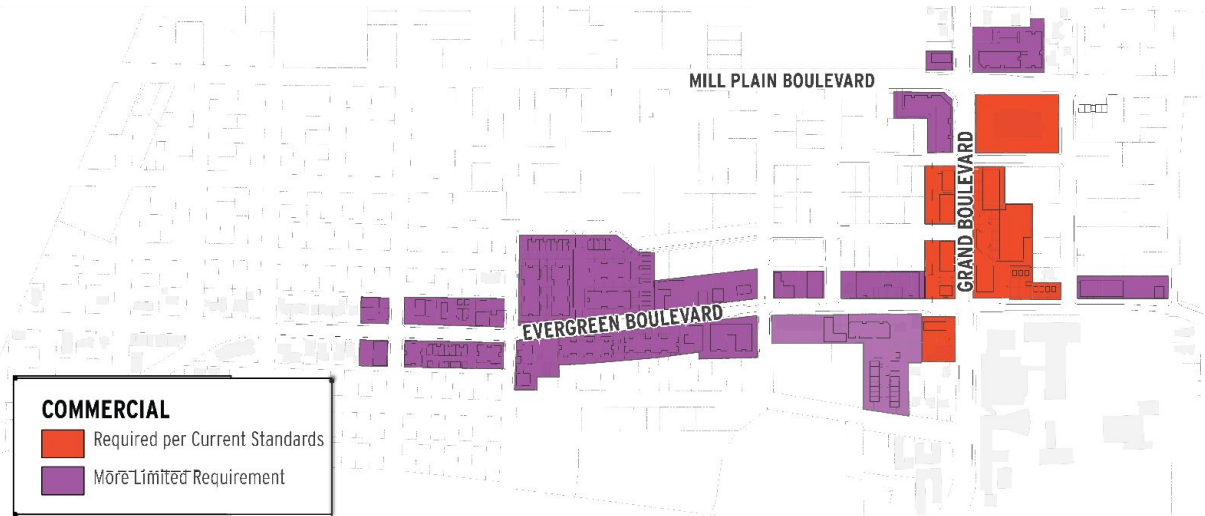


CONCENTRATE RETAIL

Require ground floor commercial at crossroads of Evergreen/Grand in the commercial 'heart' of the study area using existing 50% requirement

LIMITED COMMERCIAL ON EVERGREEN

Corridor Strategy recommended more limited requirement for commercial along Evergreen but did not identify specific standard



REQUIRED COMMERCIAL | TESTING

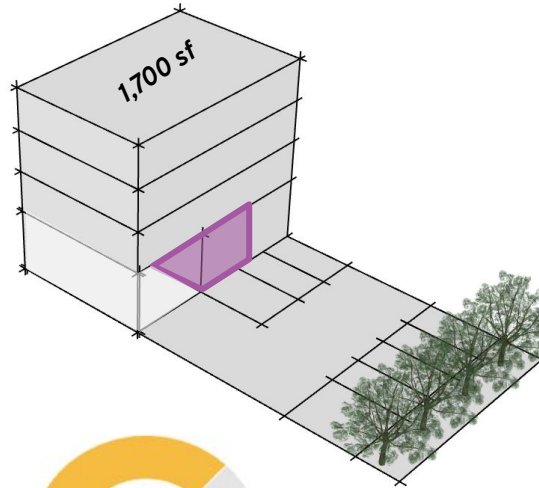
03

What is the impact of **requiring ground floor commercial uses** on development feasibility of higher density mixed-use projects?

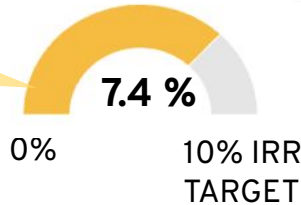
- **Residential-only buildings perform better than mixed use buildings.** Retail spaces are not as productive because rents are lower on a per square foot basis than residential units. However, the negative impact on feasibility is limited because only 50% of the ground floor is required to be commercial space.

 50% ground floor retail

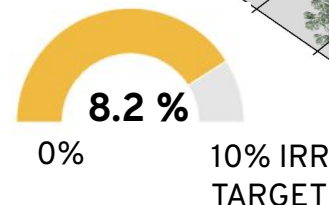
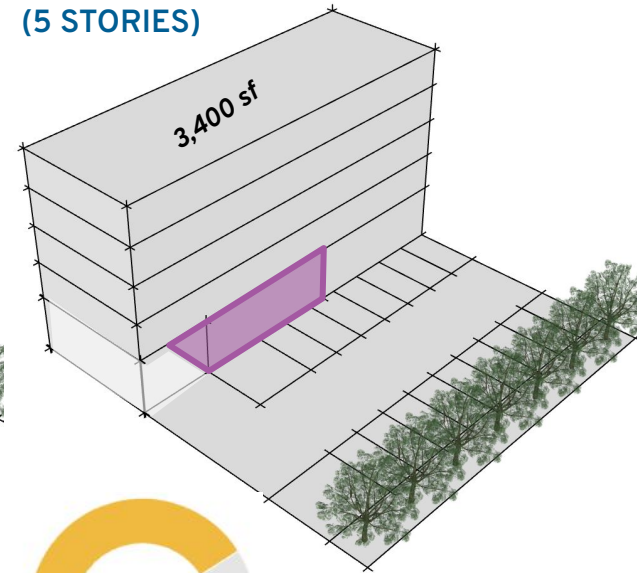
**MIXED-USE SMALL LOT
(4 STORIES)**



Ground floor retail negatively impacts feasibility



**MIXED-USE LARGE LOT
(5 STORIES)**



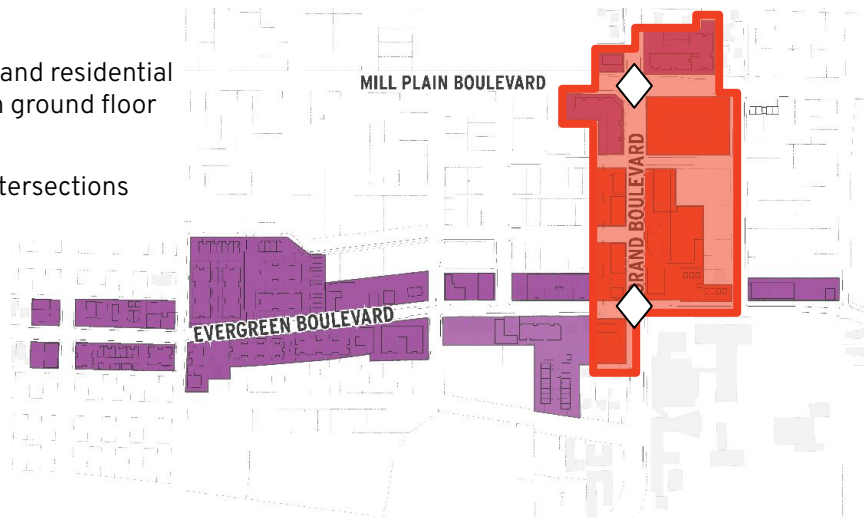
RETAIL ALONG GRAND

Currently the majority of properties along Grand already have retail. Future development should follow this pattern and require 50% ground floor retail along Grand.

FLEXIBILITY ON EVERGREEN

Allow for either commercial or residential on the ground floor on sites on Evergreen. Do not require a minimum amount of ground floor commercial space. **High-density residential uses also support corridor goals.**

- Ground floor commercial required
- Commercial and residential permitted on ground floor
- ◊ Important intersections





04

PARKING
CODE CONCEPTS

▶ LOW EXISTING RESIDENTIAL STANDARD

Given proximity to high-frequency transit service, the current parking standard for residential uses cannot be greater than 0.75 for multi-unit projects. This is already a low number of spaces required.

Lower ratio within ¼ mile of frequent transit

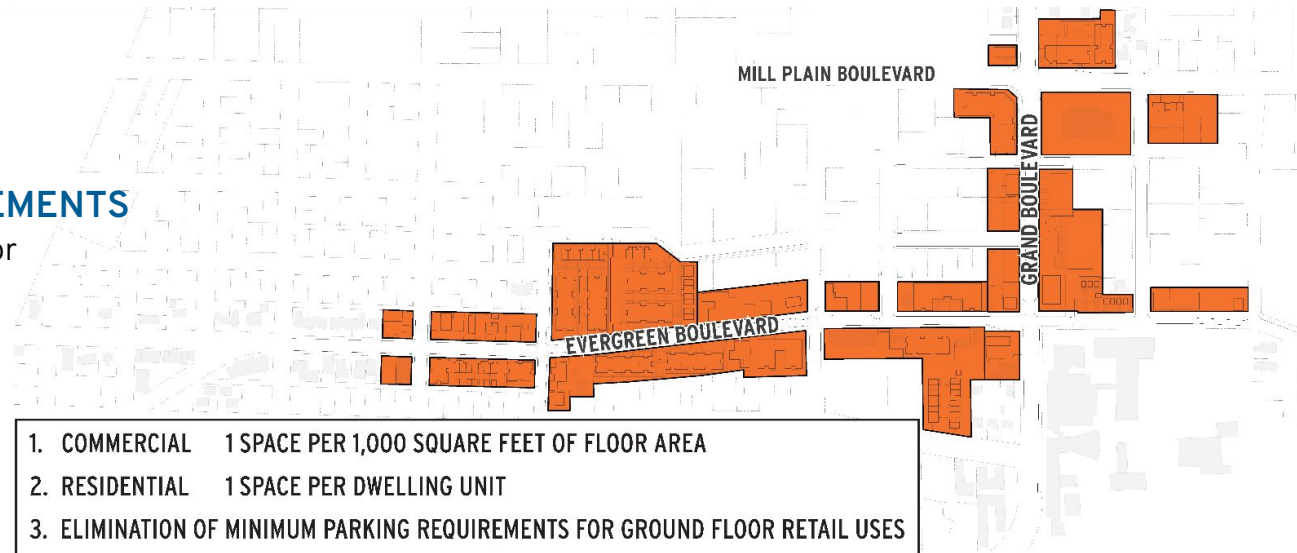
Parking Requirement	# of Spaces
Townhomes	1/unit
Duplex	1/unit
Multifamily	0.75/unit
Goods and Services	1/300 sf
Eating and Drinking	1/250 sf
Office	1/400 sf

NO PARKING FOR GROUND FLOOR RETAIL

Remove requirement to increase feasibility of active uses along street in key locations

REDUCED REQUIREMENTS

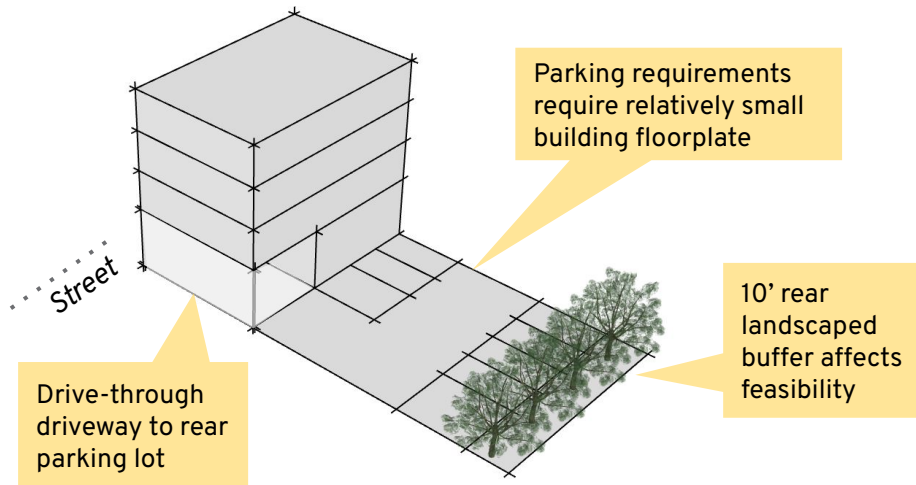
Less parking required for commercial uses throughout corridor to make redevelopment more feasible



Are higher density projects with urban form feasible with **proposed parking ratios** on-site?

- **Reduced parking standards proposed in the Corridor Strategy are critical to feasibility on smaller lots.** If current Title 20 parking standards for commercial spaces were required then many of these models would be physically impractical to build.
- **Further parking reductions may result in more projects being economically feasible.** If the residential parking standards were reduced to 0.5 spaces per unit or lower, it may stimulate more infill development in the corridor than if the current ratio of 0.75 spaces per unit were maintained.

RESIDENTIAL SMALL LOT (4 STORIES)



PARKING | CODE CONCEPT: REDUCE PARKING BURDEN

04

LOWER RATIOS

In order to achieve desired development, require lower ratio proposed for commercial uses in Corridor Strategy. Do not require any parking for ground floor commercial.

FURTHER RESIDENTIAL REDUCTIONS

Drop parking ratio for multi-unit developments from 0.75 to 0.5 to reduce burden on financial performance of projects and further City climate action goals.

Parking Requirement

of Spaces

Townhomes

1/unit

Duplex

1/unit

Multifamily

0.50/unit

Commercial

1/1000 sf

Slight reduction to make projects more feasible

Recommendation from Corridor Strategy



QUESTIONS?
CODE CONCEPTS

CODE CONCEPTS | RECOMMENDATIONS

01

BUILDING HEIGHT

Maintain existing 4-story height limits along Evergreen and western half of Grand and increase to 5-story in target zones along eastern half of Grand supported with high-frequency transit

03

REQUIRED GROUND FLOOR COMMERCIAL

Require ground floor commercial only along Grand while promoting flexibility in how to achieve. Promote commercial along Evergreen using incentives but allow more flexibility in uses

02

BULK AND MASSING

Amend existing standards and adopt new standards to shape building massing and bulk and address concerns about context-sensitive buildings

04

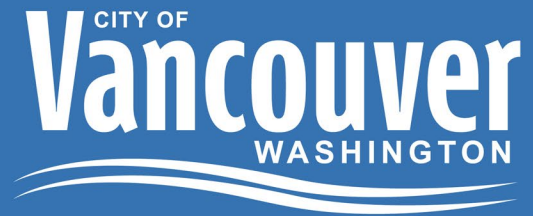
PARKING

Reduce parking requirements for commercial uses to 1:1,000 SF, do not require for ground floor commercial uses, and reduce requirements for multi-unit projects to 0.5 spaces/unit.

Project Next Steps

- Stakeholder engagement
 - Use direction from Planning Commission and community feedback to make changes to proposed code standards
- Planning Commission Workshop in April
- City Council Workshops in May and July
- Further public outreach in June
- Planning Commission Public Hearing in July
- City Council Public Hearing in August
- Implementation efforts beyond development code requirements

Thank You



DATE: February 3rd, 2023

TO: Chair Ledell and Planning Commission members

FROM: Becky Coutinho, Associate Planner and Bryan Snodgrass, Principal Planner
Community Development Department

CC: Rebecca Kennedy, Deputy Director, Community Development Department

RE: February 14 workshop review of Evergreen and Grand Commercial Corridors Strategy Implementation

Introduction

The February 14 workshop is intended to update the Planning Commission on the status of the Evergreen and Grand commercial corridors implementation process. This memorandum includes a recap of the associated Strategy Document adopted in 2022, and recent and upcoming work intended to result in zoning code changes and various other implementation measures in 2023.

Strategy Document

The Evergreen and Grand Commercial Corridors Strategy document (see Attachment A below) was adopted by City Council on February 28, 2022, intended to guide future zoning code text changes and other land use, community development and transportation implementation.

Both Planning Commission and City Council reviewed the document through a combined nine workshops and four public hearings. Community outreach occurred through one in-person and four virtual community meetings, direct communications with individual stakeholders, the project website, and surveys and communication through the City of Vancouver Be Heard page. The process began in early 2020 and lasted until late 2021.

Within the corridors, the Strategy includes three different character areas – a Main Street Commercial Mixed-Use Corridor, a Residential Mixed-Use Corridor, and a Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) Hub. Within these areas the proposed regulatory changes would include allowances for ground floor commercial uses, building height limitations, minimum off-street parking requirements, and requirements for building to achieve an 'active edge' at the ground floor. Specifically, the current standard requiring first floor non-residential uses is recommended to be maintained along Grand Boulevard, with

additional flexibility recommended along Evergreen Boulevard and the BRT hub. The current 50 foot maximum is proposed to be modulated, with increased heights up to five stories allowed on the west side of the BRT hub, four stories allowed on most of Grand and Evergreen Boulevards, and a three-story limit on other portions of Evergreen. For parking, one space is proposed to be required per 1,000 feet of commercial floor area. No minimum is proposed for ground floor retail in mixed-use buildings. One space is proposed per residential dwelling unit. To create active edge along the development, it is recommended to require a maximum front setback of 0-5 feet at the ground floor only regardless of building height, as well as establishing front door access and minimum ground floor transparency requirements for both commercial and residential uses.

In addition to land use regulations, there are several additional regulatory and programmatic recommendations in the Strategy. Some of these include adopting standards that support activating vacant and underutilized spaces, developing design guidelines bolstering local identity and street activation that considers development affordability, and encouraging streetscape improvements in all redevelopment projects. The Strategy recommended and an effort is currently underway to extend the City's Multi-Family Tax Exemption (MFTE) program to this area, calibrated to implement the vision and goals for the corridors and add workforce housing. The Strategy recommends other longer-term non-regulatory programmatic investments, including the creation of a business district organization to support art, events, and other placemaking activities.

Implementation Work

Following the adoption of the Strategy, City Staff completed a competitive request for proposal process to secure a consultant to aid in the work of creating development regulations and additional implementation measures. Cascadia Partners, a full-service urban planning, real estate, environmental sustainability, and public engagement consulting firm was chosen. The consultant began work in October 2022 and will be part of the presentation at the February 14 workshop.

Cascadia Partners thus far has provided analysis of existing corridor conditions, completed an inventory collecting site specific information, summarized the code concepts, and provided updated recommendations that are supported by a preliminary pro forma analysis. A consultant memo and pro-forma analysis is included in the workshop materials.

Staff and the consultants have identified adjustments to some of the specific provisions of the Strategy Document, listed below. Pending worksession discussion, we envision engaging property owners and the community about these in the coming months. These include:

	Current Development Code	2022 Strategy Document	Proposed New Code
Maximum Building Height	• 50-feet throughout, typically 4 stories	• 3-5 stories, varying by parcel	• 4 stories along Evergreen and west Grand, 5 stories at Mill Plain/Grand transit node.

Building Bulk and Massing	• Silent beyond height limits and setbacks. Commercial abutting lower density residential requires 10-foot setback • Upper portions need ½ foot setback for each foot of building height above 20 feet.	• No standard directly proposed to address the development form beyond active edge requirements, maximum front setback of 0-5 feet at the ground floor	• Maximum height step down only on rear face within 25 feet of a residentially zoned site • Maximum building width, with breaks within the building
Required Ground Floor Commercial	• At least half of frontage along arterial/collector streets must be commercial or office	• More flexibility along Evergreen, keep existing requirement on Grand	• Allow for either ground floor commercial or residential along Evergreen. Require ground floor commercial along Grand
Required Minimum Off-Street Parking Spaces	• 0.75 per multi-family unit near frequent transit such as Evergreen and Grand • 1/300sf for goods and services, 1/250sf for eating and drinking, 1/400sf office	• Zero for ground floor retail • 1/1000sf for commercial uses • 1 per unit for residential	• 0.5 per multi-family unit • 1/1000sf commercial, zero for ground floor retail

More details including graphics and the pro-forma economic analyses used to support the above are contained in the Cascadia Partners memorandum, and the presentation for the February 14 workshop.

Project Next Steps

Following this Planning Commission workshop will be public outreach including open houses meetings with the general public and key stakeholders including business owners along the corridors. Once community input is gathered, staff will return to Planning Commission for another Workshop in April provide the community feedback and project status updates. Staff then have two City Council Workshops in May and July, with additional public outreach occurring in June. The Planning Commission Public Hearing is scheduled for July 25th and the City Council Public hearing is scheduled for August 21st.

In addition to the development code changes being proposed, project staff will also be reviewing programmatic recommendations to implement other policy goals identified in the Strategy document including:

- Create a neighborhood business association to advocate for existing business needs
- Create a business district to support art, events, and other placemaking
- Extend the Multi-Family Tax Exemption (MFTE) program calibrated to implement the vision and goals for the corridors and add workforce housing
- Attract and retain neighborhood-serving businesses
- Establish a storefront improvement program to support existing businesses
- Establish a signage and placemaking program along Grand Boulevard and in the BRT Hub
- Identify opportunities to support houseless communities and promote community safety
- Explore strategies to maintain economic diversity and housing affordability, especially for low- and moderate-income households
- Consider height bonuses in exchange for attainably priced workforce housing units
- Improve connectivity to nearby destinations such as downtown Vancouver, the Fort Vancouver National Historic Site, and the Pearson Field Airport as an economic development strategy.
- Create a cohesive, walkable, and safe multimodal environment providing access to and through the study area, increase signage to improve user safety and comfort, traffic calming and streetscape improvements, and explore Transportation Demand Management strategies in the study area to support safe and easy use of multiple modes.
- Design transportation infrastructure and streetscape improvements to facilitate multi-modal access to transit and promote accessibility for people of all abilities around the future BRT station platforms.
- Streetscape improvements including widened sidewalks to 12-15 feet to accommodate retail, pedestrian, landscaping, and street furnishing zones.
- Support roadway improvements to Grand Boulevard south to 5th Street, including an enhanced pedestrian crossing at 6th Street to support access to the School for the Deaf, reduced speed limits and traffic calming measures.
- Leverage environmental remediation funding opportunities as an incentive to develop eligible sites

Staff Contact

Becky Coutinho, Associate Long Range Planner, 360-487-7899

Becky.coutinho@cityofvancouver.us

Bryan Snodgrass, Principal Planner, 360-487-7946

Bryan.snodgrass@cityofvancouver.us

Attachment(s):

- A. Evergreen and Grand Commercial Corridors Strategy
- B. Cascadia Partners Memo
- C. Cascadia Partners Pro Forma Feasibility Analysis



GRAND BLVD E EVERGREEN BLVD

EVERGREEN & GRAND

COMMERCIAL CORRIDORS STRATEGY

FEBRUARY 2022

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

VANCOUVER CITY COUNCIL

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Marjorie Ledell, Chair
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James Atkins
Larry Blaufus
Jack Harroun
Tim Schauer
Steve Schulte

PROJECT TEAM

Rebecca Kennedy	Deputy Director, CDD
Bryan Snodgrass	Principal Land Use Planner, CDD
Anna Dearman	Senior Transportation Planner, CDD
Cayla Cothron	Associate Land Use Planner, CDD
Tay Stone	Planner, CED Cayla Cothron
Becky Coutinho	Associate Land Use Planner, CDD

CONSULTANTS

Crandall Arambula
Leland Consulting Group

Acronym:
CDD: Community Development Department

LAND ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The City of Vancouver is located within the ancestral territory of the Chinook, Klickitat, and Cowlitz people, among other tribes — all of whom have a rich and enduring relationship with the Columbia River and surrounding forests, coasts, and plains that spans over 10,000 years.

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GLOSSARY

‘Active Edge’ Development Standards

Regulations that support and create an inclusive pedestrian environments through targeted setbacks and transparency requirements.

Adaptive Reuse

The renovation and/or rehabilitation of existing structures in order to reuse them for purposes that they were not originally built for.

Average Daily Trips (ADTs)

The total number of trips, both in-bound and out-bound, within a 24 hour weekday period, generated by a particular use or development.

Building Form, Massing, and Scale

The shape, orientation, and size of buildings as well as their physical placement within a parcel.

Bus Rapid Transit (BRT)

A bus-based transit system that is designed to be higher capacity, more reliable, and more frequent than a conventional bus system.

Canyon Effect

A visual and environmental effect on corridors that occurs when tall structures flank both sides of a street.

Development Standards

Regulatory code that addresses issues like building height, setbacks, lot coverage, and lot area.

Easement

A grant of one or more of the property rights by the property owner to and/or for use by the public, a corporation or another person or entity.

Gentrification

The process of neighborhood change that leads to a shift in socioeconomic composition of neighborhoods due to the in-migration of higher income, in-migrants leadings to displacement of lower income residents and businesses.

Horizontal Mixed-Use

A form of development that incorporates multiple uses on a single parcel but not necessarily within a single building.

Micromobility

A form of personal transportation using lightweight vehicles like electric scooters or bicycles.

Multimodal

When describing a street or transportation network, multimodal means it provides options for people who travel by foot, using a personal mobility device such as wheelchair, by bicycle or other micro-mobility device, using transit, or in motorized vehicles.

Nonconforming Uses

A use of land, building, structure or use which lawfully existed at the time of its original construction, but does not conform with contemporary development regulations.

Overlay Zone

A designated area within a base zoning district for which specific land use regulations apply, in addition to the base zoning requirements.

Pedestrian

A pedestrian is a person traveling by foot and is inclusive of those using assistive devices.

Placemaking

The practice of leveraging community assets and inspirations to create public spaces that champion and support community health and vibrancy.

Public Realm

Space that the general public has access to, including streets, sidewalks, parks, and civic plazas.

Right-of-way

Land that is controlled by the city and reserved for public use such as for streets and sidewalks.

Right-size Parking

Parking standards that provide just enough parking to meet demand, taking into consideration surrounding land uses as well as transit and mobility access.

Setbacks

The minimum allowable horizontal distance from a given point or line of reference, such as a property line, to the nearest vertical wall or other element of a building, structure, or edge of vehicle parking area.

Traffic Calming

The use of design features to improve safety for motorists, pedestrians, and cyclists. This can include for example speed humps, curb extensions, or narrowing traffic lanes.

Transit-Oriented Development

Residential and commercial centers designed to maximize access by transit and non-motorized transportation.

Transportation Demand Management

The application of strategies to reduce travel demand and/or redistribute demand to allow for more efficient use of transportation infrastructure, such as programs to encourage carpooling and transit usage.

Vertical Mixed-Use

A form of development that includes multiple uses within the same building with typical developments reserving ground floors for commercial use.

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CHAPTER 1

BACKGROUND

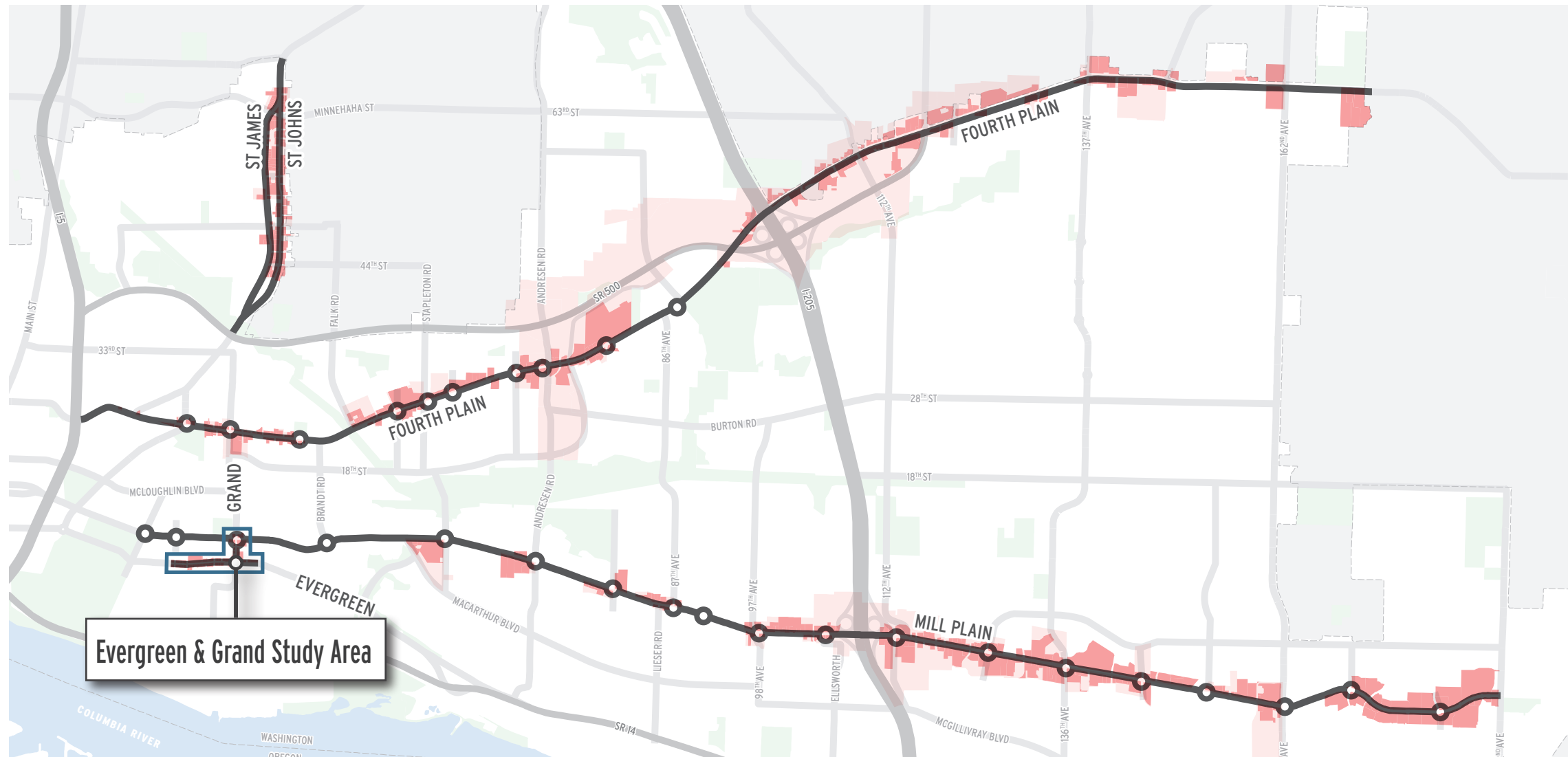


WHAT IS THE COMMERCIAL CORRIDORS PROJECT?

The Evergreen and Grand corridors are part of the Commercial Corridors Strategy (CCS), a larger citywide effort initiated in 2019 to improve major commercial corridors and nearby areas throughout Vancouver where residents work, shop, live, and travel. The CCS is a community planning process intended to enhance existing commercial corridors, increase transportation options, ensure access to services and amenities, support job growth, and increase housing opportunities on the corridors.

The overall process originally included study corridors in three general areas: the St. Johns/St. James couplet, Fourth Plain and Mill Plain, and Evergreen and Grand as shown in Figure 1. With the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, the project focus shifted to the Evergreen and Grand study area, and future work on the remaining study corridors is expected to be integrated into larger citywide planning processes and undertaken as resources allow.

FIG. 1: COMMERCIAL CORRIDOR STRATEGY CITYWIDE MAP



EVERGREEN & GRAND COMMERCIAL CORRIDORS STRATEGY

The Evergreen and Grand Commercial Corridors Strategy report is a subarea plan for the study area (as shown in Figure 2), and the culmination of the two-year community planning process that evaluated the types of uses that are allowed, regulatory standards for new development, parking and access, the pedestrian environment, and other issues identified by the community and stakeholders.

The Strategy report includes three primary components.

1. A long-term community vision with accompanying goals and objectives
2. Corridor vision concepts that establish a land use framework for the study area and highlight three complementary land use areas with anchor development sites
3. A set of recommendations that consider short-term regulatory changes, as well as mid- to long-term policies, programs, and tools to help achieve the vision over time

FIG. 2: EVERGREEN AND GRAND STUDY AREA



The City Council adopted a six-month moratorium on new development along Evergreen and Grand Boulevards in November 2019 but lifted it in May 2020 in recognition of local economic conditions associated with the COVID-19 pandemic.

FIG. 3: EVERGREEN AND GRAND COMMERCIAL DISTRICT ILLUSTRATION



PUBLIC PROCESS

The Strategy was refined through outreach and engagement efforts held at each stage of the process, as outlined below. Community and stakeholder feedback helped to identify priorities for future development of the corridors, establish a long-term community vision, and refine recommendations to achieve the vision and goals. The project team also held workshops with the Planning Commission and City Council at key milestones to review and provide feedback throughout the process. The full description and detailed summaries of community engagement efforts can be viewed in Appendix A.

Issues and Opportunities

The project team evaluated corridor conditions, conducted a market analysis, and gathered community and stakeholder input through an in-person kick-off open house and online survey on issues, opportunities, and priorities for future development of the corridors. See below sections for more detailed information on the results of this work.

- Issues, Opportunities, and Priorities (Chapter 2)
- Corridor Conditions Summary (Appendix B)
- Market Opportunities Analysis (Appendix C)

Community Vision

Issues, opportunities, and priorities identified during the first stage of community outreach helped shape a vision for the area that includes specific goals and objectives. These were then reviewed and refined through a virtual open house and online survey to ensure they reflected community priorities.

- Community Vision (Chapter 3)
- Vision, Goals, and Objectives (Appendix D)

Corridor Vision Concepts and Recommendations

Public feedback on the corridor vision concepts and initial recommendations was gathered through a virtual open house and online survey, and stakeholder meetings with key property owners along the corridors. The full set of recommendations included in this Strategy report includes short-term recommendations for regulatory changes, and mid- to long-term recommendations for policies, programs, and tools to achieve the community vision over time.

- Corridor Vision Concepts (Chapter 4)
- Recommendations (Chapter 5)

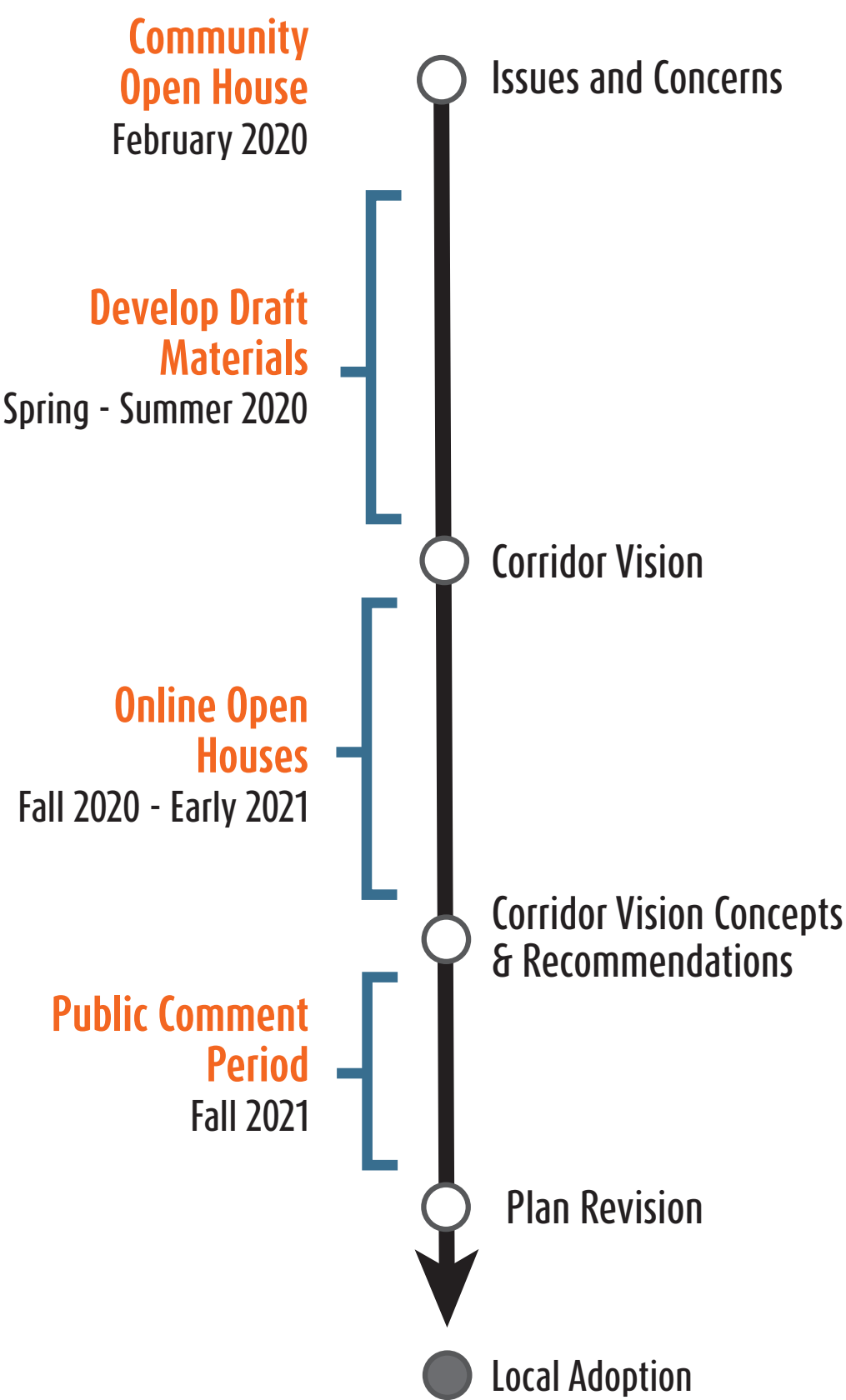


FIG. 4: PROJECT TIMELINE



CHAPTER 2

CURRENT CONDITIONS

CURRENT CORRIDOR CONDITIONS

Evergreen and Grand Boulevards are locally-oriented commercial corridors that boast an emerging small business district. They are located east of downtown Vancouver and the Fort Vancouver Historic Reserve and adjacent to established neighborhoods. There are a variety of existing land uses in the study area, including commercial, retail, shopping and dining, office, automotive, and institutional, and buildings are generally smaller-scale and oriented to the street, with varied setbacks and some parking located in front of buildings. There are also single-family residential homes on Evergreen Boulevard, some of which have been adaptively reused for commercial purposes over time and contribute to the unique character of the corridors.

As a general rule, successful commercial areas need somewhere between 5,000-15,000 average daily trips (ADT) of vehicle or multimodal traffic for businesses to thrive. While trip mode is shifting as people increasingly choose multimodal travel options, the importance of visibility for small businesses remains a key consideration. In addition to trips, retail success requires rooftops, as nearby residential development provides some demand for commercial retail uses within a business district. Given nearby residentially-driven demand and the importance of visibility, the market study for this area indicates that Grand Boulevard is the more suitable market for new commercial development with approximately 10,000 average daily trips, proximity to the forthcoming Mill Plain BRT extension, and existing small retailers. There is the potential to accommodate a thriving commercial retail environment along Grand with improvements to the design and orientation of buildings, parking, the pedestrian environment, and other multimodal infrastructure in the roadway as part of future development.

Evergreen Boulevard is more intimate than Grand, with a narrower right-of-way, lower trip volumes (4,000-6,000 ADT) and existing traffic calming measures and crossing improvements that reduce speeds, improve safety for vulnerable road users, and enhance the pedestrian environment. With low trip volumes, an enjoyable pedestrian environment, and the existing uses, market demand along this corridor is primarily for new residential development and other uses that provide basic needs and services for the neighborhood. Residential and other complementary commercial uses would help to support existing businesses and the success of new retail in the study area. With the presence of existing on-street parking, there is also the opportunity for additional spaces to serve commercial retail and create a buffer between pedestrians and moving traffic.

At the north end of the study area C-TRAN will also be constructing a new Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) line that will run along Mill Plain Boulevard. The future Mill Plain BRT will have three stations within a five-minute walking distance of the corridors, providing opportunities to benefit existing commercial businesses and connect people to both the Evergreen and Grand commercial corridors and other community destinations throughout the City. Strong demand for residential units around the study area coupled with the future Mill Plain BRT also makes the intersection at Grand and Mill Plain Boulevards a prime location for higher-density multi-family development affordable to a variety of incomes.

EXISTING ZONING

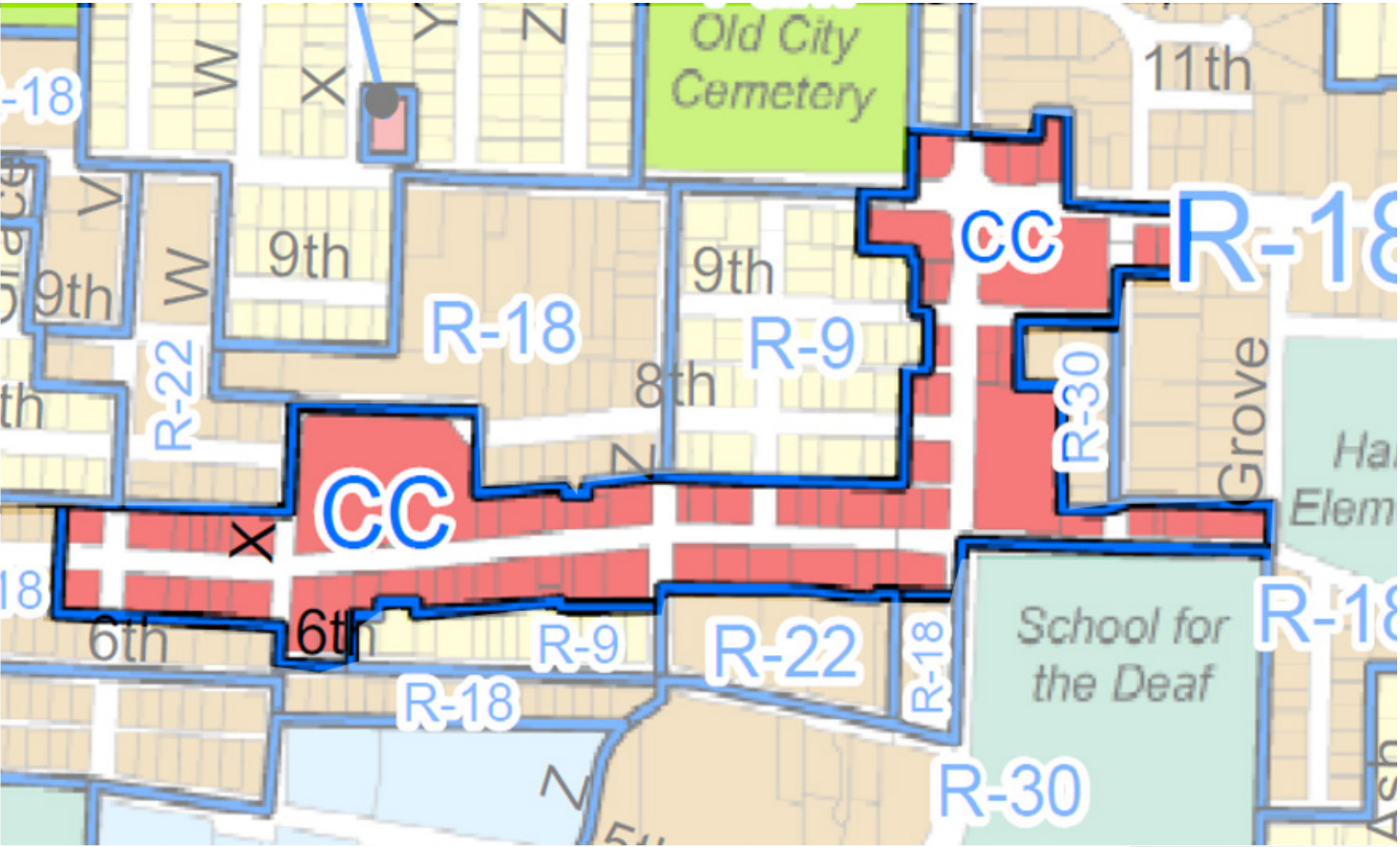
Current zoning throughout the study area is Community Commercial (CC), which is intended to provide for retail goods and services purchased regularly by residents of several nearby neighborhoods, accommodate offices, institutions, and mixed-use housing, and provide significant opportunities for walking, bicycle and transit trips encouraged through building and site design, landscaping, and access. However, some development standards and allowed uses within the CC zone do not recognize the unique built environment of these specific corridors, and may result in development that doesn't fully meets the zone's intent.

Allowed uses within the CC zone include both allowances and limitations that are not appropriate for a vibrant, neighborhood-serving commercial corridor. This includes limitations on residential uses; limitations on lodging; less restrictive retail allowances including big box retail; auto repair, sales and rental; gas stations; and self-storage. Some development standards in this zoning district also do not recognize the fine-grained and more urban development patterns that currently exist on both Evergreen and Grand.

The Evergreen and Grand Commercial Corridors Strategy seeks to address these issues, ensuring that development regulations recognize the unique built environment that exists in this area and promote development consistent with the intent of the zoning. In addition to regulatory changes, the Strategy identifies recommendations for other non-regulatory policies, programs, and tools that are intended to be implemented over time to help achieve the long-term vision and goals for the corridors.

The full Corridor Conditions Summary and Market Analysis conducted for the study area can be viewed in Appendices B and C.

FIG. 5: EXISTING ZONING DESIGNATION



COMMUNITY COMMERCIAL (CC)

- Intended to provide for retail goods and services purchased regularly by residents of several nearby neighborhoods.
- Current regulations and allowed uses do not support development that meets the zone's intent or the vision and goals established through this process.

ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES

The following summary provides a high-level overview of issues and opportunities identified through the planning process that reflect community priorities for future development along the Evergreen and Grand commercial corridors. This input shaped the long-term community vision, goals, and objectives for the corridors with a focus on what types of land uses are appropriate and how people can best access them.

The Issues & Opportunities Community Engagement Summary can be viewed in Appendix A.

ISSUES

- Recent developments seen as out of context and character with the surrounding neighborhood
- Perceived poor condition and function of existing buildings and the public realm
- Lack of access to parks, open space, and community gathering spaces
- Concerns about gentrification and maintaining affordability and diversity in housing types as development occurs
- Some existing land uses do not support walking and biking or a unique identity for the small business district
- Safety for pedestrians and bicyclists and lack of safe access throughout the corridor, especially for people accessing Harney Heights Elementary School and the Washington Schools for the Deaf and the Blind
- Impacts from the homelessness crisis

OPPORTUNITIES

- Accommodate small-scale retail, eating and drinking establishments, and other active uses such as restaurants and breweries, food carts, community event space, a local grocer or satellite farmers market, and complementary uses that provide basic needs and services to neighborhood residents
- Promote publicly-accessible parks, plazas, and community gathering spaces where appropriate on the corridors
- Encourage a range of housing types that are affordable to a variety of incomes
- Proactively address gentrification and displacement
- Limit uses that do not contribute to a walkable and vibrant commercial corridor
- Undertake streetscape improvements to make the corridor more livable and inviting, such as sidewalk and lighting improvements, more landscaping and street trees, etc.
- Provide adequate parking and on-street spaces for businesses
- Ensure development is consistent with the scale and character of the corridors
- Create 'anchor points' that contribute to a distinct and authentic identity for the corridors
- Improve walkability and safety for people walking, biking, using mobility devices, and using micromobility such as scooters



CHAPTER 3

COMMUNITY VISION

COMMUNITY VISION

Community feedback and data on issues and opportunities gathered during the first stage of the planning process was used to develop a long-term vision that reflects community priorities for future development of the corridors, as well as supportive goals and objectives for land use, mobility, parking, urban design, and economic development. The outcome of these visions, goals, and objectives will elevate the corridors' existing status as a small business district.

VISION

Promote equitable and diverse corridor development that is vibrant, sustainable, and mixed-use.

Foster development that recognizes and builds upon the neighborhood's unique setting, history, and character.

FIGS. 6 & 7: FEBRUARY 2020 KICK-OFF COMMUNITY OPEN HOUSE



GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Land Use	Goal Strengthen current businesses while providing an appropriate mix of commercial and residential uses.
Mobility	Goal Establish a balanced, multi-modal network of motor vehicle, transit, walking, and biking routes through the corridors.
Parking	Goal Provide adequate parking to serve existing uses and future development.
Urban Design	Goal Create public and private spaces that are inclusive, integrated, and contribute positively to the livability of the corridors.
Economic Development	Goal Provide ample opportunities for small-scale, locally-owned businesses to thrive.

LAND USE

A mix of residential and commercial uses is generally needed to create vibrant and healthy corridors in the long-term. Currently, there is a strong demand for housing citywide with commercial and retail uses playing a secondary and supporting role. As the region emerges from the current pandemic, infill or redevelopment of the corridors should ‘fill the gaps’ of land uses that are missing like income-based housing, restaurants, retail shops, and plazas and other community gathering spaces.

Goal Strengthen current businesses while providing an appropriate mix of commercial and residential uses.

Objectives

- Provide viable opportunities for new retail and dining uses that attract local and regional businesses.
- Support a mix of uses that serve the daily needs of surrounding neighborhood residents and employees.
- Encourage transit-supportive uses near the planned Mill Plain Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) station at the intersection of Mill Plain and Grand.
- Allow a variety of housing types to serve a range of needs, preferences, ages, and incomes.
- Discourage additional motor vehicle related uses (service and repair shops, gas stations, etc.) in the corridors.
- Discourage nuisance uses that may lead to increased crime, or excessive traffic or noise.
- Foster street-oriented uses that create walking and biking activity throughout all business hours, all days, and all seasons.

MOBILITY

Transportation and mobility improvements should maximize opportunities for corridor residents, visitors, and employees to safely and efficiently traverse and visit the corridor as well as accessing the future Vine BRT planned for Mill Plain Boulevard. Implementation of many of the Mobility objectives will be incorporated into the current Transportation System Plan update and subsequent implementation activities.

Goal Establish a balanced, multi-modal network of motor vehicle, transit, walking, and biking routes through the corridors.

Objectives

- Provide safe and direct sidewalk and bike lane routes and intersection crossings within and to the corridors for all users regardless of age or physical ability.
- Foster safe and comfortable connections to and from transit, including the planned Mill Plain Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) and existing bus routes.
- Limit excessive traffic speed through effective speed reduction and/or traffic calming measures.
- Maintain access for emergency, service, maintenance, delivery, and personal vehicles to businesses.

PARKING

Providing appropriate parking can reduce the impacts on surrounding neighborhoods as well as support commercial businesses and residential development along the corridor. ‘Right-sized’ parking reduces the total infrastructure costs for development, which can limit or discourage redevelopment or otherwise unnecessarily increase the cost of housing and commercial rents.

Goal Provide adequate parking to serve existing uses and future development.

Objectives

- Support existing and future retail uses by providing adjacent short-term curbside vehicle parking, bike parking, and micromobility parking, as appropriate.
- Minimize impacts of vehicle parking on the active transportation environment (walking, biking, using mobility devices, using micromobility, accessing transit).
- Limit excessive spillover parking into adjacent neighborhoods.
- Consider ‘right-sized’ parking approach to support corridor vibrancy and affordability.

URBAN DESIGN

The public realm must contribute positively to the economic vitality and livability of the corridors. Evergreen and Grand Boulevard should be more than a conduit for moving people through the neighborhood. They should include “placemaking” improvements that result in a setting that spurs high-quality desirable development and makes people want to visit businesses on the corridor.

Goal Create public and private spaces that are inclusive, integrated, and contribute positively to the livability of the corridors.

Objectives

- Create opportunities for cultural, community, and other amenities that attract customers and strengthen businesses.
- Encourage safe and active public spaces that are inclusive, accessible, and comfortable for all residents, customers, employees, and visitors.
- Encourage new public spaces that contribute to the livability and economic vitality of the corridors.
- Foster a distinct identity and improve corridor aesthetics by increasing the amount of cohesive landscaping and streetscape features.
- Promote sustainable design for buildings, sites, and streets.
- Ensure form, massing, and scale of new development is context-sensitive and supports and strengthens the livability and vitality of the corridors.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Small, locally-owned businesses make neighborhood districts unique and interesting places to visit. Actions taken that generate sustained developer interest should be done in a way that prioritizes the success and vitality of existing and future local, neighborhood-serving businesses located along the corridors.

Goal **Provide ample opportunities for small-scale, locally-owned businesses to thrive.**

Objectives

- Maximize redevelopment opportunity sites.
- Discourage gentrification and displacement by identifying policies, programs, or other measures to address affordability concerns and wealth creation opportunities for residents and businesses.
- Provide regulatory flexibility to foster innovation and creativity.
- Strengthen existing local and small businesses by establishing programs and tools to support their economic viability.
- Implement policies, programs, and other tools to mitigate impacts of the ongoing coronavirus pandemic and support small business recovery and resilience.

CHAPTER 4

CORRIDOR VISION CONCEPTS



CORRIDOR VISION CONCEPTS

The corridor vision concepts are intended to establish a land use framework to achieve the vision and goals for the study area and were shaped by a mix of best practices in planning and urban design as well as public input. The concepts consider current and future real estate market conditions, the feasibility of different development typologies, and the neighborhood's history and character.

The diagram on the following page provides an easy-to-understand description of 'big ideas' and establishes a land use framework for the study area. It includes three distinct yet complementary land use areas— a Commercial Mixed-Use Corridor, Residential Mixed-Use Corridor, and Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) Hub. Anchor development sites (indicated by 'A' in Figure 4) are also shown where either existing use enhancements or future redevelopment could catalyze positive change. A summary of each vision concept area is provided below:

VISION CONCEPT AREAS

Grand Boulevard Commercial Mixed-Use Corridor

Located along Grand Boulevard at the crossroads of the corridors, extending from the intersection of Evergreen Boulevard north to Ninth Street. Land uses and infrastructure improvements should establish a unique neighborhood 'heart' that is vibrant and recognizable to create a compact commercial core for the District.

Evergreen Boulevard Residential Mixed-Use Corridor

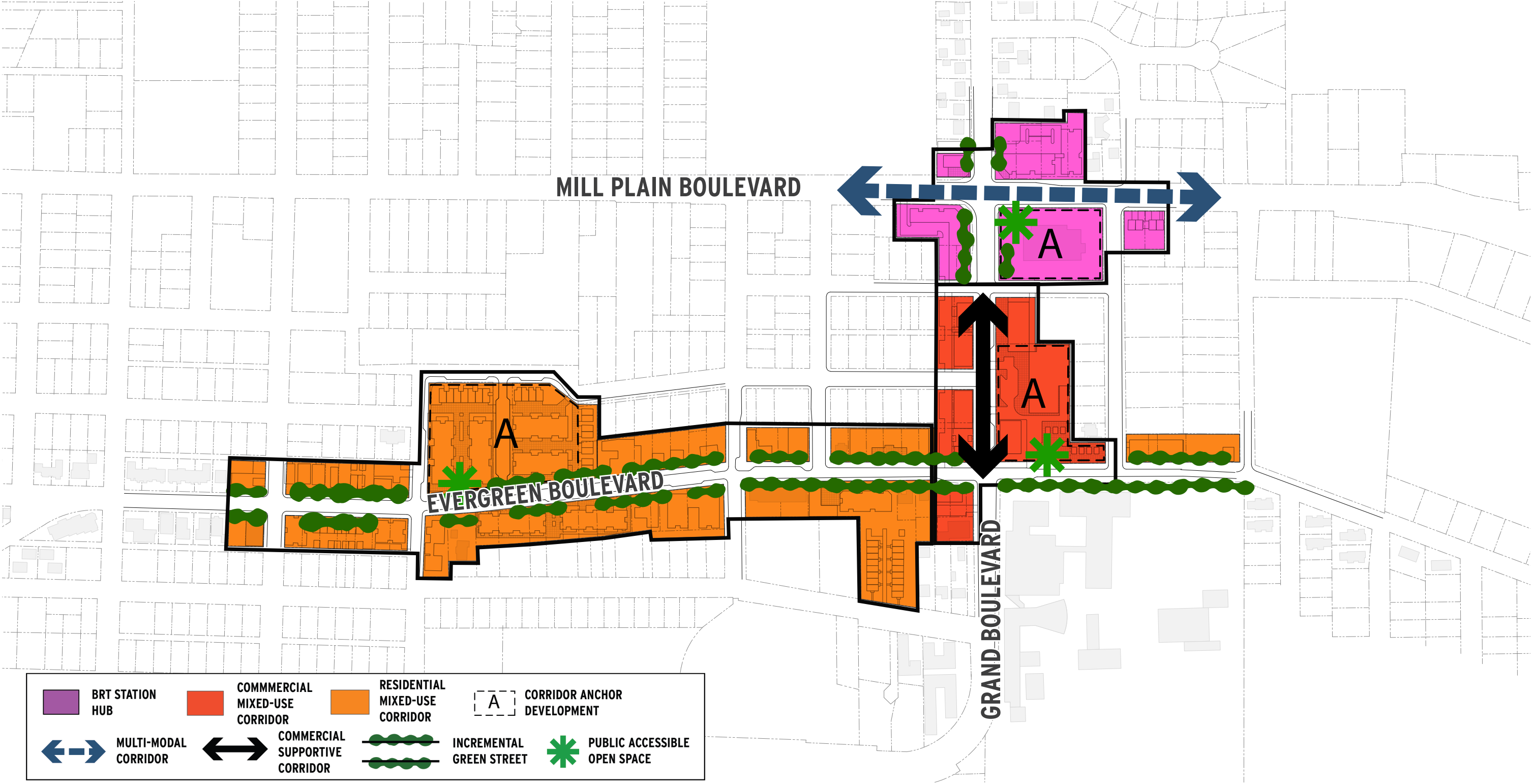
Encompasses parcels along Evergreen Boulevard from the western edge of the study area to near Grand Boulevard. A greater emphasis on residential development that complements and strengthens existing desirable commercial uses is envisioned here.

Mill Plain/Grand Intersection Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) Hub

Includes parcels at the intersection of Mill Plain Boulevard and Grand Boulevard. There is a planned BRT station that will be built in this area, providing premium transit access to the City's two largest employment hubs—downtown and the Columbia Tech Center. The strategy envisions changes that address the needs of those who are transit-dependent and will benefit most from the future Mill Plain BRT.

The Evergreen and Grand Commercial Corridors are largely situated within the Hudson's Bay neighborhood. In the 1998 Hudson's Bay Neighborhood Action Plan, the Hudson's Bay Neighborhood Association coined this area as "the original 'East Vancouver,' where businesses served neighborhood residents as well as the road users of Evergreen Boulevard and 5th Street which were once the primary highways to Camas and the Columbia Gorge.

FIG. 8: EVERGREEN AND GRAND CORRIDOOR VISION CONCEPTS MAP



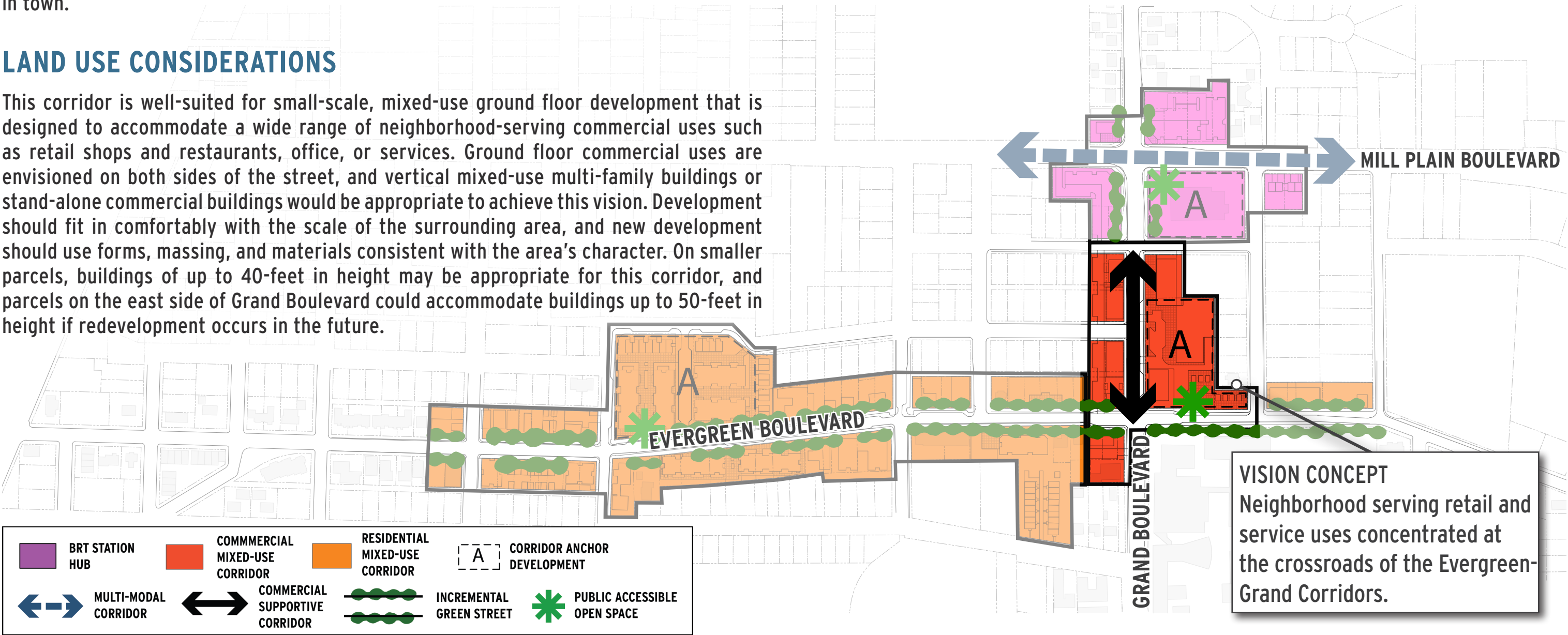
COMMERCIAL MIXED-USE CORRIDOR CONCEPT

The Grand Boulevard Commercial Mixed-Use Corridor envisions neighborhood-serving retail and service uses at the crossroads of the Evergreen and Grand corridors where there is an existing concentration of commercial uses and potential opportunity sites, as well as higher levels of visibility. Critical elements for commercial success in this area include a new emphasis on small-scale ‘entrepreneur-friendly’ mixed-use development; promoting use of forms, massing, and materials consistent with the area’s character; and promoting and attracting businesses that will differentiate the district from other commercial areas in town.

LAND USE CONSIDERATIONS

This corridor is well-suited for small-scale, mixed-use ground floor development that is designed to accommodate a wide range of neighborhood-serving commercial uses such as retail shops and restaurants, office, or services. Ground floor commercial uses are envisioned on both sides of the street, and vertical mixed-use multi-family buildings or stand-alone commercial buildings would be appropriate to achieve this vision. Development should fit in comfortably with the scale of the surrounding area, and new development should use forms, massing, and materials consistent with the area’s character. On smaller parcels, buildings of up to 40-feet in height may be appropriate for this corridor, and parcels on the east side of Grand Boulevard could accommodate buildings up to 50-feet in height if redevelopment occurs in the future.

FIG. 9: GRAND BOULEVARD COMMERCIAL MIXED-USE CORRIDOR CONCEPT MAP



ANCHOR SITE

The anchor site for this corridor vision concept provides the opportunity to catalyze mixed-use development by attracting businesses that will help to foster a unique identity for the corridors. In addition to providing the land use framework to encourage building improvements, recommendations brought forward as part of this process should also promote flexibility to make improvements or renovations that draw neighborhood-serving businesses to locate here.

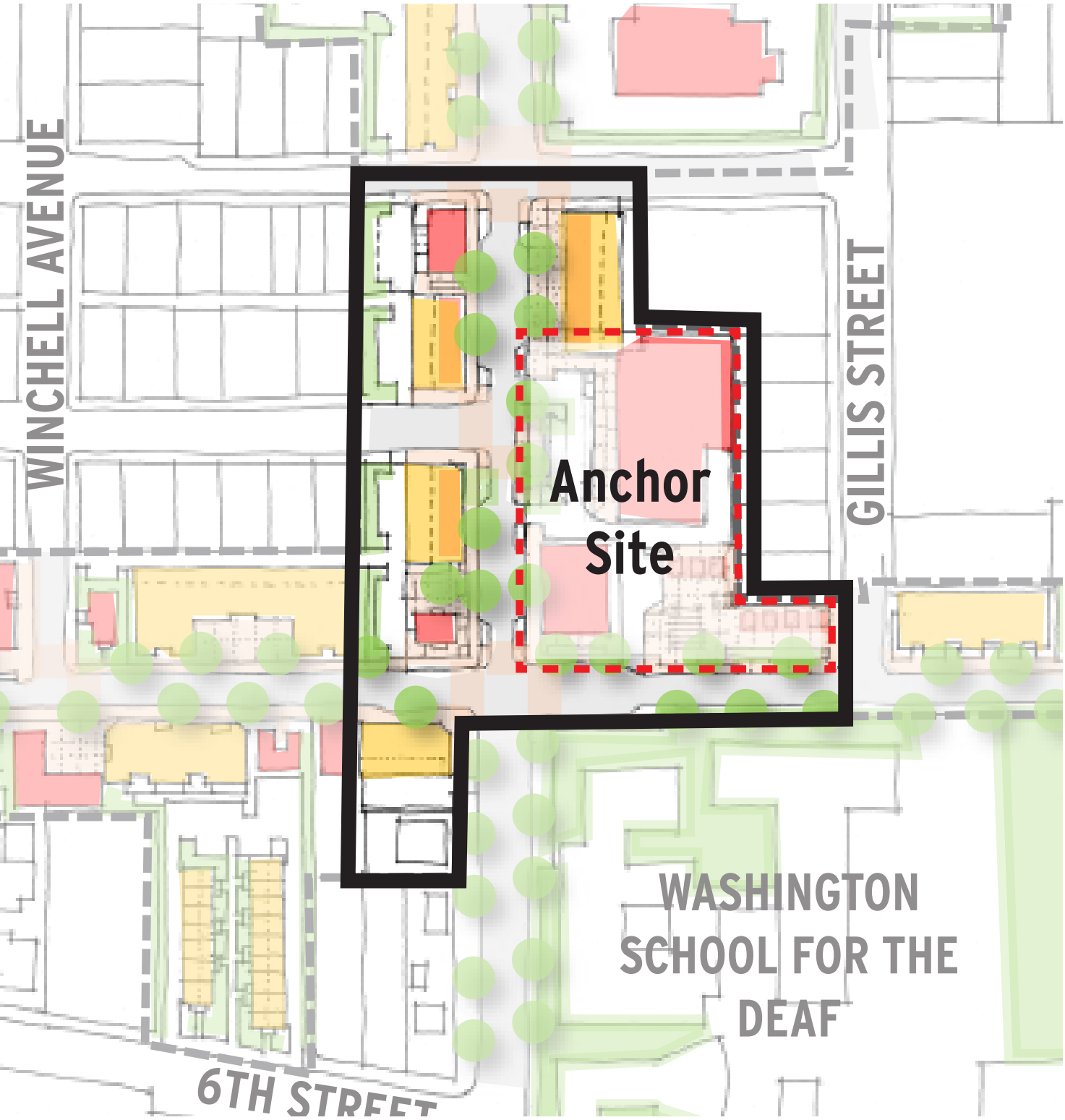
FIG. 10: EXISTING COMMERCIAL SHOPPING CENTER



FIG. 11: POTENTIAL ENHANCED COMMERCIAL



FIG. 12: COMMERCIAL MIXED-USE CORRIDOR ANCHOR SITE



PUBLIC REALM CONSIDERATIONS

The public realm vision for this area includes wider sidewalks with street trees, streetlights, and benches; reducing crossing distances for those walking, especially vulnerable users; and decreasing speeds to improve safety, access, mobility, and storefront visibility. The vision for the public realm, right-of-way, and streetscape considerations that result from this process will be used to inform Vancouver Moves, the City’s Transportation System Plan update currently underway, including how the street is classified in the future and design changes that will enhance and strengthen commercial uses and the pedestrian experience.

PUBLIC REALM VISION

- Wider sidewalks with street trees, streetlights, and benches
- Reduce crossing distances for those walking biking, using mobility devices, and using micromobility
- Decrease speeds to improve safety, access, and mobility

FIG. 13: PARKING ALTERNATIVES - SEATING



FIG. 14: PARKING ALTERNATIVES - STREET CAFE



FIG. 15: ACTIVATED SIDEWALK WITH STREET TREES AND FURNITURE



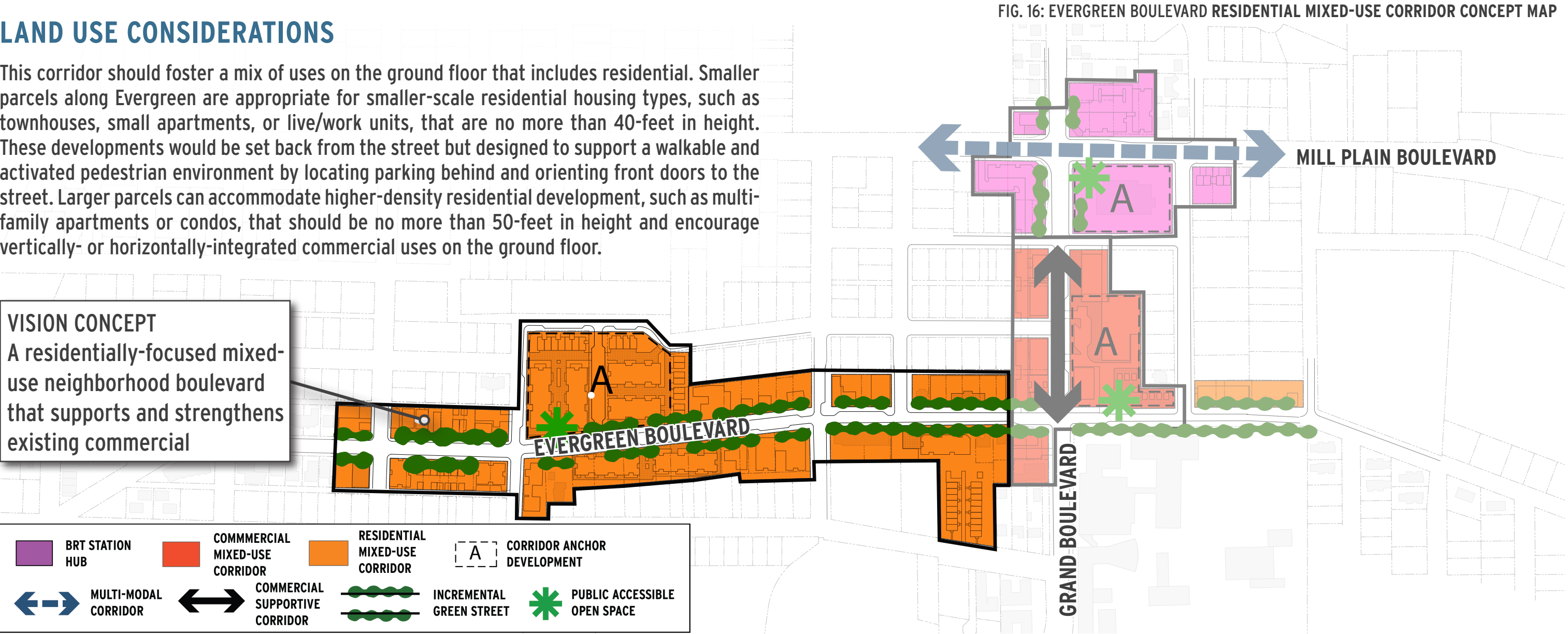
RESIDENTIAL MIXED-USE CORRIDOR CONCEPT

The Evergreen Boulevard Residential Mixed-Use Corridor envisions new development along Evergreen Boulevard to be generally residentially-focused while supporting and strengthening existing commercial uses, with uses and buildings that are compatible with the neighborhood context and contribute to an active and safe public realm. This corridor should foster a mix of uses; encourage rather than require ground floor commercial; allow for live/work units on the ground floor; and promote a variety of housing types

LAND USE CONSIDERATIONS

This corridor should foster a mix of uses on the ground floor that includes residential. Smaller parcels along Evergreen are appropriate for smaller-scale residential housing types, such as townhouses, small apartments, or live/work units, that are no more than 40-feet in height. These developments would be set back from the street but designed to support a walkable and activated pedestrian environment by locating parking behind and orienting front doors to the street. Larger parcels can accommodate higher-density residential development, such as multi-family apartments or condos, that should be no more than 50-feet in height and encourage vertically- or horizontally-integrated commercial uses on the ground floor.

VISION CONCEPT
A residentially-focused mixed-use neighborhood boulevard that supports and strengthens existing commercial



ANCHOR SITE

The anchor site for this area may be appropriate for the addition of new multi-family development to support the existing commercial uses and small businesses along Evergreen and provide publicly-accessible amenities and spaces for neighborhood residents and visitors.

FIG. 17: RESIDENTIAL MIXED-USE CORRIDOR ANCHOR SITE

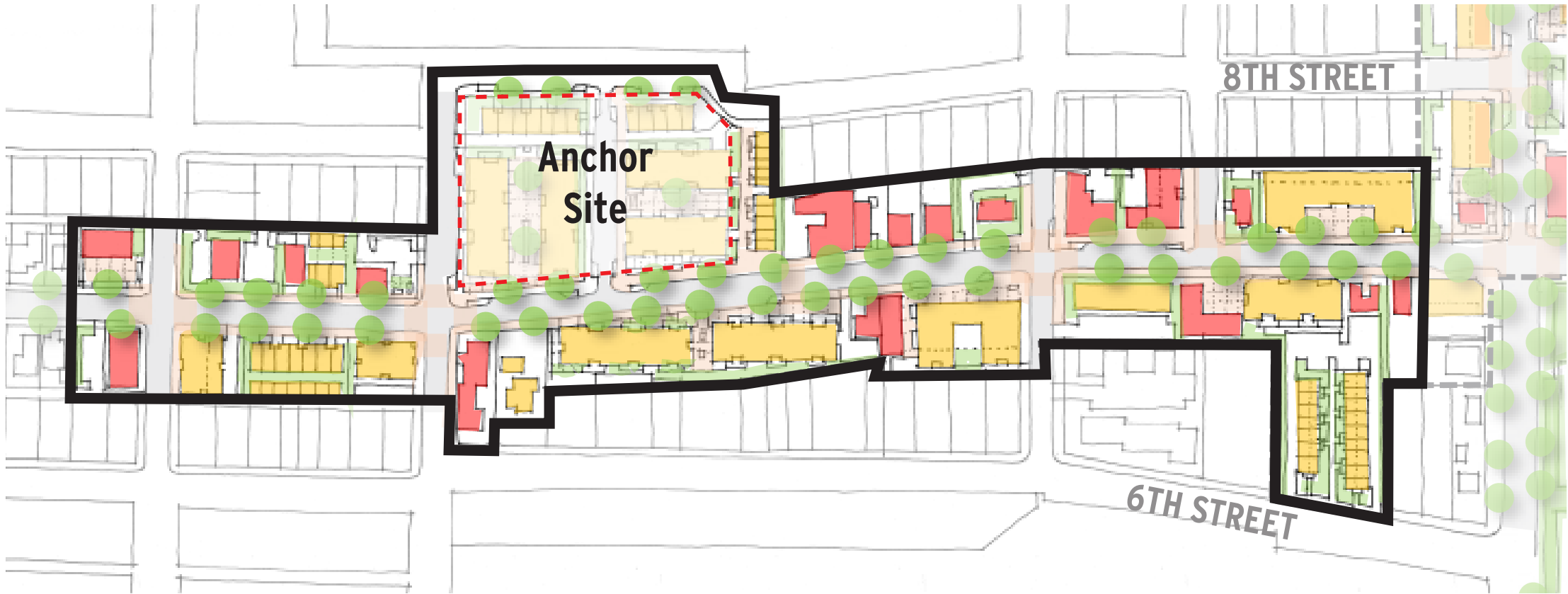


FIG. 18: THREE TO FOUR STORY APARTMENTS



FIG. 19: PUBLICLY-ACCESSIBLE WALKWAYS

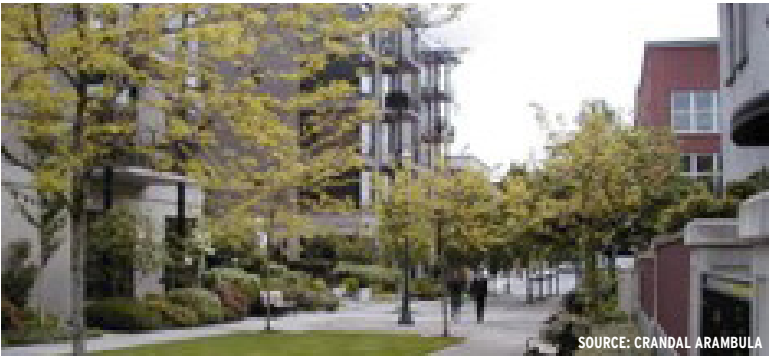


FIG. 20: PUBLICLY-ACCESSIBLE COURTYARDS



PUBLIC REALM CONSIDERATIONS

The vision for the public realm in this area includes refocusing the street primarily as a neighborhood boulevard rather than a street primarily for commerce; extending and unifying the streetscape character along Evergreen; and providing a public plaza or other family-oriented publicly accessible urban open space as part of any redevelopment project . Plazas and open space provided as part of development should be accessible to the public but privately owned and maintained.

PUBLIC REALM VISION

- Refocus street as a neighborhood boulevard rather than a street for commerce
- Extend/unify the streetscape character of Officers' row along Evergreen
- Provide additional family-oriented publicly-accessible open space as part of any redevelopment project

FIG. 21: LANDSCAPED SETBACKS



FIG. 22: WIDENED SIDEWALK/LANDSCAPED PARKWAY



FIG. 23: STREET FURNITURE IMPROVEMENT



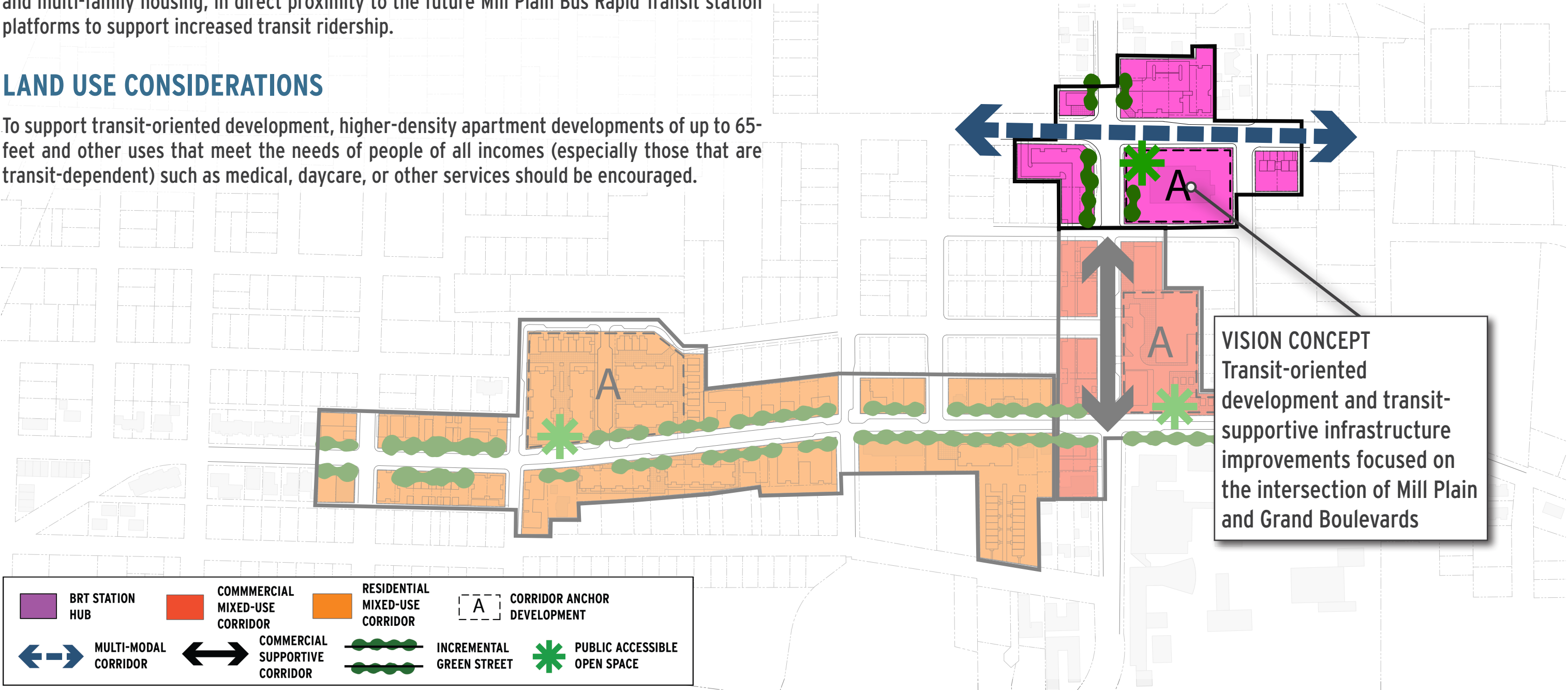
BUS RAPID TRANSIT HUB CONCEPT

The Mill Plain/Grand Intersection BRT Hub is envisioned to accommodate transit-oriented development and transit-supportive infrastructure improvements focused on the intersection of Mill Plain and Grand Boulevards. This area should concentrate trip-generating and transit-supportive uses and amenities, such as commercial uses that serve as weekday destinations and multi-family housing, in direct proximity to the future Mill Plain Bus Rapid Transit station platforms to support increased transit ridership.

LAND USE CONSIDERATIONS

To support transit-oriented development, higher-density apartment developments of up to 65-feet and other uses that meet the needs of people of all incomes (especially those that are transit-dependent) such as medical, daycare, or other services should be encouraged.

FIG. 24: MILL PLAIN/GRAND INTERSECTION BUS RAPID TRANSIT HUB CORRIDOR CONCEPT MAP



ANCHOR POINT

The anchor site in this area could accommodate a destination commercial or employment use, like a local grocer or another amenity for residents, if it were to redevelop or be adaptively used in the future.

FIG. 25: BUS RAPID TRANSIT HUB CORRIDOR ANCHOR SITE

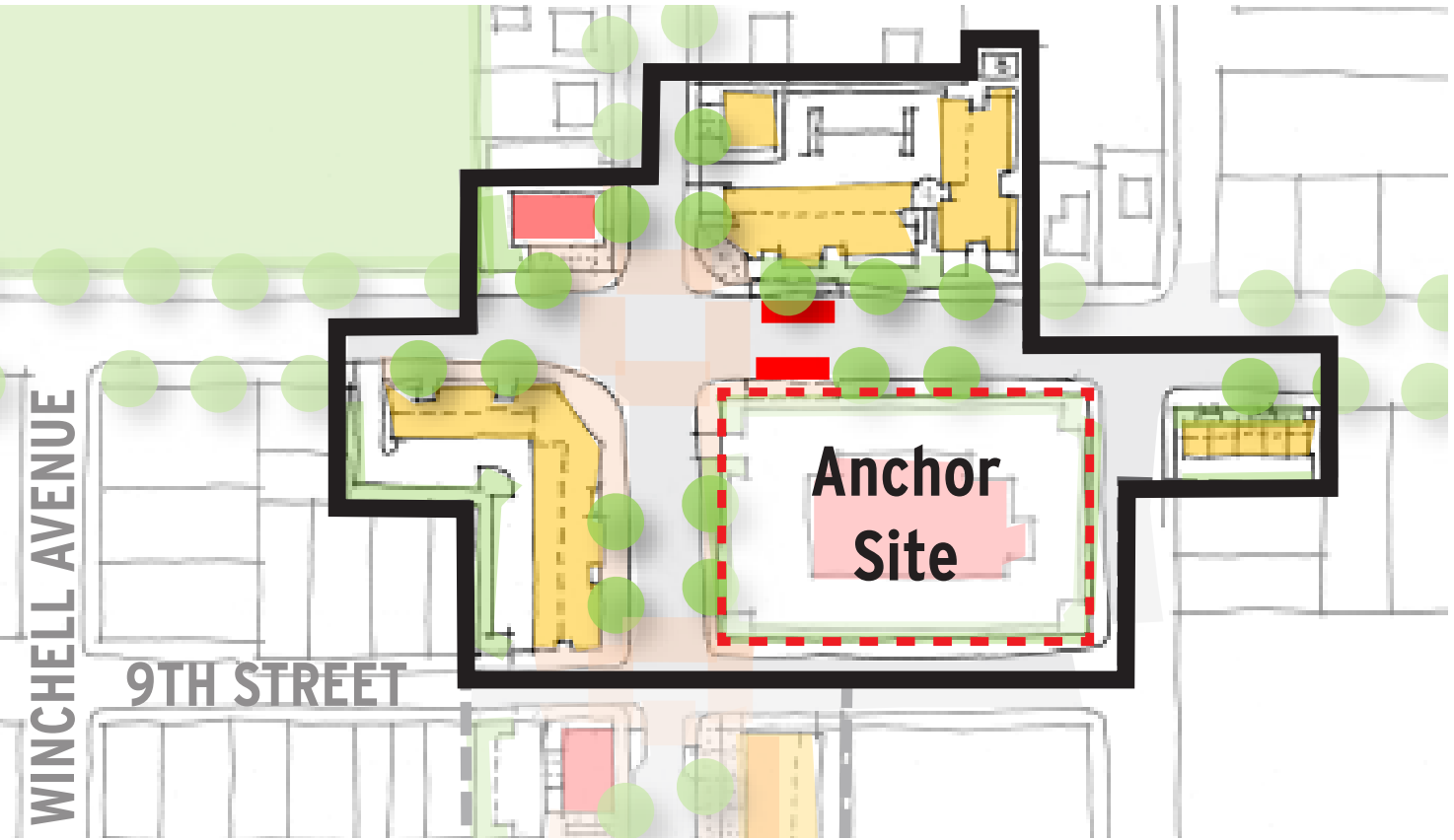


FIG. 26: INTERNATIONAL AIR & HOSPITALITY ACADEMY



FIG. 27: EXAMPLE COMMERCIAL USE AT ANCHOR SITE



PUBLIC REALM CONSIDERATIONS

The vision for the public realm in the BRT Hub includes siting future uses so that they create a BRT station environment that is safe and active during all hours of transit operations and all seasons of the year, while ensuring that the surrounding street network provides multimodal access to transit. With the presence of both the Washington State School for the Blind and the Washington School for the Deaf near this area, the transportation system and transit access should be safe and comfortable for all users.

PUBLIC REALM VISION

- Site future uses so that they create a BRT station environment that is safe and active during all hours of transit operations and all seasons of the year
- Ensure that the surrounding street network provides multi-modal access to transit

FIG. 28: BUS RAPID TRANSIT STATION



FIG. 29: BRT STATION SPACE ACTIVATION





CHAPTER 5

RECOMMENDATIONS

RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter summarizes recommendations for implementation strategies that will collectively achieve the long-term vision established with the community through the commercial corridors planning process. The full set of refined recommendations includes short-term changes to development standards to ensure goals for the corridors are met as development occurs, as well as other mid- to long-term recommendations for policies, programs, and tools intended to be implemented over time. The recommendations reflect feedback received from the community, property owners, Planning Commission, and City Council throughout the planning process, and are intended to work together to achieve the community vision, goals, and objectives over time.

Vision

Promote equitable and diverse corridor development that is vibrant, sustainable and mixed use.

Foster development that recognizes and builds upon the neighborhood's unique setting, history, and character.

Goals

Land Use

Strengthen current businesses while providing an appropriate mix of commercial and residential uses.

Mobility

Establish a balanced, multi-modal network of motor vehicle, transit, walking, and biking routes through the corridors.

Parking

Provide adequate parking to serve existing uses and future development.

Urban Design

Create public and private spaces that are inclusive, integrated, and contribute positively to the livability of the corridors.

Economic Development

Provide ample opportunities for small-scale, locally-owned businesses to thrive.

REGULATORY CHANGES

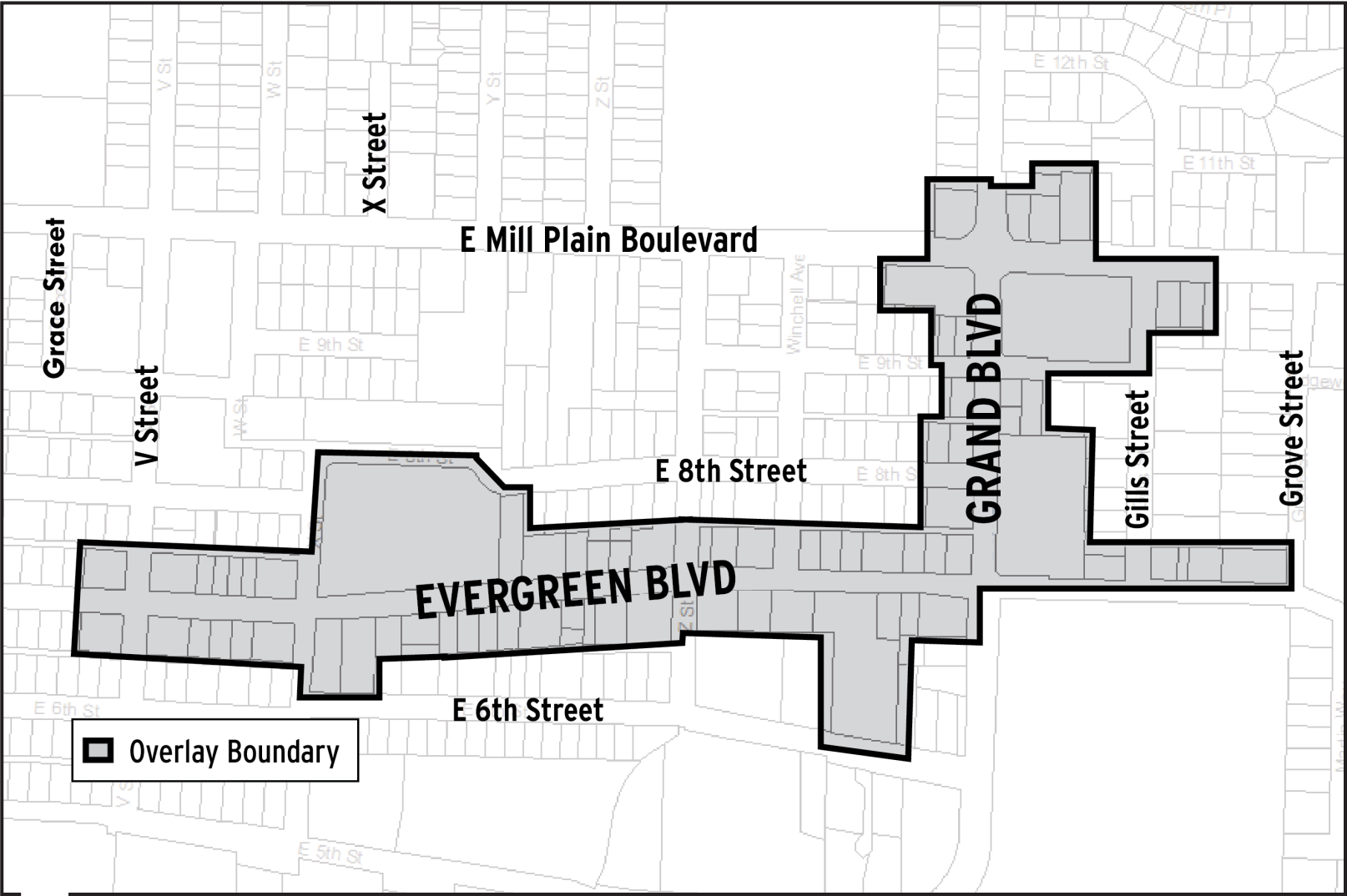
Short-term regulatory changes – likely achieved through an overlay zone or similar tool – can be used to tailor development standards to address issues with the current zoning and ensure regulations recognize the vision and concepts for the overall the Evergreen and Grand District and each unique area. The regulatory recommendations resulting from this process include changes to ground floor commercial use requirements, building height limitations, minimum off-street and shared vehicle parking requirements, bike parking requirements, standards for buildings to achieve an ‘active edge’ at the ground floor, parking design and screening requirements, and others for consideration as part of short-term Strategy implementation.

STUDY AREA OVERLAY

The Evergreen and Grand Commercial Corridors overlay includes the following development regulations to ensure the intent and community vision is met:

- Commercial ground floor use requirements
- Building height limitations
- Parking requirements
- Standards for buildings to achieve an ‘active edge’ at the ground floor

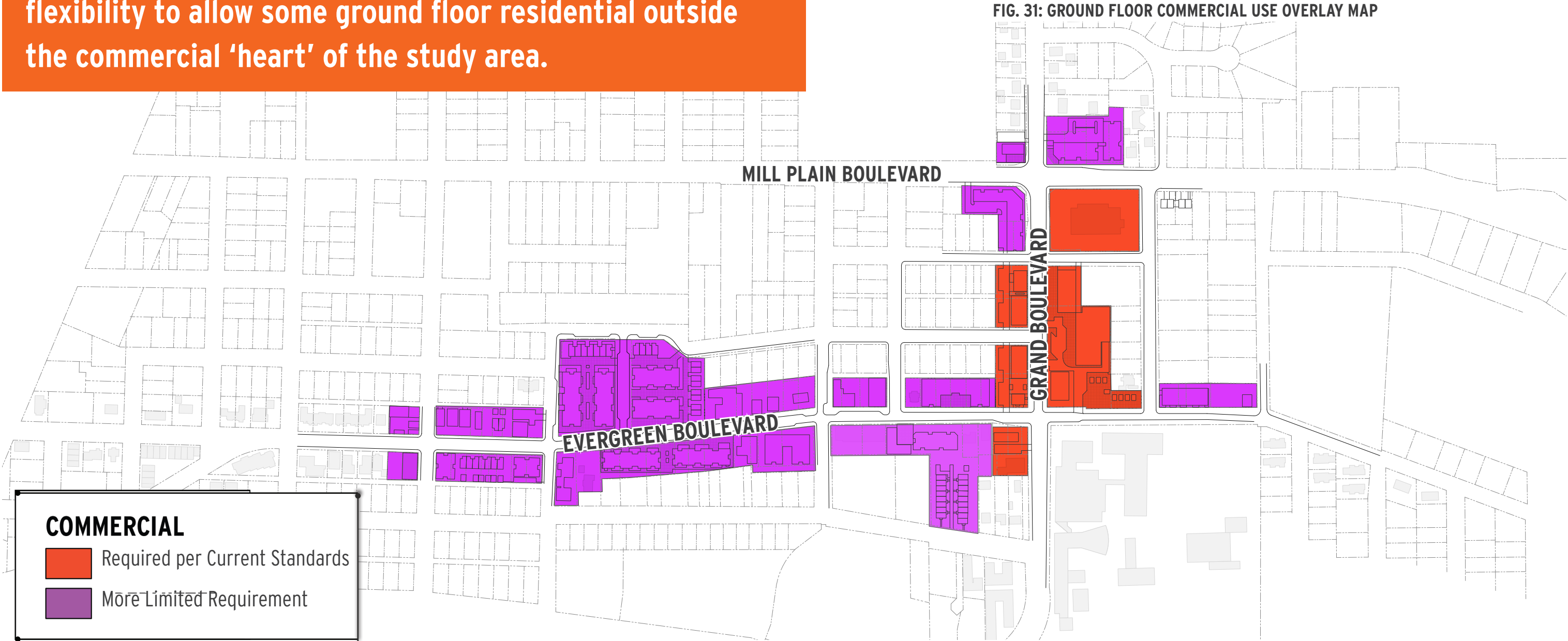
FIG. 30: EVERGREEN AND GRAND OVERLAY ZONE



GROUND FLOOR COMMERCIAL USE REQUIREMENTS

RECOMMENDATION

Continue to require ground floor commercial in the Grand Boulevard Commercial Mixed-Use Corridor, and provide flexibility to allow some ground floor residential outside the commercial ‘heart’ of the study area.



Concentrating new commercial uses in the Grand Boulevard Commercial Mixed-Use Corridor concept area along Grand Boulevard supports providing daily goods and services for area residents, employees, and visitors, and accessibility to those who walk, bike, roll, or take transit. The linkage to the future BRT station on Mill Plain also presents opportunities for ‘chaining’ trips—or grouping errands or other activities into one trip instead of returning home in between each one—which is an important consideration for transit users.

In the Evergreen Boulevard Residential Mixed-Use Corridor concept along Evergreen and on smaller parcels in the Mill Plain/Grand Intersection BRT Hub, allow some ground floor residential uses to foster a mix of uses and provide flexibility outside of the commercial ‘heart’ of the study area. Requiring first floor commercial on a limited basis in these areas allows for more variety in development, like live/work spaces integrated vertically into a building or horizontally-developed commercial that’s attached to or within a larger building. First floor commercial requirements should only apply on a limited basis. This approach would help to meet the corridor concept for this area as a neighborhood boulevard and support the viability of existing commercial development along Evergreen.

FIG. 32: COMMERCIAL BUILDING WITH REQUIRED GROUND FLOOR COMMERCIAL



FIG. 33: VERTICAL MIXED-USE



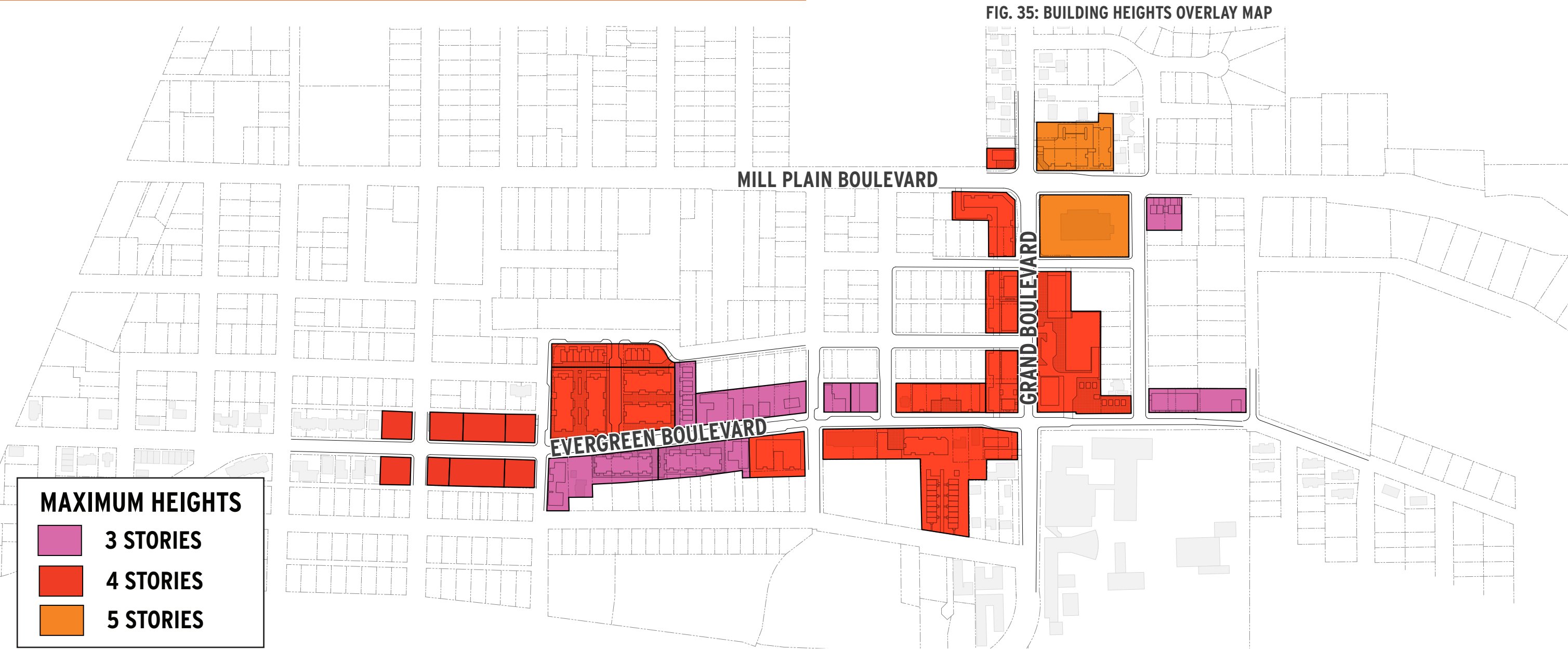
FIG. 34: HORIZONTALLY-MIXED LIVE WORK COMMERCIAL



BUILDING HEIGHTS

RECOMMENDATION

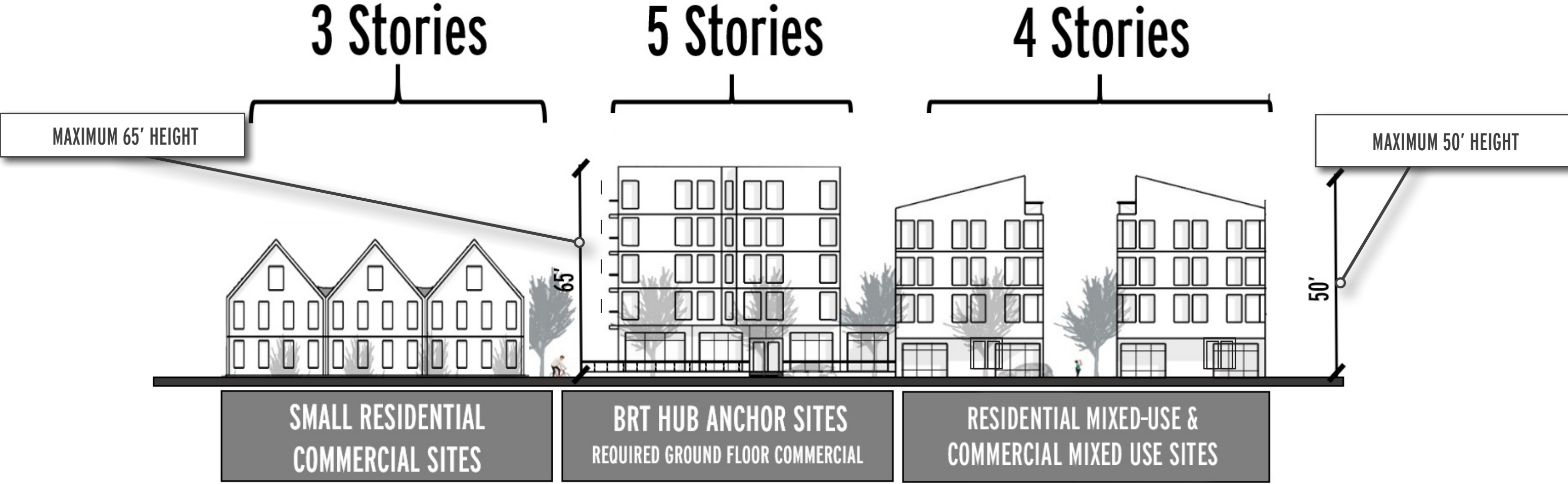
Tailor maximum building heights to align with the corridor vision concepts for the study area.



The recommended maximum building heights for the study area are tailored to align with the three corridor vision concepts, be responsive to community and stakeholder feedback received throughout the process, and balance development feasibility. Stepdowns or increased setbacks will be required on parcels that abut low-density residential zones.

The current maximum building height under Community Commercial zoning is 50-feet, which is conducive for 3- and 4- story buildings. To achieve five stories in the Mill Plain/Grand Intersection BRT hub corridor concept at Mill Plain and Grand, the permitted height in feet would need to be increased to 65-70 feet.

FIG. 36: DIAGRAM OF RECOMMENDED MAXIMUM BUILDING HEIGHTS



3 STORIES

Three stories, or a maximum of 40 feet, can be appropriate on more narrow, residentially-oriented streets with smaller commercial parcels that abut existing single-family zoning. This proposed scale is lower than what is currently allowed under existing zoning and is being recommended to address community concerns about the impact of taller buildings near areas that will continue to be zoned for single family development and the potential canyoning impact of taller buildings on narrower streets. Three stories is most common for multi-family, townhome, and small-lot mixed-use commercial, as well as most attainable housing types such as walk-up apartments where no elevator is required.

FIG. 37: 3-STORY APARTMENT



FIG. 38: MIXED-USE 3-STORY APARTMENT



4 STORIES

Four stories, or a maximum of 50 feet, is consistent with what is effectively allowed under existing zoning, and is a typical height for neighborhood residential infill and one of the most common multi-family housing types in the region. This development scale is generally economically viable for the corridors and can accommodate ground floor commercial with residential apartments above.

FIG. 39: MIXED-USE 4-STORY APARTMENT



FIG. 40: MIXED-USE 4-STORY APARTMENT



5 STORIES

Five stories, or a maximum of 65 feet, is more urban in scale and would be appropriate to support higher-density transit-oriented development in the BRT Hub and not adjacent to single-family. This is an increase from what is currently allowed under existing zoning, and buildings at this scale often require a change in construction type that may be viable with some additional flexibility in height.

FIG. 41: 5-STORY MIXED-USE APARTMENT



FIG. 42: 5-STORY MIXED-USE APARTMENT WITH STREET IMPROVEMENTS



FIG. 43: 5-STORY MIXED-USE APARTMENT



URBAN DESIGN

RECOMMENDATION

Ensure all development adheres to urban design principles that will result in a strong sense of place, vibrant and safe pedestrian environment, and active public spaces. Placemaking will contribute to the livability and economic vitality of the corridors.

CLEAR STANDARDS

High quality urban design standards will enhance existing neighborhood character and create a blueprint for new development. Prohibiting new uses inconsistent with corridor visions, such as big-box retail; motor vehicle repair, sales and rental; gas stations; self-storage; and drive-thru establishments. Existing uses can be maintained as they are already integrated within the corridors.

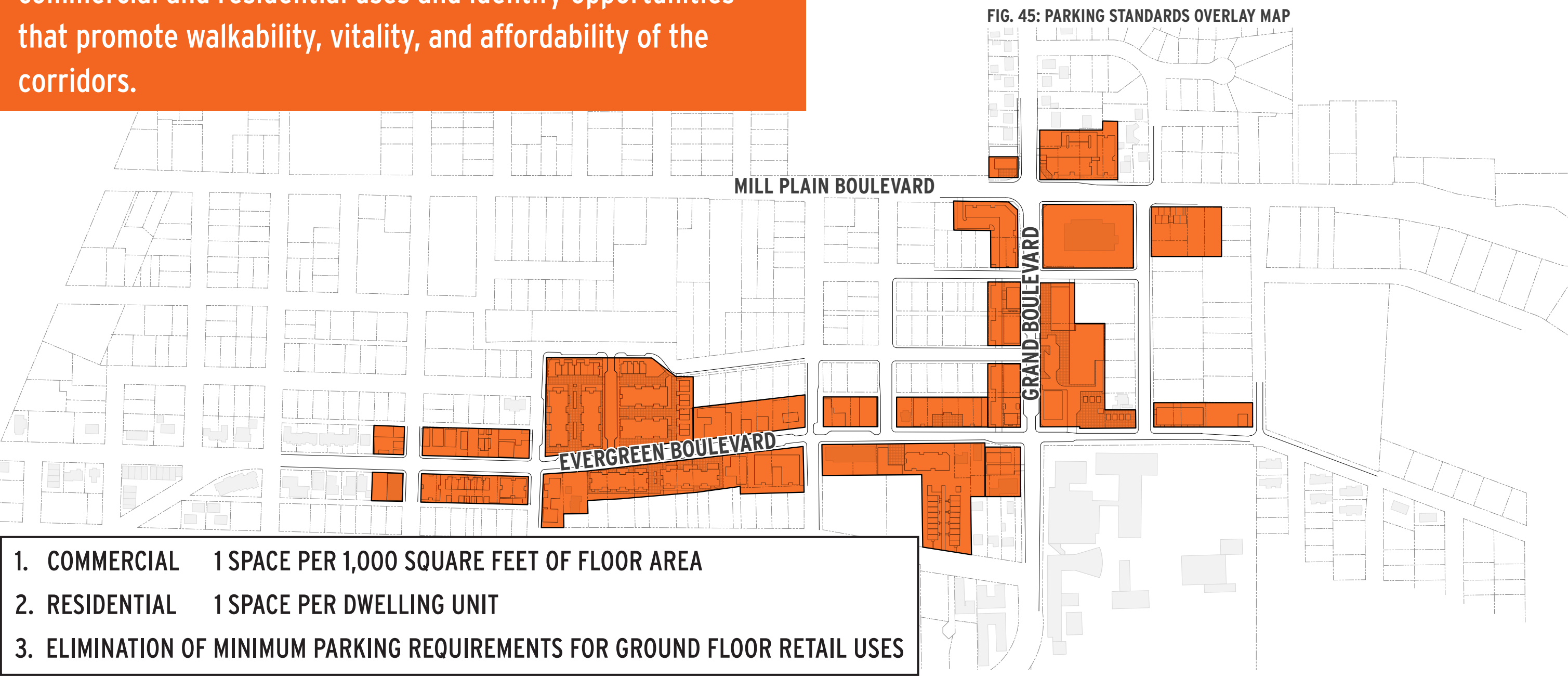
FIG 44. ACTIVE URBAN SPACE



PARKING

RECOMMENDATION

Adapt minimum off-street parking requirements that support commercial and residential uses and identify opportunities that promote walkability, vitality, and affordability of the corridors.



PARKING CONSIDERATIONS

Parking requirements that adapt to the specific uses of a development can help reduce costs to both developers and tenants while still limiting spillover parking and impacts to surrounding neighborhoods. Eliminating minimum parking requirements for ground floor retail uses—excluding office uses—and providing additional on-street parking opportunities in front of businesses along the corridor will provide access to corridor amenities and reduce the minimum parking requirements for developments. Additionally, setting a minimum off-street parking requirement of at least one space per 1,000 square feet of floor area for ground floor office uses and any commercial uses above the ground floor as well as one space per residential dwelling unit is recommended for the study area to ensure that right-size parking is provided.

Additional requirements should also be considered such as requiring parking to be located behind buildings on larger parcels, requiring shared driveways and access easements between abutting developments to consolidate the number of driveways along the corridors, as well as screening parking areas from view to meet parking and urban design goals for the study area. Shared parking should also be an option for larger, abutting developments as well as shallow, small properties where on-site parking will be difficult.

These standards better recognize the mix of uses along the corridors, as well as access to the corridors via connecting streets, sidewalks, existing bus service and future Mill Plain BRT. Other parking elements should also be considered, such as mandatory micromobility parking requirements for vehicles such as electric scooters, providing incentives such as reduced parking minimums for opting in to a shared parking or accessway easement, or implementing a Transportation Demand Management program that supports the use of multiple modes to travel to and through the corridors.

PARKING PLAN

Through the outreach and engagement process, project stakeholders recommended a proactive approach to addressing parking impacts and traffic safety concerns if and when these occur. The City commits to ongoing monitoring of on-street parking occupancy on residential streets and of traffic speed and volumes on the corridors as well as adjacent residential streets, and to developing mitigation strategies when certain thresholds are met. For on-street parking on residential streets, the City will work with residents to develop a mitigation plan when occupancy exceeds 85 percent for the average day. For vehicle speeds and volumes on residential streets, the City will work with stakeholders to develop traffic calming plans when thresholds for the City's existing Neighborhood Traffic Calming Program are met. For Grand Boulevard, an updated street section (implemented through the Transportation System Plan Update currently underway) will include traffic calming and broad mobility elements to ensure the facility is safe for all users regardless of age, ability, or mode of travel, in compliance with the City's Complete Streets Policy. For Evergreen, which already has traffic calming, the City will monitor and review traffic data to identify any future calming or other improvements that are needed as the area develops.

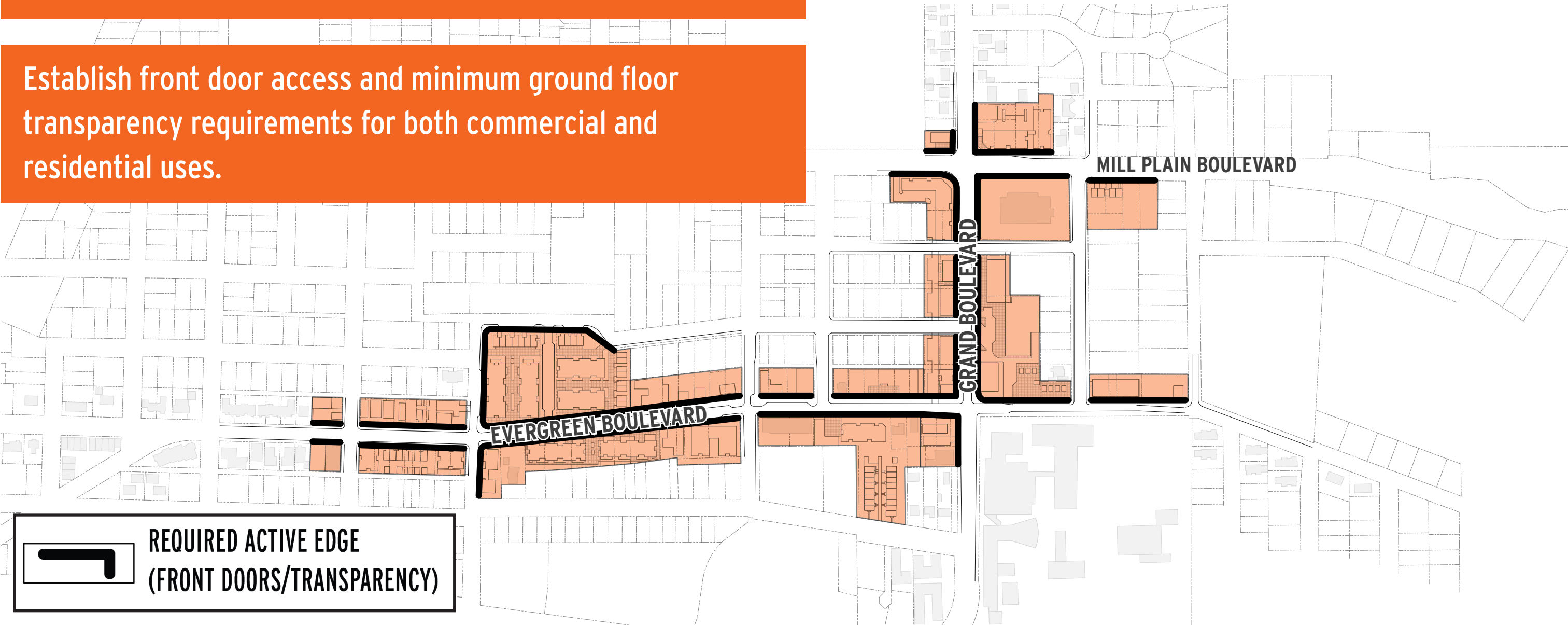
'ACTIVE EDGE' DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS

RECOMMENDATIONS

Require a maximum front setback of 0-5 feet at the ground floor only regardless of building height.

Establish front door access and minimum ground floor transparency requirements for both commercial and residential uses.

FIG. 46: 'ACTIVE EDGE' DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS OVERLAY MAP



Placing and orienting ground floor uses toward Evergreen and Grand Boulevards and creating an ‘active edge’ frames and encloses the public street to create a walkable pedestrian environment. To meet this vision, a maximum front setback of 0-5 feet regardless of building height is recommended, which would not prevent upper floors of a building from stepping back farther to help prevent the canyon effect and support a scale and design that complements neighborhood character.

GROUND FLOOR COMMERCIAL

A higher minimum transparency requirement for commercial uses of 75% of the ground floor façade provides visibility of goods and services, and front door access from the street results in street-oriented buildings rather than parking lot-oriented buildings. Visibility of indoor spaces also animates the street where there are restaurants, pubs, and other types of retail uses. For commercial retail uses, buildings built to the sidewalk with front doors facing the street provide easy access for pedestrians and essential visibility for those traveling along adjacent roadways.

GROUND FLOOR RESIDENTIAL

For residential uses, a more moderate minimum transparency requirement of 50% is recommended to support eyes on the street while also recognizing the importance of privacy. By orienting front door access from the street rather than from parking lots and garages, residential development built to these standards supports increased pedestrian activity, reduces or eliminates visual impacts of surface parking, and puts eyes on the street often resulting in safer street environments.

FIGS. 47 & 48: COMMERCIAL TRANSPARENCY



FIGS. 49 & 50: RESIDENTIAL TRANSPARENCY AND FRONT DOORS ORIENTED TOWARD THE STREET



FIG. 51: GROUND FLOOR COMMERCIAL EXAMPLE



FIG. 52: GROUND FLOOR RESIDENTIAL EXAMPLE



OTHER REGULATORY CHANGES

The following standards are other regulatory changes to consider as part of near-term Strategy implementation that would complement the main recommendations outlined in this section, and support the vision and goals established for the corridors.

- Prohibit uses that do not support the vision for the corridors as a walkable and vibrant neighborhood-serving commercial corridor. These include new uses like drive-thru establishments; big-box retail; motor vehicle repair, sales and rental, and gas stations; and self-storage, among others .
- Adopt standards that support activating vacant and underutilized spaces.
- Develop regulations that provide additional access enhancements in the BRT Hub corridor area that take into consideration first/last mile solutions and universal design best practices.
- Allow for non-mixed-use housing types on smaller parcels, where appropriate.
- Explore providing flexibility for nonconforming uses, such as existing small businesses, adaptively reused single-family homes fronting the corridors, etc.
- Investigate strategies to disincentivize chains in the study area.
- Cap commercial businesses to a certain size to accommodate small-scale retail and maintain the fine-grained development pattern of the corridors
- Explore allowances for interim/temporary uses such as food cart pods.
- Create standards for ground floor residential to ensure streetfront activation and interest.
- Develop design guidelines that will help bolster the historic identity of the Hudson's Bay neighborhood and ensure consistent street activation of future developments in a way that considers development affordability.
- Encourage streetscape improvements in all redevelopment projects.

OTHER IMPLEMENTATION RECOMMENDATIONS

MID- TO LONG-TERM POLICIES, PROGRAMS, AND TOOLS

The long-term vision and goals for the Evergreen and Grand commercial corridors cannot be achieved solely through changes to development standards. The following are recommendations for other mid-to-long-term policies, programs, and tools intended to be implemented over time as city resources allow that can contribute to the full realization of the long-term vision of a vibrant, active commercial district.

- Support the development of a neighborhood business district organization that can advocate for the needs of new and future businesses through promotions, special events and beautification activities, similar to what exists in other areas of the City.
- Create a business district organization to support art, events, and other placemaking activities
- Extend the Multi-Family Tax Exemption (MFTE) program calibrated to implement the vision and goals for the corridors and add workforce housing
- Attract and retain neighborhood-serving businesses that provide community amenities and basic needs and services
- Establish a storefront improvement program to support existing businesses
- Establish a signage and placemaking program along Grand Boulevard and in the BRT Hub
- Identify opportunities to support houseless communities and promote community safety
- Explore strategies to maintain economic diversity and housing affordability, especially for low- and moderate-income households
- Consider height bonuses in exchange for attainably priced workforce housing units
- Improve connectivity to nearby destinations such as downtown Vancouver, the Fort Vancouver National Historic Site, and the Pearson Field Airport as an economic development strategy.
- Leverage environmental remediation funding opportunities as an incentive to develop eligible sites
- Work with the City Parks & Recreation department to identify opportunities for urban open space in proximity to the corridors
- Work with the City Economic Development department to extend the City's existing Street Eats program to the corridors

TRANSPORTATION CONSIDERATIONS

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE ENTIRE SUTDY AREA

Create a cohesive, walkable, and safe multimodal environment providing access to and through the study area, increase signage to improve user safety and comfort, consider integration of stormwater and other sustainability best practices into right-of-way, traffic calming and streetscape improvements, and explore Transportation Demand Management strategies in the study area to support safe and easy use of multiple modes. Determine appropriate access management along the corridors, ensuring that building orientation and site access are located on either Evergreen or Grand or side streets in order to optimize both user safety and economic vitality. Explore funding strategies for transportation investments that serve the entire district, such as improvements to the intersection of Mill Plain and Grand.

FIG. 53: RAISED CROSSWALK WITH CURB EXTENSIONS



FIG. 54: STREET FURNITURE



FIG. 55: PEDESTRIAN ISLAND



FIG. 56: ON-STREET PARKING



VANCOUVER MOVES

The currently underway Vancouver Moves project is an in-depth planning process to update the citywide Transportation System Plan (TSP). Vancouver Moves explores transportation needs and priorities in partnership with Vancouver residents, employees and visitors, and examines existing travel conditions for all users of the City's transportation system. While the Evergreen and Grand Commercial Corridor Strategy is focused on land uses, the following recommendations for streetscape and right-of-way improvements were identified – consistent with the vision and goals for mobility and the public realm established through this process – to inform Vancouver Moves for how the street system in this subarea should be classified and planned to support adjacent land uses along the corridors.

STREET SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS

Mill Plain/Grand Intersection BRT Hub

Design transportation infrastructure and streetscape improvements to facilitate multi-modal access to transit, and promote accessibility for people of all abilities around the future BRT station platforms.

Evergreen Boulevard Residential Mixed-Use Corridor

Streetscape improvements including widened sidewalks to 12-15 feet to accommodate retail, pedestrian, landscaping, and street furnishing zones. Increase street trees and other landscaping features add street furniture, lighting, benches, and bike racks that are accessible by users of all abilities; and evaluate an enhanced pedestrian crossing at the intersection of V Street and Evergreen Boulevard to improve safety for people crossing the street.

GRAND BOULEVARD COMMERCIAL MIXED-USE CORRIDOR

Grand Boulevard Safety Improvements

Stakeholders identified safety improvements on Grand south of Evergreen that directly connect to the Washington School for the Deaf as a critical need to support vulnerable road users. Roadway improvements identified in this plan have been expanded to include the Grand Boulevard south to 5th Street, including an enhanced pedestrian crossing at 6th Street to support access to the School for the Deaf (see map below), reduced speed limits and traffic calming measures that can be implemented through existing City programs.

FIG. 57: EXPANDED SAFETY IMPROVEMENTS



FIG. 58: COMPLETE STREET DIGEST



Grand Boulevard Streetscape Improvements

Improvements to Grand Boulevard will occur through redevelopment of the properties along the corridor, as well as through future City-led projects. The transformation of Grand will occur incrementally. These roadway and streetscape improvements will include adding on-street parking and protected mobility lanes and improving the pedestrian realm through updated sidewalk and street tree standards. There will also be flexibility to allow construction and maintenance of parking-alternative uses such as outdoor dining, seating, or bike parking on a temporary or permanent basis, and other temporary activation or interim uses to improve placemaking.



MEMORANDUM

TO: Becky Coutinho, City of Vancouver

FROM: Jamin Kimmell and Pauline Ruegg, Cascadia Partners

DATE: January 31st, 2023

PROJECT: Evergreen Grand Commercial Corridors Code Update

SUBJECT: **Code Concepts (Task 4.1)**

This memorandum summarizes the key recommendations for Code Concepts to implement the Evergreen and Grand Commercial Corridor Strategy (“Corridor Strategy”). The purpose of the Code Concepts is to confirm and refine the regulatory recommendations from the Corridor Strategy. The project team seeks direction from the Planning Commission on these Code Concepts prior to drafting new code language for the corridor.

The memo is organized into the following sections:

- Project Overview
- Summary of Evergreen/Grand Corridor Strategy
- Code Concepts
 - Building Height
 - Bulk and Massing
 - Required Ground Floor Commercial Space
 - Off-Street Parking

Within each Code Concept topic, the memo presents the existing City of Vancouver Title 20 regulations, the recommendation from the Corridor Strategy, and a refined recommendation based on additional analysis by Cascadia Partners. Each concept includes analysis of the potential impact of recommended code changes on the goals of the Corridor Strategy.

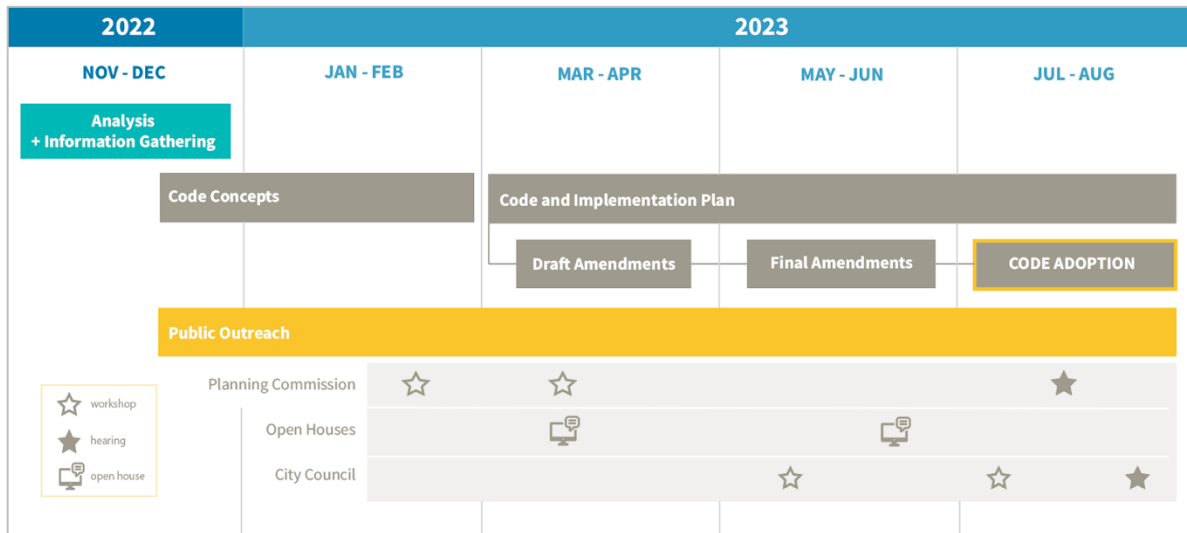
1. Project Overview

Following the adoption of the Corridor Strategy by City Council in February 2022, the City began to take the steps needed to translate key objectives into specific development code updates. The

Evergreen Grand Code Update project is a 10-month focused effort to review in detail the vision and recommendations for the Evergreen Grand Commercial Corridor and develop code language and additional implementation actions. The project consists of four primary tasks:

1. **Analysis + Information Gathering:** The consultant team will review the Corridor Strategy and conduct an in-depth analysis of existing standards. The team will identify all code provisions that may need to be modified to implement the vision. The team will also conduct a site inventory of existing conditions and identify relevant development examples to better understand the market potential for desired land uses and building forms.
2. **Stakeholder Engagement:** City staff conducted extensive outreach over two years to develop the Corridor Strategy. It is critical that the code updates reflect this valuable work and consider the preferences identified through prior engagement. There will be two online open houses (March and June) to share the proposed code changes and implementation actions to confirm that Code Concepts meet the previously identified goals of the Corridor Strategy. The public will also have opportunities at two Planning Commission Work Sessions (February 14 and April 11) and two City Council Work Sessions (May 15 and June 19) to review and comment on proposed approaches.
3. **Code Concepts + Implementation Strategies:** The team will identify the best means to translate the values and future vision for the Corridor into specific regulatory changes. Code Concepts will include new development and design standards supported with financial analysis of the impact of proposed changes on the feasibility of development and affordability of housing or commercial spaces. This analysis will help the team calibrate code standards to best support market-feasible development types so that the City achieves its goals for redevelopment.
4. **Adoption:** Following detailed review and refinement of draft code language, there will be one Planning Commission and one City Council hearing. The desired outcome is an adopted code update by the end of August 2023.

Figure 1.1: Project Schedule



2. Commercial Corridor Strategy Summary

The Corridor Strategy was part of a larger citywide effort begun in 2019 to improve major commercial corridors and adjacent areas for residents and business owners. The Strategy focused on the two intersecting corridors of Evergreen Boulevard and Grand Boulevard east of Downtown Vancouver. The Corridor Strategy evaluated:

- Types of uses allowed
- Regulatory standards
- Existing conditions including buildings and pedestrian environment

Vision

The long-term community vision was for three complementary land use areas with anchor development sites. Mixed-use infill development will build on the neighborhood's unique setting with views out to the Columbia River and reflect the history and character of existing buildings in the older commercial corridor. New buildings will be scaled in height, with activity and density centered at the intersection of Grand and Evergreen and near the future bus rapid transit station at Mill Plain and Grand. Lower intensity buildings will infill along Evergreen without negatively impacting the quality of life to surrounding residential neighborhoods.

Key elements of the vision include:

- Opportunities for small-scale development that can accommodate a wide range of neighborhood-serving uses should be maintained to support existing businesses while attracting supportive new development.

- Ground floor commercial development and buildings that come up to the front edge of lots will activate the Corridor. The street should be framed with buildings and punctuated by public and private spaces that increase livability.
- As uses intensify, parking must be adequate and balance the needs for existing and new users.

Proposed Corridor Strategy Regulatory Changes

To achieve the Corridor Vision, the Strategy identified several proposed regulatory changes:

- **Limit building heights:** Modulate the existing maximum height of 50 feet (4 stories) with lower height maximums of three stories along portions of Evergreen and four stories along portions of Evergreen and Grand, with a small pocket of five stories at the intersection of Mill Plain and Grand adjacent to the BRT hub.
- **Require ground floor commercial:** To increase street activity levels and enliven the pedestrian environment, ground floor commercial uses should be required at the intersection of Evergreen and Grand to create a neighborhood hub. More flexibility should be permitted throughout the rest of the Corridor to allow for ground floor residential uses as resident entrances along the corridor will also activate the street.
- **Reduce minimum parking requirements for residential and commercial uses:** To reduce the burden of parking requirements on commercial uses, the minimum number of spaces should be reduced; no minimum parking should be required for ground floor commercial uses that are part of a mixed use building. To improve development feasibility, residential uses should require one space per dwelling unit and commercial uses should require one space per 1,000 feet.
- **Create active edges:** To create a continuous street wall and welcoming pedestrian experience, a maximum front set-back should be established of 5 feet. Front door access should be required and ground floor transparency (window) standards increased.

3. Code Concepts

Below is a summary of the proposed Code Concepts that will be presented in greater detail at the Planning Commission Work Session #1 on February 14, 2023. Code Concepts were identified based on an analysis of the proposed Corridor Strategy regulatory changes compared to existing City zoning.

CP conducted a financial analysis of the feasibility of development of housing and commercial spaces to test the impact of specific code changes. The results of this analysis are included as an appendix to this memo (Appendix A: Pro Forma Summary Analysis). The findings of how best to calibrate code standards to support corridor goals while also supporting market-feasible development types is reflected in recommendations provided for the Planning Commission in a gray call-out box.

1. Building Height

The intent of the Corridor Strategy's reduction in height limits was to address neighborhood concerns about infill of taller buildings. This is a valid concern and the code should include regulations that encourage development that is sensitive to the existing context of the Corridor.

However, reducing maximum height can have a negative impact on development feasibility. The pro-forma testing (Appendix A) demonstrated that a 3-story mixed use building can achieve an Internal Rate of Return (IRR) of 5.3%, while a 4-story mixed use building can achieve an IRR of 7.4%. The target return for buildings of this type is typically 10% IRR. Thus, allowing the 4-story building will make it significantly more likely that this building type is developed on the corridor.

The underlying reason that increasing height improves feasibility is that it increases the number of leasable units. Given the existing parking requirement of 0.75 spaces per unit, a 3 story height limit is binding on the achievable density on the smaller 5,000-10,000 square foot sites on the corridor.

The Strategy Document also recommended increasing height limits to 5 stories on two properties at the intersection of Mill Plain and Grand (Figure 3.1). As the pro-forma modeling indicates, this change would positively impact development feasibility, albeit not as significantly as the increase from 3 to 4 stories.

Increasing building heights on Grand is sensible because the street is wider and the lots are generally deeper. This means that taller buildings are less likely to create a "canyon" effect viewed from the street and have less negative impacts on neighboring properties to the rear. These conditions are generally true on the east side of Grand throughout the corridor. However, the Corridor Strategy only recommended increasing maximum heights to 5 stories at the intersection of Grand and Mill Plain.

In all locations on the corridor, we recommend supplementing maximum height limits with additional standards that encourage context-sensitive buildings. These "bulk and massing" recommendations are outlined in the next section.

RECOMMENDATION

- Maintain existing 50-foot height limits (4 stories) on Evergreen and the west side of Grand Avenue (Figure 3.2).
- Increase the maximum height limit on the eastern side of Grand Avenue from 50 to 60 feet to allow for 5 story buildings (Figure 3.2).
- In lieu of reducing height limits as recommended by the Corridor Strategy, use a range of bulk and massing controls to encourage context-sensitive building forms.

Figure 3.1: Maximum Height Recommendation of the Corridor Strategy

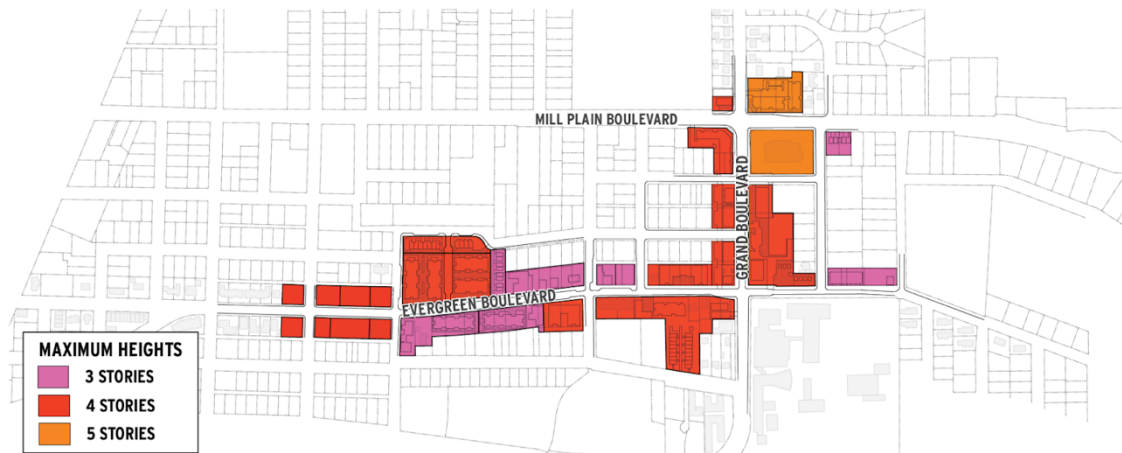
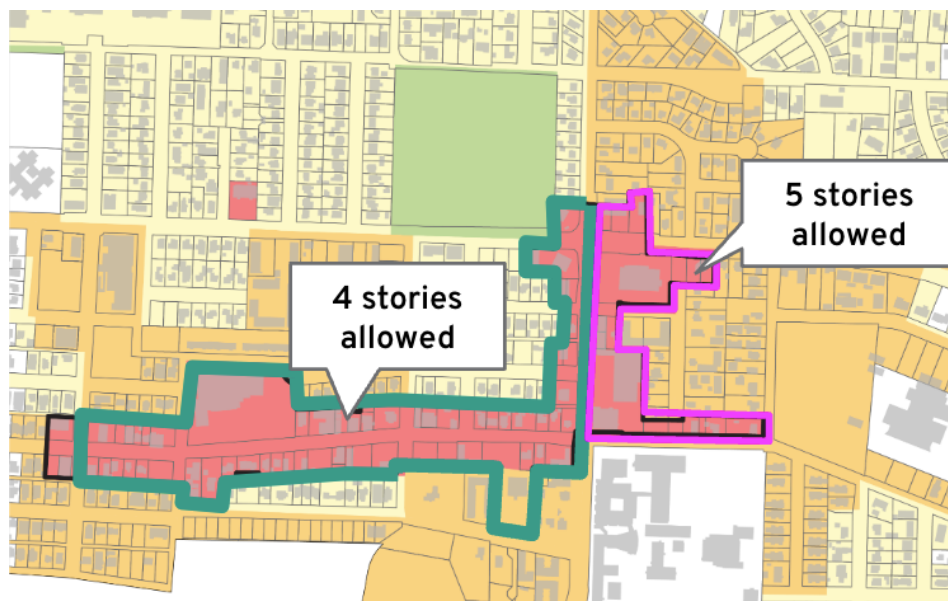


Figure 3.2: Refined Recommendation for Maximum Height



2. Bulk and Massing

The Corridor Strategy did not include any recommendations for modulating building massing. The proposed approach was to limit overall height. CP recognizes that it is important to ensure new development is context-sensitive, balancing the existing character of smaller commercial development and adjacent residential uses with the desire to increase development along the Corridor. Currently the City requires all lots in the CC zone that share a back lot line with residential zones to:

- **Setback** buildings 10 feet from the rear lot line.
- **Buffer/Screen** the building and parking areas using screening including 4-foot tall shrubs or 6-foot fences

- **Step-back** the building $\frac{1}{2}$ foot for each foot the building exceeds 20 feet in height up to a maximum of 40 feet

This is the extent of available tools to address concerns of compatibility. CP proposes to enhance these controls with several development standards that are more targeted at shaping the bulk and massing of new buildings. The available tools include:

- **Step-down at rear of building:** The current rear step-down requirement requires multiple smaller step-downs, translating into a sloped building form. This standard requires complex building forms that are costly. CP recommends an amended standard that steps the rear of the building back once from the rear lot line. The step-down would be substantial, however, and still meet the intent of creating additional separation between a higher-intensity development and adjacent lower-density residential uses.
- **Maximum building length:** There is no current standard addressing the overall length of buildings as measured along the street frontage. However longer buildings that are uninterrupted visually are less interesting and negatively impact the experience of pedestrians. Additionally, longer buildings would be out of scale with the current pattern of narrower 50- to 100-foot-wide lots. CP recommends limiting buildings to 200 feet in overall length and requiring significant breaks in the building facade (or separate buildings) every 100-150 feet to shape and modulate the building form. There is also a concern that tall buildings on either side of the Corridor could create a canyon effect. A sense of scale is not just impacted by building height, however. The ratio of building height to overall street width is more important than simply building heights. Given the current 50-foot right-of-way width of Evergreen, the narrower of the two streets in the Corridor, 50-foot buildings will not create a canyoning effect.

RECOMMENDATION

- Amend the existing step-down provision for the rear of buildings to shift from a sloped step down to a more effective single, larger step down.
- Do not require front step backs.
- Adopt a new maximum building length standard.
- Allow for parking areas to be developed within the 10-foot rear setback/buffer to increase buildable area and improve development feasibility on shallow lots.

3. Required Ground Floor Commercial Space

Current Title 20 standards require a minimum amount of ground floor uses to be commercial uses in the Community Commercial (CC) zone. The intent of this standard is to

encourage neighborhood-serving businesses near residents and to site uses that energize the street both visually and physically. A commercial use will have users coming and going throughout the day and into the evening and storefronts provide a window into the activities inside the building and provide intrigue for people walking or biking by. The current requirements include:

- Minimum of 50% of lineal street front must be devoted to commercial or office uses, with the intent being to require some portion of activating uses in a mixed-use building to frame the street wall.
- If there are multiple buildings on the site, a minimum of 20% of gross floor area must be devoted to non-residential uses.

The Corridor Strategy recognized that these requirements could be an impediment to residential development in the corridor that would otherwise be desired. The vision for the Corridor distinguished the area into three subareas. The area along Evergreen would be focused more on residential uses, while Grand Avenue would remain the “commercial heart” of the corridor

CP evaluated the impact of requiring ground floor commercial uses on development feasibility through pro-forma modeling (Appendix A). All-residential buildings performed better than mixed use buildings with commercial on the ground floor. Retail spaces are not as productive because rents are lower on a per square foot basis than residential units. However, the negative impact on feasibility is limited because only 50% of the ground floor is required to be commercial space.

A market analysis was conducted as part of the Corridor Strategy planning process. That analysis found that there is limited demand for new retail space in the study area. It estimated demand for approximately 10,000-12,000 square feet of new retail space. That amount of space can easily be accommodated in 2-3 mixed use developments. Once these spaces are filled, there will be very limited demand for new retail, which could drive down local retail rents and further erode development feasibility if commercial uses are required.

The market study also found that Grand Avenue is much more suitable for retail than Evergreen given the limited traffic and visibility on the street. The Corridor Strategy recommendation to have a “more limited requirement” for commercial uses on Evergreen is sensible given these market realities. The Strategy did not specifically identify whether there would be any commercial uses required on Evergreen or if the current requirements would be reduced.

As summarized above, the existing requirements vary depending on if there is a single mixed use building proposed or a mixed-use development with multiple buildings is proposed. The standard for “mixed use developments” would effectively require a larger amount of commercial space than the standard for mixed use buildings. The standard is linked to the total gross floor area on the site (20%) while the standard for mixed use buildings is linked to the lineal street frontage (50%).

For example, if a mixed-use development with multiple buildings were proposed, and each building was 4 stories, then this standard would effectively require 80% of the ground floor of each building to be commercial uses (20% of a 4-story building). However, if the project only included one building, then approximately 50% of the ground would be required to be commercial space.

RECOMMENDATION

In order to balance the desire for commercial uses in the corridor while preserving market feasibility for higher density housing, the following changes are recommended:

- Eliminate the separate set of requirements for mixed use developments (20% of gross floor area) with multiple buildings for projects in the corridor.
- Maintain the existing requirement for 50% of lineal street frontage to be commercial uses, but only apply to properties along Grand Avenue.
- Do not require ground floor commercial uses for properties on Evergreen. Instead, use regulatory incentives to encourage commercial spaces. The recommended incentive is a reduction in minimum parking requirements for the residential portion of the project. If this recommendation is supported, CP can model incentive options to identify an option that would substantially improve feasibility and thus would be likely to be used.

4. Parking

The Corridor Strategy recommended reducing minimum parking requirements for both residential and commercial uses to improve development feasibility. In the time since the adoption of the Corridor Strategy, state law has mandated that any lot located within a ¼ mile of high-frequency transit have reduced requirements of 0.75 spaces per unit for multi-unit projects. This is the current standard in place on the corridor because the entire area is within ¼ mile of frequent transit (along Mill Plain, Grand, and Evergreen).

Existing parking standards do require higher ratios of parking spaces per commercial use, however. See a comparison of current standards vs. proposed Corridor Strategy standards below:

Use	Existing Standard	Corridor Proposed Standard
Goods and Services	1 space / 300 sf	1 space / 1,000 sf.
Eating and Drinking	1 space / 250 sf	No spaces required for

Office	1 space / 400 sf	ground-floor commercial uses in mixed use buildings.
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The pro-forma modeling used the recommended parking ratios from the Corridor Strategy. If the higher existing standards were used in the pro-forma modeling, the parking areas would be significantly larger and would likely preclude rational building floor plates or require underground parking on the smaller lots that predominate the corridor. The parking standards would not only impair financial feasibility; they would make high-density mixed-use development physically impractical or impossible.

Further reductions in parking standards below those recommended by the Corridor Strategy, particularly for the residential portions of projects, would likely further improve development feasibility. However, it is unclear if the current parking standards are binding; developers may continue to provide parking at currently required ratios if they are concerned about marketability of units without off-street parking. If the parking requirements were to be reduced further, then it eliminates the potential for using the requirements as an incentive.

Further, there is limited on-street parking on Evergreen and Grand and there are concerns about the impacts of more on-street parking in surrounding neighborhoods voiced by residents during the Corridor Strategy planning process.

RECOMMENDATION

- Reduce parking requirements for commercial uses to the proposed Corridor Strategy standards of 1 space per 1,000 square feet, with no parking required for ground-floor commercial uses in mixed use buildings.
- Provide for further reductions in minimum parking requirements for residential uses as an incentive for developments that provide other spaces, features, or amenities that are important to the vision for the corridor. These could include:
 - Ground floor commercial space on Evergreen Boulevard
 - Affordable housing units (deed-restricted)
 - Desired design features that support walkable and transit-oriented development, like a public plaza or open space

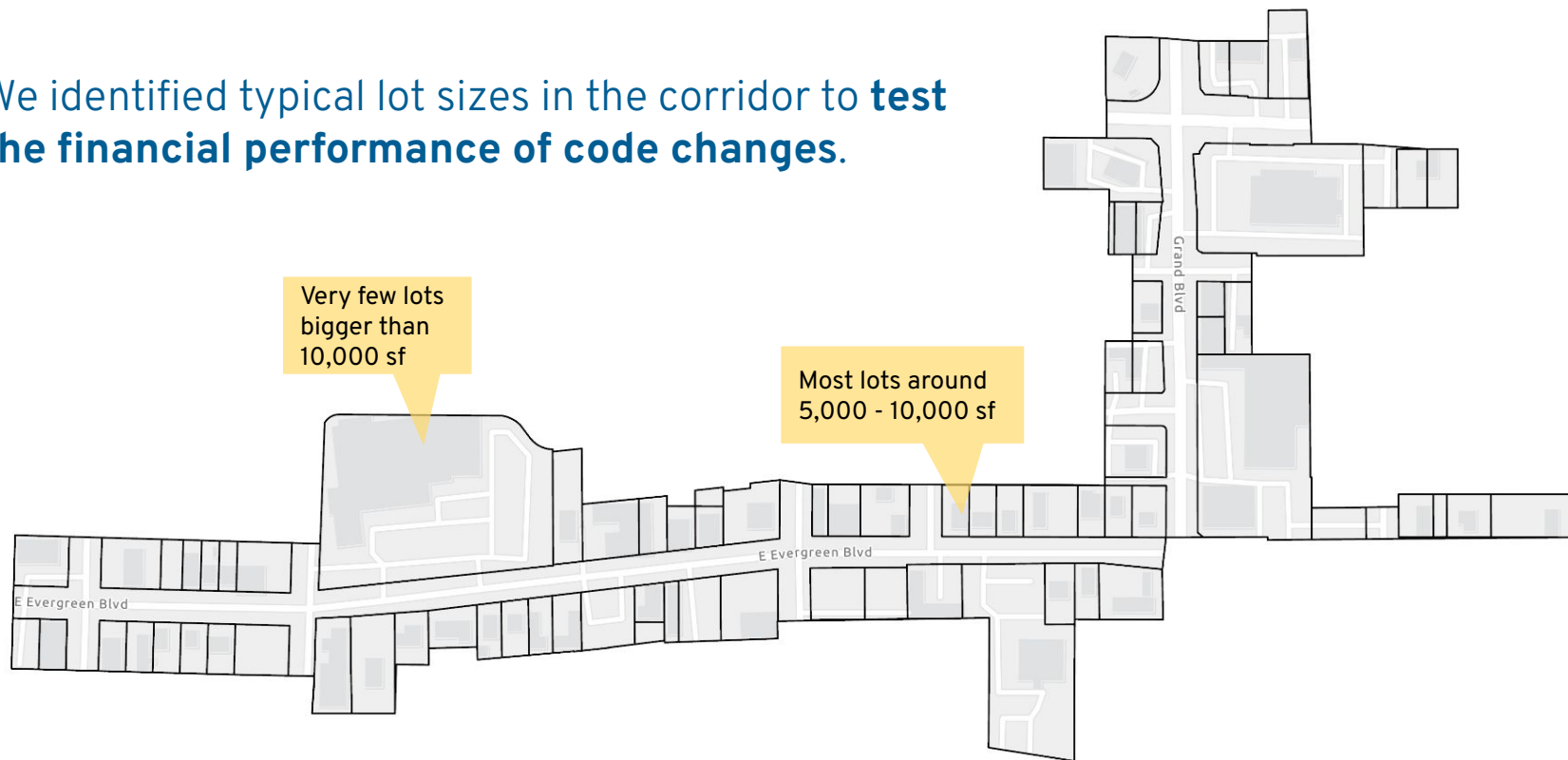


APPENDIX A

FINANCIAL FEASIBILITY ANALYSIS OF CODE CONCEPTS

LOT SIZE ANALYSIS: 5,000 AND 10,000 SF LOTS

We identified typical lot sizes in the corridor to **test the financial performance of code changes.**



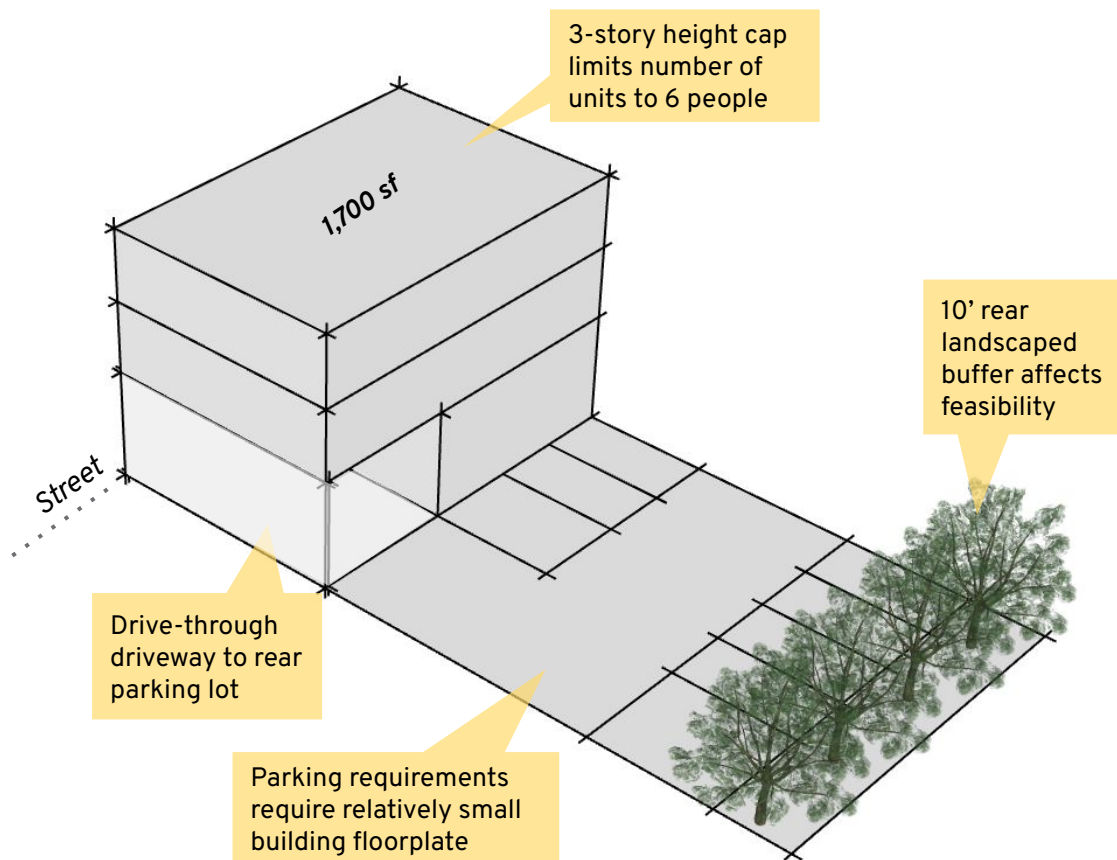
TEST PROTOTYPES

TEST NAME	LOT SIZE(S)	HEIGHT	GROUND FLOOR COMMERCIAL	PARKING RATIOS
1. Residential Small Lot (3-stories)	5,000 sf	3 stories	None	0.75 per unit
2. Mixed-Use Small Lot (3-Stories)	5,000 sf	3 stories	50% of frontage	0.75 per unit No parking for ground floor commercial spaces
3. Residential Small Lot (4-stories)	5,000 sf	4 stories	None	0.75 per unit
4. Mixed-Use Small Lot (4-stories)	5,000 sf	4 stories	50% of frontage	0.75 per unit No parking for ground floor commercial spaces
5. Residential Large Lot (5-stories)	10,000 sf	5 stories	None	0.75 per unit
6. Mixed-Use Large Lot (5-stories)	10,000 sf	5 stories	50% of frontage	0.75 per unit No parking for ground floor commercial spaces

RESIDENTIAL SMALL LOT (3-STORIES)

1. Residential Small Lot

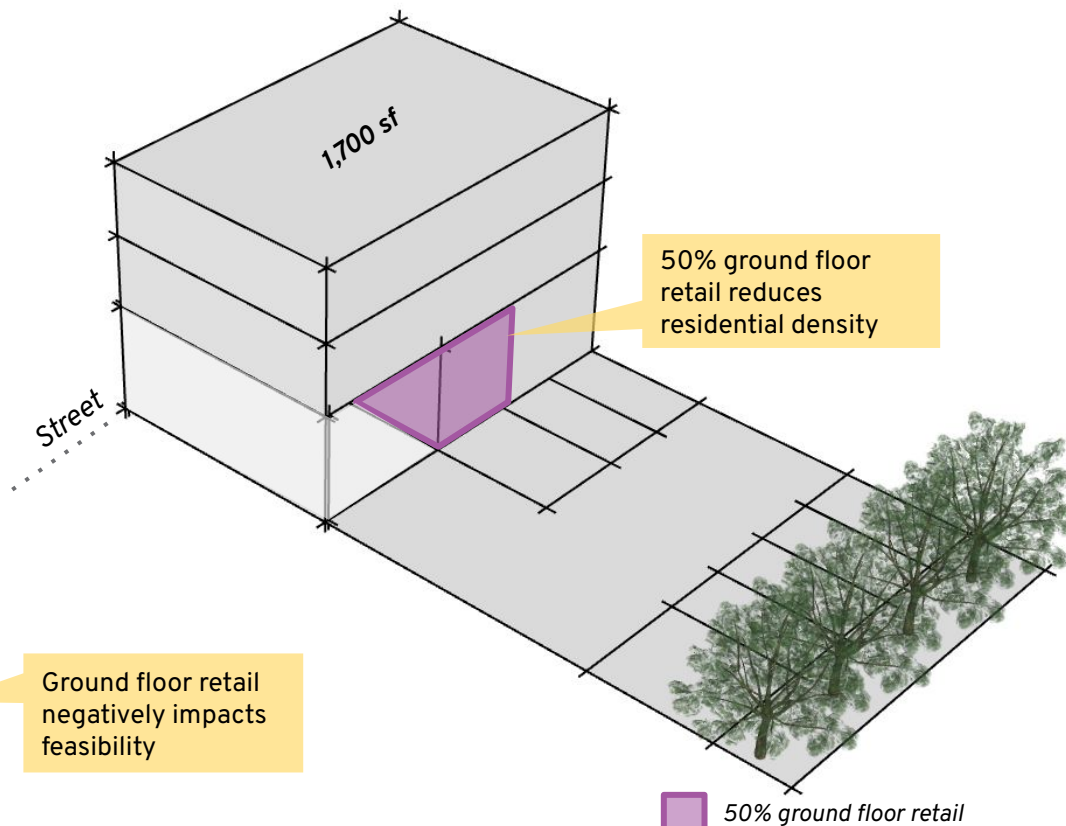
Lot Size	5,000 sf
Height	3 stories
Parking Spaces	8
# of Residential Units	6
Avg. Unit Size (sf)	600
Retail Space (sf)	-
Construction Cost	\$260/sf
Avg. Residential Rent / Unit	\$1,500/month
Retail Rent	-
Internal Rate of Return (Target 10%)	6.1%



MIXED-USE SMALL LOT (3-STORIES)

2. Mixed-Use Small Lot

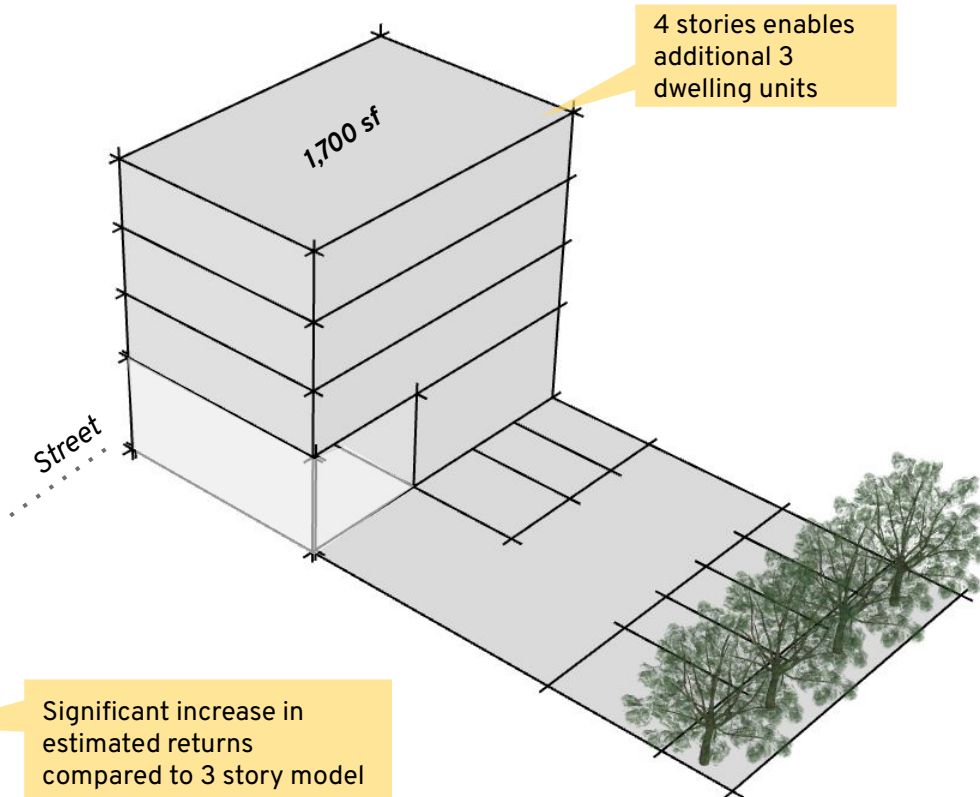
Lot Size	5,000 sf
Height	3 stories
Parking Spaces	8
# of Residential Units	5
Avg. Unit Size (sf)	600
Retail Space (sf)	510
Construction Cost	\$260/sf
Avg. Residential Rent / Unit	\$1,500/month
Retail Rent	\$25/sf
Internal Rate of Return (Target 10%)	5.3%



RESIDENTIAL SMALL LOT (4-STORIES)

3. Residential Small Lot

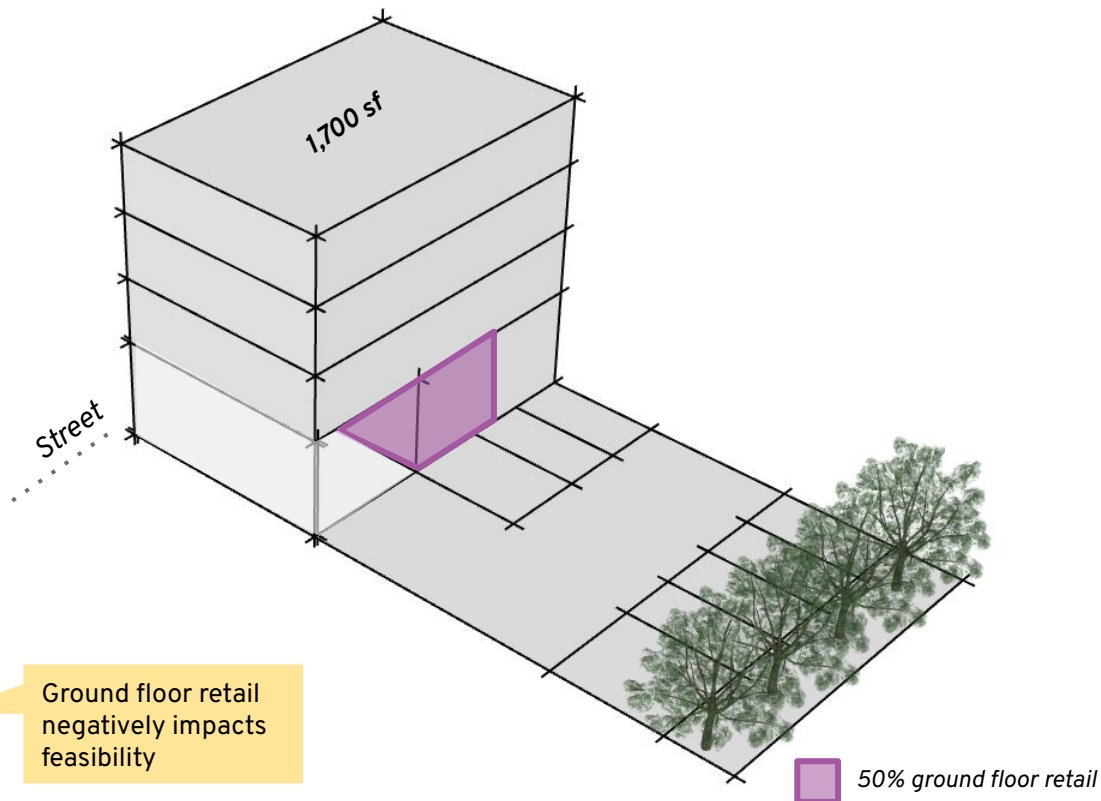
Lot Size	5,000 sf
Height	4 stories
Parking Spaces	8
# of Residential Units	9
Avg. Unit Size (sf)	600
Retail Space (sf)	-
Construction Cost	\$215/sf
Avg. Residential Rent / Unit	\$1,500/month
Retail Rent	-
Internal Rate of Return (Target 10%)	7.9%



MIXED-USE SMALL LOT (4-STORIES)

4. Mixed-Use Small Lot

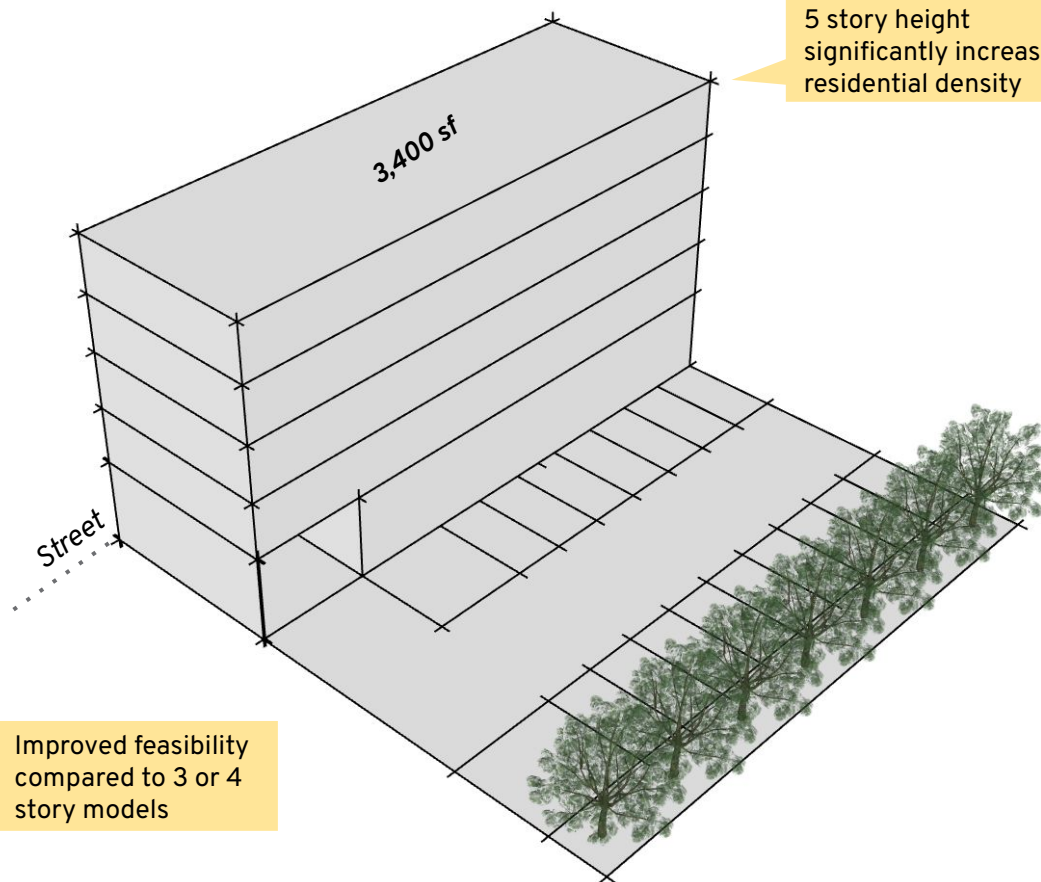
Lot Size	5,000 sf
Height	4 stories
Parking Spaces	8
# of Residential Units	8
Avg. Unit Size (sf)	600
Retail Space (sf)	510
Construction Cost	\$260/sf
Avg. Residential Rent / Unit	\$1,500/month
Retail Rent	\$25/sf
Internal Rate of Return (Target 10%)	7.4%



RESIDENTIAL LARGE LOT (5-STORIES)

5. Residential Large Lot

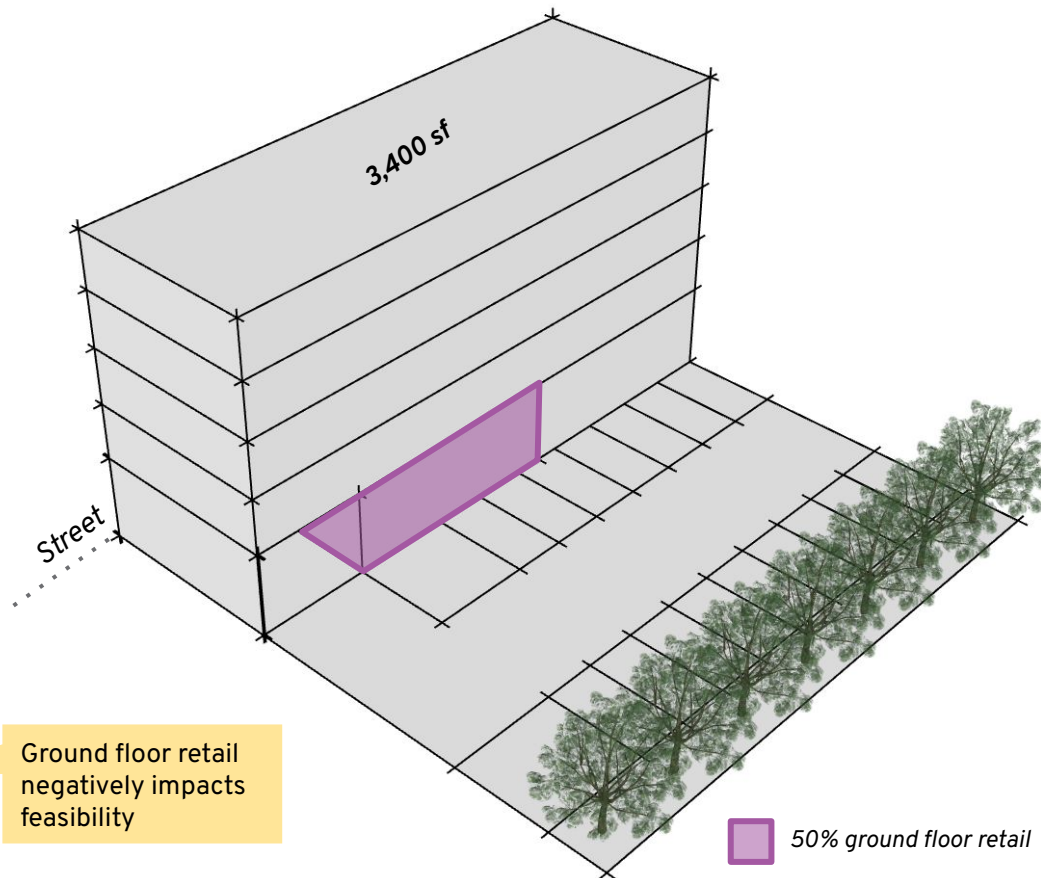
Lot Size	10,000 sf
Height	5 stories
Parking Spaces	18
# of Residential Units	23
Avg. Unit Size (sf)	600
Retail Space (sf)	-
Construction Cost	\$260/sf
Avg. Residential Rent / Unit	\$1,500/month
Retail Rent	-
Internal Rate of Return (Target 10%)	8.5%



MIXED-USE LARGE LOT (5-STORIES)

6. Mixed-Use Large Lot

Lot Size	10,000 sf
Height	5 stories
Parking Spaces	18
# of Residential Units	21
Avg. Unit Size (sf)	600
Retail Space (sf)	1,360
Construction Cost	\$260/sf
Avg. Residential Rent / Unit	\$1,500/month
Retail Rent	\$25/sf
Internal Rate of Return (Target 10%)	8.2%



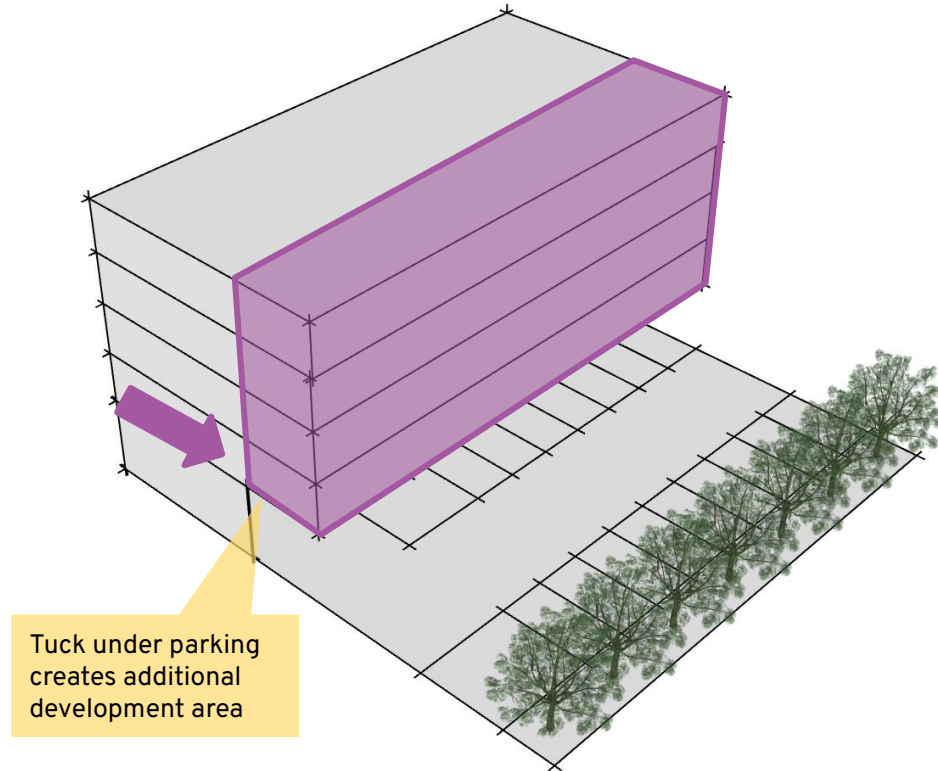
SUMMARY OF RESULTS

SCENARIO	1. Residential Small Lot (3-Stories)	2. Mixed-Use Small Lot (3-Stories)	3. Residential Small Lot (4-Stories)	4. Mixed-Use Small Lot (4-stories)	5. Residential Large Lot (5-Stories)	6. Mixed-Use Large Lot (5-stories)
Lot Size	5,000 sf	5,000 sf	5,000 sf	5,000 sf	10,000 sf	10,000 sf
Height	3 stories	3 stories	4 stories	4 stories	5 stories	5 stories
Site Program	Pure Residential	Residential w/ 50% Ground Floor Retail	Pure Residential	Residential w/ 50% Ground Floor Retail	Pure Residential	Residential w/ 50% Ground Floor Retail
# of Residential Units	6	5	9	8	23	21
Retail Space (sf)	-	510	-	510	-	1,360
# of Parking Spaces	8	8	8	8	18	18
Internal Rate of Return (Target 10%)	6.1%	5.3%	7.9%	7.4%	8.5%	8.2%

PRO FORMA TESTING | IMPLICATIONS

- **Height increase from 3 to 4 stories has a significant positive impact on development feasibility.** The impact of increasing to 5 stories is also positive but not as significant as the increase from 3 to 4 stories. This is partly explained by the small lots on the corridor: height is more important for maximizing density on small, constrained lots.
- **All-residential buildings performed better than mixed use buildings.** Retail spaces are not as productive because rents are lower on a per square foot basis than residential units. However, the negative impact on feasibility is limited because only 50% of the ground floor is required to be commercial space. On sites larger than 10,000 square feet (not modeled here) it is not clear that overall demand for retail will support filling those spaces at the rents modeled here. Lowered rents in this situation would further erode feasibility.
- **Reduced parking standards proposed in the Corridor Strategy were critical to feasibility on smaller lots.** If current Title 20 parking standards for commercial spaces were required then many of these models would be physically impractical to build.
- **Further parking reductions may result in more projects being economically feasible.** If the residential parking standards were reduced to 0.5 spaces per unit or lower, it may stimulate more infill development in the corridor than if the current ratio of 0.75 spaces per unit were maintained. However, it is unclear if the current parking standards are binding; developers may continue to provide parking at a higher ratio than 0.5 if they are concerned about marketability.
- **The 10' rear landscaped buffer negatively impacts feasibility on smaller lots.** Allowing parking spaces, but not buildings, in this buffer area would have a meaningful impact on achievable densities on small lots.

PRO FORMA TESTING | ALTERNATIVE BUILDING FORMS



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Rear setback of 10' abutting high density residential - necessary?
- Encroachment standards affecting rear of building



Planning Commission General Training

February 14, 2023



Bryan Snodgrass, Principal Planner, Community Development
Becky Rude, Assistant City Attorney

Presentation Overview



**Washington Land
Use Planning
Framework**



**Planning
Commission Role**



**Planning
Commission
Conduct**

Washington State Land Use Planning Framework

- 1962 Planning Enabling Act/1965 Planning Commission Act - General enabling authority for local planning commissions, comprehensive plans, and development regulations
- 1971 State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) - Requires identification and mitigation of probable significant environmental and related impacts for proposed projects, plans, and standards
- 1972 Shoreline Management Act (SMA) - Protects shorelines through regulation of shoreline area, including requirement for local adoption of a Shoreline Master Program consistent with state guidelines

State Framework – Growth Management Act (1990-91)

GMA requires 18 fastest growing counties and their cities to adopt Comprehensive Plans and implement regulations to further 14 aspirational goals:

- Concentrated urban growth
- Sprawl reduction
- Regional transportation
- Affordable housing
- Economic development
- Property rights
- Permit processing
- Natural resource industries
- Open space and recreation
- Environmental protection
- Early and continuous public participation
- Public facilities and services
- Historic preservation
- Shoreline management

Growth Management Act Requirements

- Comprehensive Plan Elements: Land Use, Housing, Capital Facilities, Utilities, Transportation, Economic Development, and Parks (mandatory); Conservation, Solar Energy, Recreation, and Subarea Plans (optional)
- Implemented through specific development regulations (zoning code)
- Include Comprehensive Plan map and implementing zoning designations map for all properties

Growth Management Act Requirements (cont.)

- Plan for and accommodate preset number of housing units affordable in various income categories, including emergency housing, and address racially disparate impacts. New requirement, further legislation possible.
- Ensure capital facilities plan and transportation plans are consistent with land use plans and growth targets; identify existing facilities, future needs, and a financing plan covering at least 6 years
- Designate and protect critical areas using “best available science” to preserve critical area functions and value – wetlands, aquifer recharge areas, fish and wildlife habitat, flood areas, geologically hazardous areas

Growth Management Act Requirements (cont.)

- Establish Urban Growth Area (UGA) boundaries with sufficient, but not excess, amount and density of land to accommodate adopted population and employment growth targets for 20 years
- UGA sufficiency must be demonstrated by land capacity analysis
- UGA boundaries, UGA growth targets, and countywide growth targets adopted by counties in consultation with cities
- Countywide population forecast must be within high/medium/low range provided by state Office of Financial Management

Growth Management Act Requirements (cont.)

- Cities generally considered provider of urban services, counties provider of regional services
- Counties, in coordination with cities, adopt Countywide Planning Policies governing regional management issues
- UGAs anticipated to annex to cities
- With limited exception, no urban services or urban densities outside of UGAs
- Counties have no land use jurisdiction inside city limits

Growth Management Act Requirements (cont.)

- Adopt Comprehensive Plan changes generally no more than once per year; development regulations proposed and adopted any time; annually consider updates proposed by any party
- Full review and update of Comprehensive Plan as needed at least every ten years, including UGAs. Currently underway.
- Comprehensive Plans and development regulations presumed valid upon adoption; may be appealed to State Growth Management Hearings Board

Local Guidance

- Clark County Community Framework Plan – also adopted by Vancouver and other local cities. Contains high level urban form guidance, and Countywide Planning Policies (CPPs). May need some updating.
- Vancouver Comprehensive Plan and Land Use and Development (Zoning) Code (Title 20 of Vancouver Municipal Code). Update underway.
- Vancouver Strategic Plan. Not part of GMA. Update underway.

City Charter Section 8.02 –Recognizes creation and purpose of Planning Commission

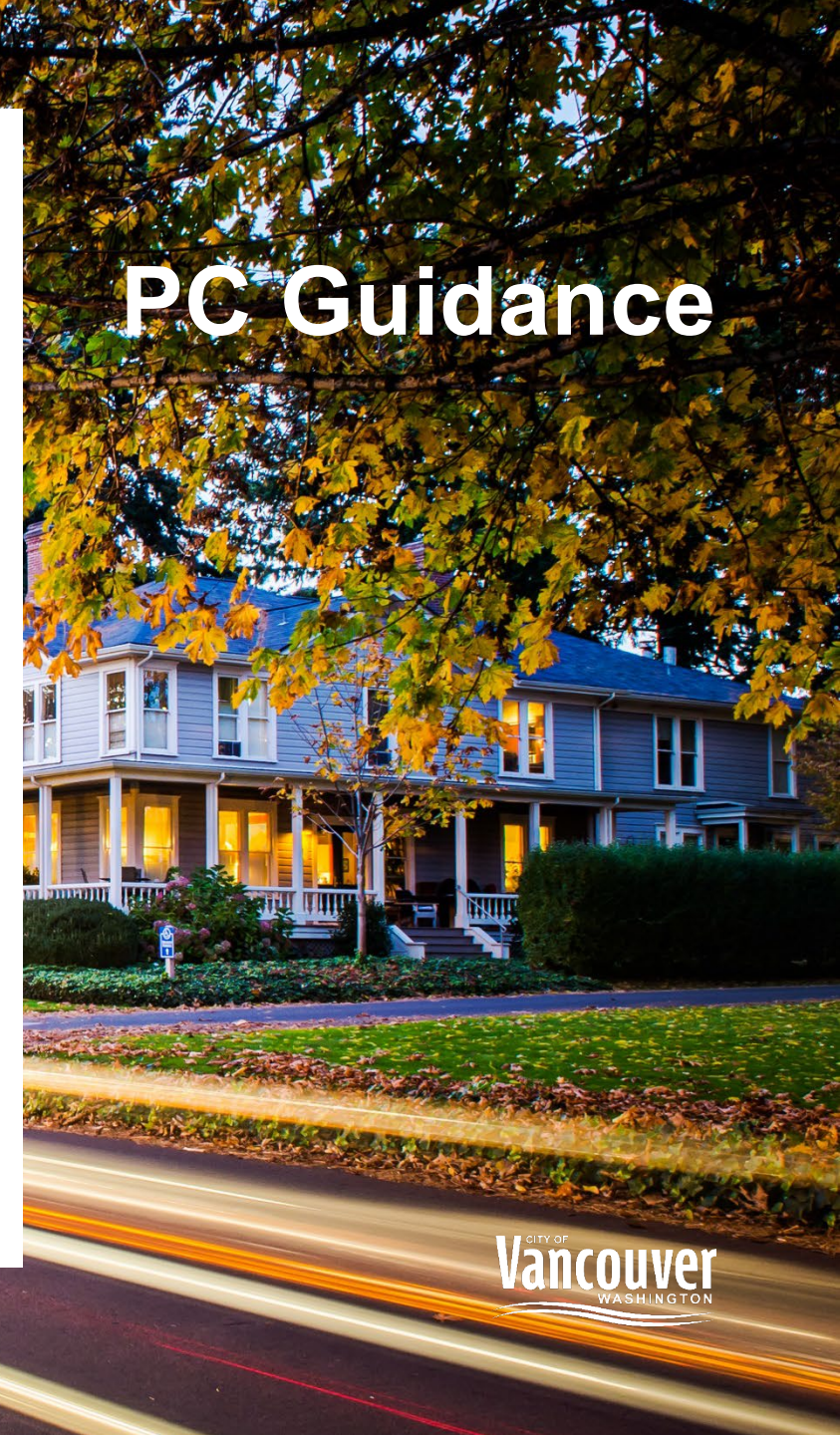
City Council Policy 100-06 – Appointments to citizen commissions

VMC Chapter 20.220, Review Bodies – VMC 20.220.010 establishes Planning Commission and sets parameters for Commission membership, authority, and responsibilities

Planning Commission Bylaws – Operating rules

VMC 20.285, Text and Map Amendments – provides review process and substantive criteria for changes to maps or text of the Comprehensive Plan

PC Guidance



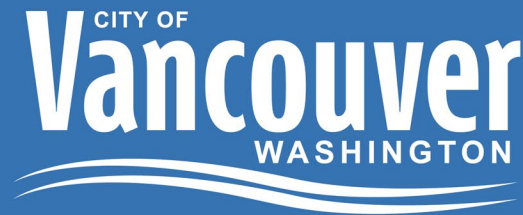
PC Guidance (cont.)

**Planning Commission
serves as a review body
for:**

- Most Comprehensive Plan and zoning map designation changes
- Land use Development Agreements
- Comprehensive Plan and zoning text changes (except fees)
- Planned Developments and Mixed-Use Master Plans

Questions?

Washington Growth Management Act and PC Role



Planning Commission Conduct



State Law: Title 42 RCW – Public Officers & Agencies

Appearance of Fairness Doctrine – Chapter 42.36

Open Public Meetings Act – Chapter 42.30

Code of Ethics – Chapter 42.23

Public Records Act – Chapter 42.56

Appearance of Fairness Doctrine (Chapter 42.36 RCW)



- Quasi-judicial (administrative) land use decisions
- N/A = Advisory recommendations or legislative policy
- Unbiased in both ***appearance*** and ***fact***

Appearance of Fairness Doctrine (cont.)

Quasi-Judicial

- Legal rights, duties, or privileges
- Specific, identifiable parties
- Public hearing or contested case
- PC determination results in a ruling

Advisory or Legislative

- Making recommendations
- Establishing rules of general application
- Adopting policy decisions

Appearance of Fairness (cont.)

Most Planning Commission Actions are Legislative or Advisory

- VMC Code Amendments
- Comp Plan Amendments
- Area-Wide Zoning; District Plans
- Land Use Policy Recommendations



Quasi-Judicial Acts

Appearance of Fairness Doctrine Applies to:

- Site-specific rezones
- Conditional uses and variances
- Subdivision plat approvals
- Land use permits
- Final determinations on SEPA appeals
- Discrete zoning changes affecting specific parties



Case Study: *Buell v. Bremerton*, 80 Wn.2d 518 (1972)

- Rezoning of a five acres from residential to commercial where planning commissioner owned adjacent property and potentially benefitted from commission's action
- Fact that rezone would have been approved even without the self-interested commissioner's vote was not enough to overcome violation
- "The self-interest of one member of the planning commission infects the action of the other members of the commission regardless of their [respective] disinterestedness."

Case Study: *Hayden v. Port Townsend*, 28 Wn. App. 192 (1981)

- Chair advocated approval of a rezone application for land on which his employer held an option to purchase
- At the quasi-judicial public hearing, Chair relinquished his position as chair, moved to the audience, and did not vote
- Violation occurred because Chair had prepared the SEPA checklist and remained involved questioning witnesses and offering procedural advice to another commissioner – a “corrupt motive” was not required; zoning decision was invalidated

Planning Commissioner Appearance of Fairness Duties



- Disclose any actual or perceived personal interest (conflicts), prejudgment, bias, or *ex parte* communications at start of proceeding
- May require recusal; must allow an opportunity for participants to raise a challenge and disqualify member (RCW 42.36.080)

Appearance of Fairness Doctrine

Ex Parte
Communications
(RCW 42.36.060)

Ex parte communications occur in connection with a matter currently under consideration and take place in any format outside the formal proceeding



Doctrine of Necessity

(RCW 42.36.090)

- Commissioner disqualified under AOF Doctrine can participate if removal would result in lack of quorum
- Commissioner must have first publicly disclosed the basis for disqualification



Conflicts of Interest – Code of Ethics (RCW 42.23.070)



- Use of Position to secure privileges or receiving outside compensation
- Engaging in activity that would induce disclosure of confidential information
- Disclosing confidential information

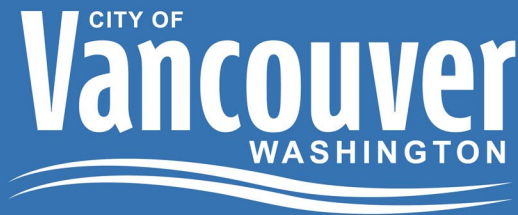
Conflicts of Interest (cont.)

Penalties for Violating Statutory Code of Ethics (RCW 42.23.050):

- \$500 civil penalty; liable to municipality
- Other civil or criminal liability or penalty as may otherwise be imposed upon the municipal officer by law
- May require forfeiture of office

Questions?

Appearance of Fairness Doctrine and Conflicts of Interest



Open Public Meetings Act (Chapter 42.30 RCW)



- Commission may only transact business at a **public meeting**
- **Meeting:** any time a quorum “gathers” to transact PC business
- **Gather:** in-person, phone, voicemail, texts, social media, email, combo

Open Public Meetings Act (OPMA)

90 Days

Newly appointed members must complete OPMA training

Four Years

Members must renew training (RCW 42.30.205)

Notice

Must provide public notice in advance of all meetings

Open

Must be open and accessible to all

Quorum

Majority of members present; intent to conduct business

“Business”

Discussion, deliberation, and voting

No Secrets

Secret ballots not allowed

Basic Requirements – OPMA Applies to Planning Commission

Open Public Meetings Act Violations

Consequences:

- Action taken at a meeting held in violation of the OPMA is null and void
- Members who knowingly violate the OPMA are personally liable for possible monetary penalties (\$500 first violation; \$1,000 each subsequent violation)
- Award of costs and reasonable attorney fees for any person prevailing in an action alleging an OPMA violation

Case Study: *Wood v. Battle Ground School District*, 107 Wn. App. 550 (2001)

Serial Meeting: Does an exchange of emails regarding official board business among a quorum of board members violate OPMA?

- “Meetings at which action is taken” broad enough to include exchange of emails between members
- “The active exchange of information and opinions in these emails, as opposed to the mere passive receipt of information, suggests a collective intent to deliberate and/or to discuss Board business.”
- ***Egan v. City of Seattle***, 471 P.3d 899 (2020): Combination of personal gatherings, emails, phone calls, texts, and hard copy distributions constituted a meeting; presence of quorum and awareness of others



OPMA Communication Best Practices

- Only share scheduling information and factual data, not opinions
- Begin emails: “For informational purposes only. Do not reply.”
- Never “Reply All” – use “BCC” for other Commissioners
- Rely on City staff to circulate information
- Do not discuss PC business by exchanging voicemails, emails, texts, or on social media – be mindful of creating serial meetings or *ex parte* communications

Public Records Act (Chapter 42.53 RCW)



- PRA is a mandate for broad disclosure of public records
- **“Public Records”** include data pertaining to the conduct of government
- Any format or platform – emails, text messages, tweets, voicemails, etc.

PRA Requirements

- City records must be made available to all members of the public – few and narrow exemptions
- Requests don't have to be submitted formally; they can come to you
- City must respond quickly – within five business days
- Response can be: (1) fulfill the request, (2) deny the request, (3) give an estimated release date for responsive records, or (4) seek clarification

Public Records Act (Cont.)

Public Records Officer

- City has designated Public Records Officer (Raelyn McJilton) as a primary point of contact

Public Records Requests

- Public records can be requested using a form accessed on the City's website
- Use of the public records request form is not required
- Certain records, or portions of records, may be withheld or redacted due to certain limited statutory exemptions – there is no general “right of privacy” exemption

Case Study: *West v. City of Puyallup*, 2 Wn. App. 2d 586 (2018)

PRA Request: Made to City of Puyallup for records relating to City Council member's Facebook page:

- Posts at issue were not public records because official did not prepare them within the scope of her official capacity
- But personal Facebook page posts can constitute public records if they relate to the conduct of government and are prepared within public official's scope of employment or official capacity, or address the conduct or performance of government functions

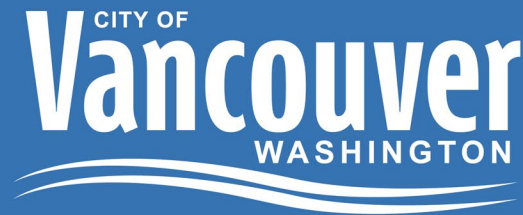
Public Records Act Violations

Penalties:

- Burden on agency to prove exemption; no affirmative duty to create or interpret records
- Person who prevails against an agency awarded all costs, including attorney fees, incurred in connection with the lawsuit
- Court may award up to \$100 for each day a person was improperly denied the right to inspect or copy a public record

Questions?

OPMA and PRA



Constitutional Law

Procedural Protections and Private Rights



Takings Clause
5th Amendment



Due Process Clause
14th Amendment



Freedom of Speech
1st Amendment

Takings Clause

Constitutional Protection:

- Prohibits the taking of private property for public use;
- By physical appropriation or regulation;
- Absent just compensation



Regulatory Taking



- Denies all economically viable use of the land;
- Requires landowner to allow trespass;
- No reasonable relationship to impact of project; or
- A less intrusive, effective option exists

Exactions

Land use conditions intended to offset infrastructure costs or mitigate impacts

May become a “taking” absent:

- An “essential nexus” between the condition imposed and the impact of the development; and
- A “rough proportionality” to the burden imposed on the public by allowing the proposed land use



Due Process Clause – 14th Amendment

Procedural Rights – Fairness

- Notice
- Opportunity to be heard
- Impartial tribunal

Substantive Rights – Restrictions Permitted

- Serves a legitimate government interest
- Rationally related to that public purpose
- Not unduly oppressive

** Government may not deprive “any person of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law.”*

Case Study: *Smith v. Skagit County*, 75 Wash. 2d 715 (1969)

“Spot Zoning” = Rezoning of a small parcel of land within the limits of another zone:

- Illegal when done in a manner that is inconsistent with the comprehensive plan and surrounding land, or when arbitrary or discriminatory absent adequate public benefit
- Test of “Reasonableness” – Government *may* deprive individual rights; due process prevents *unjust* or *mistaken* deprivation

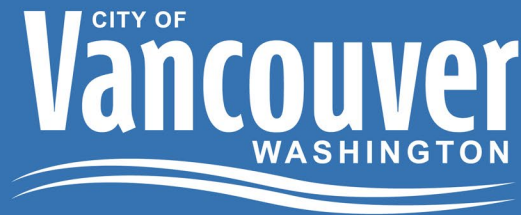
Freedom of Speech – 1st Amendment

- First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution provides protection to, and opportunity for, free speech in public forums
- Public meetings are considered a “limited public forum,” so time, place, and manner of speech can be regulated in a viewpoint neutral manner
- Purpose of Community Forum is for public to inform Commission of its views, not for dialogue or Q&A
- Regulation is by adoption of guidelines; Chair has authority to enforce:
 - Remarks are time limited and are to be directed to the Commission as a body, not the audience, staff, or an applicant
 - Information presented at public hearings to be factual and relevant

Thank You

Becky Rude, (360) 487-8513
Becky.Rude@cityofvancouver.us

Bryan Snodgrass, (360) 487- 7946
Bryan.Snodgrass@cityofvancouver.us



ANNUAL ELECTION OF OFFICERS PROCEDURE

In accordance with Article III of the Planning Commission Bylaws, the elected officers of the Planning Commission shall consist of a Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson, with nomination and election of these officers to be made annually at the first regular or special meeting of the year. The term of office is one year, with vacancies for an unexpired term to be filled for the remainder of that term as soon as practicable in accordance with this election procedure. The nominee for each office receiving a majority vote of those present at the election meeting shall be declared elected and the newly elected Chair shall then preside over the remainder of the election meeting.

OFFICER ELECTION PROCEDURE:

The procedure for the annual election of Planning Commission officers, followed first for the office of Chairperson and then for the office of Vice-Chairperson, shall be:

1. Call for Chairperson Nominations. Planning Commission staff, acting as Secretary in accordance with the Bylaws, will call for nominations to the office of Chairperson of the Planning Commission.
2. Call for Vice-Chairperson Nominations. After the election of the Chairperson, the newly elected Chairperson will call for nominations to the office of Vice-Chairperson of the Planning Commission and then follow the remaining procedure for nomination and election of the Vice-Chairperson.
3. Nominations. Nominations may be offered by the Chairperson or from the floor. Nominations for each office will be called for at least three times. Seconds are not necessary after each nomination.
4. Closure of Nominations. Nominations may be closed by the Planning Commission staff for nomination of the Chairperson, or by the Chairperson for nomination of the Vice-Chairperson, when it appears that no more nominations will be offered. Nominations may also be closed by a two-thirds majority vote, upon a motion and a second to close nominations for an office; this is not required, but any such motion to close nominations is appropriate only after a reasonable opportunity to make nominations has been given.
5. Voting. Planning Commission staff will then call for and record either: (a) a voice vote of yay or nay on each nominee for Chairperson, in the same order in which nominations were made; or (b) a roll call vote with each Commissioner identifying their preference for Chairperson (or Vice-Chairperson, as appropriate) when called. Planning Commission staff will announce the elected nominee for each office.

SUGGESTED FORMS MOTIONS:

1. I NOMINATE COMMISSIONER _____ AS CHAIRPERSON (VICE-CHAIRPERSON) (accept as many nominations as presented for each office).

2. I MOVE TO CLOSE NOMINATIONS FOR CHAIRPERSON (VICE-CHAIRPERSON) (a second and 2/3 majority vote in favor of such motion is required to fulfill this motion; motion is not required to close nominations, but may be made after at least three calls for nominations to each office).

GUIDELINES FOR NOMINATIONS

- As soon as nominations are opened, any Commissioner can bring forth a nomination. A Commissioner should know beforehand if the person to be nominated is both eligible and willing to serve.
- A Commissioner may decline the nomination during the nominating process and request that their name be removed from consideration.
- A Commissioner may self-nominate.
- A Commissioner may be nominated for more than one office.
- A Commissioner may not nominate more than one person for an office until all other Commissioners have had the opportunity to make nominations.
- Nominees do not have to leave the meeting during the nominations, when the vote is taken, or when the vote is counted.
- The presiding officer may continue presiding, even if nominated for office.
- After each nomination, it is appropriate for the Chairperson to repeat the name of the nominee and call for any further nominations.