

The Heights District Plan

VANCOUVER
CITY HALL



July 27, 2020
City Council Workshop

Chad Eiken, CED Director
Rebecca Kennedy, Planning Manager
Marjorie Ledell, Chair, Planning Commission

Presentation Overview

- Project goals, timeline, deliverables
- Roadway Capacity Analysis & Traffic Impact Study
- Transportation Recommendations, Strategies & Response to Public Input
- Holistic Sustainability Approach
- EIS Findings, Public Comments, and Responses: Emergency Services, Utilities, & Environment
- Phased Implementation Strategy
- Next Steps
- Questions and Discussion

Planning Commission/City Council Review

Planning Commission:

- March 27, 2018
- July 24, 2018
- December 11, 2018
- March 12, 2019
- June 11, 2019
- October 22, 2019
- December 10, 2019
- February 11, 2020 (PH)

City Council Workshops:

- July 2, 2018
- October 22, 2018
- February 4, 2019
- June 10, 2019
- September 17, 2019
- November 18, 2019
- March 2, 2020
- July 13, 2020
- July 20, 2020

City Council Public Hearings to extend Tower Mall Development Moratorium:

- November 13, 2017
- May 14, 2018
- November 5, 2018
- April 15, 2019
- October 7, 2019
- March 16, 2020

Heights District Plan: Project Deliverables

1. ***Subarea Plan*** for the 205-acre Heights District that will include an overarching vision for the area, and make recommendations on design, land use, housing transportation, public space, and implementation priorities.
2. ***Detailed Redevelopment Plan*** for the 63-acre Tower Mall redevelopment area that will include a market analysis, feasibility study, phased redevelopment plan, and partnerships and implementation recommendations.
3. ***Environmental Impact Statement***: Planned Action SEPA Analysis that includes thresholds for a mix of uses and will enable expedited review of future development proposals.

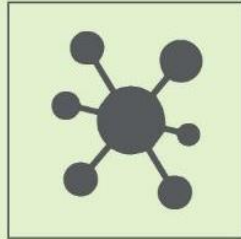
Heights District Plan: Project Goals

- Establish a vision for a **vibrant neighborhood center**
- Catalyze additional **private development** in the District
- **Involve the public** in the planning / design process
- Include **affordable** income-based housing
- Include accessible **public open space**
- Utilize innovative urban design and **sustainable development practices**
- Plan for the creative and functional **integration of transit**
- Increase **multi-modal connectivity** in the District uses



A Vision for the Heights

PRIMARY DRIVERS



1. Connectivity

- Creation of a walkable and bikeable street network with connections to nearby trails
- Maintain local and regional connections to services and amenities in Downtown Vancouver, Portland, etc.
- Improved traffic safety at intersections, through improved lighting, signals, and visibility



2. Community Health, Wellness & Equity

- Walkable, healthy food options, such as grocery stores and farmers markets
- Uses that promote “healthy” living, including playgrounds and exercise/athletic facilities
- Maintain social and support services for underserved families in the area



3. Sustainability

- Increase urban greenspace and trees while preserving existing significant trees
- Break up existing pattern of pavement and gravel
- Address drainage and flooding issues along major corridors

SECONDARY DRIVERS



4. Public Realm

- Creation of flexible gathering spaces that can accommodate community activities and events
- Provide a variety of active open spaces, including dog parks, playfields, and community gardens
- Well-maintained public spaces and sidewalks



5. Economic Development

- Restaurants and other food options that are affordable and easy to walk to
- Specialty, health-focused grocery store
- Maintain “small business” culture by saving existing locally owned businesses and attracting new local businesses



6. Mixed Income Housing

- Increased housing variety that includes mixed types (i.e. senior housing) and mixed incomes
- Mindful placement and integration of low-income housing
- Keeping housing options affordable for a diverse demographic, from seniors to young families



7. Urban Character/Form

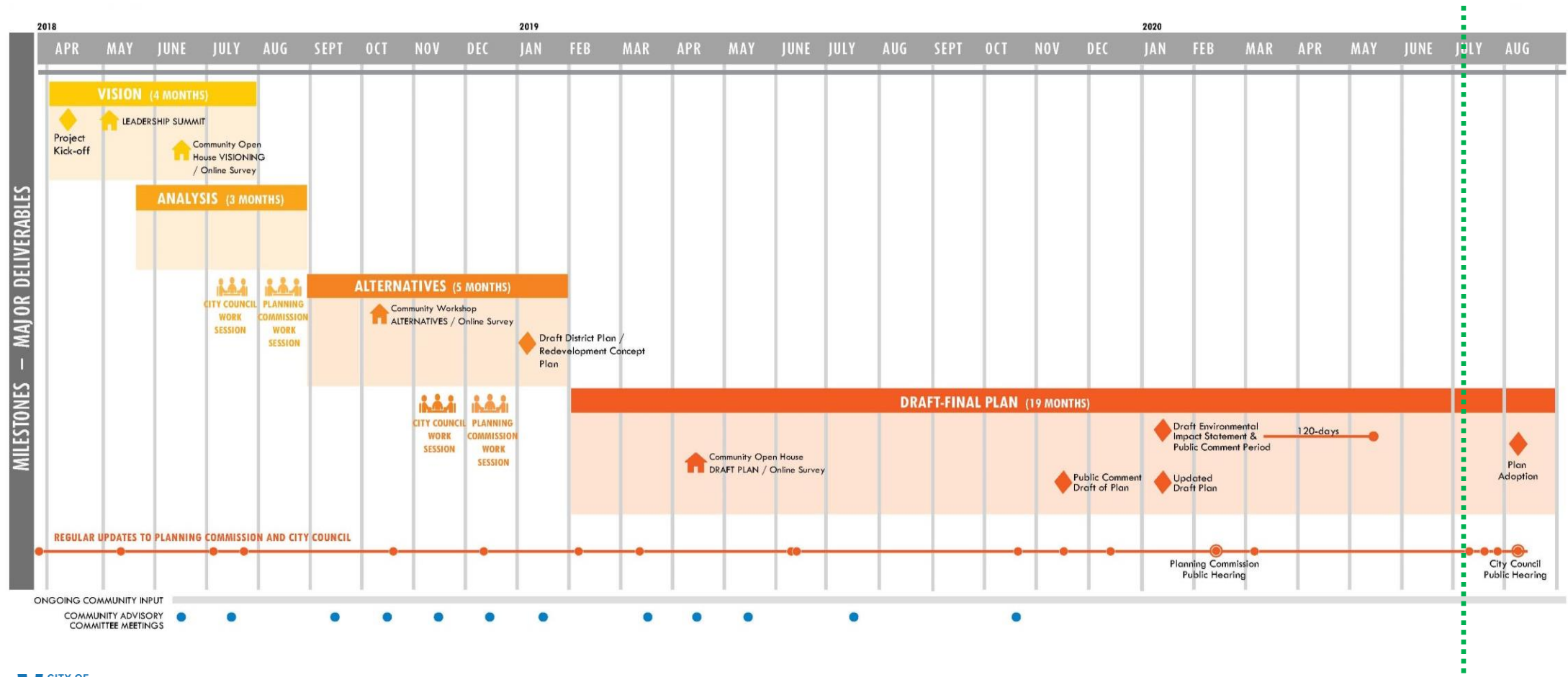
- Creation of a distinct identity through urban form
- Attractive, appealing architecture that complements existing neighborhood character
- Appropriate scale (number of stories) of buildings



8. Arts/Culture

- Installation of art pieces, such as murals, that can be participatory and reflect local history
- Dedicated, flexible venues for arts and cultural events
- Neighborhood library as a cultural amenity

Heights District Plan: Timeline & Phasing



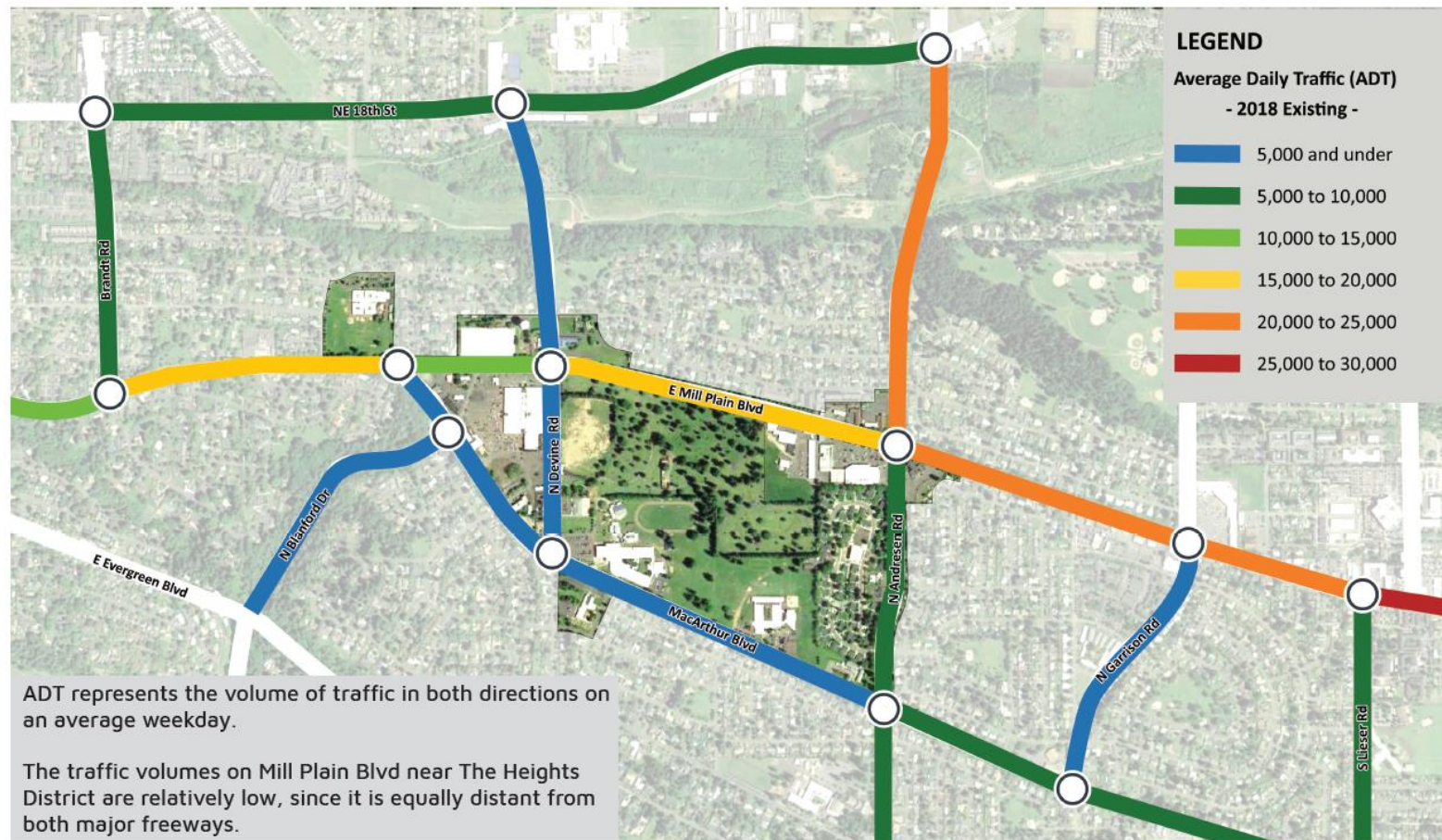
Heights District: Existing Conditions Analysis

- Current Land Use Mix
- Market Analysis & Redevelopment Potential
- Demographics
- Income-based housing
- **Transportation Network, Access & Impacts**
- Sustainability program



Roadway Capacity Analysis

EXISTING AVERAGE DAILY TRAFFIC



Traffic Impact Study: Data Collection

- Traffic data was collected at intersections in the study area in early June 2018
- Data was collected while school was in session, and **peak periods** were adjusted to account for school drop off and pick up:
 - Weekday AM Peak: 7am-10am
 - Weekday PM Peak: 2pm-6pm
- Counts included vehicles, pedestrians, bicycles and heavy vehicles
- Analysis also included existing signal timing at signalized intersections in the District
- Because multiple intersections were heavily influenced by school traffic, the **peak hour** determination for each intersection was individualized, to account for the heaviest traffic volumes

Traffic Impact Study: Build Alternative

- The Build alternative represents future conditions in the Regional Transportation Plan, which includes the following improvements:
 - Additional westbound left-turn lane at Mill Plain and Lieser
 - Signal optimization along Mill Plain corridor and at Andresen and 18th Street intersection
- Traffic forecasts utilize the Southwest Washington Regional Transportation Council (RTC) travel demand model

Traffic Impact Study: Data Collection

- Assumes 1,800 new residential units within the District
- Assumes the same number of commercial trips, even though total commercial square footage will decrease from 258,000 sf to 204,000 sf
- Trip generation developed using the 10th Edition Institute of Traffic Engineers (ITE) Trip Generation Manual



Traffic Impact Study: LOS Today



Traffic Impact Study: Intersection LOS 2038, BUILD



Traffic Impact Study: Intersection LOS 2038, No Build



Traffic Impact Study: Findings & Recommendations

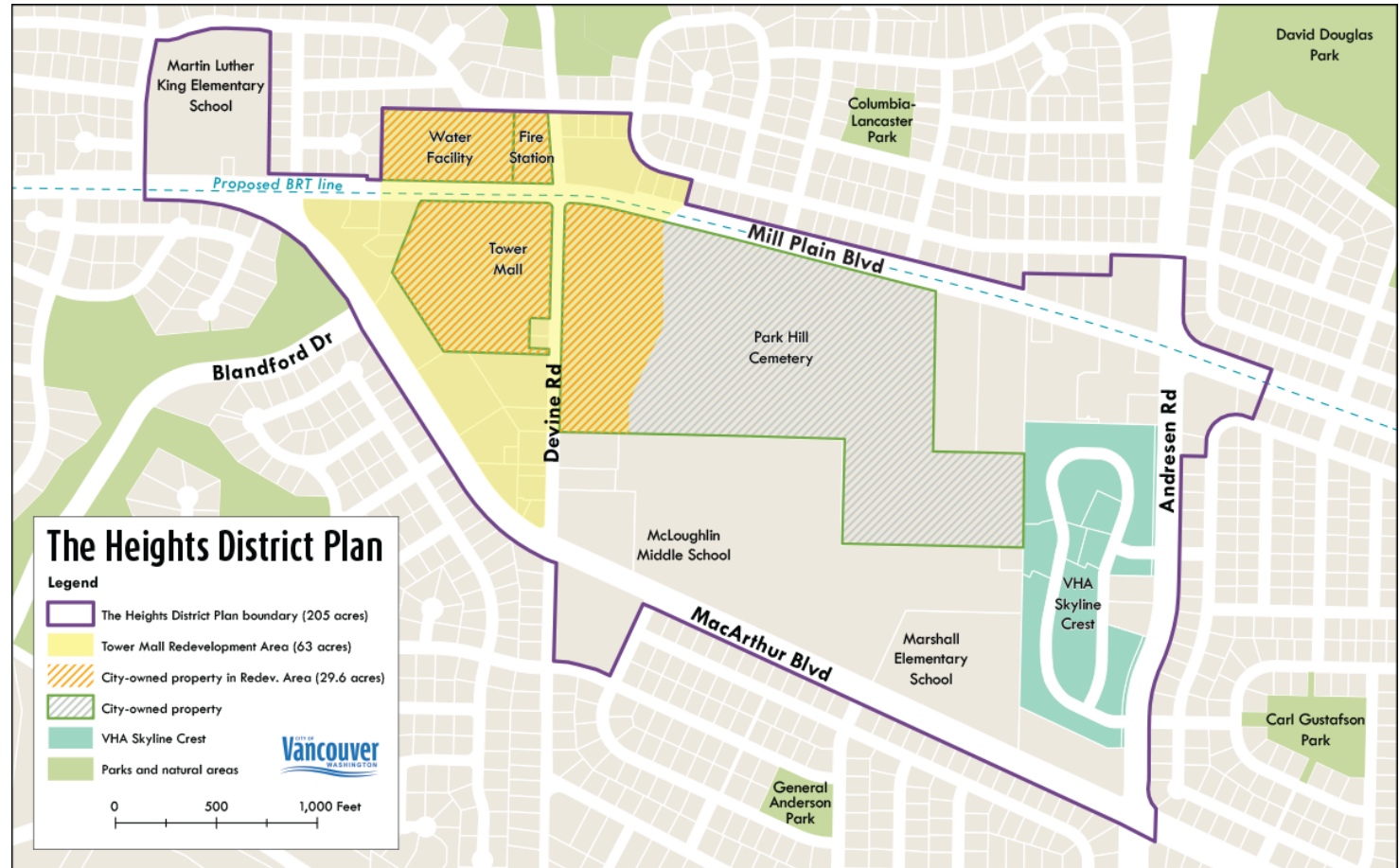
- Current capacity of existing roadways can accommodate new trips generated by proposed redevelopment
- All intersections are currently operating at an acceptable level (LOS D or above), except for the unsignalized intersection at MacArthur-Lieser-St. Helens Road
- Some intersection approaches are operating at an LOS E, but this is similar between the Build and No Build scenarios
- Planned improvements, including roundabouts at MacArthur and Devine and MacArthur and Andresen will improve traffic operations from their current condition and support new development
- A planned traffic signal at the MacArthur-Leiser-St. Helen's intersection, while outside the Heights District, will address the biggest traffic challenge in the area
- The addition of protected/permitted left turns (flashing yellow arrow) at Mill Plain/Garrison and Andresen/18th Street will further improve traffic operations

Potential Diversion Traffic: Baseline Traffic Counts

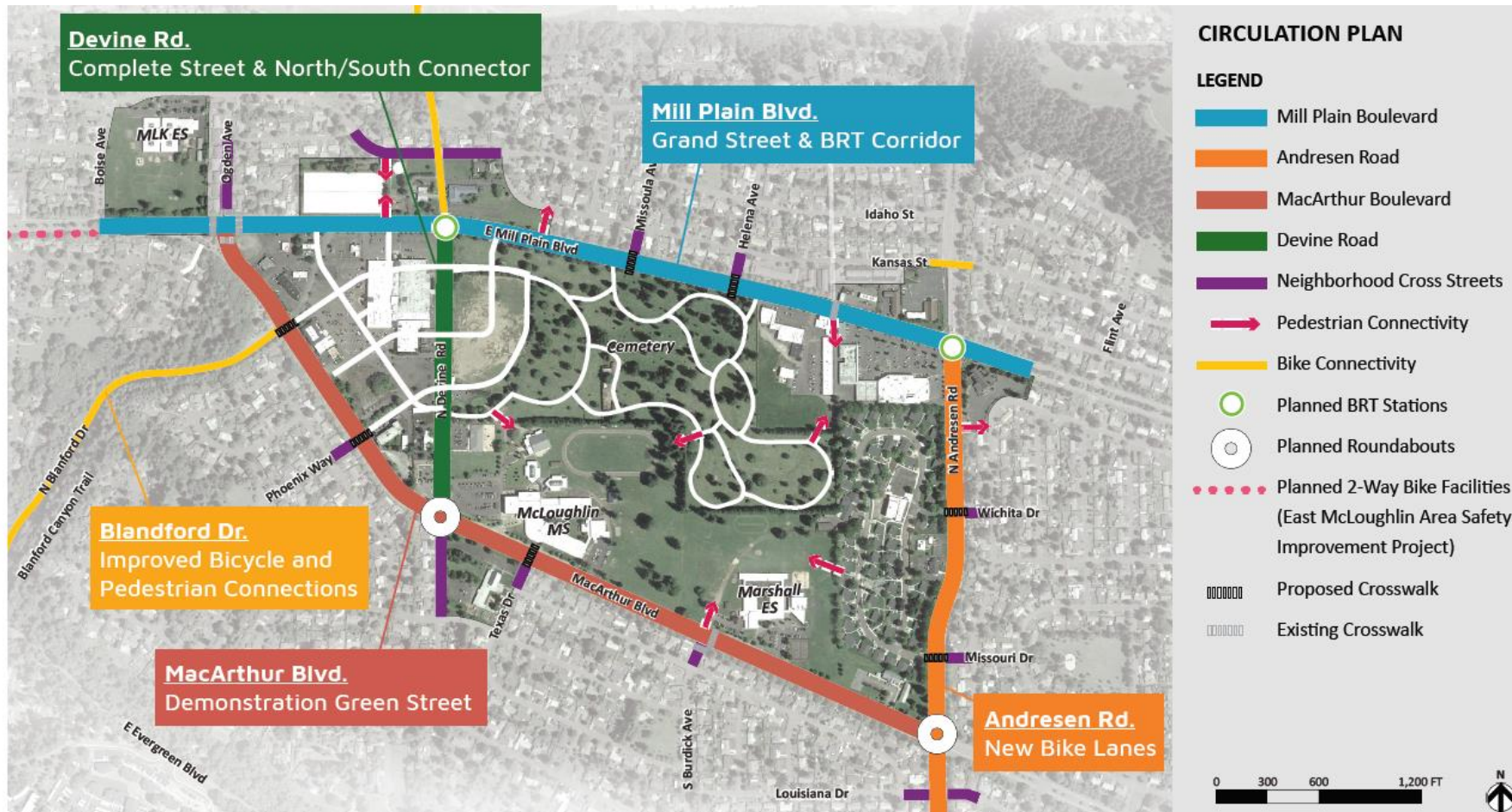
- Baseline traffic counts are being conducted in neighborhoods adjacent to the Heights
- Pre-COVID traffic counts were done for streets in the Evergreen Highlands and Northcrest neighborhoods
- Early results indicate speeds and volumes that are fairly low, and would not meet eligibility thresholds for the City's Neighborhood Traffic Calming Program
 - Speeds are below 30 mph and ADT is below 300, and often below 200
- City has committed to annual traffic counts and to implementing traffic calming and diversion reduction measures if/when counts meet thresholds for existing Neighborhood Traffic Calming Program

Heights District Plan: Recommendations

- Land Use & Urban Design
- Public Realm & Open Space
- Equity, Jobs & Housing
- Economic Vitality
- **Mobility, Access & Circulation**
- **Sustainability**



The Heights District: Circulation & Access



The Heights District: Mill Plain Boulevard



The Heights District: Devine Road



The Heights District: MacArthur Boulevard



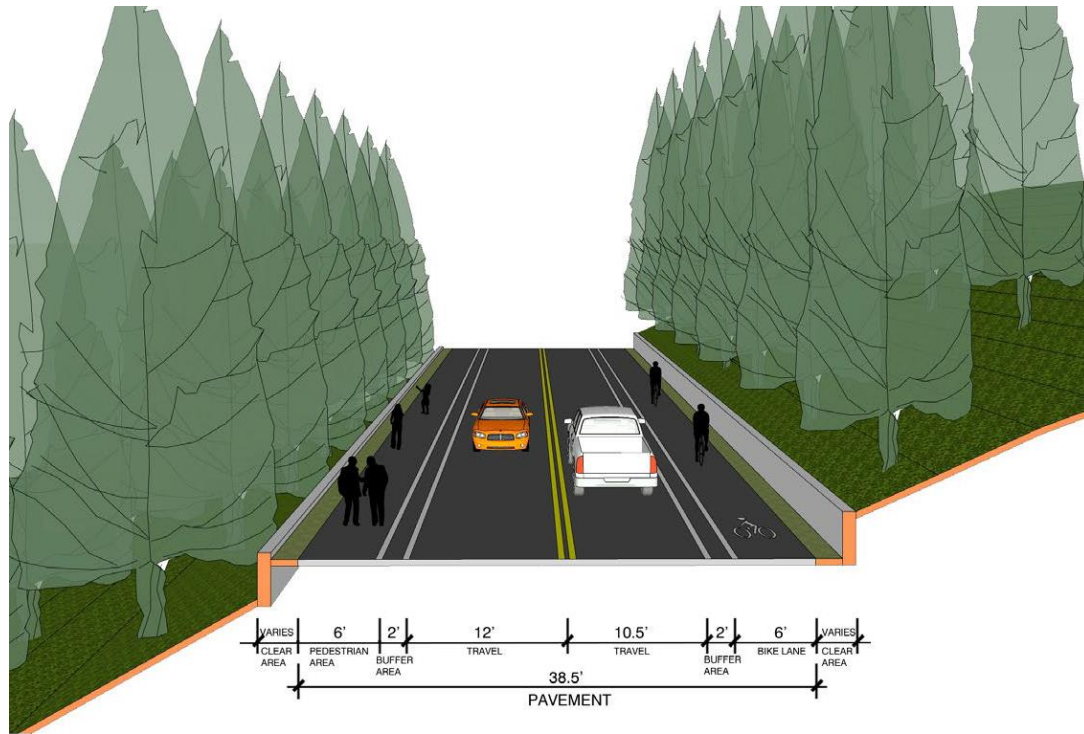
The Heights District: Andresen Road

R.O.W.

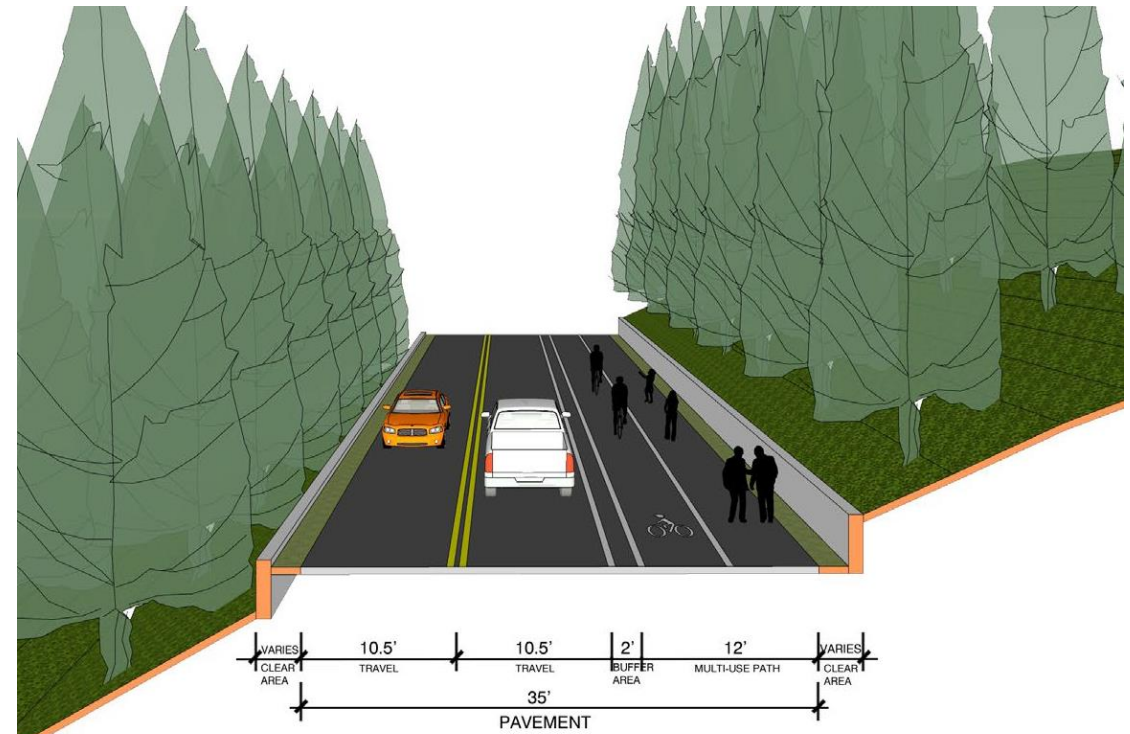
R.O.W.



The Heights District: Blandford Drive



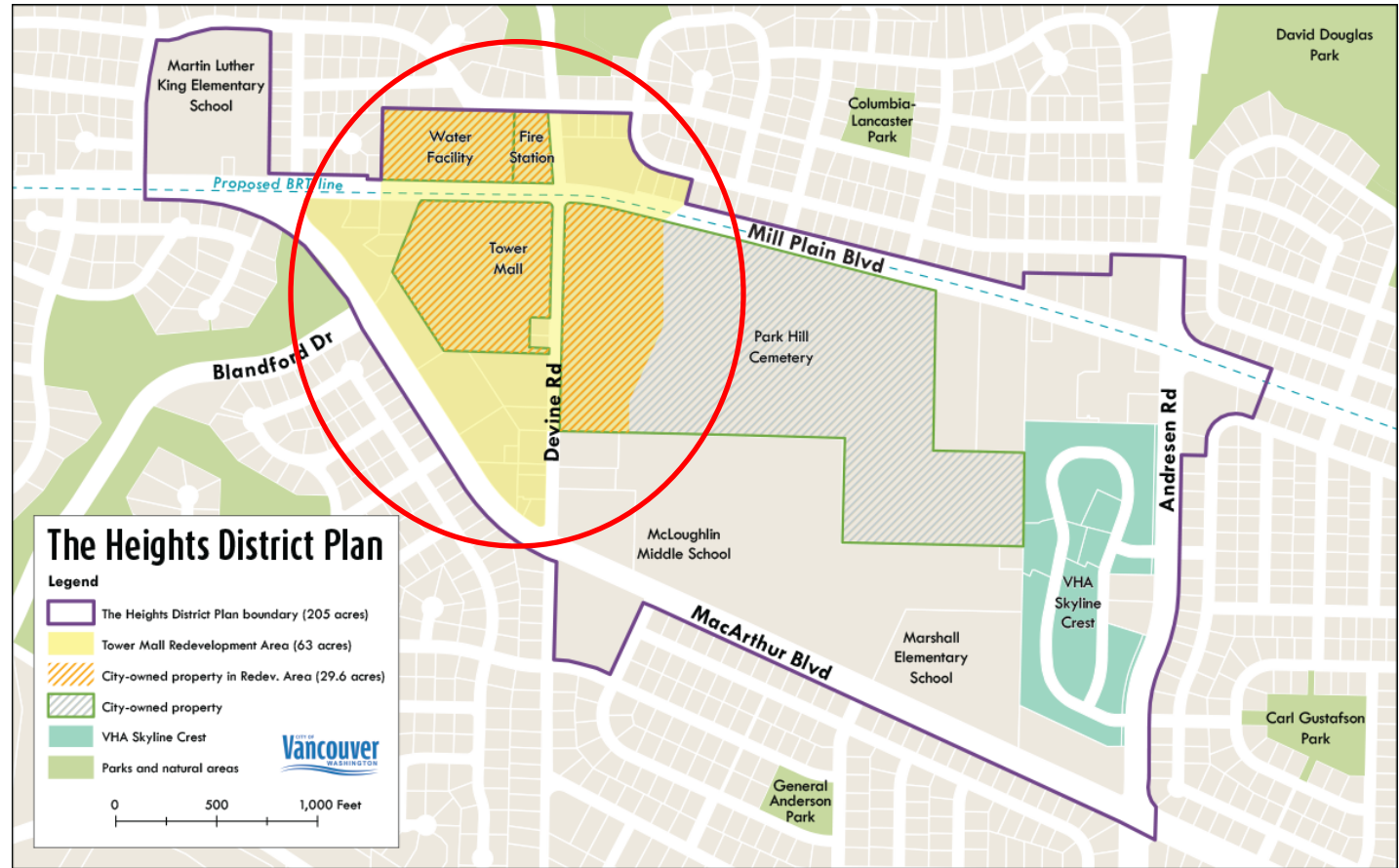
OPTION 1: BLANDFORD DRIVE SECTION A



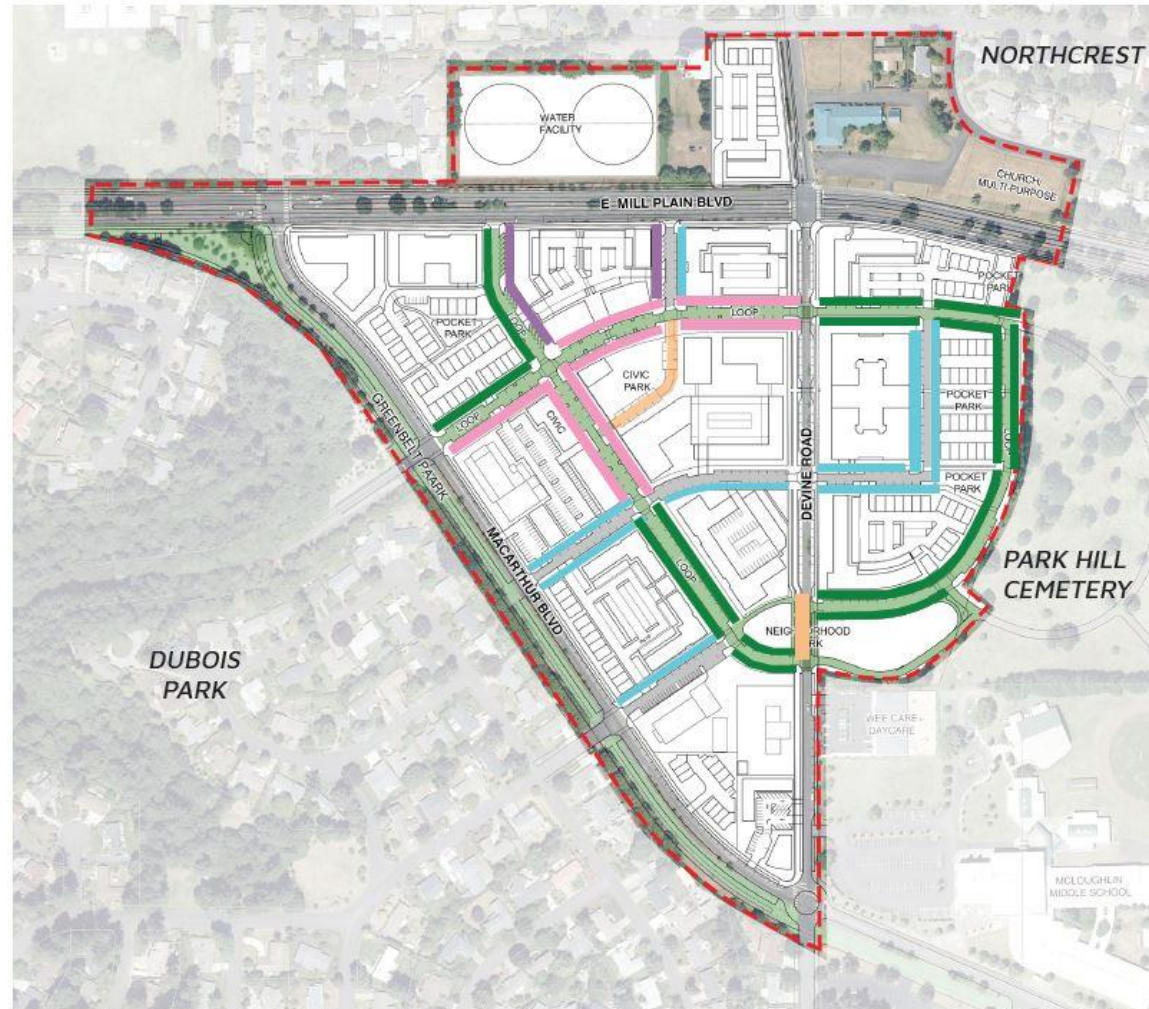
OPTION 2: BLANDFORD DRIVE SECTION A

Recommendations: Tower Mall Redevelopment Area

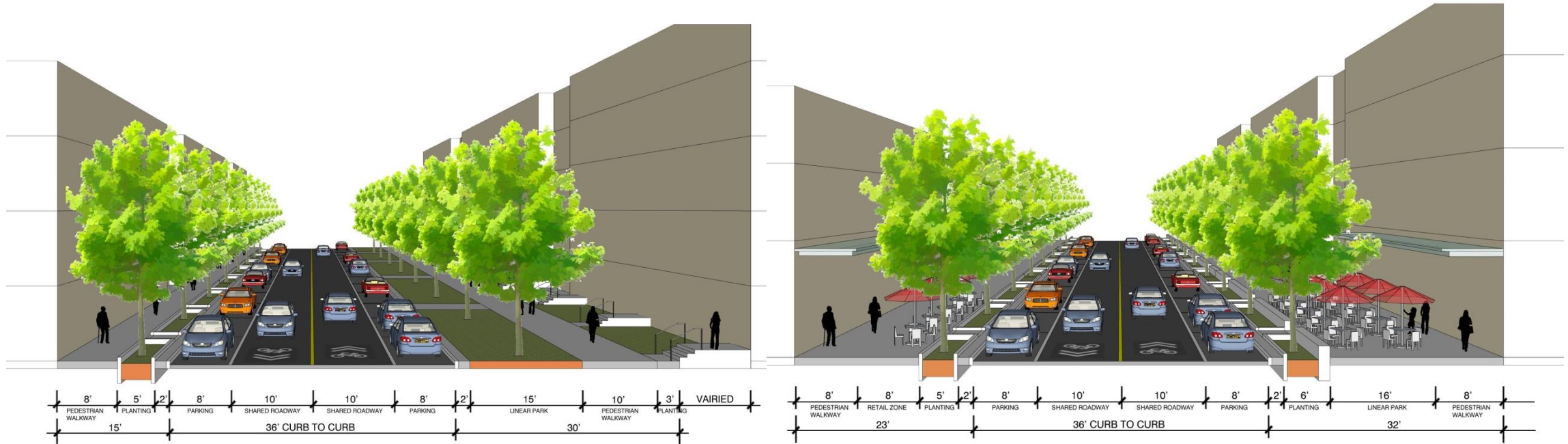
- Proposed Development Program & Land Use Mix
- Preferred Concept Plan: The Loop framework
- Neighborhood Districts approach
- Public Realm & Open Space
- **Internal street network**
- Parking strategy



Tower Mall Redevelopment Area: Internal Streets



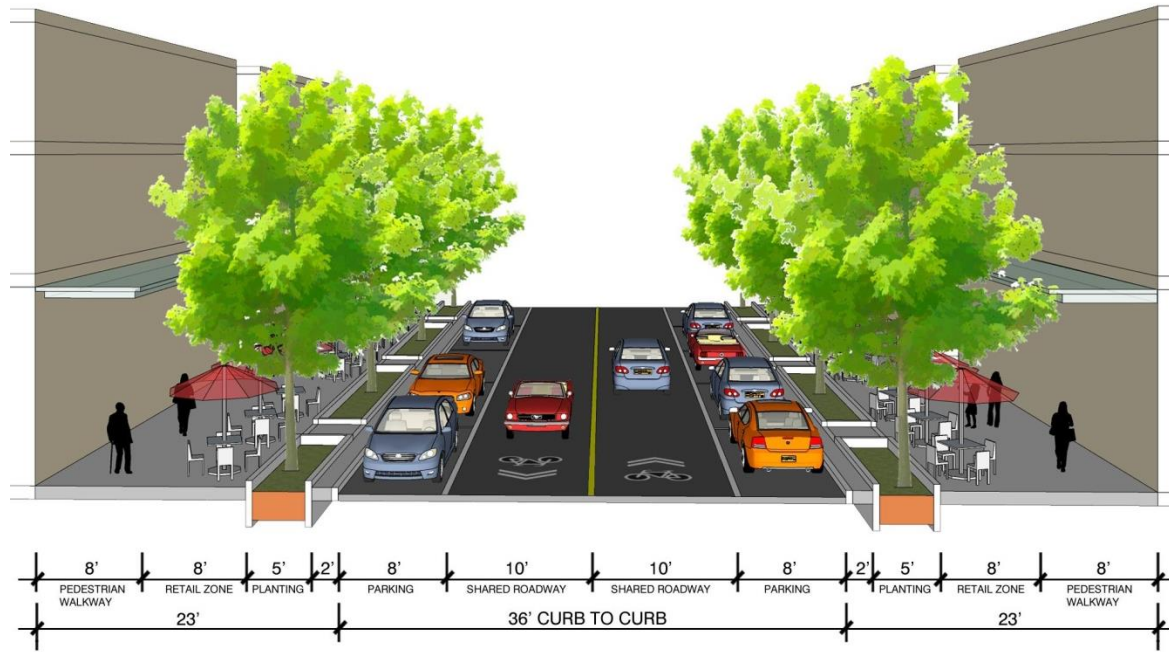
Tower Mall Redevelopment Area: Internal Streets



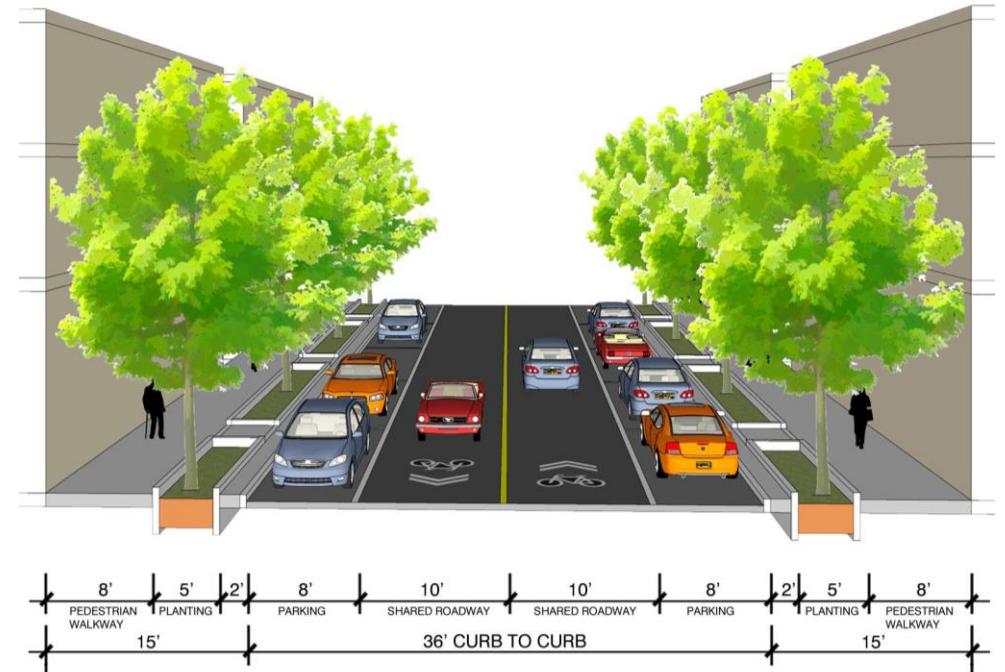
INTERNAL STREET - LINEAR PARK ALONG RESIDENTIAL

INTERNAL STREET - LINEAR PARK ALONG RETAIL

Tower Mall Redevelopment Area: Internal Streets



INTERNAL STREET - RETAIL



INTERNAL STREET - STANDARD

Waterfront/Columbia Way: Street Design



Waterfront/Columbia Way: Street Design



“Sharrow” markings indicate people biking and people driving share the lane

On-street parking creates visual friction

Street Design- Tools for Low Speeds

- Building lines—limiting setback distances through zoning/development standards creates visual friction
- Street trees—create visual friction and provide human and environmental health benefits
- On-street parking—if adjacent to narrow travel lanes that may be delineated through striping/other markings, on-street parking creates visual friction (can provide stormwater management through pervious pavers)
- Bulbouts/curb extensions—shorten pedestrian crossing distances, provide stormwater management opportunities through planting strips

Street Design-Tools for Low Speeds

- Vertical calming in street — raised pedestrian crossings, raised intersections, speed cushions, speed tables
- Narrowed street widths at intersections and between blocks – 10' travel lanes on internal street system
- Frequency of intersections and limitations on block lengths
- Stormwater management in street - rain gardens, bio-swales, larger planting strips and other stormwater management infrastructure will be incorporated in the street, at bulb outs, along travel lanes, and in planting strips

Heights Traffic Calming Opportunities



Heights District Plan: Sustainability

- Robust stormwater management systems
- Energy efficient buildings
- Reduced trips and sustainable mobility
- Restore or improve function of natural landscapes (including TreeCAP Gold Leaf certification)
- Reduce pollutants
- Consider social & economic sustainability



ASPECTS OF SUSTAINABILITY

- ENERGY USE
- MATERIALS
- EMISSIONS
- EQUITY
- HEALTH
- ECOLOGY
- WATER

Fitwel Community Certification

Scorecard

1. Location
2. Building Access
3. Community Open Space: Design
4. Community Open Space: Entrances
5. Community Open Space: Management
6. Outdoor Environment
7. Healthy Buildings
8. Community Assets
9. Water and Restroom Access
10. Healthy Food Environment
11. Community Resiliency
12. Emergency Preparedness



Community Engagement Reflected in the Plan



Concern: Diversion traffic in neighborhoods

Response:

- Improvements to arterial streets will decrease diversion and improve intersection function (i.e. roundabout at Andresen and MacArthur)
- Commitment to measure (baseline and on an annual basis) traffic speed and volumes on neighborhood streets and take steps to address any impacts, including traffic calming, diverters, etc.
- Right-sized parking strategy for District; parking minimums but now maximums; managed parking within redevelopment area to ensure efficiency use of parking assets; required transportation demand management; functional and aesthetic integration of transit to support increased ridership

Community Engagement Reflected in the Plan



Concern: Speeding/history of accidents on Andresen Road

Response:

- Proposed roadway retrofit on Andresen that would decrease travel lanes from two to one in each direction, decrease speed limit, add traffic calming in key areas, and add protected crossings



Concern: Transportation improvements could increase congestion in the short-term if not phased appropriately

Response:

- Prioritize and phase transportation investments so that existing bottlenecks are addressed first, including the MacArthur-Lieser-St. Helen's intersection
- Travel lane reduction on Andresen should be done concurrently or after construction of roundabout at Andresen and MacArthur



Community Engagement Reflected in the Plan



Enhanced Accessibility for people with disabilities and the mobility-challenged

- Enhanced accessibility at entryways and in public spaces
- Emphasis on universal design (ADA not enough)
- Wayfinding that is accessible to the visually challenged; enhanced safety at arterial crossings

***Concern:* Sustainability certification system to ensure redevelopment meets CAC goals around health, equity, wellness**

***Response:* Selected for Fitwel pilot project and pursuing certification**

Transportation: EIS Public Comment

- The amount of parking and potential spillover into adjacent neighborhoods
- Increased traffic and congestion on arterial streets and at intersections
- Diversion traffic into neighborhoods
- Multimodal safety for people walking and biking, including students walking to school and pedestrians crossing arterials
- Special events and traffic management

Transportation: Responses

- Recommendations from the Plan for transportation roadway and multi-modal improvements
 - BRT station platform and improved multi-modal connections to and from transit
 - Multi-modal improvements to bicycle and pedestrian facilities and infrastructure, connectivity, and circulation
 - Parking strategies such as a shared use parking plan and implementation of transportation demand management (TDM)

Transportation: Responses

- Improvements that will improve traffic operations and support new development
 - Planned roundabouts at MacArthur/Devine and MacArthur/Andresen
 - Planned traffic signal at the MacArthur-Leiser-St. Helen's intersection
 - Addition of protected/permitted left turns (flashing yellow arrow) at Mill Plain/Garrison and Andresen/18th Street
 - Andresen to become one travel lane in each direction with protected bike facilities from Mill Plain to Highland Drive

Emergency Services: EIS Findings

- Heights redevelopment will result in the highest demand for emergency services
- Compact growth and development close to existing emergency services could result in more efficient service delivery
- Regular and/or annual performance review of emergency services will identify any required staffing or equipment needs to offset any potential impacts to emergency service delivery, including response time

Emergency Services: EIS Public Comment

- Funding for adequate provision of emergency services with an increase in population from the Heights
- Maintaining response times and service levels for fire and police
- Ensuring safe and efficient access by emergency services with transportation and roadway improvements

Emergency Services: Responses

- VFD/VPD evaluate staffing, equipment, and facility needs on a regular basis through the City's strategic/capital planning and budgeting processes to ensure service levels and target response times are met
- Proportional relationship between increased revenues from Heights development (new residential and commercial uses) and the City's general fund budget
- Population growth from the Heights will occur incrementally over time, and growth projections are reviewed annually by the City and used to adjust planning assumptions for a range of city services

Utilities: EIS Findings

- Upgrades to current water system are not necessary to serve the Heights, only expansion of the system through addition of new piping
- Planned water infrastructure improvements to address existing pressure deficiencies and balance system pressures in the area regardless of the Heights development
- Planned sewage loading capacity expansion at treatment plants, which will accommodate any increase from the Heights development

Utilities: EIS Public Comment

- Capacity for water and sewer infrastructure to accommodate the Heights development
- Maintaining adequate water pressure
- Source of funding for water and sewer infrastructure to serve the Heights
- Rate/tax increases for the surrounding area

Utilities: Responses

- Citywide sewer and water needs are assessed through the General Sewer and Comprehensive Water System Plans, capital facilities planning, and requirements of individual developments assessed at development review
- All new water/sewer required to serve the Heights will be paid for and constructed by the development. New water and sewer service connections require connection fees/system development charges to mitigate for development impacts to the broader city system
- Utility rates fund water utility infrastructure, and impacts to utility rates by the Heights development are not anticipated as rates are set by overall system needs and not individual developments

Environment: EIS Findings

Plants and Animals

- Existing vegetation and animals are limited to species commonly found in urbanized environments, and no exceptional or heritage trees are listed in the District.

Actions in the Plan of limiting impervious surfaces; increasing green infrastructure and reducing stormwater runoff; adding new parks, open space, and community gardens; and using native/adaptive plant species could have a positive impact on priority plant/animal species outside the District

Environment: EIS Findings

Light and Glare

- Under all EIS alternatives, the aesthetic character of the Heights District will change and have the potential to impact light and glare.

Adoption and enforcement of the Heights District urban design standards and guidelines will help shape the character urban form, and public spaces of the development, and will minimize impacts to visual resources and light and glare

Environment: EIS Findings

Climate Change and Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Emissions

- GHG emissions would be generated under all EIS alternatives, but the Heights development implements actions to mitigate impacts.

Increasing access to multi-modal transit options including BRT service and bicycle/pedestrian infrastructure improvements; increasing density in an already urbanized area; advocating for Low Impact Development (LID) and LEED credentials; and implementing a Transportation Demand Management (TDM) program.

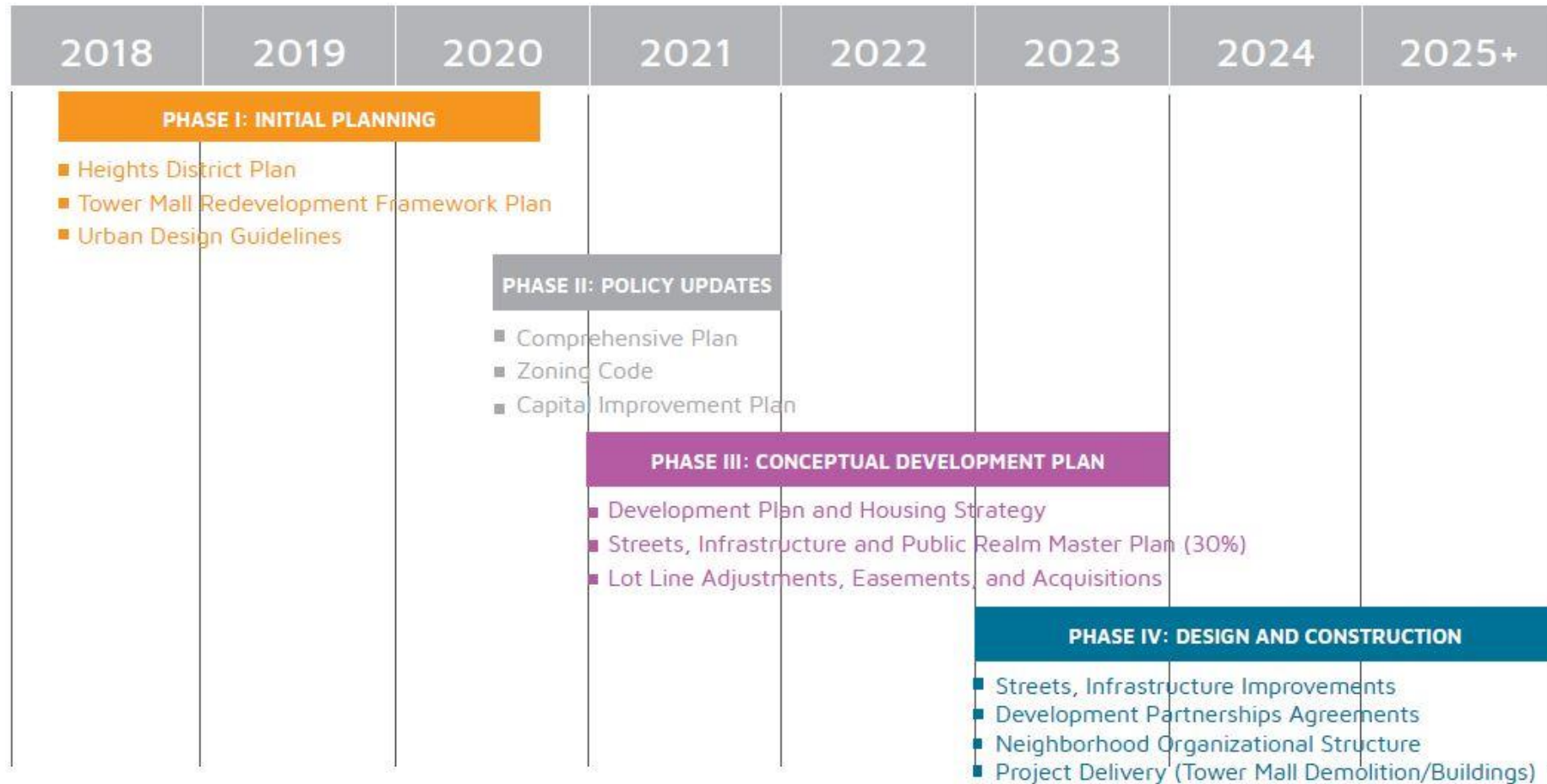
Environment: EIS Public Comment

- Need for cleanup of hazardous substances on the site due to existing dry cleaner
- Mitigation during construction and development including erosion and pollution control
- Concern around habitat destruction for birds during construction and development

Environment: Responses

- Mitigation measures to evaluate potential contamination on the site and address cleanup
- Construction and development will comply with the City and Ecology's stormwater and erosion control regulations
- Preservation of the Park Hill Cemetery and existing vegetation

Implementation Timeline



Phased Implementation Strategy

Phase I: Initial Planning *(concludes pending adoption of the Heights District Plan)*

Phase II: Land Use Code and Policy Updates (2020-2021)

- Updates to development regulations and the Comprehensive Plan including creation of the new Heights Mixed-Use zone (HX zone) and Design Guidelines, adoption of the Planned Action Ordinance (PAO), extension of the Multi-Family Tax Exemption Program, and lifting of the development moratorium
- Fitwel Community certification to support goals of health, equity, and wellness

Phase III: Conceptual Development Planning: Refinement of the development program and housing strategy for the Redevelopment Area, streets and infrastructure, and lot line adjustments, easements, and acquisitions

Phase IV: Delivery, Design, and Construction: Infrastructure improvements, public realm programming, development partnerships and agreements, and overall project delivery

Phase II: Policy Updates & Partnerships

- Update the Comprehensive Plan and Development Code; adopt a Planned Action Ordinance
- Eliminate the development moratorium for the Tower Mall Area
- Extend the Multi-Family Tax Exemption Program along the duration of the Mill Plain BRT Corridor and to the Heights District
- Fitwel Certification for the Heights District Plan
- Develop a comprehensive Stormwater Management Plan for the Heights District
- Update the City's Capital Improvement Program, Transportation Improvement Program and Capital Facilities Plan to reflect the vision articulated in the Heights District Plan
- Coordinate with adjacent property owners to support long-term implementation of the Plan vision
- Demolish the Town Plaza building
- Continue to engage the public

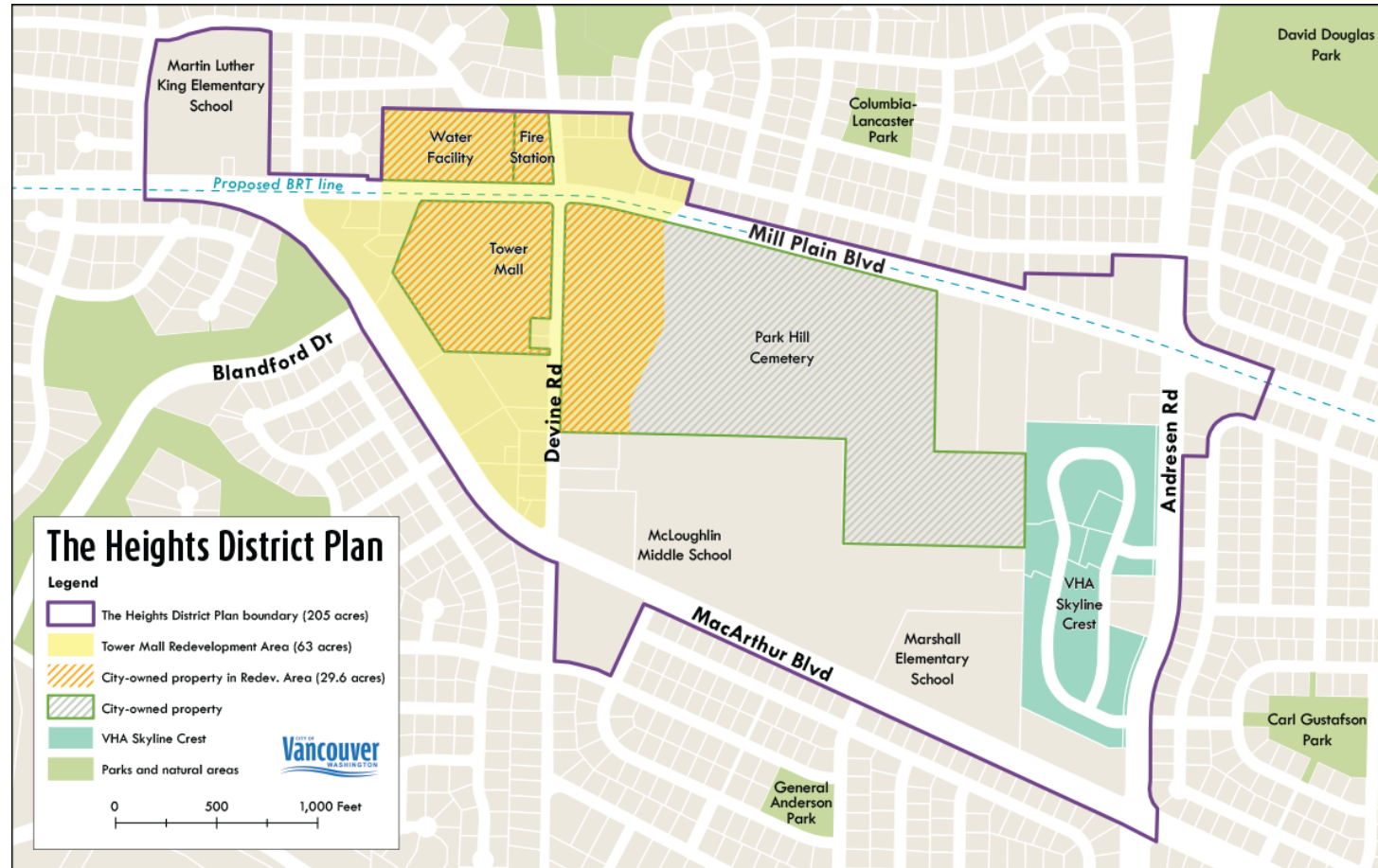
Phase III: Program & Concept Refinement

- Develop and implement strategies to retain local businesses and services, support local entrepreneurship in the Heights, and expand family wage job opportunities
- Develop and implement strategies to facilitate affordable housing development in the District
- Prioritize and implement recommendations from the Reside Vancouver: Anti-Displacement Strategy for Central Vancouver
- Pursue land agreements necessary to facilitate utility easements, land swaps, and develop agreements with private property owners
- Create development incentives specific to the Heights, and pursue local, state and federal funding opportunities
- Coordinate with the City Water Utility on the Master Plan for the Water Station 5
- Remediation of Town Plaza site
- Identify private development partner(s)

Phase IV: Delivery, Design and Construction

- Advance design for infrastructure and public open space, including roadways, utilities, parks and green spaces, and stormwater systems
- Develop system for programming of public open space and create structure for a public art program
- Invest in infrastructure improvements to support early phase redevelopment

Heights District: the Heart of Vancouver



Process and Community Engagement

- 25** Neighborhood Association meetings
- 12** 20-member Community Advisory Committee (CAC) meetings
- 4** community “coffee talks”
- 3** in-person and online community open houses
- 1** Leadership Summit

Planning Commission Workshops

- Seven Planning Commission workshops with evolving issues, discussions and changes:
 - Number of residential units
 - Neighborhood compatibility
 - Green space and universal design
 - Traffic and parking
 - Civic Park and community gathering space
 - From three concept alternatives to one

Planning Commission Public Hearing

- 17 public comments provided at the hearing
- 175 public comments captured through petitions to remove churches from the rezone recommendations
- High level issues and concerns
 - Rezoning of church properties
 - Number of residential units/density, including impacts to the surrounding area
 - Traffic and parking

Planning Commission Deliberation & Recommendation

- Merits of compatible land use, mixed-use, and diversity
- Commitment to green space and tree canopy
- Value in creating a sense of community
- Proactively address adjacent gentrification and displacement
- Remove churches from rezone recommendations

Feb. 11 Planning Commission Public Hearing: unanimous recommendation to adopt the Heights District Plan

Planning Commission Perspective

- Planning Commission role
- Planning Commission sees Heights as an inclusive community
- Neighborhood Center where residents can live and work

From Vision to Reality

- From ideas and abstracts to specifics and timelines
- The process of change
- 20-minute neighborhood
- A community that embraces diversity and inclusion
- Density and livability



Next Steps

- **August 3:** City Council First Reading for Heights District Plan
- **August 17:** City Council Public Hearing for Plan
- **Fall 2020:** Initial implementation steps, including separate PC and CC processes for adoption of new HX zoning district and design guidelines

Questions and Discussion

VANCOUVER
CITY HALL

Rebecca Kennedy, Planning Manager
(360) 487-7896, Rebecca.Kennedy@cityofvancouver.us

Chad Eiken, CED Director
(360) 487-7882, Chad.Eiken@cityofvancouver.us



www.cityofvancouver.us/TheHeights