

## MEMORANDUM

**DATE:** September 2, 2020

**TO:** Mayor and City Council

**FROM:** Bryan Snodgrass, Principal Planner, and Cayla Cothron, Associate Planner, Community and Economic Development Department

**RE:** September 14 workshop review of the Evergreen and Grand component of the Commercial Corridors Strategy

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The September 14 workshop is intended to update the Council on the status of the Evergreen and Grand commercial corridors planning process, and the overall Commercial Corridors Strategy. These were addressed briefly during Council hearings to enact the Evergreen and Grand development moratorium in November 2019, and to remove it in May 2020.

### **Background**

The overall Commercial Corridors Strategy was initiated in 2019 as a community planning process to enhance existing commercial corridors, increase walkability, ensure access to services and amenities, support job growth, and increase housing opportunities. The City retained planning and design firm Crandall-Arambula to assist in this effort, which envisioned development of policies and programs for three distinct areas, including the St. Johns/St. James couplet, Fourth Plain and Mill Plain Boulevards, and Evergreen and lower Grand Boulevards.

The Commercial Corridors Strategy is intended to address broader policy questions related to the City's zoning districts in key corridors, including:

- Do current commercial zoning development standards and allowed uses adequately address the needs and future potential of key corridors?
- If not, how can these be updated to recognize unique characteristics and new transit investments along those key corridors, and further City Strategic Plan objectives related to 20-minute neighborhoods and strengthening neighborhood business districts?
- In addition to development standards, what other tools and/or programs should be utilized to ensure new development supports long-term goals and policies?

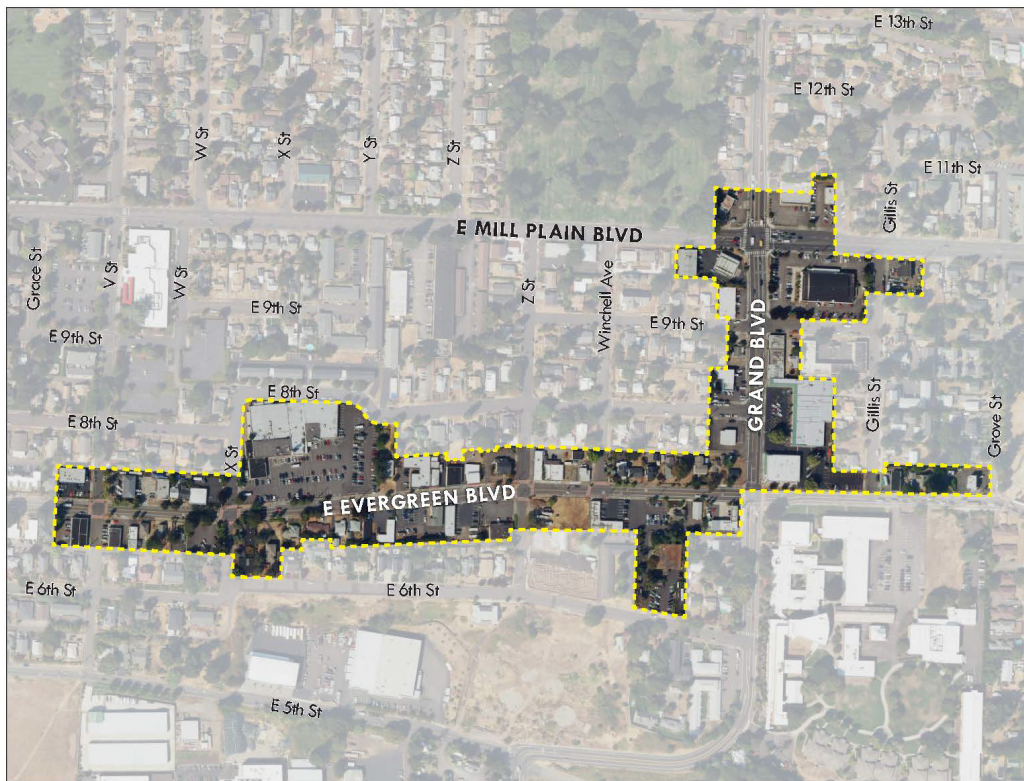
Recommendations resulting from this process will address types of land uses and development that are allowed, the pedestrian environment, building orientation in relationship to the street, and parking and access. Non-regulatory tools and programs will be considered in addition to development standards. Corridor housing as well as commercial uses will be addressed.

An initial existing conditions analysis and market assessment was conducted for all three corridor areas, but with the onset of the Evergreen and Grand moratorium in late 2019 and overall

economic and fiscal constraints from the pandemic in spring 2020, project focus has shifted to the Evergreen and Grand study area as shown in the enclosed map. Future work on the St. Johns/St. James couplet and Mill Plain and Fourth Plain will be re-evaluated in coming years.

### **Evergreen and Grand Commercial Corridors**

The Evergreen and Grand Commercial Corridor Strategy is focused on Grand Blvd. between the Mill Plain and Evergreen Blvd. intersections, and on Evergreen Blvd. between the V and Grove Street intersections.



Evergreen and Grand Boulevard contain an emerging small business district with smaller-scale buildings oriented to the street adjacent to established neighborhoods. Corridor conditions are summarized [here](#). There has been some development interest in recent years including the construction of two new multi-family buildings, as well as additional indications that this area may be growing. The corridors present an opportunity to facilitate a 20-minute neighborhood and the business district. Based on this the City Council adopted a six-month moratorium on new development in November 2019, but allowed it to expire in May 2020 in recognition of potential impacts from the pandemic on local businesses.

Community engagement for the study area began with a February 13 in-person open house and online survey where over 50 residents, property and business owners, and other stakeholders helped identify issues, opportunities, and community priorities (public input is summarized [here](#) and [here](#)). Key community concerns included improving walkability and pedestrian safety, new development being out of character with the surrounding area, and poor appearance and disrepair of the public realm and existing buildings. A desire for more local eating and drinking establishments, small-scale retail, and neighborhood-serving amenities was also expressed.

Community feedback and data gathered during the first stage of the process was used to develop a long-term community vision, as well as supportive goals and objectives for land use, mobility, parking, urban design, and economic development (see attachment A). These were presented for community feedback at virtual open houses on August 26 and 27 which were attended by a total of 15 persons.

The recorded presentation used to generate feedback at the August open house events is available [here](#). Attending community members expressed general agreement with the vision, goals, and objectives presented. Specific input included concerns about existing buildings needing repair, excess traffic speeds on Grand Blvd, and public safety. Desires for multi-modal upgrades on Evergreen Blvd and traffic calming on Grand Blvd, community gathering spaces, and a local grocery and/or farmers market were also as expressed. A need for adequate parking for retail businesses and new residential development, and to maintain and build upon the existing character of the corridors was also cited. More direct connections to the corridors from surrounding areas/destinations and wayfinding were also called for.

For those that were unable to attend the open house events, an online survey is available on the project [Be Heard page](#) where community members can view short videos on the vision, goals, and objectives and provide feedback through the end of September. Input provided at this stage will help identify recommendations to achieve the long-term vision. These will be brought forward for community review at future virtual meetings and outreach opportunities anticipated in fall and winter 2020.

### **Next Steps**

Based on feedback to date and additional survey results being collected through the end of September, the project team will develop draft concepts and high-level recommendations for community review at public outreach opportunities anticipated in the next one to two months. Workshops will be scheduled before the Planning Commission and City Council, with hearings and final adoption not anticipated until early 2021.

For more information, please visit the [project website](#), or contact project staff: Bryan Snodgrass at [bryan.snodgrass@cityofvancouver.us](mailto:bryan.snodgrass@cityofvancouver.us) or (360) 487-7946; or Cayla Cothron at [cayla.cothron@cityofvancouver.us](mailto:cayla.cothron@cityofvancouver.us) or (360) 487-7899.

**ATTACHMENT A: EVERGREEN AND GRAND CORRIDORS VISION, GOALS, AND OBJECTIVES**

**EVERGREEN AND GRAND CORRIDORS 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.*

LAND USE	MOBILITY	PARKING	URBAN DESIGN	ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
<p><b>GOAL</b> <i>Strengthen current businesses while providing an appropriate mix of commercial and residential uses.</i></p>	<p><b>GOAL</b> <i>Establish a balanced multi-modal network of motor vehicle, transit, walking, and biking routes through the corridors.</i></p>	<p><b>GOAL</b> <i>Provide adequate parking to serve existing uses and future development.</i></p>	<p><b>GOAL</b> <i>Create public and private spaces that are inclusive, integrated, and contribute positively to the livability of the corridor.</i></p>	<p><b>GOAL</b> <i>Provide ample opportunities for small-scale, locally-owned businesses to thrive.</i></p>
<p><b>OBJECTIVES</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide viable opportunities for new retail and dining uses that attract local and regional businesses.</li> <li>• Support a mix of uses that serve the daily needs of surrounding neighborhood residents and employees.</li> <li>• Encourage transit-supportive uses near the planned Mill Plain Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) station platform at the intersection of Mill Plain and Grand.</li> <li>• Allow a variety of housing types to serve a range of needs, preferences, ages, and incomes.</li> <li>• Discourage additional</li> </ul>	<p><b>OBJECTIVES</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide safe and direct sidewalk and bike lane routes and intersection crossings within and to the corridors for all regardless of age or physical ability.</li> <li>• Foster safe and comfortable connections to and from transit, including the planned Mill Plain Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) and existing bus routes.</li> <li>• Limit excessive traffic speed through effective speed reduction and/or traffic calming measures.</li> <li>• Maintain access for emergency, service, maintenance, delivery, and personal vehicles to</li> </ul>	<p><b>OBJECTIVES</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support existing and future retail uses by providing adjacent short-term curbside parking and bike parking, as appropriate.</li> <li>• Minimize impacts of parking on the walking and biking environment.</li> <li>• Limit excessive spillover parking into adjacent residential areas.</li> <li>• ‘Right-size’ site parking requirements that may stifle development.</li> </ul>	<p><b>OBJECTIVES</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create opportunities for cultural, community, and other amenities that attract customers and strengthen businesses.</li> <li>• Encourage safe and active public spaces that are inclusive, accessible, and comfortable for all residents, customers, employees, and visitors.</li> <li>• Encourage new public spaces that contribute to the livability and economic vitality of the corridors.</li> <li>• Foster a distinct identity and improve corridor aesthetics by increasing the amount of cohesive landscaping and</li> </ul>	<p><b>OBJECTIVES</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maximize redevelopment opportunity sites.</li> <li>• Discourage gentrification and displacement by identifying policies, programs, or other measures to address affordability concerns and wealth creation opportunities for residents and businesses.</li> <li>• Provide regulatory flexibility to foster innovation and creativity.</li> <li>• Strengthen existing local and small businesses by establishing programs and tools to support their economic viability.</li> <li>• Implement policies,</li> </ul>

<p>motor vehicle related uses (service and repair shops, gas stations, etc.) in the corridors.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discourage nuisance uses that may lead to increased crime, or excessive traffic or noise.</li> <li>• Foster street-oriented uses that create walking and biking activity throughout all business hours, all days, and all seasons.</li> </ul>	<p>businesses.</p>		<p>streetscape features.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promote sustainable design for buildings, sites, and streets.</li> <li>• Ensure form, massing, and scale of new development is context-sensitive and supports and strengthens the livability of the corridor.</li> </ul>	<p>programs, and other tools to mitigate impacts of the ongoing coronavirus pandemic.</p>
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