

Central Vancouver Neighborhood Revitalization Strategy Area

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Introduction

The City of Vancouver's Community Development Block Grant program is requesting a Neighborhood Revitalization Strategy Area (NRSA) designation for Central Vancouver. The *Central Vancouver NRSA* will be the second designated NRSA in the City of Vancouver. The first is the Esther Short NRSA, approved by the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) on June 30, 2006. (1) The City of Vancouver has completed a plan for a larger development referred to as the *Fourth Plain Subarea Plan* and approved by Vancouver's City Council in January 2007. A NRSA designation for Central Vancouver will assist with many of the Plan's goals, such as:

- Home Ownership
- Home and Business Rehabilitation
- Establish a Community Development Entity
- Establish a Merchant Association
- Streetscape and Parks Improvement

History of Fourth Plain Subarea

The City of Vancouver and the *Central Vancouver NRSA's* history begins with the settlement of Fort Vancouver, by the Hudson's Bay Company, around 1825. The first year settlers found the area surrounding Fort Vancouver densely forested with intermittent areas referred to as 'plains' throughout. These plains were subsequently used for agriculture and industry. The first plain, also called Mill Plain, was the location for both grist and lumber mills. A second plain was found near Burnt Bridge Creek south of 18th St. and east of Bryant. A third plain was located west of what is now the Westfield Mall; the fourth and largest plain, was located in the area we now call Orchards, and the fifth plain was located east of Vancouver's current boundary near Camas. The road from Fort Vancouver to the fourth plain went through the second and third plains and is now Fourth Plain Boulevard. (8) Fourth Plain Boulevard runs horizontally through the center of the designated NRSA block groups. See map on page 6.

Vancouver's population soared during World War II. In just four months it grew from 18,000 to 85,000 people. Much of this growth occurred within *Central Vancouver NRSA*. The Bagley Downs and Fourth Plain Village, neighborhoods were developed by the Vancouver Housing Authority to provide war time housing. After World War II, Vancouver's population declined and within five years, it was 41,000. This decline in population had a direct effect on *Central Vancouver NRSA* and started a trend towards deteriorating conditions. The development of SR-500 in 19?? also contributed to the decline of the area, as it provided an alternative route to the Fourth Plain Boulevard.

Between the census in 1990 and 2000, the population of Vancouver soared from 46,000 to 143,000 people. This growth can be attributed to a large annexation in 1997 and an influx of new residents to the area making Vancouver the fourth largest city in the state. Although Vancouver has experienced overall growth, very little has occurred within *Central Vancouver NRSA*. This

land area of 1,982 acres has a population of 24,118 (HUD Census 2000) with 18,329 people (76%) considered low to moderate income. (8)

Many of the businesses, approximately 250, along Fourth Plain Boulevard are small family owned businesses that cater to the large ethnic population living in the surrounding neighborhoods. These businesses include Hispanic/Latino, American and Asian markets as well as a variety of ethnic restaurants. Businesses have suffered due to the stagnation of growth in the area and the loss of auto traffic after SR-500 was built, resulting in many empty businesses as well as for rent signs. (8)

Consultation

Consultation for the *Central Vancouver NRSA* is based on results from the *Fourth Plain Subarea Plan* planning efforts. The *Fourth Plain Subarea Plan* was developed as a greater concept of revitalization and redevelopment and include a broader range of different physical boundaries and statistics. *Central Vancouver NRSA* includes information from the *Fourth Plain Subarea Plan* when the data is relevant. The *Fourth Plain Subarea Plan's* process involved a public outreach element that included:

- An *Oversight Committee* composed of local residents, Neighborhood Associations, business owners, government, nonprofit agencies, representatives from Clark College and the Vancouver Housing Authority.
- This committee met throughout the course of the planning process to gather input on development and design principles, create a vision statement; provide input on specific actions proposed in the *Fourth Plain Subarea Plan* and to track the progress of the planning efforts.
- Interviews of stakeholder groups that included local residents, business owners, developers and lenders.
- Visioning Workshops in which community members were asked to identify important areas within the subarea that are perceived as places of concern and places for future opportunity.
- Outreach to English Language Learners (ELL) students and their families.
- Vancouver's *Fourth Plain Subarea Plan* was completed in 2006 and adopted in January 2007.(8)

Fourth Plain Subarea Plan Vision

The following vision statement was developed by the *Oversight Committee* and is included in the *Fourth Plain Subarea Plan*.

People

- All people feel valued and safe
- Celebrate diversity
- Neighborhoods are stable and homeownership is encouraged
- An area that is well served, by stores, schools and public transportation and services
- Residents and businesses owners can use their skills and experience to increase economic security

Business

- Supports small businesses and continues to function as a business incubator
- Support a diverse range of employment and uses
- Business owners create an organization to advocate their interests
- Mix of uses encouraged at key nodes and in underdeveloped areas

Community Character

- City wide destination for goods and services with an international flair
- Safe or safer than other areas of the city
- Public places to gather and a streetscape that is well cared for and inviting
- Schools continue as focus of area activities with room to expand

Access and Mobility

- Transit system is enhanced and improved and accessible to all residents
- Street connectivity is improved
- Regional transportation systems are connected to the *Fourth Plain Subarea*
- Safe pedestrian connection and crossings are provided for, and traffic safety study recommendations implemented (8)

Community Partnerships in *Central Vancouver NRSA* & Oversight Committee:

The following groups or agencies were represented in the *Fourth Plain Subarea Plan* meetings.

Clark College

Vancouver School District

Vancouver Housing Authority

C-TRAN

Vancouver Chamber of Commerce

Bagley Downs Neighborhood Association

Meadow Homes Neighborhood Association

Fourth Plain Village Neighborhood Association

Harney Heights Neighborhood Association

Rose Village Neighborhood Association

Central Park Neighborhood Association

Ogden Neighborhood Association

City of Vancouver-Transportation Department

City of Vancouver- Community Services Department

City of Vancouver City Council

Potential Community Partnerships for the *Central Vancouver NRSA*:

Vancouver Farmers Market

Columbia Nonprofit Housing

Unlimited Choices Inc.

Home Ownership Center

Affordable Community Environments

YW Housing

Share

Neighborhood Revitalization Strategy Area

-Excerpts from the Fourth Plain Subarea Plan and Fourth Plain Briefing Book Draft as referenced to the block groups in the Central Vancouver NRSA designation.

Boundaries & Demographic Criteria

The Central Vancouver Neighborhood Revitalization Strategy Area has a total HUD population of 24,118 of which low to moderate income accounts for 76% of the population. Central Vancouver NRSA request is within the Fourth Plain Subarea Plan. It is bound to the north by SR-500, Burton Road to the east, 18th Street/16th Street to the south, and Interstate 5 to the west. See Figure One, on the following page, for the Central Vancouver NRSA boundaries. Central Vancouver NRSA includes approximately 1,982 acres. (8)

Table One:
Income levels for Central Vancouver NRSA Census Tracts and Block Groups

Income Levels for Central Vancouver NRSA Block Groups					
Census Tract	Block Group	Low/Mod Population	Total Population	Percentage	Median Household Income
411.09	3	2583	2891	86.7	\$24,397
412.03	1	1267	1745	72.2	\$32,339
416	1	643	799	79.1	\$32,188
416	2	2374	3048	78.3	\$22,933
417	1	1917	2179	83.9	\$27,845
417	2	1228	1894	69.1	\$27,917
418	1	993	1531	68.2	\$28,953
418	2	806	1234	65.3	\$34,464
418	3	830	1256	68.3	\$26,652
426	1	1472	1990	74.7	\$26,125
427	1	1350	1633	83.0	\$22,850
427	2	2098	2521	83.0	\$21,318
Total		17,517	24,118	76%	

Source: HUD, 2000 US Census

Assessment

Land Use

Central Vancouver NRSA is a low-density urban area that contains a broad variety of uses including housing, industrial and warehousing facilities, retail centers, government buildings, parks and schools. Land use in Central Vancouver NRSA is primarily residential; with the highest percentage of land use (50%) in the residential zoning category. The next most common land use is school/government/religious/social services (21%); Commercial (9%) Industrial (8%), Parks and open spaces (2%) and miscellaneous/vacant (10%). (2)

Central Vancouver NRSA

NRSA map includes 12 block groups.

Housing

Over 72% (6,502 renters to 2,520 owners) of households in the *Central Vancouver NRSA* rent their homes. Accordingly, the area has a high percentage of multifamily housing units. Clark County's housing stock is 70% single-family; City of Vancouver is 60% while the Fourth Plain Subarea is 30%. (8) The median value of housing in *Central Vancouver NRSA* is ranges from \$87,000 to \$138,800; whereas the overall median value in the City of Vancouver is \$172,509 (year 2004(8)). Over 25% of occupied homes in *Central Vancouver NRSA* were built prior to 1980. Renters in *Central Vancouver NRSA* also pay less for housing. The average rent in the subarea is 13% (\$618) less compared to the rents (\$711) in the rest of Vancouver. (8)

Population

The population of *Central Vancouver NRSA* is approximately 22,744 (2000 U.S. Census) and represents 15.8% of Vancouver's overall population. The population is expected to grow slowly by 1.63% (2001 through 2009), which is significantly less than the 2.81% from the previous decade. The current median age in *Central Vancouver NRSA* is 27.7 years old compared to Vancouver (33.6 years) and Clark County (34.6 years). (8)

Table 2: Central Vancouver NRSA Age Distribution

NRSA Age Group	NRSA Total Population of Age Group
Under 1 to 5 years	2736
6 to 10 years	2071
11 to 15 years	1474
16 to 20 years	1597
21 to 24 years	1703
25 to 29 years	2204
30 to 34 years	2038
35 to 39 years	1754
40 to 44 years	1715
45 to 49 years	1288
50 to 54 years	920
55 to 59 years	756
60 to 64 years	617
65 to 74 years	916
75 years and older	955

Source: US Census 2000 P8: Sex by Age

Diversity

Approximately 32% of the residents in the *Fourth Plain Subarea* are foreign born (8). The highest concentration of the foreign born population are from Mexico, Ukraine, Russia and Vietnam with a smaller concentration from Bosnia/ Herzegovina, Iran, Philippians, Central Asia and Canada. Along with the percentage of people who are foreign born, *Central Vancouver NRSA* has a high percentage of people who do not speak English or do not speak English well. Approximately 14% (1,170 households) of the *Central Vancouver NRSA* households are considered 'linguistically isolated' compared to 4.7% of City of Vancouver households. Linguistic isolation is determined if all the members in a household over fourteen years old have some difficulty speaking English. The language barriers faced by many of the people in *Central Vancouver NRSA* create further difficulties for them in finding jobs, obtaining an education and even getting basic services.(8) The diversity of race, illustrated in Table 3, shows a majority of the population white, followed by Latino/Hispanic.

Table 3: Central Vancouver NRSA Diversity

	Central Vancouver NRSA	Central Vancouver NRSA %
Total:	22,744	
White alone	16,413	72%
Black or African American alone	648	3%
American Indian and Alaska Native alone	213	1%
Asian alone	873	4%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander alone	134	1%
Hispanic/Latino	3,224	14%
Two or more races	1,227	5%

Diversity distribution in the *Central Vancouver NRSA* of total block group Source: US Census 2000 P6: Age by Sex

Poverty

Out of the 22,568 individuals living in Central Vancouver, there are 5,600 people living in poverty (25 %); that is more than twice that of the City of Vancouver's poverty rate of 10.6 percent. Median incomes in *Central Vancouver* are also substantially lower than City of Vancouver's overall median income of \$46,189. (8)

The federal poverty threshold (year 2004) was \$19,484 for a household of four and \$9,827 for a single person household. Poverty levels are determined by thresholds, developed by the Department of Agriculture, that use income, before tax, and do not include non-cash aid such as Medicaid, food stamps, etc. Thirty-seven percent of children under the age of 18 in *Central Vancouver NRSA* account for those individuals in poverty. Comparatively, the rate for children under the age of 18 living in poverty, in the City of Vancouver, is 16.7 %. (8)

Education

In *Central Vancouver NRSA*, 2,747(23%) of residents who are 25 years or older, have not graduated from high school and 1,229 (9%) having a Bachelor's Degree or higher. In comparison, 15% of the City of Vancouver residents have not graduated high school while over 20% have a Bachelor's Degree or higher. (8)

Employment

As of the year 2000, approximately 9,743 (59%) residents in *Central Vancouver NRSA* were employed of the 16,463 residents over 16 years of age. (8)

Transportation

The City of Vancouver is separated by the Columbia River only five miles north of Portland, Oregon and is included as a part of the Portland-Metro region. Thirty percent of Clark County residents commute daily to work in the Portland area. Residents in the *Central Vancouver NRSA* commute to work by driving alone 6,244 (66 %), a total of 1,896 (20%) people carpool compared to the City of Vancouver overall (12.6%). Workers from *Central Vancouver NRSA* commute by public transportation, totaling 767 people (8 %) compared to entire rest of City of Vancouver (3.7%). (8)

Retail

The retail, commercial, and service-oriented businesses operating in *Central Vancouver NRSA*, range from business in strip malls to individual mini-marts. Retail and commercial land use accounts for approximately 9% of the land in the area. The *Central Vancouver NRSA* is known for its ethnic specialty stores that cater to East European, Hispanic/Latino and Asian clients. These businesses serve the ethnic communities that live in the surrounding neighborhoods, e report to have a regional draw. (8)

Industrial

Central Vancouver NRSA has industrial and warehousing land uses (8% of the overall land use of the tax lot area). These are primarily located at the far east of the area along 65th Avenue and 18th Street, in block group 416.1. Fourth Plain Boulevard has an advantage of being within a few miles of both I-5 and I-205 yet the area between lacks industrial and manufacturing development. (8)

Central Vancouver Current Development & Conditions

There are several retail and commercial developments planned for *Central Vancouver NRSA*. The largest of these projects is a new WinCo Foods supermarket planned for the vacant property located at the far northeast corner of 18th Street and Andresen Road.

The Fourth Plain Shopping Center, located at the corner of Andresen and Fourth Plain has recently been renovated following the closure of a Safeway supermarket. A Walgreens drug store relocated in the Fourth Plain Center site and its old location filled by Office Depot.

In 2007, Fred Meyer's announced plans to move out of the store at Grand and Fourth Plain Blvd. and into a new building outside of the subarea. The current Fred Myer site includes over 88,000 square feet of commercial space that is located on a six acre lot. This property will be available for future development after the move but leaves only one grocery store at the far east end of the area.

The City of Vancouver Transportation Department is currently reviewing the streetscape and road accessibility for architectural design development on Fourth Plain Boulevard. Transportation is looking at on-street parking, tree design and layout, transit locations, crosswalk accessibility and other concerns to provide a more pedestrian friendly neighborhood.

The empty Kyocera campus is located on Fourth Plain Boulevard. The Kyocera property includes almost 47 acres, yet the facility has 128,000 square feet of built structures. The City of Vancouver is currently in discussions with potential buyers.

Economic Empowerment

The Oversight Committee participated in the *Fourth Plain Subarea Plan* and also assisted developing of an implementation strategy. (8) The Central Vancouver NRSA was developed using the goals and desired outcomes stated by the stakeholders in the *Fourth Plain Subarea Plan*. These documents have been the basis for the *Central Vancouver NRSA* designation. The implementation plan states several goals that can be assisted with the help of Community Development Block Group (CDBG) funds. For example, the goal to establish a 'Fourth Plain Community Development Entity' would greatly benefit from these funds. Federal grants for home rehabilitation and home ownership loans would help implement the goals for better housing and increased home ownership in the NRSA.(3)

City of Vancouver's CDBG staff has received funding that not only will help the community but can also be targeted within the *Central Vancouver NRSA* redevelopment. A \$1,000,000 Brownfields Development Initiative (BEDI) was awarded to the City of Vancouver in December 2006.

An application for a HUD Section 108 grant, for \$6.8 million dollars, was submitted by the City of Vancouver in January 2007. CDBG staff is currently researching the most effective ways of allocating these funds to help improve employment and economic opportunities.

Economic & Community Development Goals and Objectives

Central Vancouver NRSA is culturally diverse, with 78% low to moderate income households and a variety of land uses dominated by residential. The *Oversight Committee's* Implementation Recommendations suggest that there are several key aspects to the revitalization of the subarea. Along with the goals set forth by the *Oversight Committee* within the *Fourth Plain Subarea Plan*, the CDBG Consolidated Plan has a set of goals that can assist in achieving the *Fourth Plain Plan* vision and the goals of the *Central Vancouver NRSA*. Finally, the nine neighborhood associations in *Central Vancouver NRSA* have action plans that can also assist in the revitalization efforts. (8)

The City of Vancouver has identified organizations and programs that should be created to help develop a successful *Central Vancouver NRSA*:

1. The identification/establishment of a nonprofit organization to assist the city with home ownership programs to low and moderate income individuals.
2. Establish a Merchant Association entity to assist with community and business relations and retention.
3. Encourage home ownership and home rehabilitation projects through grants and loans.
4. Assist businesses with property development, façade and storefront enhancements and pedestrian friendly locations.

5. Support cultural identity and community activism.

Goal I: Increase home ownership and rehabilitation of homes through grant and loan programs in target area

- Seek home ownership grants and loans through state and federal programs for low and moderate income individuals.
- Seek home rehabilitation grants and loans for low and moderate income individuals.
- Increase police presence to increase neighborhood safety and visual appeal.

Goal II: Support business and property enhancement along Fourth Plain Boulevard

- Seek out Façade and Storefront Improvement Programs and grants.
- Establish and support businesses with public street frontage for improvements regarding windows, landscaping and parking issues.
- Establish grants and loans for business rehabilitation and growth.

Goal III: Develop pedestrian friendly streets and encourage public transportation

- Establish sidewalk redevelopment through street furnishings, bike paths, landscaping, lighting and parking regulations.
- Maintain high level of public transportation and enhance premium service and stop amenities.
- Identify and explore additional transit infrastructure options.
- Reduce visual clutter of utilities and increase consolidated signage.
- Improve lighting on streets and in parks.
- Increase public space for additional park space and revitalize current parks for family use.

Goal IV: Assist with business development and increase customer traffic.

- Establish a Merchant Association.
- Create a neighborhood identity.
- Explore and possibly assist in creating a Central Vancouver Farmers/Craft Market and identify possible locations.
- Create a pedestrian and customer central business area.
- Assist with minority business loans, small business loans and training resources.

Benchmarks:

The following benchmarks on the next page have been developed and are funded through Community Development Block Grant program.

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