

## **Reside Vancouver Appendix A**

# **Existing Conditions**

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## Introduction

As the largest city in one of the fastest growing counties in the region, Vancouver has been experiencing low housing vacancy and rising housing costs. While the City has made strides to address housing affordability in recent years, proposed public investments in some of Vancouver's most vulnerable neighborhoods has made it clear that more steps need to be taken to protect and uplift Vancouver's existing residents. By funneling public and private dollars to improve parks, access to public transportation, jobs, and services in the central Vancouver neighborhood, the City aims to revitalize these historically disinvested areas. However, without considering development holistically, enhancements to these neighborhoods can trigger displacement for people of lower economic means and communities of color currently residing there as their neighborhoods become more desirable.

The improvements in these neighborhoods are long overdue, however increased desirability can have a multitude of negative impacts such as: forced eviction of tenants in market-rate affordable housing, residents being priced out of their homes due to significant rent increases, and residents choosing to move as their neighborhoods no longer reflect their values or cultures. This phenomenon is becoming a reality in the city's most affordable neighborhoods. For example, in 2015 the renters in the Courtyard Village apartment complex in Vancouver's Rose Village neighborhood were forcibly evicted so that the owner could renovate the units and increase their rental value.<sup>1</sup>

In the Pacific Northwest, several municipalities (Portland<sup>2</sup>, Seattle<sup>3</sup>, and San Francisco<sup>4</sup>) have passed equity-focused policies to support communities of color and low-income communities as their cities grow. Now, the City of Vancouver has recognized the need to address ongoing and future displacement of residents within the city's most vulnerable neighborhoods as rents continue to increase and public and private investments in the city grow. Specifically, the prospect of several large public investments projected at over \$100 million in central Vancouver has raised the possibility of further displacement due to increased housing costs and/or neighborhood changes that don't reflect the cultural values of those who currently live there. This risk is particularly troubling given that central Vancouver is made up of Clark County's most diverse and vulnerable neighborhoods.

# 1. Past

The city of Vancouver, Washington sits on the state's southern border and is separated from Oregon's largest city by the Columbia River. Originally, the Chinook Nation inhabited this area for over 10,000 years prior to the arrival of Spanish explorers in 1602. The Chinook people were prolific traders and benefited from the area's abundant natural resources, situating their home at the confluence of the Willamette and Columbia Rivers. They had large settlements throughout the region, but their population was decimated by the Euro-American incursions, disease, and forced assimilation. Their numbers have never fully recovered and the damage suffered by the many transgressions against them and other tribes in the region have had intergenerational effects.<sup>5</sup>



Image: Fort Vancouver National Site  
Source: Thread Community Planning

Today, Vancouver has a diverse indigenous community made up of a multitude of bands within the Chinook, Klickitat, and Cowlitz tribes. While the Cowlitz and Klickitat tribes have been officially recognized by the federal government, the Chinook People continue to fight for recognition.

By the early 19th century, the city became a popular fur-trading hub and later became the predominant commerce center for the entire Pacific Northwest region. Its proximity to the Columbia and Willamette Rivers attracted the British-Canadian fur-trading corporation, the Hudson Bay Company, and as the area's largest employer at the time Hudson Bay established Fort Vancouver in 1821. By the 1840s, the city's population grew to approximately 1,000 making it the largest city on the west coast, which led to its nickname the "New York of the Pacific".

Economic activity in then-Fort Vancouver grew throughout the early- and mid-20th centuries due to the high quality and volume of Sitka spruce trees in the region (important for the development of European aircraft during World War I) along with the introduction of the railroads, and the creation of the 1917 bridge connecting Vancouver to Portland, Oregon. The city's lumber mill was a significant economic boon during the First World War and during this same time, two shipyards and an aluminum plant also

opened their doors, which became the city's largest employers. However, once the war ended, the shipyards, lumber mill, and aluminum plant either went into decline or were dismantled altogether. The wax and wane of population growth and economic activity in the region continued through the Second World War, which led to a significant population boom from 18,000, peaking at over 80,000 and resting at 41,000 by the war's conclusion.<sup>6</sup>



Image: Fort Vancouver National Historic Site

Source: Thread Community Planning

#### *Central Vancouver – The Fourth Plain Subarea*

Central Vancouver is located upon four of five plains regions within Vancouver's city boundaries, which were historically used for agriculture by the Chinook. The majority of the population boom that occurred during World War II was concentrated to central Vancouver. The significant population increase led to a housing shortage, which was addressed by the Vancouver Housing Authority (VHA) through the construction of six housing developments within the plains, leading to the development of Bagley Downs, Fourth Plain Village, Fruit Valley, among other neighborhoods. Unlike many cities and jurisdictions around the country, the VHA chose not to segregate housing developments by race. However, the collapse of population post-war – along with the construction of SR-500 - led to significant and ongoing neighborhood deterioration that impacts the area's low-income residents and residents of color today.<sup>7 8</sup>

## 2. Present

The city of Vancouver, Washington sits on the state's southern border and is separated from Oregon's largest city by the Columbia River and has long been coined as Portland's largest suburb. Separated from Portland's city limits only by the Columbia River, the effects of the close geographical relationship between the two cities are notable. Portland's widespread popularity as an attractive place to live and work has overshadowed Vancouver's own unique character and identity, which negatively impacts the city economically and undervalues the city's history. This issue, known as the "second city phenomenon"<sup>9</sup> is evident as approximately one-third of Clark County's labor force and resident retail purchases take place in Portland.<sup>10</sup>

Vancouver has become an affordable alternative to the region's escalating cost of living. For example, the rapid population growth, gentrification, and subsequent increase in cost of living occurring throughout Portland's once-affordable neighborhoods is leading to people leaving in search of more affordable opportunities.<sup>11</sup> While there is limited data that details the in-migration patterns among the Portland Metro region's seven counties (and even less data that identifies why people migrate), recent population growth occurring among each county have shown that Clark County is the fastest growing. This point, paired with the knowledge that a significant portion of Vancouverites are commuting to Portland for work and recreation suggests that Vancouver's lower cost of living is a factor in people's choice to reside there.<sup>12</sup>

### **(Dis)Investment - The Local Context**

Historically, higher income earners moved to suburban centers, following the allure of single-family living outside of bustling downtowns. Now, higher-income earners prefer to live near the urban core, that's neighborhoods were once made up of communities of lower economic means. This shift in economic class has led to people of lower economic means being pushed out of their neighborhoods and into the suburbs. As cities and developers have increased their investments into urban areas, less investment is being targeted for current, lower-income suburban neighborhoods.<sup>13</sup>

The City of Vancouver began revitalizing its downtown in 1998 and has since invested heavily in its redevelopment through efforts such as the Waterfront Development Project and the renovation of Esther Short Park. This investment has not been welcomed by all Vancouver residents, with some feeling that the development of the Vancouver Waterfront acts as a signal of gentrification and a devaluation of the city's low-income residents.<sup>14</sup>



“I think that [development] is happening unfairly, because people like me and my neighbors who have lived here for years have always been a little broke. And that was normal. It’s why we lived here. Now, despite whether we like it or not, the price is increasing. The Vancouver Waterfront is a big way to say ‘get out poor people!’ And I feel that it shouldn’t be that way.”

The local suburbanization of poverty is most overtly experienced in central Vancouver, which hosts the most demographically diverse – and lowest income – residents in the city. The demographic makeup of central Vancouver reflect patterns of suburbanization of poverty as employment opportunities that have positions with skills that match low-income households continue to be disproportionately developed in suburban areas leading to higher concentrations of low-income households moving to areas closer to work and furthering class divides. Just like the disinvestment of urban centers in the past, the lack of investment in the suburbs is leading to reduced quality of life for its residents, poorer life outcomes in the form of shorter life expectancy,<sup>15</sup> unabated poverty, and increased crime compared to other, higher income neighborhoods within the city.<sup>16</sup>



Image: Blighted house in Maplewood neighborhood

Source: Thread Community Planning

## Vancouver by the Numbers

The following section offers insight into three significant components to addressing antidisplacement through housing stabilization and economic prosperity: demographics, the state of housing, and the state of the City's workforce. While the vulnerability assessment in Appendix B: Vulnerability Assessment goes into more detail, understanding the foundation for each of these components helps frame the narrative.

### *Demographic Profile*

The population in the city of Vancouver has grown by 23% over the past twenty years and is expected to be one of the fastest growing cities in the Portland Metro region with a projected population increase of 22% by 2030. The median household income (MHI) in Vancouver is lower than both the MHI of greater Clark County as well as the Portland Metro region and the share of lower income residents is higher than both jurisdictions. However, there has been growth in the number of households making higher incomes between 2000 and 2016.<sup>17</sup>

The number of people of color has grown by 26.5% since 2010 with the Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander population increasing from 906 residents in 2010 to nearly 2,300 by 2017. The Hispanic/Latinx population has grown 40.2% in the same time period. The African American/Black community is the only racial group that has decreased in that time period, with a significant decrease in population share by 15.6% (see Appendix B: Vulnerability Assessment for a more detailed analysis).<sup>18 19</sup>



Image: Painted Parking Space in Central Vancouver

Source: Thread Community Planning



### *The State of Housing*

As of 2017, approximately half of Vancouver's residents were renters. Housing demand is high and diverse, with multifamily and single-family units both being desired. The number of households with children has decreased over time and the city has a smaller household size (2.49) than at the state (2.57) or county (2.72) level. The sales price of homes within Vancouver is lower than Portland, the Portland Metro region, the county, and the state, though it has closely followed the waxes and wanes of sale prices in the region over time.

Between 2003 and 2007 Clark County's population increased by 33%, and as a result homebuilders and developers worked to meet the need for more housing, building an average of 500 new units per year. However, when the U.S. economy declined in 2008, housing construction nearly halted in Clark County. During the first two years of the recession, only 200 units were constructed throughout the entire county. As the economy recovered the rate of construction increased significantly, but the production of housing has not been able to keep up with demand. The city of Vancouver and larger region has experienced an unprecedented demand for rental units and housing demand forecasts project a need for 11,000 housing units by 2040.



Image: Central Vancouver Yard Sign  
Source: Thread Community Planning

At the end of 2010, the vacancy rate in Vancouver was just 3.8% and was as low as 2% by 2014. As of 2017, the vacancy rate is 5.0%, which is lower than the state vacancy rate of 9.0%. Between October 2014 and October 2015, the increase in median rent for a 2-bedroom, 1-bath unit in Vancouver was the highest in the nation at 15.6%.<sup>20</sup> Wages have remained relatively stagnant in the region, which have made these rent increases even more difficult to bear. Between 2009 and 2014, Vancouver's median household income (MHI) rose only 3.1% while rents spiked by 38.3%. Even more concerning, between 2014 and 2017, MHI rose a mere 10%, while rents increased by nearly 60%.<sup>21</sup>

### *The State of the Workforce*

According to the Columbia River Economic Development Council (CREDC), one-third (46,000) of Clark County's workforce is employed in technology and science, arts and culture, education, and professional services sectors. Combined, these sectors make an average of \$77,600 per annum and are expected to grow by 13.3% before 2030. Manufacturing and production positions – making up 25.2% (39,500) of the workforce – are expected to grow 16% by 2030. Employees in these positions make an average of \$43,400 per year. Over 43% (71,000) of the county's workforce holds largely low-paid service positions with an average annual income of \$38,000.<sup>22</sup>

The largest employers in Clark County in 2016 include PeaceHealth (4,445 FTEs), Evergreen Public Schools (2,856 FTEs), Vancouver Public Schools (2,800 FTEs), Legacy Salmon Creek Medical Center (1,946 FTEs), and Fred Meyer Stores (1,760 FTEs).<sup>23</sup>

The EDS identified five driving industries in the region, including:

- Computer and Electronics
- Clean Tech
- Software
- Metals and Machinery
- Life Sciences (manufacturing)

Of the five driving industries in the region, two have been identified as needing less than an associate's degree to obtain a position:

- The Metals and Machinery sector requires a high school diploma and technical training to obtain skills in manufacturing and mechanics. Workers in these positions earn an average of \$42,000 and \$49,700 per year respectively.
- The Computer and Electronics sector require a high school diploma, some college, and technical training. Workers in these positions earn an average of \$49,000 annually.

While the share of the workforce in the Construction sector is less than 6%, it was the fastest growing sector between 2012 and 2017 in Clark County, experiencing a 35.5% growth in that time frame. This growth outpaces the Portland-Vancouver MSA by nearly 10%. This sector has an annual average salary of \$54,620 and most positions in the field require either no formal educational background or a high school diploma.<sup>24</sup>

### **Existing Plans & Initiatives**

Through the development and eventual adoption of a slew of planning actions, the City of Vancouver has codified its desire to transition from Portland's suburb to an equitable, economically thriving, walkable, urban center. As they push forward with these goals, the City also aims to benefit and uplift Vancouver's most vulnerable communities in the process.

#### *City of Vancouver's Comprehensive Plan: 2011-2030*

The most recent rendition of the City's Comprehensive Plan was published in 2011. Informed by Clark County's Growth Management Plan and required by Washington's Growth Management Act, the City's Plan outlines the priorities and broader policy goals Vancouver will aim to achieve by 2030. The plan prioritizes five themes: community development, economic development, housing, environment, and public facilities and services. One of the City's goals and responsibilities is to manage land use that will lead to thriving, livable neighborhoods, business districts, and subareas that advance the wellbeing of its residents and businesses. Vancouver also wants to retain more family wage jobs and provide quality, affordable local retail options to support the local economy while also addressing the city's rising housing costs.<sup>25</sup>

#### *Vancouver Strategic Plan: 2016-2021*

The Vancouver Strategic Plan defines the vision of the city and offers ten overarching goals for the City to achieve between 2016 and 2021. Of these ten goals, three are most relevant and timely for an antidisplacement plan. Goal 3 specifies the need to, "Create new programs that engage people of all ages, cultures, family configurations, educational backgrounds, trades and professions", and specifically identifies improving services for underrepresented communities as one of its primary objectives. Goal 9 states there is a need to, "Build the strongest, most resilient economy in the region", which is a theme echoed in the CREDC plan previously described as they envision Vancouver to prosper developmentally. Finally, Goal 10 says, "Use our influence to support community partners' actions, projects and initiatives that improve our community's livability and prosperity", framing the intention and commitment the City has with uplifting culturally-specific communities and their representative organizations.<sup>26</sup>

### *Affordable Housing Assistance*

In 2015, the City of Vancouver convened a 21-member Affordable Housing Task Force in response to the city's extremely low vacancy rates, rapidly increasing rents, and increasing displacement of the city's residents. The group convened for eight months and recommended policy options to staff and City Council that would provide relief from a changing, less affordable housing market. Three ordinances aimed at protecting vulnerable renters were adopted into Vancouver's Municipal Code (VMC) upon convening the Task Force, which include:

1. VMC 8.45: Sources of Income Protection

This ordinance protects renters from being denied when applying for a rental unit on the basis of their source of income or participation in a rental assistance program. Landlords must also only count the portion of rent that the tenant is responsible of paying when determining whether or not their income meets the criteria (e.g. if the rent is \$800 and the prospective tenant receives \$400 in rental assistance, then the tenant is only responsible for \$400 per month)

2. VMC 8.46: 45 Day Notice of Rent Increase

This ordinance requires landlords who wish to raise rent by 10% or more than the rent charged during the previous 12 months to give tenants a 45-day written notice

3. VMC 8.47: 60 Day Notice to Vacate

This ordinance protects month-to-month renters by providing tenants an "Affirmative Defense" to utilize in circumstances when a 60-day no-cause tenancy termination was not provided to the tenant by landlords who own 5 or more units<sup>27</sup>

In addition to the task force and proceeding tenant protections described, other initiatives have been implemented within the city in hopes to produce and/or maintain affordable housing options to residents who are in need. Some of the steps and actions taken on by the City are as follows:

- The implementation and recent renewal of the Affordable Housing Fund, which established a 7-year \$42 million fund to help build and preserve affordable housing, provide rental services and assistance, and shelter/transitional housing. This fund can also be used by developers to build affordable housing for low-income families and seniors who earn 50% or under the area median income (AMI)<sup>28</sup>
- Provision of services through the Housing Rehabilitation Loan Program which offers low-interest loans for up to \$25,000 for housing repairs that are not required



to be paid until they choose to sell their homes

- Updates to the Multifamily Tax Exemption program to better incentivize developers to build affordable multifamily units
- Updates to the Accessory Dwelling Unit Code, which has led to a substantial increase in the number of permits issued for ADU developments within the last two years. Relaxation of regulations have included: no parking requirements, reduced design regulations outside of ensuring that the ADU is compatible to the main residence, and owner occupancy in either the main unit or ADU is no longer required<sup>29 30</sup>

#### *Clark County Economic Development Strategy*

The Columbia River Economic Development Council (CREDC) published the most recent 5-year economic development strategy (EDS) in 2017. The EDS projects that the majority of growth in industrial employment will occur in the Port of Vancouver region in five driving industries previously mentioned:

- Computer and Electronics
- Clean Tech
- Software
- Metals and Machinery
- Life Sciences (manufacturing)

The EDS aims to foster this growth while simultaneously working to uplift those not currently benefiting from higher paying employment opportunities by promoting higher education/vocational training and increased neighborhood livability. To do so, the strategy sets three goals for local jurisdictions to work toward as industrial jobs emerge over the course of the next five years.

**Goal 1: Expand the Existing Base** offers strategies to help grow its driving traded clusters through knowledge accumulation regarding each sector to provide insight into potential challenges, collaborative opportunities, and more. In addition to bolstering industries currently residing in the city, they also encourage cities to catalyze start up businesses that currently lack many support services.

**Goal 2: Support People** recognizes that income and skills gaps exist within their region. While they recognize that the city hosts a strong primary education (K-12) program and provides their residents opportunities to attend secondary schools via Clark College and WSU Vancouver, educational attainment levels in the region are still

below the U.S. average. As the economy develops efforts need to be taken to support youth to graduate high school, reduce barriers of entering the secondary education system, and increase career technical education opportunities in strong and growing fields, most notably in STEM fields.

**Goal 3: Create Place** acknowledges the desire to have livable urban centers that provide necessities and amenities to its populace and encourages local jurisdictions to create placemaking strategies, develop a local brand, identify and address regional transportation needs, and embrace opportunities provided through a growing Downtown Vancouver.<sup>31</sup>

#### *Workforce Development*

Under the guidance of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, Workforce SW is a predominantly federally-funded collaborative that supports job seekers, businesses, and community partners in Clark, Cowlitz, and Wahkiakum Counties to help meet the job training and employment needs of residents and businesses alike. In Vancouver, Workforce SW grants WorkSource, the city's predominant job training center for its residents, millions of dollars per year to provide adult- and youth-based workforce development services to its residents in the region's high growth sectors.

Along with connecting with employers through targeted outreach, WorkSource is tasked with providing workforce development opportunities to non-dominant communities in the region. However, they have found that it is predominantly white women who regularly access their programs. While neither organization have data that provides the rationale, there are three potential causes of such a narrow demographic reach. First, other non-dominant cultures may have more pressing needs than participating in a job training or apprenticeship program. Second, residents may not be aware of Workforce SW, WorkSource, or the services they provide.<sup>32</sup> Third, this data is largely gathered through customer surveys that is currently only offered in English and not targeted toward hard-to-reach communities in an accessible way. This means that the number of hard-to-reach users may be higher than what the data presents.

WorkSource offers a multitude of programs to help build skills, help customers become more employable, and help them with their job search that will lead to positions that offer a living wage. For example, they have five job preparation workshops that are offered on a weekly or bi-weekly basis, which include: interview preparation, job search strategies, resume writing and cover letter assistance, application assistance, and a workshop to help people identify their transferable skills.



Image: “We’re Hiring” sign found in central Vancouver

Source: Thread Community Planning

They also have partnerships within the community that provide additional services. Goodwill utilizes Worksource space to facilitate beginner, intermediate, and advanced Microsoft Word and Excel tutorials to help with digital literacy. Another partnership with the Department of Social and Human services helps job seekers with their soft skills. All workshops are available to non-English speaking populations through Worksource’s free interpretation services. Their two most utilized interpretation services are Spanish and Russian.

Partnerships with schools in the area – including Clark College, Lower Columbia College, the Vancouver School for the Deaf, and an occupational rehabilitation center that helps with developmental disabilities – provide additional opportunities for job seekers. The Colleges help provide additional information to job seekers into the types of programs and training opportunities that they provide and WorkSource offers eligibility-based financial support to help job-seekers afford school tuition. Most job seekers who utilize WorkSource collect unemployment, which occurs due to their requirement to register with Worksource as they look for work. They also recruit job seekers through some of their partnerships. However, access to culturally-specific communities and communities that are English language learners are particularly limited due to lack of connections with organizations that represent these communities.

Other job training centers and organizations exist within the city. While not an exhaustive list, these organizations include:

- Next Career Center
- Partners in Careers
- Bridgeview Education and Employment Resource Center

### *Fourth Plain Forward*

In 2015, a Portland State University Master's of Urban and Regional Planning workshop team developed the Fourth Plain Forward: Action Plan, which aimed to implement policies and goals set forth in the City's Fourth Plain Corridor Subarea Plan published in 2007. The Subarea Plan aimed to invest resources into the Fourth Plain Corridor in order to shape a future for the area that benefited current residents and business owners. With this knowledge the student team underwent a five-step planning process that spanned five key project goals:

1. Cultivate a vibrant and welcoming business district
2. Stabilize and grow small businesses
3. Create a growth pipeline for food entrepreneurs
4. Prioritize pedestrian safety and access
5. Foster inclusive transit-oriented development

Since its adoption, the City of Vancouver has used the 2015 Fourth Plain Forward Action Plan as a guide to further stabilize the Fourth Plain corridor and uplift the corridor's diverse, international communities. Most notably, plan implementation manifested through the creation of the Fourth Plain Forward association. This entity acts as a supportive hub for existing Fourth Plain businesses in need of assistance or access to networks and resources, serves as a transportation and safety advocate, and helps with district marketing to encourage more economic activity in the corridor. Fourth Plain Forward has taken on a multitude of projects that benefit both local businesses and the residents in the area, including hosting the Summer of Murals, the annual Fourth Plain Multicultural Festival, and a Summer Movie Night in Evergreen Park.<sup>33</sup>



Image: Scenes from Fourth Plain Boulevard



Source: Thread Community Planning



### 3. Future

The City of Vancouver has several plans in various stages of development that will effectively reshape the city's community and economic landscape once completed. While distinct in the project outcomes, each of the plans/strategies being developed aim to propel the city toward its goals set by its Comprehensive Plan, Economic Development Strategy, Strategic Plan, and Fourth Plain Forward Action Plan previously described. As Vancouver transitions from an auto-oriented suburb to a lively urban center, the City wants to help ensure that all of the existing and future residents enjoy the benefits of these investments and thrive. If the following projects are implemented, the City will have invested over \$100 million in improvements and new developments.

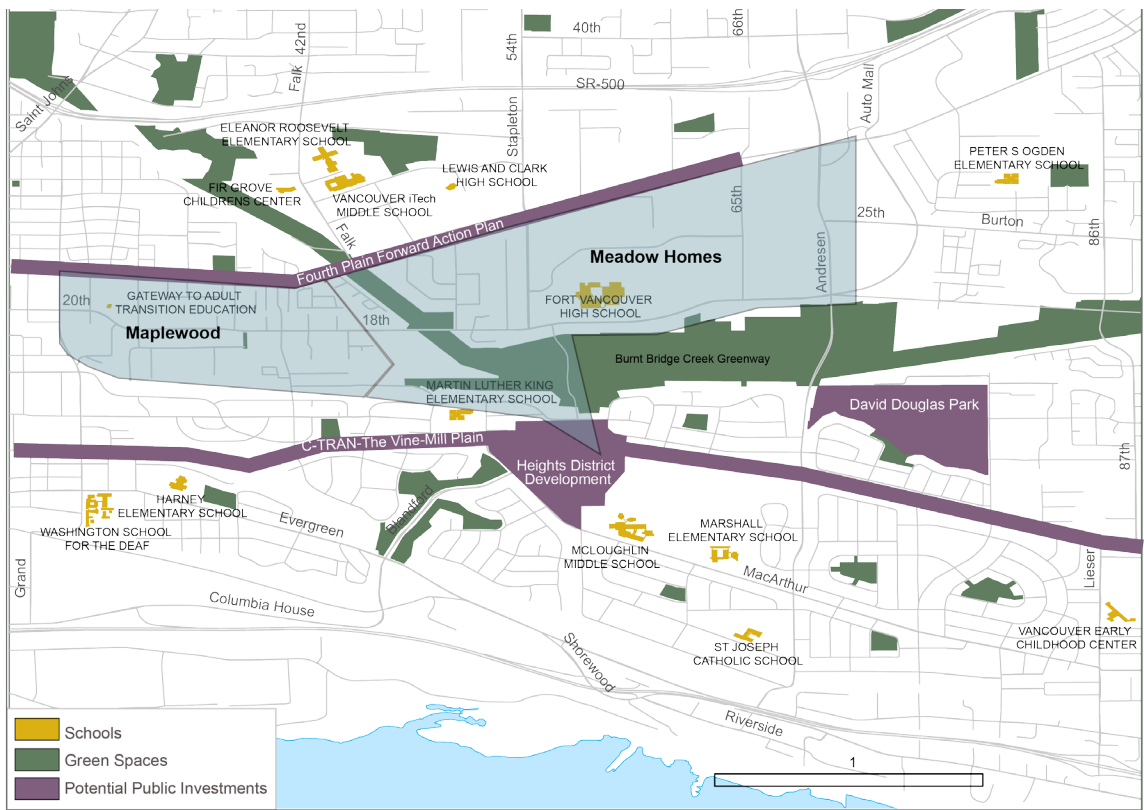


Figure: Study Area and Potential Developments Map

Source: City of Vancouver

### *Heights District Plan*

Vancouver's Comprehensive Plan has identified the Heights District as a future urban center and as such is conducting a community engagement process to guide the planning and visioning process for the entire district. Currently, the Heights District is home to Park Hill Cemetery, several public schools, businesses and nonprofit organizations. This district will undergo the development of a Subarea Plan that considers housing, amenities, transportation, community development needs, a Redevelopment Plan for a 63-acre public/private redevelopment project, as well as an Environmental Impact Statement for both planned developments. The Heights District Plan has nine overarching goals:

1. Establish a vision for a vibrant urban center at The Heights
2. Involve the public in a robust community planning and design process
3. Catalyze future private development in the District through public investments in planning and infrastructure
4. Increase mixed-income housing options in the District
5. Include accessible public open space as part of The Heights redevelopment
6. Utilize innovative urban design to build an attractive place where people want to be
7. Plan for the creative and functional integration of transit
8. Increase connections that allow people to walk and bike to and through the District
9. Create eight new 20-minute neighborhoods where residents can walk, bike or take transit to meet their daily needs<sup>34</sup>



Image: Heights District Plan Civic Plaza Rendering

Source: City of Vancouver

### *Commercial Corridors Strategy (CCS)*

The City is currently reviewing proposals to develop an urban density-focused affordable housing, economic development, and placemaking strategy applied to Vancouver’s major corridors. Two of the prominent corridors that the city desires to redevelop are Fourth Plain and Mill Plain Boulevards – the primary east-west surface streets in the city. The City seeks to transition these auto-oriented, suburban corridors to 20-minute walkable neighborhoods with affordable and market-rate housing options, multi-modal transit access, and access to jobs and amenities.<sup>35</sup>

### *Mill Plain Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) Project*

After the successful adoption and eventual implementation of the first BRT line on Fourth Plain Boulevard, C-TRAN has received federal funding to solidify plans to add another 10-mile stretch of BRT line on Mill Plain Boulevard. Mill Plain’s current ridership is the second-highest among all of the C-TRAN lines and the forecasted growth expected to occur in central Vancouver will likely lead to well over 3,300 residential units being built throughout the corridor that the Mill Plain BRT will serve. Construction is expected to begin in late 2020 with operations beginning in 2023.<sup>36</sup>



Image: The Vine Bus Stop on Fourth Plain Source: Thread Community Planning



### *Redevelopment in the International District: Opportunity Zones*

In addition to the City's revitalization efforts within central Vancouver, Clark County has designated four regions within Vancouver as Opportunity Zones. Created out of the 2017 federal Tax Cuts and Jobs Act, the intent of the Opportunity Zone program is to help catalyze community and economic development in disinvested communities. This is achieved by providing incentives to investors and developers in the form of up to 100% capital gains tax deferment if they pay into the county's investment Opportunity Fund and increased flexibility in the designated retail use of the development.<sup>37</sup>

### *Additional Potential Redevelopment Opportunities*

The City is currently considering a multitude of capital projects to be implemented throughout the city that would lead to over millions of dollars-worth of public investments. These funds would be put toward improving current parks, developing new green spaces, renovating multiple fire stations, and centering economic development opportunities in underserved areas. One significant project being considered is the improvement of the city's largest public green space and regional park, David Douglas Park.<sup>38</sup> The City has already observed some speculative interest for acquisition of properties near or adjacent to the park in anticipation of this development.



Image: David Douglas Park

Source: Thread Community Planning



The City's Public Works Operations Center, located on the corner of Fourth Plain Boulevard and Andersen Road, has been in need of significant renovation for many years. As the future of Fourth Plain has become more clear, the City recognized the opportunity of relocating the Operations Center and opening up the 10.2-acre site for redevelopment that aligns with the City's revitalization goals for central Vancouver. City staff has shown interest in developing this with the Fourth Plain community in mind, paying attention to the residents and small businesses that are located near the site.<sup>39</sup>

## Conclusion

Vancouver, Washington is in a state of transition - one that holds a plethora of opportunity for its current and future residents. As the city builds in popularity and fortifies itself in its own, unique identity, City staff and local public officials will need to reaffirm their commitments to equity and the value held in the diverse communities that form the city's historic character. This is particularly true as public and private investment moves forward in areas home to the city's most underrepresented communities who simultaneously have the most to gain *and* the most to lose from these investments.

The City has begun taking steps to help improve and/or preserve housing affordability and community resilience to neighborhood change through the passage of tenant protections and the Affordable Housing Fund, the development and implementation of Fourth Plain Forward Action Plan, the development of the Fourth Plain Coalition, among others. Persisting with these efforts and initiatives while also considering new opportunities to prioritize the unmet needs of Vancouver's diverse populations will be imperative as the city grows.

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