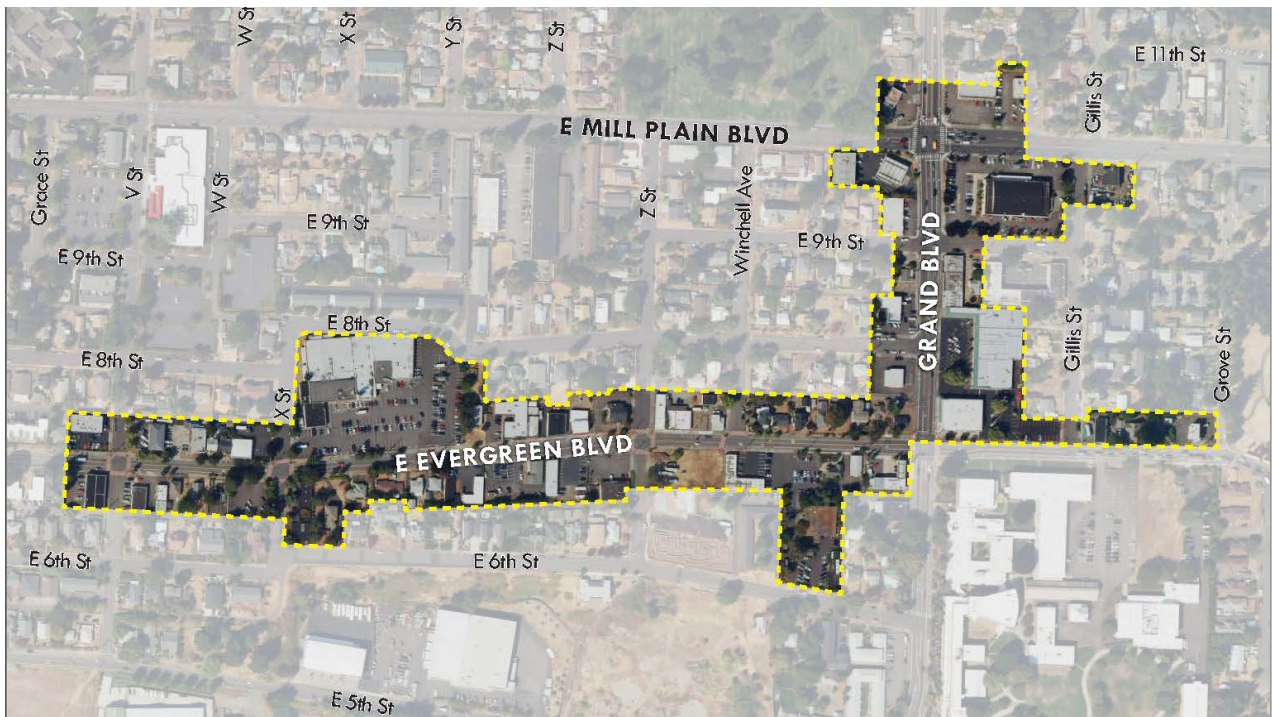


TO: Planning Commission

HEARING DATE: 9/12/2023

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

SUBJECT: Evergreen and Grand Commercial Corridors Implementation



Report Date: 9/1/2023

Hearing Date: 9/12/2023

Proposal: Adopt the Evergreen and Grand Commercial Corridors Overlay District and Implementation Plan

Location: Evergreen and Grand Commercial Corridors

Proponent/Applicant: City of Vancouver

City Staff: Becky Coutinho and Bryan Snodgrass

Recommendation: Forward to City Council a recommendation to adopt the Evergreen and Grand Commercial Corridors Overlay District and Implementation Plan

I. PRIOR COMMISSION REVIEW (IF APPLICABLE):

The Planning Commission held workshops on the Evergreen and Grand Commercial Corridors Strategy Implementation on February 14, 2023, April 11, 2023, and June 13, 2023. Staff presented during City Council communications on June 5, 2023, and a City Council workshop was held on July 17, 2023. City Council has an upcoming communications presentation on October 2, 2023, first reading on October 16, 2023, and public hearing on October 23, 2023.

II. BACKGROUND AND REVIEW PROCESS:

The [Evergreen and Grand Commercial Corridors Strategy](#) document was adopted by City Council on February 28, 2022, intended to guide future zoning code text changes and other land use, community development and transportation implementation. The Strategy vision is to promote equitable and diverse corridor development that is vibrant, sustainable, and mixed use, as well as to foster development that recognizes and builds upon the neighborhood's unique setting, history, and character. Specific policy goals outlined in the Strategy were to create ground floor use requirements to aid in the creation of active edges and a pleasant pedestrian environment, update building height and parking requirements, and identify opportunities to promote walkability, vitality, and affordability in the corridors.

Following the adoption of the Strategy, City Staff completed a competitive request for proposal process to secure a consultant to aid in the work of creating development regulations and additional implementation measures. Cascadia Partners, a full-service urban planning, real estate, environmental sustainability, and public engagement firm was chosen. The project team began work in October 2022 on development of the Evergreen and Grand Commercial Corridors Overlay District and Implementation Plan. Regular progress reports were given to the Planning Commission throughout the process, including workshops on February 14, 2023, April 11, 2023, and June 13, 2023. At these workshops the Planning Commission continued to indicate overall support of the project and provided feedback on a variety of code concepts, design requirements, and implementation efforts. Planning Commission feedback and guidance have been incorporated into the proposed final version of the Overlay District and Implementation Plan (See attachments A and D below). The project team presented under City Council communications on June 5, 2023, and at a Council workshop on July 17, 2023. The Council indicated overall support for the project and the direction of implementation work. At the July workshop Council asked staff a series of clarifying questions to which staff responded via memo (See attachment E).

Implementation is intended to facilitate development consistent with the overall Strategy goals and vision, through the development code as well as longer term implementation efforts. The code development process has included community outreach, including a public open house and a developer focus group to share code concepts and gather community input. Feedback received from the open house indicated continued support for the goals of the Strategy and that the development code language was in line with the vision of the Strategy. During the conversation there was a focus on identifying the other programmatic activities the city planned to do to support the corridor's growth. At the developer focus group, developers expressed that the draft code standards struck the

right balance between high quality design outcomes and development feasibility and flexibility.

Following adoption of Overlay District, the next phase of work will focus on economic development, community building, and transportation improvements, and will occur over the next several years. The Evergreen and Grand Implementation Plan will guide this next phase of work.

III. SUMMARY OF PROPOSAL:

Evergreen & Grand Commercial Corridors Overlay District

Proposed development standards for the Evergreen & Grand Commercial Corridors Overlay District include the following code concept recommendations:

- **Building Height-** Maintain the existing 4-story height limit along Evergreen and western half of Grand. Increase to 5-story limit along eastern half of Grand near the new transit line.
- **Building Form-** Adopt new standards that address the shape and size of new buildings to address concerns about buildings being in character with existing neighborhood.
- **Required Ground Floor Commercial-** Require ground floor commercial uses only along Grand and allow more flexibility for ground floor residential along Evergreen.
- **Parking-** Reduce parking requirements for multifamily developments and for commercial uses, and eliminate required parking for ground floor commercial uses.

These code concepts have been integrated into the Evergreen and Grand Commercial Corridors Overlay District (see Attachment A) that will apply to the corridor boundaries consistent with the original Strategy document. The overlay district outlines the types of land uses permitted in the district and development standards around density, building orientation, building setbacks and buffers, building heights, building massing, and parking.

Through the implementation process, the project team has identified needed adjustments to some of the specific provisions outlined in the Strategy Document. These proposed refinements are outlined in the chart titled “Evergreen and Grand Commercial Corridors Strategy Refinements” on page 5 of this report and respond to changing market conditions reflected in the findings in the Pro Forma analysis conducted by Cascadia Partners (see Attachment B) as well as new information about the scale of the City’s housing deficit. The pro forma analysis incorporated a parcel-by-parcel site inventory, development modeling, and current development patterns. Given the development climate today, the project team believes the below changes are necessary to make development in the corridor feasible. These changes continue to reflect the Strategy vision and community aspirations for the area, and support development feasibility and flexibility. In addition to addressing current market conditions, these changes align with goals outlined in the Climate Action Framework and respond to new state regulations related to housing production and parking requirements.

Objective design standards are also included in the Evergreen and Grand Commercial Corridors Overlay District to meet the vision of the Strategy document, focusing on the ground floor of buildings to create a vibrant street and pedestrian experience, and to

address the unique challenges of creating an active street while preserving resident privacy. The standards are not intended to promote a particular architectural style or aesthetic. Use of objective standards is intended to allow for consistent administration and interpretation as opposed to more discretionary guidelines, with the goal of striking a balance between the number/complexity of standards and encouraging new development in the Corridor.

The following are the proposed design standards:

- **Building Orientation**
 - *Build-to-Line*: A minimum of 50% of the street-facing facade of the building must be located within 0-10 feet of the street.
 - *Parking Areas*: No more than 50% of the street frontage may be used for vehicle areas. Where parking is adjacent to the street, it must be screened with low wall and/or landscaping.
- **Main Entrances**
 - *Commercial Uses*: Must provide at least one entrance on either Evergreen or Grand. If on a corner, the entrance must be oriented to the corner.
 - *Residential Uses*:
 - Minimum 50% of ground floor residential units must have individual entrances.
 - Additional setback and design standards to create a transition from street to private units and activate the street.
- **Ground Floor Commercial**
 - *Minimum Height*: Ground floor commercial spaces must be 12-15 feet in height.
 - *Windows*: Minimum 60% of the ground floor elevation must be windows or other glazed openings.
 - *Weather Protection*: A minimum of 25-50% of the width of street-facing facade must include weather protection (awnings, canopies, etc.)
- **Ground Floor Residential**
 - Entrances to residential units must be setback 5-10 feet from street.
 - Must provide either a hardscape patio, landscaped private open space, raised private open space (patio, porch, etc.) or the dwelling unit must be raised above the street, or include steps to a terrace, among other design features that create a public private realm.
 - Must provide either a transparent low wall or fence (18-24") or landscape screening.
- **Facade Articulation**
 - *Applicability*: Buildings more than 20 feet high. The standard would only apply to larger buildings, not single-story commercial buildings.
 - *Standard*: Buildings must incorporate vertical and horizontal elements that articulate the facade.
 - These elements help to divide the mass of the building into a base, middle, and top with distinct physical transitions.
 - This standard does not dictate architectural style.
 - It requires details that break up larger facades, so they are interesting to people walking by and contribute to the identity of the Corridor.
- **Screening and Fences**

- *No High Fences/Walls on Street:* Fences, walls, or hedges higher than 3 feet shall be prohibited between the street and the building.
- *Ground Mounted Utilities/Equipment/Waste Receptacles.* New electric meters, gas meters, HVAC equipment, and waste receptacles must be screened from view from the street.
- *Rooftop Utilities/Equipment:* must be set back at least 15 feet from roof edges on street-facing facades and include screening

Evergreen and Grand Commercial Corridors Strategy Refinements			
	Current Development Code	2022 Strategy Document	Proposed Development Code
Maximum Building Height	50-feet throughout, typically 4 stories	3-5 stories, varying by parcel	50ft along Evergreen and west Grand (4 stories) 60ft on east side of Grand and crossroads of Grand and Mill Plain Blvd (5 stories)
Building Bulk and Massing	Silent beyond height limits and setbacks. Commercial abutting lower density residential requires 10-foot setback Upper portions need 1/2 foot setback for each foot of building height above 20 feet.	No standard directly proposed to address the development form beyond active edge requirements, maximum front setback of 0-5 feet at the ground floor	Maximum height step down only on rear face within 25 feet of a residentially zoned site Maximum building width, with breaks within the building
Required Ground Floor Commercial	At least half of frontage along arterial/collector streets must be commercial or office	More flexibility along Evergreen, keep existing requirement on Grand	Allow for either ground floor commercial or residential along Evergreen. Require ground floor commercial along Grand
Required Minimum Off-Street Parking Spaces	0.75 per multi-family unit near frequent transit such as Evergreen and Grand 1/300sf for goods and services, 1/250sf for eating and drinking, 1/400sf office	Zero for ground floor retail 1/1000sf for commercial uses 1 per unit for residential	0.5 per multi-family unit 1/1000sf commercial, zero for ground floor retail

Evergreen & Grand Commercial Corridors Implementation Plan

The full extent of the vision outlined in the Evergreen and Grand Commercial Corridors Strategy requires both development code regulations and other longer-term programmatic investments. The Evergreen and Grand Implementation Plan has been drafted to guide the work that falls outside the purview of the development code (see Attachments C and D) and is intended to guide ongoing City investments while also bringing in key partners like neighborhood associations, mobility advocates, businesses and technical assistance

providers, nearby schools and service providers, affordable housing developers, and the community at large. The tasks have been broken down to four focus areas including housing and economic development, urban design, mobility, and parking, as outlined below. All will require resources to implement in the coming years.

- *Economic Development:*
 - Foster a unique and attractive corridor identity
 - Establish a business-friendly climate that supports a diversity of neighborhood-serving businesses
- *Housing:*
 - Maintain economic diversity and housing affordability, especially for low- and moderate-income households
- *Urban Design:*
 - Support a vibrant and active corridor
 - Pursue opportunities for climate resilient design
- *Mobility:*
 - Leverage ongoing corridor and neighborhood-wide infrastructure projects
 - Support targeted interventions to improve mobility for all users and connectivity to transit
 - Improve safety for all corridor users
- *Parking:*
 - Evaluate and manage vehicular parking impacts to local residents
 - Support climate and parking goals by increasing micro mobility, shared parking options, and EV infrastructure

The two tasks below are highlighted here as shorter term non-regulatory implementation priorities, as they play a critical role in catalyzing several of the other implementation tasks.

- *ED 1.1:* Provide seed support for a locally based, self-created neighborhood Business District Organization that can meet the shared needs of new and future businesses through networking, marketing, promotions, special events, beautification, and advocacy
- *ED 1.2:* Provide staff and resource support to the Business District Organization so it can develop into a fully-fledged, self-sustaining, and independent organization.

The goals and associated tasks that fall under them reflect input and expertise from various City departments who will lead them, with a particular emphasis on feasibility, timing, and resource needs. It will continue to be refined as the team collaborates with other partners. Note that Housing action 1.1 – *Extend the Multi-Family Tax Exemption (MFTE) program calibrated to implement the vision and goals for the corridor and consider adding workforce housing-* has already been completed and approved by City Council.

IV. REVIEW CRITERIA AND FINDINGS:

[VMC 20.285.070](#) outlines the review criteria for Comprehensive Plan and Zoning Code Text Amendments, which are required to demonstrate the following:

1. The proposal is consistent with applicable policies of the Vancouver Strategic Plan and Comprehensive Plan; and
2. The proposal is necessary to further the public interest based on present needs and conditions.

Applicable Strategic Plan Provisions:

- TM.PM.4: Percentage of residents living within a 15-minute walk or bike to transit facilities
- HH.PM.4: Diversity of citywide housing stock by type and size
- HH.PM.5: Number of new housing units constructed (overall and affordable)
- VDN.PM.1: Existence of key businesses in neighborhood districts
- VDN.PM.2: Percentage of residents living within ¼ mile of supermarkets or food stores, restaurants, parks, schools or community centers
- VDN.PM.3 To maintain active and healthy neighborhood associations

Applicable Comprehensive Plan Provisions:

- CD-2: Efficient development patterns
Encourage efficient development throughout Vancouver to ensure achievement of average density of 8 units per acre set by Countywide Planning Policies. Encourage higher density and more intense development in areas that are more extensively served by facilities, particularly transportation and transit services.
- CD-3 Infill and redevelopment
Where compatible with surrounding uses, efficiently use urban land by facilitating infill of undeveloped properties, and redevelopment of underutilized and developed properties. Allow for conversion of single to multi-family housing where designed to be compatible with surrounding uses.
- CD-4: Urban centers and corridors
Achieve the full potential of existing and emerging urban activity centers and the corridors that connect them, by:
 - *Promoting or reinforcing a unique identity or function for individual centers and corridors*
 - *Planning for a compact urban form with an appropriate mix of uses*
 - *Working with stakeholders to develop flexible standards to implement the vision for that center or corridor*
 - *Encouraging innovative, attractive private development that efficiently uses available land and resources*
 - *Establishing connectivity within each center and to other areas to provide accessibility*
 - *Providing a range of transportation options*
 - *Investing in public facilities and amenities to enhance livability*

- **CD-5: Mixed use development**
Facilitate development that combines multiple uses in single buildings or integrated uses.
- **CD-6: Neighborhood livability**
Maintain and facilitate development of stable, multi-use neighborhoods that contain a compatible mix of housing, jobs, stores, and open and public spaces in a well-planned, safe pedestrian environment.
- **CD-7: Human scale, accessible development, and interaction**
Facilitate development that is human scale and encourages pedestrian use and human interaction.
- **CD-8: Design**
Facilitate development and create standards to achieve the following:
 - *Increased street front use, visual interest, and integration with adjacent buildings*
 - *Improved pedestrian connections and proximity of uses within developments*
 - *Enhanced sense of identity in neighborhoods and subareas*
 - *Publicly and/or privately owned gathering places facilitating interaction*
- **CD-9: Compatible uses**
Facilitate development that minimizes adverse impacts to adjacent areas, particularly neighborhoods.
- **CD-10: Complementary uses**
Locate complementary land uses near one another to maximize opportunities for people to work or shop near where they live.
- **CD-12: Integrated area planning**
Promote cohesive, integrated planning of areas and sites through use of subarea planning, master planning, planned developments, and other methods.
- **CD-14: Sustainability**
Facilitate sustainable land use development through measures including but not limited to the following:
 - *Develop integrated land use patterns and transportation networks that foster reduced vehicle miles traveled and associated greenhouse gas emissions.*
 - *Develop individual buildings that minimize energy and resource consumption.*
 - *Encourage home-based efficiencies such as installation retrofits, efficient water and air, heating systems, and use of solar panels or other forms of energy capture.*
 - *Implement recommendations of the Vancouver-Clark County Sustainable Affordable Residential Development Report.*
- **EC-2: Family-wage employment**
Promote the formation, recruitment, retention, and growth of businesses that provide a wide range of employment opportunities, particularly family-wage employment. Prioritize family-wage employment in land use policies and practices

- **EC-5: No net loss of employment capacity**
Restrict zone changes or legislative land use approvals that would lessen long-term capacity for high-wage employment unless accompanied by other changes within the same review cycle that would compensate for the lost capacity or unless the proposed change would promote the long-term economic health of the city.
- **EC-8: Small business support**
Support the growth of new and expanding small business through efficient permitting, incentives, and communication
- **H-1: Housing options**
Provide for a range of housing types and densities for all economic segments of the population. Encourage equal and fair access to housing for renters and homeowners.
- **H-5: Housing placement near services and centers**
Facilitate siting of higher density housing near public transportation facilities and in designated centers and corridors.
- **PFS-1: Service availability**
Consider water, sewer, police, transportation, fire, schools, stormwater management, and parks as necessary facilities and services. Ensure that facilities are sufficient to support planned development.
- **PFS-9: Land use and transportation integration**
Develop and implement innovative transportation investment, design, and program incentives to achieve the urban environment envisioned in the Comprehensive Plan.
- **PFS-10: Livable streets**
Design streets and sidewalks and manage vehicular traffic to encourage livability, interaction, and sense of neighborhood or district ownership in linkage with adjacent land uses. Encourage multi-modal travel, and provide accessible, human scale opportunities for transferring between travel modes.
- **PFS-13: Neighborhood traffic**
Protect and enhance neighborhoods with an active program that focuses on safety, safe routes to school, traffic calming, education, and enforcement.
- **PFS-18: Street design**
Design city streets to achieve safety and accessibility for all modes. Arterial streets shall provide facilities for automobile, bike, pedestrian, and transit mobility, and shall include landscaping and adequate lighting.
- **PFS-19: Parking standards**
Adopt coordinated parking standards which maintain neighborhood integrity, promote the use of a multi-modal transportation system and efficient utilization of limited land, and encourage desired economic development and growth throughout the entire urban area.

Staff Findings:

The proposed Evergreen and Grand Commercial Corridors Overlay District and Implementation Plan are consistent with the above applicable portions of the Vancouver Strategic and Comprehensive Plans. Adoption of the Overlay District and Implementation Plan will support the enhanced housing and economic development opportunities in a well-designed, livable mixed-density, mixed-use environment with sustainable features, consistent with Policies HH.PM.4, HH.PM.5, CD-2, CD-3, CD-4, CD-5, CD-6, CD-8, CD-9, CD-14, EC-2, EC-5, EC-8, H-1, and H-5. The Overlay District and Implementation allows for the creation of the corridors as a 15-minute neighborhood where residents can walk, bike, or roll to essential amenities, services, and employment opportunities which include stores, restaurants, and transit stations, consistent with Policies TM.PM.4, VDN.PM.1, VDN.PM.2, VDN.PM.3, CD-7, CD-10, PFS-1, PFS-9, PFS-10, PFS-13, PFS-18, and PFS-19. The adoption of the Evergreen and Grand Commercial Corridors Overlay District and Implementation Plan will directly support the strategic plan core values of livability, innovation, equity and inclusion, and trust and relationships.

V. RECOMMENDED ACTION:

Forward to City Council a recommendation to adopt the Evergreen and Grand Commercial Corridors Overlay District and Implementation Plan as outlined in this staff report and the attachments included below.

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Attachments:

- Attachment A- Evergreen and Grand Commercial Corridors Overlay District
- Attachment B- Financial Feasibility Analysis of Code Concepts
- Attachment C- Evergreen and Grand Commercial Corridors Implementation Plan Memo
- Attachment D- Evergreen and Grand Commercial Corridors Implementation Plan
- Attachment E- City Council Update Memo from July 17 Evergreen & Grand Workshop
- Attachment F- SEPA DNS
- Attachment G- SEPA Checklist