



# OUR VAN COUN VER OUR FUTURE.



## **2026-2045 Comprehensive Plan**

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Vancouver Bee Project  
Vancouver Downtown Association (VDA)  
Vancouver Farmers Market  
Vancouver Neighborhood Alliance  
Vancouver Neighborhood Associations  
Vancouver Housing Authority (VHA)  
Vancouver Public Schools (VPS)  
Watershed Alliance of Southwest  
Washington  
Washington Conservation Action  
Washington Low Income Housing  
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- C. Equity Analysis
- D. Housing Needs Assessment
- E. Economic Conditions and Opportunities Analysis
- F. Community Atlas
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- H. Climate Vulnerability Assessment
- I. Health Impact Assessment
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- K. Public Involvement Plan
- L. Vision and Goals Framework
- M. Engagement and Outreach Summary
- N. Greenhouse Gas Emissions Inventory
- O. Land Capacity Analysis Methodology and Process for the Preferred Alternative
- P. Housing Needs and Land Capacity Analysis
- Q. Capital Facilities Plan
- R. Citywide Equitable Development Strategy
- S. Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Transition Plan
- T. Multimodal Evaluation and Active Trip Potential
- U. Full List of Plan Policies

## List of Acronyms

|         |                                        |
|---------|----------------------------------------|
| ADA     | Americans with Disabilities Act        |
| ADU     | accessory dwelling unit                |
| AMI     | area median income                     |
| AMR     | American Medical Response              |
| BIPOC   | Black, Indigenous, and People of Color |
| BMP     | best management practice               |
| BSM     | Bicycle and Small Mobility             |
| CFP     | Capital Facilities Plan                |
| CIP     | Capital Improvement Program            |
| Ecology | Washington State Department of Ecology |

## OUR VANCOUVER

|                 |                                                                                                                         |
|-----------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| EIS             | environmental impact statement                                                                                          |
| EPS             | Evergreen Public Schools                                                                                                |
| FAR             | floor area ratio                                                                                                        |
| FVRLibraries    | Fort Vancouver Regional Library District                                                                                |
| GHG             | greenhouse gas                                                                                                          |
| GMA             | Growth Management Act                                                                                                   |
| I-5             | Interstate 5                                                                                                            |
| I-205           | Interstate 205                                                                                                          |
| K-to-birth      | kindergarten-to-birth                                                                                                   |
| LEP             | limited English proficiency                                                                                             |
| LGBTQ+          | Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer/Questioning (+ includes additional identities, such as Intersex and Asexual) |
| LID             | low impact development                                                                                                  |
| LOS             | level of service                                                                                                        |
| LTS             | level of traffic stress                                                                                                 |
| MGD             | million gallons per day                                                                                                 |
| MMLOS           | Multimodal Level of Service                                                                                             |
| NRPA            | National Recreation and Park Association                                                                                |
| PIF             | park impact fee                                                                                                         |
| PM2.5           | fine particulate matter                                                                                                 |
| RCW             | Revised Code of Washington                                                                                              |
| RTC             | Regional Transportation Council                                                                                         |
| SEPA            | State Environmental Policy Act                                                                                          |
| SFS             | Street Funding Strategy                                                                                                 |
| SNAP            | Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program                                                                               |
| TBD             | to be determined // Transportation Benefit District                                                                     |
| TIF             | traffic impact fee                                                                                                      |
| TIP             | Transportation Improvement Program                                                                                      |
| Transition Plan | ADA Self-Evaluation and Transition Plan                                                                                 |
| TSP             | Transportation System Plan                                                                                              |
| UFMP            | Urban Forestry Management Plan                                                                                          |
| UGA             | urban growth area                                                                                                       |

## OUR VANCOUVER

|       |                                                 |
|-------|-------------------------------------------------|
| VA    | U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs             |
| VFD   | Vancouver Fire Department                       |
| VMC   | Vancouver Municipal Code                        |
| VMT   | vehicle miles traveled                          |
| VPD   | Vancouver Police Department                     |
| VPRCS | Vancouver Parks, Recreation & Cultural Services |
| VPS   | Vancouver Public Schools                        |
| VUGA  | Vancouver Urban Growth Area                     |
| WAC   | Washington Administrative Code                  |
| WSDOT | Washington State Department of Transportation   |



# Introduction

Vancouver is a city defined by change. Once a modest trading outpost, it has grown into Washington's fourth largest city and the primary urban center of Clark County, with more than 200,000 residents today. By 2045, that number is projected to exceed 281,000, a scale that underscores the importance of intentional planning to accommodate new growth and ensure livability and opportunity for all community members.

Throughout its history, Vancouver's identity has been shaped by rapid, transformational shifts. The city is currently in the middle of a major transformation, shifting from a traditionally suburban development pattern to a more urban character as land resources decrease, and where access to amenities and services, a range of transportation options, and a variety of housing types and price ranges are increasingly important. Economic and cultural changes are also reshaping how people live and work. Remote and hybrid employment is more common, housing is increasingly unattainable for many low- and middle-income residents, smaller household sizes are driving different housing needs, and younger generations place a premium on inclusive public spaces and vibrant cultural life. These shifts frame a central opportunity of the Comprehensive Plan: leveraging growth to enhance our daily experience in the community, strengthen the social fabric, delivering increased amenities and benefits, and creating neighborhoods where all residents can thrive.

## **OUR Evolution as a Community**

Vancouver's history begins with the Indigenous peoples who historically have inhabited and stewarded this land for more than 10,000 years, and whose descendants continue to be a part of the Vancouver community today. The Chinook people lived in large rectangular houses made of cedar planks, located in towns along the north bank of the "Wimahl" River, or "Big River," near its confluence with Oregon's Willamette River. Rich in salmon, plants, and berries, the Chinook people lived in relative abundance and became prolific traders. Included in this



**Fort Vancouver, 1845 Sketch by Lt. Henry Warre (UW Special Collections, WAS0374)**

extensive trade network were the nearby Cowlitz and Klickitat tribes. The Columbia served as a vital transportation corridor and the foundation of an extensive trade network that sustained these communities and connected them to neighboring regions. The Cowlitz tribe likely lived along the Cowlitz River a short distance upstream from its confluence with the Columbia River. They traveled by canoe on the Columbia River near present day Vancouver and passed through the area by land regularly as well. The arrival of Europeans to this area beginning in the mid-1700s brought waves of smallpox and other diseases that devastated Native communities. By the early 1800s, when Lewis

and Clark passed through the area, the Native population had suffered significant losses. Today, the Chinook Indian Nation—comprising five constituent tribes—continues to advocate for federal recognition, which was briefly granted in 2001 and rescinded in 2002.



The Hudson's Bay Company established Fort Vancouver in 1825 as a fur trading post and administrative center. Chinookan and Cowlitz peoples were hired by the Company in their traditional roles as middlemen, which facilitated the Company's access to the established trade network in the area<sup>1</sup>. Within two decades, the Fort became the hub of commerce for the region, housing the first school, library, and theater on land that is now known as the state of Washington. By the 1840s, it was the largest concentration of people on the West Coast. While company officers lived within the stockade, the broader workforce and their families lived in Kanaka Village, a multicultural settlement, including Hawaiian Islanders, French Métis, Iroquois, and local Native people.

American settlers began arriving in the 1840s, and after the U.S.–Canada border was fixed at the 49th parallel in 1846, Fort Vancouver's role declined. The U.S. Army established barracks nearby in 1849, drawing additional settlers and cementing Vancouver's military importance. The city was incorporated in 1857 with roughly 1,700 residents, becoming one of the first incorporated cities in the Washington Territory. By 1880, Vancouver had become the third largest town in the territory. Records from the late nineteenth century show the presence of Chinese laborers and Buffalo Soldiers—segregated army regiments of Black American men—stationed at Vancouver Barracks, though the broader White community discriminated against these groups.

The early twentieth century saw Vancouver expand through annexation (1909) and infrastructure investment. The opening of the Vancouver–Hayden Island Railroad Bridge in 1906 and the Interstate Bridge in 1917 connected the city more directly to the region and fueled industrial growth. Immigrant families, including Japanese farmers, shaped the agricultural economy but faced discriminatory laws. In 1940, Alcoa opened a major aluminum plant, followed by the Kaiser Shipyards in 1942, which tripled the city's population almost overnight. To meet the need for housing, the Vancouver Housing Authority constructed more than 12,000 family units and 10,000 dormitories, reshaping neighborhoods across the city. After the war, most temporary wartime housing was demolished or converted into subdivisions.

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<sup>1</sup> [An Ethnohistorical Overview of Groups with Ties to Fort Vancouver National Historic Site](#)

Postwar decades also brought new infrastructure and urban renewal. Construction of Interstate 5 (I-5) in the 1950s cut through neighborhoods and severed connections to downtown, accelerating suburban development and retail flight. The City adopted its first Comprehensive Plan in 1957, establishing segregated land uses and suburban street patterns. Urban renewal programs in the 1960s and 1970s demolished portions of downtown housing stock, displacing lower-income residents and impacting historic buildings. In 1973, Oregon passed Senate Bill 100, which established an urban growth boundary and limited outward expansion into farmland surrounding Portland. New restrictions on growth south of the river, along with construction of the Interstate 205 (I-205) bridge to Vancouver, catalyzed a significant amount of growth that occurred in Clark County, particularly in what is now East Vancouver.

The late twentieth century and early twenty-first century marked another transformation. Annexations in the late 1990s and mid-2000s dramatically expanded city boundaries, nearly doubling the city's overall population, while the growth of high-tech industries and large-scale redevelopment efforts reshaped the urban core. Long-term investments and strategic planning, such as the Esther Short Park Redevelopment Plan, the 2007 Vancouver City Center Vision (VCCV), and the development of the Waterfront reconnected Vancouver to its riverfront and created a renewed sense of civic identity.



**Hudson House on the Kaiser Shipyard Site (Vancouver Housing Authority)**

Today, Vancouver is home to just over 200,000 residents and is one of the most diverse communities in the region. Since 2010, communities of color have grown by over 60 percent, and Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) populations countywide have nearly doubled. The City continues to confront challenges of housing affordability, displacement, climate change, and infrastructure needs while building on a long legacy of resilience. With the 2022 Climate Action Framework, 2023 Strategic Plan, 2024 Transportation System Plan and the 2025 Comprehensive Plan update, Vancouver is setting the stage for its next chapter: a future that honors its Indigenous roots, addresses past inequities, and creates a more equitable, sustainable, and prosperous community for generations to come.





**Vancouver Waterfront and the Grant Street Pier in 2025.**

Vancouver's identity is inseparable from the Columbia River, a defining natural feature that has shaped the city's history, economy, and community life for thousands of years. Today, the Columbia River remains central to Vancouver's identity—supporting industry and recreation, and reinforcing the city's role as a connected regional hub. This longstanding relationship carries a responsibility to steward and protect the river for future generations. As Vancouver grows, the Columbia River will play a critical role in shaping a more resilient and sustainable future—supporting habitat restoration, climate adaptation, and equitable access to open space and recreation. Our future depends on our ability to protect this natural resource, and responsibly and equitably increase access to it as a civic gathering space and public amenity.

What Issues Face the Community in 2026?

**Housing Affordability and Displacement.** Housing costs have risen dramatically in the past decade, with median rents increasing by more than 60 percent since 2011 and home prices nearly tripling. Nearly half of all renters are cost-burdened, with more than a quarter paying over half their income on housing. Displacement risk is highest for Black, Hispanic/Latine, and lower-income households, many of whom are concentrated in neighborhoods along the Fourth Plain Corridor, Fruit Valley, and Walnut Grove, and in the northeast corner of the city. Meeting the state-mandated target of more than 38,000 new housing units by 2045 will require increasing production, streamlining regulations, reducing review timelines, and finding new sources of funding to both preserve and build new rent-restricted affordable housing.

**Climate Change and Environmental Stress.** Vancouver is already experiencing the effects of climate change, from extreme heat and wildfire smoke to flooding and degraded air quality, with these impacts expected to increase over the next 20 years. Vulnerable populations—including older adults, children, and households with low incomes or limited English proficiency (LEP)—face disproportionate exposure to these hazards. Neighborhoods with less tree canopy and higher concentrations of pavement, such as parts of the Fourth Plain Corridor and East Vancouver, are more susceptible to urban heat. Addressing climate resilience is critical not only for physical infrastructure but also for the daily comfort, health, and safety of residents.

**Evolving Demographics and Community Needs.** The city is transitioning from a suburban to a more urban environment, with demand growing for smaller, more affordable homes near transit, parks, and neighborhood services. The share of residents over 65 is increasing, households are getting smaller,

Community Overview



Population: **202,600**



Median Age: **36.8 years**



Youth: **21% under 18 years**



Seniors: **21% are 65 years +**



Size: **51.84 square miles**



Housing Units: **71,649**



Tenure: **49% rent, 51% own**



Median Home Sales Price:  
**\$477,000**



Median Household Income:  
**\$76,799**



Disability Status: **14.7%**



Has a Bachelor's Degree or Higher:  
**31.2%**



Speaks a language other than  
English: **14.7%**



Veteran Status: **7.7 %**



and more residents live alone. This creates new needs for accessible housing, social infrastructure, and community spaces that foster connection and reduce isolation.

**Economic Shifts and Disparities.** Vancouver has attracted new employers in healthcare, technology, and education, strengthening its job base. Yet median household income remains below the county average, and many jobs in retail and service sectors do not pay a living wage. Economic disparities persist along racial lines, with Black and Hispanic households earning significantly less than the citywide median. Supporting small businesses, expanding workforce development, adding family wage jobs, and ensuring proximity between jobs and housing are critical to building a resilient and inclusive economy.

**Safety and Social Cohesion.** Public safety remains a concern, particularly with rising traffic fatalities and injuries involving pedestrians and bicyclists. Residents consistently express a desire for safer streets, more inviting public spaces, and stronger social connections. Building trust in civic institutions, fostering participation in cultural and community life, and ensuring that residents feel represented in the built environment are essential to a positive community experience.

**What Key Trends Do We Anticipate Addressing over the Next 20 Years?**

Vancouver’s next two decades will be shaped by continued growth, demographic transition, climate impacts, and economic restructuring. The community issues we face today—housing affordability, environmental stress, inequity, and safety—are projected to intensify without decisive, coordinated planning. Looking ahead to 2045, several major trends will frame the choices before us.

- ➔ **Continued Population, Housing, and Employment Growth** - By 2045, Vancouver is projected to grow by over 81,000 new residents and will need at least 38,000 new housing units to address our existing housing deficit and meet new demand. The employment base will also need to grow by an additional 43,200 jobs to provide local employment opportunities and reduce commutes between other major employment centers in the region. Refer to Table 1 for current and projected future capacity for population, housing units, and jobs in the Vancouver area.

Table 1. 2024 Population, Housing Units, and Jobs and Projected Future Capacity

|               | 2024    | Projected Growth | 2045    |
|---------------|---------|------------------|---------|
| Population    | 200,000 | +81,000          | 281,000 |
| Housing Units | 86,000  | +38,000          | 124,000 |
| Jobs          | 100,000 | +43,200          | 143,200 |

- ➔ **Intensifying Housing Need, Affordability Pressures, and Displacement Risk** - Even as production increases, the need for affordable housing and supportive housing will outpace market delivery. Cost burdens are expected to grow for renters, seniors, single-person households, and Black, Hispanic/Latine, Pacific Islander, and immigrant communities. Market pressures will continue to concentrate displacement risk in areas like Fruit Valley and Fourth Plain Corridor, requiring intentional anti-displacement strategies and more robust equitable development tools.

- ➔ **Increasing Climate Hazards and Community Vulnerability** - By 2045, Vancouver is projected to experience significantly more days of extreme heat, more intense atmospheric river events, longer wildfire smoke seasons, and reduced summer stream flows. These impacts will disproportionately affect residents with lower incomes, LEP, disabilities, older adults, and households living in heat-vulnerable areas with low tree canopy. Infrastructure—particularly stormwater, water supply, energy grid, transportation corridors, and older housing stock—will require major adaptation and resilience upgrades. Vancouver will need to integrate nature-based solutions, extreme heat response systems, and community-scale resilience hubs into its long-range planning.
- ➔ **Shifting Demographics, Aging, and Changing Household Types** - The city will continue to diversify racially and culturally, with growing immigrant communities and multigenerational households. The share of seniors will rise significantly, increasing demand for accessible housing, aging-in-place options, and supportive community services. More residents will live alone, amplifying the need for social infrastructure—public spaces, libraries, neighborhood centers, cultural hubs, and inclusive civic life—to reduce isolation and strengthen community belonging.
- ➔ **Transforming Economy and Labor Market** - Vancouver's economy is increasingly bifurcated, with large numbers of higher-wage jobs in healthcare, technology, engineering, creative industries, and professional services, as well as lower wage service sector jobs. Traditional manufacturing, logistics, and construction—industries where Vancouver doesn't perform well relative to the overall region—will remain essential to providing living-wage jobs for residents without postsecondary education. Remote and hybrid work will continue influencing where people live and how they travel, increasing demand for flexible workspaces, neighborhood-serving services, and multimodal infrastructure. As commercial redevelopment accelerates, the City will need to strategically manage finite employment land, support small businesses, foster entrepreneurship, and expand opportunities for workforce development.
- ➔ **Greater Emphasis on Safe, Connected, Low-carbon Mobility** - Traffic fatalities and serious injuries—especially those impacting pedestrians—are likely to rise without significant safety investments. Over the next two decades, Vancouver must find ways to shift travel behavior to more climate-friendly options, such as walking, rolling, cycling, and transit. Electrification of transportation, expansion of active transportation networks, and redesign of high-injury corridors throughout the city will be critical to both safety and climate goals.
- ➔ **Growing Expectations for Equity, Representation, and Community Voice** - Community expectations for repair of past harms, culturally responsive government, and equitable investment will continue to grow. Residents increasingly expect transparent data, meaningful power-sharing, and policies that correct historical inequities in housing, environmental conditions, transportation access, and economic opportunity. Over the next 20 years, Vancouver will need to strengthen partnerships with neighborhood organizations, cultural communities, Tribes, and community-based groups to co-create solutions and ensure a sense of community ownership and buy-in.

### Role of the Comprehensive Plan

Comprehensive Plans are the centerpiece of local planning efforts and are a foundational tool for shaping outcomes in the built and natural environment and addressing the key issues a community faces. These 20-year plans articulate a community vision through a series of goals, policies, and actions that guide the day-to-day decisions of elected officials and local government staff. While growth and change have and will always be a part of our lives, Comprehensive Plans are created by local governments with the community to help coordinate and plan for that growth, establish common goals, support the environment, and support our collective health, safety, and high quality of life.

The City of Vancouver is required to develop a Comprehensive Plan under Washington's Growth Management Act (GMA), with specific requirements outlined in Revised Code of Washington (RCW) Section 36.70A. First adopted in 1994 and updated in both 2004 and 2011, Vancouver's Comprehensive Plan has evolved alongside the city's growth, setting the policy framework for urban centers, housing diversity, and service provision. This updated plan extends the community vision to 2045 and establishes goals, policies, and actions that better address the issues and trends outlined above.



### Community Vision Statement

“Vancouver is an equitable and prosperous community, which ensures that all residents, businesses and organizations benefit from the growth and advancement we make together.

Vancouver will be recognized for our quality of life, as evidenced by affordable housing in vibrant, safe and walkable neighborhoods, access to jobs and economic opportunity for all, and leading-edge efforts to address climate change.”

### How the Plan Is Structured

This Comprehensive Plan is centered around the plan's **community vision statement**. The vision statement is the result of a detailed visioning process, which engaged more than 1,000 community members between June 2022 and February 2023. The plan vision statement serves as the basis from which all other goals and policies in the plan are developed. Each of the plan's chapters and corresponding goals were developed from input received during phase I engagement and guidance

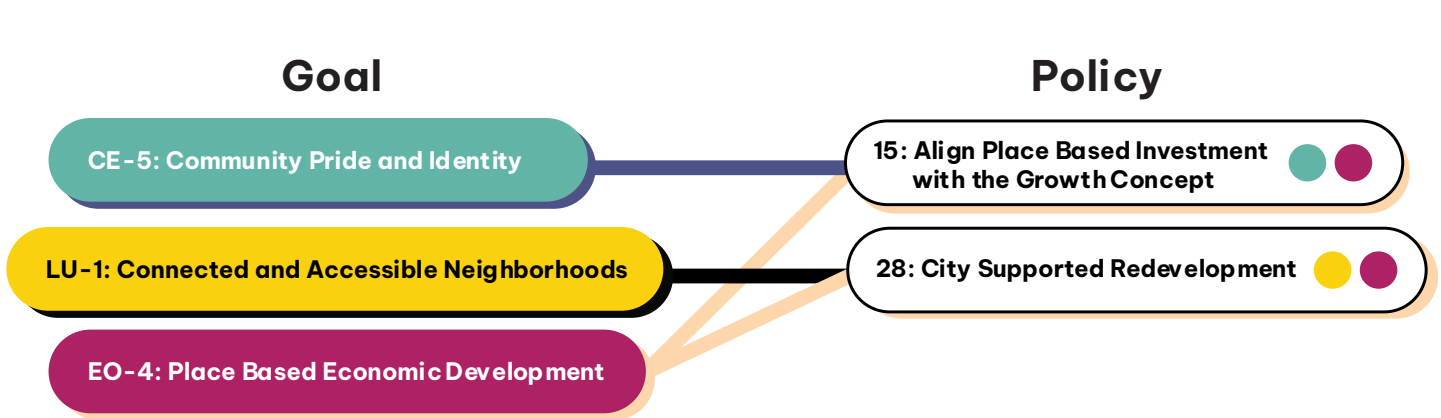
provided by the plan’s *Community Partners*, the primary community advisory group tasked with co-creation of the plan with City staff. This goals framework was endorsed by City Council early in the process, and can be found in Exhibit L. The Plan is organized into the following chapters; see Figure 1. Each chapter also has its own vision statement, as well as a set of goals associated with that chapter.

Figure 1. Comprehensive Plan Chapters



Each goal is described in the relevant chapter and includes a list referencing the policies that support the goal. Because community priorities are interconnected, most policies end up supporting multiple goals and are repeated under multiple goals throughout the plan. See Figure 2. Applying policies to multiple goals helps strengthen the connections between what we want to achieve (i.e., the vision and goals) and what we need to do to get there (i.e., the policies and actions).

Figure 2. Interaction of Goals, Policies, and Actions







### Community Engagement

Each chapter of the Comprehensive Plan includes a Community Feedback callout box that highlights key themes heard from the community and shows how that input informed plan direction. Community engagement and outreach were conducted throughout the Comprehensive Plan update process in a multi-year effort, beginning with visioning in 2023, advancing through development of Land Use Alternatives in 2024 and the Preferred Alternative in 2025, and concluding in Spring 2026 with public review of the draft plan and zoning code. This process was designed to center equitable engagement, elevate community voices, and ensure that lived experiences informed policy development.

In total, more than 2,000 people were directly engaged through over 200 meetings, events, workshops, and outreach activities, and more than 1,900 ideas and comments were received. Engagement occurred through a variety of formats to reach people across different communities, including:

- Public meetings, small-group discussions, and community events, including forums, tabling, and neighborhood-based outreach
- Interactive mapping activities and online engagement tools to gather place-based input
- Community Partner and Community Working Group meetings that supported a co-creative planning process
- Workshops with City boards, commissions, Planning Commission, and City Council, where community members could provide testimony and feedback
- Broad digital and citywide outreach, including surveys, StoryMap engagement, newsletters, and social media

- Presentations to community and business organizations, neighborhood associations, schools, service providers, and other public agencies.

This layered approach allowed the City to gather both broad and in-depth feedback, reaching thousands more community members through online platforms and citywide communications . A deeper dive into engagement methods, participation, and key themes can be found in Appendix K: Public Involvement Plan and Appendix M: Engagement and Outreach Summary.





## Related Plans and Policies

Related plans and policies provide background information and policy directives that inform and support Comprehensive Plan analyses, goals, policies and implementation steps.

\*Adopted by Reference: some Plans listed below fulfill statutory requirements of Comprehensive Planning under the Growth Management Act. The Adopted by Reference notation refers to the most current version of each plan, as subsequently amended from time to time.

### Appendix A. Related Plans and Policies

- 2023-2029 Strategic Plan
- Climate Action Framework (CAF), adopted 2022\*
- Electric Vehicle Strategy, anticipated adoption 2026
- Housing Action Plan
- Reside Vancouver Anti-Displacement Plan, 2023
- City of Vancouver 2019-2023 Consolidated Housing and Community Development Plan, and 2025 Action Plan
- 2022-2031 Vancouver Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services (VPRCS) Comprehensive Plan\*
- Culture Arts and Heritage Plan, adopted 2018
- Five-Year Economic Development Strategy, adopted 2025
- 2024-2044 Transportation System Plan (TSP), adopted 2024\*
- 2026-2031 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)
- Stormwater Management Program Plan (SWMP Plan), adopted 2025
- 2011 General Sewer Plan, update in process, adoption anticipated 2026-2027
- 2026-2031 Water, Sewer and Surface Water Capital Improvement Program (CIP)
- 2016 Comprehensive Water System Plan, amended 2022, update in process, adoption anticipated 2026-2027
- Long Range Facilities Plan, adopted 2024
- VPS 6-year Capital Facilities Plan
- EPS Building Locations
- Urban Forestry Management Plan (UFMP), adopted 2023\*
- Shoreline Master Program, adopted 2011, last amended 2021
- Critical Areas Ordinance, adopted 2024
- Subarea and District Plans\*
- Other Jurisdiction and Agency Policies
- Countywide Planning Policies\*

# Glossary

*Below are key terms and acronyms that are used frequently throughout this plan:*

**Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU)** - A dwelling unit located on the same lot as a single-family housing unit, duplex, triplex, fourplex, townhome, or rowhome. An attached ADU is located within or attached to a housing unit. A detached ADU is a unit that is separate from a housing unit and is on the same property. ADUs expand housing options and provide lower-cost, smaller-scale homes within established neighborhoods.

**Active Transportation** - Primarily human-powered travel, such as walking, bicycling, rolling, or using mobility devices, including those with electric assistance, pursuant to RCW 36.70A.030. Active transportation networks improve health, reduce emissions, and support more sustainable travel choices.

**Active Trip Potential (ATP)** - A measure of the likelihood that people will walk, roll, or bike based on surrounding land uses, street conditions, and access to destinations. ATP helps identify areas where investments in active transportation would be most effective.

**Adaptive Capacity** - A community's ability to adjust, respond, or adapt to climate impacts, environmental changes, or other stresses. Higher adaptive capacity reduces vulnerability and supports long-term resilience.

**Affordable Housing** - Housing that is priced so that residents can still afford other essential needs such as food, healthcare, transportation, and savings. Housing is generally considered affordable when costs, including utilities, do not exceed 30 percent of a household's income.

- Affordable housing may be **income-restricted**, meaning it serves households at or below certain income levels, and often relies on public funding to keep costs affordable.
- **Naturally occurring affordable housing** refers to housing that is not income restricted but still affordable at a given income level, typically smaller and older housing units.
- **Workforce Housing refers** to housing that is affordable (costs no more than 30 percent of household income) to households that earn between 80 and 120 percent of the area median income and still allows them to afford other basic needs, such as food, healthcare, transportation, and savings.

**Aging in Place** - The ability for older adults to remain in their homes and communities safely and comfortably as they age. This relies on accessible housing, supportive services, transportation options, and age-friendly neighborhood design.

**Air Quality** - A measure of the concentration of pollutants—such as particulate matter, ozone, and other contaminants—in the air people breathe. Good air quality is essential for public health and is influenced by transportation, industry, wildfires, and climate conditions.



**Annexation** - The legal process by which a city expands its boundaries to include adjacent unincorporated areas of land into the municipality. Annexation supports orderly growth, consistent service delivery, and alignment with long-range planning under the Growth Management Act.

**Annexation Agreement** - A negotiated agreement between a city and property owners, or between jurisdictions, outlining the terms, services, and responsibilities associated with annexing land. These agreements help ensure predictable transitions for infrastructure, governance, and land use regulation.

**Area Median Income (AMI)** - The midpoint of household incomes in a region, as defined and calculated annually by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. AMI is used to determine eligibility for affordable housing programs and income-restricted units.

**Bus Rapid Transit (BRT)** - A high-capacity transit service that uses dedicated lanes, frequent service, enhanced stations, and transit priority treatments to provide faster and more reliable bus travel. In Vancouver, C-TRAN operates the Vine as Clark County's only BRT system.

**Capital Facilities Plan (CFP)** - A long-range plan that identifies major public physical infrastructure needs, including utilities, transportation, parks, and public buildings, and outlines funding strategies. CFPs include municipal and non-municipal infrastructure project plans in detail for a six-year period and more generally over the remainder of the 20-year planning period, pursuant to RCW 36.70A.070(3).

**Carbon Emissions** - Greenhouse gases (GHG), primarily carbon dioxide and methane, released through transportation, buildings, industry, and other human activities. Reducing carbon emissions is essential for mitigating climate change and improving long-term environmental health.

**Circular Economy** - An economic system aimed at eliminating waste and keeping materials and products in use for as long as possible. In Vancouver's context, this includes local sourcing, recycling and reuse, low-carbon construction, and minimizing emissions across supply chains.

**Climate Action Framework** - The City of Vancouver's strategic plan for reducing GHG emissions and transitioning toward a low-carbon, sustainable future. Adopted in 2022, the Climate Action Framework outlines goals, actions, and performance measures that guide policy, investments, and community partnerships to mitigate climate change and support long-term resilience.

**Climate Exposure** - The degree to which people, infrastructure, or natural systems are subjected to climate-related hazards, such as extreme heat, flooding, wildfire smoke, or drought. Exposure is a key component of climate vulnerability assessments.

**Climate Refugia** - Areas that are more protected from climate impacts—such as cooler, shaded, or well-watered environments—that provide safe habitat for people, plants, and wildlife during extreme conditions. Protecting refugia helps support long-term ecological and community resilience.

**Climate Resilience** - A community's ability to withstand, adapt to, and recover from climate-related disruptions. Resilience planning includes reducing risk, strengthening infrastructure, and building social and economic systems that can support residents during climate stressors.

**Climate Vulnerability Index** – A data-based tool that identifies where people and places in the city are most vulnerable to climate hazards by combining exposure, sensitivity, and adaptive capacity indicators. The Climate Vulnerability Index helps prioritize investments in high-risk neighborhoods. The index is referenced throughout the Climate Vulnerability Assessment.

**Community Development** – The set of policies, programs, and investments that shape the physical, economic, and social well-being of neighborhoods. Community development focuses on equitable access to housing, services, infrastructure, and opportunities.

**Community Experience** – The lived experience of residents as they interact with their neighborhoods, public spaces, services, and each other. Planning for community experience emphasizes belonging, safety, cultural identity, and everyday quality of life.

**Community Spaces** – Publicly accessible spaces that support social interaction. Includes both publicly owned and privately owned areas and both indoor and outdoor facilities, such as parks, plazas, open spaces, community centers, and neighborhood-serving businesses. Generally synonymous with “community gathering spaces” and “third places” for purposes of this plan.

**Complete Streets** – A design approach that ensures streets are safe and comfortable for all users—people walking, rolling, biking, taking transit, and driving—regardless of age or ability. Complete Streets support multimodal mobility, safety, and healthy communities.

**Comprehensive Plan** – A local jurisdiction’s blueprint for managing growth, land use, housing, transportation, climate resilience, parks, natural area protection, and public facilities and services over a 20-year period developed and adopted in accordance with the Washington GMA. The plan provides policy direction, regulatory guidance, and a shared vision for the city’s future.

**Connected and Accessible Neighborhood** – A neighborhood where residents can conveniently reach daily needs—such as shops, parks, transit, and schools—through safe walking, biking, rolling, and transit connections. These neighborhoods support health, affordability, and reduced carbon emissions.

**Criteria Pollutant** – A pollutant regulated under the Clean Air Act, such as ozone, particulate matter, carbon monoxide, nitrogen dioxide, sulfur dioxide, and lead, due to their known health effects. Tracking criteria pollutants helps communities monitor and improve air quality.

**Critical Areas Ordinance (CAO)** – Local regulations that protect environmentally sensitive areas, such as wetlands, areas with critical recharging effect on aquifers used for potable water, floodplains, geologically hazard areas, and fish and wildlife habitat. The Critical Areas Ordinance ensures development avoids or mitigates impacts to critical natural systems.

**Cultural Displacement** – The loss of cultural identity and community cohesion that occurs when longtime residents or native communities can no longer afford to live in or operate businesses in their neighborhoods or on their ancestral lands. Cultural displacement often accompanies economic or demographic shifts and is a key equity concern.

**Cumulative Impacts** - The combined effect of multiple past, present, and future actions—such as pollution, land-use decisions, or infrastructure investments—on community health and environmental conditions. Cumulative impacts assessments help identify places facing disproportionate burdens.

**Density (Housing or Job Density)** - A measure of how many housing units or jobs are located within a specific area, typically expressed as units or jobs per acre. Density helps guide land use decisions, infrastructure planning, and the creation of walkable, transit-supportive neighborhoods.

**Disparities:** Measurable differences in outcomes between population groups, including differences in health, economic conditions, well-being, environmental exposure, and access to housing, services, resources, and opportunities.

- **Racial disparities:** Differences in outcomes across racial groups.
- **Economic disparities:** Differences in income levels and related economic indicators.

**Displacement (Gentrification)** - The process in which rising property values and neighborhood investment lead to the involuntary movement of lower-income residents as wealthier households move in. Gentrification-related displacement typically reflects broader economic pressures and inequities in housing systems.

**Displacement Risk Assessment** - An analysis used to identify communities most vulnerable to displacement due to market pressures, policy changes, or public and private investments. These assessments guide anti-displacement strategies and inform equitable planning decisions.

**Economic Mobility** - The ability of individuals and households to improve their economic status over time through access to education, jobs, housing, and community resources. Cities promote economic mobility by expanding pathways to stable, living-wage employment and reducing systemic barriers.

**Economic Opportunity** - The availability of jobs, business resources, and supportive conditions that allow residents and local firms to thrive. Economic opportunity is strengthened by workforce development, small business support, equitable access to capital, and the creation of high-quality employment centers.

**Embodied Carbon** - The total carbon emissions associated with the extraction, production, transportation, and installation of materials used in construction, production, and manufacturing. Reducing embodied carbon supports both climate goals and local economies when materials are sourced regionally.

**Emergency Shelter** - Short-term, temporary housing that provides immediate, safe accommodations for individuals and families experiencing homelessness or crisis. Emergency shelters often include supportive services to help stabilize residents and connect them with long-term housing options.

**Employment Land** - Land designated for commercial, industrial, office, or mixed-employment uses that support jobs and economic activity. Employment lands ensure that cities have adequate space to accommodate future job growth and business development.

**Entrepreneurship/Startup Ecosystem** - The network of entrepreneurs, small businesses, support organizations, investors, educational institutions, and services that nurture innovation and new business creation. A strong startup ecosystem generates local jobs and drives economic diversification.

**Environmental Impact Statement (Draft EIS)** - A detailed environmental review document prepared under the State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) that evaluates the potential environmental impacts, alternatives, and mitigation measures of a proposed plan, policy, or project. The Draft EIS is released for public and agency review to gather comments before selecting a Preferred Alternative and finalizing the analysis.

**Environmental Impact Statement (Final EIS)** - The completed environmental review required by SEPA that responds to public and agency comments on the Draft EIS and identifies a Preferred Alternative, and provides refined analysis, mitigation measures, and a summary of the decision-making process. The Final EIS informs the adoption of major plans or actions.

**Environmental Justice** - The principle that all people should benefit equally from environmental protections and not bear disproportionate environmental harms. It means the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people regardless of race, color, national origin, or income with respect to the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, rules, and policies. Environmental justice includes addressing disproportionate environmental and health impacts in all laws, rules, and policies with environmental impacts by prioritizing vulnerable populations and overburdened communities, the equitable distribution of resources and benefits, and eliminating harm. Environmental justice ensures fair treatment and meaningful involvement in decisions affecting community health.

**Equality** - The condition in which all people have the same resources or opportunities. While equality focuses on uniform distribution, it may not account for differing needs or historical inequities.

**Equitable Development** - Development that intentionally reduces disparities by ensuring that the benefits of growth—such as housing, jobs, transportation, and amenities—are shared by all residents, especially communities historically excluded from opportunity. Equitable development makes adequate provisions for all economic segments of the community and is supported by anti-displacement policies and inclusionary zoning.

**Equity** - The principle of distributing resources, opportunities, and support based on need so that all individuals can achieve fair outcomes. Unlike equality, equity recognizes structural inequities and adjusts approaches to address them.

**Equity Index** - A local data-driven tool, developed and maintained by the City, that maps and measures disparities across neighborhoods—such as income, housing stability, health, transportation access, and environmental conditions. The index helps the City identify Equity Priority Communities and guide targeted investments.

**Equity Priority Communities** - Groups identified in compliance with the Washington Law Against Discrimination (Chapter 49.60 RCW) that have been historically or systematically excluded from



economic, political, or social opportunities due to race, ethnicity, immigration status, income, disability, gender identity, or other identity factors. Vancouver's Equity Priority Communities include BIPOC, Latino/a individuals, LGBTQ+ individuals, people with low incomes, people with disabilities, youth and children, renters, people experiencing homelessness, small business owners, refugees, undocumented populations, and formerly incarcerated community members.

**Essential Spaces** - A planning framework used in the Vancouver Parks, Recreation & Cultural Services (VPRCS) Comprehensive Plan that recognizes parks, recreation facilities, trails, natural areas, and cultural spaces as critical public assets essential to community health, equity, environmental resilience, economic vitality, and quality of life. Essential Spaces provide physical, mental, social, and cultural benefits and are foundational to a thriving and inclusive city.

**Exposure (Climate)** - The degree to which people, buildings, and natural systems are subject to climate hazards, such as extreme heat, drought, flooding, or wildfire smoke. Exposure is one of three components of climate vulnerability, along with sensitivity and adaptive capacity.

**Extreme Heat** - Unusually high temperatures that pose risks to human health, infrastructure, and ecosystems, compared to average weather or historic trends. Extreme heat events are intensifying due to climate change and disproportionately impact vulnerable populations.

**Floodplain** - Low-lying land adjacent to a river, stream, or waterbody that is prone to flooding during storms or seasonal high-water events. Floodplain management reduces risks to people, property, and ecological systems.

**Floor Area Ratio (FAR)** - A measure of building intensity calculated by dividing a building's total floor area by the size of the lot it is built on. FAR helps regulate the scale of development and guide urban form.

**Form-based Code** - A land use regulation that emphasizes building form, design, and the public realm rather than separating uses. Form-based codes create predictable, human-scaled environments, and support walkability and mixed-use development.

**Green Infrastructure** - Nature-based systems—such as trees, rain gardens, wetlands, and permeable surfaces—that manage stormwater, reduce flooding, improve air quality, and enhance urban habitat. Green infrastructure provides ecological and community co-benefits.

**Green Space** - Vegetated or natural areas, publicly or privately owned, that provide ecological, climate, health, and community benefits. Green Space supports climate resilience and environmental equity by reducing urban heat, managing stormwater, improving air and water quality, supporting biodiversity, and providing access to nature.

**Greenhouse Gas (GHG)** - Gases, including carbon dioxide, methane, nitrous oxide, hydrofluorocarbons, perfluorocarbons, sulfur hexafluoride, and others designated by the Washington State Department of Ecology (Ecology) pursuant to RCW 36.70A.45.010, that trap heat in the atmosphere and contribute to climate change. Reducing GHG emissions is a key goal of climate action planning.

**Growth Management Act (GMA)** - Washington State's legal framework for coordinated land use planning, requiring fast-growing communities to plan for housing, transportation, environmental protection, and public services within designated Urban Growth Areas (UGAs) as set forth in Chapter 36.70A RCW.

**Health Disparities** - Differences in health outcomes between groups that stem from inequitable social, economic, and environmental conditions. Planning, public health, and community investment can help reduce these disparities.

**Health Impact Assessment (HIA)** - A structured process and evaluation tool that was used to evaluate the potential health effects of the Comprehensive Plan and the Preferred Land Use Alternative. Health Impact Assessments help integrate health considerations into decision making and support more equitable outcomes.

**Heat Island** - The phenomenon where urbanized areas become significantly warmer than surrounding rural areas due to heat-absorbing surfaces like pavement and rooftops. Reducing heat island effects improves public health and climate resilience.

**Historically Marginalized Communities** - Communities that have experienced systemic exclusion or discrimination—often based on race, ethnicity, income, disability, or immigration status—and face disproportionate barriers to opportunity. Planning processes prioritize their inclusion and protection.

**House Bill (HB)** - Legislation introduced in the Washington State House of Representatives. House Bills often establish or modify requirements for local planning, housing, climate policy, or municipal operations.

**Housing Cost Burden** - A condition in which a household spends more than 30 percent of its income on housing costs, including rent, mortgage payments, and utilities. Severe cost burden occurs when housing costs exceed 50 percent of household income.

**Housing Tenure** - Whether a household owns or rents its home. Housing tenure patterns help identify stability, affordability challenges, and long-term housing needs.

**Impervious Surface** - A surface—such as pavement, concrete, or rooftops—that prevents water from soaking into the ground. Impervious surfaces increase stormwater runoff, flooding risk, and heat island effects.

**Inequities** - The uneven distribution of investment, resources, and environmental hazards across communities, resulting from exclusionary policies, practices, and processes. Historical, structural, and systemic inequities represent compounding layers of injustice where past discrimination (historical) is embedded into laws and policies (structural), creating a pervasive, self-reinforcing system (systemic) that disadvantages specific groups.

**Infill Development** - New development or redevelopment on underused or vacant land within smaller, already-urbanized areas. Infill supports efficient land use, reduces sprawl, and promotes walkability.

**Innovation** - The creation and application of new ideas, technologies, or practices that improve processes, products, or community outcomes. Innovation in planning often involves creative problem-solving, emerging tools, and partnerships that generate new opportunities.

**Intergovernmental Agreement** - A formal agreement between jurisdictions—such as cities, counties, or special districts—defining shared responsibilities, service provision, or coordinated planning. Intergovernmental Agreements support efficient governance and consistency across boundaries.

**Intensity (Land Use)** - The degree of development or activity allowed on a property, often measured through building height, FAR, lot coverage, or employment density. Intensity helps shape the character of districts and supports transit-oriented, walkable communities.

**Jobs-to-Housing Ratio** - A comparison of the number of jobs to the number of housing units in a community, used to assess the balance between employment and residential opportunities. A well-balanced ratio can reduce commute times, support economic vitality, and promote sustainable land use.

**Land Use** - The arrangement and designation of different types of activities—such as housing, employment, parks, and commercial uses—within a community. Land use planning guides where growth occurs to support efficient infrastructure, environmental protection, and community goals.

**Level of Service (LOS)** - A performance measure that evaluates how well transportation, utilities, or public services operate relative to established standards. LOS helps determine where improvements are needed to maintain safety, efficiency, and quality of service.

**Living-wage Job** - A job that pays enough for a worker to meet basic needs, such as housing, food, childcare, transportation, and healthcare, without public assistance. This amount varies by household size and local cost of living.

**Low-income Household** - A household earning below 80 percent of the area median income (AMI), as defined by federal or state guidelines. Low-income households often face housing affordability challenges and benefit from targeted programs and investments.

**Middle Housing** - Housing types such as duplexes, triplexes, fourplexes, courtyard apartments, townhomes, and cottage clusters that fall between single-family homes and larger multifamily buildings. Middle housing expands attainable, neighborhood-scale options in residential areas.

**Mitigation Measures** - Actions that avoid, reduce, or compensate for negative environmental, social, or economic impacts of a proposed project or policy. Mitigation is required under SEPA to ensure impacts are responsibly managed.

**Mixed-Use Development** - Development that blends residential, commercial, office, or civic uses within the same building or site. Mixed-use areas support walkability, reduce reliance on driving, and create vibrant, connected neighborhoods.

**Mobility** - The ability of people to move safely and efficiently throughout the transportation system using a variety of travel modes. Mobility reflects access, convenience, travel options, and the overall function of the street network.

**Multimodal Transportation** - A transportation system that supports multiple ways of traveling—walking, biking, rolling, transit, rideshare, and driving. Multimodal systems enhance accessibility, safety, and sustainability.

**Overburdened Communities** - Communities that experience disproportionately high environmental, health, and socioeconomic burdens due to historical inequities, disinvestment, and cumulative impacts. These areas are prioritized for equitable investment and pollution reduction.

**Particulate Matter** - Small airborne particles, including dust, soot, and smoke, that can be inhaled deep into the lungs and cause health problems. Fine particulate matter (PM<sub>2.5</sub>) is a key pollutant monitored for air quality and public health.

**Parks Classification** - A system used to categorize parks and recreation spaces based on size, function, service area, and amenities. In Vancouver, park classifications—including Neighborhood Parks, Community Parks, Regional Parks, Natural Areas, Civic Plazas, Linear Parks, and Special Facilities—guide land acquisition, design standards, service expectations, and investment decisions.

**Parks Demand** - The total amount of local parkland acreage needed to serve the existing or projected population based on adopted LOS standards. Parks demand represents the theoretical amount of land required to meet service goals, assuming no existing park inventory.

**Parks Need** - The difference between Parks Demand and the existing inventory of parkland and developed facilities. Parks Need identifies how many additional acres must be acquired or developed to meet adopted LOS standards and is used to prioritize land acquisition, capital projects, and funding strategies.

**Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Services Comprehensive Plan** - The City's long-range plan that guides the development, maintenance, and programming of parks, recreation facilities, cultural spaces, and natural areas. It identifies community needs, sets service standards, and outlines capital and operational priorities to ensure an equitable, accessible, and high-quality parks and recreation system.

**Periodic Update** - A required update to a city's Comprehensive Plan and development regulations under the GMA, occurring on a periodic cycle, typically at least every 10 years pursuant to RCW 36.70A.140. The update ensures that planning documents remain current with state laws, projections, and community priorities.

**Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH)** - Subsidized, long-term housing paired with voluntary, support services for people experiencing chronic homelessness or who have disabilities. Permanent Supportive Housing helps residents stabilize, maintain housing, and improve health and well-being.

**Place-based Investment** - Strategic investment in specific geographic areas—such as business districts, corridors, or neighborhoods—that builds on local assets and addresses local needs. This approach connects to Vancouver's land use policies and is often used to stabilize or uplift areas facing disinvestment or gentrification pressure.

**Potable Water Supply** - Water that is treated and safe for human consumption, used for drinking, cooking, and sanitation. Managing potable water ensures reliable service and protects public health.



**Preferred Alternative** - The option identified by the lead agency (City of Vancouver) in the EIS as best meeting the project's purpose, need, and policy objectives, taking into account environmental impacts, feasibility, and public input. The Preferred Alternative is evaluated in both the Draft and Final EISs and typically becomes the basis for final plan adoption or project implementation.

**Public Spaces** - Publicly owned areas that are accessible to the public, such as streets, sidewalks, parks, trails, natural areas, libraries, and community centers.

**Racially Disparate Impacts (RDI)** - Outcomes in which policies or systems disproportionately disadvantage one or more racial groups, regardless of intent. RCW 36.70A.070 requires identifying local policies and standards with potential racially disparate impacts and ways of beginning to undo those impacts.

**Redevelopment** - The process of replacing, expanding, or intensifying use on previously developed land. Redevelopment supports infill growth, revitalization, and efficient use of existing infrastructure.

**Revised Code of Washington (RCW)** - The collection of all permanent laws enacted by the Washington State Legislature. RCWs direct local planning, housing, environmental regulation, and municipal operations.

**Right-of-Way (ROW)** - Land dedicated for public transportation purposes, such as streets, sidewalks, bike lanes, and utilities. The right-of-way provides space for mobility, infrastructure, and public access.

**Severe Cost Burden** - A condition in which a household spends more than 50 percent of its income on housing costs. Severe cost burden significantly limits a household's ability to pay for other essential needs.

**Shoreline Management Act** - A state law set forth in Chapter 90.58 RCW governing the use and protection of shorelines, requiring local governments to balance environmental protection, public access, and water-dependent uses. The Act guides the development of local Shoreline Master Programs.

**Shoreline Master Program (SMP)** - A local plan and regulatory framework required under the State Shoreline Management Act to guide development, restoration, and public access along shorelines. Vancouver's Shoreline Master Program ensures shoreline uses are environmentally responsible and publicly beneficial.

**Smoke Exposure** - Exposure to wildfire or woodsmoke that can degrade air quality and pose significant health risks. Communities with vulnerable populations or limited cooling resources face greater smoke-related impacts.

**Social Determinants of Health (SDOH)** - The conditions in which people live, work, learn, and play that shape health outcomes—including housing stability, transportation access, education, income, and environmental quality. Addressing Social Determinants of Health improves health equity across neighborhoods.

**Social Infrastructure** - The network of places, institutions, and community assets—such as parks, libraries, schools, arts spaces, and neighborhood centers—that bring people together and support social connection. Strong social infrastructure fosters community resilience and belonging.

**State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA)** - Adopted by the Washington legislature in 1971, this law requires state and local agencies to identify and evaluate environmental impacts of proposed projects and non-project actions, mitigation measures and alternatives, prepare environmental documents that outline these findings in a concise and clear way, and involve the public in decision-making processes.

**Stormwater System** - The infrastructure that collects and manages precipitation runoff, including pipes, ditches, catch basins, and green stormwater facilities. Effective stormwater systems reduce flooding, protect water quality, and support climate resilience.

**Sweat Equity** - The value added to a property or business through personal labor and time, rather than direct financial investment. In community development, sweat equity can be a tool for building ownership and wealth among those without traditional access to capital.

**Tenant Protections** - Policies that help renters maintain stable housing—such as notice requirements, anti-discrimination rules, and protections against unfair eviction. Tenant protections support housing stability and reduce displacement risk.

**Transit-oriented Development (TOD)** - Compact, walkable, mixed-use development located near high usage transit facilities. Transit-oriented development supports transit ridership, reduces vehicle use, and creates vibrant, connected communities.

**Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)** - A short-range financial plan identifying transportation projects to be implemented by the City over a set period, typically four to six years. The TIP directs funding toward priority multimodal and safety improvements.

**Transportation System Plan (TSP)** - The City of Vancouver's long-range plan for managing and investing in the transportation network, including roads, transit, bike, and pedestrian systems, and freight corridors. The policies, programs, and projects identified within it supports mobility, safety, sustainability, and growth management.

**Tree Canopy** - The layer of leaves and branches formed by trees that cover the ground when viewed from above and provides shade, cooling, habitat, and air quality benefits. Tree canopy coverage is essential for reducing heat island effects and improving neighborhood health.

**Universal Design** - A design approach that ensures buildings, streets, and public spaces are usable by people of all ages and abilities without the need for adaptation. Universal Design enhances accessibility, safety, and inclusivity.

**Urban Forestry** - The planning, establishment, management, stewardship, and expansion of trees and associated plants, whether in small groups or forested areas, within the urban environment. Urban forestry enhances ecological health, climate resilience, and community well-being.

**Urban Growth Area (UGA)** – The area designated under the GMA generally characterized by urban or urbanizing development and services and containing a city anticipated to grow into and annex over the long term.

**Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT)** – The total number of miles driven by auto and small truck vehicles in a given area over a set time period. Reducing VMT supports climate goals, improves air quality, and promotes more sustainable transportation choices.

**Vancouver Parks, Recreation & Cultural Services (VPRCS)** – The City of Vancouver department responsible for the planning, development, operation, and maintenance of parks, recreation facilities, trails, natural areas, and cultural services. VPRCS manages the City’s park system and implements policies, programs, and capital investments that support recreation, community health, environmental stewardship, and cultural expression.

**Wastewater System** – The infrastructure that collects, conveys, and treats sewage from homes and businesses. Proper wastewater management protects public health and environmental quality.

**Water System (Potable/Drinking Water)** – The network of pipes, pumps, treatment facilities, and reservoirs that provides safe drinking water to homes and businesses. A resilient water system ensures reliable service and protects community health.

**Washington Administrative Code (WAC)** – The compilation of rules and regulations adopted by state agencies to implement state law. WACs provide detailed guidance for local planning, environmental review, and municipal operations.

**Workforce Development** – Programs and partnerships that prepare people for employment through training, education, apprenticeships, and job placement—with an emphasis on family-wage opportunities and long-term career pathways.

**Workforce Housing** – Housing that is affordable to households earning moderate incomes, and often located near employment centers. RCW 36.70.A.835 defines workforce housing as affordable to households earning 80 percent of the Area Medium Income (AMI) in the case of rental housing, and 100 percent of AMI in the case of owner-occupied housing.





# **Community Experience**

**1**

**OUR VANCOUVER**



# Introduction

This chapter is intended to be a lens for considering how decisions about the built and natural environment will impact the way people feel in their day-to-day experience in the city. It encompasses the social connections that shape daily life, the aesthetics and visual identity of neighborhoods, the public spaces where people gather, and how the built environment impacts people's sense of belonging and safety and the identity of the city overall. It is an experiential lens to inform policy making that asks the following question: *What is it like to live in this place?*

This chapter sets the foundation for the Comprehensive Plan by framing the human experience as a central planning priority. It focuses on what it feels like to be in Vancouver, to encounter one another and to move through shared spaces, and places community experience at the heart of achieving policy outcomes related to safety, equity, inclusion, and social well-being.



## Vision: Community Experience

We envision a city that is affordable, safe, accessible, vibrant, and prosperous, where all community members feel valued, included, and honored. Our city is made up of authentic places that reflect our different histories and lived experiences and help strengthen social bonds and connections to each other. We recognize that our histories include big accomplishments and important milestones, as well as individual and collective trauma and systemic injustice, and we will work to intentionally repair past harms and limit future ones. We uplift individuals and communities to collectively build a future where we not only survive but thrive, so that every person can lead a fulfilling life and truly belong.

## Changing Demographics

Vancouver's demographic landscape is shifting in ways that directly shape how people participate in civic life and form social connections. The city added just over 56,000 residents between 2000 and 2023, a 39 percent increase that has expanded the scale and diversity of the community. This growth has been accompanied by an aging population and changes in household composition that influence how residents engage with one another. The share of residents 65 and older increased from 13 percent to 19 percent between 2011 and 2021, while the share of youth under 20 declined from 25 percent to 20 percent over the same period. At the same time, the city's largest age cohort—residents aged 20 to 34, who make up 24 percent of the population—is also the group most likely to be newcomers to Vancouver, renters, or early-career workers whose civic engagement patterns are often still forming. These shifts mean Vancouver now includes larger proportions of older adults at increased risk of social isolation, as well as young adults who may lack long-term social networks, extended family nearby, or established pathways into community life.

Household patterns reinforce these dynamics. The Housing Needs Assessment shows that Vancouver's average household size has decreased from 2.4 to 2.3 persons over the last decade, with a seven-percentage-point decline in households with children and corresponding increases in one- and two-person households. These trends reflect broader shifts in aging, affordability pressures, delayed household formation, and diverse living arrangements, and they carry implications for civic and social life. Smaller households have fewer built-in social networks and tend to rely more on community centers, third places, and neighborhood institutions to build connection and access information. Vancouver's racial and ethnic diversity also continues to grow—communities of color increased from 24 to 33 percent of the population from 2011 to 2021—which brings cultural vibrancy but also requires civic systems that are linguistically and culturally accessible to ensure full participation. Economic disparities further shape engagement conditions. Vancouver's median household income—\$70,000, compared to the county's \$84,000—creates a higher share of residents who are cost-burdened, renters, or working multiple jobs. Residents facing financial stress have less discretionary time for civic involvement and may have fewer resources to participate in leadership roles, neighborhood associations, or volunteer opportunities.

Together, these demographic realities reveal a community where social connection is unevenly distributed and where barriers to civic participation are often tied to age, income, renter status, language, cultural identity, and the availability of accessible gathering spaces. Older adults may experience isolation if mobility or fixed incomes limit their access to community life. Younger adults may experience disconnectedness during transitional phases in work or housing. Immigrant and multilingual households may face linguistic or cultural barriers that impede civic involvement unless outreach is tailored. These trends underscore the importance of robust social infrastructure as the connective tissue of a rapidly growing and increasingly diverse city, and underscores the importance of parks, libraries, plazas, community centers, local businesses, cultural hubs, and informal gathering spaces that serve as the everyday platforms where civic life becomes possible, trust is built, and social isolation is countered.

## Representation & Belonging

Representation is a foundational component of community experience. It reflects who is present in Vancouver, whose voices shape decisions, and whose identities, cultures, and histories are visible in the built environment, civic processes, and public life. A community where people can see themselves reflected—in leadership, public spaces, art, businesses, and decision-making—fosters a stronger sense of belonging, trust, and shared ownership of place.

Vancouver is a growing and increasingly diverse community. As of recent estimates, more than 30 percent of residents identify as people of color, a notable increase over the past decade, alongside continued growth in Hispanic/Latine, Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander, and multiracial populations. The city is also home to a significant number of renters, young adults, single-person households, and LGBTQ+ residents. At the same time, disparities in income, housing access, environmental conditions, and access to services continue to vary across communities, particularly along lines of race, income, and geography. These patterns underscore that while Vancouver is diverse, representation in opportunity, outcomes, and decision-making historically has not been evenly distributed.

Ensuring that a range of perspectives inform design and policy decisions will help create a community that's more inclusive, functional, and responsive to the needs of all community members.

Advancing representation will require moving beyond participation alone toward outcomes that reflect the full diversity of the community. This includes:

- Ensuring engagement processes reach and reflect underrepresented populations
- Supporting equitable access to economic opportunity and small business development
- Designing public spaces and neighborhoods that reflect diverse identities and lived experiences
- Aligning investments with areas and populations identified through the City's Equity Index
- Reducing impacts of development to communities in areas identified with high displacement risk.

## Equity Lens

Ensuring all population groups are adequately represented in public decision making requires extended efforts to engage populations that historically have had limited time and resources to engage in public decision-making processes. These groups include:

- Hispanic and Black residents
- Youth and adults under 35
- Renters and lower-income households
- Non-English speakers and residents with limited English proficiency
- Individuals without reliable internet access or traditional access to engagement channels



## Who lives in this Community?

- **30%** of population identifies as people of color
- **29%** of households include children
- **15%** of households below federal poverty line
- **13.7%** Are foreign born, with strong representation from Latin America, Asia & Europe.
- **10.7%** of adults identify as LGBTQ+
- **7.3%** of households do not have access to a vehicle
- **Fastest Growing Populations** - Hispanic/Latine, Native Hawaiian & Pacific Islander communities, and Multiracial Residents
- **Languages Spoken** – English, Spanish, Russian, Vietnamese, Chuukese, Mandarin and American Sign Language

### Social Infrastructure

Social infrastructure—the network of physical places and community institutions where people regularly interact—is one of the most powerful tools the city has to counter isolation and build connection. In Vancouver, this includes neighborhood parks and trails, libraries, community centers, schools, cultural and faith-based institutions, small businesses and cafés, arts and performance venues, and the streets, plazas, and civic spaces that knit them together. Throughout the engagement process, residents consistently described these places as the heart of community life: parks, the waterfront, community centers, and local events were repeatedly celebrated as the spaces where people build relationships, find recreation, and feel a sense of belonging. Downtown, the Waterfront, Esther Short Park, and historic



*Downtown Vancouver currently has a wide range of amenities, restaurants, coffee, shops, community centers, social spaces, and urban plazas that foster opportunity for connection. As the city continues to grow, new centers identified in the growth concept (chapter 3) will need to accommodate similar levels of service.*



neighborhood main streets were often characterized as the city's "living rooms" and everyday third places—sites of casual encounters, cultural activities, and shared community identity.



**Murals: "Lewis and Clark" David Van Overeem, 2014; "River Recreation" Jan Strommel, 2014**

*Murals and other public art installations provide opportunities for representation in the built environment, and developing a shared sense of community identity. Policies in this Chapter as well as the Parks and Recreation Chapter highlight policies to help advance community representation.*

Over the next 20 years, Vancouver will add an estimated 38,000 new housing units to meet projected population growth, with an emphasis on more diverse housing types in already urbanized areas. This scale of investment represents a once-in-a-generation opportunity to strengthen social infrastructure alongside new homes. As new multifamily buildings, middle-housing types, and mixed-use centers are built, the Comprehensive Plan will guide their design to help facilitate communities with a variety of activities, businesses, events, and publicly accessible gathering spaces. This includes small plazas, courtyards, and community rooms within new developments; co-located housing and services for older adults; and flexible spaces that can host childcare, cultural programming, and neighborhood-led activities. By planning housing and social spaces together, the City can help ensure that new residents are moving into connected neighborhoods rather than isolated complexes.



The City has already begun investing in this kind of community-oriented public realm. The Main Street Promise project and similar efforts are reshaping key corridors into safer, more walkable, tree-lined main streets that support small businesses and everyday gathering. Investments in parks, trails, and community centers have expanded year-round opportunities for recreation, cultural events, and youth programming. Partnership-based initiatives in areas like Fourth Plain and Fruit Valley are demonstrating how culturally specific services and neighborhood-run facilities can create hubs of activity that reflect the communities they serve. The success of the Arts Hub and momentum behind arts-focused spaces is a poignant reminder of the critical importance of art and culture in our lives. These efforts show how public investment can seed the kinds of places where residents naturally come together.

Parks, recreation facilities, and public open spaces are among the most widely used and accessible forms of social infrastructure in Vancouver. They provide consistent, low-barrier environments where residents build relationships, participate in shared activities, and access community resources. From neighborhood parks and trails to community centers, pools, and plazas, these spaces support everyday interaction across age, income, and cultural background. Expanding and equitably distributing these assets—particularly in areas with higher social isolation or fewer amenities—strengthens community resilience and reinforces the role of parks as essential civic infrastructure.



**Publicly Accessible Pool at Firstenburg Community Center.**

Vancouver's social infrastructure is also shaped by the presence of long-standing institutions that serve specific communities and create spaces of identity, connection, and support. The Washington School for the Deaf and the Washington State School for the Blind are two key statewide institutions located in Vancouver that serve students and families from across Washington and function as important cultural and community anchors for people with disabilities. These institutions contribute to a broader network of culturally specific spaces and services that reflect Vancouver's growing diversity. As highlighted in the City's Equity Analysis and Community Atlas, Vancouver is home to a wide range of equity priority communities—including Chuukese, Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI), Eastern European, Latine, Black, queer, and other culturally distinct populations—each with unique needs, traditions, and needs for community spaces. These communities are supported by faith-based organizations, small businesses, cultural centers, and community-led initiatives that serve as vital social infrastructure, fostering belonging, cultural continuity, and mutual support across the city.

## Community Design and Aesthetics

Design and aesthetics shape how people understand and move through the city, influencing whether neighborhoods, business districts, and open spaces feel welcoming, walkable, and reflective of the people who live in and use them. As Vancouver grows and transitions into a more connected and compact city, the quality of its public realm—its streets, parks, buildings, and everyday gathering places—plays an increasingly important role in shaping the lived experience of residents. Community members consistently emphasized that design matters: attractive streetscapes, comfortable pedestrian environments, engaging storefronts, trees and landscaping, and public art contribute to how people feel in their neighborhoods and whether they feel a sense of connection to place.

Smaller households, remote work, long commutes, and car-dependent development patterns make it more difficult for chance encounters outside. These trends are not just a result of changing social dynamics and technological advances—they're also shaped by land use. When homes, shops, schools, and parks are spread far apart and separated by environments where it's difficult to walk or navigate without a car, it becomes harder to casually meet one another, linger in public spaces, or feel a sense of shared ownership over our neighborhoods.

## Community Feedback

- Need to foster belonging, safety, and stability for all residents, including physical safety, emotional and mental safety, allowing community members to feel relaxed and respected.
- Desire for spaces, services, and information that are accessible—physically, culturally, and financially.
- Value of and desire for places, events, and organizations that reflect their individual identity, allowing them to express themselves and connect with others who share that identity.
- Appreciation for Vancouver's existing feel and community spaces.
- Including parks and trees, access to nature, events, local art, food trucks, and community hubs like libraries, faith centers, and the waterfront.
- Mixed feelings about future growth and change, with interest in retaining the things people appreciate about Vancouver today.
- Desire for more places, programs, and processes that support social ties, involvement, and lifelong learning.
- Strong interest in high-quality spaces that incorporate greenery and public art and are well-maintained and context-sensitive.

As Vancouver accommodates significant new housing over the next 20 years, carefully shaping how new development integrates into the city is critical. Experience is also shaped by whose histories, cultures, and identities are made visible in the built environment. Vancouver's engagement process underscored that many communities—particularly Indigenous, Black, Latine, immigrant, refugee, LGBTQ+, and youth communities—do not consistently see themselves reflected in public art,

architecture, or civic spaces. Residents expressed a desire for a public realm that celebrates the city’s cultural diversity and acknowledges histories that have historically been excluded from dominant narratives. The Comprehensive Plan incorporates these sentiments by enacting policy to support it, primarily through Chapter 2, Equity and Inclusion, and Chapter 3, Land Use and Development.

### **Applying a Community Experience Lens**

This chapter establishes a lens that extends beyond this section of the plan. While goals CE-1 through CE-5 focus directly on social infrastructure, inclusion, safety, innovation, and community identity, their intent is to shape how all planning decisions are made across the Comprehensive Plan. Applying a community experience lens means evaluating policies, investments, and regulations not only by what they produce physically, but by how they affect daily life—especially for residents who face barriers due to income, race, language, age, disability, gender identity, renter status, or health vulnerability.

It asks:

1. Who benefits from this decision?
2. Who may be excluded or burdened by it?
3. How will this change feel to someone moving through their neighborhood on foot, by transit, or without financial flexibility?
4. Does this action strengthen a sense of belonging, dignity, and social cohesion?



## Goal: CE-1

## Social Infrastructure

### **Vancouver community members live in vibrant, active, and engaged neighborhoods with supportive social ties, where collaboration and mutual care create a sense of belonging.**

Social infrastructure refers to the places, relationships, and systems that help people feel connected, supported, and rooted in their neighborhoods and community. In Vancouver, this infrastructure takes many forms—community centers, parks, cultural and creative spaces, arts venues, privately owned event spaces, and the informal networks that emerge in everyday life. These spaces and relationships are essential to community well-being: they strengthen trust, reduce social isolation, support mental and physical health, and help neighbors mobilize to help themselves and others during emergencies or climate-related events.

As Vancouver grows and becomes more diverse, social infrastructure plays a critical role in maintaining belonging and resilience. Many residents—especially low-income households, renters, older adults, youth, people with disabilities, immigrants and refugees, and LGBTQ+ community members—experience barriers to participating in civic life or accessing culturally relevant gathering spaces. The Comprehensive Plan seeks to reduce these barriers by expanding access to free and low-cost spaces; increasing opportunities for artists, creatives, and community organizations; and inviting future users of these spaces to help shape design and programming.

The plan also encourages reactivating underutilized or unconventional spaces—such as vacant parcels or areas under bridges—to bring community, cultural, and environmental programming to areas that currently lack access. This goal also recognizes the need for public spaces that support climate resilience by offering shade, cooling, clean air, and refuge during extreme heat and smoke events, given the prevalence of these events today and their projected increases by 2045.

Events and cultural celebrations further contribute to vibrant, welcoming neighborhoods by creating opportunities for connection across cultures and generations. Together, these strategies build a city where every resident has access to the social supports they need and where collaboration, mutual care, and belonging are fundamental to everyday life.

## Applying this Lens across Chapters

- The Land Use and Development chapter shifts away from isolated, low-density patterns toward a network of centers and corridors with mixed uses, services, and amenities within walking distance. This supports CE-1 by enabling “third places”—cafés, libraries, parks, childcare, and neighborhood businesses—that were historically missing in many parts of the city.
- The Housing chapter policies prioritize locating new homes near essential services, such as education, healthcare, grocery stores, childcare, and recreation opportunities. CE-1 clarifies that this is not only an efficiency strategy, but a social connection and well-being strategy that reduces isolation and strengthens neighborhood life.
- The Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Services chapter identifies parks, community centers, trails, cultural spaces, and greenways as essential spaces that contribute to physical, mental, and community health. CE-1 positions these places as core civic infrastructure that enable gathering, mutual support, and everyday interaction.
- The Transportation and Mobility chapter commits to an equitable, connected network of streets, paths, and transit that links people to essential resources and opportunities. Under CE-1, those routes are understood as social connectors that link residents to schools, parks, libraries, and commercial districts—not just corridors for throughput.
- Social infrastructure also supports broader goals in the Economic Opportunity chapter, as well as Goal LU-1: Connected and Accessible Neighborhoods. Social Infrastructure strengthens neighborhood economies by creating active, walkable places that support local businesses. Parks, plazas, and community facilities generate consistent foot traffic, support small business visibility, and contribute to the vitality of neighborhood business districts, reinforcing place-based economic development strategies.

| Supporting Policy                                                    | Description                                                                                                                                                      | No.       | Related Goals                       |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|-------------------------------------|
| <b>Center Impacted Voices in the Development of Community Spaces</b> | Engage community organizations and individuals representing diverse lived and cultural experiences in the planning, design, and programming of community spaces. | <b>26</b> | CE-1, CE-5<br>EI-1, EI-4,<br>PR-4   |
| <b>Climate Resilient Spaces</b>                                      | Incorporate elements of climate resiliency into new public spaces, buildings, and infrastructure.                                                                | <b>29</b> | CL-1, CE-1,<br>PR-1, PFS-3,<br>LU-3 |

| Supporting Policy                                           | Description                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | No.        | Related Goals          |
|-------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|------------------------|
| <b>Event Programming</b>                                    | Continue to support and expand local gatherings, festivals, and special events that uplift community, reflect diverse histories and lived experiences, and create a sense of civic pride.                                                                                                                                                                   | <b>57</b>  | CE-1, CE-5, PR-4       |
| <b>Inclusive Engagement</b>                                 | Foster inclusive, community engagement rooted in inclusion, trust, and long-term relationship-building. Center the voices of those who are most directly impacted by outcomes of City processes.                                                                                                                                                            | <b>69</b>  | EI-4, CE-1             |
| <b>Increase Access to Community Spaces</b>                  | Facilitate and provide access to community spaces, with a focus on populations vulnerable to social isolation.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | <b>75</b>  | CE-1, EI-2, LU-1       |
| <b>Increase Access to Space for Artists and Creatives</b>   | Establish partnerships that increase access to shared, affordable spaces serving artists and arts and cultural organizations.                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | <b>76</b>  | CE-1, PR-4, CE-5       |
| <b>Program Underutilized Spaces</b>                         | Encourage the thoughtful reuse and activation of underutilized lands—such as space beneath freeway viaducts, oddly shaped parcels, utility corridors, temporarily vacant lots, and other non-developable remnants typically under 1 acre—by establishing public-private partnerships to program them to serve community, cultural, and environmental needs. | <b>106</b> | CE-1, CE-4, LU-4, PR-2 |
| <b>Shared Parking and Redevelopment of Existing Parking</b> | Encourage shared parking strategies to improve land efficiency and reduce redundant parking supply. Incentivize the redevelopment of large, underutilized surface parking areas into more productive uses that support redevelopment and other community-serving needs.                                                                                     | <b>133</b> | LU-4, CE-1             |
| <b>Support Neighborhood Organizations</b>                   | Support the growth and stability of neighborhood associations as key partners in establishing local pride, connection, and representation within Vancouver’s distinct neighborhoods.                                                                                                                                                                        | <b>149</b> | CE-1, CE-5, EI-4       |

## **Goal: CE-2**

# **Inclusive and Affirming Environments**

**Vancouver’s public spaces and facilities are inclusive and affirming across race, class, age, sex, gender identity, ability, religion, national origin, and citizenship status, creating a sense of belonging and safety.**

Inclusion is the foundation of a community where everyone feels safe, welcomed, and able to fully participate in civic life. For Vancouver, this means creating public spaces, services, neighborhoods, and cultural expressions that honor residents’ identities across race, class, age, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, ability, religion, national origin, and citizenship status. It also means recognizing how past and present inequities have shaped access to opportunity and belonging—and actively working to repair harm while building a more just future.

This goal emphasizes a holistic approach to inclusion that goes beyond removing barriers. It calls for culture-building, trust-building, and the intentional design of environments where historically excluded and marginalized communities can see themselves reflected, respected, and supported. This includes ensuring that City programs and services are delivered using trauma-informed practices, so that community members—particularly those who have experienced violence, displacement, or systemic harm—can engage with public institutions safely.

A welcoming and affirming city also requires shifting from transactional interactions toward deeper, relational connections between the City and residents. This means supporting new and long-term residents alike, investing in community-led networks of care, and ensuring that people at greatest risk of exclusion are empowered to play a key role in community building and shaping how our spaces are designed. Cultural representation is another key pillar: public art, cultural installations, and the design of public spaces should reflect the full diversity of Vancouver’s communities, telling stories that have historically been left out of the city’s physical landscape.

To support accessibility and equitable participation, the City will expand multilingual, culturally competent services and improve communication channels so community members can meaningfully access information, programs, and decision-making processes. Creating inclusive environments also extends to the built environment and housing. Supporting culturally specific and identity-affirming housing models—whether for immigrant and refugee communities, LGBTQ+ residents, Indigenous



communities, or others—ensures that people can live in places that reflect their cultural identities, family structures, and community relationships.

## **Applying this Lens across Chapters**

- The Equity and Inclusion chapter establishes that historic policies created disparities in access to safe transportation, amenities, and healthy environments, particularly for communities of color, low-income households, people with disabilities, and LGBTQ+ residents. CE-2 operationalizes this by shaping how places are designed, programmed, and experienced.
- Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Services policies commit to inclusive, safe public spaces that reflect the diversity of the community, remove cost barriers, and support culturally responsive programming. CE-2 reinforces that public spaces should feel welcoming across language, culture, age, and ability.
- Public Facilities and Services planning emphasizes equitable access to infrastructure, services, and community facilities. CE-2 ensures that facilities, such as libraries, community centers, and civic buildings, are designed and located in ways that foster belonging, representation, and dignity.
- Land Use and Development policies support mixed, inclusive neighborhoods with access to services and amenities while preventing displacement and protecting vulnerable residents. CE-2 extends this to the experience of belonging in those spaces, including culturally responsive design, public art, and identity-affirming places.

| Supporting Policy                                         | Description                                                                                                                                                                                                   | No.        | Related Goals        |
|-----------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|----------------------|
| <b>Culturally Responsive Design</b>                       | Develop standards for public spaces and buildings that incorporate culturally specific design principles and art installations and reflect the diverse history and heritage of Vancouver communities.         | <b>41</b>  | CE-5, CE-2, PR-4     |
| <b>Culturally Specific and Identity-based Housing</b>     | Work with partners to facilitate and fund housing that reflects the cultures, identities, and needs of Vancouver's unique population groups, and for the equity priority communities identified in this plan. | <b>42</b>  | H-2, CE-2, EI-1, H-4 |
| <b>Expand Representation in Public Art</b>                | Ensure publicly funded art projects and installations reflect and incorporate the experiences of historically excluded and underrepresented voices in the physical and cultural landscape of the city.        | <b>58</b>  | CE-5, CE-2, PR-4     |
| <b>Language Access and Culturally Responsive Services</b> | Ensure all City services are accessible in high impact languages spoken throughout the city and delivered with cultural competency.                                                                           | <b>82</b>  | CE-2, EI-4,          |
| <b>Trauma-informed Services</b>                           | Ensure City programs and policies are designed and delivered using trauma-informed care principles.                                                                                                           | <b>156</b> | CE-2, CE-3, EI-2     |
| <b>Welcoming and Supportive Community</b>                 | Build a community that welcomes and invites all community members to participate in civic life through inclusive practices, programs, and public spaces.                                                      | <b>162</b> | CE-2, EI-1           |

## **Goal: CE-3**

## **Community Safety**

**Vancouver is a community where safety is prioritized, people look out for one another, and strong social ties ensure that all residents are well prepared to respond to challenges and disruptive events.**

A safe community is one where people not only feel protected from harm, but also supported, connected, and equipped to respond when challenges arise. Safety is understood as both a physical and a social condition—rooted in well-designed public spaces, strong community relationships, accessible emergency services, and systems that help residents anticipate, withstand, and recover from disruptions. Vancouver faces increasing risks from extreme weather, flooding, wildfire smoke, seismic hazards, and large-scale social or economic disruptions. Strong social ties—neighbor-to-neighbor relationships, community organizations, and trusted local messengers—are essential components of resilience and are explicitly supported through this goal.

The built environment also plays a critical role. Safe street designs, active public spaces, good lighting, and visible community activity can reduce opportunities for crime and create environments where people feel comfortable moving through their neighborhoods. Land use and transportation patterns that make walking, biking, and transit safer contribute to both public safety and climate resilience, reinforcing the city's broader goals for health and sustainability.

Public safety and emergency services—fire, police, and emergency medical response—remain core components of a resilient Vancouver. This goal supports investment in facilities, staffing, and coordinated planning to enhance service quality, expand access, and support complete communities as Vancouver grows.”

## **Applying this Lens across Chapters**

- Transportation and Mobility policies identify safety as a primary goal and focus on correcting systems historically built for vehicle movement rather than people walking, rolling, or using transit. The Transportation and Mobility chapter prioritizes safety for people walking, rolling, biking, and taking transit, recognizing that past vehicle-oriented design produced high collision risk and inequitable mobility. CE-3 connects these policies to lived experience by framing traffic safety, lighting, visibility, and accessible crossings as community safety outcomes. Safe routes to schools, parks, and services reduce risk while supporting independence for youth, older adults, and people with disabilities.
- Housing stability is foundational to safety. The Housing chapter addresses homelessness, overcrowding, and cost burden—all conditions linked to physical, mental, and economic insecurity. CE-3 connects housing policy to community safety by recognizing that stable, affordable, and appropriate housing reduces exposure to unsafe living conditions, displacement, and crisis. Locating housing near essential services also improves access to healthcare, food, and support networks during both everyday life and emergencies.
- Public Facilities and Services planning links infrastructure investments to emergency services, climate resilience, and community needs. CE-3 reinforces that safety includes equitable access to facilities, reliable infrastructure, and trusted community spaces.
- The Climate and Environment chapter documents that extreme heat, smoke, and flooding disproportionately affect neighborhoods with lower tree canopy, older housing, and socioeconomic disparities. CE-3 situates emergency preparedness, cooling and clean air centers, and resilient infrastructure as community safety and dignity issues, not only environmental concerns.



| Supporting Policy                                    | Description                                                                                                                                                                        | No.        | Related Goals     |
|------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|-------------------|
| <b>Coordinate with Fire and Police</b>               | Coordinate with the Vancouver Fire Department and Vancouver Police Department to plan for expected growth, equitably serve the community, and facilitate emergency response.       | <b>38</b>  | CE-3, PFS-3       |
| <b>Crime Prevention through Environmental Design</b> | Foster a safe community by encouraging street level activity and thoughtful building and infrastructure design that enhance public safety and community well-being.                | <b>40</b>  | CE-3, LU-2        |
| <b>Disaster Recovery and Emergency Response</b>      | Develop plans and resources to ensure effective emergency response and recovery efforts in the event of natural disasters, climate-related hazards, and social disruptions.        | <b>43</b>  | CE-3, CL-1, PFS-3 |
| <b>Public Safety</b>                                 | Support public safety through investment in emergency services, facilities, infrastructure and coordinated preparedness efforts that strengthen community resilience and response. | <b>109</b> | CE-3, PFS-3       |
| <b>Reduce VMT and GHG Per Capita</b>                 | Implement land use patterns that reduce vehicle miles traveled, traffic congestion, and associated greenhouse gas emissions per capita, while improving safety and air quality.    | <b>118</b> | CL-3, CE-3, TM-2  |
| <b>Trauma-informed Services</b>                      | Ensure City programs and policies are designed and delivered using trauma-informed care principles.                                                                                | <b>156</b> | CE-2, CE-3, EI-2  |

## Goal: CE-4

## Innovation

**Vancouver community members are empowered to test and explore creative solutions, innovative methods, entrepreneurship, calculated risk-taking, and bold solutions that drive progress, address systemic inequities, and improve quality of life within neighborhoods.**

Vancouver's future depends on its ability to identify and embrace new ideas and methods for addressing challenges. This goal sits within the **Community Experience** chapter to establish innovation as an overall community mindset, and way of approaching challenges, designing services, building neighborhoods, and working together as a community. It affirms that creative problem-solving belongs to everyone, not only entrepreneurs or industry leaders, and that the City has a responsibility to cultivate environments where residents feel empowered to test ideas, learn from failure, and pursue solutions shaped by lived experience.

Innovation is a powerful tool for addressing systemic inequities and improving quality of life, particularly when driven by the communities most impacted by those inequities. This goal supports inclusive, ethical approaches to technology that intentionally reduce bias and expand access—ensuring that smart tools, digital platforms, and data practices uplift rather than marginalize. It also advances experimentation across City systems, from decentralized infrastructure that reduces strain on centralized networks, to streamlined development processes that support small businesses, to creative mobility solutions that prepare Vancouver for emerging technologies while maintaining safety and equity.

This goal also recognizes that innovation happens at many scales. At the neighborhood level, pilot projects—temporary demonstrations, low-cost activations, and flexible interventions—allow residents to test ideas before the City makes long-term investments. These projects help generate community buy-in, reveal what works in practice, and create opportunities for people to directly shape public space. Similarly, the reuse of underutilized or unconventional spaces offers fertile ground for experimentation, enabling partnerships that bring cultural programming, environmental projects, and community services to areas that lack amenities or investment.

This goal also elevates the importance of workforce pathways, entrepreneurship support, and business development. By supporting training, skill-building, and opportunity across all communities—especially those historically excluded—Vancouver can support its social and economic fabric simultaneously.

## **Applying this Lens across Chapters**

- The Economic Opportunity chapter prioritizes innovation in business and industry, development of a green economy, and reducing barriers for historically excluded groups. CE-4 frames innovation as a tool for improving quality of life and addressing inequities, not only economic growth.
- The Housing chapter calls for expanding the range of housing types, supporting non-traditional design and ownership models, and allowing emergency, transitional, supportive, and culturally specific housing. CE-4 frames this as housing system innovation—updating regulatory, financial, and design approaches so the housing market can respond to demographic change, affordability pressures, and multigenerational living patterns. It supports piloting new housing forms, shared housing models, and incremental neighborhood-scale infill as tools for both supply and social resilience.
- The Transportation and Mobility chapter moves beyond a vehicle-priority model toward multimodal access, small mobility devices, and integrated hubs. CE-4 frames this as mobility innovation—expanding travel choices, testing new technologies and service models, and reducing financial and physical barriers to movement. It supports pilot programs, adaptive street design, and flexible use of public right-of-way to respond to changing travel behavior.
- Climate policies emphasize both mitigation and adaptation, requiring new approaches to building performance, land use patterns, and infrastructure systems. CE-4 supports innovation in green infrastructure, urban forestry, stormwater systems, and energy-efficient buildings, as well as neighborhood-based cooling, shade, and resilience strategies. It recognizes that responding to climate impacts requires testing new tools and working across sectors rather than relying solely on traditional infrastructure models.

| Supporting Policy                                             | Description                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | No.        | Related Goals          |
|---------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|------------------------|
| <b>Emerging Mobility</b>                                      | Prepare for emerging technologies by updating City policies and operational requirements for shared mobility and emerging mobility vendors, including Autonomous Vehicles. Create data standards, data sharing agreements, and vendor requirements. | <b>46</b>  | TM-2, CE-4             |
| <b>Ethical and Fair City Processes</b>                        | Promote ethical and fair governance by embedding accountability in City processes, ensuring access for historically excluded communities, mitigating bias, and fostering ethical use of technology and digital practices.                           | <b>56</b>  | EI-4, CE-4             |
| <b>Facilitate Job-creating Business Growth and Investment</b> | Support businesses that create high-quality jobs by reducing barriers to growth, streamlining development processes, and ensuring access to necessary resources and infrastructure.                                                                 | <b>59</b>  | EO-2, EO-4, CE-4       |
| <b>Housing Innovation</b>                                     | Promote and remove regulatory barriers to new financing methods, homeownership models and design and construction techniques.                                                                                                                       | <b>67</b>  | H-1, CE-4              |
| <b>Inclusive Use of Technology</b>                            | Utilize an equity lens to evaluate, assess, develop, and implement use of smart technologies to reduce embedded biases and provide inclusive and accessible access.                                                                                 | <b>70</b>  | EI-4, CE-4             |
| <b>Pilot Projects</b>                                         | Encourage the use of short-term pilot projects for park, transportation, and general infrastructure improvements before making long-term investments to foster innovation, test feasibility, and increase community buy-in.                         | <b>102</b> | CE-4, PR-2, TM-2, CL-1 |



| Supporting Policy                                   | Description                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | No.        | Related Goals          |
|-----------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|------------------------|
| <b>Program Underutilized Spaces</b>                 | Encourage the thoughtful reuse and activation of underutilized lands—such as space beneath freeway viaducts, oddly shaped parcels, utility corridors, temporarily vacant lots, and other non-developable remnants typically under 1 acre—by establishing public-private partnerships to program them to serve community, cultural, and environmental needs. | <b>106</b> | CE-1, CE-4, LU-4, PR-2 |
| <b>Support Decentralized Infrastructure Systems</b> | Support decentralized local energy and water solutions while strengthening community adaptability to environmental, social, and economic changes.                                                                                                                                                                                                           | <b>145</b> | PFS-1, CE-4, PFS-3     |
| <b>Vancouver as an Innovation Hub</b>               | Position Vancouver as a center for innovation, technology, and entrepreneurship through public investment and attracting entrepreneurial talent.                                                                                                                                                                                                            | <b>159</b> | CE-4, EO-2             |
| <b>Workforce Development and Career Pathways</b>    | Expand access to career pathways, workforce training, and entrepreneurship opportunities that lead to living-wage jobs and wealth creation, with a focus on underrepresented communities.                                                                                                                                                                   | <b>163</b> | EO-1, EI-1, CE-4       |

## Goal: CE-5

## Community Pride & Identity

**In Vancouver, people are part of a distinct community that welcomes and supports diverse identities, cultures, and histories. Through engagement in cultural events, volunteering, and civic life, residents relate to a collective identity and sense of pride.**

A strong community identity is essential to how people understand the community they live in, how they relate to one another, and how a city is understood regionally and even nationally. Cities with clear, authentic identities—whether rooted in culture, history, creativity, or shared values—attract and retain people who feel aligned with that character, shaping what it *means* to be part of a place. For Vancouver, cultivating a distinct sense of identity is not only about pride; it is a strategic advantage that helps draw and keep residents, businesses, and talent who see themselves reflected in the city's values and cultural landscape. Community identity helps create belonging, fosters connection across difference, and provides a shared narrative that anchors residents to one another and to the neighborhoods they call home.

In Vancouver, community pride is rooted in the stories, cultures, histories, and creative expressions that shape neighborhoods and bring residents together. This goal affirms that these cultural elements—whether reflected through public art, historic preservation, restaurants, small businesses, neighborhood business districts, or everyday traditions—are vital to a thriving community and should be elevated, protected, and made visible throughout the city's public spaces and civic life. Small businesses, in particular, play a critical role in providing culturally specific goods, services, and food that foster a sense of belonging for diverse communities, while also serving as hubs of creativity and innovation that contribute to the city's economic and cultural vitality.

Civic engagement and shared experiences further strengthen the fabric of community life. Local festivals, cultural celebrations, volunteer events, and community storytelling deepen residents' connection to one another and help build lasting traditions. Goal CE-5 encourages these opportunities, recognizing that pride emerges not only from physical surroundings but from the relationships and collective experiences that give neighborhoods their character.

Preserving Vancouver's historic and cultural resources is another key component of this goal. Protecting significant sites, buildings, landscapes, and artifacts honors the people and communities who shaped the city and ensures that future generations can see themselves in Vancouver's past, as well as its future.

A strong sense of community identity is not only central to belonging—it is a key driver of economic vitality and competitiveness. As Vancouver continues to grow, the city's ability to attract and retain businesses and workers will increasingly depend on the quality and distinctiveness of place. The Economic Conditions and Opportunities Analysis highlights that Vancouver's recent growth has been fueled in part by in-migration of higher-income and remote workers seeking communities with strong amenities, cultural vibrancy, and livability. Community input received during the plan update process further reinforces this connection, with residents identifying parks, cultural spaces, local businesses, and the waterfront as key places where identity and community life are experienced. Together, these factors demonstrate that investing in authentic, place-based identity supports small businesses, strengthens neighborhood economies, and positions Vancouver as a desirable place to live, work, and invest.

## Applying this Lens across Chapters

- The Equity and Inclusion chapter documents how historic exclusion shaped present disparities in access to amenities, safe environments, and opportunity. CE-5 complements this by focusing on cultural visibility and belonging—ensuring that public spaces, civic processes, and neighborhood investments reflect the histories, cultures, and identities of communities who have been underrepresented. Pride is tied to recognition, representation, and repair.
- Housing policy supports culturally specific, multigenerational, and diverse housing forms. CE-5 connects this to identity by recognizing housing as a place where culture, family structures, and traditions are expressed. Stable, affordable housing allows residents to remain in neighborhoods over time, sustaining social networks and cultural continuity.
- The Land Use and Development chapter describes neighborhoods and centers as places that provide housing, services, amenities, and destinations. CE-5 emphasizes that these places should have distinct character and reflect local history, culture, and community narratives, rather than producing uniform development. Corridor reinvestment, mixed-use centers, and neighborhood nodes become settings for community life and shared identity.
- From a public facility and services standpoint, libraries, community centers, schools, and civic buildings are more than service points; they are civic anchors. CE-5 highlights their role as visible symbols of shared investment and places where community life unfolds—from cultural events to civic engagement. Their location, design, and programming influence whether residents see themselves reflected in public life.
- From an economic development standpoint, a strong, place-based community identity enhances Vancouver's economic competitiveness by attracting talent, supporting local businesses, and reinforcing the city's appeal as a vibrant place to live, work, and invest.

| Supporting Policy                                                    | Description                                                                                                                                                                                                       | No.       | Related Goals                     |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|-----------------------------------|
| <b>Align Place Based Investment with the Growth Concept</b>          | Align City investments, incentives, and programs to reinforce key centers identified in the growth concept as points for local economic development efforts and community investment.                             | <b>15</b> | CE-5, EO-4                        |
| <b>Center Impacted Voices in the Development of Community Spaces</b> | Engage community organizations and individuals representing diverse lived and cultural experiences in the planning, design and programming of community spaces.                                                   | <b>26</b> | CE-1, CE-5<br>EI-1, EI-4,<br>PR-4 |
| <b>Culturally Responsive Design</b>                                  | Develop standards for public spaces and buildings that incorporate culturally specific design principles and art installations and reflect the diverse history and heritage of Vancouver communities.             | <b>41</b> | CE-5, CE-2,<br>PR-4               |
| <b>Event Programming</b>                                             | Continue to support and expand local gatherings, festivals, and special events that uplift community, reflect diverse histories and lived experiences, and create a sense of civic pride.                         | <b>57</b> | CE-1, CE-5,<br>PR-4               |
| <b>Expand Representation in Public Art</b>                           | Ensure publicly funded art projects and installations reflect and incorporate the experiences of historically excluded and underrepresented voices in the physical and cultural landscape of the city.            | <b>58</b> | CE-5, CE-2,<br>PR-4               |
| <b>Historic and Culturally Significant Resources</b>                 | Protect and preserve significant cultural, historic, archeologic, and ecologic community resources. Promote preservation, restoration, and rehabilitation of historic and architecturally significant structures. | <b>66</b> | CE-5, CL-1,<br>CL-2, PR-4         |



| Supporting Policy                                         | Description                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | No.        | Related Goals                       |
|-----------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|-------------------------------------|
| <b>Increase Access to Space for Artists and Creatives</b> | Establish partnerships that increase access to shared, affordable spaces serving artists and arts and cultural organizations.                                                                                                                                                                   | <b>76</b>  | CE-1, PR-4, CE-5                    |
| <b>Preserve and Protect the Columbia River</b>            | Manage the built and natural environment to protect and restore the water quality and habitat of the Columbia River basin, reflecting its central role in the city's identity, economy, history, and future.                                                                                    | <b>104</b> | CL-2, CL-4, CE-5, EO-2, PR-2, PFS-1 |
| <b>Strengthen Neighborhood Business Districts</b>         | Ensure neighborhood business districts are safe, vibrant, and accessible hubs of economic activity through strategic public and private investment, and reflect a sense of community identity.                                                                                                  | <b>141</b> | EO-4, CE-5                          |
| <b>Support Locally Made Products and Art</b>              | Support and elevate Vancouver's local makers, artisans, and creative production sectors by promoting the use of locally sourced and recycled materials, strengthening small-scale manufacturing, and advancing a circular economy that contributes to community pride and place-based identity. | <b>147</b> | CE-5, EO-3                          |
| <b>Support Neighborhood Organizations</b>                 | Support the growth and stability of neighborhood associations as key partners in establishing local pride, connection, and representation within Vancouver's distinct neighborhoods.                                                                                                            | <b>149</b> | CE-1, CE-5, EI-4                    |

# Equity and Inclusion



2





# Introduction

An equity approach is fundamental to shaping a future where every Vancouver community member can thrive. For too long, systemic barriers—including exclusionary housing policies, disinvestment, and unequal access to education, employment opportunities, and wealth-building opportunities—have actively harmed communities of color, people with low incomes, people with disabilities, immigrants and people with limited English proficiency, LGBTQ+ residents, and other historically underserved groups. These populations often experience overlapping barriers shaped by structural inequities. These barriers are not accidental, but the product of societal structures and systems that shaped Vancouver’s growth over time. These barriers are visible in disparities in housing stability, wealth, health outcomes, educational attainment, access to safe transportation, and exposure to environmental risk. Vancouver is experiencing rapid demographic change: communities of color grew by 64 percent between 2010 and 2020, and 14.7 percent of residents speak a language other than English at home. In 2021, 51 percent of households were cost burdened<sup>2</sup>, and neighborhoods like Bagley Downs and Meadow Homes face childhood poverty rates above 50 percent. Access to amenities is also uneven: areas in west and central Vancouver host the majority of essential services, while neighborhoods east of I-205, along Fourth Plain, and in parts of Fruit Valley have less access to parks, transit, sidewalks, safe roadway crossings, and grocery stores. It’s important for the City to take a targeted and local approach to addressing inequitable outcomes in the built environment and use the tools it has available to address them. This chapter provides a lens through which to understand all the other chapters within the Comprehensive Plan, helping the City focus on equity in both the process and outcomes when implementing the plan.

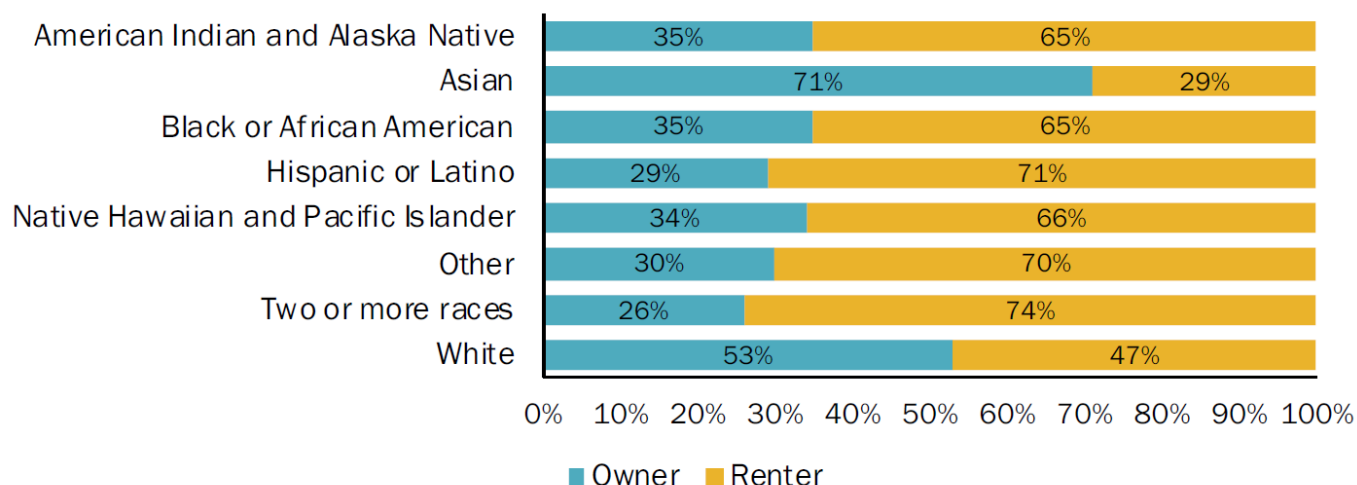
## Past Policies and Exclusionary Practices

Historic policy direction around growth and development in the city emphasized low-density, single-family neighborhoods and imposed minimum lot sizes and parking requirements that limited access to affordable housing choices, particularly for lower-income and non-White households. In 2023, 46 percent of land area in the city was zoned to exclusively allow the construction of a single home on one lot. The City historically has effectively limited the development of naturally occurring, small-scale density in many neighborhoods by applying land use standards that only allow single-family homes. This effectively has excluded “middle housing” forms—duplexes, triplexes, and courtyard apartments—which can provide affordable pathways to ownership and rental housing, and has contributed to the overall undersupply of housing in Vancouver and the Clark County region. People of color face a variety of structural barriers, which have impacted wealth accumulation over generations, and on average, resulted in less available wealth and purchasing power to contribute to housing. Black, Hispanic, and Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander households are less likely to live in a single-family home and are less likely to own their homes.

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<sup>2</sup> Our Vancouver – Housing Needs Assessment, April 2024, pg 48

**Figure 3. Housing Units by Race, ACS 5 Year Estimates, 2017-2021**



Additionally, housing options attainable by renters, immigrants, and people of color are often in areas near major transportation corridors, rail lines, and industrial areas, which leave these residents vulnerable to pollution, disinvestment, or redevelopment pressures without tools to ensure stability. Similarly, transportation design standards prioritized vehicle throughput over safety for people walking or biking. This contributed to inequitable safety outcomes, with higher crash rates in lower-income and BIPOC neighborhoods where residents are more likely to walk or rely on transit.<sup>3</sup> Economic development policies historically emphasized recruitment of large employers and external sources of investment. While these strategies created jobs, they often overlooked the needs of small, locally owned businesses, particularly those owned by entrepreneurs of color. Business ownership remains disproportionately concentrated among White residents, while Black, Latino, and immigrant entrepreneurs have been underrepresented and clustered in lower-cost, aging corridors.

### Equity Analysis

The Equity Analysis (Appendix C) provides a more detailed assessment of disparities across Vancouver, identifying where communities experience disproportionate barriers to housing, health, access to services, and environmental quality. This analysis helped shape policies to address historic and ongoing inequities outlined in this chapter. It serves as a foundational tool to guide equitable decision-making and track progress toward more inclusive outcomes.

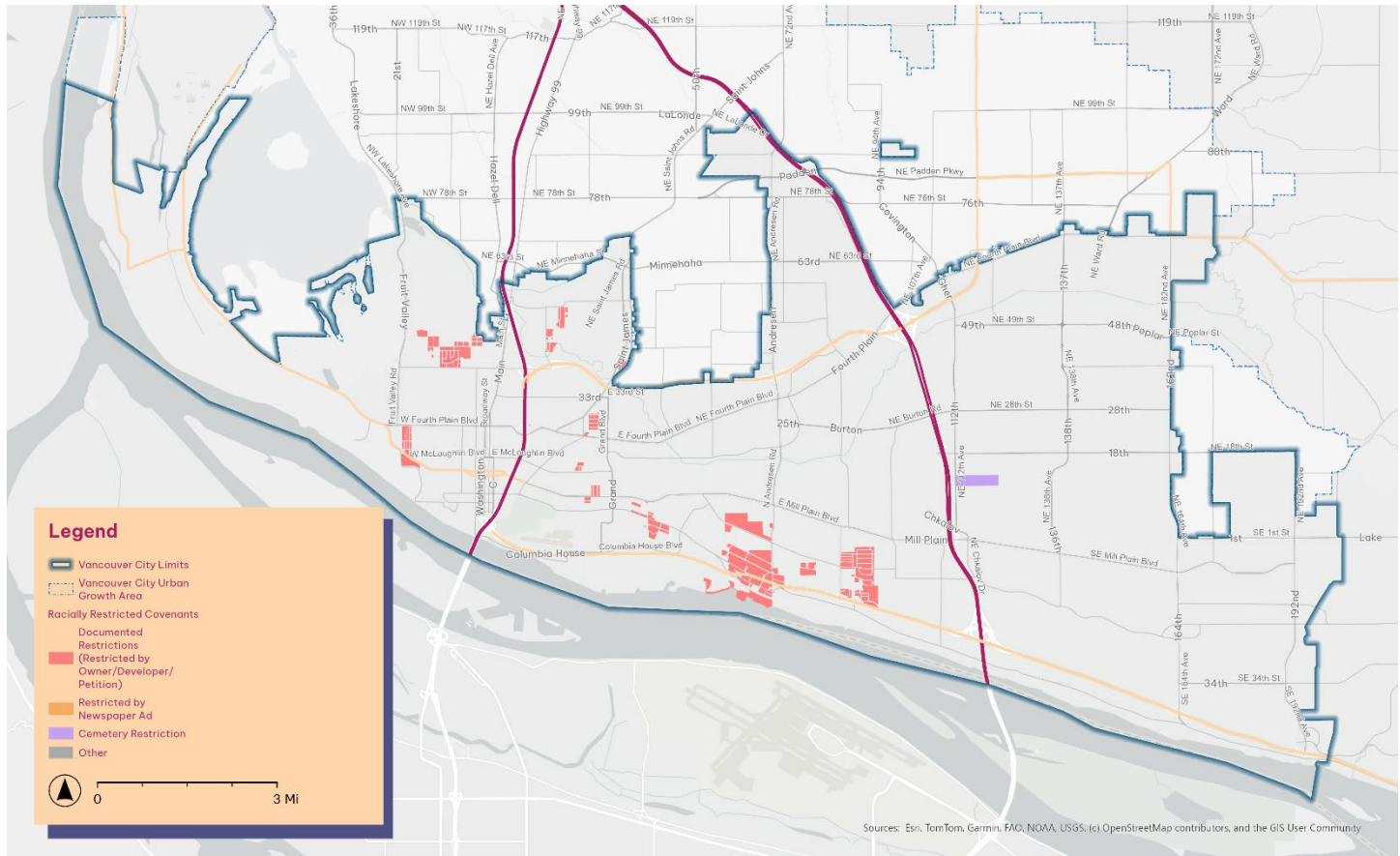
### Housing, Homeownership, and Houselessness

Housing policy in Vancouver has long reflected national patterns of exclusion. Racial covenants, conditions, and restrictions (CC&Rs) once prohibited households of color from purchasing property in a select number of neighborhoods in the city. These restrictions were most prevalent in Evergreen Highlands and Riverview neighborhoods (circled as area 1 in Figure 4), the Heights (circled as area 2

<sup>3</sup> Local Road Safety Plan, 2022



in Figure 4), the Lincoln Neighborhood (circled as area 3 in Figure 4) and Simpson Avenue in east Fruit Valley (circled as area 4 in Figure 4). While the 1968 Fair Housing Act made these racial restrictions illegal and unenforceable, the barriers they created to homeownership limited the ability of families of color to build intergenerational wealth. This contributes to the housing and economic disparities we see today.



**Figure 4. Neighborhoods with Racially Restrictive Covenants (University of Washington Racial Restrictive Covenants Project)**

In 2021, more than half of Black households (52 percent) and nearly half of Hispanic households (45 percent) had housing costs that were 30 percent or more of their income<sup>4</sup>. In Vancouver, people of color, renters, and low-income households are at a greater risk of experiencing homelessness. Rising rents and redevelopment pressures in areas along Fourth Plain and in Fruit Valley compound these disparities, driving displacement risk in some of Vancouver’s most vulnerable communities. These disparities are most pronounced by race and ethnicity, and are further compounded for renters, people with low incomes, people with disabilities, and households facing language or immigration barriers.

<sup>4</sup> Housing Needs Assessment



## **Vision: Equity and Inclusion**

We strive to build an equitable and inclusive community that recognizes and respects intersecting identities. We do this through intentional action that seeks to acknowledge and repair injustices of the past while charting a new course, centering voices that were excluded and, in many instances, continue to be excluded from decision-making processes. We follow the guidance and expertise of those who have been directly impacted by exclusionary practices and racist and oppressive systems, to design a more equitable future for our community. We examine the intended and unintended consequences of past, current, and proposed policies with an equity lens and work towards increasing pathways to access and participation. Reparative actions, universal access, and physical and mental health are critical priorities in creating inclusive environments.

## **Income and Wealth Gaps**

Vancouver's median household income was \$76,733 in 2023, compared to \$84,000 in Clark County and \$84,000 statewide. Black households make \$24,000 less, and Hispanic or Latino/a populations make \$11,000 less than the median household income for Vancouver on average.<sup>5</sup> These disparities are reflected in broader income inequality. In Vancouver in 2024, the top 10 percent of households held twice as much income than that of the bottom 45 percent of households.

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<sup>5</sup> American Community Survey 5 Year Estimates – 2019–2023

## **Transportation**

Transportation access and safety remain inequitable across the city. Nearly 75 percent of fatal and severe crashes occur on arterial and collector streets, disproportionately located in lower-income neighborhoods. Crashes are most common at non-intersection locations without traffic control, where pedestrians and cyclists face higher risks. These patterns mirror inequities in access to safe, reliable, and affordable transportation options, which in turn affect access to employment and services. Low-income residents, people of color, older adults, youth, and people with disabilities are more likely to rely on walking, biking, and transit; yet also face the greatest exposure to traffic collisions and unsafe street conditions (Local Road Safety Plan, 2022). Employment access is particularly limited for residents without cars, with many jobs clustered along highway corridors or in areas underserved by transit.

## **Health, Education, and Life Outcomes**

Disparities in social determinants of health—housing, education, and income—are the product of systemic inequities and translate directly into health disparities across neighborhoods and population groups. Life expectancy can vary by more than a decade between neighborhoods. While 92 percent of adults hold a high school diploma, only 32 percent hold a bachelor's degree, with stark differences by race: fewer than 20 percent of Black and Hispanic adults have a four-year degree compared to more than 40 percent of White and Asian adults. Childhood poverty exceeds 50 percent in neighborhoods, such as Bagley Downs and Meadow Homes, shaping lifelong disparities in health, earnings, and opportunity.

## **Parks, Food Access, and Tree Canopy**

Access to public amenities also differs across the city. Census block groups with higher proportions of people of color have less tree canopy than the city on average, reducing shade and increasing vulnerability to extreme heat. Several areas identified as equity priority communities, including Fourth Plain, Fruit Valley, and the Mountain View neighborhood, face limited access to fresh and affordable food options, further compounding health disparities. Vancouver's Climate Vulnerability Assessment shows that households identified in the City's Equity Index (which includes communities of color, low-income households, renters, people with disabilities, and others facing overlapping vulnerabilities) are more likely to live in areas exposed to extreme heat, flooding, and air pollution. These same households often lack access to resources like healthcare, insurance, or air conditioning, making adaptation to climate change more challenging. As climate hazards intensify, the inequities in resilience and recovery will grow unless addressed directly.

## **Recent Advancements in Equity-centered Policy**

Over the past decade, the City of Vancouver has begun to reorient its policies toward equity and inclusion. These changes reflect both community advocacy and recognition that past practices reinforced disparities. The City has taken meaningful steps, and the current Comprehensive Plan update represents the most significant opportunity yet to embed equity into every aspect of growth and development. In 2020, the City Council adopted equity as one of their key priorities,

demonstrating a commitment to institutionalizing equity across planning, budgeting, and service delivery.

- **Reside Vancouver.** Adopted in 2020, Reside Vancouver is an anti-displacement strategy that outlines how the City can help stabilize vulnerable communities, such as renters, people with lower incomes, and people of color, and support them as they move towards financial self-sufficiency over time. Based on the strategy's vulnerability assessment, the recommendations are tailored to the Maplewood and Meadow Homes neighborhoods. It emphasizes tenant protections, affordable housing production, and neighborhood reinvestment and formed the foundation for policy work around equity and land use that the City is implementing through the Comprehensive Plan.
- **Fourth Plain for All and American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Investments.** Federal relief funds during the COVID-19 pandemic were leveraged to advance equity. Seventy-five percent of funding the City received from the American Rescue Plan Act went to funding improvements along the Fourth Plain Corridor, in housing, parks, public spaces, economic development, and community building. The City has also created the Fourth Plain Commons, which has become a model for future public-private partnerships in constructing affordable housing and support for community services. The City has invested in the Fruit Valley Action Plan, which directed resources to one of Vancouver's most underserved neighborhoods.
- **Embedding Equity in All Plans.** In 2023, equity was included as a core value of the 2023-2029 Strategic Plan and a foundational piece of the TSP update and Climate Action Framework. These policy documents guided the goals and policies in transportation, climate, and other chapters of the updated Comprehensive Plan.

These efforts highlight the investments and efforts the City has conducted recently, and outline the continued work the City needs to conduct over the lifespan of this 20-year plan.

### Equity as a Lens

This Comprehensive Plan is the first in Vancouver's history to have a direct, intentional focus on equity within its policy work. The Equity Framework (Appendix B) for this plan provides the principles and process that guide this work and was developed with a core advisory group, called the Community Partners. The Community Partners group was composed of members from and/or organizations that serve equity priority communities. In addition to helping create the Equity Framework, this group worked in

## Equity Priority Communities

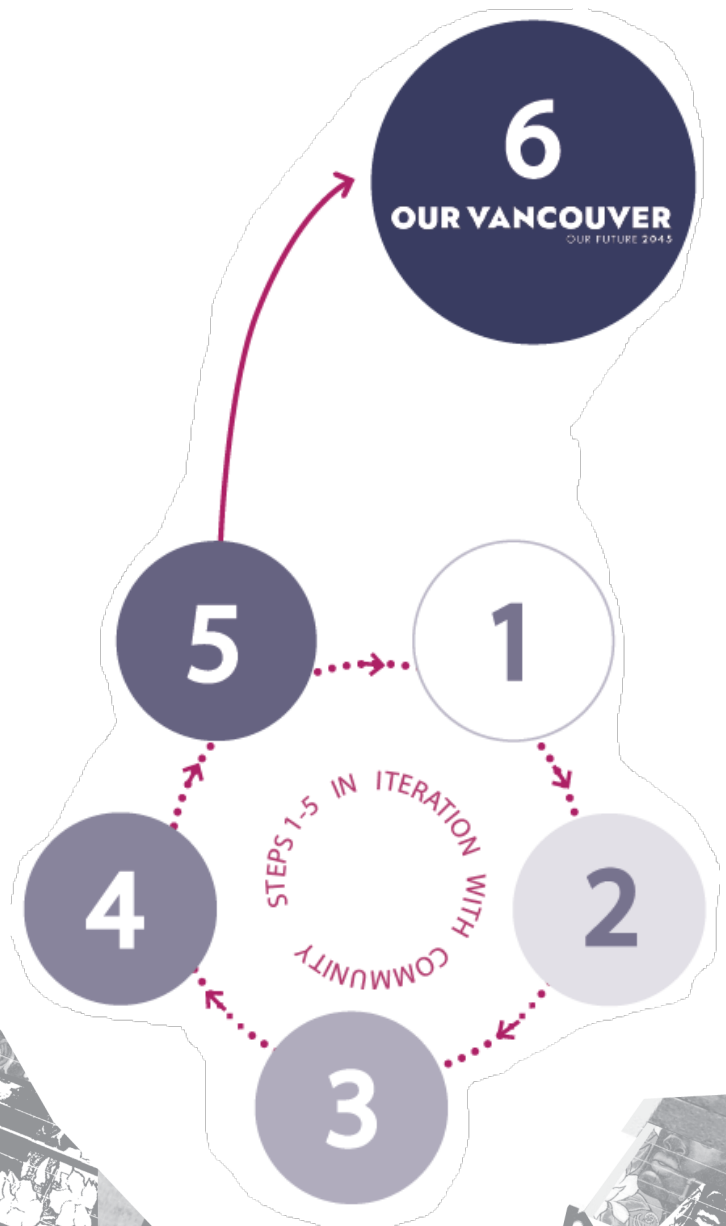
- BIPOC communities
- People with low incomes
- People with disabilities, including neurodivergence
- Youth and children
- LGBTQ+ individuals
- Renters
- Homeless population
- Small business owners
- Refugees
- Undocumented population
- Formerly incarcerated populations



partnership with staff to design policies, draft recommendations, and ensure that the lived experiences of historically underserved communities directly informed the plan update.

This co-creative method was central to the process. Instead of engaging communities at the end of the decision-making process, implementing the plan's Equity Framework allowed more integrated policy making at the beginning—to shape questions, surface root causes, and generate solutions together. To put these principles into practice, the Equity Framework lays out a six-step process that was applied in each chapter of the plan:

1. **Identify outcomes** that reflect equity goals.
2. **Develop metrics** to measure progress toward those outcomes.
3. **Assess baseline** gaps and root causes using data disaggregated by race, income, language, and geography.
4. **Apply an equity lens**, asking who benefits, who is burdened, who has been excluded, what unintended impacts might arise, and who is accountable.
5. **Propose** goals, policies, and strategies that address the root causes of inequity.
6. **Implement** with transparency, engaging communities in accountability and monitoring.



## Intersectionality

Creating a more equitable future requires recognizing that many community members hold multiple, intersecting identities that shape how they experience opportunity, access, and belonging in the city. Factors such as race, income, age, disability, language, immigration status, gender identity, and housing stability do not operate in isolation—they compound, often intensifying barriers or shaping unique needs. For example, a low-income older adult with a disability may face different challenges navigating housing and transportation than a younger resident. Likewise, individuals experiencing overlapping structural barriers—such as those related to race, income, gender identity, disability, language access, or immigration status—may face compounded challenges in accessing housing, employment opportunities, and culturally responsive services. Planning for equity therefore requires more than addressing individual disparities—it requires an intersectional approach that considers how systems interact and how policies can either reinforce or reduce cumulative disadvantage. By centering intersectionality in decision-making, the City can better design programs, investments, and spaces that reflect the full diversity of lived experiences in Vancouver and ensure that outcomes are more equitable across all communities.



**Mapping exercise conducted at Fourth Plain Commons**

## Guiding Community Investment and Decision Making with Data

A central component in addressing structural inequities is ensuring that resources are directed where they are needed most. Vancouver's Equity Index provides a clear, data-driven foundation for this work. By combining eight demographic indicators—including race, income, renter status, education, language access, disability, youth, and older adults—the index identifies neighborhoods with the highest levels of vulnerability and social need. This index helps decision makers understand who could benefit or be burdened by policy decisions and prioritize investments in neighborhoods where the need is greatest. The Equity Index

was used in the Comprehensive Plan update to help understand baseline gaps and root causes (Step 3

of the Equity Framework) and apply an equity lens to the goals and policies in this plan. The highest concentrations of need are along Fourth Plain Boulevard and surrounding neighborhoods—including Bagley Downs, Meadow Homes, Maplewood, Kevanna Park, Image, Rose Village, and Fruit Valley—where poverty, cost burden, and environmental health disparities overlap. The index also reveals growing displacement vulnerability in neighborhoods east of I-205, such as Cascade Highlands and Mountain View, where rapid demographic change and rising housing costs signal emerging displacement risks.

## Community Feedback

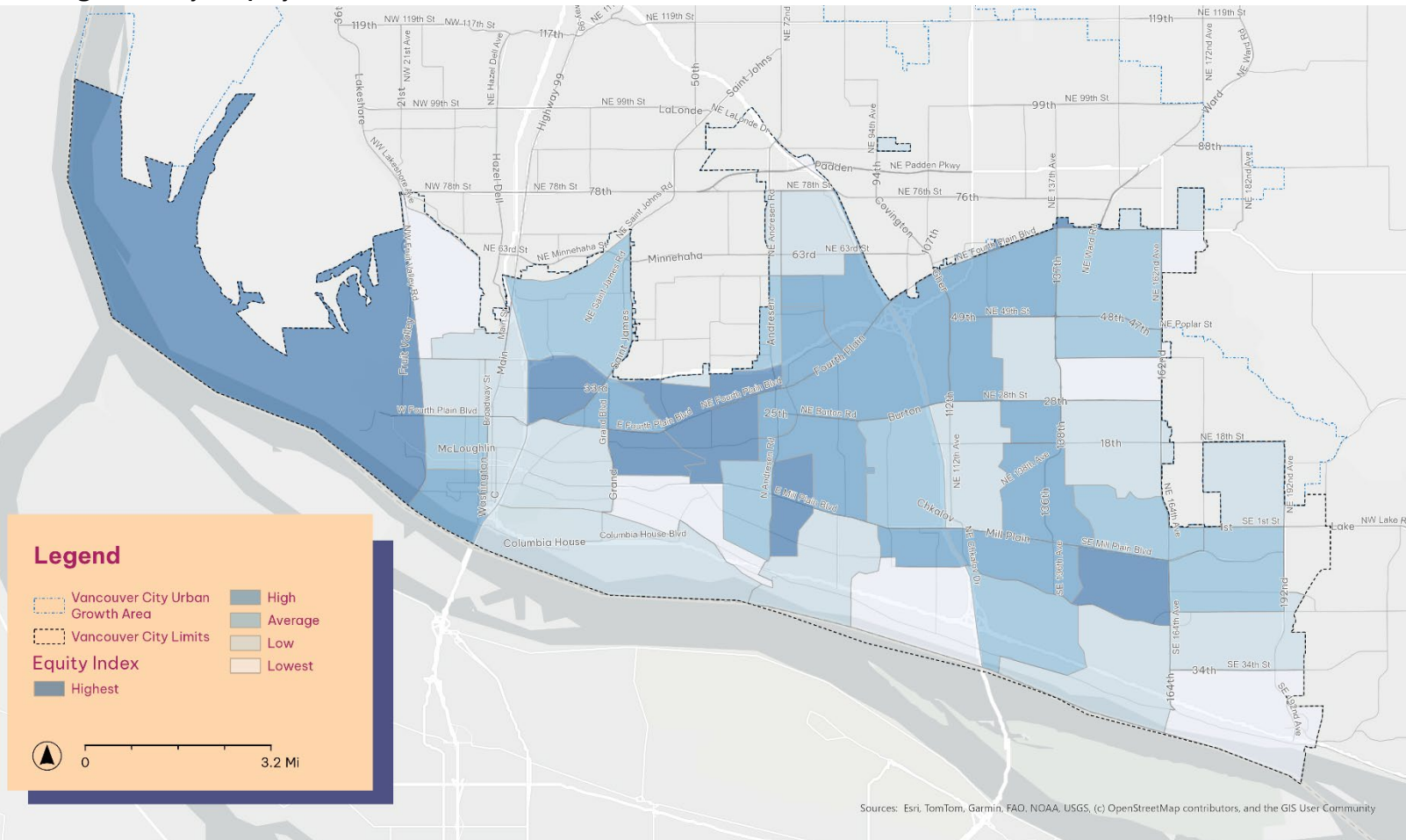
- Desire for the City to acknowledge historical injustice and systemic racism, take reparative action, and be bold and transparent in its equity commitments.
- Want accessibility and disability inclusion to be centered in planning, design, and community engagement.
- Desire for culturally specific resources, inclusive events, and community spaces that reflect diverse identities and support youth, seniors, and people with disabilities.
- Concerns about displacement and a desire to balance new development with protections for existing residents.
- People experience disparities in access to parks, healthcare, jobs, housing, transportation, and public spaces, and want tailored, culturally aware approaches that address inequalities rather than one-size-fits-all solutions.

## Equity Lens: Housing Stability, Renters and Eviction Risk

Renters are a vital part of Vancouver's community, contributing to the city's economic vitality, cultural diversity, and neighborhood life. For many residents, renting provides flexibility and access to opportunity, while for communities historically excluded from homeownership, it reflects ongoing systemic barriers rather than choice. They are central to Vancouver's housing system and are disproportionately impacted by housing instability, cost burden, and displacement pressures. Approximately half of Vancouver households rent their homes, yet renters are significantly more likely than homeowners to experience financial strain, with roughly 57 percent of renters considered cost burdened. These conditions leave many households one unexpected expense away from losing their housing. Clark County has recorded the highest number of eviction filings per capita in Washington State for three consecutive years, with more than 2,200 eviction cases filed in 2025 alone. Evictions are closely linked to housing instability and homelessness, creating long-term barriers to securing future housing and disrupting employment, education, and community connections. The Health Impact Assessment further underscores how renters may face compounded risks, including limited ability to make improvements to their homes to address heat, air quality, or other environmental hazards, increasing exposure to health impacts. Addressing eviction risk, expanding tenant protections, and increasing access to affordable and supportive housing are critical to reducing homelessness and improving long-term housing stability for renters across Vancouver.

By embedding the Equity Index and Equity Framework into planning and budgeting decisions, Vancouver can ensure that investments over the next 20 years are both equitable and accountable, focusing on the communities most impacted by systemic barriers and past disinvestment. Figure 5 shows populations that have been historically underserved or disproportionately impacted by systemic inequities and are geographically concentrated.

**Figure 5. City's Equity Index**



Vancouver’s future depends on confronting deeply rooted inequities. The census tracts that meet the threshold for high vulnerability are the neighborhoods where cost burdens, environmental health disparities, and limited access to essential services overlap, underscoring the compounding effects of historic disinvestment. This Comprehensive Plan responds by embedding equity into all chapters—using data, community partnership, and accountability to guide decisions. In doing so, Vancouver can chart a path toward a city where opportunity and belonging are not the privilege of a few, but the shared foundation for all.



## Goal: EI-1

## Equitable Community

**All community members have equitable and inclusive access to opportunities and resources, including communities most impacted by past and present exclusionary practices.**

Vancouver's ability to create a thriving and resilient future depends on whether all community members—especially those who have been most impacted by inequities—can share in its opportunities. Today, gaps in health, housing, income, and environmental quality remain stark: households of color face higher rates of cost burden and lower homeownership, life expectancy and health outcomes differ dramatically by neighborhood, and communities in central and eastern Vancouver experience greater exposure to noise, air, and heat pollution. Goal EI-1 recognizes that closing these gaps is not only about short-term programs but also about redesigning structural systems of belonging, support, and fairness across every aspect of city life.

The policies under this goal chart a long-term approach to correcting these deficiencies. By broadening access to healthcare, addressing environmental health disparities, and expanding income-based and culturally specific housing in connected and accessible neighborhoods, the City aims to stabilize at-risk households and reduce displacement by 2045. Emergency rental assistance and anti-displacement strategies are designed to help families remain in their homes so they can benefit from new public and private investments. Parallel efforts to expand educational opportunities, workforce training, and career pathways will help close persistent income and employment gaps, enabling more residents to access living-wage jobs and wealth-building opportunities.

Cultural and civic inclusion are also integral to the solution. Investments in arts, heritage, and cultural programs, coupled with community-driven design of public spaces, ensure that residents see themselves reflected in Vancouver's identity and have meaningful opportunities to shape its future. Finally, this goal focuses on using data to inform decision making, using the City's Equity Index, Equity Framework, Displacement Risk Assessment, and Climate Vulnerability Assessment, to guide community investment, prioritizing neighborhoods with the greatest need, ensuring that progress toward equity is measurable and sustained. Taken together, these strategies set Vancouver on a path to repair past harm and create equitable outcomes over the 20-year life of the Comprehensive Plan.

| Supporting Policy                                                    | Description                                                                                                                                                                                          | No. | Related Goals                  |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|--------------------------------|
| <b>Access to Arts and Cultural Programs</b>                          | Improve access to arts, cultural, and heritage programs by reducing barriers to participation, prioritizing underserved and historically underserved communities, and investing in related programs. | 1   | EI-1, PR-4                     |
| <b>Access to Education and Employment</b>                            | Reduce barriers to accessing education and employment opportunities, so all community members can reach their full potential.                                                                        | 2   | EI-1, EO-1                     |
| <b>Access to Non-traditional Homeownership Methods</b>               | Broaden access to homeownership for first-time owners, low-income residents, and other groups frequently priced out of through alternative ownership methods.                                        | 3   | EI-1, H-4, H-5, H-6            |
| <b>Access to Services and Amenities</b>                              | Expand access to essential services and amenities, particularly in underserved areas, through regulation and public investment.                                                                      | 4   | PFS-1, EI-1, LU-1              |
| <b>Affordable Commercial Space</b>                                   | Utilize City-controlled real estate to provide affordable commercial leasing opportunities for small and emerging businesses.                                                                        | 10  | EO-4, EI-1, EO-2               |
| <b>Center Impacted Voices in the Development of Community Spaces</b> | Engage community organizations and individuals representing diverse lived and cultural experiences in the planning, design, and programming of community spaces.                                     | 26  | CE-1, CE-5<br>EI-1, EI-4, PR-4 |

| Supporting Policy                                     | Description                                                                                                                                                                                                   | No. | Related Goals        |
|-------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|----------------------|
| <b>Culturally Specific and Identity-based Housing</b> | Work with partners to facilitate and fund housing that reflects the cultures, identities, and needs of Vancouver's unique population groups, and for the equity priority communities identified in this plan. | 42  | H-2, CE-2, EI-1, H-4 |
| <b>Emergency Rental Assistance</b>                    | Provide financial support to help at-risk households remain in their homes, preventing eviction and displacement.                                                                                             | 45  | H-4, EI-1, H-3       |
| <b>Equity and Climate Data</b>                        | Incorporate the City's Equity Index, Displacement Risk Assessment tool, and Climate Vulnerability Assessment in public investment and infrastructure improvement decisions.                                   | 54  | EI-1, PFS-1, CL-1    |
| <b>Health Access</b>                                  | Broaden access to essential healthcare and services for underserved populations and address built environment causes of health disparities.                                                                   | 65  | EI-1, PR-3           |
| <b>Income-restricted Housing</b>                      | Facilitate development of income-restricted housing, particularly in areas near transit and services.                                                                                                         | 71  | H-2, EI-1, LU-1      |
| <b>Invest in Underserved Areas</b>                    | Prioritize infrastructure, housing, and public service investments in underserved neighborhoods and areas of the city that have not benefitted from past investments.                                         | 81  | PFS-1, EI-1          |

| Supporting Policy                                    | Description                                                                                                                                                                                | No.        | Related Goals    |
|------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|------------------|
| <b>Mitigate Noise Pollution</b>                      | Reduce and mitigate noise pollution from major stationary and mobile sources, including air travel, vehicles, freight, railroads and high-intensity industrial uses.                       | <b>89</b>  | EI-1, CL-4       |
| <b>Reduce Displacement in the Face of New Growth</b> | Implement anti-displacement strategies and actions that protect residents and businesses in advance of public investment so communities can remain in place and benefit from improvements. | <b>112</b> | H-4, EI-1        |
| <b>Reduce Environmental Health Disparities</b>       | Focus on areas with high environmental health disparities when mitigating the impacts of air, water, heat noise, and light pollution.                                                      | <b>113</b> | EI-1, CL-4       |
| <b>Support Mental Health Access</b>                  | Explore partnerships to expand access to culturally inclusive mental health, behavioral health, and physical health resources.                                                             | <b>148</b> | PR-3, EI-1       |
| <b>Support Small Businesses</b>                      | Foster inclusive economic growth through education and resources that support small business owners, entrepreneurs, and members of historically excluded and underserved communities.      | <b>150</b> | EO-4, EO-1, EI-1 |
| <b>Welcoming and Supportive Community</b>            | Build a community that welcomes and invites all community members to participate in civic life through inclusive practices, programs, and public spaces.                                   | <b>162</b> | CE-2, EI-1       |
| <b>Workforce Development and Career Pathways</b>     | Expand access to career pathways, workforce training, and entrepreneurship opportunities that lead to living-wage jobs and wealth creation, with a focus on underrepresented communities.  | <b>163</b> | EO-1, EI-1, CE-4 |



## Goal: EI-2

## Universal Design & Access

### **Public spaces, public infrastructure, and public and private buildings are universally designed and meet best practices for accessibility and inclusion.**

Designing for a wide range of ages, abilities and circumstances is essential to ensuring that all Vancouver residents can navigate, participate and thrive with safety and dignity. Today, nearly 14 percent of residents live with one or more disabilities, while neighborhoods along the Fourth Plain Corridor, east of I-205 and in Fruit Valley have higher concentrations of older adults and households without vehicles. These patterns point to inequities in mobility, access and independence and highlight the urgent need for housing, transit, parks, and community spaces designed with accessibility at the core. These conditions also underscore the need to systematically upgrade City facilities and public infrastructure to meet Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) standards, consistent with the City's adopted ADA Transition Plan, to ensure compliance with federal law and remove long-standing barriers to access across municipal buildings, parks, rights-of-way, and services. Goal EI-2 responds by making accessibility a foundational value across public spaces, infrastructure, housing, and private development, directly supporting LU-1: Connected and Accessible Neighborhoods, which envisions communities where everyone can reach services, jobs, parks, and cultural spaces within their daily lives.

Over the next 20 years, the policies under this goal aim to reduce these disparities by embedding universal design principles in all new public facilities, incentivizing their adoption in private development, and expanding retrofits for existing homes. These measures ensure that housing options are accessible, inclusive and adaptable—supporting multigenerational households and enabling residents to age in place.

This goal also calls for stronger connections between housing and natural spaces. By siting new homes near existing and future parks, and by improving the accessibility of parks and greenways in historically underserved neighborhoods, the City will close long-standing gaps in access to the physical and mental health benefits of nature. Taken together, these strategies directly address existing deficiencies in equitable outcomes—ensuring that, by 2045, Vancouver has created inclusive environments where residents of all ages and abilities are connected, supported and able to thrive in their neighborhoods.

| Supporting Policy                                           | Description                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | No. | Related Goals         |
|-------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|-----------------------|
| <b>Accessible Mobility for All</b>                          | Promote universal design standards and mobility solutions for disabled, senior, youth, and low-income residents across all modes.                                                                                                                                                                              | 5   | EI-2, EI-3, TM-1,     |
| <b>Broaden Equitable Access to Natural Spaces and Parks</b> | Increase equitable access to natural spaces and parks by investing in new and improved facilities in underserved neighborhoods and siting new accessible housing close to existing and future parks.                                                                                                           | 23  | CL-4, PR-3, H-1, EI-2 |
| <b>Incorporate Universal Design Principles</b>              | Incentivize universal design principles in private development. Support accessibility retrofits for existing homes and prioritize affordable housing options tailored to multigenerational living, aging in place, and a wide range of abilities.                                                              | 74  | EI-2, PR-1, H-2       |
| <b>Increase Access to Community Spaces</b>                  | Facilitate and provide access to community spaces, with a focus on populations vulnerable to social isolation.                                                                                                                                                                                                 | 75  | CE-1, EI-2, LU-1      |
| <b>Resilient, Transit-supportive Infrastructure</b>         | Invest in infrastructure that supports reliable, frequent and accessible transit service as outlined in the Enhanced Transit Network, while adapting to localized climate impacts. Investments should expand mobility options, improve neighborhood access, and deliver health, economic, and social benefits. | 124 | TM-2, PFS-3, EI-2     |
| <b>Trauma-informed Services</b>                             | Ensure City programs and policies are designed and delivered using trauma-informed care principles.                                                                                                                                                                                                            | 156 | CE-2, CE-3, EI-2      |

## Goal: EI-3

## Focus on Youth and Aging Population

**The built environment supports community members from childhood through later life, with families and caretakers benefitting from robust youth programs and accessible childcare, enabling children to excel and parents to actively participate in the workforce. Aging populations benefit from accessible infrastructure, inclusive urban design, accessible housing, and opportunities for social connection.**

Vancouver's future depends on how well the City supports residents across the entire lifespan—from young children and families to older adults seeking to age in place. Today, more than 22 percent of Vancouver's population is under the age of 18, while nearly 16 percent are over the age of 65. The city will see significant growth in both youth and senior populations by 2045, with increasing demand for childcare, accessible housing, and transportation options that allow residents to live independently and remain connected to their communities. Without intentional planning, these demographic shifts risk deepening existing inequities in access to housing, mobility and essential services.

Policies under EI-3 aim to create a built environment that supports community members through every stage of life. Expanding access to affordable and accessible childcare facilities is critical for enabling parents and caretakers to participate in the workforce while ensuring children can thrive. At the same time, Vancouver must prepare for an aging population by supporting accessible housing options near services and reliable transit, and by encouraging downsizing opportunities that allow seniors to stay rooted in their communities with dignity and independence.

Housing policy also plays a central role. By incentivizing multigenerational housing, the City will expand living options that allow families to pool resources, provide care within households, and create culturally inclusive homes that meet the needs of Vancouver's diverse communities.

Finally, this goal emphasizes the importance of **community resources that foster multigenerational connection**. This includes safe play areas for children, accessible public facilities, and programming that brings youth and older adults together—strengthening social ties and reducing isolation.

| Supporting Policy                                | Description                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | No.        | Related Goals     |
|--------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|-------------------|
| <b>Accessible Mobility for All</b>               | Promote universal design standards and mobility solutions for disabled, senior, youth and low-income residents across all modes.                                                                                                      | <b>5</b>   | El-2, El-3, TM-1, |
| <b>Aging Populations</b>                         | Ensure that residents have support for aging within community and downsizing through diverse housing options near accessible services and reliable transit to ensure long-term livability and independence.                           | <b>12</b>  | El-3, H-2         |
| <b>Multigenerational Households</b>              | Incentivize development of housing types suitable for multigenerational living.                                                                                                                                                       | <b>92</b>  | El-3, H-2         |
| <b>Resources for Youth and Aging Populations</b> | Prioritize programs and infrastructure that support youth and aging populations, including safe play areas, accessible housing, robust childcare, public facilities and community programs that foster multigenerational interaction. | <b>125</b> | El-3, PFS-1       |
| <b>Support Access to Childcare</b>               | Support the development of new childcare facilities in the city and eliminate regulatory barriers preventing their creation.                                                                                                          | <b>143</b> | El-3, EO-1        |



## Goal: EI-4

## Transparent and Inclusive Governance

**Community members have trust in City government, built and sustained through equitable and inclusive community engagement, language access, equitable access to programs, technology and resources, an emphasis on building trust-based relationships with partners and community members, regular reporting of progress and outcomes, and co-creative and transparent decision-making processes.**

Equity cannot be achieved without trust, accountability, and inclusion in the decisions that shape Vancouver's future. For too long, many communities—particularly immigrants and refugees, BIPOC residents, renters, people with disabilities, and low-income households—have been excluded from decision making or faced barriers to participating fully in civic life. Nearly 20 percent of Vancouver residents speak a language other than English at home, with Spanish and Russian/Slavic among the most common, yet access to multilingual services has lagged behind this need. These disparities reflect systems that have not only produced uneven outcomes but have also left impacted communities without a meaningful seat at the table.

Clear access to information and services is essential so everyone can take part in civic life. Some community members—including people with LEP and those who use American Sign Language—experience language-related barriers when trying to find information, use programs, or participate in decisions that affect them.

Language access supports each of the City's core values: livability, sustainability and resiliency, innovation, equity and inclusion, and community trust and relationships. It also helps us meet our strategic priorities: community safety, climate action, economic opportunity, and high-performing

government. Together, these values and priorities guide employees to support the diversity of our residents and actively remove barriers to effective communication.

Goal EI-4 addresses these gaps by embedding transparency, accountability and representation into City governance. Policies under this goal call for inclusive engagement processes that move beyond one time relationship approaches toward long-term, reciprocal trust-based relationships. This means centering the voices of communities most directly impacted by policy decisions, from the design of community spaces to the implementation of smart technology. By using an equity lens in technology and data systems, the City commits to reducing embedded bias, preventing harm, and ensuring that digital practices and smart city tools expand rather than limit opportunity.

Building a fair and accountable government also requires that decision-making bodies reflect the diversity of the community. This goal directs the City to strengthen representation on boards and commissions, ensuring that voices of historically excluded groups play a meaningful role in shaping land use, housing, transportation, and economic policies. This goal also emphasizes multilingual and culturally competent services, acknowledging that language access and cultural context are essential for true participation. Partnerships are also a key element of inclusive governance, through building deeper, sustained relationships with tribal communities and land stewards, integrating their knowledge, perspectives, and priorities into planning and decision making. This goal calls for embedding community benefits into private development and redevelopment projects, ensuring that growth directly delivers value to impacted neighborhoods through affordable housing, small business space or public amenities.

Finally, EI-4 establishes a strong framework for accountability. The City will track implementation of Comprehensive Plan policies using clear metrics, report back to the community in accessible formats, and maintain open data platforms that allow residents to monitor investments and progress. By connecting this transparency with consistent feedback loops, the City creates an ongoing process of co-governance that keeps equity commitments front and center.

## Priority Driven Budgeting

Biennial budget decisions are critical to ensuring the Comprehensive Plan is implemented successfully over time. These decisions should be based on established policy priorities, and individual budget requests are evaluated and prioritized based on the relative importance of individual programs, projects, and services for meeting those priorities. Budget narratives and reporting methodologies articulate how budget items help meet the City's mission, are consistent with its organizational values, reflect City priorities, and the cost and value they offer to community members. The impacts and outcomes of budget decisions will be regularly and transparently documented and published.

| Supporting Policy                                                    | Description                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | No.       | Related Goals                     |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|-----------------------------------|
| <b>Boards and Commissions</b>                                        | Ensure boards and commissions reflect community demographics, consist of diverse voices, and provide a meaningful role in decision-making and policy development.                                                                                                                                       | <b>22</b> | EI-4                              |
| <b>Center Impacted Voices in the Development of Community Spaces</b> | Engage community organizations and individuals representing diverse lived and cultural experiences in the planning, design and programming of community spaces.                                                                                                                                         | <b>26</b> | CE-1, CE-5<br>EI-1, EI-4,<br>PR-4 |
| <b>Engage with Tribal Community Members</b>                          | Foster meaningful partnerships with tribal communities and land stewards, integrating their knowledge, priorities and cultural perspectives into local decision-making processes.                                                                                                                       | <b>49</b> | EI-4, CL-2                        |
| <b>Ethical and Fair City Processes</b>                               | Promote ethical and fair governance by embedding accountability in City processes, ensuring access for historically excluded communities, mitigating bias, and fostering ethical use of technology and digital practices.                                                                               | <b>56</b> | EI-4, CE-4                        |
| <b>Future Updates</b>                                                | Continue to update the Comprehensive Plan and implementing regulations in response to the annual review process, state-mandated 5-year Implementation Progress Report, and 10-year periodic review requirement that includes updates to long-term growth forecasts and regional land capacity analysis. | <b>62</b> | EI-4                              |
| <b>Inclusive Engagement</b>                                          | Foster inclusive, community engagement rooted in inclusion, trust, and long-term relationship-building. Center the voices of those who are most directly impacted by outcomes of City processes.                                                                                                        | <b>69</b> | EI-4, CE-1                        |
| <b>Inclusive Use of Technology</b>                                   | Use an equity lens to evaluate, assess, develop, and implement use of smart technologies to reduce embedded biases and provide inclusive and accessible access.                                                                                                                                         | <b>70</b> | EI-4, CE-4                        |

| Supporting Policy                                         | Description                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | No.        | Related Goals    |
|-----------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|------------------|
| <b>Incorporate Community Benefits into Development</b>    | Integrate community benefits into private developments involving discretionary land use approval or City redevelopment efforts while maintaining project feasibility.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | <b>73</b>  | H-4, EI-4        |
| <b>Language Access and Culturally Responsive Services</b> | Ensure all City services are accessible in high-impact languages spoken throughout the city and delivered with cultural competency.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | <b>82</b>  | CE-2, EI-4,      |
| <b>Monitoring Progress</b>                                | Regularly review progress towards implementation of the Vancouver Comprehensive Plan goals and policies using the metrics identified for each policy, and update regulations and policies as needed to reflect changing conditions.                                                                                                                                                                   | <b>91</b>  | EI-4             |
| <b>Open Government</b>                                    | Ensure transparent and equitable access to government data by maintaining open, user-friendly platforms that allow community members to understand, engage with, and influence public decisions and investments.                                                                                                                                                                                      | <b>97</b>  | EI-4, PFS-2      |
| <b>Support Neighborhood Organizations</b>                 | Support the growth and stability of neighborhood associations as key partners in establishing local pride, connection, and representation within Vancouver's distinct neighborhoods.                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | <b>149</b> | CE-1, CE-5, EI-4 |
| <b>Tracking Progress and Reporting Back</b>               | Build transparency and accountability with the community through regular tracking of plan implementation and consistently reporting out on progress in an accessible manner.                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | <b>154</b> | EI-4             |
| <b>Values Driven Budgeting</b>                            | Ensure biennial budget decisions are guided by adopted policy priorities, with programs, projects, and services evaluated and prioritized based on their contribution to achieving those priorities. Require budget narratives and reporting to clearly demonstrate alignment with the City's mission, values, and community benefit, and to transparently document and publish outcomes and impacts. | <b>160</b> | EI-4, PFS-2      |



## Chapter 2 – Key Implementing Actions

- ✓ Implement the City's Equitable Development Strategy
- ✓ Implementation of the City's Language Access Plan
- ✓ Coordinate Implementation and regular updates of the City's ADA Transition Plan

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# Land Use and Development



3



OUR VANCOUVER



# Introduction

One of the biggest opportunities that the City has to influence positive change in community is through regulating the use of land. The Land Use chapter of the Comprehensive Plan serves as a framework to guide the development, preservation, and management of land resources within Vancouver. It identifies a growth concept for future development and provides a set of policies to guide and manage this growth. As the population grows and the demand for housing, jobs, services, amenities, parks and open space, and the infrastructure needed to serve this demand increases, it is essential to establish a plan for how land will be used to meet current and future needs while balancing environmental sustainability, economic vitality and quality of life.

Since World War II, areas in Central and East Vancouver have developed as low-density, suburban expansions of previously exurban and rural land. Past Comprehensive Plans adopted by the City focused and emphasized lower density development patterns aimed at preserving single-family neighborhoods, discouraging integration and mixing of different uses, and concentrating higher



## Vision: Land Use and Development

Vancouver is a connected and accessible city, with neighborhoods that provide a mix housing, services and amenities, and employment centers that provide opportunities for family-wage jobs and economic mobility. We envision a city with a variety of affordable housing options; a robust economy that provides employment opportunities to all our residents; a strong network of healthcare, childcare and social service organizations; and plentiful urban and natural amenities that foster a sense of inclusion for people of all backgrounds. We recognize that change will occur incrementally, in neighborhoods and corridors across the city, and that we must accommodate this change while minimizing displacement, maintaining livability and protecting the natural environment. Our land use strategy will meet the needs of a growing city by building a resilient, thriving, connected, and inclusive urban landscape that creates harmony between the built and natural environment and fosters choice and opportunity for all.

intensity buildings in downtown and along major transportation corridors. Neighborhoods developed with fewer community gathering spaces or walkable destinations, leading to increased car dependence and fewer “third places,” such as cafés, libraries, and parks, where residents naturally build connections. These patterns have contributed to uneven access to services, particularly in areas with limited childcare, grocery stores and health facilities, and for community members that rely on walking, rolling and transit to access daily needs and educational and economic opportunities.

The 2011 Comprehensive Plan looked to address some of these impacts, by making a shift toward infill and redevelopment, with policies aimed at maximizing the use of available sites and encouraging transit-oriented development. These efforts have, over time, led to the development of more compact neighborhoods and mixed-use districts, and facilitated significant investment in previously underserved and underutilized areas. Given projected population growth and associated demand for housing and jobs, as well as a lack of undeveloped land in the city, the 2025–2045 Comprehensive Plan seeks to build and expand on the 2011 Comprehensive Plan, supporting development in areas with access to public transportation and essential services, allowing for more and different housing choices in neighborhoods around the city, and facilitating job growth and investment in mixed-use centers and corridors.

## Community Feedback

- ➔ Strong desire for walkable, mixed-use neighborhoods and development that integrate housing with daily needs, such as jobs, childcare, healthcare, grocery stores, parks, transit, and commercial services.
  - Youth were particularly interested in more amusement-oriented uses, such as a zoo, waterpark, or scenic viewpoints.
- ➔ Support for increasing and focusing density in corridors, centers, and underutilized areas while protecting agricultural areas and open space from development.
  - Many favor redevelopment of parking lots and commercial sites, but expressed concerns about excessive height, parking shortages, and increased density in single-family neighborhoods.
- ➔ Need for compatibility and thoughtful transitions between land uses, such as buffers between industrial and residential uses, limits on incompatible uses (e.g., car dealerships, warehouses), and careful adjacency between low- and high-density zones.
- ➔ Desire to retain and enhance neighborhood aesthetics, historic areas, and community identity.
- ➔ Concerns about how changes could impact displacement, property values, and non-conformities.
- ➔ Interest in trauma-informed, culturally-responsive planning and community-serving places,
  - Including community centers, identity-specific spaces, and development that reflects cultural needs and supports social connection.

Vancouver's updated growth concept directs future development into a network of centers, corridors and employment districts designed to create more connected, equitable and resilient neighborhoods. Instead of continuing past patterns of low-density sprawl that fueled car dependence and disparities in access to services, the new framework prioritizes compact, mixed-use growth in the Urban Core and a variety of Regional and Local Centers and Corridors. Residential neighborhoods will diversify with a broader mix of housing types and commercial services, while employment and industrial areas will be conserved for jobs and greenways, and natural areas will be protected as critical community assets.

The remaining sections of this chapter outline the plan's growth concept and the corresponding classifications, a comprehensive zoning map for the city based on the growth concept, a detailed description of each of the zone districts that outlines the uses and scale of development associated with each, and the goals and policies designed to support implementation. The Land Capacity Analysis Methodology and Process for the Preferred Alternative (Appendix O) describes the methodology used to estimate housing and employment capacity under the Preferred Alternative, including parcel-level modeling, development prototypes, and market feasibility assumptions. This analysis ensures that the plan accommodates projected population and job growth while aligning with land use goals and infrastructure planning needs. It provides the technical basis for the future land use map and supports consistency with Growth Management Act requirements.

### **Countywide Planning Policies**

The Land Use chapter is consistent with Clark County Countywide Planning Policies and reflects coordination with the countywide population and housing allocation process. Vancouver's growth concept, land use designations, and zoning approach supports regional goals for compact urban development, efficient service delivery, and environmental stewardship, ensuring local land use decisions align with broader county and regional planning efforts.



Growth Concept

Figure 6. Growth Concept







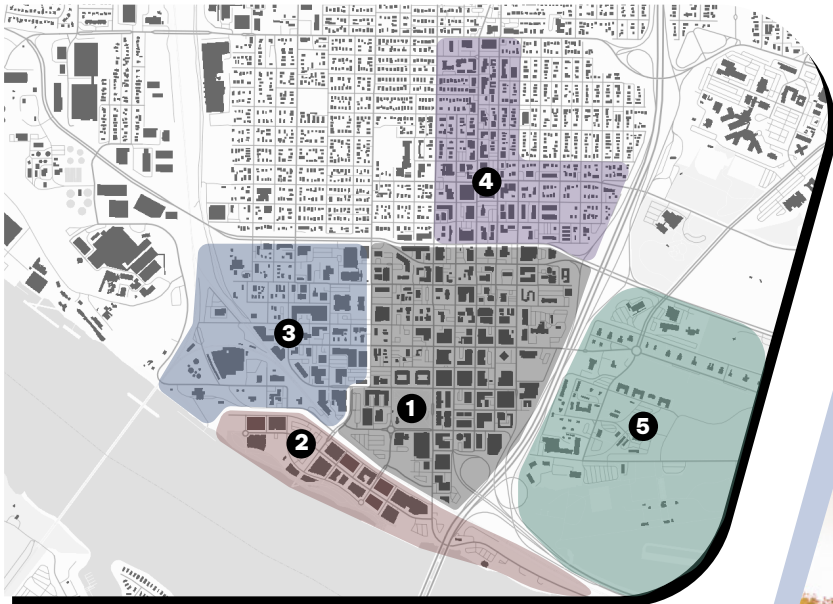
Urban Core

The Urban Core represents the City’s highest concentration of housing, jobs, services, and amenities. It is envisioned as a vibrant, mixed-use environment that brings people together to live, work, shop, and engage in civic and cultural activities in a walkable and transit-rich setting. Growth in the Urban Core emphasizes density and vertical mixed-use development types, while also celebrating preserving historic areas.

The area is defined by a rich layering of uses—housing above active retail, large community gathering spaces such as Esther Short Park, Main Street, the Waterfront, the Convention Center, and the Farmers Market, and a strong presence of local businesses, restaurants, and entertainment. The Urban Core functions as a regional anchor that draws community members and employees from around the region and is a focal point for visitors to Vancouver. The Urban Core has a walkable, pedestrian oriented street network, and is connected to major arterials and accessible via the state highway system.

Sub-Focus Areas

1. Downtown / Esther Short
2. Waterfront
3. Downtown West
4. Uptown
5. Historic Preserve





Regional Center



Regional Centers are planned as compact, high-intensity hubs that serve as secondary anchors for housing, amenities, services and jobs outside of the Urban Core, and function as regional hubs that reduce the need to travel long distances for work or daily needs. Regional Centers are strategically located along major transportation corridors that are or will be served by frequent transit, and are intended to grow into vibrant districts that complement the Urban Core by offering accessible opportunities for living, employment, and entertainment.

These areas are envisioned with mid-rise housing, regional office space, retail districts, and community services, all supported by strong multimodal connections. Public investments in infrastructure, streetscapes, and transit access will support and catalyze private development. Regional Centers should be a focal point for locating affordable housing and essential services, ensuring that historically underserved communities benefit from new investment. Over time, these centers are expected to evolve into distinctive destinations with unique characters and identifies.

Identified Areas

- Columbia Business Center
- The Heights
- Van Mall
- Columbia Tech Center
- Vancouver Innovation Center
- Columbia Palisades/HQ



Local Center

Local Centers are intended to be hubs of housing, essential services and amenities that are accessible to most neighborhoods in the city via public transportation or small-scale mobility. They provide local and often smaller-scale destinations for shopping, dining, small businesses, and cultural life that are more accessible than regional centers or the Urban Core, and they accommodate a greater share of housing capacity than typical neighborhoods. They include jobs and may have employment centers nearby.

These areas are characterized by a mix of uses but a lower scale of development than what is seen in the urban core and regional centers, and include mixed use buildings as well as stand alone housing, office, retail and services. Local centers are served by busy arterial streets and accessible via the City’s pedestrian and bike and small mobility modal networks. Where current multimodal facilities do not meet City standards, these areas should be priorities for future improvements. Local centers should be focal points for affordable housing and business district development.

Identified Areas

- Main Street
- Central Fourth Plain
- East Fourth Plain
- West Mill Plain
- Central Andresen
- East Mill Plain
- Mill Plain and 205
- 112th corridor
- 136th/137th corridor
- 164th corridor
- 192nd corridor



Neighborhood Center

Neighborhood Centers are smaller-scale destinations that serve surrounding neighborhoods with access to everyday goods and services. They typically feature a mix of small grocery stores, cafes, childcare facilities, healthcare offices, and other neighborhood-serving businesses. They feature a variety of low and medium scale housing options, including townhomes, plexes, apartments, and small mixed-use buildings, as well as standalone commercial and office buildings. Neighborhood Centers help more evenly distribute connected and accessible neighborhoods throughout the city so residents can walk or bike to basic services and amenities. Development will often occur incrementally through adaptive reuse of existing buildings, small infill projects, and more middle housing options. These areas are generally served by lower volume streets with existing or planned multimodal facilities, reducing reliance on cars for short trips.

Identified Areas

- Fruit Valley Residential Area
- 39th Street
- West Fourth Plain
- 33rd Street
- 29th Street– Kauffman to Norris
- Evergreen and Grand
- Grand between Mill Plain and Fourth Plain
- St. Johns/St. James couplet
- 18th Street
- Andresen South of Fourth Plain
- Burton & 86th





 **Campus**

Campuses are large, multi-building sites that serve as anchors for education, healthcare, government, and employment. They include universities, hospitals, corporate headquarters, and research facilities and often integrate these primary uses with housing, services, amenities, athletic facilities, public open space or cultural venues. Their development is primarily guided by multi-phase master plans and public-private partnerships to improve infrastructure.

In Vancouver, these institutions include Clark College, the Department of Veteran’s Affairs, Clark County Public Health, the Fort Vancouver Historic Reserve, C-TRAN, and the PeaceHealth Medical Campus, as well as priority redevelopment sites like Section 30, the Fisher’s Landing Transit Center and the existing and new City Operations Center sites.

Many are looking to expand their uses to accommodate population-specific housing, and are often important providers of social services and workforce development opportunities. Their expansion will require strong partnerships between the City and other public agencies as well private developers to align growth with broader plan goals.

**Identified Areas**

- Clark College / VA
- Fort Vancouver
- Peacehealth Medical Campus
- Columbia Tech Center
- Section 30
- Fisher’s Landing Transit Center
- Fourth Plain Ops Center
- New City Ops Center
- Clark College at CTC



 **Employment Centers**

Employment Centers are districts primarily dedicated to providing jobs, with limited or no housing. They protect and enhance Vancouver’s supply of industrial, manufacturing, office, and research space, ensuring the city maintains a strong economic base. These areas often include large parcels and flexible development sites that can support advanced manufacturing, logistics, warehousing, and associated office needs. Employment Centers are vital for sustaining living-wage jobs, diversifying the economy, and retaining businesses that may not be viable in higher-cost mixed-use environments.

Future development is expected to include modernization of industrial facilities, integration of clean and green industries, and improvements to freight and logistics infrastructure. To remain competitive, Employment Centers will often require significant investments in utilities and transportation connections. These areas must balance economic productivity with environmental stewardship, ensuring land use efficiency while aligning with the city’s climate and equity goals. Concentrating job growth in well-defined areas protects employment lands and creates stable locations for long-term workforce opportunity.

**Identified Areas**

- Port of Vancouver
- Fruit Valley Industrial Area
- Lower Grand Employment Area
- West Minnehaha Industrial Area
- Van Mall North Industrial Area
- Andreesen + Fourth Plain
- 112th Industrial Area
- East Fourth Plain Industrial Area





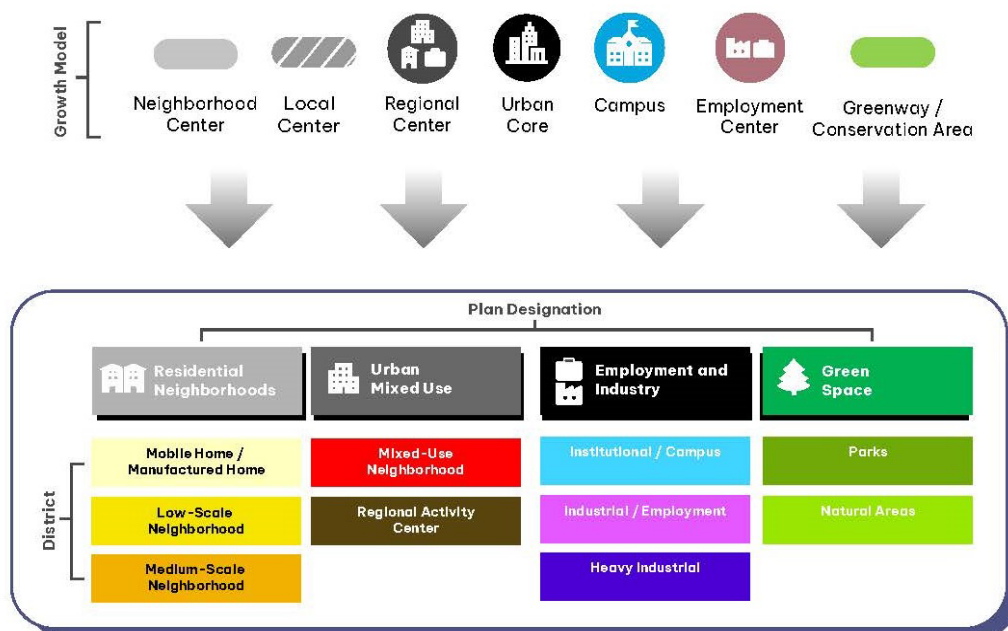
## Moving from Concepts to Implementation

Areas designated as Urban Core, Regional Centers and Local Centers will likely require place-specific subarea plans (new or updated) to achieve the long-term intended outcomes. Areas like the Heights and Evergreen and Grand have recently completed subarea plans that largely align with the new Comprehensive Plan goals and policies. Other existing plans—including those for Fruit Valley, Downtown, Central Fourth Plain, 112th Corridor, and Section 30—will require updates. Several other areas—including Upper Main Street, Mill Plain east of the Heights, the St. Johns/St. James couplet, Vancouver Mall, East Fourth Plain, and the 136th/137th, 164th and 192nd corridors—do not have existing subarea plans and will likely need them in the future. Subarea plans address location-specific issues and opportunities at a greater level of detail than a citywide Comprehensive Plan can do.

While the growth concept describes how places function and relate to one another at a citywide scale and Comprehensive Plan designations group these into broad categories, zoning districts provide the specific rules and development standards that govern land use on individual sites. These rules—such as allowed building types, uses, and intensity of development—ensure the growth model is implemented consistently across the city.

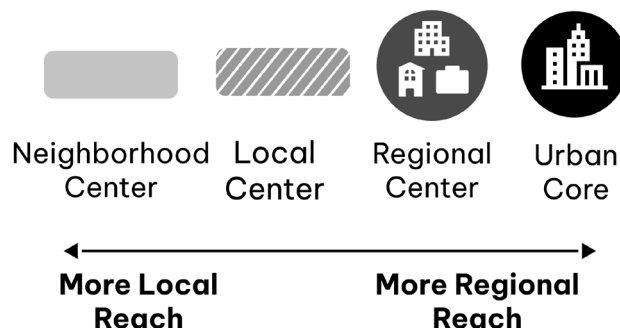
Comprehensive Plan land use designations provide the broad framework for distributing uses and scales of development around the city. The updated Comprehensive Plan groups land into four broad designations: Residential Neighborhood, Urban Mixed Use, Employment and Industry, and Green Space. Each Comprehensive Plan designation is implemented through one or more zoning districts with specific standards outlined in the City’s Land Use and Development Code, which is the primary regulatory tool used to implement the growth concept and ensure new development aligns with the plan’s vision.

**Figure 7. Growth Concept to Plan Designations**



## Distribution of Services and Amenities

The growth model establishes a hierarchy for how services and amenities are distributed. The Urban Core will attract at a regional scale for employment, commercial services, and public spaces, while Neighborhood Centers focus on neighborhood-serving uses that support surrounding communities. This is ultimately reflected in the zoning map and the amount of land dedicated to each district.



## Land Capacity

The following table summarizes the total acreage, estimated housing unit capacity, and employment capacity associated with each zone district, demonstrating that the City has sufficient land capacity to meet its 20-year population, housing, and job growth allocations.

**Table 2. Zone District Estimated Housing Unit and Employment Capacity**

| Zone District             | Acres          | Net New Housing Units | Net New Jobs  |
|---------------------------|----------------|-----------------------|---------------|
| Manufactured Home Park    | 205            | 0                     | N/A           |
| Low-Scale Neighborhood    | 5,830          | 7,300                 | 100           |
| Medium-Scale Neighborhood | 6,304          | 15,800                | 300           |
| Mixed-Use Neighborhood    | 2,718          | 6,600                 | 7,300         |
| Regional Activity Center  | 1,569          | 10,600                | 13,500        |
| Institutional/Campus      | 1,168          | 3,800                 | 2,700         |
| Industrial/Employment     | 2,274          | N/A                   | 16,000        |
| Heavy Industrial          | 1,609          | N/A                   | 5,200         |
| Parks                     | 2,004          | N/A                   | N/A           |
| Natural Areas             | 1,064          | N/A                   | N/A           |
| <b>Citywide Totals</b>    | <b>24,476*</b> | <b>44,100</b>         | <b>45,100</b> |

*\*Citywide acreage total does not account for public right of way and other non-parcelized land.*

## Land Uses Not Present

As a fully urbanized city, Vancouver does not contain designated agricultural, timber, or mineral resource lands of long-term commercial significance, nor rural land uses. Land use planning within the City is therefore focused on accommodating urban residential, mixed-use, employment, institutional, recreational, and conservation uses within the capacities stated above.

## **Community Experience Lens – Access to Commercial Spaces**

The strategy implemented in this plan will direct a majority of new commercial uses to Mixed Use Neighborhoods and Regional Activity Centers where a broader mix of retail, dining, entertainment, and employment uses can support a wider population and higher levels of activity. These areas are intentionally located along the C-Tran Vine system, to ensure that community destinations are accessible by multiple modes and supported by existing infrastructure. By aligning these more intensive uses with transit, the City is leveraging high capacity transit to connect residents to community events, services, and commercial activity—especially during periods of peak demand—reducing carbon emissions, reducing strains on the transportation network, and supporting a more efficient system. From a community experience perspective, this approach considers the day-to-day needs of a wide range of users, including youth, older adults, people with disabilities, and households with limited access to a vehicle. It makes it easier to access destinations safely and conveniently, without reliance on driving.

In addition to focusing higher-intensity commercial activity in centers and corridors, Vancouver's land use framework allows for small-scale, neighborhood-serving commercial uses to be thoughtfully integrated into low-scale and medium-scale residential neighborhoods to support connected and accessible neighborhoods. These uses—such as a neighborhood café, small corner market, childcare center, or personal services—are limited in size, scale, and operating characteristics to ensure they are compatible with adjacent homes and contribute to daily needs within a short walk or bike trip. By differentiating these contexts, the City can expand access to everyday services within neighborhoods while directing more intensive uses to areas with the infrastructure and transit capacity to support them.

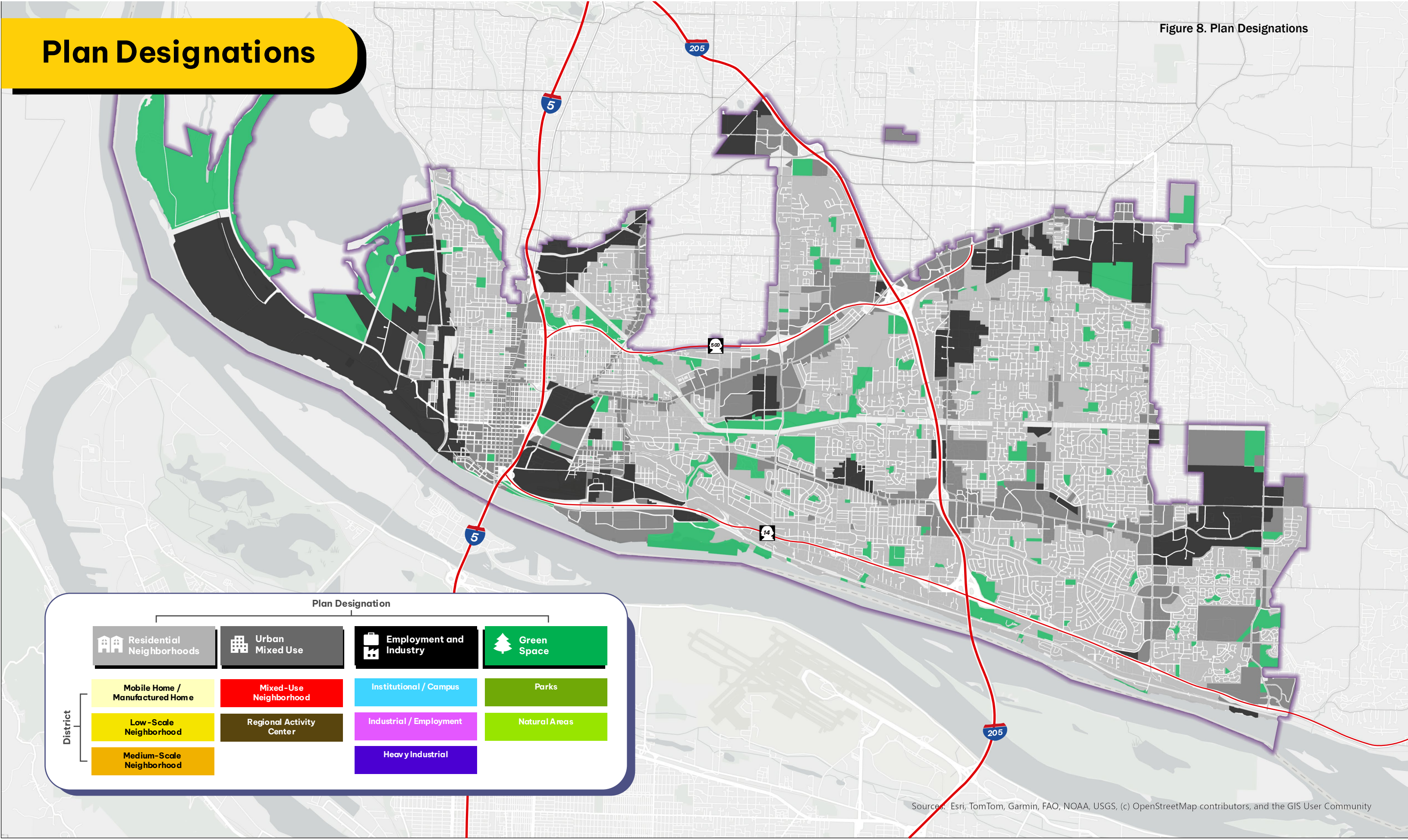
### **Groundwater Resources**

Protection of groundwater resources used for public water supplies is addressed primarily through critical areas regulations and the Shoreline Master Program that limit incompatible activities and guide development practices in sensitive areas. The City coordinates land use decisions with adopted water system plans, watershed planning efforts, and applicable state and local regulations to protect aquifer recharge areas and maintain long-term water supply reliability while accommodating planned growth. More detail can be found within the Public Facilities Chapter of this plan.



# Plan Designations

Figure 8. Plan Designations



Plan Designation

|          |                                                                                                               |                                                                                                     |                                                                                                             |                                                                                                   |
|----------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| District |  Residential Neighborhoods |  Urban Mixed Use |  Employment and Industry |  Green Space |
|          | Mobile Home / Manufactured Home                                                                               | Mixed-Use Neighborhood                                                                              | Institutional / Campus                                                                                      | Parks                                                                                             |
|          | Low-Scale Neighborhood                                                                                        | Regional Activity Center                                                                            | Industrial / Employment                                                                                     | Natural Areas                                                                                     |
|          | Medium-Scale Neighborhood                                                                                     |                                                                                                     | Heavy Industrial                                                                                            |                                                                                                   |
|          |                                                                                                               |                                                                                                     |                                                                                                             |                                                                                                   |

Sources: Esri, TomTom, Garmin, FAO, NOAA, USGS, (c) OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community



Figure 9. Zone Districts

Zone Districts

**Legend**

- Interstate
- State Route
- Primary Arterial
- Arterial
- Minor Collector
- Forest Collector
- Private or Other
- Major Railway
- Streams
- Waterbodies
- Vancouver UGA
- City Boundary

**Plan Designation**

|                                 |                          |                         |               |
|---------------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|---------------|
| Residential Neighborhoods       | Urban Mixed Use          | Employment and Industry | Green Space   |
| Mobile Home / Manufactured Home | Mixed-Use Neighborhood   | Institutional / Campus  | Parks         |
| Low-Scale Neighborhood          | Regional Activity Center | Industrial / Employment | Natural Areas |
| Medium-Scale Neighborhood       |                          | Heavy Industrial        |               |

**District**

\*Figure 9, provides high level informal mapping of zoning designations applied to all properties in the City of Vancouver. A formal, more detailed zoning map version of figure 9 suitable for review of individual properties is adopted as part of the Vancouver Municipal Code Title 20 Development Code.



 Residential Neighborhoods

Residential neighborhoods make up a majority of the developed land within City limits. They form the everyday places where people live, connect with neighbors, and access schools, parks, and local services, providing a foundation for many neighborhoods in Vancouver.

**Mobile Home /  
Manufactured Home**

Applied to existing manufactured home parks to retain long-term affordability and prevent displacement of existing residents; no other uses allowed unless ongoing use as manufactured home parks demonstrably unfeasible. Maximum height of 35 feet.



**Low-Scale  
Neighborhood**

Allows a minimum of 4-6 units of housing per parcel, and building heights up to 45 feet with a maximum of 3 floors above grade. Allows a limited range of neighborhood commercial.



**Medium-Scale  
Neighborhood**

Allows a broad range of single, middle, and multifamily housing types, with a maximum building height of 75 feet. Allows a slightly increased range of neighborhood commercial uses compared to the low scale neighborhood.



 Urban Mixed Use

Urban mixed-use areas combine housing, commercial spaces, community oriented spaces, office, employment, and culture into compact, walkable districts. These areas concentrate activity in centers and corridors, supporting vibrant daily life and efficient use of land and infrastructure.

**Mixed-Use  
Neighborhood**

Allows a broad range of housing, commercial, and civic/institutional use types, with a maximum building height of 110 feet.



**Regional  
Activity Center**

Allows for a range of commercial, employment, civic and entertainment uses and amenities; facilitates dense housing and mixed-use buildings and has no maximum building heights. Intended to provide activated public spaces that draw people from around the community.







## Employment and Industry

Employment and industry areas conserve land for jobs that drive the regional economy and provide pathways to family-wage employment. They encompass campuses, industrial districts, and specialized sites where production, logistics, research, and office activity are clustered.

### Institutional / Campus

Includes lands that support academic, civic and medical buildings; a broad range of commercial uses; dense housing types, large campus employment and phased master-planned developments.



### Industrial / Employment

Includes lands with large-scale, single-tenant industrial, warehouse and flex space buildings, and smaller, multi-tenant industrial buildings. No maximum building heights and no new residential uses allowed.



### Heavy Industrial

Includes lands that are currently zoned for heavy industrial uses, such as manufacturing and production. No new housing allowed.



## Green Space

Green spaces serve ecological, recreational, and cultural functions for the community. These areas provide access to nature and recreation while protecting natural environments systems that sustain the community over time.

### Parks

Lands currently zoned as public community and neighborhood parks. They provide neighborhoods with accessible, inclusive spaces that foster health, community identity, and cultural life.



### Natural Areas

Includes lands currently zoned for greenways and natural areas. They strengthen biodiversity and natural systems, while connecting people to nature while protecting resources for future generations.



## Goal: LU-1

# Connected and Accessible Neighborhoods

**Vancouver neighborhoods are places where community members can walk, bike or roll to a diverse mix of community and open spaces, services, retail, fresh food, healthcare, and educational opportunities and amenities within 15 minutes or less.**

Connected and accessible neighborhoods are an overarching goal of the 2025–2045 Comprehensive Plan and associated growth concept. This concept envisions every neighborhood as a place where residents can walk, bike or roll within 15 minutes—or roughly a quarter mile—to reach daily needs, such as grocery stores, schools, childcare, health care, parks, community spaces, and local businesses. The benefits of this type of development pattern are numerous, including decreasing the time people spend in transit and the costs and climate impacts of transportation, reducing disparities in access to essential services, facilitating more efficient use of land, and providing options for healthier lifestyles and more opportunities for neighbors to gather and engage with each other. Currently, Vancouver has gaps in this accessibility: only 47,000 residents live within a quarter mile of frequent transit, and most transportation routes lack safe and comfortable walking and rolling facilities. Access to parks, healthy food options and childcare centers are unevenly distributed; neighborhoods, such as Fruit Valley, Rose Village, and parts of Fourth Plain Village, have less than 20 percent of the park acreage needed to meet City standards and higher proportions of households with limited access to grocery stores.

Addressing these limitations is essential for equity, climate resilience and public health, as well as creating urban spaces that foster a sense of community and inclusion. The different types of centers and corridors included in the growth framework (Figure 6) and guided by the new land use map (Figure 9) and zoning code are intended to facilitate an evolution to more self-sustaining connected and accessible neighborhoods. In the past, a significant amount of the city's growth occurred in areas with low food and park access and substandard transportation facilities—future development that efficiently uses land, increases mixing of uses and invests in infrastructure improvements helps to close these gaps.



**Figure 10. Connected and Accessible Neighborhoods Analysis**

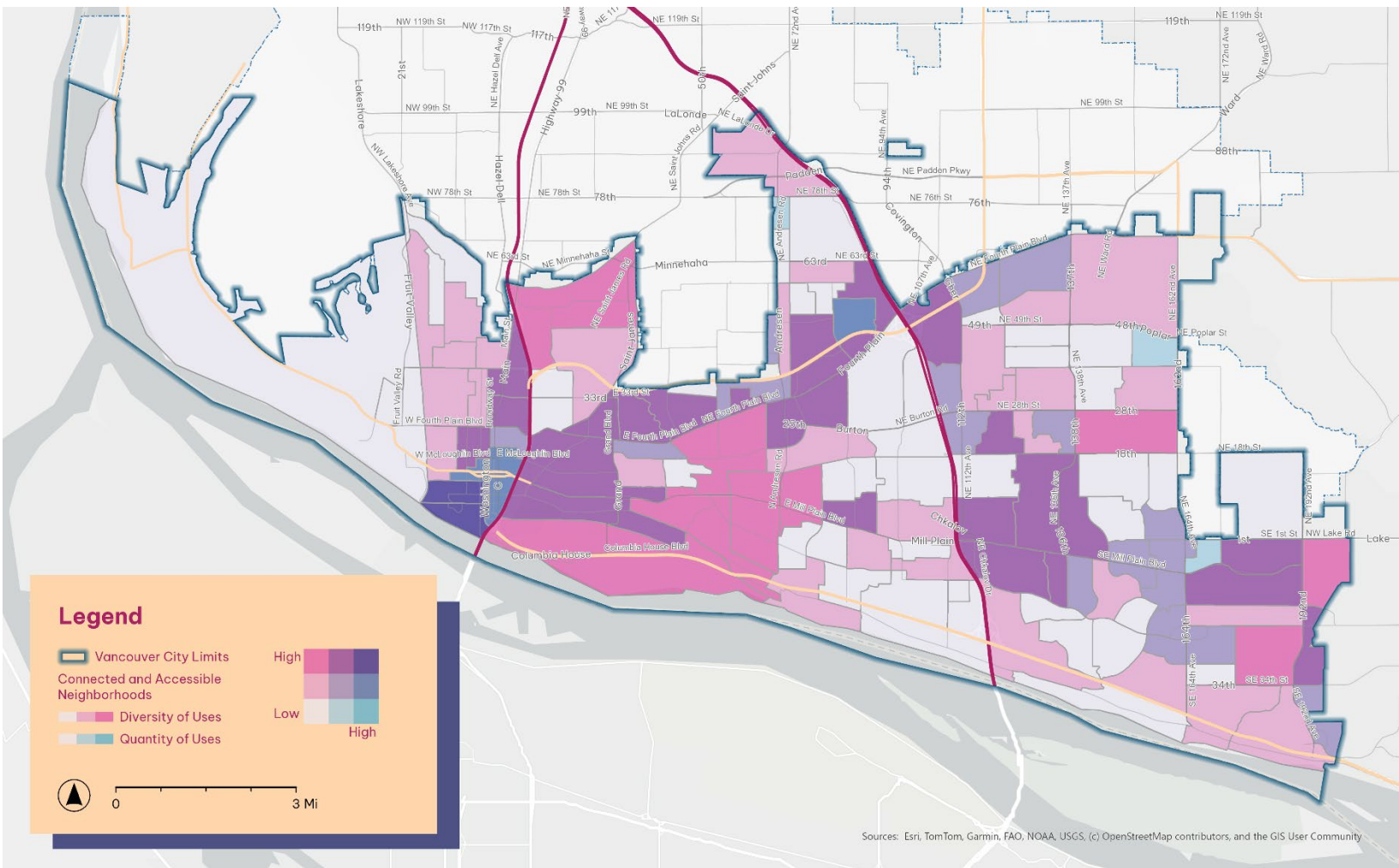


Figure 10 compares the quantity (density of uses) with the diversity of uses (number of unique business types) within a census block group. Areas with low scores (gray color) must travel farther distances to access both essential and supportive services.

The figure above is an index for connected and accessible neighborhoods that illustrate the uneven distribution of the number and diversity of services around the city. Areas with high scores (in purple) are near downtown and in established corridors—combine proximity to essential uses like grocery stores, urgent care, schools, parks, childcare, and transit with a diversity of supportive uses like cafes, community centers, and retail. Unequal access to services reinforces patterns of inequity, as these same communities often have lower incomes, higher housing cost burdens, and disproportionate climate risks, such as extreme heat and poor air quality.

Together with the growth concept, new land use map and updated zoning code, the policies in this chapter will help ensure that future growth and investment builds more neighborhoods that are equitable, multimodal and resilient. They focus on strengthening neighborhood business districts into vibrant hubs, encouraging infill and mixed-use development, and designing buildings and streetscapes at a human scale that invite walking, biking and rolling. By linking resources and housing to existing and future transit and expanding access to essential services like food, healthcare and

childcare, the City can begin to reverse inequities in the built environment and past patterns of disconnected growth, making it possible for all residents to live in neighborhoods where daily needs are close at hand and safely reachable without a car.

| Supporting Policy                       | Description                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | No.       | Related Goals     |
|-----------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|-------------------|
| <b>Access to Services and Amenities</b> | Expand access to essential services and amenities, particularly in underserved areas, through regulation and public investment.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | <b>4</b>  | PFS-1, EI-1, LU-1 |
| <b>Campuses</b>                         | Support the growth and evolution of major institutional campuses as integrated community anchors that expand access to education, healthcare and employment while maintaining strong physical, functional and social connections to surrounding neighborhoods.                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | <b>25</b> | LU-1              |
| <b>City-led Redevelopment</b>           | Invest in current and future City-led redevelopment efforts through property acquisition, community engagement, master planning, parks and infrastructure funding, and investment in affordable housing. Priority areas for City-led redevelopment include existing projects at Waterfront Gateway, the Heights, and Fourth Plain Ops Center; future projects at Library Square; and historically compatible investments at City-owned properties inside the Historic Reserve. | <b>27</b> | LU-1, EO-4        |
| <b>City-supported Redevelopment</b>     | Participate in future public-private partnerships to promote redevelopment on privately owned land in key areas around the city—including Downtown, Uptown Village, West Downtown, Van Mall, Columbia Business Center, Evergreen and Grand, Mill Plain Corridor, 136th near Firstenberg, and Clark College, as well as other strategic locations around the city.                                                                                                              | <b>28</b> | LU-1, EO-4        |
| <b>Community Food Enterprises</b>       | Explore opportunities for community-owned and cooperative grocery store models to strengthen neighborhood food access where the private market fails to meet demand.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | <b>31</b> | PR-3, LU-1        |

| Supporting Policy                             | Description                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | No. | Related Goals    |
|-----------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|------------------|
| <b>Employment Centers</b>                     | Direct new employment growth into Employment Centers with close proximity to housing, commercial activities, public services, employment, and amenities.                                                                                      | 47  | LU-1, EO-2       |
| <b>Equitable Transit Oriented Development</b> | Tailor regulations, incentives and investments to facilitate development near current and future transit stations and make this development accessible to transit-reliant and historically excluded and underserved communities.              | 52  | LU-1, LU-2, TM-2 |
| <b>Income-restricted Housing</b>              | Facilitate development of income-restricted housing, particularly in areas near transit and services.                                                                                                                                         | 71  | H-2, EI-1, LU-1  |
| <b>Increase Access to Community Spaces</b>    | Facilitate and provide access to community spaces, with a focus on populations vulnerable to social isolation.                                                                                                                                | 75  | CE-1, EI-2, LU-1 |
| <b>Increase Food Access</b>                   | Incentivize and remove regulatory barriers to locating grocery stores and neighborhood markets near housing and in underserved neighborhoods.                                                                                                 | 78  | PR-3, LU-1       |
| <b>Local Centers</b>                          | Focus growth and investment in Local Centers to create compact, mixed-use districts along key corridors and intersections that provide daily goods, services, and jobs, in a manner that complements uses in Regional Centers and Urban Core. | 84  | LU-1             |
| <b>Neighborhood Centers</b>                   | Develop Neighborhood Centers as accessible, neighborhood-serving districts that bring daily goods, services, and gathering spaces closer to where people live, supported by a mix of low- to medium-scale housing.                            | 95  | LU-1             |
| <b>Pedestrian-oriented Design</b>             | Ensure ground floor building facades, public spaces and streets are designed at a human scale and provide comfort, accessibility and visual interest for pedestrians.                                                                         | 99  | LU-1, TM-1       |

| Supporting Policy                           | Description                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | No.        | Related Goals                  |
|---------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|--------------------------------|
| <b>Preserve Existing Affordable Housing</b> | Preserve the existing stock of affordable housing and discourage conversion of income-based housing to more expensive market rate housing when affordability restrictions end.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | <b>105</b> | H-3, H-4, LU-1                 |
| <b>Regional Centers</b>                     | Develop Regional Centers as compact, high-intensity mixed-use hubs that provide a balance of housing, jobs and services that complement the Urban Core, that are connected through the high-capacity transit network.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | <b>120</b> | LU-1                           |
| <b>Resources Near Transit</b>               | Locate community resources near current and future transit routes to ensure access for those most reliant on public transit.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | <b>126</b> | LU-1, TM-2                     |
| <b>Subarea Plans</b>                        | Develop subarea plans for centers identified in the Growth Concept and areas called out in the Equitable Development Strategy to facilitate the development of integrated residential, commercial, employment, and community uses, including in the following areas: Central Mill Plain (the Heights to PeaceHealth), 136th/137th Corridor, Vancouver Mall, St. Johns/St. James couplet, Fourth Plain Corridor, Downtown, Upper Main Street and Walnut Grove, 164th Corridor, and 192nd Corridor. | <b>142</b> | LU-1, EO-4                     |
| <b>Underdeveloped Lots and Brownfields</b>  | Prioritize, facilitate and incentivize development on infill and underutilized lots and clean up brownfield sites.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | <b>157</b> | LU- 3, LU-4, LU-1, PFS-1, CL-4 |
| <b>Urban Core</b>                           | Focus the city's highest intensity of future growth in the Urban Core to reinforce it as the region's primary destination for services, amenities, nightlife, and employment.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | <b>158</b> | LU-1                           |



## **Goal: LU-2**

# **Preserve and Invest in Employment Land**

**Vancouver preserves and invests in employment land to sustain a strong economic base, provide access to middle- and high-wage jobs, and support community stability and long-term opportunity.**

Preserving and investing in employment land is critical to Vancouver's long-term economic health, community stability, and ability to provide access to quality jobs. Industrial areas and designated Employment Centers support businesses that generate middle- and high-wage employment, contribute to the city's tax base, and provide opportunities across a range of industries and skill levels. Maintaining sufficient and well-located employment land ensures that Vancouver can continue to accommodate job growth while supporting a balanced and resilient urban structure.

As the city grows, employment land faces increasing pressure from competing development demands. Without clear policies to preserve these areas, industrial and job-producing lands can be incrementally lost to incompatible or higher-value uses, reducing the city's long-term capacity to support employment. Protecting employment land safeguards space for businesses that require specialized infrastructure, freight access, or larger sites and helps ensure these uses can remain and reinvest in Vancouver over time.

| Supporting Policy                                           | Description                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | No. | Related Goals    |
|-------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|------------------|
| <b>Adaptive Reuse</b>                                       | Support efforts to retrofit or repurpose underutilized buildings, structures and infrastructure for the development of new housing and commercial spaces.                                                                        | 9   | LU-2, CL-3       |
| <b>Build a Resilient Economy</b>                            | Encourage business growth, retention and expansion, with an emphasis on family-wage jobs and foster resilience within Vancouver's economy.                                                                                       | 24  | LU-2 CL-1, EO-3  |
| <b>Conserve Lands Providing Employment</b>                  | Conserve and invest in industrial lands and other areas that provide employment opportunities and family-wage jobs.                                                                                                              | 36  | LU-2, EO-2       |
| <b>Crime Prevention through Environmental Design</b>        | Foster a safe community by encouraging street level activity and thoughtful building and infrastructure design that enhance public safety and community well-being.                                                              | 40  | CE-3, LU-2       |
| <b>Enhance Port Access and Multimodal Freight Solutions</b> | Improve infrastructure and connectivity to and from the Port of Vancouver to streamline freight operations.                                                                                                                      | 50  | LU-2, TM-3, EO-2 |
| <b>Equitable Transit-oriented Development</b>               | Tailor regulations, incentives and investments to facilitate development near current and future transit stations and make this development accessible to transit-reliant and historically excluded and underserved communities. | 52  | LU-1, LU-2, TM-2 |
| <b>Optimize Freight Corridors</b>                           | Designate and enhance freight corridors to facilitate efficient movement of goods and reduce congestion.                                                                                                                         | 98  | LU-2, TM-3, EO-2 |

## **Goal: LU-3**

# **Reduced Carbon in the Built Environment**

**Vancouver has successfully decreased local carbon emissions associated with Vancouver's built environment through investments in energy-efficient buildings, compact urban design, access to frequent transit, and infrastructure that supports active modes of travel.**

The built environment is one of the most significant contributors to community-wide greenhouse gas emissions, accounting for both the direct energy used to heat, cool, and power buildings and the indirect emissions from how land use patterns shape transportation choices. On-road transportation (37%) and buildings and energy use (37%) together account for nearly three-quarters of community-wide emissions in 2023. While total community emissions have fallen 27% since 2007, primarily due to a cleaner electricity grid and temporary shifts in travel behavior during the pandemic, natural gas use in buildings has risen and transportation remains the largest single source of local emissions. This underscores the central role that land use plays in determining Vancouver's climate future. Dispersed, auto-dependent growth patterns lock in high vehicle miles traveled, energy-intensive buildings, higher infrastructure demands, and increased heat island effects. Conversely, compact development supported by frequent transit, safe walking and rolling networks, and energy-efficient buildings provides one of the most effective strategies to reduce emissions while creating healthier and more livable neighborhoods. Vancouver's new growth concept and land use map respond to these dynamics by aligning growth management with the City's Climate Action Framework, ensuring that how and where the community grows actively advances larger climate goals.

Reducing emissions in the built environment requires both retrofitting existing systems and reimagining new development. Energy-efficient building design, adaptive reuse of older structures, and the use of low-carbon and locally sourced materials help limit emissions from construction and operations. At the same time, policies supporting low-carbon fuels and electric vehicle adoption transition the city's transportation system toward cleaner options. Just as importantly, expanding safe, connected networks for walking, biking, rolling, and transit provides residents with practical,

low-carbon alternatives to driving, reducing vehicle miles traveled while improving health and mobility. The Climate Vulnerability Assessment underscores that the same neighborhoods most burdened by heat and air quality impacts are often those with the fewest mobility options, making it critical that these strategies prioritize equity.

The policies under this goal work together to create a comprehensive pathway for reducing carbon emissions tied to land use. Investments in building energy efficiency, adaptive reuse, and low-carbon construction materials lower emissions from the building sector. Support for alternative fuels and electric vehicles, paired with active transportation and multimodal connectivity, reduces transportation emissions. Compact development and connected streets reduce infrastructure demands and enable sustainable travel. Collectively, these approaches position Vancouver to reduce its carbon footprint while creating healthier, more livable neighborhoods. This shift will help the City meet its climate targets, protect public health, and ensure that future growth supports both environmental sustainability and community well-being.

| Supporting Policy                                             | Description                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | No. | Related Goals                 |
|---------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|-------------------------------|
| <b>Acquire Land for Public Parks</b>                          | Acquire and reserve land for the development of parks for public use and recreation in areas experiencing growth, prioritizing underserved neighborhoods and areas currently not meeting parks service standards.                                                                                   | 7   | LU-3, PR-2                    |
| <b>Climate Resilient Spaces</b>                               | Incorporate elements of climate resiliency into new public spaces, buildings, and infrastructure.                                                                                                                                                                                                   | 29  | CL-1, CE-1, PR-1, PFS-3, LU-3 |
| <b>Strategic Reuse of Excess Right-of-Way</b>                 | Analyze suitability of excess and unneeded ROW for adding tree canopy, native planting, nature spaces, and stormwater management systems.                                                                                                                                                           | 137 | CL-1, CL-2, LU-3, CL-4, PR-2  |
| <b>Street Connectivity</b>                                    | Adopt connectivity standards to improve pedestrian and small mobility safety and accessibility. Apply standards to development, capital, and planning projects including maximum block length, unconnected streets, cul-de-sac connections, linkages between land uses, and multiple access points. | 139 | TM-1, TM-2, TM-4, LU-3        |
| <b>Support Local Business Transition to the Green Economy</b> | Support local businesses in adapting to the localized impacts of climate change, and reduce their overall carbon impact.                                                                                                                                                                            | 146 | EO-3, LU-3                    |



## **Goal: LU-4**

## **Efficient Use of Land**

**Development in Vancouver uses finite land and material resources practically and efficiently, and occurs primarily in previously developed areas with existing infrastructure, minimizing environmental impact, contributing to a compact urban form, and improving efficiency of service provisions.**

Vancouver's land supply is finite, and how it is used will shape the city's livability, affordability and sustainability for decades to come. Efficient land use means concentrating growth in areas already served by infrastructure and utilities, reducing the need for costly system expansions while minimizing environmental impacts. By focusing on infill, redevelopment, and compact urban form, the City can support affordable housing, expand access to economic opportunities, reduce GHG emissions, and protect open space and sensitive lands outside of the Vancouver Urban Growth Area (VUGA). Directing growth in and up is critical to meeting the City's climate, equity and housing priorities.

Maximizing density in appropriate areas makes development more feasible by leveraging existing infrastructure and spreading the cost of new or upgraded infrastructure across more housing units and commercial and industrial space. Compact form also enhances transit viability by concentrating demand along corridors and around stations, creating the ridership base needed for frequent, reliable service. Site design and parking management are equally important: shared parking, on-street parking strategies, and right-sized parking requirements reduce the need to dedicate large swaths of land to vehicle storage. This lowers development costs, reduces heat islands, and also opens up space for creative land uses—plazas, pocket parks, and cultural spaces—that enhance the uniqueness and character of Vancouver's neighborhoods.

The policies in this plan mobilize these ideas by encouraging integrated employment hubs close to housing and services, facilitating infill and redevelopment, and advancing strategies for shared and managed parking. Regional coordination ensures that growth is managed consistently across Clark County, with annexation and land supply decisions supporting efficient service delivery. The plan also calls for regular reassessment to ensure land use aligns with the City's ability to provide necessary facilities and services. Taken together, these approaches recognize that efficiency is not

about uniformity but about making the most of Vancouver’s limited land base to foster innovation, identity, and sustainability in every neighborhood.

| Supporting Policy                                             | Description                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | No. | Related Goals          |
|---------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|------------------------|
| <b>Airfield Compatibility and Airspace Protection</b>         | Ensure land uses, development patterns and building heights in areas surrounding Pearson Airfield and Portland International Airport flight paths are compatible with aviation operations and do not interfere with active airspace.                                                                                                                        | 13  | LU-4                   |
| <b>Maximize the Utilization of Existing on Street Parking</b> | Implement strategic pricing mechanisms to regulate the availability of on-street parking in Mixed-Use Neighborhood and Regional Activity Centers.                                                                                                                                                                                                           | 88  | TM-2, LU-4             |
| <b>Mixed Income Housing</b>                                   | Develop incentives to integrate below market housing as part of new market rate housing projects.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | 90  | H-5, H-6, LU-4         |
| <b>Periodically Reassess Land Use</b>                         | Assure consistency of overall land use and capital facilities plans by reevaluating Vancouver’s land use plan and code to ensure regulations are facilitating intended outcomes and the City is able to provide necessary public facilities and services to implement the plan.                                                                             | 100 | PFS-1, LU-4            |
| <b>Program Underutilized Spaces</b>                           | Encourage the thoughtful reuse and activation of underutilized lands—such as space beneath freeway viaducts, oddly shaped parcels, utility corridors, temporarily vacant lots, and other non-developable remnants typically under 1 acre—by establishing public-private partnerships to program them to serve community, cultural, and environmental needs. | 106 | CE-1, CE-4, LU-4, PR-2 |

| Supporting Policy                                           | Description                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | No.        | Related Goals                  |
|-------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|--------------------------------|
| <b>Proportional Fees</b>                                    | Establish proportional impact fees and system development charges based on size of unit for residential uses while ensuring cost recovery.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | <b>107</b> | PFS-1, LU-4                    |
| <b>Regional Planning</b>                                    | Coordinate closely with Clark County, other cities, and other government entities, such as C-TRAN, the Regional Transportation Council (RTC), and school districts, to sustainably manage UGAs, efficiently deliver urban services, expand regional transit and multimodal connectivity, and coordinate on shared goals and responsibilities, in accordance with adopted countywide planning policies. | <b>122</b> | LU-4, CL-3, TM-2, TM-1         |
| <b>Shared Parking and Redevelopment of Existing Parking</b> | Encourage shared parking strategies to improve land efficiency and reduce redundant parking supply. Incentivize the redevelopment of large, underutilized surface parking areas into more productive uses that support redevelopment and other community-serving needs.                                                                                                                                | <b>133</b> | LU-4, CE-1                     |
| <b>Streamline the Development Process</b>                   | Simplify the development review process where feasible and as needed to reduce permitting timelines and improve housing costs.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | <b>138</b> | H-1, LU-4                      |
| <b>Transitions Between Zones</b>                            | Develop regulations that provide transitions between zoning districts to ensure compatibility of adjacent land uses.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | <b>155</b> | LU-4                           |
| <b>Underdeveloped Lots and Brownfields</b>                  | Prioritize, facilitate and incentivize development on infill and underutilized lots and clean up brownfield sites.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | <b>157</b> | LU- 3, LU-4, LU-1, PFS-1, CL-4 |

## **Chapter 3 – Key Implementing Actions**

- ✓ Advance redevelopment priorities in Waterfront Gateway, the Heights, the Fourth Plain Operations Center, and Library Square.
- ✓ Assess City-owned properties for opportunities to advance housing, small business, and placemaking goals.
- ✓ Update the Shoreline Master Program to reference the new development code and VMC Title 20.
- ✓ Develop a Middle Housing Production Strategy that advances non-regulatory strategies and incentives to support middle housing infill.
- ✓ Develop subarea plans for St. Johns/St. James, Vancouver Mall, and the 136th/137th Corridor.
- ✓ Develop a place-based action plan for the Walnut Grove neighborhood.
- ✓ Develop a responsive and efficient process for the 2027 Annual Review Program and future needed code changes.
- ✓ Review, update, and standardize the Development Agreement structure, process, and fees.
- ✓ Coordinate implementation of the citywide Equitable Development Strategy.
- ✓ Update VMC Titles 16 and 17 to require commercial-ready fire suppression and separation for ground-floor residential uses in the Ground Floor Active Use Ready overlay.
- ✓ Update VMC Titles 12 and 22 to align with the Comprehensive Plan.



# Housing



4



**OUR VANCOUVER**



# Introduction

Adequate, safe, and affordable housing for all residents is essential to the health of a community. This chapter describes Vancouver’s existing housing conditions and the direction the City will take to meet community housing needs from 2025 to 2045. Chapter includes goals and policies to address long-standing housing underproduction and to better accommodate the diverse housing needs of the whole community across the income spectrum. Like other communities across the state, Vancouver is facing serious housing challenges, including an existing deficit of housing to meet the needs of current residents, rising homelessness, limited attainability and affordability, and prices that continue to push homeownership out of reach for many families. Addressing these challenges will require improved access to a broad range of housing types, the development of innovative housing products, and greater allowances for emergency, transitional and permanently supportive housing, all while supporting equitable outcomes and minimizing displacement. This plan aims to close the gap in housing needs by addressing Vancouver’s unique community and market conditions,



## Vision: Housing

Vancouver is a community where people have many choices about where they will live, all within thriving, active and affordable neighborhoods that they are proud to live in. We envision a future where housing is affordable and accessible to everyone and reflects the diversity of housing needs in the community. We commit to increasing opportunities for homeownership and wealth creation and prioritizing the needs of historically excluded communities. Our strategy aims to maximize the number and range of housing options available, embrace non-traditional design, construction and ownership methods, add middle, culturally specific and multigenerational housing, and increase housing options near essential services like education, healthcare, grocery stores, childcare, and recreation opportunities.

and builds on the City of Vancouver's existing Housing Action Plan (see Appendix A, Housing Action Plan).

In order to develop housing goals and policies, we first need to understand the housing market in 2025. The Housing Needs Assessment (Appendix D), summarized below, identifies the range of housing needs by analyzing the best available data describing Vancouver's housing stock, workforce, household demographics, housing market dynamics, and expected housing demand. The analysis answers questions about the current availability of different types of housing, who lives and works in the Vancouver area, and what range of housing is needed to meet current and future housing needs. Vancouver, like other communities in the region, has changed over the years and housing needs have not been successfully met. The affordability of housing has changed, and access to housing has never been equal, especially for families with lower incomes and communities of color. The Housing Needs Assessment was prepared in 2023 using the best available data at that time (primarily 2022 data). Where possible, demographic data and statistics in this chapter were updated to 2023 or 2024, to include the most recent available data in an effort to highlight consistent trends. The year associated with various data points is noted throughout the chapter.

## Community Feedback

- Center equity and historically excluded communities in housing policy.
- Provide a diverse mix of housing types that meet different needs, incomes, cultures, and sages of life of community members.
- Increase housing supply and densify strategically to mitigate impacts.
- Make housing and homeownership affordable and attainable.
- Prevent and address houselessness by increasing housing and supportive services.
- Support aging in place and housing for people with disabilities.
- Locate housing near essential services, transportation options, employment and educational opportunities, and green space.
- Prevent displacement and protect vulnerable residents, including seniors, renters, and households with low income.

## Community Demographic and Household Trends

**Population Growth.** Vancouver and the region have grown substantially over the last two decades and are projected to continue to grow over the 20-year planning period (2025–2045). From 2000 to 2023, Vancouver's population, including annexation areas, grew by just over 56,000 residents, or 39 percent, which is slightly higher than Washington State (35 percent) but lower than Clark County

as a whole (53 percent)<sup>6</sup>. The pandemic may have shifted or accelerated migration patterns and housing preferences permanently, and Portland outmigration has contributed to Clark County's rapid growth.

**Demographics.** Vancouver's population is getting older. The share of Vancouver residents aged 65 years and older increased from 13 percent in 2011 to 16 percent in 2023, a higher share than in Clark County overall. The share of residents under 20 years remained about the same, at 24 percent of the population<sup>7</sup>.

Vancouver became more racially and ethnically diverse over the last decade. From 2011 to 2023, the Hispanic/Latino population increased by 8 percent (from 9 to 17 percent), while the Asian and Black populations remained about the same (5 and 3 percent, respectively)<sup>8</sup>.

**Income.** Vancouver households tend to have lower incomes compared to Clark County. In 2023, the city's median household income was around \$80,000 per year, roughly \$17,000 less than the countywide median of \$97,000. In addition, a larger share of Vancouver households earn less than \$75,000 and a smaller share earn more than \$100,000 annually than the county overall.<sup>9</sup> As of 2023, the AMI determined by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development for the Portland-Vancouver-Hillsboro Metropolitan Statistical Area was \$114,400 for a family of four.

**Household Size.** Vancouver's average household size decreased slightly from 2.4 persons in 2011 to 2.3 in 2023 and the overall share of households with children declined. The share of one- and two-person households increased, while three- and four-person households decreased.<sup>10</sup> In addition, the percent of households with children in Vancouver dropped by 7 percent between 2011 and 2021.<sup>11</sup>

### Key Demographics and Trends

- **39%** population growth from 2000 to 2023
- **8%** Hispanic/Latino population increase from 2011 to 2023
- **16%** residents age 65+ (2023)
- **\$80k** median household income (2023)
- **7%** decrease in households with children between 2011 and 2021
- **1 in 3** Vancouver residents work in Vancouver (2022)

<sup>6</sup> Washington State Office of Financial Management analysis of U.S. Census data, 2021: <https://ofm.wa.gov/washington-data-research/population-demographics/population-estimates/population-density>

<sup>7</sup> ACS 1-Year Data Tables, Table S0101, 2023

<sup>8</sup> ACS 1-Year Data Tables, Table B03002, 2011, 2023

<sup>9</sup> ACS 1-Year Data Tables, Table S1901, 2023

<sup>10</sup> ACS 1-Year Data Tables, Table S2501, 2011, 2023

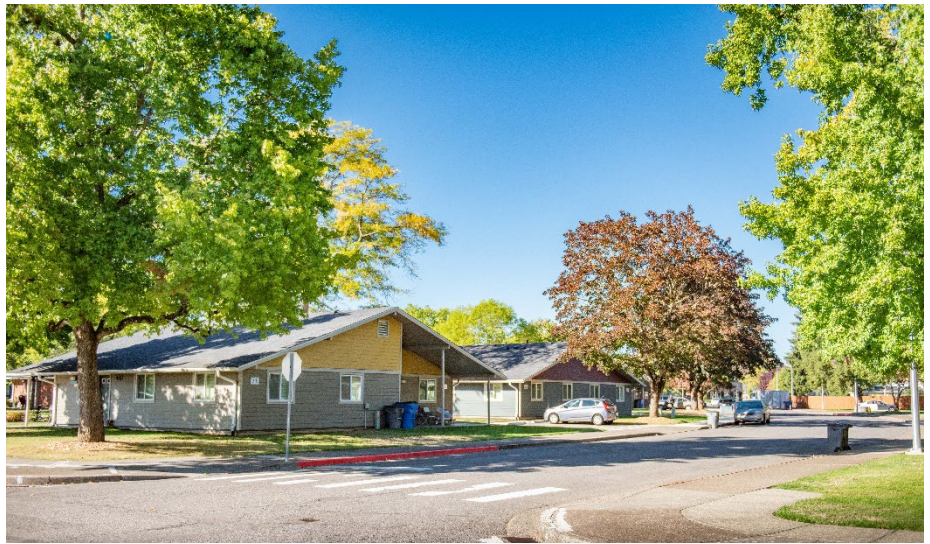
<sup>11</sup> ACS 1-Year Data Tables, Table S1101, 2011, 2021



**Employment Location.** About a third of people (30,655) employed in Vancouver live in Vancouver, which is higher than all nearby jurisdictions, except Portland (2022). The second most common workplace destination for Vancouver residents is Portland (2022).<sup>12</sup> As of 2021, the City of Vancouver had a higher jobs-to-housing ratio than the County's goal of 1:1, with 1.18 jobs for every household compared to 0.82 jobs for every household in Clark County<sup>13</sup> (see Appendix E, Economic Conditions and Opportunities Analysis). This trend is reflective of Vancouver's role as an employment hub but could also indicate a shortage of housing options available for people who work in Vancouver.

### **Existing Housing Conditions, Types, Tenure, Affordability, and Market Trends**

The cost of housing in Vancouver rapidly increased over the last decade. Median home sale prices nearly tripled and average rents increased over 90 percent, from \$879 to \$1,683, between 2012 and 2023<sup>14</sup>. During the same period, average income increased 76 percent when adjusted for inflation<sup>15</sup>. The widening gap between housing costs and incomes indicates declining attainability and affordability in



Vancouver's ownership and rental market. Rents in Vancouver have now surpassed those in Portland<sup>16</sup>.

Approximately half of Vancouver households rent their homes and half own their homes, which is a similar homeownership rate as other nearby cities, but lower than Clark County (67 percent) and the state (66 percent).<sup>17</sup>

Renters are three times more likely to be cost burdened (when a household spends 30 percent or more of its monthly income towards housing costs) compared to homeowners. In 2023, 53 percent of renters were cost burdened and 26 percent were severely cost burdened (households paying

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<sup>12</sup> Office of Financial Management, LODES, 2010-2022

<sup>13</sup> Office of Financial Management, LODES, 2011-2021

<sup>14</sup> Redfin, 2023. Data not adjusted for inflation

<sup>15</sup> ACS 1-Year Data Tables, Table S1901, 2012, 2023

<sup>16</sup> CoStar

<sup>17</sup> ACS 1-Year Data Tables, Table B25003, 2023



50 percent or more of monthly income towards housing costs).<sup>18</sup> This highlights the need for more affordable rental units and increased homeownership opportunities, particularly for households with low and moderate incomes.

In 2023, Vancouver’s dominant type of housing was single-family detached, which comprises nearly half (48 percent) of the total number of housing units in the city. This is a slightly lower share of single-family detached than Clark County overall (65 percent). Vancouver’s other housing stock as of 2021 consists of multifamily housing (buildings of five or more units), accounting for 35 percent of total units citywide and attached housing “plexes” (two to four units) accounting for 16 percent of citywide housing.<sup>19</sup> Vancouver’s existing housing supply reflects market conditions and policy choices over the years. The 2011 Comprehensive Plan zoned approximately 46 percent of citywide land for low-density single-family residential housing with new small, attached types permitted only through additional review. The remaining 54 percent of citywide land accommodated all multifamily, commercial, office and industrial uses combined. Vancouver has a higher share of existing multi-unit housing than Clark County overall, with significant development occurring in recent years. Of the land use applications proposing multifamily or plex housing received between 2019 and 2025, 89 percent were for new multifamily housing developments that had more than five units. This points to future opportunities to diversify the housing mix, especially expanding middle housing options like duplexes, triplexes, and townhomes.

Racial disparities exist in Vancouver’s housing access. White households have significantly higher rates of homeownership than Hispanic and/or Black households and are less cost burdened by housing ownership or rental expenses.<sup>20</sup> See the Equity Lens section of this chapter for more information about racially disparate impacts.

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<sup>18</sup> ACS 1-Year Data Tables, Table B25091, 2023

<sup>19</sup> The U.S. Census provides generalized survey-based information describing the main categories of housing units, including single-family detached, “plex housing” (which includes townhomes and row homes, and buildings up to four units), and multifamily (five or more units). ACS 1-Year Data Tables, Table B25024, 2023.

<sup>20</sup> SEVA, ACS 5-Year Estimates, 2017–2021



Vancouver provides most of the existing affordable housing in Clark County, with 1,447 rent-restricted affordable units sponsored by the City's Affordable Housing Fund that are either existing or currently in progress for development as of 2025. Of these units, 32 percent are set aside for seniors and 9 percent of the units are set aside specifically for populations with special needs or mental health issues. All housing units sponsored by the Affordable Housing Fund must serve households below 50 percent AMI.

### Housing Needs

Continued strong population growth is anticipated through the planning period. Clark County adopted a total population forecast of 718,154 persons countywide in 2045, which requires 103,696 new housing units. Vancouver's population is estimated to increase to 281,000 by 2045. The City of Vancouver's allocated housing share to accommodate is **36,527 new housing units**. In order to



accommodate new population growth and address the existing housing deficit and associated affordability crisis, the City of Vancouver is planning for **38,129 new housing units by 2045**. This means an estimated 1,733 housing units need to be built on average per year from 2023 to 2045 to meet the City's projected housing need.

Under state law, new housing is required to be affordable at different income levels. The 2045 housing unit targets shown in Table 3 include units for Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH)<sup>21</sup> and extremely low (<30% AMI), low (30–80% AMI), moderate (80–100% AMI), middle (100–120% AMI), and high (>120% AMI) incomes. Additionally, the City needs to plan for an additional 1,405 emergency shelter beds<sup>22</sup>.

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<sup>21</sup> Permanent Supportive Housing is “subsidized, leased housing with no limit on length of stay that prioritizes people who need comprehensive support services to retain tenancy and utilizes admissions practices designed to use lower barriers to entry than would be typical for other subsidized or unsubsidized rental housing, especially related to rental history, criminal history, and personal behaviors” Washington RCW 36.70A.030(31).

<sup>22</sup> Emergency Units are “temporary indoor accommodations for individuals or families who are homeless or at imminent risk of becoming homeless that is intended to address the basic health, food, clothing, and personal hygiene needs of individuals or families. Emergency housing may or may not require occupants to enter into a lease or an occupancy agreement.” – Washington RCW 36.70A.030(14).

**Table 3. City of Vancouver Future Housing Need by Income Category<sup>23</sup>**

| <b>Income Category</b>          | <b>Units Needed</b> |
|---------------------------------|---------------------|
| 0 to ≤30% AMI (PSH)             | 2,600               |
| 0 to ≤30 AMI<br>(nonsubsidized) | 4,423               |
| >30 to ≤50%                     | 5,890               |
| >50 to ≤80%                     | 5,788               |
| >80 to ≤100%                    | 3,351               |
| >100 to ≤120%                   | 3,175               |
| >120% AMI                       | 12,902              |
| <b>Total</b>                    | <b>38,129</b>       |

The analysis indicates that about one-third of new housing units will need to be affordable to households at or below 50 percent of AMI. Historically, building new units that are affordable to households making 60 percent of median income or below require significant public subsidy to make development and long-term affordability feasible. To date, the state has allocated no new resources to support the development of additional rent restricted units affordable at this level. This is further addressed in Appendix P, Housing Needs and Land Capacity Analysis.

To ensure the availability of land to meet the identified housing need by income level, price data and land capacity were analyzed. Table 4 identifies the level of affordability anticipated to be achieved within each zone based on housing prices derived from an 18-month price trend. Table 3 and Table 5 summarize housing needs and capacity by income level and Comprehensive Plan and Zoning Designations. The analysis indicates a net capacity surplus of 5,983 units across the city and capacity surplus for all income levels. See the Capital Facilities Forecast section of Chapter 9: Public Facilities and Services for more details on how capital facilities will serve anticipated growth and housing needs over the next 20 years.

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<sup>23</sup> The housing units needed by income category vary from the units allocated to the City from Clark County, as the City completed their housing analysis using the Washington State Department of Commerce Housing for All Planning Tool (HAPT), prior to the City receiving Clark County housing allocations. Appendix P Housing Needs and Land Capacity Analysis includes a section “Aligning Vancouver Housing Needs with County Allocation” that demonstrates Vancouver’s capacity to meet the need by income band using either the HAPT tool or the County allocation.



**Table 4. Affordability Level and Housing Type by Zoning Designation**

| <b>Zoning Designation</b>  | <b>Typical Housing Types Allowed</b>                                                                                                                                                 | <b>Lowest Potential Income Level Served, Market Rate</b> | <b>Lowest Potential Income Level Served, with Subsidies</b> | <b>Assumed Affordability Level of Capacity Analysis</b> |
|----------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------|
| Manufactured Home Park     | Manufactured homes                                                                                                                                                                   | Low to moderate income<br>30 to 80% AMI                  | Very low to low income<br><30 to 60% AMI                    | Low income<br>0 to 80% AMI                              |
| Low-Scale Neighborhood     | Single-family residential building, townhouse/rowhouse, stacked multi-plex building, multi-cluster building, cottage court building                                                  | High income<br>100 to >120% AMI                          | Moderate income<br>80 to 120% AMI                           | Higher income<br>100 to >120% AMI                       |
| Residential Neighborhoods  | Single-family residential building, townhouse/rowhouse, stacked multi-plex building, multi-cluster building, cottage court building, multifamily building                            | Moderate income<br>>80 to 120% AMI                       | Moderate income<br>>80 to 120% AMI                          | Moderate income<br>>80 to 120% AMI                      |
| Urban Mixed-Use            | Townhouse/rowhouse, stacked multi-plex building, multi-cluster building, cottage court building, multifamily building, mid-rise residential building, mixed-use residential building | Moderate income<br>>80 to 120% AMI                       | Low to moderate income<br><50 to 80% AMI                    | Low to moderate income<br>0 to 100% AMI, PSH            |
| Urban Mixed-Use            | Multifamily building, mid-rise residential building, mixed-use residential building                                                                                                  | Moderate income<br>>80 to 120% AMI                       | Low to moderate income<br><50 to 80% AMI                    | Low to moderate income<br>0 to 100% AMI, PSH            |
| Employment Mixed Use       | Townhouse/rowhouse, stacked multi-plex building, multi-cluster building, multifamily building, mid-rise residential building, mixed-use residential building                         | Moderate income<br>>80 to 120% AMI                       | Low to moderate income<br><50 to 80% AMI                    | Low to moderate income<br>0 to 100% AMI, PSH            |
| ADUs (All Zone Categories) | Accessory dwelling units on developed residential lots                                                                                                                               | Moderate income<br>60 to 120% AMI                        | N/A                                                         | Moderate income<br>60 to 120% AMI                       |

Source: Clark County Assessor, CoStar, Redfin, EConorthwest

**Table 5. Housing Capacity by Income Level**

| <b>Income level (% AMI)</b>                                                                                                                                           | <b>Comp Plan Designations<br/>(Zoning Districts) Serving<br/>These Needs</b>                                                                                                          | <b>Aggregated<br/>Housing<br/>Need</b> | <b>Total<br/>Capacity</b> | <b>Capacity<br/>Surplus</b> |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------------|
| <b>0-80% AMI</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 0-30% AMI (PSH)</li> <li>• 0-30% AMI (Other)</li> <li>• &gt;30-50% AMI</li> <li>• &gt;50-80% AMI</li> </ul> | Residential Neighborhoods (Manufactured Home Park); Urban Mixed-Use (Mixed-Use Neighborhood); Urban Mixed-Use (Regional Activity Center); Employment Mixed Use (Institutional/Campus) | 18,701                                 | 21,012                    | 2,311                       |
| <b>&gt;80-120% AMI</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• &gt;80-100% AMI</li> <li>• &gt;100-120% AMI</li> </ul>                                                | Residential Neighborhoods (Medium-Scale Neighborhood) <sup>24</sup>                                                                                                                   | 6,526                                  | 6,647                     | 121                         |
| <b>&gt;120% AMI</b>                                                                                                                                                   | Residential Neighborhoods (Low- and Medium-Scale Neighborhood)                                                                                                                        | 12,902                                 | 16,423                    | 3,551                       |
| <b>Total</b>                                                                                                                                                          | <b>N/A</b>                                                                                                                                                                            | <b>38,129</b>                          | <b>44,112</b>             | <b>5,983</b>                |

Source: City of Vancouver, WSP, ECOnorthwest

While this analysis indicates the land use and zoning in the land use map meet the city's housing needs, additional financial subsidies are required to meet the need for housing at 0-80 percent AMI levels. This analysis was conducted to identify what level of subsidy would be required on an annual basis to build below market rate housing that is needed across the city using the two most available funding sources for affordable and middle-income housing – the Multifamily Tax Exemption (MFTE) Program and the Low Income Housing Tax Credit program. The subsidies needed per unit for these income levels was identified via the funding gap necessary to target affordability at these income levels, see details in Table 6.

<sup>24</sup> 42% of Medium Scale Neighborhood capacity assumed in 80-120% AMI and 58% of capacity in >120% AMI capacity.

**Table 6. Annual Subsidy Needed to Deliver Below Market Rate Housing**

|                                                                    | <b>0 to 50% AMI</b> | <b>50 to 80% AMI</b> |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------|----------------------|
| Total units needed by income depth                                 | 12,913              | 5,788                |
| Estimated number of units needed annually                          | 646                 | 289                  |
| Applicable funding program for respective unit depth               | Tax credits         | MFTE                 |
| Estimated number of units delivered annually by applicable program | 130                 | 195                  |
| Estimated share of potential units covered by applicable program   | 20%                 | 67%                  |
| Estimated remaining annual units not funded                        | 516                 | 94                   |
| Estimated subsidy need per unit                                    | \$400,000           | \$325,000            |
| Total subsidy needed annually                                      | \$206,260,000       | \$30,680,000         |

Emergency housing, emergency shelters, and transitional housing are allowed uses by right in all zones across the city that allow residential and lodging uses. Vancouver has a need for an additional 1,405 emergency shelter beds by 2045. Table 7 summarizes the total acres of zoned capacity where emergency housing, emergency shelters, and transitional housing are allowed.

**Table 7. Zoned Capacity by Zoning Designation Where Emergency Housing and Shelters Are Allowed Uses**

| <b>Zoning Designation</b> | <b>Acres</b> |
|---------------------------|--------------|
| Manufactured Home         | 205          |
| Low-Scale Neighborhood    | 5,830        |
| Medium-Scale Neighborhood | 6,304        |
| Mixed-Use Neighborhood    | 2,707        |
| Regional Activity Center  | 1,569        |
| Institutional/Campus      | 1,168        |

In addition to new units built for households with low income, filtering is another pathway to increase availability of affordable housing units in the market. Filtering assumes housing units are most expensive when new and as these housing units age, the price decreases over time, slowly becoming more affordable. Filtering requires a sufficient supply of housing units in the market, with new units more likely to be occupied by higher income households and older units occupied by lower income households.<sup>25</sup> Vancouver's housing supply is currently insufficient for filtering to function as a method to provide a sufficient supply of housing affordable to lower incomes. Increasing Vancouver's housing supply will support the filtering process. The goal of 1,733 units per year on average spreads out housing needs equally over the 20-year Comprehensive Plan time horizon and is intended to guide land use planning decisions and actions that accommodate the total number during this time period. However, the City's 10-year Housing Action Plan front loads needed housing production and calls for 2,500 units per year to meet current housing needs rather than wait the full 20 years of the Comprehensive Plan time horizon. The Housing Action Plan calls on the City to enact policies to

<sup>25</sup> [Filtering of Apartment Housing between 1980 and 2018](#)

increase housing production as soon as possible to meet housing needs. The land use designation changes as part of the Comprehensive Plan update also support the shorter timeline identified in the Housing Action Plan, reflecting City Council direction to “pull every lever” to meet current and anticipated housing needs as soon as possible.

The zone districts map (Chapter 3, Land Use and Development, Figure 9) simplifies citywide zoning districts to 10 new zones, 6 of which allow residential uses. Per the updated zoning districts and the City’s adopted land use map, there is capacity for an additional 44,100 housing units in Vancouver.

The land use map and new zoning districts increase capacity for new housing units citywide and allow for a greater diversity of housing types given market feasibility and redevelopment potential. In comparison to the current land use map, the new one designates more land for higher-intensity multifamily development types through the application of Medium Scale Neighborhood, Mixed-Use Neighborhood, and Regional Activity Center zoning districts. These denser zoning districts allow for a broader range of housing types with more and smaller units, and more potential for lower cost units. Zoning code standards are intended to be easier and simpler to understand, which may also reduce the costs and barriers to housing production.

New state laws require the City of Vancouver to allow for at least four dwelling units per lot on all lots in single-family zones, and up to six dwelling units per lot if within a quarter mile of a major transit stop, or if two of the units are affordable. Lands designated Low Scale Neighborhood have the potential for a greater diversity of housing types, such as duplexes, quadplexes, sixplexes, and townhomes than current low-density zoning districts.

### **Affordable and Senior Housing**

The required zoning updates will allow for greater density, a broader array of housing types and sizes, and new housing units throughout the city. However, there are challenges to building housing that serves all households, especially those with lower incomes. In general, the higher capacity for new housing units allows for greater opportunities to construct different smaller housing typologies, which in turn have the potential to be more affordable for a broader range of household income levels. However, certain households will likely not be served by the private market without additional subsidies for housing. Development of regulated

affordable housing can face a number of challenges and typically requires substantial public subsidy to make these projects financially feasible to build.

The City is committed to increasing affordable housing throughout the community and to pulling every lever available to achieve the housing goals. In addition to regulatory changes, permitting fee





reductions, and process improvements, the City leverages the following programs and sources of funding to support rent-restricted affordable housing development.

- ➔ The City's Affordable Housing Fund supports people experiencing very low income in Vancouver by providing affordable housing and services.<sup>26</sup> Established in 2016, it awarded funds of almost \$20 million between 2017 and 2023 and supported production of 701 new rent-restricted affordable housing units. This levy was renewed by voters to provide \$100 million in additional funding for affordable housing from 2024 through 2033.<sup>27</sup> Of the \$100 million allocated for 2024 through 2033, \$60 million goes towards housing production and preservation, \$20 million for rent assistance and housing services, \$10 million for temporary shelter, and \$5 million each towards homeownership and implementation. The Housing Needs Assessment includes a full list of income-restricted, project-based affordable housing sponsored by the City's Affordable Housing Fund. As of 2025, there are 1,447 rent-restricted units designated for various populations in Vancouver (including both completed and in-progress projects and those supported by the Affordable Housing Fund, as well as other public sources).
- ➔ The HOME Investment Partnerships program is a federal Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) entitlement fund that supports rental assistance, housing construction, preservation, acquisition, and homeowner/homebuyer assistance for households making 60 percent AMI or below (rental assistance/units) or 80 percent AMI or below (homeownership assistance/units).
- ➔ The Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program is a Federal HUD entitlement that supports homeowner/homebuyer assistance for households making 60 percent AMI or below (rental assistance) or 80 percent AMI or below (home ownership).
- ➔ The Multifamily Tax Exemption (MFTE) incentive is a state authorized property tax exemption for market rate and income restricted multifamily housing projects. Projects offering 20 percent of units at or below 80 percent AMI receive 12-year property tax exemption. Market rate projects pay into a Fee-in-Lieu Fund.
- ➔ The Affordable Housing Fee-in-Lieu Fund is funded by contributions from MFTE market rate projects and supports development of affordable housing and property acquisition for future development for households making 60 percent AMI or below (rental units) or 80 percent AMI or below (homeownership units).
- ➔ Impact Fee Waivers waive up to 80 percent of park and traffic impact fees for new affordable housing developments affordable to households making up to 80 percent of AMI.
- ➔ Construction Sales Tax Deferral (CSTD) defers sales and use taxes for new construction of multifamily housing on public parking lots for 10 years, for projects affordable at 80 percent AMI (rental units) and 115 percent AMI for (homeownership units).

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<sup>26</sup> <https://city-of-vancouver-wa-geo-hub-cityofvancouver.hub.arcgis.com/documents/CityOfVancouver::affordable-housing-fund-investment/explore>

<sup>27</sup> <https://www.cityofvancouver.us/economic-prosperity-and-housing/affordable-housing-fund/>

- ➔ The Affordable Housing Sales Tax and Sales Tax Credit are state enabled sales tax revenue streams that fund affordable and supportive housing.
- ➔ Dedication of \$10 million from the American Rescue Fund Act to acquire properties for future affordable housing development.
- ➔ Historically, the City has utilized Real Estate Excise Tax (REET) to acquire land for future affordable housing development.
- ➔ The City actively supports project utilization of State programs and funding for affordable housing in Vancouver and southwest Washington, including WSHFC tax credits, the Housing Trust Fund, the Connecting Housing to Infrastructure Program (CHIP) to cover water and sewer infrastructure and connection fees, and legislative appropriations.

The availability of housing for seniors (65 years or older) is important to track and assess to ensure the city has sufficient housing for the growing senior population. From 2011 to 2023, Vancouver's senior population (aged 65 years or older) increased by three percentage points, from 13 to 16 percent of the total population, likely increasing the demand for senior housing facilities and units that allow for aging in place. Addressing housing needs for those aged 65 years and above will require a range of housing opportunities. For example, while the 82-to-86-year cohort dominates the assisted living and more intensive care sector, new or near-retirees may prefer aging in place or active, age-targeted communities.<sup>28</sup> Immigration status and ethnicity play a role in the likelihood of living in multigenerational households, with older Asian and Hispanic community members more likely to live in a multigenerational household than White or Black community members.<sup>29</sup> Households with adults 65 years or older have different income profiles from the general working age population that require them to make distinctive housing choices. For instance, seniors with low income may not have the financial resources to live in a nursing home and may instead choose to downsize to smaller, more affordable units. Others with nearby relatives may choose to live in multigenerational households. The aging of the Baby Boomer generation will very likely increase the demand for smaller "downsized" housing options and housing with assistance and age-in-place amenities.

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<sup>28</sup> Source: Urban Land Institute (2018). Emerging Trends in Real Estate, United States and Canada

<sup>29</sup> Source: Herbert, Christopher and Hrabchak Molinsky (2015). Meeting the Housing Needs of an Aging Population. [https://shelterforce.org/2015/05/30/meeting\\_the\\_housing\\_needs\\_of\\_an\\_aging\\_population/](https://shelterforce.org/2015/05/30/meeting_the_housing_needs_of_an_aging_population/)

### Accessory Dwelling Units

Accessory dwelling units (ADUs) are defined as one or more rooms with private bath and kitchen facilities comprising an independent, self-contained dwelling unit within or attached to a single-family dwelling or in a detached building on the same lot as the primary dwelling unit.<sup>30</sup> ADUs are primarily found in low- and medium-scale neighborhood zones and are permitted in all residential zoning districts in Vancouver that contain a single-family home. State legislation referred to as House Bill 1337 requires cities like Vancouver to allow up to two ADUs on a residential lot, assuming compliance with development regulations.



ADUs provide homeowners the ability to establish separate living quarters within or adjacent to their home and increase the range of housing options and supply of accessible and affordable housing units in the community.<sup>31</sup> In 2024, Vancouver updated its current development code to comply with this legislation, and the new code will also incorporate compliant standards. Based on the new allowances for two ADUs per lot and recent trends in ADU development, Appendix P, Housing Needs and Land Capacity Analysis, identifies capacity for 1,280 ADUs in Vancouver through 2045.

### Connected and Accessible Neighborhoods

Connected and accessible neighborhoods are intended to support a mix of uses within a 15-minute walk, bike, or roll to provide access to essential services like grocery stores, childcare, education, and healthcare, as well as opportunities for shopping, entertainment, cultural amenities, and employment within proximity to housing.

The placement of higher density residential zones near commercial areas and transit routes increases the potential for a substantial amount of new housing in connected and accessible neighborhoods. As summarized in Table 8, 44.1 percent of the new housing capacity is in areas with five or more existing services or amenities within walking distance. These services or amenities include full-service grocery stores, transit stops, parks and open spaces, trails, libraries, ambulatory healthcare services, schools, and other essential places, such as higher education institutions. This proximity to services benefit resident well-being in terms of access to healthcare, food and daily needs, as well as opportunities to interact with others. Additional details about connected and accessible neighborhoods are available in Appendix F, Community Atlas, and Chapter 3, Land Use and Development.

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<sup>30</sup> VMC 20.810.020

<sup>31</sup> VMC 20.810.010

Table 8. Estimated Capacity for New Housing Units in Connected and Accessible Neighborhoods

| Metric                                                                             | Housing Units |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------|
| Projected Capacity for New Housing Units in Connected and Accessible Neighborhoods | 21,502        |
| Percent of Total Projected Capacity for New Housing Units                          | 44.1%         |

Displacement Risk

As Vancouver continues to grow and housing demand rises, the city faces new challenges related to involuntary displacement of existing households. Housing underproduction, combined with a highly competitive regional market, exerts upward pressure on housing costs, which poses significant challenges for communities, particularly vulnerable populations. “Displacement risk” describes when these pressures in the real estate market could force households to relocate due to rising costs for housing or increased feasibility and interest in redevelopment. The goals and policies in this Comprehensive Plan are designed to mitigate displacement in high-risk areas to reduce the unintended consequences of new development and growth and facilitate long-term equitable development across the city.

Those at the greatest risk of housing displacement include:

- ➔ **Households with low incomes and children in the home, particularly those who rent,** are at greatest risk of being forced to move due to rising rents, because they have limited ability to cover rent increases and may already be facing tradeoffs between paying rent and covering other basic needs for their household. Washington State and local regulations offer some protections for renters, including caps of annual rent increases and notice requirements for rent increases and evictions. Under Washington’s recently passed statewide rent control laws, private property owners may increase rent up to 7 percent plus the Consumer Price Index, or 10 percent, whichever is less.<sup>32</sup> There are exceptions for the control of rent in buildings under public-private agreements to provide regulated affordable housing.<sup>33</sup> Taken together, these protections may delay, but do not ultimately prevent, displacement of households with low incomes.
- ➔ **Adults without college degrees** have less ability to increase their income to cover higher housing costs and may have to work multiple low-wage jobs to make ends meet. Educational attainment (as well as income) is not protected under federal housing legislation, leaving these adults more vulnerable to discrimination.
- ➔ **Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC)**—particularly people who are Black, Indigenous, and/or Latinx—tend to face greater housing discrimination and may have a harder time finding other housing if they are forced to move. Race, color and national origin are all protected by the Fair Housing Act, but the long history of racist housing policies in the United

<sup>32</sup> HB1217 Landlord Resource Center <https://www.commerce.wa.gov/housing-policy/hb1217-landlord-resource-center/>.

<sup>33</sup> RCW 36.01.130 pre-empts jurisdictions from adopting local rent control ordinances, but other state regulations provide some protections around notice to vacate.



States continues to impact household wealth and housing options for many BIPOC and families. The legacy of these practices contributes to ongoing disparities in homeownership and housing cost burdens nationwide. Past policies that excluded people of color from homeownership have played a role in systemically preventing the accumulation of generational wealth. In contrast, many White families have benefited from long-term property appreciation. This is an example of how historic discrimination and exclusion has contributed to persistent disparities by race and ethnicity related to housing generally and displacement risk specifically.

- ➔ Additionally, **households with limited English proficiency, people with disabilities, and adults age 65+** face unique challenges to finding and securing housing due to language barriers and accessible housing options.

The City of Vancouver created a Displacement Risk Assessment Map (Figure 11) to better understand displacement pressures citywide and further the City’s equity goals by pairing investments with anti-displacement strategies in areas shown to have greater displacement risk.

Table 9 outlines how socioeconomic vulnerability, location-specific demographic change, and housing market dynamics are analyzed to understand displacement risk. The risk assessment uses the demographic factors described above to measure socioeconomic vulnerability<sup>34</sup> to displacement. Whether or not demographic change is underway, Table 9 indicates the extent to which displacement is already occurring. Housing market data, specifically trends in home sales prices, indicates where market pressures are or are likely to increase prices. The year 2007 was used as the base year for housing market data in order to capture prices when the market was at its peak before the 2008 crash; changes in home values looked at changes between 2010 and 2020. The City’s Displacement Risk Assessment Map is updated every five years using new data. The methodology included seven different categories of displacement risk, based on the combination of socioeconomic vulnerability factors and real estate market trends by census tract, grouped into early-, mid-, or late-stage gentrification as defined in Table 9.<sup>35</sup>

Table 9. Description of Displacement Risk Typologies

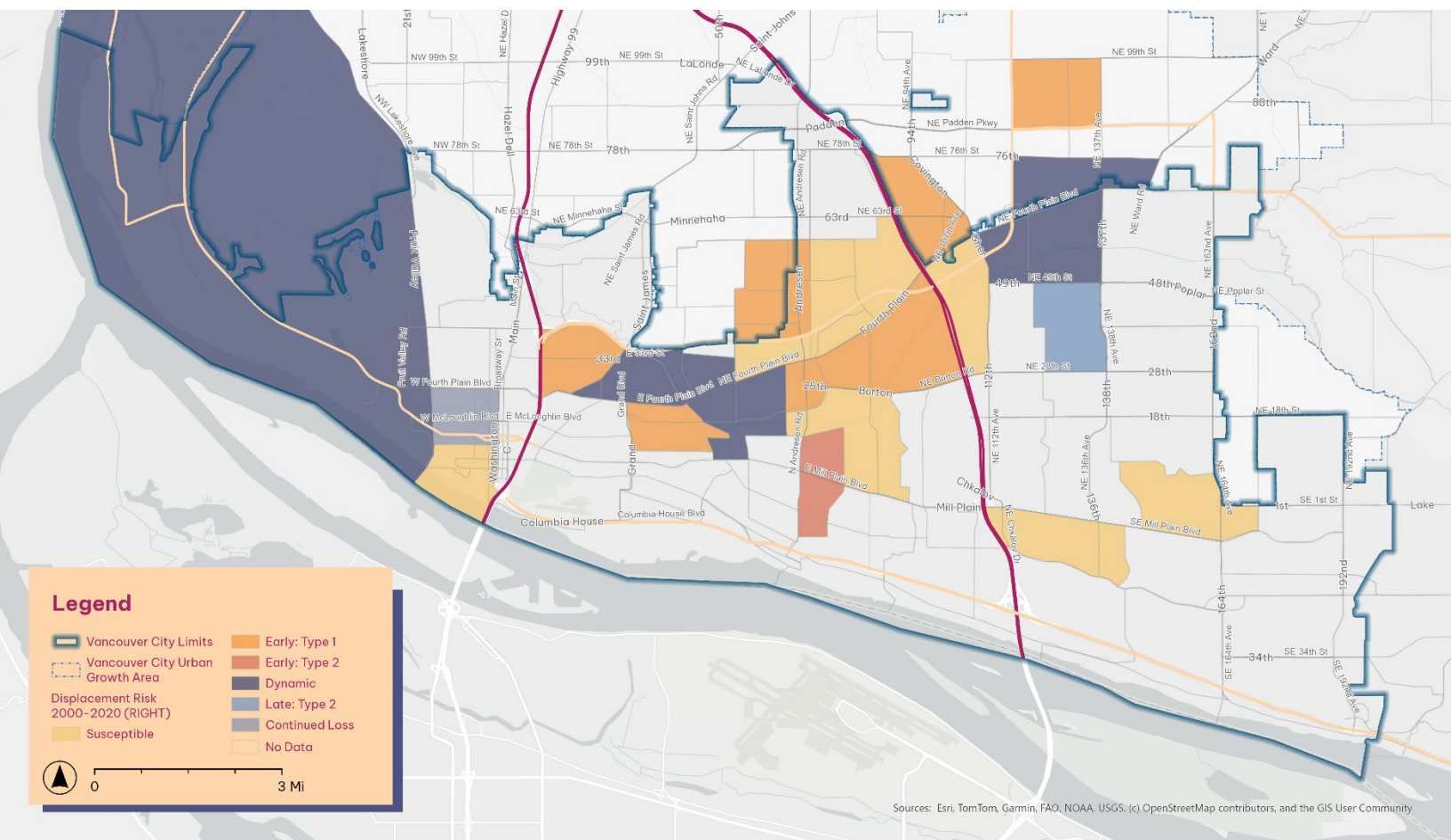
| Gentrification Stage       | Typology      | Vulnerable Population | Demographic Change | Housing Market                                         |
|----------------------------|---------------|-----------------------|--------------------|--------------------------------------------------------|
| Early-stage Gentrification | Susceptible   | Higher share          | No                 | Low to moderate, adjacent to high or increasing values |
| Early-stage Gentrification | Early: Type 1 | Higher share          | No                 | Low to moderate, high appreciation since base year     |

<sup>34</sup> The City’s study defined vulnerable tracts by analyzing the distribution of quintile scores, and then set the threshold at approximately the 75th percentile.  
<sup>35</sup> City of Portland Bureau of Planning and Sustainability, “Gentrification and Displacement Neighborhood Typology Assessment,” October 2018.

| Gentrification Stage       | Typology       | Vulnerable Population    | Demographic Change | Housing Market                                         |
|----------------------------|----------------|--------------------------|--------------------|--------------------------------------------------------|
| Early-stage Gentrification | Early: Type 2  | Higher share             | Yes                | Low to moderate, adjacent to high or increasing values |
| Mid-stage Gentrification   | Dynamic        | Higher share             | Yes                | Low to moderate, high appreciation since base year     |
| Late-stage Gentrification  | Late: Type 1   | Higher share             | Yes                | High                                                   |
| Late-stage Gentrification  | Late: Type 2   | Lost previous high share | No                 | Low to moderate, appreciation since base year          |
| Late-stage Gentrification  | Continued Loss | Lost previous high share | No                 | High                                                   |

Per the Displacement Risk Assessment, of the 64 census tracts within or intersecting the city's boundaries, 14 census tracts in Vancouver face early-stage gentrification. Four tracts face mid-stage gentrification, and one is in late-stage gentrification. Late-stage gentrification means a neighborhood has lost an increasing share of vulnerable populations over the study period and is facing rising housing costs (see Appendix D, Housing Needs Assessment, for additional details and methodology). The Image Neighborhood is the only area that has reached late-stage gentrification based on the City's methodology. The Fourth Plain Village and North Image Neighborhoods fall into the Dynamic category, which refers to areas where new anti-displacement actions can still help to prevent loss of vulnerable populations before the areas reach more advanced displacement types. Neighborhoods facing early-stage gentrification are concentrated in Central Vancouver, including along Fourth Plain Boulevard, I-205, and State Route 500. In these areas, preserving low-cost housing and preventing displacement of vulnerable populations can help keep neighborhoods from advancing into mid- or late-stage gentrification.

Figure 11. Displacement Risk Map, Vancouver, 2010-2020



The most effective anti-displacement strategies vary by location-specific characteristics and displacement stage. Reside Vancouver, an anti-displacement plan developed in 2020, identifies recommended strategies for preventing displacement, which include citywide strategies, as well as geographically specific strategies for the Fourth Plain Corridor. Table 10 shows estimated capacity for new housing units in areas considered high displacement risk. Goals and policies throughout this Comprehensive Plan aim to prevent displacement by preserving existing low-cost housing, creating new affordable housing options, increasing economic opportunities for residents, and supporting homeownership to stabilize households. The City's Equitable Development Strategy identifies a range of strategies to ensure equitable development and reduce displacement pressures and incorporates existing work from the Heights Equitable Development Strategy, citywide Economic Development Strategy, and Housing Action Plan, as well as new best practice research and community-identified priorities.

Table 10. Estimated Capacity for New Housing Units in High Displacement Risk Areas

| Metric                                                                   | Housing Units |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------|
| Projected Capacity for New Housing Units in High Displacement Risk Areas | 8,897         |
| Percent of Total Projected Capacity for New Housing Units                | 18.2%         |

The Washington State Department of Commerce published a displacement risk map that similarly shows areas on the west, north-central and east sides of the city as being higher risk for displacement based on market trends, demographic change and social vulnerability.

## Equity Lens: Racially Disparate Impacts

The Washington State House Bill 1220 included a component to ensure that new and existing housing policy addresses and mitigates racially disparate impacts, displacement and exclusion. See Appendix G, Racially Disparate Impacts Analysis, for additional data and information.

- **Displacement:** The process by which a household is forced to move from its community because of conditions beyond their control (can include physical, economic and/or cultural displacement).
- **Exclusion in housing:** The act or effect of shutting or keeping certain populations out of housing within a specific area, in a manner that may be intentional or unintentional, but which leads to non-inclusive impacts.
- **Racially disparate impact (RDI):** When policies, practices, rules or other systems result in a disproportionate impact on one or more racial groups.

Historically, policies—such as redlining, restrictions in Veterans Administration homeownership loans, and housing covenants—resulted in segregated housing and limited the ability of people of color to gain generational wealth. Today in Vancouver, people of color are more likely to live in multifamily housing, rent instead of own their home, be housing cost burdened (spending more than 30 percent of income on housing), rely on public transit or carpooling for commuting, and live in areas of the city with less tree canopy. This data demonstrates racially disparate impacts exist in the community.

The Comprehensive Plan update includes goals and policies to directly address increasing housing production, providing diverse and affordable housing types, preventing displacement of existing residents, and increasing access to homeownership specifically for those who have previously been excluded from buying a home.



## Goal: H-1

## Housing Production

**In 2045, the city will have added a minimum of 38,000 net new housing units to its current stock, eliminating the current housing deficit and providing enough housing to serve Vancouver's diverse and growing community.**

Vancouver's housing supply in 2045 will serve the entire community, regardless of income, age, disability status, educational attainment, or household composition. It will do this by providing a range of diverse housing options affordable to a broad spectrum of incomes. The City will need to take a broad range of actions, pull multiple levers and find new and innovative ways to support housing production. This includes changes to Vancouver's land use map and zoning code occurring as part of this Comprehensive Plan periodic review cycle, which seeks to simplify the development code, provides flexibility, and reduces the time, process and cost associated with new development. These updates will provide greater clarity to applicants and the community, minimizing unnecessary delays in the review of residential permit applications. In addition to changes to regulations and process, meeting housing production goals will require additional implementation steps that could include fee reductions or exemptions, advocating for new resources at the state and federal levels, updating existing or developing new incentive programs, and supporting innovative design and construction methods.

In order to support the construction of housing that's affordable to low- and extremely low-income households, the City will continue to partner with local, state, and national agencies to secure supportive funding for the construction of rent-restricted, permanently affordable housing, as these levels of affordability are not supported by the private market without substantial subsidies and/or incentives.

| Supporting Policy                                           | Description                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | No.        | Related Goals         |
|-------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|-----------------------|
| <b>Broaden Equitable Access to Natural Spaces and Parks</b> | Increase equitable access to natural spaces and parks by investing in new and improved facilities in underserved neighborhoods and siting new accessible housing close to existing and future parks.                                                      | <b>23</b>  | CL-4, PR-3, H-1, EI-2 |
| <b>Housing Innovation</b>                                   | Promote and remove regulatory barriers to new financing methods, homeownership models and design and construction techniques.                                                                                                                             | <b>67</b>  | H-1, CE-4             |
| <b>New Funding Methods for Affordable Housing</b>           | Explore and develop additional funding methods and resources to support affordable housing and community ownership opportunities.                                                                                                                         | <b>96</b>  | H-1, H-6              |
| <b>State Level Housing Reform</b>                           | Advocate for state legislation, regulatory reform, and sustained funding that support condominium development, expand homeownership opportunities, and increase resources for the production and preservation of affordable housing across income levels. | <b>135</b> | H-1, H-2              |
| <b>Streamline the Development Process</b>                   | Simplify the development review process where feasible and as needed to reduce permitting timelines and improve housing costs.                                                                                                                            | <b>138</b> | H-1, LU-4             |

## Goal: H-2

## Diverse & Accessible Housing

**A wide range of new housing types are provided to fit a variety of household sizes, cultures, incomes, and abilities, and where community members can access housing that meets their needs at all stages of life.**

A wide range of housing types and sizes is needed to ensure all community members can find housing that meets their needs throughout their lives. This goal focuses on expanding housing choice by encouraging more diverse housing types, scales, and densities that respond to changing household sizes, ages, incomes, and abilities, while improving access to services and amenities.

The City's policy approach emphasizes reducing regulatory barriers and modernizing zoning and development standards to better align with housing needs. Historically, Vancouver's housing stock has been constrained by limited housing types and density patterns that artificially constrain housing production and do not reflect today's demographics. To address this, the City will support middle housing forms—such as two- to six-unit plexes, townhomes, cottage clusters, courtyard apartments, and stacked flats and accessory dwelling units—in all low- and medium-scale neighborhoods.

Accessibility is a central component of this goal. As the population ages and the need for inclusive housing grows, policies will encourage accessible design that supports aging in place and multigenerational living. The City will also work with community-based partners to facilitate culturally specific and identity-based housing that reflects the lived experiences and needs of Vancouver's diverse communities.

Together, these policies support a housing system that is more adaptable, inclusive, and responsive, and provides more options, so that people can remain in their neighborhoods as their needs change. By allowing a greater range and size of housing in neighborhoods across the city, including those with existing services, new housing provides more people with access to connected, accessible neighborhoods.

| Supporting Policy                                     | Description                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | No. | Related Goals        |
|-------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|----------------------|
| <b>Aging Populations</b>                              | Ensure that residents have support for aging within community and downsizing through diverse housing options near accessible services and reliable transit to ensure long-term livability and independence.                                           | 12  | EI-3, H-2            |
| <b>Allow Middle Housing</b>                           | Increase housing diversity by allowing a range of missing middle housing types (duplexes, triplexes, townhomes, cottage clusters, and courtyard apartments) in low- and medium-intensity residential areas to expand affordability and accessibility. | 16  | H-2                  |
| <b>Analyze and Mitigate Displacement Risk</b>         | Analyze and mitigate for displacement pressures and risks prior to making large-scale public investments.                                                                                                                                             | 17  | E-1, H-2, H-4, PFS-1 |
| <b>Culturally Specific and Identity-based Housing</b> | Work with partners to facilitate and fund housing that reflects the cultures, identities and needs of Vancouver's unique population groups, and for the equity priority communities identified in this plan.                                          | 42  | H-2, CE-2, EI-1, H-4 |
| <b>Income-restricted Housing</b>                      | Facilitate development of income-restricted housing, particularly in areas near transit and services.                                                                                                                                                 | 71  | H-2, EI-1, LU-1      |
| <b>Incorporate Universal Design Principles</b>        | Incentivize universal design principles in private development. Support accessibility retrofits for existing homes and prioritize affordable housing options tailored to multigenerational living, aging in place, and a wide range of abilities.     | 74  | EI-2, PR-1, H-2      |



| Supporting Policy            | Description                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | No. | Related Goals |
|------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|---------------|
| Multigenerational Households | Incentivize development of housing types suitable for multigenerational living.                                                                                                                                                                           | 92  | EI-3, H-2     |
| State Level Housing Reform   | Advocate for state legislation, regulatory reform, and sustained funding that support condominium development, expand homeownership opportunities, and increase resources for the production and preservation of affordable housing across income levels. | 135 | H-1, H-2      |

## Goal: H-3

## Reduce Homelessness

**The City and its partners work collectively to provide adequate transitional, permanently supportive, and affordable housing in the community, so that all residents have access to safe and stable housing.**

Ensuring that all residents have access to safe and stable housing requires coordinated action to address homelessness across the housing continuum. This goal focuses on expanding and sustaining emergency shelters and transitional, permanently supportive, and affordable housing so that individuals and families experiencing housing instability can move toward long-term stability.

The City's policy approach centers on partnership, preservation and targeted investment. Vancouver will continue working with local, state and national partners to secure funding and resources for emergency shelter beds, transitional housing, permanently supportive and rent-restricted permanently affordable housing, recognizing that these housing types are rarely delivered by the private market. Policies emphasize integrating housing with services to support individuals with disabilities, behavioral and mental health needs, and other barriers to housing stability.

In addition to expanding housing options, the City will prioritize preserving existing affordable and supportive housing, including naturally occurring affordable units, to prevent further loss of low-cost housing. Protecting existing stock is a critical component of reducing homelessness and preventing households from falling into housing instability.

By aligning housing policy with service delivery and regional efforts, this goal advances a coordinated response to homelessness that prioritizes stability, dignity, and improved long-term outcomes.

| Supporting Policy                           | Description                                                                                                                                                                                 | No. | Related Goals  |
|---------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|----------------|
| <b>Emergency Rental Assistance</b>          | Provide financial support to help at-risk households remain in their homes, preventing eviction and displacement.                                                                           | 45  | H-4, EI-1, H-3 |
| <b>Permanently Supportive Housing</b>       | Expand the availability of permanently supportive housing and emergency shelter beds with integrated services for people with disabilities, houseless individuals, and at-risk populations. | 101 | H-3            |
| <b>Preserve Existing Affordable Housing</b> | Preserve the existing stock of affordable housing and discourage conversion of income-based housing to more expensive market rate housing when affordability restrictions end.              | 105 | H-3, H-4, LU-1 |

## Goal: H-4

## Prevent Displacement

**The City and its partners work collectively to prevent displacement of community members due to direct impacts and market forces by providing resources that support residents remaining stably and securely housed.**

As Vancouver grows and housing demand increases, preventing involuntary displacement is essential to maintaining community stability and equity. This goal focuses on minimizing displacement driven by rising housing costs, redevelopment pressures, and public investment and increasing access to homeownership opportunities—particularly for renters, low-income households, and communities of color who face disproportionate risk.

The City's policy approach emphasizes early intervention, targeted protections, affordable home ownership strategies, and equitable development practices. Using displacement risk data, the City will prioritize anti-displacement strategies in areas most vulnerable to market pressure. Policies support tenant protections, emergency rental assistance, relocation assistance, right of first refusal, and community ownership models that help residents remain housed or return to their communities if displacement occurs. Preventing displacement also includes supporting existing homeowners, particularly low- and moderate-income households, through home repair and preservation programs that help residents remain safely housed as neighborhoods change. In areas experiencing new development or public investment, policies will encourage community benefits that deliver tangible outcomes—such as affordable housing, local hiring, and community facilities—while reducing unintended impacts.

Together, these strategies aim to ensure that growth and investment strengthen neighborhoods without displacing the people who live there.



| Supporting Policy                                      | Description                                                                                                                                                                                                  | No. | Related Goals        |
|--------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|----------------------|
| <b>Access to Non-traditional Homeownership Methods</b> | Broaden access to homeownership for first-time owners, low-income residents, and other groups frequently priced out of homeownership through alternative ownership methods.                                  | 3   | EI-1, H-4, H-5, H-6, |
| <b>Analyze and Mitigate Displacement Risk</b>          | Analyze and mitigate for displacement pressures and risks prior to making large-scale public investments.                                                                                                    | 17  | E-1, H-2, H-4, PFS-1 |
| <b>Culturally Specific and Identity-based Housing</b>  | Work with partners to facilitate and fund housing that reflects the cultures, identities and needs of Vancouver's unique population groups, and for the equity priority communities identified in this plan. | 42  | H-2, CE-2, EI-1, H-4 |
| <b>Emergency Rental Assistance</b>                     | Provide financial support to help at-risk households remain in their homes, preventing eviction and displacement.                                                                                            | 45  | H-4, EI-1, H-3       |
| <b>Incorporate Community Benefits into Development</b> | Integrate community benefits into private developments involving discretionary land use approval or City redevelopment efforts while maintaining project feasibility.                                        | 73  | H-4, EI-4            |
| <b>Preserve Existing Affordable Housing</b>            | Preserve the existing stock of affordable housing and discourage conversion of income-based housing to more expensive market rate housing when affordability restrictions end.                               | 105 | H-3, H-4, LU-1       |
| <b>Reduce Displacement in the Face of New Growth</b>   | Implement anti-displacement strategies and actions that protect residents and businesses in advance of public investment so communities can remain in place and benefit from improvements.                   | 112 | H-4, EI-1            |
| <b>Right of First Refusal and Sweat Equity</b>         | Explore models and opportunities for existing residences and businesses to have right of first refusal to purchase property when it's being sold, or build an equity stake in the property over time.        | 127 | H-4, EO-1            |

## Goal: H-5

## Access to Homeownership

**Homeownership is attainable for people across the income spectrum, particularly communities previously excluded from buying a home through racial covenants and discriminatory lending practices.**

Homeownership remains an important pathway to housing stability and wealth creation, yet many Vancouver residents have been excluded from ownership opportunities due to historic and ongoing barriers. This goal focuses on expanding access to homeownership across incomes, with particular attention to communities previously excluded through discriminatory policies and practices.

The City's policy approach centers on broadening the pathways to ownership rather than relying on a single housing product or market condition. Rising land costs, construction expenses and financing barriers have made traditional ownership models unattainable for many residents. In response, policies under this goal support a wider range of ownership structures and development approaches that reduce upfront costs and maintain long-term affordability while still allowing households to build equity. To advance this goal, the City will align land use policy, development incentives, and housing programs to encourage ownership opportunities within new residential development, including mixed-income and mixed-tenure projects. Partnerships with nonprofit organizations and housing providers will be critical to implementing alternative ownership models that stabilize households and preserve affordability over time.

By addressing structural barriers and supporting a broader range of ownership options, these policies aim to ensure that homeownership remains a viable option for current and future residents and contributes to neighborhood stability and intergenerational wealth building.

| Supporting Policy                                      | Description                                                                                                                                                                 | No. | Related Goals        |
|--------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|----------------------|
| <b>Access to Non-traditional Homeownership Methods</b> | Broaden access to homeownership for first-time owners, low-income residents, and other groups frequently priced out of homeownership through alternative ownership methods. | 3   | El-1, H-4, H-5, H-6, |
| <b>Affordable Homeownership</b>                        | Facilitate homeownership opportunities through assistance programs, grants, and other methods that reduce barriers to entry for low- and moderate-income households.        | 11  | H-5, H-6             |
| <b>Mixed Income Housing</b>                            | Develop incentives to integrate below market housing as part of new market rate housing projects.                                                                           | 90  | H-5, H-6, LU-4       |

## Goal: H-6

## Affordable Housing

**Vancouver community members have access to affordable housing regardless of income, including market rate and income-based housing options, and the City prioritizes long-term preservation of existing affordable units.**

Housing affordability remains one of the most significant challenges facing Vancouver, particularly for households with incomes below the citywide median. This goal focuses on expanding and preserving affordable housing options to ensure that residents across income levels can access safe, stable housing and remain in the community as the city grows.

The City's policy approach recognizes that the private market does not deliver deeply affordable housing and requires sustained public leadership, funding, and coordination. Policies under this goal emphasize long-term affordability through a combination of direct investment, strategic use of public land, and regulatory and financial incentives that support affordable housing development and preservation. To meet housing needs by income band over the planning time horizon, the City will continue to leverage local funding sources, pursue partnerships with nonprofit and public housing providers, and advocate for more public resources to build and preserve permanently affordable, rent-restricted housing options. Policies also support integrating affordable housing into areas with access to transit, services, and employment, helping to reduce transportation costs and improve access to opportunity.

Ongoing monitoring and evaluation are essential components of this approach. The City will track housing production, affordability levels, and program outcomes to assess progress toward housing targets and adjust strategies as needed. Together, these policies establish a framework for sustained investment in affordable housing that supports community stability, equity, and long-term resilience.



| Supporting Policy                                      | Description                                                                                                                                                                    | No. | Related Goals        |
|--------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|----------------------|
| <b>Access to Non-traditional Homeownership Methods</b> | Broaden access to homeownership in the community for first-time owners, low-income residents, and other groups frequently priced out of through alternative ownership methods. | 3   | El-1, H-4, H-5, H-6, |
| <b>Acquire Land for Affordable Housing Development</b> | Pursue strategic acquisition and use existing City-owned land for affordable housing.                                                                                          | 6   | H-6                  |
| <b>Affordable Homeownership</b>                        | Facilitate homeownership opportunities through assistance programs, grants, and other methods that reduce barriers to entry for low- and moderate-income households.           | 11  | H-5, H-6             |
| <b>Mixed Income Housing</b>                            | Develop incentives to integrate below market housing as part of new market rate housing projects.                                                                              | 90  | H-5, H-6, LU-4       |
| <b>New Funding Methods for Affordable Housing</b>      | Explore and develop additional funding methods and resources to support affordable housing and community ownership opportunities                                               | 96  | H-1, H-6             |

## **Chapter 4 – Key Implementing Actions**

- ✓ Update the Multifamily Tax Exemption (MFTE) Program to align with Comprehensive Plan centers.
- ✓ Update the Housing Action Plan to reflect needs identified in the Comprehensive Plan.
- ✓ Advance housing priorities for City-led redevelopment projects, including Waterfront Gateway, the Heights, the Fourth Plain Operations Center, and Library Square.
- ✓ Expand resources for strategic land acquisition to support future affordable housing development.
- ✓ Expand resources to support affordable and workforce housing development.
- ✓ Preserve existing affordable housing through rehabilitation and acquisition strategies.
- ✓ Implement the City's Rental Registration Program.
- ✓ Finalize and operate the Bridge Shelter.
- ✓ Advance regulatory and fee reforms that avoid adding cost or delay to housing development and, where possible, actively reduce barriers to housing production.

# Economic Opportunity



5



OUR VANCOUVER



# Introduction

A vibrant local economy is critical to ensuring a high quality of life in our community. To ensure access to living wage jobs and business opportunities, the City must support and encourage the growth of its economy in inclusive and strategic ways to deliver shared prosperity. We must learn from the past and seek opportunities to continue Vancouver's transition into an economic driver of the region and state over the next 20 years.

Vancouver's strategic location along the confluence of several rivers has sustained human settlement for thousands of years. As the city grows and changes, its geography and connection to the river remains an important asset. The Chinook people lived in what is now Vancouver for 10,000 years before European contact, and their proximity to the Wimala ("big river"), now referred to as the Columbia River, allowed them to become prolific traders who lived in relative abundance. In 1825, the original Hudson's Bay Company established Fort Vancouver as the regional center of commerce.



## Vision: Economic Opportunity

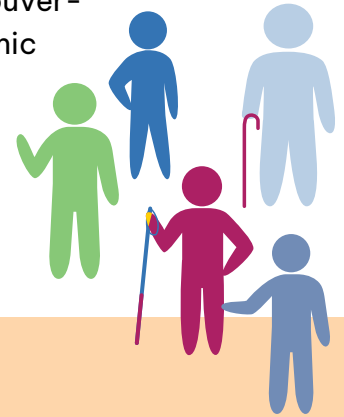
We envision a future where all community members have access to stable jobs that allow them to support themselves, their families and communities. We commit to prioritizing wealth creation and financial stability for historically excluded groups, growing economic opportunity for all, developing a green economy that mitigates the impacts of climate change, and supporting innovation in business and industry. We recognize that access to housing and childcare is essential to building a resilient and equitable economy. We believe in community-centered economic development that focuses on people and uplifts our existing workforce while providing options for those who will be here in the future. We commit to building and strengthening partnerships to support small businesses and startups, expand workforce training opportunities, break down barriers to entry and promote upward mobility, particularly for historically underserved and excluded communities.



After the company relocated to Canada, and until World War II, Vancouver's economy was composed of logging and lumber mills, railroads and agriculture, primarily prune farming.

World War II brought industry, primarily shipbuilding, and a growing population to Vancouver, but a decline in industrial jobs after the war led to unemployment, population loss and disinvestment, particularly in the Black community. The construction of I-5 and later the I-205 further disrupted the existing urban fabric of the city, making downtown more difficult to access and encouraging growth in more suburban settings.

More recently, Vancouver has attracted a growing and diverse community and economy. Situated in the heart of the Pacific Northwest, Clark County is exceptionally well positioned to access major West Coast, Midwest and international markets. Currently, the City of Vancouver encompasses 51.84 square miles and has an estimated 2023 population of 196,441. It is the fourth most populous city in Washington State and the second largest city in the Portland-Vancouver-Hillsboro Metropolitan Statistical Area. Vancouver is considered an economic hub of both the region and state, benefitting from proximity to three deep-water ports (Port of Vancouver, Port of Portland, and Port of Columbia County), the Portland International Airport, two interstate highways (I-5 and I-205), and two freight rail lines (BNSF Railway and Union Pacific Railroad).



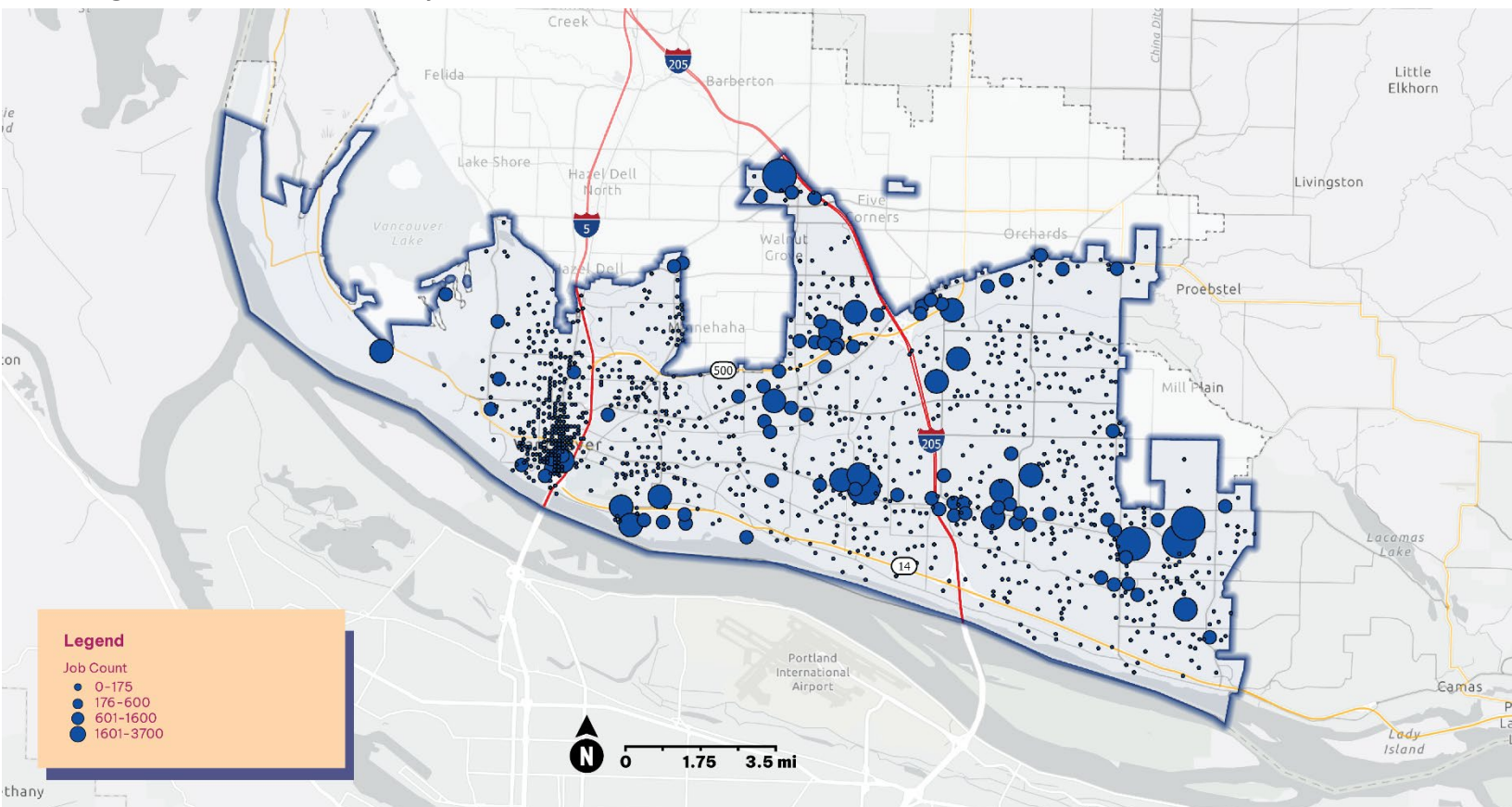
### Community Feedback

- ➔ Strong desire for more neighborhood-serving businesses, such as restaurants, coffee shops, grocery stores, arts facilities, and shops.
- ➔ Broad support for small business growth and prevention of commercial displacement.
  - Ideas for initiatives included incubator spaces, food carts, technical assistance, and affordable commercial rents to support local businesses.
- ➔ Support for equitable access to economic opportunity, particularly through addressing education disparities, supporting youth workforce development, mixed-income neighborhoods, and ensuring large employers contribute to housing and workforce stability.
- ➔ Interest in locating jobs closer to where people live, including having more employment centers in neighborhoods, flexible zoning for home-based businesses, and mixed-use areas that reduce commuting.
- ➔ Redevelopment of underutilized land seen as a major opportunity.
  - Vancouver Mall, parking lots, NE 40th & Andresen, Section 30, and areas north of Mill Plain were cited as prime sites for new economic activity.
- ➔ Support for diverse, livable-wage jobs and workforce training, with particular interest in trade schools, apprenticeships, and pathways to jobs that keep pace with rising living costs.
- ➔ Mixed views on industrial uses and commercial compatibility.
  - Some support preserving industrial lands for job growth, but there are concerns about industrial uses near homes and a desire to separate incompatible uses.

## Vancouver's Economy

Vancouver's economy is undergoing a transformative shift. As the city attracts a more professional, service-oriented, and creative workforce, the city is becoming less dependent on traditional manufacturers and more dependent on knowledge-based industries to drive economic growth (Figure 12). Vancouver has experienced rapid population growth over the past two decades, attracting more educated and higher-income workers in targeted sectors like computers and electronics, software, clean tech, metals and machinery manufacturing, and life sciences. The growth and transformation are due to a combination of factors, including the city's lack of income tax, recent investments in public infrastructure, access to outdoor amenities, and a relatively lower cost of living compared to other West Coast locations. Because of these factors and a revitalized Urban Core, Vancouver has grown into a desirable place for many in the region to live, resulting in in-migration. In particular, white-collar workers gaining greater locational flexibility due to remote work during the COVID-19 pandemic have shifted or accelerated migration patterns and housing preferences permanently. Overall, outmigration of workers from Portland has contributed to Clark County's rapid growth, as well as more families and peak earning workers leaving Oregon in recent years.

**Figure 12. Counts and Density of All Jobs, Vancouver, 2020<sup>36</sup>**



<sup>36</sup> Census OntheMap

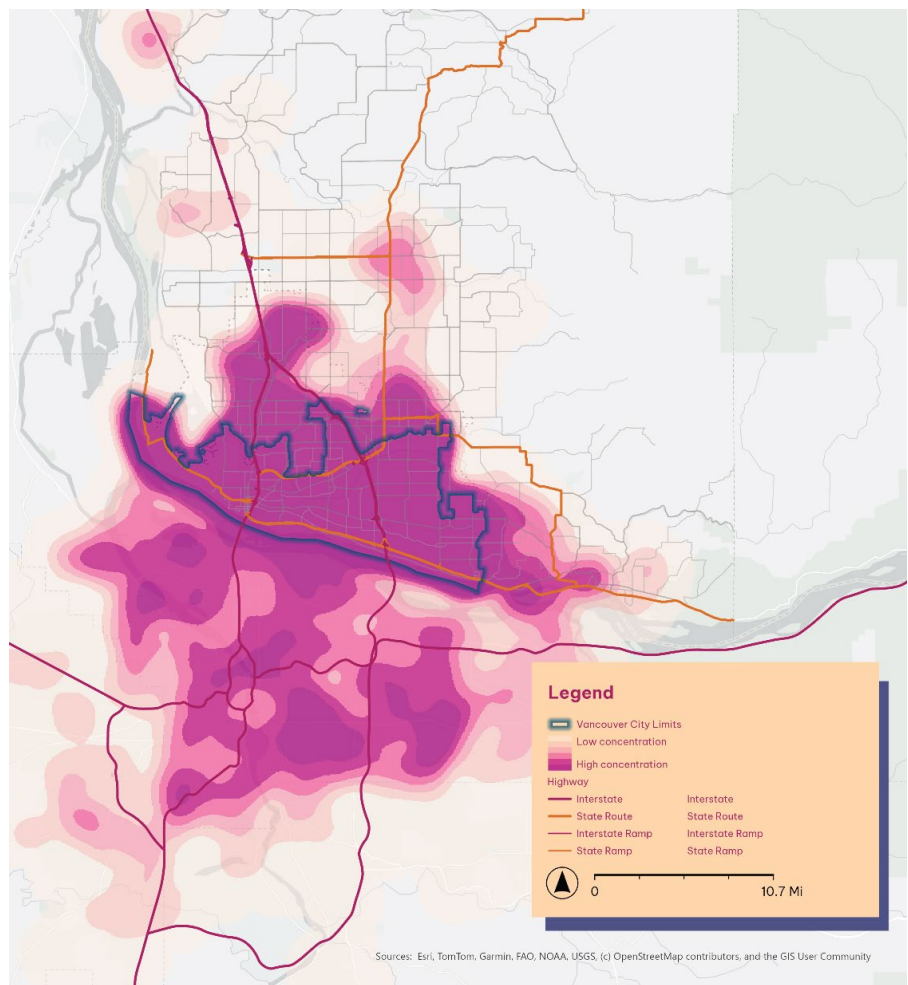
With rising demand for housing, Vancouver has seen increasing housing costs, rising displacement pressures, and economic disparities among communities. In particular, people of color in Vancouver face higher levels of cost burdening, lower median incomes, lower rates of homeownership, and lower rates of educational attainment. In 2023, the median incomes of Black households or Hispanic or Latino households were below the median income in Vancouver.<sup>37</sup> Housing cost burden was also most prevalent for Black and Hispanic or Latino households, indicating additional economic burdens.

The City of Vancouver has several employment centers dispersed throughout the city supporting a higher concentration of jobs (see figure 13 below). Vancouver's downtown area located near I-5 has the highest concentration of employment, with other centers around major employers like Clark College, the Port of Vancouver, PeaceHealth medical facilities along Mill Plain Boulevard, the Vancouver Mall and other strip shopping centers along State Route 500, and technology and innovation hubs, such as Vancouver Innovation Center (VIC) on the east side.

### Vancouver's Workforce

The region's growth includes more educated and early working age adults, and higher income households. An increasingly educated and skilled workforce can help attract and retain employers, including those in the Columbia River Economic Development Council's (CREDC) current target industry clusters for the county (computers and electronics, software, clean tech, metals and machinery, and life sciences). A portion of this skilled workforce in occupations allowing for locational flexibility (such as tech-intensive industries) could work remotely at least part of the time or in co-working spaces rather than full time at a centralized office space. As of 2023, approximately 16.2 percent of Vancouver's workers worked remotely and 53 percent of these

**Figure 13. Workplace Location of Vancouver Residents (2020)**



<sup>37</sup> 2023 American Community Survey

workers earn over \$65,000 per year<sup>38</sup> (see Appendix D, Housing Needs Assessment, for more information).

Compared to the national average, Vancouver has higher-than-average employment concentrations in the transportation and real estate sectors. An estimated 70 percent of people who *work* in Vancouver *live* outside the city, while approximately 39.5 percent of people who *live* in Vancouver *work* outside the city.

As higher-income households move into the city, it is likely to increase housing costs and displacement pressures for lower-income households. Renters are nearly three times as likely to be cost burdened than homeowners, with over a quarter of renters severely cost burdened, spending more than 50 percent of income on rent. In Vancouver, Black households and Hispanic or Latino households experience the highest rates of cost burden. Chapter 3, Land Use and Development, and Chapter 4, Housing, of the plan address housing disparities in Vancouver and include goals and policies that aim to provide diverse housing opportunities for all residents.

### Employment Land

Clark County recently adopted a countywide employment projection of 269,000 total jobs to be used with the County's 2025 Comprehensive Plan Update. Vancouver is projected to add anywhere between 46,000 new jobs and 49,000 new jobs citywide by 2045, and an additional 18,221 jobs in its UGA by 2045 (the most of any jurisdiction in the county). According to U.S. Census data (see figure 14 below) between 2010 and 2020, Downtown Vancouver, the Columbia Business Center in East Vancouver, and the 122nd Avenue corridor have absorbed the most job growth. Areas surrounding the Vancouver Mall have seen the greatest overall decrease in employment.

### Workforce in 2023

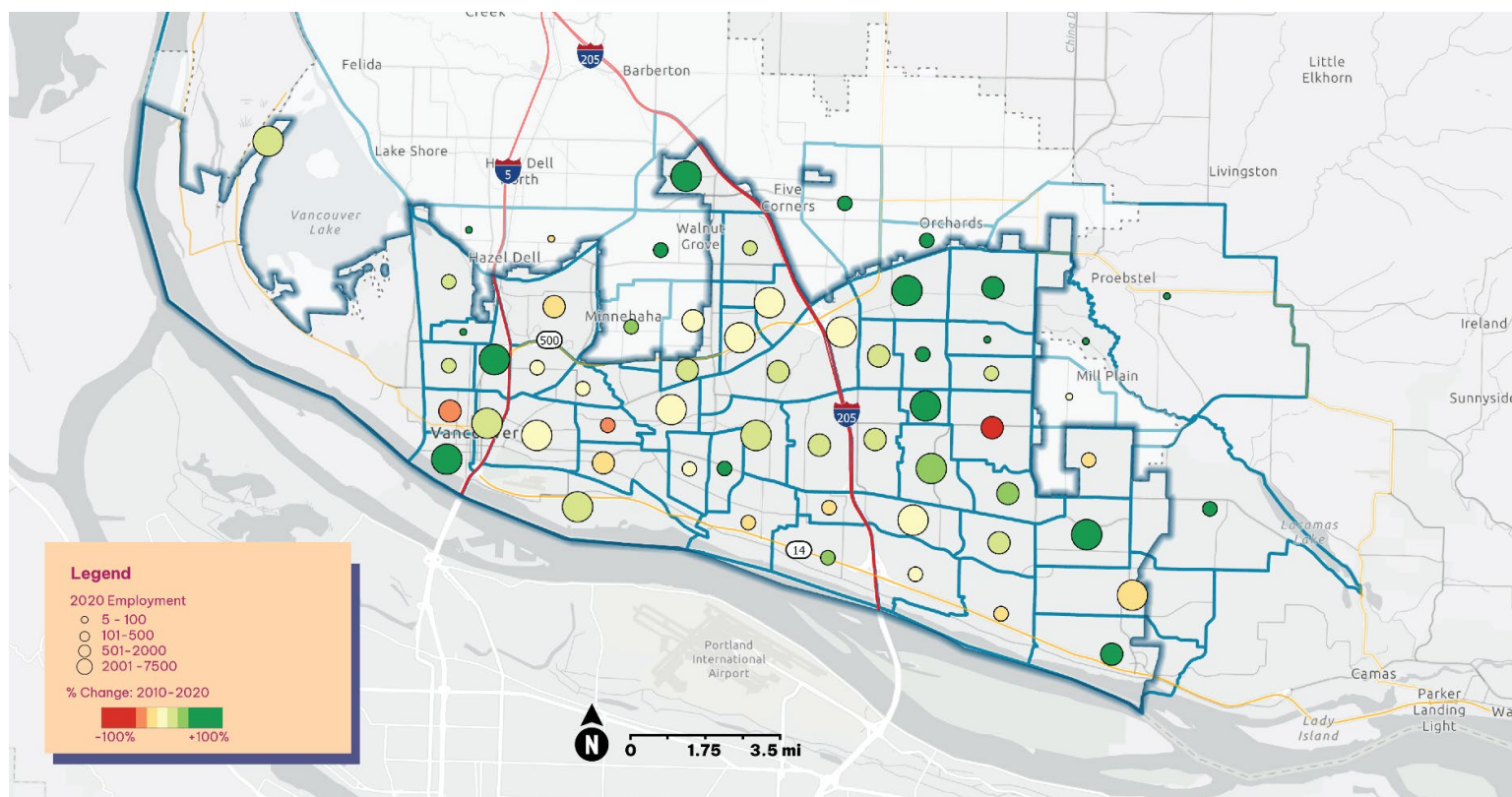
- **13.2k** Net job increase in Clark County
- **62.4%** Work in white-collar professions
- **19.4%** Work in blue-collar professions
- **18.2%** Work in the service sector
- **70%** of workforce lives outside city limits
- **66%** of residents work outside city limits

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<sup>38</sup> 2023 American Community Survey



**Figure 14. Change in Employment by Census Tract, Vancouver, 2010-2020 (LODES 2020)**



## Equity Lens

Vancouver's economic opportunity strategies must be grounded in the lived realities of its residents—particularly those who have long been excluded from wealth-building systems. While the city's median household income reached \$76,733 in 2023, this figure masks stark disparities. Black and Hispanic or Latino households earn well below the citywide median and face the highest rates of housing cost burden, with more than 50 percent of renters in these groups spending over half their income on housing. Business ownership is disproportionately concentrated among White residents, and educational attainment gaps persist: less than 20 percent of Black and Latino residents over 25 hold a bachelor's degree, compared to over 40 percent of White and Asian residents. Vancouver's Gini Index—a measure of income inequality—stood at 0.42 in 2024, meaning the top 10 percent of earners make more than double the income of the bottom 45 percent. These disparities are not incidental; they are the product of policies and systems that have excluded BIPOC, immigrant, and low-income communities from full participation in the local economy. To reverse these trends, implementation must prioritize place-based investments in neighborhoods like Fourth Plain and Rose Village and expand culturally specific small business assistance and workforce programs. Policymakers should use disaggregated data—such as business ownership by race and neighborhood-level income trends—to track outcomes and guide public investment.

The goals and policies in this plan are consistent with the City's Economic Development Strategy and support a balance of jobs for workers in diverse fields that are resilient to fluctuations in the global and regional economy and pay living wages that allow workers to continue to live in Vancouver. Workforce development programs can contribute to a more equitable and sustainable local economy by targeting disadvantaged groups. Additionally, this plan includes inclusive economic development policies that prioritize both the growth and retention of industries that provide employment opportunities for those without advanced degrees or specialized skills, such as traditional manufacturing jobs, construction-related jobs, or labor in skilled trades.

## Goal: EO-1

## Invest in People

**Vancouver has a robust local economy that supports communitywide prosperity, with a range of employment opportunities that provide stable, family-wage jobs, and an ecosystem of training and skill building resources to build the workforce of the future.**

Vancouver's ability to build a resilient, inclusive economy hinges on whether all residents can access stable, family-wage employment. This goal recognizes that economic development is not just about business recruitment or industrial land capacity, but enabling human potential. The policies supporting this goal work to reduce barriers to education and employment, expand access to affordable and available childcare, support small business ownership in historically excluded communities, create clear and equitable pathways into high-demand careers, and create opportunities for generational wealth.

While Vancouver is attracting higher-income residents and businesses in growing sectors like professional services and tech, these opportunities have not been widely shared. BIPOC households continue to experience lower median incomes, higher housing cost burdens, and lower educational attainment rates, underscoring the need for intentional, equity-focused economic policy. Service sectors like retail, education, and healthcare—which employ a large portion of Vancouver's workforce—often do not provide living wages, and the City's ability to close that gap depends on investments in workforce training, apprenticeships, small business support, and a competitive business climate.

Vancouver's high jobs-to-housing ratio and rising cost of living create real barriers for low-income families working and living in the city. By coordinating across these policy areas, Vancouver can ensure that new economic growth translates into shared prosperity. Measurable indicators, such as the number of living-wage jobs, the successful launch and growth of small businesses, access to affordable childcare, apprenticeship placements, and post-secondary enrollment, will help the City track its progress toward the vision and adjust strategies to meet the evolving needs of the community.

| Supporting Policy                                | Description                                                                                                                                                                                           | No. | Related Goals    |
|--------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|------------------|
| <b>Access to Education and Employment</b>        | Reduce barriers to accessing education and employment opportunities, so all community members can reach their full potential.                                                                         | 2   | EI-1, EO-1       |
| <b>Right of First Refusal and Sweat Equity</b>   | Explore models and opportunities for existing residences and businesses to have right of first refusal to purchase property when it's being sold, or build an equity stake in the property over time. | 127 | H-4, EO-1        |
| <b>Support Access to Childcare</b>               | Support the development of new childcare facilities in the city and eliminate regulatory barriers preventing their creation.                                                                          | 143 | EI-3, EO-1       |
| <b>Support Small Businesses</b>                  | Foster inclusive economic growth through education and resources that support small business owners, entrepreneurs and members of historically excluded and underserved communities.                  | 150 | EO-4, EO-1, EI-1 |
| <b>Workforce Development and Career Pathways</b> | Expand access to career pathways, workforce training and entrepreneurship opportunities that lead to living-wage jobs and wealth creation, with a focus on underrepresented communities.              | 163 | EO-1, EI-1, CE-4 |



## Goal: EO-2

## Thriving Economy and Industries

**By 2045, Vancouver will have added 43,200 new jobs by attracting diverse businesses and industries, fostering innovation and entrepreneurship, supporting local small businesses and startups, leveraging new technologies, and providing the infrastructure, workforce, and resources the economy needs to thrive and grow sustainably.**

Vancouver's economic competitiveness in 2045 will be measured not just by the number of jobs added, but by the quality, diversity, and sustainability of the businesses and industries that fuel economic growth. The city is projected to add over 43,200 new jobs by 2045, with Vancouver and its UGA expected to capture more than half of all employment growth in Clark County. This includes 26,317 new jobs within city limits and 19,253 in the adjacent UGA. Much of this growth will rely on preserving and activating the city's industrial lands—which comprise over 2,400 net buildable acres, or 62 percent of the county's industrial land capacity—and ensuring it remains accessible to employers offering living-wage jobs.

The City must take an active role in shaping a business environment that supports startups and entrepreneurs through policies like leveraging City-owned land for affordable commercial space and streamlining permitting processes. Job-creating businesses must also have access to multimodal freight corridors and modern port infrastructure, particularly in sectors that depend on the efficient movement of goods. Vancouver's strategic location—at the nexus of I-5, I-205, multiple national rail lines, and deep water ports make it a prime hub for production based industries.

Supporting local job growth also means investing in place-based development and flexible spaces that can respond to the evolving needs of businesses. Policies under EO-2 reinforce these strategies, from conserving employment lands and leveraging public infrastructure to optimize freight mobility. The City will measure its progress through the total number of jobs created, business retention and attraction data, and the number of new small businesses that remain in operation beyond their first two years—all of which serve as indicators of a thriving, resilient and inclusive economy.

| Supporting Policy                                             | Description                                                                                                                                                                                                  | No. | Related Goals                       |
|---------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|-------------------------------------|
| <b>Affordable Commercial Space</b>                            | Use City-controlled real estate to provide affordable commercial leasing opportunities for small and emerging businesses.                                                                                    | 10  | EO-4, EI-1, EO-2                    |
| <b>Conserve Lands Providing Employment</b>                    | Conserve and invest in industrial lands and other areas that provide employment opportunities and family-wage jobs.                                                                                          | 36  | LU-2, EO-2                          |
| <b>Employment Centers</b>                                     | Direct new employment growth into Employment Centers with close proximity to housing, commercial activities, public services, employment, and amenities.                                                     | 47  | LU-1, EO-2                          |
| <b>Enhance Port Access and Multimodal Freight Solutions</b>   | Improve infrastructure and connectivity to and from the Port of Vancouver to streamline freight operations.                                                                                                  | 50  | LU-2, TM-3, EO-2                    |
| <b>Facilitate Job-creating Business Growth and Investment</b> | Support businesses that create high-quality jobs by reducing barriers to growth, streamlining development processes, and ensuring access to necessary resources and infrastructure.                          | 59  | EO-2, EO-4, CE-4                    |
| <b>Optimize Freight Corridors</b>                             | Designate and enhance freight corridors to facilitate efficient movement of goods and reduce congestion.                                                                                                     | 98  | LU-2, TM-3, EO-2                    |
| <b>Preserve and Protect the Columbia River</b>                | Manage the built and natural environment to protect and restore the water quality and habitat of the Columbia River basin, reflecting its central role in the city's identity, economy, history, and future. | 104 | CL-2, CL-4, CE-5, EO-2, PR-2, PFS-1 |
| <b>Vancouver as an Innovation Hub</b>                         | Position Vancouver as a center for innovation, technology and entrepreneurship through public investment and attracting entrepreneurial talent.                                                              | 159 | CE-4, EO-2                          |

## Goal: EO-3

## Circular and Sustainable Economy

**Vancouver's economy is sustainable, circular and supports climate action and resiliency. City investments in economic development promote holistic cycles of consumption and production, prioritize renewable resources, and support industries that advance environmental health and economic stability.**

A sustainable and resilient economy is one that not only grows—but does so in alignment with climate goals. This idea reflects Vancouver's commitment to building an economy that reduces waste, supports local supply chains, and prioritizes industries that regenerate rather than deplete natural resources. As Vancouver prepares for over 43,200 new housing units and new commercial development to support that growth by 2045, the opportunity to scale circular practices—such as sourcing materials locally, reducing embodied carbon in construction, and expanding access to recycled and reclaimed inputs—has never been greater. This transition requires rethinking the full economic cycle: from where materials come from, to how goods are produced, consumed, reused, and ultimately reintegrated into the economy.

The city's evolving employment landscape also underscores the need for economic resilience. Vancouver's workforce is still concentrated in service sectors vulnerable to climate disruptions, but growth is emerging in clean technology, life sciences, and green construction. At the same time, 17 percent of workers are now remote—many earning above \$65,000 a year—highlighting a shift in where and how people work, and an opportunity to localize more jobs that support community self-sufficiency. A more circular economy will reduce vehicle miles traveled, create durable green jobs, and decrease waste at every stage of the supply chain. Collectively, the policies under EO-3 ensure that economic development in Vancouver strengthens both environmental health and long-term economic stability.

| Supporting Policy                                             | Description                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | No. | Related Goals                 |
|---------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|-------------------------------|
| <b>Build a Resilient Economy</b>                              | Encourage business growth, retention and expansion, with an emphasis on family-wage jobs and foster resilience within Vancouver's economy.                                                                                                                                                      | 24  | LU-2 CL-1, EO-3               |
| <b>Embodied Carbon</b>                                        | Prioritize local source materials, low-carbon materials and material reuse in City-led infrastructure and redevelopment projects.                                                                                                                                                               | 44  | CL-3, EO-3                    |
| <b>Native Landscapes</b>                                      | Incorporate native plantings, food forests and agroforestry into parks and public spaces to support food security, ecological health and cultural knowledge sharing.                                                                                                                            | 94  | PR-3, CL-2, EO-3              |
| <b>Reduce Food Waste</b>                                      | Reduce food waste in the community, and ensure surplus food supply is directed to underserved communities without fresh food access.                                                                                                                                                            | 114 | CL-3, EO-3                    |
| <b>Reduce Solid Waste</b>                                     | Increase waste diversion rates through a system that minimizes landfill reliance, reduces GHG emissions, prioritizes composting, and encourages resource recovery.                                                                                                                              | 117 | CL-1, CL-3, CL-4, EO-3, PFS-1 |
| <b>Support Local Business Transition to the Green Economy</b> | Support local businesses in adapting to the localized impacts of climate change and reduce their overall carbon impact.                                                                                                                                                                         | 146 | EO-3, LU-3                    |
| <b>Support Locally Made Products and Art</b>                  | Support and elevate Vancouver's local makers, artisans, and creative production sectors by promoting the use of locally sourced and recycled materials, strengthening small-scale manufacturing, and advancing a circular economy that contributes to community pride and place-based identity. | 147 | CE-5, EO-3, PR-4              |



## Goal: EO-4

### Place-based Economic Development

## **Vancouver strengthens a sense of place by directing investment, policy and partnerships to key activity hubs that support local businesses, community-serving amenities, job access, and shared prosperity.**

A strong and inclusive economy is one that is rooted in place—where economic activity strengthens neighborhoods, reflects community identity, and creates opportunity close to where people live. This approach reflects Vancouver’s commitment to directing investment, policy, and partnerships toward key hubs of activity that support local businesses, community-serving amenities, job access, and shared prosperity. Rather than relying solely on citywide growth strategies, place-based economic development focuses on the specific conditions, assets, and needs of different neighborhoods, recognizing that economic opportunity is shaped by geography, access, and the built environment.

As Vancouver continues to grow and evolve, the opportunity to reinforce neighborhood-scale economic hubs has never been greater. New housing development, infrastructure investments, and public realm improvements will reshape how people live, work, and access services across the city. Targeted investment in neighborhood business districts, employment centers, and mixed-use hubs—particularly in historically underinvested corridors—allows the City to strengthen local entrepreneurship, expand access to daily goods and services, and support small businesses that anchor community life. These areas serve not only as centers of economic activity, but also as social and cultural gathering places that contribute to neighborhood vitality and identity.

Vancouver’s economic landscape also underscores the importance of localizing opportunity. Small and emerging businesses—particularly those owned by historically marginalized entrepreneurs—often face barriers related to rising commercial rents, permitting complexity, and limited access to capital. Place-based strategies allow the City to respond to these challenges by aligning land use, infrastructure, public space, and economic tools in ways that support business stability and prevent displacement as neighborhoods change. The policies under EO-4 ensure that economic development in Vancouver strengthens a sense of place while advancing equitable access to opportunity and shared prosperity across the city.

| Supporting Policy                                             | Description                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | No. | Related Goals    |
|---------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|------------------|
| <b>Affordable Commercial Space</b>                            | Use City-controlled real estate to provide affordable commercial leasing opportunities for small and emerging businesses.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | 10  | EO-4, EI-1, EO-2 |
| <b>Align Place-based Investment with the Growth Concept</b>   | Align City investments, incentives and programs to reinforce key centers identified in the growth concept as points for local economic development efforts and community investment.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | 15  | CE-5, EO-4       |
| <b>City-led Redevelopment</b>                                 | Invest in current and future City-led redevelopment efforts through property acquisition, community engagement, master planning, parks and infrastructure funding, and investment in affordable housing. Priority areas for City-led redevelopment include existing projects at Waterfront Gateway, the Heights, and Fourth Plain Ops Center; future projects at Library Square; and historically compatible investments at City-owned properties inside the Historic Reserve. | 27  | LU-1, EO-4       |
| <b>City-supported Redevelopment</b>                           | Participate in future public-private partnerships to promote redevelopment on privately owned land in key areas around the city, including Downtown, Uptown Village, West Downtown, Van Mall, Columbia Business Center, Evergreen and Grand, Mill Plain Corridor, 136th near Firstenburg, and Clark College, as well as other strategic locations around the city.                                                                                                             | 28  | LU-1, EO-4       |
| <b>Facilitate Job-creating Business Growth and Investment</b> | Support businesses that create high-quality jobs by reducing barriers to growth, streamlining development processes, and ensuring access to necessary resources and infrastructure.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | 59  | EO-2, EO-4, CE-4 |

| Supporting Policy                                 | Description                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | No.        | Related Goals    |
|---------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|------------------|
| <b>Strengthen Neighborhood Business Districts</b> | Ensure neighborhood business districts are safe, vibrant, and accessible hubs of economic activity through strategic public and private investment, and reflect a sense of community identity.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | <b>141</b> | EO-4, CE-5       |
| <b>Subarea Plans</b>                              | Develop subarea plans for centers identified in the Growth Concept and areas called out in the Equitable Development Strategy to facilitate the development of integrated residential, commercial, employment and community uses, including in the following areas: Central Mill Plain (the Heights to PeaceHealth), 136th/137th Corridor, Vancouver Mall, St. Johns/St. James couplet, Fourth Plain Corridor, Downtown, Upper Main Street and Walnut Grove, 164th Corridor, and 192nd Corridor. | <b>142</b> | LU-1, EO-4       |
| <b>Support Small Businesses</b>                   | Foster inclusive economic growth through education and resources that support small business owners, entrepreneurs and members of historically excluded and underserved communities.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | <b>150</b> | EO-4, EO-1, EI-1 |

## Chapter 5 – Key Implementing Actions

- ✓ Implement the City's Economic Development Strategy.
- ✓ Support programs and policies that help create and retain jobs that pay a living wage.
- ✓ Explore opportunities to acquire and utilize City-owned buildings for affordable commercial space.
- ✓ Enhance access to business technical assistance and growth capital for entrepreneurs and small businesses.

Develop and implement a cross sector strategy to address community childcare needs.



# Climate and Environment



6

OUR VANCOUVER



# Introduction

Climate change is no longer a distant threat in Vancouver. Rising temperatures, wildfire smoke, and more frequent flooding events are impacting the health of our residents, the resilience of our infrastructure, and the vitality of our natural systems. Without significant interventions on a national or global scale to reduce carbon emission, these impacts are expected to worsen over the next twenty years. In the face of a rapidly changing environment, the City can play a key role in mitigating some of these impacts and increasing overall community resilience.

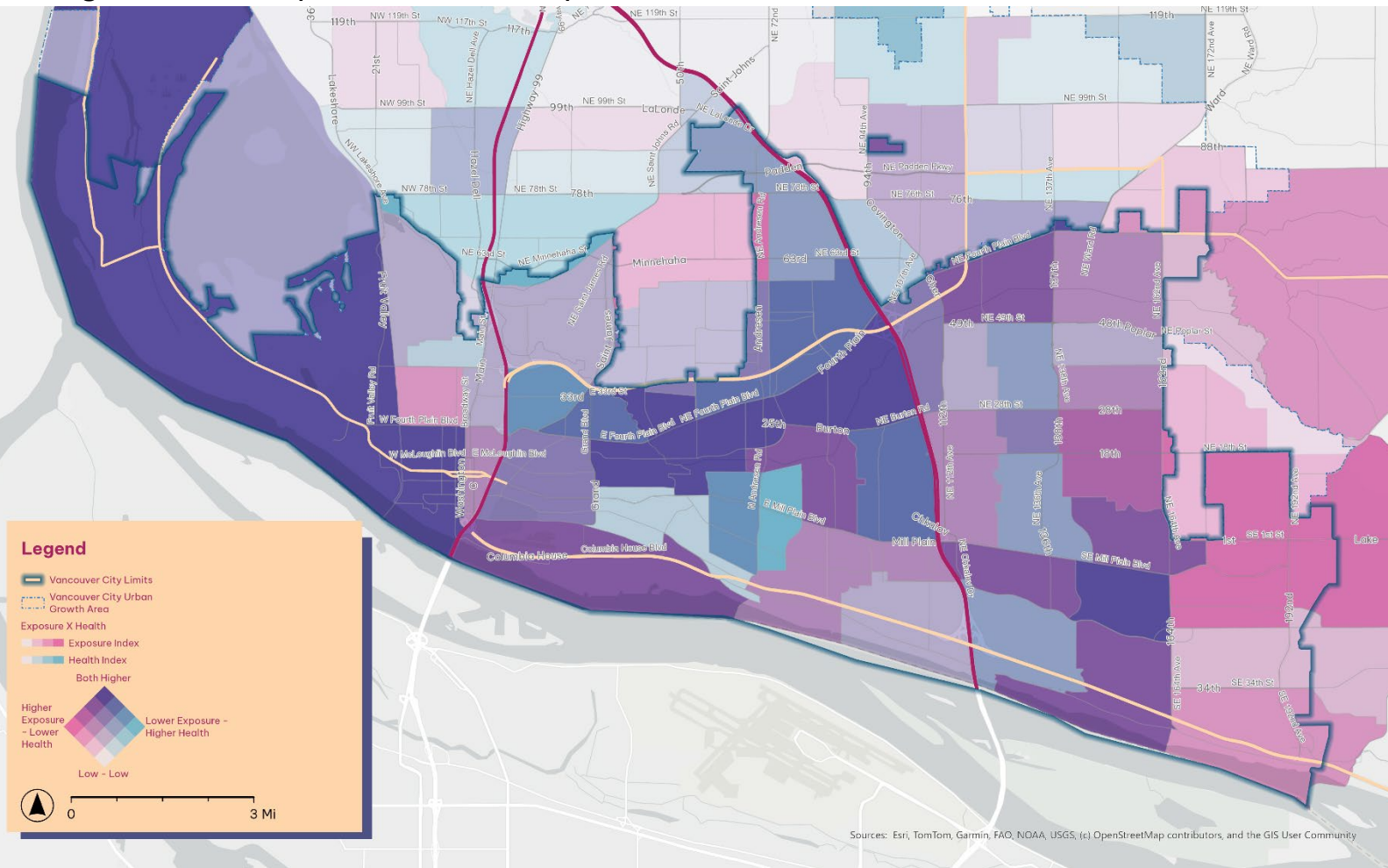


**Downtown Vancouver, Washington, during the 2020 Wildfire Season**

For decades, Vancouver’s land use patterns have shaped the GHG emissions profile the city faces today. Much of Vancouver’s post-war growth occurred through low-density residential development separated from jobs, services, and daily needs, resulting in an urban form where most households rely on driving for nearly every trip. This pattern has contributed to transportation becoming the city’s largest source of emissions, consistent with regional and statewide trends. At the same time, older housing stock and commercial buildings—many built long before modern energy codes—continue to generate substantial emissions through inefficient heating, cooling, and ventilation systems. Historic industrial activity, the concentration of commercial corridors along auto-oriented arterials, and development patterns that expanded outward rather than upward have further locked in a built environment that consumes more energy and produces more air pollution than compact, mixed-use neighborhoods. These patterns have also produced uneven climate burdens: neighborhoods with lower tree canopy, more impervious surface, and older buildings—often the same communities facing socioeconomic and health disparities—experience both higher emissions exposure and greater

climate vulnerability, reinforcing many of the inequities identified in Appendix H, Climate Vulnerability Assessment, and Appendix I, Health Impact Assessment.

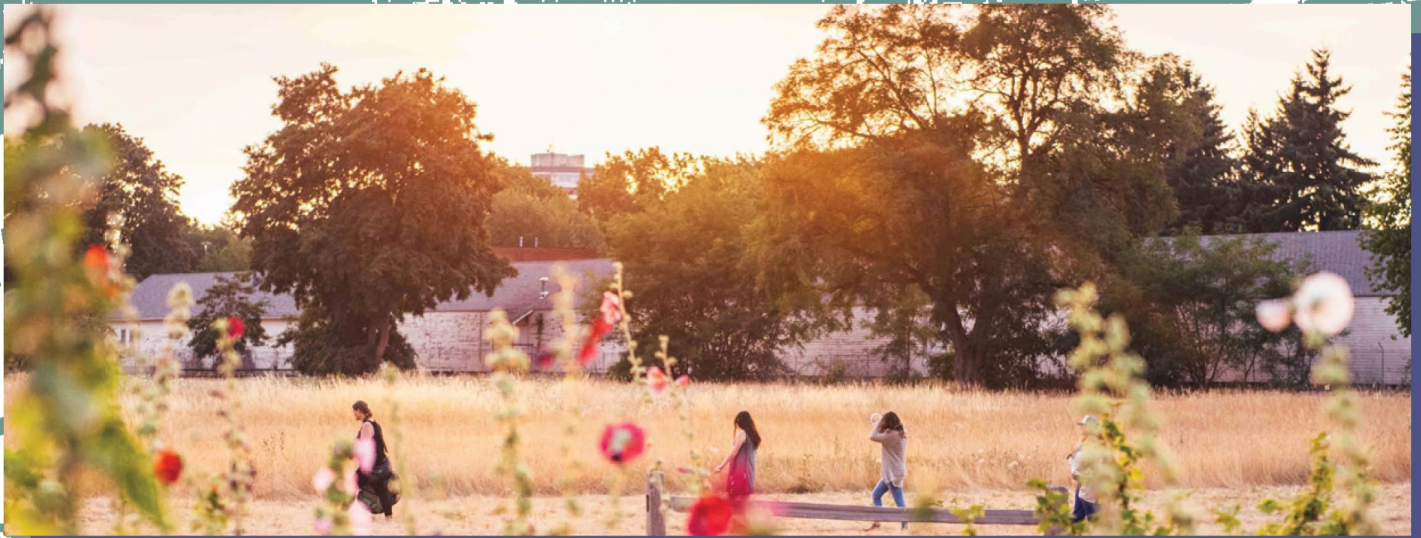
**Figure 15. Climate Exposure versus Health Impact Score**



The map above shows areas of the city that have both high exposure to climate risks (ex: extreme heat, flooding, smoke inhalation), and high instances of health conditions (such as asthma, diabetes, heart disease, or poor physical / mental health). Areas in purple have the highest instances, while areas in white have the lowest.

Due to a variety of socioeconomic factors and structural inequities, not all population groups in our community experience the impacts of climate change equally, and are less able to adapt and respond to those impacts when faced with them. Areas with the highest combined climate exposure, health sensitivity, and equity disparities are concentrated along the Fourth Plain Corridor (Maplewood, Meadow Homes, and Bagley Downs), Fruit Valley, central Vancouver south of State Route 500, and southeast Vancouver. These neighborhoods include higher proportions of people of color, low-income households, renter households, adults without a four-year degree, households with limited English proficiency, and persons with disabilities—all of which are identified as





### **Vision: Climate and Environment**

We envision a future where there is balance between the built and natural environment, with resilient and thriving communities that are well prepared to adapt to the impacts of climate change. We commit to expanding green spaces and the ecosystems they host, building sustainable infrastructure, combating heat islands, and providing every community member with multimodal transportation options that reduce GHG emissions. We will invest in projects and initiatives that support those most impacted by climate change and engage all community members in finding solutions. We will prioritize the development of infrastructure and community spaces that are ready to function during times of disaster and create places where people continue to be able to live, work and play as climate changes.

indicators of reduced adaptive capacity in the City's Equity Index. Additionally, these populations tend to overlap with areas of the city where residents experience greater health risks, such as asthma, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, diabetes, heart disease, poor physical health, and poor mental health.

As Vancouver grows, there are also opportunities to place an intentional focus on developing a built environment that supports increased health outcomes. Policy efforts to encourage physical activity, support food access, bolster community connections, mitigate health hazards, and support housing access and financial security that are outlined in this chapter can improve well-being for current and



future residents, particularly those with the greatest health disparities. Vancouver must also grow in ways that make it easier for residents to walk, bike, roll, or take public transit to their daily destinations, instead of relying primarily on single-occupancy vehicles. Achieving this will require advancing many of the strategies outlined in this plan, including creating more compact land use patterns, expanding diverse housing options, improving walking and cycling infrastructure, and encouraging a thoughtful mix of land uses to lower communitywide GHG emissions. This chapter establishes a coordinated approach to reducing GHG emissions, decreasing per-capita vehicle miles traveled, and preparing for the local impacts of climate change. It is grounded in the findings of the Climate Vulnerability Assessment (Appendix H) and Health Impact Assessment (Appendix I), which together provide the technical basis for understanding current and future climate hazards, who is most affected, and which assets and systems face the greatest risks.

### Climate Hazards

Vancouver's approach to climate resilience recognizes that climate change impacts are not experienced evenly across the city. The effects of extreme heat, heavy rainfall, drought, and wildfire smoke intersect with existing inequities in health, housing and infrastructure. Climate modeling suggests that hazards will become more intense and more frequent by 2050.



**Warming and Extreme Heat:** The annual number of extremely hot days and warm nights in the Northwest has been above the

long-term average over the past decade, and the annual number of extremely cold nights over the same period has been below the long-term average. Future warming in the region is expected to exacerbate regional heatwave intensities. It is particularly magnified on impervious areas in urban areas like Vancouver.

- **6°F hotter** average summer maximum temperature by 2050
- **+39 hot days** (over 90°F humidex/heat + humidity) by 2050



#### **Extreme Precipitation Events:**

The frequency and intensity of extreme precipitation events are projected to increase across the region. A greater number of strong atmospheric events and fewer moderate and weak events are

projected to occur and are projected to reach farther inland. In Vancouver, major flooding along rivers and streams is less likely due to flood control structures and greenways but there is a risk along the port and other areas that are low lying, and there is a risk of urban flooding elsewhere.

- **13% more total precipitation** in a 2-year storm by 2050
- **14% more total precipitation** in a 25-year storm by 2050



#### **Flooding and Infrastructure:**

Riverine flooding, as well as localized urban flooding, is a growing concern in Vancouver due to aging stormwater infrastructure, particularly in older neighborhoods with combined sewer systems. These systems are increasingly overwhelmed by intense rainfall events, leading to surface flooding and sewer overflows.

- **More frequent high stream flows** (every 9 years for Burnt Bridge Creek

and every 21 years for Columbia River, instead of every 25 years) by 2050



### Decreasing Summer Precipitation and Increasing Drought:

Summer precipitation is projected to decline. Observed lower stream flows in summer are expected to decrease. This could affect fish and other aquatic life in Vancouver's streams.

- **34% chance of lower than normal precipitation** (at or below 75% of normal) by 2050
- **Lower summer stream flows** (-5% for Burnt Bridge Creek and -21% on Columbia River) by 2050

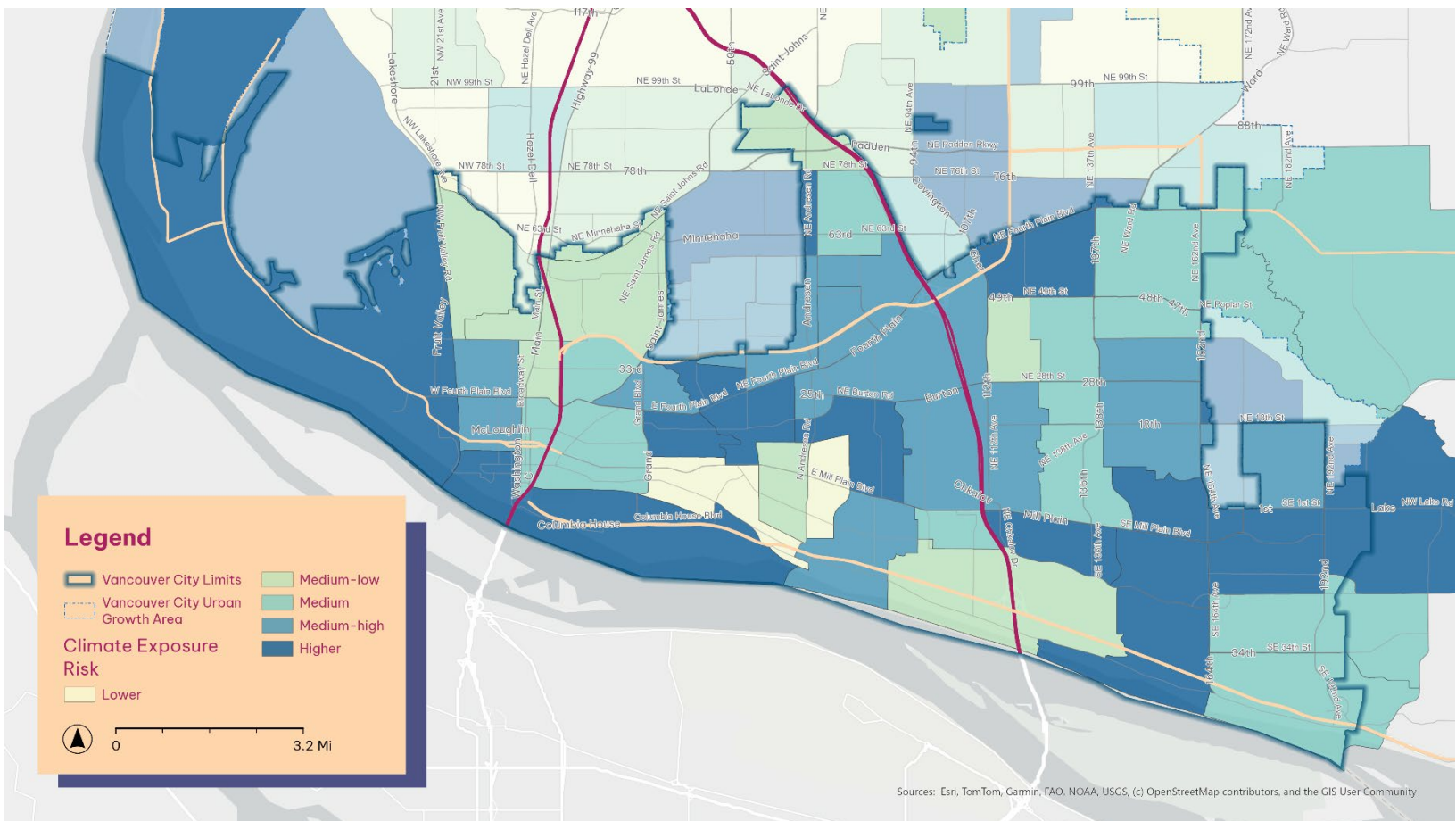


### Increasing Wildfire Likelihood and Smoke:

An increase in wildfires in the Pacific Northwest could expose people in Vancouver and the broader region to more wildfire smoke. Increased wildfire smoke events are straining indoor air quality in public facilities. Many community centers and senior centers lack adequate heating, ventilation, and air conditioning systems or filtration, limiting their ability to serve as clean air shelters during smoke events.

- **37% greater** chance of climate and fuel conditions being conducive to wildfire
- **9 more** high fire danger days in Vancouver annually by 2050

Figure 16. Climate Exposure Index. *Source: BERK, 2025*

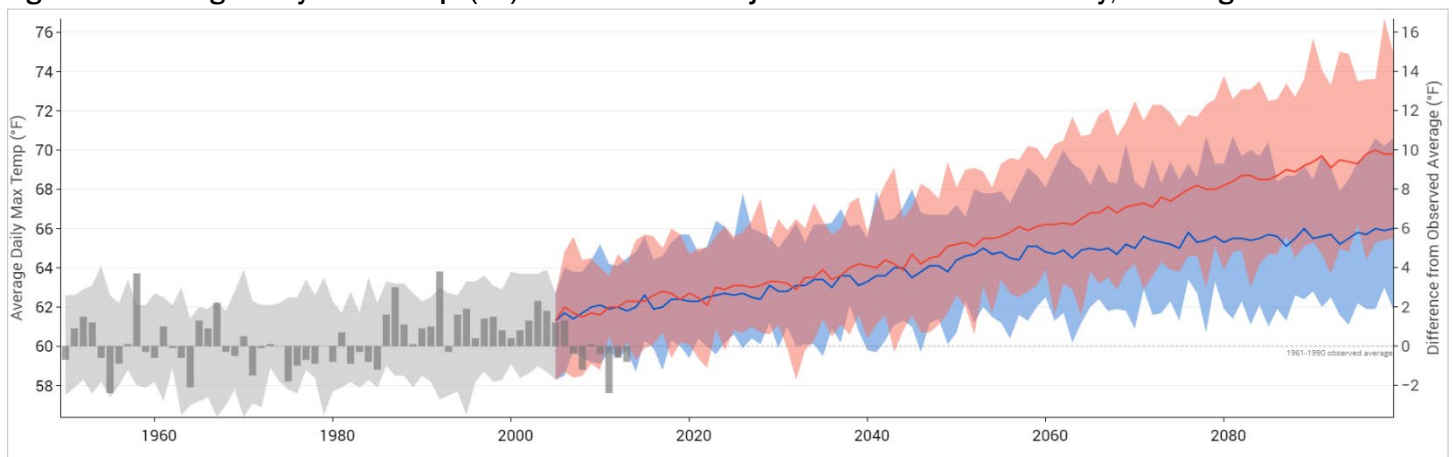


These hazards and their associated impacts vary substantially across Vancouver’s neighborhoods. Some populations are at higher risk of climate impacts than others, based on location, health sensitivities, and access to resources. Areas at higher risk include those with more pavement and fewer trees, parts of the city prone to flooding and the 100-year floodplain, areas adjacent to industrial land uses and transportation emissions, and higher exposure to air quality impacts.

Conditions like asthma, chronic obstructive pulmonary disorder, diabetes, heart disease, hypertension, poor physical health, poor mental health, and lack of health insurance are linked to higher sensitivity.

- Bagley Downs, Maplewood, and Meadow Homes—along with the Fruit Valley and Mountain View neighborhoods—face the highest combined exposure to climate hazards and the lowest equity scores, reflecting greater social and economic vulnerability and fewer resources to adapt.
- East Vancouver, including areas near the Vancouver Mall and along SE Mill Plain Boulevard, experiences the city’s greatest heat exposure, driven by low tree canopy (below 20 percent) and high impervious surface coverage.
- West Vancouver, especially around Vancouver Lake and the port, faces the highest flood and precipitation exposure due to low-lying topography and aging stormwater infrastructure. Central corridors around Burnt Bridge Creek also experience repeated surface flooding during intense rainfall events.
- Air quality and smoke exposure are more pronounced east of NW Fruit Valley Road, along State Route 14, and in southeast Vancouver, where prevailing winds concentrate wildfire smoke during regional fire events.

**Figure 17. Average Daily Max. Temp. (°F) – Historic and Projected Trends – Clark County, Washington**



Vancouver’s climate risk is the product of both natural systems and long-standing development patterns that have concentrated people, infrastructure, and industry in areas more exposed to hazards. Historically, industrial land uses and transportation corridors were sited along Vancouver’s western shoreline, adjacent to the Columbia River and Vancouver Lake. This legacy has left these neighborhoods with higher exposure to flooding, stormwater overflow, and poor air quality, while also limiting green space and tree canopy. The Climate Vulnerability Assessment (Appendix H)



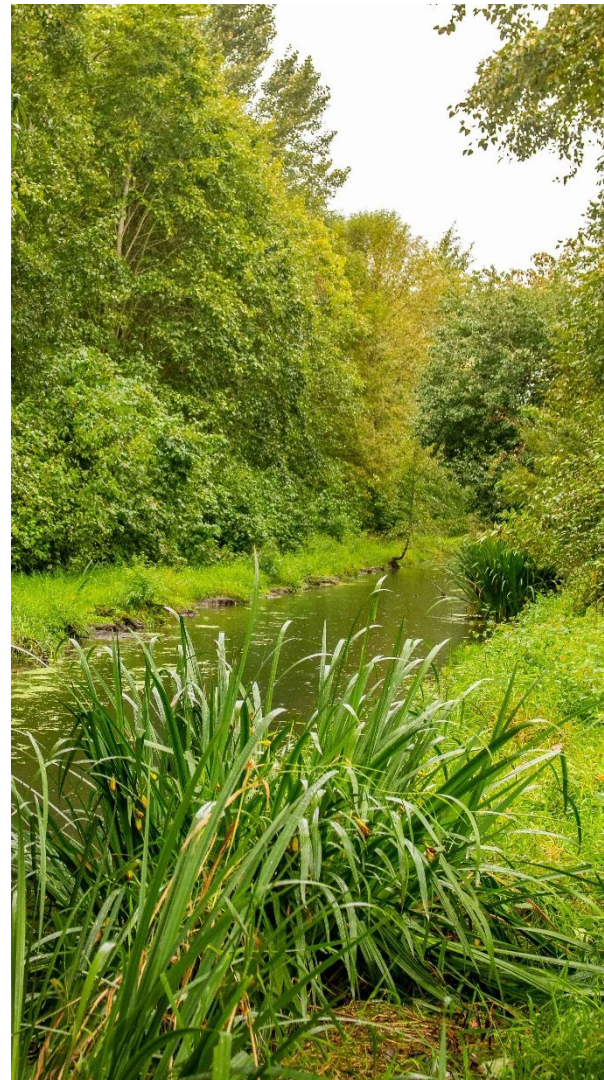
identifies these same areas as having some of the city's lowest adaptive capacity, due to older housing, lower incomes, and aging infrastructure.

### **Divesting from Fossil Fuels**

The City of Vancouver has generally not supported proposed development involving intensive fossil fuel usage in recent years. The City actively opposed the Vancouver Energy oil transshipment terminal at the Port of Vancouver, which was ultimately denied by the Washington Energy Facility Site Evaluation Council (EFSEC) and the Governor in 2017. In 2022 the City enacted a yearlong moratorium on the construction of large scale distribution warehouses, which was then replaced with standards allowing the warehouses only on a more limited basis, with requirements that they include various climate friendly features and use restrictions. To meet community GHG reduction goals, the City will need to continue to limit new major investments in fossil fuel infrastructure, develop strategies to phase out existing infrastructure and utilize renewable sources in their place.

### **Critical Areas and Shorelines**

Vancouver's Critical Areas Ordinance and Shoreline Master Program (SMP) are foundational tools for advancing climate resilience through land use planning and for implementing the City's Climate Vulnerability Assessment (CVA). These regulatory frameworks protect wetlands, floodplains, fish and wildlife habitat conservation areas, geologic hazard areas, and shoreline environments—natural systems that the CVA identifies as among the most sensitive to climate impacts such as increased flooding, extreme precipitation, rising temperatures, and degraded water quality. By regulating development intensity, requiring buffers, limiting disturbance, and prioritizing restoration in these areas, the CAO and SMP directly implement CVA strategies that call for protecting and enhancing natural infrastructure to reduce hazard exposure and improve adaptive capacity. The SMP, adopted under the Shoreline Management Act, further reinforces these outcomes by establishing shoreline designations, restoration priorities, and development standards that maintain ecological function while accommodating appropriate water-dependent uses and public access. Together, these frameworks play a critical role in protecting and restoring habitat connectivity, supporting biodiversity, and improving ecosystem resilience in the face of climate change. Integrating CVA findings into ongoing updates and implementation of the CAO and SMP ensures that land use decisions proactively reduce risks, protect wildlife, and strengthen the city's ability to adapt to future climate conditions.



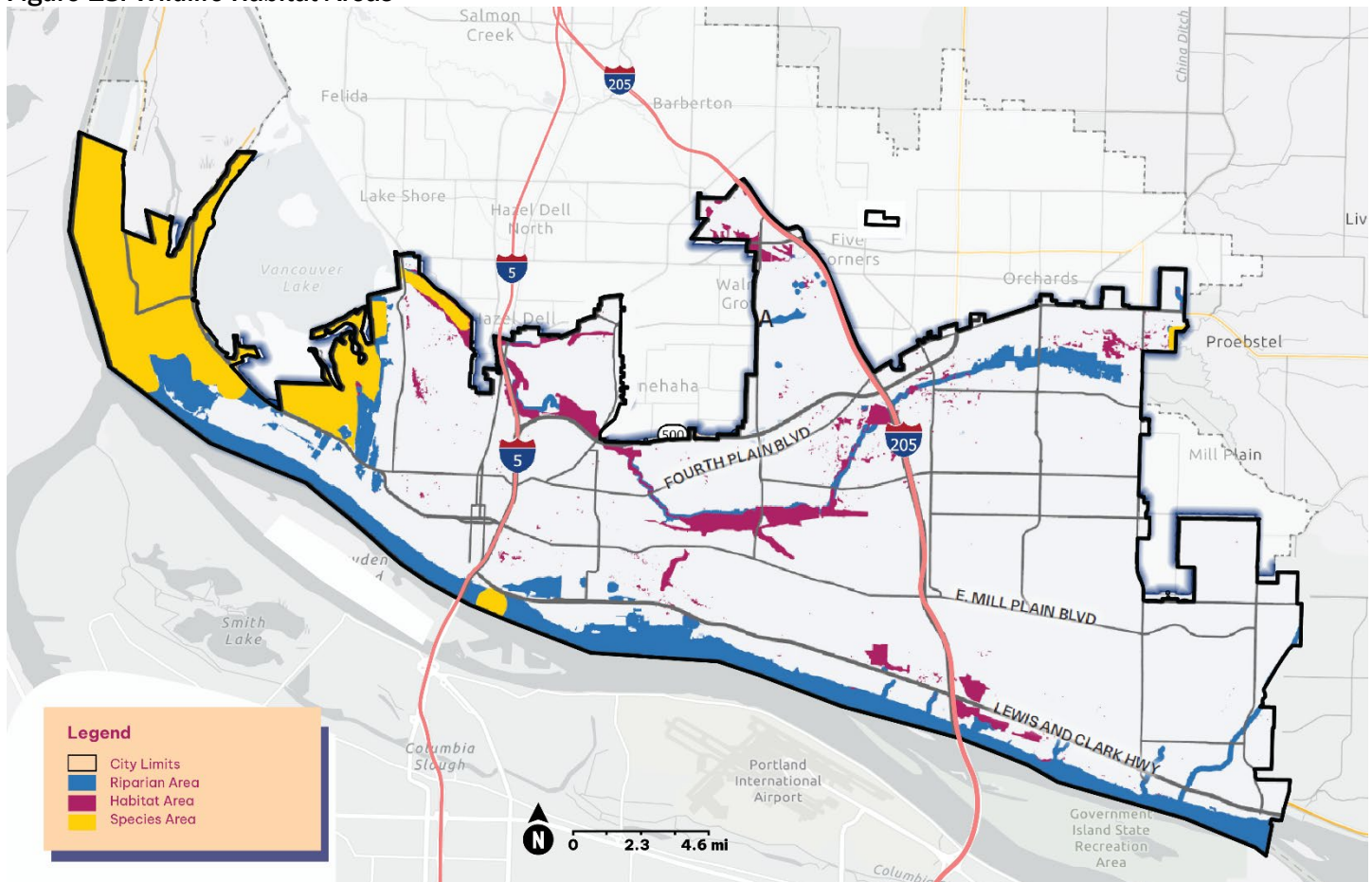
Burnt Bridge Creek is a key ecological asset that runs east to west through the City.



## Wildlife Habitat

As Vancouver grows, the design of the built environment plays an increasingly important role in protecting wildlife, maintaining ecological function, and strengthening climate resilience. Approximately 14 percent of the city supports key riparian functions, wildlife habitat and vulnerable species, with key corridors along Burnt Bridge Creek, the Columbia River, and other water resources. These areas support biodiversity, provide habitat connectivity, and serve as critical migration routes, including for birds traveling along the Pacific Flyway and fish within the Lower Columbia River system. At the same time, urban development, climate stressors, and human activity introduce pressures that can degrade habitat quality, disrupt species behavior, and reduce ecosystem resilience. The City's Climate Vulnerability Assessment (CVA) identifies ecosystems, water resources, and habitat corridors as highly sensitive to climate impacts, including increased flooding, extreme precipitation, rising temperatures, and degraded water quality. It also highlights secondary stressors—such as invasive species, pest outbreaks, and habitat fragmentation—that can accelerate ecological decline if not proactively managed. In this context, climate resilience depends not only on protecting designated critical areas, but also on shaping how development interacts with the broader urban ecosystem. Integrating CVA findings into land use planning means designing development to minimize ecological disruption, enhance habitat function, and support species' ability to adapt to changing conditions.

**Figure 18: Wildlife Habitat Areas**



## **Protecting Habitat Through Land Use Planning**

The City's Critical Areas Ordinance and Shoreline Master Program provide the regulatory foundation for protecting wetlands, fish and wildlife habitat conservation areas, and shoreline environments, consistent with state requirements and best available science. These frameworks require avoidance, minimization, and mitigation of impacts, and are guided by a "no net loss" standard for ecological functions. They also establish buffers, habitat protection measures, and restoration requirements that help maintain ecosystem services such as flood storage, water quality protection, and habitat connectivity.

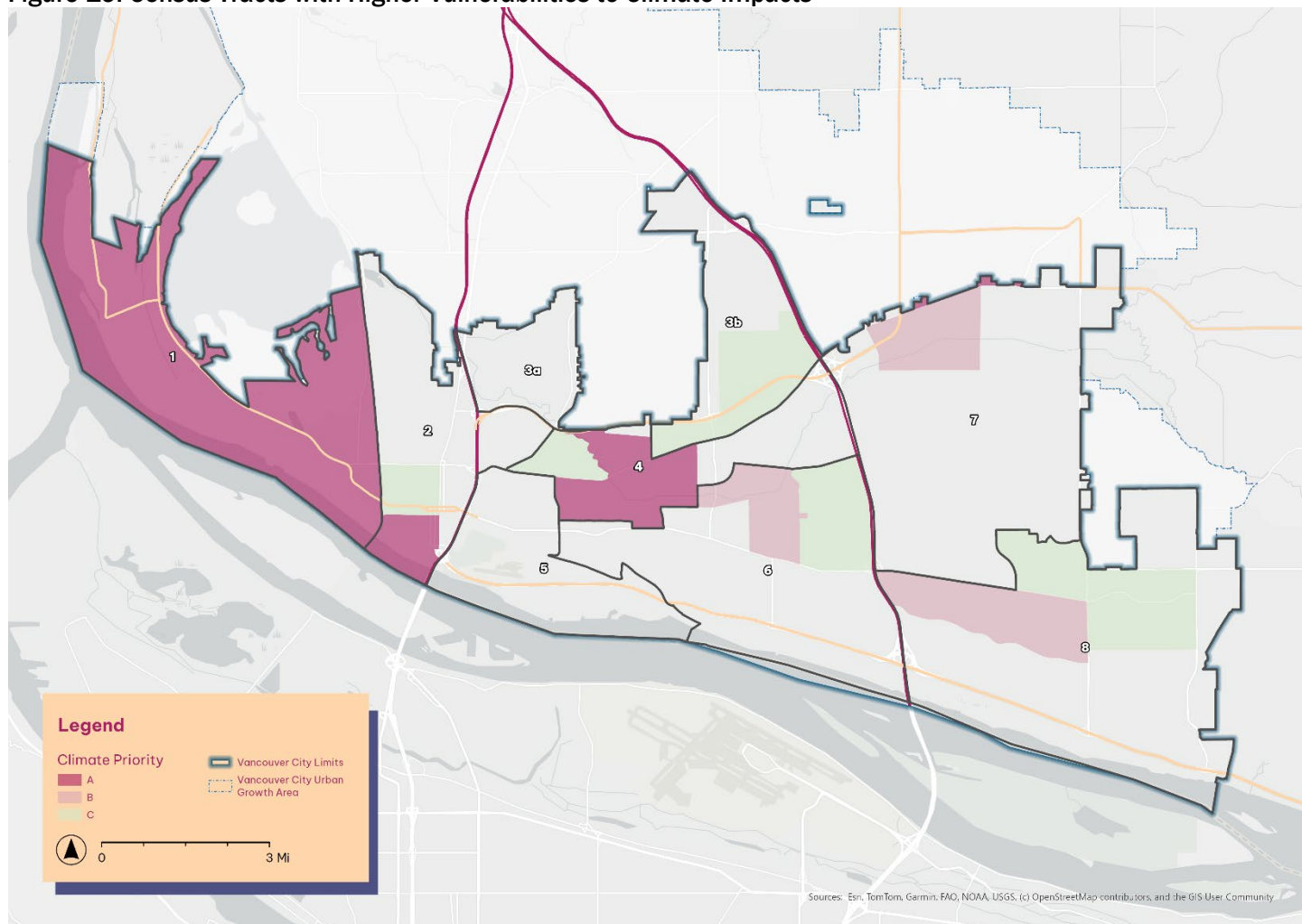
Given Vancouver's location along the Pacific Flyway, bird-safe design is particularly important. Excessive or poorly designed lighting can disrupt migration patterns, alter feeding and breeding behaviors, and increase mortality for birds and other species. To reduce these impacts, development should incorporate lighting strategies that minimize ecological disruption, including the use of downlighting, shielding, and lighting controls to reduce light spill and glare. Applying dark sky principles—such as limiting unnecessary nighttime illumination, using warmer color temperatures, and directing light only where needed—can help maintain more natural light cycles while also conserving energy. Building materials and design also play a critical role. Bird collisions with glass are a leading cause of mortality in urban areas, particularly near habitat corridors and water features. Mitigations are most effective when applied in areas near riparian corridors, habitat areas, and other ecological features identified in Figure 18. Protecting wildlife and natural systems is a core component of climate resilience. Healthy ecosystems provide essential services that reduce climate risks, including flood mitigation, urban cooling, water quality protection, and carbon sequestration.

While Vancouver does not currently designate protected habitat areas as a standalone classification, the functions of these areas are embedded within the City's critical areas and shoreline regulations. Riparian corridors, wetlands, and fish and wildlife habitat conservation areas function as core ecological assets that support biodiversity and climate resilience. As shown in Figure 18, these areas form an interconnected system across the city that should be preserved and enhanced over time. When opportunities and funding streams emerge in the future to acquire land for conservation purposes, these areas should be prioritized as greenway or natural area designations.

## **Invasive Species**

Climate change is expected to increase the spread and intensity of invasive species and pests, which can outcompete native vegetation, degrade habitat, and alter ecosystem dynamics. Managing these risks is essential to maintaining biodiversity and ecological resilience. The City will need to support integrated pest management approaches that prioritize prevention, monitoring, and non-toxic or least-toxic control methods, while reducing reliance on pesticides that can harm pollinators, aquatic systems, and other wildlife. Coordination with regional partners, including the Clark County Mosquito Control District, will continue to be important to balance public health needs with ecological protection.

**Figure 19. Census Tracts with Higher Vulnerabilities to Climate Impacts**



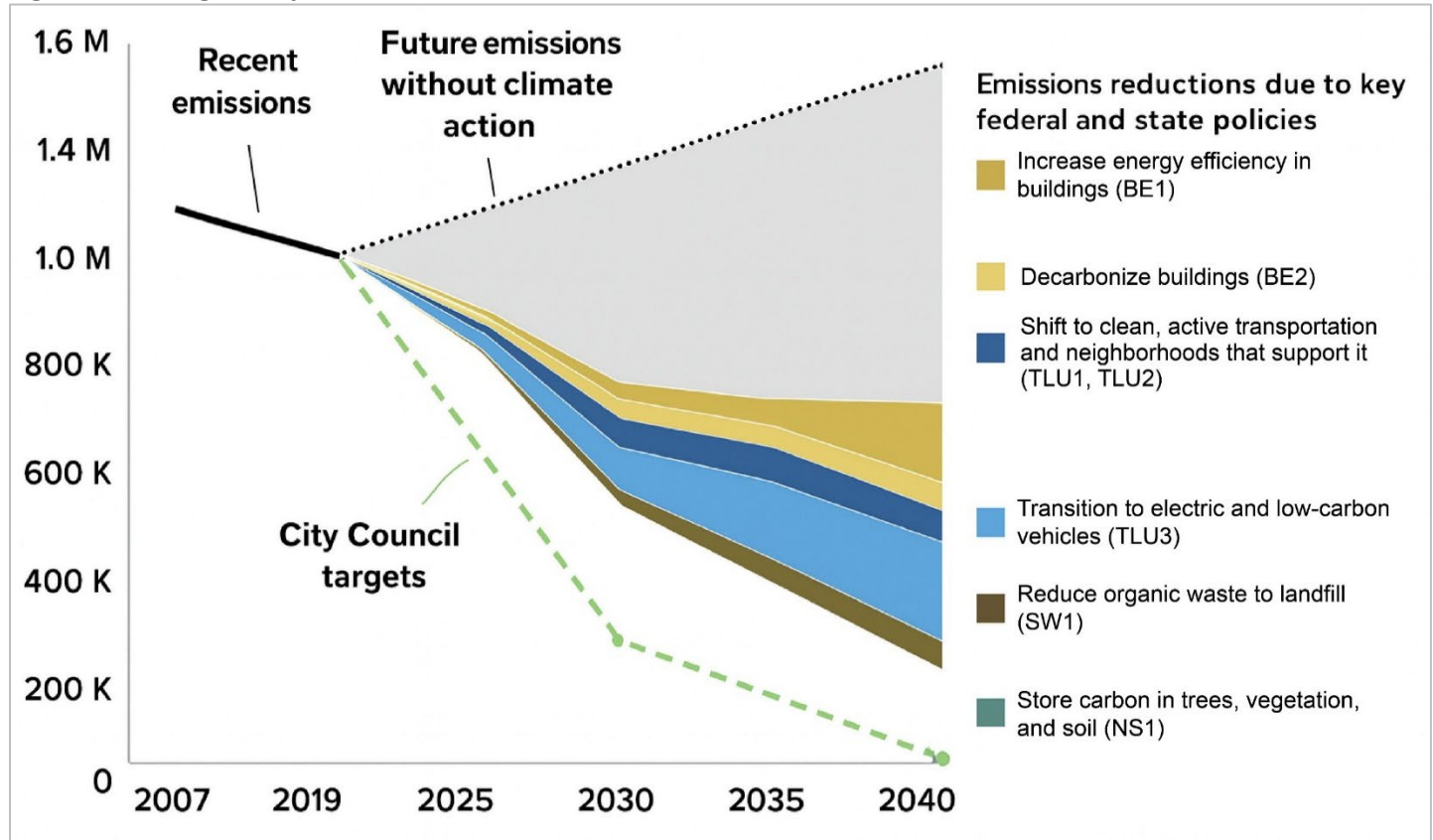
## Greenhouse Gas Emissions

As climate impacts become more intense and frequent, it is increasingly urgent that Vancouver takes action to reduce GHG emissions, which are the driving force of climate change. Emissions in Vancouver mostly come from how we get around and how we heat, cool, and power buildings. Air travel, vehicles and equipment (like cars, delivery trucks, boats, and lawn mowers), electricity use, and natural gas use are major sources. Over time, residents on average have used less natural gas, driven fewer miles, and sent less waste to the landfill, even as our local economy has progressed.

The City's Climate Action Framework sets forth a goal that the city be carbon neutral by 2040. The Framework anticipates that with current technologies and existing policies, Vancouver could reach approximately 80 percent of its goal towards carbon neutrality; refer to Figure 20. With policy changes and technological innovations, Vancouver will strive to close the remaining gap. This element reflects the City's policy changes and actions to reach its goal through reducing emissions from City-owned buildings, operations, infrastructure, and municipal fleet; supporting transportation options; regulating land use; advancing technology and infrastructure; and partnering on regional economic development. The Greenhouse Gas Emissions Inventory (Appendix N) provides a more detailed accounting of community-wide and municipal emissions, establishing a baseline to

track progress toward the City’s climate goals. The inventory identifies key emissions sources—particularly in transportation and buildings—and highlights areas where targeted action can have the greatest impact. This data-driven foundation informs climate policies and helps prioritize strategies to reduce emissions and improve community health and resilience.

**Figure 20. Wedge Analysis – Climate Action Framework**



## Health and the Built Environment

Land use and urban design shape the health of our communities. Safe and accessible walking and biking routes, access to parks, proximity to grocery stores and other services, housing access, and financial security all affect people’s well-being on a day-to-day basis. Exposure to poor air and water quality, noise, heat, and climate impacts can have negative effects. City policies that emphasize health benefits and minimize hazards can lead to better health outcomes for Vancouver residents. The City can support physical activity through parks and active transportation. Access to parks varies citywide: Fruit Valley, Rose Village, Fourth Plain Village, and some areas on the east side of Vancouver have less than 20 percent of the park acreage needed to meet the City’s established level of service (LOS)<sup>39</sup>. As of 2024, only 2 percent of Vancouver workers walk to work, 0.5 percent bike to work, and 3 percent take public transit (and are likely to walk some amount in their commute), while the overwhelming majority (75 percent) drive alone to their jobs<sup>40</sup>. Many existing

<sup>39</sup> 2022–2031 Vancouver Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Services Comprehensive Plan

<sup>40</sup> Design Workshop (2024)



car trips are under 5 miles long. Improved pedestrian and bicycle safety and connectivity could make active transportation an option for more people. Land use planning that encourages mixed uses and more services near homes can also make it easier to walk and bike on a regular basis.

Much of the Vancouver population has food access challenges. Sixteen percent receive Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) support and 48 percent of public school students receive free and reduced school lunch<sup>41</sup>. Access to supermarkets varies citywide: some areas don't have any within a mile. Other food resources include food banks, community gardens, and local farmers markets. City efforts can help support access

to food by facilitating the density and commercial space needed to support new stores, and by promoting community gardens and other food-related uses.

Access to other amenities also varies. There is generally lower access to services, in terms of quantity and variety, in Fruit Valley, Rose Village, and some areas west of I-205 and the east side of

## Health Facts

- **5.5%** workers who get some physical activity on their commute (walk, bike, or take transit)
- **16%** of households receive SNAP benefits
- **48%** students who receive free and reduced school lunch
- **30** estimated deaths per year from poor air quality exposure (PM2.5)
- **1 in 8** households living below the federal poverty level

## Equity Lens

Some communities experience greater climate hazard and health disparities than others:

- Persons that are elderly may have more limited mobility or pre-existing health conditions, and children under five years old may have a harder time regulating temperature and may have underdeveloped immune systems.
- Low-income households may be more susceptible to illnesses and have limited resources to adapt or respond to climate change.
- Persons that speak English less than very well may have more difficulties during evacuation and difficulties accessing post-disaster funding.
- Households with lower incomes are more likely to lose more work hours due to weather.
- BIPOC populations are more likely to have new asthma diagnoses due to particulate air pollution.
- Areas with less tree canopy are exposed to more heat, and communities of color have less coverage in Vancouver.

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<sup>41</sup> U.S. Census Bureau (2022) and Design Workshop (2024)

the city. Land use that supports a mix of uses and densities can encourage development that provides new services close to where people live. A range of health hazards also affect Vancouver residents. Vancouver is especially impacted by air pollution, with an estimated 30 deaths per year associated with PM 2.5 concentration<sup>42</sup>. Other threats like climate hazards and noise vary by location. City policies can help mitigate these hazards by influencing things like tree canopy cover, placement of growth, stormwater management, and other factors.

Housing and economic issues are also tied to health and well-being. Affordability and displacement are pressing issues in Vancouver, and many older units may have exposure to hazards like lead and asbestos. About one in eight households is living below the federal poverty level and average wages are especially insufficient for single parent households<sup>43</sup>. City policies to encourage housing affordability, safe and healthy housing, and a strong local economy can create opportunities for all Vancouver residents to thrive.

### Tree Canopy

Tree canopy is one of the most effective and visible climate resilience strategies available to the City, providing a wide range of environmental, social, and economic benefits. Trees reduce urban heat island effects, improve air quality, manage stormwater, sequester carbon, and contribute to overall community health and livability. However, Vancouver's current canopy coverage—approximately 19 percent—is well below the level needed to maximize these benefits. The City's Urban Forestry Management Plan establishes a goal of achieving 28 percent canopy coverage by 2030, requiring a substantial increase in tree planting, preservation, and long-term maintenance efforts. Reaching this goal will require not only expanding the urban forest



*Areas like Blandford Canyon (shown above) still have significant stands of trees. Trees provide greater ecological benefits and remain healthy when preserved in large stands. Vancouver's ability to achieve its Tree Canopy goals will depend on preserving these areas and ensuring new development does not significantly disrupt ecologic processes.*

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<sup>42</sup> Washington State Department of Ecology (2023)

<sup>43</sup> U.S. Census Bureau (2023), MIT (2025)

through coordinated planting initiatives and community partnerships, but also prioritizing the protection of existing mature trees through a “no net loss” framework and stronger enforcement of tree regulations. Just as importantly, tree canopy must be expanded equitably—today, canopy is unevenly distributed across the city, with neighborhoods with higher proportions of people of color and lower incomes have less tree plantings than more affluent neighborhoods. Achieving Vancouver’s canopy goals will therefore require a targeted, data-driven approach that prioritizes planting and investment in underserved neighborhoods, aligns with broader climate and health equity goals, and ensures that the long-term benefits of the urban forest are shared across all communities.

## Community Feedback

- ➔ Through Resilience Rising in May and June 2025, participants with Fourth Plain Forward, the Southwest Washington Equity Coalition, and Washington Conservation Action repeatedly raised issues of inequitable access to resources like air conditioning, clean air shelters, and public cooling infrastructure.
- ➔ Through engagement for the Climate Adaptation Strategy in 2023, physical elements that community members would like to see include water features, such as splash pads, urban gardens and fruit trees; more tree coverage; and community centers or public spaces for neighbors to connect with one another.
- ➔ Air, water, and noise pollution are major concerns, viewed as top issues affecting neighborhood health and tied to worries about traffic, industrial uses, and incompatible land uses.
- ➔ Strong desire to protect and expand natural assets, including preserving open space, preventing habitat loss, increasing tree canopy and shade, planting native species, and creating more community gardens and green spaces.
- ➔ Broad support for climate-friendly and sustainable development practices, such as concentrating growth near transit, improving energy efficiency, expanding solar, enhancing stormwater management, and balancing development with forest and agricultural land conservation.
- ➔ Community resilience is a priority, with interest in cooling features, resilient infrastructure, emergency preparedness, and using public buildings, transit centers, and natural systems (like trees) as resilience assets.
- ➔ Access to essential health, food, and social services is critical, including medical facilities, fresh food, culturally and physically accessible services, and resources for vulnerable populations.
- ➔ People value clean, quiet, nature-connected neighborhoods, emphasizing the importance of mitigating noise, reducing pollution, improving compatibility between land uses, and ensuring development does not degrade environmental quality.

## Goal: CL-1

## Resilience and Climate Adaptation

**Vancouver is a resilient and sustainable city that is prepared to mitigate and adapt to the localized impacts of climate change, including sea level rise, landslides, flooding, more intense winter storm conditions, drought, heat, smoke, and wildfire.**

Vancouver's climate response depends on preparing for and adapting to the localized impacts of climate change that are already unfolding across the region. Rising temperatures, more frequent wildfire smoke events, intense rainfall, flooding, and prolonged drought conditions are affecting residents in every neighborhood—and disproportionately harming frontline communities with fewer resources to cope. Goal CL-1 establishes a coordinated, community-centered approach to safeguarding public health, strengthening infrastructure, and ensuring that all residents have equitable access to the protections they need as climate conditions intensify. This goal embraces the reality that resilience is built through both physical investments and strong social networks, and it positions Vancouver to adapt proactively rather than reactively.

At the core of this approach is robust disaster recovery and emergency response, which ensures that residents—particularly older adults, people with disabilities, unhoused residents, low-income households, and linguistically isolated communities—can access emergency information, cooling or clean-air shelters, medical care, and recovery assistance during climate-related events. Supportive policies include building trust with community-based organizations, cultural groups, and neighborhood networks, acknowledging that these relationships are essential for effective emergency communication and resource distribution.

Vancouver's Climate Vulnerability Assessment (Appendix H) shows that heat exposure is most severe in neighborhoods with limited tree canopy, high impervious surfaces, and existing social and health inequities. Policies under this goal commit the City to cooling these neighborhoods through strategic shade structures, expanded green space, and climate-appropriate tree canopy—especially in Equity Priority Neighborhoods. These nature-based solutions not only cool streets and homes but also improve air quality, reduce stormwater runoff, and create healthier public environments.



The approach also proposed integrating climate-resilient infrastructure and buildings into both public projects and private development, including green stormwater systems, drought-tolerant landscaping, cool roofs, and building upgrades that increase energy efficiency, improve indoor air quality, and reduce emissions. Expanding solar access for low-income renters and homeowners supports both equity and long-term energy resilience. Policies that advance solid waste reduction, composting, and resource recovery further reduce emissions and environmental impacts.

| Supporting Policy                               | Description                                                                                                                                                                        | No. | Related Goals                 |
|-------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|-------------------------------|
| <b>Adapt Infrastructure to Climate Change</b>   | Retrofit existing infrastructure, parks and natural spaces, and construct new facilities to adapt to the localized impacts that will occur in the community due to climate change. | 8   | CL-1, PFS-1, PFS-3            |
| <b>Build a Resilient Economy</b>                | Encourage business growth, retention, and expansion, with an emphasis on family-wage jobs and foster resilience within Vancouver's economy.                                        | 24  | LU-2 CL-1, EO-3               |
| <b>Climate Resilient Spaces</b>                 | Incorporate elements of climate resiliency into new public spaces, buildings, and infrastructure.                                                                                  | 29  | CL-1, CE-1, PR-1, PFS-3, LU-3 |
| <b>Conserve Water Resources</b>                 | Encourage water-efficient technologies and practices to reduce consumption and ensure sustainable water availability amid climate change and growing demand.                       | 37  | CL-1, CL-4, PFS-1             |
| <b>Disaster Recovery and Emergency Response</b> | Develop plans and resources to ensure effective emergency response and recovery efforts in the event of natural disasters, climate-related hazards, and social disruptions.        | 43  | CE-3, CL-1, PFS-3             |

| Supporting Policy                                                  | Description                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | No. | Related Goals          |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|------------------------|
| <b>Energy Efficient and Climate Resilient Buildings</b>            | Ensure that buildings contribute to the City's GHG reduction goals and protect occupants from pollution, extreme weather and other climate hazards.                                                                         | 48  | CL-1, CL-3             |
| <b>Equity and Climate Data</b>                                     | Incorporate the City's Equity Index, Displacement Risk Assessment tool, and climate vulnerability assessment in public investment and infrastructure improvement decisions.                                                 | 54  | EI-1, PFS-1, CL-1      |
| <b>Historic and Culturally Significant Resources</b>               | Protect and preserve significant cultural, historic, archeologic, and ecologic community resources. Promote preservation, restoration, and rehabilitation of historic and architecturally significant structures.           | 66  | CE-5, CL-1, CL-2, PR-4 |
| <b>Climate Resilient Development</b>                               | Integrate climate resiliency best practices into the City's review of new development.                                                                                                                                      | 72  | CL-1, CL-2, PFS-1      |
| <b>Pilot Projects</b>                                              | Encourage the use of short-term pilot projects for park, transportation, and general infrastructure improvements before making long-term investments to foster innovation, test feasibility, and increase community buy-in. | 102 | CE-4, PR-2, TM-2, CL-1 |
| <b>Reduce Climate Impact Exposure to Vancouver's Neighborhoods</b> | Establish development regulations that incorporate best practices for reducing the risk of wildfire, extreme heat, flooding, and other climate-exacerbated hazards.                                                         | 111 | CL-1                   |

| Supporting Policy                             | Description                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | No. | Related Goals                 |
|-----------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|-------------------------------|
| <b>Reduce Heat Island Effect</b>              | Minimize impacts of the urban heat island effect, reduce geographic temperature disparities, and safeguard vulnerable populations from the adverse effects of extreme heat.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | 115 | CL-1, CL-2, CL-4              |
| <b>Reduce Solid Waste</b>                     | Increase waste diversion rates through a system that minimizes landfill reliance, reduces GHG emissions, prioritizes composting and encourages resource recovery.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | 117 | CL-1, CL-3, CL-4, EO-3, PFS-1 |
| <b>Redundancy in Infrastructure</b>           | Design, construct and maintain capital infrastructure systems with resiliency and redundancy to minimize the risk of system failure during natural hazards, climate-related events, or other disruptions. Prioritize investments that diversify supply sources, strengthen backup systems, and enhance adaptive capacity so essential services can be maintained or restored quickly in the event of a failure. | 119 | PFS-3, CL-1                   |
| <b>Solar Access</b>                           | Expand residential, commercial and industrial access to solar power to meet energy needs.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | 134 | CL-1, CL-3                    |
| <b>Stormwater Management</b>                  | Improve water quality, protect watersheds and reduce flood risks by promoting groundwater infiltration, reducing runoff, and advancing effective stormwater best management practices (BMPs).                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | 136 | CL-1, PFS-1                   |
| <b>Strategic Reuse of Excess Right-of-Way</b> | Analyze suitability of excess and unneeded ROW for adding tree canopy, native planting, nature spaces, and stormwater management systems.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | 137 | CL-1, CL-2, LU-3, CL-4, PR-2  |

## Goal: CL-2

## Increase Biodiversity and Enhance Natural Systems

**Vancouver has thriving ecosystems, builds green infrastructure and preserves natural spaces that enhance air quality, provide natural cooling, sequester carbon, and beautify neighborhoods, enriching residents' quality of life and fostering rich and diverse plant and animal life.**

Vancouver's natural systems—its forests, waterways, wetlands, riparian corridors, and open spaces—are essential to the city's long-term resilience, ecological health, and quality of life. This goal strengthens these systems by proposing solutions to restore habitat, expand green infrastructure, improve tree canopy, and protect the ecological functions that cool neighborhoods, filter air and water, sequester carbon, and sustain a diversity of plant and animal life. As climate impacts intensify, these natural assets also serve as vital buffers against heat, flooding, drought, and poor air quality.

CL-2 emphasizes protecting and restoring the city's critical areas and shorelines, ensuring no net loss of ecological function and advancing conservation design principles that support salmon-bearing streams, wetlands, and riparian habitats. The goal further commits to restoring degraded natural areas, improving habitat quality, and identifying climate refugia—places with naturally cooler conditions, stable hydrology, or intact vegetation that can sustain species under climate stress. These strategies help maintain biodiversity while preserving the ecological processes that safeguard water quality, reduce erosion, and support community well-being.

Expanding and equitably distributing tree canopy are cornerstones of this goal. Increasing canopy to 28 percent—and prioritizing low-canopy, equity priority neighborhoods—provides natural cooling, reduces heat island effects, improves air quality, and enhances stormwater infiltration. Integrated climate-resilient infrastructure, such as green streets, bioswales, and permeable surfaces, complements this work by managing runoff, reducing localized flooding, and bringing greenery into urban areas where it is most needed.

CL-2 also strengthens habitat connectivity, linking parks, natural areas, and open spaces through linear greenways and active transportation corridors. These networks support wildlife movement, expand pollinator habitat, and create shaded, walkable routes for residents. Complementary policies



promote native landscapes, food forests, and agroforestry, which enhance soil health, support food security, and foster cultural knowledge-sharing. Conservation of environmentally sensitive lands ensures long-term protection for ecologically significant areas.

Another key component of CL-2 is building meaningful partnerships with Tribal nations and Indigenous land stewards, whose knowledge and cultural priorities deepen ecological understanding and inform stewardship practices. The goal also aligns closely with efforts to protect historic, cultural, and archeological resources, recognizing the intertwined nature of cultural heritage and ecological resilience.

| Supporting Policy                                                  | Description                                                                                                                                                                                                       | No. | Related Goals          |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|------------------------|
| <b>Conserve Land For Open Space and Environmental Preservation</b> | Acquire environmentally sensitive land with ecological benefits for the purpose of conservation.                                                                                                                  | 35  | PR-2, CL-2             |
| <b>Engage with Tribal Community Members</b>                        | Foster meaningful partnerships with Tribal communities and land stewards, integrating their knowledge, priorities, and cultural perspectives into local decision-making processes.                                | 49  | EI-4, CL-2             |
| <b>Equitably Expand Tree Canopy</b>                                | Use canopy assessment data and the City's Equity Index to prioritize areas for tree planting and greening investments.                                                                                            | 53  | CL-2                   |
| <b>Habitat and Species Under Stress from Climate Change</b>        | Take inventory of and protect climate refugia, and fish and wildlife habitat needs for species under stress from climate change.                                                                                  | 64  | CL-2, CL-4             |
| <b>Historic and Culturally Significant Resources</b>               | Protect and preserve significant cultural, historic, archeologic, and ecologic community resources. Promote preservation, restoration, and rehabilitation of historic and architecturally significant structures. | 66  | CE-5, CL-1, CL-2, PR-4 |
| <b>Climate Resilient Development</b>                               | Integrate climate resiliency best practices into the City's review of new development.                                                                                                                            | 72  | CL-1, CL-2, PFS-1      |
| <b>Native Landscapes</b>                                           | Incorporate native plantings, food forests, and agroforestry into parks and public spaces to support food security, ecological health, and cultural knowledge sharing                                             | 94  | PR-3, CL-2, EO-3       |

| Supporting Policy                                        | Description                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | No. | Related Goals                       |
|----------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|-------------------------------------|
| <b>Pollinator Habitats</b>                               | Support a healthy urban ecosystem by embedding pollinator habitat into public and private development, prioritizing pesticide free landscaping, removal and reducing use of invasive species, enhancing biodiversity, and connecting natural spaces across the city through pollinator-friendly plantings. | 103 | CL-2, PR-2, PR-3, CL-4              |
| <b>Preserve and Protect the Columbia River</b>           | Manage the built and natural environment to protect and restore the water quality and habitat of the Columbia River basin, reflecting its central role in the city's identity, economy, history, and future.                                                                                               | 104 | CL-2, CL-4, CE-5, EO-2, PR-2, PFS-1 |
| <b>Protect and Restore Critical Areas and Shorelines</b> | Protect critical areas, shorelines and other ecologically significant areas, ensure no net loss of ecological function through avoidance and mitigation of impacts, and apply conservation design principles to restore and enhance degraded areas.                                                        | 108 | CL-2                                |
| <b>Reduce Heat Island Effect</b>                         | Minimize impacts of the urban heat island effect, reduce geographic temperature disparities, and safeguard vulnerable populations from the adverse effects of extreme heat.                                                                                                                                | 115 | CL-1, CL-2, CL-4                    |
| <b>Regional Trail and Open Space Networks</b>            | Work with nonprofit and private partners, Clark County and adjacent cities to build out the regional trail network for recreation and active transportation purposes.                                                                                                                                      | 123 | TM-1, PR-2, CL-2                    |
| <b>Strategic Reuse of Excess Right-of-Way</b>            | Analyze suitability of excess and unneeded ROW for adding tree canopy, native planting, nature spaces, and stormwater management systems.                                                                                                                                                                  | 137 | CL-1, CL-2, LU-3, CL-4, PR-2        |

## Goal: CL-3

## Decrease Emissions

### **Vancouver is a carbon-neutral community that excels in reducing carbon emissions and criteria pollutants through implementing sustainable practices and green infrastructure.**

Achieving a carbon-neutral future requires transforming how Vancouver produces and uses energy, constructs buildings, manages waste, and moves people and goods throughout the community. This goal establishes a comprehensive approach to reducing GHG emissions and criteria pollutants by integrating clean energy, efficient buildings, sustainable transportation, and circular-economy practices into the City's long-term growth strategy. This goal supports both climate mitigation and public health by cutting pollution at its source and ensuring that the benefits of cleaner air, lower utility costs, and healthier environments reach all Vancouver residents.

A major focus of CL-3 is reducing emissions from buildings and infrastructure, which account for a significant share of communitywide emissions. Policies supporting this goal advance energy-efficient and climate-resilient building design, encourage adaptive reuse of existing structures, and promote the use of low-carbon and regionally sourced materials to reduce embodied carbon in new construction. Expanding solar access—especially for low-income renters and homeowners, along with supporting renewable energy storage and grid upgrades, ensures that the energy Vancouver uses becomes increasingly clean, reliable and affordable. Complementary procurement and maintenance practices further lower emissions by prioritizing green materials, reducing plastics and harmful chemicals, and adopting sustainable alternatives across City operations.

Another major element of this approach is long-term changes needed to shift Vancouver's transportation and land use patterns. The policies outlined in this plan promote low-carbon transportation alternatives, including electric vehicles, hybrid technologies, and emerging clean-fuel options—while investing in the infrastructure needed to support them. Equally important, this goal calls for land use patterns that lower per-capita vehicle miles traveled (VMT) by concentrating new housing and employment in key centers identified in the growth concept. By coordinating with regional partners, such as Clark County, RTC, and C-TRAN, Vancouver aligns local decisions with regional mobility systems to expand multimodal options, reduce congestion, and improve air quality.

Waste reduction is a key component of this goal. Policies that increase waste diversion, enhance composting and resource recovery, and reduce food waste help cut emissions from landfills and

support a more circular local economy. Ensuring surplus food is redirected to underserved communities also advances food security, equity and community health.

| Supporting Policy                                            | Description                                                                                                                                                                                           | No. | Related Goals                 |
|--------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|-------------------------------|
| <b>Adaptive Reuse</b>                                        | Support efforts to retrofit or repurpose underutilized buildings, structures and infrastructure for the development of new housing and commercial spaces.                                             | 9   | LU-2, CL-3                    |
| <b>Community Safe Routes</b>                                 | Create safe walking connections through programs that identify and invest in Safe Routes to Schools and Community Safe Routes that link people to transit and other important community destinations. | 33  | TM-1, TM-2, PFS-3, PR-2, CL-3 |
| <b>Embodied Carbon</b>                                       | Prioritize local source materials, low-carbon materials and material reuse in City-led infrastructure and redevelopment projects.                                                                     | 44  | CL-3, EO-3                    |
| <b>Energy Efficient and Climate Resilient Buildings</b>      | Ensure that buildings contribute to the City's GHG reduction goals and protect occupants from pollution, extreme weather and other climate hazards.                                                   | 48  | CL-1, CL-3                    |
| <b>Environmentally Conscious Procurement and Maintenance</b> | Include criteria related to the use of environmentally sustainable materials and practices in procurement processes and maintenance contracts.                                                        | 51  | PFS-1, CL-3                   |
| <b>Low-carbon Fuels</b>                                      | Work with transportation, industry and utility partners to support the transition to low-carbon fuels.                                                                                                | 85  | CL-3, CL-4                    |
| <b>Low Carbon Transportation Alternatives</b>                | Adopt new technologies and invest in supportive infrastructure to increase the adoption of electric, hybrid, and alternative fuel vehicles to reduce community emissions.                             | 86  | CL-3                          |



| Supporting Policy                          | Description                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | No. | Related Goals                 |
|--------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|-------------------------------|
| <b>Reduce Built Environment Emissions</b>  | Reduce emissions from buildings, structures and infrastructure in the community.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | 110 | CL-3, PFS-1                   |
| <b>Reduce Food Waste</b>                   | Reduce food waste in the community and ensure surplus food supply is directed to underserved communities without fresh food access.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | 114 | CL-3, EO-3                    |
| <b>Reduce Solid Waste</b>                  | Increase waste diversion rates through a system that minimizes landfill reliance, reduces GHG emissions, prioritizes composting and encourages resource recovery.                                                                                                                                                                                                              | 117 | CL-1, CL-3, CL-4, EO-3, PFS-1 |
| <b>Reduce VMT and GHG per Capita</b>       | Implement land use patterns that reduce VMT, traffic congestion, and associated GHG emissions per capita, while improving safety and air quality.                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | 118 | CL-3, CE-3, TM-2              |
| <b>Regional Planning</b>                   | Coordinate closely with Clark County, other cities, and other government entities, such as C-TRAN, RTC, and school districts, to sustainably manage urban growth areas, efficiently deliver urban services, expand regional transit and multimodal connectivity, and coordinate on shared goals and responsibilities, in accordance with adopted countywide planning policies. | 122 | LU-4, CL-3, TM-2, TM-1        |
| <b>Solar Access</b>                        | Expand residential, commercial and industrial access to solar power to meet energy needs.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | 134 | CL-1, CL-3                    |
| <b>Support the Use of Renewable Energy</b> | Encourage new renewable energy infrastructure and promote development of storage systems to ensure a stable, resilient and sustainable energy grid.                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | 151 | CL-3, PFS-1                   |

## Goal: CL-4

## Environmental Health

**Community members experience better environmental health conditions through the protection and enhancement of local ecosystems, improved air and water quality, reduced exposure to environmental hazards, and increased access to natural spaces.**

Environmental health is essential to community well-being, and the policy approach proposed in this plan responds by focusing on improving the air, water, ecosystems, and neighborhood conditions that shape daily life for Vancouver residents. Climate change and historic land use patterns have created uneven exposures to pollution, extreme heat, flooding, noise, and environmental hazards—disproportionately affecting frontline communities identified in Appendix H, Climate Vulnerability Assessment, and Appendix I, Health Impact Assessment. The policies in this section aim to reduce these disparities by protecting ecosystems, improving environmental quality, and expanding access to healthy natural spaces and community resources.

A central strategy outlined in this goal is reducing the urban heat island effect and improving air quality, particularly in areas with limited tree canopy and for residents who face greater health risks. Investments in shade, vegetation, and climate-resilient building design help safeguard people during extreme heat and wildfire smoke events, while targeted efforts to improve indoor air quality reduce exposure to particulates, nitrogen dioxide, carbon monoxide, and other harmful pollutants common in older or poorly ventilated homes.

Reducing environmental burdens also requires rethinking how waste, fuels, and materials flow through the city. Expanded waste diversion, composting, and resource recovery cut pollution associated with landfills, while support for low-carbon fuels and cleaner transportation technologies reduces emissions of pollutants that disproportionately impact neighborhoods along high-traffic corridors. Addressing noise pollution from freight, aviation, industrial operations, and major roadways further improves quality of life, especially in residential areas and places where vulnerable populations live.

Healthy ecosystems play a critical role in environmental health. Policies promote identifying and protecting species and habitats under climate stress, conserving climate refugia, and expanding

pollinator-friendly, pesticide-free landscapes that enhance biodiversity. Conservation and restoration efforts also support cleaner waterways, healthier soils, and stronger ecological connections across the city. Water-efficient technologies and conservation practices help maintain long-term water availability and protect the integrity of local watersheds.

Equitable access to natural spaces and community facilities is another essential focus. Expanding parks and green spaces in underserved neighborhoods, improving connections to existing natural areas, increasing tree canopy and ensuring housing is located near parks supports both physical and mental well-being. New and expanded community centers offer cultural, recreational, and educational programming, strengthening social networks and providing safe indoor spaces during climate-driven events. Land use strategies—including brownfield remediation, infill development on underutilized lots, and careful siting of new housing away from major stationary pollution sources—further reduce residents’ exposure to environmental hazards.

| Supporting Policy                                           | Description                                                                                                                                                                                          | No. | Related Goals         |
|-------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|-----------------------|
| <b>Broaden Equitable Access to Natural Spaces and Parks</b> | Increase equitable access to natural spaces and parks by investing in new and improved facilities in underserved neighborhoods and siting new accessible housing close to existing and future parks. | 23  | CL-4, PR-3, H-1, EI-2 |
| <b>Conserve Water Resources</b>                             | Encourage water-efficient technologies and practices to reduce consumption and ensure sustainable water availability amid climate change and growing demand.                                         | 37  | CL-1, CL-4, PFS-1     |
| <b>Habitat and Species Under Stress from Climate Change</b> | Take inventory of and protect climate refugia, and fish and wildlife habitat needs for species under stress from climate change.                                                                     | 64  | CL-2, CL-4            |
| <b>Indoor Air Quality</b>                                   | Improve indoor air quality for residents most susceptible to negative impacts from exposure to particulates, carbon monoxide, nitrogen dioxide, and lead.                                            | 79  | CL-4                  |

| Supporting Policy                              | Description                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | No. | Related Goals                       |
|------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|-------------------------------------|
| <b>Low-carbon Fuels</b>                        | Work with transportation, industry and utility partners to support the transition to low-carbon fuels.                                                                                                                                                                                                     | 85  | CL-3, CL-4                          |
| <b>Mitigate Noise Pollution</b>                | Reduce and mitigate noise pollution from major stationary and mobile sources, including air travel, vehicles, freight, railroads and high-intensity industrial uses.                                                                                                                                       | 89  | EI-1, CL-4                          |
| <b>Pollinator Habitats</b>                     | Support a healthy urban ecosystem by embedding pollinator habitat into public and private development, prioritizing pesticide free landscaping, removal and reducing use of invasive species, enhancing biodiversity, and connecting natural spaces across the city through pollinator-friendly plantings. | 103 | CL-2, PR-2, PR-3, CL-4              |
| <b>Preserve and Protect the Columbia River</b> | Manage the built and natural environment to protect and restore the water quality and habitat of the Columbia River basin, reflecting its central role in the city's identity, economy, history, and future.                                                                                               | 104 | CL-2, CL-4, CE-5, EO-2, PR-2, PFS-1 |
| <b>Reduce Environmental Health Disparities</b> | Focus on areas with high environmental health disparities when mitigating the impacts of air, water, heat noise, and light pollution.                                                                                                                                                                      | 113 | EI-1, CL-4                          |
| <b>Reduce Heat Island Effect</b>               | Minimize impacts of the urban heat island effect, reduce geographic temperature disparities, and safeguard vulnerable populations from the adverse effects of extreme heat.                                                                                                                                | 115 | CL-1, CL-2, CL-4                    |



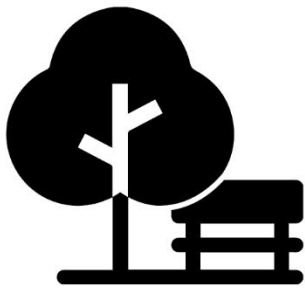
| Supporting Policy                                          | Description                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | No.        | Related Goals                  |
|------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|--------------------------------|
| <b>Reduce Impacts of Point Source Pollution on Housing</b> | Avoid siting new housing near known stationary sources of air, water, heat and light pollution, and facilitate site and building design that mitigates impacts from stationary pollution sources for both new and existing housing. | <b>116</b> | CL-4, LU-2                     |
| <b>Reduce Solid Waste</b>                                  | Increase waste diversion rates through a system that minimizes landfill reliance, reduces GHG emissions, prioritizes composting and encourages resource recovery.                                                                   | <b>117</b> | CL-1, CL-3, CL-4, EO-3, PFS-1  |
| <b>Strategic Reuse of Excess Right-of-Way</b>              | Analyze suitability of excess and unneeded ROW for adding tree canopy, native planting, nature spaces, and stormwater management systems.                                                                                           | <b>137</b> | CL-1, CL-2, LU-3, CL-4, PR-2   |
| <b>Underdeveloped Lots and Brownfields</b>                 | Prioritize, facilitate and incentivize development on infill and underutilized lots, and clean up brownfield sites.                                                                                                                 | <b>157</b> | LU- 3, LU-4, LU-1, PFS-1, CL-4 |

## Chapter 6 – Key Implementing Actions

- ✓ Update VMC Title 17 to reflect new requirements of the Green Building Program.
- ✓ Implement a Green Building Program for new construction.
- ✓ Update VMC Titles 16 and 17 to integrate and advance middle housing production.
- ✓ Explore green building policies for existing commercial and industrial buildings.
- ✓ Perform minor updates to the Urban Forestry Management Plan to align with the Comprehensive Plan.
- ✓ Develop a municipal fleet decarbonization roadmap and purchasing policy.
- ✓ Update the Climate Action Framework (CAF) to align with the Comprehensive Plan.
- ✓ Advance electric vehicle education and advocacy efforts.
- ✓ Develop a roadmap for accelerating adoption of low-carbon fuels.
- ✓ Add resources to expand the City's capacity for climate hazard preparedness.
- ✓ Expand urban tree canopy cover and restore urban natural areas and nature spaces.
- ✓ Develop a residential resiliency and decarbonization program.
- ✓ Assess opportunities to install large-scale solar installations on City-owned properties.
- ✓ Identify opportunities to optimize City-owned properties for natural resource benefits.
- ✓ Develop policies and programs to advance middle housing and transit-oriented development.



# Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services



7



OUR VANCOUVER



# Introduction

This chapter of the Comprehensive Plan captures the vision, mission, goals, and policy recommendations from the recently adopted *Vancouver Parks, Recreation & Cultural Services Comprehensive Plan* (VPRCS Comprehensive Plan) and brings forward key land use recommendations based on existing conditions within Vancouver, and recent studies conducted through the *Our Vancouver* Comprehensive Planning process.

The VPRCS Comprehensive Plan, adopted in 2022, provided an in-depth analysis of existing parks, recreation and cultural services conditions within Vancouver and identified 10-year goals, which are currently being implemented. This chapter seeks to carry through pertinent information from the *VPRCS Comprehensive Plan* through a land use planning lens—looking to provide an overview of existing programs and system structures that affect future land use decisions—and provide guidance on how the City can balance growth with the provision of parks and recreation. Building on the



## Vision: Parks and Recreation

We strive for a future where all people enjoy increased access to cultural events, public art, natural areas, parks, community and green spaces, and an expansive network of trails and greenways. We recognize that art, culture and open spaces are critical elements of community health, wellness and quality of life. We commit to building inclusive and safe public spaces that reflect the diversity of our community without cost barriers, while conserving and preserving natural areas and adapting to climate change. Embracing native plants and species, we aim to create biodiverse havens that enhance ecological resilience. With a focus on health and well-being, our parks will offer diverse recreational opportunities and engaging programming, ensuring a thriving and interconnected community for generations to come.



robust engagement process from the *VPRCS Comprehensive Plan*, the *Our Vancouver* planning process focused on engaging with Vancouver residents through the community survey, Community Partner discussions, and community working groups; in-person engagement events; and online resources, asking respondents to provide feedback on a variety of topics related to parks and recreation in Vancouver. This feedback served as the baseline for developing the vision and goals for this chapter.

### **VPRCS Comprehensive Plan Overview**

The parks system in Vancouver is owned, maintained and managed by the City of Vancouver Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Services Department. The department is also tasked with creating and updating a parks plan to guide the future acquisition and development of parks within the city. Washington's GMA requires that parks plans are updated in coordination with updates to land use plans and development regulations every eight years in order to ensure that City and County policies reflect state statutes.

## **Community Feedback**

- ➔ Increase equitable access to parks and open spaces for all Vancouver community members—both for non-White and low-income residents, and in areas that are currently underserved, such as East Vancouver.
- ➔ Maintain, improve and expand on existing parks and amenities—including expanded tree canopy, and the introduction of shelters, shade structures or areas, and integration of upgraded facilities for playgrounds, restrooms and parking.
- ➔ Accommodate cultural spaces, programming and community centers addressing specific needs and low-cost and free activities, particularly for Vancouver's youth.
- ➔ Encourage community connection through City parks, community centers, libraries, farmers markets and gathering places like the waterfront.
- ➔ Diversify recreation offerings for both outdoor and indoor recreation spaces—including community pools, playgrounds, skateparks and pump tracks, museums, community events, gardens, art and performance spaces, trails and dog parks.
- ➔ Implement climate resilience design principles through use of native plants, protections of natural ecosystems, and maintaining and expanding the city's tree canopy and naturalized landscapes.

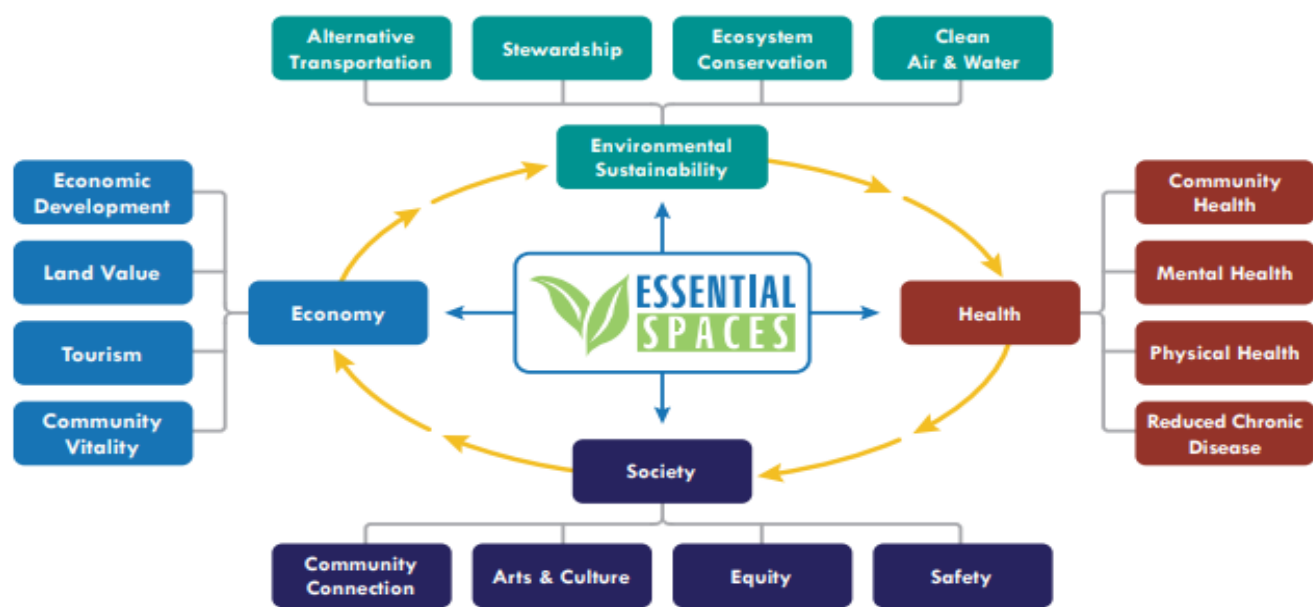
In this case, the *VPRCS Comprehensive Plan* was adopted prior to the *Our Vancouver* planning process and the most current EIS, both of which will inform future discussions and updates to the next Vancouver parks plan. The work undertaken for the *VPRCS Comprehensive Plan*, in similar fashion to this planning process, included a heavy focus on community outreach and engagement ensuring that the vision, mission, community goals and policies were reflective of the voices and

needs of the Vancouver community. The following sections provide an overview of critical content from the *VPRCS Comprehensive Plan*.

**Vision and Essential Spaces Framework**

The concept of Essential Spaces was selected as the primary theme for the *VPRCS Comprehensive Plan*, centering on the idea that the role of parks, recreation, trails, natural areas, and cultural services contribute heavily to the physical, mental, and economic health of the Vancouver community. What the City has defined as “Essential Spaces” provide enormous benefits to residents, workers, and visitors through the direct impact they have on society, the local economy, sustainability efforts, and community health. These impacts are further illustrated in Figure 21.

Figure 21. Essential Spaces Graphic, VPRCS Comprehensive Plan 2022



A planning framework was created for the *VPRCS Comprehensive Plan* that captures community values, the City’s commitment to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion and additional objectives identified by Vancouver’s City Council, including climate action and safety. All together, these guiding principles emphasize the importance of the stewardship of public resources, inclusive access, and the creation of inclusive spaces.

**VPRCS Vision and Community Goals**

The *VPRCS Comprehensive Plan* includes a vision, a mission statement, and eight community goals defined through the planning and outreach process. These goals provide the foundation for the plan focusing on how the City can enhance its parks, recreation facilities, natural areas, and cultural services. The table below illustrates how the *VPRCS Comprehensive Plan* community goals relate to the *Our Vancouver Comprehensive Plan* goals.

**Table 11. VPRCS Comprehensive Plan Community Goals versus Our Vancouver Comprehensive Plan Goals**

| <b>VPRCS Community Goals</b>                                                                                                                                                                   | <b>Complementary Comprehensive Plan Goals</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Provide safe and equitable access to parks, natural areas, and public arts and cultural spaces for all residents.                                                                              | PR-2 Parks, Trails, and Natural Spaces: Vancouver's residents have access to a well-connected and expanded network of developed parks, trails, and natural areas that support outdoor recreation, biodiversity, and climate resilience, that serve as vital hubs for community gatherings, cultural events and a shared sense of place.                         |
| Provide an interconnected system of park properties and public spaces that support alternative modes of transportation, public health, recreational opportunity and environmental stewardship. | PR-2 Parks, Trails, and Natural Spaces: Vancouver's residents have access to a well-connected and expanded network of developed parks, trails, and natural areas that support outdoor recreation, biodiversity, and climate resilience, that serve as vital hubs for community gatherings, cultural events and a shared sense of place.                         |
| Preserve Vancouver's historic and cultural heritage.                                                                                                                                           | PR-4 Thriving Cultural Landscape: Vancouver supports a thriving cultural landscape for residents and visitors by investing in public art, cultural centers and facilities, historic preservation, and supporting community centered initiatives and opportunities for creative expression that reflect the city's diverse identities and historic roots.        |
| Expand Level of Service and Equity Gap Analysis to inform and guide project and funding opportunities and priorities.                                                                          | PR-1 Increase Community Health through Recreation: Vancouver has safe and equitable access to a quality and diverse system of parks, natural areas, amenities, recreational facilities and programs that promote physical and mental well-being, cater to the varied interests and needs of community members and contribute to a vibrant and active community. |
| Update Improvement Level definitions to include innovative approaches that meet the needs of a growing and diversifying community.                                                             | CE-2 Inclusive and Affirming Environments: Vancouver's public spaces and neighborhoods are inclusive and affirming across race, class, age, sex, gender identity, ability, religion, national origin and citizenship status, creating a sense of belonging and safety.                                                                                          |
| Maintain and enhance parks, trails, natural areas, culture and heritage spaces, recreation facilities and community assets to meet identified standards.                                       | PFS-1 Public Facilities and Services: Vancouver has high-quality public facilities, services, and utilities that are affordable, efficient, well maintained, and meet the needs of a growing population.                                                                                                                                                        |
| Establish and meet goals outlined in the departmental program areas.                                                                                                                           | PR-3 Community Health and Wellness: Vancouver community members have access to high-quality public spaces that support physical and mental well-being,                                                                                                                                                                                                          |

| VPRCS Community Goals                                                                                                              | Complementary Comprehensive Plan Goals                                                                                                                                                              |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                                                                                                                                    | active lifestyles, connection to nature, and sense of community belonging.                                                                                                                          |
| Reflect the community we serve through creative public engagement, collaborative planning and culturally responsive communication. | EI-1 Equitable Community: All community members have equitable and inclusive access to opportunities and resources, including communities most impacted by past and present exclusionary practices. |

### Vancouver's Park and Recreation System

As of 2022, publicly accessible lands in Vancouver were estimated at approximately 3,800 acres or roughly 12 percent of the city's total land area, where approximately 1,700 acres are identified as City-owned park lands, comprising 113 sites. The City also operates the Firstenburg and Marshall/Luepke Community Centers, which feature swimming pools, gyms, fitness amenities, a climbing wall, senior centers, and community rooms.

**Table 12. Park System Inventory**

| Park Type              | Number of Sites                                                                                                                                                   | Area (acres) |
|------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------|
| Neighborhood Park      | 91 Sites (includes 11 undeveloped sites, 55 developed sites, and 25 school sites)                                                                                 | 314.84       |
| Community Parks        | 17 Sites (includes 4 undeveloped sites and 13 developed sites)                                                                                                    | 287.69       |
| Regional Parks         | 2 Sites                                                                                                                                                           | 489.40       |
| Urban Natural Areas    | 22 Sites                                                                                                                                                          | 280.11       |
| Special Facility       | 9 Sites (includes 3 developed City of Vancouver sites, 2 developed Clark County sites, 1 developed school site, and 3 developed sites managed by other providers) | 332.91       |
| Regional Natural Areas | 7 Sites (includes 6 undeveloped City of Vancouver sites and 1 undeveloped Clark County site)                                                                      | 1,044.58     |
| Total Park Acreage     | -                                                                                                                                                                 | 2,749.53     |

**Note:** This table reflects updates to the number of sites and acreage since the *VPRCS Comprehensive Plan* as part of the Environmental Impact Assessment for **OUR VANCOUVER**.

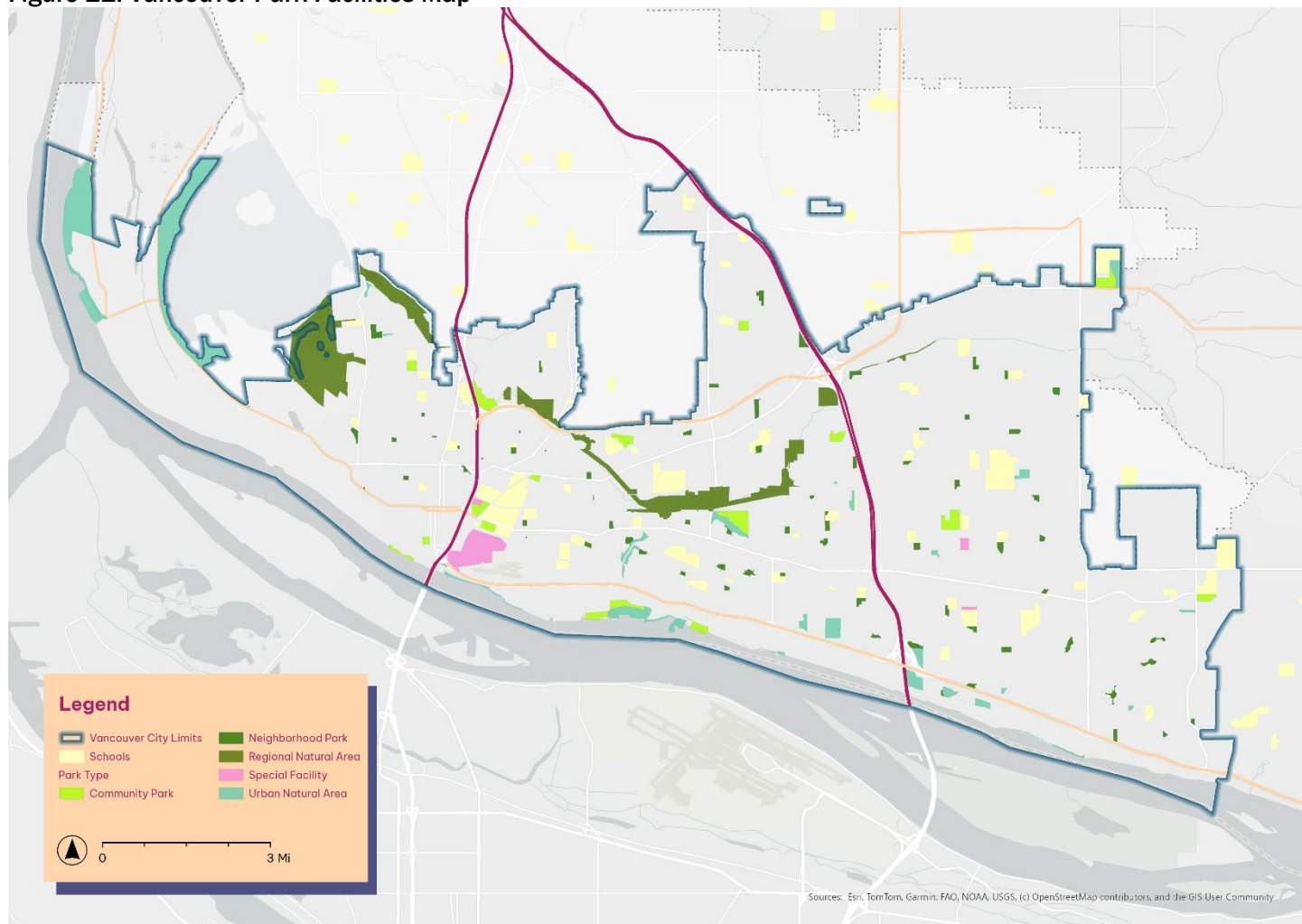
Source: VPRCS Comprehensive Plan

The City continuously invests in its park system primarily through park acquisitions, park development, or rebuilding or renovating existing parks, diversifying the types of parks and spaces available to the Vancouver community. In order to accomplish this, the VPRCS Department relies on an organizational framework for its parks that includes park classification types, maintaining a parks inventory, setting and recording parks LOS standards, using diverse funding mechanisms, and planning for parks acquisitions and capital improvements.

Figure 22 below, Vancouver Park Facilities Map, illustrates the city's boundaries, delineates the Park Impact Fee (PIF) Districts, and includes Regional Parks, Community Parks, Neighborhood Parks, Urban and Regional Natural Areas, Special Facilities, other public lands, and schools.



**Figure 22. Vancouver Park Facilities Map**



## Parks System Classifications

The City of Vancouver is transitioning from a traditional core-and-suburb model to a denser, mixed-use urban environment. This evolution demands adaptive planning to address changing zoning, densities, mobility, and park needs. The city's park system is organized into eight classification types based on landscape characteristics, access, development potential, local park needs, and use patterns. These classifications guide the optimal use of parkland, ensuring diverse recreational opportunities through strategic funding and a balance between natural resource protection and park development.

Together, Vancouver's parks provide spaces for play, connection, and environmental stewardship, forming a resilient network that supports recreation, wellness, and habitat conservation. The current parks classifications are outlined in Table 13, below, and include both pre-existing park types in Vancouver and two new additional classifications, Civic Plazas and Linear Parks, that were introduced in the 2022 *VPRCS Comprehensive Plan*.

**Table 13. VPRCS Comprehensive Plan Parks Classifications**

| Type               | Description                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
|--------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Neighborhood Parks | Typically, 3 to 5 acres, offering amenities like playgrounds, sport courts, turf areas, gardens, native plant resource areas, pathways and trails, and picnic areas. These parks are designed for non-organized recreational opportunities that support healthy lifestyles, neighborhood identity, social interaction, and the preservation of natural resources.                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| Community Parks    | Ranging from 20 to 100 acres, these parks serve as hubs for organized recreation and events for a broad segment of the population. In addition to typical of a Neighborhood Park, Community Parks feature sports fields, skate parks, picnic shelters, community gardens, trails, event spaces, public art, and cultural features. These parks typically include more support facilities, such as parking and restrooms, and may also integrate natural areas, passive recreation spaces, and community facilities like community centers or senior facilities. |
| Linear Parks       | Developed landscaped areas or other lands that follow linear natural or man-made corridors like rivers, abandoned railroad rights-of-way, canals, and utility corridors. Linear Parks typically feature trails, signage, seating, landscaping, small play areas, and viewpoints and are intended to expand the network and connectivity of trails and pedestrian corridors, provide shade to users of the transportation network, and reduce the impact of the heat island effect.                                                                              |
| Civic Plazas       | Found in urban centers or town squares, civic plazas are public gathering spaces with landscaping, seating, performance and vendor areas, public art, and fountains. They encourage community connection and may be managed in partnership with other entities.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| Regional Parks     | Usually over 50 acres, Regional Parks provide facilities for a wide range of activities, including sports fields, extensive trail systems, and large picnic areas or shelters. These parks also typically include passive recreation space and unique natural features in addition to support facilities, such as parking and restrooms.                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| Natural Areas      | Ranging from a single acre to hundreds, natural areas provide opportunities for nature-based recreation and education, such as birdwatching, walking, biking, hiking, and biking, serving both local and regional needs.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| Special Facilities | Special Facilities, or special use areas, are stand-alone facilities that do not have a minimum size. They include community centers, aquatic centers, sports complexes, or skate parks.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| Trails             | Trails are not considered a park classification but rather an improvement/amenity.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |

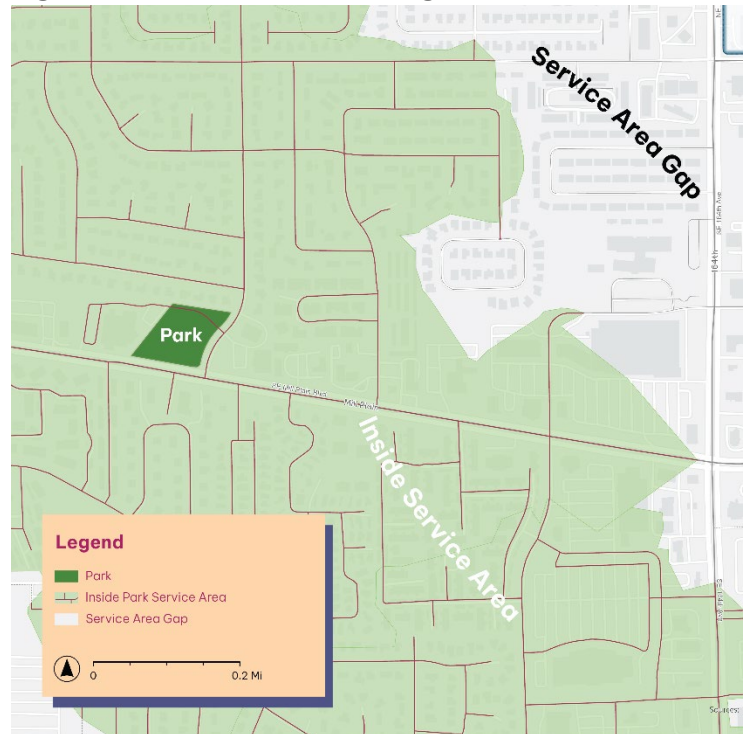
Source: VPRCS Comprehensive Plan

## Parks and Recreation System Evaluation

Vancouver’s park system strives for equitable access through careful geographic distribution and service area standards. In simpler terms, the City aims to provide residents with access to a park within a certain distance of their homes—a half-mile service area, or 10-minute walk along public rights-of-way is recognized as a reasonable expectation for residents. This is aligned with national best practice as predicated by the National Parks and Recreation Association, which establishes national guidelines for service area standards.

Parks in Vancouver have different indicated service areas depending on classification. For example, Vancouver’s Neighborhood Parks are designed to serve residents within a half-mile radius, which equates to approximately a 10-minute walk. Community Parks, on the other hand, serve larger areas ranging from half a mile to 3 miles, offering both walkable access and broader community coverage. Figure 23 illustrates how these walksheds (illustrated in green as park service areas) are determined by following public rights-of-way and easements from all access points to park sites, ensuring an accurate representation of accessible routes for residents.

**Figure 23. Park Service Area Diagram**



The City relies heavily on service area mapping to determine which locations are served by parks, and to identify gaps where new parks or services may be needed.

In the update to the *VPRCS Comprehensive Plan*, staff identified the need to expand on typical park metrics to reflect existing conditions and better assess the equitable distribution of parks across Vancouver. The *VPRCS Comprehensive Plan* developed a two-part methodology that involves combining demographic analyses and park scoring to guide reinvestment priorities. This methodology, though complex, reflects national best practice through layering equity considerations into the criteria:

- ➔ A detailed geographic information system analysis is performed at the Census Block level to identify areas with the greatest need for park access, focusing on populations, such as residents under 18 and over 65, people of color, communities below the poverty level, households with low-median income, individuals with disabilities, areas with high obesity rates, and regions of high population density per acre.
- ➔ Evaluation of park property using a comprehensive scoring matrix that measures factors related to quantity, quality, safety, sustainability, and accessibility.

- ➔ Incorporating additional criteria, including (1) the baseline half-mile service area, (2) gaps between existing LOS and adopted standards, (3) current development status, (4) time since acquisition, (5) potential for improved accessibility, (6) safety, (7) resource protection, (8) diversity of recreation opportunities, (9) condition and lifespan of assets, (10) need for safety enhancements, (11) sustainability of infrastructure and natural resources, and (12) accessibility for people with physical limitations.

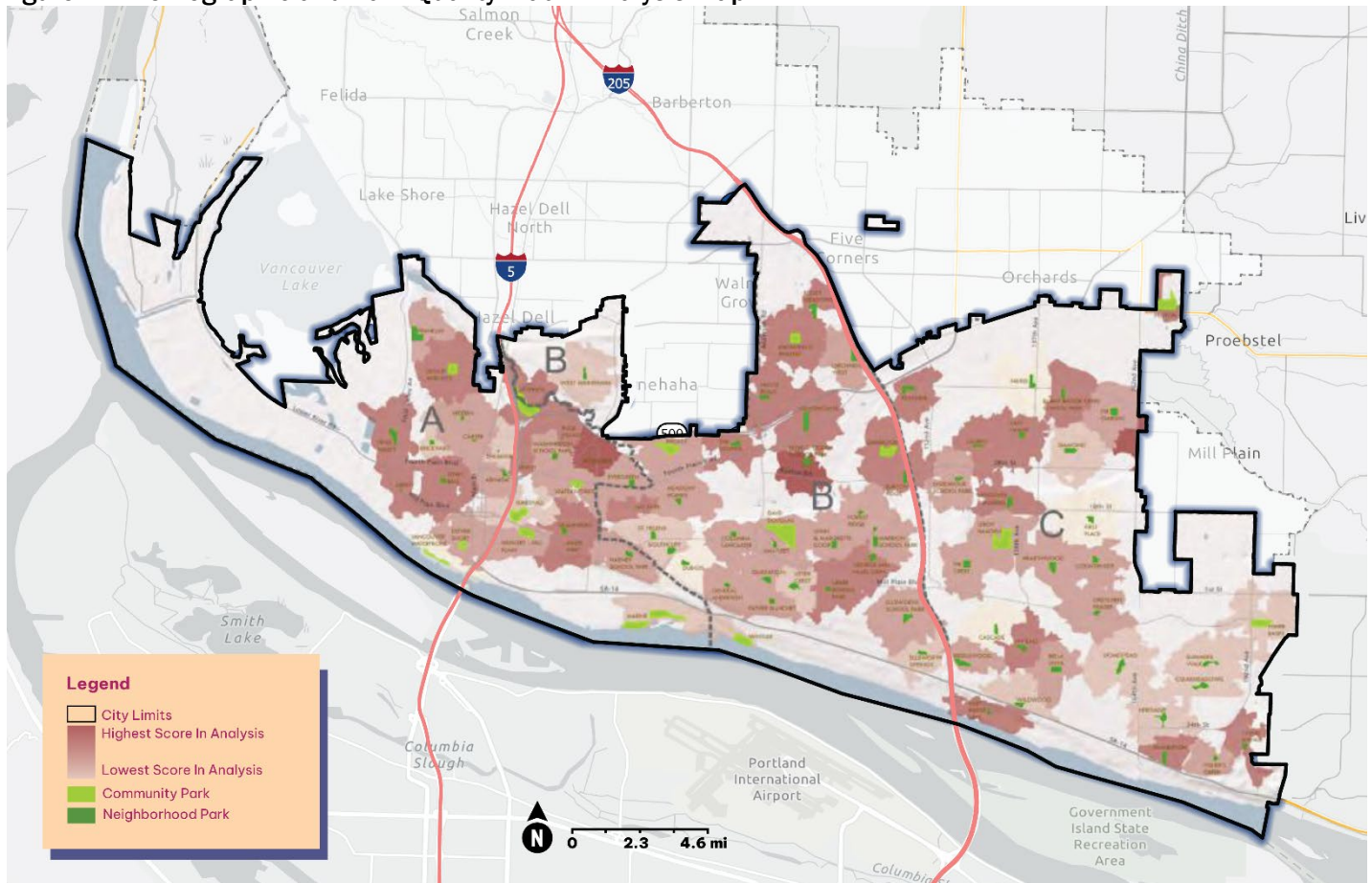
The outcome of this analysis was a matrix that prioritizes projects for reinvestment, ensuring that resources are allocated where they will have the greatest community impact and maximize the overall value of the park system for Vancouver residents.

It is anticipated that Vancouver will experience an increased demand for youth activities, after-school programs, and programming for active older citizens as it continues to grow, with an expanding need for intergenerational recreation opportunities and the implementation of inclusive design practices to welcome a more diverse community of residents. By establishing a baseline methodology, the City has created a tool that can be regularly used to evaluate residents' access to Vancouver's park and recreation system. This tool can be further refined and tailored to the city's needs as future policy work is undertaken as part of the next parks plan update.

Figure 24 shows park level of service and need across Vancouver by evaluating park quantity, quality, safety, sustainability, and accessibility within ½-mile service areas to identify gaps and prioritize reinvestment. Areas in the darkest shade indicate the greatest need for park investments. It illustrates how demographic information is layered with park quality data to create composite scores, which can help decision makers prioritize available funding for future parks planning purposes.



**Figure 24. Demographic and Park Quality Matrix Analysis Map**



Source: VPRCS Comprehensive Plan.

## Park Demand, Park Need, and Total Level of Service

The City of Vancouver uses three calculations to guide the monitoring of its parks system: (1) LOS, (2) Park Demand, and (3) Park Need where:

- ➔ LOS is measured as the number of park acres per 1,000 residents.
- ➔ Park Demand is the acres of parkland needed to serve a population at a set standard.
- ➔ Park Need identifies the acreage required to bring the LOS into alignment with the standard.

The City updated these calculations in the *VPRCS Comprehensive Plan*, reviewing its inventory of parks, recreation facilities, natural areas, and trails owned and operated by VPRCS. The City uses this inventory to identify acreage by park classification and measure existing conditions against set LOS standards looking at how many acres are needed to be acquired and/or developed. VPRCS used the following standards for Neighborhood Parks, Community Parks, and Urban Natural Areas classifications in the 2022 plan update.

- ➔ *Park Acquisition*: 6 acres per 1,000 residents
- ➔ *Park Development*: 4.25 acres per 1,000 residents

Table 14 outlines the City-adopted acquisition and development standards for Neighborhood Parks, Community Parks, and Urban Natural Areas.

**Table 14. VPRCS Comprehensive Plan Park Acquisition and Development Standards**

| Park Classification | Acquisition Standard<br>(in acres per 1000 residents) | Development Standard<br>(in acres per 1000 residents) |
|---------------------|-------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------|
| Neighborhood Park   | 2.00                                                  | 2.00                                                  |
| Community Park      | 3.00                                                  | 2.25                                                  |
| Urban Natural Area  | 1.00                                                  | N/A                                                   |
| <b>Total</b>        | <b>6.00</b>                                           | <b>4.25</b>                                           |

Source: VPRCS Comprehensive Plan

Table 15, Table 16, Table 17, and Table 18 detail the calculated Park Demand and Park Need established in 2022, differentiated by Park Impact Fee (PIF) Districts (A, B, or C). Park Demand calculations indicate a need for approximately 1,200 additional acres of parkland, of which over 800 acres need to be developed to adequately serve Vancouver's 2022 population. Park Need indicates that the City needed to acquire approximately 440 acres of parkland to bring its existing acreage into alignment with its LOS.

**Table 15. VPRCS Comprehensive Plan Park Demand 2022, Acquire**

| PIF District | Population     | Neighborhood Park (acres)<br>Acquire | Community Park (acres)<br>Acquire | Urban Natural Area (acres)<br>Acquire | Total (acres)<br>Acquire |
|--------------|----------------|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| A            | 38,770         | 77.5                                 | 116.3                             | 38.8                                  | 232.6                    |
| B            | 61,324         | 122.6                                | 183.9                             | 61.3                                  | 367.9                    |
| C            | 94,592         | 189.2                                | 283.8                             | 94.6                                  | 567.6                    |
| <b>Total</b> | <b>194,686</b> | <b>389.35</b>                        | <b>584.02</b>                     | <b>194.67</b>                         | <b>1168.05</b>           |

**Table 16. VPRCS Comprehensive Plan Park Demand 2022, Develop**

| PIF District | Population     | Neighborhood Park (acres)<br>Develop | Community Park (acres)<br>Develop | Urban Natural Area (acres)<br>Develop | Total (acres)<br>Develop |
|--------------|----------------|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| A            | 38,770         | 77.5                                 | 87.2                              | N/A                                   | 164.8                    |
| B            | 61,324         | 122.6                                | 138.0                             | N/A                                   | 260.6                    |
| C            | 94,592         | 189.2                                | 212.8                             | N/A                                   | 402.0                    |
| <b>Total</b> | <b>194,686</b> | <b>389.35</b>                        | <b>438.02</b>                     | <b>N/A</b>                            | <b>827.37</b>            |

Source: VPRCS Comprehensive Plan

**Table 17. VPRCS Comprehensive Plan Park Need 2022, Acquire**

| PIF District | Population     | Neighborhood Park (acres)<br>Acquire | Community Park (acres)<br>Acquire | Urban Natural Area (acres)<br>Acquire | Total (acres)<br>Acquire |
|--------------|----------------|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| A            | 38,770         | 23.1                                 | 16.0                              | 0.1                                   | <b>39.2</b>              |
| B            | 61,324         | 0.6                                  | 76.4                              | 28.4                                  | <b>105.4</b>             |
| C            | 94,592         | 51.5                                 | 218.3                             | 20.3                                  | <b>290.2</b>             |
| <b>Total</b> | <b>194,686</b> | <b>75.2</b>                          | <b>310.7</b>                      | <b>48.8</b>                           | <b>434.8</b>             |

**Table 18. VPRCS Comprehensive Plan Park Need 2022, Develop**

| PIF District | Population     | Neighborhood Park (acres) Develop | Community Park (acres) Develop | Urban Natural Area (acres) Develop | Total (acres) Develop |
|--------------|----------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------|------------------------------------|-----------------------|
| A            | 38,770         | 23.8                              | 0.3                            | N/A                                | <b>24.1</b>           |
| B            | 61,324         | 15.1                              | 40.1                           | N/A                                | <b>55.2</b>           |
| C            | 94,592         | 68.7                              | 170.6                          | N/A                                | <b>239.3</b>          |
| <b>Total</b> | <b>194,686</b> | <b>107.6</b>                      | <b>211.0</b>                   | <b>N/A</b>                         | <b>318.6</b>          |

Source: VPRCS Comprehensive Plan

Table 19 highlights the city’s total LOS, combining Neighborhood and Community Park categories. Across measurable park classifications, the City of Vancouver provides 4.46 acres of parklands per 1,000 residents citywide—which falls short of the City’s standard of 6 acres acquired Neighborhood and Community Parks per 1,000 residents, and national guidelines provided by the National Recreation and Park Association, indicating 10.2 acres per 1,000 residents as best practice.

**Table 19. Total Level of Service**

| Park Classification              | Current Level of Service<br>(in acres of parkland per 1,000 population) |
|----------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Neighborhood and Community Parks | 3.02                                                                    |
| Urban Natural Areas              | 1.44                                                                    |
| <b>Total</b>                     | <b>4.46</b>                                                             |

Source: VPRCS Comprehensive Plan

While the City focuses LOS calculations on Neighborhood Parks, Community Parks, and Urban Natural Areas, other park classifications are also assigned acquisition standards. The *VPRCS Comprehensive Plan* set acquisition standards for Regional Parks (10 acres per 1,000 residents) and also introduced two new park classifications—Civic Plazas and Linear Parks, to provide outdoor park spaces in compact urban areas where traditional park parcels are limited—but did not assign a standard of service. Regional Natural Areas and Special Facilities are also included as park classifications without assigned acquisition standards. As indicated in Table 13, trails are not currently considered a park classification but rather an improvement or amenity. A detailed overview of acquisition and development standards and 2022 LOS by park classification is provided in Table 20.

**Table 20. 2022 Park Classification Acquisition and Development Standards versus LOS**

| Park Classification   | Acquisition/Development Standards      | 2022 Acquisition LOS<br>(All PIF Districts) |
|-----------------------|----------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------|
| Neighborhood Park     | 2 acres/2 acres per 1,000 residents    | 1.62 acres/1,000 residents                  |
| Community Park        | 3 acres/2.25 acres per 1,000 residents | 1.40 acres/1,000 residents                  |
| Regional Park         | 10 acres/1,000 residents               | 6.80 acres/1,000 residents                  |
| Urban Natural Area    | 1 acre/1,000 residents                 | 1.44 acres/1,000 residents                  |
| Regional Natural Area | No Adopted Standard                    | No Adopted Standard                         |
| Linear Park           | No Adopted Standard                    | No Adopted Standard                         |
| Civic Plaza           | No Adopted Standard                    | No Adopted Standard                         |
| Special Facilities    | No Adopted Standard                    | No Adopted Standard                         |

Source: VPRCS Comprehensive Plan

## Recreation and Cultural Services

Recreation in Vancouver is designed to support a wide range of activities for residents of all ages, abilities, and backgrounds. It includes structured programs, such as aquatics, sports, and fitness, as well as informal opportunities for play, leisure, and social connection. The city's recreation facilities include community centers, pools, and sports fields.

Public input played a key role in shaping recreation priorities established in the *VPRCS Comprehensive Plan*. Through surveys, outreach events, and stakeholder meetings, residents expressed strong interest in more trails, youth programs, water play features, and outdoor fitness equipment. These preferences are reflected in recommendations identifying a need for upgrades to existing facilities and the development of new amenities that support active lifestyles and social interaction.

Engagement also identified barriers to recreation, such as cost, transportation, and physical accessibility. Recommendations for addressing community feedback include increasing parks and open space in East Vancouver, investing in safe multimodal infrastructure that connects people to parks and open space, improving ADA compliance, and offering culturally responsive programming.

Cultural services are recognized as an essential component of the city's identity, greatly impacting its sense of vitality and quality of life. The *VPRCS Comprehensive Plan* prioritizes equitable access to



Firstenburg Pool



Día de Muertos Celebration



cultural services, acknowledging that historically marginalized communities often face barriers to participation.

The *VPRCS Comprehensive Plan* highlights the need to expand culturally relevant programming and support for underrepresented groups, including Indigenous peoples, communities of color, LGBTQ+ residents, and people with disabilities. Strategies include increasing funding for community-led cultural initiatives, improving accessibility in cultural venues, and fostering partnerships with local artists and cultural organizations. The Cultural Services chapter of the *VPRCS Comprehensive Plan* identifies gaps in cultural infrastructure, including limited performance spaces, inadequate support for public art, and a need for flexible venues that can host a variety of cultural activities. Recommendations include investing in new cultural facilities, upgrading existing spaces, and integrating arts and culture into park and public space design. In late 2024, the City adopted a Cultural Access Program that will support improved and expanded cultural resources in the future, as it will generate approximately \$7 million annually to improve access to arts, culture, heritage, and science across the community. Vancouver also seeks to make better use of schools, libraries, and other civic buildings as cultural hubs.

### **Preferred Alternative and Future Parks Planning**

Gaps in LOS provide the basis for the City's land acquisition planning along with PIF allocation, measuring LOS and long-term planning for equitable access to recreation and green space throughout the city. Acquisition standards contribute to the City's goals for climate adaptation, tree canopy preservation and expansion, improved air quality, environmental justice, and prioritizing natural areas in historically underserved neighborhoods. These standards also assist the City in meeting the requirements of the Washington's GMA, which states that Comprehensive Plans must keep pace with projected population and development trends.

Priorities for parkland acquisition consider the four key criteria:

- ➔ **Geographic Equitable Access** to ensure all residents have equitable access to a park within a 10-minute walk (half a mile) (*VPRCS Comprehensive Plan*).
- ➔ **Population Growth and Development Trends** highlight new parks in rapidly growing neighborhoods, particularly east of I-205, where future residential density and family households are projected to increase (*VPRCS Comprehensive Plan*).
- ➔ **Network Connectivity and Access** prioritize sites that strengthen the citywide network of parks, trails, and greenways (*VPRCS Comprehensive Plan*).
- ➔ **Environmental Factors** protect lands that provide ecological value, such as tree canopy, wildlife habitat, flood mitigation, and climate resilience (EIS Report).

In an updated analysis conducted as part of the *Our Vancouver* planning process, Vancouver has identified a need to acquire 372.47 acres of parkland and develop 382.71 acres of parkland to meet its current metrics for LOS in 2025; see Table 21.

**Table 21. Existing (2025) City Parks and Natural Areas Demand, Inventory, and Need by District (in acres)**

| PIF by District | Acquisition Demand | Acquisition Inventory | Acquisition Need | Development Demand | Development Inventory | Development Need |
|-----------------|--------------------|-----------------------|------------------|--------------------|-----------------------|------------------|
| A               | 246.43             | 217.12                | 29.31            | 174.56             | 124.50                | 50.05            |
| B               | 388.10             | 327.73                | 60.37            | 274.91             | 207.82                | 67.08            |
| C               | 600.13             | 317.33                | 282.80           | 425.09             | 159.52                | 265.57           |
| <b>Total</b>    | <b>1,234.66</b>    | <b>862.19</b>         | <b>372.47</b>    | <b>874.55</b>      | <b>491.84</b>         | <b>382.71</b>    |

Source: City of Vancouver 2025

Note: Park Impact Fee (PIF) District boundaries are shown in Figure 22. Demand calculated based on estimated 2025 population of 41,072 in PIF A, 64,684 in PIF B, and 100,021 in PIF C. Assumes LOS standard of 6 acres per 1,000 residents of acquisition need and 4.25 acres per 1,000 records for park development need. Need is calculated by subtracting the inventory (as of 2025) from the future projected demand.

As Vancouver continues to grow, the City will need to regularly evaluate the acquisition standards to reflect changes in population, community priorities, and new development. Population projections through 2045 indicate a need to acquire 823.81 acres of additional parkland and develop 702.41 acres to adequately serve the community; see Table 22.

**Table 22. Future (2045) City Parks and Natural Areas Demand, Inventory, and Need by District (in acres)**

| PIF by District | Acquisition Demand | Acquisition Inventory | Acquisition Need | Development Demand | Development Inventory | Development Need |
|-----------------|--------------------|-----------------------|------------------|--------------------|-----------------------|------------------|
| A               | 333.54             | 217.12                | 119.42           | 238.38             | 124.50                | 113.88           |
| B               | 529.97             | 327.73                | 202.23           | 375.39             | 207.82                | 167.57           |
| C               | 819.49             | 317.33                | 502.16           | 580.47             | 159.52                | 420.96           |
| <b>Total</b>    | <b>1,686.00</b>    | <b>862.19</b>         | <b>823.81</b>    | <b>1,194.25</b>    | <b>491.84</b>         | <b>702.41</b>    |

Notes: (a) Park Impact Fee (PIF) District boundaries are shown in Figure 22. (b) Demand calculated based on estimated 2045 population of 56,090 in PIF A, 88,328 in PIF B, and 136,582 in PIF C, for a total population of 281,000 citywide. Assumes LOS standard of 6 acres per 1,000 residents of acquisition need and 4.25 acres per 1,000 records for park development need. Need is calculated by subtracting the inventory (as of 2025) from the future projected demand. Note: These citywide projections assume that the 2045 population distribution would be similar to the 2025 population distribution. The projections do not account for differences between the alternatives in housing capacity distribution by PIF district.

Competing land use interests will present challenges for the City in meeting these goals, but the *VPRCS Comprehensive Plan* outlines a plan for acquisitions, capital assets, and planned investments to begin implementation of measures to improve LOS.

To address LOS deficiencies, the *VPRCS Comprehensive Plan* identified several measures to be addressed in future parks plan updates. These include (1) identifying opportunities to acquire new community park sites or enhance larger neighborhood parks with community-level amenities; and (2) improving parks with low LOS by adding amenities, increasing user capacity, and enhancing both natural and built environments to promote sustainability and recreational diversity.

The *VPRCS Comprehensive Plan* also identifies the need to explore alternative metrics for measuring LOS and setting classification standards. The addition of two new park classifications, Civic Plazas and Linear Parks, will provide additional options for recreation as the city experiences growth through the 2045 horizon of the *Our Vancouver Comprehensive Plan*, and the City will need to focus efforts on updating acquisition standards and PIFs through an updated nexus study prior to the adoption of the next update to the *VPRCS Comprehensive Plan*.

## **Best Practices in Park System Planning**

**Many factors influence how cities establish guidelines for their park systems. In recent years, many cities have revisited how they designate parks, set LOS, and manage facility and asset investments in response to demographic shifts, climate considerations, equity priorities, and fiscal pressures. The following section summarizes current national best practices relevant to Vancouver's future park system planning.**

### **Park Designation, System Definitions and Classifications**

Setting citywide criteria helps prioritize park designations, land acquisitions, capital investments, and maintenance while aligning service expectations. Vancouver currently uses a classification system for its parks, open spaces and trails. As the city continues to grow, Vancouver may consider adding new park classifications and expanding its LOS standards to anticipate future land acquisitions or expansions and diversify opportunities for capturing additional parklands. The introduction of Civic Plazas and Linear Parks as new classifications paves the way for the City to reconsider how it is providing parks and recreation spaces in an urbanizing environment.

Most cities reexamine their park designation criteria and system definitions during updates to their Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Plans (typically every 8 to 10 years), with refinements to LOS standards or equity priorities every 3 to 5 years. These updates generally align with planning cycles and shifts in growth patterns, policy direction, or asset management frameworks rather than a fixed schedule. This aligns with NRPA's suggestion that comprehensive park system plans be updated roughly every 10 years with midcycle check-ins.

### **System Definition and Access**

Traditionally, LOS has been measured using acres of parkland per 1,000 residents. While still relevant, many cities now use a broader LOS framework that incorporates access, equity, investment, and quality. The NRPA uses a benchmarking metric of 10.2 acres per 1,000 residents (NRPA 2025 Agency Review), which is higher than Vancouver's current 6 acres per 1,000 residents.

Beyond acreage, cities are increasingly evaluating whether all residents have meaningful access to parks using metrics, such as:

- 10-minute walk proximity, measured using walkshed analysis
- Quality of amenities, such as playgrounds, restrooms, or trails
- Equitable distribution across neighborhoods

Another emerging LOS approach evaluates the condition and functionality of park and facilities



[NRPA Park Metrics | Research | National Recreation and Park Association | NRPA](#)

assets, such as playgrounds, restrooms and trails. The NRPA's dataset allows agencies to compare operational metrics, such as staffing and maintenance burden. The Trust for Public Land's Park Score index reflects these trends by assigning points based on acreage, investment, amenities, access, and equity. Its investment and amenity metrics also consider per resident spending and available facilities.

### Equity-focused LOS Trends

Current best practices emphasize that LOS should account for underserved populations, spatial equity, and equitable access to both parks and park quality. The ParkScore report supports this by highlighting how investment, access, and distribution trends evolve over time, noting that residents of larger cities increasingly rely on parks for connection, well-

being, and community togetherness.

### Holistic Assessment of Publicly Accessible Parklands

When assessing park distribution, the Trust for Public Land takes a more holistic approach by evaluating all publicly accessible parks, trails, and open spaces regardless of ownership. Today, cities recognize that people often do not distinguish between city parks, state parks, or school play areas. Instead, people perceive all of these as part of the public realm. The publicly accessible parks may account for:

- City-managed parks
- County parks or open spaces
- State or federal lands
- School district playfields
- Nonprofit-managed open spaces
- Other publicly accessible green spaces



[ParkScore® 2025 Scoring Metrics - Trust for Public Land](#)

These methods are useful for examining a more complete understanding of distribution, proximity, and service gaps.



## Considerations for Vancouver

Vancouver's park classifications adequately reflect existing conditions and provide distinction for park types currently seen across the city; however, as Vancouver continues to grow and strive for a higher LOS, additional consideration should be given to park types and intended purpose, park hierarchy, acquisition and development standards, and PIF program updates.

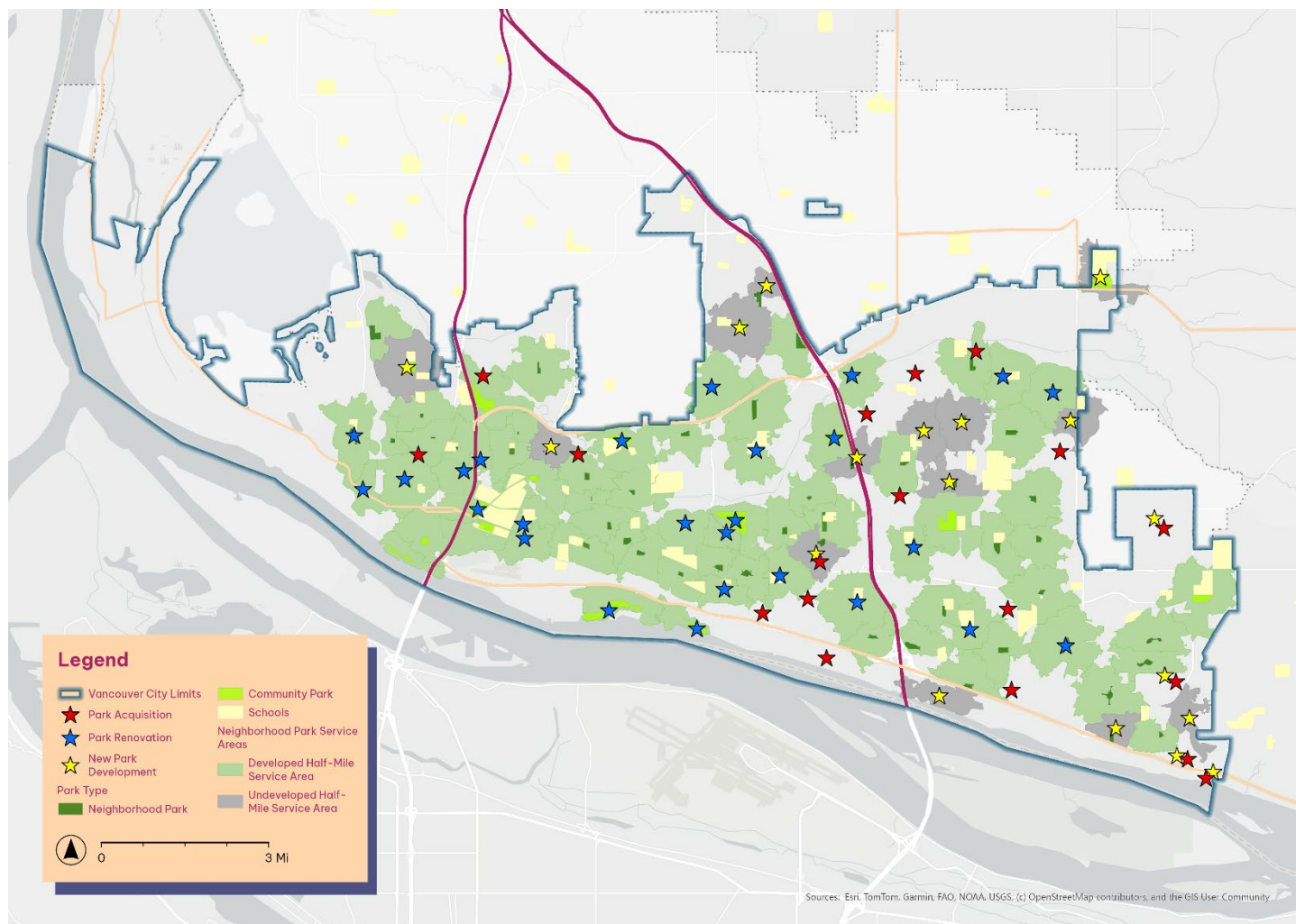
Based on peer communities in Washington and across the United States, Vancouver should explore the following:

- Enhanced focus on ecological value of property in planning efforts.
- Park hierarchy will need to be addressed as new park classifications are added. Vancouver should consider adding more detail to the Linear Parks classification that reflects how these spaces should function in contribution to the park system.
- Based on the *Our Vancouver* park system need cost analysis, consider adoption of proposed minimum standard of 1 acre per 30,000 residents for Civic Plazas. Additional standards for Community Centers, Regional Trails and Sports Complexes should also be considered. An updated nexus study should be conducted to affirm proposed standards are compliant with state regulations.
- Current PIFs (2025 rates) are estimated to support only 30 percent of the actual cost of acquisition and development. This deficit is anticipated to grow due to inflation and the use of PIF waivers. Consideration should be given to increasing PIF rates to generate a proportionate share of the resources necessary to adequately serve residential development—in addition to review of incentives for private park development, impact of fee waivers on LOS to low-income areas, and application of program to non-residential development.

## Proposed Capital Assets and Acquisition Planning

Vancouver's capital projects use investment and allocated funds to meet the needs of Vancouver's parks and recreation system, based on LOS standards, growth projections, and equity indicators. The planning process for new parkland is data-driven and community-informed, incorporating structured evaluation from feasibility analysis through community input and City Council approval (*VPRCS Comprehensive Plan*, EIS Report).

**Figure 25. Capital Facilities Plan Projects Map**



## Capital Facilities Plan

Vancouver's Capital Facilities Plan (CFP) provides a 6- and 20-year roadmap for capital projects, including major park and recreation investments, as well as the annual Capital Improvement Program (CIP). The CIP identifies near-term project priorities based on system needs, available funding, and coordination with other infrastructure investments. Capital improvements include physical changes to the park system, such as park, trail, or facility upgrades, as well as new parkland acquisition.

## Planned Investments

As part of the *VPRCS Comprehensive Plan*, approximately \$166 million in planned capital projects are identified between 2022 and 2031. These investments include new park acquisitions, major park renovations, trail expansions, and systemwide accessibility improvements, as Vancouver continues to keep pace with population growth, new development, and environmental changes (*VPRCS Comprehensive Plan*). A minor update to the *VPRCS Comprehensive Plan* is anticipated to occur following the adoption of the *Our Vancouver* plan to reflect policy changes and updates to investment strategies.

East and central Vancouver, along with the Evergreen, Burton, and Fourth Plain Boulevard corridors, have been identified as areas suitable for future investments. These locations are expected to experience increased population growth and higher-density residential development, resulting in a gap in park acreage per capita, as well as a focus on equitable access (Appendix F, Community Atlas Existing Conditions, EIS Report).

## Implementation and Funding Sources

Implementation for Vancouver's parks and recreation system is guided by adopted plans, policies and funding tools that align with citywide growth and planning objectives. Funding for implementation comes from a combination of federal and state grants, and partnerships with private and nonprofit organizations. These sources provide a guide for the City to maintain existing facilities, acquire new parkland, and expand recreation facilities.

The City of Vancouver has a variety of funding sources available supporting both capital improvements and ongoing operations, which are further outlined below:

- ➔ **Dedicated Funding Streams.** Cities and counties may allocate dedicated sources, such as property taxes, sales taxes, business license surcharges and impact fees (residential and non-residential), specifically for parks and recreation. These revenues can support both current operations and capital improvements in a stable, ongoing way. The City currently uses impact fees, a business license surcharge, and a local Real Estate Excise Taxes to provide dedicated, ongoing parks funding.
- ➔ **Bonds and Levies.** Bonds and levies may be used independently or in combination. When used together, bonds and levies can finance both the initial cost of improvements and the ongoing resources needed to support them. This combined approach offers a broader range of funding options than using either tool separately and, in most cases, requires voter approval.
  - Bonds are a debt-financing tool that allows jurisdictions to raise money upfront for large capital projects, such as park development or major renovations. Repayment is typically made over time through property taxes or other dedicated revenue streams. In Washington, general obligation bonds usually require voter approval and are repaid through property taxes, while revenue bonds are repaid from specific program revenues (e.g., user fees) and typically do not require a public vote. This type of funding is focused for specific projects and is not necessarily a stable ongoing source of funding for a variety of parks-related capital improvement projects.

- Levies are property tax measures that raise revenue directly, either on a temporary or permanent basis. They are commonly used to fund park operations, maintenance, or smaller-scale capital improvements. Most levies require voter approval, often through a simple majority or, in some cases, a supermajority with minimum turnout thresholds.
- ➔ Park and Recreation Districts. Washington law authorizes the creation of park and recreation districts, service areas, and metropolitan park districts. These permanent entities may levy property taxes, issue bonds, and generate other revenues dedicated to parks. A guiding principle is that there should be a clear connection between the population served and the taxes or levies imposed.
- ➔ Grants. State and federal grant programs can provide funding for park acquisition, development, restoration, and programming. Grants are often tied to specific policy goals, such as conservation or community health, and supplement local revenue sources rather than providing ongoing funding.
- ➔ Tax Increment Financing. The Tax Increment Financing districts capture increases in property tax revenue generated by new development within a designated area. The incremental revenue can be directed to fund a variety of infrastructure investments, including park facilities, often as part of broader subarea plan implementation and associated redevelopment efforts. The City of Vancouver currently does not have a Tax Increment Financing district but is actively studying their applicability to priority redevelopment areas in the city.
- ➔ Other Revenue Strategies
  - User Fees and Charges: Fees for activities, such as sports leagues, equipment rentals, or special events, can generate revenue to help offset operational costs. These fees are typically structured to recover a portion of costs while maintaining access for a broad range of users. They do not typically generate revenue for parks system improvement or expansion.
  - Fundraising, Advertising and Naming Rights: Donations from individuals, foundations, or businesses, as well as organized fundraising efforts such as capital campaigns or crowdfunding, can provide additional support for parks projects. These sources are generally project-specific, vary in scale and do not provide ongoing funding.

In addition, the City recently adopted a 0.1% sales tax increase through a Cultural Access Program establishes a dedicated funding source to strengthen community access to arts, culture, science, and heritage programming. This funding may be used to expand arts education, support local cultural organizations, and increase opportunities to participate in cultural experiences across the city.



## Culture, Arts and Heritage

Cultural spaces and programming are essential to Vancouver's uniqueness and sense of place, functioning as an interconnected system that supports community life. As described in the City's Culture, Arts & Heritage Plan, Vancouver is home to a growing and evolving cultural ecosystem that includes artists, cultural organizations, educational institutions, historic sites, and public spaces that together contribute to the city's identity, vibrancy, and quality of life. These culture, arts, and heritage functions are supported and coordinated through the City's Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Services department, which plays a key role in delivering programs and stewarding public spaces. Parks and public facilities provide accessible, everyday venues where culture and creativity are experienced as part of daily life (see goal CE-1).

A robust arts and cultural ecosystem is defined not only by the presence of venues, but by the capacity, programming, and space needed to support cultural activity citywide. This includes expanding opportunities for performance, exhibition, education, and informal creative expression across a network of spaces—such as parks, plazas, community centers, libraries, commercial spaces, and streets—while also addressing identified community needs for arts funding, organizational capacity, and dedicated cultural space. Integrating arts and culture into public infrastructure and neighborhood spaces strengthens social connection, fosters creativity, and reinforces Vancouver's distinct identity and sense of community pride (see CE-5).

In addition to strengthening community identity and social connection, access to arts and cultural experiences contributes to improved physical, mental, and emotional well-being. Research shows that engagement with the arts can reduce stress, support cognitive health, and foster a sense of belonging and purpose. Public art integrated into parks, streets, and civic spaces enhances the everyday environment, creating more inviting, walkable, and restorative places that encourage outdoor activity and social interaction. Communities with abundant and visible arts and cultural opportunities are better positioned to support overall quality of life, contributing to healthier, more connected, and resilient populations.



Public art being unveiled at the corner of Evergreen and Broadway in Downtown Vancouver.

As Vancouver grows and becomes increasingly diverse, expanding equitable access to cultural experiences remains essential. Culture—expressed through language, traditions, art, and shared experiences—reflects the everyday life of the community and helps build connections across differences. Investing in arts and cultural infrastructure and programming, particularly in underserved areas, supports inclusive participation, cross-cultural exchange, and opportunities for residents of all ages and backgrounds to engage in creative expression.



In 2023, the City acquired the former Community Library Building at Mill Plain and Fort Vancouver Way, and developed it into the Community Art Hub, a space that hosts a wide variety of cultural events, classes, workshops and rehearsals, helping the local arts ecosystem to flourish.

Partnerships are central to sustaining a thriving cultural ecosystem. The City plays a key role as a convener and partner—working with cultural organizations, Indigenous communities, schools, businesses, and community groups to expand access to arts education, programming, and cultural space. Consistent with the Culture, Arts & Heritage Plan, this collaborative approach helps build cultural capacity, support local artists, and integrate culture, arts, and heritage into the daily life of Vancouver’s residents, while also contributing to economic vitality, tourism, and overall community well-being.

## **Goal: PR-1**

## **Increase Community Health through Recreation**

**Vancouver has safe and equitable access to a quality and diverse system of parks, natural areas, amenities, recreational facilities and programs that promote physical and mental well-being, cater to the varied interests and needs of community members, and contribute to a vibrant and active community.**

Vancouver's parks and recreation system will support the health of the community by creating opportunities for play, connection, engagement, and creative expression. Currently, Vancouver's parks, trails, and facilities are inclusive places to engage in physical fitness, mental well-being, and social belonging. Through intentional design and equitable distribution, Vancouver's diverse system will enhance quality of life throughout the city, connecting neighbors and nature.

Recreation is a core public service that enriches the city's livability and resiliency. Vancouver's recreational programs offer lifelong health by encouraging outdoor activity, building intergenerational relationships, and supporting inclusive events that celebrate Vancouver's diversity. Vancouver's facilities are designed and operated to be inclusive, accessible and responsive to the needs of the community.

Community health and well-being for all ages and abilities are an important part of Vancouver's outdoor plan and recreation. According to Appendix F, Community Atlas (2023), one in five residents is under 18, and nearly 15 percent are over 65, emphasizing a need for more intergenerational recreation opportunities. Youth programs provide safe and structured spaces for play, learning, and teamwork, while senior and adaptive recreation programs promote mobility, connection, and mental wellness.

Looking at both local and national trends, access to recreation and green spaces reduces the risk of chronic diseases and improves mental health, strengthening the City's dedication to inclusive and equitable recreation access (*VPRCS Comprehensive Plan*, EIS Report).

The supporting policies with this goal will support investment in recreation programs, facilities and public spaces that promote physical activity, mental well-being, and social connection for people of all ages and abilities. The policies emphasize equitable access through universal design, inclusive programming, and programs and infrastructure that support youth, aging populations, and underserved communities. While there is an emphasis on equity and a sense of place, the policies also prioritize the coordination of capital investments to align with health and equity objectives.

| Supporting Policy                              | Description                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | No.       | Related Goals                 |
|------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|-------------------------------|
| <b>Asset Management</b>                        | Manage City assets to balance full life-cycle costs, performance, risk, and service levels, using BMPs and data. Public infrastructure and facility investments will leverage existing investments to support efficient and equitable growth.     | <b>21</b> | PFS-2, TM-1, PR-1             |
| <b>Climate Resilient Spaces</b>                | Incorporate elements of climate resiliency into new public spaces, buildings, and infrastructure.                                                                                                                                                 | <b>29</b> | CL-1, CE-1, PR-1, PFS-3, LU-3 |
| <b>Incorporate Universal Design Principles</b> | Incentivize universal design principles in private development. Support accessibility retrofits for existing homes and prioritize affordable housing options tailored to multigenerational living, aging in place, and a wide range of abilities. | <b>74</b> | EI-2, PR-1, H-2               |



## Goal: PR-2

## Parks, Trails, and Natural Spaces

**Vancouver’s residents have access to a well-connected and expanded network of developed parks, trails and natural areas that support outdoor recreation, mental and physical health, biodiversity, and climate resilience, reflect the cultural and economic value of the community, and serve as vital hubs for community gathering.**

Vancouver’s parks, open spaces, and trail network connect people to the outdoors, strengthening the city’s environmental health, recreation opportunities, and social vitality. Land acquisition and preservation efforts ensure that environmentally sensitive areas are protected, and new parks and open spaces expand in line with the city’s population growth.

As Vancouver continues to grow, capital investments will focus on linking parks and communities, improving connectivity and access for walking, biking, and active transportation. Expanding trail networks and greenway corridors will help address service gaps and promote equitable access to outdoor spaces, particularly in east and central Vancouver, where access to parks and trails remains limited. Natural areas also play a critical role in the City’s climate adaptation strategy. Vancouver’s park lands and natural areas offer community health benefits. Increasing urban tree canopy mitigates heat island effects and flooding. According to the Community Atlas (2023), neighborhoods with higher canopy coverage and access to natural spaces have better public health outcomes and greater climate resilience. The policies associated with this goal support the expansion and maintenance of Vancouver’s connected network of parks, trails, and open spaces that provide environmental, recreational and social benefits. There is a strong emphasis on climate resilience, preservation of sensitive lands, and creation of community streets and green corridors that bring nature into the urban environment. This goal also calls for exploring methods to activate underutilized sites throughout the city and have them contribute productively to our existing network of parks and open spaces. This approach is intended to complement—not replace—ongoing investment in existing parks and open spaces by strategically identifying underutilized sites,

particularly those at risk of blight or public safety concerns, where activation can deliver additional community benefit.

| Supporting Policy                                                  | Description                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | No.        | Related Goals                 |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|-------------------------------|
| <b>Acquire Land for Public Parks</b>                               | Acquire and reserve land for the development of parks for public use and recreation in areas experiencing growth, prioritizing underserved neighborhoods and areas currently not meeting parks service standards.                                               | <b>7</b>   | LU-3, PR-2                    |
| <b>Community Safe Routes</b>                                       | Create safe walking connections through programs that identify and invest in Safe Routes to Schools and Community Safe Routes that link people to transit and other important community destinations.                                                           | <b>33</b>  | TM-1, TM-2, PFS-3, PR-2, CL-3 |
| <b>Community Streets</b>                                           | Develop guidance and encouragement for community use of the right-of-way, including plazas, parklets, “streateries,” open streets events, public art, converting some low volume roadways into pedestrian only thoroughfares, and other demonstration projects. | <b>34</b>  | TM-1, TM-4, PR-2              |
| <b>Conserve Land for Open Space and Environmental Preservation</b> | Acquire environmentally sensitive land with ecological benefits for the purpose of conservation.                                                                                                                                                                | <b>35</b>  | PR-2, CL-2                    |
| <b>Improve Connectivity between Parks and Open Spaces</b>          | Create an expansive network of linear parks that encourage active transportation, improve community health and well-being, enhance tree canopy and stormwater management, and link parks and open space with housing.                                           | <b>68</b>  | PR-2, PFS-1,                  |
| <b>Pilot Projects</b>                                              | Encourage the use of short-term pilot projects for park, transportation, and general infrastructure improvements before making long-term investments to foster innovation, test feasibility, and increase community buy-in.                                     | <b>102</b> | CE-4, PR-2, TM-2, CL-1        |

| Supporting Policy                              | Description                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | No.        | Related Goals                       |
|------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|-------------------------------------|
| <b>Pollinator Habitats</b>                     | Support a healthy urban ecosystem by embedding pollinator habitat into public and private development, prioritizing pesticide free landscaping, removal and reducing use of invasive species, enhancing biodiversity, and connecting natural spaces across the city through pollinator-friendly plantings.                                                 | <b>103</b> | CL-2, PR-2, PR-3, CL-4              |
| <b>Preserve and Protect the Columbia River</b> | Manage the built and natural environment to protect and restore the water quality and habitat of the Columbia River basin, reflecting its central role in the city's identity, economy, history, and future.                                                                                                                                               | <b>104</b> | CL-2, CL-4, CE-5, EO-2, PR-2, PFS-1 |
| <b>Program Underutilized Spaces</b>            | Encourage the thoughtful reuse and activation of underutilized lands—such as space beneath freeway viaducts, oddly shaped parcels, utility corridors, temporarily vacant lots, and other non-developable remnants typically under 1 acre—by establishing public-private partnerships to program them to serve community, cultural and environmental needs. | <b>106</b> | CE-1, CE-4, LU-4, PR-2              |
| <b>Regional Trail and Open Space Networks</b>  | Work with nonprofit and private partners, Clark County and adjacent cities to build out the regional trail network for recreation and active transportation purposes.                                                                                                                                                                                      | <b>123</b> | TM-1, PR-2, CL-2                    |
| <b>Strategic Reuse of Excess Right-of-Way</b>  | Analyze suitability of excess and unneeded ROW for adding tree canopy, native planting, nature spaces, and stormwater management systems.                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | <b>137</b> | CL-1, CL-2, LU-3, CL-4, PR-2        |
| <b>Sustainable Parks Funding</b>               | Identify and implement new funding strategies to support robust parks and natural area investments, ongoing maintenance and operation costs, and provide equitable access and LOS to all community members.                                                                                                                                                | <b>152</b> | PR-2                                |

## **Goal: PR-3**

## **Community Health and Wellness**

**Vancouver community members have access to high-quality public spaces that support physical and mental well-being, active lifestyles, connection to nature, and sense of community belonging.**

Vancouver's parks and recreation system connect residents to spaces and programs that encourage active living, stress reduction and social connection. Parks, community centers and recreation facilities function as part of the city's broader wellness network, providing inclusive environments that support physical and mental well-being and complement other community health services.

This goal helps address these benefits and recognizes neighborhoods within the city with higher rates of food insecurity and chronic disease, particularly in areas with limited access to fresh produce and outdoor recreation opportunities. Addressing these disparities requires a coordinated approach that integrates park amenities, community gardens, and wellness programming into everyday public spaces (Appendix F, Community Atlas, 2023).

In collaboration with the *VPRCS Comprehensive Plan (2022–2031)*, there is a need for continued investment in programs that promote lifelong wellness, including fitness classes, adaptive recreation, nature-based therapy, and nutrition education. Partnerships with local health providers, school districts and nonprofit organizations can help extend these opportunities.

Exposure to green spaces has also been proven to lower stress, improve concentration, and encourage a sense of social belonging, benefiting youth, older adults, and residents who experience higher health risks. Policies supporting this goal emphasize collaboration among parks, health, and social service partners to increase community wellness and provide equitable high-quality public spaces.



| Supporting Policy                                           | Description                                                                                                                                                                                          | No.       | Related Goals         |
|-------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|-----------------------|
| <b>Broaden Equitable Access to Natural Spaces and Parks</b> | Increase equitable access to natural spaces and parks by investing in new and improved facilities in underserved neighborhoods and siting new accessible housing close to existing and future parks. | <b>23</b> | CL-4, PR-3, H-1, EI-2 |
| <b>Community Centers</b>                                    | Establish multipurpose community centers offering social, recreational, educational, and cultural programming, especially in underserved areas.                                                      | <b>30</b> | PR-3, PFS-1           |
| <b>Community Food Enterprises</b>                           | Explore opportunities for community-owned and cooperative grocery store models to strengthen neighborhood food access where the private market fails to meet demand.                                 | <b>31</b> | PR-3, LU-1            |
| <b>Community Gardens</b>                                    | Expand access to community gardens and incentivize urban agriculture to improve food security and increase healthy food options.                                                                     | <b>32</b> | PR-3                  |
| <b>Health Access</b>                                        | Broaden access to essential healthcare and services for underserved populations and address built environment causes of health disparities.                                                          | <b>65</b> | EI-1, PR-3            |
| <b>Increase Food Access</b>                                 | Incentivize and remove regulatory barriers to locating grocery stores and neighborhood markets near housing and in underserved neighborhoods.                                                        | <b>78</b> | PR-3, LU-1            |

| Supporting Policy                   | Description                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | No.        | Related Goals          |
|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|------------------------|
| <b>Native Landscapes</b>            | Incorporate native plantings, food forests, and agroforestry into parks and public spaces to support food security, ecological health, and cultural knowledge sharing.                                                                                                                                     | <b>94</b>  | PR-3, CL-2, EO-3       |
| <b>Pollinator Habitats</b>          | Support a healthy urban ecosystem by embedding pollinator habitat into public and private development, prioritizing pesticide free landscaping, removal and reducing use of invasive species, enhancing biodiversity, and connecting natural spaces across the city through pollinator-friendly plantings. | <b>103</b> | CL-2, PR-2, PR-3, CL-4 |
| <b>Support Mental Health Access</b> | Explore partnerships to expand access to culturally inclusive mental health, behavioral health, and physical health resources.                                                                                                                                                                             | <b>148</b> | PR-3, EI-1             |

## Goal: PR-4

# Thriving Cultural Landscape

**Vancouver supports a thriving cultural landscape for residents and visitors by investing in public art, cultural centers and facilities, historic preservation, and supporting community centered initiatives and opportunities for creative expression that reflect the city’s diverse identities and historic roots.**

Cultural spaces, parks, and public facilities are essential to Vancouver’s uniqueness and sense of place. The park system provides community gathering spaces for creative expression and cultural learning that strengthen social connections. The City’s cultural programs honor Indigenous heritage, highlight local artists, and promote diverse community voices through events, exhibits, and performances that reflect Vancouver’s evolving character.

As Vancouver continues to grow, its population becomes increasingly diverse, with cultural heritage and multilingual communities shaping the city’s neighborhoods and public life (Appendix F, Community Atlas, 2023). Expanding access to cultural programming and facilities helps create shared experiences across generations and cultural groups, particularly in areas where residents have fewer opportunities for arts engagement.

Ongoing collaboration with schools, cultural organizations, local artists, and community-based groups helps extend the reach of arts education and programming, while supporting creative activity in both established and emerging spaces. Efforts to preserve and interpret historic and cultural resources further reinforce community identity and provide opportunities for learning and reflection.

Policies supporting this goal prioritize collaboration among cultural organizations, Indigenous partners, and community groups to advance arts education, heritage preservation, and equitable access to cultural experiences.

| Supporting Policy                                                    | Description                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | No.       | Related Goals                     |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|-----------------------------------|
| <b>Access to Arts and Cultural Programs</b>                          | Improve access to arts, cultural and heritage programs by reducing barriers to participation, prioritizing underserved and historically underserved communities, and investing in related programs.                                                                      | <b>1</b>  | EI-1, PR-4                        |
| <b>Center Impacted Voices in the Development of Community Spaces</b> | Engage community organizations and individuals representing diverse lived and cultural experiences in the planning, design and programming of community spaces.                                                                                                          | <b>26</b> | CE-1, CE-5<br>EI-1, EI-4,<br>PR-4 |
| <b>Culturally Responsive Design</b>                                  | Develop standards for public spaces and buildings that incorporate culturally specific design principles and art installations and reflect the diverse history and heritage of Vancouver communities.                                                                    | <b>41</b> | CE-5, CE-2,<br>PR-4               |
| <b>Event Programming</b>                                             | Continue to support and expand local gatherings, festivals and special events that uplift community, reflect diverse histories and lived experiences, and create a sense of civic pride.                                                                                 | <b>56</b> | CE-1, CE-5,<br>PR-4               |
| <b>Expand Representation in Public Art</b>                           | Ensure publicly funded art projects and installations reflect and incorporate the experiences of historically excluded and underrepresented voices in the physical and cultural landscape of the city.                                                                   | <b>57</b> | CE-5, CE-2,<br>PR-4               |
| <b>Fort Vancouver and the Historic Reserve</b>                       | Protect and promote Fort Vancouver and the Historic Reserve as nationally significant cultural and historic assets. Support public investment, inclusive programming, and heritage-based economic development. Oppose efforts to reduce funding or public accessibility. | <b>61</b> | PR-4                              |



| Supporting Policy                                         | Description                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | No.        | Related Goals          |
|-----------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|------------------------|
| <b>Historic and Culturally Significant Resources</b>      | Protect and preserve significant cultural, historic, archeologic, and ecologic community resources. Promote preservation, restoration, protection, and rehabilitation of historic and architecturally significant structures, and heritage trees.                                               | <b>66</b>  | CE-5, CL-1, CL-2, PR-4 |
| <b>Increase Access to Space for Artists and Creatives</b> | Establish partnerships that increase access to shared, affordable spaces serving artists and arts and cultural organizations.                                                                                                                                                                   | <b>76</b>  | CE-1, PR-4, CE-5       |
| <b>Increase Cultural Capacity</b>                         | Strengthen Vancouver's cultural sector by investing in capacity building across arts, culture and heritage organizations as an economic and cultural driver of the community.                                                                                                                   | <b>77</b>  | PR-4                   |
| <b>Support Locally Made Products and Art</b>              | Support and elevate Vancouver's local makers, artisans, and creative production sectors by promoting the use of locally sourced and recycled materials, strengthening small-scale manufacturing, and advancing a circular economy that contributes to community pride and place-based identity. | <b>147</b> | CE-5, EO-3, PR-4       |

## **Chapter 7 – Key Implementing Actions**

- ✓ Develop a Comprehensive Parks Funding Strategy.
- ✓ Reevaluate Parks Level of Service (LOS) standards to align with the Comprehensive Plan.
- ✓ Reevaluate Park district boundaries.
- ✓ Reevaluate and update the Park Impact Fee (PIF) program, including adding a commercial PIF, and update relevant technical documents.
- ✓ Identify minor updates to the Parks Comprehensive Plan to align with the citywide Comprehensive Plan and updated Climate Action Framework.
- ✓ Continue strategic parks capital investments guided by the Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Services Comprehensive Plan.
- ✓ Refine community recreation offerings to support community health and connectedness within the City's cost recovery policy.
- ✓ Develop a citywide strategy for managing natural systems in support of climate goals.
- ✓ Advance the Arts Hub project.
- ✓ Expand implementation of the Arts, Culture, and Heritage Plan with approved cultural access funding.



# Transportation & Mobility.



8

OUR VANCOUVER



# Introduction

Vancouver's transportation system reflects historic development patterns that prioritized vehicle movement over multimodal access, contributing to high vehicle dependence, safety risks, and gaps in pedestrian, bicycle and transit networks. Much of the policy work undertaken by the City over the last decade aims to address these conditions, improving access to opportunity, and advancing safety and climate goals. This chapter relies heavily on the 2024-2044 Transportation System Plan (TSP). The TSP was developed over the course of three years and formally adopted by City Council in January 2024. Development of the TSP included extensive outreach and coordination between City staff and City Council, the Transportation and Mobility Commission, a technical advisory



## Vision: Transportation and Mobility

In Vancouver, transportation is safe and accessible for everyone, regardless of where they live or their socioeconomic status. We commit to building an equitable and connected network of streets, paths and trails that are safe and comfortable for people walking, driving, rolling, using small mobility devices and taking transit. By prioritizing reliability and frequency, our public transportation system allows people to move around the community easily and safely. We embrace multi-modal options such as bicycles and small mobility devices like scooters and commit to breaking down barriers and removing financial obstacles to using these travel options. Through strategic partnerships, we will establish integrated transportation hubs, fostering safe, climate-friendly, and accessible pathways to essential resources and opportunities in Vancouver and across the region.



committee, and community members. Though adopted in early 2024, the TSP may undergo a minor update after completion of the Comprehensive Plan to ensure alignment with the goals and policies of this chapter and account for and integrate the City’s updated growth concept. The TSP is adopted by reference and referenced frequently to fulfill requirements of the GMA. The TSP is included in Appendix A, Transportation System Plan.

The TSP includes its own goals, policies and programs that work in coordination with and are informed by the Comprehensive Plan goals, policies, and implementation actions.

Transportation System Plan Goals

The TSP’s vision and goals guide future transportation investments and align resource allocation to community values, and align with and complement the goals and policies of the Comprehensive Plan. The primary plan goals of safety, equity and climate align with City Council’s priorities for the city. The remaining three goals focus on transportation choice, regional connectivity, and maintaining City assets.

Transportation System Plan Big Ideas

The TSP organizes its policies and programs under the framework of six ‘big ideas’ that reflect community-supported values. The TSP goals set the vision and the big ideas define how to get there. The TSP big ideas align with and complement the goals and policies of the Comprehensive Plan, as shown in Table 23.

Table 23. Transportation System Plan Big Ideas and Comprehensive Plan Goals

| TSP Big Idea                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | Complementary Comprehensive Plan Goal                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Support Thriving Neighborhoods.</b> Make walking and rolling, small mobility, and transit options convenient for neighborhood travel.                                                                                                                                               | LU-1 Connected and Accessible Neighborhoods: Vancouver neighborhoods are places where community members can walk, bike, or roll to a diverse mix of community and open spaces, services, retail, fresh food, healthcare, and educational opportunities and amenities within 15 minutes or less (quarter mile). |
| Create <b>complete corridors</b> that connect growth areas, support business, serve transit, and maximize safety.<br>AND<br><b>Connect people to transit.</b> Fill sidewalk gaps, add safe crossings, and support speed and reliability projects that keep transit moving efficiently. | TM-1 Integrated Transportation and Connectivity: Vancouver is served by a reliable, frequent, and accessible transportation system that seamlessly connects residents to key areas of the city and the region.                                                                                                 |
| <b>Build low-stress networks.</b> Make the walking, rolling, bicycling, and small mobility networks inviting for all ages and abilities.                                                                                                                                               | EI-2 Universal Design and Access: Public spaces, infrastructure, information platforms and public and private buildings are universally                                                                                                                                                                        |

| TSP Big Idea                                                                                                                                                             | Complementary Comprehensive Plan Goal                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                                                                                                                                                                          | designed and meet best practices for accessibility and inclusion.                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| <b>Make growth a benefit for all.</b> Manage growth by leveraging investments from new development and use parking and demand management policies to support livability. | EO-4 Inclusive and Community-centered Economic Growth: Economic growth provides benefits and opportunities to all community members, supports upward mobility, and provides opportunities for wealth creation.                                                                 |
| <b>Embrace the future.</b> Adopt new technologies and track data to help meet our goal of carbon neutrality by 2040.                                                     | CE-4 Innovation: Vancouver community members are empowered to explore creative solutions, innovative methods, entrepreneurship, calculated risk-taking, and bold solutions that drive progress, address systemic inequities, and improve quality of life within neighborhoods. |

## Community Feedback

- ➔ Desire for land use and transportation to be coordinated so that transit and active transportation options are near housing, jobs, parks, and essential services.
- ➔ Concerns about vehicle traffic safety and congestion, including noise and air pollution, speeding, unsafe crossings, industrial traffic, potholes, and the need for traffic calming.
- ➔ Strong support for active transportation options—walking, biking, and micromobility—and desire for more sidewalks, curb ramps, protected bike lanes, greenways, and access to scooters/bike share.
- ➔ Strong demand for expanded, reliable transit service, including more bus routes, fast and frequent service, and regional connections, especially among younger community members.
- ➔ Transit must be accessible, safe, and comfortable, including better stop amenities (shelters, lighting) and a welcoming and secure space.
- ➔ Mixed views on parking and how much land should be dedicated to it—some think parking takes up too much space, others fear losing parking near homes and businesses.
- ➔ Make sure freight can move efficiently while mitigating negative impacts on neighbors and other transportation options.

## Existing Transportation System and Framework

Vancouver’s transportation system is a part of a regional network in southwest Washington and across the Columbia River to Portland and surrounding cities. The City coordinates with Clark County, neighboring cities, Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT), C-TRAN, the

Southwest Washington RTC, and the tri-county Metro Regional Government in Oregon to facilitate updates to Vancouver's transportation network and assess land use assumptions. The sections below describe the city's street network and transportation programs and tools used to assess the effectiveness and efficiency of the transportation system.

### Street Network

The city's street network is the backbone of the transportation system. City streets and sidewalks account for nearly 20 percent of Vancouver's total land area—approximately four times the land dedicated for parks. The TSP provides an inventory of modal networks throughout Vancouver, including walking and rolling, bike and small mobility, enhanced transit corridors, and freight corridors, as well as overlap of these networks.

The modal networks, described below, provide a policy framework and a roadmap for capital investment. Full maps are available in the TSP Networks chapter of the TSP (Appendix A, Transportation System Plan).



**The Pedestrian, or “Walking/Rolling Network”** identifies pedestrian corridors and pedestrian centers. Pedestrian corridors represent places where high levels of walking or rolling are expected.

- ➔ **Primary Pedestrian Corridors** include a transit route or routes, provide a continuous east-west or north-south connection, include major multi-use paths, and/or connect to the interstate bridges.
- ➔ **Secondary Pedestrian Corridors** connect to schools and parks and fill gaps in the network.



**The Bicycle and Small Mobility (BSM) Network** aims to provide low-stress transportation facilities within a half mile of all residents that can safely accommodate a variety of users. The facility type required to feel safe and attractive to various users is dependent upon the roadway characteristics it is located on.

- ➔ Facility types that make up the BSM Network include protected or buffered bicycle lanes, multi-use paths, unpaved trails, striped bike lanes, and neighborhood greenways.



**The Enhanced Transit Network** consists of enhanced transit corridors where the City will focus on supporting access to transit and transit priority.

- ➔ Corridors were identified based on existing and planned frequent service, equity considerations and growth centers.



**The Freight Network** includes existing critical freight corridors, which consist of the federally designated National Highway Freight Network and Truck Freight Economic Corridors, as well as Freight Access Streets, which are designated by the City based on local freight volumes.



**The Roadway Network** is defined by local, regional and federal functional roadway classifications. The Vancouver public roadway functional classification is defined in [Title 11](#) of the Vancouver Municipal Code (VMC).

In addition to the street network, Vancouver's transportation network also includes Pearson Field Airport, a general aviation airport located directly east of I-5 and just north of State Route 14 and the Columbia River. The airport is operated by the City of Vancouver, which owns 61.8 acres of the airport site. The remaining 72.6 acres are owned by the National Park Service and located within the Vancouver National Historic Reserve.



### Concurrency and Multimodal Level of Service

The GMA requires cities to adopt concurrency standards and ensure transportation projects, programs, and services needed to serve growth are regionally coordinated and in place either at the time of development or within six years. This occurs through coordination of the transportation system and the adopted land use map and assessment of LOS. The TSP also calls for a shift to a more multimodal approach in measuring concurrency (a measure of transportation system capacity to support development) that measures LOS for travel modes beyond just vehicles.

The City of Vancouver Multimodal Level of Service (MMLOS) will measure network completeness and level of traffic stress (LTS). The network completeness assesses the existing facility against its prescribed facility type based upon the 2024-2044

### Equity Lens

Historically, Vancouver and many other Washington cities have measured capacity using auto performance metrics, such as peak hour vehicle speed and intersection throughput. This autocentric approach hindered broader improvements to the multimodal system and focused on those who primarily drive to get to where they need to go. The revised concurrency policy measures conditions and performance of all modes, including walking, biking, transit and vehicles.



TSP<sup>44</sup> modal networks. The prescribed facilities are determined by the roadway speed, traffic volumes, and adjacent land use to ensure that pedestrians, bikes and small mobility users have LTS 1 or 2<sup>45</sup> on the primary and secondary modal corridors. For transit, the City will invest in transit supportive infrastructure and design on the Enhanced Transit Modal Network to support speed, reliability and quality infrastructure for transit riders. The City adopts C-TRAN’s MMLOS standard for the local and regional system.

- ➔ Local System
  - Routes: Service frequency LOS B (30 min headway) or better
  - Transit stops: Accessible path is LTS 1 or 2 and stop completeness (assess existing facilities against C-TRAN Amenity Standards)
- ➔ Regional System
  - Routes: Reliability LOS B or better
  - Transit stops: Accessible path is LTS 1 or 2 and stop completeness (assess existing facilities against C-TRAN Amenity Standards)

In order to bring transportation facilities and services to the established MMLOS, the City will pursue programs and policies from the TSP, such as the Complete Corridors program, leverage development with traffic impact analyses and the traffic impact fee (TIF) program, and the safe routes to school program, in addition to the goals and policies of this plan. The TSP addresses MMLOS in Policy CC2.2, Multimodal Concurrency Standard: *Update concurrency requirements to ensure that developments and capital projects consider multimodal impacts and contribute to mode shift.*

The City is required to adopt LOS for both Highways of Statewide Significance (HSS) and Highways of Regional Significance (non-HSS) as determined by the State and Regional Transportation Council. In Vancouver, HSS include I-5, I-205, SR-14, and SR-501 between I-5 and the Port of Vancouver. Highways of Regional Significance in Vancouver include segments of SR-500. In Clark County, WSDOT has established a LOS ‘C’ for rural HSS and ‘D’ for urban HSS facilities. The RTC Board adopted LOS ‘E’ or better for non-HSS urban highway facilities and LOS ‘C’ or better on rural non-HSS facilities. More information on these standards can be found in the Clark County Regional Transportation Plan, adopted in 2024.

Table 24. Level of Service Standards for Highways

| Facility | Designation | Level of Service (LOS) |
|----------|-------------|------------------------|
| I-5      | HSS         | C (rural), D (urban)   |
| I-205    | HSS         | C (rural), D (urban)   |
| SR-14    | HSS         | C (rural), D (urban)   |
| SR-501   | HSS         | C (rural), D (urban)   |
| SR-500   | Non-HSS     | C (rural), E (urban)   |

<sup>44</sup> [Vancouver Moves: Transportation System Plan](#)

<sup>45</sup> [Level of Traffic Stress](#)

## Active Transportation

Active transportation is an integral part of the city's transportation system. The TSP includes two big ideas that support active transportation in Vancouver. One of the TSP's big ideas is to **"create complete corridors"** that connect growth areas, support businesses, serve transit, and maximize safety. The city's arterial network (which includes streets like Mill Plain Boulevard, 112th Avenue and Andresen Road) acts as the backbone of its transportation network. They service major destinations, typically have transit service, and are often the most direct route with high demand for travel. These corridors are also fast, wide, and have the greatest number of crashes. Rethinking how the City plans, designs and measures success on these streets is necessary to have a safe and comfortable pedestrian and bike and small mobility network.

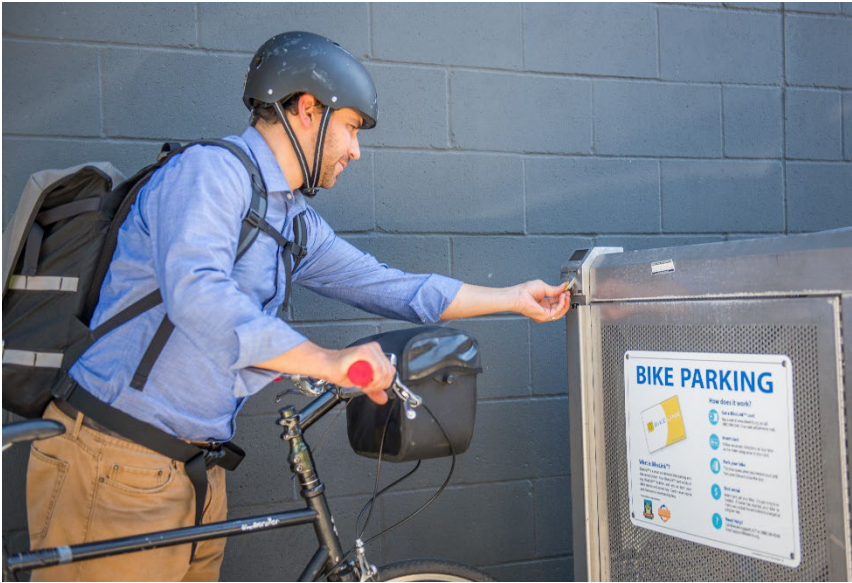
The second applicable big idea is **"build low-stress networks."** The goal is to make the pedestrian and BSM Networks safe and inviting for all ages and abilities. The BSM

Network today consists of lower-stress neighborhood streets isolated by higher-stress collector and arterial streets. This makes it challenging to bike outside of neighborhoods and specific corridors and reduces access to key destinations and opportunities. Sidewalks are missing on 9 miles of arterial streets—the fastest and most daunting places to walk or roll. Adopting a citywide low-stress network for BSM and walking and rolling must be complemented by policies and programming (wayfinding, education) that further facilitate use of these networks.

## Transportation Demand Management

Transportation Demand Management is supported by the TSP's big idea to **"make growth a benefit for all."** To do this, Vancouver will manage growth by leveraging investments from new development and use parking and demand management policies to support livability. With growth comes the need to update development standards to ensure necessary infrastructure is in place to accommodate new trips. These updates present an opportunity to right-size parking, balancing vehicle accessibility with the need to preserve valuable land for housing, recreation, and other uses. Demand management policies and programs pair well with infrastructure—the design of streets can make it easy to walk, roll, or bicycle while programs incentivize multimodal choices.





Since 2006, the City of Vancouver has managed the Clark County **Commute Trip Reduction Program** on behalf of Clark County. Employers with 100+ full-time employees commuting during peak commute hours must participate. There are 56 affected worksites countywide, reaching about 11,000 employees. The [2025-2029 Commute Trip Reduction Plan's](#) goals include establishing performance measures, developing strategies to reduce employee drive-alone commutes, and alignment with other regional plans.

In February 2025, the “**Downtown Access, Mobility and Parking Plan: Focusing on People**” was approved by City Council. This plan includes three goals: adopt new pricing practices for parking, expand public parking supply through shared parking, and enhance downtown mobility options. The plan includes 16 specific actions—new policies, initiatives or investments—designed to help the City achieve the plan goals. The plan calls for a five-year implementation period.

Updating pricing practices in downtown will incorporate demand-driven pricing strategies to create a user friendly “park once” environment that benefits those who drive downtown, encourages people to walk between destinations without moving their car, and maximizes utilization of the on-street parking supply. Enhancing downtown mobility options will provide new options for people to adopt car-free behaviors to get to and around downtown. This will help to reduce demand for car trips between downtown destinations. In the future, pricing strategies can be applied elsewhere in the city where land uses and transportation options make this practicable.

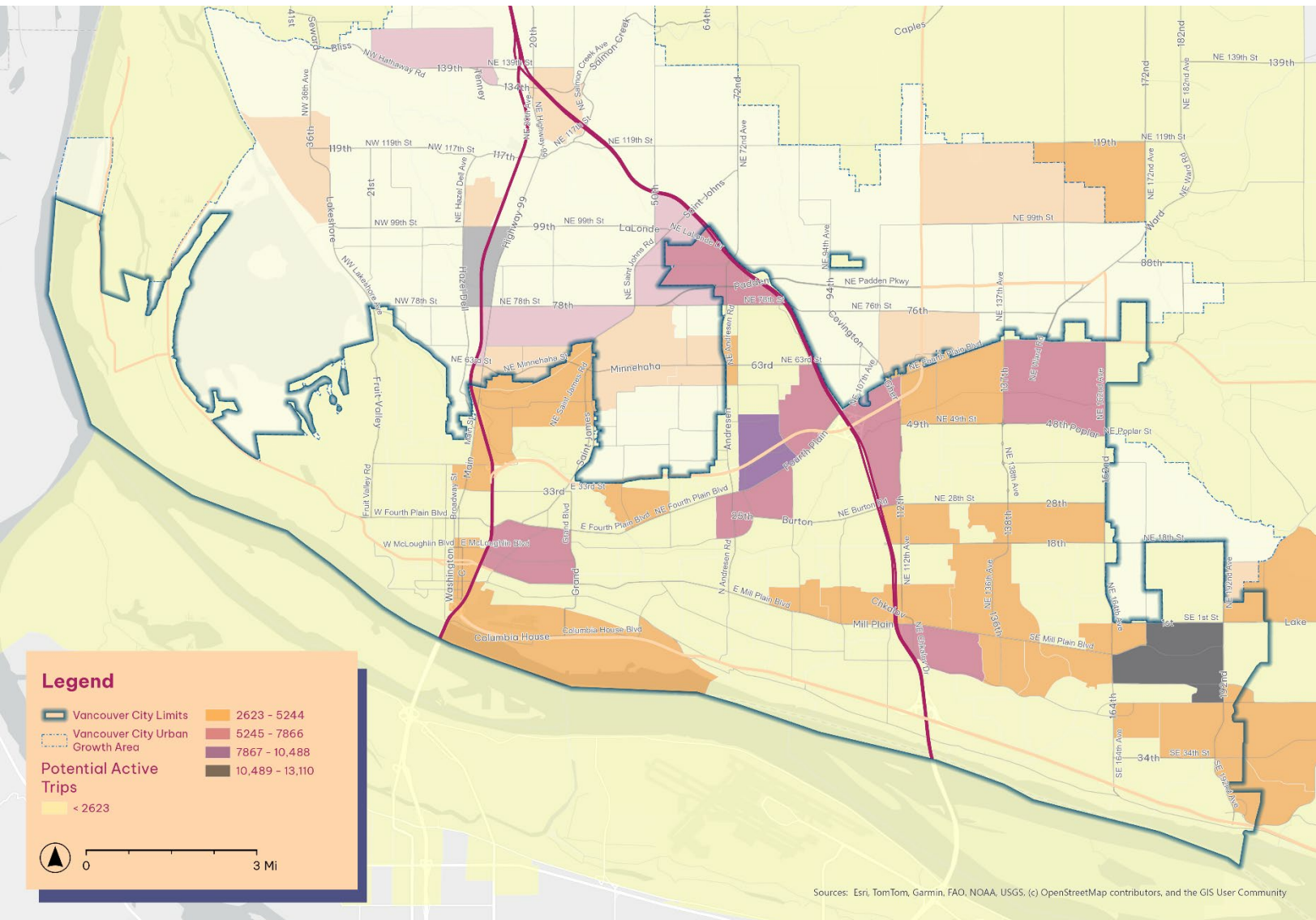
### **Transportation Forecast**

Over the next 20 years, there is strong potential for increasing active transportation trips in every part of the city and region. Over one-third of vehicle trips in Vancouver are less than 4 miles and are, therefore, potential candidates for conversion to active transportation trips. In order to convert motor vehicle trips to active trips and reduce GHG emissions, the City will focus land use and transportation strategies in the areas surrounding Clark College, Vancouver Mall, Walnut Grove, Hewlett-Packard campus/Columbia Tech Center, and the eastern end of SE Mill Plain Boulevard. Figure 26 shows the concentration of short vehicle trips by location, with areas with more of these trips indicating a higher potential for future conversion to active trips. Average daily trips per household are expected to increase very slightly over the next twenty years but some of those trips are expected to convert to active modes if supportive infrastructure, such as sidewalks and protected mobility lanes, is provided. Focusing infrastructure investments in areas where both current and projected active trip potential are high will ensure that these new facilities can be the



most useful to both current and future residents. Additional analysis can be found in Appendix T. Multimodal Evaluation and Active Trip Potential.

**Figure 26. Active Trip Potential in Clark County by Census Block Group Origin**



## Vehicle Miles Traveled

Measuring and projecting VMT provide another way to assess how changes in land use over the next 20 years will affect the transportation system. Growth and development by 2045 will increase VMT to some extent from current conditions. However, VMT per household is projected to be slightly lower by 2045, due to an increase in mixed-use areas that reduce the length and frequency of vehicle trips and allows for mode shift to be more likely. See details in Table 25.



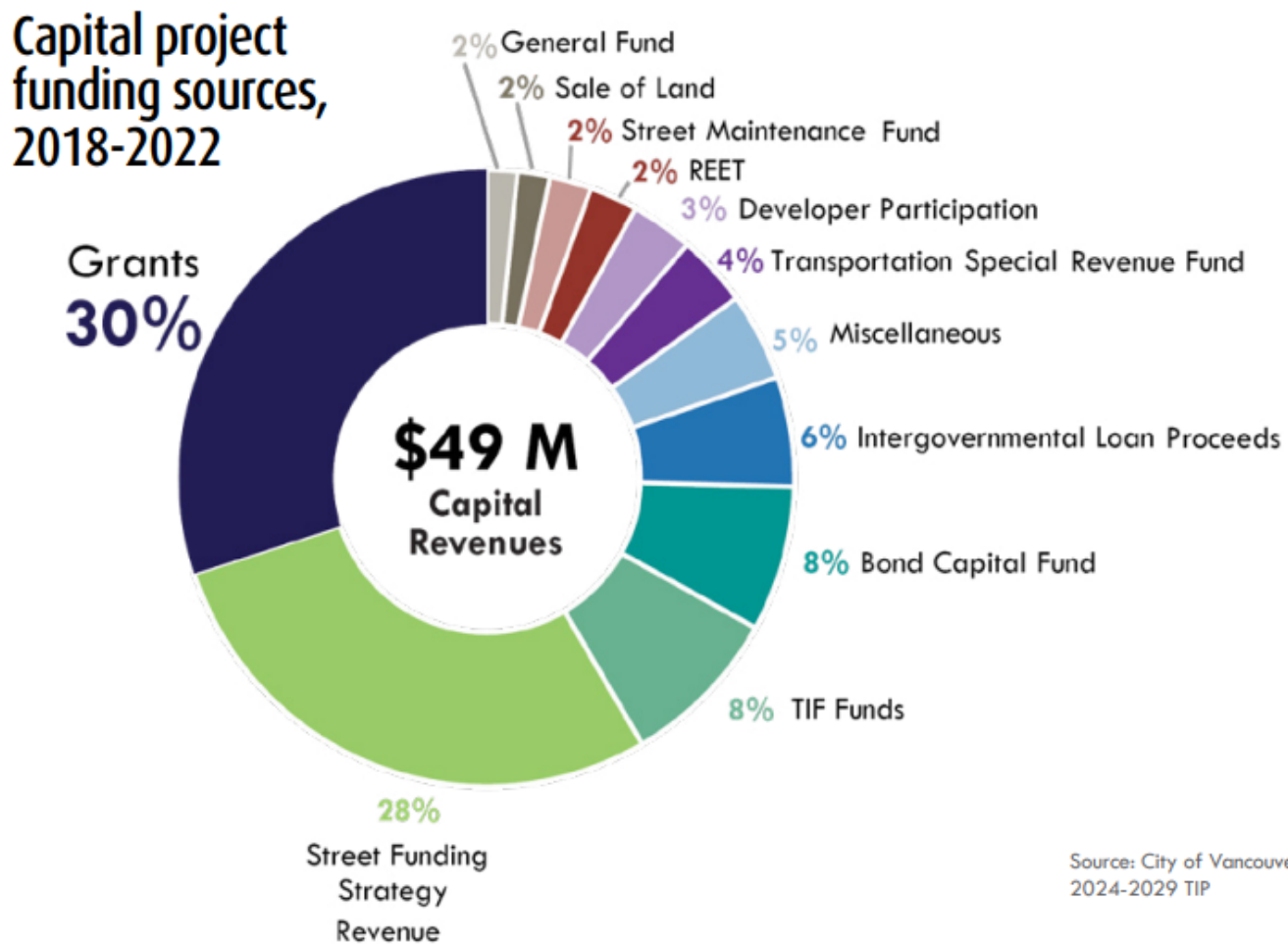
Table 25. Modeled Existing and Future Daily Vehicle Miles Traveled in Vancouver

| Vehicle Type                                 | Existing Vehicle Miles Traveled (2023) | Modeled Vehicle Miles Traveled (2045) |
|----------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| All Vehicles Except Trucks                   | 3,949,553                              | 5,356,110                             |
| Trucks (in passenger car equivalent)         | 215,391                                | 549,024                               |
| <b>Total</b>                                 | <b>4,315,718</b>                       | <b>5,905,133</b>                      |
| <b>VMT per household (avg miles per day)</b> | <b>45.6</b>                            | <b>42.6</b>                           |

### Financial Analysis

Implementing the multimodal network and improving the transportation system to meet the growing need in the city will require substantial capital investments. More than half the funding for transportation capital projects comes from grants or the City’s Street Funding Strategy (SFS) (see Figure 27). The City passed the SFS in 2015 as a package of new funding for transportation. It secured revenues from utility taxes and a business license surcharge. A main source of SFS funds comes from designating the city as a Transportation Benefit District (TBD) with the ability to collect a \$40 vehicle license fee. SFS makes up more than one-fifth of maintenance revenues and more than one-quarter of capital revenues. City Council further increased transportation funding in 2023 through a TBD 0.1 percent sales tax increase and change to the business license surcharge. This funding source has allowed the City to make significant progress—and will continue to support upgrades to substandard streets throughout the city. Additional transportation funding sources are listed in the TSP [Appendix I Funding Memo](#).

Figure 27. Transportation Capital Project Funding Sources, 2018-2022



The City prepares a Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) annually, which details all the transportation projects planned in the city for the next six years. These projects include planning studies, capital projects like arterial upgrades, pavement management activities, and upgrades to bike lanes, crosswalks, and traffic signals. The TIP offers comprehensive details and funding status for each project. It also provides details on how transportation projects are funded with state and/or federal grants and local dollars. The TIP consists of three different project lists: funded projects, partially funded projects and unfunded projects. Projects on the funded list are considered fully funded for design, right-of-way acquisition, and construction. Projects on the partially funded list have funding for design and/or right-of-way acquisition, but do not have full funding for the construction phase. Projects on the unfunded list do not have any funding allocated to them.

The City organizes transportation-related expenses into three categories: transportation debt, transportation capital and street maintenance. The TIP annually reports on the six-year actual and forecasted expenses and revenue for transportation projects.

## Resource Needs for TSP Projects List

The TSP identified a total of 228 capital projects as needed to implement the walking, rolling, and BSM elements. Implementing the TSP requires funding both for design and construction, as well as for staff to manage programs. Capital projects are costly to construct; currently, the City advances active transportation improvements in conjunction with pavement maintenance work when restriping will already occur. Leveraging existing projects and planned maintenance work enables the City's resources to go further in building out the walking, biking and small mobility networks. With limited budgets, the projects are phased over the next 20 years and could be implemented through either expanding the TIP or incorporating it into planned pavement and other projects currently on the TIP. The TIP and CIP are reviewed and updated annually. As part of this annual review, projects will be analyzed and prioritized based on a number of factors, such as impact, safety and cost to determine their priority. Another way to fund and build TSP projects is through TIFs, which are paid by developers and calculated based on how much traffic a new project is expected to generate. Vancouver is currently updating its TIF program to keep pace with the city's rapid development, and to incorporate new MMLOS standards.

Vancouver receives a large portion of capital project funding through grants, but the City could continue to expand efforts into new funding programs. For example, a transportation utility program could levy fees for transportation purposes. Appendix I of the TSP lists additional federal and state grant opportunities that the City could pursue to fund capital projects. Additional details on transportation projects included in the 6-year TIP and 20-year CFP are included in the Public Services and Facilities element.

## Americans Disabilities Act Transition Plan

Equal access to information, facilities, programs and civic processes are essential to meaningful participation in community life, yet Vancouver community members continue to experience barriers in access, participation, and decision-making. Vancouver is committed to removing these barriers and to strengthening trust with the disability community. This includes improving the accessibility of existing facilities and services, incorporating accessibility into budget planning, embedding best practices for inclusion into new projects and programs, and ensuring meaningful and accessible opportunities for community input.

The City's Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Self-Evaluation and Transition Plan (Transition Plan) formalizes this work. It documents the City's evaluation of facilities, policies, programs and practices, identifies barriers to access, and establishes priorities for removal. Members of the disability community were engaged at key stages of the development of the plan and informed findings and recommendations. The Transition Plan guides accessibility improvements, supports long-term compliance planning, and strengthens the City's

## Disability By Race

- Overall: **14.7%**
- Hispanic or Latino: **7%**
- White alone: **16%**
- Black: **15%**
- Asian Alone: **9%**
- Hawaiian / Pacific Islander: **12%**
- American Indian / AK Native: **18%**

ability to provide equitable access to all public programs, services, and activities. It was developed in accordance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. Transition Plans are a federal requirement and are adopted by reference into the Comprehensive Plan, and are intended to serve as a working document that is updated when barriers have been removed and when new barriers are identified. Additional details are available in Appendix S. Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Transition Plan.

Generations of local disability leaders– including veterans, youth, elders, caregivers, advocates and community organizers– have worked to make Vancouver more accessible, inclusive and responsive to lived experiences of disabled people. The City recognizes this history of leadership and its ongoing responsibility to identify and work toward dismantling barriers to full and meaningful participation in civic life. We are committed to building a community where people of every ability belong and thrive. Our Transition Plan is an important, but by no means only, piece of this work.



## **Goal: TM-1**

# **Integrated Transportation and Connectivity**

**Vancouver is served by a reliable, safe and accessible transportation system that seamlessly connects residents to key areas of the city and the region.**

Vancouver's transportation system will serve all users by providing multimodal options that get the community to work, school, services, entertainment and shopping reliably and accessibly. Historically, Vancouver's transportation system prioritized vehicle movement over other forms of travel. This plan update and Goal TM-1, in coordination with the TSP, shifts the priority to efficiently moving people. This prioritizes building network connections that will serve not only vehicles, but transit and active transportation modes as well.

A significant portion of Vancouver households, 7.3 percent, do not have access to a vehicle and rely on transit, carpooling, and active transportation modes to get from place to place. Transit services will be frequent and arrive on schedule, serving both those with and without vehicles. People of all ages and abilities will have an opportunity to choose the mode that works best for them, whether that's taking transit, walking, biking, rolling, carpooling, or driving alone. The system will be well integrated with neighboring cities through close coordination between agencies who plan for land use and transportation.

The supporting policies invest in active transportation infrastructure that connects residential and commercial areas, provide connectivity through updated street design standards, and build on the existing trail and open space network to fill gaps. Another key policy supports maintaining assets and the City's existing infrastructure.

Other goals in the plan that advance related outcomes include LU-1 Connected and Accessible Neighborhoods, EI-1 Equitable Community, and PFS-1 Public Facilities and Services.

| Supporting Policy                                    | Description                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | No. | Related Goals                 |
|------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|-------------------------------|
| <b>Accessible Mobility for All</b>                   | Promote universal design standards and mobility solutions for disabled, senior, youth, and low-income residents across all modes.                                                                                                                               | 5   | EI-2, EI-3, TM-1,             |
| <b>Asset Management</b>                              | Manage City assets to balance full life-cycle costs, performance, risk, and service levels, using BMPs and data. Public infrastructure and facility investments will leverage existing investments to support efficient and equitable growth.                   | 21  | PFS-2, TM-1, PR-1             |
| <b>Community Safe Routes</b>                         | Create safe walking connections through programs that identify and invest in Safe Routes to Schools and Community Safe Routes that link people to transit and other important community destinations.                                                           | 33  | TM-1, TM-2, PFS-3, PR-2, CL-3 |
| <b>Community Streets</b>                             | Develop guidance and encouragement for community use of the right-of-way, including plazas, parklets, “streateries,” open streets events, public art, converting some low volume roadways into pedestrian only thoroughfares, and other demonstration projects. | 34  | TM-1, TM-4, PR-2              |
| <b>Cost-efficient Infrastructure</b>                 | Design and maintain infrastructure to reduce long-term maintenance and replacement costs. Consider life-cycle costs, emerging technologies, and the impacts of facility design and material choices in both capital and operating budgets.                      | 39  | PFS-1, TM-1                   |
| <b>Low-stress Bicycle and Small Mobility Network</b> | Implement the citywide low-stress BSM Network that prioritizes safety and comfort for people of all ages and abilities.                                                                                                                                         | 87  | TM-1, TM-2, TM-4              |
| <b>Pedestrian-oriented Design</b>                    | Ensure ground floor building facades, public spaces, and streets are designed at a human scale and provide comfort, accessibility and visual interest for pedestrians.                                                                                          | 99  | LU-1, TM-1                    |

| Supporting Policy                                | Description                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | No.        | Related Goals          |
|--------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|------------------------|
| <b>Regional Infrastructure</b>                   | Work with local, state, federal and tribal partners to ensure that new construction or replacement of critical infrastructure is planned and designed to avoid community harm and maximize social, environmental, and cultural value.                                                                                                                                          | <b>121</b> | TM-1, PFS-1            |
| <b>Regional Planning</b>                         | Coordinate closely with Clark County, other cities, and other government entities, such as C-TRAN, RTC, and school districts, to sustainably manage urban growth areas, efficiently deliver urban services, expand regional transit and multimodal connectivity, and coordinate on shared goals and responsibilities, in accordance with adopted countywide planning policies. | <b>122</b> | LU-4, CL-3, TM-2, TM-1 |
| <b>Regional Trail and Open Space Networks</b>    | Work with nonprofit and private partners, Clark County and adjacent cities to build out the regional trail network for recreation and active transportation purposes.                                                                                                                                                                                                          | <b>123</b> | TM-1, PR-2, CL-2       |
| <b>Street Connectivity</b>                       | Adopt connectivity standards to improve pedestrian and small mobility safety and accessibility. Apply standards to development, capital, and planning projects including maximum block length, unconnected streets, cul-de-sac connections, linkages between land uses, and multiple access points.                                                                            | <b>139</b> | TM-1, TM-2, TM-4, LU-3 |
| <b>Street Standards</b>                          | Adopt updated street standards that facilitate evolution to a safe, comfortable, and accessible multimodal transportation system.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | <b>140</b> | TM-1, TM-2, TM-4       |
| <b>Support Active Transportation Investments</b> | Improve active transportation in areas with inadequate mobility infrastructure to increase the share of trips made by foot, bike and other small mobility options, and transit, including better integrating parks and trails into the active transportation network.                                                                                                          | <b>144</b> | TM-1, PFS-1            |

Goal: TM-2

Low Carbon Mobility Choices

**Community members can access a suite of low carbon travel options that connect important destinations, including walking, cycling, small mobility, and transit, while reducing reliance on single occupancy vehicles.**

As Vancouver continues to grow and change, the transportation network will adjust to provide more modal options for the community to move around the city and the region. With complete corridors and easy connections to transit, choosing those options will be more convenient. Walking or using a small mobility device for short trips will be safer and more comfortable for all users, and transit will be a reliable and convenient option to travel longer distances. These options will reduce per capita vehicle miles traveled and advance climate goals related to reducing transportation-related greenhouse gas emissions.

Policies related to this goal support investments in transit infrastructure, adding more housing and services near transit stations, updating street standards and maximizing the use of on-street parking. The policies also consider future mobility by preparing the City to adapt to emerging transportation technology and allowing for pilot projects that will test the feasibility and impact of new mobility options.

While the majority of people in Vancouver will continue to drive to important locations, providing options to walk, roll, bike, use a small mobility device and take transit will support the shift toward low-carbon transportation options.

| Supporting Policy     | Description                                                                                                                                                                                           | No. | Related Goals                 |
|-----------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|-------------------------------|
| Community Safe Routes | Create safe walking connections through programs that identify and invest in Safe Routes to Schools and Community Safe Routes that link people to transit and other important community destinations. | 33  | TM-1, TM-2, PFS-3, PR-2, CL-3 |



| Supporting Policy                                             | Description                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | No.        | Related Goals          |
|---------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|------------------------|
| <b>Emerging Mobility</b>                                      | Prepare for emerging technologies by updating City policies and operational requirements for shared mobility and emerging mobility vendors, including Autonomous Vehicles. Create data standards, data sharing agreements and vendor requirements. | <b>46</b>  | TM-2, CE-4             |
| <b>Equitable Transit-oriented Development</b>                 | Tailor regulations, incentives and investments to facilitate development near current and future transit stations and make this development accessible to transit-reliant and historically excluded and underserved communities.                   | <b>52</b>  | LU-1, LU-2, TM-2       |
| <b>Low-stress Bicycle and Small Mobility Network</b>          | Implement the citywide low-stress bicycle and small mobility network that prioritizes safety and comfort for people of all ages and abilities.                                                                                                     | <b>87</b>  | TM-1, TM-2, TM-4       |
| <b>Maximize the Utilization of Existing on Street Parking</b> | Implement strategic pricing mechanisms to regulate the availability of on-street parking in mixed use and regional activity centers.                                                                                                               | <b>88</b>  | TM-2, LU-4             |
| <b>Multimodal Level of Service</b>                            | Update regulations and design guidance to reflect MMLOS standards that require private development and capital projects to advance multimodal safety and support shifts to non-drive-alone modes.                                                  | <b>93</b>  | TM-2                   |
| <b>Pilot Projects</b>                                         | Encourage the use of short-term pilot projects for park, transportation and general infrastructure improvements before making long-term investments to foster innovation, test feasibility, and increase community buy-in.                         | <b>102</b> | CE-4, PR-2, TM-2, CL-1 |
| <b>Reduce VMT and GHG per Capita</b>                          | Implement land use patterns that reduce VMT, traffic congestion, and associated GHG emissions per capita, while improving safety and air quality.                                                                                                  | <b>118</b> | CL-3, CE-3, TM-2       |

| Supporting Policy                                   | Description                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | No.        | Related Goals          |
|-----------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|------------------------|
| <b>Regional Planning</b>                            | Coordinate closely with Clark County, other cities, and other government entities, such as C-TRAN, RTC, and school districts to sustainably manage urban growth areas, efficiently deliver urban services, expand regional transit and multimodal connectivity, and coordinate on shared goals and responsibilities, in accordance with adopted countywide planning policies. | <b>122</b> | LU-4, CL-3, TM-2, TM-1 |
| <b>Resilient, Transit-Supportive Infrastructure</b> | Invest in infrastructure that supports reliable, frequent, and accessible transit service as outlined in the Enhanced Transit Network, while adapting to localized climate impacts. Investments should expand mobility options, improve neighborhood access, and deliver health, economic, and social benefits.                                                               | <b>124</b> | TM-2, PFS-3, EI-2      |
| <b>Resources near Transit</b>                       | Locate community resources near current and future transit routes to ensure access for those most reliant on public transit.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | <b>126</b> | LU-1, TM-2             |
| <b>Street Connectivity</b>                          | Adopt connectivity standards to improve pedestrian and small mobility safety and accessibility. Apply standards to development, capital, and planning projects, including maximum block length, unconnected streets, cul-de-sac connections, linkages between land uses, and multiple access points.                                                                          | <b>139</b> | TM-1, TM-2, TM-4, LU-3 |
| <b>Street Standards</b>                             | Adopt updated street standards that facilitate evolution to a safe, comfortable and accessible multimodal transportation system.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | <b>140</b> | TM-1, TM-2, TM-4       |

**Goal: TM-3****Efficient Freight Access**

**Vancouver's port and freight infrastructure safely and efficiently moves goods, supports economic growth, is resilient to disruptions, and minimizes negative environmental impacts.**

Efficient and resilient freight infrastructure supports commercial and industrial activities in Vancouver and enables goods to move quickly, safely and reliably throughout the region. A well-maintained freight network reduces congestion, prevents delays, and lowers fuel consumption while supporting economic productivity and competitiveness. Smart infrastructure planning, such as incorporating dedicated freight routes throughout the transportation network and optimizing traffic flow with intelligent transportation systems, can significantly reduce environmental impacts.

The policies associated with this goal will enhance freight movement to and from the Port of Vancouver and other employment areas and reduce conflict between freight vehicles and other roadway users, such as personal vehicles, bikes and pedestrians.

| Supporting Policy                                           | Description                                                                                                 | No        | Related Goals    |
|-------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|------------------|
| <b>Enhance Port Access and Multimodal Freight Solutions</b> | Improve infrastructure and connectivity to and from the Port of Vancouver to streamline freight operations. | <b>50</b> | LU-2, TM-3, EO-2 |
| <b>Optimize Freight Corridors</b>                           | Designate and enhance freight corridors to facilitate efficient movement of goods and reduce congestion.    | <b>98</b> | LU-2, TM-3, EO-2 |

## **Goal: TM-4**

# **Eliminate Traffic Fatalities (Vision Zero)**

**Vancouver has a safe and comfortable travel environment for all users, regardless of age, ability or mode of travel, where traffic-related fatalities and serious injuries are eliminated.**

Vision Zero represents a bold commitment to rethinking transportation systems so that safety is not negotiable. Roads, intersections, and mobility policies are designed to prioritize human life above speed or convenience, eliminating death or serious injuries in the transportation network. This extends beyond drivers to include pedestrians, cyclists, transit riders, children, older adults, and people with disabilities, recognizing that everyone deserves to move through their community without fear. By creating a safe and comfortable travel environment for all modes and abilities, Vision Zero fosters equity, encourages active transportation, and builds trust in public infrastructure.

The policies supporting the goal of Vision Zero include street standards that ensure the design of all streets in Vancouver are comfortable and inviting to multiple modes of transportation. Many of the policies focus on making streets safer and more comfortable for those who are biking, walking or rolling.



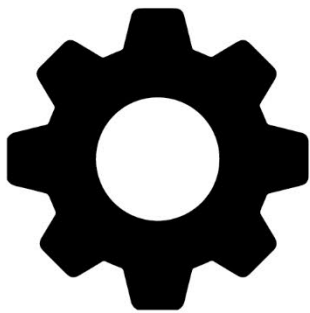
| Supporting Policy                                    | Description                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | No.        | Related Goals          |
|------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|------------------------|
| <b>Community Streets</b>                             | Develop guidance and encouragement for community use of the right-of-way, including plazas, parklets, “streateries,” open streets events, public art, converting some low volume roadways into pedestrian only thoroughfares, and other demonstration projects.                                      | <b>34</b>  | TM-1, TM-4, PR-2       |
| <b>Low-stress Bicycle and Small Mobility Network</b> | Implement the citywide low-stress bicycle and small mobility network that prioritizes safety and comfort for people of all ages and abilities.                                                                                                                                                       | <b>87</b>  | TM-1, TM-2, TM-4       |
| <b>Street Connectivity</b>                           | Adopt connectivity standards to improve pedestrian and small mobility safety and accessibility. Apply standards to development, capital, and planning projects, including maximum block length, unconnected streets, cul-de-sac connections, linkages between land uses, and multiple access points. | <b>139</b> | TM-1, TM-2, TM-4, LU-3 |
| <b>Street Standards</b>                              | Adopt updated street standards that facilitate evolution to a safe, comfortable, and accessible multimodal transportation system.                                                                                                                                                                    | <b>140</b> | TM-1, TM-2, TM-4       |

## **Chapter 8 – Key Implementing Actions**

- ✓ Identify and make minor updates to the Transportation System Plan to align with the Comprehensive Plan, particularly in growth centers.
- ✓ Implement priority projects, programs, and policies identified in the City's Transportation System Plan.
- ✓ Continue to implement and integrate multimodal level of service (MMLOS) standards throughout transportation planning and design activities.
- ✓ Update VMC Title 11, street typologies and standards, Traffic Impact Analysis requirements, and the Traffic Impact Fee Program to include MMLOS and implement the Transportation System Plan.
- ✓ Update the City's Trail Plan and integrate it into multimodal network planning.
- ✓ Build out and develop the City's Safe Routes to Schools Program.
- ✓ Advance Vision Zero goals through design, programs, and policy.
- ✓ Partner with C-TRAN to implement their 20-Year Transit Development Plan.
- ✓ Accelerate implementation of the Complete Streets program and other programs that support a safe, convenient, and connected multimodal transportation system.



# Public Facilities and Services



9

**OUR VANCOUVER**

# Introduction

Cities and counties must be supported by a range of local public facilities and services, including transportation, water, sanitary sewer, stormwater, parks, fire and emergency services, police, solid waste, schools, and libraries. This chapter summarizes the City of Vancouver's capital facilities and physical infrastructure needed to serve growth anticipated to occur in the city over the next 20 years. Most of these facilities are owned by the City of Vancouver, but some are owned by outside public agencies. This chapter closely connects with Chapter 8, Transportation and Mobility, and Chapter 3, Land Use and Development, to plan and manage infrastructure and urban services. It provides an inventory of existing facilities and infrastructure and a forecast of future needs based on population and employment growth and anticipated changes in the city. It includes a detailed financing plan identifying how capital facilities needed to serve the first six years of the Comprehensive Plan will be paid for, and more generalized information about costs over the



MAKE ROOM FOR ALL

## Vision: Public Facilities and Services

We will prioritize public infrastructure and facility investments that leverage our existing investments to support efficient and equitable growth. We commit to providing high-quality, well-maintained and affordable public services that protect the environment, mitigate and adapt to climate change, ensure equitable access to programs and resources, and respond to our community's needs as we grow. We commit to enhancing social infrastructure to foster a sense of connectedness, well-being and acceptance to advance equitable outcomes.



remainder of the 20-year period. This chapter summarizes more detailed information in the multi-year capital plans and budgets of individual City departments and outside agencies. Pursuant to the GMA, it focuses on needs for new or expanded capital facilities rather than operating or maintenance cost of those facilities, or personnel or non-capital facilities' needs. This chapter is a long-term planning document and intended to be amended periodically over time to remain relevant, but it will not be updated as frequently as department or agency capital budgets or project lists. Existing facilities/urban services and the service providers are listed in Table 26.

**Table 26. Vancouver Public Facilities/Urban Services and Service Providers**

| <b>Facility/Service</b>     | <b>Provider(s)</b>                                                                                                                                                                                      | <b>Relative Planning Documents</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
|-----------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Transportation              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• City of Vancouver</li> <li>• Clark County (UGA)</li> <li>• WSDOT (I-5, I-205, State Route 14)</li> <li>• Port of Vancouver</li> <li>• BNSF Railroad</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Transportation Chapter of Comprehensive Plan</li> <li>• 2024 Vancouver Moves (Transportation System Plan)</li> <li>• Vancouver 2026-2031 Transportation Improvement Program</li> <li>• Clark County Comprehensive Plan</li> <li>• 2013 Pearson Field Master Plan (update planned for 2026-2027)</li> </ul> |
| Transit                     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• C-TRAN</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2025-2030 C-TRAN Transit Development Plan</li> <li>• Transportation Chapter of the Comprehensive Plan</li> <li>• RTC Regional Transportation Plan (2024)</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                        |
| Water                       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• City of Vancouver</li> <li>• Clark Public Utilities (UGA)</li> </ul>                                                                                           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2015 Comprehensive Water System Plan (20-year plan); update in process, adoption anticipated 2026-2027</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| Sanitary Sewer (wastewater) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• City of Vancouver</li> <li>• Clark Regional Wastewater District</li> <li>• Discovery Clean Water Alliance (Treatment only)</li> </ul>                          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2011 General Sewer Plan (20-year plan); update in process, adoption anticipated 2026-2027</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| Stormwater                  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• City of Vancouver</li> <li>• Clark County</li> </ul>                                                                                                           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2025 Stormwater Management Plan</li> <li>• Climate and Environment Chapter</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| Parks                       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• City of Vancouver</li> <li>• Clark County</li> <li>• National Parks Service (Fort Vancouver)</li> </ul>                                                        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parks and Recreation Chapter</li> <li>• 2022-2031 PRCS Comprehensive Plan</li> <li>• City of Vancouver Long Range Facilities Plan (2025)</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                        |

| Facility/Service            | Provider(s)                                                                                                                                                                   | Relative Planning Documents                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
|-----------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Urban Forestry              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• City of Vancouver</li> </ul>                                                                                                         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2023 Urban Forestry Management Plan</li> <li>• Climate and Environment Chapter</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| Fire and Emergency Services | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• City of Vancouver</li> <li>• Clark County Fire District 5 (City and UGA)</li> <li>• Clark County Fire District 6 (UGA)</li> </ul>    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• City of Vancouver Long Range Facilities Plan (2025)</li> <li>• Proposition 2</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| Police                      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• City of Vancouver</li> <li>• Clark County Sheriff (UGA)</li> </ul>                                                                   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• City of Vancouver Long Range Facilities Plan (2025)</li> <li>• Proposition 5</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| Solid Waste                 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Waste Connections, Inc.</li> <li>• Columbia Resource Company</li> </ul>                                                              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2025–2030 Comprehensive Countywide Solid Waste Management Plan</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| Public Schools              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Vancouver, Evergreen and Camas School Districts</li> <li>• Battle Ground, Ridgefield and Hockinson School Districts (UGA)</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Vancouver School District Capital Facilities Plan (2022)</li> <li>• Evergreen Public Schools Capital Facilities Plan (2026)</li> <li>• Vancouver School District Strategic Plan</li> <li>• EPS Strategic Plan (2023–2027)</li> <li>• CSD Strategic Plan (2025)</li> <li>• Battle Ground Public Schools Strategic Plan (2022–2027)</li> <li>• Ridgefield School District Strategic Plan (2025)</li> <li>• Hockinson School District Strategic Plan (2025–2030)</li> </ul> |
| Libraries                   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fort Vancouver Regional Library System</li> </ul>                                                                                    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fort Vancouver Regional Libraries Comprehensive Facilities Plan (2025)</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| General Government          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• City of Vancouver</li> <li>• Clark County</li> </ul>                                                                                 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• City of Vancouver Long Range Facilities Plan (2025)</li> <li>• 6–Year Project List (2025)</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |

## Community Feedback

- ➔ Concerns about whether infrastructure, facilities, and services can keep pace with growth.
- ➔ Need to maintain and upgrade existing infrastructure and public facilities.
- ➔ Desire for repairs and updates to community centers, streets, sidewalks, stormwater systems, and parks.
- ➔ Concerns that schools, fire and police services, and parks are strained.
- ➔ Concerns about rising utility costs and the potential for housing displacement associated with increased costs.
- ➔ Infrastructure and services must support climate resilience and emergency preparedness.
- ➔ Concerns about public safety and enforcement, including crime, traffic and parking enforcement, and clean and safe public spaces.

### Public Facilities and Services

#### Wastewater

The City of Vancouver provides wastewater services within city limits and in portions of the UGA outside of city limits. The Clark Regional Wastewater District services northwest portions of the UGA. See service boundaries in Figure 28.

The City of Vancouver's wastewater collection system consists of interceptors, trunk lines, main lines, pump stations, and force mains. The wastewater treatment system is comprised of three main facilities:

- Marine Park Water Reclamation Facility
- Westside Water Reclamation Facility
- Industrial Pretreatment Lagoon

Several conveyance pump stations balance the flows between Marine Park and the westside facilities. These diversion pump stations include the Orchards Diversion Pump Station, Andresen Diversion Pump Station, and the Industrial Pump Station. There are an additional 30 collection pump stations that serve smaller areas. The collection system consists of mainly gravity lines, most of which have an 8-inch-diameter pipe size. The City's existing sewer system includes nearly 800 miles of pipelines serving approximately 47,000 customer accounts through a variety of sewer laterals and other collection means. Flows from the gravity collection system are routed to a series of interceptors, built between 1947 and 1996. More detailed information regarding the inventory of sewer system assets can be found in the General Sewer Plan.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>46</sup> City of Vancouver 2011 General Sewer Plan

Industrial and commercial wastewater may contain metals, oil and grease, organics or other pollutants at greater concentration than typical domestic wastewater. Vancouver’s pretreatment program protects the wastewater collection system, treatment facilities, and environment from uncontrolled toxic pollutants. Facilities, such as restaurants, dental offices, manufacturers, fabricators, chemical blenders and others, that discharge non-domestic wastewater into the system must meet federal Clean Water requirements. The City monitors food establishments, dental facilities, and industrial dischargers on an annual basis, and issues five-year industrial wastewater discharge permits to facilities classified as significant and medium industrial users.

The model for the major wastewater collection system was refined as part of the City’s General Sewer Plan (2011) to determine whether the network of pipes, manholes, pumps, and other physical facilities were adequate to convey estimated flows under storm conditions. The General Sewer Plan is currently being updated to be consistent with Ecology requirements, the adopted Comprehensive Plan, and to reflect changes to the infrastructure since 2011.

**Table 27. Inventory of Sewer Facilities, Capacity, and Flows in 2025**

| <b>Facility</b>                        | <b>Average Daily Flow Capacity (in MGD)</b> | <b>Average Daily Flow (in MGD)</b> | <b>Maximum Average Daily (in MGD)</b> |
|----------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------|------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Westside Water Reclamation Facility    | 28.3                                        | 10.7                               | 17.1                                  |
| Marine Park Water Reclamation Facility | 16.1                                        | 11.0                               | 18.1                                  |
| Industrial Pretreatment                | 3.2                                         | 1.1                                | 2.0                                   |

### **Future Demand**

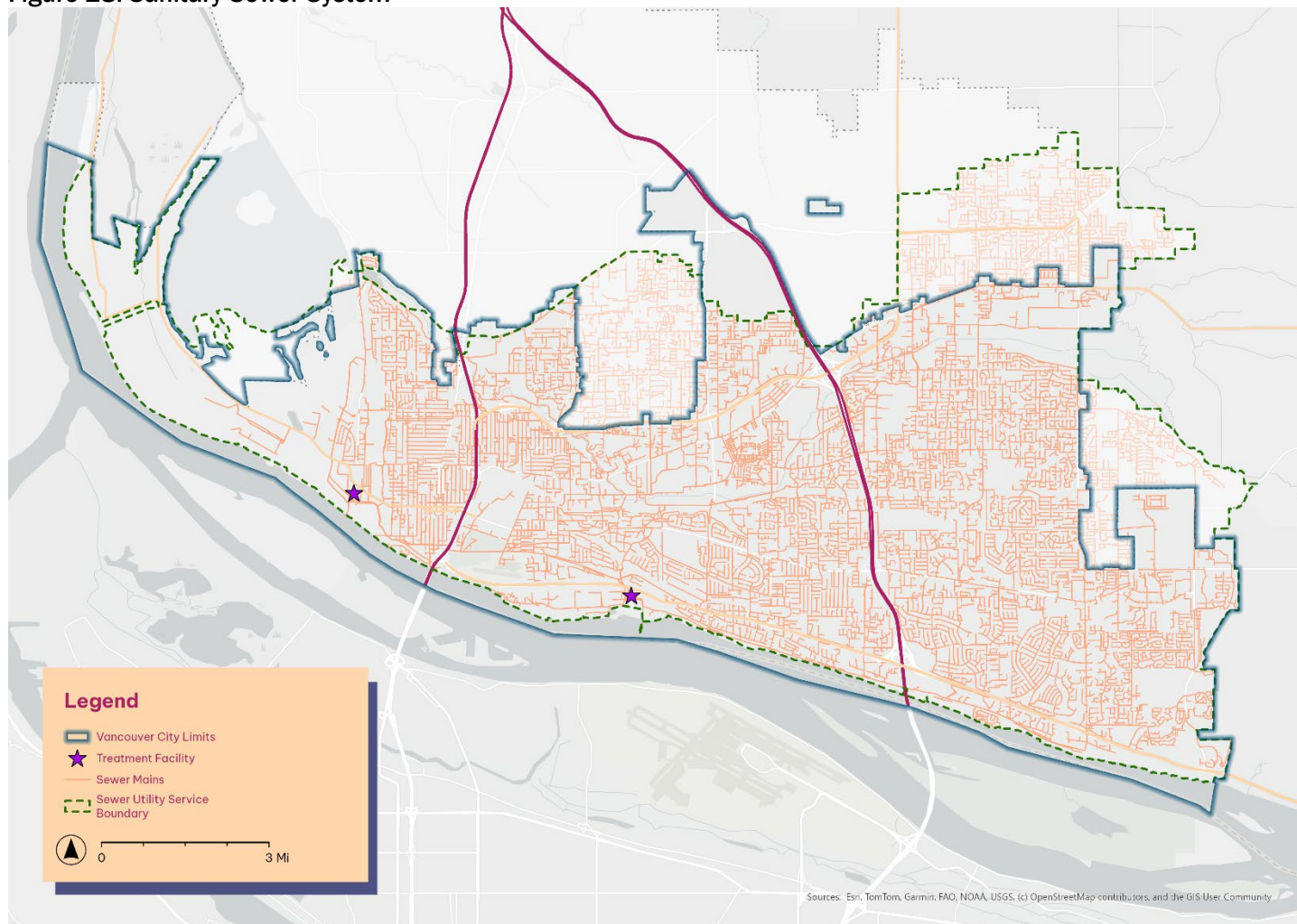
The existing sewer system meets all federal and state standards and has adequate capacity for existing demand. An amendment to the General Sewer Plan is underway to confirm future demand capacity and expected to be complete late 2026/early 2027. Proposed capital improvement projects will be incorporated into the CIP annually if deficiencies are identified. The system is monitored closely along with development trends to plan treatment, conveyance and collection system projects well before the system reaches capacity.

In 2025, there were approximately 5,355 on-site sewage treatment or septic systems in the Vancouver sewer service area, serving 14,456 people and discharging 0.4 million gallons per day (MGD) of effluent into the ground for treatment. Most of these systems are reaching the end of their expected life spans; therefore, failures are more likely to occur. This can result in contamination of nearby streams, lakes, or shallow drinking water wells, and may increase nitrates in groundwater. The Sewer Connection Incentive Program was developed to protect water resources from failing septic systems and to support homeowners in eliminating unreliable septic systems by connecting to the sewer system. The program completed 112 projects extending public sanitary sewers to 4,781 properties at an investment of approximately \$46 million since 2000. In 2025, there were two Sewer Connection Incentive Program projects under construction, connecting approximately



50 properties to the sewer system. There were three projects in the design phase that will connect approximately an additional 175 properties to the system.

**Figure 28. Sanitary Sewer System**

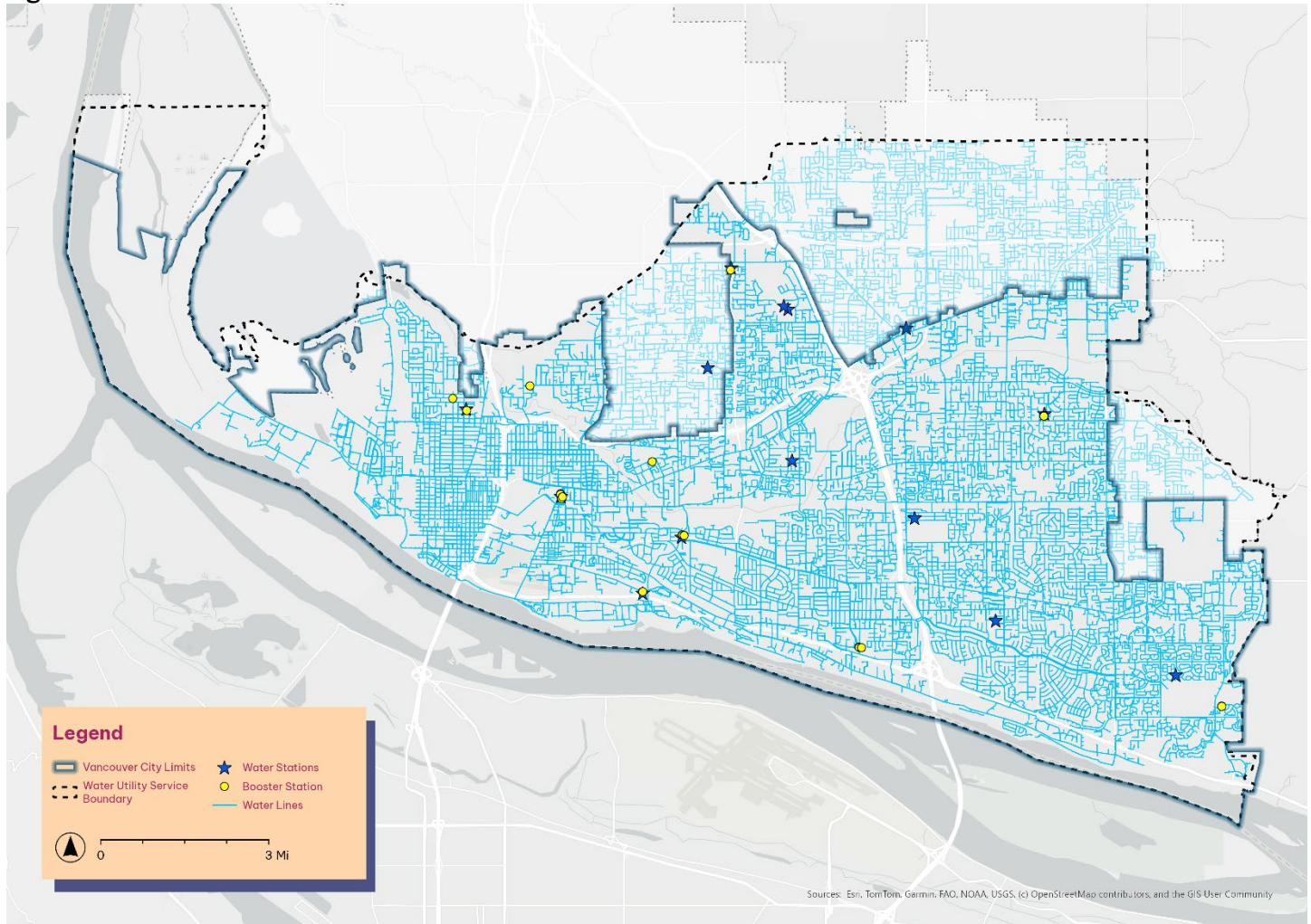


## Water

Both the City of Vancouver and Clark Public Utilities provide potable water. See Figure 29 for details of the service boundaries. The City serves approximately 270,000 residents through 77,000 water service connections and, in 2024, produced approximately 9.85 billion gallons, or an average daily production of 26.9 MGD. The City operates and maintains 9 water production stations, 40 wells, 52 booster pumps, more than 1,100 miles of pipes, and 77,000 service connections that include commercial, industrial and institutional customers.<sup>47</sup>

<sup>47</sup> City of Vancouver 2022 Amendment to the 2016 Water System Plan 4-Year Extension Update

**Figure 29. Water Service Area and Facilities**



Water pressure requirements for the system are determined by the Washington Department of Health, which establishes minimum operating pressure standards of 30 pounds per square inch.<sup>48</sup> These standards ensure that adequate water flow is maintained during peak hours when there is high demand. Compliance with these pressure standards is crucial for providing a reliable water supply to the community. The National Fire Protection Association also plays a role in ensuring the effectiveness of the water system, particularly in the event of a fire. The National Fire Protection Association sets guidelines and regulations for the supply, storage, and distribution of water to meet the firefighting needs of the community. Fire flow requirements often determine the minimum size of water lines and storage capacity to ensure an adequate water supply is available for firefighting purposes.

<sup>48</sup> WAC 246-290-420

The complete water system analysis, hydraulic model and asset inventory for the water system is detailed in the City's Water System Plan (2015). The hydraulic model is used to determine whether the system is adequate to provide average daily, peak daily, and fire flow demands to the City's service customers. The Water System Plan is currently being updated to be consistent with the Washington Department of Health regulations, the adopted Comprehensive Plan, and to reflect changes to the infrastructure since 2015.

## Equity Lens

Public facilities and services play an essential role in Vancouver's safety, growth and opportunities. The Equity Index identifies locations in Vancouver with potentially underserved populations, focusing on various metrics at the census tract level. This tool will help inform future planning and design of community services and facilities and will play a role in prioritizing investments.

### Future Demand

Table 28 shows the Vancouver public water supply system and summarizes current production and future demand for the water system. Vancouver has a total annual water right for withdrawal of 16.3 billion gallons per year, or an annual withdrawal rate of 44.86 MGD. Maximum instantaneous withdrawal allowed is 108.1 MGD at 75,000 gallons per minute. Ideal design practice recommends that the source of supply be able to serve the maximum day demand, allowing stored water to be used for the daily peaking requirements of the system. Currently, the total peak reliable well capacity is 88 MGD, but other limiting factors, such as treatment capacity, restrict the total reliable capacity to 80.6 MGD. The peak day system demand was 44.6 million gallons in 2012, or 248 gallons per person. In 2025, the average day demand per person is estimated to be 102 gallons. It is estimated that the average daily demand will increase to 122 gallons per person by 2045 and that the peak day demand will increase to 300 gallons per person due to an increase in industrial and wholesale demand. The City is committed to making full use of its water rights. Based on existing and future water rights analysis, no new water rights are required in the 20-year planning period.

One challenge faced by the water system in Vancouver is the geographical disconnect between the location of the water reservoirs in the southwest area of the city and the areas experiencing population growth in the northeast part of the city. To maintain the flow of water and meet the increasing demands, the City continuously improves its transmission infrastructure and pumping systems while addressing the storage capacity issue in the northeast. Projects are identified in the capital improvement plan and reviewed and updated annually.



**Table 28. Water Production and Projected Demand**

| Category                                                                               | 2012 (actual) | 2025 (estimate) | 2045 (projected) |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------|-----------------|------------------|
| Service area population (includes incorporated City and adjacent unincorporated areas) | 228,779       | 273,500         | 324,335          |
| Average Daily Demand (ADD) in millions of gallons per day (MGD)                        | 25            | 28.0            | 39.6             |
| ADD/person, in gallons                                                                 | 144           | 102             | 122              |
| Peak day demand in MGD                                                                 | 44.6          | 54.4            | 76.8             |
| Number of sources (wells)                                                              | 40            | 40              | 40               |
| Reliable source (well) capacity in MGD                                                 | 49.8          | 49.8            | 58.44            |
| Storage capacity in MG                                                                 | 24            | 28.25           | 39.25            |
| Primary water rights, Instantaneous Withdrawal ( $Q_i$ ) in MGD                        | 43.41         | 43.41           | 43.41            |
| Primary water rights, Annual Withdrawal ( $Q_a$ ) in billions of gallons per year      | 15.8          | 15.8            | 15.8             |

## Stormwater

The City of Vancouver works to protect local water resources and aims to improve water quality. Stormwater is regulated under the Federal Clean Water Act through the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System permit program administered by Ecology. The City's current stormwater permit is valid through July 31, 2029, and re-issued every five years. The City follows the Stormwater Management Manual for Western Washington as the standard for designing and managing stormwater systems.

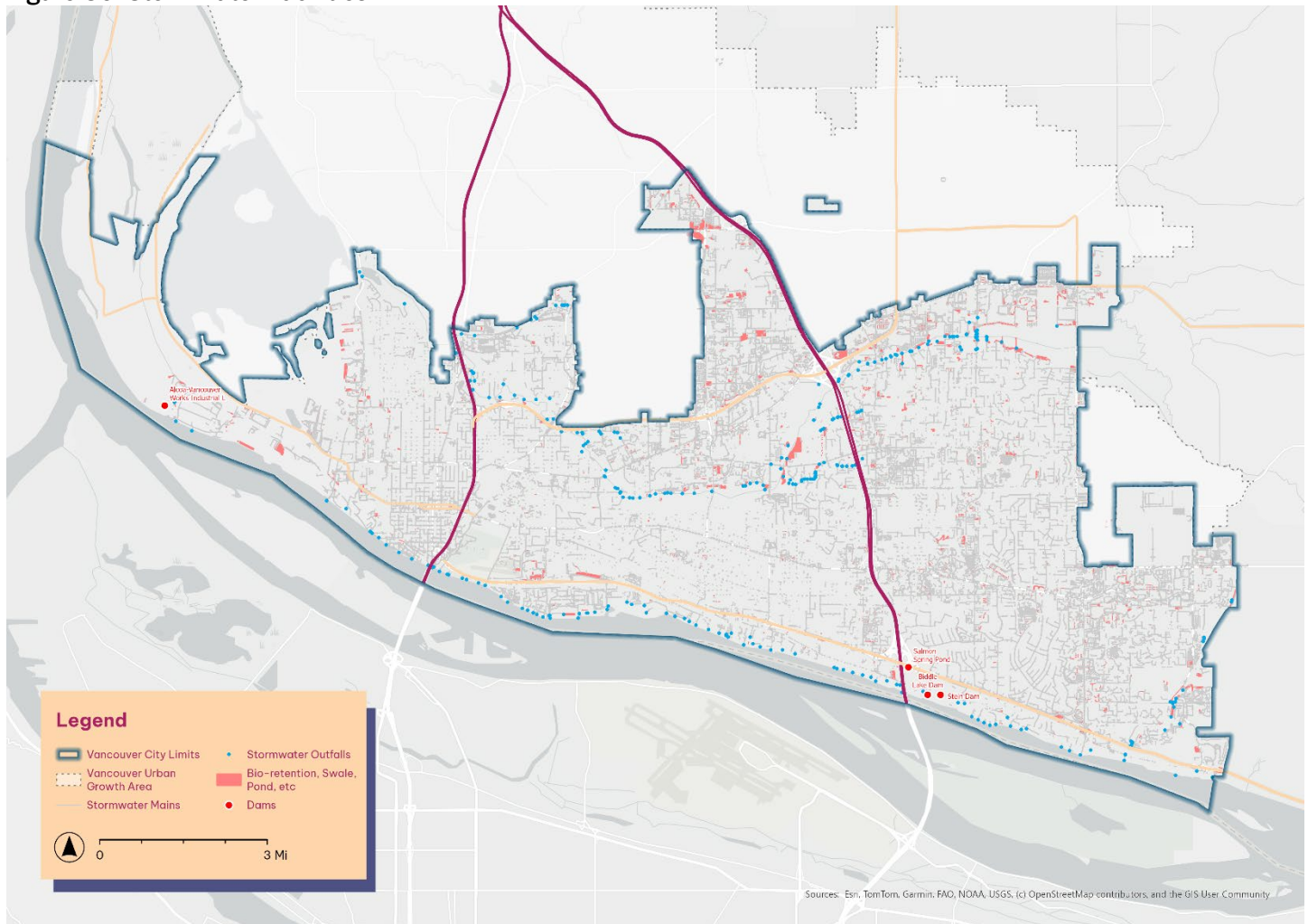
Ecology also regulates stormwater infiltration to protect groundwater and drinking water supplies. These requirements help prevent pollutants in stormwater runoff from contaminating groundwater. Vancouver's stormwater infiltration systems, such as drywells, are regulated under this program.

When stormwater infiltrates into the ground, it can mix with shallow groundwater that feeds nearby streams, springs, and rivers, or it can recharge deeper groundwater aquifers. Burnt Bridge Creek and springs along the Columbia Slope are supplied by both surface water and groundwater, including water influenced by stormwater infiltration systems.

The City owns and maintains approximately 3,500 drywells and nearly 65 miles of infiltration trenches, many of which have been in place for more than 40 years. In addition, the City's stormwater system includes approximately 275 miles of pipes, 188 outfalls to surface waters, and 724 treatment and flow control facilities, which includes over 400 bioretention facilities. See Figure 30 for locations of stormwater facilities.



**Figure 30. Stormwater Facilities**



Because much of Vancouver was developed before current stormwater regulations were adopted, runoff from older areas is often not treated before discharging to the ground or surface waters. The City is actively identifying areas that would benefit from additional stormwater treatment BMPs and is incorporating these improvements into the CIP. The City maintains a Stormwater Management Program Plan, which documents current and planned actions to protect water resources. The Stormwater Management Program Plan is updated annually. Vancouver implements low impact development (LID) principles and BMPs as the preferred approach for site development under the City's land use and development codes. Development projects are required to comply with the Stormwater Management Manual for Western Washington, which emphasizes LID techniques, such as groundwater recharge, preservation of on-site natural features, thoughtful site planning, and the use of distributed stormwater BMPs integrated into a project's design. Common LID practices include bioretention facilities, rain gardens, roof runoff infiltration, permeable pavements, reduced excavation foundations, vegetated roofs, and rainwater harvesting.<sup>49</sup>

<sup>49</sup> 2025 Stormwater Management Program Plan

### Future Demand

New construction or redevelopment will increase the amount of new impervious surfaces, including rooftops, driveways, roadways, sidewalks, parking lots, and compacted soils. Impervious surfaces reduce natural infiltration of water into soils and increase surface water runoff, which can change the way that water and pollutants travel to urban streams and lead to increased stormwater impacts. All development projects are required to provide erosion control, stormwater capture and treatment, and conveyance on site in accordance with VMC 14.24, 14.25 and 14.26.

Development projects that create or replace impervious surfaces within City right-of-way are required to construct new stormwater facilities to City standards, and are dedicated to the City for operation and maintenance. If on-site stormwater management is not feasible for a specific site, projects may propose to connect to City-owned stormwater facilities and must provide a full downstream capacity analysis prior to approval.

### Green Infrastructure

In 2023, House Bill 1181 took effect in Washington and includes a new term, “green infrastructure,” to be included with the inventory of existing capital facilities. Green infrastructure includes parks and tree canopy and stormwater infrastructure and management practices. Vancouver’s stormwater infrastructure and policies are detailed in the section above, as well as in Vancouver’s [Stormwater Management Program Plan](#). More information about Vancouver’s parks can be found in Chapter 7, Parks, Recreation & Cultural Services, of this plan and the [Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services Comprehensive Plan](#). Vancouver’s Urban Forestry Division works to preserve, manage and enhance Vancouver’s existing tree canopy and promotes reforestation of the urban area. Tree canopy management practices and policies can be found in the [Urban Forestry Management Plan](#).

### Fire and Emergency Services

The Vancouver Fire Department (VFD) provides fire protection and emergency medical services to the City and Clark County (via Fire District 5). In addition to fire and emergency medical services, they provide maritime response, fire prevention and fire investigation. Regionally, they provide hazardous materials and technical rescue responses. VFD, in partnership with Fire District 5, serves 301,500 residents in the city and in portions of the UGA, across 90 square miles, including 22 miles of shoreline along the Columbia River, running more than



38,500 calls per year. In 2024, 62.9 percent of all service requests were emergency medical calls. The City also partners with American Medical Response (AMR) for ambulance transport.<sup>50</sup>

The consolidated fire department currently has 14 facilities, including 11 fire stations, operated by 256 VFD and 190 AMR personnel. Vehicular equipment includes one each of heavy rescue unit, medical rehab unit, mobile air compressor, fire boat, high-capacity pump and foam tender and fire investigation unit; two each of brush units and battalion chief units; three each of mobile water tenders, ladder trucks, and paramedic squads; and 11 fire engines.

VFD uses a metric of firefighters per 1,000 people as one way of projecting future needs to maintain or improve LOSs to the community. The current ratio is 0.83 firefighters per 1,000 people.<sup>51</sup> Priorities 1 and 2 include fire and critical medical calls, Priorities 3 and 4 are less critical, and Priority 5 are the least emergent.

**Table 29. VFD Calls Per Station\***

| Station #                 | 1     | 2     | 3     | 4     | 5     | 6     | 7     | 8     | 9     | 10    | 11                |
|---------------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------------------|
| Calls/<br>station<br>2010 | 2,644 | 2,474 | 3,521 | 1,942 | 3,339 | 2,133 | 854   | 2,598 | 1,946 | 1,350 | N/A <sup>52</sup> |
| Calls/<br>station<br>2024 | 5,263 | 3,796 | 3,612 | 2,025 | 5,562 | 4,533 | 1,414 | 4,830 | 3,452 | 2,034 | 1,901             |
| % change                  | 49.8  | 34.8  | 2.5   | 4.1   | 40    | 52.9  | 39.6  | 46.2  | 43.6  | 33.6  | N/A               |

\*Calls are for fire and emergency medical aid service.

**Table 30. 2024 VFD Response Time Performance**

| Alarm Type                                        | Standard<br>Response<br>Time | 2024  | 2024 %<br>Met<br>Standard | No. of Calls<br>Received in<br>2024 | Percent<br>Change Over<br>2023 |
|---------------------------------------------------|------------------------------|-------|---------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Priorities 1 and 2<br>(except maritime)           | 07:59                        | 08:01 | 89.9%                     | 16,676                              | 5.5%                           |
| Priorities 3 and 4<br>(except maritime)           | 10:59                        | 08:43 | 95.8%                     | 8,582                               | -0.7%                          |
| Priority 5 Non-<br>Medical                        | 15:59                        | 10:35 | 98.3%                     | 5,873                               | 16.3%                          |
| Priority 5 Emergency<br>Medical-Ambulance<br>Only | 17:59                        | 17:50 | 90.4%                     | 7,436                               | -5.4%                          |

<sup>50</sup> [VFD-Annual-Report\\_2024-final.pdf](#)

<sup>51</sup> [949b2eaca3e28d8fdc13a296056e0dcf\\_OurVancouver\\_DraftEIS\\_July2025.pdf](#)

<sup>52</sup> Construction of Fire Station 11 was completed in 2022.



## Future Demand

Population density, number of emergency calls per station area, response times, and national standards developed by the Insurance Services Offices, Inc. and the U.S. Fire Administration are used to decide when to staff fire stations with career personnel, and when and where to build new fire stations. The need for additional response units is based on the same factors and on the number of emergency calls per response unit.

VFD is planning to relocate and construct new facilities for Station 3 in the Heights in central Vancouver and Station 6 in Burton Ridge in east Vancouver over the next five years to address growing needs in these areas. The City is also considering construction of new fire stations downtown and/or in the St. Johns area to accommodate future city growth and ensure adequate emergency response times and serviceability. Station 5 is an aging facility at capacity that either requires a seismic upgrade or rebuild after 2030. Station 4 will be seismically retrofitted as part of the Proposition 2 capital project work. Fire and police identified a need for training facilities, which could be combined and/or include other partners. Construction of a training facility is dependent on finding an appropriate property and securing partnerships and funding.

## Police

The Vancouver Police Department (VPD) provides police services in the city and is authorized to employ 241 officers, with 226 sworn members as of February 2025. VPD is located in eight facilities throughout the city. Similar to VFD, VPD uses a metric of sworn officers per 1,000 people to help project future needs to maintain or enhance its services to the community. VPD currently has a ratio of 1.2 sworn officers per 1,000 people but has identified a need to increase that number to 1.4 sworn officers per 1,000 people based on current population and anticipated growth. A ballot initiative, Proposition 5, that was approved by voters in fall 2025, will help to fund hiring of new officers to meet that goal. VPD serves approximately 50 square miles, divided into two precincts, east and west, which are further divided into two districts per precinct. Each district is then divided into beats, and individual patrol officers are responsible for handling calls for service within each beat.<sup>53</sup>



Table 31 summarizes the number of events initiated by community members and by officers in 2024, as well as the average response time for community-initiated events. The event priority number

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<sup>53</sup> [949b2eaca3e28d8fdc13a296056e0dcf\\_OurVancouver\\_DraftEIS\\_July2025.pdf](#)



refers to the level of emergency, with Priorities 1, 2, and 3 indicating calls that require an immediate response and Priorities 4, 5, and 9 referring to calls with less immediacy.

**Table 31. Vancouver Police Department Response Times**

| <b>Event Priority</b> | <b>2024 Community-Initiated Events<br/>(% Change from 2023)</b> | <b>Avg Response Time Community-Initiated Events</b> | <b>2024 Officer-Initiated Events<br/>(% Change from 2023)</b> | <b>Total Events<br/>(% Change from 2023)</b> |
|-----------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------|
| 1                     | 460 (-16.2%)                                                    | 5.56 minutes                                        | 11 (-50.0%)                                                   | 471 (-17.5%)                                 |
| 2                     | 5,968 (-4.7%)                                                   | 8.34 minutes                                        | 192 (6.1%)                                                    | 6,160 (-4.4%)                                |
| 3                     | 43,034 (-7.1%)                                                  | 10.74 minutes                                       | 19,922 (64.4%)                                                | 62,956 (7.7%)                                |
| 4                     | 21,972 (-10.3%)                                                 | 13.82 minutes                                       | 12,413 (-6.2%)                                                | 34,385 (-8.9%)                               |
| 5                     | 2,307 (-21.7%)                                                  | 13.18 minutes                                       | 1,564 (-10.0%)                                                | 3,871 (-17.4%)                               |
| 9                     | 5,349 (-15.4%)                                                  | 7.46 minutes                                        | 19 (11.8%)                                                    | 5,368 (-15.3%)                               |
| <b>Total</b>          | <b>79,090 (-9.0)</b>                                            | <b>10.82 minutes</b>                                | <b>34,121 (25.0%)</b>                                         | <b>113,211 (-0.9%)</b>                       |

### Future Demand

Projected incremental residential and employment growth will increase demand for VPD services. The City has identified a replacement of VPD Headquarters on its list of capital improvements through 2029. VPD reports that its east and west precinct buildings are currently at capacity for current staff levels and have limited potential for expansion due to land constraints. VPD will need to reevaluate staffing levels and equipment within both the east and west precincts to accommodate future demand. The evidence storage facility lacks adequate parking, covered storage, and evidence processing space. Plans to expand this facility begin in 2030. Fire and police identified a need for training facilities, which could be combined and/or include other partners. Construction of a training facility is dependent on finding an appropriate property and securing partnerships and funding.

### Schools

The Vancouver school system is a mix of public, charter, private, and special schools. Two regional public school districts have facilities in Vancouver: the Vancouver Public Schools (VPS) and the Evergreen Public Schools (EPS). The city also is home to the Washington School for the Deaf, the Washington School for the Blind, and Clark College, a community college offering bachelor's and associate degrees and certificates. Cascadia Tech Academy, which offers cooperative career and technical learning experiences in partnership with 10 school districts, including VPS and EPS, is also located in central Vancouver.

Vancouver’s school districts are facing the challenge of providing quality educational facilities given the rapid growth and development in the city and county. For the fastest growing school districts, the dilemma of serving students in portables (or having “unhoused students”) is exacerbated by the continued growth projections for the region. Capital facilities demands are increased by aging infrastructure, the need for better instructional technology and facilities to support high-quality teaching and learning (such as computers, presentation equipment and science labs), the desire for equity among facilities and the move toward smaller class sizes and special programs. Close coordination between the City, County and school districts is essential to adequately address these challenges.<sup>54</sup>



VPS is the primary provider of public education in west and central Vancouver. The school district consists of 21 elementary, 6 middle, and 7 high schools covering a district of 58 square miles, as well as 5 specialty schools. The average student-teacher ratio is 17:1, which is less than the state average of 19.7:1.

In 2022, VPS adopted a six-year Capital Facilities Plan (CFP) that established average classroom sizes for elementary, middle, and high school grade levels. The CFP guidelines suggest that average class sizes should be as follows:

- Elementary school, Grades K-5: 21.5 students per classroom
- Middle school, Grades 6-8: 26 students per classroom
- High school, Grades 9-12: 27 students per classroom
- Special education students: 10 students per classroom

VPS uses standard assumptions about new student generation rates to forecast their capacity needs. A map of existing Vancouver Public Schools is available in the VPS Capital Facilities Plan (2022) and included in Appendix A, VPS 6-year Capital Facilities Plan.

The EPS Capital Facilities Plan for 2026-2032 establishes educational programs and standards of service, an inventory of capital facilities, enrollment projections, facility needs, finance plans, and

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<sup>54</sup> [Draft Clark County Comprehensive Plan School Element](#)

review of school impact fees. EPS serves Clark County and the eastern part of Vancouver and consists of 22 elementary, 6 middle, and 6 high schools serving about 23,366 students (2024 enrollment). It also includes 4 specialty schools. A map of EPS building locations is available in Appendix A, EPS Building Locations. The District’s educational standards of service include:

- Grades K-3 – targeted at 23 students per class
- Grades 4-5 – targeted at 25 students per class
- Special Education – 1 to 15 students per classroom for elementary schools
- Grades 6-8 – targeted at 27.33 students per class
- Grades 9-12 – targeted at 30 students per class
- Special Programs (e.g., music, art, and physical education) –20 to 70 students per class

**Future Demand**

The VPS CFP projected insufficient capacity by 2028 at two schools, Ogden Elementary in central Vancouver and Sacajawea Elementary in west Vancouver and called for adding classrooms and co-op space at both schools. All other VPSs had reported enrollment levels below their building capacity.

The updated Evergreen CFP projects a decrease in enrollment that will level off and remain steady through 2032. One factor hindering enrollment growth has been the slow growth in the child population cohort within Evergreen boundaries. The annual kindergarten-to-birth (K-to-birth) ratio is a key metric representing a combination of net migration between birth and age five and the share of five-year-old residents enrolled in district kindergarten classes, often referred to as a “capture rate.”

EPS also uses standard assumptions about new student generation rates to forecast their capacity needs. The ratios for Evergreen have fluctuated, recovering from the 2020-2021 low of 0.75, but have not returned to pre-pandemic levels. The middle scenario assumes that K-to-birth ratios will increase slightly in the next years before stabilizing at 0.89 from 2028 through 2032.

Looking forward to 2045, population growth will increase the number of new students in both VPS and EPS. This growth would occur incrementally over the next 20 years.

Table 32 summarizes the current and projected number of future new students for each school district in 2045 based on estimated capacity for housing units and associated new school-age population. There will be more projected new students in areas served by EPS than VPS because more growth is forecast to occur within the EPS service area (primarily east Vancouver). Both school districts will need to account for this projected growth as part of their CFP planning processes and identify potential capacity issues.

**Table 32. Current Enrollment and Future Projected New Students**

|                                  | Vancouver Public Schools | Evergreen Public Schools |
|----------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| <b>Current Enrollment (2024)</b> | -                        | -                        |
| Elementary School (K-5)          | 9,468                    | 9,046                    |
| Middle School (6-8)              | 4,651                    | 4,844                    |

|                                    | Vancouver Public Schools | Evergreen Public Schools |
|------------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| High School (9-12)                 | 7,302                    | 8,240                    |
| <b>Current Enrollment Subtotal</b> | <b>21,421</b>            | <b>22,130</b>            |
| <b>Future Enrollment (2045)</b>    | -                        | -                        |
| Elementary School (K-5)            | 1,732                    | 1,986                    |
| Middle School (6-8)                | 764                      | 896                      |
| High School (9-12)                 | 953                      | 1,158                    |
| <b>Future Enrollment Subtotal</b>  | <b>3,449</b>             | <b>4,040</b>             |
| <b>Total Enrollment 2045</b>       | <b>24,840</b>            | <b>26,170</b>            |

## Library Services

Fort Vancouver Regional Library District (FVRLibraries) serves more than 550,000 residents of Clark, Klickitat, Skamania, and Cowlitz counties. There are 15 library locations, 2 bookmobiles, 24/7 digital branch, and diverse outreach programs. It also maintains an Operations Center that houses Library administrative and support services. There are over 596,000 physical items and over 197,000 digital materials. Vancouver has four library branches within city limits or the UGA, including Cascade Park Community Library, Vancouver Community Library, Vancouver Mall Community Library, and the Three Creeks Community Library, as well as the District's Operations Center.<sup>55</sup>

In 2025, FVRLibraries updated its comprehensive facilities plan, which includes a 20-year facilities vision and a 10-year capital plan. A new 5-year strategic plan (2026-2030) for FVRLibraries will be completed in early 2026. The 2025 FVRLibraries [Comprehensive Facilities Plan](#) establishes a level of service for public library space of 0.5 to 0.6 square feet per capita. As of 2025, within Vancouver, there is 123,660 square feet of public library space (not including the Operations Center). The current space per capita for Vancouver is 0.64 square feet.

## Future Demand

To keep public library facilities well maintained and build capacity for future community growth, the Comprehensive Facilities Plan recommends the following capital projects:

- Renovate Three Creeks Community Library
- Renovate Cascade Park Community Library
- Address ongoing capital maintenance needs at Vancouver Community Library
- Acquire a suitable site and build a new library branch within the area bounded by I-5, I-205, and State Route 500.

<sup>55</sup> [FVRL Comprehensive Facilities Plan 2025](#)



## Administrative and Public Works Buildings



In addition to fire and police stations, community centers and specific utility sites, the City owns and operates buildings in which various government and educational services are provided. City Hall at 415 West Sixth Street provides office and meeting space for numerous City departments. It contains Council Chambers, where City Council and other commissions and boards meet. The Permit Center is located in City Hall and is open to the public three days per week.

In 2022, the City purchased 521 Chkalov and is renovating the building to relocate some public facing and customer service functions.

The Zhen Building, at 5107 East Fourth Plain Boulevard, hosts Community Court and a division of Public Works. The building is in poor condition and once vacated, will be demolished. Community Court will need to relocate when that happens.

The Operations Center, at 4711 East Fourth Plain Boulevard, provides office and meeting space primarily for the Public Works Department. A new 32-acre Public Works Operations Campus on NE 94th Avenue between NE 88th Street and NE 91st Street is planned to open by the end of 2028. The current Operations Center does not meet the current or long-term needs of the community. The facility has original electric and plumbing systems from 1951, lacks ADA-compliant access and does not currently meet seismic standards.

The new campus will allow the City's Public Works Department to provide more efficient and effective operations, increase sustainable practices, enhance responsiveness, provide continued operations in the event of a seismic event, and serve as an Emergency Operations Center in



the event of a major emergency or natural disaster. The new Operations Campus will replace/relocate the existing operations center's staff and facility and consolidate additional

operations sites currently scattered around the city to a single location. Consolidation will decrease costs and increase overall efficiency of services to the public.

The Brookside Complex (2323 General Anderson Avenue) includes the public-facing Utilities Billings office and an operations yard, fleet parking and crew building. The Eastside Operations Center (912 NE 192nd Avenue) includes portable crew building, enclosed parking shed, bulk material storage, and laydown space. The Marine Park Engineering building at 4500 SE Columbia Way provides office and meeting space for the Utilities Engineering, Environmental Services and Business Services divisions of the Public Works Department.

The Water Resource Education Center, at 4600 SE Columbia Way, is a facility meant to educate the public about planning and managing water resources and sewer infrastructure, as well as advancing stewardship of the community's high-quality water resources. Programming, such as exhibits, tours and volunteer programs, are available to the public, as well as access to the community room, hosting up to 160 people. The VPRCS Department owns and operates the Firstenburg Community Center in east Vancouver and Luepke Senior Center and Marshall Community Center (both in west Vancouver). The Arts Hub is an emerging community space in the design stage as of 2025 and located in the former FVRLibraries Operations Center. The Vancouver Tennis Center (in central Vancouver) is owned by Vancouver School District but site improvements and management are funded by the City. Additional details about these community centers can be found in Chapter 7, Parks, Recreation & Cultural Services, of this plan, as well as the [Parks, Recreation & Cultural Services Comprehensive Plan](#).

## Community Experience Lens

Public facilities and infrastructure investments play an important role in shaping how residents understand, experience, and connect with the built environment. In addition to delivering essential services, there is an opportunity to more intentionally design and program public facilities and spaces to celebrate and communicate these investments. Events and community programming tied to the completion of major capital projects—such as parks, transportation improvements, or civic facilities—can help residents better understand the purpose and value of these investments, while fostering a stronger sense of transparency, trust, and shared ownership. Integrating arts and cultural programming into public facilities and infrastructure projects can further enhance their visibility and community relevance, using creative expression as a tool for education and storytelling. Prioritizing the inclusion of arts and cultural spaces within community facilities—such as performance areas, studios, and flexible multi-use spaces—also ensures that public investments support not only service delivery, but community identity, cultural expression, and everyday civic life.

Figure 31. General Government Facilities

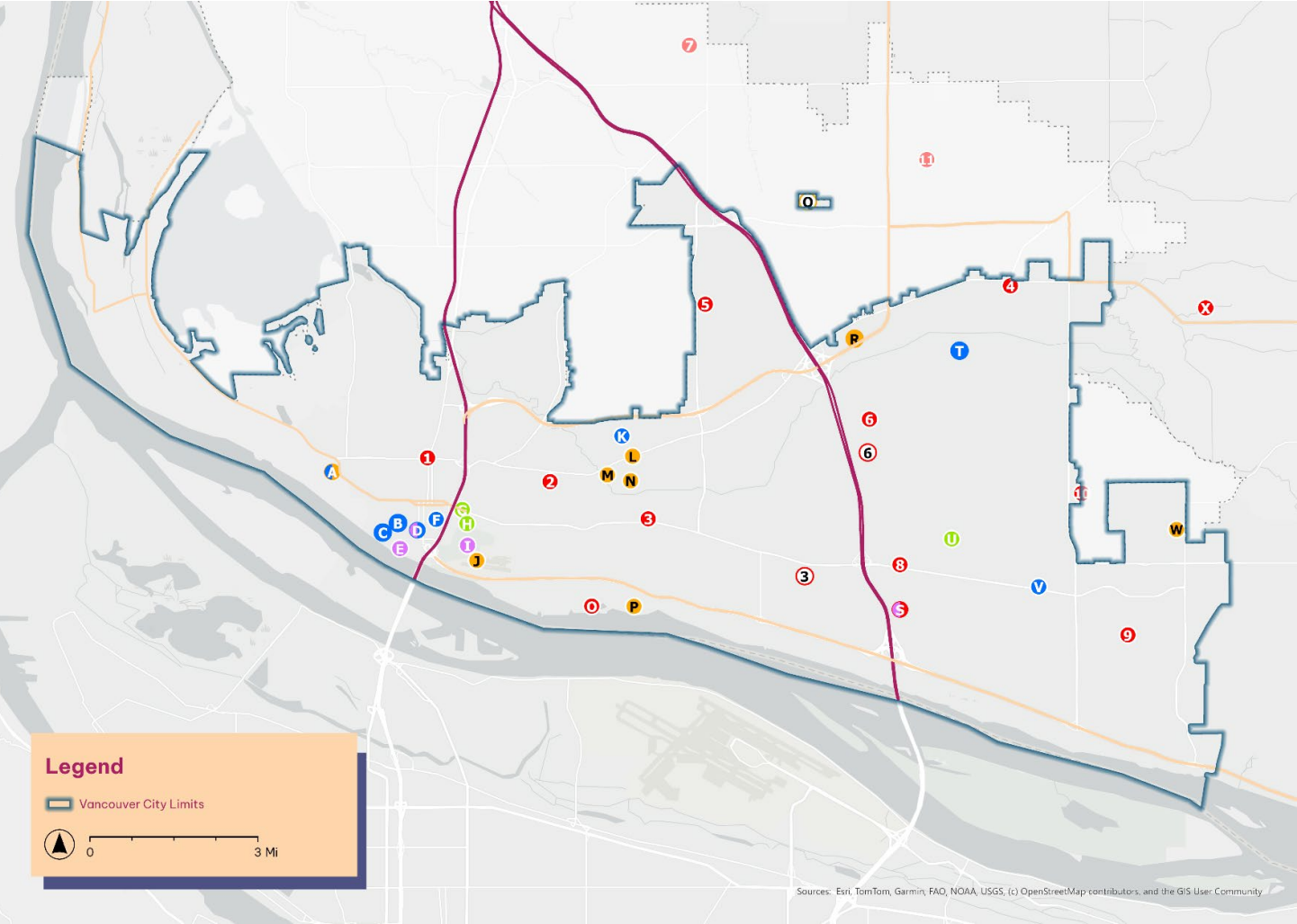


Figure 32. General Government Facilities Key

| POLICE                                     |                                                     | PARKS, RECREATION, AND CULTURAL SERVICES |                                                                                                                          | FIRE |                     |
|--------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------|---------------------|
| A                                          | Evidence Facility                                   | G                                        | Marshall Community Center and Luepke Senior Center                                                                       | 1    | Station 1           |
| B                                          | Clark County Children's Justice Center <sup>1</sup> | H                                        | Arts Hub                                                                                                                 | 2    | Station 2           |
| C                                          | Elder Justice Center <sup>1</sup>                   | U                                        | Firstenburg Community Center                                                                                             | 3    | Station 3           |
| D                                          | DVPC <sup>1</sup>                                   |                                          |                                                                                                                          | 3    | Station 3 (planned) |
| F                                          | Headquarters                                        |                                          |                                                                                                                          | 4    | Station 4           |
| K                                          | West Precinct                                       |                                          |                                                                                                                          | 5    | Station 5           |
| T                                          | Image Elementary <sup>1</sup>                       |                                          |                                                                                                                          | 6    | Station 6           |
| V                                          | East Precinct                                       |                                          |                                                                                                                          | 6    | Station 6 (planned) |
| ADMINISTRATION                             |                                                     | PUBLIC WORKS                             |                                                                                                                          | 7    | Station 7           |
| E                                          | City Hall                                           | A                                        | Westside Wastewater Treatment Plant <sup>2</sup>                                                                         | 8    | Station 8           |
| S                                          | 521 Chkalov                                         | J                                        | Pearson Airport <sup>2</sup>                                                                                             | 9    | Station 9           |
| I                                          | Historic Trust/Officers Row <sup>2</sup>            | L                                        | Zhen Building                                                                                                            | 10   | Station 10          |
| J                                          | Zhen Building                                       | M                                        | Fourth Plain Operations Center                                                                                           | 11   | Station 11          |
| D                                          | DVPC <sup>1</sup>                                   | N                                        | Brookside Complex                                                                                                        | O    | Boathouse           |
| <sup>1</sup> Leased facility               |                                                     | P                                        | Marine Park Water Engineering, Marine Park Wastewater Treatment Plant <sup>2</sup> , and Water Resource Education Center | S    | 521 Chkalov         |
| <sup>2</sup> Managed by outside contractor |                                                     | Q                                        | Operations Center (planned)                                                                                              | X    | Fire Cache          |
|                                            |                                                     | R                                        | WSDOT Building <sup>1</sup>                                                                                              |      |                     |
|                                            |                                                     | W                                        | Eastside Operations Center                                                                                               |      |                     |



## Solid Waste

The City's Public Works Department oversees a Solid Waste utility providing garbage, recycling and organics collection through a contractor, Waste Connections. The City offers a variety of waste and recycling resources to residents, including information on hazardous waste removal, recyclables, and composting. The City also offers organics pickup for residents and businesses to help reduce the amount of organic materials going to landfills. This practice is in alignment with the State of



Washington's Organics Management Law, which is intended to divert 75 percent of previously disposed organic materials from the landfill by 2030, and rescue 20 percent of previously disposed edible food for human consumption by 2025.

The City has historically been included in the development of and adopted Clark County's Comprehensive Solid Waste Management Plan, which has been updated for the years 2025-2030 and is pending adoption by Ecology. The plan describes existing conditions and outlines strategies for waste reduction,

recycling, organics, moderate risk waste, miscellaneous waste, solid waste collection, transfer and disposal. The plan also discusses funding and financing of capital needs and an implementation schedule with recommendations for each of these areas of the county, including the City of Vancouver.

Columbia Resource Company, a subsidiary of Waste Connections, operates three transfer stations in Clark County (in central Vancouver, west Vancouver, and Washougal) and is the designated processor of recyclables. These transfer stations charge fees to accept miscellaneous solid waste, organics, and recyclables. Master plans for each facility identify the investments needed to build them out to meet future growth.

## Future Demand

Increases in population density and new residential and commercial development will increase demand for garbage, recycling, and organics collection. Additionally, new mandates adopted by the Washington State Legislature relating to organics management and the reduction of solid waste will put a significant additional burden on the utility in the coming years. The recently passed organics management laws aim to divert organic materials away from landfills through prevention, food rescue, and organics management facilities to achieve its 2030 goal to reduce organic material in the landfill by 75 percent.



## Private Utilities

Efforts to transition to non-emitting<sup>56</sup> and renewable<sup>57</sup> energy sources are underway in the city and region, with roughly 52.7 percent<sup>58</sup> of energy used in Vancouver and greater Clark County coming from non-emitting and renewable energy sources. Clark Public Utilities manages and operates electrical distribution, generation, and water systems. Clark Public Utilities serves electricity to all of Clark County, Washington. The Clean Energy Transformation Act commits the state to transition to 100 percent clean electricity by 2045, and Clark Public Utilities will help lead this effort locally. Currently, Clark Public Utilities energy sources include hydropower (42.46 percent), natural gas (28.75 percent), nuclear electricity (7.03 percent), wind power (3.21 percent), and unspecified sources (18.55 percent). Unspecified sources are market purchases that are not tracked back to physical resources. Because hydropower is widely available in the region, a significant but unknown portion of this source is from hydropower. The remaining balance was sourced from natural gas powered plants.

In 2024, Clark Public Utilities provided electric service to 239,896 customers with 5,610,947 megawatt hours and a peak demand of 1,144 megawatts. Its generating system produced 1,418,300 megawatt hours of electricity. In their 2024 Integrated Resource Plan, Clark Public Utilities forecast that sufficient energy resources are available to meet customer demand through 2035; however, there is already a capacity<sup>59</sup> deficit, which is expected to grow through 2044. The finding of an immediate need for additional capacity prompted Clark Public Utilities to switch to the Bonneville Power Administration's load following product in October 2025. Clark Public Utilities determined that it will need to procure new energy resources to continue meeting customer demand for the next 20 years.

NW Natural is the natural gas provider for the city and provides heating and other energy needs to approximately 2.5 million people across Oregon and Southwest Washington. The company serves more than 140 communities through 800,000 meters. In Washington, the typical residential customer uses an average of 57 therms per month. NW Natural is aiming to reach carbon neutrality by 2050 by providing renewable natural gas, introducing clean hydrogen energy, and carbon capture, use and storage.

Telecommunications and internet services are provided by numerous private companies, including, but not limited to, AT&T, Verizon, Xfinity (Comcast), T-Mobile, Century Link, and Ooma.

## Future Demand

New residential, commercial, and industrial development will result in additional utility demand and energy use. Energy providers will need to coordinate with the City to ensure their respective future infrastructure planning is consistent with the city's projected growth through 2045. Specific

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<sup>56</sup> Nuclear resources are classified in the Clean Energy Transformation Act as "non-emitting"

<sup>57</sup> Includes hydropower and wind energy sources

<sup>58</sup> Clark Public Utilities 2024 Fuel Mix Disclosure

<sup>59</sup> Maximum electricity output that can produced under specified conditions

proposed projects will need to demonstrate that there are adequate energy resources to support their development. Clark Public Utilities has identified a potential future energy deficit and is identifying sources to meet additional energy needs. Past and current versions of Clark Public Utilities' long-term plans, including the Integrated Resource Plan, Clean Energy Implementation Plan, and plans for Conservation, Demand Response and Transportation Electrification, are available on the utility's public website.

### **Parks and Open Space**

For information and details on Vancouver's Parks and Recreation amenities, see Chapter 7, Parks, Recreation & Cultural Services.

### **Transportation System**

For information and details on Vancouver's transportation system, see Chapter 8, Transportation and Mobility.

### **Level of Service**

LOS is a quantifiable measure for an amount or quality of a public facility or service. LOS helps measure the capacity of a facility or service to provide for the community. As the community changes, the LOS may indicate where to prioritize future funding and resources. Some public facilities and services also have concurrency standards. Concurrency means that the LOS of the facility is maintained to serve new development at the same time, or within six years of occupancy, which may require mitigation if the standard is not maintained. The Comprehensive Plan requires concurrency for water, sewer, and transportation services and identifies them as Tier I public facilities and services. LOS is not required for Tier II facilities, as listed below in Table 33.

**Table 33. Service Tier and Level of Service**

| <b>Service Tier</b> | <b>Public Facility</b>      | <b>Level of Service</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
|---------------------|-----------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Tier I              | Wastewater                  | Meet all federal and state standards with adequate capacity for existing and future demand.                                                                                                                                        |
| Tier I              | Water                       | Meet peak hourly demands with pressure $\geq 30$ psi at all points in the distribution system.<br>For fireflow conditions, $\geq 40$ psi.                                                                                          |
| Tier I              | Transportation              | See Chapter 8, Transportation and Mobility                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| Tier II             | Stormwater                  | Meet and maintain requirements in the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System Phase II Stormwater Permit                                                                                                                   |
| Tier II             | Fire and Emergency Services | 0.83 firefighters per 1,000 residents<br>AMR Response Time:<br>Priorities 1 and 2 (high, low density): 9:59, 19:59<br>Priorities 3 and 4 (high, low density): 12:59, 19:59<br>Priorities 5 and 6 (high, low density): 17:59, 29:59 |
| Tier II             | Police                      | 1.4 sworn officers per 1,000 people                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| Tier II             | Schools – VPS               | Average class sizes                                                                                                                                                                                                                |

| Service Tier | Public Facility    | Level of Service                                                                                                                                                                  |
|--------------|--------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|              |                    | Elementary: 21.5<br>Middle: 26<br>High: 27<br>Special Education: 10                                                                                                               |
| Tier II      | Schools – EPS      | Targeted students/class<br>K–3: 23<br>Grades 4–5: 25<br>Special Education (elementary): 1 to 15<br>Middle: 27.33<br>High: 30<br>Special Programs (e.g., music, art, PE): 20 to 70 |
| Tier II      | Parks              | 6 acres acquired neighborhood/community parks/1,000 residents<br>4.25-acre developed neighborhood/community parks/1,000 residents                                                 |
| Tier II      | Library Facilities | 0.5–0.6 square feet of library branch space/resident                                                                                                                              |

### Capital Facilities Forecast

The GMA requires cities to plan for adequate capital facilities to meet anticipated demand based on anticipated growth and the adopted land use map. Table 34 identifies the 20-year capital facility plan required to meet anticipated demand and

Table 35 provides a six-year finance plan that identifies costs of planned projects and funding over the next six years to maintain or improve LOS to Vancouver residents with anticipated growth. Additional information is available in Appendix Q. Capital Facilities Plan. These two tables identify known capital projects for the short- and long-term planning periods that will provide capacity to serve anticipated growth over the next 20 years, consistent with the adopted land use map. These projects, once completed, must be operated and maintained to ensure consistency in the services provided. Costs associated with operations and maintenance are not included in the tables below but will be assessed regularly through the City budget process and the CIP. Note that amounts are rounded to the nearest \$1,000. For further details, see the respective plans and programs as linked below.

**Table 34. 20-Year Capital Facilities Plan Project Cost Summary**

| Capital Facility | Project Type            | 2026–2031     | 2032–2045     |
|------------------|-------------------------|---------------|---------------|
| Water            | Design and Construction | \$435,271,000 | \$289,402,000 |
| Wastewater       | Design and Construction | \$260,575,000 | \$366,000,000 |

| Capital Facility                            | Project Type                               | 2026-2031              | 2032-2045                                                                       |
|---------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------|------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Surface Water                               | Design and Construction                    | \$24,891,000           | \$16,300,000                                                                    |
| Transportation                              | Design and Construction                    | \$203,828,000          | \$390,900,000                                                                   |
| Transit                                     | Design and Construction                    | \$668,835,000          | \$515,489,000<br>Note: Additional details available in <a href="#">2024 RTP</a> |
| Parks                                       | Acquisition, Development, and Improvements | \$127,574,000          | \$935,970,000                                                                   |
| Fire & EMS                                  | Design and Construction                    | \$120,515,000          | \$41,400,000                                                                    |
| Police                                      | Design and Construction                    | \$64,400,000           | \$161,600,000                                                                   |
| General Government Long Range Facility Plan | Design and Construction                    | \$271,234,000          | To be determined (TBD)                                                          |
| Solid Waste                                 | Design and Construction                    | \$12,700,000           | \$2,500,000                                                                     |
| Schools – VPS                               | Design and Construction                    | \$7,425,000            | TBD                                                                             |
| Schools – EPS                               |                                            | None anticipated       | EPS does not plan this far into the future                                      |
| Fort Vancouver Regional Library             | Design and Construction                    | \$25,700,000           | None proposed in Vancouver                                                      |
| <b>Total 20-year CFP</b>                    |                                            | <b>\$2,222,948,000</b> | <b>\$2,719,561,000</b>                                                          |

**Table 35. Summary of Planned Six-Year Capital Facilities Costs 2026-2031**

| Service                               | Major Capital Projects     | Estimated Total | Funding Source(s)                                                                                |
|---------------------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Transportation<br><a href="#">TIP</a> | Funded Projects, 2026-2031 | \$78,578,000    | Current non-grant revenue sources, dedicated street funding non-grant sources, and grant sources |



| Service                                                                     | Major Capital Projects                                       | Estimated Total | Funding Source(s)                                                                                                   |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Transportation<br><a href="#">TIP</a>                                       | Partially-Funded Projects, 2026-2031                         | \$53,150,000    | Current non-grant revenue sources, dedicated street funding non-grant sources, and grant sources                    |
| Transportation<br><a href="#">TIP</a>                                       | Unfunded Projects                                            | \$72,100,000    | Current non-grant revenue sources, dedicated street funding non-grant sources, and grant sources                    |
| Transit<br><a href="#">Transit Development Plan</a>                         | Infrastructure, system expansion, capital obligations, other | \$668,835,000   | Sales tax, federal and state grants, farebox, interest                                                              |
| Water<br><a href="#">6-Year Water Capital improvement Program 2026-2031</a> | Production Projects                                          | \$19,028,000    | Ratepayer revenue, System Development Charges, grants/loans, PFAS legal settlement funds, and miscellaneous revenue |
| Water<br><a href="#">6-Year Water Capital improvement Program 2026-2031</a> | PFAS Mitigation                                              | \$238,300,000   | Ratepayer revenue, System Development Charges, grants/loans, PFAS legal settlement funds, and miscellaneous revenue |
| Water<br><a href="#">6-Year Water Capital improvement Program 2026-2031</a> | SCADA Projects                                               | \$1,012,000     | Ratepayer revenue, System Development Charges, grants/loans, PFAS legal settlement funds, and miscellaneous revenue |
| Water<br><a href="#">6-Year Water Capital improvement Program 2026-2031</a> | Distribution Projects                                        | \$12,009,000    | Ratepayer revenue, System Development Charges, grants/loans, PFAS legal settlement funds, and miscellaneous revenue |

| Service                                                                                                  | Major Capital Projects                 | Estimated Total | Funding Source(s)                                                                                                   |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------|-----------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Water<br><a href="#">6-Year Water Capital improvement Program 2026-2031</a>                              | Transmission Projects                  | \$37,852,000    | Ratepayer revenue, System Development Charges, grants/loans, PFAS legal settlement funds, and miscellaneous revenue |
| Water<br><a href="#">6-Year Water Capital improvement Program 2026-2031</a>                              | Planning/Other                         | \$127,070,000   | Ratepayer revenue, System Development Charges, grants/loans, PFAS legal settlement funds, and miscellaneous revenue |
| Sanitary Sewer<br><a href="#">6-Year Wastewater Capital Improvement Program 2026-2031</a>                | Collection                             | \$106,935,000   | Ratepayer revenue, System Development Charges, loans, and miscellaneous revenue                                     |
| Sanitary Sewer<br><a href="#">6-Year Wastewater Capital Improvement Program 2026-2031</a>                | Treatment: Marine Park                 | \$21,090,000    | Ratepayer revenue, System Development Charges, loans, and miscellaneous revenue                                     |
| Sanitary Sewer<br><a href="#">6-Year Wastewater Capital Improvement Program 2026-2031</a>                | Treatment: Westside                    | \$119,100,000   | Ratepayer revenue, System Development Charges, loans, and miscellaneous revenue                                     |
| Sanitary Sewer<br><a href="#">6-Year Wastewater Capital Improvement Program 2026-2031</a>                | Treatment: Lagoon                      | \$6,200,000     | Ratepayer revenue, System Development Charges, loans, and miscellaneous revenue                                     |
| Sanitary Sewer<br><a href="#">6-Year Wastewater Capital Improvement Program 2026-2031</a>                | Treatment: Other                       | \$7,250,000     | Ratepayer revenue, System Development Charges, loans, and miscellaneous revenue                                     |
| Stormwater (Surface Water)<br><a href="#">6-Year Surface Water Capital Improvement Program 2026-2031</a> | Regulatory Compliance and UIC Retrofit | \$7,265,000     | Ratepayer revenue, grants, and miscellaneous revenue                                                                |

| Service                                                                                                  | Major Capital Projects | Estimated Total | Funding Source(s)                                    |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------|-----------------|------------------------------------------------------|
| Stormwater (Surface Water)<br><a href="#">6-Year Surface Water Capital Improvement Program 2026-2031</a> | Facility Retrofits     | \$1,150,000     | Ratepayer revenue, grants, and miscellaneous revenue |
| Stormwater (Surface Water)<br><a href="#">6-Year Surface Water Capital Improvement Program 2026-2031</a> | Property Acquisition   | \$635,000       | Ratepayer revenue, grants, and miscellaneous revenue |
| Stormwater (Surface Water)<br><a href="#">6-Year Surface Water Capital Improvement Program 2026-2031</a> | Coordination Projects  | \$550,000       | Ratepayer revenue, grants, and miscellaneous revenue |
| Stormwater (Surface Water)<br><a href="#">6-Year Surface Water Capital Improvement Program 2026-2031</a> | Sub-Standard Systems   | \$10,000,000    | Ratepayer revenue, grants, and miscellaneous revenue |
| Stormwater (Surface Water)<br><a href="#">6-Year Surface Water Capital Improvement Program 2026-2031</a> | WSDOT Fee Projects     | \$523,000       | Ratepayer revenue, grants, and miscellaneous revenue |
| Stormwater (Surface Water)<br><a href="#">6-Year Surface Water Capital Improvement Program 2026-2031</a> | Planning               | \$1,890,000     | Ratepayer revenue, grants, and miscellaneous revenue |

| Service                                                                                                  | Major Capital Projects                         | Estimated Total | Funding Source(s)                                                                                                             |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------|-----------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Stormwater (Surface Water)<br><a href="#">6-Year Surface Water Capital Improvement Program 2026-2031</a> | Stormwater Demand Response                     | \$1,050,000     | Ratepayer revenue, grants, and miscellaneous revenue                                                                          |
| Stormwater (Surface Water)<br><a href="#">6-Year Surface Water Capital Improvement Program 2026-2031</a> | Burnt Bridge Creek WQ Study TMDL/SMAP Projects | \$1,828,000     | Ratepayer revenue, grants, and miscellaneous revenue                                                                          |
| Parks<br><a href="#">Parks Comprehensive Plan 2022-2031</a>                                              | Park Acquisition                               | \$2,640,000     | Bonds, grants, general funds, Park Impact Fees, Conservation Futures, donations, federal funding, partnerships, state funding |
| Parks<br><a href="#">Parks Comprehensive Plan 2022-2031</a>                                              | Project Facility                               | \$17,500,000    | Bonds, grants, general funds, Park Impact Fees, Conservation Futures, donations, federal funding, partnerships, state funding |
| Parks<br><a href="#">Parks Comprehensive Plan 2022-2031</a>                                              | Park Development                               | \$97,906,000    | Bonds, grants, general funds, Park Impact Fees, Conservation Futures, donations, federal funding, partnerships, state funding |
| Parks<br><a href="#">Parks Comprehensive Plan 2022-2031</a>                                              | Park Improvements                              | \$2,548,000     | Bonds, grants, general funds, Park Impact Fees, Conservation Futures, donations, federal funding, partnerships, state funding |



| Service                                                     | Major Capital Projects                     | Estimated Total | Funding Source(s)                                                                                                             |
|-------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------|-----------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Parks<br><a href="#">Parks Comprehensive Plan 2022-2031</a> | Trails Capital Repairs, Planning           | \$5,937,000     | Bonds, grants, general funds, Park Impact Fees, Conservation Futures, donations, federal funding, partnerships, state funding |
| Parks<br><a href="#">Parks Comprehensive Plan 2022-2031</a> | Special Facility Development & Improvement | \$1,043,000     | Bonds, grants, general funds, Park Impact Fees, Conservation Futures, donations, federal funding, partnerships, state funding |
| Fire & EMS                                                  | Fire Stations 3 Construction               | \$23,865,000    | Proposition 2                                                                                                                 |
| Fire & EMS                                                  | Fire Station 6 Construction                | \$23,435,000    | Proposition 2                                                                                                                 |
| Fire & EMS                                                  | Retrofit and expand Station 8              | \$14,265,000    | Proposition 2                                                                                                                 |
| Fire & EMS                                                  | Retrofit Station 4                         | \$1,950,000     | Proposition 2                                                                                                                 |
| Fire & EMS                                                  | Rebuild Station 5                          | \$48,900,000    | Proposition 2                                                                                                                 |
| Fire & EMS                                                  | Fire Station 5 Retrofit                    | \$7,800,000     | Proposition 2                                                                                                                 |
| Fire & EMS                                                  | Fire Station 5 Warehouse                   | \$300,000       | Proposition 2                                                                                                                 |
| Police                                                      | Police Headquarters Land and Building      | \$40,500,000    | Proposition 5                                                                                                                 |
| Police                                                      | Renovate East Precinct                     | \$12,000,000    | Proposition 5                                                                                                                 |
| Police                                                      | Expand Evidence Storage                    | \$11,900,000    | Proposition 5                                                                                                                 |
| General Government Long Range Facility Plan                 | Chkalov renovations                        | \$17,085,000    | Proposition 2, ratepayer revenue, general fund                                                                                |
| General Government Long Range Facility Plan                 | City Hall consolidation and maintenance    | \$14,949,000    | Proposition 2, ratepayer revenue, general fund                                                                                |
| General Government Long Range Facility Plan                 | Public Works Operations Center             | \$225,000,000   | Proposition 2, ratepayer revenue, general fund                                                                                |
| General Government Long Range Facility Plan                 | Bridge Shelter                             | \$14,200,000    | Proposition 2, ratepayer revenue, general fund                                                                                |

| Service                                                                  | Major Capital Projects                                            | Estimated Total | Funding Source(s)                                                                                |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Solid Waste<br><a href="#">Comprehensive Solid Waste Management Plan</a> | West Van Transfer Station:<br>Ph 1 Site improvements              | \$1,400,000     | Designated Capital Improvement and Maintenance Restricted Fund, Regional Solid Waste System Fund |
| Solid Waste<br><a href="#">Comprehensive Solid Waste Management Plan</a> | Ph 2 Utilities/site work                                          | \$2,000,000     | Designated Capital Improvement and Maintenance Restricted Fund, Regional Solid Waste System Fund |
| Solid Waste<br><a href="#">Comprehensive Solid Waste Management Plan</a> | Ph 2B Expansion for organics and top load                         | \$6,700,000     | Designated Capital Improvement and Maintenance Restricted Fund, Regional Solid Waste System Fund |
| Solid Waste<br><a href="#">Comprehensive Solid Waste Management Plan</a> | Ph 3 New office center                                            | \$1,100,000     | Designated Capital Improvement and Maintenance Restricted Fund, Regional Solid Waste System Fund |
| Solid Waste<br><a href="#">Comprehensive Solid Waste Management Plan</a> | Ph 4 New recycle/HHW center                                       | \$1,500,000     | Designated Capital Improvement and Maintenance Restricted Fund, Regional Solid Waste System Fund |
| Schools – VPS (2022-2028)                                                | Additional capacity for Odgen Elementary and Sacajawea Elementary | \$7,425,000     | Uncommitted property sale funds, general obligation bonds, state match funds, impact fees        |
| Schools – EPS (2026-2031)                                                | None                                                              | N/A             | N/A                                                                                              |

| Service                                                                                             | Major Capital Projects                          | Estimated Total        | Funding Source(s)                                                         |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Fort Vancouver Regional Libraries (2026-2037)<br><a href="#">FVRL Comprehensive Facilities Plan</a> | Three Creeks Community Library Renovation       | \$7,090,000            | FVRL Foundation, State of Washington, Library Capital Improvement Program |
| Fort Vancouver Regional Libraries (2026-2037)<br><a href="#">FVRL Comprehensive Facilities Plan</a> | Cascade Park Community Library Renovation       | \$12,000,000           | FVRL Foundation, State of Washington, Library Capital Improvement Program |
| Fort Vancouver Regional Libraries (2026-2037)<br><a href="#">FVRL Comprehensive Facilities Plan</a> | Vancouver Community Library Capital Maintenance | \$5,610,000            | FVRL Foundation, State of Washington, Library Capital Improvement Program |
| Fort Vancouver Regional Libraries (2026-2037)<br><a href="#">FVRL Comprehensive Facilities Plan</a> | Acquire site for new branch                     | \$1,000,000            | FVRL Foundation, State of Washington, Library Capital Improvement Program |
| <b>City of Vancouver Total</b>                                                                      | -                                               | <b>\$1,508,288,000</b> | <b>See above</b>                                                          |
| <b>Non-municipal Agencies Total</b>                                                                 | -                                               | <b>\$714,660,000</b>   | <b>See above</b>                                                          |

### Impact Fees and System Development Charges

Vancouver collects impacts fees for parks and transportation purposes. For planning and funding parklands, Vancouver is divided into three PIF districts. The program establishes LOS standards for urban parks, including neighborhood and community parks and urban open space, and assesses PIFs on new residential development to offset the cost of providing these parks. Additional details are in the Chapter 7, Parks, Recreation & Cultural Services.

The City collects traffic impact fees (TIF) paid at the time of the development application to offset the proportionate system impacts of the proposed added travel demand associated with the proposed project. The City has three TIF districts that consider the unique growth and investment characteristics of each area. The collected TIF from all districts is used to fund TIF eligible projects in any of the three districts. City staff will determine which project will be constructed. A developer

may elect to construct a TIF eligible project as part of their development program and receive a TIF credit for doing so. Recent Washington legislation allows funds collected through the TIF to be used for multimodal projects. As such, the TIF project list has been updated to add walking/rolling and BSM projects from the TSP. Additional details on TIFs can be found in Chapter 8, Transportation and Mobility, as well as in the TSP.

On behalf of the school districts, the City also collects School Impact Fees. The revenue is collected and held in special accounts by the Clark County Treasurer for use by the districts for growth-related capital expenditures. Current School Impact Fees are listed in Table 36.

**Table 36. School District Impact Fees**

| School District | Single-family | Multifamily |
|-----------------|---------------|-------------|
| Battle Ground   | \$10,760      | \$3,845     |
| Camas           | \$6,650       | \$6,650     |
| Evergreen       | \$6,432       | \$3,753     |
| Vancouver       | \$2,786       | \$2,486     |



## Goal: PFS-1

## Public Facilities and Services

### **Vancouver has high-quality public facilities, infrastructure, and utilities that are efficient, well maintained, and meet the needs of a growing population.**

Goal PFS-1 establishes the foundation for how Vancouver plans, funds and manages the physical systems that make daily life in the city possible. At its core, the goal commits the City to providing high-quality facilities, services, and utilities that are affordable, efficient, and well maintained, while ensuring these systems evolve with the needs of a growing and changing community. It links long-range land use planning with capital investment, operations, and maintenance, making sure that growth is matched with reliable public infrastructure and services.

A key focus of PFS-1 is access and equity. The goal directs the City to expand access to essential services and amenities—such as community centers, parks, utilities, and public facilities—through both regulation and public investment, with particular attention to underserved areas. Decisions about where to invest are informed by the City’s Equity Index, displacement risk analysis, and climate vulnerability data. Facilities and programs that support youth, aging populations, and multigenerational community life are also emphasized, reinforcing the idea that infrastructure is not only pipes and pavement, but also the social spaces that support well-being.

PFS-1 also embeds climate resilience and environmental responsibility into everyday infrastructure decisions. It supports retrofitting existing facilities and natural systems to address climate impacts such as heat, flooding, and water stress, while requiring new development and public projects to incorporate climate-resilient design. The goal promotes water conservation, renewable energy, decentralized infrastructure systems, and reduced emissions from buildings and public facilities. Stormwater management, watershed protection, waste reduction, and environmentally conscious procurement practices further ensure that Vancouver’s infrastructure systems protect environmental quality while serving community needs.

Another key dimension is financial stewardship and long-term efficiency. PFS-1 calls for infrastructure to be designed and maintained with life-cycle costs in mind, with the aim of reducing long-term maintenance and replacement burdens. Proportional impact fees and system development charges are used to help recover costs and ensure growth contributes fairly to needed facilities. Periodic reassessment of land use plans and service standards helps the City align

regulations, growth assumptions, and capital planning so that facilities and utilities can keep pace with development.

| Supporting Policy                                        | Description                                                                                                                                                                        | No. | Related Goals        |
|----------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|----------------------|
| <b>Access to Services and Amenities</b>                  | Expand access to essential services and amenities, particularly in underserved areas, through regulation and public investment.                                                    | 4   | PFS-1, EI-1, LU-1    |
| <b>Adapt Infrastructure to Climate Change</b>            | Retrofit existing infrastructure, parks and natural spaces, and construct new facilities to adapt to the localized impacts that will occur in the community due to climate change. | 8   | CL-1, PFS-1, PFS-3   |
| <b>Analyze and Mitigate Displacement Risk</b>            | Analyze and mitigate for displacement pressures and risks prior to making large-scale public investments.                                                                          | 17  | E-1, H-2, H-4, PFS-1 |
| <b>Annexation Agreements Prior to Service Extensions</b> | Continue to require developing or developed unincorporated areas to agree to future annexation as a precondition of the extension of City services.                                | 18  | AN-1, PFS-1          |
| <b>Community Centers</b>                                 | Establish multipurpose community centers offering social, recreational, educational, and cultural programming, especially in underserved areas.                                    | 30  | PR-3, PFS-1          |
| <b>Conserve Water Resources</b>                          | Encourage water-efficient technologies and practices to reduce consumption and ensure sustainable water availability amid climate change and growing demand.                       | 37  | CL-1, CL-4, PFS-1    |

| Supporting Policy                                            | Description                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | No. | Related Goals     |
|--------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|-------------------|
| <b>Cost-efficient Infrastructure</b>                         | Design and maintain infrastructure to reduce long-term maintenance and replacement costs. Consider life-cycle costs, emerging technologies, and the impacts of facility design and material choices in both capital and operating budgets.                                      | 39  | PFS-1, TM-1       |
| <b>Environmentally Conscious Procurement and Maintenance</b> | Include criteria related to the use of environmentally sustainable materials and practices in procurement processes and maintenance contracts.                                                                                                                                  | 51  | PFS-1, CL-3       |
| <b>Equity and Climate Data</b>                               | Incorporate the City's Equity Index, Displacement Risk Assessment tool, and climate vulnerability assessment in public investment and infrastructure improvement decisions.                                                                                                     | 54  | EI-1, PFS-1, CL-1 |
| <b>Improve Connectivity between Parks and Open Spaces</b>    | Create an expansive network of linear parks that encourage active transportation, improve community health and well-being, enhance tree canopy and stormwater management, and link parks and open space with housing.                                                           | 68  | PR-2, PFS-1,      |
| <b>Climate Resilient Development</b>                         | Integrate climate resiliency best practices into the City's review of new development.                                                                                                                                                                                          | 72  | CL-1, CL-2, PFS-1 |
| <b>Invest in Underserved Areas</b>                           | Prioritize infrastructure, housing, and public service investments in underserved neighborhoods and areas of the city that have not benefitted from past investments.                                                                                                           | 81  | PFS-1, EI-1       |
| <b>Periodically Reassess Land Use</b>                        | Assure consistency of overall land use and capital facilities plans by reevaluating Vancouver's land use plan and code to ensure regulations are facilitating intended outcomes and the City is able to provide necessary public facilities and services to implement the plan. | 100 | PFS-1, LU-4       |

| Supporting Policy                                | Description                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | No. | Related Goals                       |
|--------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|-------------------------------------|
| <b>Preserve and Protect the Columbia River</b>   | Manage the built and natural environment to protect and restore the water quality and habitat of the Columbia River basin, reflecting its central role in the city's identity, economy, history, and future.                                                                                                                                                 | 104 | CL-2, CL-4, CE-5, EO-2, PR-2, PFS-1 |
| <b>Proportional Fees</b>                         | Establish proportional impact fees and system development charges based on size of unit for residential uses while ensuring cost recovery.                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | 107 | PFS-1, LU-4                         |
| <b>Reduce Built Environment Emissions</b>        | Reduce emissions from buildings, structures, and infrastructure in the community.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | 110 | CL-3, PFS-1                         |
| <b>Reduce Solid Waste</b>                        | Increase waste diversion rates through a system that minimizes landfill reliance, reduces greenhouse gas emissions, prioritizes composting and encourages resource recovery.                                                                                                                                                                                 | 117 | CL-1, CL-3, CL-4, EO-3, PFS-1       |
| <b>Regional Infrastructure</b>                   | Work with local, state, federal and tribal partners to ensure that new construction or replacement of critical infrastructure is planned and designed to avoid community harm and maximize social, environmental, and cultural value.                                                                                                                        | 121 | TM-1, PFS-1                         |
| <b>Resources for Youth and Aging Populations</b> | Prioritize programs and infrastructure that support youth and aging populations, including safe play areas, accessible housing, robust childcare, public facilities and community programs that foster multigenerational interaction.                                                                                                                        | 125 | EI-3, PFS-1                         |
| <b>Service Availability and Standards</b>        | Consider water, sewer, stormwater, solid waste, police, and schools as necessary public facilities and services. Ensure levels of service sufficient to serve planned development. Establish service standards and planning assumptions for estimating needed public facilities and services based on service capabilities, land use designations, and BMPs. | 130 | PFS-1                               |



| Supporting Policy                                   | Description                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | No. | Related Goals      |
|-----------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|--------------------|
| <b>Service Transition</b>                           | Identify strategies for facilitating phased transition of urban services, particularly public safety, transportation, parks, utilities, and land use review. This should include exploration of early application of land use regulations and infrastructure standards to ensure urban level of service in areas developed to urban densities within the VUGA. | 131 | AN-1, PFS-1        |
| <b>Sewer Service</b>                                | Provide safe and sustainable sewer service throughout the City, connect remaining existing development served by septic to the public sewer system, and manage domestic and industrial wastewater to reduce health hazards and environmental impacts.                                                                                                          | 132 | PFS-1              |
| <b>Stormwater Management</b>                        | Improve water quality, protect watersheds and reduce flood risks by promoting groundwater infiltration, reducing runoff, and advancing effective stormwater BMPs.                                                                                                                                                                                              | 136 | CL-1, PFS-1        |
| <b>Support Active Transportation Investments</b>    | Improve active transportation in areas with inadequate mobility infrastructure to increase the share of trips made by foot, bike and other small mobility options, and transit, including better integrating parks and trails into the active transportation network.                                                                                          | 144 | TM-1, PFS-1        |
| <b>Support Decentralized Infrastructure Systems</b> | Support decentralized local energy and water solutions while strengthening community adaptability to environmental, social, and economic changes.                                                                                                                                                                                                              | 145 | PFS-1, CE-4, PFS-3 |
| <b>Support the Use of Renewable Energy</b>          | Encourage new renewable energy infrastructure and promote development of storage systems to ensure a stable, resilient, and sustainable energy grid.                                                                                                                                                                                                           | 151 | CL-3, PFS-1        |

| Supporting Policy                          | Description                                                                                                                                                                                                       | No.        | Related Goals                  |
|--------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|--------------------------------|
| <b>Underdeveloped Lots and Brownfields</b> | Prioritize, facilitate, and incentivize development on infill and underutilized lots, and clean up brownfield sites.                                                                                              | <b>157</b> | LU- 3, LU-4, LU-1, PFS-1, CL-4 |
| <b>Water Service</b>                       | Provide safe, clean, quality drinking water to every home and business, ensure water pressure and volumes necessary to support fire suppression systems. Encourage on-site water reuse systems where practicable. | <b>161</b> | PFS-1, PFS-2, PFS-3            |

## **Goal: PFS-2**

## **Government Services and Financing**

### **Vancouver’s process for funding public services and facilities is transparent and aligns with community priorities as well as state requirements.**

Goal PFS-2 focuses on the ways in which Vancouver decides to fund, prioritize, and deliver public infrastructure and government services. While other goals address what systems are built, PFS-2 ensures that the process for making those decisions is inclusive, transparent, and grounded in community priorities. It commits the City to open governance, equitable participation, and coordinated long-term planning so that investments reflect the needs and voices of the full community.

A central component of PFS-2 is aligning funding decisions with adopted plans. The Capital Improvement Program (CIP) is maintained as a key implementation tool, with a prioritization process that ties capital projects directly to the goals and policies of the Comprehensive Plan and other long-range planning documents. This ensures that public dollars are invested in ways that advance the City’s vision for land use, mobility, housing, parks, utilities, and climate resilience rather than responding only to short-term pressures. Asset management practices reinforce this alignment by using data and best management approaches to balance lifecycle costs, performance, risk, and service levels, while leveraging past investments to support efficient and equitable growth.

PFS-2 also elevates transparency and public access to information as essential parts of infrastructure planning. The City commits to open, user-friendly platforms that allow residents to understand how decisions are made, how funds are allocated, and how projects are performing. This open government approach strengthens accountability and enables community members to engage meaningfully in shaping public investments. By making data and decision-making processes visible, the City supports informed participation and trust in government.

| Supporting Policy                                                | Description                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | No. | Related Goals       |
|------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|---------------------|
| <b>Align Capital Improvement Program with Comprehensive Plan</b> | Maintain a prioritization process that aligns the CIP with the goals and policies of the Comprehensive Plan and other relevant long-term planning documents.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | 14  | PFS-2               |
| <b>Asset Management</b>                                          | Manage City assets to balance full life-cycle costs, performance, risk, and service levels, using BMPs and data. Public infrastructure and facility investments will leverage existing investments to support efficient and equitable growth.                                                                                                                                                         | 21  | PFS-2, TM-1, PR-1   |
| <b>Essential Public Facilities</b>                               | Plan, site and design essential public facilities through coordinated, equitable, and transparent processes that support regional planning goals, minimize community impacts, and ensure long-term benefit to all Vancouver residents.                                                                                                                                                                | 55  | PFS-2               |
| <b>Open Government</b>                                           | Ensure transparent and equitable access to government data by maintaining open, user-friendly platforms that allow community members to understand, engage with, and influence public decisions and investments.                                                                                                                                                                                      | 97  | EI-4, PFS-2         |
| <b>Schools</b>                                                   | Work with local school districts to provide adequate school facilities, including timely and efficient review processes for new facilities.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | 128 | PFS-2               |
| <b>Values Driven Budgeting</b>                                   | Ensure biennial budget decisions are guided by adopted policy priorities, with programs, projects, and services evaluated and prioritized based on their contribution to achieving those priorities. Require budget narratives and reporting to clearly demonstrate alignment with the City's mission, values, and community benefit, and to transparently document and publish outcomes and impacts. | 160 | EI-4, PFS-2         |
| <b>Water Service</b>                                             | Provide safe, clean, quality drinking water to every home and business, ensure water pressure and volumes necessary to support fire suppression systems. Encourage on-site water reuse systems where practicable.                                                                                                                                                                                     | 161 | PFS-1, PFS-2, PFS-3 |



## Goal: PFS-3

## Infrastructure Enhances Public Safety

**In Vancouver, investments in public services, facilities and infrastructure advance community safety, contribute to the emergency preparedness, and support disaster response.**

Goal PFS-3 centers on Vancouver's ability to keep critical systems functioning during emergencies and disruptive events. It commits the City to developing and maintaining resilient infrastructure that can withstand natural hazards, climate impacts, and other shocks, while ensuring emergency services can respond quickly and effectively. This goal links physical system design, public safety services, and community preparedness into a unified resilience framework.

A major focus of PFS-3 is climate adaptation and hazard readiness. The City works to retrofit existing infrastructure, parks, and natural systems, and to design new facilities that respond to localized climate risks, such as heat, flooding, wildfire smoke, and severe storms. Public spaces are designed with climate-resilient features that reduce exposure to hazards and provide safe gathering areas during extreme events. Transportation investments, such as Community Safe Routes, also contribute to resilience by creating safer, more reliable walking connections to transit and key destinations, including during emergencies.

PFS-3 strongly integrates public safety and emergency response systems into infrastructure planning. Coordination with fire and police departments ensures facilities, staffing, and equipment keep pace with growth and are distributed to serve the community equitably. The goal supports investments in emergency services facilities, communications systems, and preparedness efforts that allow rapid response to disasters and day-to-day emergencies alike. Disaster recovery and emergency response planning further ensure that all residents have access to emergency services and recovery resources, reducing risks from natural disasters, climate-related hazards, and social disruptions.

| Supporting Policy                               | Description                                                                                                                                                                                           | No. | Related Goals                 |
|-------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|-------------------------------|
| <b>Adapt Infrastructure to Climate Change</b>   | Retrofit existing infrastructure, parks and natural spaces, and construct new facilities to adapt to the localized impacts that will occur in the community due to climate change.                    | 8   | CL-1, PFS-1, PFS-3            |
| <b>Climate Resilient Spaces</b>                 | Incorporate elements of climate resiliency into new public spaces, buildings, and infrastructure.                                                                                                     | 29  | CL-1, CE-1, PR-1, PFS-3, LU-3 |
| <b>Community Safe Routes</b>                    | Create safe walking connections through programs that identify and invest in Safe Routes to Schools and Community Safe Routes that link people to transit and other important community destinations. | 33  | TM-1, TM-2, PFS-3, PR-2, CL-3 |
| <b>Coordinate with Fire and Police</b>          | Coordinate with the VFD and VPD to plan for expected growth, equitably serve the community, and facilitate emergency response.                                                                        | 38  | CE-3, PFS-3                   |
| <b>Disaster Recovery and Emergency Response</b> | Develop plans and resources to ensure effective emergency response and recovery efforts in the event of natural disasters, climate-related hazards, and social disruptions.                           | 43  | CE-3, CL-1, PFS-3             |
| <b>Public Safety</b>                            | Support public safety through investment in emergency services, facilities, infrastructure and coordinated preparedness efforts that strengthen community resilience and response.                    | 109 | CE-3, PFS-3                   |

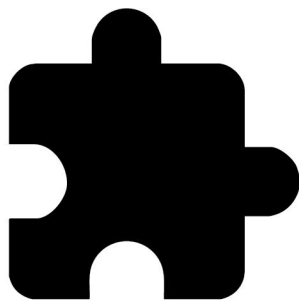
| Supporting Policy                                   | Description                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | No. | Related Goals       |
|-----------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|---------------------|
| <b>Redundancy in Infrastructure</b>                 | Design, construct, and maintain capital infrastructure systems with resiliency and redundancy to minimize the risk of system failure during natural hazards, climate-related events, or other disruptions. Prioritize investments that diversify supply sources, strengthen backup systems, and enhance adaptive capacity so essential services can be maintained or restored quickly in the event of a failure. | 119 | PFS-3, CL-1         |
| <b>Resilient, Transit-Supportive Infrastructure</b> | Invest in infrastructure that supports reliable, frequent, and accessible transit service as outlined in the Enhanced Transit Network, while adapting to localized climate impacts. Investments should expand mobility options, improve neighborhood access, and deliver health, economic, and social benefits.                                                                                                  | 124 | TM-2, PFS-3, EI-2   |
| <b>Support Decentralized Energy Systems</b>         | Support decentralized local energy systems while strengthening community adaptability to environmental, social, and economic changes.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | 145 | PFS-1, CE-4, PFS-3  |
| <b>Water Service</b>                                | Provide safe, clean, quality drinking water to every home and business, ensure water pressure and volumes necessary to support fire suppression systems. Encourage on-site water reuse systems where practicable.                                                                                                                                                                                                | 161 | PFS-1, PFS-2, PFS-3 |

## Chapter 9 – Key Implementing Actions

- ✓ Finalize and adopt the updated 20-Year Water System Plan.
- ✓ Implement a comprehensive water source PFAS treatment plan.
- ✓ Update and adopt the 20-year General Sewer Plan.
- ✓ Develop and implement the Wastewater Treatment Solids Processing and Renewal Program.
- ✓ Regularly evaluate and update utility rates and System Development Charges (SDCs).
- ✓ Coordinate with Public Works and Parks to add street and park trees in canopy-deficient areas.
- ✓ Coordinate with Clark County and other jurisdictions to implement the County Solid Waste Management Plan (CSWMP).
- ✓ Expand curbside organics and food scrap collection citywide, consistent with RCW 70A.205.540.
- ✓ Update VMC Title 6 to align with updates to the solid waste portion of VMC Title 20.
- ✓ Explore development of a Fire Impact Fee Program.
- ✓ Fill new positions and add equipment funding through Proposition 2.
- ✓ Fill new positions and add equipment funded through Proposition 5.
- ✓ Complete construction of the new operations center.
- ✓ Implement the City's Long Range Facilities Plan.



# Annexation



10

**OUR VANCOUVER**





# Introduction

Annexation is the process by which cities add land to their boundaries to accommodate growth and provide public services. The Growth Management Act (GMA) anticipates that designated Urban Growth Areas (UGAs) will become part of cities over the 20-year time horizon of the Comprehensive Plan, and that cities are the appropriate provider of urban services.

The Vancouver Urban Growth Area (VUGA) is the largest UGA in the state by population, with an estimated 170,000 residents. Like the City of Vancouver, the incorporated VUGA is increasingly diverse and has experienced recent economic growth that exceeds what has happened in the rest of the overall Portland-Vancouver metropolitan region. It has a higher rate of homeownership, a higher medium income, and a higher average age than Vancouver overall. Annexation of the full VUGA would make Vancouver the second largest city in the state. The scale and complexity of Vancouver's UGA and the extent that it is already developed to urban densities presents both opportunity and challenge. Annexation is an opportunity to align land use and infrastructure planning across a larger area to meet key community and policy objectives and more efficiently deliver services. However, the City will bear the cost of serving annexed areas, addressing deferred maintenance and upgrading substandard infrastructure. Fiscal sustainability is a major challenge to large-scale annexation of VUGA.



## Vision: Annexation

Vancouver will continue to manage urban growth by annexing urbanized areas within the Vancouver Urban Growth Area in an orderly way that is fiscally sustainable and maintains adopted levels of service. By coordinating with partners, addressing baseline conditions, and making targeted investments that support smooth service transitions, Vancouver will successfully integrate future annexed areas into the city's urban fabric and strengthen our shared sense of identity.

From a fiscal perspective, annexation has historically been most feasible in areas with a strong commercial or employment base that can help offset the cost of serving adjacent residential areas. However, large portions of the VUGA consist of single-family residential neighborhoods that lack nearby commercial services, have auto-oriented development patterns, and public infrastructure that does not meet urban standards. Level of service standards in unincorporated UGAs typically fall below those provided in incorporated areas. In these areas, the long-term cost of providing urban services can significantly exceed anticipated revenues, making annexation difficult to justify without additional funding mechanisms or phased service strategies. In addition, as costs increase, the unfunded liability associated with substandard infrastructure continues to grow.

### **Key Annexations**

Since the mid-1990s, the City has pursued annexation incrementally. Annexations during this period reflect a mix of large, population-serving annexations and smaller, targeted annexations for municipal or employment purposes.

- **East Vancouver (1997)**

One of the City's largest annexations, East Vancouver nearly doubled the population of the city and represented a major step toward implementing the UGA concept. This annexation established a precedent for coordinating service delivery and infrastructure investment in urbanized areas previously under county jurisdiction.

- **Section 30 (2008)**

Annexation of this area supported industrial and employment uses, strengthening the City's economic base and aligning land use regulation with infrastructure and service provision.

- **Alcoa/Port of Vancouver Remnant Parcels (2009)**

These targeted annexations brought key employment and industrial parcels into city limits, improving regulatory consistency and supporting port-related economic activity.

- **Vancouver Operations Center (2023)**

This recent annexation reflects the continued use of annexation for municipal purposes, ensuring that the new City operations center currently under development is strategically located to serve the existing community, as well as future growth.

- **Van Mall North (2017)**

This annexation incorporated a large, mixed residential and commercial area, adding approximately **5,500 residents**. Van Mall North illustrates the City's emphasis on annexing areas that combine residential areas with nearby commercial and employment uses.

### **Smaller Annexations and Boundary Refinements**

Over time, Vancouver has also completed smaller annexations in response to property owner requests. While these annexations typically added little or no population, they result in small, incremental jurisdictional boundary adjustments.

## Annexation Process

Annexation in Washington State is governed by state statute and shaped by the GMA, which together establish where and how cities may expand their boundaries. In counties planning under the GMA, annexation is generally limited to areas within a designated UGA and must occur in a coordinated, contiguous, and orderly manner. These requirements reinforce the GMA's intent that cities serve as the primary providers of urban services and that counties avoid long-term provision of urban services within UGAs. Washington law provides multiple methods for annexation, each with distinct initiation requirements, approval processes, and applicability depending on local conditions.

## Methods

- **Property-owner petition methods** – most often requiring owners representing a threshold of assessed property value to initiate annexation
- **Election-based annexation** – which require approval by voters within the proposed annexation area
- **Annexation of unincorporated islands** – a streamlined process for enclaves that are largely surrounded by city limits
- **Annexation by interlocal agreement** – allowing cities and counties to negotiate annexation terms for urbanized areas
- **Municipal-purpose annexations** – used to incorporate City-owned property needed for public facilities

## Key Evaluation Factors

Regardless of the annexation method used, proposed annexations must be evaluated against a consistent set of planning and service considerations:

- **Consistency with the Growth Management Act**, including the requirement that annexations occur within UGAs and support planned urban growth patterns
- **Alignment with countywide planning policies**, which establish expectations for coordinated growth, annexation sequencing, and transition of urban services
- **Fiscal sustainability**, including the City's ability to fund expanded services, address infrastructure deficits, and maintain adopted LOSs without adverse impacts to existing residents
- **Infrastructure readiness**, including the capacity and condition of transportation systems, utilities, parks, and other public facilities
- **Logical boundaries and service areas**, avoiding fragmented jurisdictions, irregular boundaries, or inefficient service delivery arrangements



These considerations help ensure that annexation decisions advance long-term planning objectives rather than responding solely to short-term development or boundary pressures.

### **Intergovernmental Coordination and Service Transitions**

Coordination with Clark County and affected service providers is a foundational element of the annexation process. Prior to annexation, counties often adopt development regulations that are consistent with the City, while cities plan for eventual assumption of service responsibility. Annexation requires careful planning to ensure continuity of services, such as public safety, transportation, utilities, and land use regulation. State law and administrative guidance encourage the use of interlocal agreements to manage these transitions, particularly where annexation will affect special purpose districts, such as fire, utility, or library districts. These agreements may address service timing, infrastructure standards, revenue impacts, and phased transitions to City service provision. Countywide planning policies further guide this coordination by establishing shared expectations for how annexation supports regional growth management objectives.

## **Community Feedback**

- ➔ Strong need for clear, transparent information about annexation—how it works, when it will happen, and what it means for services, zoning, taxes, and growth targets.
- ➔ Mixed ideas on whether and where annexation should occur.
- ➔ Concerns that annexation could increase traffic, pollution or taxes and change the feel of suburban and semi-rural areas.
  - Others feel “in limbo” outside city limits and want representation and consistent services.
  - Desire for annexation to support sustainable, balanced growth with urban level services, logical boundaries, and coordination with the county to ensure adequate police, fire and infrastructure.

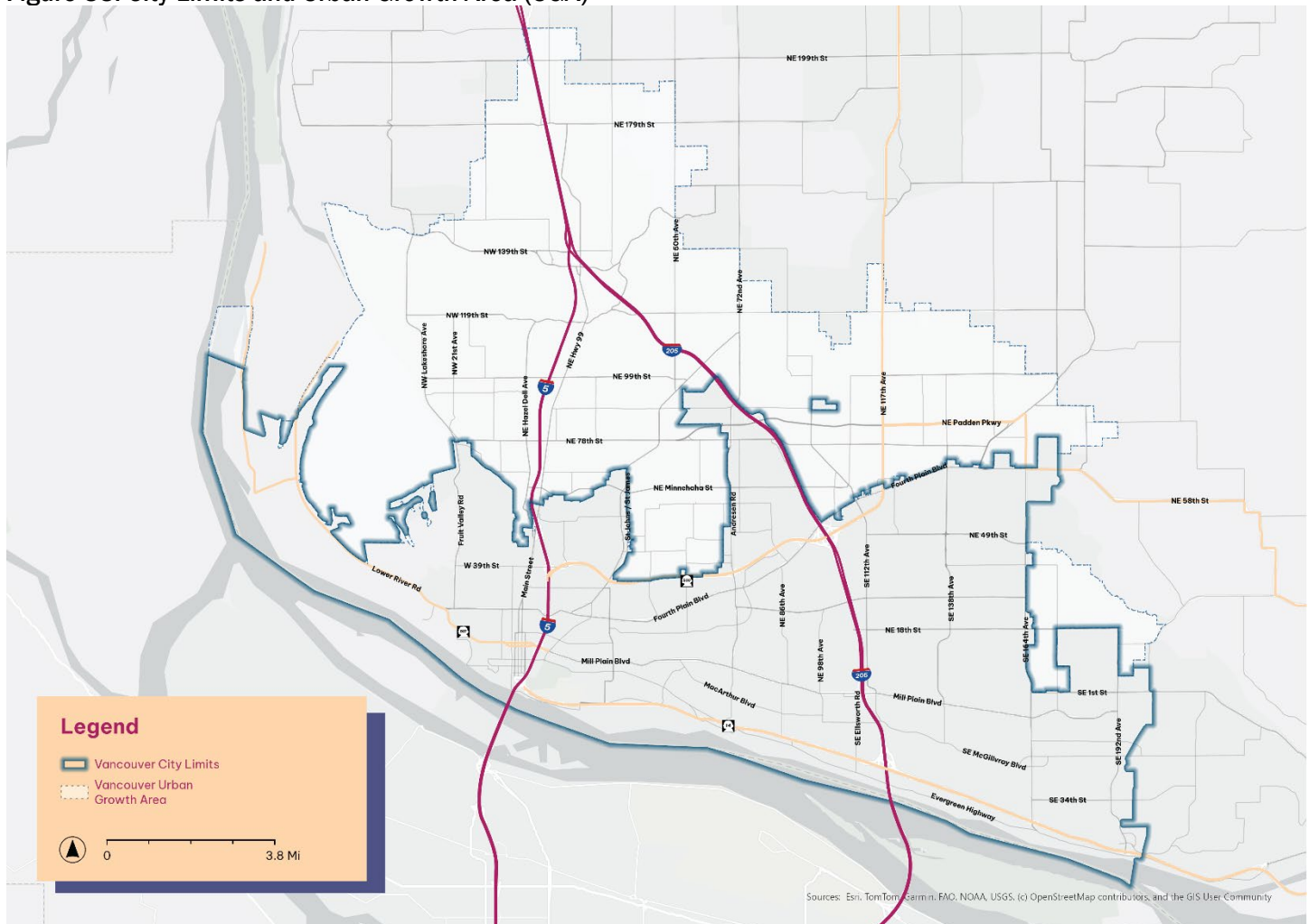
### **Adapting to Changing Conditions**

The City adopted an Annexation Blueprint Plan in 2007 that identified a phased annexation schedule, but this was quickly followed by the Great Recession and largely went unimplemented. Since that time, on the ground conditions in the VUGA have continued to evolve, as have state rules that govern annexation processes. Vancouver’s approach to annexation recognizes this evolving context and acknowledges structural deficiencies that make annexation difficult to pursue. The City will continue to evaluate annexation opportunities using available statutory tools while emphasizing coordination, fiscal responsibility, and transparent decision making. Annexation is viewed not as a single event, but as a planned transition of governance and services that must align with long-term growth management, infrastructure investment, and community expectations.

The impact of annexation on currently unincorporated areas also continues to evolve. Many residents of the unincorporated Vancouver Urban Growth Area (VUGA) and the City of Vancouver do not know where the boundary between each jurisdiction is located and see the built environment and

associated infrastructure as one continuous fabric. Different levels of service mean some residents feel that they are underserved or ignored, and different infrastructure standards leave people feeling confused about why certain areas are designed one way and others not. It is not uncommon for community members to seek positions on City boards and commissions without realizing they don't actually live in the city and are thus not eligible, as they are nonetheless impacted by City decisions. Incorporation into the City of Vancouver will provide residents of the VUGA with greater influence over City decisions as well as urban level of service standards.

**Figure 33: City Limits and Urban Growth Area (UGA)**



## **Goal: AN-1**

## **Facilitate Annexation of the Urban Growth Area (UGA)**

### **The annexation of urbanized areas within the Vancouver Urban Growth Area into city limits will occur in a coordinated, orderly and timely manner.**

Goal AN-1 establishes annexation as the primary mechanism for transitioning urbanized areas within the VUGA into the city in a coordinated, orderly and timely manner. Lands designated within the UGA are planned to accommodate urban development and, over time, to be incorporated into the city so that governance, land use regulation, and service delivery align with urban conditions and community expectations.

Under this goal, annexation is intended to support a cohesive and efficient urban environment by establishing clear and logical jurisdictional boundaries. The City prioritizes annexation patterns that promote contiguous growth, reduce fragmented governance, and create functional service areas capable of supporting urban levels of service. Larger, coordinated annexations are emphasized where they improve regulatory consistency, streamline long-term service provision, and advance annexation within the planning horizon anticipated by the GMA. At the same time, property-owner-initiated annexations adjacent to city limits will continue to be facilitated when they are consistent with these broader principles and contribute to orderly growth.

Implementation of Goal AN-1 relies on sustained coordination with Clark County and other service providers, and pre-annexation adoption of City infrastructure and regulatory standards. Annexation is viewed not as a single boundary action but as a planned transition of governance and services that must be carefully sequenced and managed over time. This includes coordinating land use designations, infrastructure standards, and service responsibilities so that areas expected to urbanize can do so in a predictable and well-managed manner.

Through clear sequencing, service transition planning, and intergovernmental collaboration, the City will pursue annexation that supports long-term regional planning objectives, strengthens regulatory consistency, and integrates future annexed areas into the city's urban fabric. Goal AN-1 reinforces the City's commitment to managing growth proactively and transparently, ensuring that annexation contributes to a unified, well-governed city over time.

| Supporting Policy                                        | Description                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | No. | Related Goals |
|----------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|---------------|
| <b>Annexation Agreements Prior to Service Extensions</b> | Continue to require developing or developed unincorporated areas to agree to future annexation as a precondition of the extension of City services.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | 18  | AN-1, PFS-1   |
| <b>Annexation Appropriateness</b>                        | Evaluate potential annexations to ensure they support the City's ability to provide and maintain adopted levels of service. Annexations should proceed only when they do not result in a reduction of service levels for existing residents and when necessary urban services can be provided in a timely, efficient, and financially sustainable manner.                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | 19  | AN-1          |
| <b>Annexation Boundaries</b>                             | Annexation agreements should promote large annexations, efficient service delivery, the provision of necessary infrastructure, and clear jurisdictional boundaries. This includes contiguous areas and both sides of roads and streets and associated rights-of-way. Individual property owners should not be prevented from pursuing annexation, and requests should be facilitated when immediately adjacent to Vancouver city limits.                                                                                                                                             | 20  | AN-1, AN-2    |
| <b>Intergovernmental Coordination of Annexation</b>      | Work with Clark County to facilitate annexation of the unincorporated Vancouver Urban Growth Area in a coordinated and orderly manner. Coordination should include County adoption of development regulations and infrastructure standards for the VUGA that are consistent with those of the City of Vancouver, agreements to maintain existing infrastructure prior to annexation, community engagement in annexation planning and implementation, and generally advance Vancouver as a provider of urban services and Clark County as a provider of social and regional services. | 80  | AN-1          |



| Supporting Policy           | Description                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | No.        | Related Goals |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|---------------|
| <b>Limit UGA Expansions</b> | Rigorously review any requests for future VUGA expansions to those clearly necessary to address forecasted population growth and associated housing and job needs, to reduce future annexation burdens, and to foster efficient long-term urbanization given finite countywide land supplies. Modeling of growth and associated land capacity needs should utilize generally acceptable best practices and reflect reasonable assumptions. | <b>83</b>  | AN-1, AN-2    |
| <b>Service Areas</b>        | Work with Clark County, utility districts, and other regional service providers to ensure reasonable, efficient and fiscally sustainable service area boundaries and provide urban levels of service throughout planned annexation areas. Explore regional district service provision models that could lead to greater efficiency.                                                                                                        | <b>129</b> | AN-1          |
| <b>Service Transition</b>   | Identify strategies for facilitating phased transition of urban services, particularly public safety, transportation, parks, utilities, and land use review. This should include exploration of early application of land use regulations and infrastructure standards to ensure urban level of service in areas developed to urban densities within the VUGA.                                                                             | <b>131</b> | AN-1, PFS-1   |
| <b>Timing of Annexation</b> | Coordinate with Clark County to establish annexation sequencing, agreements and timelines that facilitate annexation of the full Vancouver Urban Growth Area within the 20-year time horizon anticipated in the Growth Management Act.                                                                                                                                                                                                     | <b>153</b> | AN-1          |

## Goal: AN-2

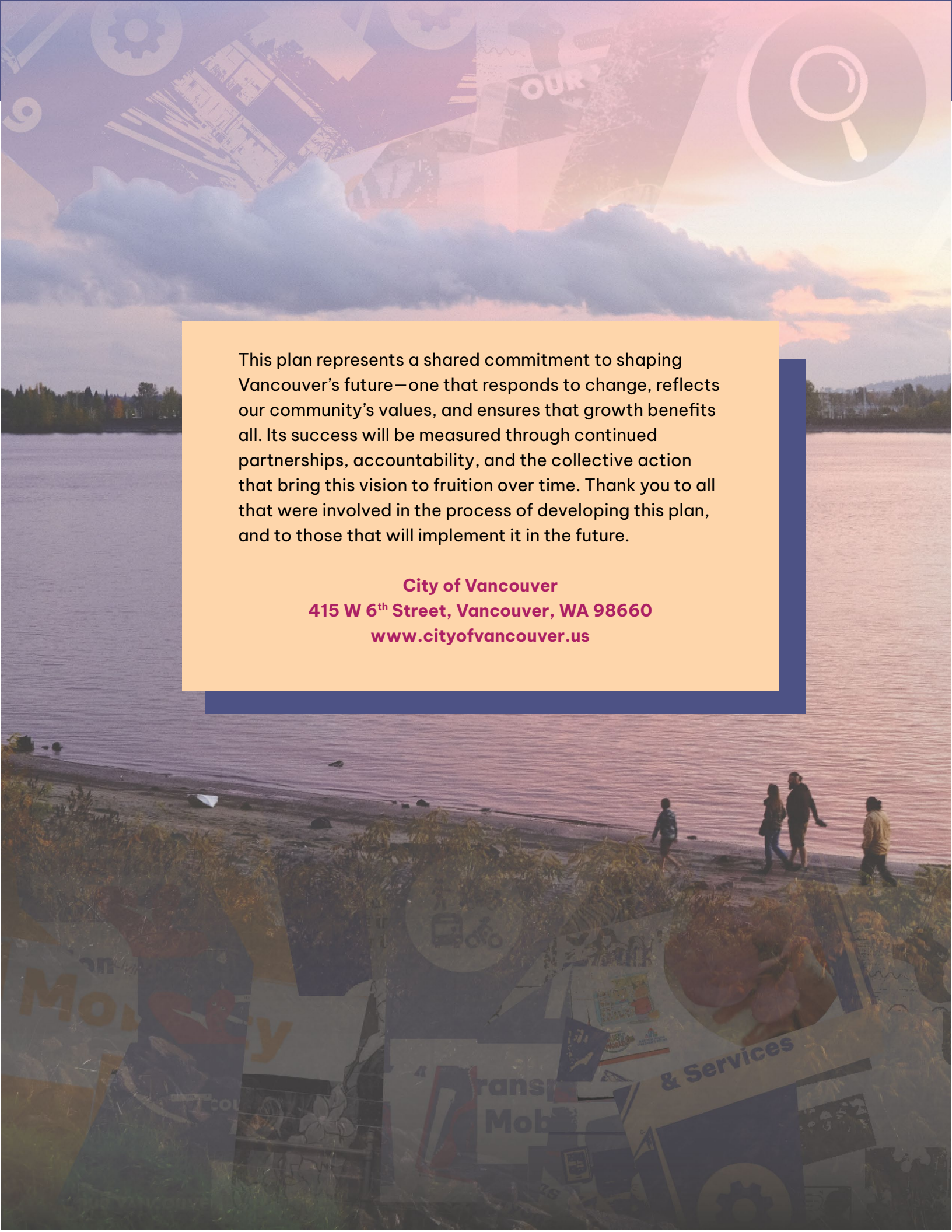
## Fiscally Sustainable Annexations

**Facilitate balanced annexations that are fiscally sustainable for both the county and the city. Future annexations will support fiscally sustainable and quality service delivery for both existing and future residents.**

Goal AN-2 ensures that annexation decisions are implemented in a fiscally responsible manner that maintains adopted LOSs for both existing and future residents. As annexation expands the City's responsibility for public services and infrastructure, careful evaluation of costs, revenues, and service capacity is essential to avoid unintended fiscal impacts. Under this goal, annexation proposals are evaluated based on infrastructure readiness, service demands, long-term operating costs, and the City's capacity to provide and sustain urban LOSs. Particular attention will be given to baseline conditions in annexed areas, including deferred infrastructure needs and capital investments required to meet City standards. Annexations should proceed only when they do not diminish service levels elsewhere in the city and when service transitions can be managed efficiently.

Recognizing that fiscal constraints can limit annexation feasibility, the City will work collaboratively with Clark County and regional partners to pursue additional funding mechanisms and implementation tools. This state-level advocacy is intended to support more balanced annexations over time, particularly in areas where service needs and revenue capacity are misaligned. Through this approach, Goal AN-2 supports equitable, sustainable annexation that strengthens the City's long-term financial and service delivery capacity.

| Supporting Policy                          | Description                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | No. | Related Goals |
|--------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|---------------|
| <b>Annexation Boundaries</b>               | Annexation agreements should promote large annexations, efficient service delivery, the provision of necessary infrastructure, and clear jurisdictional boundaries. This includes contiguous areas and both sides of roads and streets and associated rights-of-way. Individual property owners should not be prevented from pursuing annexation, and requests should be facilitated when immediately adjacent to Vancouver city limits.   | 20  | AN-1          |
| <b>Fiscal Sustainability of Annexation</b> | Evaluate proposed annexations to ensure they are fiscally sustainable and support the City's ability to provide, operate, and maintain adopted levels of service over time. Annexations should proceed only when they do not reduce service levels for existing residents and when required urban services can be delivered in a timely, efficient, and financially sustainable manner.                                                    | 60  | None          |
| <b>Limit UGA Expansions</b>                | Rigorously review any requests for future VUGA expansions to those clearly necessary to address forecasted population growth and associated housing and job needs, to reduce future annexation burdens, and to foster efficient long-term urbanization given finite countywide land supplies. Modeling of growth and associated land capacity needs should utilize generally acceptable best practices and reflect reasonable assumptions. | 83  | AN-1          |



This plan represents a shared commitment to shaping Vancouver's future—one that responds to change, reflects our community's values, and ensures that growth benefits all. Its success will be measured through continued partnerships, accountability, and the collective action that bring this vision to fruition over time. Thank you to all that were involved in the process of developing this plan, and to those that will implement it in the future.

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# Appendix List

June 1, 2026

## Appendix A: Related Plans and Policies

Related plans and policies provide background information and policy directives that inform and support Comprehensive Plan analyses, goals, policies, and implementation steps.

*\*Adoption by Reference:* some Plans listed below fulfill statutory requirements of Comprehensive Planning under the Growth Management Act. The Adopted by Reference notation below refers to the most current version of each plan, as subsequently amended from time to time.

- [2023-2029 City of Vancouver Strategic Plan](#) (*\*Adopted by Reference*)
- [City of Vancouver Climate Action Framework](#) (CAF), adopted 2022 (*\*Adopted by Reference*)
- [Housing Action Plan](#)
- [Reside Vancouver Anti-Displacement Plan](#), 2023
- City of Vancouver 2019-2023 Consolidated Housing and Community Development Plan
- 2025 Action Plan Economic Prosperity and Housing
- 2022-2031 Vancouver Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services (PRCS) Comprehensive Plan (*\*Adopted by Reference*)
- [Culture Arts and Heritage Plan](#), adopted 2018
- [Five-Year Economic Development Strategy](#), adopted 2025
- [Vancouver Moves: 2024-2044 Transportation System Plan](#) (TSP), adopted 2024 (*\*Adopted by Reference*)
- [2026-2031 Transportation Improvement Program](#) (TIP)
- [Stormwater Management Program Plan](#) (SWMP Plan), adopted 2025
- [2011 General Sewer Plan](#), update in process, adoption anticipated 2026-2027
- [2026-2031 Water, Sewer and Surface Water Capital Improvement Program](#) (CIP)
- [2016 Comprehensive Water System Plan](#), amended 2022, update in process, adoption anticipated 2026-2027
- Long Range Facilities Plan
- [Map of Existing Vancouver Public Schools](#)
- [Map of Evergreen Public Schools](#)
- [Urban Forestry Management Plan \(UFMP\)](#), adopted 2023 (*\*Adopted by Reference*)
- [Shoreline Master Program](#), adopted 2011, last amended 2021
- [Critical Areas Ordinance](#), adopted 2024 [VMC 14.26](#), [VMC 20.740](#)
- [Fourth Plain Subarea Plan](#) (*\*Adopted by Reference*)
- [112<sup>th</sup> Avenue Corridor Plan](#) (*\*Adopted by Reference*)
- [Central Park Subarea Plan](#) (*\*Adopted by Reference*)
- [Evergreen and Grand Commercial Corridors Strategy](#) (*\*Adopted by Reference*)
- [Fourth Plain Forward](#) (*\*Adopted by Reference*)
- [Fruit Valley Subarea Plan](#) (*\*Adopted by Reference*)
- [The Heights District Subarea Plan](#) (*\*Adopted by Reference*)

- [Lower Grand Employment Area Action Plan](#)
- [Riverview Gateway Subarea Plan](#) (\*Adopted by Reference)
- [Section 30 Subarea Plan](#) (\*Adopted by Reference)
- [Waterfront Gateway](#)
- Other Jurisdictions and Agencies Policies
- [Countywide Planning Policies](#) (\*Adopted by Reference)

## Appendices B–P: Plan-specific Appendices

- B. [Equity Framework](#)
- C. [Equity Analysis](#)
- D. [Housing Needs Assessment](#)
- E. [Economic Conditions and Opportunities Analysis](#)
- F. [Community Atlas](#)
- G. [Racially Disparate Impact Analysis](#)
- H. [Climate Vulnerability Assessment](#)
- I. [Health Impact Assessment](#)
- J. [Community Partnership Framework](#)
- K. [Public Involvement Plan](#)
- L. [Vision and Goals Framework](#)
- M. [Engagement and Outreach Summary](#)
  - a. [Phase 1 Visioning Engagement and Outreach Summary](#)
  - b. [Phase 2 Community Mapping Activities Engagement and Outreach Summary](#)
  - c. [Phase 2 Land Use Alternatives Engagement and Outreach Summary](#)
  - d. [Phase 2 Draft EIS Comment Period Engagement and Outreach Summary](#)
  - e. [Phase 3 Draft Plan and Code Engagement and Outreach Summary](#)
- N. [Greenhouse Gas Emissions Inventory](#)
- O. [Market and Land Capacity Analysis Methodology and Process for the Preferred Alternative](#)
- P. [Housing Needs and Land Capacity Analysis](#)
- Q. [Capital Facilities Plan](#)
- R. [Citywide Equitable Development Strategy](#)
- S. [Americans with Disabilities Act \(ADA\) Transition Plan](#)
- T. [Multimodal Evaluation and Active Trip Potential](#)
- U. [Full List of Comprehensive Plan Policies](#)
- V. [HB 1491 Compliance Memo](#)