



POLICY REPORT
DEVELOPMENT AND BUILDING

Report Date: May 21, 2013
Contact: Matt Shillito
Contact No.: 604.871.6431
RTS No.: 10084
VanRIMS No.: 08-2000-20
Meeting Date: May 29, 2013

TO: Standing Committee on Planning, Transportation and Environment

FROM: General Manager of Planning and Development Services, in consultation with the General Manager of Community Services, the General Manager of Parks and Recreation, and the General Manager of Engineering

SUBJECT: Oakridge Centre Rezoning - Issues and Directions

RECOMMENDATION *

- A. THAT Council indicate it is willing to consider an intensification of the Oakridge Centre site beyond density envisaged in the 2007 Oakridge Centre Policy Statement to include additional residential, office, and retail space as generally outlined in this report, noting that the final density will be refined and analysed through the rezoning process, which will include additional public consultation and a Public Hearing.
- B. THAT Council indicate it is willing to consider tower height of up to 45 storeys for the tower closest to the intersection of 41st Avenue and Cambie Street, with heights decreasing as distance from the intersection increases, noting that the final built form will be further refined and analysed through the rezoning process, which will include additional public consultation and a Public Hearing.
- C. THAT Council direct staff to work with the applicant to revise the rezoning application to better address the City's inclusionary housing policies, with a focus on maximizing the number of social housing units that can be achieved within the development.
- D. THAT Council accept payment-in-lieu of park land to satisfy the outstanding obligation to provide 1.15 ha (2.83 acres) of park space on the Oakridge Centre site;

FURTHER THAT Council direct staff to report back at time of Public Hearing on the value of the payment-in-lieu and opportunities for re-investment as part of the Oakridge Centre public benefits strategy.

- E. THAT Council endorse in principle the use of the rooftop of Oakridge Centre as public space for the community, noting that all obligations for operation, on-going maintenance and capital renewal will be the requirement of the owner of Oakridge Centre;

FURTHER THAT Council direct staff to report back at time of Public Hearing on programming options for the public space as part of the public benefits package for Oakridge Centre, informed by additional public consultation.

- F. THAT Council endorse its commitment to prioritizing walking, cycling, and transit as transportation options for Oakridge Centre;

FURTHER THAT Council direct staff to continue to work with the applicant to determine appropriate parking supply, measures to reduce the required parking, and methods to manage parking spill-over onto nearby residential streets.

- G. THAT Council endorse in principle the proposed public benefits package for Oakridge Centre, including a City-owned civic centre and affordable housing, noting that the ultimate configuration and location of the public benefits will be further refined and analysed through the rezoning process;

FURTHER THAT Council direct staff to develop a comprehensive funding strategy for public benefits associated with the Oakridge Centre redevelopment.

- H. THAT the passage of the above resolutions will in no way fetter Council's discretion in considering any rezoning application for Oakridge Centre, and does not create any legal rights for any person or obligation on the part of the City; any expenditures of funds or incurring of costs is at the risk of the person making the expenditure or incurring the costs.

REPORT SUMMARY *

This report seeks Council's direction on the following, which will help to guide further processing of the rezoning application for Oakridge Centre:

- Affirmation of the mix of land uses and overall density on the site, including the amount of commercial floor space on site, noting that there are still built form issues to be resolved that may affect the ultimate density of the Oakridge Centre proposal;
- A maximum tower height of 45 storeys for the tower closest to the intersection of 41st Avenue and Cambie Street, with heights decreasing as distance from the intersection increases, noting that there are still built form issues to be resolved that may affect the ultimate density and massing of the Oakridge Centre proposal;
- Resolution of the outstanding obligation for 2.83 acres of open space resulting from a 1983 subdivision and a 1993 rezoning of the site;
- Affirmation of the City's policies to prioritize walking, cycling, and transit over automobile use, including parking ratios for the residential and commercial density proposed on the Oakridge Centre site, which support Transportation 2040 goals of improving environmental impacts, the economy, people, and sustainable transportation choices (including transit); and

- A public benefits strategy for Oakridge Centre which includes a mix of affordable housing, open space provided on site, and a co-located civic centre comprised of a community centre, seniors centre, expanded library, and child care.

The report also provides Council with the draft results of the retail impact study for an expanded Oakridge Centre, the results of the first phase of public consultation, and an assessment of Canada Line capacity. The decisions arising from this report will inform revisions to the rezoning application for Oakridge Centre.

COUNCIL AUTHORITY/PREVIOUS DECISIONS *

Relevant City policies for this site include:

- Oakridge Langara Policy Statement (1995)
- Riley Park South Cambie Vision (2005)
- Oakridge Centre Policy Statement (2007)
- Metro Core Jobs and Economy Plan (2007)
- Green Building Rezoning Policy (2010)
- Greenest City 2020 Action Plan (2011)
- Cambie Corridor Plan, Phase II (2011)
- Housing and Homelessness Strategy 2012-2021(2011)
- Metro Vancouver 2040: Shaping our Future (2011)
- Vancouver Economic Action Strategy (2011)
- Transportation 2040 (2012)
- Rezoning Policy for Sustainable Large Developments (2012)

CITY MANAGER'S/GENERAL MANAGER'S COMMENTS *

The General Manager of Planning and Development Services recommends APPROVAL of the foregoing

REPORT

Background/Context

Oakridge Centre is situated at the southwest corner of Cambie Street and 41st Avenue, immediately adjacent to the Oakridge-41st Avenue Canada Line station. The site is 11 hectares (28 acres) in size, roughly equivalent to eight city blocks.

In 1995, Council approved the Oakridge-Langara Policy Statement (OLPS) to guide growth in the Oakridge-Langara area. The OLPS gives direction that the neighbourhood centre at 41st and Cambie be re-evaluated in the event that a rapid transit line is implemented along Cambie Street. The Riley Park South Cambie (RPSC) Vision approved in 2005 borders Oakridge Centre. The Vision identifies 41st and Cambie as an important neighbourhood centre, major shopping destination and special community place that should be retained and strengthened.

In 2007, Council adopted a Policy Statement for Oakridge Centre which envisioned a vibrant, sustainable redevelopment of the site, with a greater intensity of housing, retail and office uses that takes advantage of the Centre's excellent transit accessibility and is well-supported by parks and public amenities.

During 2011 and 2012, the owners of Oakridge Centre (Ivanhoe Cambridge) partnered with Westbank Developments to redevelop the site. The developers examined city policy adopted since the 2007 Policy Statement, and utilized this to shape their rezoning application. The developers felt their new proposal could make a more significant contribution to the City's goals for housing affordability, environmental sustainability, creation of complete communities, and economic development.

In July 2012, Council directed staff to work with the proponent team, and to consider an application for rezoning that varied from the built form and some of the policies contemplated in the Oakridge Centre Policy Statement. Council also directed staff to carry out an enhanced program of public consultation during the Oakridge Centre rezoning process that recognizes its scale and strategic significance.

*Strategic Analysis **

Through the initial review of the rezoning application (submitted in October 2012), staff have identified a number of issues that require direction from Council. Direction on these issues is necessary to inform further review of the application.

1. Land Use

The rezoning application for Oakridge Centre proposes over 4,500,000 square feet of development.

Uses	Current Uses	Proposed Rezoning
Retail (sq. ft.)	620,000	1,430,600
Office (sq. ft.)	126,000	424,259
Amenity (sq. ft.)	26,000	45,000
Residential (sq. ft.)	50,000	2,697,700
TOTAL (sq. ft.)	822,000	4,597,559

Oakridge Centre is designated as a Municipal Town Centre in the Metro Vancouver Regional Growth Strategy. Municipal Town Centres are intended to be among the region's primary focal points in terms of concentration of residential density, job space, civic/cultural facilities, and transit service. Noting that Downtown is identified as the metropolitan core of the region, Oakridge Centre is the Municipal Town Centre identified within the City of Vancouver.

One of the target strategies contained in Vancouver's Economic Action Strategy is to protect, enhance, increase, and densify employment spaces. The application for Oakridge Centre proposes to increase the amount of retail floorspace from 620,000 square feet to over 1,400,000 square feet. Combined with the additional 300,000 square feet of office space proposed, staff estimate that the number of jobs accommodated on the site would increase from 2,000 to over 5,000 jobs following redevelopment. The 2007 Metro Core Jobs and the Economy Plan identified the need to accommodate approximately 24,000 additional jobs outside the Downtown and Broadway areas by 2031. The additional jobs provided at Oakridge Centre would help the City meet its job targets and would constitute approximately 3000 jobs toward this total (12.5%).

Staff support the land use and overall density proposed at Oakridge Centre based on its unique role and prominence in the City and region. While staff is seeking an indication from Council that it is willing to consider the proposed land use mix and overall density, it is

important to note that the exact floorspace figures are subject to change based on revisions to the form of development. This may result in some variation in the density proposed in the application.

2. Built form and Height

The rezoning application for Oakridge Centre proposes a variety of building forms ranging from low and mid-rise buildings of 6 to 12 storeys, to towers and terraced buildings of 18 to 45 storeys.

As noted above, Oakridge Centre is designated as a Municipal Town Centre in the Metro Vancouver Regional Growth Strategy. Therefore, in assessing the proposed height and form of development, Oakridge Centre should be considered in the context of Metro Vancouver and the City of Vancouver as a whole, development along the Canada Line, and the immediate local surroundings.

In Vancouver and the region as a whole, planning policy emphasizes greater levels of development intensity and height at rapid transit and in key urban centres, reflecting the increasing sustainability of locations that offer high walkability and decreased automobile reliance. Vancouver has recently approved developments up to 31 storeys at Joyce-Collingwood on the Expo Line, and up to 35 storeys at the Cambie and Marine Station on the Canada Line. Regionally, recent approvals at rapid transit locations are trending upwards to approximately 50 storeys, with up to 70 storeys at Burnaby's Brentwood Town Centre.

The Cambie Corridor Plan identifies Oakridge as the "centre" of both the city and the Canada Line which should represent the most significant concentration of urban uses and density. The importance of Oakridge as a Municipal Town Centre, its location at an important crossroads (noting that 41st Avenue is a priority for future rapid transit), and the singular scale of the Oakridge Centre site places it at the top of the hierarchy of Vancouver station areas outside the downtown. As such, staff consider that the building height range proposed for Oakridge Centre is consistent with directions in transit-oriented development in Vancouver and elsewhere in the region.

Staff analysis suggests that the patterning of height and massing proposed is generally consistent with the principles in the 2007 Policy Statement, and that the expanded height range gives greater ability to meet the principles of the policy for massing and transitions to the local neighbourhood while carrying a density appropriate to this significant transit-oriented site. Additionally, the height range and building forms proposed are important to achieving residential and job-space density without compromising the functioning and viability of the retail mall which is the economic engine of the site.

The surrounding properties adjacent to the site were analyzed based on their existing and future context within the Cambie Corridor. Staff believe the proposed built form provides an appropriate transition to the evolving neighbourhood. While the taller buildings in the proposal cast longer shadows on the local neighbourhood, the impact on immediately adjacent areas is minimized based on the proposed tower forms and placement on site.

The existing residential development most impacted is the Terraces, a 32 unit strata residential building at the northeast corner of the Oakridge site immediately adjacent to the Canada Line station. Its context will be significantly altered by the proposed redevelopment. While acknowledging the degree of change, staff believe that the shadowing impacts and adjacencies are acceptable. However, staff will be looking to further improve solar access and reduce visual impact of upper level massing along Cambie shopping street and boulevard.

While staff is seeking an indication from Council that it is willing to consider the proposed building height range at Oakridge Centre, it is important to note there are still significant built form issues to be addressed in further evolution of the application. The built form and pedestrian experience along 41st Avenue and Cambie Street, the setting back of buildings from the property line to retain existing mature trees, building sculpting, variety in building forms, reduction in mass of some buildings, and the building forms along the high street are just some of the topics that require further discussion with the applicant. This may result in a variation in the density contained in the application.

Should Council indicate that it is willing to consider the building heights as proposed, staff will utilize the objectives of the *General Policy for Higher Buildings* to achieve Council's direction for architectural excellence and green building performance. While these are normally reserved for buildings in the downtown, staff recommend that buildings over 114 metres (375 feet) in height be subject to an augmented Urban Design Panel, with two additional architects with experience in mixed use building design and green building practices.

A full analysis of height and built form can be found in Appendix A.

3. Outstanding Obligation for 1.15 hectares (2.83 acres) of Park Space

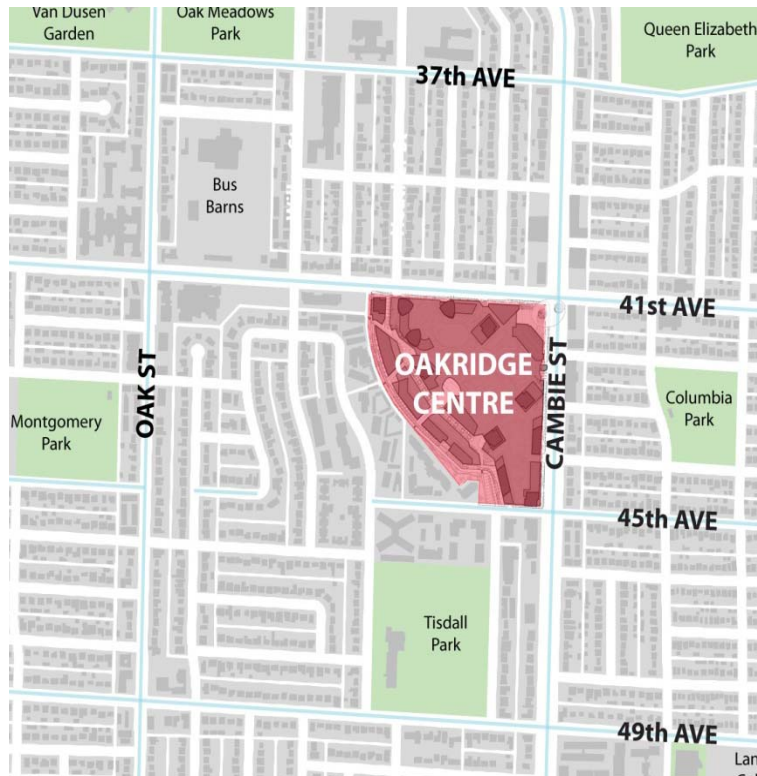
In 1983, the former owners of Oakridge Centre were given approval to subdivide the site and create a parcel of land for residential development (subsequently developed as three 6-storey buildings). The subdivision triggered a requirement for dedication of park land, in accordance with the Subdivision By-Law, of 10% of the site, which would have yielded a future park land dedication of 3.085 acres. The City and owners agreed to a deferral of the obligation to a future subdivision in a legal agreement that was registered on title.

In 1991, Council approved in principle a rezoning of the site which would permit additional density. A condition of the rezoning was the provision by the owner of land on the Oakridge site for 96 units of seniors' housing at one third of market value. The housing itself was to be built and financed by a different developer. This rezoning was not immediately enacted and in 1992, Council approved modifications to the conditions of the 1991 rezoning to allow the following:

- the owner would transfer a 1.1 acre site to the City for seniors housing for \$660,000 (10% of market value) once construction on the expansion of the mall commenced; and
- the outstanding park obligation would be reduced from 3.085 acres to 2.83 acres to recognize the land contribution for seniors housing (originally to be transferred at one third of market value); and
- a new covenant to be registered which would require delivery of the park or payment in lieu;

Council enacted the rezoning by-law in September 1993 and a covenant was registered on title to secure the delivery of the housing site and the park obligation. The 1.1 acre housing site was to be transferred to the City upon the first use of the additional density received from the rezoning. The covenant to secure the delivery of the park or payment in lieu (upon the earlier of the next subdivision or 15 years from the date of such covenant) was to be registered concurrently with subdivision plan to create the housing site for the City. The owner never undertook the development which was to trigger these outstanding obligations and, as a result, these outstanding obligations remain unfulfilled to this day.

The housing site obligation will be discussed further under item 5 below. Regarding the park obligation, instead of requiring the dedication of 2.83 acres of land for park, Council may, in its discretion, accept cash-in-lieu of park land for all or part of the obligation. The value of the cash-in-lieu should be equivalent to the value of 2.83 acres of land at the Oakridge Centre site at current market value.



Staff analysed the existing park space network around Oakridge Centre in determining whether to pursue park space on site or a payment of cash-in-lieu. The Oakridge area is relatively well-served by park space, with three large parks within a five minute walk of the centre: Tisdall Park, Columbia Park, and Oak Meadows Park (located adjacent to Eric Hamber Secondary School), and Queen Elizabeth Park also nearby.

Staff is recommending that Council consider accepting payment-in-lieu of park land on site based on the quantity of open space in close proximity to Oakridge Centre. Further analysis is required to determine the financial value of the park land dedication for cash-in-lieu purposes.

The Vancouver Charter and the Subdivision By-Law state that any funds in lieu of park land dedication shall be used only for the purpose of providing public park or recreational facilities. Planning and Park Board staff will explore use of those funds as part of the Oakridge Centre public benefits strategy.

4. Use of Oakridge Centre Rooftop as Public Space

The redevelopment of Oakridge Centre provides an opportunity to create a significant publicly-accessible open space on the roof of the expanded shopping centre. The 2007 Oakridge Centre Policy Statement suggested exploring the potential to introduce some recreational uses on roof top areas of the Centre. With over 4.5 hectares (11 acres) of roof, there is an opportunity to develop this into a place for recreation for not only residents and patrons of Oakridge Centre but the broader community. While this space would not be dedicated and deeded to the city, it would still function as a public space accessible to the general public.

The 11 acres of proposed public open space on the mall roof offers the opportunity for outdoor passive and active recreation in close proximity to where many people live, work and shop without any interference from motorised traffic. The mall roof should have the complement of amenities typically associated with residential high-rises, but also allow for usage by the general public. This would include indoor amenity space opening onto outdoor amenity space that accommodates informal gathering, children's play, seating, garden features and urban agriculture, with direct access from all residential buildings onto the roof.

The roof space could also lend itself to less common features for use by the general public, including a jogging track, fitness stations, outdoor gyms, tai chi pavilions, and habitat areas.

Through the rezoning process, staff will work with the applicant to maximise the amount of open space that functions and feels like publicly accessible open space for the public, establish hours of operation, maximise access to the roof space from ground level, and define maintenance obligations and responsibilities of the City and developer. A Community Use Agreement will be required to ensure the space functions as a public space. The City will require that maintenance and operation of the rooftop be the sole responsibility of the owner of the commercial component of Oakridge Centre rather than the responsibility of the residential buildings located on site. Staff will also work with the applicant to determine the appropriate programming for this space, informed by community input.

5. Public Benefits Strategy for Oakridge Centre

Staff have examined the existing inventory of amenities and facilities in the area, future needs associated with population growth in the Cambie Corridor and options to address those needs.

Civic Centre at Oakridge Centre

To fulfil the requirements of the 2007 Policy Statement, as well as future demand in the Oakridge area, staff is recommending a new co-located civic centre be developed on the Oakridge Centre site. This civic centre would be comprised of the following:

- A community centre of approximately 36,000 square feet, including a gymnasium, multi-purpose rooms, a dedicated seniors centre space, community kitchen, and circulation space;
- An expanded branch for the Vancouver Public Library of approximately 25,000 square feet, including expanded programming, work and study spaces, which will help meet existing and future demand in the area; and
- A 69 space child care facility with adjacent outdoor play space

In evaluating the need for a community centre at Oakridge, staff looked at the complement of existing community facilities in the area. Feedback from the 2007 Oakridge Centre planning process indicated strong public support for additional services on the Oakridge Centre site.

Staff project that future population increases at Oakridge Centre and within the Cambie Corridor as a whole will be in the order of 26,000 to 30,000 additional people over the next 30 years, equivalent to the average catchment population of Vancouver's community centres. When these future projections are combined with existing population in the area, there will be enough people in close proximity to warrant construction of a new community centre located on the Oakridge Centre site.

Programming for a community centre at Oakridge would be comprised of facilities found in most community centres: a full-sized gymnasium, a fitness centre, multi-purpose rooms designed to accommodate a range activities, meeting rooms, and lobby and circulation space. To complement the needs of the community, staff have identified the possibility of a community kitchen within the centre. Space would also be needed to accommodate the existing seniors centre operating at Oakridge Centre.

The current Oakridge branch of the Vancouver Public Library is one of the three busiest branches in the system in terms of annual visitors (390,848 in 2012) and the number of items borrowed (642,924 in 2012). Despite its low-profile location in the basement of Oakridge Centre, the community heavily uses this branch for a variety of purposes. The branch provides critical outreach services and reading enjoyment programs for teens, children and their caregivers. Program partnerships with health units, the Vancouver School Board and other community agencies are also a part of the Oakridge Library, with a special focus on working with vulnerable communities.

Based on research, by 2023, the Library anticipates that it will require approximately 20% less space for shelves for physical materials. However, with increasing densification, people are turning to the public library for work space, family space, and study space. Increased residential development and the expansion of civic and commercial amenities will see a further increase in the demand for space and programs offered by the Oakridge Library. The library needs a space of approximately 25,000 square feet. This space would be planned to allow for flexibility in adapting to different functions as the use of library space evolves over the coming years.

Population growth at Oakridge Centre and within the Cambie Corridor will also generate additional demand for childcare. Along with the community centre, the requirement for a 69-space child care has been identified as a need in this area. The space would be owned by the City of Vancouver, but managed by a non-profit operator with experience in operating child care centres of this size. While there will be more demand for child care in the area based on increased population, other opportunities will be explored throughout the Cambie Corridor including partnerships with VSB and the non-profit sector.

The application has proposed a civic centre building fully integrated into Oakridge Centre. However, staff is exploring acquisition of an unencumbered (dirt) site for the civic facility. The advantages are:

- enabling delivery of the civic facility at a time when it is needed independent from the development of the Oakridge Centre site;
- providing a measure of long-term flexibility to adapt community services to demographic or other changes, including potential expansion;
- ability to better manage facility operating costs;
- achieving simplicity of relationships with neighbouring properties and uses by avoiding the complications associated with air space parcelisation and strata arrangements;
- potential for integration of social housing with the civic centre; and
- enabling the potential to construct the civic facility for post-disaster services at a much higher resiliency than typically required by building codes.

Affordable Housing at Oakridge Centre

The Oakridge Centre rezoning represents an opportunity to increase the supply and diversity of housing in the Oakridge neighbourhood. The opportunity to provide additional affordable housing at frequent rapid transit stations is a key point of intersection between Council's high level objectives on affordable housing and environmental sustainability.

The City's inclusionary housing policy for major projects applies to this rezoning and sets a 20% affordable housing target for the Oakridge Centre redevelopment. As part of the final report of the Mayor's Task Force on Housing Affordability in October 2012, Council directed staff to implement a more flexible and creative approach to inclusionary housing policies. The priority continues to be to secure 20% of the units in large developments as social housing for

low-income households, but the City will consider a range of options to deliver affordable housing when adequate funding is not available, such as:

- Market rental housing owned and operated by a non-profit housing provider;
- Market rental housing that is privately owned and operated;
- Innovative housing models that can demonstrate a significant level of affordability (e.g. affordable home ownership models);
- Clear title to a land site that could accommodate 20% of the units in a development as affordable housing in cases where the City has a reasonable expectation of being able to develop the site in a timely way; and/or,
- Off-site provision of affordable housing.

As discussed above, there is a significant outstanding housing obligation which requires the owner to transfer a 1.1 acre site to the City for a price of \$660,000. This obligation from a previous rezoning represents a significant value to the City that is in addition to any obligations that arise out of the proposed rezoning. Staff will resolve the outstanding obligation in conjunction with the proposed rezoning of the site.

The current rezoning application for Oakridge Centre currently proposes 25% of residential units as some form of affordable housing. The current proposed breakdown of residential units is as follows:

Oakridge Centre Proposed Affordable Housing Mix

	Units	% of Res Units	Gross Area	% of Res Area
Market Condominium	2123	75%	2,224,600	82%
Spectrum of Affordable Units				
Market Rental	391	14%	264,000	10%
Affordable Home Ownership	100	4%	68,700	3%
SAFER Housing	54	2%	27,000	1%
Social Housing (seniors)	90	3%	51,900	2%
Social Housing (families)	60	2%	61,500	2%
Sub-total Affordable Units	695	25%	473,100	18%
Total Residential Units				
	2818	100%	2,697,700	100%

While this proposal offers a significant degree of housing diversity, the proposed housing mix has several shortcomings relative to Council's inclusionary housing policies.

- The number of affordable housing units required to meet the 20% policy is approximately 560. The total number of affordable housing units proposed by the developer (695 units) and the share (25% of total units) of affordable housing units is higher than the target, but only 150 of these units (5% of total and 22% of affordable) are currently proposed to be social housing. A target of 20% with a 50:50 mix of subsidized (from deep core to higher core need) and low end of market rental would be a reasonable target for the project.

- In addition, a high proportion of the proposed affordable housing units are privately owned market rental housing (391 units or 14% of total residential units) that would not be affordable to households with low incomes.
- Finally family units make up only 37% of the affordable housing units proposed, whereas the 2007 Policy Statement and the Cambie Corridor Plan calls for 50% of affordable units to be suitable for families with children. In addition, these units are all 2 bedroom units. The proposal does not provide any units with 3 or more bedrooms as part of the affordable housing proposal.

Staff is seeking Council direction to work with the applicant to revise the rezoning application to better address the City's inclusionary housing policies, with a focus on maximizing the number of social housing units that can be achieved through the rezoning. Negotiations with the applicant will continue to develop a proposal that better addresses Council's housing policies. Staff will seek to achieve the 20% affordable housing targets as cost effectively as possible, while increasing the share of social housing provided through the proposed rezoning. Staff will also explore housing options in combination with the proposed civic centre to be located on a separate parcel of land at Oakridge Centre.

Delivery of Public Amenities at Oakridge Centre

When rezoning land for future development, the City often seeks Community Amenity Contributions (CACs) from developers in the form of in-kind contributions or cash payments which help fund public amenities. Real Estate Services staff have been working with the developer to evaluate the pro-forma for the proposal, noting that this is a complex exercise because of the blending of a large scale expansion of a shopping centre with significant residential development.

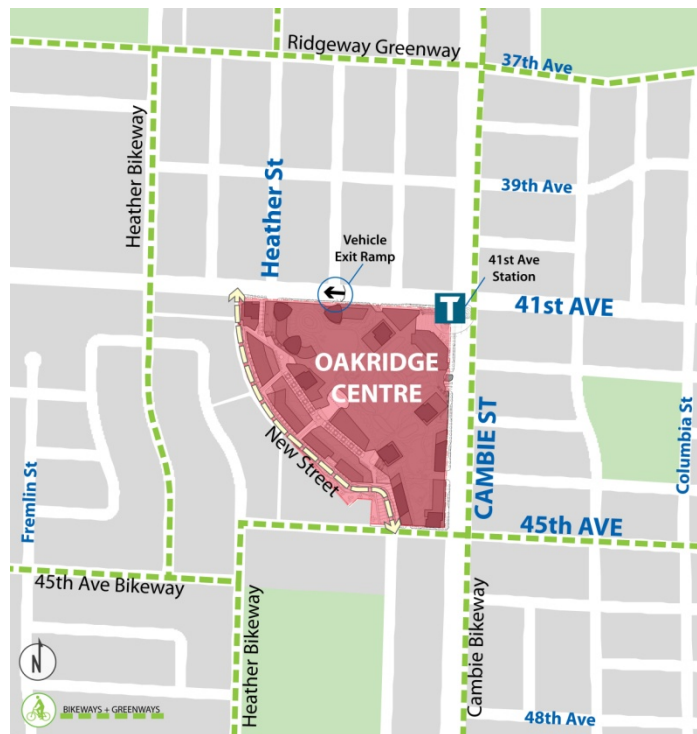
While Real Estate Services is still evaluating the pro-forma, it is anticipated that funding the delivery of the Civic Centre and 20% affordable housing will require additional funds beyond the Community Amenity Contribution likely to be offered by the developer. Finance and Real Estate Services are exploring additional funding sources and cost-effective options to maximize delivery of amenities on site, and will report back as part of a public benefits strategy at time of Public Hearing.

In addition, a phasing strategy would be required to identify timing of provision of amenities in relation to development of the various phases of Oakridge Centre. This approach is consistent with the approach the City utilized for East Fraser Lands and timing and provision of amenities within the project area.

6. Affirmation of the City's policies to prioritize walking, cycling, and transit over automobile use

Transportation 2040 provides direction to prioritize pedestrians, cyclists, and transit above cars. In the design of the adjacent roadways, staff have been working with the applicant to determine ways to improve pedestrian, cyclist, and transit access to and around the site.

Heather Street Bikeway



The Oakridge Centre site is currently a barrier to north-south cyclist movement along Heather Street. When the Heather Bikeway extension south of 37th Avenue was approved in 2007, Willow Street was chosen as an alternate route because the site prevented a more direct connection. With the 2007 Policy Statement and ongoing route planning, Council has confirmed a desire to continue the direct connection through the Oakridge Centre site upon redevelopment and to establish better cyclist connectivity to the Oakridge-41st Avenue Canada Line Station and Oakridge Centre itself.

The current proposal shows a major vehicle access point to the mall on the south side of the Heather Street and 41st Avenue intersection. Staff is concerned that this access point could

create significant conflicts with the bikeway that cannot be adequately resolved. Without significant additional traffic calming, the access could also result in shortcutting traffic along Heather Street north of 41st Avenue.

Staff is working with the applicant to pursue alternate vehicle access points which remove or mitigate this potential conflict in order to prioritize cycling. Current discussions suggest that relocating this access point is a viable option.

Vehicle Tunnel onto 41st Ave

There is an existing vehicular tunnel providing an exit from the mall which feeds into the westbound lane on 41st Avenue. This tunnel presents challenges for urban design and limits future design flexibility of the street. Transportation 2040 identifies 41st Avenue as one of the priority corridors for rapid transit in the future and maintaining the ability to implement a rapid transit solution (e.g. Light Rail Transit or similar technology) on the corridor is important to the City's long-term needs and goals.

Preliminary work from the applicant has suggested that there may be significant financial and design implications with removing the tunnel and maintaining adequate circulation/access. Staff is working with the applicant to determine the trade-offs of removing or retaining the tunnel. If the tunnel is maintained, staff will ensure that future rapid transit options along 41st Avenue are not precluded.

New Street Connection to 45th Avenue

A proposed new City street runs along the western boundary of the site, expanding the existing lane. The 2007 Policy Statement shows the new street connecting directly to Cambie Street, whereas the current rezoning proposal would have the new street connect to 45th Avenue on the south side of the site, which is a local street and designated bikeway.

This raises several issues, including the potential for motorists to use the new street as a shortcut and for additional vehicular traffic on the 45th Avenue Bikeway, compromising its potential as an All Ages and Abilities (AAA) route. Additionally, the proposal shows a second driveway from the site onto 45th Avenue between Cambie Street and the new street. Council policy as of 2009 and in Transportation 2040 is to not accept new driveways onto bike routes unless there is no appropriate alternative (e.g. for reasons of pedestrian safety, transit operations).

Staff recommend that, where possible, accesses onto 45th Avenue be removed and measures be taken to protect cyclists on 45th Avenue from impacts of any additional vehicles, where access must be retained. Traffic calming on the new street must also be considered to prevent shortcutting and neighbourhood traffic.

7. Parking ratios for Oakridge Centre

Under the Parking Bylaw, the proposed development would require a minimum of approximately 3,700 vehicular spaces for the commercial component and 2,500 spaces for the residential uses. The current proposal would provide 5300 parking spaces for the commercial component and only 1,300 parking spaces for the residential component (approximately half of the bylaw standard).

The Parking By-law does not include a standard specific for shopping centres and therefore does not necessarily offer an appropriate standard to meet the market demand for the proposed land use. The number of proposed retail spaces is based on the current parking use and is within a reasonable standard as compared to other shopping and Municipal Town Centres.

The proposed number of 1,300 residential parking stalls, however, is significantly below the expected demand for this amount of residential development. The proposed parking ratio is lower than the downtown standard, and well below other recently approved ratios at other transit-oriented developments, such as Marine Gateway. Staff is working with the applicant to understand the amount of parking demand that the site will generate in order to make a recommendation on required parking to serve the development.

In order to offset the low residential parking requirements, the developer is proposing 100 shared vehicles on site. These shared vehicles would function as a "car club" for the residents at Oakridge Centre, who would have the ability to use these cars. While similar to other car-share programs throughout the city, the developer is proposing these 100 cars would be for the sole purpose of the residents at the Centre and parked within the private parkade for the Centre. The City's Parking Bylaw also allows for substitution of car-share spaces at a ratio of 5:1 up to one space per 50 residential units if car-share organizations can be found to operate the proposed amount.

Staff also note there are approximately 3,500 bicycle parking spaces required for the residential development. Providing the space for this requirement may further reduce the parking supply for the residential units, as the applicant has suggested there is little opportunity to reduce the commercial parking. In the absence of a more detailed understanding of how the proposed measures will affect the parking demand, staff is concerned that the proposal could result in a high level of parking pressure on local neighbourhood streets. Tools such as the Resident Permit Parking program are available to deal with these issues, but it would be a major change for the neighbourhood.

Staff recommend continuing to work closely with the applicant to conduct a comprehensive parking strategy to understand the parking demand that the site will experience. The strategy will compare other site and area specific parking standards given the context of Oakridge Centre and its access to transit as well as other transportation demand management strategies such as the "car club". Consideration will be given to a phasing plan that enables the site to provide additional or improved residential parking if required.

8. Canada Line Capacity

Through the public processes for Oakridge Centre and other developments along the Cambie Corridor, residents have regularly expressed concerns about the ability of the Canada Line to accommodate the additional demand that Oakridge and other development along the corridor will create. Staff is working closely with the applicant and TransLink to understand the impacts on the transit system. There are two Canada Line capacity issues that will be addressed through this process - the line capacity and the station capacity.

The line capacity is the ability of the system to carry passengers in the peak direction in the peak hour. TransLink is working to identify the level of passenger demand along the line with the level of proposed development along the entire corridor. The initial review suggests that there is potential for significant growth in capacity on the Canada Line - currently the line can accommodate approximately 6,500 people per hour per direction (pphpd) and carries about 5,500 pphpd at the busiest point on the line. This is based on the current operation of two-car trains with a frequency of 3 minutes and 20 seconds between trains at the peak period.

This capacity can be expanded to 10,000 pphpd by increasing the frequency of two-car trains to 90 seconds between trains at peak periods. By upgrading to three-car trains at the maximum frequency of 90 seconds between trains, the number can be further expanded to 15,000 pphpd. It should be noted that some station modifications will be required to accommodate a three-car train operation.

The station capacity is the ability of the station to allow enough pedestrian flow to meet the demand of people travelling to and from the trains. Analysis of station capacity has been initiated by the applicant's consultant. Staff recommend that the review of the line and station capacity be a condition of rezoning and that any upgrades required to the Oakridge-41st Avenue station to meet the increased demand that the development will be creating will be the sole obligation of the applicant.

9. Retail Impact Study

To assess the impacts of the proposed expansion of the mall at Oakridge Centre on the viability of existing shopping areas in Vancouver, staff retained Coriolis Consulting to carry out a Retail Impact Study, which focused on:

- Potential impacts of the proposed retail expansion at Oakridge Centre on Downtown Vancouver, including Pacific Centre Mall and retail destinations such as Robson Street;
- Potential impacts on community scale commercial areas (including Business Improvement Areas) whose local trade areas overlap with Oakridge Centre; and
- Potential impacts on commercial precincts with concentrations of stores in categories that are being materially expanded at Oakridge Centre

The primary trade area was defined as the City of Vancouver and the University Endowment Lands. The study assessed current and future demand for local serving retail at Oakridge

Centre, as well as how expansion would impact regional shopping patterns. According to the study, the City of Vancouver currently has about 20 to 25 percent less retail and service space per capita than the regional average. Further, population growth within the city over the coming decades will significantly increase the demand for new retail space.

In undertaking the impact study, Coriolis examined the proposed future tenant mix of an expanded Oakridge Centre, with particular attention to supermarkets, clothing stores, jewelers, department stores, and pharmacy and personal care businesses. In all cases, preliminary results of the study show that an expanded Oakridge Centre would have minimal, if any, impact on any local shopping areas within the primary trade area of Oakridge Centre.

The study also looked at regional shopping patterns in Vancouver and the lower mainland. The study found that the expansion of Oakridge Centre will have minimal impact on Pacific Centre, but will draw new clients that would normally travel to other shopping areas outside of Vancouver, including Metrotown and Park Royal. Staff will be scheduling meetings with local BIAs to discuss the findings of the Retail Impact Study.

10. Public Consultation to Date

As one of the largest development applications in the City, public engagement and consultation is a critical part of the Oakridge Centre redevelopment. The process has taken advantage of a variety of methods to engage the public on the proposal.

On November 15 and 17, 2012, Staff held open houses at the Oakridge Centre Auditorium to introduce the rezoning proposal to the public and gather initial comments from the community. The open houses were attended by over 1,400 people, with over 300 comment forms received. The following common themes were identified through the consultation:

- Most respondents found the development's overall style and form agreeable, but objected to the proposed heights exceeding the 2007 Policy Statement limit of 24-stories.
- The density proposed for the site should only be considered as long as there is a focus on liveability and delivery of an amenity rich public realm.
- The proposal should contain more local-serving stores.
- The proposed public space on the roof needs to be more accessible to the general public, including multiple access points at grade.
- More consideration of impacts on the local neighbourhood, the Canada Line capacity, schools, and hospitals in the area is required.

Based on comments from the Open Houses, staff identified a number of questions that required further input from the public. Rather than hold an on-site workshop, staff opted to host a comprehensive consultation through the City's website. This "on-line" consultation was launched on April 18, 2013, and asked questions about community facilities, housing, built form, public open spaces, and active transportation. Over 500 responses (including 50 in Chinese) were received to the questionnaire at the time of writing this report, with more comments expected. While most of the questions were targeted to specific design or programming questions, the following themes were identified through the consultation:

- Over 40% of respondents travelled more frequently to Oakridge Centre because of the Canada Line.
- The proposed building heights are a significant concern, with almost 60% of the respondents calling for the height to be reduced.

- For those concerned with height, the main concern was that the towers would be too visible and dominant in the neighbourhood and are not appropriate in this context.
- Housing for seniors as well as middle income households (\$21,500 - \$86,500) is important to include at Oakridge Centre.
- The rooftop space should be programmed with more passive uses and walking paths instead of active uses like organized group sports.

Targeted consultations were also held with the Riley Park/South Cambie Vision Implementation Committee, Oakridge-Langara Area Residents, Oakridge Seniors Centre, Translink, the Terraces Residents, various cycling groups, the Urban Development Institute, and Urban Land Institute. Staff also hosted a consultation with planning and architecture students at UBC.

Following this report and revisions to the rezoning application, staff will begin phase two of consultation for Oakridge Centre. This will include multiple options for public engagement with all interested parties.

Implications/Related Issues/Risk (if applicable)

*Financial **

The public benefits contemplated as part of the Oakridge rezoning will have capital and operating budget implications to the City.

Capital - Capital funding for the renewal of existing facilities is typically funded from property tax while provision of new or upgraded facilities are typically funded from a combination of CACs, DCLs, and direct contributions from developers for infrastructure upgrades, augmented by other City funding sources.

Operating - In-kind CACs that are constructed by the developer and turned over to the City, like the proposed civic centre and affordable housing, will require funding for the operation, programming, asset maintenance and rehabilitation as they come on stream. Other public benefits such as the roof top garden and any secured market rental will be the responsibility of the developer.

Staff will develop a comprehensive financial strategy that outlines the funding and phasing of the contemplated public amenities over the development horizon and present to Council for adoption as part of the final rezoning report for Oakridge Centre. Staff will also explore strategic funding partnerships with non-profits, foundations, and senior levels of government, in particular for affordable housing and childcare.

The Oakridge Public Benefit Strategy will be integrated into the City's overall capital program (10-year strategic outlook, 3-year plan and 1-year budget).

CONCLUSION *

The purpose of this report is to bring clarity to a number of important issues that will assist staff and the developer of Oakridge Centre to further refine the rezoning application. Staff will continue to work with the developer and the community to ensure that the redevelopment of this important Municipal Town Centre is sustainable, liveable, and a vibrant neighbourhood for generations to come.

Oakridge Centre Rezoning - Issues and Directions URBAN DESIGN ANALYSIS

In 2007, Council adopted a Policy Statement for Oakridge Centre which envisions a vibrant, sustainable redevelopment of the site, with a greater intensity of housing, retail and office uses that takes advantage of the Centre's excellent transit accessibility. The policy statement supports a variety of uses and building forms including low and mid-rise buildings of 3 to 8 storeys, and towers from 14 to 24 storeys, with an overall floor area of approximately 2,500,000 ft².

Since 2007 Vancouver has developed several key strategies and action plans regarding affordability, the economy, sustainability and the environment. The owners of the site would now like to pursue development beyond what was contemplated in 2007, and the new proposal could make a more significant contribution to the City's goals. The current proposal for Oakridge is for a variety of building forms ranging from low and mid-rise buildings of 6 to 12 storeys, to towers and terraced buildings of 18 to 45 storeys. The overall floor area proposed is approximately 4,550,000 ft².

In assessing the proposed height and form of development to determine what is appropriate on the site, Oakridge Centre should be considered in the context of:

1. Metro Vancouver Region
2. Vancouver and the Canada Line
3. Local Surroundings and Policy

Metro Vancouver Region

Since 2007, there has been much redevelopment interest and a strengthening realization of the desirability and benefits of living near transit - particularly rapid transit systems such as the Canada Line and the SkyTrain system. Recent directions set at major station sites in the lower mainland reflect a general trend towards more intense development and greater height.

Oakridge Centre is designated as a Municipal Town Centre in the Metro Vancouver Regional Growth Strategy (Fig 1). Municipal Town Centres are intended to be among the region's primary focal points for concentrated growth and transit service. Outside of downtown Vancouver, the metro core of the region, Oakridge is the only urban or Municipal Town Centre identified in Vancouver.

Brentwood on the Millenium Line in Burnaby is also identified as a Municipal Town Centre. The approved masterplan for the Brentwood mall site (similarly sized to Oakridge Centre at 27 acres, and situated adjacent to single family housing to the north) supports a range of uses and building forms including residential towers of 45 to 70 storeys. Other developments in the Brentwood area currently under construction range from 39 to 49 storeys. Recent approvals in Surrey's transit-oriented City Centre range from 24 to 48 storeys, and 35 to 57 storeys in Burnaby's Metrotown.

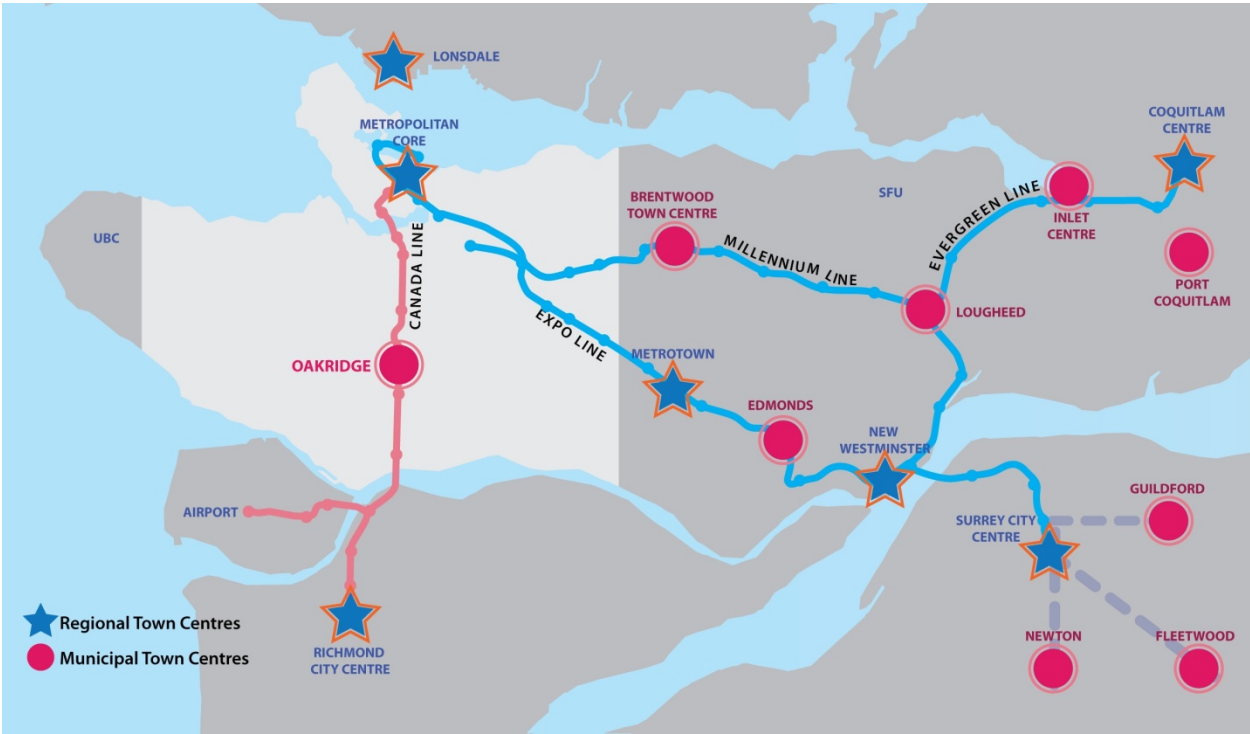


Fig 1: Oakridge Centre in the context of Metro Vancouver Region

Vancouver and the Canada Line

Residential tower development in Vancouver’s downtown of the past two decades has most typically been up to about 300 to 350 feet in height. Vancouver’s taller downtown buildings range upwards of this to the current tallest structure of 600 feet and 58 storeys. (Fig 2)

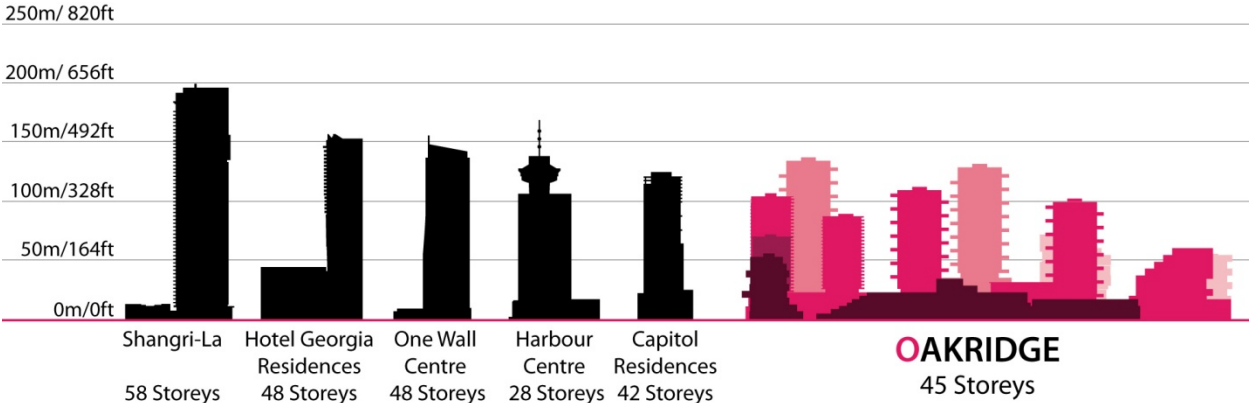
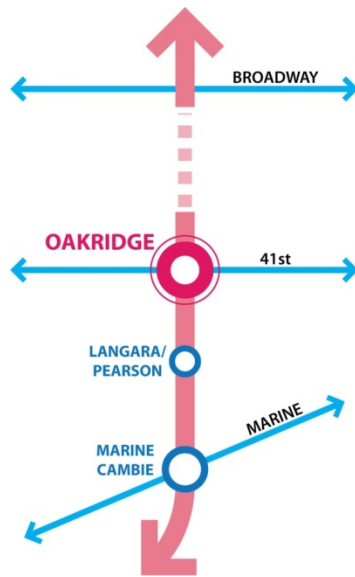


Fig 2: The proposed Oakridge Centre compared to other taller buildings in Vancouver



Outside the downtown, on larger sites associated with rapid transit, Vancouver has recently approved developments up to 31 storeys at Joyce-Collingwood on the Expo Line, and up to 35 storeys at the Cambie and Marine Station on the Canada Line.

The Cambie Corridor Plan identifies Oakridge as the “centre” of the city and Canada Line which, along with Marine Drive station area, represents the most significant concentration of urban uses and density (Fig 3). The importance of Oakridge as a municipal town centre, it’s location at an important crossroads (noting that 41st Avenue is a priority for future rapid transit), and the singular scale of this transit-oriented site places it at the top of the hierarchy of Vancouver station areas outside the downtown. (Fig 3b)

Fig 3a: Oakridge Centre is the most significant centre in the context of the Cambie Corridor

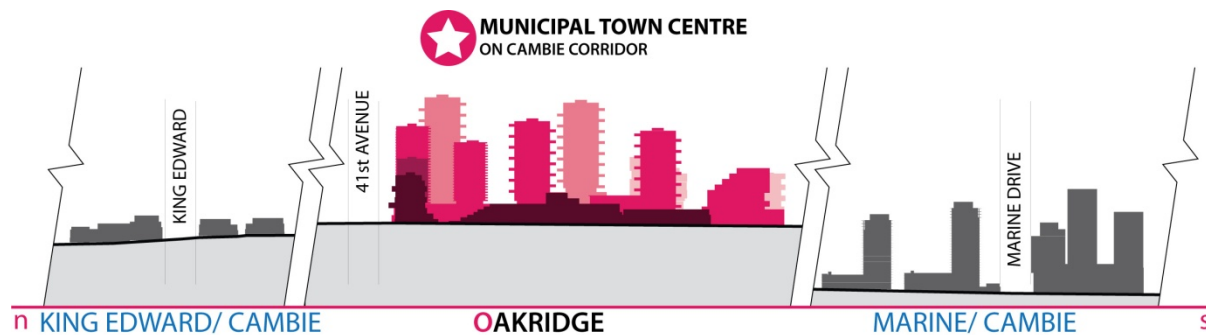


Fig 3b: The Proposed Oakridge Centre is first in the hierarchy of major developments along the Cambie Corridor

Local Surroundings and Policy

In directing staff to consider proposals that varied from the specific building height and form parameters of the 2007 Policy Statement, Council asked that proposals be considered in the context of the following principles based on the policy:

- Creating variety in building forms and heights, within a coherent whole.
- Use of sculpting, setbacks and smaller floorplates to reduce the apparent mass of buildings at upper levels.
- Respectful transitions between the site and surrounding properties, for example, in terms of views, overlook, privacy, and shadowing.

Prior to the current application the design team explored massing options within a lower overall height. These options were composed of long slab building forms within a more limited range and variety of height, typically 20 to 26 storeys, with a few taller buildings of 30 to 36 storeys. The long slab buildings were much bigger and longer than Vancouver’s typical tower forms. The consequence of this approach would be more extensive shadowing through more times of the day on the immediate surroundings and public places such as

Cambie Street, an extensive 'wall' of taller massing around the perimeter of the site, limited variety in height and form, and a lack of a transition in scale to the south and west. The taller range of height currently proposed gives more flexibility to achieve variety, scale transitions, and the more slender tower proportions that the principles of the 2007 Policy Statement envisage.

With respect to shadowing, the proposed building forms do not shadow any surrounding public parks or school yards at key times of the day and year (10:00 to 4:00 at the equinox)(Fig 4a, 4b, 4c, 4d). Additionally, while the taller buildings cast longer shadows, the more distant shadows move more quickly, and the impact on immediately adjacent areas is reduced. Staff will however, be looking to further improve solar access and reduce visual impact of upper level massing along Cambie Street and boulevard.

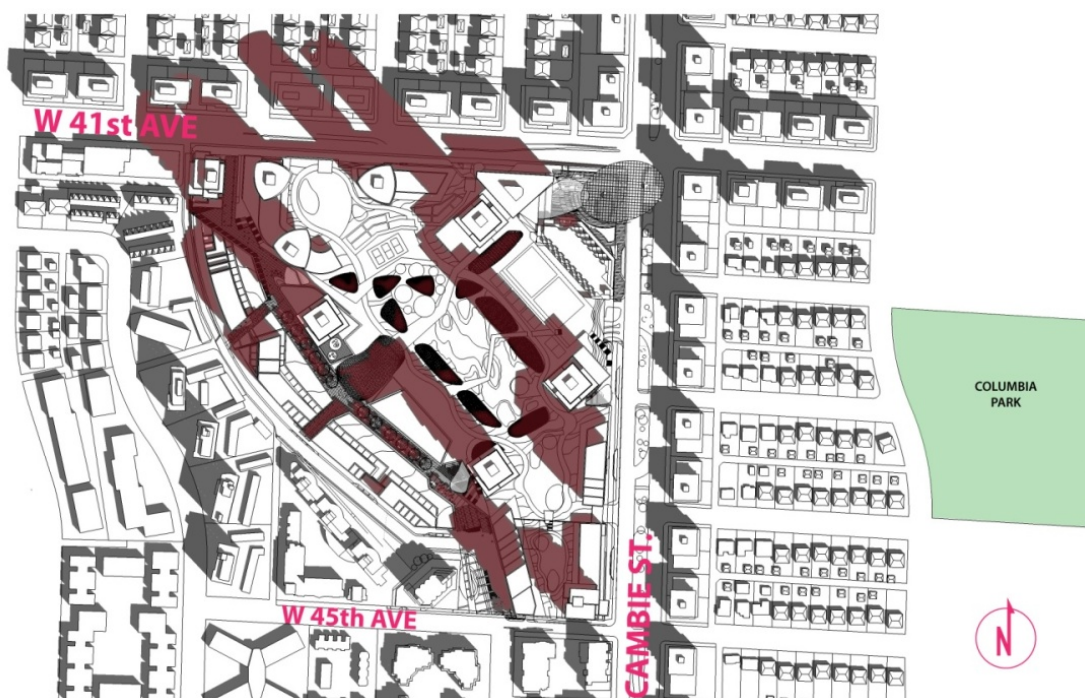


Fig 4a: Shadow Study (Equinox, 10am)



Fig 4b: Shadow Study (Equinox, 12 noon)



Fig 4c: Shadow Study (Equinox, 2pm)

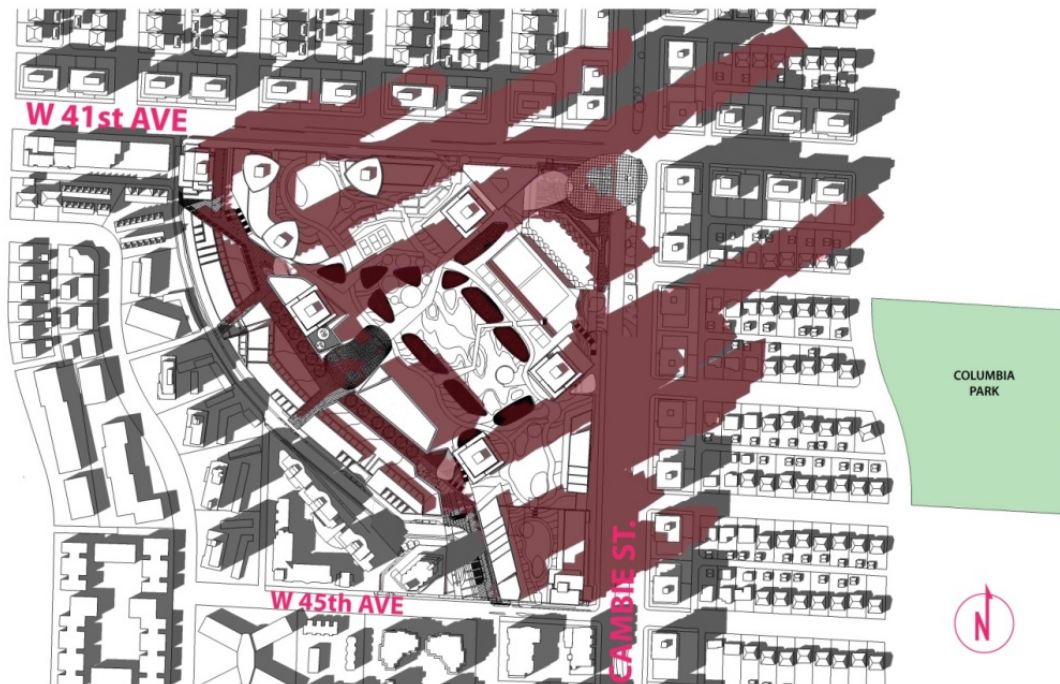


Fig 4d: Shadow Study (Equinox, 4pm)

The 2007 Policy Statement calls for buildings of the more slender proportions typical of Vancouver towers. This is measured by 'floorplates' (basically the floor area of a typical level). The policy statement limits tower floorplates to 6500 ft². The current proposal is for towers with floorplates of 8400 to 8500 ft². In assessing this proposal, a comparison to a more typical area of the city with towers is instructive. Figure 5 illustrates the footprint and tower locations proposed for Oakridge Centre with a portion of Downtown South at the same scale (Fig 5).

At Oakridge Centre, the retention and expansion of the mall places limitations on where and how residential and office buildings can be located, configured, and accessed. There are quite simply fewer places for building cores and entries than in a typical piece of the city with a grid street system. As a consequence, the proposal is for fewer and taller buildings, spaced further apart than might otherwise be seen at a comparable density. Given the limited opportunities for tower placement and the subsequent greater distances between them, staff believe that generally a larger floorplate is supportable. However, the principles of variety and reduction of impacts of upper level massing established in the Policy Statement indicate that some buildings should nonetheless be slimmer towers more typical of Vancouver, particularly at upper levels. Staff will work with the applicant to revise the proposal to better address this important principle.

The upside of the limited locations for building placement above the mall is the extensive continuous roof space that results and the opportunity it presents for public open space. The success of the roof as public open space will be largely dependent on the quality of the public access. Staff is currently working with the applicant to ensure that the roof accesses are generous, inviting, convenient, and highly public, and that the space itself is enlivened with activities and outlook that give many reasons to make the roof top open space a destination.

The Policy Statement speaks to consideration of view impacts on the surrounding area. There are no Council approved public view corridors that affect the site. It should be noted that extension of the large mall footprint to two levels, approximately 50 feet in height, will obstruct distant views over the site from much of the surrounding development. Additionally, the lack of a street grid and the angled orientations of the mall and developments to the southwest prevents the creation of shared view corridors.

Transitions to the surrounding area are an important principle in the Policy Statement. While overall heights are taller in the proposed development, it demonstrates a height pattern consistent with the policy, with greatest heights approaching the transit station, and a transition downwards to the surrounding community to the west and south. To the north and east where the greatest height is placed, are neighbourhood areas that are part of the Cambie Corridor Plan. Change is already underway to six storey buildings along the north side of 41st Avenue. The Cambie Corridor plan supports 12 storey buildings at the corners of 41st

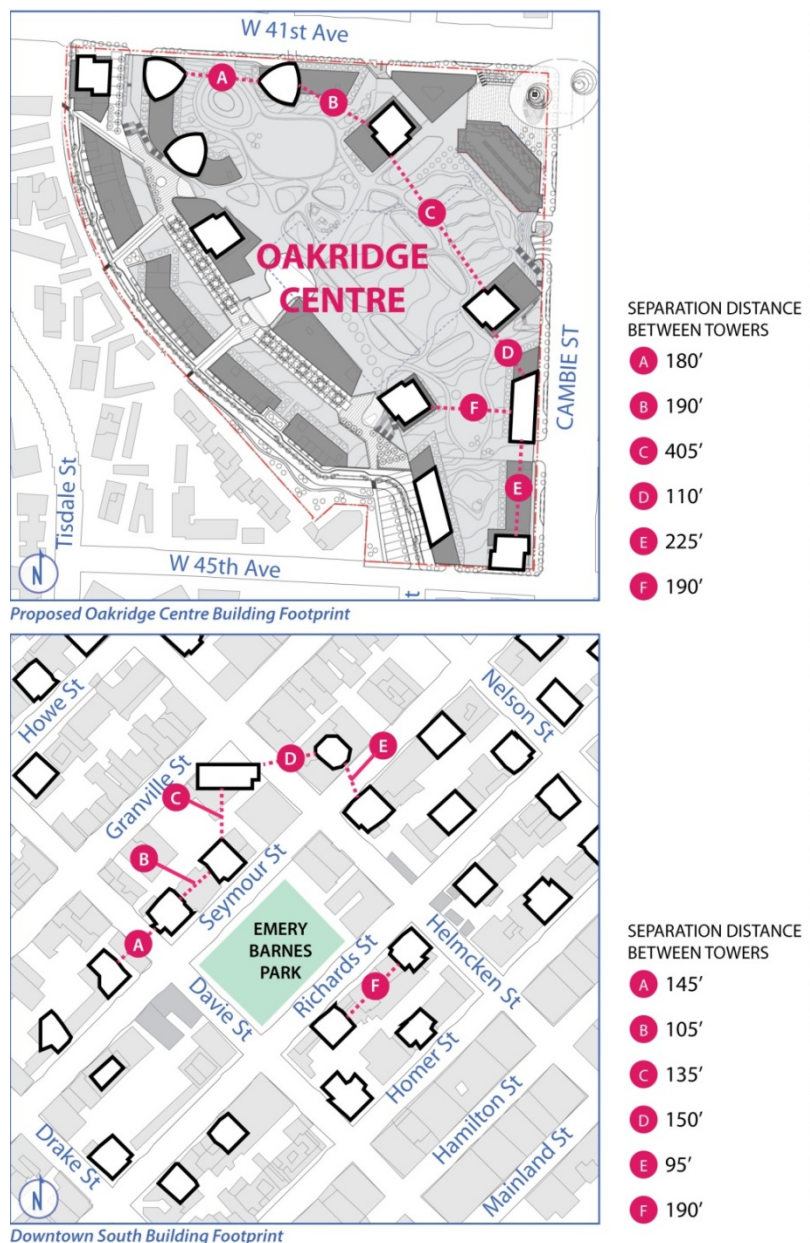


Fig 5: Comparison of tower floorplates and separation distances between Oakridge Centre and Downtown South.

and Cambie, and Council recommended considering height beyond this when planning for Phase 3 in the neighbourhoods behind occurs. As such, the tallest buildings are placed in closer proximity to those of areas of the surrounding context that are likely to see the greatest change in the future. (Fig 5)

The Terraces

With respect to relationships between the proposed redevelopment and existing properties, the residential development most impacted is the Terraces, a 32 unit residential strata building at the northeast corner of the Oakridge site immediately adjacent to the Canada Line station. It is located in the top three floors of a mixed use six storey building. The immediate context of the residences on the north side of the building overlooking the transit station and plaza will not change much with redevelopment of Oakridge Centre other than through landscape and other improvements to the plaza and station entry. However, the context of the residences on the south side will be more affected.

A 43 storey (390 foot) tower is proposed to the south of the Terraces. (Fig 6) Both buildings are set on the diagonal, with no overlap across the primary faces of the buildings. The distance between the closest corners of the proposed residential building to the south and the terraces is over 135 feet to the offices and over 170 feet to the residential. A 45 storey (410 foot) tower is proposed to the west of the Terraces. The distance between the closest corners of the proposed residential building and the terraces is 90 feet.

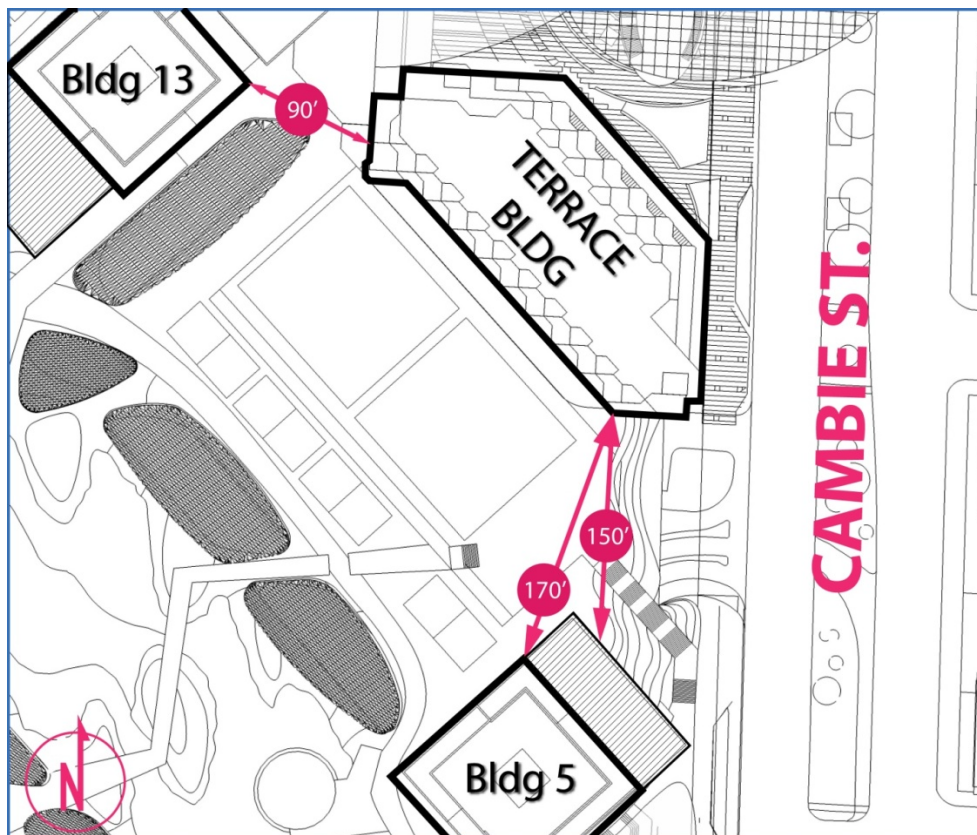


Figure 6: Proposed building locations and separation distance from Terraces.

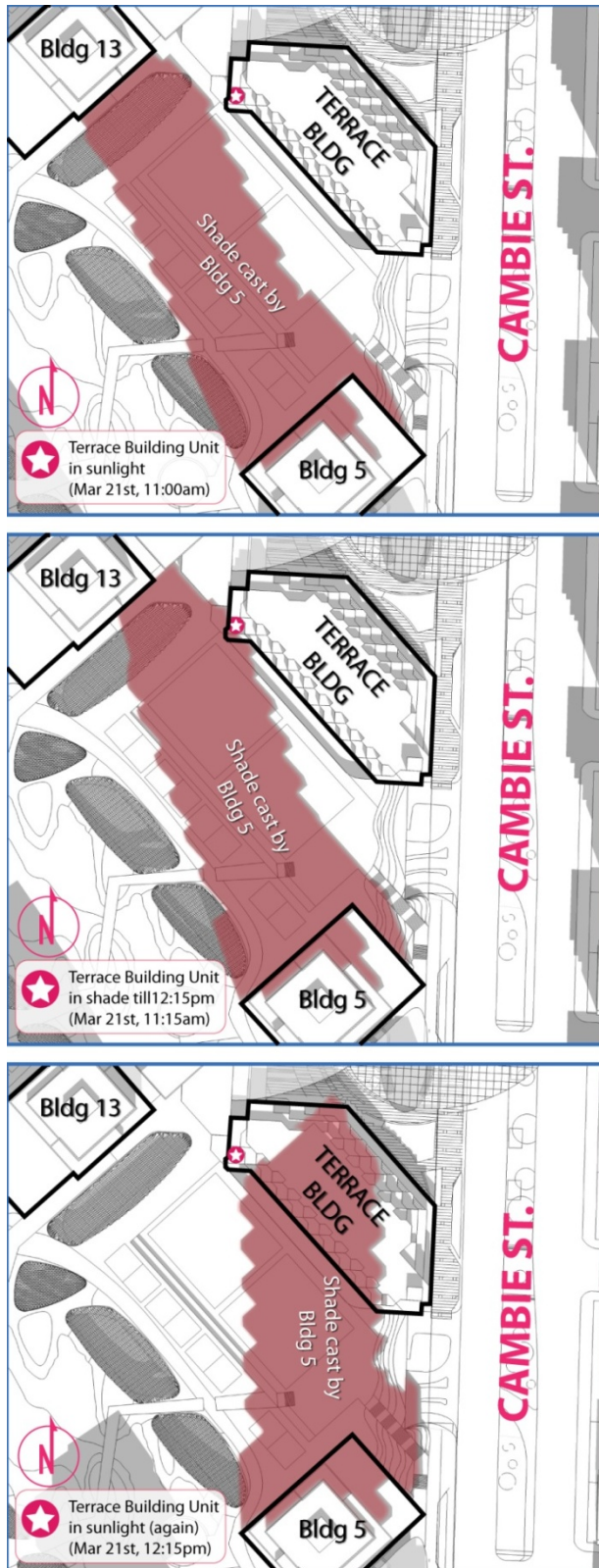


Figure 7 - Shadow diagrams at Equinox

While this is clearly a significant change from the current context in which the Terraces sit, the distances between the buildings compares favorably with the standard sought in Vancouver's downtown, where the minimum separation between residential towers is 80 feet. Downtown guidelines do not specify a distance between residential and office uses.

With respect to shadowing, the proposed tower to the south of the Terraces will shadow the units and balconies around noon at the equinox (Fig 7). From the perspective of each individual terrace or balcony, the length of time in shadow is approximately an hour and a quarter. As the season advances, the shadow impact decreases. Between mid-May through to early August there is no shadow cast on the Terraces during the day.

It should be noted that the current foreground view of the south facing terraces is of the extensive asphalt and concrete roof-top parking areas of the Centre. While redevelopment of Oakridge Centre will alter the context of the Terraces creating shadow and a reduced sense of privacy, redevelopment of the centre will also see the primary outlook significantly enhanced as the roof-top becomes a high amenity landscaped area and/or public open space.

The context of the Terraces will be significantly altered by the proposed redevelopment, going from an expansive, relatively suburban setting to a distinctly urban one with associated adjacencies and shadow impacts. While acknowledging the degree of change, staff believes that the shadowing impacts and adjacencies are acceptable.

Conclusion

Staff consider that the height range proposed is appropriate to Oakridge Centre considering its role and place in the region and the city, and in the hierarchy of major transit-oriented sites in Vancouver. From a local perspective, the height range gives greater ability to meet the principles of the 2007 Policy Statement while carrying a density appropriate to this most significant transit-oriented site and Municipal Town Centre. It should be emphasized that Oakridge is the only Municipal Town Centre in Vancouver, and that the heights and densities supportable here should be considered at the top of the hierarchy of existing and future station areas in the city. Staff recommend confirming a range of heights to a maximum of 45 storeys, noting other built form issues to be addressed through the rezoning process.

Oakridge Centre Rezoning - Issues and Directions PUBLIC CONSULTATION SUMMARY

An enhanced public engagement program was initiated in the fall of 2012 as part of the Oakridge Centre rezoning. The first phase of the engagement program consisted of a series of public open houses, targeted meetings, and an on-line questionnaire.

1. Open Houses November 2012

Open house meetings were held at the Oakridge Centre Auditorium on the evening of Thursday November 15th and all day on Saturday November 17th; the intent of the meetings was to give the public an early opportunity to view details of the application and to seek input on a range of key topics and issues and to assess the proposal against established planning principles.

Prior to the open house dates, notification flyers were mailed out to 10,000 households with details of the time, date, location and project web address; these details were also emailed to a list of 1,900 addresses.

Over the course of two days over 1,400 people attended. City of Vancouver staff as well as members of the proponent team were present, both Cantonese and Mandarin translation were available. A range of display boards were presented at the open house; material by the City of Vancouver focussed on relevant City policy along with the planning principles used to assess the application; materials by the proponent focussed on the details of the proposal.

Public Response

A questionnaire was available at the open house as well as online for a period of 10 days. In total 339 were submitted, 328 in hardcopy format and 10 online through PlaceSpeak. Of those that submitted a questionnaire, 57% indicated that they owned and lived in the Oakridge area while 35% indicated they live outside the area. Of those that submitted a questionnaire, 48% indicated that they were opposed to the ideas presented in the Oakridge proposal while 44% were supportive.

Specific questions were asked regarding the following aspects of the proposal and whether they met the planning principles presented by the City on the display boards:

1. Principles
2. Building Heights
3. Community Benefits & amenities
4. Affordable housing
5. Parks & Open space
6. Access, transit & parking
7. Mix of Uses
8. Office & Retail

Below is a summary of responses for each topic.

Alignment with 2007 Oakridge Centre Policy Statement

The majority of respondents expressed that the rezoning proposal did not adhere to the principles outlined in the 2007 Policy Statement. In particular, most of the respondents felt the proposed building heights of up to 45-storeys departs too far from the previous height limit of 24-storeys. Other issues cited include concerns about traffic congestion, shortage of parking given the increased scale of development, and transitions to adjacent lower-height buildings.

A smaller number of respondents noted that the scale of the proposed development is warranted when considered in the context of the city as a whole, especially considering Oakridge's central location. Others suggested that the proposed increase in height and density beyond the 2007 Policy Statement is acceptable as long as there is a focus on liveability and delivery of an "amenity rich public realm."

Heights and Form

Most respondents felt the proposed building heights and forms were incompatible with the surrounding lower-scaled buildings and would shadow the surrounding areas significantly, impacting the public realm. However, some respondents felt that the proposed buildings' overall style and form was agreeable, but objected to the heights exceeding the 2007 Policy Statement limit of 24-storeys.

Some respondents noted that with the Oakridge area being on a topographical ridge there was an opportunity to create a landmark and add architectural variety to the area. Moreover, being on a ridge means the towers will likely "not obscure views from any other areas." Others also made a connection between greater heights and the delivery of open spaces, in that taller slender towers free up more space between buildings that can be translated to better public realm.

Proposed Amenities

Of the 287 responses on whether the proposal's delivery of community benefits is appropriate and adequate, 38% felt it was appropriate, 39% felt it was inadequate, and 23% felt "maybe".

Amenity Comments

A large percentage of respondents expressed a discrepancy between the amenities to be delivered and the increased population and density. Many also noted the proposed senior centre is inadequate for an ageing population in the area; additionally, they also felt the senior centre should be ground-oriented to make it easier for seniors who use walkers and wheelchairs to get to and from the centre, as well as ease of drop-off/pick-up from hand-darts. A preference for a stand-alone seniors centre separate from the main community centre was also voiced. Other opinions included views about the proposed library being insufficient to cater to the area's increased population, and concerns that the proposed above-ground park may not be easily accessible.

A smaller percentage of respondents, however, felt the proposed amenities will add quality to the area, which is perceived to be currently underserved by the overcrowded community centres such as Hillcrest and Marpole. Furthermore, others felt that "the more public amenities there are, the more successful the development will be." Some also mentioned that if the amenities are state of the art, along the lines of Hillcrest, it would further attract more people to use them and to the general Oakridge area.

Affordable Housing

Many respondents felt what is being proposed as “affordable housing” is not clearly defined; they expressed concerns that these affordable housing units could be resold at a higher profit, rendering them unaffordable in the future. Many also mentioned that with the senior population increasing, the proposed number of seniors housing units will be insufficient. A sizeable number of respondents also noted Oakridge is not the right place for affordable housing as this may potentially “upset residents in the area.” As such, they suggested alternative locations for building affordable housing.

A small fraction of respondents voiced support for the proposed affordable housing as meeting the principle of providing housing choice. Some noted the positive impacts of mixed socio-economic housing and its importance in building “community cohesion.” Other respondents offered comments in favour of: student housing especially with Oakridge’s proximity to Langara College; housing so that disabled persons can be better integrated into the wider community; and more family housing, especially ground-oriented, to complement the generally family-oriented Oakridge area.

Parks & Open Space

A majority of respondents expressed that the proposed park and open space does not meet the principle of optimizing parks. Many stated a preference for a park at grade and that the proposed rooftop space will not be truly public due to access difficulties and the perception of it being a private park for residents. Other issues cited include: accessibility for seniors and the disabled, overlook and shadowing impacts from surrounding buildings, ownership and maintenance responsibilities.

Of those in favour of the proposed parks and open space, many stated that more parks in the area is a positive thing for the neighbourhood and for future residents, though many also noted that public access must be ensured. Suggestions were also made to include a mix of active and passive uses such as community gardens and sports facilities.

Access, Transit, Parking

A majority of respondents raised concerns regarding negative impacts to transit, stating that the Canada line and bus service is now at capacity and questioning how the additional population will be accommodated. Multiple comments expressed concerns regarding 45th Ave and potential impacts that the increased vehicular traffic will have on the bike route and surrounding residential areas.

Many stated that the proposed parking is not sufficient for shoppers and future residents; reasons cited include the preference to drive as well as the need for access to clinics, the seniors centre and Safeway.

A minority of respondents stated that the proposal meets the Oakridge and Cambie transportation principles and that the redevelopment is appropriate due to the proximity to transit. Other comments supported improvements to cycling connections, the proposed car/bike share programs, and that the number of proposed parking spaces could be reduced further.

Mix of uses?

Respondents were asked to assess the proposed overall mix of uses. The answers are summarized below:

Use Type	Responses
Retail	51% about right
Office	47% about right
Residential	58% too much
Community Facilities	52% not enough
Publicly Accessible open space	48% not enough

A common comment to this question was that the amount of proposed retail is too much and that the amount of office space is not enough. Many also stated that that the proposal does not add diversity and that it should contain more local serving stores.

Additional comments

A majority of the additional comments were against the proposal. Many respondents stated that it is out of scale with the surrounding area and goes too far beyond previous area policies such as the 2007 Policy Statement and the Cambie Corridor Plan. Concerns were expressed regarding quality of life impacts due to increased shadowing and traffic and that the level of development proposed was unreasonable for the neighbourhood to bear.

Of the minority that that were supportive of the proposal many stated that, due to the proximity to transit, the site is an appropriate location for additional density and that it will be an improvement over the current site condition. Several comments suggested that more mid-rise buildings should be considered.

2. On-Line Questionnaire

Based on comments from the Open Houses, staff identified a number of questions that required further input from the public. Rather than hold an on-site workshop, staff elected to host a comprehensive consultation through the City’s website. This “on-line” consultation was launched on April 18, 2013, and asked questions about community facilities, housing, built form, public open spaces, and active transportation. Over 9,000 notifications were mailed to residents in the Oakridge Area, with ads in the Georgia Straight and Vancouver Courier. The survey was available in English and Chinese. Over 500 responses were received (including 50 in Chinese).

Below is a summary of responses for each section of the questionnaire

Introduction

Many of the respondents indicated that they either shopped or lived in the Oakridge area. Their main mode of travel to Oakridge Centre was via Automobile (64% of respondents), with the Canada Line identified as the second highest mode of transportation.

Public Spaces

Questions were asked about the rooftop public space proposed at Oakridge Centre. While many of the respondents indicated the rooftop space seemed inviting, and was designed to be welcoming to the public, only 38% of the respondents indicated they would use this space on a regular basis. When asked what uses respondents would like to see located in this space,

the most common responses were community gardens, children's play areas, a walking path with fitness stations, and sitting areas.

Respondents indicated the desire for a pedestrian path and more trees to be included in the Cambie Historic Boulevard to make it a more enjoyable and engaging experience. They also indicated a desire for more outdoor cafes to populate the high street, and a strong desire for some weather protection to be provided at the 41st Avenue Transit Plaza

Community Amenities

Many of the respondents indicated that Hillcrest Community Centre was the community facility they frequented in the area. The questionnaire responses indicated that a fitness facility and classes were important to include in a new community centre on the Oakridge Centre site.

Questions were also asked about programming and design of the Oakridge Library. Of the responses, people felt that wi-fi access at the library was just as important as signing out books. When asked about the design of the library, respondents felt that access to natural light was one of the most important things to include in the design of the new library.

Housing

Two questions were asked in this section; Who needs affordable housing in Oakridge Centre, and What should the unit mix be at Oakridge Centre. With respect to the needs, most respondents indicated housing for seniors as well as middle income households (\$21,500 - \$86,500) is important to include at Oakridge Centre. With respect to the housing mix, responses indicated an even balance between studios, one bedroom, two bedroom, and 3+ bedroom units.

Built Form

Over half of the respondents felt there was an appropriate variety of building forms and heights that worked well together as a whole development, and that the proposed development uses sculpting and setbacks to ensure buildings feel "lighter" at upper levels. However, the proposed building heights were a significant concern, with almost 60% of the respondents calling for the height to be reduced. For those concerned with height, the main concern was that the towers would be too visible and dominant in the neighbourhood and are not appropriate in this context.

Active Transportation

Questions were asked regarding walking, cycling, and transit to Oakridge Centre, including walking paths, cycling routes, bus travel, and the Canada Line. People indicated a strong desire for wider sidewalks to enhance the pedestrian routes to get to Oakridge Centre. Respondents also indicated the north/south bikeways were the more frequent routes used to get to Oakridge Centre. Over 40% of respondents travelled more frequently to Oakridge Centre because of the Canada Line, and over 80% of all respondents felt the 41st Avenue/Oakridge Centre Canada Line Station met their travel needs.

3. Targeted Consultations

Targeted consultations were also held with the Riley Park/South Cambie Vision Implementation Committee, Oakridge-Langara Area Residents, Oakridge Seniors Centre, Translink, the Terraces Residents, Simon Fraser University, various cycling groups, the Urban Development Institute, and Urban Land Institute. Staff also hosted a consultation with planning and architecture students at UBC.