VISION & KEY PRINCIPLES
2.1 Vision & Key Principles

The redeveloped Oakridge will be a vibrant and sustainable mixed-use community, well-supported by parks and public amenities, with an appropriate density of housing, retail and office uses that takes advantage of the Centre’s excellent accessibility to two major transit corridors. It will be a place where retail, residential, office, transit and amenity are seamlessly integrated into a unified, transit oriented development.
2.2  City Wide Policy Summary

2.2a  Oakridge Centre Policy Statement (2007)

The Oakridge Centre policy Statement 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. The principles contained in the Oakridge Centre Policy Statement were used to shape the rezoning application.

2.2b  Greenest City 2020 Action Plan (Part 2)

The plan outlines actions required to achieve a healthy, prosperous and resilient city – with the ultimate goal of becoming the world’s greenest city by 2020. The plan calls for compact, complete communities and planning for mixed-use areas with pedestrian-oriented public spaces so that goods and services are within a safe and enjoyable 10-minute walk from where people live. The plan also supports planning for new development that supports existing transit infrastructure, as well as development of neighbourhood-scaled renewable energy systems, green construction and carbon neutral buildings.

2.2c  Cambie Corridor Plan

The plan builds on the investment in rapid transit by linking land use, built form, transportation infrastructure, district energy systems, affordable housing, and other elements of sustainability to create compact communities along Cambie Street. The plan highlights the importance of integrating employment and residential uses with services and amenities near transit stations to promote transit ridership, facilitate sustainable growth, and help reduce our overall ecological footprint. The plan does not address the Oakridge site specifically, however it identifies the Oakridge area as a key node on the Canada Line, which along with the Marine Landing area (Cambie Street and Marine Drive) will represent the most significant concentration of urban uses with pedestrian-oriented public spaces.

Phase III of the plan is currently in process and will further explore housing affordability, transit oriented developments, and the provision of community amenities, through increased height and density.

2.2d  Metro Vancouver 2040: Shaping our Future (2016)

The Regional Growth Strategy provides a framework for all municipalities in the Lower Mainland to accommodate projected growth – over 1 million people and 600,000 new jobs – by 2040. The strategy articulates five goals to manage this growth in a way that enhances the livability and sustainability of the region, including creating compact urban areas, developing complete communities, and supporting sustainable transportation choices. The Strategy designates the Oakridge area as one of the Region’s Municipal Town Centres. These are intended to be hubs of activity within the municipality, served by frequent transit and offering employment, business, commercial, community and cultural activities, as well as high and medium density housing.

2.2e  Vancouver Economic Action Strategy (2011)

This action strategy focuses on creating a climate for economic growth, supporting business investment and trade, and attracting and retaining talent. To attract and retain businesses and talented employees the Strategy highlights the importance of creating vibrant neighbourhoods with a dense mix of activities and people, walkable and bikeable public realm, access to amenities and services, a range of affordable housing options, and convenient, reliable transit. It also calls for stronger business and job growth in key commercial zones, and reduced business and employment leakage to other jurisdictions.

2.2f  Housing & Homelessness Strategy 2012 – 2021 (2011)

This is a strategy for increasing the variety of affordable housing options across the entire housing continuum to improve choice and affordability for all residents within the City. The three strategic directions are:

1. Increase the supply of affordable housing.
2. Encourage a housing mix across all neighbourhoods that enhance quality of life.
3. Provide strong leadership and support partners to enhance housing stability.

The associated Three-Year Action Plan 2012-2014 directs staff to focus implementation of the City’s long-standing 20% Affordable Housing Policy in new neighbourhoods on options that the City can undertake in the absence of senior government programs, as well as achieving secured market rental housing, and to use financial and regulatory tools to encourage a variety of housing types and tenures that meet the needs of diverse households.

2.2g  Action Plan from the Task Force on Housing Affordability (2012)

The Task Force provided recommendations to increase the supply and diversity of housing, enhance the City’s and community’s capacity to deliver affordable rental and social housing, protect the existing social and affordable rental stock, explore opportunities to renew and expand that stock, streamline and create more certainty and clarity in the regulation process, and improve public engagement. 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.
• Off-site provision of affordable housing.
2.0 VISION & KEY PRINCIPLES

2.2h Vancouver Housing Strategy 2017
Vancouver’s housing affordability crisis has escalated to the point of jeopardizing our city’s diversity and long-term economic resiliency. This report and the Housing Vancouver Strategy, 3 Year Action Plan, and associated policies propose a new vision and concrete actions to guide a bold, urgent response to address our housing crisis. Over a year of engagement with expert stakeholders, partners from cities around the world, and Vancouver residents has informed a housing strategy that reflects the core values of our city. Key steps include immediate action to address the rampant commodification of housing and speculative demand, shift our housing toward the ‘Right Supply’, and ensure affordability, protection, and support for our most vulnerable residents. The City Manager, General Manager of Planning Urban Design and Sustainability, and the General Manager of Community Services recommend approval of the recommendations in this report.

2.2i Transportation 2040
Transportation 2040 is a long-term strategic vision for the city that guides transportation and land use decisions. The plan calls for prioritizing and encouraging a dense and diverse mix of services, amenities, jobs, and housing types in areas well-served by frequent, high-capacity transit. It also reaffirms the transportation hierarchy listing walking and cycling first, and identifies 41st Avenue as a frequent, high-capacity transit corridor.

2.3 Municipal Town Centre
Oakridge will fulfill its potential as a Municipal Town Centre in the Metro Vancouver Regional Growth Strategy. Municipal Town Centres are regionally-significant urban centres that are transit-oriented communities with diverse populations, a wide range of job, retail, public and cultural spaces, and a variety of housing options including affordable choices. These characteristics make Municipal Town Centres ideal locations to accommodate growth in our region and create more complete, vibrant communities.

The area around Cambie Street and 41st Avenue is one of 17 regionally designated Municipal Town Centres in Metro Vancouver. The Oakridge Municipal Town Centre is a priority location for more concentrated growth in higher density forms of development. Urban design of these areas will promote a high-quality public realm with transit, cycling, and walking as the preferred modes of transportation.

2.4 Civic Amenities & Public Realm
A network of civic amenities, public and green spaces, linked by pedestrian pathways will create opportunities for community interaction and support the social, physical and cultural life of the community. A new 100,000 ft² (9,290 m²) Civic Centre will co-locate a community centre, senior’s centre, library, youth and cultural space, and childcare in one facility in the northwest area of the site and will become a focal point for the local community. A highly integrated, accessible and extensive New Park will welcome the public with outdoor enjoyment opportunities enriched and overlooked by retail, restaurants, services, offices and residential. More information about the public spaces planned for Oakridge can be found in Section 5: Public Places, while further information about the Civic Centre can be found in Section 6: Civic Centre.

2.5 Housing
Oakridge will be home to a diverse mix of residents by providing housing options for people of all ages and stages of life, accommodating a range of incomes and tenures including social housing, rental, market housing, as well as affordable ownership options (Section 7: Affordable Housing).

2.6 Retail, Office & Job Space
Oakridge will contribute significantly to Vancouver’s Economic Action Strategy to enhance, increase, and densify employment spaces. Oakridge will accommodate approximately 1,385,000 ft² (128,671 sm) of retail floorspace and 424,000 ft² (39,400 m²) of office space. At completion, the Centre will support an estimated 5,000 jobs. A variety of retail types and experiences will serve local and city-wide needs including an enhanced multi-level indoor retail mall, street-oriented retail and an outdoor pedestrian High Street.

2.7 Transportation
Oakridge will embody the directions of the City’s Transportation 2040 Plan, placing transit supportive land uses and densities within a permeable and integrated network of paths and places that facilitate walking and cycling for all ages and abilities. Connections through the mall and via the New Park will offer convenient access to the Canada Line that will extend beyond the normal operating hours for the retail. A reduction in retail and office parking ratios will reflect the transit-oriented location of the site, and traffic impacts on the public realm and on the surrounding community will be minimized by the creation of an efficient multi-level below grade parkade with improved access from 41st Avenue and Cambie Street. Safe, attractive, separated off-street bike paths will line the perimeter of Oakridge and connect and complete surrounding bike routes and transit (Section 4: Movement Plan).

The Oakridge MTC is part of a Frequent Transit Development Area. This means it is a priority location for more concentrated growth in higher density forms.

2.8 Sustainability
Sustainability strategies for Oakridge address and underlie all aspects of its redevelopment. Oakridge will incorporate design, construction and operational strategies to reduce its carbon footprint, improve outdoor and indoor environments and ensure future resiliency and adaptability of the neighbourhood as a whole. Further information can be found in Section 9: Sustainability Strategy.

2.9 Placemaking
Oakridge will transcend the traditional, single-use regional shopping centre model to become an integrated mixed use precinct, well-connected to the adjacent community and incorporating genuinely public routes and places. Highly public and legible access points will invite people up to the New Park. Routes through the mall will read like covered and uncovered, indoor and outdoor streetscapes. Major entry points to the mall from 41st Avenue and Cambie and High Street will be designed to bring heat lines back in from the street and create a blurring of interior and exterior space. Oakridge will have active and engaging urban street edges on both 41st Avenue and Cambie Street.
2.10 Oakridge Centre Policy Statement

The 2007 Oakridge Centre Policy Statement established principles and objectives to guide the redevelopment of Oakridge. The key planning principles in Section 2.3 of the document were considered when evaluating the rezoning proposal, and will be used to shape subsequent Development Permit Applications.

2.10a Create a Neighbourhood & Municipal-Serving Centre

- Encourage incremental redevelopment to create a vibrant centre at Cambie Street & 41st Ave with a mix of housing, retail, service and office uses served by a well-connected public transit system, parks and public amenities.

2.10b Create a Transit Hub

- Encourage higher densities of transit-supportive office, residential and commercial uses within a 5-minute walk of the transit station. Provide pedestrians with convenient public connections around and through the Centre to the transit station entrance at Cambie Street & 41st Avenue. Integrate bus stops and drop off areas with the transit station. Encourage the provision of active uses and high quality public realm development along public connections to contribute to site security and the creation of a secure transit hub.

2.10c Create a Neighbourhood & Municipal-Serving Centre

- Retail: Provide for the expansion of retail uses at Oakridge beyond the current expansion approvals. Encourage the development of animated street edges by orienting storefronts along public streets. Balance local and city-wide retail needs by creating a precinct within which there is a mix of commercial uses serving regional shopping, the local neighbourhood and transit riders alike.
- Housing: Develop housing choices suitable for families of all types, ages and incomes. Maximize the number of ground-oriented units wherever possible. Use residences to define, animate and overlook streets and public spaces.
- Office: Provide for and encourage an increase in the amount of office space on the site to serve local and city-wide needs and to support the transit hub with rapid transit access. Encourage location of office uses in proximity to the transit station.
- Parks and Open Space: Make provision to complete outstanding parkland dedication obligations and to provide new park area contributions to support the anticipated mix of new uses. Also provide a range of high quality outdoor public and semi-private spaces for residents and visitors, located both at grade and on rooftops.
- Community Amenities: Maintain levels of service and amenity for the wider Oakridge community while providing appropriate amenities to support new uses, neighbourhood residents and visitors. Seek and develop opportunities to upgrade and expand the existing library, seniors’ centre, and child minding centre and consider opportunities for clustering of compatible community amenities.
- Parking: Provide safe and convenient parking for public and private uses. Develop a parking plan, with Transportation Demand Management (TDM) strategies appropriate for a transit-oriented development, while recognizing the regional-serving commercial functions of Oakridge, and existing contractual and lease agreements.

2.10d Create an Amenity Rich Public Realm

- Permeability and Connectivity: Organize development on a more integrated pattern of streets and public ways to provide linkages to the immediate neighbourhood and through the Oakridge site to transit. Links between the transit station, shops, parks, community facilities, schools, greenways, bikeways, and local streets are key to promoting pedestrian mobility and transit use.
- Pedestrian Network: Prioritize planning for pedestrians first as well as cyclists and transit riders to contribute to site sustainability. Integrate grade level uses with a pedestrian-scaled and universally accessible network of paths, sidewalks and public spaces.
- Street Network: Dedicate a new public street through the Oakridge site connecting 41st and Cambie to serve the growing community and centre. Design parking and servicing systems to provide convenient access without off-loading impact onto existing public streets and sidewalks, pedestrian places and neighbouring areas.
- Cambie Street: Reinforce Cambie Street as one of Vancouver’s great streets, lined with buildings that provide a strong street presence, pedestrian interest, and a mix of local and regional serving shops overlooked by new residential development. Enhance pedestrian and bike crossings to better connect to retail and other uses across Cambie Street. Expand the pedestrian realm along Cambie Street. Improve planting of the street edge and Heritage boulevard.
- 41st Avenue: Develop 41st Avenue as a mixed use street frontage with an enhanced pedestrian environment. Reduce the number of vehicle crossings for access and egress. Create new and convenient pedestrian and cyclist crossings to link the neighbourhood to the north.
- New “High Street”: Design the new public street through the site as an urban, pedestrian friendly shopping street, and the focus of the new mixed use Oakridge neighbourhood.

2.10e Optimize Parks & Open Space

- Parks and Public Open Spaces: Provide parks and public open spaces to adequately serve new development and the surrounding community. Utilize parks and open spaces as organizing elements for the development of the site. Connect open spaces to adjacent areas with foot and bicycle paths to create an amenity-rich, walking and cycling friendly neighbourhood.
- Trees & Landscape: Retain existing healthy and significant trees where possible and provide new plantings and trees to define public spaces and provide shade as needed. Consider an overall stormwater management plan, integrating elements such as green roofs, surface swales and wetlands in new park areas to enhance site sustainability.

2.10f Enhance Built Form

- Street Presence: Improve all streets by bringing buildings, uses and store entrances to the street. Ensure that interior-oriented stores do not present bland exterior walls to the street. Wrap interior-oriented mall spaces and anchor stores with lively street-oriented uses and a public, pedestrian scaled environment.
- Built Form and Views: Design buildings massing to minimize the disruption of significant views from existing developments and public places, while supporting opportunities for the creation of new views from the site.
- Neighbourly Development: Ensure new development, parks, public places, and pedestrian linkages create a neighbourly transition to the adjacent community and invite people into the new neighbourhood.
2.11 Urban Design Rationale

Oakridge is a Hybrid of the positive aspects of these urban design strategies that integrate nature within the city.

2.11.1 Hilltop Town

Oakridge draws inspiration from medieval towns like San Gimignano, Italy where buildings of a variety of heights cluster at the top of a hill. The hilltop town becomes the skyline of the surrounding landscape. This concept is discussed further in Section 5.1: Overall Public Realm Plan.

2.11.2 Garden City

Inspired by the Utopian novel "Looking Backward", the Garden City acknowledged the importance of incorporating nature within the urban fabric. It proposed defining distinct landscape, green belts, and urban zones.
The architecture of Oakridge is a response to a myriad of functional, poetic and visionary aspirations set forth by this unique opportunity to build Vancouver’s only municipal town centre outside of the downtown core.

2.11.3 Radiant City
The Radiant city of the 1930’s proposed by Le Corbusier consisted of point towers sitting within a landscape field increasing density while allowing light and nature at grade. The model did not acknowledge or integrate into a typical urban street wall fabric.

2.11.4 Urban Streetwall
Street wall buildings at grade (lining High Street and New Street) and on the podium level help to create both enclosure and an urban experience similar to historical European cities. These street acknowledges the human scale and create a cadence across the building façades that enhances the pedestrian experience and unifies the entire site (Refer to Figure 2.9e).
An Organic & Topographical Approach
A vibrant "street-oriented design" that integrates nature and topography to create a variety of experiences for the public and provides places for people to live, shop, work, and play at a major transit node.
2.11 Urban Design Rationale

2.11.1 Design Rationale

The following images illustrate a series of formal ‘operations’ that led to the current design, each of which responds to the objectives of reinforcing the urban fabric or creating a vibrant public realm that integrates nature and urban forms.

The resulting concept is a modern street oriented urban experience that integrates nature and topography to create an organic expression of architecture emerging from the landscape. The genesis of the design narrative begins by reintroducing the lost first growth forest displaced by the original mall and then sculpts new retail street walls to define the perimeter of the site and the high street within, knitting together the surrounding urban fabric. Into this new landscape are sculpted retail gallerias and public rooms which emerge and define the edges of the park above. From this foundation of parks and plazas, office and residential towers terrace upward out of the landscape and are capped by iconic towers marking gateways, capturing views in all directions.

The Oakridge visitors will be citizens in a new organic micro city connected to both downtown to the north and the airport to the south by rapid transit, inhabiting one the most meaningful sustainable models of suburban mall redevelopments in the world.

The Oakridge Redevelopment will:

- Reintroduce a strong urban streetwall.
- Create and reinforce connections to the surrounding urban fabric.
- Reintroduce the lost forest and topography to the site.
- Generate density at an important transit hub through buildings that emerge and merge with the landscape.

Artist’s Rendering
1948 mature forest park within the city grid.

1950–1980: Site razed for suburban mall surrounded by parking lots.
Introduction of New Street to establish third major urban street along the perimeter.

Establish new urban streetwalls along Cambie, West 41st Avenue and New Street by expanding the building footprint to fill the site.
High Street, a new outdoor pedestrian street is introduced to connect Heather and Ash Streets.

The primary connection from the neighbourhood to the transit plaza is created through the site. A sculpted canopy at the corner marks this major node.
Secondary paths are established to connect to the existing street network locating plazas at major nodes.

Reintroduction of lost landscape and topography.
The new landscape skin is manipulated and peeled to allow light to enter the mall below and folded to transition down to grade at the edges of the site.

Vertical mixing chambers connect the parking levels through the mall and up to the park at the major internal intersections.
Towers emerge from the landscape topography, twisting towards views and light.

Gateway and Landmark towers mark the major park access points.
The New Street streetwall buildings echo the scale of the neighbourhood blocks and respond to the new High Street towers.

Reintroduction of the lost forest.
Forest displaced by community gathering, activity & garden spaces.

Water provides focal points for main space.
2.0

VISION & KEY PRINCIPLES

The Oakridge Redevelopment