

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of this application is to secure approval for a CD-1 rezoning bylaw which includes density, uses and form of development for 929 to 949 West 41st Avenue, otherwise known as the former Oakridge Transit Centre, along with 5469, 5489, and 5507 Willow Street.

This proposed rezoning application consists of the former Oakridge Transit Centre (OTC) site, comprised of 5.6 hectares (13.8 acres), to be combined with an additional three single-family lots totalling 0.5 acres, making this one of the last large-scale, centrally-located developments of its kind in the city. Located on the traditional territory of the Coast Salish people, the land was acquired from the Canadian Pacific Railway in 1948 for B.C. Electric to establish its electric trolley bus depot, along with offices for the administration of the system. With the completion of a new transit centre on the Eburne lands in 2006, the site has since 2008 served limited use and is ready for reactivation.

Starting in 2014, Vancouver City Council approved a planning program for the OTC site, at which time Council directed staff to engage in a policy planning process with TransLink to develop policies to guide site planning, conduct a public consultation process to establish and evaluate guiding principles, and report back to council with a policy statement for the OTC site.

In December 2015, this policy statement was adopted by Vancouver City Council and forms the basis for this rezoning application, with further allowances in regards to density and massing received by Council in a July 2019 Issues Report, the outcome of which allowed for an increase in building heights as well as an increase in the overall FSR from 2.1 to 2.3 for the OTC site. Along with these minor modifications, the OTC guiding policy statement considered the future mix of uses, density and height, building forms, parks and public spaces, circulation and movement, along with community amenities to serve both the new and existing community.

In addition to the policy statement, several other policy frameworks have likewise provided guidance for the former OTC site. They include: Cityplan (1995); the Oakridge Langara Policy Statement (1995); the Cambie Corridor Plan (2011); the Housing and Homelessness Strategy (2011); the Transportation 2040 Plan (2012); the Greenest City 2020 Action Plan (2011); the Green Buildings Policy for Rezoning (2014); and the Rezoning Policy for Sustainable Large Developments (2013).

This rezoning's proposed uses are primarily residential and commercial, including a new public park and daycare centre along with ample communal green space. These uses are consistent, and compatible, with the existing uses approved under the Riley Park South Cambie (RPSC) Vision, as well as the Oakridge Langara Policy Statement (OLPS), which provides overall guidance for the range of ground-oriented housing types, including townhouse, stacked townhouses, low-rise and mid-rise buildings that will be provided in the former OTC, now Oak Green master-plan.

The proposed site density is approximately 2.1 FSR, blended with additional density provided by the addition of three single-family sites at 39th Avenue and Willow Street, added to the development in order to provide a future ROW roadway to access the site from the east. As well, the recent approval of two 24 and 26-storey towers on the Jewish Community Centre site immediately to the south of the site has signaled that the City would support increased density and building height along 41st Avenue, which will provide for the increased density from the 2.1 FSR in the policy statement, providing for an overall FSR of 2.3. The OTC/Oak Green project team also heard support from the public at the April 2019 Open House for an increase in affordable rental and social housing, expressing that they would support higher densities for the site.

REZONING & DESIGN RATIONALE

Modern Green Canada are looking to rebrand the former Oakridge Transit Centre site as Oak Green, a new and vibrant neighbourhood in central Vancouver located to the south of VanDusen Botanical Gardens, north of the Jewish Community Centre, and a short walk from both the Oakridge Mall and 41st Avenue Canada Line station. It is one of Vancouver's last undeveloped brownfield properties and is intended to become an integral part of the 41st Avenue corridor between Oak and Cambie Streets, poised to be a dynamic new neighbourhood to support a range of housing types for a mix of incomes.



REZONING & DESIGN RATIONALE

DESIGN INTENTIONS

The Oak Green masterplan proposes a diversity of building form and massing to enhance the backdrop of the North Shore Mountains, while respecting the surrounding context of predominantly single-family houses and townhomes. With particular attention to providing natural sunlight throughout the site, the overall building massing gradually steps down as one moves north through the site, with high-rises on 41st Avenue stepping down to mid-rise and low-rise buildings surrounding a two acre park at the north end of the site. The merging of landscape and architecture throughout the site will enhance Vancouver's strong natural and urban interface and contribute to a unique sense of place. As well, an important feature of the masterplan will be the provision of a pedestrian greenway which will connect 41st Avenue to the park along 38th Avenue.

USE

The project consists of a wide range of uses. Commercial activity along 41st Avenue will provide street frontage for this important neighbourhood arterial, with community gardens and generous landscaping to promote inclusiveness and social connection within the community itself. As well, the masterplan includes the provision for a childcare facility in the park, which will also enhance and promote neighbourhood connectivity. Finally, multi-story housing units throughout the site will include courtyards and landscaping to act as a social condenser in the spaces between the housing.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

This rezoning will devote 20% of the project's housing units, comprising approximately 20% of the residential floor area, to affordable housing, prioritizing social housing targeted towards low to moderate income households. As shown in the masterplan, two parcels have been designated for this social housing, with one of them to be realized in the first phase of the development.

Additionally, and as per the recently updated Sustainable Large Developments Policy (July 2018), the City now requires large developments to provide 10% moderate income rental housing, and as such Oak Green will provide for a stand-alone rental building to provide for this, also to be realized in the first phase of the development's build-out.

HISTORY

This project will seek to highlight both the historical and contemporary significance of the site. This will include a public art program which will emphasize the Coast Salish people, as well as the more recent history of the site as a Transit Centre based on the Statement of Significance prepared for the site by Donald Luxton and Associates in October 2014.

The intent with Oak Green is to establish a new neighbourhood identity for the site, one that draws its inspiration from the site's history, first as Coast Salish land, and secondly as a transit centre, to be conveyed through site patterning, building orientation and public realm detailing.

PUBLIC REALM

The Oak Green public realm will combine a new 2.0 acre park, a five metre wide greenway running from the park to 41st Avenue, as well as several pedestrian thoroughfares and landscaped courtyards throughout the site.

While the area benefits from a variety of park spaces - both VanDusen Botanical Gardens and the Queen Elizabeth Park are within walking distance of the site - the Oakridge Langara Policy Statement identified a new park for the area as a key City objective and will provide the new neighbourhood with space for activities such as youth sports and children's play. A new daycare facility will also be located in the park.

The park is to have highly public edges and will facilitate views across the site to the North Shore mountains, while maximizing the number of residences overlooking the park. It will be configured to provide flexibility for a variety of park programming (active and passive activities) while contributing to the larger network of parks that include sensitive ecological areas in Queen Elizabeth park, VanDusen Botanical Gardens, and Oak Meadows Park.

In addition to the park, a linear green open space will connect the park to 41st Avenue, inviting the public into the neighbourhood and reinforcing the ecological connections in the neighbourhood. This greenway will be comprised of enhanced landscaping to activate the public realm, encouraging areas for gathering.

41st Avenue will also be designed with an enhanced public realm to complement and support local-serving shops and services, with generous sidewalks, cafe seating, places for people to gather, protected bicycle paths, large street trees, weather protection and other quality public realm treatments (street furniture, pedestrian lighting, etc.).

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

FAMILY HOUSING

A minimum of 50% of the affordable housing units (approximately 20% of the site's residential floor area) will be for families with children, including two and three bedroom units. A minimum of 35% of the market units will also be two and three bedrooms, comprised of at least 10% three bedroom units. Design of family units will also be in accordance with the High-density Housing for Families With Children guidelines.

DAYCARE

A daycare centre for 69 children will be provided on 38th Avenue next to the neighbourhood park, to be built to Passive House standards, and will be fully-finished and equipped to serve infants, toddlers, and 3-5 year olds, designed in accordance with the Childcare Design Guidelines.

LOCAL-SERVING RETAIL

Approximately 1,400 square metres (15,000 sq. ft.) of commercial floorspace will be located in the neighbourhood, primarily along 41st Avenue between Oak Street and the new intersection across from the Jewish Community Centre, providing an inviting entrance to the site and animating the public realm. A retail capacity analysis has been included with this rezoning application to confirm the amount of retail the neighbourhood can support.

COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

In addition to its new vehicle roadways, the Oak Green site will be integrated into the surrounding neighbourhood context via new pedestrian and cycling connections, with the site design accommodating various transportation modes. Walking and cycling modes are to be prioritized, while connecting to existing and anticipated public transit systems.

CENTRAL PLAZA

A new public outdoor space is proposed at the new 41st Avenue intersection providing entry to the site. This flexible space will accommodate a variety of activities, such as farmers markets, foodtruck fairs, or simply provide outdoor seating for restaurants.

GREEN SPACE

The buildings in Oak Green have been carefully sited to define common green space throughout the new neighbourhood, providing for a variety of active and passive uses. Park space will be highly visible and bordered by public streets, mews, and walkways with animated edges in appropriate locations. In addition to the Civic Plaza there are a variety of green spaces that also includes the landscaped courtyards throughout the site, along with the Pedestrian Walkway and Bike Route noted above, all of which will be linked to the larger ecological network of the City's surrounding green spaces.

SUSTAINABILITY

The Oak Green development will meet the Rezoning Policy for Sustainable Large Developments as well as the Green Buildings Policy for Rezonings. An exceptional standard of sustainability is the goal for Oak Green, to be achieved through the thoughtful consideration of site design, architecture, building energy use, and rainwater management, as well as urban food and waste systems.

MID-RISE DISTRICT

Oak Green will seek to create a new residential district with a variety of building types and forms such as townhouses, low-rise and mid-rise apartments. And with the recent approval by the City of Vancouver of several projects in the area that exceed the 6-15 storeys envisioned in the OTC Policy Statement, two high-rises have been proposed along 41st Avenue to reflect this change in the area's built form. And of these two tall towers on the Oak Green site, one will be entirely comprised of moderate income rental housing with the other designated as market condominiums.

HOUSING VARIETY AND AFFORDABILITY

Oak Green has been designed to accommodate a wide range of household incomes by providing market condominiums, rental housing, and affordable housing for households with low incomes, seniors and those with mental health issues or addictions. The site design will likewise maximize opportunities for ground-oriented units and housing suitable for families, including two and three bedroom units.