

# **PHASE 2: LAND USE ALTERNATIVES ENGAGEMENT AND OUTREACH SUMMARY**

November 2024 through June 2025

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## Introduction

### Purpose

The purpose of this document is to summarize engagement feedback and input from the community so that it can be incorporated into the **OUR VANCOUVER** Comprehensive Plan, specifically the land use alternative maps and the plan's goals, policies, and actions.

### Approach to Outreach and Engagement

This phase focused on raising public awareness about the land use alternatives and preparing the public to provide comments during the draft environmental impact statement (EIS) comment period.

This phase's strategy focused on attending existing meetings and events and partnering with community-based organizations to organize events, instead of organizing City-led events.

During this phase, the project team proactively worked to hear from youth and Black and Hispanic community members, because these groups were under-represented in earlier comprehensive plan engagement (see Phase 1 and Phase 2 summaries).

## Overview of Engagement and Outreach

This section provides an overview of the engagement and outreach methods used during this phase.

### Engagement Methods

#### Group Presentations

**Date(s):** November 2024 – June 2025

**Engagement Method:** Board and commission meetings, neighborhood association meetings, community-based organization meetings/events

**Purpose:** Awareness, land use alternatives feedback

**Participation:** 18 events

**Outreach Methods Used:** Outreach was typically conducted by the partnering organization. Public meetings were posted to the Be Heard page. Promoted requests for presentations in e-newsletters.

**Topics Covered:** Comprehensive plan, land use alternatives, EIS process

### **Mini Mapping Activities**

**Date(s):** 1/30/2025, 4/1/2025, 4/23/2025

**Engagement Method:** Mapping activities at NAYA Elders Luncheon

**Purpose:** Land use alternative feedback

**Participation:** 3 events

**Outreach Methods Used:** Outreach was conducted by the partnering organization.

**Topics Covered:** Comprehensive plan, land use alternatives

### **Tabling**

**Date(s):** 1/14/2025, 2/5/2025, 2/6/2025, 3/6/2025

**Engagement Method:** Tabling at three Clark College student affinity luncheons and one community resource fair

**Purpose:** Awareness, land use alternatives feedback

**Participation:** 4 events

**Outreach Methods Used:** Outreach was conducted by the partnering organization.

**Topics Covered:** Comprehensive plan, land use alternatives

### **Visioning Collage and Zine Workshop**

**Date(s):** Saturday, March 22, 2025

**Engagement Method:** Collage activity

**Purpose:** Awareness, community connection

**Participation:** 1 event

**Outreach Methods Used:** Social media, Be Heard, City and Kindred websites, Our Vancouver e-newsletter

**Topics Covered:** Chapter vision statements

### **Our Vancouver Email Inbox**

**Date(s):** November 2024 – June 2025

**Engagement Method:** shared Outlook mailbox (OurVancouver2045@cityofvancouver.us)

**Purpose:** Provide a way for community members to contact the project team, ask questions, and share their thoughts. E-newsletters with project updates were also sent from this email address.

**Participation:** 23 emails were received that contained direct project input and/or inquiries.

**Outreach Methods Used:** Email address was listed on the StoryMap, hardcopy materials, social media posts, **OUR VANCOUVER** e-newsletters, presentations, and Be Heard.

**Topics Covered:** Comprehensive plan, land use alternatives, EIS process

## Outreach Methods

- **Be Heard** – project webpage
  - 5,500+ views
- **StoryMap** – online interactive map of land use alternatives
  - 5000+ views
- **Our Vancouver e-newsletter:** [11/1/2024](#), [2/7/2025](#), [2/21/2025](#), [3/10/2025](#), [4/4/2025](#), [5/9/2025](#), [6/12/2025](#)
  - From 493 to 628 recipients
- **Vancouver Connects** e-newsletter – [November 2024](#), [December 2024](#), [3/11/2025](#), [4/9/2025](#), [6/6/2025](#)
- **Office of Neighborhoods** e-newsletter – [11/8/2024](#), [1/31/2025](#), [2/14/2025](#), [3/14/2025](#), [4/11/2025](#), and [6/27/2025](#)
- **The Columbian** newspaper – [3/21/2025](#)
- **Social Media** – Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, NextDoor
- **Flyers** at Coffee with the Mayor, Neighborhood Convenings, and Community Forums.

## Summary of Feedback

This section provides an overview of community feedback that emerged during Phase 2C of community engagement for the **OUR VANCOUVER** Comprehensive Plan. Common “key themes” emerged across feedback gathered at engagement events, which are organized based on the comprehensive plan chapters. Additionally, some feedback was specific to the land use alternative maps or had a spatial component to the comment, so a sub-section has been added below to summarize this feedback.

The summary section that follows may quantify comments received by the terms “few,” “some,” or “many.” *Few* means less than 10 comments received; *Some* or *several* means between 10–20 comments received; and *Many* means 20 or more comments received on a particular topic.

## **Community Experience**

### **Accessibility of Places, Services, and Resources**

Many people expressed that they wanted places, information, and basic needs to be accessible – physically, financially, socially/culturally, and bureaucratically.

### **Connection and Involvement**

Many people had a strong desire for deeper community ties and engagement and wanted places and processes that would support this.

### **Safety, Comfort, and Stability**

Many people highlighted the importance of safety, comfort, and stability. This was discussed in terms of personal physical safety, as well as emotional and mental safety allowing community members to feel happy and respected.

### **Belonging and Inclusion**

Many people value and desire places, events, and organizations that reflect a specific aspect of their identity and that allow them to express themselves and connect with others who share that identity. Primarily, this was discussed in terms of culture and race/ethnicity.

### **Lifelong Learning**

Many people described a desire for learning and training opportunities and placed value on places and programs that supported growing and sharing one’s talents.

### **Mixed Feelings about Growth and Change**

Some people acknowledged that growth and change will occur, while others expressed wanting to preserve things as they are. Many wanted to ensure that growth and change benefited existing and long-time residents. There were mixed views on the pace of change, as some were comfortable incremental

change while others expressed a need for more bold and immediate transformation.

### **Blend of Urban and Natural Amenities**

A few people expressed appreciation for the community's mix of urban and natural amenities.

## Vancouver's Push and Pull

What draws people to Vancouver?

- Family, school, jobs
- Retirement
- Balance of urban amenities with access to nature
- Amenities like the waterfront, events, or specific businesses

What draws people **from** Vancouver?

- Family, school, jobs
- Culturally-specific places
- Housing costs/availability
- Amenities like specific restaurants or more regional amenities.

## **Land Use and Development**

### **Important places**

Many people value access to the following uses and would like to see them maintained and increased:

- **Community centers**, including teen centers, religious facilities, and a desire for more grassroots gathering spaces.
- **Food-related uses**, including grocery stores, gardens and agriculture, the farmers market, and restaurants.
- **Medical and healthcare** uses, including hospitals, specialty clinics, and emergency rooms.

- **Parks and natural areas**, including the Columbia River, sports fields, and the Waterfront.
- **Educational facilities**, including trade and specialty schools, the Water Resource Education Center, and libraries.
- **Commercial spaces**, including Vancouver Mall, gyms, and amusement spaces--Some youth specifically wanted go-karts, a zoo/aquarium, viewpoints, a stadium, and a waterpark.
- **Identity-specific places** – Many people value and desire places that reflect a specific aspect of their identity and that allow them to express themselves and connect with others who share that identity, primarily, in terms of culture and race/ethnicity.

### **Places of concern and incompatibility**

Some people had negative views of particular uses, including car dealerships, marijuana shops, large warehouses / industry, and “camping,” and suggested measures such as transition areas, buffers, or prohibitions for these uses, particularly around schools, parks, and residential areas.

### **Support for allowing mixing**

While many people seemed to support greater mixing of non-residential and residential uses if externalities (traffic, noise, air quality) are limited, a couple people were concerned that overregulating or requiring mixing could make development infeasible. A couple people didn't want commercial in their neighborhood.

### **Importance of single-story buildings/units**

A few people inquired about building height and others noted that single-story buildings/units are important for residential and industrial uses.

### **Impact on existing development**

A few people were concerned about how the plan update would impact existing buildings and the creation of non-conformities, wanting to ensure that existing development can remain and function.

## **Housing**

### **Houselessness and Housing Security**

Many people view houselessness as an issue in the community and want to help people be and stay safely housed. Some people specifically expressed support for shelters, safe stays, using underutilized spaces, building affordable housing, and other programs and resources as ways to improve housing security.

### **Housing Affordability**

Many people recognized the rising cost of housing and felt that greater housing affordability is imperative. A few people asked what is meant by “affordable” and were skeptical about how adding more market-rate housing could improve affordability. However, others saw a connection and need for more housing broadly to improve affordability. One noted the need for subsidies to provide below-market rate housing.

### **Housing Density**

Many people seemed comfortable with adding middle housing and some density. Some saw adding more housing as a way to support affordability, businesses, walkability, and transit. However, many people were concerned about the impact of higher density housing on existing neighborhood character, traffic, trees and nature, parks, and property values/taxes.

### **Housing Type and Design**

While there was support for middle housing, people particularly value detached housing types (like single-family houses, ADUs, and cottage clusters) and ownership opportunities. Some people suggested design considerations like single-floor units for seniors, large units for families, outdoor space, and climate control features for climate resilience.

### **Housing Location**

Many people wanted housing to have access to commercial services, medical centers, jobs, parks, transportation options, and other opportunities and resources. A few people brought up concerns about locating housing in unsafe areas or areas with high traffic, noise, or air pollution. A few people noted that infrastructure needs to be able to accommodate additional housing.

## **Residential Displacement**

Some people were concerned about residential displacement, particularly for seniors, renters, and low-income residents. A couple of people expressed support for specific anti-displacement measures, like mobile home protections and rent caps.

## **Equity**

### **People see and experience disparities and inequality in Vancouver**

Many people spoke to the differences in access to a variety of things, including parks and trees, healthcare, jobs and economic opportunity, housing, transportation, community centers, internet, public spaces and processes, and places, organizations, and events that reflected their identity. There is a desire for equality in the community, allowing all to fully attain the themes outlined under Community Experience.

### **Current system disadvantages particular groups**

Some people shared that different aspects of the social and built environment make it disproportionately difficult for particular groups of people to access to the things mentioned above and attain the themes under Community Experience. Primarily, the groups mentioned were in terms of race/ethnicity and culture, and were also mentioned in terms of immigration status, age, language, sexuality, gender, incarceration, marital status, housing tenure, and economic class/income level. \*Of note, disability was not prominently mentioned, possibly due to limited engagement.

### **Greater focus on those who face the greatest barriers/have the greatest need**

Some people directly expressed a desire and need for equity, including in planning and services. Many people expressed the need to support vulnerable populations, especially those with low incomes, those facing housing insecurity, youth and families, and seniors. Both the engagement feedback and process point to the need for diverse and tailored approaches (particularly culturally-aware and -specific approaches) in order to achieve equal access and attainment of desired community experience – not a one-size-fits-all approach.

## **Putting equity into practice**

While some people expressed appreciation for the steps the City is currently taking to advance equity and inclusion, there was a desire for more immediate and visible progress. A couple of people suggested implementing equity goals in partnership with impacted communities and organizations for full effectiveness.

## **Climate, Environment, Community Health, Sustainability, and Resiliency**

### **Enthusiasm and appreciation for natural amenities**

Many people value sustainability and the environment, especially Vancouver's parks and trees. People shared that they valued these because of the benefits they provide in terms of physical and mental health, habitat area, transportation, and recreational opportunities. Outdoor spaces that people highlighted ranged from one's own yard/garden to the Columbia River.

### **Opportunities to support community health**

Many people value health and saw ways that planning could support it, including in:

- Housing – housing stability, quality location and buildings
- Parks and recreation – exercise equipment and programming, spaces to be active, opportunities to connect with nature
- Transportation – bike lanes and walkability providing movement and connection, ability to access healthcare
- Land use and development – medical facilities, food access, gyms, green spaces
- Economic opportunity – income stability
- Implementation – culturally, linguistically, and physically accessible resources, partnering with community orgs

### **Clean air and quiet places are important, especially at home**

Many people had concerns about noise and air pollution. A few people brought up compatibility concerns between land uses because of air and noise issues, like industrial uses and traffic/vehicles versus parks and housing. A couple people saw opportunities for mitigation, like having bike lanes and the need to mitigate noise from denser living.

## **Support emergency preparedness and better connect planning and climate**

People did not usually bring up climate change or natural disasters on their own, but when discussed, many people were concerned and saw a need for increased awareness, communication, and preparedness. Public buildings and schools, hospitals and emergency services, grocery stores, religious facilities, Tribal offices, transit stops / centers, and trees were seen as critical infrastructure for resiliency. A couple people highlighted a need to consider Vancouver's rainy season when investing in infrastructure.

*See Climate Vulnerability Assessment engagement summary for more detailed feedback on resiliency.*

## **Economic Opportunity**

### **Economic opportunity for all**

Many people support jobs and economic growth and want it to benefit existing residents and local businesses, especially those who have historically lived in or contributed to Vancouver. Some people are concerned that job and housing growth may displace long-time residents and existing businesses. Some people stated the need to support equitable access to jobs for underrepresented groups and to support economically diverse neighborhoods.

### **Support for Diverse, Livable-Wage Employment Opportunities**

Many people, especially youth and those working with youth, want more livable-wage and diverse job opportunities and workforce development opportunities. Places and programs mentioned included trade and specialty schools, colleges, apprenticeships, and community center programs. A couple people highlighted the need for people's wages to meet rising costs of living.

### **Need for Jobs Closer to Where People Live**

Some people expressed a desire to reduce commuting, especially trips to Portland, and to have more jobs integrated into neighborhoods. This included support for neighborhood commercial areas, mixed-use developments that include jobs, and flexible zoning that allows low-impact employment in or near homes. However, a couple people wanted to ensure requirements for commercial uses do not prevent development, especially housing.

## **Workplaces are economically and socially important**

Many people spend a significant amount of time at businesses and workplaces when not at home. Businesses and jobs draw people to Vancouver with many people sharing that they either moved to or visit Vancouver for work, or workforce development. Many people value local markets, restaurants, shops, and services, while some also value non-local chains, both as economic drivers and places to gather.

## **Parks, Recreation, Open Space, and Community Well-Being**

### **People value parks, green spaces, and community centers and access to these places**

Many people value parks, green spaces, and community centers and wanted to these maintained and increased. Access was discussed both in terms of physical access and financial access. A few people shared that they value the mental and physical health benefits that parks and green space offer.

- Some places mentioned include Marshall, Waterfront Park, Water Resources and Education Center, Fourth Plain Forward, Ike Memorial Park, and Frenchman's Bar.
- Events mentioned include Powwows, First Friday Art Walks, and Pride events.

### **Community centers for connection**

Many people valued community centers and saw them as places to gather, connect, express, and learn. Some people had requests specifically for

- Culturally-specific centers,
- Smaller, grassroots, drop-in spaces,
- Teen and youth-focused centers, and
- Affordable memberships for income-burdened families

### **Quality parks and green space**

Some people desire upgrades to existing parks and community centers. Some people noted specific park features that they like / would like including:

- Sports courts, skateparks, yoga/workout areas, gardens
- Dog-friendly amenities, rain shelters, adult-friendly spaces

- Bathrooms, paved trails, stages, interactive art, scenic viewpoints
- More mature trees, especially in underserved neighborhoods
- Water related-recreation (river, pools, waterparks)

### **Recreation as transportation**

A few people saw opportunities for recreational spaces to also support transportation, like bike / pedestrian paths.

### **Transportation and Mobility**

#### **People want to be able to easily, safely, and quickly get to places they want to go**

Some people highlighted the connection between transportation and land use, and the need for these to complement each other, particularly for transit. For example, locating transit where housing is being added and where essential services exist (and vice versa), and considering how remote work could impact transportation needs.

#### **Driving is convenient**

Many people drive and see the need to drive/have a car as something that is not going to go away any time soon. Some people voiced frustration or concern about changes that make driving more costly (both in terms of time and money). Many people had concerns about growth leading to more vehicle traffic and about the safety, air pollution, and noise impacts associated with vehicles. Some supported changes that would allow people to not need to drive/have a car.

#### **Use of and improving non-driving options**

Many people voiced support for walking, biking/small mobility, and/or transit but shared that improvements in physical infrastructure, comfort/safety, and service are needed to make these viable transportation options. A few people see these modes in competition with each other in terms of infrastructure and investments. These modes seemed to be more important to youth and seniors than to other ages, and students also use the school bus.

**Bike / Pedestrian** – People often called for more sidewalks. A few people shared that they value health and social benefits these modes offer. One person noted that rainy weather can deter biking.

**Transit** – People often called for more frequent transit service and occasionally highlighted the desire for faster travel times and stops closer to their origin/destination, including outside of Vancouver. A few people had concerns about transit negatively impacting personal safety and comfort. A couple people suggested adding modes for shorter distances and adding night services, but there were mixed feelings about adding light rail (MAX) as an option.

### **Spaces for transportation can support additional community needs**

Some people highlighted that spaces for transportation can serve other purposes and vice versa. For example, transit centers could be used as gathering places and shelters, bike/ped paths for recreation, streets for events and murals, and parking lots for housing or bike gardens.

## **Infrastructure, Public Facilities and Services, and Utilities**

### **Public facilities are important places for the community**

Many people, especially youth and seniors, value and spend a lot of time at schools, libraries, community centers.

### **Quality community spaces**

Many people desire clean, updated, and well-maintained public spaces, with some calling for repairs and upgrades to specific community centers, streets, and sidewalks. At the same time, some people had concerns that improvements may lead to displacement or increases in cost of living. Some people highlighted how incorporating public art, especially murals, in public spaces enhances the quality.

### **Infrastructure and services must keep pace with growth**

Many people highlighted this need and brought it up in terms of utilities, transportation infrastructure, emergency services, traffic, air quality, jobs, housing, and parks.

### **Infrastructure needs to support resilience and be resilient**

Many people see infrastructure, public facilities and services, and utilities as supporting resilience and needing to be resilient itself – this includes schools, public buildings, emergency services, electricity, transit stops / centers, and

trees. A couple people highlighted the need to factor in climate, particularly Vancouver's rainy season, to infrastructure investments.

## **Annexation**

### **Curiosity about relationship between annexation and plan**

Many people were curious about annexation processes (when where and how it will happen) and how annexation relates to comprehensive planning. A few people specifically asked if annexation could be used to meet population, housing, and jobs targets.

### **Questions about how to upgrade and serve the Urban Growth Area**

A couple people were concerned about cost of annexation and ability to provide sufficient services, like police and fire, if areas are incorporated into the city. People want the City to coordinate with county to facilitate a smooth transition.

## **Implementation**

### **Coordination and partnerships**

Desire for coordination between planning and other departments, county, and community organizations. One person highlighted the importance of partnerships in addressing housing needs. Some partners that were mentioned during this phase were Council for the Homeless, NAYA homeless shelter, VHA, and SWACH.

## **Land Use Alternative Maps**

### **Alternative Maps**

- A few voiced a specific preference for Alternative 2.

### **Low-scale Neighborhood and Medium-scale Neighborhood**

- A few people had concerns about existing single-family/Low-scale neighborhoods being upzoned to either Medium-scale Neighborhood or Mixed-use Neighborhood.
- Many supported having some commercial uses in residential areas.
- Requests for Low-scale: 2308 La Frambois Rd and 906 Topeka Lane

- Requests for Medium-scale: The property next to 13604 SE 20th Circle, Vancouver, WA 98683 and parcels 35140000, 3516000 and 35150000.

### **Mixed-use Neighborhood and Regional Activity Center**

- People most often located these at key intersections and corridors dispersed across the city, with an emphasis on corridors served by transit like Fourth Plain and Mill Plain.
- Requests for Regional Activity Center: Columbia Business Center

### **Institutional / Campus**

- Some people wanted to keep or increase hospitals and emergency rooms, suggesting the need to keep or increase Institutional / Campus districts.

### **Industrial / Employment and Heavy Industrial**

- Creating and maintaining land for jobs was particularly important to high school students
- A few people noted the negative impacts industrial has on adjacent land uses where people live and visit, suggesting the need for separation/mitigation between industrial districts (IE and HI) and districts that allow residential (LS, MS, MX, and RA).

### **Parks and Natural Areas**

- Many people wanted more parks and to preserve existing parks. A couple people suggested more parks where there is more density.
- A few people identified corrections needed for parks land, which have already been corrected in the two action alternatives (DuBois Park, South Cliff Park, Burnt Bridge Creek School Park).