



## MEMORANDUM

**DATE:** July 23, 2024

**TO:** Chair Adigweme and Planning Commissioners

**FROM:** Dominique Martinelli, Senior Long-Range Planner, Community Development Department; Rebecca Kennedy, Deputy Director, Community Development Department

**CC:** **OUR VANCOUVER – Land Use Possibilities**

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### Intent

Provide Planning Commission with an overview of the following:

- The three proposed land use possibilities and associated takeaways and benefits between each configuration.
- High level estimates for the following metrics associated with each possibility over the 20-year plan time horizon:
  - Greenhouse Gas Emissions
  - Environmental Health Metrics
  - Estimated number of new housing units
  - Estimated number of new jobs

### Background

The City of Vancouver's Comprehensive Plan provides the overall long-term vision and policy direction to manage the built and natural environment in Vancouver and provide necessary public facilities to achieve that vision. The City adopted its first comprehensive plan under Washington's Growth Management Act in 1994 (Chapter 36.70A RCW), with a major re-write occurring in 2004, and a less substantive update occurring most recently in 2011. The existing Comprehensive Plan builds its policy approach off of a Centers and Corridors strategy, which designates key areas where the most growth and development should occur, and an anticipated timeframe for these areas to develop on a short, medium and long term basis. The Centers and Corridors identified in this approach determine where the City undertakes more detailed subarea

and district level planning. Since the initial adoption of the Comprehensive Plan in 2004, the following sub-area plans have been adopted based on this broader overall strategy:

- Evergreen and Grand Commercial Corridors Strategy
- Fourth Plain Corridor Subarea Plan and Fourth Plain Forward Action Plan
- Lower Grand Employment Area Subarea and Action Plan
- 112<sup>th</sup> Avenue Corridor Subarea Plan
- Central Park Subarea Plan
- Fruit Valley Subarea Plan
- Heights District Plan
- Riverview Gateway Subarea Plan
- Section 30 Subarea Plan
- Vancouver City Center Vision Plan

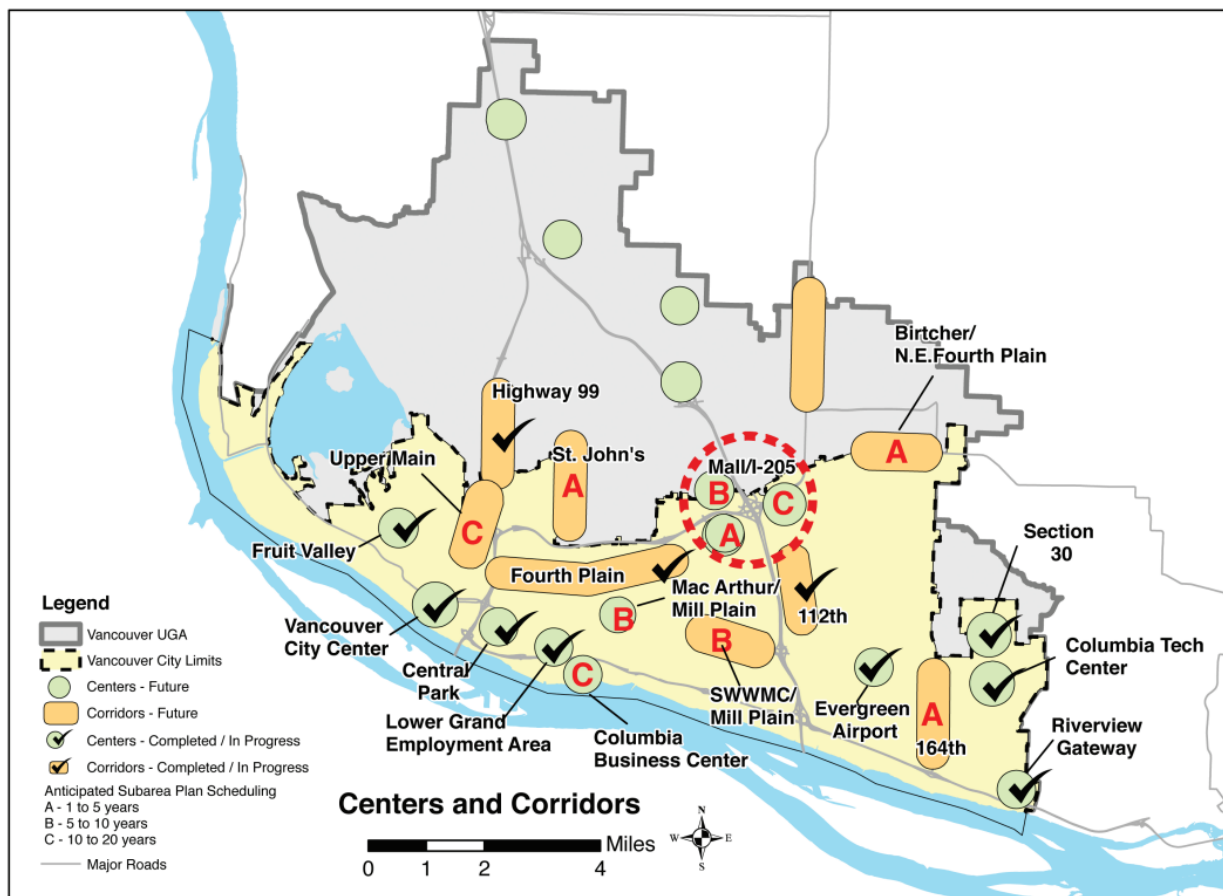


Figure 1: Centers and Corridors Strategy

This strategy also informed the Land Use designations within the comprehensive land use map, which designates types and intensities of land use allowed throughout the City. The current map is broken down into five general designations that segment uses by geographic district:

- Residential (Urban Low Density and Urban High Density)

- Water
- Open Space or Public Facility
- Commercial/Mixed Use
- Industrial

Seventeen specific zoning districts are nested under these designations and embedded in the Vancouver Municipal Code (VMC) in Title 20 Land Use and Development. In general, designations were based on the traditional Euclidian zoning model that aims to segment incompatible land uses based on perceived externalities and impacts, as was common with many Cities in the State of Washington and the country at large in the 20<sup>th</sup> and early 21<sup>st</sup> century. As with many other Cities nationally, this pattern of development has both directly and indirectly contributed to sprawling land use patterns, auto dependency, discrimination in access to housing, and increased energy usage and greenhouse gas emissions (GHG's) in our community.

Given recent statewide legislation, Council policy direction on implementing connected, accessible 15-minute neighborhoods and complete streets, and a goal of net zero GHG emissions Citywide by 2040, it is necessary to explore alternative methods to regulate land use within our community. This includes creating designations and zoning districts that focus more on mixing and integrating land uses, providing flexibility, and allowing for a combination of market driven approaches and regulatory interventions where the private market doesn't deliver outcomes that are critical to the overall strategy and approach.

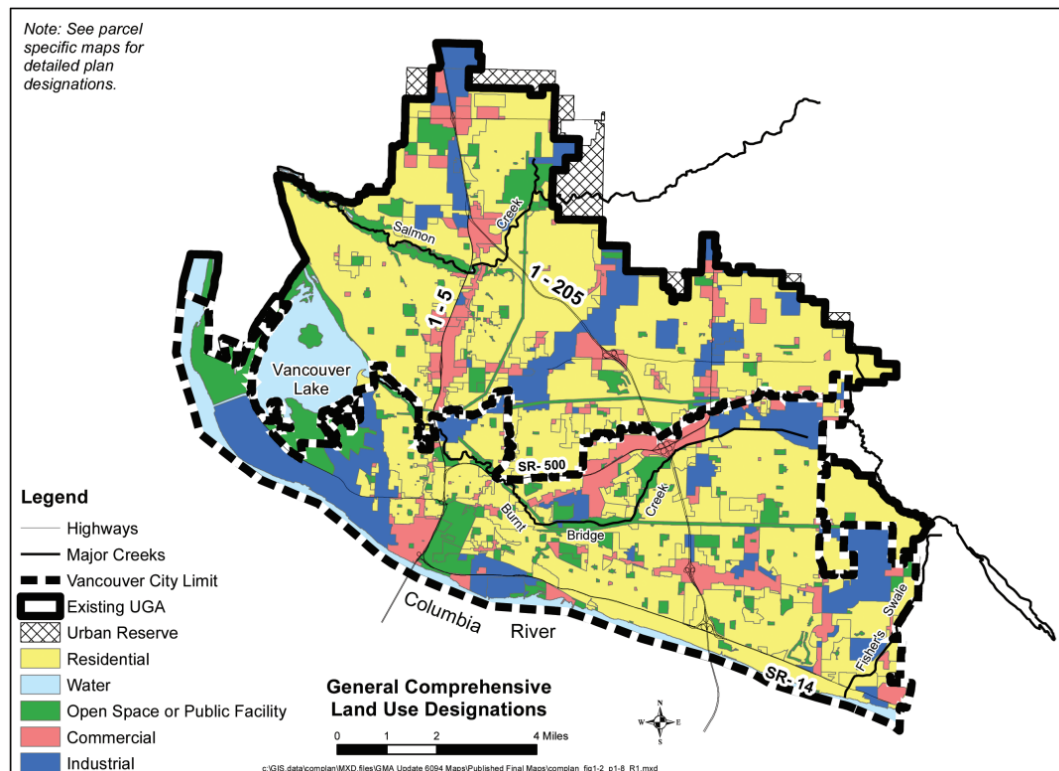


Figure 2: Existing Comp Plan Land Use Designations



Our Vancouver developed three new land use possibilities that seek to address the new policy goals listed above. Each proposes a new growth and development strategy that responds to current needs and future vision established for **OUR VANCOUVER** during the first phase of the project. The community vision statement reads as follows:

*“Vancouver is an equitable and prosperous community, which ensures that all residents, businesses and organizations benefit from the growth and advancement we make together. Vancouver will be recognized for our quality of life, as evidenced by affordable housing in vibrant, safe and walkable neighborhoods, access to jobs and economic opportunity for all, and resilience to the impacts of climate change.”*

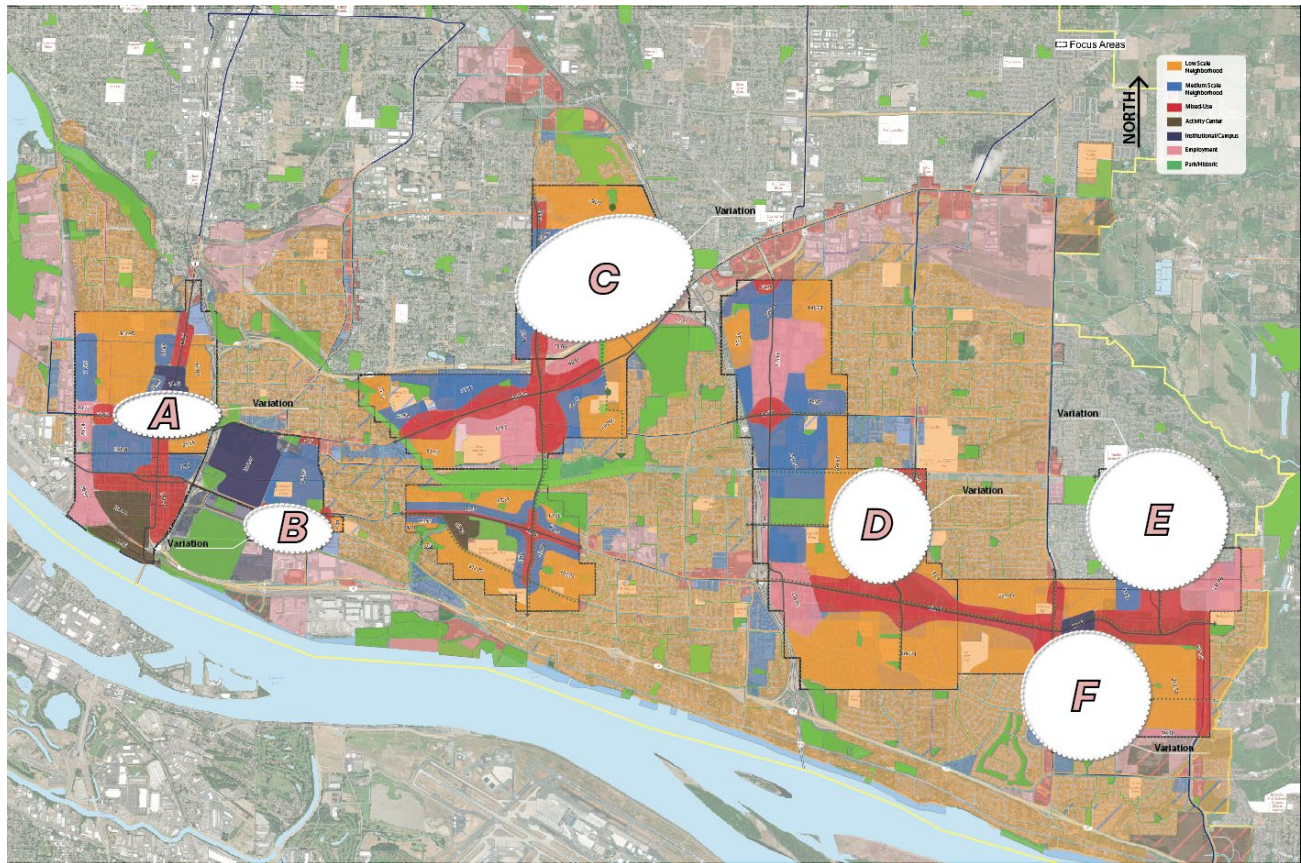


Figure 3: Proposed Land Use Possibilities Map (variations omitted)

### Structure of Three Land Use Possibilities

Each of the three land use possibilities contain the following components

- **Base** – Areas within the City that are not included within the focus areas. These areas are proposed to have less change over the 20-year period. The base is not included in the calculations for total units, emissions, or environmental health metrics at this stage, but more detailed analytics of cumulative impacts for proposed uses and zoning across the entire City will be assessed as part of the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS). The DEIS process will begin later this year and is slated to be released in early 2025.

- **Focus Areas** – These are ten geographic areas in the City where a significant amount of future growth and development will be located, and where future zoning will more substantially differ from existing standards. . These areas will generally be where the greatest amount of change will occur over the 20-year timeframe, and the areas that will accommodate the greatest proportion of new housing and employment growth.
- **Variations** – These the areas that vary between each of the possibilities. They are smaller geographic areas nested within the focus areas, and represent areas that had a lack of consensus or shared agreement between community mapping exercise participants, which included workshops with the broader community, specific youth and neighborhood focused events, as well as mapping exercises conducted with the Community Partners, Community Working Groups (business leaders, housing, transportation, climate, community-based organizations, development community), and internal technical committees. There are six variations, labeled A-F in figure 3 above.

### Development Process

The community mapping exercises conducted in April and early May resulted in 37 different map alternatives generated by groups of workshop participants, and an online version of the mapping activity generated 28 additional map variations. The result of the community mapping activity were added together, and individual grid squares that had a statistically significant level of consensus (at least 4 grid squares in agreement, out of a maximum observed score of 11) became the foundation for the focus areas. Areas where there was a lack of consensus (3 or less squares in agreement) became variations A-F.

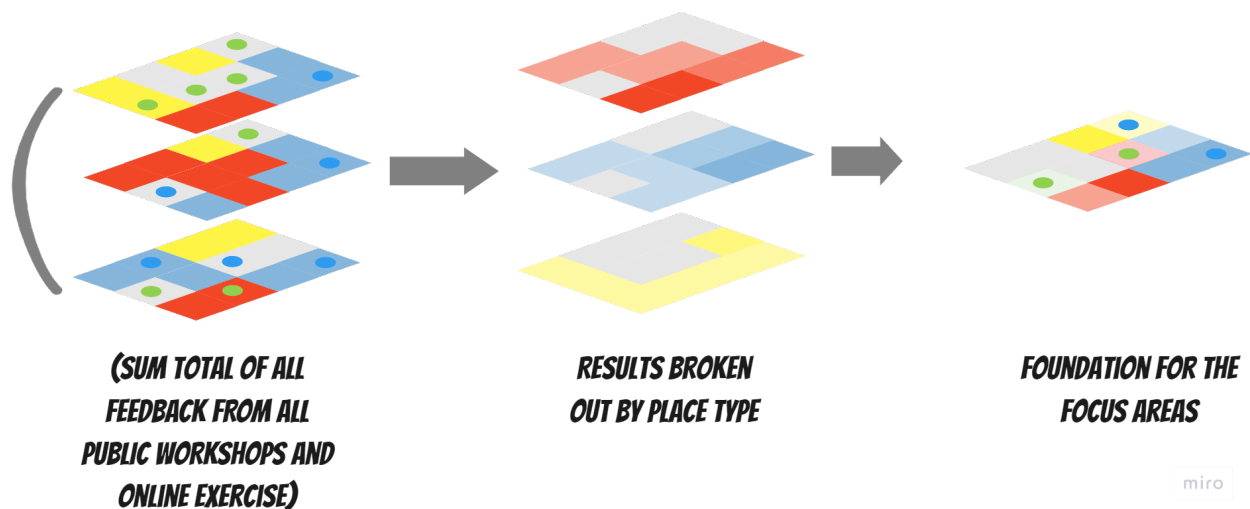


Figure 4: Development Process Diagram

## Overall Takeaways

### Housing Mix

All three possibilities contain a different arrangement and mixture of place types that translate into different scales of development and mixes of uses across the City. Each possibility receives the majority of new units from medium scale neighborhood and mixed-use place types, which results in a significant portion (between 65-75%) of new development occurring in the form of middle housing and medium scale multi-unit projects that range from 1-3 stories in scale. Between 35-40% of new housing in each of the scenarios would come from slightly larger developments 4 stories and above. All of the possibilities assume a relatively low amount of new housing delivered from single family homes and small-scale middle housing (6 units or less).

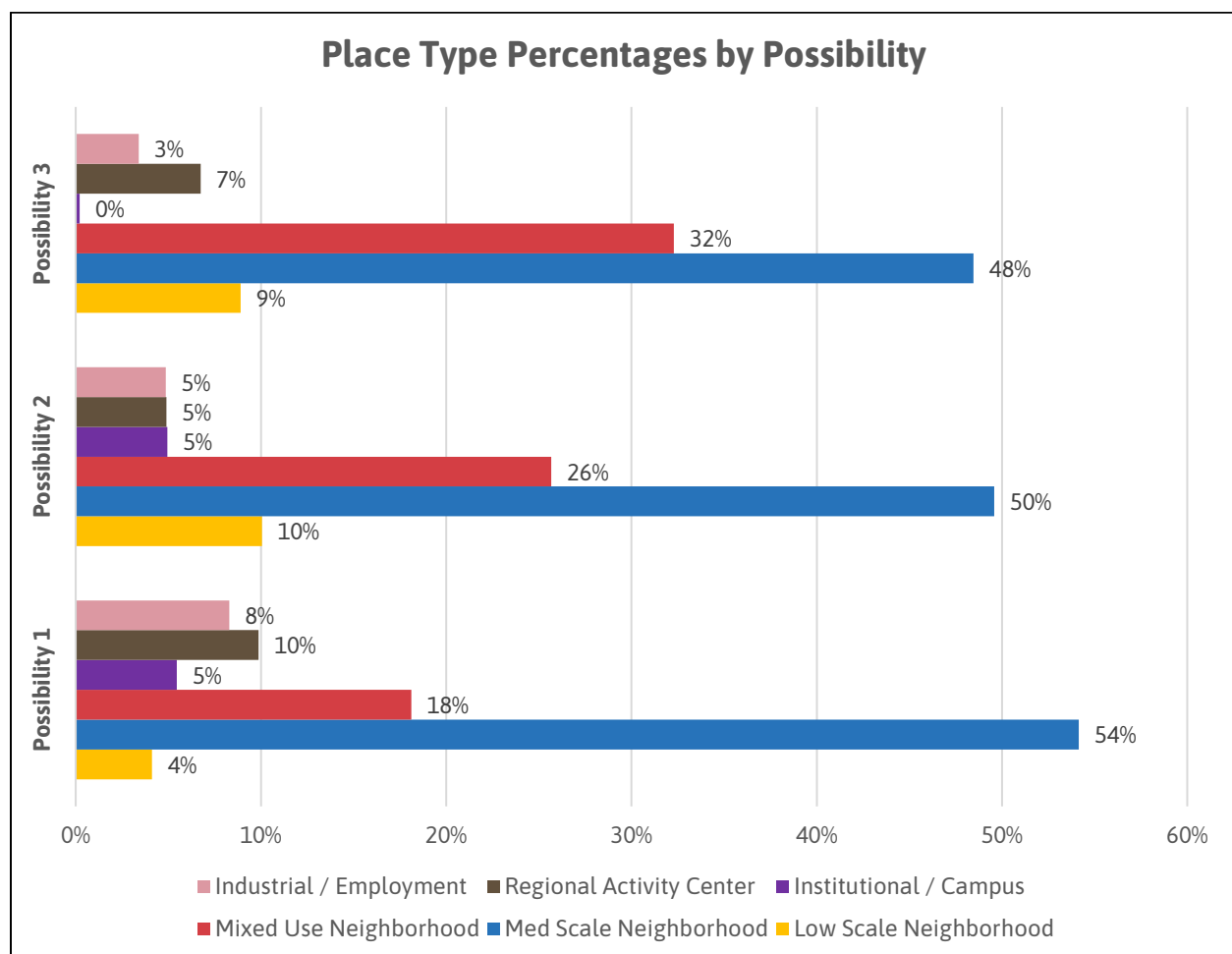


Table 1: Units by Place Type and Possibility

Possibility 1 includes a greater portion of new units being delivered through smaller housing types than the other two possibilities due to a greater allocation of the medium scale neighborhood place type (54% compared to 50% and 48%). In Possibility 1, approximately 60% of total units would be delivered from projects between 3-4 stories in size, compared to 56% in Possibility 2 and 57% in Possibility 3.

Possibility 3 assumes fewer total units from middle housing and more are developed from larger mixed use developments generally 5 stories and above, because of a greater allocation of the mixed use place type designation (32%).

Place Type	New Units Per Acre	Possibility 1		Possibility 2		Possibility 3	
		Acres	Units	Acres	Units	Acres	Units
Low Scale Neighborhood	1.3	2850.15	3717	3002.52	3916	2976.48	3882
Med Scale Neighborhood	2.5	2855.16	7085	2723.69	6758	2715.54	6738
Mixed Use Neighborhood	10.9	2010.86	21942	2201.41	24022	2386.34	26040
Institutional / Campus	3.5	416.40	1436	401.66	1385	279.33	963
Regional Activity Center	4.9	449.43	2184	318.38	1547	368.96	1793
Industrial / Employment	1.7	1051.81	1828	961.21	1671	925.04	1608
<b>Totals</b>	<b>N/A</b>		<b>38,192</b>		<b>39,299</b>		<b>41,024</b>

Table 2: Units by Place Type and Possibility

All three possibilities will generally produce a similar amount of housing. The numbers above include assumptions about the rate of development to estimate the number of new units that would be delivered within the focus areas only. Estimates for new units that would be developed outside of focus areas have not been calculated at this time. Each of the possibilities would generally allow for a greater diversity and mix of housing compared to current conditions today.

**Land Use**

Within all three of the possibilities, the majority of land is dedicated to either low intensity or medium scale residential place types. Compared to the existing zoning framework today, a much greater portion is dedicated to medium scale residential in terms of acreage. Within each of the variations, the majority are dedicated to medium scale neighborhood, mixed use neighborhood, and regional activity centers. The majority of employment land is located outside of variations areas, and possibility 1 provides the greatest amount of land dedicated to employment. Along transit corridors and areas that are defined as connected and accessible neighborhoods, there is a majority of mixed use and regional activity center place types. The table below shows variations within land use possibilities, with the top two place types shown ranked by acreage.



Variation	Rank	Possibility 1	Possibility 2	Possibility 3
A	1	Med Scale Neighborhood	Med Scale Neighborhood	Low Scale Neighborhood
	2	Regional Activity Center	Mixed Use Neighborhood	Med Scale Neighborhood
B	1	Med Scale Neighborhood	Med Scale Neighborhood	Med Scale Neighborhood
	2	Mixed Use Neighborhood	Mixed Use Neighborhood	Mixed Use Neighborhood
C	1	Med Scale Neighborhood	Med Scale Neighborhood	Med Scale Neighborhood
	2	Regional Activity Center	Mixed Use Neighborhood	Low Scale Neighborhood
D	1	Med Scale Neighborhood	Med Scale Neighborhood	Med Scale Neighborhood
	2	Mixed Use Neighborhood	Low Scale Neighborhood	Mixed Use Neighborhood
E	1	Med Scale Neighborhood	Med Scale Neighborhood	Mixed Use Neighborhood
	2	Mixed Use Neighborhood	Mixed Use Neighborhood	Med Scale Neighborhood
F	1	Med Scale Neighborhood	Med Scale Neighborhood	Med Scale Neighborhood
	2	Mixed Use Neighborhood	Mixed Use Neighborhood	Mixed Use Neighborhood
Total	1	Med Scale Neighborhood	Low Scale Neighborhood	Low Scale Neighborhood
	2	Low Scale Neighborhood	Med Scale Neighborhood	Med Scale Neighborhood

Table 3: Summary of Variations A-F for each Possibility

## Health

All three possibilities were evaluated by a series of environmental health metrics that will inform a health impact assessment included in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS). The following factors were analyzed as follows:

Scale:		Good	Better	Best	
		Possibility			
Metric	Topics	#1	#2	#3	Notes
Connected, accessible, 15 min neighborhoods	Physical activity, air quality, community connections				<i>Based on # units in variations that are 15-min neighborhood hot spots</i>
Growth near transit	Air quality				<i>Based on # units in variations that have transit access</i>
Park access	Physical activity				<i>Based on # units in variations with high access to parks</i>
Heat island mitigation	Heat				<i>Based on # units in variations with heat island disparities (opportunity to add greenery)</i>
Mixed uses	Physical activity, air quality, community connections				<i>Based on total mixed use + activity center acreage</i>
Buffering from highways	Air quality, noise				<i>Based on buffering residential from the highways in variations 1 and 3</i>

Table 4: Environmental Health Assessment

Possibility 3 generally scores highest from an environmental assessment, due to the fact that it's delivering the most housing overall, that it's placing the most housing near access to transit and within Connected and Accessible neighborhoods, and provides a greater mix of land uses.

Possibility 1 scores higher from an environmental externality perspective – due to its greater concentration of housing in areas that are not directly adjacent to major arterial corridors.

## Employment

For the purposes of comparing the potential employment numbers associated with each possibility, the team developed an index of jobs to housing units. The second column shows the assumption that was used for the percentage of land within a place that is dedicated to employment uses. In general, possibility 1 is shown to have greatest job concentrations in relation to the total number of housing units provided, due to a

greater proportion of the institutional / campus, regional activity center, and industrial / employment place types. Across all three possibilities, because there is a high percentage of acreage dedicated to the mixed-use neighborhood place type, between 40-50% of all jobs come will occur in mixed use neighborhoods that frequently host a greater percentage of retail oriented or low wage work. Across the board, the more employment focused place types (institutional / campus, regional activity center, and industrial / employment) have a much higher ratio of jobs to housing units, with more jobs coming from these designations in Possibilities 2 and 3.

Scale: Lowest Average Highest

		Possibility 1		Possibility 2		Possibility 3	
% of Total Acreage Assigned to Employment		Jobs Per Housing Unit		Jobs Per Housing Unit		Jobs Per Housing Unit	
		Acres	Unit	Acres	Unit	Acres	Unit
Low Scale Neighborhood	10%	285.02	0.14	300.25	0.15	297.65	0.16
Med Scale Neighborhood	10%	285.52	0.07	272.37	0.08	271.55	0.08
Mixed Use Neighborhood	50%	1005.43	0.67	1100.71	0.74	1193.17	0.76
Institutional / Campus	75%	312.30	3.83	301.25	4.20	209.50	4.30
Regional Activity Center	50%	224.72	4.70	159.19	5.15	184.48	5.28
Industrial / Employment	75%	788.86	3.60	720.91	3.95	693.78	4.05
Total -->			<b>1.07</b>		<b>0.98</b>		<b>0.95</b>

Table 5: Jobs to Housing Ratio

### Next Steps

At this stage in the process, the three possibilities are conceptual in nature. Additional work to understand GHG impacts of each possibility is underway and will be available soon. These concepts will be shared with the broader community, Community Partners, Community Working Groups, technical committees, the City Council, Planning Commission, and other relevant boards and commissions this summer and fall, and will be revised based on responses and inputs from these engagement activities. Following this, revised versions of the possibilities that assign place types at a parcel-level will be developed and evaluated under the State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) process. The Draft EIS will analyze impacts for the three parcel-specific possibilities and a no action alternative, followed by a public comment period. This will inform the development of a preferred possibility that will be presented to the community, Council, Planning Commission, and other stakeholder groups and assessed through a Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) in Spring 2025. The preferred possibility will become the basis for the policy development phase of the project and the re-write of Vancouver Municipal Code Title 20 - Land Use and

Development. It is likely that the preferred possibility will contain components of each of the three possibilities in response to community input, rather than a discrete selection of one over the others.

**Attachments:**

3 Land Use Possibility Maps  
Variation Area Calculations

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