

City of Vancouver’s DRAFT Desired Outcomes and Guiding Principles for the Community Connector and Evergreen Station Area

December 2024

Desired Outcomes

- There is a coordinated design for the Community Connector, transit station, future development at the Library Square site, the Library, Historic Reserve, and access to the surrounding street network – strengthening the connection between the two sides of the freeway.
- The Community Connector serves as an important active transportation corridor between the Downtown and Historic Reserve.
- The Community Connector is a resilient, adaptable structure (i.e., works in a variety of weather and can be changed over time).
- Library Square and other proximate development support transit ridership.
- The Evergreen Focus Area serves as an important “mobility hub” within the Downtown “transit district” – with safe, interconnected multimodal transportation facilities that provide many options for how people can move around the area and convenient transfers between modes.
- The Community Connector includes design elements that can be continued and incorporated into future 9th Street improvements that extend through Library Square to Columbia Blvd.
- The Evergreen Focus Area adds to the network of safe, well-maintained, and activated public spaces.
- Investments in the Evergreen station area complement existing uses and reflect the local culture, history, and the needs/aspirations of the existing community.

Place-making Principles

- Provide a pedestrian-oriented corridor that aligns with 9th Street (or 8th Street) for the purpose of reducing walking distance between the cores of Downtown and the Historic Reserve and for supporting active uses and special events on the Library Square site.
- Improve both the physical and perceived connectivity between Downtown and the Historic Reserve (considering sight lines, grade changes, safety/quality of the route, design consistency, etc.).
- Maximize the development potential of Library Square, focusing on uses that generate transit riders and support an active station environment throughout the day and week.
- Create an inclusive hub for Vancouver – where community members can gather and all people feel welcome and safe.
- Provide a visual and symbolic “gateway” to Vancouver and the State of Washington – utilizing iconic design.
- Celebrate the local culture of today and honor the many histories of the surrounding area and the city’s people.

- Incorporate storytelling through public art, signage, sound, interactive installations.
- Include communities on the east side of I-5 in addition to Downtown and other neighborhoods on the west side.
- Reflect opportunity to enhance regional connectedness through IBR investments, especially the transit extension.
- Support local businesses through information, signage, programming, and partnerships.
- Design the Community Connector as a calm, inviting, family-friendly place to pass through, learn, and hang out.
 - Incorporate space for community gathering and interaction, as well as passive recreational use.
 - Consider amenities for children – complementary to the library and serving the growing Downtown population.
 - Provide scenic viewpoints.
 - Enable small events, pop-up markets, and group activities – but not necessarily large events. Plan for loading/unloading, space for tents, electricity, and acoustics.
- Explore the provision of public restrooms in this area, recognizing the increased demand from the transit station.

Transportation Principles

- Provide enhanced east-west connections for walking and small mobility modes (e.g., bikes, e-bikes, scooters).
 - Align with 9th Street as a main pedestrian-oriented east-west corridor through Downtown.
 - Link to the station, bus stops, and existing sidewalk/small mobility networks.
 - Incorporate amenities that support these modes, such as a bike repair kiosk, bike rentals, wayfinding signage.
- Ensure that all transit connections to and from the Evergreen station are safe, convenient (short distances), comfortable and accessible to all transit riders.
- Provide intuitive wayfinding through the space, with direct routes and clear sight lines to key destinations.
- Ensure that bus turning and through movements support efficient transit operations and provide the necessary facilities to support the transit station, while minimizing interference with pedestrian movement and sight lines.
- Locate and design pathways to minimize grade changes as much as possible, recognizing the topography of the area and constraints associated with the transportation facilities.
- Consider the potential to extend transit in the future – consider design choices that would minimize costs and disturbances to surrounding uses in this event.

Design Principles

- Design the spaces to recognize and balance the variety of user needs and to prioritize accessibility for people with disabilities.
 - Use universal design and other best practices for designing public spaces and transportation facilities – going beyond Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requirements where possible.
 - Incorporate the detailed feedback from people with disabilities and accessibility-oriented leaders provided to the City and IBR to date and involve this population at every stage of design and implementation moving forward.
- Strategically locate and design Transportation facilities to promote safety and comfort—separating faster moving modes from slower moving ones and gathering places.
- Use “Crime prevention through environmental design” (CPTED) principles as part of a comprehensive strategy to promote security and provide “eyes” on public spaces.
 - Activate the public spaces through both design and programming (e.g., interactive installations, events, ground floor uses that generate foot traffic).
 - Partner with nearby property owners, agencies, and community groups to program the public spaces.
 - Strategically locate and design lighting to promote security, while minimizing unwanted spillover.
- Provide a mix of hardscape and vegetation on the Community Connector.
 - Select plants that provide aesthetic and environmental benefits (such as shading and bee habitat).
 - Seek creative ways to address long-term maintenance needs.
- Design the Community Connector to:
 - be flexible and adaptable (with evolving uses over time);
 - be cost effective to build and maintain;
 - promote environmental sustainability (using low carbon materials and methods);
 - be resilient to weather events and reduce the heat island effect; and
 - provide visual, noise, and air quality buffers from the freeway and transit guideway.
- Size the Community Connector to balance the competing objectives for the space, including long-term maintenance and security considerations.
 - Prioritize functional and accessible active transportation connections.
 - Seek creative ways to use the site’s topography as an advantage.
- Design the transit station to blend with the surrounding development, consistent with the Downtown Design Guidelines.
- Design new development on Library Square to provide a functional transition and visual buffer between existing Downtown development and the transit station.