# Evergreen and Grand Current Corridor Conditions Summary

## Planning Process and Development Moratorium Overview

The City of Vancouver is embarking on a community planning process for the Evergreen and Grand commercial corridors that is intended to support neighborhood livability and create a walkable environment where businesses can thrive. This process will occur in three stages that will identify issues, opportunities, and community priorities, establish a long-term vision, and result in a set of recommendations to achieve the vision. The Strategy will address types of uses that are allowed, the pedestrian environment, building orientation in relationship to the street, and parking and access. The process began in January 2020 and will extend through the summer, and the February 13 open house was a first step in this process.

​With recent local market interest in development and redevelopment along these corridors and the lack of an existing community vision for this area, City Council adopted a temporary moratorium on new development for the Evergreen and Grand study area in November 2019. The moratorium allows time to work with the community to establish a long-term vision for these corridors, and develop strategies and standards that support this vision.

The Evergreen and Grand corridors are part of the Commercial Corridors Strategy, a larger citywide community planning process intended to enhance existing commercial corridors, increase walkability, ensure access to services and amenities, support job growth, and increase housing opportunities. The overall process will address study corridors in three general areas, starting with the Evergreen and Grand commercial corridors.

## Development Growth and Decline

Evergreen and Grand have an incredibly rich history dating back to World War two. The corridors originally served as roadhouses to nearby highways, and the greatest concentration of development took place in the nineteen forties. This growth occurred due to industrial needs associated with World War two and the area’s proximity to the nearby shipyards on what is now Columbia Boulevard. Once the war was over, development waned. The growth and decline of development on the corridors is most evident in that most of the architecture in the area is from the nineteen twenties and nineteen fifties.

## Study Area Boundary

The study area includes Evergreen Boulevard from V Street to Grove Street, and Grand Boulevard from East Mill Plain Boulevard to East Evergreen Boulevard. The properties within the study area include businesses and residences that are oriented toward Evergreen Boulevard and Grand Boulevard.

## Zoning Intent

The current zoning in the study area is Community Commercial which is intended to serve the surrounding neighborhoods with less emphasis on providing goods and services to residents of Vancouver citywide. Development in this zone is intended to be mid-sized rather than accommodating larger uses such as big box retail stores, or singular small “mom and pop” shops on street corners.

The permitted uses in this zone are meant to be community-centered and the zone accommodates a variety of uses, including retail stores, office space, housing, and lodging facilities.

Buildings in this zone are meant to engage the street with parking being provided on-street or behind the buildings themselves. Storefront street engagement can allow for the provision of public spaces like plazas or bench seating. The objective of the Community Commercial zone is to provide community destinations that includes retail goods and services purchased regularly by residents of nearby neighborhoods—like grocery stores and food establishments—as well as uses such as offices and lodging that can be easily accessed by walking, driving, biking, or taking the bus.

Uptown Village is a local example of what development in Community Commercial could be in the Evergreen and Grand corridors.

## Existing Land Use

On Evergreen Boulevard, existing land uses include office and commercial space, retail options, recreational activities, residential properties (including single-family and multi-family developments), and automotive repair services. The existing land uses on Grand Boulevard consist of retail shopping stores, office space, automotive repair services, dining options, and institutional properties.

However, zoning is not always consistent with what uses currently exists on the ground. Some examples on Grand Boulevard include the Arco gas station and a retail shopping center with parking offered in front of the building. Additionally, some uses have changed over time, including a change of use from single-family residential to commercial use.

Vacant and underutilized parcels are present on both Evergreen and Grand Boulevard.

## Grand Boulevard – Roadway Conditions

Land use is often influenced by roadway conditions. Grand Boulevard is moderately busier than Evergreen Boulevard with a three-lane roadway and offering no on-street parking—the availability of which is often a benefit for commercial businesses. However, there are sidewalks and bike lanes which provide alternatives for people to visit the corridor.

For businesses to thrive, average daily trips to the area should be between five thousand and fifteen thousand. Any additional traffic becomes a hostile environment for some businesses due to traffic noise and increased vehicle presence. This can reduce a visitor’s desire to patronize businesses like local restaurants with outdoor seating or spend time in public spaces. The current number of average daily trips on Grand Boulevard is ten thousand.

## Grand Boulevard – Sidewalk and Transit Conditions

While sidewalks are present, they are fairly narrow for a commercial street at only six feet wide in most places. There are no trees or landscape strips, leaving no separation between the street and sidewalks and leading to “splash zones” and lowered interest in commuting on foot.

However, there are crosswalks at several intersections and block lengths are not excessive, making navigating this corridor as a pedestrian less difficult compared to many other places in the city. The corridor also hosts several C-TRAN bus stops. Lighting in the area is oriented to vehicles rather than pedestrians or bicyclists and typically located once per block.

## Evergreen Boulevard – Roadway Conditions

Evergreen Boulevard is more intimate than Grand with a two-lane roadway which varies in width. On-street parking is sporadic, which offers an opportunity to account for additional parking in the community vision if desired.

Bike lanes are also present on Evergreen, which are beneficial to riders coming up the hill from Reserve Street. The bike lane eventually transitions to sharrows partway in the study area. The speed limit on Evergreen matches that of Grand at twenty-five miles per hour with speed bumps to reduce speeds. Average daily trips on Evergreen is approximately half of what occurs on Grand at five thousand trips.

## Evergreen Boulevard – Sidewalk and Transit Conditions

Similar to Grand Boulevard, six foot sidewalks are present throughout the Evergreen corridor and there are few street trees. While Evergreen hosts several cross walks and bus stops, no lighting is oriented to the street or sidewalk and there are multiple driveways per block.

## Mill Plain Bus Rapid Transit

C-TRAN will be rolling out a new Bus Rapid Transit line on Mill Plain Boulevard just north of the Evergreen and Grand corridors approximately within the next three years. This new line will provide three stations within a 5-minute walking distance of the corridors, which will have a positive impact the commercial uses in the area. The planned stations will be located at Grand Boulevard, V Street, and Reserve Street with the design of the stations being similar in character to the existing Bus Rapid Transit line on Fourth Plain Boulevard.