

Draft Environmental Impact Statement: Executive Summary

The City is working together with community members to create **OUR VANCOUVER**, a Comprehensive Plan Update that will guide growth and development through 2045. This update is required by state law and must accommodate at least 38,129 new housing units and 43,198 new jobs over the next 20 years to support our growing city's needs.

The State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) requires the City to study, at a high level, the potential environmental effects of the Comprehensive Plan Update. On July 8, 2025, the City published an environmental report, called a Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), to comply with SEPA and provide community members, government agencies and tribes with information to consider in the decision-making process for the Comprehensive Plan Update. The Draft EIS is available for public comment through September 8, 2025. This executive summary gives an overview of key information from the Draft EIS, how you can comment on the report, and what comes next.

What did the Draft EIS study?

The Draft EIS looked at the potential environmental effects of three future scenarios: a No Action Alternative and two “action” alternatives. The Draft EIS compares the alternatives and describes the potential impacts and benefits of each alternative. Keep reading to learn more about the alternatives or visit beheardvancouver.org/plan2045 to explore larger maps of the alternatives.

You can also learn more details about the alternatives in Chapter 2 of the Draft EIS.

No Action Alternative

- The No Action Alternative, required by SEPA, assumes future growth and development would occur under the current Comprehensive Plan and zoning code and no updates to the Plan or zoning code would be made.
- The zoning map would remain the same as it is today, as shown in **Figure 1**. Appendix C of the Draft EIS explains what these zoning districts are and what they allow today.
- Automatic state laws about housing would still take effect: specifically, per new state requirements, most Washington cities now must allow at least 4 housing units per residential lot, and at least 6 units per residential lot if it is near transit or if 2 of the units are affordable to all income levels.
- The No Action Alternative has the lowest levels of density, intensity, and mix of land uses citywide; therefore, the City would not meet its minimum 2045 housing and jobs targets.

Figure 1. No Action Alternative Zoning

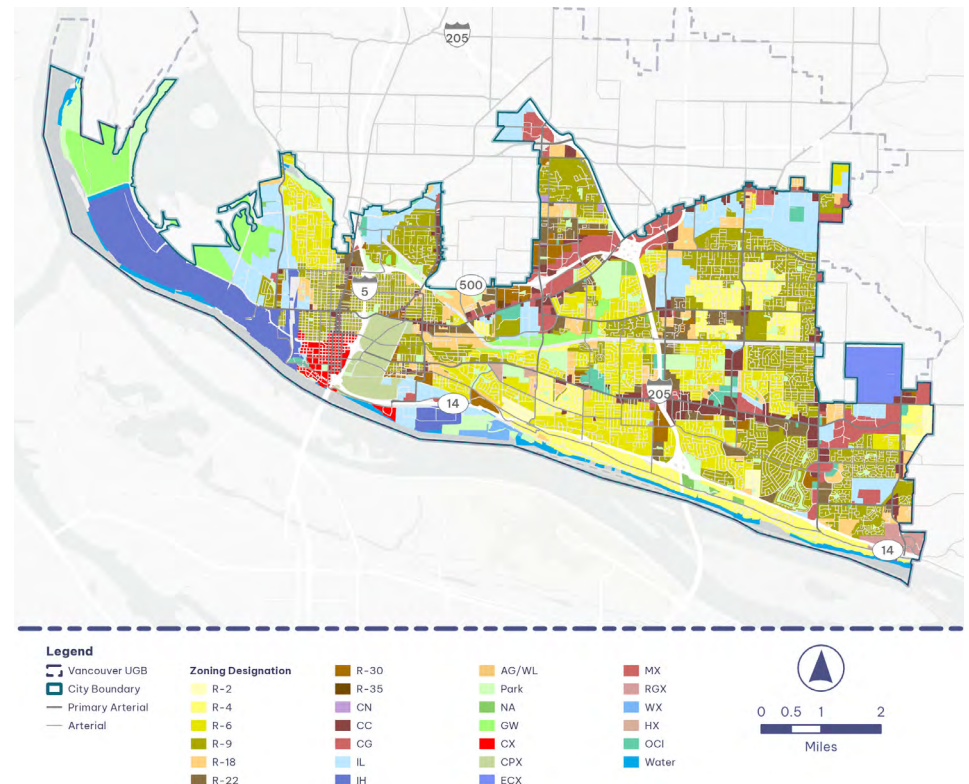
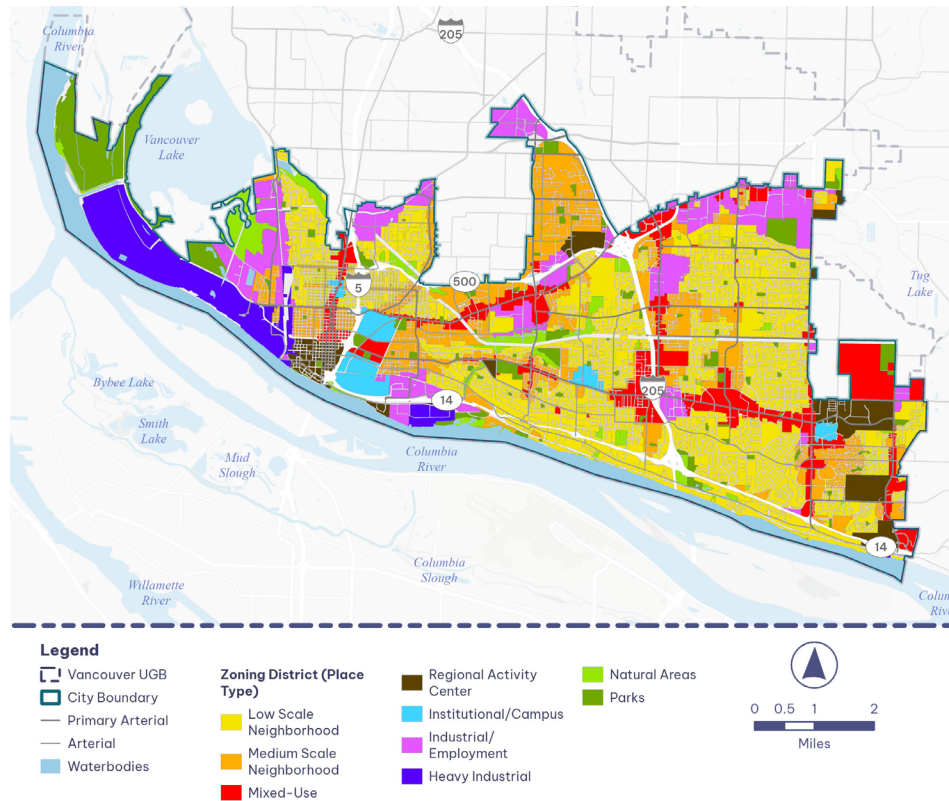


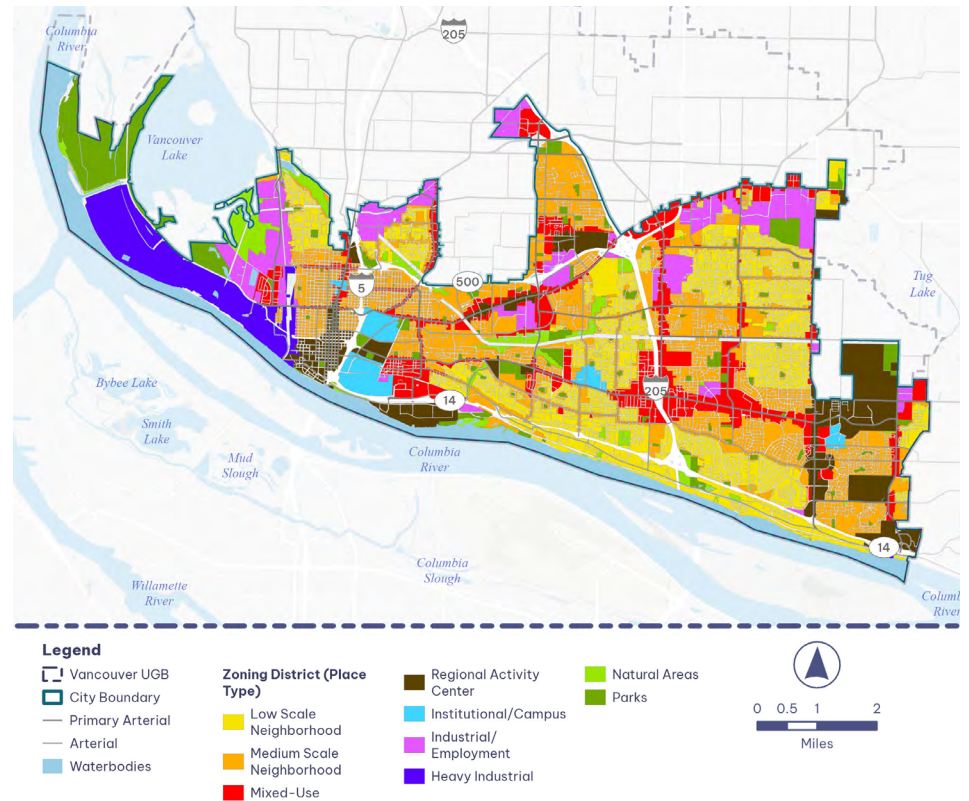
Figure 2. Alternative 1 Proposed Zoning Districts



Alternative 1

- The City would implement the Comprehensive Plan Update, as well as rename and simplify its land use designations and zoning code to focus on a smaller set of zoning districts.
- The zoning map proposes the new zoning districts shown in **Figure 2**.
- More density and greater mixes of land uses would be allowed in more parts of the city than with the No Action Alternative.
- The City would exceed its minimum 2045 housing and jobs targets (estimated room for 45,100 new housing units and 46,000 new jobs).

Figure 3. Alternative 2 Proposed Zoning Districts



Alternative 2

- Similar to Alternative 1, the City would implement the proposed Comprehensive Plan Update and associated changes to the land use designations and zoning code.
- The zoning map includes the new zoning districts shown in **Figure 3**.
- Higher-density development and greater mixes of land uses (e.g., Medium-Scale Neighborhood, Mixed Use, Regional Activity Center) would be allowed in more areas of the city than Alternative 1.
- The City would exceed its minimum 2045 housing and jobs targets by a greater amount than Alternative 1 (estimated room for 50,700 new housing units and 49,300 new jobs).

What do the map colors and zoning districts mean?

The maps are color-coded by different categories of development designations that differ in scale and allowed uses, called zoning districts. The No Action Alternative keeps the same zoning districts as today, while Alternatives 1 and 2 propose simplifying to nine new zoning districts:

- Low-Scale Neighborhood:** Allows up to 6 housing units per parcel and building heights of up to 3 stories (maximum of 45 feet tall).
- Medium-Scale Neighborhood:** Allows a broad range of housing types and building heights of 2 to 5 stories (maximum of 75 feet tall), as well as civic/institutional buildings and some neighborhood commercial activities.
- Mixed-Use Neighborhood:** Allows a broad range of housing, commercial, and civic/institutional use types, with building heights of 3 to 8 stories (maximum of 110 feet tall).
- Regional Activity Center:** Allows opportunities for economic, entertainment, civic, and denser housing needs, with minimum building heights of 3 stories and no maximum building heights.
- Institutional/Campus:** Includes lands that support academic, civic, or medical buildings up to 12 stories (maximum of 150 feet tall) and denser housing types.
- Industrial/Employment:** Includes lands with large-scale, single-tenant industrial, warehouse and flex space buildings, and smaller, multi-tenant industrial buildings ranging from up to 12 stories (maximum of 150 feet tall). No new housing allowed.
- Heavy Industrial:** Includes lands that are currently zoned for heavy industrial uses, such as manufacturing and production, within the city and would remain unchanged from today's zoning regulations. No new housing allowed.
- Parks:** Includes lands currently zoned as public community and neighborhood parks. No housing allowed.
- Natural Areas:** Includes lands currently zoned for greenways and natural areas, which are generally undeveloped lands. No housing allowed.



Explore more detailed maps of the alternatives

BeHeard Vancouver

beheardvancouver.org/plan2045

What do all of the alternatives have in common?

- 1 Growth, development, and change will occur in all areas of Vancouver over the next 20 years.
- 2 Residential neighborhoods would make up about half the City's total land area. Per state law, at least 4 housing units would be allowed per residential lot, and at least 6 units per residential lot if it is near transit or if 2 of the units are affordable.
- 3 All have a similar amount and location of Parks, Natural Areas, Institutional/Campus, and Heavy Industrial lands.

What are the potential effects of the alternatives on our environment?

The table on the following pages summarizes potential differences in impacts between the No Action and Action Alternatives (1 and 2). Alternatives 1 and 2 generally have similar impacts and benefits but to different degrees. Chapters 3, 4, and 5 of the Draft EIS provide more specific details for each alternative, as well as information about current conditions and potential ways to offset those impacts.

Potential Environmental Effects of the Alternatives

Element of the Environment	No Action	Action Alternatives (1 and 2)
Land and Shoreline Use, Housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not consistent with proposed Comprehensive Plan Update and related policies. • Does not meet City housing and jobs growth targets. • Lowest potential for commercial displacement, fewer new spaces for businesses. • Lowest potential for diversity of housing types and affordable housing supply. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consistent with proposed Comprehensive Plan Update and related policies. • Exceed City housing and jobs growth targets. Alternative 2 has the highest capacity for new housing and jobs. • Moderate potential for commercial displacement, more new spaces for businesses than No Action. Alternative 2 has the most capacity for new business space. • Higher potential for diversity of housing types and more affordable housing supply than No Action; highest potential under Alternative 2.
Aesthetics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some changes to visual setting but overall modest impacts to aesthetics. • Lowest potential for aesthetic improvements from redevelopment of parking lots, vacant lots and structures. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moderate potential for larger-scale buildings and associated visual impacts. Slightly higher potential impacts under Alternative 2 than Alternative 1. • Moderate potential for aesthetic improvements from redevelopment of parking lots, vacant lots and structures. Slightly higher potential under Alternative 2 than Alternative 1.
Historic and Cultural Preservation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lowest potential for disturbance of individual historic/cultural sites and associated impacts. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moderate potential for disturbance of individual historic/cultural sites and associated impacts under both alternatives.
Transportation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lowest increase in total miles traveled by all vehicles each day (called vehicle miles traveled or VMT) on a citywide basis. • Highest VMT per household because of fewer opportunities for mixing housing, services, and businesses. • Generally lowest projected new traffic on roads identified for safety-related improvements. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Higher total daily citywide VMT than No Action because of expected population growth; slightly higher for Alternative 2 than Alternative 1. • Lower VMT per household than No Action; lowest under Alternative 2 because of a greater mix of housing, services, and businesses that could result in less need for driving. • Higher projected new traffic on roads identified for safety-related improvements than No Action; slightly higher for Alternative 2 than Alternative 1.
Noise	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lowest potential for construction and long-term transportation noise impacts in residential/noise-sensitive areas. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moderate potential for construction and long-term transportation noise impacts in residential/noise-sensitive areas; slightly higher potential under Alternative 2 than Alternative 1.
Public Services and Utilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lowest new demand citywide for public services and utilities, including fire; police; schools; parks and recreation facilities; water, wastewater, and sewer services; energy; and solid waste services. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Higher new demand citywide for public services and utilities than No Action because of expected population growth, with Alternative 2 having higher demand than Alternative 1.
Earth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lowest potential for ground disturbances, potential erosion, and increases in impervious surfaces (e.g., rooftops, paved areas, compacted soils, etc.). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Higher potential for ground disturbances, potential erosion, and increases in impervious surfaces than No Action, with slightly higher potential under Alternative 2 than Alternative 1.

Potential Environmental Effects of the Alternatives

Element of the Environment	No Action	Action Alternatives (1 and 2)
Air Quality, Greenhouse Gases and Climate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lower modeled 2045 air pollutant and greenhouse gas emissions than existing conditions. • Lowest potential for construction-related air quality impacts. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lower modeled 2045 emissions than existing conditions; higher modeled emissions than No Action Alternative because of higher modeled VMT. Slightly higher modeled emissions for Alternative 2 than Alternative 1. • Higher potential for construction-related air quality impacts than No Action; slightly higher potential for Alternative 2 than Alternative 1.
Water, Plants and Animals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lowest potential for new impervious surfaces and associated runoff. • Lowest potential for impacts to vegetation and habitat areas. • Lowest potential for new development subject to updated Critical Areas regulations protecting ecosystems. • Lowest capacity for new housing units in areas with existing low tree canopy cover. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Higher potential for new impervious surfaces and associated runoff than No Action, with highest potential under Alternative 2. • Higher potential for impacts to vegetation and habitat areas than No Action, with highest potential under Alternative 2. • Higher potential for new development subject to updated Critical Areas regulations protecting ecosystems, with highest potential under Alternative 2. • Higher capacity for new housing units in areas with existing low tree canopy cover than No Action, with highest capacity under Alternative 2.

How do I comment on the Draft EIS?

- We welcome your comments from now through September 8, 2025 at 11:59 p.m.
- **Online Comment Form** (preferred): www.surveyhero.com/c/VancouverDEIS
- **Email** to OurVancouver2045@cityofvancouver.us
- **Mail** your comments to:
 - Attn: Meredith Herbst
 - City Hall
 - PO Box 1995
 - Vancouver, WA 98668
- **Leave a voicemail** by calling 360-487-7929.
- **Attend a public meeting** and provide written comments.

Public Meeting Dates

EAST VANCOUVER

Wednesday, July 30, 2025
4 p.m. to 7 p.m.

Firstenburg Community Center
Community Room
700 NE 136th Avenue
Vancouver, WA 98684

WEST VANCOUVER

Saturday, August 9, 2025
11 a.m. to 2 p.m.

City Hall
Aspen Room
415 W. 6th Street
Vancouver, WA 98660

Please visit the Be Heard Vancouver website for more information about the public meetings and other informal opportunities to review and discuss the Draft EIS with City staff: www.beheardvancouver.org/plan2045

What's Next?

Fall 2025

Create a Preferred Alternative, Plan, and Development Regulations. Based on the environmental report, input from community members, City policy priorities, and direction from City Council, a final zoning map, called the preferred alternative, will be created that combines features from Alternatives 1 and 2. At this time, you'll have the opportunity to comment on the draft plan and development regulations.

Winter 2025 and beyond

Final Environmental Impact Statement. The City will study the potential impacts of the preferred alternative and summarize it in a final environmental report, called a Final EIS. In the Final EIS, staff will respond to the comments provided during the Draft EIS comment period by theme.

Consideration by City Council. The final Comprehensive Plan Update, zoning map, and development regulations will be presented to the City Council for adoption.

After adoption of the Comprehensive Plan Update, individual development proposals will be required to obtain applicable permits and conduct additional SEPA review as required by City and state law.

Questions? Please reach out to us at

OurVancouver2045@cityofvancouver.us

To request translations or accommodations for mobility, visual, hearing, written, or other needs, please contact us at 360-487-7937 or OurVancouver2045@cityofvancouver.us



Download the full Draft EIS at the [BeHeard Vancouver](https://www.beheardvancouver.org) website.

