

Section 20.630.080 City Center Waterfront

A. Purpose. The following City Center (CX) Waterfront design standards are intended to:

1. Implement the principles, goals and policies of the Vancouver City Center Vision Subarea Plan for mixed-use development and connections to the waterfront.

a. Create and support messy vitality, a dynamic and rich mix of residential, cultural, civic, retail and entertainment places that will attract growth, jobs and round-the clock activity;

b. Focus waterfront redevelopment on residential uses supported by significant public access, recreation, cultural, hospitality, entertainment and limited commercial uses;

c. Connect the downtown to the waterfront;

d. Overcome the barrier like feeling of the railroad and berm between downtown and the waterfront; and

e. Strengthen the primary street connections to the waterfront.

2. Build to the highest density that is financially viable and achievable within the allowed height restrictions and grid dimensions.

3. Create an urban high activity waterfront character.

4. Create tangible connections to the waterfront, connecting Vancouver's City Center businesses, neighborhoods and parks to a vibrant waterfront district that is accessible to all.

5. Design streets to enhance the district's ability to function as a pedestrian-oriented urban neighborhood, encourage pedestrian activity, and create a lively active district.

6. Extend the Columbia River Renaissance Trail to the west.

7. Encourage water oriented uses along the shoreline area.

8. Encourage environmentally friendly site and development design and construction.

9. Secure public access to or along the shoreline, to include waterfront public spaces.

B. Boundary. The area zoned City Center (CX) located within the Columbia West Renaissance District of the Vancouver City Center Subarea Plan between Interstate-5 on the east, the Railroad Bridge to the west; the Railroad right of way to the north and the Columbia River to the south (refer to Figure 20.630-7).

C. Administration. Compliance with the provisions of this Section shall be determined through the procedures of Section 20.620.030A and B, Columbia River Shoreline Enhancement Plan District, Administration.

D. Design and Development Standards

1. Street Grid

The street system shall be based on a grid pattern and pedestrian system similar to the existing City Center grid of 200 foot blocks. Based on site and environmental constraints the planning official may approve a limited number of smaller or larger blocks. Where blocks are 300 feet or longer on a face, mid block pedestrian connections shall be provided.

2. Traffic Calming

Traffic calming elements shall be incorporated in the master plan. Elements such as and not limited to maximize on-street parking, narrow streets, ten to twelve foot sidewalks, and visible attractive crosswalks at intersections.

3. Sidewalk

a. Width - Twelve to Fifteen foot wide sidewalks shall be provided on Primary corridors. Ten to twelve foot wide sidewalks shall be provided on Secondary corridors. Street classifications to be determined in master plan process.

b. Accents - Provide decorative pavement accents in sidewalks and at intersection crossings and on streets that provide connections to the trail network.

4. Street Lights

The City's Street Light Policy shall apply. It identifies the Sheppard's Crook light fixtures on the waterfront trail and the Double-Acorn light fixture on the streets.

5. Parking

Within the Columbia West Renaissance District, new surface parking lots are prohibited except for surface parking lot(s) needed during phased construction and where an approved phasing plan states timelines for completion of each phase and removal of such lot(s).

Structural parking is prohibited between the river and buildings located nearest to the shoreline and at the interface of buildings and the river shoreline.

Require parking driveway access from secondary streets and require on-street parking on all streets unless otherwise approved by the Transportation Manager.

Develop orient and screen structural parking to:

- a. complement adjacent buildings;
- b. integrate structural parking with the building's overall design;
- c. reduce automobile/pedestrian conflicts; and
- d. support a comfortable pedestrian environment.

6. Link to City Center

The principles of the Downtown Plan District sub-sections 20.630.020, Building Lines; 20.630.030, Rain Protection; 20.630.040, Blank Walls; 20.630.050 C, Maximum Building Heights; and

Parking Control, 20.630.060 shall apply to the Columbia West Renaissance District waterfront area zoned City Center (CX). The details of how and where to apply the above mentioned sub-sections of the Downtown Plan District (20.630) shall be provided in the master plan (20.620.030) and approved by the City.

7. Pathways, Open Spaces and Connections

People shall be able to interact with the river in appropriate locations, whether by touching, viewing, or enjoying the riverbank in other ways. Visual access to the water shall be provided. Physical access shall be provided where determined appropriate and consistent with the requirements of the Critical Areas Ordinance (VMC 20.740) and Shoreline Master Plan.

Locate open spaces strategically to serve proposed uses, pedestrian linkages and nearby districts and to enhance transition from the waterfront urban environment to the river shoreline environment. Provide pedestrian connections and specific design elements to connect the varied open spaces into a cohesive open space system.

Provide public open spaces that are diverse in character, and placement. Both green and hardscape shall be provided. Hardscape open spaces designed for intense urban uses and consistent with the Critical Areas Ordinance (VMC 20.740) and Shoreline Master Plan may be appropriate in some areas of the City Center's waterfront.

Extend the Columbia River Renaissance Trail from east to west keeping it as close to the river as possible consistent with the requirements of the Critical Areas Ordinance (VMC 20.740) and Shoreline Master Plan.

Incorporate information about the Columbia River's natural resources and cultural history into the design of provided riverfront features such as public art, and interpretive signs.

Provide primary pedestrian connections between the existing Esther Short Park and new waterfront development. Pedestrian connections may include, but not limited to, features or amenities such as special sidewalk design, landscaping, art work, street furniture, views etc. See Landscape Plans below.

8. Landscape Plans

Employ design concepts that unify the new waterfront development with the City Center, Esther Short Park, the Columbia River, river pathways and open spaces, and surrounding activities to the east and west, by specific plant selection, furniture, lighting, art, and hardscape materials etc. Integrate landscape elements to enhance transitions with pedestrian access ways from the waterfront urban development to the river shoreline.

Arrange plant communities to reinforce diverse open spaces, provide connectivity, aesthetics, ecological functions, and variety and interest through the seasons.

Select appropriate species of native and native-like plants in the waterfront district area based on the soil, light, moisture conditions, context and adjacent uses. Planting schemes shall consider water conservation goals refer to VMC Section 20.925.100.

Specify appropriate species of native plants in the riparian management area and riparian buffer of the shoreline based on the soil, light, moisture conditions, context and adjacent uses and consistent with the Critical Areas Ordinance and Shoreline Master Plan.

The selection of tree species and the layout of trees on different streets are related to both the

operation and desired character of a particular street. Species selection and tree spacing shall be coordinated with the City's Parks and Forestry Divisions to ensure appropriate relationship to the Columbia River shoreline and Columbia River Renaissance Trail, connectivity to the City Center, and desired character of specific streets. For street tree selection, refer to VMC 20.925.060.

9. Building Design

While creating an urban façade to the property line, development in the Columbia West Renaissance District should not present a wall between the downtown and the river, nor should it represent themed building types or styles. To avoid monolithic building mass, vary the footprint and façade plane of buildings that face the Columbia River to create a diversity of building forms and urban spaces adjacent to the shoreline. This may be accomplished by:

- a. configuring the building's mass to be perpendicular to the river;
- b. articulating the façade plane to step down to the shoreline;
- c. articulating building facades that face the Columbia River with human scale elements;
- d. breaking up the building's mass to develop a variety of volumes, developing a varied set of horizontal plane and vertical façade shifts; or
- e. using divisions inherent to the building type to break up potentially monolithic building forms.

Mixed-use developments shall be designed to provide increased opportunities for informal and planned activities beyond the typical 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. work hours.

Non-residential ground floor building levels shall include elements of pedestrian interest appropriate to the use of the ground floor, such as, but not limited to, public art, display windows, arcades, courtyards, front porches and stoops, special landscaping and architectural features.

Residential ground floor building levels shall include architectural elements that provide a transitional space between the public and private realm such as, but not limited to, indoor or outdoor foyers, courtyards, front porches, stoops and special landscaping areas.

The design of building lights, signs, and awnings, shall be determined through the master plan process. Signage shall be appropriate for a district that is intended primarily for residential use, and should not be visible from outside the district.

10. View Protection

Within the Columbia West Renaissance District, buildings shall be arranged and designed to maximize views and preserve views of the shoreline.

11. Sustainable Site and Development Design

As much as practicable incorporate sustainable design concepts as integral components of urban site and development designs. Examples include but are not limited to:

- a. integrating ecological landscape elements in site designs;
- b. developing special landscape environments;

c. creating interior spaces within buildings that relate to or take advantage of exterior environments; and

d. incorporating sustainable building practices or techniques into development designs.

As much as practicable integrate innovative stormwater management systems with the overall site and development designs. Examples include but are not limited to:

a. developing multifunctional stormwater management systems;

b. artistically emphasizing the stormwater function of typical building elements;

c. considering the potential aesthetic functions of stormwater management systems;

d. integrating recreational rooftop facilities;

e. creating comprehensive systems that advertise and attractively display the building's stormwater; and

f. incorporating eco-roofs.

Enhance the river bank with native vegetation and bio-engineered and/or bio-technical engineered solutions consistent with the Critical Areas Ordinance (VMC 20.740) and Shoreline Master Plan.

Use low impact development methods as much as practicable.

E. Modification. Modifications to design and development standards may be processed as part of the request for concept plan approval if the applicant can demonstrate compliance with the following approval criteria:

1. A master plan that complies with Section 20.268.070 Master Plan Components is submitted.

2. The modification(s) is warranted given site conditions and/or characteristics of the design.

3. The benefits accruing from the implementation of the modification meet or exceed the current design and development standards in Section D above.

4. Any impacts resulting from the modification are mitigated to the extent practical.

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Vancouver Municipal Code, § 20.630.080 (City Center
Waterfront)

