MASSIVE $1.5-BILLION OAKRIDGE CENTRE REDEVELOPMENT APPROVED BY VANCOUVER CITY COUNCIL

BY KENNETH CHAN (HTTP://WWW.VANCITYBUZZ.COM/AUTHOR/KENNETH/) | 7 MONTHS AGO |

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Vancouver City Council has approved Oakridge Centre's rezoning and redevelopment proposal with a 6-3 majority vote. It will allow the construction of 14 towers between 9 to 44 storeys tall while also doubling the amount of retail available at the 1959-built mall.

Are you in favour of the Oakridge Centre redevelopment proposal?

- Yes
- No
- Undecided

Vote

View Results

Polldaddy.com (http://polldaddy.com/signup-free/?ad=poll-front)

The scale of the development is unprecedented within the city proper limits and when complete, the tallest of the towers will become the City of Vancouver's highest outside of downtown Vancouver.

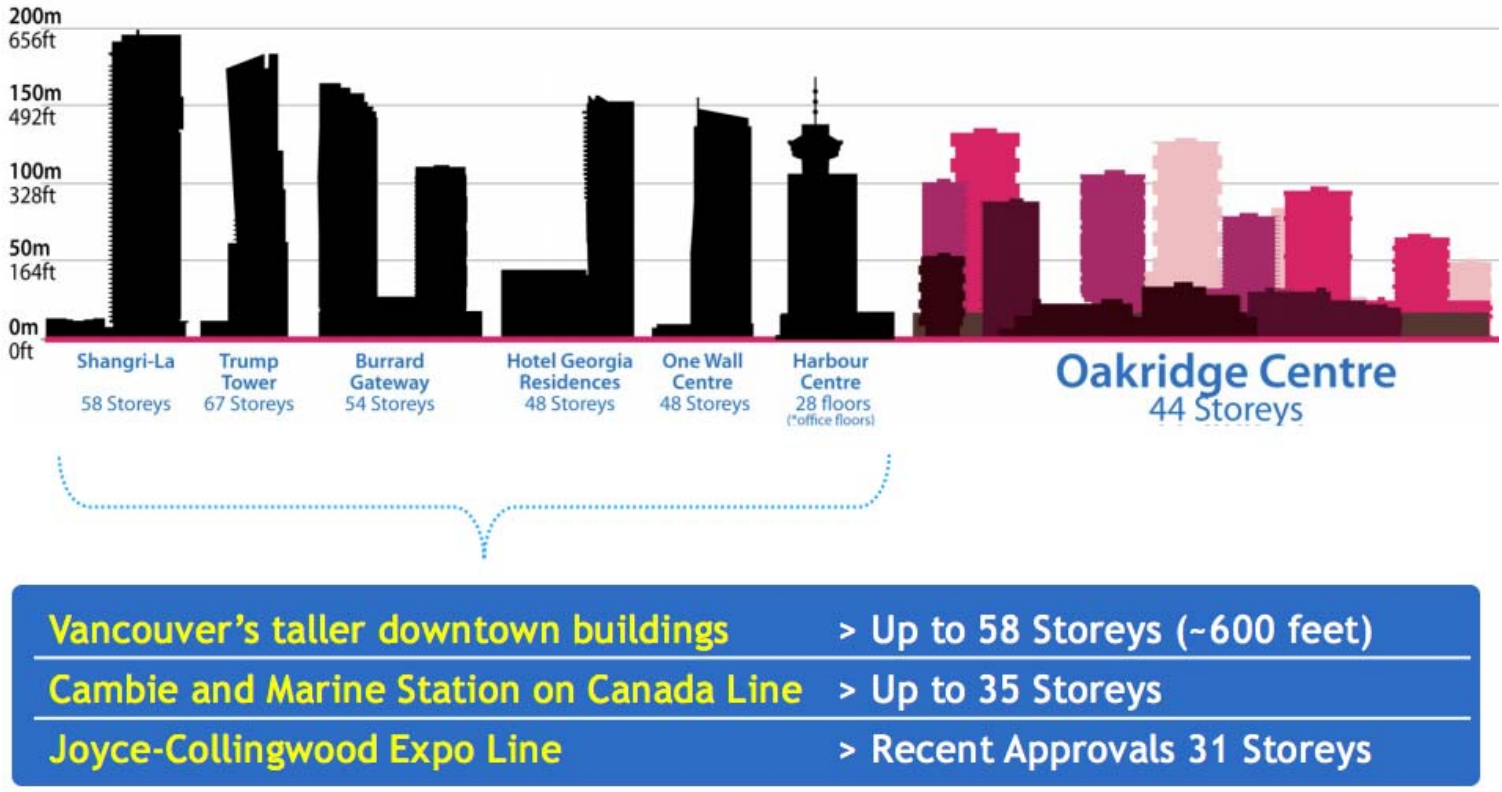

Image: City of Vancouver/Ivanhoe Cambridge/Westbank

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Oakridge Centre is the largest of the thee major redevelopments planned along the Canada Line. A redevelopment project at the 25.4-acre Pearson Dogwood site at 57th Avenue and Cambie Street (http://www.vancitybuzz.com/2014/02/major-redevelopment-pearson-dogwood/) will renew Vancouver Coastal Health's medical facilities, bring 3,083 residential units, green spaces, and a new/additional Canada Line station. Further down at the foot of Cambie Street, Marine Gateway has provided a catalyst for additional major development projects within the immediate vicinity.

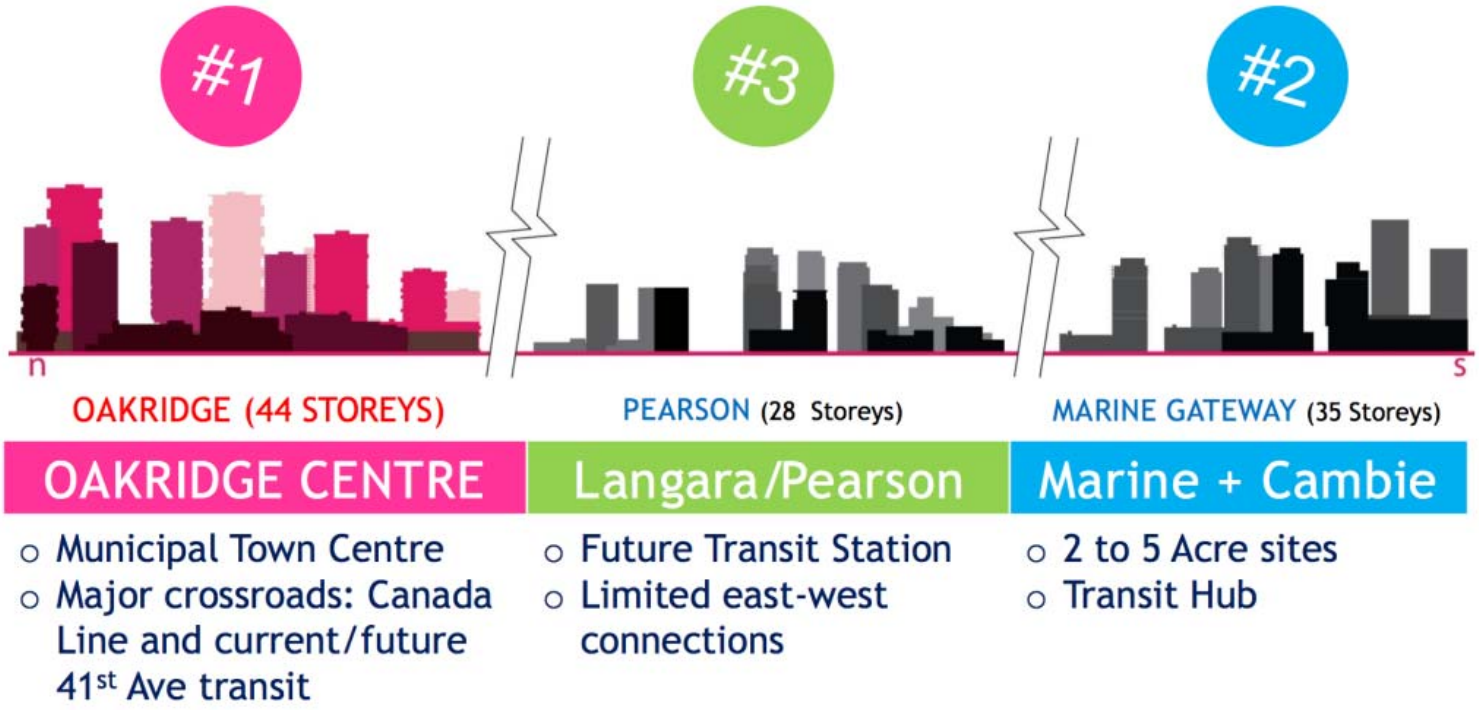

Image: City of Vancouver/Ivanhoe Cambridge/Westbank

This will be the only "Town Centre" within the City of Vancouver outside of downtown Vancouver whereas neighbouring Burnaby has three such hubs at Metrotown, Brentwood and Lougheed.

In addition to being served by the Canada Line, Oakridge Centre is located in the middle of Vancouver at the crossroads of two of the city's major arterial roads (41st Avenue and Cambie Street).

Three public hearings were held at City Hall on Monday, Tuesday and Friday to allow all 150+ speakers a chance to voice their views. The City of Vancouver received a total of 400+ written and spoken responses prior and during the public hearing period.

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While a majority of the speakers were in favour of the project and its elements, local neighbourhood residents came out in full force to voice their concerns over the traffic additional density would bring, shadowing caused by tower heights, potential strain in local services and infrastructure, local impact of phased construction over a decade long period, issues over transparency and the public consultation process, and their desire to maintain a small-scale, intimate “sense of community.”

Looking north from Tisdail Park

Image: City of Vancouver/Ivanhoe Cambridge/Westbank

Looking south from Queen Elizabeth Park

Image: City of Vancouver/Ivanhoe Cambridge/Westbank

A new concern that came up over numerous occasions throughout the public hearings related to the

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capacity of the “already overcrowded” SkyTrain Canada Line. According to TransLink, $7.7-million in capacity upgrades are required for Oakridge-41st Station if the project is to be built as proposed, but no funding sources for the improvements have been identified.

Most local neighbourhood residents who spoke at the hearings were against the project, although surveys indicated that city residents on a whole are greatly in favour and appreciate what the new Oakridge Centre will bring to the geographical centre of Vancouver. The future of Vancouver relies on densification if sustainability and economic growth is to be achieved.

In 2007, City Council approved a similar but significantly smaller development policy plan for Oakridge Centre with less buildings, less public amenities, and shorter heights limited to 24 storeys tall. The approved policy plan called for a total of 2.586-million square feet including 950,000 square feet of retail, 326,000 square feet of office space, 60,000 square feet of public amenities and 1.25-million square feet of residential.

Original 2007 vision from the approved Oakridge Centre policy statement.

Image: City of Vancouver/Ivanhoe Cambridge/Westbank

The Canada Line, which opened in 2009, has proved to be much more of a success than originally envisioned prior to its completion, especially in 2007 when the development policy plan was approved. Planners and proponents are citing the new SkyTrain line’s success as one of the main reasons for pursuing a denser and more ambitious project.

A re-submitted plan in 2012 offered a much more grandiose version that likened the mall’s precinct as a

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burgeoning town centre along the SkyTrain route – a future that is similar to SkyTrain-adjacent redevelopments planned for Brentwood Town Centre and Station Square.

The final plan that was deliberated in City Council this week proposed a total scale of 4.57-million square feet including 1.385-million square feet of retail, 424,300 square feet of office space, 70,000 square feet of public amenities and 2.761-million square feet of residential.

Altogether, and in great contrast, this is an increase from the existing mall area of 822,000 square feet comprised of 620,000 square feet of retail, 126,000 square feet of office space, 26,000 square feet of public amenities, and 50,000 square feet of residential.

- **SEE ALSO: Vancouver enters outdoor mall building boom: do you prefer indoor mall or outdoor retail shopping? (http://www.vancitybuzz.com/2014/03/indoor-shopping-malls-vs-outdoor-street-retail-prefer/)**

Today

Image: City of Vancouver/Ivanhoe Cambridge/Westbank

Future

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When complete, the new 28-acre shopping centre is expected to house up to 6,200 new residents in 2,914 units (290 social housing units, 290 market rental units, and 2,334 market units) and create space for 5,000 jobs (up from the existing 2,000) including 990 office jobs and 2,210 retail jobs.

	# of Units	2-bedroom Units	3-bedroom units
Social Housing Units	290 Units	87 Units	58 Units
Market Rental Units	290 Units	73 Units	29 Units
Market Strata Units	2,334 Units	965 Units	479 Units
TOTAL	2,914 Units	1,124 Units (38%)	569 Units (19%)

Image: City of Vancouver/Ivanhoe Cambridge/Westbank

A portion of the mall expansion will be open-air and exposed to the elements along a new high street and could allow certain retail units the option to open after mall hours. The expanded fashion, refreshed anchors, pedestrian street retail, expanded dining, and a broader range of community services come together to make Oakridge an integrated community and retail centre. This also means new and relocated spaces for Hudson's Bay, Safeway, a new Target store to replace Zellers, and an unnamed fourth anchor tenant.

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(article continues below…)

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$148.7-million in developer-funded public amenities will be accompany the project including a new 70,000 square foot Oakridge Civic Centre to provide a consolidated community centre/seniors' centre, a new library (25,000 sq. ft.) and a 69-space daycare (9,000 sq. ft.).

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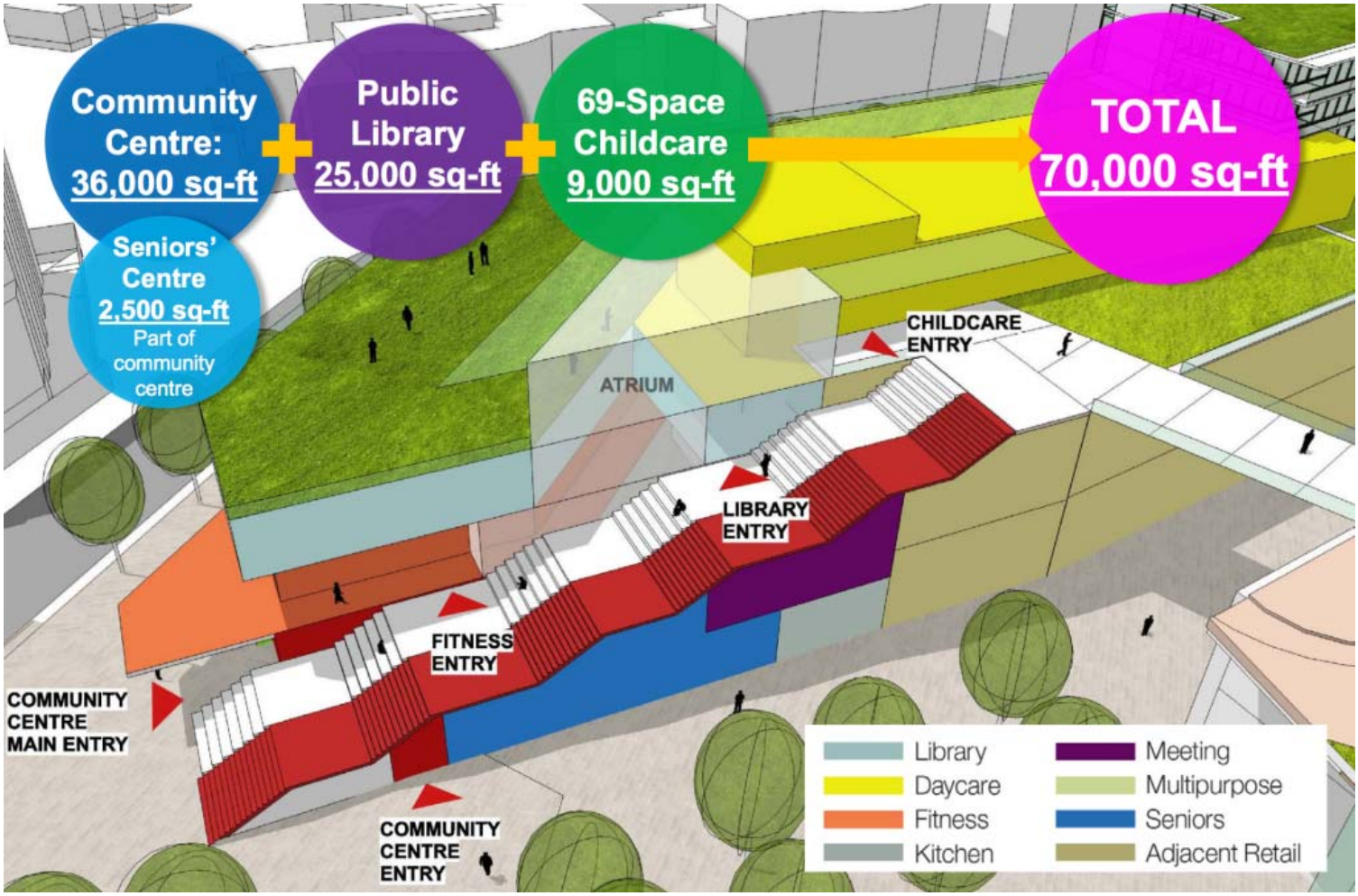

Image: City of Vancouver/Ivanhoe Cambridge/Westbank

A large 9-acre mall rooftop park commons area, where mall rooftop parking is currently located, is to include a water/pond garden area, lawn space and playing fields, dining terraces, community gardens and urban agriculture, recreational area, children's play area, a 0.8-km long walking and running loop trail, and a rooftop restaurant. The rooftop park commons area will be highly accessible from six large entry points and regulated as a City of Vancouver park with the associated Park Board bylaws.

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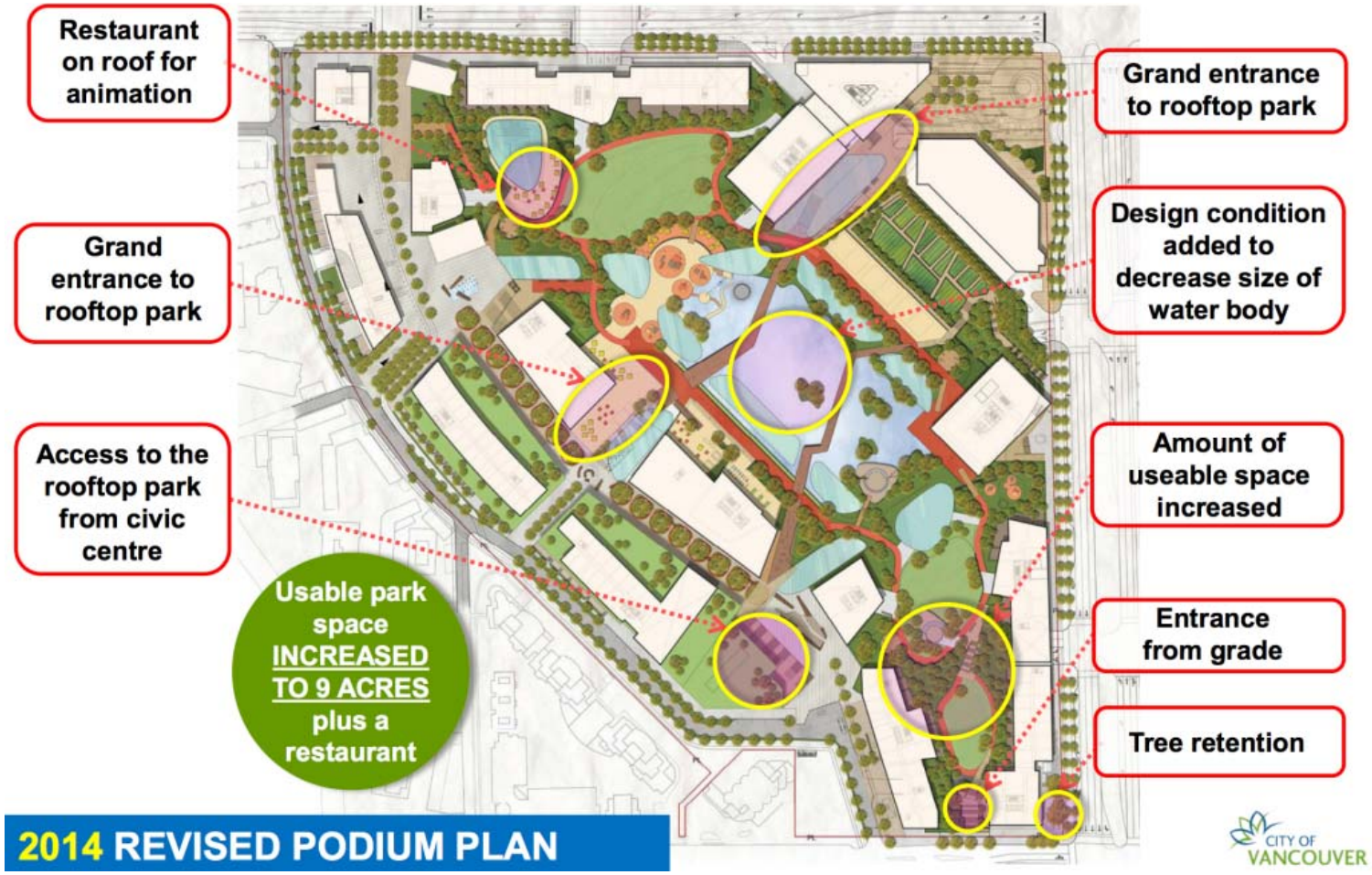

Image: City of Vancouver/Ivanhoe Cambridge/Westbank

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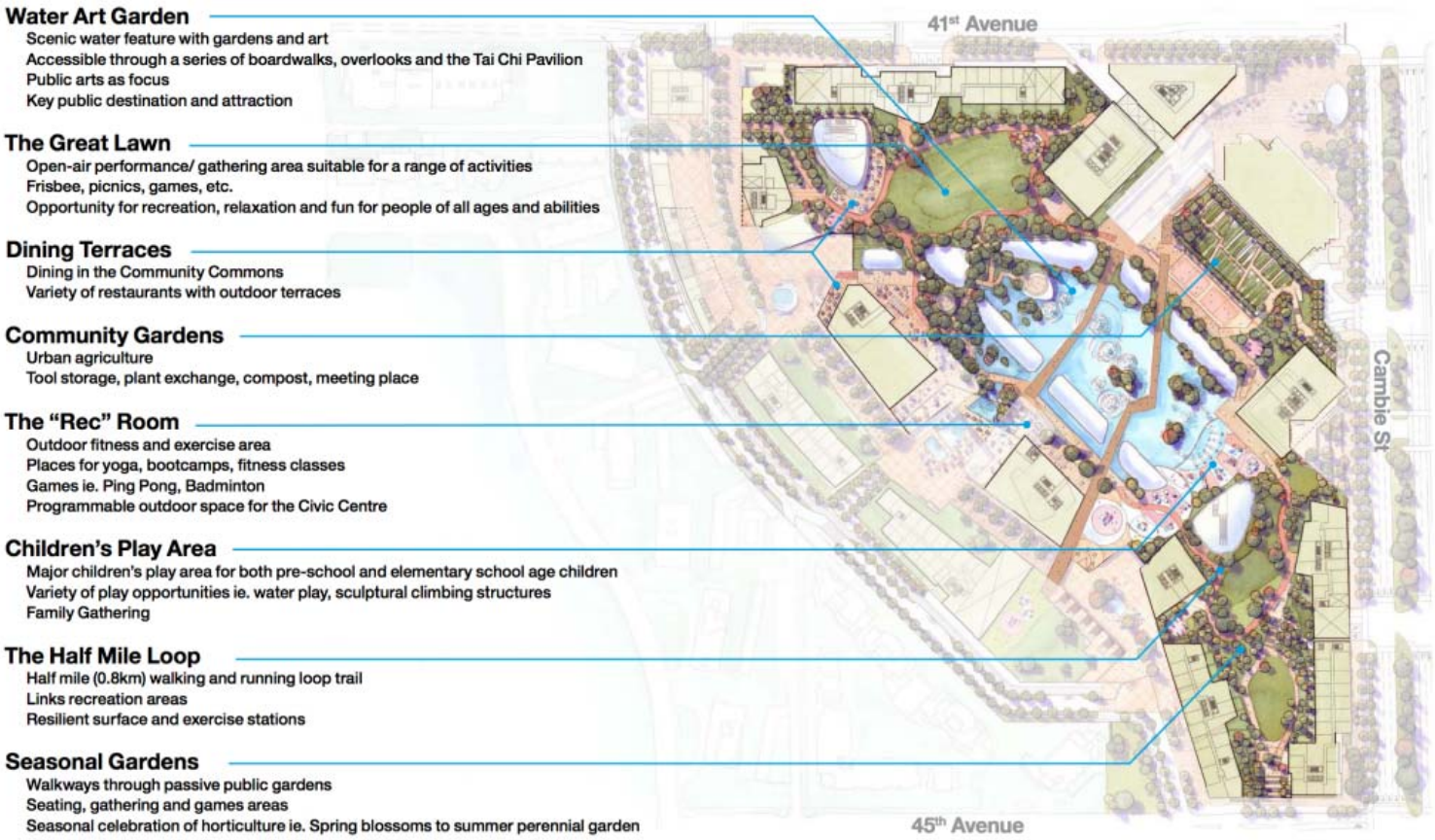
The design of the rooftop park commons area is an innovative and unique concept to Vancouver. Its design is comparable to other rooftop parks around the world such as Jubilee Park at Canary Wharf in London, Illumination Lane at Lincoln Centre and High Line in New York City, and Grin Grin Park in Fukouka, Japan.

Click on images for enlarged version.



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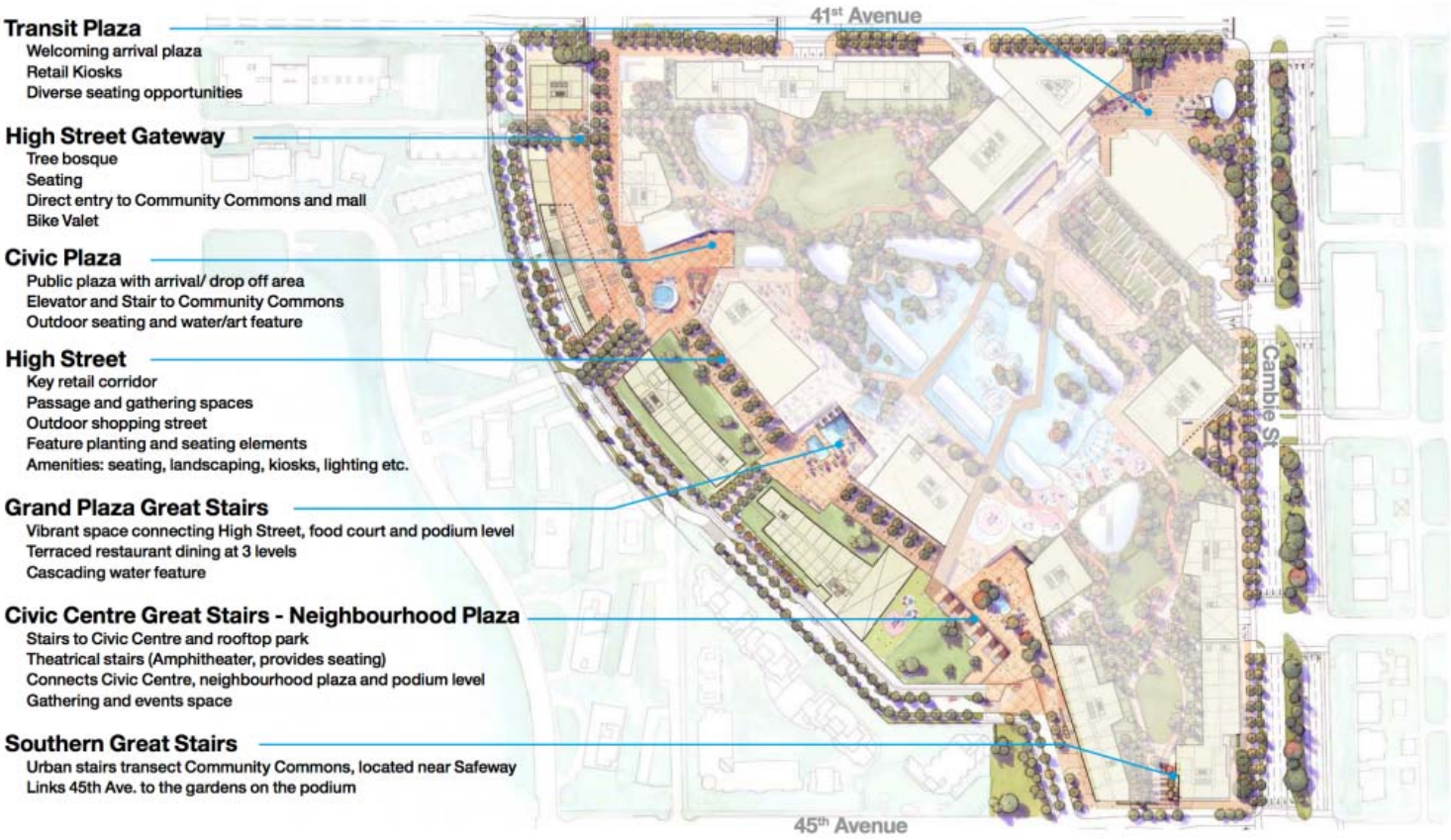

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Image: City of Vancouver/Ivanhoe Cambridge/Westbank

To support the project elements, there will be 5,400 stalls of commercial parking and another 1,570 stalls to support the residential units.

Besides the development's local economic spinoffs, it will be a windfall for the City of Vancouver bringing $45.7 million in one-time Development Cost Charges and an additional $13.7 million in property taxes per year. Including $79.17-million for the value of 290 social housing units, the entire project will bring $228.3-million in privately funded public amenity benefits.

The mall will remain open during construction, which will be undertaken through five construction phases at different areas of the mall site. Given the scale of the project, three architectural firms – Henriquez Partners Architects, Stantec Architecture and Gensler – are involved in the design process.

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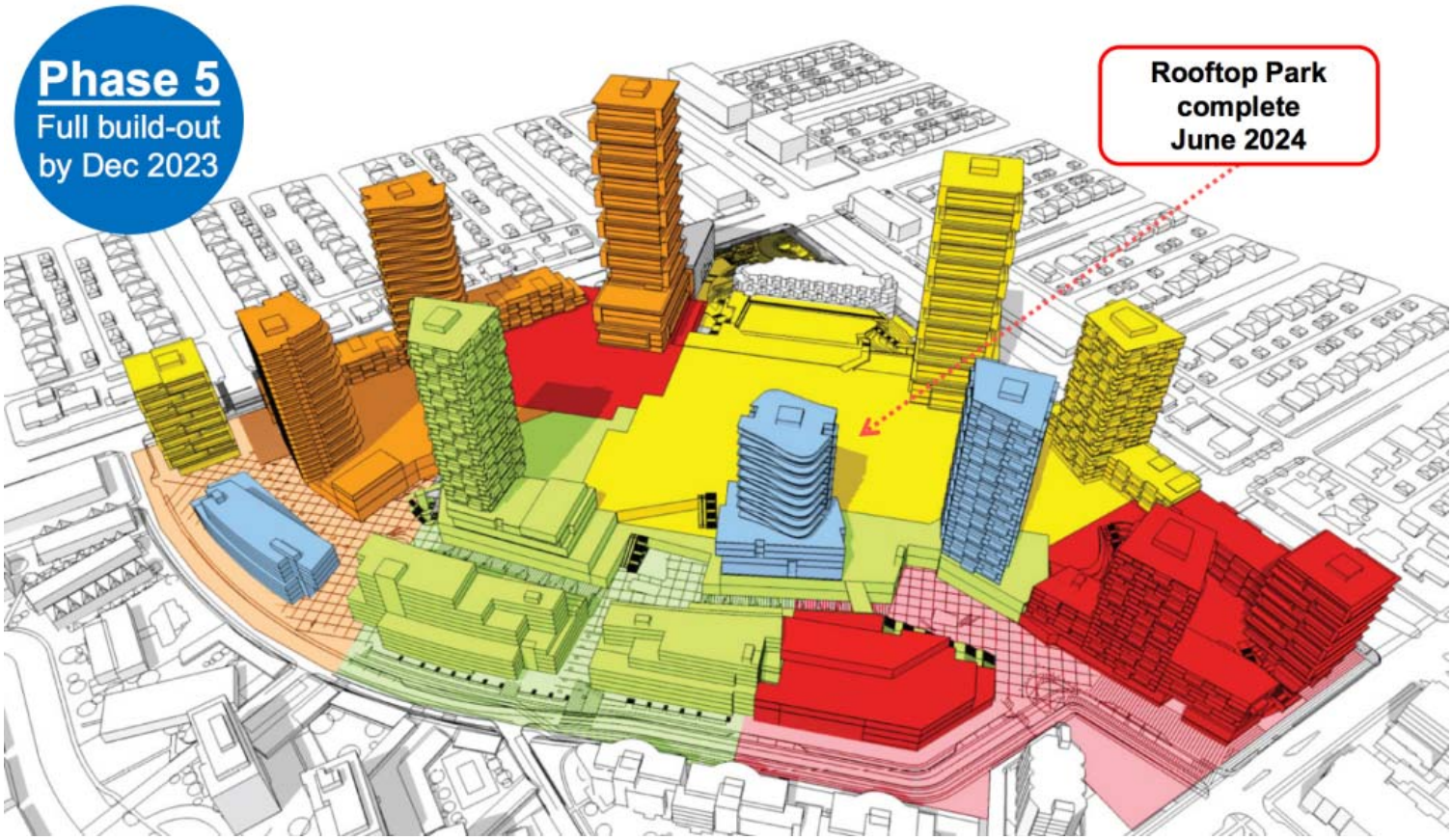

Image: City of Vancouver/Ivanhoe Cambridge/Westbank

Ivanhoe Cambridge, the owner of the mall and proponent of the project, has also partnered with Westbank Development to carry out the new Oakridge Centre's major residential component.

The project is expected to cost $1.5-billion and will be fully complete in 2024. The first phase on the Safeway parking lot and the construction of the Civic Centre will be completed in the summer of 2019. The rooftop park commons area will be completed in the summer of 2024 as part of the final phase as its space is needed for construction staging.

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