

Oakridge Urban Design Vision:

Oakridge offers the opportunity to build Vancouver’s only Municipal Town Centre outside of the downtown core. This opportunity facilitates an architectural response with numerous functional, poetic and visionary aspirations.

The Oakridge redevelopment’s architectural expression is both urban and topographical. The project is a hybrid of different city precedents from architectural history, each addressing the relationship between nature and the urban fabric. Fundamental principles were distilled from the disparate planning movements of Ebenezer Howard’s Garden City movement of the late 19th century and Le Corbusier’s Radiant City. Poetic inspirations range from Italian hilltop towns to the urban streetwalls of Europe.

The resulting concept is a contemporary, street-oriented, urban experience. Nature and topography are integrated into an organic expression of architecture emerging from the landscape. The project’s design genesis is the reintroduction of the lost forest that was removed by the original Oakridge development. The project then sculpts new retail streetwalls to define the perimeter of the site and High Street. This knits together the surrounding urban fabric. Retail galleries and public spaces are sculpted into this new landscape to define the edges of the park above. From this foundation of parks and plazas, office and residential towers emerge from the landscape. The design culminates with iconic towers that mark the gateways to the project and capture views in all directions.

Oakridge visitors will be citizens in a new, organic micro-city with rapid transit connections to both downtown and to the airport — making the project one of the world’s most sustainable models for suburban mall redevelopment.

DP3a Design Rationale:

The scope of the DP-3a application marks the primary entry into the project from the Transit Plaza at the corner of Cambie Street and West 41st Avenue. The scope includes the renovation of the existing, stand-alone office buildings and the main pedestrian entrance to the park and mall.

Located at the transit hub of the Cambie Street-West 41st Avenue intersection, DP-3a is the principle project access point for Canada Line users, bus riders and pedestrians. DP-3a’s location marks the project’s symbolic “front door.” This prominence is celebrated with a Transit Plaza that accommodates flexible programming for informal gathering, community events and performances. Elevated above the plaza is a large sculptural canopy that marks the entry to the public park and retail development beyond. Plants on the Northeast Office’s exterior lead visitors towards the park’s upper levels. At grade, the Transit Plaza leads retail visitors towards the mall’s grand, ceremonial doors.

DP-3a consists of 5 main program components:

1. Transit Plaza Gateway
2. Northeast Office
3. Main Mall Entry
4. Terraces Building offices and retail
5. Park Connection

Transit Plaza Gateway

The Transit Plaza at the intersection of Cambie Street and West 41st Avenue is the principle pedestrian and transit entry point to the project and serves as its symbolic “front door.” The Transit Plaza is a key civic node that provides access to the Canada Line Station below grade, bus stops at grade, access to the rooftop park, and entry into the mall. A canopy at the corner of the Cambie Street-41st Avenue intersection marks site entry and provides weather protection for the Canada Line access staircase.

Northeast Office

As part of the project's sustainability strategy, the DP-3a submission will retain and renovate two existing buildings. The Northeast Office will receive seismic upgrades, and material updates to its envelope to match the surrounding new buildings.

The architecture of the renovated Northeast Office incorporates a capless, curtain-wall skin that wraps around the two primary facades. The skin projects out over the sidewalk and provides weather protection for the retail storefronts, while undulating over the staircase leading up to the park. The reveal at the building's base acts as a visual and experiential marker, leading the public from both West 41st Avenue and the Transit Plaza up to the rooftop park.

Main Mall Entry

The project blurs the boundary between interior and exterior urban experience by establishing exterior retail storefronts that extend into the mall entry. Typical of suburban malls, the current Oakridge mall establishes a clear delineation between the interior retail and the surrounding context. By eliminating the entry facing the Transit Plaza and relocating it further inside of the mall, the plaza is activated by the exterior retail.

Terraces Building offices and retail

The Terraces Building will receive minor envelope updates to accommodate the removal of the mall atrium. In conjunction with the renovated and expanded Northeast Office, the Terraces Building will contribute to job creation. The buildings will provide services for on-site residents and citizens throughout the local community, while also providing convenient connections to the Canada Line, major bus stops and the nine-acre park.

Park Connection

Adjacent to the Main Mall Entry is one of the primary connections up to the rooftop park. A covered staircase along the existing office façade connects the plaza to the park in conjunction with a pair of elevators. Plants along the path guide visitors to the park above.