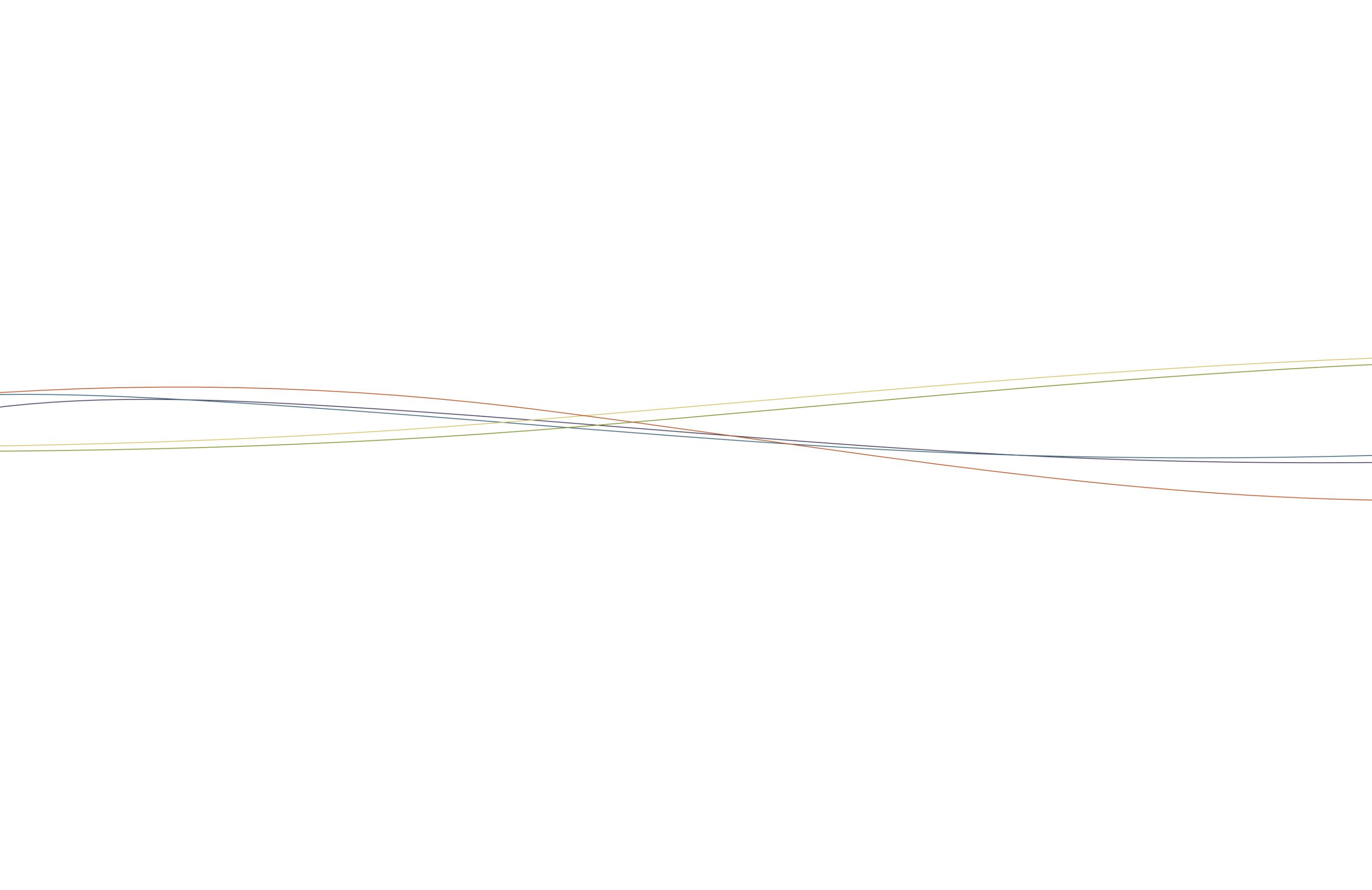




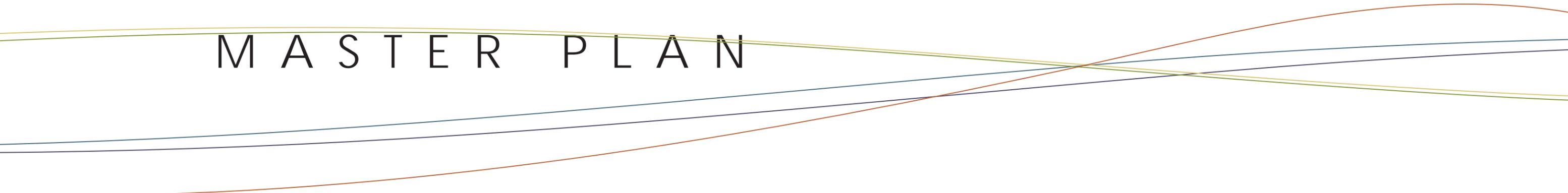
REDMOND CENTRAL CONNECTOR

MASTER PLAN

May 10, 2011



REDMOND CENTRAL CONNECTOR MASTER PLAN



Strengthening Redmond as....

an increasingly **urban** community | a city strongly connected to **nature**

a small town rooted in **history** | a forward-looking city shaping the world's **future**

FOREWORD

The railroad has been at the heart of Redmond since 1889, before the City incorporated in 1912. It brought commerce, and with that, jobs and people. As the City grew, the railroad began to divide the City—the north from the south, the new from the old, and eventually split the commercial area in two. Over the past 15 years, the City has continued to develop and is now an urban center. In 2008, the railroad abandoned the tracks in Redmond.

Now the rail corridor is owned by the City, and the Redmond Central Connector will play a key role in the revitalization of Downtown Redmond. This place will build community through enhanced pedestrian and transit connections, personal interaction, and opportunities to connect businesses with customers. Redevelopment of this corridor allows us to connect to the heart of our downtown and build a stronger community for our citizens.

In the future, Downtown Redmond will have a vibrant mix of businesses, residences, and open spaces for recreation and relaxation. The City is taking tangible steps toward realizing its vision for Downtown Redmond, signaling its commitment to private developers to encourage continued investment in the neighborhood. The implementation of the comprehensive plan policies and master plans for proposed developments in Downtown will:

- Create an economically healthy, vibrant Downtown that emphasizes pedestrian activities 18 hours a day.
- Develop a cohesive system of public places in Downtown that attract people and build community through interactive events and features.
- Link the north and south parts of the Downtown through various pedestrian and vehicular connections.
- Improve the aesthetic appeal of Downtown through enhanced landscaping, integration of iconic and interactive art, thoughtful preservation of historic elements, highlight local landmarks, and develop gateways and gathering places.
- Increase mobility and promote environmental quality by providing for convenient transit, pedestrian, and bicycle routes to and from the Downtown.

Downtown Redmond is creating choice by becoming a vibrant urban center with a variety of dining, shopping, recreating and living options. As a regional growth center, more than 6,000 new residents and 4,000 new workers are expected in Downtown Redmond by 2020. In preparation for this growth, private development has recently completed nearly 1,500 new residential units in Downtown.

To support and encourage future developments of this nature, the City is planning projects that make Downtown Redmond a more attractive place to live and work, including:

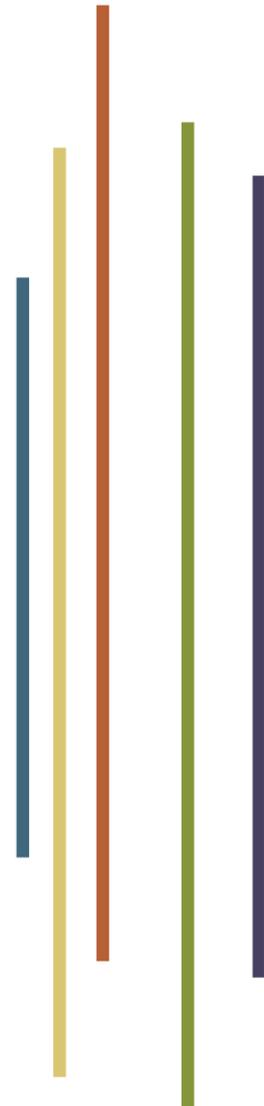
- Continued acquisition and development of Downtown Central Park, which is integral to attracting residents and businesses to Downtown and the future hub for entertainment and recreation.
- Implementation of the Downtown East/West Corridor projects, which include an overhaul of the Downtown street grid system, eliminating one-way streets and construction of complete streets.
- Development of the Redmond Central Connector—a regional trail and linear park, utility corridor, and transit way for East Link light rail.

The Redmond Central Connector could see up to 50,000 users a month during peak season. The goal is to make the Connector a year-round destination and even attract users to local businesses and cultural attractions. Bringing tens of thousands more people to the Redmond Central Connector is an economic benefit to all Downtown businesses.

In the end, this project will be a key element to growing a sustainable urban center in Redmond by making significant aesthetic improvements in Downtown, increasing access to trails, parks and art; improving transportation alternatives; enhancing the environment through stormwater and park projects; and spurring economic growth.

Yours Truly,

Mayor John Marchione





ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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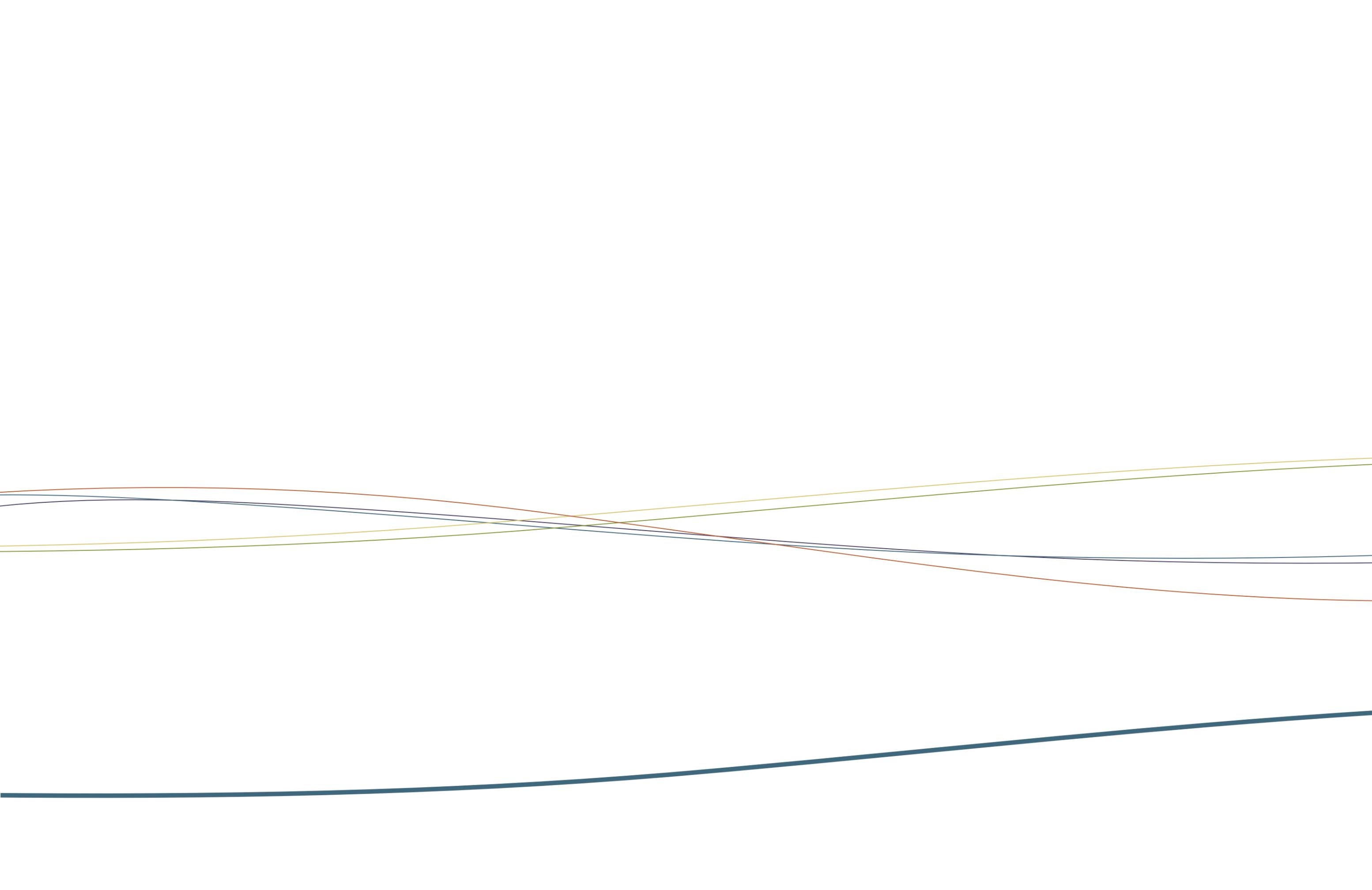
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PROJECT OVERVIEW



THE REDMOND CENTRAL CONNECTOR - VISION



THE VISION

Redmond has been shaped by the railroad that ran through the City's heart since 1889 when the Seattle, Lake Shore & Eastern Railway (SLS&E) began to serve Redmond. The City and its economy matured and grew around the railroad. Today the railroad is gone, yet the railroad right-of-way remains, currently as a no man's land dividing the Downtown and running through the beautiful Sammamish Valley. The Redmond Central Connector will reclaim the abandoned railroad corridor by creating a regional trail with park and cultural amenities that becomes a dynamic destination for people to experience Redmond and create community. The Connector will be a catalyst for economic growth in Downtown by bringing more people to Redmond to live, work, socialize, and recreate.

This corridor has long been recognized for its importance to a growing Redmond and the City adopted comprehensive planning policies and goals relating to the acquisition and development of the railroad corridor for nearly a decade. In 2004, the City adopted comprehensive planning policies to support the many possible uses of the corridor that are generally described below.

The City recognizes the value of the former rail corridor to serve the community as a site for valued and needed infrastructure, including:

- A regional trail.
- Sound Transit's planned light rail transit way.
- Improved transportation connections.
- Providing local and regional utility needs such as King County, Puget Sound Energy (PSE), etc.

The City's vision for the corridor was bold, imagining an inspired public open space converting miles of unused space into a corridor that integrates a trail, open space, historical elements and art into the community as a whole, by:

- Creating a new and exciting entry to Downtown.
- Improving the corridor's aesthetic appeal through park and art amenities.
- Honoring Redmond's history.
- Incorporating iconic, interactive art.
- Linking the corridor to Central Park and other Downtown attractions.
- Enhancing the economic vitality of Downtown.¹

In June 2010, the City of Redmond acquired the Redmond section of the former Burlington Northern Santa Fe (BNSF) corridor and immediately began master planning the corridor. The Redmond Central Connector Master Plan accomplishes all of the Redmond Comprehensive Plan goals for the corridor.

¹ More City policies from the Comprehensive Plan can be found at <http://www.codepublishing.com/WA/redmond/CompPlan/PDF/index.html>

The master plan process started by engaging every City department, the Parks and Trails Commission, the Arts Commission, the Pedestrian and Bicycle Advisory Committee, the Planning Commission, the Design Review Board, the Lodging and Tax Advisory Committee, the City Council, the Redmond Historical Society, neighboring businesses and property owners, and partner agencies including Sound Transit and King County. Hundreds of members of the community were also engaged through public open houses, helping to shape the project as a reflection of Redmond. (Public involvement summaries are included in Appendix D.)

This master plan process has resulted in two distinct components. The first was the Infrastructure Alignment Plan (IAP) (Appendix A), which was developed in coordination with partner agencies to identify where different infrastructural elements would be located within the corridor to facilitate and not interfere with the long-term development of the corridor. The IAP includes memorandums of understanding from partner agencies and environmental and critical areas analyses. The IAP was adopted by the Redmond City Council in October 2010 and became the basis from which the remaining master plan work was developed. The IAP is available for review at: <http://www.redmond.gov/PlansProjects/Parks/RedmondCentralConnector/documents/>.

The second component of this planning effort is a master plan design that gives form to the City's vision for the Connector. What has emerged is not just a trail to Downtown and through the City, but a new destination filled with the energy and vitality of the community that surrounds it. The Connector will unite Downtown Redmond as a cohesive whole and eventually extend through the Sammamish Valley and beyond. Beyond physical connections, it will be an experience by drawing people in to enjoy the City's culture, art, and environment. The Downtown section of the Connector will enliven Downtown, bring commerce, reinforce community, and create a strengthened residential and commercial heart for the City. The Sammamish Valley section of the Connector will enhance the pedestrian experience through one of the most beautiful view corridors in the City and improve access to many businesses along Willows Road and West Park.

THE REDMOND CONNECTOR SITE

The Redmond Central Connector is a 3.89-mile-long linear property ranging in width from approximately fifty feet to one hundred feet. It starts from the end of King County's East Lake Sammamish Trail, just west of the SR 520/SR 202 interchange and Bear Creek, to NE 124th Street. The corridor passes both natural and cultural features and qualities that make it a uniquely inspiring series of spaces that the Redmond Central Connector can draw upon in creating a trail and linear park connection unlike any other.



DOWNTOWN & SAMMAMISH VALLEY

The Redmond Central Connector Master Plan establishes a common vision for both the Sammamish Valley and Downtown, yet recognizes the different physical and cultural characteristics between the two areas. The Sammamish Valley area has more natural qualities and will be less intensively developed, keeping with a more typical design for multi-use trails in this region. There are currently no significant projects planned or funded within the Sammamish Valley length of the Connector. Conversely, the Downtown has numerous public and private projects in various stages of planning, design and construction including the construction of a regional stormwater trunk line, the extension of 161st Avenue NE and 164th Avenue NE across the corridor, construction of two mixed-use residential developments adjacent to the corridor, and eventually construction of light rail. In 2012, the first phase of the Redmond Central Connector regional trail will be constructed from Bear Creek to the Sammamish River. With the immediacy of funded projects within the Downtown section of the Connector and regional planning considerations such as light rail, the master plan provides a more detailed vision for the Downtown portion of the Redmond Central Connector than the Sammamish Valley section.



DOWNTOWN

The Downtown Study Area runs from the east bank of the Sammamish River to the west bank of Bear Creek. This stretch of trail includes seven zones: Sammamish River Crossing, Higher Ground, Station, Promenade, Open Space, Neighborhood, and Creekside. The Sammamish River Crossing and Higher Ground consist of elevated railroad grades perched on abutments west of 161st Avenue NE and east of 170th Avenue NE. Redmond's Downtown historically occupied the northern side of the railroad grade, and buildings turned their front sides away from the railroad. The southern side of the railway corridor includes from west to east a large City-owned property on the station block, NE 76th Street and Redmond Town Center from the Promenade to the Neighborhood zone, and commercial development and natural areas in Creekside. While the developers of the Redmond Town Center and the City took efforts to integrate the shopping center with the historical Downtown area by connecting street grids and having new buildings providing active storefronts toward Downtown, the corridor proved to be a stubborn and significant barrier between the two areas that still exists today. The creation of the Redmond Central Connector as a trail and linear park provides the opportunity to knit the two pieces of Downtown Redmond together in a way that they have never been before, providing seamless bike and pedestrian connections and complementing City transportation planning efforts to unite the two areas, notably the Downtown East/West Corridor Study (DEWCS).

SAMMAMISH VALLEY

The Sammamish Valley Study Area starts at the northern City limits of NE 124th Street and extends south to the east bank of the Sammamish River. The character of the corridor is predominantly rural, in spite of its location along a high volume road between three major metropolitan centers (Kirkland, Woodinville and Redmond). The trail parallels the west edge of the Sammamish Valley with views of natural and agricultural landscapes, evergreen forested hillsides to the east, and the Cascade Mountains beyond. The southern portions of the valley become increasingly developed with office parks and light industrial uses before reaching the Sammamish River. This is a historically important part of the City with the Sammamish River being a resource to Native American tribes and later to pioneers who farmed the valley on the banks of the river.





URBAN ANALYSIS

Existing and planned projects shape the Redmond Central Connector site, particularly in the Downtown, where multiple projects will change the corridor quickly. The master plan process has considered the many conditions of this evolving City and the resulting design is shaped to both accommodate and benefit from this change.

CITY AND SOUND TRANSIT ENVELOPES

At the onset of the master planning process, the City worked diligently with Sound Transit to determine the needs for current and future public works projects within the corridor in order to optimize the planning of the regional stormwater trunk line and regional trail within the corridor. The City envelope for development is the northern portion of the corridor and the Sound Transit envelope for development is the southern portion of the corridor and part of NE 76th Street. These envelopes are documented in detail in the Infrastructure Alignment Plan (IAP) (Appendix A) and Section 5.2. Figure 1.2.1 shows the general location and a cross section of the envelopes.

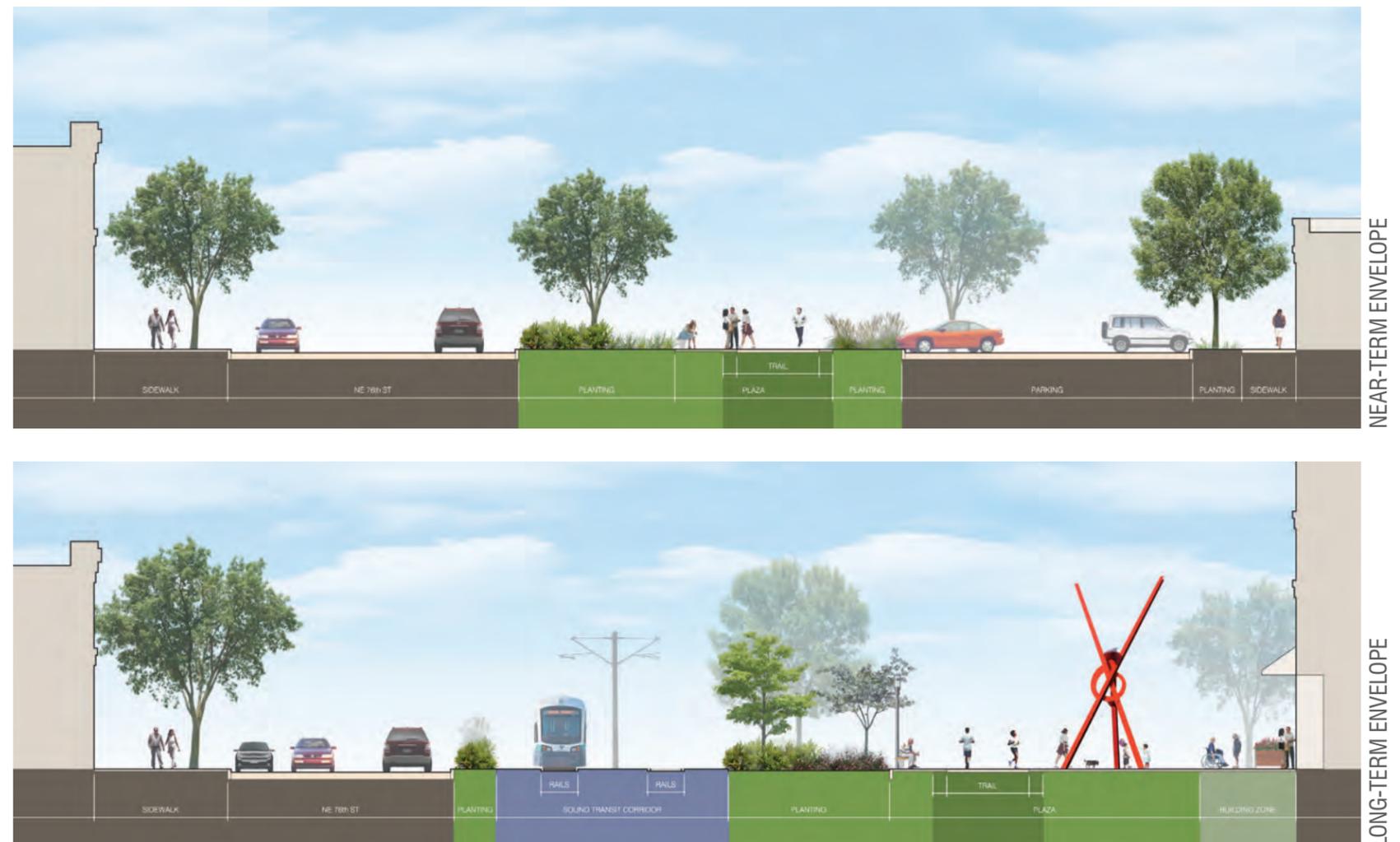
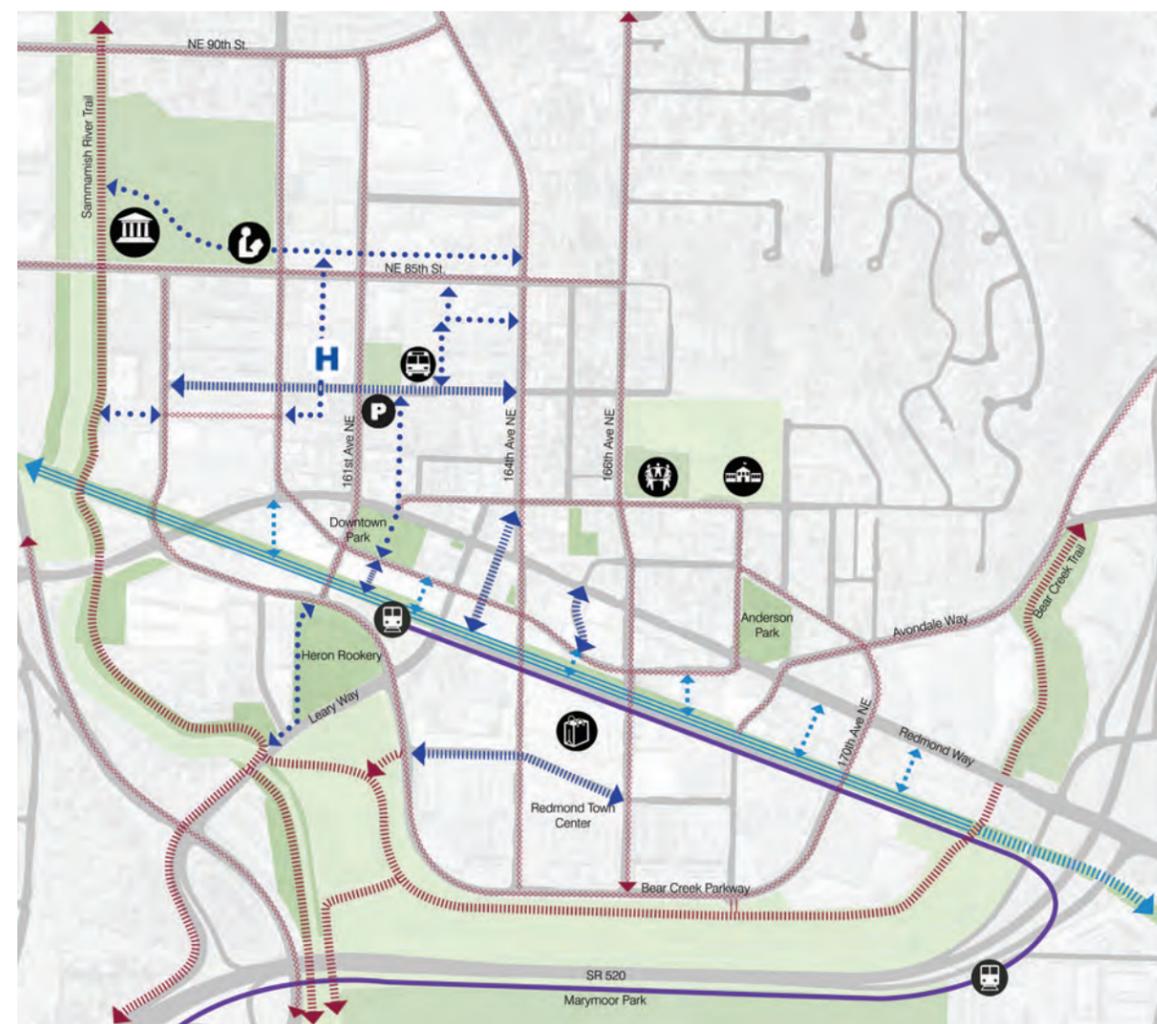


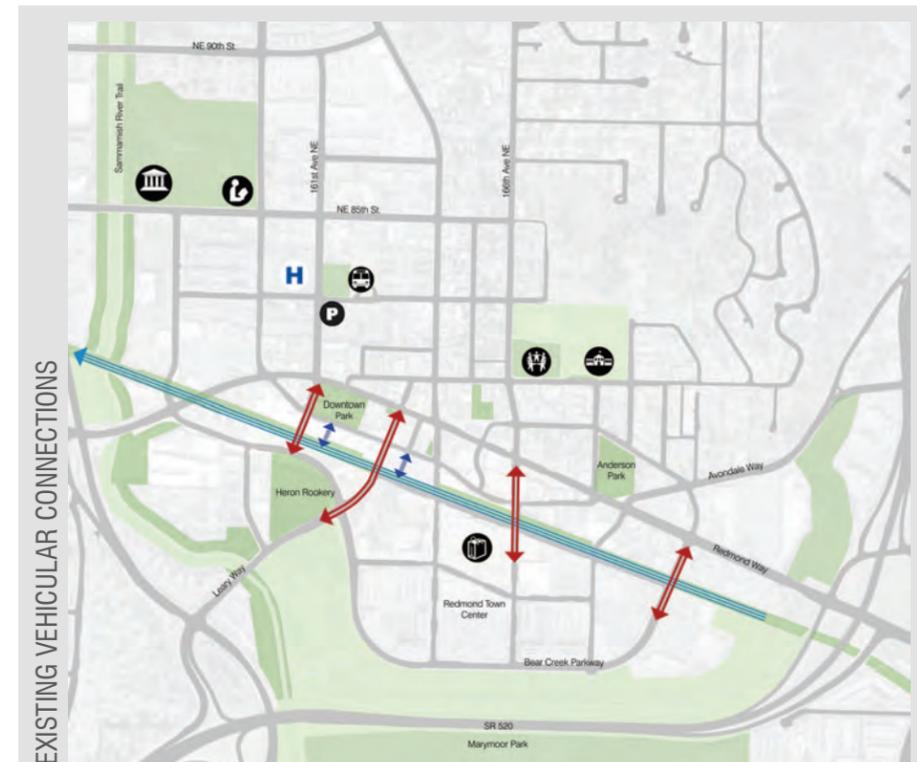
Figure 1.2.1

CROSSINGS AND CONNECTIONS

The master plan has been developed recognizing the Connector's importance as a multi-modal transportation hub. The Connector will be a pedestrian and bicycle corridor and will connect with numerous other pedestrian connections such as other trails, pedestrian-friendly streetscapes, mid-block connections, sharrows, and bike lanes, which will provide a range of route alternatives for the diversity of bike users, ranging from family cyclists to advanced cyclists. In its existing state, the Connector is crossed by three street crossings; however, another three street crossings are planned as part of the Downtown East-West Corridor Study (DEWCS) and numerous mid-block and service street connections will provide pedestrian access to the Connector.



EXISTING AND PROPOSED NON-MOTORIZED CONNECTIONS



EXISTING VEHICULAR CONNECTIONS



EXISTING AND PROPOSED MULTI-MODAL CONNECTIONS

CORRIDOR FOCUSED GROWTH

In its existing state, few buildings front on the corridor, with many placing service areas toward the historically undesirable railroad. New developments are already starting to respond to the future Connector, a trend that will surely continue as new projects front on the corridor in more active ways, infusing it with energy.



VIEWS AND VIEW CORRIDORS

The Connector’s location in the heart of Downtown near the intersection of several different City grids presents the opportunity to enhance visual connections between key civic features such as Downtown Central Park to the Connector or the current transit station to the Connector. Several new and planned streets end at the corridor, becoming important spaces along the Connector and providing the opportunity for iconic elements to reinforce street-end views. The Redmond Central Connector will eventually bring more people to the Sammamish Valley, where there are spectacular views of key natural features from the Sammamish River to Mount Rainier and the Cascade foothills and mountains.





HISTORICAL ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Historically, Redmond emerged as a crossroads that became a village and then a town engaged in the production, harvesting and transportation of natural resources. It became a place from the presence of a river and the placement of a rail line and the activities of growing and moving resources that came from the land, and from the hands and then the minds of its occupants. The Redmond Central Connector is the evolution of the former rail corridor which played a significant role in shaping Redmond, a history that should be honored.

How does this history inform the future vision of the Redmond Central Connector Master Plan? How does the design use and re-purpose the specific history of Redmond? It does this by identifying broad patterns of the past and the present that remain the backdrop of daily living. History, through interpretation in the plan, becomes a means of identifying the special circumstances and soul of this place.

The master plan authenticates the character of Redmond. The design does not “caption” the past or place artifacts out of context as historic symbols in a new setting. Moreover, it does not attempt re-creation. Rather it interprets the elements of the rail corridor, early agriculture, and the emergence of technology by incorporating abstracted features of the past in new, inventive ways. In doing so, the Connector will promote curiosity, and encourage residents and visitors to discover the unique aspects of history that made the City what it is today.

THE CONNECTOR EVOLVES OVER TIME

The City of Redmond has long had a vision for how the Connector could become an integral part of the City. The master plan gives form to that vision with a framework of recommendations and design guidance to lead the corridor forward to reality. The change to the corridor from its existing state to the full vision of the master plan is significant with many elements that are beyond the City's control including developments by private parties (adjacent property owners) and other public agencies (Sound Transit). The master plan provides three distinct milestones on the way to realizing the full vision for the corridor.

2012

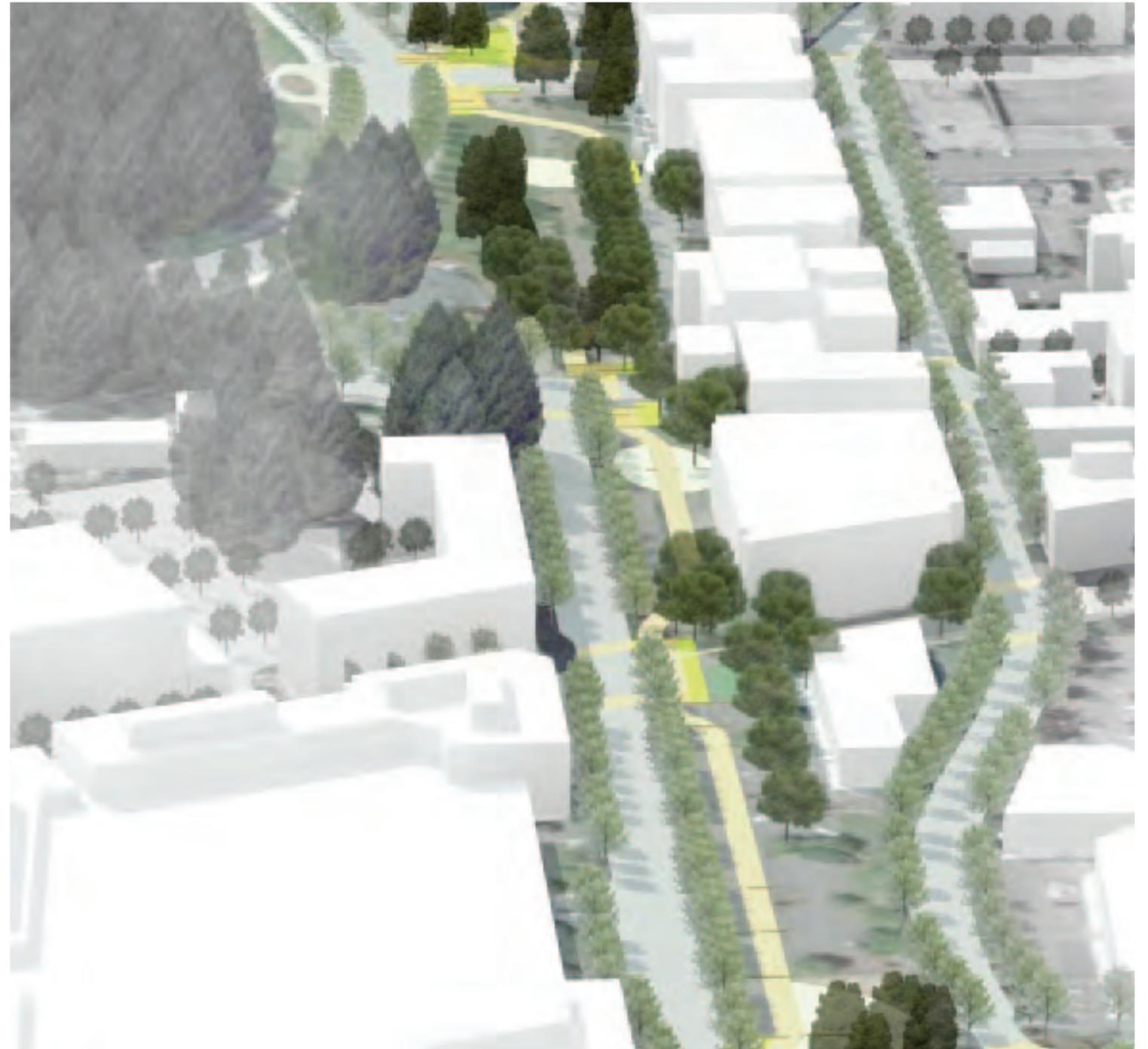
The first phase of development is a trail connecting the Bear Creek Trail and Sammamish River Trail through Downtown, creating the first physical connection and laying the foundation for the character and culture of the trail experience to be developed in the future.

2016

The 2016 vision is the build-out of the Connector to the degree the City can control it, respecting conditions and realities as the City now understands them to be. The design includes the space south to NE 76th Street (as no light rail is yet constructed) and properties along the north edge of the Connector are evolving with many existing corridor uses by neighboring property owners (primarily as surface parking) still remaining.

2025

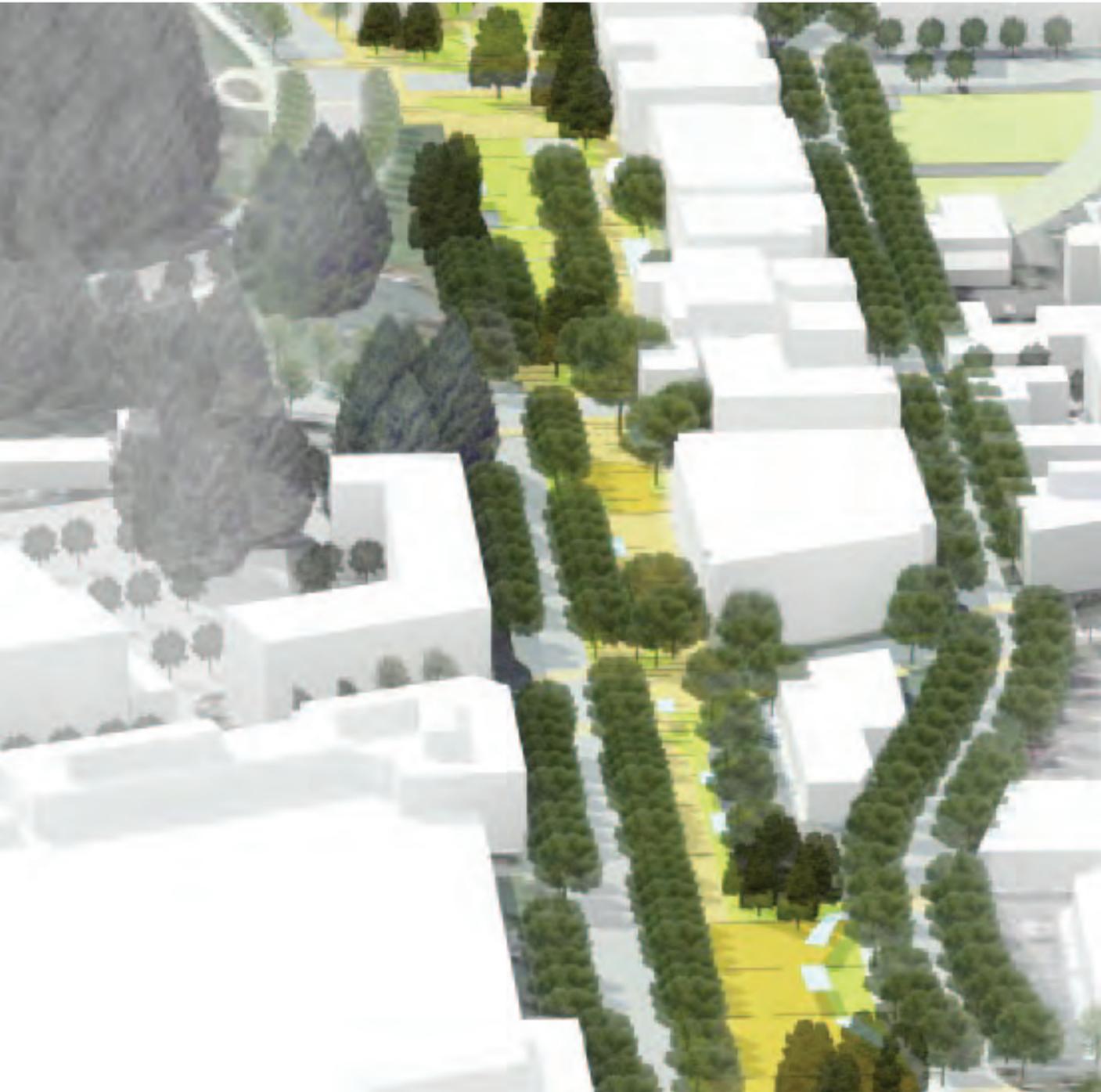
The 2025 vision is the ultimate build out of the corridor including the completion of the light rail transit way and station in the heart of the City. The northern properties will evolve with new development fronting the corridor bringing commerce and activity, and more street and pedestrian connections to the Connector. By this time, all corridor leases will end, returning the space to the City as public open space.



2012



2012



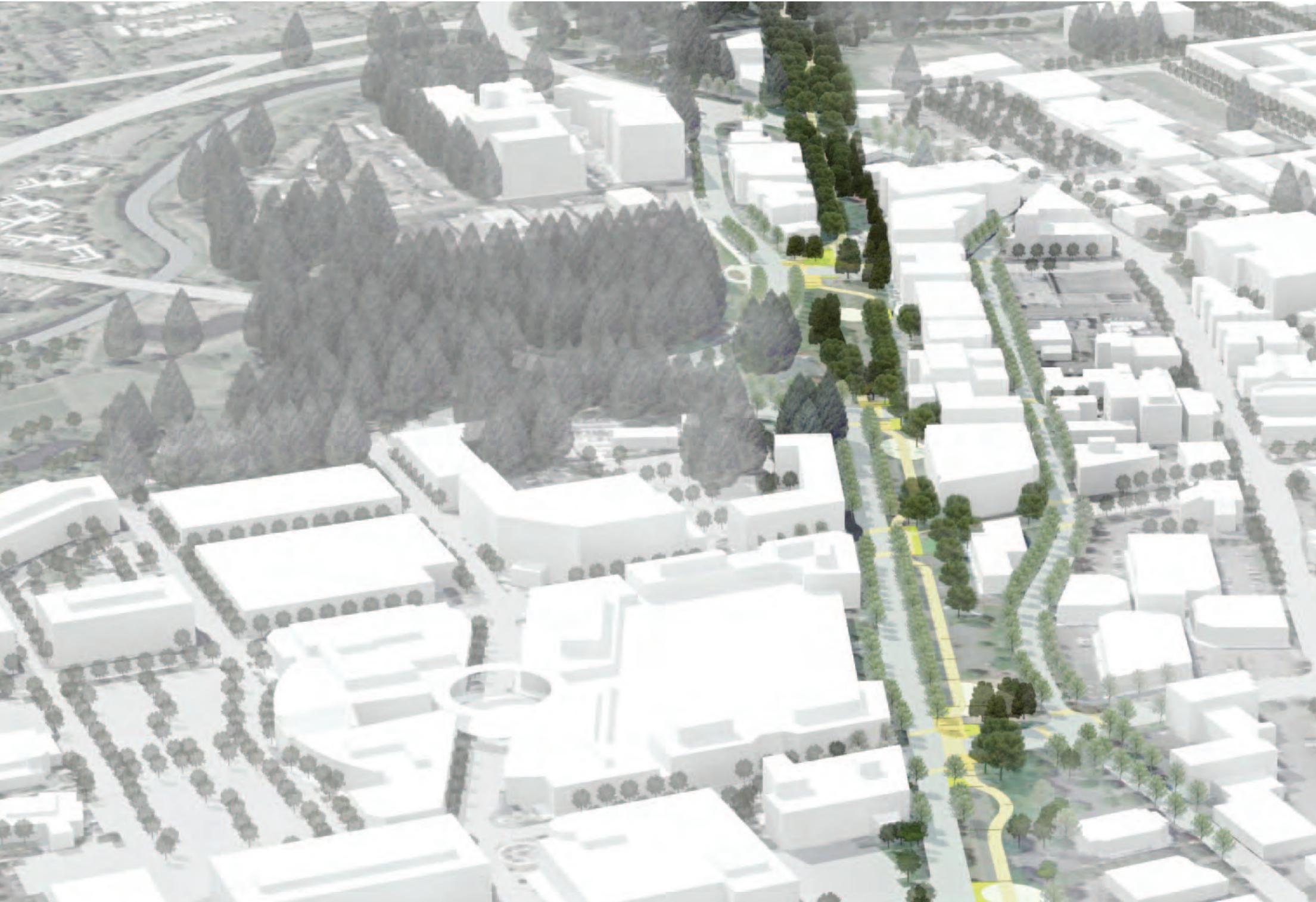
2016



2025

THE CONNECTOR EVOLVES OVER TIME

2012

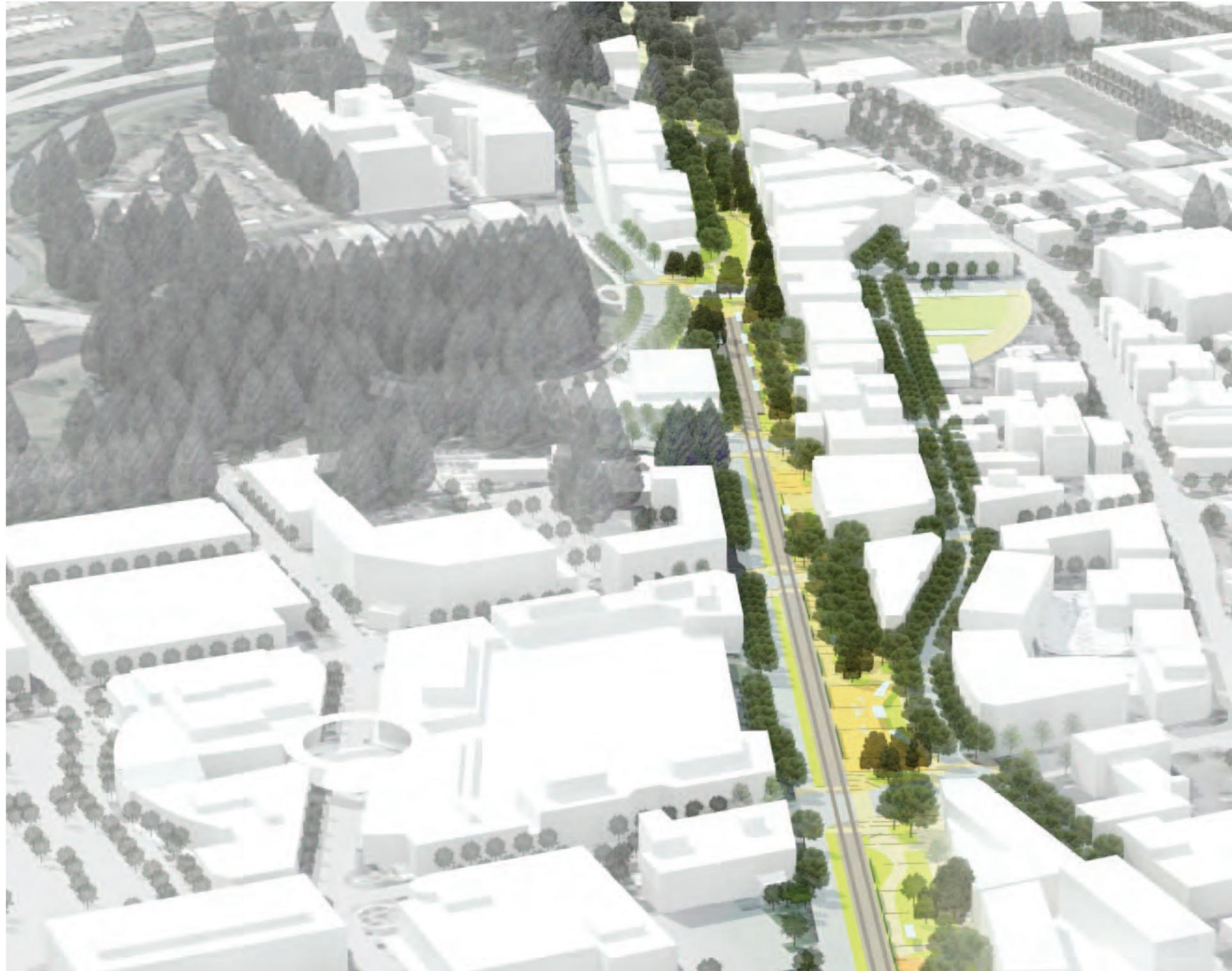


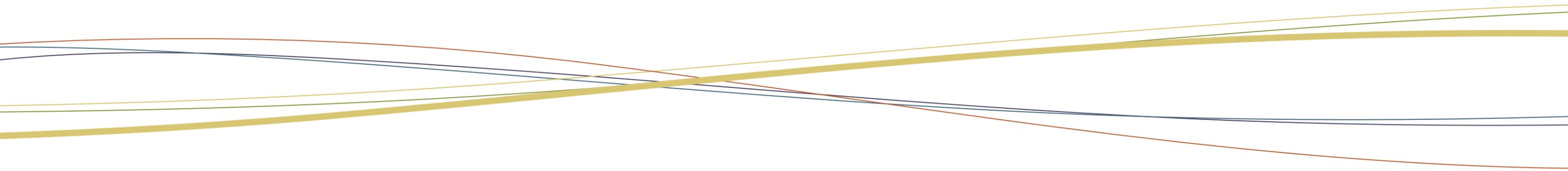
2016





2025





DESIGN PRINCIPLES



PRINCIPLES

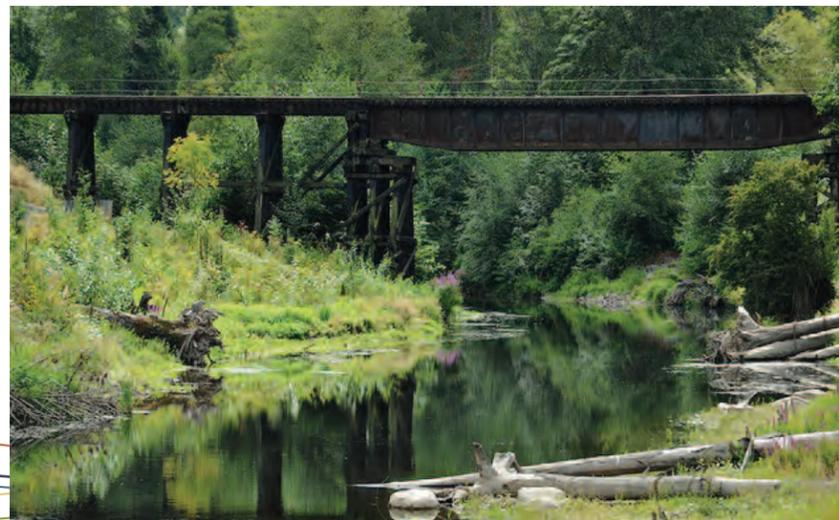
Several overriding opportunities emerged throughout the master plan design process and were embraced by the design team, City staff and the public. These ideas have inspired and guided the design of the master plan and should continue to shape the implementation of the Redmond Central Connector.

MAKE IT REDMOND: PAST, PRESENT, FUTURE

Make the Connector unique to Redmond. Honor and celebrate Redmond's past, but do not try to artificially recreate it. Acknowledge Redmond of today and welcome its evolution into the future by making the Connector a forward-looking place. Celebrate and welcome the opportunity for the Connector to evolve over time for a future we cannot predict.

How it might manifest itself in implementation:

Save and reuse historic elements from the railroad in new and imaginative ways to bring history to life and give them new use. Celebrate connections to existing historic structures such as the Justice White House and to others in Downtown through connections beyond the corridor. Create a structure for celebrating history through integrated art, to be implemented and changed over time, allowing responsiveness to the current cultural climate.



NOT JUST A PLACE WITH ART, A PLACE THAT IS ART

The Connector presents the opportunity not only to house art, but to be art and to be a catalyst to shape an ever more artistically engaged community.

How it might manifest itself in implementation:

The master plan is shaped at its most basic structure by the art-driven concept of Fluctuations, detailed in Section 3.0. Within the Connector there are numerous layers of art and art opportunities, ranging from art integrated into the design of functional elements of the corridor, permanent commissioned pieces of art to changing curated collections. Required design elements in the Connector such as bollards, furnishings and visual utility elements should be completed in a more artful way, starting with site restoration after installation of the trunk line producing inspired landforms and interim art where seeded meadow would typically suffice. Imagine the corridor as a catalyst for Redmond becoming home to artists and their studios.



MAKE IT MAGNETIC...

Create design elements that provide visual interest and invite physical interaction. This magnetic quality should encourage users of the corridor to be engaged, to linger longer in specific spaces, and can also be a means to encourage visitors to move down the Connector to more distant areas beyond their planned destination. These corridor qualities will also influence the unique design of private development along the Connector.

How it might manifest itself in implementation:

Imagine human-scale building blocks that users of the corridor can move to make their own creations. Imagine a stormwater feature where you control the flow of water. Imagine a zen-like garden where you create never before made patterns. Imagine a puzzle that requires and inspires you to walk the whole of the corridor to solve the challenge. Imagine furnishings and canopies that can be moved, opened and closed by you to respond to sun, shade and rain.



CONNECT THE COMMUNITY

The physical connections made by the Connector are key to physically connecting the City. The more ambitious and rewarding goal is for the Connector to create connections between people. The Connector will create experiences that bring strangers together in sharing a common experience and making personal connections that might otherwise not occur.

How it might manifest itself in implementation:

Interactive creations can connect people by drawing individuals in yet requiring more than one person to fully activate the artwork or park element. Imagine a game that requires recruiting multiple players to play. Imagine mobile elements that require multiple people to move them.



CATALYST FOR COMMERCE

The confines of the corridor are not enough to realize the vision for the Connector. The City around it must do its part by activating the corridor and broader Downtown with the commerce and activity that comes with it. The Connector can be both a catalyst for and a beneficiary of new commerce and the urban activity that comes with it as new businesses choose to front on Redmond's iconic public space and people solicit those businesses and activate the surrounding park spaces.

How it might manifest itself in implementation:

Buildings that currently turn their back on the Connector will be re-imagined to front on it. A range of appropriate commercial uses such as restaurants, athletic clubs, galleries and artist studios will spill out of buildings to outdoor spaces, blurring the line between the public Connector and the adjacent private developments. Those attracted to Downtown Redmond for its retail and cultural quality will enhance their Downtown experience with a stroll down the Connector.



CAPTURE THE SKY

The Connector is a significant space in the heart of the City, yet the park and trail experience gets as narrow as 30 feet between the buildings and future light rail transit way. Properties on the north side of the Connector may reach 65 feet or higher, and light rail catenary structures to the south can reach as high as 30 feet. Recognizing the narrow, linear quality and surrounding height, the treatment of the space above the corridor becomes a critical opportunity to enhance the corridor experience, celebrating the “urban canyon” quality, or helping to mitigate it.

How it might manifest itself in implementation:

Portions of the Connector could be deliberately kept free of vertical and overhead obstructions, maximizing the valued open space to the sky as a welcomed relief. Conversely some spaces might create an overhead presence, be it lighting, vegetation, overhead canopy or art, emphasizing the space as an outdoor room both utilizing adjacent verticals and mitigating them. Another opportunity is to utilize the space over the Connector for park elements, particularly art, which might not best fit on the ground, helping turn people’s eyes to the sky.



CELEBRATE THE WEATHER

The Connector, as with all parks, will be a heavily used and sought after destination in times of dry weather, and particularly so in warmer weather. The opportunity of the Connector is to continue to be that destination year round, continuing to be a gathering place and catalyst for community life in all types of weather. Instead of simply trying to mitigate what might be considered inclement weather, the Connector seeks to celebrate it and use it as one of the elements that gives the Connector its identity.

How it might manifest itself in implementation:

Rain... it’s in our DNA and the corridor seeks to celebrate it in a way that Redmondites will say, “it’s raining, let’s go down to the Connector!” The Connector provides strategic overhead weather protection to allow pedestrian links in the City with building canopies, freestanding pavilions and even artwork. Integral to the experiential design of the Connector are low impact development strategies that utilize stormwater to energize the site even as they provide environmental benefit. Imagine stormwater from all adjacent structures being routed down facades facing the Connector to provide water features that celebrate the rainfall.



EXPERIENCE THE NIGHT

It’s easy to imagine a lively, charged Connector bustling during daylight hours; yet in the Northwest during much of the year our skies are dark for more than 15 hours a day and much of that time is when key social activities occur, when we expect the City to come to life as a bustling hub of commerce and activity. The Connector embraces the opportunity to be even more engaging in the evening than during the day. Beyond mitigating the darkness of evening with ample light, the Connector seeks to utilize light as one of its defining experiential elements.

How it might manifest itself in implementation:

Zone-based lighting and lighting strategies assure that there are a number of different lighting treatments along the corridor. In some places the levels of light are specific and performance-based, such as at intersections to meet defined guidelines. At locations more distant from intersections the lighting can be more subjective, while at significant “events” along the trail the lighting is a powerful part of the Connector experience, possibly including interactive light elements that complement art or are art in themselves.





