

Tuesday, July 8, 2025

5:00 p.m.

City Hall

Council Chambers

415 W. 6th Street

Vancouver, WA

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84366617530>

+1 (253) 205-0468, Meeting ID: 843 6661 7530

AGENDA

1. Call to order and roll call
2. Adoption of Minutes - May 13 and May 27, 2025.
3. Workshop: Comprehensive Plan Update: DEIS Findings – Rebecca Kennedy, Deputy Director, Community Development Department

Break 6pm-6:30pm

4. Community Forum – see below
5. Public Hearing: Downtown Design Guidelines Updates – Jason Nortz, Development Review Division Manager, Community Development Department
6. Public Hearing: Change to Impact Fee Payment Timeline – Bryan Monroe, Economic Prosperity Housing; Bryan Snodgrass, Community Development Department
7. Staff and Commissioner Communications

Adjournment approx. 8:00 pm

Members

Patrick Adigweme
Chair

Zach Pyle
Vice Chair

Marjorie Ledell
Nena Cavel
Sandra Beck
Allyssa Wheeler
John Jay

**Community
Development
Department**

415 W. 6th Street
P.O. Box 1995
Vancouver, WA 98668
360-487-7800
Relay: 711
cityofvancouver.us

To request accommodation or other formats, please contact:

Community Development Department | 360-487-7813 | Relay: 711 | PlanningCommission@cityofvancouver.us

Community Forum

The public is invited to speak regarding any issue. Members of the public testifying are asked to limit testimony to three minutes. There are three ways to provide comments:

1. In Writing: Public comments can be submitted in writing (name, address, contact information and comments) via email to PlanningCommission@cityofvancouver.us by noon on the day of the meeting.
2. Remotely: Complete the [online form](#) before noon the day of the meeting and join via phone or Zoom (details on each agenda). Staff will call on you to speak when it's your turn. If dialing into Zoom by phone, use *6 - Toggle mute/unmute and *9 - Raise/lower hand
3. In Person: Complete the [online form](#) before noon the day of the meeting or a speaker request form in person prior to the start of the Community Forum portion of the meeting.

Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, May 27th, 2025

5:00 p.m.

City Hall

Council Chambers

415 W 6th Street

Vancouver, WA

The meeting was called to order at 5:00pm

Commission Members Present:

Patrick Adigweme, Nena Cavel, Alyssa Wheeler, John Jay

Commission Members Absent:

Sandra Beck, Marjorie Ledell, Zach Pyle

Motion by Commissioner Jay, seconded by Commissioner Wheeler for excusal of the absence of Commissioners Beck, Ledell, and Pyle.

Motion carried unanimously.

Staff Present: Rebecca Kennedy, staff liaison, Krista Liles and Meredith Herbst, Support Staff, Becky Rude, staff attorney

Workshop: Impact Fee Deferral Code Changes – Bryan Monroe, Housing Project Planner, Economic Prosperity & Housing Department; Bryan Snodgrass, Principal Planner, Community Development Department

Staff presented proposed zoning code changes that would defer impact fee payments until final inspection instead of from building permit issuance. Staff reviewed current housing incentives, the state of the housing development pipeline, forthcoming changes intended to increase the feasibility of new housing production, the impact the impact fee deferral change may have, and next steps.

Commission discussion and staff responses:

- **Does the graph on slide 4 show total multifamily residential units that are permitted for construction?** Staff responded that the graph shows completed projects that have been delivered to market.

Members

Patrick Adigweme
Chair

Zach Pyle
Vice Chair

Nena Cavel
Sandra Beck
Marjorie Ledell
Alyssa Wheeler
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- **Is there an estimate of how many housing units we would gain in exchange for deferring these payments?** Staff responded that we don't have an estimate on the number of units that this would generate because of market fluctuation and materials costs.
- **Commissioners requested additional information** about other cities that have implemented impact fee deferral, or similar, and how that impacted housing development.
- Commissioners expressed general support for deferring impact fees even though it could result in the City potentially losing some revenue from interest, because the city doesn't have any multifamily being developed and is not getting any fee revenue at all. Being able to incentivize more building in a more efficient manner helps cut costs and make our spending more efficient in the long run.
- **A lot of building requirements, such as impact fees, can have an influence on a developers' decision to develop.** Commissioners expressed that they were in favor of looking into other things that can be done to improve the feasibility of private housing development.
- **Would delaying impact fees prevent developers from passing off the cost to the final home buyers?** Staff responded that the cost of the impact fees will be passed on to the final buyer, whether they're deferred or not. But being able to defer the impact fees could save the buyer the interest on those fees over that time, in addition to making it a less risky investment for the developer. The end cost would likely be close to the same or marginally less for a project with deferred impact fees.
- **Have there been any conversations about lowering the impact fees?** Staff responded that staff will be doing an analysis of impact fees and system development charges (SDCs). Impact fees are for transportation, parks, and schools. System development charges are for sewer and water. Staff will be looking at these holistically through the Comprehensive Plan update process and how they impact development feasibility. The City is also required by the State to calibrate impact fees based on the size of the housing unit. Right now, the City's zoning code distinguishes between single-family and multi-family, but a very large single-family house would pay the same impact fees as a small single-family house. The same goes for multi-family units. With the new calibration requirement, impact fees will be lower for units that are smaller.
- **Clarification on Slide 3. What do the acronyms CDBG and HOME mean?** Staff responded that CDBG stands for Community Development Block Grant program and that HOME is the HOME Investment Partnerships Program. Both are federal programs run through the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). Through these programs, funds are issued by the federal government to jurisdictions of specific size and are calibrated based on population. Typically, the City will combine these funds and the majority of them are used to fund affordable housing projects. They also fund key services, such as small business technical assistance, credit repair, and homelessness services. Generally, the funds are used for community development, usually housing-related, purposes. The development of Fourth Plain Commons used a section 108 loan, which is another HUD funding tool and is related to CDBG and HOME formula funds.
- **Where can the public access this data?** Staff responded that the data is available on the permits dashboard online and that there is a development dashboard that tracks development activity. The data in the presentation was produced by staff in the form of a monthly report. The data is available to the public on the City's website, but it might not be in the specific format as shown in the presentation.
- **Looking at Slide 8, enforcement of this would be via lien, correct?** Yes, developers would be required to record a lien against the property and final occupancy permits will not be issued until impact fees are paid.
- **What level of impact does this have?** By itself, low impact. But if we can pull all the levers, we can get them increase the feasibility of development overall and move projects that are on the margins forward.
- **Does this determine financial feasibility?** Staff responded that there is a tendency in the community to see developers as profit extracting, high rent demanding people who aren't thinking about community, but staff see them as partners who build almost all the housing in the City. Developers access financing from institutional investors that require a certain return on investment. Staff noted that they think it is important to understand builders and developers as partners in producing housing, and that they have to demonstrate feasibility and an acceptable return on investment in order to secure the financing needed to build housing.

- **How does the loss of interest revenue from the deferred impact fees affect the City's budget? Is this a significant hit to the City?** The estimated lost interest revenue is approximately \$660,000 annually. This does not have a significant impact on the City's budget and has no impact on the City's general fund. Impact fees pay for capital improvements to schools, parks and transportation facilities, but its important to note that if projects don't move forward the City collects no revenue to support these improvements.
- **How might development drive infrastructure improvement? How does that help to foster and grow development in the City?** Development projects pay for frontage and other off site improvements that benefit the City overall. This includes improving sidewalks and curbs, adding streetlights and trees, and improving intersections and signals, depending on the projects. Most infrastructure improvements that take place in the City are built or funded by private development. The City does fund large capital improvements, but impact fees contribute to these. For example, if there are no sidewalks adjacent to a development site, construction of a new building will also build the sidewalks. It's important to understand that private development is a partner in renewing aging infrastructure. The City cannot do it all, or even most of it.

Community Forum

- Amy Smith commented on maintaining Fishers Landing neighborhood character with the upcoming Comprehensive Plan changes.
- Tabor Kelly commented on development impact fees, supply and demand of housing and units, and traffic impact fees of apartments rather than road user fees.
- Bruce Barnes commented on lane reduction, parking fees, lack of retail activity on the waterfront, affordable housing, and property taxes.
- Carmen De Leon commented on bikeable infrastructure, light rail, and the housing market.
- Kimberlee Elbon commented concerns about housing development, population growth and the role of investors, asked for City transparency, and commented on sanctuary cities.

Public Hearing: Eliminate Parking Minimums for Affordable Housing – Chim Chune Ko, Real Estate Project Manager, Economic Prosperity & Housing Department; Bryan Snodgrass, Principal Planner, Community Development Department

Staff presented reviewed Council's policy on processing map and text changes in advance of adoption of the updated Comprehensive Plan and explained how the proposed text change before the Commission to remove parking minimums for affordable and attainable housing met that policy.

Discussion questions

- A asked that the change apply to all land uses, not just affordable housing. If arbitrary numbers of required parking are inhibiting the production of other land uses, it is inhibiting us from creating walkable urban neighborhoods.
- **Does this prohibit parking?** This just removes the minimum required, it doesn't restrict the amount a development can decide to build.
- **Is there data on housing production? Where can the public find this?** Yes, there is information on the [Affordable Housing Fund dashboard](#).
- **What are some of the other initiatives the City is promoting housing with?** Staff responded that deferring impact fees, temporary changes to the multi-family tax exemption program, and expedited review timelines are steps being taken to support housing development, in addition to the proposed change related to parking.

Public Testimony

- **Kimberlee Elbon** commented on taxes, growing population of Vancouver, and air/ water quality.
- **Jason Cromer** commented on property and vehicle taxes and reducing parking minimums.
- **Israel Lopez** commented on the need for more housing in Vancouver.
- **Bruce Barnes** commented on walkable infrastructure and enforcement of affordable housing.
- **Carmen (Melo) DeLeon** commented on translation services, financial spending, and housing fees.

Commission Deliberation

- Commissioner Wheeler is appreciative of the work the City is doing to make housing more affordable.
- Commissioner Jay is in support of removing parking minimums and increasing housing affordability,
- Chair Adigweme appreciates the fellow commissioners' comments. The market should allow developers of these units to understand the needs of the people they're wanting to sell or rent to and build the parking they need to address that need.

Motion by Commissioner Cavel, seconded by Commissioner Jay to recommend approval of the removal of parking minimums for affordable and attainable housing citywide.

Roll Call

Commissioner Cavel - Y

Commissioner Wheeler - Y

Commissioner Jay - Y

Chair Adigweme - Y

Motion carried unanimously.

Communication from Staff

- Thank you to Krista and Meredith for running the meeting this week. New Support Staff Specialist starts training soon.
- There will be no June or August Planning Commission meetings.

The meeting adjourned at 7:36 pm

Patrick Adigweme, Chair

Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, May 13th, 2025

4:30 p.m.

City Hall

Council Chambers

415 W 6th Street

Vancouver, WA

The meeting was called to order at 4:30pm.

Commission Members Present:

Patrick Adigweme, Marjorie Ledell, Zach Pyle, Nena Cavel, Sandra Beck, Alyssa Wheeler, John Jay

Staff Present: Bryan Snodgrass, staff liaison, Kail Hibbs, support staff, Becky Rude, staff attorney

Adoption of the minutes:

Motion by Cavel, seconded by Pyle to approve the April 8th meeting minutes carried with an abstention from Commissioner Wheeler who was absent.

Action item: Vote to amend future agendas to include Commissioner Communications instead of Chair Communications.

Motion by Pyle, seconded by Jay to approve. Motion carried unanimously.

Workshop: Comprehensive Plan Update – Plan Element Goals and Policies

Domenique Martinelli, Senior Planner, Community Development Department

Staff presented an overview of the Comprehensive Plan vision statements and policies. The policies included in tonight's workshop were based on equity, transportation, and parks & recreation. Next steps include taking feedback from working groups, City Council, and feedback from tonight's Planning Commission. Also, a Draft Environmental Impact Statement is coming soon.

Commission discussion and staff responses:

Members

Patrick Adigweme
Chair

Zach Pyle
Vice Chair

Nena Cavel
Sandra Beck
Marjorie Ledell
Alyssa Wheeler
John Jay

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- **How are traffic fatalities defined in transportation policy? Does that include pedestrians and other transportation users outside of vehicles?** Staff responded that traffic fatality data is reported and monitored in a traffic collision dashboard for all modes of transportation and mobility. If more information is needed, staff will get back to commissioners on this topic.
- **When developing and maintaining street standards, are we using low-cost infrastructure or low-cost of future ongoing maintenance?** The transportation department rolls out a maintenance package which includes paving, storm drain cleaning, sidewalk infill, etc. These Higher upfront costs have lower maintenance responsibilities. Are we looking to pursue low ongoing maintenance costs?
- **Intersection of parks and mobility** are a good start. We want to see more connectors through the City like Burnt Bridge Creek and Salmon Creek Trail.
- **What is the driving plan behind regional freight access in the 20-year Comprehensive Plan?** Also, freight is related to jobs. Staff responded that we want to make sure that we prioritize freight in the plan to facilitate jobs, driving community, and local economy.
- **The feel factor is similar to livability, what will be the metrics for 'Community Feel'?** Staff responded that we would conduct community-wide surveys about city-wide satisfaction. City facilities and inventories will likely be the driving metrics.
- **What is the approach of City staff when infill housing supports City goals but goes against other goals such as traffic and community feel?** Staff responded that the goal is mode shift. We want to pair housing around transit-rich areas. We want them to be thinking about walking, biking, other small-mobility trips. Our current standards are based on vehicle output, but we want to start looking at streets as people moving through spaces rather than vehicles.
- **In policy 55**, it supports the premise that diverse housing options support aging populations. As well as an emphasis on this same policy supporting young families with an opportunity to live around their community through their whole life.
- **In reference to regional planning and coordination policies, will this include aligning code with annexation and making the gap more affordable?** Staff responded in terms of the Urban Growth Area (UGA) and working with the county that unless we annexed certain areas in the UGA, we did not have the ability to influence design standards or costs. A City expectation could be included in the comprehensive plan but part of that means periodic coordination with County Council by the City making county standards more consistent in order for those City standards to be met. At the end of the day City has say inside City limits and the County has jurisdiction outside of City limits.
- **More support for park pathways and recreation** intersecting with transportation and more mobility trails through parks.
- **Can you provide an overview of how these goals align with the place types we have reviewed and how these goals inform that work?** Staff responded that place types exist in the Land Use policies which we went over at the last meeting. These policies regarding Equity, Transportation, and Recreation align with Land Use and place types through walkable and accessible neighborhoods with built environments that promote health through efficient use of land. These policies also relate to nodes and key corridors meeting employment hubs.
- **One thing that is relevant to providing a welcoming community, regarding Policy #2, is affordable housing.**
- **How do we quantify sentiments regarding Community Feel and Vision?** How do we inform that metric through how those visions are formed?
- **Possible name change for one of the goals:** Ensuring access to a variety of transportation options rather than "changing travel behavior" as a name for one of the goals.
- **What are we planning for?** Staff responded we are planning for an influx of approximately 81,000 new residents, 38,000 new housing units, and 44,000 new jobs over a 20-year period.

Community Forum

Workshop: Code change to eliminate Parking Minimums for Affordable Housing – Chim Chune Ko, Real Estate Project Manager, Economic Prosperity & Housing Department; Bryan Snodgrass, Principal Planner, Community Development Department

Staff presented data showcasing a significant housing deficit and how the City's goal is to increase housing production to at least 2000 new units per year and included at least 1000 new affordable housing units per year. They also showed data presenting a deep decrease in recent permitting activity and housing production. By removing the off-street parking minimums for affordable housing units, it eliminates a cost barrier for many business owners and developers and lets them decide how much parking their business needs/wants. This will decrease the costs of new development, allowing for more housing to be built.

Commission discussion and staff responses:

- **Are you aware of any policies where the code is set more as an exchange: “you can eliminate parking if you add this much housing...”?** Staff responded that they are not aware of any.
- **If we acknowledge that we are in a housing emergency, we can acknowledge that parking minimums can be a barrier to housing production, why not get rid of all parking minimums?** Staff responded that more widespread reduction of parking minimums can be considered in this Comprehensive Plan update.
- **How is the ten-year minimum requirement going to be enforced?** With this, once parking gets built, it gets built so how can it be enforced past that timeline given the affordability component? Staff responded it was based off state allowance of construction sales tax exemption. We would enforce that through an Affordable Housing covenant. After those ten years, it will be up to the business to remain affordable or not.
- **How does the affordable housing covenant work?** Staff responded there are a few different models. They have annual reporting requirements to demonstrate compliance, the ability of the City to audit at any time, as well as the value of the parking that was excused. The City has a means to enforce the covenant if in violation after evaluation. The options after ten years are to remain affordable housing or compensate the City for the value of the parking that was excused.
- **With this policy allowing affordable housing developers to choose how much parking to allow, the City should have a piece of code which requires applicants to explain their plan for parking and why they are providing the number of parking stalls that they are.**
- **Are there other ways the City can get involved to reduce barriers of housing development?** Staff responded that the costs of construction have certainly increased, some of that due to state requirements, but can also be influenced by parking minimums, downtown design standards, etc.
- **Are most properties generally around the parking minimum?** Staff responded they have seen projects wanting to provide both more and other properties provide less. The affordable projects tend to see lower levels of parking desired and higher cost units tend to demand more parking from a developer standpoint as an amenity to attract more residents.
- **Is the Downtown Parking Plan you referenced available on the City website?** Yes.

Community Forum:

- Margie Barilla commented on the Haven Treatment Center and its positive practices for the mental health of youth in Washington State.
- Sharon Pevey commented on manufactured homeowners' rights and interests. She commented on rent increases and lack of protections for manufactured homeowners.
- Tabor Kelly commented with support for removing parking minimums.

- Atul Mathur commented with concerns about rezoning of Fishers Landing in the upcoming 2045 Comprehensive Plan. Atul commented on neighborhood values, walkability, and asked for stability within the rezoning.

Public Hearing: 2025 Stand Alone Rezones to Facilitate Housing – Bryan Snodgrass, Principal Planner, Community Development Department

a. 58th Street Rezone

Staff presented an overview of the 58th St rezone which would change the zoning in the short term if approved from R – 22 to R -50. This is generally consistent with the potential new zoning of for the site and surrounding properties of Medium Scale Neighborhood identified in the Comprehensive Plan update land use possibilities.

Discussion questions for Staff:

- **Asked Eric Hahn, Senior Engineer with the Transportation Division for the City of Vancouver, for an overview of traffic on 58th St and general observations.** Staff responded that we typically review existing properties that have undergone similar rezones, looking for any potential points that will cause failure with the rezone. This area has capacity for more residents, the intersections have capacity for more throughput, and it is not anticipated to see an increase of too much throughput from these additional units inside the rezone. The only issue may be the state of the sidewalk and pedestrian facilities with the redevelopment. Staff are looking to create a lighted pedestrian crossing from this unit to the park.
- **When you say there is nothing failing now, what is the definition of failing?** Staff responded we grade streets on certain standards from A-F. Primary intersections nearby on peak hours are in the level of service D in some cases. This rezone will not be that highly impacted.
- **If medium-scale is approved for this area, there will likely be a 60' height limit. How does this compare with what is proposed today?** Staff responded that this type of designation envisions 2-4 story buildings. This does include additional allowance for commercial or retail that currently do not exist.

Questions for the Applicant:

- **The Comprehensive Plan will likely increase Base Zoning Allowance? Why right now?** The applicant responded that the only changes the neighborhood will see is additional trips. There won't be much of a change other than additional units. Both the current R-22 zone and proposed R-50 zone allow multi-family development.
- **Are you committed to go to City Council keeping the height at 5 stories instead of 7?** The applicant responded that they understand the concerns and will research before going to the Council.
- **How did you arrive at R-50 from R-22?** The applicant responded that the goal is to promote higher density.

Public Testimony

- Anastasiya Kozlovska commented on the neighborhood feel of Walnut Grove as a whole and the surrounding opinions on this rezone. Asked for protections for Raymond E. Shaffer Park. Also commented on the high traffic volumes that will come from this rezone.
- Charles Donald LeBaron commented as a new resident of Walnut Grove about the community feel of Walnut Grove. Charles commented on the exorbitant size of the rezone along the corridor near a park and a school. He expressed support for more housing but asked that the size be reconsidered.
- Paulo Rolon-Lozano commented on traffic increases and accidents. Commented on the sidewalk and pedestrian crossings. And asked for protections for the park for kids and families.
- Charles Brasher commented as a 20-year Walnut Grove resident on the size of this rezone and commented on the stormwater treatment facility adjacent to the property.
- Bob Seegert commented as a 20-year Walnut Grove resident on the changes to this corridor. Commenting on an increase in traffic congestion, freight, noise, and speed.

- Deborah Petrie commented as a 20-year Walnut Grove resident on traffic increases and the safety of youth utilizing 58th St as a route to school. Also commented on the environment and asked for minimized native vegetation loss of trees and plants providing vital shade and air quality,
- Jonathan Wheeler commented on the housing crisis and the need for more affordable housing.
- Tabor Kelly commented on the housing crisis and the need for more affordable housing. Tabor commented on the need to build for the future residents of the neighborhood and Vancouver.
- Ralph Harris commented on traffic, dangerous speed, and the difficulty of backing out of driveways. Commented on crime in the neighborhood and road rage.
- Joel Schmeltzer commented as a new resident to Walnut Grove on bike lanes on 82nd to 58th St often having cars parked in them which decreases safe travel options for cyclists. As well as decreased safety for pedestrians with high traffic volumes. Also commented on the influx of school classroom sizes and the impact on students and teachers that will have with the increase.
- Stephen Karis commented on the neighborhood feel of Walnut Grove and opposed the rezone.

Deliberation

Commissioner Cavel is in support of the increased housing density.

Commissioner Ledell suggested something closer to R - 30 instead of R - 50 would be more appropriate.

Commissioner Beck is in support of infill housing but asks for protection of native trees. Commissioner Beck deemed the character of the neighborhood worth more than just the research that has been done and asked for more to address the safety and mobility concerns.

Commissioner Wheeler is in support of the rezone to address housing needs.

Commissioner Jay is in support of the rezone to address housing needs.

Vice-Chair Pyle agreed that R - 50 is too large a rezone for the existing conditions without the code and planning that is coming with the future Comprehensive Plan. This body cannot propose something that is not in front of us. Vice-Chair Pyle would be in more support of a lower zoning designation.

Chair Adigweme seeks to address community concerns and is in agreement with Vice-Chair Pyle on the high quantity and the rushed timeline to change R -22 to R - 50.

Motion by Commissioner Jay, seconded by Commissioner Wheeler to recommend approval of the 58th St zone change from R - 22 to R - 50 at 7711 and 7809 NE 58th St, tax lots 107971000 and 107982000.

Roll call

Commissioner Jay – Y

Commissioner Wheeler – Y

Commissioner Beck – N

Commissioner Cavel- Y

Commissioner Ledell - N

Vice Chair Pyle – N

Chair Adigweme – N

Motion fails.

b. Bella Grove Rezone

Staff presented on a possible zoning change of R - 18 to R - 30 east of 59th St and 135th Ave.

Discussion Questions

- **On slide 5, the site plan doesn't align with that configuration?** Staff responded that it does in fact include both even though the site plan doesn't include it.
- **What is a garden apartment? Do we know the height of the proposed property?** Staff responded it will likely be better answered by the applicant. Likely 3-4 stories.
- **On the maximum density allowed, is the applicant able to apply the wetland area to the acreage or is the wetland outside of that?** Staff responded that it can include it in the overall acreage.

Commissioner Deliberation

- Vice-Chair Pyle is disappointed the applicant is not present. This rezone is a big deal and they should be here. Generally, in support.
- Commissioner Ledell agrees with Vice-Chair Pyle.
- Commissioner Beck agrees.
- Commissioner Wheeler is in support of new housing.
- Commissioner Jay is in agreement.
- Chair agrees with commissioners and wished the applicant had been present.

Motion by Beck, seconded by Cavel to recommend approval of the Bella Grove Zone Change from R -18 to R – 30, at 13401 and 13309 NE 59th St, tax lots 107812000 and 107814000.

Roll call

Commissioner Jay – Y

Commissioner Wheeler – Y

Commissioner Beck – Y

Commissioner Cavel- Y

Commissioner Ledell- Y

Vice Chair Pyle – Y

Chair Adigweme – Y

Motion passes unanimously.

Commissioner Communications

- Heights District Investment Committee is in the process of receiving feedback.

Communication from Staff

- None

The meeting adjourned at 8:08 pm

Patrick Adigweme, Chair



MEMORANDUM

DATE: July 8, 2025

TO: Chair Adigweme and Planning Commissioners

FROM: Rebecca Kennedy, Deputy Director, Community Development Department
Meredith Herbst, Associate Planner, Community Development Department

RE: **OUR VANCOUVER – Draft Environmental Impact Statement Findings**

Intent

To share the findings from the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the Comprehensive Plan Update, **OUR VANCOUVER**, with the Planning Commission. In addition to an overview of the EIS process and alternatives, this workshop will cover the potential impacts of the alternatives on housing, land and shoreline use, transportation, public services and utilities, air quality, greenhouse gas emissions, and climate, and additional topics.

Background

The City of Vancouver's Comprehensive Plan provides the overall long-term vision and policy direction to manage the built and natural environment in Vancouver and provide necessary public facilities to achieve that vision. The City adopted its first comprehensive plan under Washington's Growth Management Act in 1994 (Chapter 36.70A RCW), with a major re-write occurring in 2004, and a less substantive update occurring most recently in 2011.

Population growth, demographics, market conditions, and council priorities have shifted significantly since 2011, and it is necessary to re-imagine the existing growth strategy as part of this Comprehensive Plan update cycle. The project team developed two alternatives, previously called land use possibilities, that respond to current needs and reflect the overall plan vision that was established for **OUR VANCOUVER** during the first phase of the project. The Council-endorsed community vision statement reads as follows:

Vancouver is an equitable and prosperous community, which ensures that all residents, businesses and organizations benefit from the growth and advancement we make together. Vancouver will be recognized for our quality of life, as evidenced by affordable housing in vibrant, safe and walkable neighborhoods, access to jobs and economic opportunity for all, and resilience to the impacts of climate change.

What is an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), why do we do it, and what does it cover?

The State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) requires review of how new policies and regulations as well as individual development projects impact the built and natural environment. SEPA review of government actions and decisions on plans, policies and regulations that will govern future development projects are called “nonproject” actions. The **OUR VANCOUVER** Comprehensive Plan Update and associated Title 20 land use code changes constitute a “nonproject” proposal under SEPA, which is typically less detailed than a project-specific SEPA document. The intent of a nonproject EIS is to form the basis for future project-specific environmental reviews and permitting processes. Changes such as the Comprehensive Plan Update and associated Title 20 development code changes, which have the potential for significant adverse impacts to the environment, require the highest level of SEPA review through an EIS process.

A Draft EIS is an informational document that compares land use alternatives and describes the potential impacts and benefits of each alternative, as well as potential ways to avoid, minimize, or mitigate for impacts. Then, community members, government agencies, tribes, and other interested parties are invited to comment on the Draft EIS. These comments, along with direction from elected officials, local priorities, and information provided in the Draft EIS, are then used to develop a single “preferred alternative,” which is analyzed in a Final EIS.

Alternatives for Vancouver’s Growth and Development

The Draft EIS for the **OUR VANCOUVER** Comprehensive Plan Update analyzes the potential environmental effects of three alternatives: a “No Action” Alternative and two “Action” Alternatives.

- **No Action Alternative**
 - Assumes growth and development will occur based on the City’s current Comprehensive Plan and zoning code, plus automatic state law that allows at least 4 to 6 housing units on every single-family residential lot.
- **Alternative 1 and Alternative 2**
 - Assume the Comprehensive Plan Update and zoning code changes would be implemented, including allowing taller and more dense development and a wider range of land use mixes at varying degrees throughout the city.
 - Previously called Land Use Possibility A and Land Use Possibility B, respectively. Now being called Alternative 1 and Alternative 2 to align with SEPA-specific terms and language.

The alternatives are shown as three different maps. 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 nine new zoning districts (see Figure 1 and Table 1 below).

OUR VANCOUVER – Draft Environmental Impact Statement Findings Part 1

July 8, 2025

Page 3 of 8

Figure 1. Proposed new Comprehensive Plan designations and nested zoning districts.

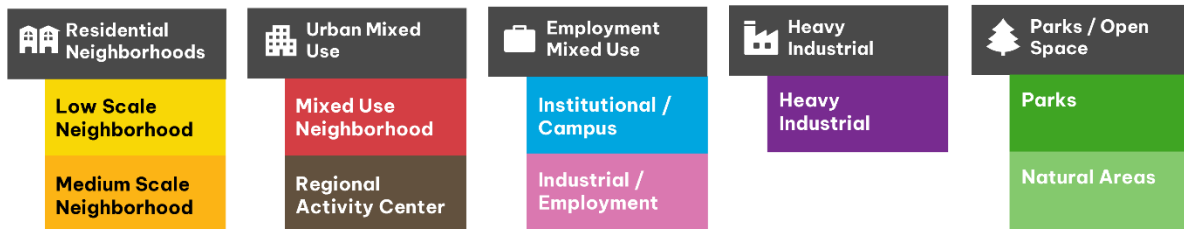


Table 1. Proposed new zoning districts with descriptions and heights.

District	Description	Height
Low-Scale Neighborhood	Focuses on low-scale housing choices, typically with up to 6 units per lot. Any lot would be allowed to have at least four units.	Up to three stories/45 feet maximum
Medium-Scale Neighborhood	Focuses on medium-scale housing choices.	Two to five stories/75 feet maximum
Mixed Use Neighborhood	Provides for a broad range of housing, commercial, and civic/institutional uses.	Three to eight stories/110 feet maximum
Regional Activity Center	Includes lands that offer opportunities for economic, entertainment, civic, and housing needs.	Three stories minimum and no height maximum
Institutional / Campus	Includes lands that support academic, civic, or medical buildings.	Up to 12 stories/150 feet maximum
Industrial / Employment	Includes lands that support large-scale, single-tenant industrial, warehouse and flex space building and smaller, multi-tenant industrial buildings.	Up to 12 stories/150 feet maximum
Heavy Industrial	Includes lands that are currently zoned for heavy industrial uses, such as manufacturing and production.	-
Parks	Includes lands currently zoned as public community and neighborhood parks.	-
Natural Areas	Includes lands currently zoned for greenways and natural areas, which are generally undeveloped lands managed for both natural and ecological value and light-impact recreational use.	-

Similarities Among Alternatives

Under all alternatives, growth, development, and change will occur in Vancouver over the next 20 years. The three alternatives have similar amounts and locations of Parks, Natural Areas, Institutional/Campus, and Heavy Industrial land as what exists today. Because of the automatic state requirements, all alternatives allow at least 4 housing units per residential lot, and at least 6 units per residential lot if near transit or if 2 of the units are affordable.

Differences Among Alternatives

While Alternatives 1 and 2 are similar, Table 2 summarizes some of the key differences among the three alternatives.

Table 2. Key differences among the alternatives.

	No Action Alternative: Current Plan	Alternative 1: Possibility A	Alternative 2: Possibility B
Density, Intensity, and Mix of Uses	Lowest	Higher than No Action	Highest
Zoning Districts	New development continues to occur under existing regulations.	More Low-Scale Neighborhood and Industrial / Employment land than Alternative 2	More Regional Activity Center and Medium-Scale Neighborhood land than Alternative 1
State Laws and Community Vision	Does not comply with some State laws, including H.B. 1220.	Complies with State laws and created to help achieve the community vision.	Same as Alternative 1

Potential Impacts

The Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) describes how these different alternatives could affect our built and natural environment. It covers the following environmental topics:

- Land and shoreline use
- Housing
- Aesthetics
- Historic and cultural preservation
- Transportation
- Noise
- Public services and utilities

OUR VANCOUVER – Draft Environmental Impact Statement Findings Part 1

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- Earth
- Air quality, greenhouse gases, and climate
- Water
- Plants and animals

Some selected findings from the Draft EIS are summarized in Table 3 below.

Table 3. Selected potential impacts of alternatives on the built and natural environment

	No Action Alternative: Current Plan	Alternative 1: Possibility A	Alternative 2: Possibility B
Land and shoreline use, housing	Does not meet City housing or jobs targets	Exceeds City housing and jobs targets	Exceeds City housing and jobs targets
Transportation	Highest potential vehicle miles traveled per household	Lower potential vehicle miles traveled per household than No Action	Lowest potential vehicle miles traveled per household
Public utilities and services	Lowest new demand	Higher new demand than No Action	Highest new demand
Air quality, greenhouse gases, and climate	Lowest modeled total emissions	Higher modeled total emissions than No Action	Slightly higher modeled total emissions than Alternative 1
Water, plants and animals	Lowest potential impacts, but lowest potential for development subject to new environmental protections	Higher potential impacts than No Action, but higher potential for development subject to new environmental protections	Highest potential impacts, but highest potential for development subject to new environmental protections

For additional details on potential impacts, see attachment and Draft EIS.

Avoid, Minimize and Mitigate

The full Draft EIS document outlines actions and strategies the City will use to avoid, minimize and mitigate potential impacts.

- Housing:
 - Includes policies and actions that increase the types and sizes of housing available, provide more housing affordable to people making below the average median income, facilitate greater access to homeownership, mitigate

displacement pressures, allow for innovative construction methods, and increase public resources for income-based housing.

- Land and Shoreline Use:
 - Includes policies and actions that support more efficient development patterns, provide buffers between zoning districts, retrofit and repurpose underutilized buildings, incentivize infill and development on underutilized lots, increase allowances for shared parking, protect critical lands and shorelines, and reduce regulatory barriers to siting essential services like grocery stores and childcare facilities.
- Transportation:
 - Includes policies and actions that provide more multimodal transit options, locate housing near transit investments and commercial services, expand community uses of the right-of-way, and update street standards to safely move more people in more ways.
- Public Services and Utilities:
 - Includes policies and actions that support compact, efficient development within City limits, regular updates to 20-year and 6-year Capital Improvement Plans, adjust rates/system development charges (SDCs) as needed, and invest in emergency services, redundant and multi-use infrastructure and community preparedness to build resilience
- Air quality, greenhouse gases, and climate:
 - Includes policies and actions that increase resilience to climate change, expand access to clean energy, implement land use patterns that reduce congestion and travel distances for essential services and jobs, and expand use of alternative fuel vehicles.
- Additional topics (aesthetics, historic and cultural preservation, noise, public services and utilities, water resources, and plants and animals)
 - Includes policies and actions that enhance green infrastructure, increase urban canopy and reduce heat islands, protect and restore natural habitats, address pollution and environmental health disparities, preserve and promote cultural and historic resources, build inclusive and culturally-specific public spaces, and emphasize walkability and integration with adjacent development.

Comment Period

The City is requesting comments on the Draft EIS from community members, agencies, tribes, and other interested parties **between July 8 and September 8, 2025**. The deadline for comments is September 8, 2025, at 11:59 p.m. Comments may be provided via the online comment form, email, postal mail or voicemail.

The public may also provide written comments at the following two interactive public meetings. At these interactive public meetings, community members will be able to learn about the Draft EIS, provide comments, and ask questions to City staff:

- Wednesday, July 30, 2025, 4 p.m. to 7 p.m. at Firstenburg Community Center
- Saturday, August 9, 2025, 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. at City Hall

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Additionally, there will be two informational virtual sessions with a presentation and time for Q&A, but comments must be made through one of the above-mentioned methods (online form, email, postal mail, voicemail, or at the July 30 or August 9 public meetings) to be considered as part of the formal Draft EIS comment period.

- Tuesday, July 22, 4 p.m. to 6 p.m. via Zoom
- Monday, August 4, 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. via Zoom

Comments received on the Draft EIS will help the City to develop a Preferred Alternative. The Preferred Alternative will be analyzed in the Final EIS and then presented to the City Council for adoption later this year.

Previous Planning Commission Review

2023

- November 14, Planning Commission Workshop: Comprehensive Plan Goals Framework

2024

- February 13, Planning Commission Workshop: Comprehensive Plan, Land Use Possibilities Methods and Assumptions Pt. 1
- April 1, City Council + Planning Commission Workshop: Mapping Activity
- May 14, Planning Commission Workshop: Comprehensive Plan, Land Use Possibilities Methods and Assumptions Pt. 2
- June 25, Planning Commission Workshop: Comprehensive Plan, Equitable Development Plan & Economic Development Strategy
- July 23, Planning Commission Workshop: Land Use Possibilities Pt. 1
- September 10, Planning Commission Workshop: Land Use Possibilities Pt. 2
- October 22, Planning Commission Workshop: Code Concepts Pt. 1

2025

- February 11, Planning Commission Workshop: Code Concepts Pt. 2
- March 11, Planning Commission Workshop: Code Concepts Pt. 3
- April 4, Planning Commission Workshop: Goals and Policies Pt. 1
- May 13, Planning Commission Workshop: Goals and Policies Pt. 2

Next Steps

- August 4, 2025
 - Workshop with City Council, Draft EIS findings part 2
- September 2025
 - Continued City Council and Planning Commission review of Draft EIS findings and public comments received, and initial discussions on a potential preferred land use possibility.
- October 2025
 - Refinement of preferred possibility based on Draft EIS findings, public comment, and Council, Planning Commission, and other board and commission feedback.
 - Council endorsement of preferred land use possibility via resolution.
 - Continued review and refinement of plan goals and policies.
- November 2025

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- Public comment draft of Plan, Preferred Land Use Possibility map, and Title 20 development code, and review of these with project working groups, broader community, relevant Boards and Commissions and City Council.
 - Continued community engagement with project partners and working groups, and the broader community.
 - Continued refinement of Plan goals and policies, Title 20 development code, and additional implementation steps.
- Adoption process with Planning Commission and City Council, supported by Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) findings.

Attachment

- Attachment A - Draft Environmental Impact Statement: Executive Summary

Staff Contact

- Rebecca Kennedy (she/her), Deputy Director, Community Development
Rebecca.Kennedy@cityofvancouver.us
- Meredith Herbst (she/her), Associate Planner, Community Development
Meredith.Herbst@cityofvancouver.us



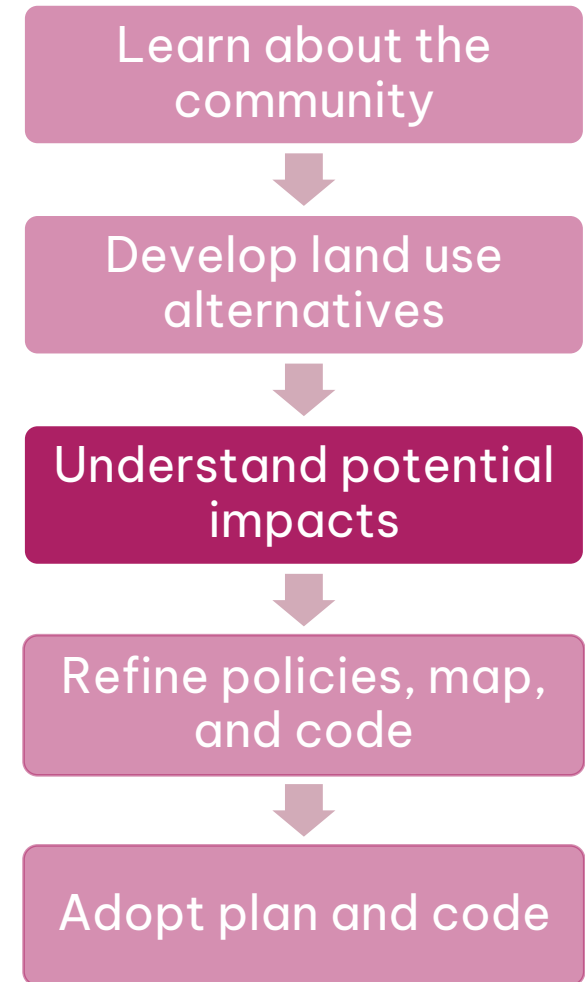
Comprehensive Plan Update Draft EIS Findings

Rebecca Kennedy (she/her), Deputy Director, Community Development
Meredith Herbst (she/her), Associate Planner, Community Development
Anne Broache (she/her), Vice President, Environmental Planning, WSP

Planning Commission | July 8, 2025

Agenda

- **Recap:**
 - Comprehensive Plan
 - Alternatives for Vancouver's growth and development
- **Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) Process**
- **Draft EIS Findings (by topic)**
 - Potential Impacts
 - Mitigation
- **Comment Period: July 8 – September 8**
- **Next steps and Discussion**



OUR VANCOUVER Comprehensive Plan

- A guide for the city's growth and development over the next **20 years** (2025-2045).

	2024	Growth	2045 Targets
Population	~200,000	+ 81,000	~281,000
Housing Units	~86,000	+ 38,000	~124,000
Jobs	~100,000	+ 43,100	~143,100

Vancouver is an equitable and prosperous community, which ensures that all residents, businesses and organizations benefit from the growth and advancement we make together.

Vancouver will be recognized for our quality of life, as evidenced by affordable housing in vibrant, safe and walkable neighborhoods, access to jobs and economic opportunity for all, and leading-edge efforts to address climate change.



About the Alternatives



www.beheardvancouver.org/plan2045

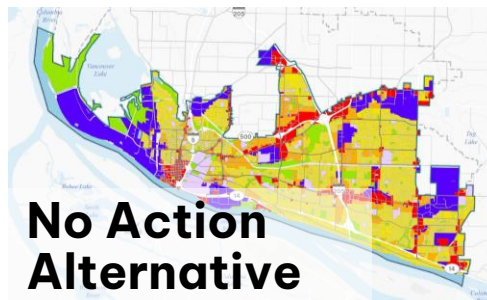
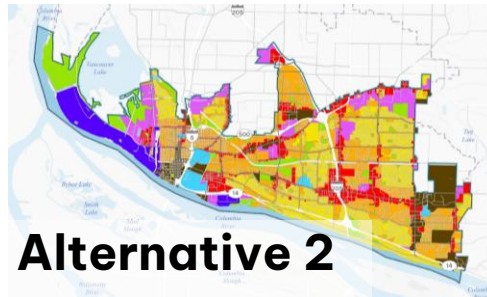
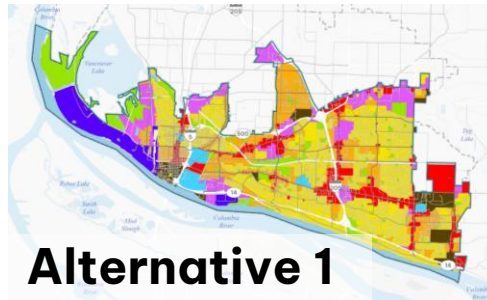
City priorities

State requirements

Community engagement

Existing and anticipated future conditions

Existing plan + automatic State laws



Draft Environmental Impact Statement (Draft EIS)

Public comment period

Preferred Alternative combines features from maps

Goals, Policies, Code

Final EIS

Adopted Plan, Map, and Zoning Code

4



EIS Process

- Draft EIS describes how each alternative could impact different aspects of the built and natural environment.
- Describes **general** impacts, not super specific, because plan is high-level policy / “nonproject” EIS.
- Required by State.
- Comment period: Jul 8 – Sep 8
- Draft EIS, public comments, board and commission feedback, Council direction, and City policies used to create one preferred alternative.



- Land and shoreline use
- Housing
- Aesthetics (light and glare)
- Historic and cultural preservation
- Transportation
- Noise
- Public services and utilities (emergency services, water, sewer, schools, parks and recreation)
- Air quality, greenhouse gases, and climate
- Earth (geological hazard areas, soils, topography)
- Water resources
- Plants and animals

Draft EIS Findings

Potential impacts and mitigation by
topic



Housing: Potential Impacts

- **All alternatives** would increase the amount and diversity of housing to some extent.

	No Action Alternative	Alternative 1	Alternative 2
Housing targets	Would not meet • Estimated capacity for 29,600 new housing units	Exceeds • Estimated capacity for 45,100 new housing units	Exceeds • Estimated capacity for 50,700 new housing units
Potential for diversity of housing types and affordable housing supply	Lowest	Higher than No Action	Highest



Housing: Mitigation

"Avoidance, Minimization, and Mitigation Measures"

- Alternatives 1 and 2 would be subject to the City's Comprehensive Plan Update goals and policies and proposed revisions to development regulations.
- Potential goals and policies
 - Enact regulations that allow for and incentivize different types and sizes of housing
 - Provide more housing that is affordable to households with incomes below the area medium
 - Facilitate greater access to homeownership
 - Reduce and mitigate displacement pressures
 - Allow for innovative and more affordable construction methods
 - Increase public resources for income-based housing
 - Implement Housing Action Plan recommendations



Land and Shoreline Use: Potential Impacts

- All alternatives would focus job growth in industrial and mixed-use or commercial areas, which would result in similar average wages.

	No Action Alternative	Alternative 1	Alternative 2
Jobs targets	Would not meet • Estimated capacity for 16,600 new jobs	Exceeds • Estimated capacity for 46,000 new jobs	Exceeds • Estimated capacity for 49,300 new jobs
Commercial displacement potential	Lowest • But fewest new spaces for businesses	Moderate • But more new spaces for businesses than No Action	Similar to Alternative 1 • Most new spaces for businesses



Note: This section of the Draft EIS also includes information about current land use, current shoreline use, population, and social vulnerability.

Land and Shoreline Use: Mitigation

"Avoidance, Minimization, and Mitigation Measures"

- All alternatives would be subject to the requirements in current applicable state, county, and city land and shoreline use laws and policies (e.g., GMA, Clark County CPPs, City SMP)
- Potential regulations that:
 - ➔ Allow for more efficient development patterns / more Connected and Accessible Neighborhoods
 - ➔ Allow for a greater mix of uses in more areas
 - ➔ Provide buffers between different zoning districts
- Potential goals and policies that support:
 - ➔ Retrofits and repurposing of underutilized buildings
 - ➔ Infill development and efficient use of currently underutilized lots
 - ➔ Protection of environmental resources, critical areas and shoreline
 - ➔ Fewer barriers to siting essential services like grocery stores and daycares
 - ➔ Affordable commercial space



Transportation: Potential Impacts

- All alternatives would
 - ➔ Increase the total miles traveled by vehicle to some extent.
 - ➔ Result in similar percentages of trips by a particular type of transportation
 - Walking/rolling, biking, by transit, or by vehicle.
 - ➔ Result in similar average distance of trips – about 4 miles.

	No Action Alternative	Alternative 1	Alternative 2
Miles traveled by vehicle	Highest per household • But lowest overall	Lower per household than No Action • But higher overall than No Action	Lowest per household • But highest overall
Traffic on City safety corridors*	Lowest	Higher than No Action	Slightly higher than Alternative 1



*Roads identified for safety-related improvements. Potential impacts vary by specific road.

Transportation: Mitigation

"Avoidance, Minimization, and Mitigation Measures"

- Updates to 6-year Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) and adhere to current Transportation System Plan (TSP) projects
- Potential goals and policies
 - More multimodal travel options
 - Locate housing near transit investments and commercial services
 - Expand community use of the right-of-way
 - Updated street standards and multimodal level of service standards
 - Implement Transportation System Plan (TSP) plans, policies and projects



Public Services and Utilities: Potential Impacts

- **All alternatives would**
 - ➔ Increase the demand for the City's public services and utilities.
 - ➔ Have the highest new demand for public services and utilities in East Vancouver (east of I-205 to the eastern city limits).

	No Action Alternative	Alternative 1	Alternative 2
Additional need for public services and utilities	Lowest	Higher than No Action	Highest



Public Services and Utilities: Mitigation

"Avoidance, Minimization, and Mitigation Measures"

- Continue to conduct regular capital project planning effort for facilities consistent with the Capital Facilities Element, other city functional plans, and service provider plans
- The school districts would continue to address changes in student enrollment through their individual planning processes.
- Potential goals and policies
 - ➔ Compact, efficient development within City limits
 - ➔ Regularly update 20-year and 6-year Capital Improvement Plans, adjust rates/SDCs as needed
 - ➔ Invest in emergency services, redundant and multi-use infrastructure and community preparedness to build resilience



Air quality, greenhouse gases, and climate: Potential Impacts

- **All alternatives would**
 - have similar capacity for new housing units in areas with air pollution exposure risks.
 - have lower emissions than Vancouver does currently.

	No Action Alternative	Alternative 1	Alternative 2
Modeled 2045 emissions	Lowest	Higher than No Action • But still lower than current	Slightly higher than Alternative 1 • But still lower than current
Potential construction-related air quality impacts	Lowest	Higher than No Action	Slightly higher than Alternative 1



Air quality, greenhouse gases, and climate: Mitigation

"Avoidance, Minimization, and Mitigation Measures"

- Future air pollutant emissions under all alternatives are expected to be lower than existing emissions due to improvements in vehicle technology, stricter fuel and engine regulations, and decarbonization of electricity supply.
- Potential goals and policies
 - Increase resilience to climate change – community and infrastructure
 - Expand access to clean energy options and alternative fuel vehicles
 - Implement land use patterns that reduce congestion and travel distances
 - Implement Climate Action Framework policies and actions



Additional Topics: Similar Potential Impacts

- To some extent, **all alternatives** would
 - ➔ Impact **historic and cultural preservation** and new development would face the same requirements protecting these resources.
 - ➔ Impact **aesthetics** through specific future development projects.
 - ➔ Have similar room for new housing in areas with high transportation **noise**.
 - ➔ Have impacts related to **geologic hazards and erosion risks** and would need to be consistent with updated city regulations protecting against these risks.
 - ➔ Have impacts on **surface water, wetland areas, and groundwater** and would need to be consistent with updated city regulations protecting these resources.
 - ➔ Have impacts on **tree canopy, vegetation, wildlife**, and plant populations and habitat and would need to be consistent with updated city regulations protecting these resources.



Additional Topics: Different Potential Impacts

	No Action Alternative	Alternative 1	Alternative 2
For potential impacts listed below	Lowest	Higher than No Action	Slightly higher than Alternative 1

- Potential for
 - ➔ larger-scale buildings and associated **visual** impacts
 - ➔ disturbance of **historic/cultural sites**.
 - ➔ construction and long-term transportation **noise** impacts in noise-sensitive areas
 - ➔ new **impervious surfaces** and associated runoff
 - ➔ impacts to **vegetation and habitat** areas
 - ➔ new development subject to updated Shoreline Master Program and Critical Areas regulations **protecting ecosystems**
 - ➔ new housing units in areas with **existing low tree canopy** cover



Additional Topics: Mitigation

"Avoidance, Minimization, and Mitigation Measures"

- Continue to require new development to comply with local, state, and federal regulations that protect natural and historic/cultural resources.
- Potential goals and policies
 - ➔ Enhance green infrastructure, adopt a citywide green building policy
 - ➔ Increase urban canopy and reduce heat islands
 - ➔ Protect and restore natural habitats, increase pollinator habitat
 - ➔ Address pollution and environmental health disparities
 - ➔ Preserve and promote cultural and historic resources
 - ➔ Build inclusive public spaces, incorporate culturally specific design elements
 - ➔ Require building design elements that emphasize walkability and integrate with adjacent development



Comment Period

- **Public comment period from July 8 to September 8**
 - Comments will help create a final map (“preferred alternative”) for Vancouver.
 - Can comment on alternatives, potential impacts, etc.
- Online comment form, plus email, mail, and voicemail
- Updated online StoryMap, with Draft EIS information
- Interactive public meetings (drop-in)
 - Wednesday, July 30 from 4p–7p at Firstenburg
 - Saturday, August 9 from 11a–2p at City Hall
- Virtual sessions (presentation and Q&A)
 - Tuesday, July 22 from 4p–6p via Zoom
 - Monday, August 4 from 11a–1p via Zoom



More information at www.beheardvancouver.org/plan2045

Staff will use

- information in the Draft EIS
- **comments on the Draft EIS and other feedback from engagement**
- City policy priorities (including equity, climate, and safety)
- direction from City Council

to draft a preferred alternative that **combines the best features** from the different alternatives.

Next Steps for Planning Commission Review

- Only workshop with Planning Commission on Draft EIS due to August break
 - Summary intended to make detailed review easier
 - Additional feedback welcome, staff available to discuss further
 - Commissioners invited to provide comment through formal process
 - Will review findings and public comments at September meeting
- Two workshops with Council
 - July 14 – Part 1
 - August 4 – Part 2

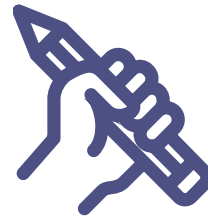


Next Steps and Discussion



Understand potential impacts

- Draft Environmental Impact Statement (Draft EIS)
- **Public comment period (Jul 8 – Sep 8)**



Refine map, policies, & code

- Determine preferred alternative based on Draft EIS comments
- **Drafts of plan, code, and map for public comment**



Adopt plan and code

- Final Environmental Impact Statement (Final EIS)
- City Council adopts plan, code, and map



www.beheardvancouver.org/plan2045 | OurVancouver2045@CityOfVancouver.us



STAFF REPORT

DATE: July 8, 2025

TO: Chair Adigweme and Planning Commission members

FROM: Jason Nortz, Development Review Manager, Community Development

RE: **Downtown Design Guidelines Update**

CC: Rebecca Kennedy, Deputy Director, Community Development
Greg Turner, Land Use Manager, Community Development

Introduction

The City is currently updating its Downtown Design Guidelines Manual to ensure alignment with current City policies and goals. The staff report includes the history of using design guidelines in the City Center as well as a timeline and process for next steps.

Background/Overview

The City is currently updating its Downtown Design Guidelines Manual to ensure alignment with current City policies and goals. The City of Vancouver established design guidelines for the downtown area in 1978 to assist architects and developers in their efforts to ensure quality design in their projects as well as compatibility with the existing urban fabric and alignment with broad City goals. The original design guidelines were updated in 1995 and became the Downtown Design Guidelines Manual, and these are still in place today. The guidelines are the primary tool applied by review staff when evaluating the design of proposed projects within the design review area.

The City adopted the Esther Short Redevelopment Plan in 1998 for the area directly around Esther Short Park, and the Vancouver City Center Vision Plan in 2007 for the 130-block area of downtown. The VCCV plan was intended to guide continued growth by encouraging residential development and creating a dynamic and rich mix of residential, cultural, civic, retail and entertainment places that attract growth, jobs and round-the-clock activity. Since the adoption of the guidelines as well as the VCCV plan, the pace and scale of development in the downtown has dramatically increased, and

the City is now seeing the need for more robust and updated design guidelines to address development scenarios not covered in the current guidelines, including large urban scale buildings. As development interest continues to grow in Downtown Vancouver, City staff have identified a need for the guidelines to be updated to better streamline the review process for both the City staff reviewers and the applicant. The goal is to have updated guidelines that are clear and concise but still allow for flexibility and are not overly prescriptive.

Updated Vancouver Downtown Design Guidelines (VDDG)

The VDDG Manual is organized around key design topics. Each design topic includes an Intent Statement that outlines design goals and a series of guidelines for meeting the design intent for each topic. Addressing guidelines are a requirement of design approval. To further explain the intent of the design guidelines, diagrams and images are provided for reference. Precedents are shown to illustrate recommended and discouraged design details. A VDDG Checklist will be included that summarizes the design requirements. The checklist is required to be completed and submitted along with a project application for review. Applicants will be required to fill out the checklist and provide a narrative description and supporting drawings that document compliance with the design guidelines.

Heritage Overlay Districts

The focus of the VDDG update as it relates to the Heritage Overlay Districts is to complement Chapter 20.510 of the Vancouver Municipal Code (VMC) through the provision of more actionable design guidelines related to new construction and how it should enhance and expand the economic, cultural, and architectural attraction of the area. The VDDG accomplishes this by providing detailed guidance about vertical and horizontal design patterns and materiality within the historic area of downtown.

The updated design guidelines are not intended to replace the standards identified in [VMC 20.510.020 Review Process, Heritage Overlay District](#) but to reinforce the historic character of the Heritage Overlay Districts.

Outreach Efforts

Since early 2024, staff have been gathering feedback from the community to help inform the guideline updates including six stakeholder meetings between January 2024 – October 2024. Staff also presented the updated guidelines to both the City Center Redevelopment Authority (CCRA) and the Planning Commission in the fall of 2024. Feedback received at those meetings included:

- Primary differences between 1995 and 2025 Design Guidelines
- More detail on material costs
- How do the Guidelines align with the Green Building Code
- Consideration for additional material types
- How the guidelines are consistent with Heritage Overlay requirements

Earlier this year, staff provided updates to the CCRA, the Planning Commission, and the City Council. They all expressed support for the revisions made in response to their previous feedback. Additional details are available on the City's [Be Heard](#) project page.

Design Review Process

Per [VMC 20.265](#) the purpose of the design review process is to allow for architectural and design review of new construction and exterior improvements to buildings and developments in the Vancouver's downtown areas prior to or in conjunction with a formal land use approval. The purpose is to:

1. Preserve the character and quality of the City's cultural, historical and architectural heritage (as noted above).
2. Protect certain public investments and ensure compatibility between public and private developments.
3. Encourage innovation and flexibility in design of new developments while maintaining standards necessary to protect the public interest.
4. Ensure design compatibility between existing and new development.
5. Promote qualities in the built environment that enhance the value of the area to the community.
6. Ensure compliance of development projects with *adopted City design guidelines and plans*.

Per the review criteria in VMC 20.265 the Planning Official shall base all reviews of the design of any proposed construction, remodeling or development according to the required zoning standards in VMC Title 20 and the Downtown Design Guidelines Manual.

Review Criteria and Findings

Because the City is adopting a new Downtown Design Guidelines Manual that is referenced in VMC 20.265, as noted above, this is considered a text change and therefore subject to the requirements outlined in VMC 20.285 Text and Map Amendments. All proposed text changes shall be reviewed by the Planning Commission. Vancouver Municipal Code 20.285.070 provides the approval criteria for comprehensive plan or zoning code text amendments:

- A. Text amendments to the comprehensive plan or VMC Title 20 zoning standards shall demonstrate the following:
 1. The proposal is consistent with applicable policies of the Vancouver strategic plan and comprehensive plan; and
 2. The proposal is necessary to further the public interest based on present needs and conditions.

Staff finds that the proposed zoning code text change complies with the balance of

Strategic Plan and Comprehensive Plan policies, most prominently [Strategic Plan](#) policies VDN.CL.1 and VDN.CL.2 regarding vibrant and distinct neighborhoods and [Comprehensive Plan](#) policies CD-4, CD-7 and CD-8 regarding community development land use policies that will help guide future development.

Developing downtown design guidelines furthers the public interest by responding to present needs and conditions in several important ways:

- Promotes Economic Vitality
- Enhances Community Identity and Sense of Place
- Improves Public Safety and Accessibility
- Balances Growth with Community Livability

Recommended Action

Following applicant and public testimony at the July 8 public hearing, staff recommends the Planning Commission forward a recommendation of approval to the City Council to approve the updated Downtown Guidelines that are referenced in VMC 20.265.

Staff Contact:

Jason Nortz, Development Review Manager, jason.nortz@cityofvancouver.us

Attachment(s):

- Updated Vancouver Downtown Design Guidelines document
- Vancouver Downtown Design Guidelines factsheet

VANCOUVER DOWNTOWN

DESIGN GUIDELINES



CITY OF
Vancouver
WASHINGTON

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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Bart Hansen

Kim Harless

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PART I: **INTRODUCTION**

Purpose

Background

Design Review Process

PURPOSE

The Vancouver Downtown Design Guidelines Manual (VDDG) is the primary tool used by staff to review the design of potential projects within the Downtown Plan Area. (Figure 1) These design guidelines are a major update to the 1995 document and will serve to inform citizens and developers as to the character of future development. The guidelines in this manual are intended to be used in conjunction with the Zoning Ordinance, Comprehensive Plan, and required design review procedures.

The goals of the VDDG are to:

- Provide a set of guidelines that are easy to understand and administer;
- Ensure the compatibility of new development with the existing historic character of the downtown;
- Maintain quality design and materials;
- Ensure ground floors include interest-creating features that contribute to an active downtown environment; and
- Ensure building designs complement each other and contribute to a cohesive sense of place.

BACKGROUND

Downtown Vancouver is a dynamic and rich mix of residential, cultural, civic, retail and entertainment places that creates a “messy vitality” and attracts residential and office growth, small business, jobs and round-the-clock activity. Downtown is composed of a 200-foot by 200-foot grid with some larger blocks that span across the grid combining two to four blocks together. The 2007 Vancouver City Center Vision (VCCV) plan recognized 5 sub-areas within the VDDG area:

- **Uptown Village (area north of 15th Street)**
- **Mill Plain Couplet (area surrounding the 15th Street and Mill Plain Blvd one-way couplet)**
- **West-side Government (area centered around the government buildings located around the intersection of 12th Street and Franklin Street and the areas to the west)**
- **Esther Short (area surrounding Esther Short Park)**
- **Central Downtown (area south of the Mill Plain Couplet and surrounding the “Main Street” Heritage Overlay District #2.**

While development in the area has gone through several different architectural style eras, the character defining features of both new and old buildings include human-scaled details, facade depth and articulation, and pedestrian focused and active ground floors. The following are key design elements that were identified to either replicate or avoid in order to strengthen the identity and sense of place in Downtown.

Design Elements that Enhance a Sense of Place for Downtown (more of this)

- Active ground floor design that creates interesting and pedestrian focused streetscape.
- Ground floor building articulation and craftsmanship that provides human-scale details.
- Fenestration is offset from the primary facade to provide visual interest and shadow lines.
- A vertical rhythm and pattern to the fenestration and facade articulation.
- Use of brick and masonry as the primary facade material, particularly at the ground level.

Design Elements that Need Improvement (less of this)

- Ground floor facades dominated by parking, utilities, and blank walls.
- Overly flat facades with limited to no articulation, modulation, or depth of fenestration to provide shadow lines and visual interest.
- High-rise buildings stepped back from the building line and located above parking structures.
- Large flat facades dominated by horizontal glazing with little to no human-scaled details.

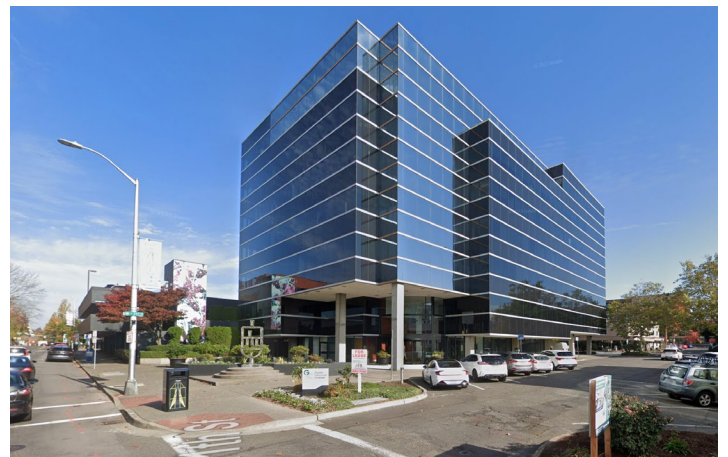
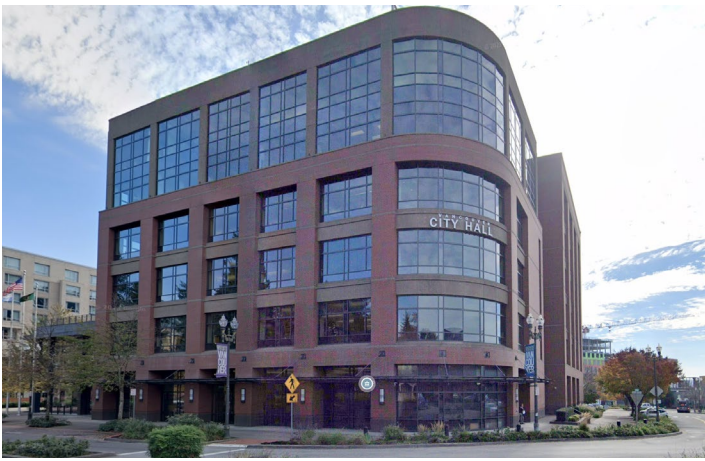


Figure 1—Downtown Design Guidelines Plan Area



-  Downtown Design Guidelines Plan Area
-  Heritage Overlay District #1 and #2
-  Esther Short Park

DESIGN REVIEW PROCESS

All projects will be reviewed for compliance with the design guidelines, zoning code, and other municipal documents that govern development.

The VDDG Manual is organized around key design topics. Each design topic includes an **Intent Statement** that outlines the design goals for each topic. A series of **Guidelines** follow for each topic outlining design guidance on how to meet the design intent for each topic. **Addressing guidelines are a requirement of design approval.** If a guideline is not fully complied with, the applicant shall provide an alternative that achieves the intent of the guideline and show how the alternative furthers the “do” examples and not the “do not” examples in the guidelines. To further explain intent and the design guidelines, diagrams and images are provided for reference. Precedents are shown to illustrate recommended and not recommended design details.

A **VDDG Checklist** is provided in Appendix A that summarizes the design requirements and is required to be completed and submitted along with project application for review. Applicants shall fill out the checklist and provide a narrative description and supporting drawings that document compliance with the design guidelines.

Projects that include historic resources are subject to additional design review and standards. These projects shall follow the Secretary of the Interior Standards. Where these projects include new construction or additions, the project may be subject to design review in relation to applicable design guidelines in the VDDG.

PART II: **DESIGN GUIDELINES**

1. Building + Design

2. Active Ground Floor Design

3. Lighting

4. Signage

5. Mechanical Equipment, Utilities, and Service Areas

6. Vehicle Access and Parking Design

7. "Main Street" Heritage Overlay District #2

1. BUILDING + DESIGN

[1.1. Massing & Articulation](#)

[1.2. High-rise Massing](#)

[1.3. Fenestration](#)

[1.4. Roofscapes + Green Roofs](#)

[1.5. Materials](#)

1.1. Massing & Articulation

1.1.1. Block Scale

INTENT

To break down the massing of super-block sites, and provide new pedestrian connections and new publicly accessible open spaces.

A. Block Size.

1. Where existing properties span multiple combined blocks, new development should recreate an approximate 200-feet by 200-feet grid by extending the sight lines of the existing street network through the creation of new publicly accessible pathways, open spaces, or streets.

1.1.2. Facade Design

INTENT

To break down the massing of block-scaled buildings and create pedestrian-scaled facades with a vertical rhythm and pattern that reflects the building's use.

A. Modulations.

1. Continuous building facades greater than 150 feet in length should have a minimum of one modulation. (Modulations should meet the modulation guidelines below).
2. Continuous residential building facades greater than 100 feet in length should have one or more modulations. (Modulations should meet the modulation guidelines below).

Definition:

Modulation. A modulation is a change in the massing of a facade plane. A modulation may be projections, recessions, or a change in facade plane that creates distinct facade sections. Size and depth of a modulation may vary but generally modulations are a change in a facade plane that exceed 18 inches in depth.

B. Modulation Design

1. Facade modulations may be a combination of recesses and projections.
2. Modulation and articulation of the ground floor should complement and align with the modulation and articulation of upper floors.
3. The facade modulation, at a minimum, should extend from the second floor through the roof plane.
4. If more than one modulation is provided, balconies may occur within the facade modulation. To ensure the facade modulation is visible, balconies should be projected or recessed from the primary facade plane, approximately 8 inches or more.



Example with two modulations that break the facade into three distinct massing elements. The breaks are emphasized with a change in color and material. Modulation and articulation of the ground floor complement and align with upper floors.



Example with combination of balcony projections and recessed modulations.



Example of facade modulation extending through the roof plane creates distinct upper floor massing elements.



Example of modulation design of top floors that complement the ground floor design.



Example of building with multiple modulation recesses with balcony projections. Modulations begin at the second floor.



Example of building with multiple modulations that extend from the ground floor through the roof plane.



DON'T: Create buildings with long flat facades. Design buildings to have modulations that reflect a residential rhythm and pattern.

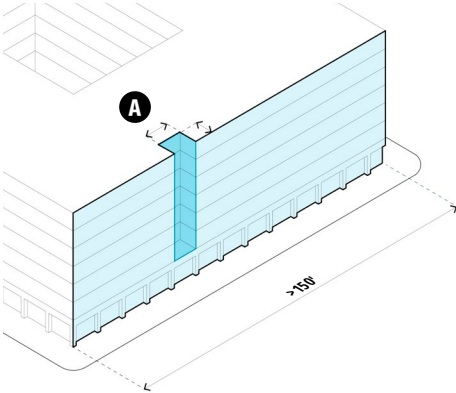


DON'T: Create flat facades with only balcony projections and no facade modulation that result in an overly flat facade appearance.

C. Modulation Size

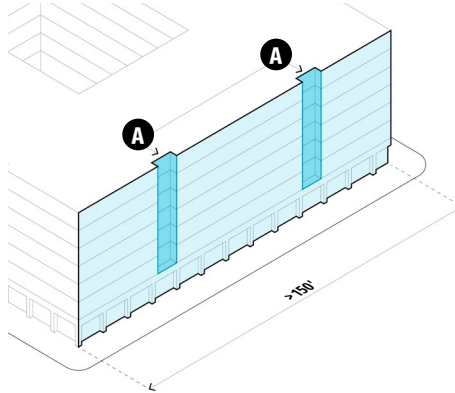
- Modulations in the facade plane should be sized depending on overall length of the facade and the number of modulations per facade:
 - If only one modulation is provided, the modulation should have a minimum width of approximately 8 to 12 feet and a minimum depth of approximately 8 to 10 feet. (Figure 2)
 - If two modulations are provided, the modulation should have a minimum width of approximately 6 to 8 feet and a minimum depth of approximately 4 to 6 feet. (Figure 3)
 - If three or more modulations are provided, the modulations should have a minimum width of 6 feet and a minimum depth of 3 feet. (Figure 4)
- The facade modulation may be of less depth if combined with a change/contrast in material/ color and/or a variation in the fenestration pattern.

Figure 2—One modulation



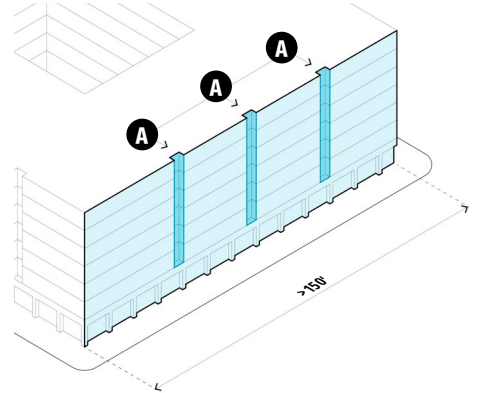
- A** The modulation should have a minimum width of 8 to 12 ft. and a minimum depth of 8 to 10 ft.

Figure 3—Two modulations



- A** The modulations should have a minimum width of 6 to 8 ft. and a minimum depth of 4 to 6 ft.

Figure 4—Three or more modulations



- A** The modulations should have a minimum width of 6 ft. and a minimum depth of 3 ft.



Example of facade with single major break.



Example of facade with 2 modulations.



Example of facade with multiple modulations with an approximate depth of 3 feet.



Example of facade with minimum modulations but a change in material and color that breaks up the building into three distinct massing elements.



Example of facade with 2 modulations.

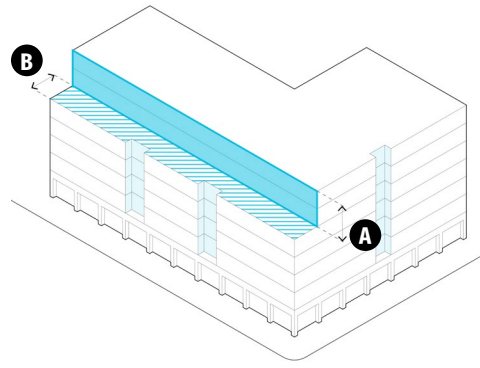


DON'T: Create buildings with long flat facades without any modulations.

D. Modulation Exemption.

1. If the top one or two stories of a facade plane are stepped back a minimum 6 feet from the building line and facade plane below, the stepped back facade plane is exempt from the modulation guidelines noted in C above. (Figure 5)

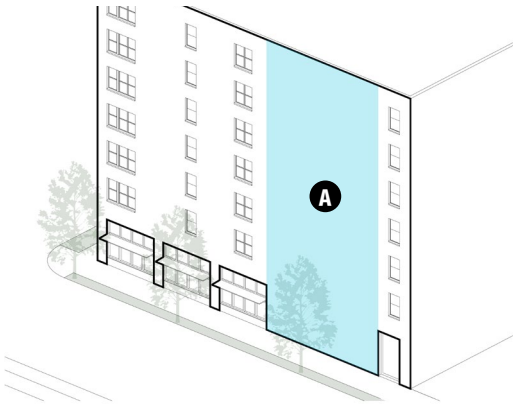
Figure 5—Top Stories Modulation Exemption



- A** Top 1 or 2 stories are exempt from the modulation guidelines if minimum step back provided.
- B** Minimum step back of 6 feet required for exemption from modulation guidelines.

E. Blank Walls.

1. Large, blank walls should be avoided on facades that face public streets or other publicly accessible spaces. Any wall sections should not exceed 30 linear feet in length without windows and facade articulation.



- A** Example of large blank wall areas between fenestration elements.



DON'T: Create blank walls longer than 30 linear feet along sidewalks or other publicly accessible spaces.

1.2. High-rise Massing

1.2.1. Meeting the Public Realm

INTENT

To provide unique moments and place making opportunities throughout downtown where high-rise projects are located.

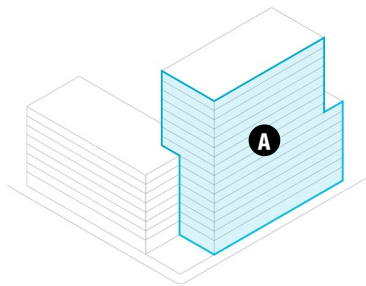
To integrate high-rise towers into the ground-level public realm.

A. Anchor the tower buildings to the public realm by extending a portion of any high-rise portion of the building to the ground plane. (Figure 6)

B. Primary building entrances should be located within or directly adjacent to the tower portion of the building. Primary building entries should be clearly identifiable and prominent elements of the building facade. (Figure 7)

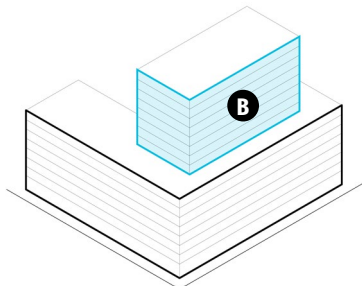
C. Corner mini park. High-rise buildings greater than 85 feet in height are encouraged to provide a corner mini-park or plaza. The mini-park or plaza should have a minimum dimension of 25 feet and a minimum area of 1,000 sf. The mini-park or plaza should be publicly accessible and may have a private area for outdoor dining that does not exceed half the size of the open space. (Figure 8)

Figure 6—Anchored tower buildings



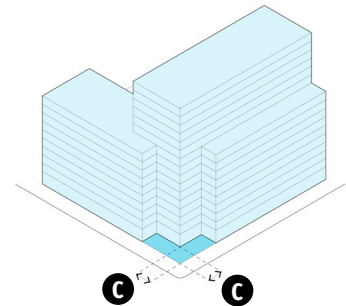
A DO anchor tower buildings to the ground plane.

Figure 7—Unanchored tower buildings



B DO NOT have tower buildings disconnected from the ground plane.

Figure 8—Corner mini park



C DO provide corner mini-parks or plazas for high-rise buildings.



DO Anchor the tower portion of the building to the ground plane.



DON'T Disconnect the tower portion of the building from the ground plane.



DO Provide corner mini-park or plaza.

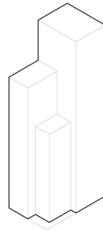
1.2.2. Skyline Massing and Design

INTENT

To create an iconic and beautiful skyline that becomes a symbol and landmark of Downtown Vancouver.
To create visually interesting buildings and avoid monolithic boxes without shape or articulation.

A. Skyline. To create a visually appealing and interesting skyline, high-rise towers greater than 120 feet in height should do one of the following:

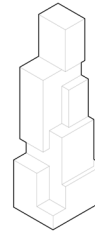
1. **Stepped Massing:** Reduce upper floor massing through one or more upper floor step backs.
2. **Tapered Massing:** Reduce the massing of upper floors through reducing the size of the floor plates as the building rises in height.
3. **Sculpted Massing:** Combine vertical and horizontal massing modulations to create interesting facade changes throughout the high-rise tower.
4. **Facade Articulation:** Use deep punched openings, changes in window patterns, and/or artistic architectural details like fins, shading devices, or cornices to create ornamental facade articulation.



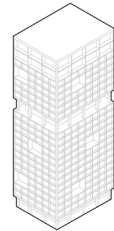
Stepped Massing



Tapered Massing



Sculpted Massing



Facade Articulation

1.3. Fenestration

1.3.1. Window Design

INTENT

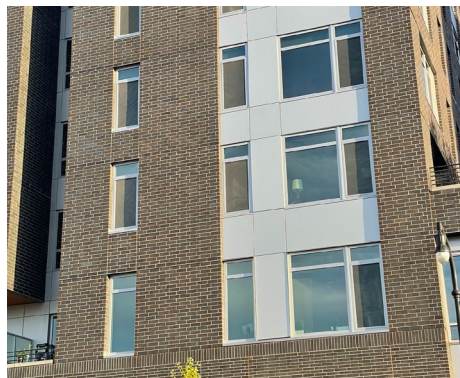
To avoid flat facades and provide human-scaled architecture elements that create visual interest and shadow lines.

A. Fenestration on facades facing a public street, right-of-way or publicly accessible open space should follow the guidelines listed below (portions of a building with glass curtain wall systems are exempt):

1. Window panes should be recessed 2 to 6 inches from facade plane.
2. Windows that are flat or “flush” with the facade are prohibited unless:
 - a. Applied to a portion of a building that is part of a facade recess/inset with a minimum 4 inches in depth. The portion of the building that is recessed should have a maximum width of 20 feet.
 - b. Framed or include a lintel and mantel with a minimum projection of 2 to 6 inches from the facade.



DO Recess windows from the facade plane to create facade depth and shadows.



DO Have windows that may be flat or “flush” with facade, if applied to a portion of a building that is part of a facade recess/inset.



DON'T Have flat or “flush” windows compose large sections of a building facade.

1.3.2. Glass Curtain Walls

INTENT

To maintain the materiality and character of downtown.

- A. Buildings with 100% glass curtain wall facades are discouraged. Glass curtain walls may be used as a building accent.
- B. Glass curtain walls should not exceed 50% of any single facade facing east, south, and west.



Example of a building with glass curtain wall accent.



Example of a building with glass curtain walls that do not exceed 50% of any single facade.



DON'T Create buildings with 100% glass curtain wall.

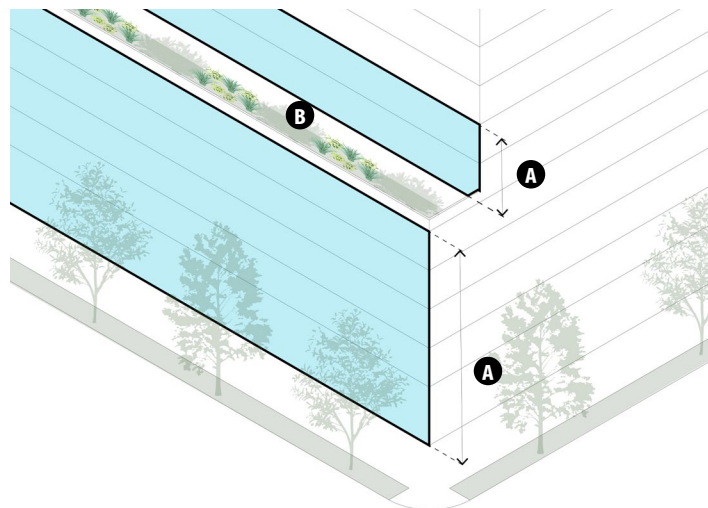
1.3.3. Bird Safe Design

INTENT

To limit the number of bird collisions by reducing the facade area of reflective materials that mimic bird habitat areas such as trees and vegetation.

- A. For new buildings, facade area between the ground and 60 feet or within 15 feet above a green roof and a glazing percentage greater than 30% should be designed with bird-friendly glazing treatments. (Figure 9) The glazing percentage guideline applies per facade.
- B. Bird-friendly glazing treatments include the use of opaque glass, the covering of clear glass surface with patterns, the use of paned glass with fenestration patterns, and the use of external screens and/or netting over non reflective glass.
- C. Visual traps such as areas of glass through which trees, landscape areas, water features or the sky are visible from the exterior, should be avoided unless a bird safety treatment is used.

Figure 9—Bird Safe Facade Design



- A Facade area between the ground and 60 feet should be designed with bird-friendly glazing treatments.
- B Green Roof

1.4. Roofscapes + Green Roofs

1.4.1. Roofscapes

INTENT

To design roofscapes as a fifth facade when visible from above, integrate roof penthouses into building design, and reduce impact of roofscapes in the creation of an urban heat island effect.

- A.** Roof areas adjacent to or below occupied upper floors should be designed to provide a visually appealing roofscape. Green roofs are encouraged.
- B.** Stair, elevator, and mechanical penthouses should be designed to minimize visibility from the street or integrated within the facade design of the building.
- C.** Roofscapes are encouraged to be designed as cool roofs with materials that reduce the amount of heat transfer into the building and surrounding area.

1.4.2. Green Roofs

INTENT

To ensure adequate planting conditions for green roofs that will contribute to the urban ecology of downtown.

- A. Topography.** Varied topography, soil materials, and soil textures are critical in supporting more diverse plantings, pollinators, and a greater range of ecological functions. Engineered soil should be placed at varying depths to mimic the natural undulation of native habitat. This will help to represent the structural contrast that plant species with varying root depths and ground-nesting pollinators rely on.
- B. Vegetation.**
 - 1. Vegetation should be low maintenance, drought-tolerant, hardy, and perennial or self-sowing.
 - 2. Over 50% of vegetation should be evergreen species.
 - 3. Vegetation should achieve 90% coverage within 2 years of planting.
- C. Soils.** Green roof soil depth should satisfy the following requirements to support healthy native plants.
 - 1. Minimum soil depth of 4-12 inches for ground cover, 20 inches for shrubs, and 36 inches for trees.
 - 2. Soil depth should be strategically varied across the green roof to accommodate the needs of various plant communities.
- D. Photovoltaic (PV) panels** may be co-located with green roofs on flat roofs where feasible. PV panels should be clustered together to allow for sunlight penetration to the green roof beneath.

1.5. Materials

INTENT

To improve the overall appearance of buildings and to have building character express longevity and permanence through high quality materials that will maintain quality of appearance over time. To create a consistent character and identity for downtown.

- A.** Building materials should be of a high-quality and chosen for the product's longevity and sustainability. Sustainability considerations should include the sourcing of materials, distance and material travels, carbon impact, and maintenance requirements.
- B.** Within the design review area, provide brick, brick veneer, terracotta, ceramic tiles, masonry or other durable materials with human-scaled textures and/or patterns that provide visual interest as the primary facade material on the ground floor of the structure.
- C.** Mass timber buildings may be exempt from this standard to express the structural facade elements. High-quality low carbon concrete may be used if detailed with human-scaled elements.

2. ACTIVE GROUND FLOOR DESIGN

INTENT

To ensure ground floor frontages focus on interest-creating facades lined with active uses or designed to show regular habitation and activity. Active ground floor uses include retail, restaurants, or other service-oriented spaces but may also include residential units, residential accessory spaces, or office space if designed to interact with and contribute to the pedestrian realm and sidewalk character while ensuring an appropriate level of privacy for the ground floor occupants.

[2.1. Building Entrances](#)

[2.2. Retail/Commercial Ground Floors](#)

[2.3. Office/Professional Services](#)

[2.4. Live/Work](#)

[2.5. Residential](#)

[2.6. Rain/Weather Protection](#)

2.1. Building Entrances

INTENT

To support wayfinding and create easily identifiable entrances that are proportional in size to the scale of the building and number of people served.

A. Primary Building Entrances.

1. Primary entrances should be prominent and easily identifiable through accentuated architectural details such as awnings, projections or recesses.
2. The primary entrances to upper floor uses should orient to public streets and open spaces.

B. Entry/Lobby Design

1. A stairway should be co-located with building lobbies and elevator access points.
2. The stairway is encouraged to be designed to be inviting and include fenestration for natural lighting.



Example of a primary entrance oriented towards a public street.



Example of a prominent and easily identifiable primary entrance.

Definition:

Primary Building Entry. The main public entrance to the upper floors of a building.

2.2. Retail/Commercial Ground Floors

INTENT

To provide retail spaces that are inviting, provide transparency into interior spaces, and are flexibly designed for a range of tenants.

A. Retail-ready Ground Floors.

1. Retail-ready ground floors, where required, should have a minimum depth of 25 feet. Greater depth in high-retail areas is encouraged to serve the needs of a variety of retail tenants or provide more storefronts per linear frontage.
2. Retail-ready ground floors should be designed to include or be retrofitted with at least one entrance for each 30 feet on linear frontage.
3. Retail-ready ground floors should be designed to incorporate venting for potential restaurant tenants, even if venting is not installed during initial construction.

B. Minimum floor-to-floor height. Retail and retail-ready ground floors should have a minimum floor-to-floor height of 18 feet. Retail in areas where retail-ready is not required may have a minimum 14 feet floor-to-floor height.

C. Storefront Facade.

1. Storefront/retail facades should maximize transparent glazing between 2 and 7 feet in height from the sidewalk grade, approximately 60% or more of the facade area.
2. Transom windows are encouraged to bring natural light into commercial spaces.
3. Bulkheads and solid walls, if provided, should measure approximately 12 to 24 inches from finished grade.

Figure 10—Retail/Commercial Ground Floors



Example of a transparent and inviting retail/commercial frontage on the ground floor.

- A** Minimum floor-to-floor height.
- B** Maximize transparent glazing between 2 and 7 feet in height.
- C** Transom windows are encouraged to bring natural light into commercial spaces.
- D** Bulkheads and solid walls, if provided, should measure approximately 12 to 24 inches from finished grade.

2.3. Office/Professional Services

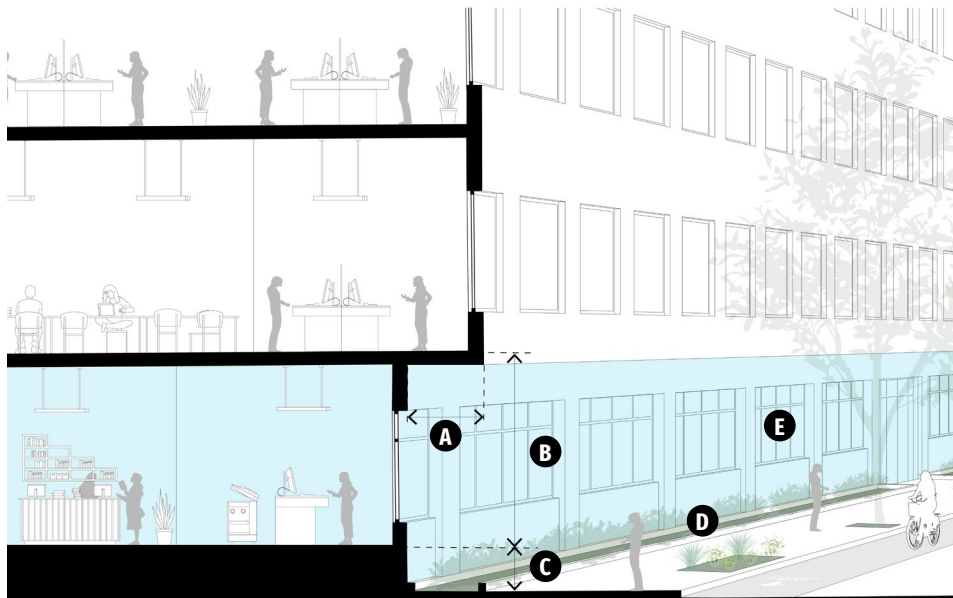
INTENT

To ensure ground floor space for office and professional services activate the public realm through adding visual depth and transparency into a building's interior.

To maintain a level of privacy through building setbacks and landscaping so temporary window coverings are not permanently closed.

- A. Floor-to-floor height.** Ground floor office space should have a minimum floor-to-floor height of 15 feet or a minimum floor-to-ceiling height of 12 feet.
- B. Non-communal spaces** should be 2-3 feet above sidewalk grade to provide privacy to office work spaces. Professional services or other spaces that have direct access to the sidewalk may be at sidewalk grade.
- C. Setback.** Ground floor office work spaces should be setback a minimum of 3 feet to provide space for a landscape buffer.
- D. Landscaping.** Setback area should maximize landscaping, generally 60% or more of the setback area.
- E. Fenestration.** Ground floor office should maximize transparent glazing between 3 and 8 feet in height from the finished floor of the office space.

Figure 11—Office/Professional Services Ground Floor



- A** Minimum of 3 feet setback to provide space for a landscape buffer.
- B** Ground floor office space should have a minimum floor-to-floor height of 15 feet or a minimum floor-to-ceiling height greater than 12 feet.
- C** Non-communal spaces should be 2-3 feet above sidewalk grade to provide privacy to office uses.
- D** Setback area should maximize landscaping, generally 60% or more of the setback area.
- E** Maximize transparent glazing between 3 and 8 feet in height from the finished floor of the office space.



Example of a ground floor office and professional services space activating the public realm through adding visual depth and transparency.

2.4. Live/Work

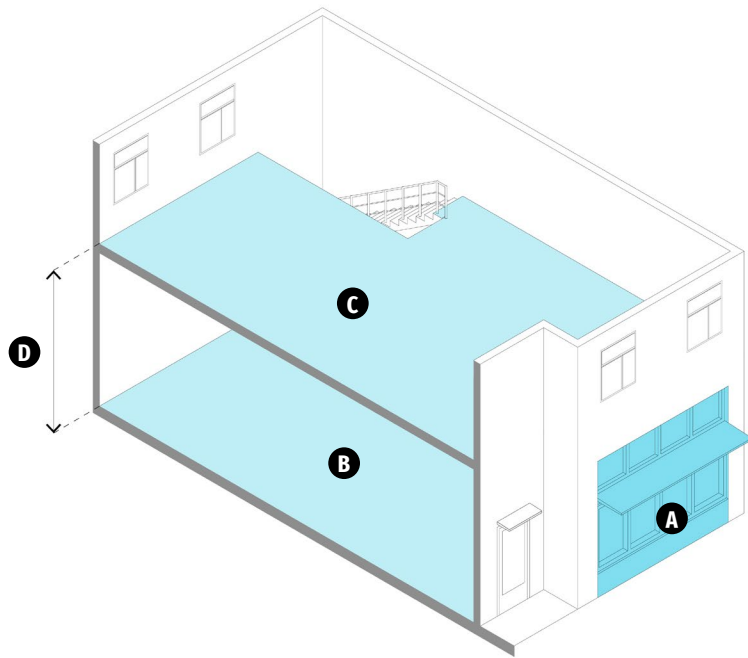
INTENT

To ensure that live/work units contribute to creating an active storefront character and provide active ground floor frontages.

A. Floor-to-floor height. Floor-to-floor height. Live/work units should have a minimum floor-to-floor height of 15 feet on the ground floor, or a minimum floor-to-floor height of 18 feet for live/work units with a mezzanine.

B. Fenestration. Live/work units should have a minimum 50% of their facade area designed with a storefront character; and live/work unit's storefront areas should maximize transparent glazing between 2 and 7 feet in height from the sidewalk grade.

Figure 12—Live/Work Typology



- A** Minimum 50% of facade area should be designed with a storefront character.
- B** Work component.
- C** Residential component.
- D** Live/work units should have a minimum floor-to-floor height of 15 feet on the ground floor.



Example of live/work unit with storefront character.

2.5. Residential

2.5.1. Residential Units

INTENT

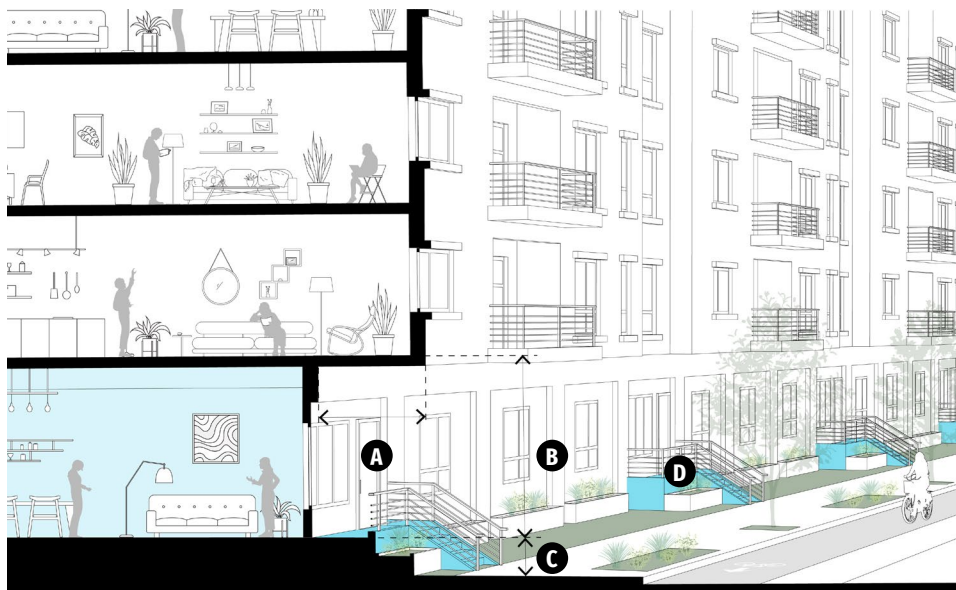
To ensure ground floor residential units create activity and enhance the public realm through direct interaction with the sidewalk through stoop unit entries, balconies or porches.

To maintain privacy through raising units above sidewalk grade and setting ground floor units back from the building line to provide space for landscaping.

To create a more residential feel with increased setbacks for buildings north of 15th Street while allowing for more urban ground floors with limited setbacks south of 15th Street.

- A.** Ground floor residential units should be raised a minimum of 2 feet and not more than 6 feet above sidewalk grade, on average per facade.
- B.** The ground floor unit should have a minimum floor-to-floor height of 10 feet.
- C.** Ground floor units are encouraged to have stoop entries.
- D. North of 15th Street.**
 - 1. Ground floor residential units north of 15th Street should be setback a minimum of 3-5 feet from the building line.
 - 2. Entrances to ground floor units should be setback a minimum of 5 feet from the building line to provide an entrance area and room for stoops.

Figure 13—Residential Ground Floor (North of 15th Street)



- A** Ground floor residential units should be setback a minimum of 3-5 feet from the building line.
- B** The ground floor unit should have a minimum floor-to-floor height of 10 feet.
- C** Ground floor residential units should be raised a minimum of 2 feet and not more than 6 feet above sidewalk grade.
- D** Ground floor units are encouraged to have stoop entries.

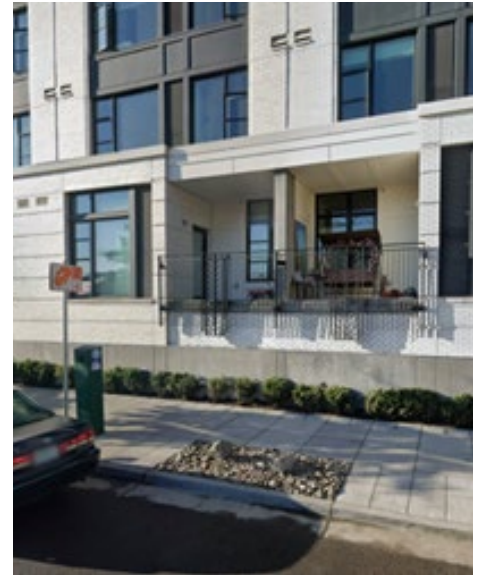
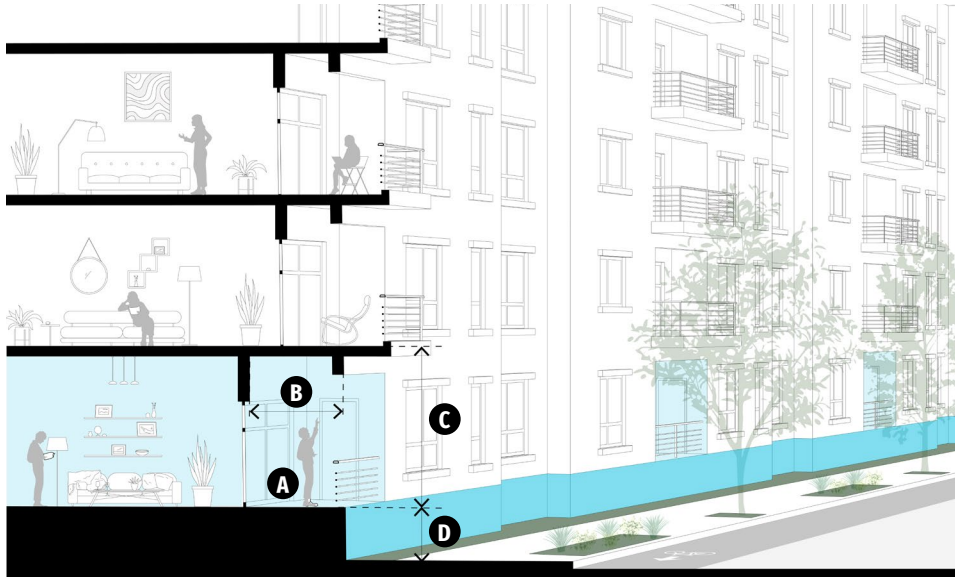


Example of a ground floor residential unit activating the public realm through stoops and patios in the setback area.

E. South of 15th Street

1. Ground floor residential units with a setback of 3-5 feet from the building line should be raised a minimum of 2 feet and not more than 6 feet above sidewalk grade.
2. Ground floor residential units without a setback of 3-5 feet from the building line should be raised a minimum of 3 feet and not more than 6 feet above sidewalk grade.
3. Ground floor units should include ground floor balcony spaces if stoops are not provided. Balconies should have a minimum depth of 6 feet.

Figure 14—Residential Ground Floor (South of 15th Street)



- A** Ground floor units south of 15th Street should include ground floor balcony spaces if stoops are not provided.
- B** Ground floor unit balcony spaces should have a minimum depth of 6 feet.
- C** The ground floor unit should have a minimum floor-to-floor height of 10 feet.
- D** Ground floor residential units should be raised a minimum of 3 feet and not more than 6 feet above sidewalk grade for units that are not setback from the building line.

Example of a ground floor residential activating the public realm through balcony and providing privacy through ground floor height raised above sidewalk grade.

2.5.2. Residential Accessory Spaces

INTENT

To design and locate residential accessory spaces to activate and provide visual interest to the public realm.

- A.** Ground floor accessory spaces fronting a street should be designed to activate the street through views into a building's active common spaces. Common spaces that activate the ground floor may include shared lounges, event spaces and leasing offices, or other similar spaces.
- B.** Ground floor residential accessory spaces should have a minimum floor-to-ceiling height greater than 10 feet.
- C.** Bike parking and/or bike rooms, utility rooms, storage rooms, mechanical rooms or other similar spaces should not be located at the corner of a building.

2.6. Rain/Weather Protection

INTENT

To provide weather protection and comfort for pedestrians that enhances the design of ground floor facades.

2.6.1. Locations

A. Rain/weather protection may be an awning, overhang, marquee, free-standing shelter, arcade or other architectural features.

B. Rain/weather protection should be provided at the following locations:

1. All primary building entrances.
2. All areas with retail-ready ground floors or where retail-ready ground floors are required.
3. Entrances to ground floor residential uses and office spaces.

2.6.2. Primary Building Entrances

A. At primary building entrances, rain/weather protection should be

1. A minimum 10 feet in width at primary building entrances.
2. Distinguished in design from other ground floor rain/weather protection.
3. A minimum 2 feet higher than adjacent rain/weather protection.

B. At primary building entrances, rain/weather protection should be located between 10 and 20 feet in height above sidewalk grade. (Figure 15)

2.6.3. Retail Frontages

A. At retail and retail-ready ground floor locations, rain/weather protection should

1. Extend the length of retail-ready ground floor.
2. Include clerestory windows above rain/weather protection overhang to increase natural light into the building spaces.
3. Not extend across building columns or create segments greater than 35 feet in length unless part of an arcade structure.
4. Integrate signage into rain/weather protection structure.

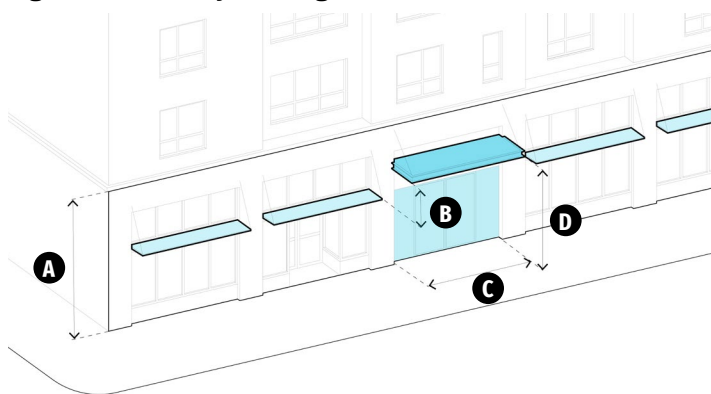
2.6.4. Ground Floor Residential and Office Entrances

A. At ground floor unit and office space entrances, rain/weather protection should be a minimum 6 feet wide.

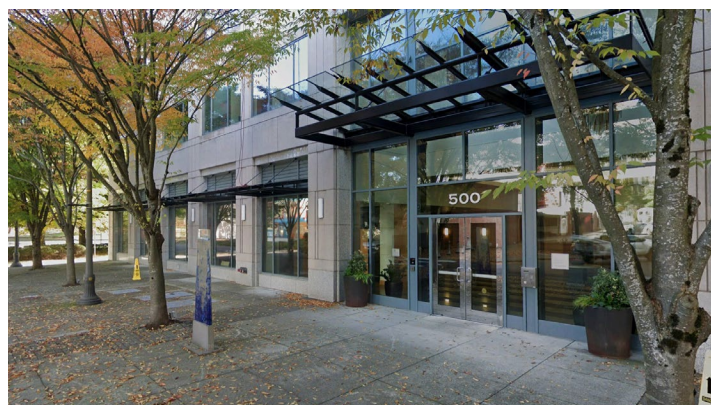
2.6.5. Materials

A. Cloth and fabric awnings are prohibited unless part of a retractable awning over an outdoor dining area.

Figure 15—Primary Building Entrances



- A** Minimum floor-to-floor height of 18 feet or a minimum floor-to-ceiling height greater than 15 feet.
- B** Rain/weather protection at primary building entrances should be a minimum 2 feet higher than adjacent rain/weather protection.
- C** Minimum 10 feet in width at primary building entrances.
- D** Rain/weather protection should be located between 10 and 20 feet in height above sidewalk grade.



Example of a primary building entrance awning that is higher than the adjacent awning.



Example of an active retail frontage with weather protection with clerestory windows above.

3. LIGHTING

INTENT

To provide clear wayfinding and pedestrian lighting that enhances the architectural character. To limit the impact of lighting on the environment and adjacent properties.

3.1. Building + Site Lighting

3.2. Dark Sky

3.3. Skyline and Beacon Lighting

3.1. Building + Site Lighting

- A. Pedestrian-Oriented Lighting.** Pedestrian-scaled lighting should be provided along active frontages and should highlight building entrances. Pedestrian-oriented lighting should be placed along pedestrian pathways, multi-use pathways and other walkways at minimum intervals of every 25-50 feet to improve pedestrian comfort, security, and safety.
- B. Architectural Compatibility.** Exterior lighting fixtures should be architecturally integrated with the building style, materials, and colors.
- C. Attachment.** Fixtures on buildings should be attached only to walls, eaves, or weather protection, and the top of the fixture should not exceed the height of the parapet, roof, or eave of the roof.
- D. Rooftop.** Rooftop open space lighting should be minimized and should be turned off outside of normal usage hours.

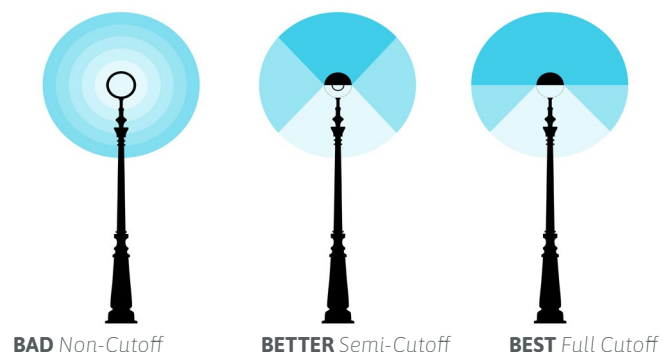
3.2. Dark Sky

- A. Lighting Plan.** An outdoor lighting plan must be submitted along with a compliance statement that the development will comply with all guidelines. The lighting plan shall be prepared by a certified lighting professional or licensed professional engineer using lighting design software.
- B. Light Trespass.**
 - 1. Light Trespass leaving a property onto adjacent public right-of-way should be no greater than 3 Lux when measured 20 feet past the property line.
 - 2. All lights should be directed, oriented, and shielded to prevent light trespass or glare onto adjacent properties. All luminaries should meet the most recently adopted criteria of the Illuminating Engineering Society of North America (IESNA) for “Cut Off” or “Full Cut Off” luminaries. (Figure 16).
- C. Lighting Intensity.** Lighting should use the lowest level of light necessary. Unless otherwise specified in this ordinance, lighting installed for an outdoor use shall not exceed 25% more than the Light Level recommended by the applicable ANSI/IES Lighting Standard, or a state approved alternate. No lights should be installed on the property capable of exceeding a total output greater than 3,000 Lumens.
- D. Time.** Lighting should be limited to essential time periods for lighting. Controls such as timer or motion detectors should be used to ensure that light is available when it is needed, dimmed when possible, and turned off when not needed.
- E. Color/Temperature.** General site and parking lot lighting should have a nominal correlated color temperature (CCT) of no greater than 3000 Kelvin. Cooler/whiter lighting above 3000 Kelvin in CCT should be limited to areas where a more accurate color rendition is important, including building entrances and exits (for security reasons), and lighting of signs.

3.3. Skyline and Beacon Lighting

- A.** Buildings should not have special, “beacon” lighting that highlights a building’s top floor, roof structure, or parapet.
- B.** Dynamic “art lighting” with moving lights or graphics are prohibited above the ground floor.

Figure 16—Street Lighting Guidelines



4. SIGNAGE

INTENT

To create an integrated and cohesive signage strategy that complements a building's architectural character.

To ease wayfinding and provide visual interest and identity.

4.1. General

4.2. Retail Signage Retail Signage

4.1. General

- A.** The number and size of signs are regulated by the City's sign ordinance (VMC 20.82). In some instances, the maximum amount of signage permitted may allow multiple signs. Wherever possible, the allowable sign area should be consolidated into the minimum number of signs consistent with the design of the project and needs of the occupant.
- B.** Materials. Paper, cloth, vinyl and other such materials that create an impermanent appearance when used as signs are strongly discouraged.
- C.** Signs should be designed and placed so they complement the overall facade composition.
- D.** Signs should be located so that building details will not be covered or otherwise obscured.
- E.** Free-standing pole signs and monument-type signs for individual commercial establishments are strongly discouraged.
- F.** Signage should be oriented to pedestrians.
- G.** Each building should have only one primary sign on any one building face.
- H.** Building signage above 45 feet in height is discouraged.
- I.** Signage for building tenants is prohibited above the 2nd story except for hotel and hospitality uses.
- J.** Large scale signage visible from the freeway or other areas of the city is prohibited.

4.2. Retail Signage

- A.** Retail signage should be integrated into the building and weather protection design.
- B.** Blade, fin and pendant signs perpendicular to the sidewalk are encouraged to provide more visible signage for pedestrians.



DO Design and place signs to complement the overall facade composition.



DO Integrate freestanding signs into the landscape design.



DON'T Design over dominating building signage that does not complement facade composition and materiality.



DO Orient tenant signage to the pedestrian.



DO Integrate retail signage into the building and weather protection design.



DON'T Create large scale signage visible from distance.



DO Design and place signs to complement the overall facade composition.



DO Design and place blade signs that are perpendicular to the sidewalk.



DON'T Use materials for signage that create an impermanent appearance.

5. MECHANICAL EQUIPMENT, UTILITIES, AND SERVICE AREAS

INTENT

To limit the visual impact of utilities and mechanical equipment.

To ensure that mechanical, utilities, and services are designed to complement the building design.

5.1. Ground Floor Facades

5.2. Wall Vents and Facade Mounted Equipment

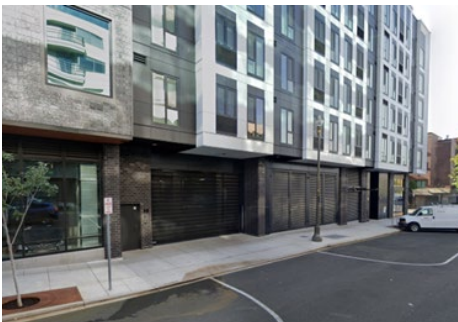
5.3. Mechanical Equipment Screening

5.1. Ground Floor Facades

A. Service, utility, mechanical and loading areas should be provided at the rear of buildings or incorporated into parking areas, if possible. If fronting a public right-of-way or publicly accessible area, they should be located on the secondary street, typically the east/west streets.

B. Service, utility, mechanical and loading areas should be designed to minimize impact to the pedestrian experience and integrate into the overall architectural character.

1. Design interior spaces to minimize overall street frontage length of service areas.
2. Integrate service and loading areas into building architecture through using matching or complementing rhythm and pattern of upper floors.
3. Use same material palette and quality of materials as active building frontages.
4. Use a variety of materials and/or changes in facade plane to break up large service areas.
5. Recess swinging doors and vehicle entrances. (Doors used solely during emergencies are not required to be recessed).



DO Use a variety of materials and changes in the facade plane to break up large service area facades.



DO Integrate service and loading areas into building architecture through using matching or complementing rhythm and pattern of upper floors.



DON'T Misalign ground floor to upper floor modulation.

5.2. Wall Vents and Facade Mounted Equipment

- A.** All vents, flashing, electrical conduits and other facade mounted equipment should match the facade color, or if paired with fenestration elements should match the fenestration color and material.
- B.** All vents, flashing, electrical conduits and other facade mounted equipment should follow a regular placement rhythm and pattern that complements overall facade design.



DO All vents, flashing, electrical conduits and other facade mounted equipment should match the facade color.



DO Organize vents in a facade to complement other design elements like fenestration and downspouts.



DON'T Detract from the building architecture by using contrasting materials or placing vents in a disorganized manner.

5.3. Mechanical Equipment Screening

- A.** All mechanical equipment, not including solar equipment, should be screened by an enclosure equal to or greater than the height of the equipment. Screening material should complement the building design.
- B.** Rooftop elements on multi-family and mixed-use buildings, including roof access, mechanical equipment, and other features needed for the function of the building, should be located to minimize its visual impact by meeting the following requirements.
1. Mechanical equipment less than two feet in height, solar panels, wind generators, or green roof features are exempt from these requirements.
 2. Mechanical equipment should be set back a minimum of 10 feet from the roof edge or screened through the use of parapet walls, towers, or other architectural features such that it is not visible from any point at or below the roof level of the subject building.



DO Setback mechanical equipments on rooftop from the roof edge or screened through the use of parapet walls, towers, or other architectural features.



DO Mechanical equipment screening material should complement the building design.



DON'T Mechanical equipment screening should not include visual gaps.

6. VEHICLE ACCESS AND PARKING DESIGN

6.1. Vehicle Access

6.2. Surface Parking

6.3. Structured Parking

6.1. Vehicle Access

INTENT

To increase pedestrian safety and reduce conflicts between vehicles and pedestrians.

- A.** Drive-thru and drive-in facilities are prohibited downtown.
- B.** Entrances to parking and loading areas and surface parking should be located on the secondary street with the least active pedestrian frontage. Parking, loading, and utility access should be avoided on the following streets: Esther Street, Columbia Street, Washington Street, Main Street, Broadway Street, 9th Street, 12th Street, and 13th Street.

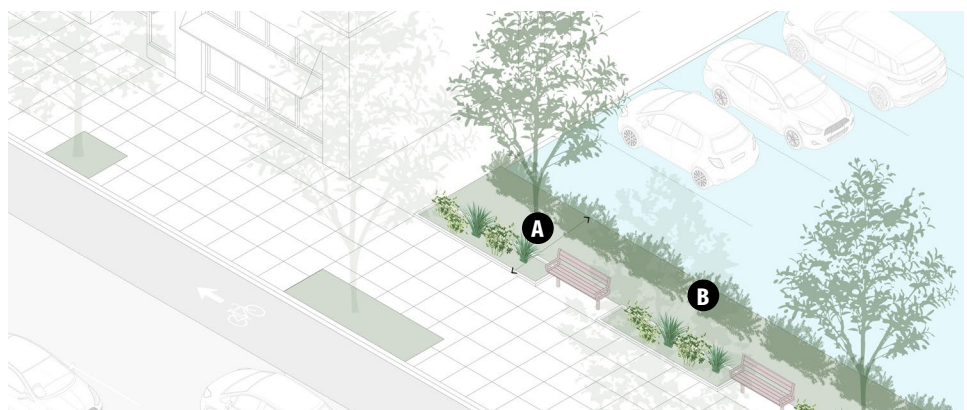
6.2. Surface Parking

INTENT

To minimize visual impact of parking areas on the public realm and not detract from the overall character of downtown or create inhospitable pedestrian environments.

- A.** Surface parking should be screened by a landscaped area that includes vertical elements with a minimum height of 3 feet to screen parked cars. The vertical element may be hedges, low walls, trellis, or other plantings.
- B.** Surface parking should be setback from the property line a minimum 8 feet to provide adequate space for planting.
- C.** Trees are encouraged in the setback landscape area to increase canopy cover over the sidewalk and parking area. (Figure 17)

Figure 17—Surface Parking Guidelines



- A** Surface parking should be setback from the property line a minimum 8 feet to provide adequate space for planting.
- B** Surface parking should be screened by a landscaped area that includes vertical elements with a minimum height of 3 feet.

6.3. Structured Parking

INTENT

To ensure structured parking does not detract from designing ground floors with active uses that engage with the streetscape.

A. Partially sub-grade parking structures:

1. Should not include direct visual access to parking areas. All fenestration into parking areas should be screened with decorative grates, louvers or landscaping.
2. Structured parking should not exceed 6 feet above sidewalk grade for residential buildings and should not exceed approximately 3 feet above sidewalk grade for office buildings. Partially sub-grade parking structures are not appropriate on facades where retail-ready ground floors are required.
3. If structured parking projects 4 feet above sidewalk grade, stoop entries accessing ground floor residential units should be included to partially screen the parking level and provide visual interest and activation of the streetscape.

B. Above-grade parking structures:

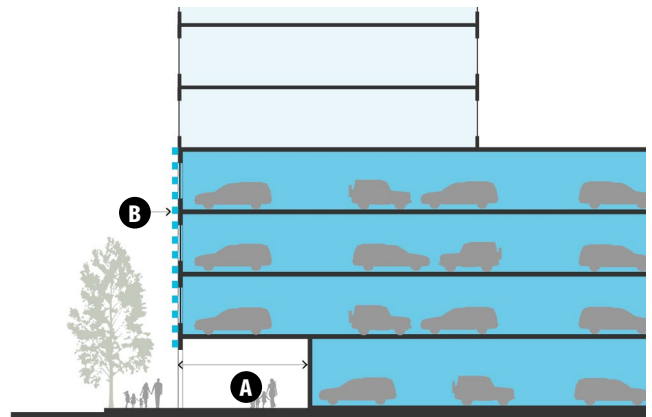
1. Parking areas should be setback a minimum of 25 feet from the building line to provide functional interior space and active frontages. (Figure 18)
2. Structured parking facades should be designed with interest-creating features and active uses.
3. For high-rise structures greater than 120 feet in height, structured parking may come to the facade edge on upper levels. Facades should be designed to look like a non-parking use building or should be designed with artistic design and articulation features to create a unique and interest-creating facade. Upper garage floors should read horizontally on the facade. (Figure 19)
4. Structured parking facades should fully screen all interior and vehicle light trespass.

Figure 18—Above-grade parking structures



- A** Parking areas should be setback a minimum of 25 feet from the building line to provide space for active uses.

Figure 19—Above-grade parking structures



- A** Parking areas on the ground floor should be setback a minimum of 25 feet from the building line to provide spaces for active uses.
- B** Facades should be designed to look like a non-parking use building or should be designed with artistic design and articulation features.



DO Screen and integrate partially below grade parking structure into the building design.



DO Line at-grade parking structure with active uses.



DON'T Design structured parking to be visible from public streets.

7. "MAIN STREET" HERITAGE OVERLAY DISTRICT #2

INTENT

To ensure the preservation of important street frontages representative of downtown Vancouver at an earlier time, to encourage the restoration of the facades of older buildings to their original character, to enhance and expand the economic, cultural, and architectural attraction of the Main Street area through the development of new buildings that build on the historic character of the area.

7.1. Historic Rhythm and Pattern

7.2. Identifiable Base/Middle/Top

7.3. Materials

7.4. Main Street Building Massing and Facade Design

7.1. Historic Rhythm and Pattern

INTENT

To create buildings that complement the historic rhythm and pattern of buildings within the "Main Street" Heritage Overlay District #2.

- A. Buildings should have a distinguishable 25-30 feet column pattern.
- B. Columns should be expressed from cornice to the street level.
- C. Columns should be a minimum 2 feet in width. Taller facades, greater than 4 stories, should have wider columns up to 4 feet in width.
- D. Window panes should be recessed a minimum 4-8 inches from the facade plane.
- E. Windows should be grouped or articulated with columns or ornamentation that emphasizes a vertical orientation.
- F. Windows should be narrow and vertical in emphasis and symmetrically spaced.
- G. Windows and door openings should generally occupy less than half of the total wall area of the building frontage.

7.2. Identifiable Base/Middle/Top

INTENT

To ensure new buildings, of any scale, use or style use the base/middle/top design organization to build on the Heritage District's design history and create human-scaled buildings.

The existing older buildings in the "Main Street" Heritage Overlay District #2 are designed to have a defined base, middle, and top.

- A. **Building facades** should be designed to have a base, middle, and top.
 - 1. **Building Base:** Should be designed with a distinct building base that is differentiated from the building middle and top.
 - a. May include a ground floor distinguished by one or more of the following: change in material, cornice line, or change in design pattern or fenestration type; or
 - b. May include a bulkhead that grounds the building and/or columns of a building and is distinguished from the middle of the building through a change in material.
 - 2. **Building Top:** Should be designed with a distinct building top that is differentiated from the building middle and base.
 - a. Should include a defined cornice line or roof overhang; and
 - b. May include upper floor change in design pattern or fenestration type.
- B. **Building alignment:** Floor plates and facade features are encouraged to line up with at least one of the adjacent building's base datum line and/or top cornice line.

7.3. Materials

INTENT

To create a consistent character and identity for the "Main Street" Heritage Overlay District #2.

- A.** Within the area designated as Historic Overlay District #2, brick, brick veneer, terracotta, ceramic tiles, masonry or other durable materials with human-scaled textures or patterns that provide visual interest are encouraged to be the primary façade material for a minimum of the first 2 to 4 floors of the structure.
- B.** Buildings and accessories should not imitate styles inappropriate to the period exemplified by the key buildings (such as Spanish, Colonial, Federal, Georgian, etc.), which are not characteristic of or compatible with examples of architecture common in Vancouver in the early 1900's.
- C.** Dark glass or opaque window panes should be avoided in favor of clear or textured glass



Example of a building that complements the historic rhythm and pattern of buildings within the Main Street Heritage District.



Example of a building with well articulated ornamentation, artistic fenestration pattern and cornice.



DO Use materiality and fenestration pattern that are consistent with the character and identity of the Heritage District.



DON'T Stucco should be limited. Materials in the Heritage District should complement existing buildings and reinforce the character of the area.

7.4. Main Street Building Massing and Facade Design

INTENT

To maintain and emphasize the historic character and scale of buildings.

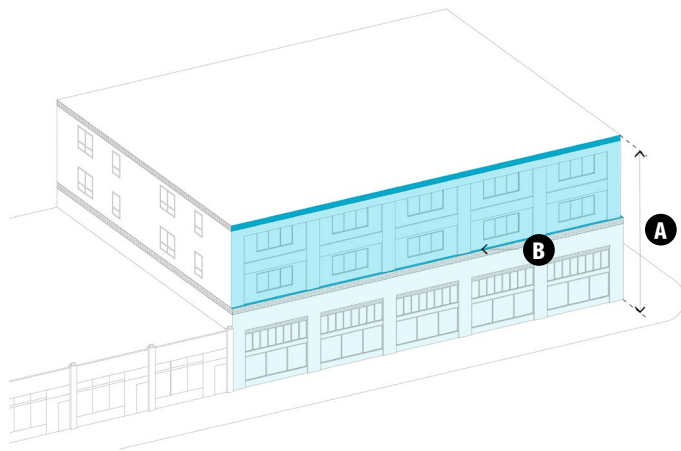
To ensure new buildings do not overwhelm Main Street historic structures.

A. Building Massing on Main Street. Buildings facing or within 100 feet of Main Street should step back upper floor facades above 35 feet in height. The upper floor step back should be greater than 10 feet. (Figure 21)

B. Alterations and Additions.

1. Projects that maintain the original facades of existing buildings but do not exceed 35 feet in height should step back new facades a minimum of six inches from the face of the original facade. (Figure 20)
2. If possible, the original distinguishing qualities and character of a building, especially of its street facade, should be retained. Whenever possible, care should be taken to avoid altering or removing any historic material or significant architectural features such as cornices, display windows, recessed entries, original siding materials, or other features.
3. Contemporary designs for new alterations or additions to the existing buildings should not destroy the significant architectural and historical material present on those buildings. Such designs must be compatible with the size, color, material and character of the building and the conservation district as a whole.
4. Whenever possible, new additions or alterations to a building should be designed in such a way that if they are removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the original building would remain unimpaired.
5. Stylistic features or examples of skilled craftsmanship that characterize the building should be treated with great sensitivity.
6. Architectural features that have deteriorated should be repaired rather than replaced whenever possible. Repair or replacement of missing architectural features on historic buildings should be based on physical or pictorial evidence rather than on conjectural designs or the availability of different architectural elements from other buildings.

Figure 20—Alterations and Additions to Heritage structures

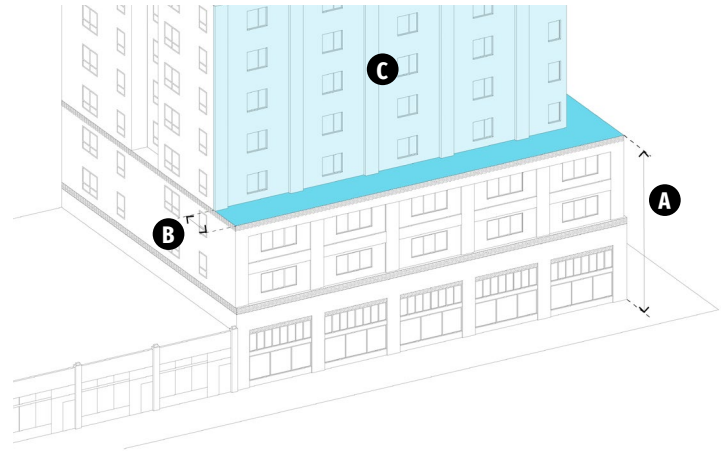


- A** Second story or 35 feet in height.
- B** Projects that maintain the original facades of existing buildings should step back new facades a minimum of six inches from the face of the original facade.

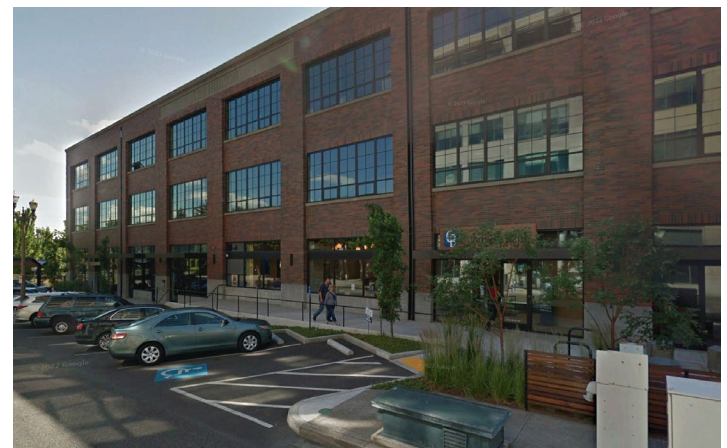


Example of the use of cornice lines at the base and top of the building to define the three portions of the facade.

Figure 21—Building Massing on Main Street



- A** Building base, up to 35 feet in height.
- B** The upper floor step back should be greater than 10 feet.
- C** Upper stories, above 35 feet in height.



Example of defining the building base with different materials and fenestration details than used on the upper stories.

PART III: **APPENDIX**

VDDG Checklist

VANCOUVER DOWNTOWN DESIGN GUIDELINES CHECKLIST

Applicant Information

Project Name :
Project Number :
Date:

Meets Guidelines

YES NO N/A

Applicant Response

1. Building + Design

1.1. Massing & Articulation

1.1.1. Block Scale

Y

N

N/A

☐☐☐

1.1.2. Facade Design

1.1.2.A. Modulations.

Y

N

N/A

☐☐☐

1.1.2.B. Modulation Design

Y

N

N/A

☐☐☐

1.1.2.C. Modulation Size

Y

N

N/A

☐☐☐

1.1.2.D. Modulation Exemption.

Y

N

N/A

☐☐☐

1.1.2.E. Blank Walls.

Y

N

N/A

☐☐☐

VANCOUVER DOWNTOWN DESIGN GUIDELINES CHECKLIST			
Applicant Information			Project Name : Project Number : Date:
Meets Guidelines			Applicant Response
YES	NO	N/A	
1.2. High-rise Massing			
1.2.1. Meeting the Public Realm			
Y ☐	N ☐	N/A ☐	
1.2.2. Skyline Massing and Design			
Y ☐	N ☐	N/A ☐	
1.3. Fenestration			
1.3.1. Window Design			
Y ☐	N ☐	N/A ☐	
1.3.2. Glass Curtain Walls			
Y ☐	N ☐	N/A ☐	
1.3.3. Bird Safe Design			
Y ☐	N ☐	N/A ☐	
1.4. Roofscapes + Green Roofs			
1.4.1. Roofscapes			
Y ☐	N ☐	N/A ☐	

VANCOUVER DOWNTOWN DESIGN GUIDELINES CHECKLIST			
Applicant Information			Project Name : Project Number : Date:
Meets Guidelines			Applicant Response
YES	NO	N/A	
1.4.2. Green Roofs			
Y ☐	N ☐	N/A ☐	
1.5. Materials			
1.5. Materials (A-C)			
Y ☐	N ☐	N/A ☐	
2. Active Ground Floor Design			
2.1. Building Entrances			
A. Primary Building Entrances.			
Y ☐	N ☐	N/A ☐	
B. Entry/Lobby Design			
Y ☐	N ☐	N/A ☐	
2.2. Retail/Commercial Ground Floors			
2.2.A. Retail-ready Ground Floors.			
Y ☐	N ☐	N/A ☐	
2.2.B. Minimum floor-to-floor height.			
Y ☐	N ☐	N/A ☐	

VANCOUVER DOWNTOWN DESIGN GUIDELINES CHECKLIST			
Applicant Information			Project Name : Project Number : Date:
Meets Guidelines			Applicant Response
YES	NO	N/A	
2.2.C. Storefront Facade.			
Y ☐	N ☐	N/A ☐	
2.3. Office/Professional Services			
2.3.A. Floor-to-floor height.			
Y ☐	N ☐	N/A ☐	
2.3.B. Non-communal spaces			
Y ☐	N ☐	N/A ☐	
2.3.C. Setback.			
Y ☐	N ☐	N/A ☐	
2.3.D. Landscaping.			
Y ☐	N ☐	N/A ☐	
2.3.E. Fenestration.			
Y ☐	N ☐	N/A ☐	

VANCOUVER DOWNTOWN DESIGN GUIDELINES CHECKLIST			
Applicant Information			Project Name : Project Number : Date:
Meets Guidelines			Applicant Response
YES	NO	N/A	
2.4. Live/Work			
2.4.A. Floor-to-floor height.			
Y ☐	N ☐	N/A ☐	
2.4.B. Fenestration.			
Y ☐	N ☐	N/A ☐	
2.5. Residential			
2.5.1. Residential Units			
2.5.1.A. Minimum raised ground floor height			
Y ☐	N ☐	N/A ☐	
2.5.1.B. Minimum floor to floor height			
Y ☐	N ☐	N/A ☐	
2.5.1.C. Stoop entries			
Y ☐	N ☐	N/A ☐	
2.5.1.D. North of 15th Street			
2.5.1.D.1. Minimum Setback			
Y ☐	N ☐	N/A ☐	

VANCOUVER DOWNTOWN DESIGN GUIDELINES CHECKLIST			
Applicant Information			Project Name : Project Number : Date:
Meets Guidelines			Applicant Response
YES	NO	N/A	
2.5.1.D.2. Ground floor entrance setback			
Y ☐	N ☐	N/A ☐	
2.5.1.E. South of 15th Street			
2.5.1.E.1. Ground floor unit raised height (with setback)			
Y ☐	N ☐	N/A ☐	
2.5.1.E.2. Ground floor unit raised height (without setback)			
Y ☐	N ☐	N/A ☐	
2.5.1.E.3. Balcony spaces			
Y ☐	N ☐	N/A ☐	
2.5.2. Residential Accessory Spaces			
Y ☐	N ☐	N/A ☐	

VANCOUVER DOWNTOWN DESIGN GUIDELINES CHECKLIST			
Applicant Information			Project Name : Project Number : Date:
Meets Guidelines			Applicant Response
YES	NO	N/A	
2.6. Rain/Weather Protection			
2.6.1. Locations			
Y ☐	N ☐	N/A ☐	
2.6.2. Primary Building Entrances			
Y ☐	N ☐	N/A ☐	
2.6.3. Retail Frontages			
Y ☐	N ☐	N/A ☐	
2.6.4. Ground Floor Residential and Office Entrances			
Y ☐	N ☐	N/A ☐	
2.6.5. Materials			
Y ☐	N ☐	N/A ☐	
3. Lighting			
3.1. Building + Site Lighting			
3.1.A. Pedestrian-Oriented Lighting			
Y ☐	N ☐	N/A ☐	

VANCOUVER DOWNTOWN DESIGN GUIDELINES CHECKLIST			
Applicant Information			Project Name : Project Number : Date:
Meets Guidelines			Applicant Response
YES	NO	N/A	
3.1.B. Architectural Compatibility			
Y ☐	N ☐	N/A ☐	
3.1.C. Attachment			
Y ☐	N ☐	N/A ☐	
3.1.D. Rooftop			
Y ☐	N ☐	N/A ☐	
3.2. Dark Sky			
3.2.A. Lighting Plan			
Y ☐	N ☐	N/A ☐	
3.2.B. Light Trespass			
Y ☐	N ☐	N/A ☐	
3.2.C. Lighting Intensity			
Y ☐	N ☐	N/A ☐	
3.2.D. Time			
Y ☐	N ☐	N/A ☐	

VANCOUVER DOWNTOWN DESIGN GUIDELINES CHECKLIST			
Applicant Information			Project Name : Project Number : Date:
Meets Guidelines			Applicant Response
YES	NO	N/A	
3.2.E. Color/Temperature			
Y ☐	N ☐	N/A ☐	
3.3. Skyline and Beacon Lighting			
Y ☐	N ☐	N/A ☐	
4. Signage			
4.1. General			
Y ☐	N ☐	N/A ☐	
4.2. Retail Signage			
Y ☐	N ☐	N/A ☐	
5. Mechanical Equipment, Utilities, and Service Areas			
5.1. Ground Floor Facades			
Y ☐	N ☐	N/A ☐	
5.2. Wall Vents and Facade Mounted Equipment			
Y ☐	N ☐	N/A ☐	

VANCOUVER DOWNTOWN DESIGN GUIDELINES CHECKLIST			
Applicant Information			Project Name : Project Number : Date:
Meets Guidelines			Applicant Response
YES	NO	N/A	
5.3. Mechanical Equipment Screening			
Y ☐	N ☐	N/A ☐	
6. Vehicle Access and Parking Design			
6.1. Vehicle Access			
Y ☐	N ☐	N/A ☐	
6.2. Surface Parking			
6.2.A. Landscape Screening			
Y ☐	N ☐	N/A ☐	
6.2.B. Minimum Setback			
Y ☐	N ☐	N/A ☐	
6.3. Structured Parking			
6.3.A. Partially sub-grade parking structures			
6.3.A.1. Parking Structure Fenestration			
Y ☐	N ☐	N/A ☐	
6.3.A.2. Structured parking height above sidewalk grade			
Y ☐	N ☐	N/A ☐	

VANCOUVER DOWNTOWN DESIGN GUIDELINES CHECKLIST			
Applicant Information			Project Name : Project Number : Date:
Meets Guidelines			Applicant Response
YES	NO	N/A	
6.3.A.3. Stoop Entries			
Y ☐	N ☐	N/A ☐	
6.3.B. Above-grade parking structures			
6.3.B.1. Minimum Setback			
Y ☐	N ☐	N/A ☐	
6.3.B.2. Interest-creating features and active uses			
Y ☐	N ☐	N/A ☐	
6.3.B.3. High-rise structured parking			
Y ☐	N ☐	N/A ☐	
6.3.B.4. Structured parking façade			
Y ☐	N ☐	N/A ☐	
7. "Main Street" Heritage Overlay District #2			
7.1. Historic Rhythm and Pattern			
Y ☐	N ☐	N/A ☐	

VANCOUVER DOWNTOWN DESIGN GUIDELINES CHECKLIST			
Applicant Information			Project Name : Project Number : Date:
Meets Guidelines			Applicant Response
YES	NO	N/A	
7.2. Identifiable Base/Middle/Top			
Y ☐	N ☐	N/A ☐	
7.2.A. Building Facades			
Y ☐	N ☐	N/A ☐	
7.2.A.1. Building Base			
Y ☐	N ☐	N/A ☐	
7.2.A.2. Building Top			
Y ☐	N ☐	N/A ☐	
7.2.B. Building Alignment			
Y ☐	N ☐	N/A ☐	
7.3. Materials			
Y ☐	N ☐	N/A ☐	

VANCOUVER DOWNTOWN DESIGN GUIDELINES CHECKLIST			
Applicant Information			Project Name : Project Number : Date:
Meets Guidelines			Applicant Response
YES	NO	N/A	
7.4. Main Street Building Massing and Facade Design			
Y ☐	N ☐	N/A ☐	
7.4.A. Building Massing on Main Street			
Y ☐	N ☐	N/A ☐	
7.4.B. Alterations and Additions			
Y ☐	N ☐	N/A ☐	

Vancouver Downtown Design Guidelines

2024/25 Update

What is this project about?

The City of Vancouver's Downtown Design Guidelines Manual (initially written in 1978 and last updated in 1995) is used in the review of development projects in Downtown Vancouver. The guidelines have helped architects and developers ensure quality design in their projects as well as compatibility with downtown character and the goals of the community. Vancouver is seeing continued development interest and the guidelines are being updated to provide better guidance for the design and scale of development being built today.

Why is the City working on this now?

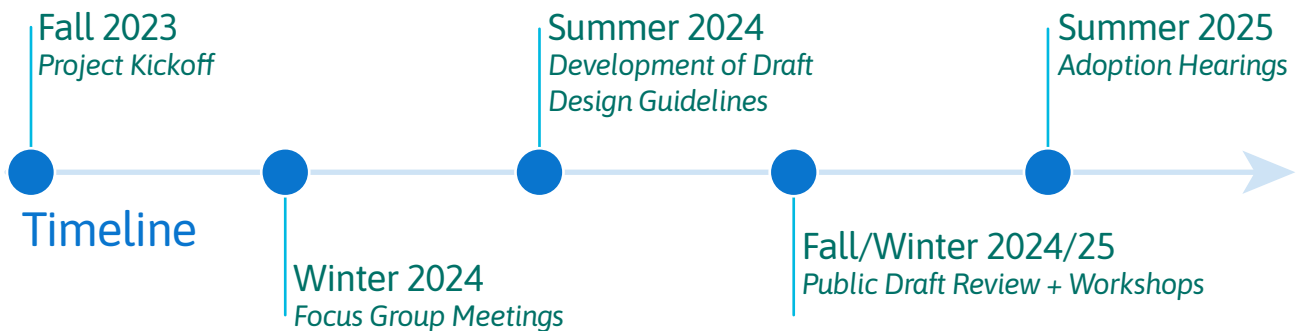
Currently, City staff are responsible for reviewing development projects, so they work directly with the Downtown Design Guidelines Manual on a regular basis. As development interest continues to grow in Downtown Vancouver, City staff have identified a need for the guidelines to be updated to better streamline the review process for both the City staff reviewers and the applicant. The City is looking for updated guidelines that are clear and concise, but still allow for flexibility and are not overly prescriptive.

How can I get involved?

Attend development community focus groups

Participate in the open house when draft guidelines are released

Watch the City's website for other engagement opportunities



CITY OF
Vancouver
WASHINGTON

Vancouver Downtown Design Guidelines Manual

Jason Nortz

Community Development Department
July 8, 2025



Chris Sensenig

Associate Principal
Raimi + Associates

Agenda

- Public Draft VDDG Manual Overview
- Highlight Changes to Public Draft
- Discussion/Questions
- Recommendation for Adoption

Prior PC/Council Review

- October 2024
 - Planning Commission and City Center Redevelopment Authority Workshops
- March 2025
 - Planning Commission and City Center Redevelopment Authority Workshops
- April 2025
 - City Council Workshop





VDDG Goals:

- Provide a set of guidelines that are easy to understand and administer;
- Ensure the compatibility of new development with the existing historic character of the downtown;
- Maintain quality design and materials;
- Ensure ground floors include interest-creating features that contribute to an active downtown environment; and
- Ensure building designs complement each other and contribute to a cohesive sense of place.

Design Elements that Enhance a Sense of Place for Downtown (more of this)

- Active ground floor design that creates **interesting and pedestrian focused streetscape**.
- Ground floor building articulation and **craftsmanship that provides human-scale details**.
- Fenestration is offset from the primary façade to provide **visual interest and shadow lines**.
- A **vertical rhythm and pattern** to the fenestration and façade articulation.
- Use of **brick and masonry as the primary façade material**, particularly at the ground level.



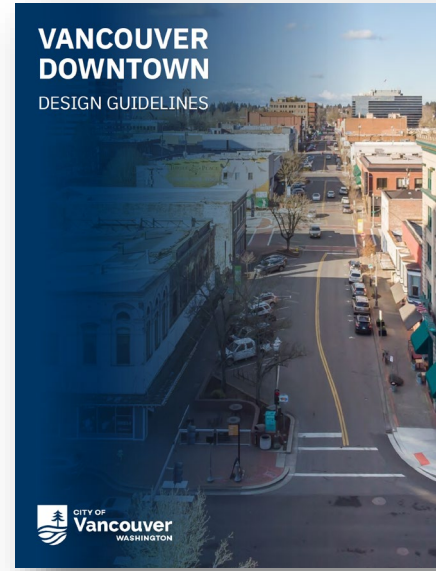
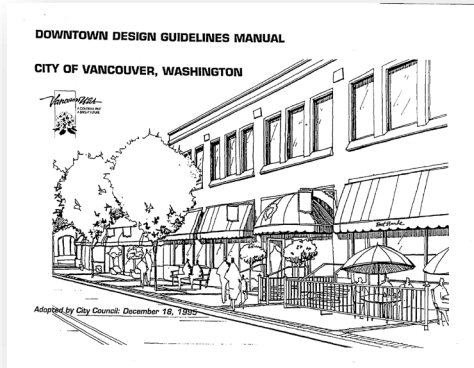


Design Elements that Need Improvement (less of this)

- Ground floor **façades dominated by parking, utilities, and blank walls.**
- **Overly flat facades** with limited to no articulation, modulation, or depth of fenestration to provide shadow lines and visual interest.
- **High-rise buildings stepped back from the building line** and located above parking structures.
- Large flat **facades dominated by horizontal glazing** with little to no human-scaled details.



1995 vs 2025 Downtown Design Guidelines



- Difficult to administer and evaluate building design applications
- Not organized by design topics
- Guidelines do not focus on current mid-rise and high-rise building types
- Included guidance on buildings and street design (street design guidance no longer needed)
- Included guidance on R-9 district which is not subject to design review

- Improve Administration
- Include Checklist
- More Detailed and Verifiable Design Guidelines
- Include more guidelines for common higher density buildings

What's New:

- **Façade Design**
- **Ground Floor Design**
- High-rise Massing
- Structured Parking
- **Window Detailing**
- **Materials**
- Bird-Safe Design
- Green Roofs
- Building Lighting



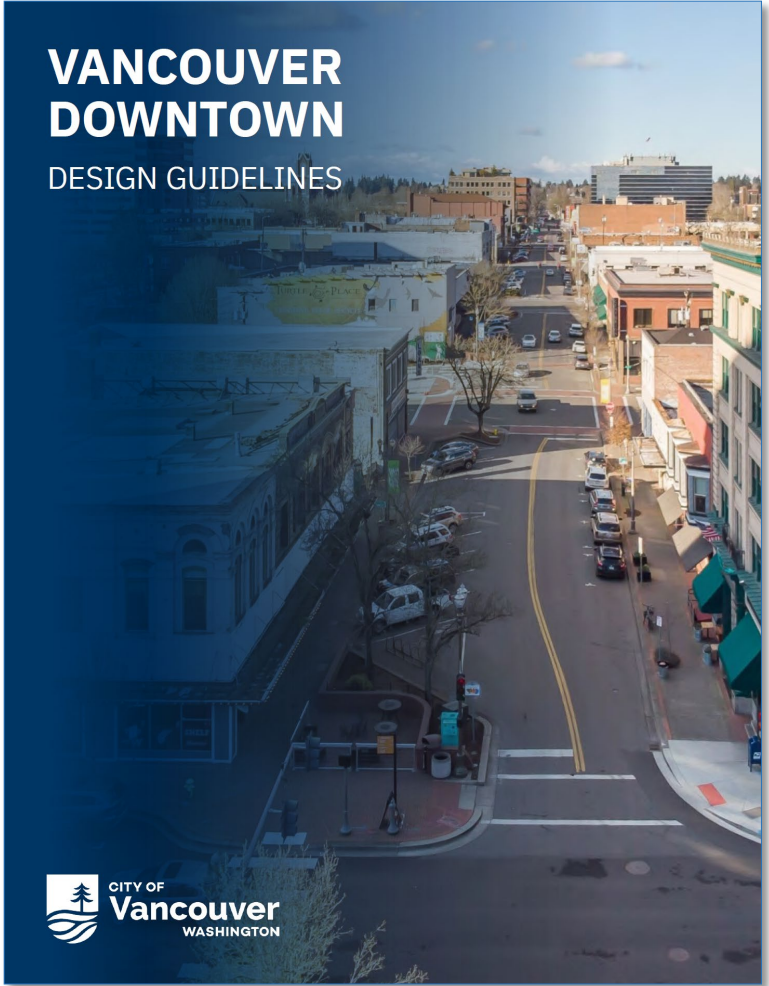


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Changes to Public Draft:

1.3. Fenestration

1.3.1. Window Design

INTENT

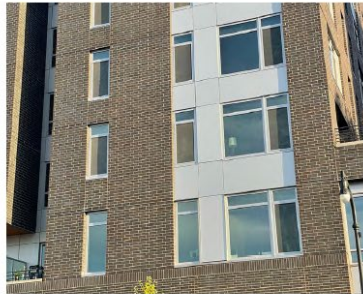
To avoid flat facades and provide human-scaled architecture elements that create visual interest and shadow lines.

A. Fenestration on facades facing a public street, right-of-way or publicly accessible open space should follow the guidelines listed below (portions of a building with glass curtain wall systems are exempt):

1. Window panes should be recessed 3 to 6 inches from façade plane. **Change minimum dimension from 3" to 2"**
2. Windows that are flat or "flush" with the façade are prohibited unless:
 - a. Applied to a portion of a building that is part of a façade recess/inset with a minimum 4 inches in depth. The portion of the building that is recessed should have a maximum width of 20 feet.
 - b. Framed or include a lintel and mantel with a minimum projection of 2 to 6 inches from the façade.



DO Recess windows from the facade plane to create facade depth and shadows.



DO Have windows that may be flat or "flush" with facade, if applied to a portion of a building that is part of a façade recess/inset.



DON'T Have flat or "flush" windows compose large sections of a building facade.

- **Reduce requirement for recess from 3 to 6 inches to 2 to 6 inches to be inline with common window details.**
- **Maintain restriction on flush window designs**
- **Only require bird safe glazing on façade areas with a glazing area greater than 30%**

Changes to Public Draft:

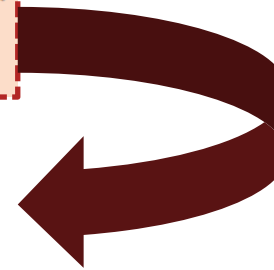
1.5. Materials

INTENT

To improve the overall appearance of buildings and to have building character express longevity and permanence through high quality materials that will maintain quality of appearance over time. To create a consistent character and identity for downtown.

- A. Building materials should be of a high-quality and chosen for the product's longevity and sustainability. Sustainability considerations should include the sourcing of materials, distance and material travels, carbon impact, and maintenance requirements.
- B. Brick, brick veneer, terracotta, ceramic tiles, or masonry provide a human-scaled element to facades and should be the primary material for all ground floor facades exclusive of fenestration.
- C. South of 15th Street: brick veneer, terracotta, ceramic tiles, or masonry are encouraged to be the primary material for all publicly facing facades for the first 50 feet of height.
- D. Mass timber buildings may be exempt from this standard to express the structural facade elements. High-quality low carbon concrete may be used if detailed with human-scaled elements.
- B. Within the design review area, provide brick, brick veneer, terracotta, ceramic tiles, masonry or other durable materials with human-scaled textures and/or patterns that provide visual interest as the primary façade material on the ground floor of the structure.
- C. Within the area designated as Historic Overlay District #2, brick, brick veneer, terracotta, ceramic tiles, masonry or other durable materials with human-scaled textures or patterns that provide visual interest are encouraged to be the primary façade material for a minimum of the first 2 to 4 floors of the structure.

- **Retain requirement of higher quality materials for the ground floor throughout the VDDG design review area.**
- **Only require higher quality materials on upper floors within the “Main Street” Historic Overlay District #2**



Changes to Public Draft:

3.2. Dark Sky

A. Lighting Plan. An outdoor lighting plan must be submitted along with a compliance statement that the development will comply with all guidelines. The lighting plan shall be prepared by a certified lighting professional or licensed professional engineer using lighting design software.

B. Light Trespass.

1. Light Trespass leaving a property onto adjacent public right-of-way should be no greater than 3 Lux when measured 20 feet past the property line.
2. All lights should be directed, oriented, and shielded to prevent light trespass or glare onto adjacent properties. All luminaries should meet the most recently adopted criteria of the Illuminating Engineering Society of North America (IESNA) for “Cut Off” or “Full Cut Off” luminaries. (Figure 16).

C. Lighting Intensity. Lighting should use the lowest level of light necessary. Unless otherwise specified in this ordinance, lighting installed for an outdoor use shall not exceed 25% more than the Light Level recommended by the applicable ANSI/IES Lighting Standard, or a state approved alternate. No lights should be installed on the property capable of exceeding a total output greater than 3,000 Lumens.

D. Time. Lighting should be limited to essential time periods for lighting. Controls such as timer or motion detectors should be used to ensure that light is available when it is needed, dimmed when possible, and turned off when not needed.

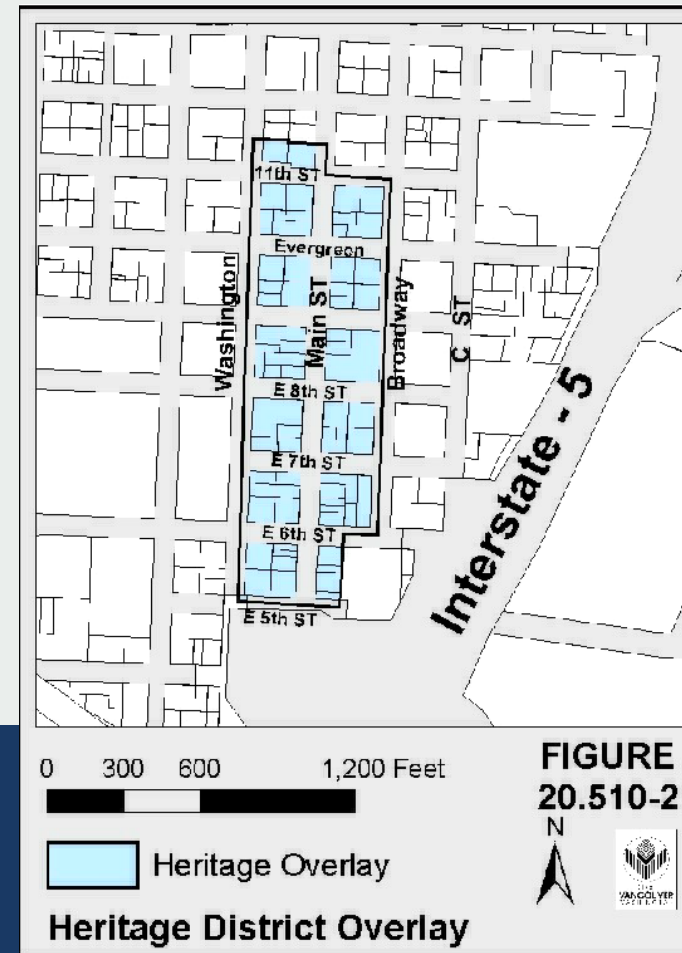
E. Color/Temperature. General site and parking lot lighting should have a nominal correlated color temperature (CCT) of no greater than 3000 Kelvin. Cooler/whiter lighting above 3000 Kelvin in CCT should be limited to areas where a more accurate color rendition is important, including building entrances and exits (for security reasons), and lighting of signs.

- **Added a lighting plan requirement**
- **Updated language and increased allowed lighting intensity to match commercial Dark Sky standards**





“Main Street” Heritage Overlay District #2



Changes to Public Draft:

7.4. Main Street Building Massing and Facade Design

INTENT

To maintain and emphasize the historic character and scale of buildings.

To ensure new buildings do not overwhelm Main Street historic structures.

A. Building Massing on Main Street. Buildings facing or within 100 feet of Main Street should step back upper floor facades above 35 feet in height. The upper floor step back should be greater than 10 feet. (Figure 21)

B. Alterations and Additions.

1. Projects that maintain the original facades of existing buildings but do not exceed 35 feet in height should step back new facades a minimum of six inches from the face of the original facade. (Figure 20)
2. If possible, the original distinguishing qualities and character of a building, especially of its street facade, should be retained. Whenever possible, care should be taken to avoid altering or removing any historic material or significant architectural features such as cornices, display windows, recessed entries, original siding materials, or other features.
3. Contemporary designs for new alterations or additions to the existing buildings should not destroy the significant architectural and historical material present on those buildings. Such designs must be compatible with the size, color, material and character of the building and the conservation district as a whole.
4. Whenever possible, new additions or alterations to a building should be designed in such a way that if they are removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the original building would remain unimpaired.
5. Stylistic features or examples of skilled craftsmanship that characterize the building should be treated with great sensitivity.
6. Architectural features that have deteriorated should be repaired rather than replaced whenever possible. Repair or replacement of missing architectural features on historic buildings should be based on physical or pictorial evidence rather than on conjectural designs or the availability of different architectural elements from other buildings.

- **VDDG Manual will be used for review of non-historic projects in Historic Overlay District #2**

- **Code section will be updated to refer to VDDG for most buildings; historic buildings will be referred to state and federal standards**

-

Incorporated relevant Historic Overlay District #2 standards from the code into the Design Guidelines



VDDG Checklist

1. BUILDING + DESIGN

1.1. Planning & Articulation

1.1.1. Block Scale

1.1.2. Facade Design

1.1.1. Block Scale

To break down the massing of super-block sites, and provide new pedestrian connections and new publicly accessible open spaces.

1.1.2. Facade Design

To break down the massing of block-scaled buildings and create pedestrian-scaled facades with a vertical rhythm and pattern that reflects the building's use.

1.1.1. Block Scale

1. Continuous building facades greater than 150 feet in length should have a minimum of one modulation. (Modulations should meet the modulation guidelines below).

2. Continuous residential building facades greater than 100 feet in length should have one or more modulations. (Modulations should meet the modulation guidelines below).

1.1.2. Facade Design

1. Continuous building facades greater than 150 feet in length should have a minimum of one modulation. (Modulations should meet the modulation guidelines below).

2. Continuous residential building facades greater than 100 feet in length should have one or more modulations. (Modulations should meet the modulation guidelines below).

1.1.1. Block Scale

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1.1. Planning & Articulation

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1.1.2. Facade Design

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1.1.1. Block Scale

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1.1.2. Facade Design

To break down the massing of block-scaled buildings and create pedestrian-scaled facades with a vertical rhythm and pattern that reflects the building's use.

VANCOUVER DOWNTOWN DESIGN GUIDELINES CHECKLIST			
Applicant Information		Project Name : Project Number : Date:	
Meets Guidelines		Applicant Response	
YES	NO	N/A	
1. Building + Design			
1.1. Massing & Articulation			
1.1.1. Block Scale			
Y	N	N/A	
☐	☐	☐	
1.1.2. Facade Design			
1.1.2.A. Modulいたions.			
Y	N	N/A	
☐	☐	☐	
1.1.2.B. Modulation Design			
Y	N	N/A	
☐	☐	☐	
1.1.2.C. Modulation Size			
Y	N	N/A	
☐	☐	☐	
1.1.2.D. Modulation Exemption.			
Y	N	N/A	
☐	☐	☐	
1.1.2.E. Blank Walls.			
Y	N	N/A	
☐	☐	☐	

VANCOUVER DOWNTOWN DESIGN GUIDELINES CHECKLIST			
Applicant Information		Project Name : Project Number : Date:	
Meets Guidelines		Applicant Response	
YES	NO	N/A	
1.2. High-rise Massing			
1.2.1. Meeting the Public Realm			
Y	N	N/A	
☐	☐	☐	
1.2.2. Skyline Massing and Design			
Y	N	N/A	
☐	☐	☐	
1.3. Fenestration			
1.3.1. Window Design			
Y	N	N/A	
☐	☐	☐	
1.3.2. Glass Curtain Walls			
Y	N	N/A	
☐	☐	☐	
1.3.3. Bird Safe Design			
Y	N	N/A	
☐	☐	☐	
1.4. Roofscapes + Green Roofs			
1.4.1. Roofscapes			
Y	N	N/A	
☐	☐	☐	

Recommendation

- Following applicant and public testimony at the July 8 public hearing, staff recommends the Planning Commission forward a recommendation of approval to the City Council to approve the updated Downtown Guidelines that are referenced in VMC 20.265.



Discussion/Questions



Thank You Slide

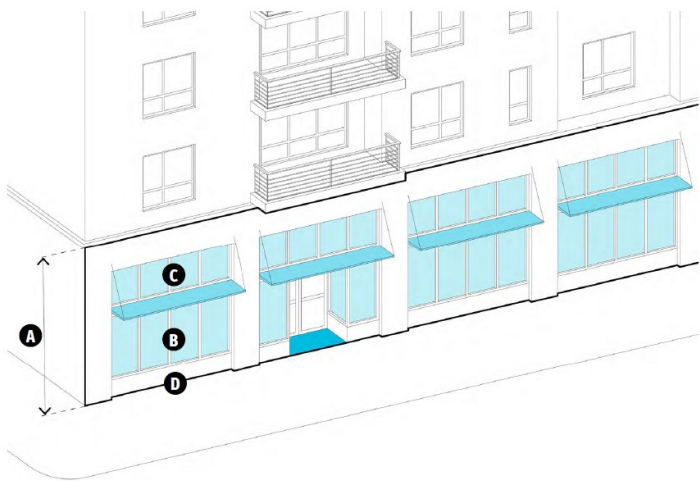


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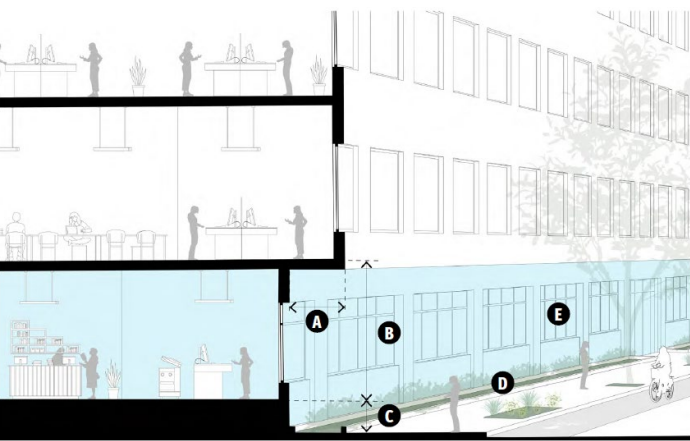




Retail/Commercial



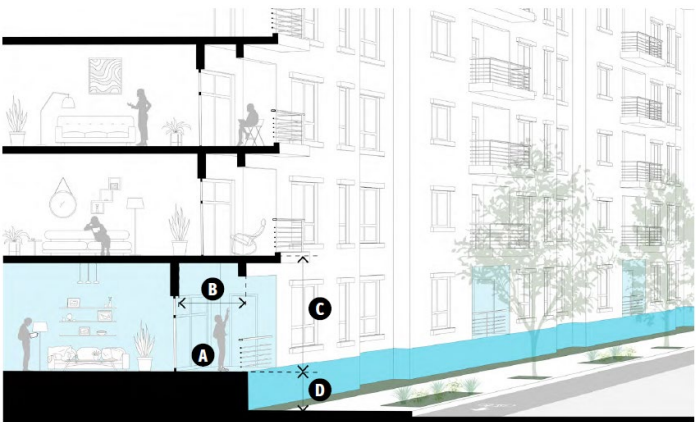
Office/Professional Services



Residential (north of 15th Street)



Residential (south of 15th Street)



Active Ground Floor Design

INTENT
To ensure ground floor frontages focus on interest-creating facades lined with active uses or designed to show regular habitation and activity.



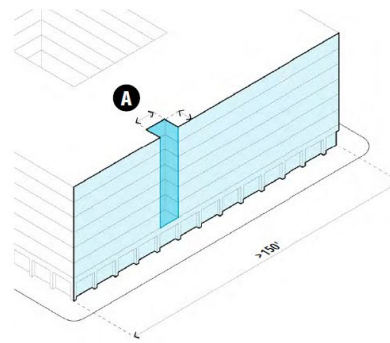
Façade Design

INTENT

To break down the massing of block-scaled buildings and create pedestrian-scaled facades with a vertical rhythm and pattern that reflects the building's use.

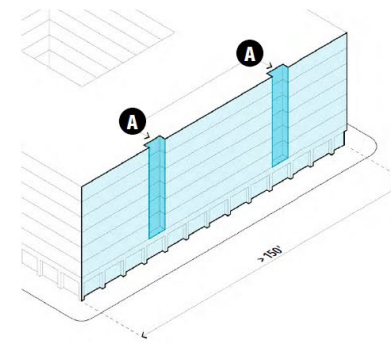
- **Modulations** in the façade plane **should be sized depending on overall length of the façade and the number of modulations** per facade
- The façade modulation **may be of less depth if combined with a change/contrast in material/color and/or a variation in the fenestration pattern.**
- **fenestration pattern.**

Figure 2—One modulation



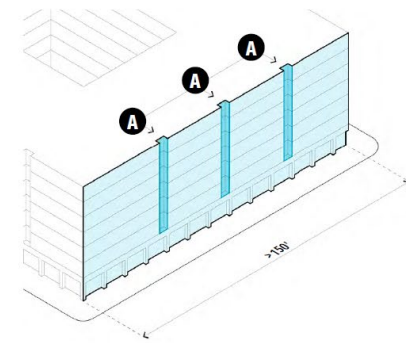
A The modulation should have a minimum width of 8 to 12 ft. and a minimum depth of 8 to 10 ft.

Figure 3—Two modulations

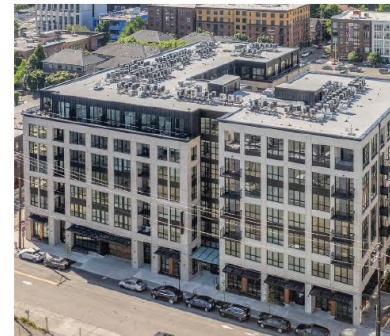


A The modulations should have a minimum width of 6 to 8 ft. and a minimum depth of 4 to 6 ft.

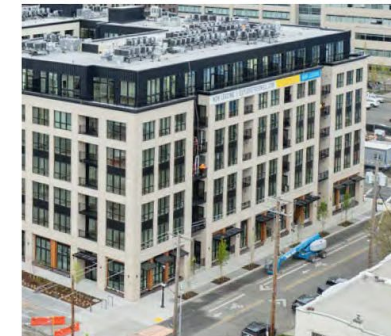
Figure 4—Three or more modulations



A The modulations should have a minimum width of 6 ft. and a minimum depth of 3 ft.



Example of facade with single major break.



Example of facade with 2 modulations.



Example of facade with multiple modulations with an approximate depth of 3 feet.



Example of facade with minimum modulations but a change in material and color that breaks up the building into three distinct massing elements.



Example of facade with 2 modulations.



DON'T: Create buildings with long flat facades without any modulations.



Materials Character and Quality

Goal:

- To improve the overall appearance of buildings
- To have building character express longevity and permanence through high quality materials that will maintain quality of appearance over time.
- To create a consistent character and identity for downtown.



Buildings with Brick as Primary Façade Material

Buildings with Stucco and Fiberboard Cement Panels as Primary Façade Material



Materials

Brick, brick veneer, terracotta, ceramic tiles, or masonry provide a human-scaled element to facades.

ALL BUILDINGS:

- **Primary material for all ground floor facades** exclusive of fenestration.

SOUTH of 15th ST:

- **Primary material for all publicly facing facades for the first 50 feet of height**

Feedback/Analysis:

- *Concern about cost implications*
- *Stucco to Brick Veneer:*
 - *50-75% premium (2-2.5 times per sf)*
 - *About 2-3% of total building cost*



Façade Design

INTENT

To break down the massing of block-scaled buildings and create pedestrian-scaled facades with a vertical rhythm and pattern that reflects the building's use.

- **Continuous building facades**
>150 feet in length
a minimum of one modulation.
- **Residential building facades**
> 100 feet in length
one or more modulations.



Example of building with multiple modulation recesses with balcony projections. Modulations begin at the second floor.



Example of building with multiple modulations that extend from the ground floor through the roof plane.



DON'T: Create buildings with long flat facades. Design buildings to have modulations that reflect a residential rhythm and pattern.



DON'T: Create flat facades with only balcony projections and no facade modulation that result in an overly flat facade appearance.



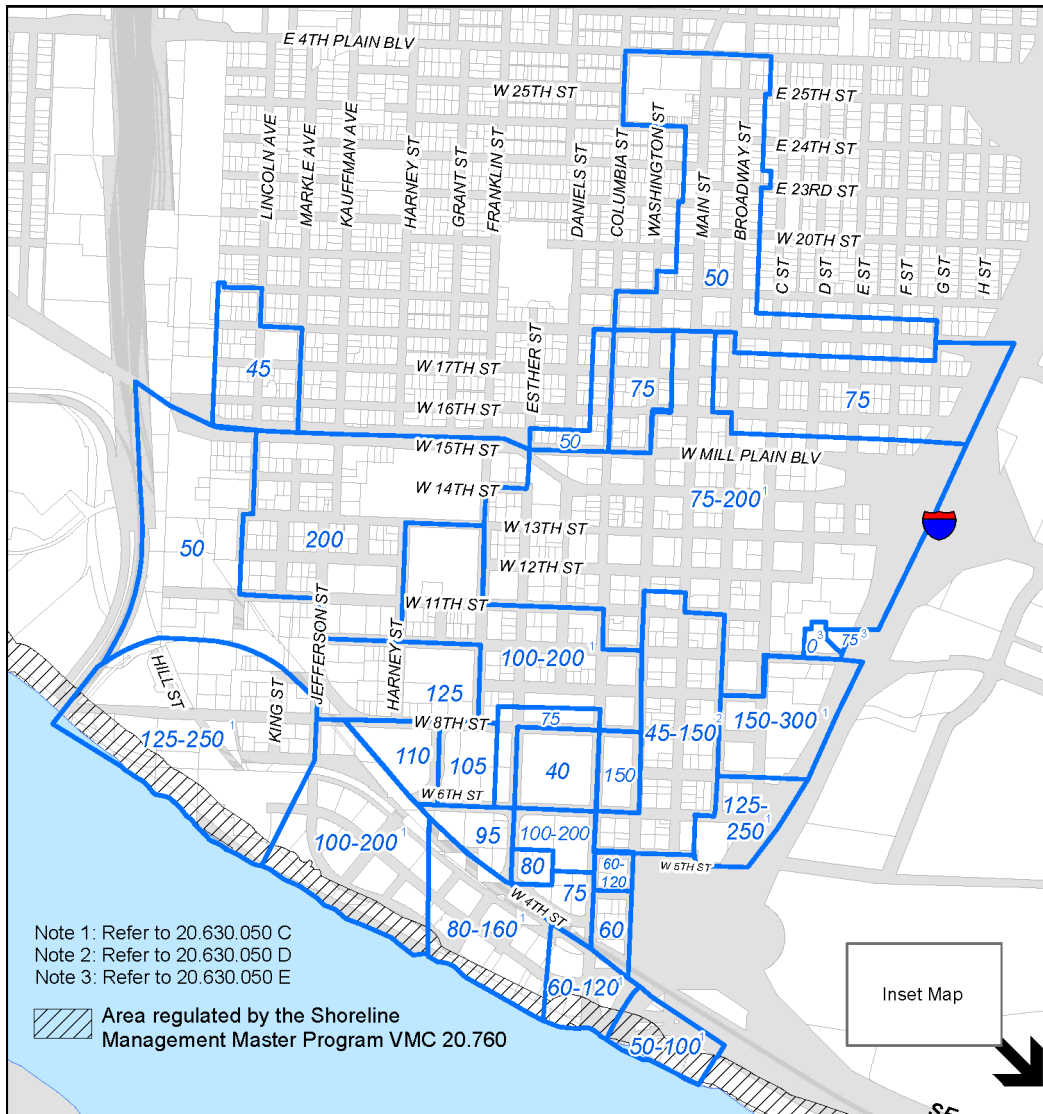
High-rise Massing

INTENT

To provide unique moments and place making opportunities throughout downtown where high-rise projects are located.

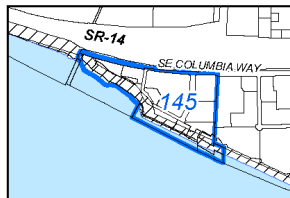
To integrate high-rise towers into the ground-level public realm.

To create visually interesting buildings and avoid monolithic boxes without shape or articulation.



0 500 1,000 2,000 Feet

**Maximum
Building
Heights**



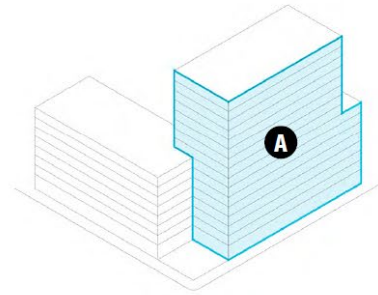
**FIGURE
20.630-4**
CITY OF
Vancouver
WASHINGTON



High-rise Massing

- **Anchor the tower buildings** to the public realm by extending a portion of any high-rise portion of the building to the ground plane.
- **Primary building entrances** should be located within or directly adjacent to the tower portion of the building. Primary building entries should be clearly identifiable and prominent elements of the building façade.
- **Corner mini park.** High-rise buildings greater than 85 feet in height are encouraged to provide a corner mini-park or plaza..

Figure 6—Anchored tower buildings

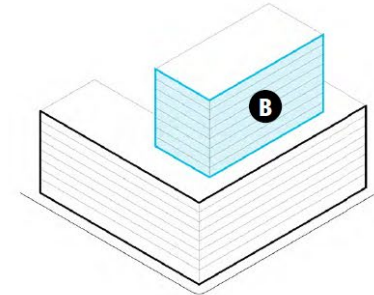


A DO anchor tower buildings to the ground plane.



DO Anchor the tower portion of the building to the ground plane.

Figure 7—Unanchored tower buildings

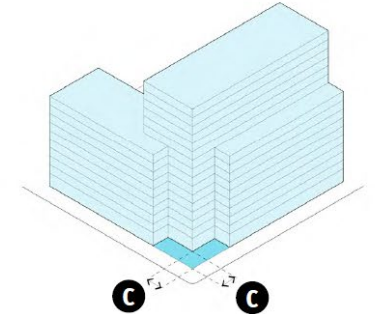


B DO NOT have tower buildings disconnected from the ground plane.



DON'T Disconnect the tower portion of the building from the ground plane.

Figure 8—Corner mini park



C DO provide corner mini-parks or plazas for high-rise buildings.



DO Provide corner mini-park or plaza.





Materials

INTENT

To maintain the materiality and character of downtown.

To improve the overall appearance of buildings and to have building character express longevity and permanence through high quality materials that will maintain quality of appearance over time.

To create a consistent character and identity for downtown.



Materials

Brick, brick veneer, terracotta, ceramic tiles, or masonry provide a human-scaled element to facades.

- Should be primary material for **all ground floor facades** exclusive of fenestration.
- **South of 15th Street:** should primary material for all publicly facing facades **for the first 50 feet of height**
- Mass timber buildings may be exempt from this standard to express the structural facade elements.
- High-quality low carbon concrete may be used if detailed with human-scaled elements.

Buildings with 100% glass curtain wall facades are discouraged.

- Glass curtain walls may be used as a building accent.
- Glass curtain walls should not exceed 50% of any single façade facing east, south, and west.



1.3.1. Window Design

INTENT

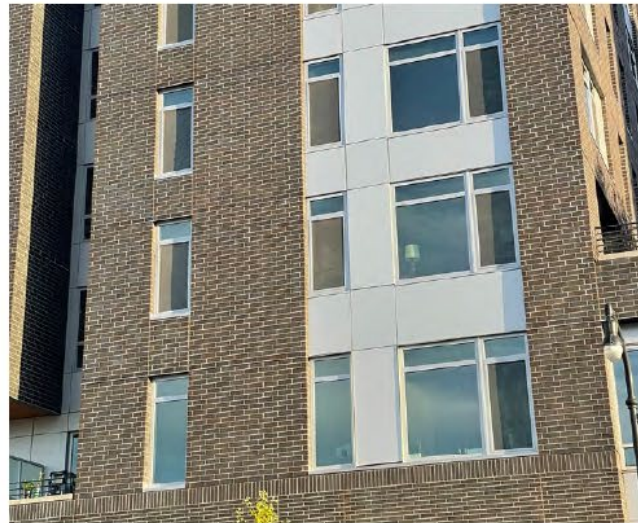
To avoid flat facades and provide human-scaled architecture elements that create visual interest and shadow lines.

A. Fenestration on facades facing a public street, right-of-way or publicly accessible open space should follow the guidelines listed below (portions of a building with glass curtain wall systems are exempt):

1. Window panes should be recessed 3 to 6 inches from façade plane.
2. Windows that are flat or “flush” with the façade are prohibited unless:
 - a. Applied to a portion of a building that is part of a façade recess/inset with a minimum 4 inches in depth. The portion of the building that is recessed should have a maximum width of 20 feet.
 - b. Framed or include a lintel and mantel with a minimum projection of 2 to 6 inches from the facade.



DO Recess windows from the facade plane to create facade depth and shadows.

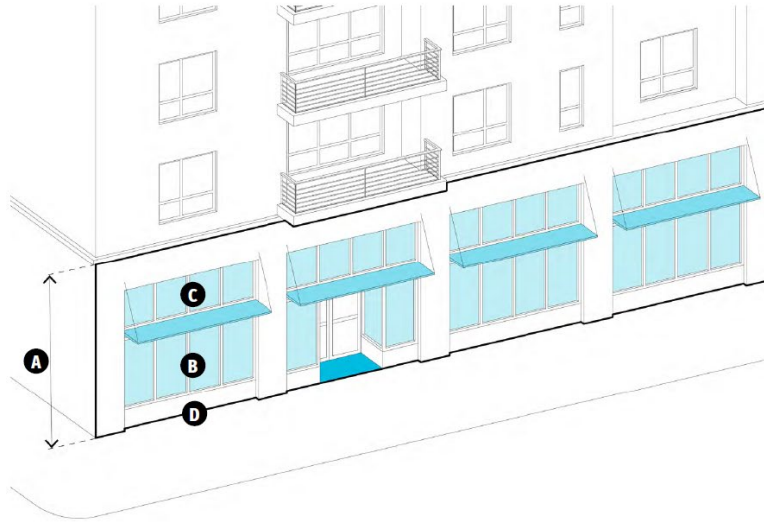


DO Have windows that may be flat or “flush” with facade, if applied to a portion of a building that is part of a façade recess/inset.



DON'T Have flat or “flush” windows compose large sections of a building facade.





- A** Minimum floor-to-floor height.
- B** Maximize transparent glazing between 2 and 7 feet in height.
- C** Transom windows are encouraged to bring natural light into commercial spaces.
- D** Bulkheads and solid walls, if provided, should measure approximately 12 to 24 inches from finished grade.

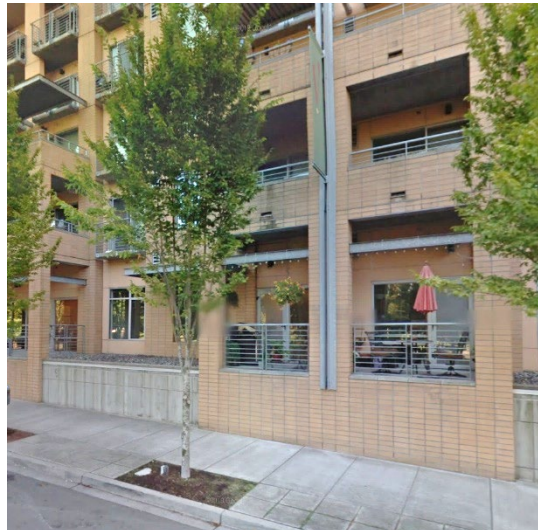
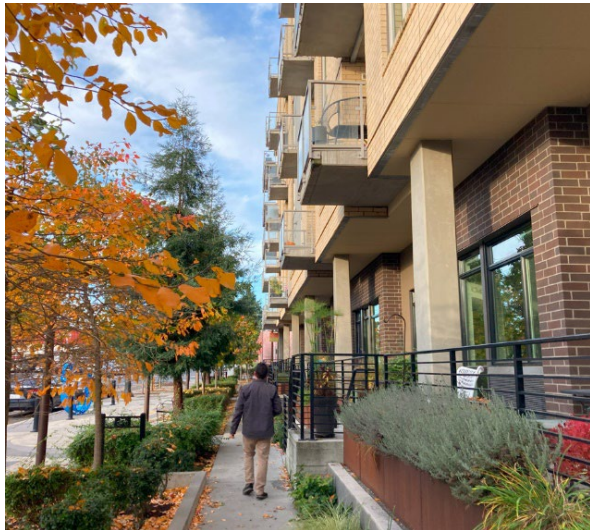


Example of a transparent and inviting retail/commercial frontage on the ground floor.

Active Ground Floors

INTENT

To ensure ground floor frontages focus on interest-creating facades lined with active uses or designed to show regular habitation and activity.



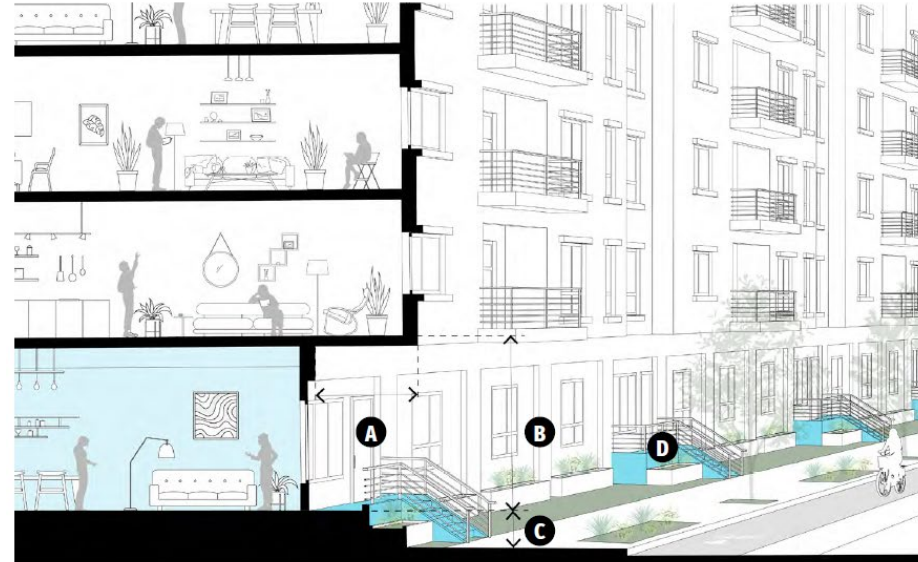
Residential

INTENT

To ensure ground floor residential units create activity and enhance the public realm through direct interaction with the sidewalk through stoop unit entries, balconies or porches.

To maintain privacy through raising units above sidewalk grade and setting ground floor units back from the building line to provide space for landscaping.

North of 15th Street (Uptown Village)



- A** Ground floor residential units should be setback a minimum of 3-5 feet from the building line.
- B** The ground floor unit should have minimum floor-to-floor height of 10 feet.
- C** Ground floor residential units should be raised a minimum of 2 feet and not more than 6 feet above sidewalk grade.
- D** Ground floor units are encouraged to have stoop entries.



Example of a ground floor residential unit activating the public realm through stoops and patios in the setback area.

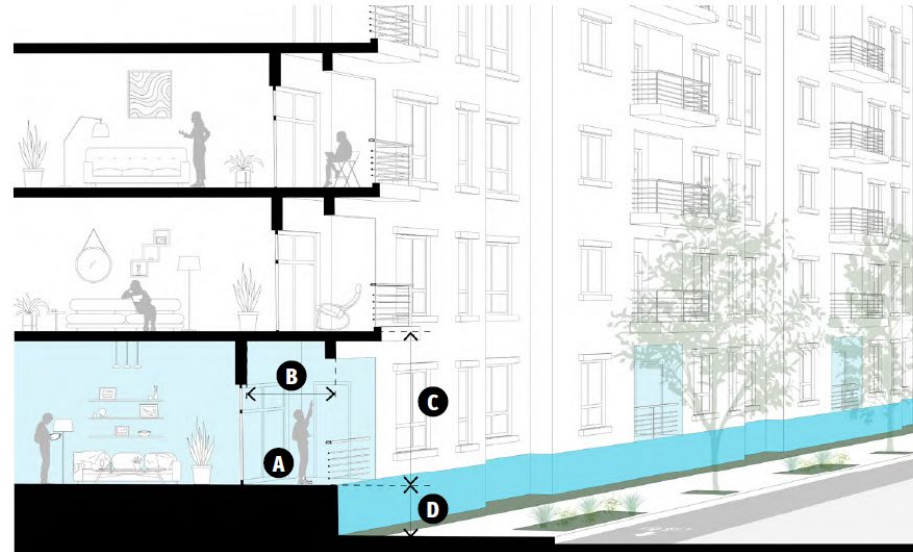


Residential

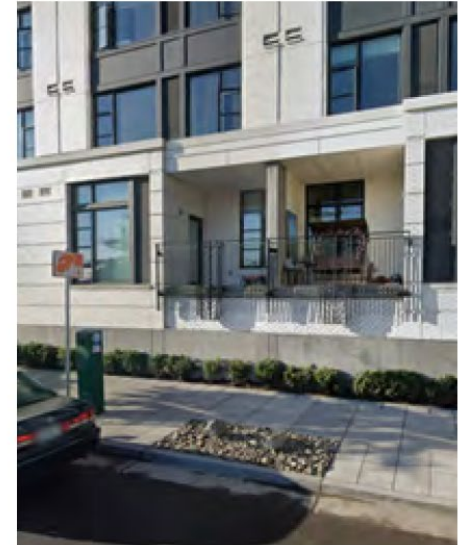
INTENT

To create a more residential feel with increased setbacks for buildings north of 15th Street while allowing for more urban ground floors with limited setbacks south of 15th Street.

South of 15th Street



- A** Ground floor units south of 15th Street should include ground floor balcony spaces if stoops are not provided.
- B** Ground floor unit balcony spaces should have a minimum depth of 6 feet.
- C** The ground floor unit should have minimum floor-to-floor height of 10 feet.
- D** Ground floor residential units should be raised a minimum of 3 feet and not more than 6 feet above sidewalk grade for units that are not setback from the building line.



Example of a ground floor residential activating the public realm through balcony and providing privacy through ground floor height raised above sidewalk grade.

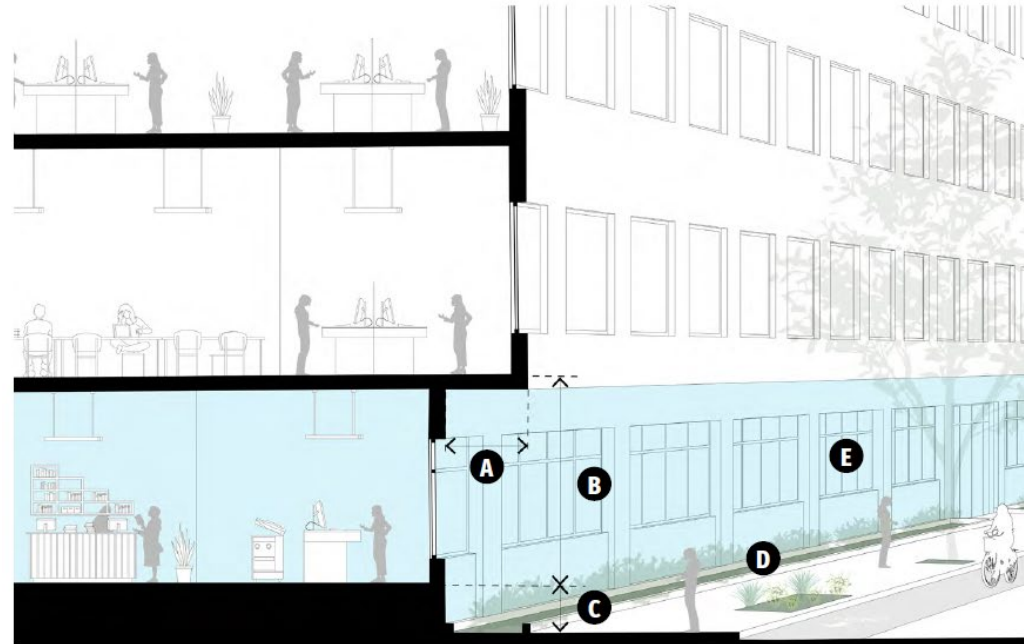


Office/ Professional Services

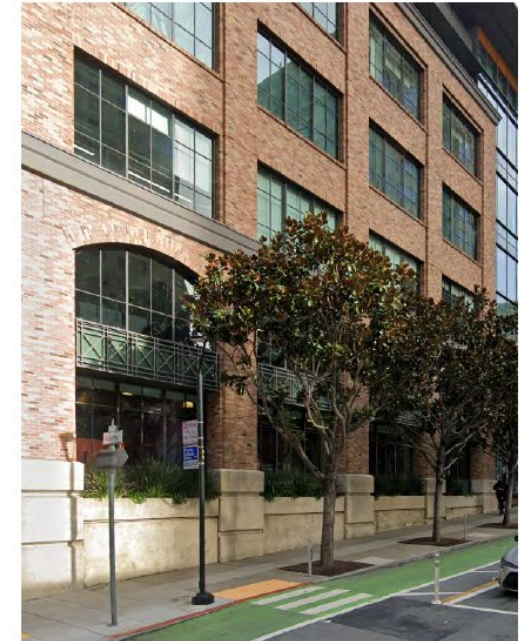
INTENT

To ensure ground floor space for office and professional services activate the public realm through adding visual depth and transparency into a building's interior.

To maintain a level of privacy through building setbacks and landscaping so temporary window coverings are not permanently closed.



- A** Minimum of 3 feet setback to provide space for a landscape buffer.
- B** Ground floor office space should have a minimum floor-to-floor height of 15 feet or a minimum floor-to-ceiling height greater than 12 feet.
- C** Non-communal spaces should be 2-3 feet above sidewalk grade to provide privacy to office uses.
- D** Setback area should maximize landscaping, generally 60% or more of the setback area.
- E** Maximize transparent glazing between 3 and 8 feet in height from the finished floor of the office space.



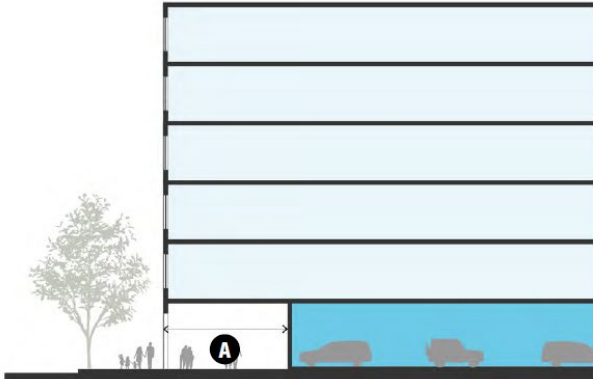
Example of a ground floor office and professional services space activating the public realm through adding visual depth and transparency.



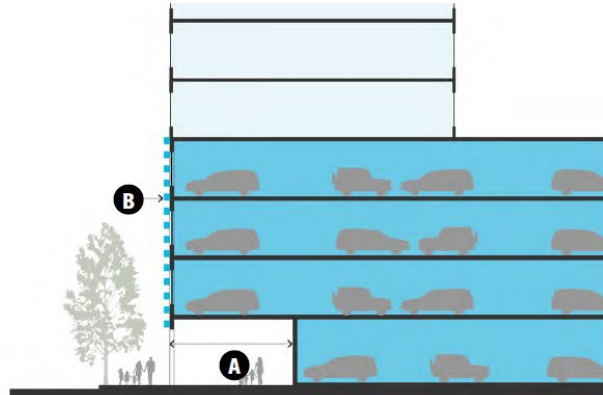
Parking

INTENT

To ensure structured parking does not detract from designing ground floors with active uses that engage with the streetscape.



- A** Parking areas should be setback a minimum of 25 feet from the building line to provide space for active uses.



- A** Parking areas on the ground floor should be setback a minimum of 25 feet from the building line to provide spaces for active uses.
- B** Facades should be designed to look like a non-parking use building or should be designed with artistic design and articulation features.



DO Screen and integrate partially below grade parking structure into the building design.



DO Line at-grade parking structure with active uses.



DON'T Design structured parking to be visible from public streets.





STAFF REPORT

TO: Chair Adigweme and Planning Commissioners

FROM: Bryan Monroe, Associate Housing Coordinator, Economic Prosperity and Housing Department; Bryan Snodgrass, Principal Planner, Community Development Department

RE: July 8, 2025 Planning Commission public hearing

CC: Patrick Quinton, Director, Economic Prosperity and Housing
Chad Eiken, Director, Community Development
Rebecca Kennedy, Deputy Director, Community Development Department
Jason Nortz, Development Review Manager, Community Development
Steve Wall, Deputy Public Works Director
Dave Perlick, Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services Director

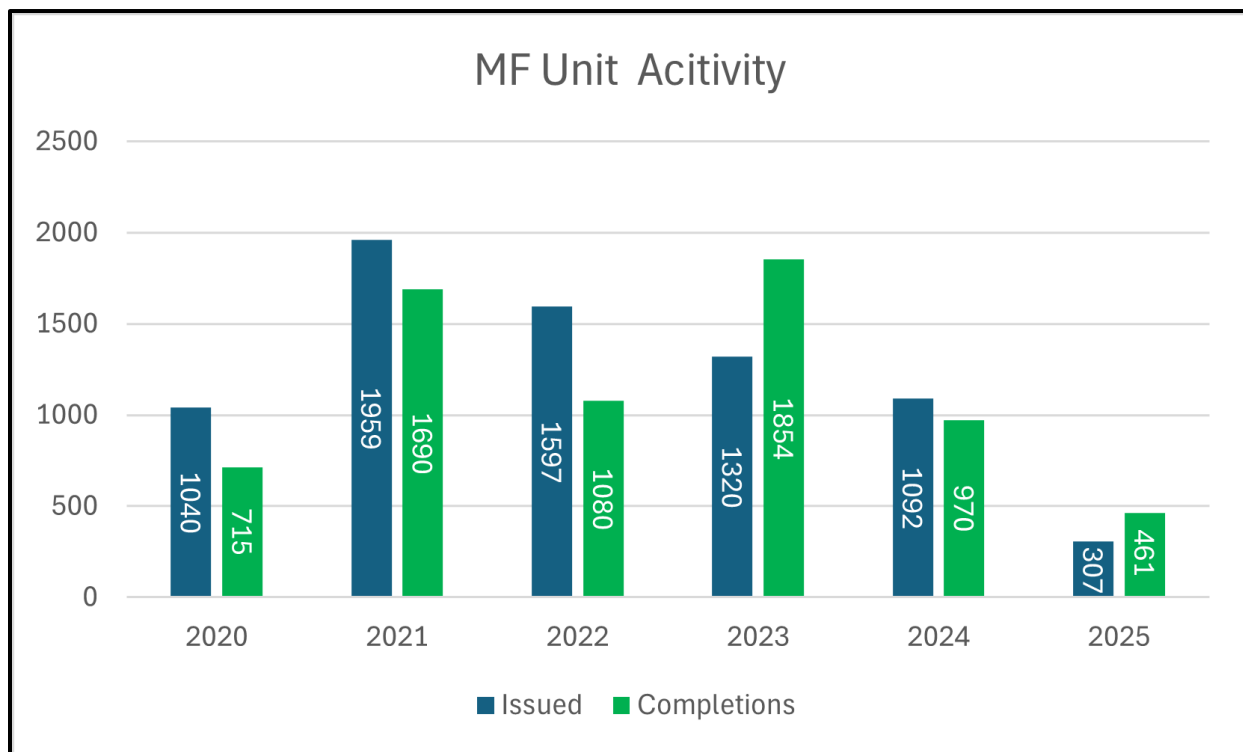
REPORT DATE: June 25, 2025

Introduction

City of Vancouver residents continue to struggle with affordable housing costs. American Community Survey data estimates approximately 50% of households in Vancouver are renters, many of whom experience significant financial burden resulting from paying more than 30% of their household income for rent and utilities. In an effort to increase housing affordability, the City has been providing incentives to facilitate increases in affordable and market rate housing production through programs such as:

1. Multifamily Tax Exemption program
2. Construction Sales and Use Tax Deferral program
3. Affordable Housing Fund
4. Community and Development Block Grant and HOME program funding, and
5. Zoning code amendments to promote density and development feasibility

Unfortunately, The year over year data patterns from the [City permitting system](#) shown below indicates housing production within the city continues to fall well short of the annual production goal of 2,000 units needed to close the housing deficit. As a result, additional actions by the City are necessary to accelerate development activity until market conditions improve.



Background/Overview

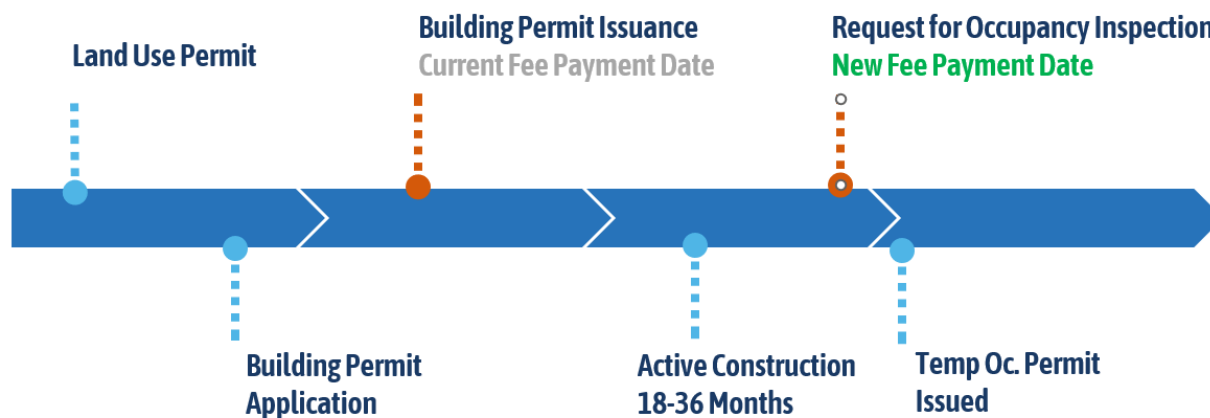
The City has a development impact fee ordinance adopted under VMC section 20.915. Impact fees are one-time charges assessed against new development projects to help pay for new or expanded public capital facilities that will directly address the increased demand for services created by those developments. The purpose of impact fees is to maintain and improve public infrastructure such as roads, parks, and schools up to the level of service standards set by the local jurisdiction to keep up with the increased demand created by development.

The developers pay a proportionate share based on the expected service demands of the development. The fees are paid into an interest-bearing account to await dispersal towards infrastructure projects on the capital facility plan for parks, traffic and schools. Traffic, park and school impact fee calculation rates are set in [VMC 20.915](#). Traffic fees are determined based upon the amount of average daily trips generated by the project and the district the project lies in. School and park impact fees are based upon the number of units added by the development and the district the project lies in. Fees generally increase yearly in January.

Impact fees received from developers must be expended or encumbered within 10 years of receipt or they may be subject to a refund. Currently, impact fees are calculated at the time permits are applied for (the vesting date) and collected at the time building permits are issued.

Summary of Text Change Proposal

The text change proposes to amend the development impact fee ordinance (VMC 20.915) providing a fee payment deferral option for multifamily housing development citywide. The change defers the timing of traffic and park impact fee payment from the time of building permit issuance to the time the applicant schedules the building occupancy permit inspection. Note that this deferral option will not apply to school impact fees. School impact fees will be due at the time building permits are issued. The estimated deferral period is expected to last approximately 18-36 months depending on the size of the project and duration of construction.



The benefit of the impact fee deferral to housing developers lies in the savings of interest costs from construction loans as well as a decreased risk for lending entities and investors. The savings from this change combined with other incentives and code changes are intended to advance projects that would not otherwise be financially viable. A potential impact to the City would be a loss of interest earned by the impact fee accounts during the construction period between permit issuance and occupancy permits (18-36 months). The delay in receiving the impacts fees may also affect the timing of completing infrastructure projects funded through impact fees. However, the City is not currently receiving significant impact fee payments because of the overall slowdown in housing development. If the proposed deferral option is successful in increasing the financial feasibility of housing projects and allowing them to move to construction, any impact fees generated by the deferral are funds the City would not have otherwise received at all. Enabling projects to advance to construction and collecting base impact fees at a later date outweighs potential lost interest from fees that are not being collected at all.

Review Criteria and Findings

The City of Vancouver, on its own behalf may initiate zoning text changes to the Vancouver Municipal Code (VMC). Zoning text change criteria are established under VMC 20.285. Text amendments to VMC Title 20 zoning standards must demonstrate:

1. The proposal is consistent with applicable policies of the Vancouver Strategic Plan and Comprehensive Plan; and
2. The proposal is necessary to further public interest based on present needs and conditions.

Public notice through a publication newspaper of record at least 10 calendar days prior to the hearing is also required.

The below analysis indicates consistency with the zone change standards outlined above.

1. Vancouver Strategic Plan and Comprehensive Plan Policies

Staff find that the proposed VMC text change complies with the City's Strategic Plan and Comprehensive Plan policies. The proposed change is most closely aligned with the Housing and Human Needs Strategic Plan goal. The text change supports incentives to increase housing production with the goal of improving supply and demand metrics that affect housing affordability, and addresses current challenges in financing housing projects.

The proposed amendment is closely aligned with the following Comprehensive Plan policies:

- CD-2 Efficient development patterns - Encourage efficient development throughout Vancouver to ensure achievement of average density of 8 units per acre set by countywide planning policies. Encourage higher density and more intense development in areas that are more extensively served by facilities, particularly transportation and transit services.
- H-1 Housing options - Provide for a range of housing types and densities for all economic segments of the population. Encourage equal and fair access to housing for renters and homeowners.
- H-2 Affordability - Provide affordable housing by formulating innovative policies, regulations and practices, and establishing secure funding mechanisms. Target affordability programs toward households with incomes below the median.
- H-4 Innovative zoning - Encourage innovative housing policies that provide for affordable housing and maintain neighborhood character.
- H-5 Housing placement near services and centers - Facilitate siting of higher density housing near public transportation facilities and in designated centers and corridors.
- PFS-3 Impact fees - Establish and maintain policies and regulations, including traffic, park and school impact fees, to ensure that new development pay for a proportionate share. Impact fees should be reduced or eliminated for low-income housing developments.

2. Public Interest

The purpose of this proposal is to advance housing affordability and availability. As previously noted, City of Vancouver residents continue to struggle with affordable housing costs. Local census data estimates approximately 50% of households in Vancouver are now renters, and many of these households experience significant financial burden resulting from paying more than 30% of their household income for rent and utilities. Based on this data, staff finds the proposed text change is a necessary action to further public interests based on present needs and conditions.

The text change proposal was presented in a workshop before the Planning Commission on May 27, 2025. A SEPA Determination of Non-Significance (DNS) was published and circulated along with an associated checklist on June 10, 2025. No applicable public comments were received on the SEPA determination. Consistent with City code requirements, advance notice of the July 7, 2025, Planning Commission public hearing was provided through publication in the Columbian Newspaper.

A City Council public hearing on the impact fee change has been tentatively scheduled for August 4th (consent/first reading) and 11th, 2025.

Recommended Action

Following public testimony at the July 8, 2025, public hearing, staff requests the Planning Commission provide an affirmative recommendation to the Vancouver City Council.

Attachments:

- Amended VMC code language
- SEPA Checklist / DNS
- SEPA notice and publication confirmation
- Presentation



CITY OF
Vancouver
WASHINGTON

Zoning Code Amendment/ Impact Fee Deferral

Vancouver Planning
Commission Hearing
July 8, 2025

Bryan Snodgrass Principal Planner- Community
Development Department

Bryan Monroe- Associate Housing Coordinator-
Economic Prosperity and Housing Department

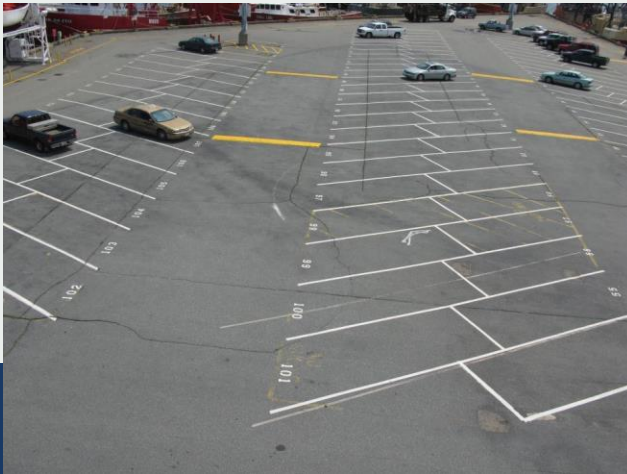


Agenda

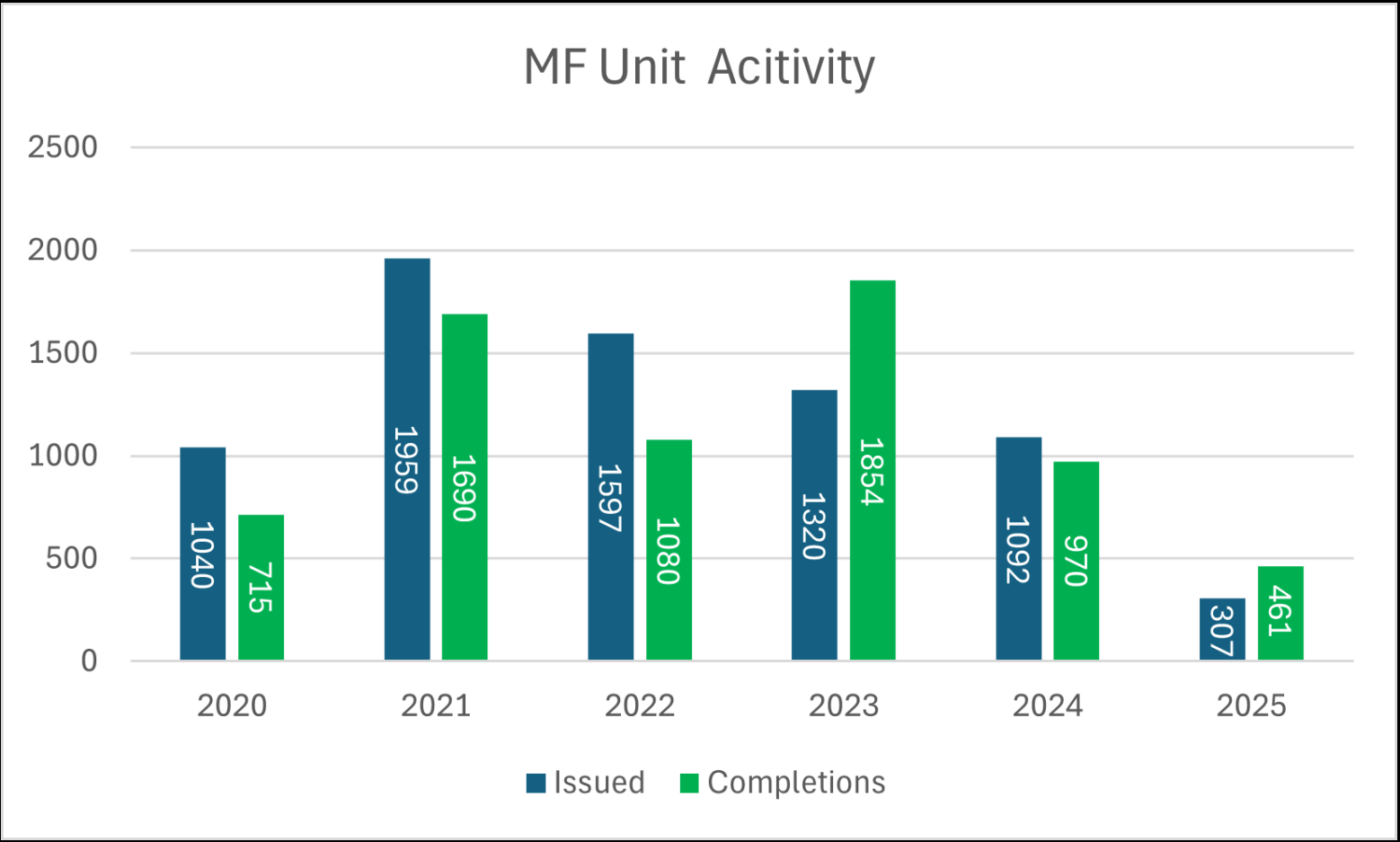
- Current Incentives
- MF Unit Production
- Proposed Incentives
- Impact Fee Details
- New Payment Timeline
- Potential Impacts
- Application Precedent
- Next Steps

Current Incentives

- Multifamily Tax Exemption
- Construction Sales Tax Deferral
- Affordable Housing Fund
- Federal CDBG/HOME
- Zoning code amendments



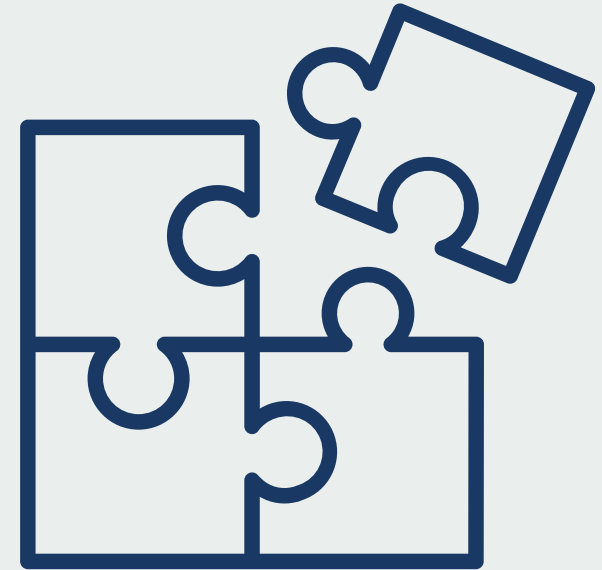
Total MF Housing Units Built Annually



Proposed Incentives

- **Parking Minimum Reductions***
- MFTE Fee in Lieu deferred payment and exemption extension
- System Development Charge fee payment deferral
- Permit review timeline and fee reductions
- **Impact fee payment deferral***

***Items reviewed by the PC**



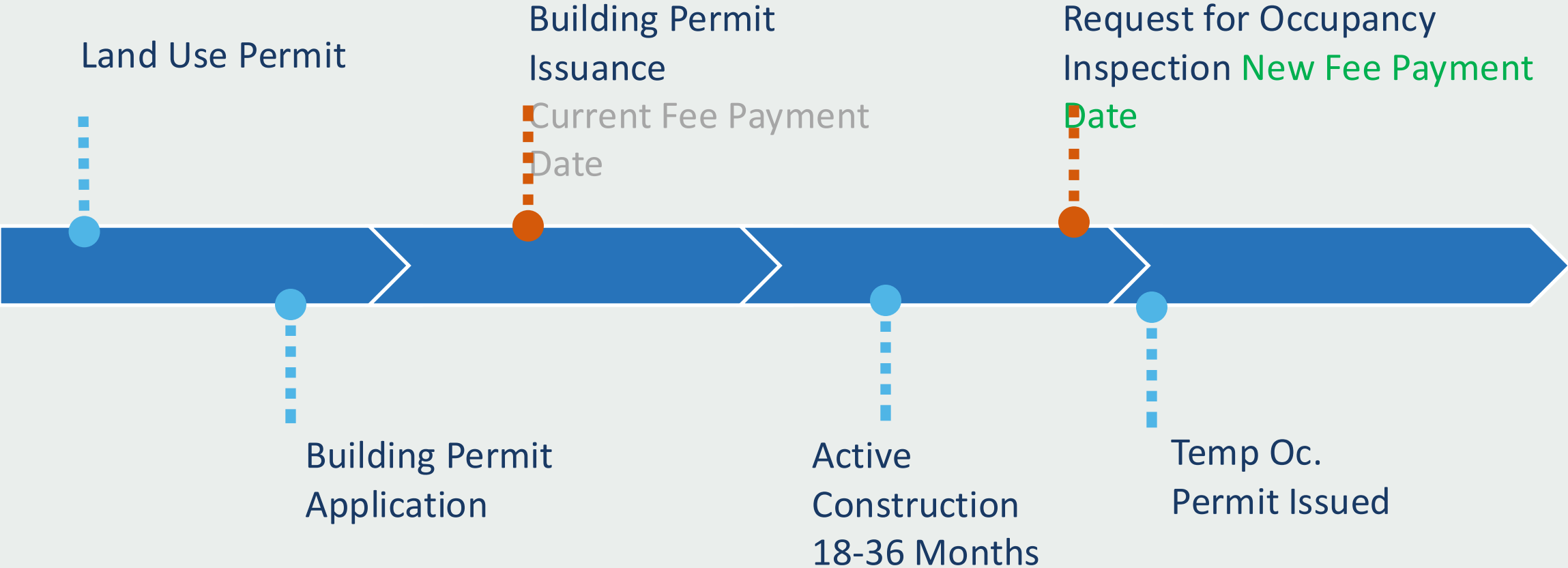
Impact Fees VMC 20.915

- One time fee for new developments
- Proportionate share of the impacts caused to level of service standard
- Impact Fees include Park, Traffic, and School*
- Fees calculated upon permit application
- Fees paid upon issuance of approved permit
- Fees placed in interest bearing accounts until encumbered
- Subject to refund in not encumbered after 10 years

**Note that School Impact Fees are not included in the proposed change*



Proposed Impact Fee Payment Timeline



Potential Value (1,000 units per year)

Estimated impact fee account interest:

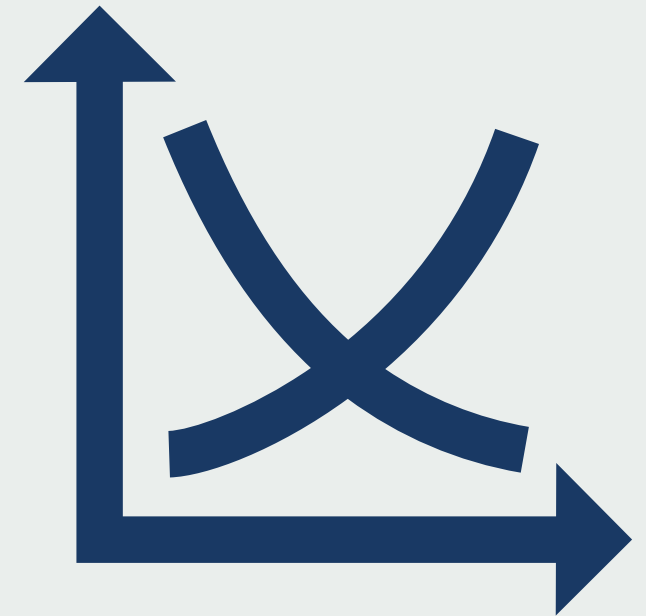
Park: \$4,206 per unit x 1,000 units= 4.2 million

– At 6% interest over 36-month deferral = \$756,000

Traffic: 4,540 Trips x \$341 x 0.85= \$1,315,919

– At 6% interest over 36-month deferral = \$236,865

Estimated deferral value of \$992,865 per year



Potential Impacts (1,000 units per year)

Estimated impact fee account interest:

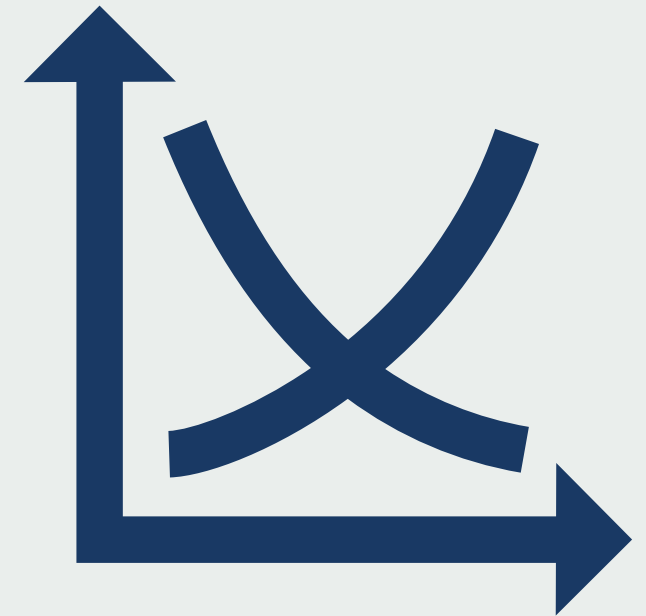
Park: \$4,206 per unit x 1,000 units = 4.2 million

– At 4% interest over 36-month deferral = \$504,720

Traffic: 4,540 Trips x \$341 x 0.85 = \$1,315,919

– At 4% interest over 36-month deferral = \$157,910

Estimated interest of \$662,630 per year



Fee Deferral Precedent

Spokane

Olympia

Washougal

Proposed change to VMC 20.915

- Add new VMC 20.915.076 to create MFR impact fee deferral. Existing 20.915.075 already provides for SFR deferral.
- Deferral no more than 36 months from building permit issuance
- Requires application for each parcel involved
- Enforced via lien that is released upon receipt of impact fees



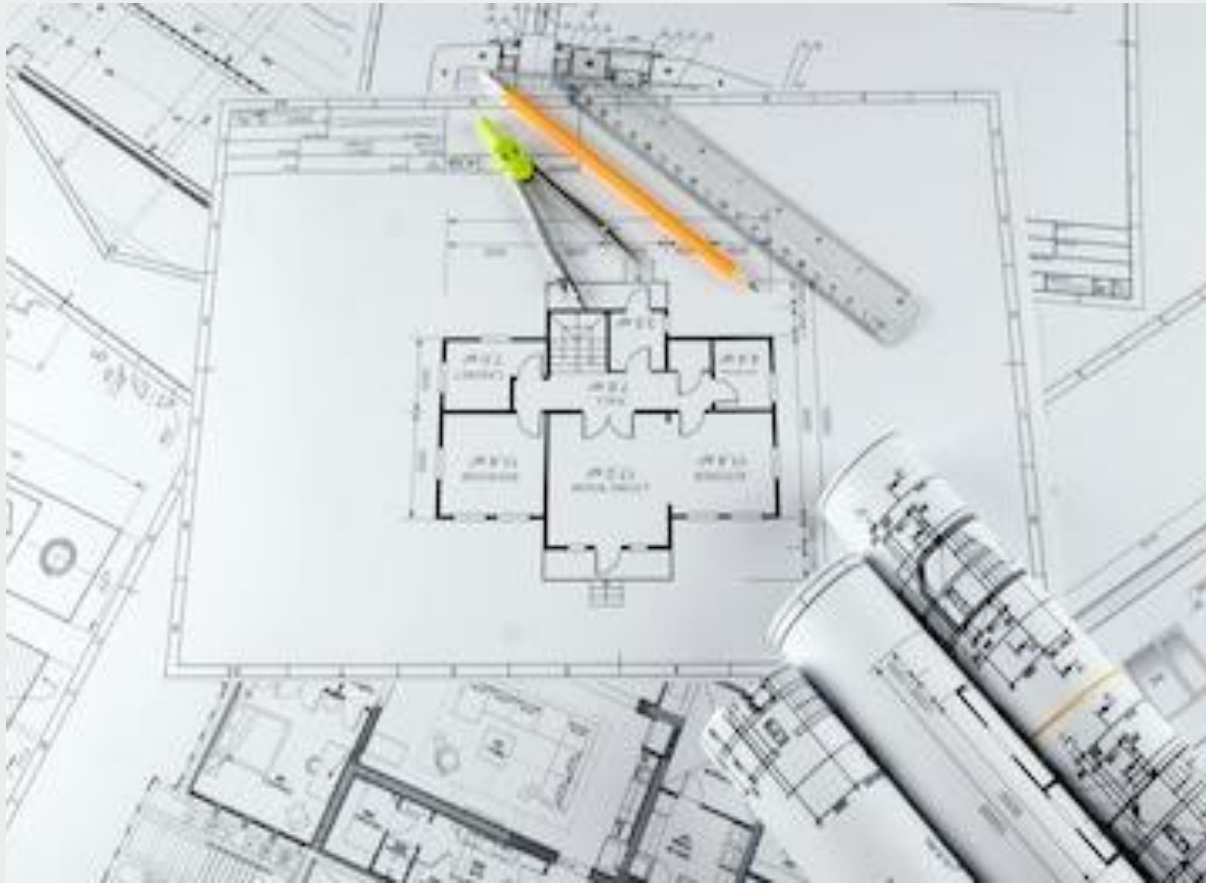
Findings and sample motion:

- Proposal consistent with Strategic and Comprehensive Plan policies regarding efficient development and housing, and public interest
- *“Based on findings in the staff report and July 8, 2025 public hearing, the Planning Commission recommends approval of proposed changes to VMC 20.915 providing for impact fee deferral”*



Next Steps

- Planning Commission Hearing- July
- City Council Hearings- August



Thank You



bryan.monroe@cityofvancouver.us | 360-487-7958
bryan.snodgrass@cityofvancouver.us | 360-487-7946



SEPA Notice of Determination of Nonsignificance (DNS)
City of Vancouver Zoning Code Text Amendment

The City of Vancouver, lead agency, has reviewed the environmental checklist as required by WAC 197-11-330(1). Pursuant to the State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) and WAC 197-11, it has been determined the following described Non-project action will not have a probable significant adverse impact on the environment. An environmental impact statement has been deemed unnecessary.

Description: Municipal zoning code text amendment to VMC 20.915 allowing a deferral of payment of Traffic and Park development impact fees associated with multifamily housing development. Traffic and Park impact fee payments may now be delayed from the building permit issuance date to just prior to the final building occupancy permit inspection.

Location: Applicable to multifamily housing development building permits citywide.

Applicant: City of Vancouver- Economic Prosperity and Housing Department

The environmental checklist and related information that are the basis of this determination are on file and will be made available on request.

This DNS is issued under WAC 197-11-340. The city will not act on this proposal until after 14 days from the date of issuance. Comments on the project will be received until 5 p.m., June 24, 2025. A final determination of nonsignificance is expected pending a 14-day public comment period.

Case Manager: Bryan Monroe, Associate Housing Project Coordinator

Phone: 360-487-7958

E-mail Address: bryan.monore@cityofvancouver.us

From: NoReply@ecy.wa.gov
To: [Monroe, Bryan](#)
Subject: SEPA record published
Date: Tuesday, June 10, 2025 4:28:13 PM

You don't often get email from noreply@ecy.wa.gov. [Learn why this is important](#)

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the City of Vancouver. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

The SEPA admin reviewed and published [SEPA record number 202502438, "Zoning Code Text Change-Impact Fees"](#).
It will now be available to the public.

From: Joe Thomas
Email: separegister@ecy.wa.gov
Phone number: (360) 407-6300

Chapter 20.915

IMPACT FEES

Sections:

- 20.915.010 Purpose.
- 20.915.020 Applicability.
- 20.915.030 Establishment of Development Service Areas.
- 20.915.040 Traffic Impact Fee.
- 20.915.050 Park Impact Fee.
- 20.915.060 School Impact Fee.
- 20.915.070 Calculation of Impact Fee.
- 20.915.075 Additional provisions for Deferral of Impact fees for Single-Family Housing.
- 20.915.080 Impact Fee Exemptions, Reductions, and Waivers.
- 20.915.090 Impact Fee Credits.
- 20.915.100 Other provisions.

20.915.010 Purpose.

Reasons for impact fees. It is the purpose of this chapter to ensure that adequate facilities are available to serve new growth and development, and to promote orderly growth and development by requiring that new development pay a proportionate share of the cost of new facilities needed to serve growth. In addition, it is also the purpose of this chapter to ensure that impact fees are imposed through established procedures and criteria so that specific developments do not pay arbitrary fees or duplicate fees for the same impact. (Ord. M-3643, 2004)

20.915.020 Applicability.

A. *Uniform applicability.* This chapter shall be uniformly applicable to development that occurs within a designated service area or overlay service areas.

B. *For pre-development permit issuance.* No building permit shall be issued for a development in a designated service area or overlay service area as defined in this chapter unless the impact fee is calculated and paid pursuant to this chapter.

C. For new development requiring a building permit the impact fee(s) shall be calculated at ~~time~~ the time of building permit application. Impact fees shall be due and payable at the time the building permit issuance unless deferred, ~~is issued except~~ as provided in VMC 20.915.075 and 20.915.076. Notwithstanding the foregoing, all impact fees shall be recalculated for building permit applications that have not been issued within one year.

D. *For development not requiring a building permit.* For development not requiring a building permit (e.g., approval of a change in use of a building or land), the impact fee shall be calculated and imposed at the time of the associated development approval.

E. *For manufactured home parks.* For manufactured home parks, the impact fee shall be calculated and imposed at the time of site plan approval.

F. All impact fees shall be calculated using the impact fee rates in effect at the time of calculation. (Ord. M-4340 § 2, 2021; Ord. M-4325 § 3, 2020; Ord. M-3643, 2004)

20.915.030 Establishment of Development Service Areas.

A. *General.* Service areas, which may vary by type of public facility, are established as shown on the Park Impact Fee Technical Document and Vancouver Transportation Impact Fees Program Technical Document, which are incorporated herein by reference.

B. *Service areas and fees.* Such areas will provide a nexus between those paying the fees and receiving the benefits to ensure that those developments paying impact fees receive substantial benefits.

C. *Establishment of overlay service areas.* Overlay service areas may be established for system improvements identified in the capital facilities plan which are:

1. Designed to serve geographic areas whose boundaries are not generally contiguous with established service areas; or
2. Designed to serve more than one established service area; or

3. Where a system improvement is designed to serve an established service area, or service areas, but is located partly or entirely outside of the city or urban growth area, and provides a substantial benefit to the assigned service area. Properties within this type of overlay service area are not subject to city impact fees to the extent those properties are outside the city.

D. *Factors affecting service areas.* Additional or revised service areas may be designated by the city council upon consideration of the following factors:

1. The Comprehensive Plan;
2. Standards for adequate public facilities incorporated in the capital facilities plan;
3. The projections for full development as permitted by land use ordinances and timing of development;
4. The need for and cost of un-programmed capital improvements necessary to support projected development; and
5. Such other factors as the city council may deem relevant.

E. *Service areas and urban growth boundaries.* Service areas adjoining an urban growth boundary shall automatically be adjusted to conform to any change in such boundary. (Ord. M-4274 § 1, 2019; Ord. M-4181 § 1, 2016; Ord. M-4107 § 2, 2014; Ord. M-3933 § 3, 2009; Ord. M-3643, 2004)

20.915.040 Traffic Impact Fee.

A. *Formula.* The impact fee component for roads shall be calculated using the following formula:

$$\text{TIF} = \text{FxTxA}$$

1. "TIF" means the traffic impact component of the total development impact fee.
2. "F" means the traffic impact fee rate per vehicle trip in dollar amounts, for each service area. Such rate shall be established in the Traffic Impact Fee Program Technical Document, incorporated herein by this reference, for each service area by estimating the cost of anticipated growth-related roadway projects divided by the projected number of growth-

related trips within that service area. Between major program updates, the calculated per trip fee will be adjusted annually to account for inflation using the Engineering News Record Construction Cost Index for Seattle, and as outlined in the Traffic Impact Fee Program Technical Document.

3. "T" means the trips generated by a proposed development and calculated according to the Traffic Impact Fee Program Technical Document. The calculation of "T" described in the Traffic Impact Fee Program Technical Document includes, for some retail commercial land uses, a "business enhancement factor (BEF)" adjustment. Refer to the Traffic Impact Fee Program Technical Document for land uses eligible for the BEF. In the absence of a land use code precisely fitting the development proposal, the director of public works or designee shall select the most similar code and may make appropriate adjustments to the trip equation applicable thereto. In selecting the appropriate land use code and in making adjustments thereto, the Review Authority shall be guided by the most recent edition of the Trip Generation Manual, Institute of Transportation Engineers.

4. "A" means an adjustment for the portion of anticipated additional tax revenues resulting from a development which is prorated to system improvements contained in the capital facilities plan. Such adjustment for traffic impacts is determined to be 15%, so that "A" equals 85%. (Ord. M-4107 § 3, 2014; Ord. M-3643, 2004)

20.915.050 Park Impact Fee.

A. *Formula.* The impact fee component for parks shall be calculated using the following formula:

$$\text{PIF} = F \times U$$

1. "PIF" means the parks impact component of the total development impact fee.
2. "F" means the parks impact fee rate per unit of housing, either single-family or multifamily residential, as applicable, for each service area. Such rate shall be established in the parks impact fee program technical document, incorporated herein by this reference, for each service area by estimating the cost of anticipated growth-related parks projects. Between major program updates, the calculated per unit fee will be adjusted

annually pursuant to the methodology set forth in VMC [3.08.100](#) and as outlined in the parks impact fee program technical document.

3. “U” means the number of units, either single-family or multifamily, whichever is applicable, consistent with a proposed development.

B. Current park impact fee rates shall be as set forth in Table 20.915.050-1:

Table 20.915.050-1.

Year	Park District	Single-Family (SF)	Multifamily (MF)
January 1, 2023	A, B, C	\$4,757	\$3,476
January 1, 2024	A, B, C	\$5,232	\$3,824
January 1, 2025	A, B, C	\$5,756	\$4,206
January 1, 2026	A, B, C	\$6,130	\$4,480

C. At least one copy of the park impact fee technical document adopted by the city council, including the current park impact fee schedule as calculated thereunder, shall be filed in the office of the city clerk for use and examination by the public. (Ord. M-4388 § 2, 2022; Ord. M-4376 § 10, 2022; Ord. M-4363 § 9, 2022; Ord. M-4319 § 3, 2020; Ord. M-4274 § 2, 2019; Ord. M-4181 § 2, 2016; Ord. M-3933 § 4, 2009; Ord. M-3663 § 22, 2004; Ord. M-3653 §§ 3, 5, 2004; Ord. M-3643, 2004)

20.915.060 School Impact Fee.

A. *Plan adoption.* In order for the city to collect school impact fees on behalf of a school district, said school district’s capital facilities plan shall be adopted as a portion of the city of Vancouver’s comprehensive plan in accordance with the provisions of this section.

B. *Plan submittal.* In conjunction with mandated comprehensive plan updates, a school district requesting impact fees shall submit to the city planning commission a capital facilities plan adopted by the school board and consisting of the following elements:

1. A standard of service which identifies the program year, class size by grade span, number of classrooms, types of facilities, and other factors identified by the school district.
2. The district's capacity over the next six years based upon an inventory of the district's facilities either existing or under construction and the district's standard of service.
3. A forecast of future needs for school facilities based upon the district's enrollment projections.
4. At least a six-year financing plan component, updated as necessary to maintain at least a six-year forecast period, for financing needed school facilities within projected funding levels.
5. Application of the formula set out in subsection [E](#) of this section based upon information contained in the capital facilities plan. Separate fees shall be calculated for single-family and multifamily types of dwelling units, based upon the student generation rates determined by the district for each type of dwelling unit. If insufficient information is available for a district to calculate a multifamily student generation rate, a county-wide average shall be utilized. For purposes of this chapter, manufactured homes and each unit of a duplex shall be treated as single-family dwellings.

C. *Planning Commission review.* The planning commission shall review a school district's capital facilities plan or plan update in accordance with the provisions of this subsection.

1. *Factors.* The planning commission shall consider:
 - a. Whether the district's forecasting system for enrollment projections appears reasonable and reliable;
 - b. Whether the anticipated level of state and voter-approved funding appears reasonable and historically reliable;
 - c. Whether the district appropriately applied the formula set out in subsection [E](#) of this section.

2. *Public hearing.* In the event the district or the planning commission on its own motion proposes to modify the school impact fee, the planning commission shall not make its recommendation until holding a duly advertised public hearing on the proposal.

3. *Recommendation.* The planning commission may request a school district to review and to resubmit its capital facilities plan or update consistent with the provisions of this section. The planning commission shall submit an annual report to the board for each school district for which school impact fees are collected.

D. *Council action.* No new or revised school impact fees shall be effective until adopted by the council following a duly advertised public hearing to consider the school district's capital facilities plan or plan update.

E. *Interlocal agreement.* School impact fees shall not become effective until the school district has entered into an interlocal agreement provided for in VMC [20.915.100](#).

F. *Formula.* The impact fee component for schools shall be separately calculated for each participating school district using the following formula:

$$SIF = \{ (CS \times SF) - (SM) - (TC) - (FC) \} \times A$$

1. *SIF* means the school component of the total development impact fee.
2. *CS* means the cost of the improvements for each type of facility listed in the school district's capital facilities plan less the cost to cure existing overcapacity divided by the capacity of the improvement. Type of facility means elementary school, middle school and high school. The development cost by service area is shown in Table 20.915.060-1.
3. *SF* means student factor. The student factor is the number of students typically generated from one residential unit for each type of school facility.
4. *SM* means state match. State match is the amount received from the state toward school construction costs. The state match component of the formula is that amount representing the per student amount of state matching funds. This is calculated for each type of facility as: student factor times Boeckh Index (average annual construction cost of a school facility per square foot) times square-foot standard per student established by the Superintendent of Public Instruction times state match percentage (that percentage of the

total cost of a school facility funded by state funds). The state match for each school district shall be calculated annually.

5. *TC* means tax credit. This is calculated as:

$$TC = (1 + i)^{10} - 1i(1 + i)^{10} \times (AAV) \times (SPTL)$$

a. *AAV* means the average assessed value for the dwelling per single family unit.

b. *SPTL* means the current school district capital property tax levy rate.

c. *i* means the current interest rate as stated in the Bond Buyer Twenty Bond General Obligation Bond index.

6. *FC* means facilities credit. This is the value of any improvements listed in a school district's capital facilities plan provided by the developer.

7. *A* means an adjustment for the portion of anticipated additional tax revenues resulting from a development that is prorated to system improvements contained in the capital facilities plan. The adjustment for school impacts is determined to be 85 percent.

Table 20.915.060-1. School District Impact Fees

School District	Single-Family	Multifamily
Battle Ground	\$10,760	\$3,845
Camas	\$6,650	\$6,650
Evergreen	\$6,432	\$3,753
Vancouver	\$2,786	\$2,486

(Ord. M-4402 § 3(Y), 2023; Ord. M-4289 § 4, 2019; Ord. M-4223 § 4, 2017; Ord. M-4147 § 4, 2015; Ord. M-3994 § 5, 2011; Ord. M-3959 § 45, 2010; Ord. M-3952 § 1, 2010; Ord. M-3951 § 1, 2010; Ord. M-3909 § 1, 2008; Ord. M-3854 § 1, 2007; Ord. M-3785 § 2, 2006; Ord. M-3736 § 1, 2006; Ord. M-3730 § 34, 2005; Ord. M-3663 § 23, 2004; Ord. M-3653 § 2, 2004; Ord. M-3643, 2004)

20.915.070 Calculation of Impact Fee.

- A. *For residential and nonresidential development.* The impact fee for a nonresidential development shall be computed by applying the traffic impact fee formula set out in VMC [20.915.040](#). The impact fee for a residential development shall be computed by applying the traffic impact fee, park impact fee and school impact fee formulae set out in VMC [20.915.050](#) and [20.915.060](#), combining the results; provided, that the school impact fee component shall not apply to housing which by restrictive covenant is exclusively for persons 62 years of age or older.
- B. *For mixed uses.* If the development for which approval is sought contains a mix of uses, the impact fee must be separately calculated for each type of use.
- C. *Criteria to reduce or eliminate impact fees.* An administrative appeal may be considered by the director of community development to reduce or eliminate impact fees by submittal of an application prior to the payment of fees. Appeals shall be reserved for unusual circumstances which make the standard impact fee as applied to the development unreasonable. Upon receipt of an application for any such appeal, the city shall distribute a written notice of appeal and a copy of the supporting studies and data required below to the office, department, or school district responsible for the applicable capital facilities for which the impact fee is imposed. The appeal must be supported by reasonable studies and data provided by the applicant showing that:
1. The formulae or method contained in VMC [20.915.040](#), [20.915.050](#) or [20.915.060](#) to calculate the fees do not accurately reflect the cost of system improvements that are reasonably related to the service demands and needs of a particular development; or
 2. Such facility improvements will not reasonably benefit the proposed development.
 3. The current development proposal implements a concomitant rezone agreement, development agreement or other development approval pursuant to which public facilities identified in the capital facilities plan were dedicated or constructed, and which are of benefit to the community at large and which fall within the definition of system improvements. The appellant shall have the burden of producing and presenting studies and data that clearly show the basis and substantiation of the appeal upon submittal. Appeals shall be reviewed by means of a Type I procedure, pursuant to VMC [20.210.020](#). Impact fees may be paid under protest in order to obtain a permit or approval of

development activity. (Ord. M-4402 § 3(Y), 2023; Ord. M-4340 § 3, 2021; Ord. M-4172 § 1, 2016; Ord. M-4107 § 5, 2014; Ord. M-3643, 2004)

20.915.075 Additional provisions for Deferral of Impact fees for Single-Family Housing.

- A. Prior to issuance of single-family detached or attached residential building permits, an application may be submitted for deferral of payment of full impact fees until scheduling of final building inspection by the City. For these purposes “attached single-family” shall be limited to common-wall housing with no more than one unit per legal lot.
- B. The amount of impact fees deferred shall be determined by the fees in effect at the time the applicant applies for a deferral. “Applicant” as defined in this section shall include an entity that controls the applicant, that is controlled by the applicant, or is under common control with the applicant.
- C. An impact fee deferral application must be submitted for each parcel to be developed. This application shall include:
1. Administrative fees as specified under VMC [20.180](#).
 2. A locally recorded impact fee deferral lien against the property involved, granted to the City of Vancouver in the amount of the deferral. The deed shall be signed by all owners of the property, with signatures acknowledged as required for a deed. The deed shall be binding on all successors, and subordinate to one mortgage for construction of the property granted by the impact fee deferral applicant.
 3. The deferral period shall not exceed a period of 18 months from issuance of the building permit, at which time any deferred impact fees shall be due.
 4. Upon receipt of all deferred impact fees, the City of Vancouver shall execute release of the lien for the property. The property owner at that time shall be responsible for recording the release, at their expense.
 5. The City of Vancouver may institute foreclosure proceedings for unpaid impact fees due. For unpaid School Impact Fees, School Districts may also institute foreclosure

proceedings if the City of Vancouver has not done so within 45 days after receiving notice from the District requesting initiation of such proceedings. (Ord. M-4172, Added, 08/15/2016, Sec 2)

20.915.076 Additional provisions for Deferral of Impact fees for Multifamily-Family Housing.

A. Prior to issuance of multifamily-family residential building permits, an application may be submitted for deferral of payment of traffic and park impact fees until prior to scheduling of building occupancy inspection by the City. For these purposes “multi-family” shall be defined as a building or portion thereof designed or used as a residence by three or more households and containing three or more dwelling units.

B. The amount of impact fees deferred shall be determined by the fees in effect at the time the applicant applies for a deferral. “Applicant” as defined in this section shall include an entity that controls the applicant, that is controlled by the applicant or is under common control with the applicant.

C. The deferral period shall not exceed a period of 36 months from issuance of the building permit, at which time any deferred impact fees shall be due.

D. An impact fee deferral application must be submitted for each parcel to be developed. The deferral application shall include an impact fee deferral lien on a form provided by the City, to be recorded against the property, granted to the City of Vancouver in the amount of the deferral. The lien shall be signed by all owners of the property, with signatures acknowledged as required for a property deed. The lien shall be binding on all successors, and subordinate to one mortgage for construction of the property granted by the impact fee deferral applicant.

E. Upon receipt of all deferred impact fees, the City of Vancouver shall execute release of the lien for the property. The property owner at that time shall be responsible for recording the release, at their expense.

F. The City of Vancouver may institute foreclosure proceedings for unpaid impact fees due. For unpaid School Impact Fees, School Districts may also institute foreclosure proceedings if the City of Vancouver has not done so within 45 days after receiving notice from the District requesting initiation of such proceedings.

20.915.080 Impact Fee Exemptions, Reductions, and Waivers.

A. *Exemptions from impact fees.* The following developments shall be exempt from the requirement for payment of impact fees: publicly operated elementary, middle, junior high and senior high schools, and administrative, maintenance and other facilities of a school district and facilities of an Educational Service District.

B. *Exemption or waiver from impact fees for low-income housing pursuant to RCW 82.02.060(2).* Pursuant to RCW [82.02.060\(2\)](#), the review authority may grant a total or partial exemption or waiver from impact fees for housing developments containing up to three dwelling units and qualifying as low-income housing as defined in this chapter, to be owned and occupied by, or leased to, low-income persons. Requests for exemption and/or waiver for four or more dwelling units must be approved by the city council. No such impact fee exemption and/or waiver shall be granted for any low-income housing that has been granted a property tax exemption pursuant to Chapter [3.22](#) VMC, Multi-Family Tax Abatement. Any such exemption or waiver shall be subject to:

1. Provision being made for payment of the impact fee from public funds other than impact fee accounts; and
2. Adequate documentation that the housing meets appropriate standards regarding household income, rent levels, sales price, location, and number of units;

C. *Alternative exemption from impact fees for low-income housing pursuant to RCW 82.02.060(3).* Pursuant to RCW [82.02.060\(3\)](#), the city council may grant an alternative exemption for low-income housing under this subsection. No such impact fee exemption and/or waiver shall be granted for any low income housing that has been granted a property tax exemption pursuant to Chapter [3.22](#) VMC, Multi-Family Tax Abatement

1. The city council may either:
 - a. Grant a partial exemption of not more than 80 percent of impact fees, in which case there is no requirement to pay the exempted portion of the fee from public funds other than impact fee accounts; or
 - b. Provide a full waiver, in which case the remaining percentage of the exempted fee must be paid from public funds other than impact fee accounts; and

2. Compliance with all of the requirements of subsection [D](#) of this section is required.

D. An exemption for low-income housing granted under subsection [B](#) or [C](#) of this section must comply with all of the following conditions:

1. The developer shall record a covenant with the Clark County auditor. The covenant must:

a. Prohibit using the property for any purpose other than for low-income housing.

b. Require that if the property is converted to a use other than for low-income housing, the property owner must pay the applicable impact fees in effect at the time of conversion.

c. Define low-income housing as housing for which the monthly housing expense is no greater than 30 percent of 80 percent of the median-family income adjusted for family size for Clark County, Washington, as reported by the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development.

2. When the city grants an exemption for low-income housing granted under subsection [B](#) or [C](#) of this section, it may not collect revenue lost through the granting of the exemption by increasing impact fees unrelated to the exemption.

3. A school district that receives school impact fees collected by the city must consent in writing prior to city approval of any exemption from school impact fees granted under subsection [B](#) or [C](#) of this section. Failure of a school district to provide consent in writing to the city within 30 days of the school district's receipt of written request for approval from the city shall constitute disapproval of the requested exemption.

E. *Reduction in traffic impact fees for qualifying businesses.* To promote business development, the review authority may grant a reduction of traffic impact fees as specified in Table 20.915.080-1 below for businesses which meet all of the following requirements:

1. The business owner shall commit, through a development agreement approved by city council, to locate a number of new employees that coincides with the TIF incentive in Table 20.915.080-1. Such new employees shall locate to the city within the first year of the business obtaining an occupancy permit; and

2. The median salary of all company employees to be located shall, at a minimum, coincide with the specified percent of median individual income in Table 20.915.080-1. Median individual income shall be based on the most recent available information from U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development for the Portland-Vancouver MSA at the time of the development agreement approval; and
3. If the owner or developer of the property or building is not the business locating within the city, documentation shall be submitted to the city that satisfactorily demonstrates that the business received the benefit of the fee reduction rather than the owner or developer; and
4. The business shall provide the city with such documentation and access to records as needed to verify satisfaction of the foregoing requirements. In the event that the business fails to satisfy any of the requirements criteria, the business shall pay to the city the amount of the fee reduction together with interest at the statutory rate provided for at RCW [19.52.010](#) upon demand.

The city shall make provision for payment of the impact fee reduction to the transportation impact fee account from public funds other than impact fee accounts.

Table 20.915.080-1 Business Development TIF Incentive			
Median Salary of All Business Employees		Minimum Employees	TIF Benefit
1.	200% of Median Individual Income	200	25% TIF reduction, up to \$100,000
2.	150% of Median Individual Income	250	25% TIF reduction, up to \$100,000
3.	125% of Median	300	25% TIF reduction,

Table 20.915.080-1 Business Development TIF Incentive			
Median Salary of All Business Employees		Minimum Employees	TIF Benefit
	Individual Income		up to \$100,000
4.	200% of Median Individual Income	400	50% TIF reduction, up to \$200,000
5.	150% of Median Individual Income	500	50% TIF reduction, up to \$200,000
6.	125% of Median Individual Income	600	50% TIF reduction, up to \$200,000

This provision shall be operative until December 31, 2020, unless renewed by city council.

F. *Criteria for calculating impact fees.* The impact fee for an exempt or waived development shall be calculated as provided for in this chapter and paid with public funds; except that there is no requirement to pay the exempted portion of the fee from public funds other than impact fee account for a partial exemption of not more than 80 percent of impact fees that has been approved under subsection [C](#) of this section. Such payment may be made by including such amount(s) in the public share of system improvements undertaken within the applicable service area. If an impact fee(s) is waived, the review authority, pursuant to VMC [20.915.070](#), or state law may determine whether a public share-contribution or a reduced public-share contribution is required. (Ord. M-4340 § 4, 2021; Ord. M-4154 § 3, 2016; Ord. M-4108 § 1, 2014; Ord. M-3643, 2004)

20.915.090 Impact Fee Credits.

A. For the developer. The developer shall be entitled to a credit against the applicable impact fee as follows:

1. The developer shall be entitled to a credit against the applicable impact fee for the fair market value of any dedication of land for and reasonable documented construction costs acceptable to the City associated with the improvement to, or new construction of any system improvements provided by the developer that are identified in the capital facilities plan and that are required by the City as a condition of approval to the development proposal against which the impact fee is assessed.
2. No credit shall be given for project improvements as defined under VMC [20.150](#).
3. *Traffic Impact Fee Credit*. Effective June 3, 2015 (effective date of ordinance), the maximum traffic impact credit shall be in the amount of the impact fee applicable to the development proposal against which the impact fee is assessed. The credit shall be applied to the impact fee as calculated for the development proposal against which the impact fee is assessed and shall not exceed the impact fee due.
4. *Street Project Assessment Reimbursement Contract for Excess Costs*. If a developer has incurred costs for street project system improvements in excess of the amount of the traffic impact fee applicable to the development proposal against which the impact fee is assessed, the developer may apply to the City for a street project assessment reimbursement contract pursuant to VMC Chapter [11.10](#).
5. *Existing traffic impact fee credits*. TIF credits that existed prior to June 3, 2015 (effective date of ordinance) shall be utilized consistent with the provisions of the TIF Program Technical Document. The value and ownership of such TIF credits as of June 3, 2015 (effective date of ordinance) shall be documented by a list thereof published by the City and distributed by US mail to the last known addresses of said owners on June 3, 2015 (effective date of ordinance).

B. *Traffic Impact Fee reduction*. The developer may be provided a TIF reduction pursuant to Section [20.550.050\(A\)](#) VMC.

C. *Traffic Impact Fee Credit for the developer*. Additionally, the developer may be provided a credit against the impact fee in an amount up to 10% of the traffic component to account for

contributions of mass transit facilities that are approved by the City and made a condition of approval for the development.

D. *Impact fee reduction.* Where impact fees are owing prior to completion of a system improvement undertaken by the developer, the impact fee shall be reduced by 85% from the Director of Public Works estimate of the credit to be due upon dedication and completion of the required work, provided, if the same has been assured by a bond or other guarantee, as governed by Chapter [20.909](#) VMC, to be completed no later than the date of occupancy for commercial/industrial/multi-family structures or the final building inspection for single-family and other uses. Upon completion of the required system improvement, appropriate refunds shall be made and credits recognized up to but not to exceed the amount of the impact fee applicable to the development proposal against which the impact fee is assessed based upon the Director of Public Works' determination of the value of dedication and reasonable construction costs.

E. *City credit utilization.* Traffic impact fee credits issued by the City after June 3, 2015, (effective date of adopted ordinance) may be utilized in lieu of cash payment only for traffic impact fees for the development proposal against which the impact fee is assessed, as provided in subsection A.3 above. Other impact fee credits recognized by the City may be utilized in lieu of cash payment of impact fees for the subject development and/or any other development within the same service area. (Ord. M-4107 § 6, 12/01/2014; Ord. M-3643, 01/26/2004)

20.915.100 Other provisions.

A. *Process for revision of traffic impact fees.* Traffic impact fee rates shall be adjusted periodically to reflect changes in costs of land acquisition and construction, facility plan projects and anticipated growth. Traffic Impact Fee Program Technical Document may contain provision for automatic revision of traffic impact fee rate no more than once annually to reflect the change in a generally recognized and applicable inflation/deflation index.

B. Park impact fee rates may be revised. Rates may be revised using the following process:

1. The adopted Park Impact Fee Technical Document may be revised periodically by the city council when financial analysis establishes that there is a need for a major program update, but no less than every three years to evaluate the status of the rate of collection

and the projected need to serve future residents. Such adjustments shall only become effective upon adoption by the city council.

C. *Process for revision of school impact fees.* School impact fee rates shall be adjusted periodically to reflect changes in costs of land acquisition and construction, facility plan projects and anticipated growth. Such adjustments shall only become effective upon adoption by the city council of a modification to the capital facilities plan.

D. *Operation of impact fee fund.* The city has created and established a special purpose, nonlapse impact fee fund. The city finance director shall establish separate accounts within such fund and maintain records for each such account whereby impact fees collected can be segregated by type of facility and by service area:

1. *Collected interest.* All interest shall be retained in the account and expended for the intended purposes that the impact fees were imposed.
2. *Impact fee fund annual report.* By April of each year, the finance director shall provide a report for the previous calendar year on each impact fee account showing the source and amount of moneys collected, earned or received and system improvements that were financed in whole or in part by impact fees.

E. *Inter-local agreements and fees.* The city of Vancouver may enter into an inter-local agreement with Clark County to establish a coordinated program for the imposition, collection, administration and expenditure of traffic and park impact fees.

F. *School impact fees.* School impact fees shall not be collected on behalf of any school district until such district enters into an inter-local agreement with city of Vancouver providing for submittal of capital facilities plans, fund administration, report of expenditure, allocation of risk, and other appropriate matters. Where Clark County adopts a substantially similar school impact fee for a district whose boundaries include portions of the city of Vancouver, such an inter-local agreement may include the county. The inter-local agreement may include a fee to cover the city's cost of administering the school impact fee program.

G. *Imposition of impact fees for costs previously incurred.* The Review Authority may impose an impact fee for system improvements costs previously incurred by the city of Vancouver to the extent that new growth and development will be served by the previously constructed

improvements, provided such fee shall not be imposed to make up for any system improvement deficiencies.

H. *Expenditures for system improvements with impact fees.* Impact fees for system improvements shall be expended only in conformance with the capital facilities plan. Impact fees shall be expended or encumbered for a permissible use within 10 years of receipt, unless an extraordinary and compelling reason exists for fees to be held longer than 10 years. Such extraordinary or compelling reasons shall be identified in written findings by the city council.

I. *Refunds for the current owner.* The current owner of property on which an impact fee has been paid may receive a refund of such fee if the city fails to expend or encumber the impact fees within 10 years of when the fees were paid, or such other period of time established pursuant to this subsection, on public facilities intended to benefit the development activity for which the impact fees were paid. In determining whether impact fees have been encumbered, impact fees shall be considered encumbered on a first-in, first-out basis. The current owner likewise may receive a proportionate refund where the public funding of applicable service area projects by the end of such 10-year period has been insufficient to satisfy the ratio of public-to-private funding for such service area as established in the capital facilities plan. The city shall notify potential claimants by first-class mail deposited with the United States Postal Service at the last known address of claimants.

1. *Refund time period.* The request for refund money must be submitted to the Vancouver city council in writing within one year of the date the right to claim the refund arises or the date the notice is given, whichever is later. Any impact fees that are not expended within these time limitations, and for which no application for refund has been made within this one-year period, shall be retained and expended on the indicated capital facilities. Refunds of impact fees under this subsection shall include interest earned on the impact fees.

2. *Criteria for a refund with interest.* A developer may request and shall receive a refund, including interest earned on the impact fees, when the building permit for which the impact fee has been paid has lapsed for noncommencement of construction. A partial refund shall be provided where the project for which a building permit has been issued has been altered resulting in a decrease in the amount of the impact fee due.

J. *Impact fees as additional and supplemental requirements.* The impact fee is additional and supplemental to, and not in substitution of, any other requirements imposed by the city on the development of land or the issuance of building permits. This is provided that any other such

city development regulation which would require the developer to undertake dedication or construction of a facility contained within the city capital facility plan shall be imposed only if the developer is given a credit against impact fees as provided for in Section [20.915.090](#) VMC.

(Ord. M-4319 § 4, 2020; Ord. M-4181 § 3, 2016; Ord. M-4107 § 7, 2014; Ord. M-4034 § 31, 2012; Ord. M-3959 § 46, 2010; Ord. M-3952 § 2, 2010; Ord. M-3951 § 2, 2010; Ord. M-3933 § 5, 2009; Ord. M-3909 § 2, 2008; Ord. M-3854 § 2, 2007; Ord. M-3785 § 2, 2006; Ord. M-3653 § 1, 2004; Ord. M-3643, 2004)

The Vancouver Municipal Code is current through Ordinance M-4465, passed October 14, 2024.

Disclaimer: The city clerk's office has the official version of the Vancouver Municipal Code. Users should contact the city clerk's office for ordinances passed subsequent to the ordinance cited above.

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