



Heritage Vancouver

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January 21 2021

Mayor Stewart and Vancouver City Council
Vancouver City Hall
453 West 12th Avenue
Vancouver BC V5V 1V4

Re: 4. Employment Lands and Economy Review Quick Start Actions: Initial Zoning and Development By-law Amendments to Support Neighbourhood Grocery Stores

Dear Mayor and Council,

We are writing to express our support for item 4. Employment Lands and Economy Review Quick Start Actions: Initial Zoning and Development By-law Amendments to Support Neighbourhood Grocery Stores. In the detailed comments below we have a few suggestions to improve this policy as it moves forward.

Heritage Vancouver is an independent charitable non-profit, helping communities create and participate in sustaining the diverse heritage of the city. We advance a comprehensive understanding of heritage that captures the diverse ways people establish meaningful connections with the environment around them.

Neighbourhood Grocery stores and local serving retail in general are critical to creating complete neighbourhoods, which in turn enable community gathering, vibrancy and resilience. Neighbourhood grocery stores have been an important way for immigrants to make their way in Vancouver and as such serve as reminders of our collective past. The current policy of banning them unless “grandfathered” might be considered exclusionary as it prevents people from working and making a living from a low-barrier business on their own property.

Strathcona is an example where there are numerous local serving retail stores that are still community hubs as well as reminders of a diverse past. There are also examples of other types of businesses that are now long gone but the buildings remain - commercial bakeries, stables, and others. Nonetheless, it is the diversity of these business and residential spaces in the same blocks that helps to make Strathcona feel inhabited and alive. It is past time to allow these innocuous additions to our neighbourhoods to be included in new buildings, not just letting grandfathered examples remain in operation.

We suggest that this policy be further developed and implemented (particularly through the Vancouver Plan) to broaden allowable uses in residential zones. Why not extend the allowable uses for local serving retail in residential areas to beyond just neighbourhood groceries? Why can't we have small restaurants, boutiques and personal services included in our residential areas away from the high streets? Again

there are numerous examples of successful, low impact non-grocery retail and food service dotting our city in residential zones - notably Victoria Drive from Broadway to Hastings (Via Tevere pizza, a clothing store, an antique store to name a few). Perhaps this policy could also include a component where the history of our small grocerers is made more legible in our neighbourhoods.

We observe that this policy could lead to many positive benefits for community connection, local economy, more walkable neighbourhoods, and a diversity of more places that offer experiences with others. However, we also observe that the policy must be carefully crafted to avoid negative impacts on neighbourhood character and the quiet enjoyment of residential spaces - i.e. land value lift and potential difficulties with commercial property taxes, empty storefronts or too many non-locally owned chain stores, or businesses that have negative noise or emission impacts on their residential context. With careful work we are confident that a balance between allowable uses and negative impacts can be created to help Vancouver's residential neighbourhoods diversify and become more resilient over time.

Sincerely,

Heritage Vancouver

From: [Marc Schutzbank](#)
To: [Speaker Request](#)
Subject: [EXT] Remove speaker request
Date: Thursday, January 21, 2021 7:28:20 PM

City of Vancouver security warning: Do not click on links or open attachments unless you were expecting the email and know the content is safe.

Hello,

I am scheduled to speak on tonight's agenda item on Neighbourhood grocery stores.

However, baby evening shenanigans are making that a challenge for me and I apologize so I share these words with you.

Neighbourhood groceries
They carry all the things that please
Fresh fruits and veggies true
The things our diverse residents want to
EAT!

I wanted to share that these assets are a critical part of our city's food infrastructure. The Food policy council has been working diligently to help protect and secure these assets. It is a difficult thing to do in our city. However, staff and councilors have been working tirelessly to find ways to support these critical organizations that allow for inexpensive and easily accessible food for Vancouver's diverse populations. Save On and IGA do not cut it. Higher prices combined with less culturally relevant foods, means that in a time of COVID, these small Neighbourhood grocery stores serve an outsized role as a distributor of food. Furthermore many of these stores are also outlets for b graded produce and other fresh foods.

Our food system requires a diverse set of groceries and food access points for the diversity of our city. On behalf of the food policy council we support this and more initiative to support Neighbourhood food systems.

With gratitude for the work you do and the complexities of this moment,

Marc
CoChair Vancouver Food Policy Council

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Marc Schutzbank
Father, consultant, fixer of problems
778.872.KALE

Public Hearing Correspondence Case

Case number: 101014730607

Case created: 2021-01-21, 08:33:00 PM

Channel: WEB

Incident Location

Address: 311 UNADDRESSED LOCATION, VANCOUVER, VAN 311

Address2:

Location name:

Original Address: 311 UNADDRESSED LOCATION

Request Details

1. Subject (address if applicable):
ELER Amendments to Support Neighbourhood Grocery Stores

2. Position:
Support

3. Comments:
My name is Colette Griffiths and I'm writing on behalf of my partner Christopher Allen. We are the Owners and Operators of The Federal Store in Mount Pleasant.

We'd like to thank the city staff, planners and council for time and effort that they have put into understanding neighbourhood grocery stores as a part of Vancouver's cultural and economic landscape and the valuable role that they play.

We opened our Neighbour Grocery Store in 2016, after a year and a half long application and renovation process. The building has been acting as a bakery or grocery store since 1926. Our landlords Mark and Fong who live next door in the adjacent townhouses ran the grocery store themselves for 25 years before we took possession in 2015.

We've lived in the neighbourhood for over 15 years and one of the things we've enjoyed most about the shop is the opportunity to get to know our neighbours and community, and watching neighbours get to know each. Truthfully, before we learned that The Federal Store was available for lease, we never saw ourselves running a grocery store, but we are so happy that we took the chance. The retail element has allowed us to meet and work with other local small businesses that are just getting started, much like ourselves, and its been an amazing opportunity to meet inspiring people from so many diverse backgrounds who are facing a lot of the same challenges as us. The small scale nature of Neighbourhood grocery stores offers a unique opportunity for these other new, local makers to test their products out in a retail atmosphere.

When COVID hit we were able to quickly adapt our business model to offer a greater selection of products that were scarce in grocery stores, while allowing a safe and local way for people to get their daily groceries. While our demand for groceries has gone down since lockdown was lifted in June, our customers have made it clear to us on a regular basis how much they valued our business during that time, and how much they want us to stay viable in the long run.

We are also excited to hear that report has suggested that the city explore the benefits of farm stands and the potential to sell alcohol, as well as more public space opportunities surrounding the business. Our community has expressed a lot of interest in all of these things over the last 4 years, and they would be even more important to our business now as a means to bounce back from the financial challenges we are facing as a result of COVID.

It has not been easy launching and running the business, and it means so much to us that the city is considering the changes proposed tonight. We think Vancouver can only benefit from more opportunities for community spaces like neighbourhood grocery stores.

Thank you so much for your time.

- 4. Neighbourhood:**
Mount Pleasant
- 5. Full name:**
Colette Griffiths
- 6. Organization you represent:**
The Federal Store
- 7. Email:**
info@federalstore.ca
- 8. Subject classification:**
PH2 - 4. Employment Lands and Economy Review Quick Start Actions: Initial Zoning and Development By-law Amendments to Support Neighbourhood Grocery Stores

Additional Details

Contact Details

Name: Colette Griffiths
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Alt. Phone: Preferred contact method: Either

Case Notes

Photo

- no picture -