



REPORT

Report Date: February 9, 2021
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Meeting Date: March 10, 2021
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TO: Standing Committee on Policy and Strategic Priorities

FROM: General Manager of Planning, Urban Design and Sustainability

SUBJECT: Issues Report: Consideration of Rezoning Proposals at 110 and 150 West 4th Avenue

RECOMMENDATION

- A. THAT Council instructs the General Manager of Planning, Urban Design and Sustainability to consider a rezoning application for the site at 110 West 4th Avenue, which is within the Broadway Plan study area (015-518-949, Lot 8 Block 21 District Lot 200A Plan 197; 015-518-973, Lot 9 Block 21 District Lot 200A Plan 197; 015-519-023, Lot 10 Block 21 District Lot 200A Plan 197; 015-519-066, Lot 11 Block 21 District Lot 200A Plan 197; 015-519-155, Lot 12 Block 21 District Lot 200A Plan 197) which proposes a mixed industrial and office building at a height and density above what is permitted in the I-1 District Schedule, as an exception to the *Broadway Plan Interim Rezoning Policy*.
- B. THAT Council instructs the General Manager of Planning, Urban Design and Sustainability to consider a rezoning application for the site at 150 West 4th Avenue, which is within the Broadway Plan study area (031-128-360, Lot A Block 21 District Lot 200A Group 1 New Westminster District Plan EPP101475) which proposes a mixed industrial and office buildings at a height and density above what is permitted in the I-1 District Schedule, as an exception to the *Broadway Plan Interim Rezoning Policy*.
- C. THAT passage of the above resolutions will in no way fetter Council's discretion in considering any rezoning applications for the subject sites and does not create any legal rights for the applicants or any other person, or obligation on the part of the City; and expenditure of funds or incurred costs are at the risk of the person making the expenditure or incurring the cost.

REPORT SUMMARY

The *Policy on Consideration of Rezoning Applications and Heritage Revitalization Agreements during Broadway Planning Process* (“*Broadway Interim Rezoning Policy*”) requires Council direction to allow consideration of rezoning applications within the Broadway Plan study area in exceptional circumstances at the discretion of the Director of Planning. The *Broadway Interim Rezoning Policy* is attached as Appendix A for reference.

The purpose of this report is to:

- Advise Council that two rezoning enquiries have been received to establish two new Comprehensive Development (CD-1) Districts on adjacent sites at 110 West 4th Avenue and 150 West 4th Avenue within the Broadway Plan study area to allow for the development of two mixed industrial (medical laboratory) and office buildings.
- Provide background information on the enquirer (AbCellera), the proposed development of a biotechnology campus in Mount Pleasant and rationale for why this is an exceptional circumstance that should be considered ahead of the Broadway Plan.
- Recommend that staff work with the applicants to prepare rezoning applications that address City objectives, including supporting public health and safety, expanding job space, increasing industrial capacity and delivering high-quality urban design.

COUNCIL AUTHORITY/PREVIOUS DECISIONS

- 2007: Metro Core Jobs and Economy Land Use Plan: Issues and Directions
- 2013: Regional Context Statement Official Development Plan
- 2010: Mount Pleasant Community Plan
- 2012: Transportation 2040 Plan
- 2013: I-1 Zoning District Schedule amendments
- 2016: I-1A and I-1B Zoning District Schedules Enacted
- 2018: Policy on Consideration of Rezoning Applications and Heritage Revitalization Agreements during Broadway Planning Process
- 2019: Broadway Plan - Phase 1 Engagement and Proposed Guiding Principles
- 2020: Employment Lands and Economy Review Phase 2 Report
- 2020: Employment Lands and Economy Review Quick Start Actions: Mount Pleasant I-1 Amendment and New I-1C District Schedule
- 2021: I-1C Zoning District Schedule Enacted

REPORT

Background/Context

Background

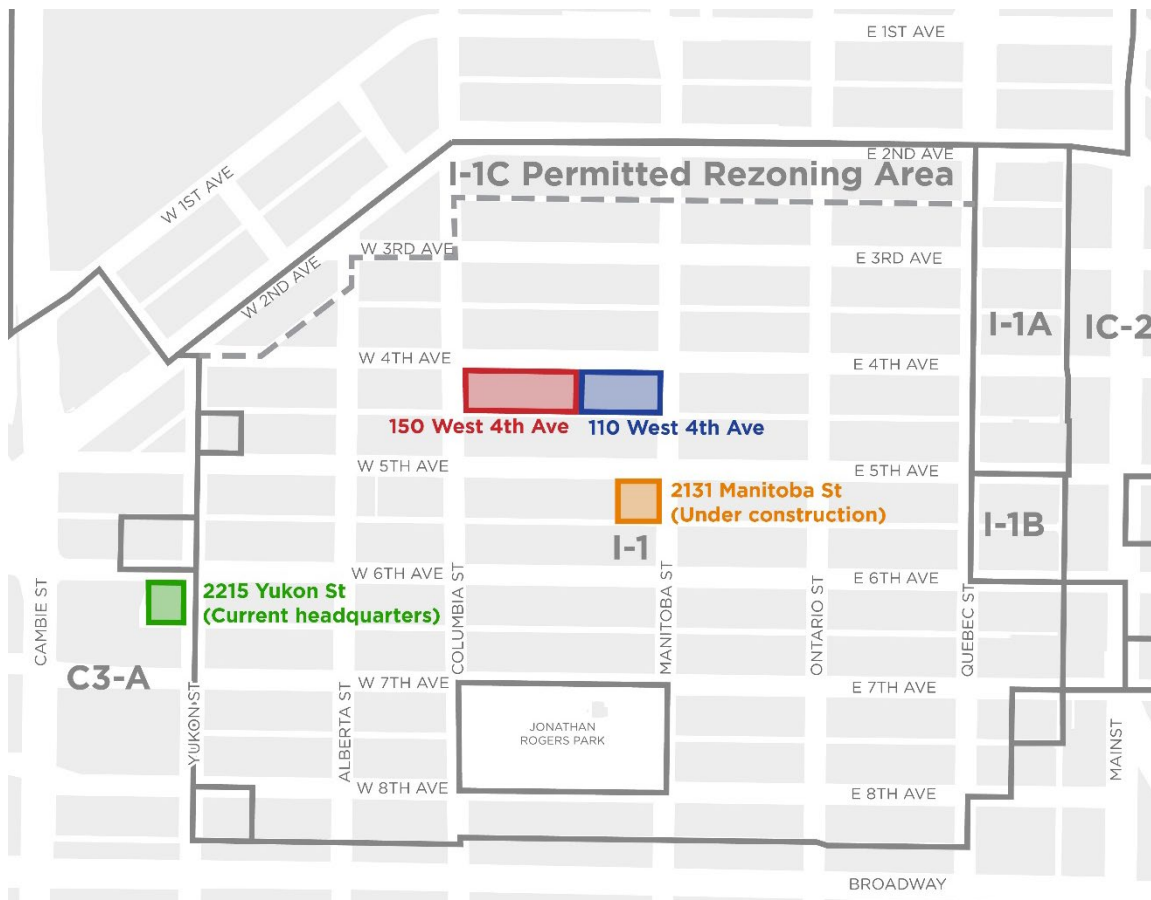
Staff have received two rezoning enquiries for adjacent sites in the Mount Pleasant Industrial Area (MPIA) at 110 and 150 West 4th Avenue to develop two mixed industrial and office projects. The enquirer for both sites is AbCellera, a local biotechnology company focused on antibody drug discovery and development.

AbCellera was founded at the University of British Columbia in 2012 and is headquartered today at 2215 Yukon Street (intersection of 6th Avenue and Yukon Street). Its COVID-19 antibody therapy (bamlanivimab), developed in partnership with U.S.-based Eli Lilly, was the first COVID-specific antibody therapy to receive emergency use authorization in high-risk patients with mild to moderate COVID-19 in the U.S. and Canada. The BC Provincial Government recently began an emergency clinical trial of this drug therapy at Surrey Memorial Hospital for patients who are at risk of being hospitalized with severe illness.

In December 2020, AbCellera raised the largest-ever IPO by a Canadian biotech company to build upon its mission to transform antibody drug development and bring new drugs to patients, including therapies and treatments for cancer, autoimmune conditions, infectious disease, and neurodegeneration. AbCellera's partners include leading biotechnology companies, global health organizations, and many of the top 10 biopharmaceutical companies.

To support its growth, AbCellera plans to develop a large-scale biotech campus in Vancouver, which will integrate and expand existing facilities in and around the MPIA. The two adjacent sites at 110 and 150 West 4th Avenue (subject of this report), a site at 2131 Manitoba Street (currently under construction) and the current headquarters at 2215 Yukon Street will make up a state-of-the-art biotech campus. Figure 1 shows a context map of these sites.

Figure 1: Contextual map showing the location of 110 West 4th Ave and 150 West 4th Ave, and other key AbCellera sites within the Mount Pleasant Industrial Area (MPIA).



AbCellera currently employs 210 people and anticipates doubling in size by the end of 2021, with the longer-term goal of hiring more than 1,000 knowledge-economy employees over the next seven years. In addition to these sites in Mount Pleasant, AbCellera is also planning a clinical-grade antibody manufacturing facility in the region, funded in part by a \$175.6 million commitment from the Government of Canada.

Policy Context

The subject sites are currently zoned I-1 and are located within the Mount Pleasant Industrial Area (MPIA). The MPIA is a designated Metro Vancouver Industrial Area. Industrial lands are critically important for Vancouver's and the region's economy, and they play a key role in:

- Providing space for economic activity that draws capital and investment from outside the city, such as the Port's cargo and cruise ship terminals;
- Providing a base for city-serving production, distribution and repair activities, as well as supporting the operation of supply chains across the region;
- Retaining employers that are able to offer higher-wage, low-barrier employment, adding to the city's diversity of livelihoods;
- Increasing the overall diversity and resiliency of the city's economy; and
- Sustaining a concentration of cultural, social and institutional spaces.

Vancouver has a limited industrial land base, comprising only 846 hectares or about 7% of the city's land area. Demand for industrial land is high and the City must balance the facilitation of investment and job growth in the local economy with maintaining local-serving industrial uses and affordable spaces for cultural uses, some of which can only take place on industrial land.

In 2013, Council approved changes to the I-1 District to allow for more general office use while maintaining the core industrial base in the district. The goal was to enhance the area as a job centre and support the local economy by allowing for more potential jobs in the area, more flexibility for business retention and expansion, and more options for mixed-use industrial and office buildings.

In January 2021, Council approved two Employment Lands and Economy Review (ELER) Quick Start Actions to intensify and modernize the MPIA, and to support economic recovery during and following the COVID-19 pandemic:

1. Add 'Health Care Office' as a conditionally permitted use in the I-1 District Schedule in response to a request from the development industry.
2. Create a new I-1C District Schedule and associated Rezoning Policy and Guidelines to permit sites along the south side of 2nd Avenue between Yukon and Quebec Streets to apply to rezone for redevelopment. The Form of Development allowed under this schedule permits employment-intensive light industrial uses and limited retail uses on lower levels, with compatible office and service uses above, to a maximum of 6 FSR.

While the I-1C District Schedule and Rezoning Policy and Guidelines are not applicable to these sites, both projects demonstrate a similar intent to intensify and modernize the City's industrial land base.

This Issues Report was initiated by the City to support public health objectives and economic recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic. It is being brought forward by the Director of Planning, supported by the findings from the Employment Lands and Economy Review, the Emerging Directions of the Broadway Plan, and the policies of the MetroCore Jobs and Economy Land Use Plan. The city-initiated process, based on existing and emerging policy, meets the requirements of the City of Vancouver's Regional Context Statement (RCS) ODP which otherwise prohibits rezoning of industrial land unless it is based on a city-initiated planning process such as this.

In June 2018, Council approved a *Broadway Plan Interim Rezoning Policy* (attached as Appendix A for reference). The policy states that generally rezonings will not be considered in the study area while the Broadway Plan process is underway, in order to not pre-empt or divert the planning process with rezonings which set new directions or preclude options that could emerge during the process. The policy provides for three exceptions to allow consideration of rezoning applications, including the following "Policy 3" which provides:

"Rezoning applications which seek relief from any of the terms of this rezoning policy may be considered under exceptional circumstances once reported to Council for direction, at the discretion of the Director of Planning."

In this case, the Director of Planning recommends that Council direct staff to consider a rezoning application review process for each site based upon exceptional circumstances:

- AbCellera is seeking additional laboratory and office space to continue to develop new therapeutic antibody drug candidates to help fight the spread and mutation of the COVID-19 virus and other diseases.
- The Broadway Plan emerging directions and ELER indicate the need to deliver additional industrial and office employment space, modernize the City's Industrial land use definitions and explore increased flexibility in the permitted uses in the MPIA. While this review will take some additional time to undertake, the proposed additional density and uses generally align with anticipated policy goals of the Broadway Plan and the ELER to intensify our industrial areas.

Strategic Analysis

The Director of Planning recommends that rezoning applications be considered for these sites. Both enquiries propose mixed industrial and office buildings that will increase the city's industrial land capacity and intensify job space close to transit and amenities.

Height and Density – The I-1 District Schedule permits up to 3 FSR of density, of which a minimum of 1 FSR is required to be delivered as Industrial uses (Production, Distribution and Repair), primarily on the ground floor. The maximum permitted building height is 60 feet. Both enquiries propose heights and densities above what is permitted under existing zoning, but also propose a higher proportion of the buildings be developed for industrial uses, which supports the City's goals for industrial areas. If Council approves the recommendations of this report, staff will work with the applicants through the rezoning enquiries and applications processes to refine the overall height and density to ensure compatibility and fit with the Mount Pleasant area.

Land Use – The proposed industrial and office land uses in both enquiries are consistent with the existing I-1 District Schedule.

Views – View impacts to the North Shore Mountains from Jonathan Rogers Park and other public spaces will be considered as part of the rezoning review process for each site.

Proposed Planning and Consultation Process – Staff anticipate public engagement through the rezoning application process for each site separately. Full details of the proposed Form of Development including massing, height and density will be made publically available for review through the rezoning application process. As with all rezoning applications, a formal public hearing would be required for each rezoning application.

As part of the rezoning process, public consultation would be led by City staff with involvement from the proponent for each respective rezoning application. The consultation processes would be conducted concurrently with staff review of a formal rezoning application for each site. Depending on COVID-19 restrictions in place, some of the following public consultation and stakeholder events may be held virtually online (*), but the separate processes for each site would include:

- Mailed notification of neighbouring residents
- Meeting with local stakeholder groups *
- At least one staff-led virtual open house to provide an opportunity for members of the public to ask questions and receive feedback *
- Public feedback forms, both online and in hard-copy if possible *
- Dedicated project page on the City website including staff contact information and a link to the public feedback form, and information regarding engagement events
- Other meetings, as deemed necessary by City staff *

Financial Implications

Subject to Council direction and as part of the rezoning processes, staff will report back at the time of any rezoning referral report on applicable public benefits including developer contributions (e.g. Development Cost Levies, Community Amenity Contribution's, and Public Art), as well as proposals for on-site and/or off-site amenities for Council's consideration.

CONCLUSION

The rezoning enquiries for two proposed mixed industrial and office buildings at 110 and 150 West 4th Avenue presents a unique opportunity to realize AbCellera's vision of creating a biotechnology campus, support its development of antibody drugs including treatments for COVID-19, increase the city's industrial land use capacity and advance a significant amount of job space within the MPIA.

The General Manager of Planning, Urban Design and Sustainability recommends that staff be directed to consider two separate rezoning applications for these two sites as an exceptional circumstance under the *Broadway Plan Interim Rezoning Policy* on the basis outlined in this report.

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City of Vancouver *Land Use and Development Policies and Guidelines*

Planning, Urban Design and Sustainability Department

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Policy on Consideration of Rezoning Applications and Heritage Revitalization Agreements during Broadway Planning Process

*Adopted by City Council on June 20, 2018
Amended January 21, 2021*

Generally rezonings will not be considered in the Broadway Plan Study area while the Broadway Plan process is underway, in order to not pre-empt or divert the planning process with rezonings which set new directions or preclude options that could emerge during the process.

The policies below will govern any exceptions that allow consideration of applications for rezoning advice (enquiries), rezoning applications, and development applications with Heritage Revitalization Agreements, during the Broadway planning process. Once adopted, the policy will apply until such time as the Broadway Plan is approved by Council.

Policy 1

Where, at the time of adoption of this rezoning policy, there is an active rezoning application or where a recent application for rezoning advice has been received, and the applicant has received a written response stating that a rezoning application would be considered (within the past three years), the application will be considered.

Policy 2

Rezoning applications will be considered for projects involving 100% social and supportive housing, or community care facilities or group residences or 100% below market rental housing or 100% affordable student housing associated with educational institutions.

Policy 3

Rezoning applications which seek relief from any of the terms of this rezoning policy may be considered under exceptional circumstances once reported to Council for direction, at the discretion of the Director of Planning.

Policy 4

Rezoning applications will be considered within the sub-area of the I-1 District Schedule identified in Figure 1 to change Zoning District from I-1 to I-1C only. Rezoning applications to a new Comprehensive Development District (CD-1) will not be permitted in accordance with the City of Vancouver's Regional Context Statement (RCS) ODP which prohibits rezoning of industrial land unless it is based on a city initiated planning process.

Rezonings for residential development (market or non-market) will not be considered in this area, with the exception of a Dwelling Unit for a caretaker, watchman or other person or persons similarly employed, if such dwelling unit is considered to be essential to the operation of the business or establishment.

Figure 1 – Mount Pleasant I-1C Permitted Rezoning Area

