

Piloting Regulatory Changes to Support Commercial Renovations and Small Business

October 14, 2021

Public Hearing



- Staff are proposing a change to the Zoning & Development By-law which requires a Public Hearing
- In addition, staff are also proposing changes to the Vancouver Building By-law and Parking By-law, which don't require a Public Hearing
- Staff are bringing all three By-law changes together as it's the combination of all recommended policy changes that will benefit permit processing times and support the commercial sector
- Staff will review the impact of these changes and report back on findings at the conclusion of the 24 month pilot

Policy changes for consideration today

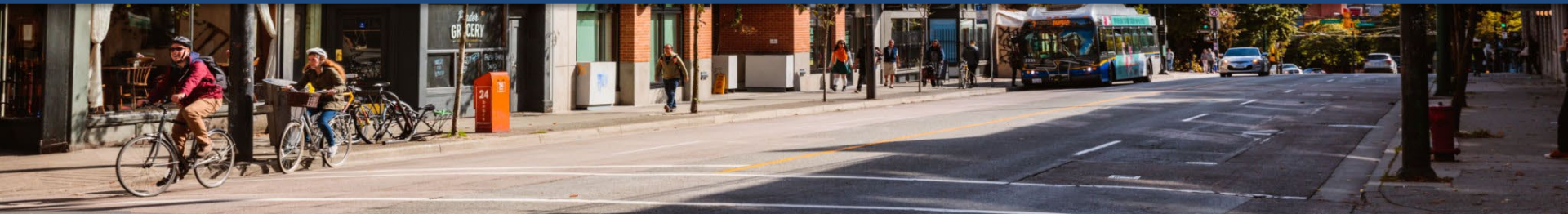


OPPORTUNITY	STRATEGY	IMPACT
A. Align project definitions in the VBBL with the scope of work being undertaken, reducing upgrade requirements and project complexity	1. Treat subdividing a suite into two or more suites as a minor renovation, as opposed to a major renovation	45 applications per year Up to 17 weeks saved per application
	2. Relax small suite definition to allow for occupant limits of 100 persons from 60 persons	
B. Reduce the permitting and licensing times, application complexity and start-up costs for new business changing between specific uses and/or occupancies	1. Exempt low risk changes of use from the requirement to submit a Development Permit as a means of reducing the permitting backlog and expediting the issuance of business licenses	135 applications per year Up to 20 weeks saved per application
	2. Waive change of occupancy upgrade requirements when changing between low risk occupancy types as a means of reducing the permitting backlog and expediting the issuance of business licenses.	40 applications per year 8 weeks saved per application
	3. Increase the threshold for meeting parking minimums from 200 m ² to 300 m ² .	Enabling change to support B.1 and B.2

3,785 processing weeks saved while supporting new and existing businesses through the COVID-19 recovery



Align project definitions with work scope



Align project definitions with work scope

1. Subdividing existing suites

2. Small suite definition

Benefits

- Simplifies application process
- Diverts projects to faster processing streams
- Removes the costly upgrade triggers for adding a demising wall
- Supports the recovery as it will be simpler and less costly to reconfigure office spaces

Risks

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- Building stock will miss an upgrade cycle, while all new work must still comply with the VBBL



Reducing impacts from change of use or occupancy



Any new business requiring a change between the following five low risk use categories can face longer processing times for a business license if the change in use requires a development permit, or building code upgrades:

1. General Office
2. Health Care Office
3. Retail Store
4. Barber Shop or Beauty Salon
5. Beauty and Wellness Centre

Frequency of use changes

A significant portion of the use changes occur within these categories

Estimate of New Businesses that Changed Use of Space Upon Opening
Spring 2020 to Spring 2021



Reducing the impacts from change of use



1. Exempt low risk changes of use from the requirement to submit a Development Permit

2. Waive change of occupancy upgrade requirements

Benefits

- Quicker Business License processing
- Reduces the volume of Development Permits and Building Permits
- Supports the recovery as it will be simpler and less costly for new business and easier for landlords to lease spaces

Risks

- Missed opportunity to upgrade building stock
- Potential for increased office use at street level, offset by the benefit of having more spaces leased

QUESTIONS

