



REPORT

Report Date: November 2, 2021
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Meeting Date: November 16, 2021
[Submit comments to Council](#)

TO: Vancouver City Council

FROM: General Manager of Planning, Urban Design and Sustainability

SUBJECT: Rupert and Renfrew Station Area Planning and Enhanced Rezoning for
3200 East Broadway and 2625 Rupert Street

RECOMMENDATION

- A. THAT Council direct staff to initiate a planning process for the area around the Rupert and Renfrew SkyTrain stations in alignment with the Vancouver Plan and to report back with Terms of Reference for the planning process in early 2022.
- B. THAT Council direct staff to initiate work to establish a Development Contribution Expectation Policy and develop an Interim Rezoning Policy for sites that may be included in the area planning process near Rupert and Renfrew SkyTrain stations in order to curb land value speculation, and report back to Council with any proposals.
- C. THAT Council approve a capital project budget of \$250,000 for the preparation of an updated Still Creek Rehabilitation and Enhancement Study, with source of funding from the Still Creek Greenway Enhancement Fund, to be added to the 2019-2022 Capital Plan, the Multi-Year Capital Budget and the Capital Expenditure Budget.
- D. THAT Council direct staff to accept and process an application for an Enhanced Rezoning (as described in the report) for the site located at 3200 East Broadway and 2625 Rupert Street in coordination with the Rupert and Renfrew station area planning.

- E. THAT passage of the above resolution 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 that expenditure of funds or incurred costs are at the risk of the person making the expenditure or incurring the cost.

REPORT SUMMARY

Advancing area planning around the Rupert and Renfrew SkyTrain stations in alignment with the Vancouver Plan process would enable the City to further a number of key plans, policies and initiatives while responding to the needs of the community. Opportunities include implementing directions of the Employment Lands and Economy Review, the Climate Emergency Action Plan, the Housing Vancouver Strategy, the Rain City Strategy and policies supporting the enhancement of Still Creek.

The proposed project timeline is phased to allow Vancouver Plan to inform the planning process, shaping it around emerging directions related to equitable housing and complete neighbourhoods, an economy that works for all, and climate protection and restored ecosystems. In parallel to the area planning process, an important step to advance ecosystem restoration is to update the Still Creek Rehabilitation and Enhancement Study. Additional funds are needed to complete the study in alignment with the area plan.

As with other recent planning programs, a Development Contribution Expectation (DCE) Policy and an Interim Rezoning Policy will be developed to limit land speculation and establish the conditions under which new rezoning applications could be considered while the area planning process is still underway. The interim DCE rate is anticipated to be significant.

The area plan would guide development in a coordinated manner and allow the City to implement policy that would apply to an application by the MST Development Corporation to develop their lands at 3200 East Broadway and 2625 Rupert Street, a site currently occupied by a BC Liquor distribution facility. Given the City's priorities and commitments to reconciliation as a goal of Vancouver Plan, including criteria identified as part of the new Policy Enquiry Process, staff are recommending that an application for an Enhanced Rezoning be accepted for this site concurrent to area planning. Through this process additional policy work will be completed to evaluate and shape any rezoning proposal.

COUNCIL AUTHORITY/PREVIOUS DECISIONS

City Policies, Plans and Decisions

- Policy Enquiry Process – Guiding Principles and Criteria (2021)
- Vancouver Plan - Updates and Quick Start Actions (2021)
- Climate Emergency Action Plan (2020)
- Employment Lands and Economy Review Emerging Policy Directions, Ideas and Potential Actions (2020)
- Vancouver Plan Terms of Reference (July 2019)
- Culture|Shift: Vancouver Culture Plan (2019)
- Rain City Strategy (2019)
- Resilient Vancouver Strategy (2019)
- VanPlay (2019)
- Housing Vancouver (2017)

- Healthy City Strategy Four Year Action Plan (2014)
- Regional Context Statement Official Development Plan (2013)
- Climate Change Adaptation Strategy (2012)
- Transportation 2040 (2012)
- Grandview-Boundary Mixed Employment Area Plan (2012)

Regional Initiatives:

- Metro 2050, Metro Vancouver's update to the regional growth strategy (underway)
- Transport 2050 (underway)
- Regional Industrial Lands Strategy (2020)
- Metro 2040, Metro Vancouver's regional growth strategy (2010)

CITY MANAGER'S/GENERAL MANAGER'S COMMENTS

The City Manager recommends approval of the foregoing.

REPORT

Background/Context

The Rupert and Renfrew SkyTrain stations were completed in 2002 as part of the Millennium Line, and are located within the Grandview-Boundary employment lands (see Maps 1 and 2 in Appendix A). At 81 hectares, the employment lands at Grandview-Boundary are significant to both the local and regional economy. City-wide and regional transportation connections for the employment lands are excellent given both rapid transit access and vehicular access through several arterial roads and Highway 1. The Millennium Line currently provides access to downtown in under 20 minutes and will be extended through the new Broadway Subway, creating a new rapid transit connection to the Canada Line. In recognition of the advantages of locating job space at rapid transit, the Grandview-Boundary Mixed Employment Area Plan was updated in 2011 to allow higher density general offices uses to locate near the two transit stations. Some job intensification has occurred in response to that plan. More recently, the Employment Lands and Economy Review identified the need for planning in this area to increase employment capacity.

Planning around Rupert and Renfrew SkyTrain stations also allows opportunities to link goals, objectives and actions of the Vancouver Plan, the Housing Vancouver Strategy, and the Climate Emergency Action Plan (CEAP). Providing additional housing choice, including rental and social housing, is essential to meet the needs of a diverse range of household incomes. The City's housing objectives are complemented by the CEAP, which emphasizes locating new housing options in neighbourhoods with easy access to transit, shops, services and amenities, allowing residents to be less reliant on personal automobiles and reducing carbon pollution.

The area near the Rupert and Renfrew SkyTrain stations includes a significant portion of Still Creek. Still Creek is one of Vancouver's few remaining watercourses, providing environmental and social value while also serving as a natural drainage asset. In 2012, for the first time in 80 years, a large number of full-size chum salmon were observed returning to spawn in many parts of Still Creek. Staff anticipate several studies will be needed to find opportunities for improving watershed health in the area. Undertaking these studies at the same time as the area planning will allow improved coordination and efficiency.

In addition to the general opportunity to add jobs and housing near existing rapid transit stations, there are some specific sites that may seek to redevelop in the area over the near term. Skeena Terrace, a site owned by BC Housing, is currently undertaking an Enhanced Rezoning process. An Enhanced Rezoning provides an opportunity for policy development and deeper public engagement beyond what would be allowed through a regular rezoning process. In addition, the MST Development Corporation, owned jointly by the xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish), and səliłwətał (Tsleil-Waututh), has expressed an interest in developing their lands at 3200 East Broadway and 2625 Rupert Street. The sites are currently occupied by a BC Liquor distribution facility. Staff have recently received a formal enquiry that includes potential residential rental uses while preserving job space in light industrial and commercial uses. Including residential use at this site would ultimately require a change to the City's Regional Context Statement Official Development Plan and will require approval from the Metro Vancouver Regional District Board. The approval of any rezoning application for 3200 East Broadway and 2625 Rupert, including the uses identified in the rezoning enquiry, would be contingent on completion of Metro 2050, an update to the regional growth strategy. Staff have provided a separate report, entitled City Comments on the Draft Regional Growth Strategy (RGS) Metro 2050 (RTS 14672), which contains comments on Metro 2050.

Strategic Analysis

This section outlines how the planning process will align with other planning processes and anticipated deliverables.

Alignment with the Vancouver Plan

The Vancouver Plan will provide a vision, goals, policies and a high-level land use plan for the city. Many elements of the plan apply at the neighbourhood scale, or will require neighbourhood-scale planning to implement. The timing for proposed area planning around Rupert and Renfrew SkyTrain stations would align with the Vancouver Plan process as the draft and final Vancouver Plan (anticipated in the first and second quarter of 2022) would precede each phase of the area plan. Area planning would in turn provide an opportunity to tailor city-wide policies and priorities to the opportunities and challenges of this particular area.

Alignment with the Regional Growth Strategy (Metro 2050)

Metro Vancouver's regional growth strategy is the regional federation's vision for accommodating anticipated future growth to the region with considerations for diverse and affordable housing, transit and mobility, resilient employment, ecological and agricultural lands and climate change. A draft of the updated regional growth strategy, Metro 2050, was released in June 2021. The draft version of Metro 2050 includes a new provision that allows municipalities to consider affordable and rental housing as part of mixed-use buildings within 200 metres of rapid transit stations. If these provisions are included in the approved version of Metro 2050, staff will recommend draft criteria that the City would use if it were to consider rezoning applications in accordance with these provisions. In alignment with current City policy and draft Metro 2050 policies, the criteria would only allow consideration of residential on employment lands in exceptional circumstances.

Alignment with Rezoning Applications in the Area

The most significant rezoning application in process in the area is Skeena Terrace, a social housing site built in the 1970s and owned by BC Housing. Redevelopment will provide an opportunity to increase the number of affordable housing units, while adding commercial uses

and new community-serving spaces. The planning process for Skeena Terrace is currently underway and would overlap with the timing of the area planning process, providing opportunities to coordinate priorities for community-serving spaces and better consider the land use and design implications of options for the Skeena Terrace site in the context of anticipated change on surrounding lands.

In addition, there have been three Moderate Income Rental Housing Pilot Program (MIRHPP) applications near the intersection of Renfrew and Broadway. Two of these have been enacted and one is anticipated to be referred to public hearing next year.

Alignment with Transportation Planning

An updated Greenways network map and prioritization framework is under development and five-year walking and cycling plans are being developed as part of the CEAP. This work will inform active transportation connections to and through the area around the Rupert and Renfrew SkyTrain stations, providing important inputs to the local area planning process.

There is a need to enhance the safety and comfort of active transportation connections in the area, including improving the Central Valley Greenway. New greenways or cycling routes, such as the Eastside Crosscut, will fall within the study area. The work on active transportation corridors and any potential improvements to the public realm will be coordinated with land use planning.

Considerations for Housing and Employment

As there are approximately 200 hectares of land within walking distance of the stations already designated for residential use, the area provides a unique opportunity to both protect and intensify existing employment lands and add more housing options, especially rental housing, on existing residential land near the stations. Generally, the employment lands are likely not as well suited to residential use given challenges with noise, air quality, compatibility with industrial activity, limited proximity to amenities and other factors.

It is important to note that the city is facing a potential gap between anticipated industrial demand and supply over the long term. On November 2, 2021 Council received a memo¹ from staff regarding the emerging policy framework for modernizing and intensifying Vancouver's industrial areas. Area planning around the Rupert and Renfrew stations provides an opportunity to consider industrial intensification in line with emerging policy.

Considerations for Watershed Health and Sewer Capacity

The 2002 Still Creek Rehabilitation and Enhancement Study provides foundational directions for supporting ecological health objectives. The study requires an update and would benefit from policies that could increase the pace of implementation. The update to the enhancement study would address changes to creek enhancement science as well as new policies and priorities, including the Rain City Strategy, climate change mitigation and adaptation policy, and would provide an increased understanding of the co-benefits of natural infrastructure including ecological and public realm benefits.

Council established the Still Creek Greenway Enhancement Fund in 2000, providing a funding mechanism for enhancement and rehabilitation projects. Revenues from leasing City lands (portions of Cornett Road and Skeena Street) along the Still Creek channel are collected into

¹ See [Project Update - Industrial Modernization and Intensification Framework](#) (RTS 14545).

this fund and are used, with Council's approval, to take actions toward the goal of enhancing and rehabilitating Still Creek. Staff recommend that \$250,000 be allocated from the Still Creek Greenway Enhancement Fund to fund the study update. The enhancement study update will also form a part of the City's recent application to Infrastructure Canada's Natural Infrastructure Fund, a potential additional source of funding to support Still Creek enhancement.

Challenges to Consider

The area is close to Highway 1 and includes portions of the Grandview Highway, Lougheed Highway, and several other arterial roads and truck routes. Trains also run at street level through this area. As a result, the area may have more noise and worse air quality than many other areas of the city, likely requiring building design measures to protect the health of future residents. In response to previous Council motions, staff have begun investigations to address concerns about livability on arterials (noise and air pollution). Approaches and costs to mitigate these impacts will be presented for Council consideration in a future report.

The at-grade rail crossing also creates challenges with North-South connectivity for all modes (vehicles, cyclists and pedestrians) when the train is passing through the area. High-level exploratory concepts such as rail and street grade separation alternatives may need to be considered as well as opportunities for potential regional, interregional and international rail solutions as identified in Transport 2050.

The proximity to Still Creek means that a significant amount of land in the area is located within the designated floodplain, and the probability and severity of flooding is anticipated to increase as a result of climate change. Area planning provides an opportunity to manage flood risk and enhance ecological and natural asset value, including sequestering carbon. However, constraints adjacent to Still Creek may be significant and redevelopment of adjacent sites will need to prioritize watershed enhancement and manage flood risk.

Actions to Limit Speculation During the Planning Process

The area planning process will include a DCE policy for Council's consideration. As with other recent planning programs, the DCE is intended to limit land speculation by alerting current land owners, realtors, and developers to the city's intention to prioritize employment, rental housing, affordable housing and expansion or upgrades of amenities and infrastructure as part of the planning process. The interim rate expectations (dollars per square foot) are anticipated to be significant. The DCE policy would be complemented by an Interim Rezoning Policy to establish what types of rezoning applications could be considered during the area planning process.

Deliverables

The planning process is anticipated to include:

- *A Development Contribution Expectation Policy and Interim Rezoning Policy* for the study area. Staff anticipate requesting that Council approve these policies early in 2022.
- *An Early Directions Report* identifying goals, key opportunities and challenges for the area in Q3, 2022. The work would provide preliminary guidance for any rezoning application for 3200 East Broadway, 2625 Rupert and potentially additional sites, while the planning process is still underway.
- *An Engagement Report* outlining what we heard from community, the host Nations, government agencies, and stakeholders.

- *The Rupert and Renfrew Station Area Plan.* In alignment with Vancouver Plan, the station area plan would outline future land use, guidance for urban design including building types and scale, rainwater management, provide specific guidance on future development in the Still Creek floodplain, recommended rezoning policies to accommodate future development, transportation, housing, amenities, public realm guidance, utilities, financial considerations and other elements.
- Alignment with work focused on the Still Creek watershed, including:
 - An Integrated Sewer and Watershed Baseline Assessment, a technical study to determine the capacity of existing sewer and drainage infrastructure, including the Still Creek channel as a natural drainage asset, to serve as a baseline for considering growth-related upgrades and flood mitigation needs.
 - An Integrated Water Management Plan, a plan that will apply a OneWater approach to determining and prioritizing growth-related sewer and drainage infrastructure upgrades by building on the aforementioned baseline assessment study.
 - A Still Creek Rehabilitation and Enhancement Study Update, a technical study to identify rehabilitation and enhancement opportunities that the Integrated Water Management Plan can consider for integration.
- Alignment with ongoing transportation work, including:
 - Further study of opportunities to pursue rail grade separation to improve safety and support international goods movement, future regional or interregional transit, and the potential for higher speed rail.
 - Analyze and evaluate active transportation network options and street/rail connections to support neighbourhood connectivity as well as citywide vehicle needs (buses and trucks).
- *An amendment to Metro 2050* and an associated update to the City's Regional Context Statement Official Development Plan. This will likely be required as an outcome of the area plan.

Engagement

As part of the area planning, staff anticipate distinct engagement processes and opportunities for the host Nations, local residents, community groups, businesses and landowners, and stewardship groups with an interest in Still Creek. Staff anticipate key public-facing communication materials will be translated into multiple languages including Simplified Chinese, Vietnamese and Tagalog and funding will be allocated for interpretation services.

As part of any rezoning application for 3200 East Broadway and 2625 Rupert, 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. Public consultation would be led by City staff with involvement from the proponent for the Enhanced Rezoning application and the consultation processes would be conducted concurrently with staff review of the Enhanced Rezoning application.

Study Area

Approximate study area boundaries and related sewer service area boundaries are shown in Appendix A. The draft study area boundary is generally defined by major roads in most cases: Boundary Road to the East, 1st Avenue to the North, 22nd Avenue to the South and Nanaimo Street to the East. The study area is significantly larger than the area in which staff would anticipate substantive changes to current land use policy. The final boundaries would be influenced by topography, walking distance to local amenities and SkyTrain stations, community input, and opportunities to manage rainwater and sewer capacity. In the latter case, it should be noted that increases in density or impervious area will likely only be possible within the boundaries of the Still Creek watershed and depend on outcomes of upcoming studies focused on sewer capacity and creek enhancement (see Appendix A, Map 4).

3200 East Broadway and 2625 Rupert Street Site

The rezoning enquiry received includes a mix of uses, including rental residential, light industrial and commercial uses. Residential use is not permitted on employment lands under the City's Regional Context Statement Official Development Plan or under Metro 2040 (the current Regional Growth Strategy), other than in a small number of exceptional circumstances.

In 2014, the City established a framework for reconciliation encompassing three foundational components (cultural competency, strengthening relations, and effective decision-making) to guide the City's work with the Musqueam, Squamish and Tsleil-Waututh Nations and Urban Indigenous communities. Strengthening relations starts with acknowledging the history of residential schools and the impact of loss of land and culture. Working with the host Nations requires a distinct approach and understanding of our shared goals. Achieving mutual respect, strong relationships and economic empowerment requires flexibility, thoughtfulness and a principled and transparent approach to decision-making. The new Policy Enquiry Process approved by Council in July 2021 includes a criterion for reconciliation and cultural redress, which provides an opportunity to include this in our planning and learn through the process.

The enquiry for 3200 East Broadway and 2625 Rupert Street is generally consistent with the reconciliation and cultural redress, affordable housing and job / economy criteria approved by Council as part of the new Policy Enquiry Process. Given this opportunity to work with MST Development Corporation, staff recommend accepting an application for an Enhanced Rezoning and to process the application concurrent to the station area plan. This would allow early policy work and engagement on the area plan to directly inform the rezoning process and enable integration of studies supporting sewer capacity and Still Creek enhancement. There are several precedents for undertaking a rezoning planning process concurrently with an area planning process, such as the Northeast False Creek Plan and the Cambie Corridor Planning Program.

Including rental residential use at 3200 East Broadway and 2625 Rupert Street would ultimately require a change to the City's Regional Context Statement Official Development Plan and will require approval from the Metro Vancouver Regional District Board in addition, following a public hearing, approval from Council.

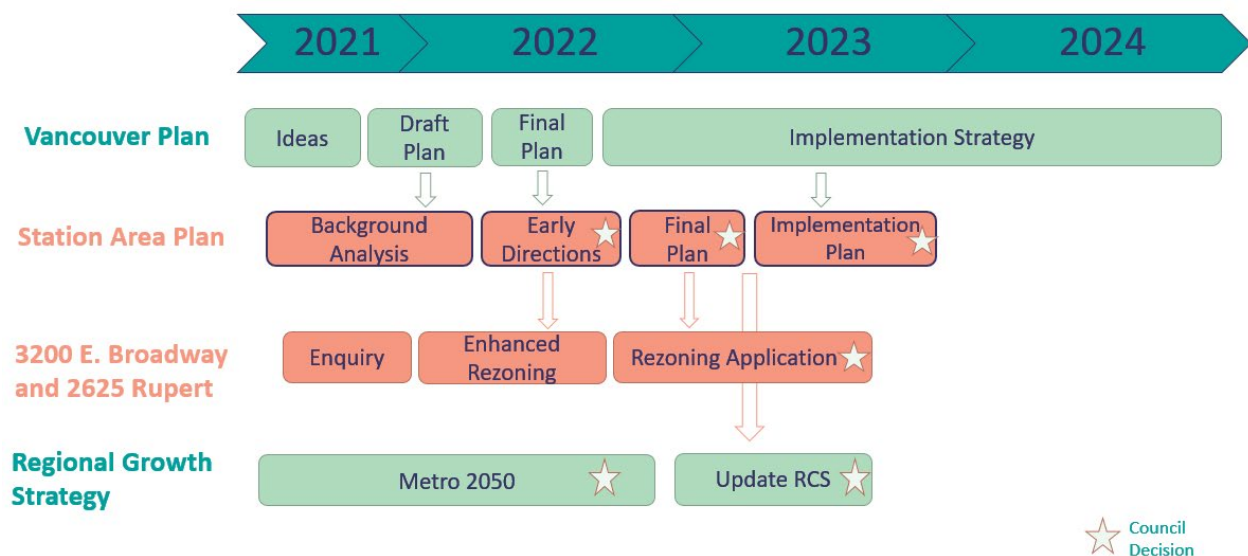
Timeline and Phasing

The project timeline would need to be refined as part of determining Terms of Reference. A draft timeline is included below. Key alignments are represented in the timeline between Vancouver Plan, the area plan, the rezoning process for 3200 East Broadway and 2625 Rupert Street and Metro 2050.

The station area plan itself would be divided into four phases:

- The first phase, background analysis, would begin immediately. This phase would focus on gaining a deeper understanding of demographics, existing local businesses, potential gaps in access to amenities and other information that can support planning and public engagement. The background work would require some preliminary engagement, and would begin in Q4 2021.
- The next phase, Early Directions, would tailor draft Vancouver Plan goals and policies to the context of this area, leading to draft policies and early recommendations that could directly inform the rezoning application process for 3200 East Broadway and 2625 Rupert Street. This phase is anticipated to occur between Q2 and Q3 2022 and would include a high level assessment of alternative transportation upgrades.
- The third phase would build on the early directions to create a draft area plan that would include a more complete list of policies and recommendations. Land use recommendations in the draft plan would be coordinated with studies related to the Still Creek watershed, including analysis of sewer capacity constraints in the area. The studies associated with Still Creek are not illustrated in the timeline but represent a critical dependency for the area plan. The draft plan is anticipated to be completed in spring 2023.
- The last phase would focus on implementation planning, including zoning policies and other critical elements. This final phase is anticipated between Q3 and Q4 of 2023.

Draft Project Timeline and Relationship to Vancouver Plan and Metro 2050



Financial Implications

The staff team assigned to the area planning process will primarily include staff funded from existing operating budgets. No additional staff are anticipated for this project. However, there is a significant dependence on staff from other departments, especially Integrated Sewer & Drainage Planning's work associated with the Still Creek Watershed, for the area planning to

be successful. Funding for the Enhanced Rezoning process would be provided by the property owners.

Budget for consultancies and expenses will include some funds in 2021 allocated to station area planning. Early studies will be funded in 2021 through the use of existing station area planning budget. The 2022 consulting budget will be funded through approximately \$180,000 from the PDS annual budget. Additional funding requirements may be considered in 2023 through the budget process. The estimates described above do not include funding allocated to Engineering for work on the Still Creek Watershed, which is also supported by the Still Creek Greenway Enhancement Fund and federal grant opportunities. Staff will provide a more specific budget as part of the Terms of Reference.

Staff expect to report back on the Interim Rezoning Policy and Development Contribution Expectation Policy in early 2022. The planning process will provide clarity on proposed land use priorities and identify the infrastructure and amenities required to support housing and job growth.

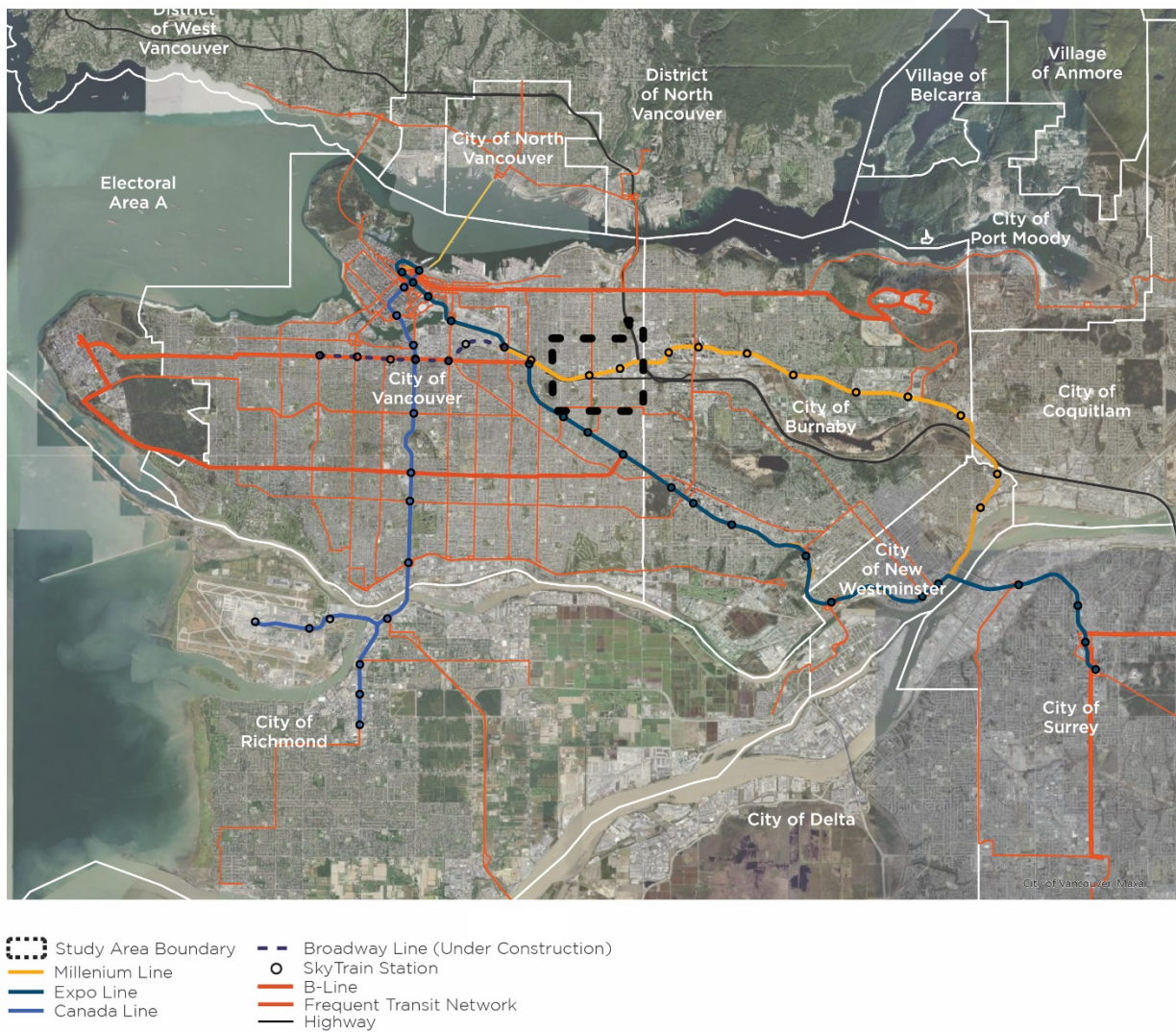
CONCLUSION

Advancing Rupert and Renfrew station area planning presents a significant opportunity to address a number of Council objectives including affordable housing, protecting and strengthening job space, advancing climate action and enhancing a unique ecological feature. Station planning would build on and align with the Vancouver Plan, including ongoing engagement. The area plan around Rupert and Renfrew SkyTrain stations will be the first community plan to implement the goals and policies of the Vancouver Plan.

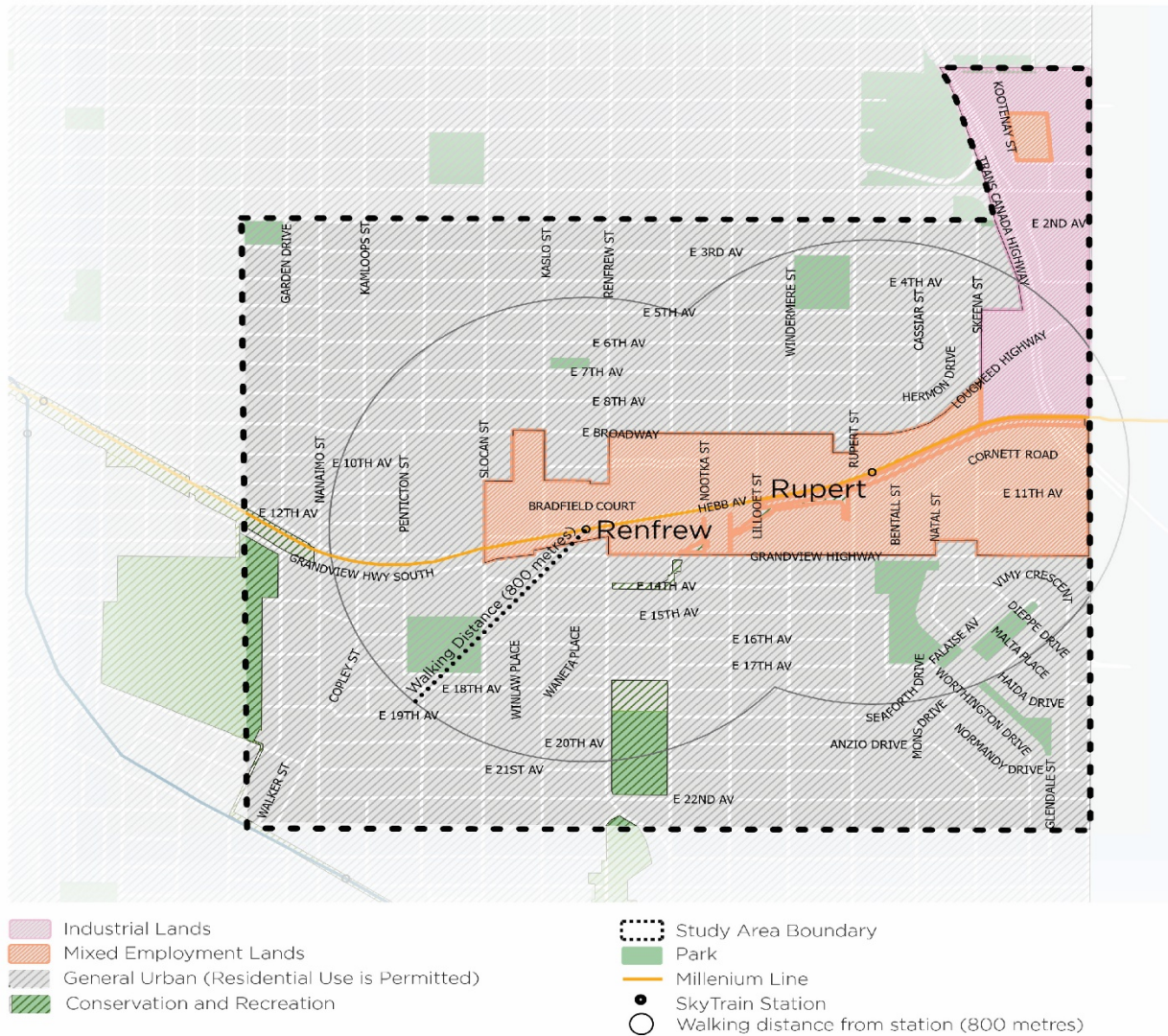
The rezoning enquiry for 3200 East Broadway and 2625 Rupert Street presents an opportunity to further reconciliation objectives identified through Vancouver Plan and through the recently approved Policy Enquiry Process. Accepting an application for an Enhanced Rezoning at this time would allow the application to be informed by the area planning process.

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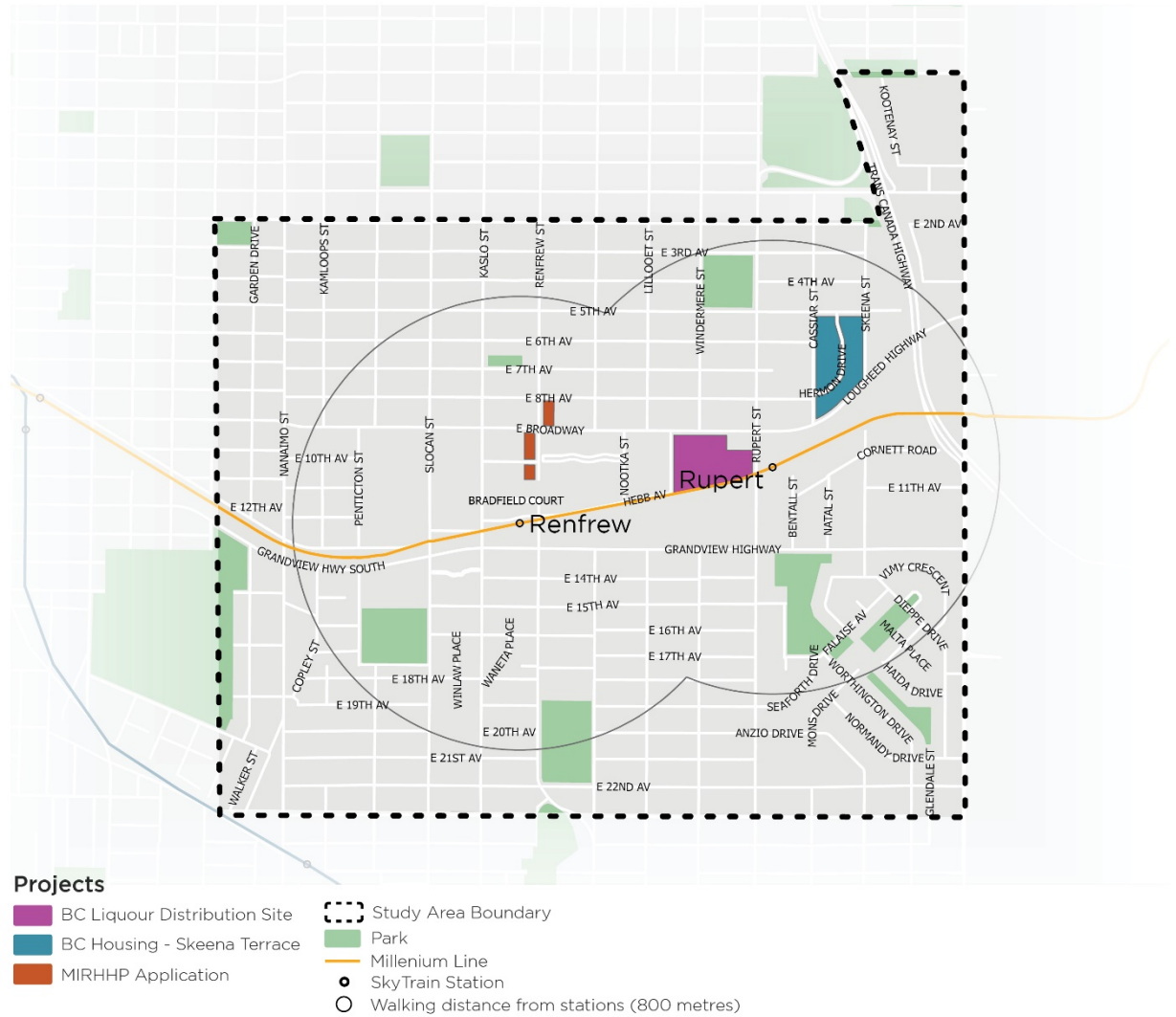
Map 1 – Draft Study Area Boundary and Regional Transportation Connections



Map 2 – Draft Study Area Boundary and Regional Land Use Designations



Map 3 – Draft Study Area Boundary and Recent/Upcoming Rezoning Applications



Map 4 – Draft Study Area Boundary, Still Creek Watershed and Designated Floodplain

