

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS: HIGHER BUILDINGS DOWNTOWN

DO THESE CHANGES RESULT IN A REMOVAL OF HEIGHT RESTRICTIONS ACROSS THE DOWNTOWN?

No. The zoned heights for all building sites remains the same as currently outlined in the Downtown Official Development Plan. The policy provides guidance on where rezoning for additional height and density is permitted on seven sites for higher buildings outside of protected public views.

WOULD THESE PROPOSED HIGHER BUILDINGS ELIMINATE PROTECTED VIEWS TO THE MOUNTAINS?

No. In January 2010, City Council affirmed the importance of the View Protection Policy or “view corridors” that have been in place for more than 20 years. Council also strengthened a number of the protected public views and added three additional new views.

At the same time, Council asked staff to look for opportunities outside of protected views for additional higher buildings. The seven sites under consideration by City Council do not impact protected public views. They are either outside of the view corridors, or only within the view of the city skyline and the mountains from Queen Elizabeth Park (View 3), which Council decided could be affected by higher buildings in 1997 when Council adopted the *General Policy for Higher Buildings*.

IS THE CITY PROPOSING THAT THE QUEEN ELIZABETH VIEW CORRIDOR BE ABOLISHED OR REMOVED THROUGH THESE RECOMMENDATIONS?

No. On May 6, 1997, Council approved a series of recommendations as part of the Downtown Skyline Study, including the following:

THAT the recommended skyline and general policy for higher buildings, as detailed in Appendix C of the Policy Report dated February 20, 1997 be approved as the basis for adjustments to the maximum permitted heights in the Downtown Official Development Plan (ODP), noting that in the area covered by this ODP:

- ...
- in no case will building heights be considered that intrude into adopted view corridors (except the Queen Elizabeth Park view corridor)
- ...

Complete minutes of the meeting and the details of the 1997 skyline study can be found at <http://vancouver.ca/commsvcs/planning/archives/skylinestudy/index.htm>

In this regard the decision made by Council in January 2010 and the recommendations before them today are very much in keeping with this ongoing approach to taller

buildings downtown. One of the elements of this view which sets it apart from all the others is that its balanced composition of the skyline, shoreline and ridgeline. This has made Little Mountain's Queen Elizabeth view points one of the most cherished vantage points in the city.

HOW MANY ADDITIONAL RESIDENTS WOULD THESE PROPOSED CHANGES BRING TO MY NEIGHBOURHOOD?

The table below summarizes the incremental additional capacity (jobs and residents) that could result over time should Council approve the proposal, over and above existing job and residential space potential under current zoning and policy. The numbers have been broken down to reflect the potential development of the seven Higher Building sites identified within the report. This information is being provided as an estimate only and is based upon the following assumptions:

- Residential buildings have been calculated with 9' floor to floor heights and 600 m² (6,458 ft²) floor plates
- Commercial buildings have been calculated with 11' floor to floor heights and 1,100 m² (11,840 ft²) floor plates
- Number of additional residents assumes 600 ft²/resident
- Number of additional jobs assumes 350 ft²/job.

	<i>COMMERCIAL CAPACITY</i>		<i>RESIDENTIAL CAPACITY</i>	
	<i>Additional Potential Area Above Current Policy</i>	<i>Additional Jobs</i>	<i>Additional Potential Area Above Current Policy</i>	<i>Additional Residents</i>
THE BURRARD BUILDING 1030 W Georgia	9,900 m ² (106,563 ft ²)	304	0	0
ALBERNI SITE 1050 Alberni to 755 Burrard	0	0	12,600 m ² (135,625 ft ²)	226
MELVILLE PARKING LOT 1133 Melville	15,400 m ² (165,764 ft ²)	474	0	0
DOWNTOWN TOYOTA * 1290 Burrard / 1281 Hornby	0	0	9,600 m ² (103,334 ft ²)	172
BURRARD & DAVIE 1157 Burrard	0	0	1,800 m ² (19,375 ft ²)	32
GRANVILLE GATEWAY (HOWE) 711 Beach to 1412 Howe	0	0	13,200 m ² (142,084 ft ²)	237
GRANVILLE GATEWAY (SEYMOUR) 1450 Granville Street	0	0	16,200 m ² (174,375 ft ²)	291
TOTALS	25,300 m² (272,327 ft²)	778	53,400 m² (574,793 ft²)	958

* Note: Although the additional height and associated density for the Downtown Toyota site is residential, the applicant is also proposing to include 190,000 sqft of OFFICE space, or job space for approximately 542 jobs. There will be additional jobs related to any retail or cultural components to the project.

WHAT WOULD BE THE TRAFFIC IMPACT OF THESE PROPOSED CHANGES?

From 1996-2006, the residential population of the Downtown increased by 29,628 to 87,973 and the number of jobs increased by 23,000 to 156,600. Although the total number of trips has increased, the number of trips made by car decreased and its proportional share has dropped from 49% of all trips Downtown in 1992 to only 30% of total trips. Walking, cycling and transit are now the dominant mode of transportation in the Downtown. In this time, the total number of vehicle trips entering Downtown has also dropped by 7%.

For the most recent update on the Downtown Transportation Plan, please visit <http://vancouver.ca/engsvcs/transport/plan/> or see the latest brochure at <http://vancouver.ca/engsvcs/transport/plan/pdf/trans-plan-brochure.pdf>

The reason is because residents who live in high density, mixed use neighbourhoods have easy access to jobs, restaurants, schools, public facilities and entertainment. Even if people own cars for weekend trips or occasional large shopping trips, they do not generally use their cars as often as people in lower density, single use neighbourhoods.

As such, it is reasonable to project that the additional residents and employees who live and work in the additional floor space created by these higher buildings will not produce a significant traffic impact on surrounding neighbourhoods.

As is standard practise for rezoning, a traffic impact study will be required of all applications for higher buildings to ensure that any traffic impacts on neighbourhoods are mitigated.

WHAT SCHOOL SPACE WILL BE REQUIRED FOR THE ADDITIONAL RESIDENTS?

As noted above, the proposed changes would result in approximately 958 additional residents in the Downtown. Approximately 5-10% of these residents could be expected to be school age children, or approximately 50 to 100 additional children.

Space in schools in the Downtown, particularly primary schools, is currently challenging. Both City Council and the Vancouver School Board have made this challenge a priority and have identified the International Village school site as the priority for construction in the city as soon as Provincial funding is available.

Although the Westend schools and Elsie Roy are at or near capacity, there is available capacity for additional students at Strathcona and Henry Hudson (Kitsilano) elementary schools. Many students in the Downtown and Westend are already currently attending these schools.

WHAT ARE THE SEISMIC (EARTHQUAKE) RISKS OF THESE HIGHER BUILDINGS?

The City of Vancouver adheres to the seismic standards created by the National Research Council, which apply to buildings of all sizes. These standards adopted across

the country and represent the best practises at the time. They are updated constantly based on building technologies and experiences from seismic events.

The City of Vancouver adopted a significant upgrade to our seismic standards in 2007 and we now have the most advanced seismic building practises in North America.

HOW MANY ADDITIONAL PARKING SPOTS WOULD BE REQUIRED AS A RESULT OF THE PROPOSED CHANGES?

The City of Vancouver parking bylaw has parking requirements based on floor area and use.

Residential floor area in a building requires a minimum of 1 parking space per 140m². There is currently no maximum for residential use.

Commercial floor area in a building requires a minimum of 1 parking space per 145m² and a maximum (limit) of 1 parking space per 115m².

Using the estimates of the additional amount of floor space potential from the proposed higher buildings (above that available under current zoning and policy), the number of additional parking spaces required are summarized in the table below.

	<i>COMMERCIAL PARKING</i>		<i>RESIDENTIAL PARKING</i>	
	<i>Additional Potential Area Above Current Policy</i>	<i>MIN/MAX ADDITIONAL PARKING SPOTS</i>	<i>Additional Potential Area Above Current Policy</i>	<i>MINIMUM ADDITIONAL PARKING SPOTS</i>
THE BURRARD BUILDING 1030 W Georgia	9,900 m ² (106,563 ft ²)	69 / 87	0	0
ALBERNI SITE 1050 Alberni to 755 Burrard	0	0	12,600 m ² (135,625 ft ²)	90
MELVILLE PARKING LOT 1133 Melville	15,400 m ² (165,764 ft ²)	107/ 134	0	0
DOWNTOWN TOYOTA 1290 Burrard / 1281 Hornby	0	0	9,600 m ² (103,334 ft ²)	69
BURRARD & DAVIE 1157 Burrard	0	0	1,800 m ² (19,375 ft ²)	13
GRANVILLE GATEWAY (HOWE) 711 Beach to 1412 Howe	0	0	13,200 m ² (142,084 ft ²)	95
GRANVILLE GATEWAY (SEYMOUR) 1450 Granville Street	0	0	16,200 m ² (174,375 ft ²)	116
TOTALS	25,300 m² (272,327 ft²)	176 / 221	53,400 m² (574,793 ft²)	383

WILL THE HIGHER BUILDINGS RESULT IN THE DEMOLITION OF HERITAGE BUILDINGS, SUCH AS THE BURRARD BUILDING?

The *General Policy for Higher Buildings* states that no higher building proposal will be considered that involves the demolition of a Class 'A' heritage building (on the Vancouver Heritage Register). This has been in the policy since adoption and remains part of the revised policy.

The higher buildings do help to support heritage however by absorbing transferable density from heritage rehabilitation projects across the city.

None of the seven sites proposed for higher buildings have Class 'A' heritage buildings. The site at Burrard and Georgia does have the Burrard Building, which is one of the first office buildings built following the Depression and is considered to be a Class 'B' building on the City's post-1940s inventory (not to be confused with the Vancouver Heritage Register). The curtain wall of the Burrard Building was significantly altered during the 1990s however, which diminished its heritage value. If there were a proposal for a higher building on this site City staff would support the proposal and "trade off" support for heritage by raising an expectation that part of the public benefits package would include heritage benefit, likely in the form of a heritage density transfer.

HAS THERE BEEN SUFFICIENT AND EFFECTIVE PUBLIC CONSULTATION?

Public consultation on view corridors and higher buildings has been underway since June 2009, with three rounds of extensive consultation. The outcome of this consultation is summarized at:

<http://vancouver.ca/commsvcs/planning/capacitystudy/feedback.htm>

Throughout the process updates were made to the project website which included presentation boards from open houses, updates on public feedback received, background information and relevant policy, a downloadable walking tour of the view corridors under review and online videos of the view corridors. As well, the website also allowed individuals to sign up for the listserv (currently 254 members) to receive ongoing updates on the process. In addition, a Facebook page was also set up for the study.

Consultation began in June 2009, with the initial round of engagement focusing on better understanding people's values and priorities for view protection and the established view corridors after twenty years of existence. The consultation consisted of four open houses in Downtown and across the city, as well as a statistically-valid online survey of Vancouver residents. Staff also met with resident groups and various interest groups to understand their perspective. The summary of this consultation is available online at the website above. Approximately 1,000 citizens participated in the first round of consultation.

The second round of consultation took place in October 2009 and focused on four concepts for view protection including the introduction of new protected views and additional higher buildings. These concepts were based on the feedback received in the first round of consultation. Three open houses were held Downtown, a

statistically-valid survey of City-wide residents was conducted and numerous meetings with community and interest groups were held to discuss these concepts. At that time there was also an evening public forum and debate on view protection at the downtown SFU campus. Approximately 1,000 citizens participated in the second round of consultation.

The most recent round of public consultation took place in October 2010. The purpose of this consultation was to review a proposal for a revised *General Policy for Higher Buildings*. This work responded to Council's request in January 2010 for staff to explore opportunities for higher buildings generally within existing policy (e.g. outside of protected views with the exception of the QE Park View 3). The consultation consisted of three open houses in the Downtown, as well as several meetings with interest groups. Approximately 500 citizens participated in the most recent round of consultation.

In December 2010, City staff provided a briefing to City Council on the report recommendations, which was attended by citizens and is available for viewing on the City's website. City staff also hosted a public information meeting on January 17, 2011 to ensure that citizens understood the proposals prior to the January 20, 2011 City Council meeting.

In all, approximately 2,500 residents have been directly involved in the study, with countless others learning about the work through media (TV, radio and print media) as well as visits to the website and social media sites.

IS THE METRIC OR IMPERIAL MEASUREMENT CORRECT IN THE VIEW PROTECTION GUIDELINES REFERENCE DATA?

They both are. The original vertical datum of the City of Vancouver was based on an arbitrary assignment of 100 feet to a low point in the City (perhaps the lowest sewer outfall at the time). It was assigned in this manner to avoid negative elevations on other engineering infrastructure. Upon more precise surveys it was found that this arbitrary point was actually 91.37 feet below sea level so the 1958 datum was based on the subtraction of 91.37 feet and multiplication by 0.3048 to convert to metric. The 1958 datum was used until 2005 when minor (centimeter level) adjustments were made to conform to the current GVRD datum.

When the view corridor work was originally adopted in 1989, reference data reflected both the current geodetic measurement and the old City datum. The reason for this was that many individuals in the architectural industry continued to work in the imperial system which referenced the old City datum. As well it was thought that this inclusion of both systems of measurement brought clarity as many of the reference points were older buildings whose data and elevation drawings reflected the imperial elevations. However, through this latest review of the View Protection Guidelines staff have determined that any clarity that may have been provided in the past is now overshadowed by confusion, as the older system of measurement is essentially obsolete in even the local architectural industry. As a result staff intend to change all reference data to an entirely metric reference data set which utilizes the GVRD Datum. This work will be included as part of the consequential house-keeping of policy documents following a Council decision on the current study.