From: "White, Josh" <Josh.White@vancouver.ca>
To: "Direct to Mayor and Council - DL"
Date: 6/23/2026 1:09:40 PM
Subject: Memo to Mayor and Council - clarification on retail areas in the proposed Villages program
Attachments: PDS - Memo to Mayor Council - Villages.pdf

Dear Mayor and Council,

Attached is a memo from Planning, Urban Design and Sustainability:

- It clarifies information with respect to policy and zoning in the retail areas within proposed Villages that Council will consider at Public Hearing July 14.
- This memo will be included in the Villages Public Hearing material. It is not confidential and its information and content can be shared.

Should you have any questions, please contact myself (josh.white@vancouver.ca) or Community Planning Director Neil Hrushowy (neil.hrushowy@vancouver.ca)

Thank you,

Josh White M.Pl.

General Manager | Planning, Urban Design & Sustainability

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CITY OF VANCOUVER

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PLANNING, URBAN DESIGN & SUSTAINABILITY
General Manager's Office

MEMORANDUM

June 23, 2026

TO: Mayor and Council

CC: City Leadership Team
Donny van Dyk, City Manager
Jason Twa, City Clerk
Mellisa Morphy, Deputy Chief of Staff, Mayor's Office

FROM: Josh White
General Manager, Planning, Urban Design and Sustainability

SUBJECT: Clarification of proposed policy and rationale for retail high streets in Villages

RTS #: 018230

Staff have discussed and received comments and questions from the public about the proposed Villages Plan. Staff also met with Councillors Zhou and Meiszner where the Councillors shared feedback from a neighbourhood meeting (focused on another topic) that raised these same comments and questions. In response, Staff would like to address several common misconceptions amongst some members of the public so that all members of Council are able to respond to any additional questions on this topic.

- The retail expansion areas in the Villages Plan, per Sections 2.1 and 3.2 of the Draft Plan, provide the local shops and services necessary to support complete, walkable neighbourhoods. The retail expansion areas represent fewer than 4% of the total number of lots that are proposed to be governed by the Villages Plan.
- 96% of lots allow a full array of housing options that include single detached houses, duplexes, multiplexes, townhouses, Space-Efficient Stair (SES) buildings, and 4-6 storey apartments (see page 8 of the Referral Report) if redevelopment occurs. Some members of the public have been told by other residents that all parcels in the Villages plan are required to either have 4-6 storeys and/or must have ground-floor retail. This is incorrect; only in the retail expansion areas would development be required to provide ground-floor commercial space.
- Nevertheless, Staff are aware of and acknowledge the public comments. If Council wants to respond to these concerns at the public hearing, Council can amend the

proposed Villages Plan and associated by-laws to give effect to representations made at the public hearing.

Further information:

- Staff recommend ground-floor retail requirements in retail expansion areas to promote viable opportunities for new businesses and to help achieve Village Plan objectives of walkability and completeness. Allowing new residential-only buildings on commercial high streets would have long-term impacts on business viability and therefore would weaken walkability, community identity and opportunities for social connection in Villages.
- On the new commercial high streets in the near term, new 4-6 storey mixed-use buildings will be mixed with existing 1-storey retail, along with existing residential buildings. Over time, the commercial high streets will fill in and will vary in form, look and feel from Village to Village, depending on a variety of factors including timing of development, existing buildings and businesses, block patterns and local demand.
- Similar changes have been made through other City plans and policies in recent years, including the Secured Rental Policy (SRP) rezoning enabling policy that has applied in many of the Villages since 2021. The SRP currently covers ~637 blocks (fully or partially) in low-density transition zones and has demonstrated outcomes associated with new residential and mixed-use opportunities aligned with those proposed in the Villages Plan. The SRP has supported 47 active applications that will result in approximately 3,700 units, including 765 units (10 applications) in mixed-use buildings, being built in low-density neighbourhoods across the city. Of the 3,700 rental units, 5% are already completed (170 units) and 44% (1,647 units) are under construction. Projects under the SRP have been distributed throughout neighbourhoods across the city.

Thank you,

Josh White
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