MEMORANDUM

June 25, 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: 2026 Storefronts Report

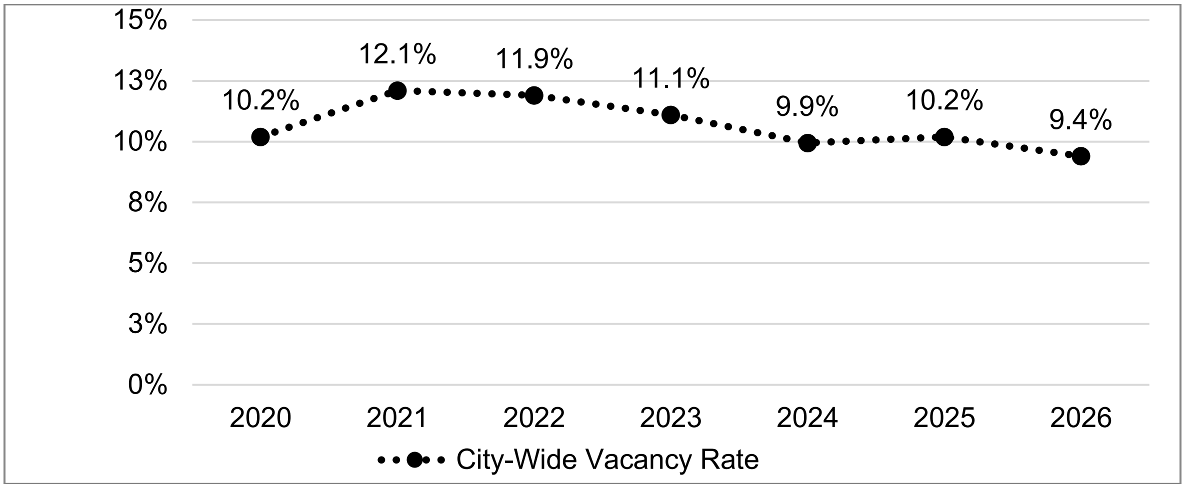
RTS #: N/A

Purpose
This memo provides Council with an update on storefront metrics following the 2026 Storefronts Inventory.

Background
Every year, Council receives for information the results from the Planning department's Storefronts Inventory. Spring 2026 marked the 7th year of the Storefronts Inventory data collection work. The inventory dataset has become a reliable and crucial longitudinal dataset for integrated policy and program development, area planning and BIA strategic planning. The attached report (Appendix A) provides key findings and specific metrics for 2026 (including BIA specific metrics). Metrics include vacancy, turnover, proportion of independent businesses, and business category distribution. The Storefronts Inventory involves in-person reviews of the exteriors of ground floor commercial retail units supported by detailed web research and business license review. The Inventory is citywide and comprehensive. In 2026, the Storefront Inventory included roughly 9,900 storefront sites.

Key Findings: 2026 Vacancy Rates

The citywide vacancy rate has decreased to 9.4% in 2026 (down from 10.2% in 2025). A target healthy vacancy rate is 5-7%. Above 10% is considered unhealthy.



Staff work with the BIAs to share the results, validate the data and discuss the unique findings for each area This improves data accuracy and provides area business and BIA's with important metrics to monitor area health and support business decision making.

Next Steps
The next update report to Council will be provided in Q2 2027 following the 2027 Storefronts Inventory.

If you have any questions or require further information, please contact me or Chris Robertson, Director, City-Wide & Regional Planning, at chris.robertson@vancouver.ca.

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APPENDIX A

CITY OF VANCOUVER

STOREFRONTS REPORT

CITY OF
VANCOUVER

July 2026

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REPORT INTRODUCTION

HEALTHY STOREFRONTS

Vancouver's local shopping areas play an important role in the livability and sustainability of the City's neighbourhoods by providing goods and services within walking distance of residents. Active storefronts support healthy shopping areas and enriches the broader business ecosystem. A storefront vacancy rate between 5 and 7% is considered healthy. To monitor storefront vacancy, City staff perform an annual survey tracking the status of storefronts across the city.

STOREFRONT INVENTORY

At the onset of the pandemic in spring 2020, staff commenced the annual city-wide storefronts inventory to establish a baseline for storefront conditions. The inventory provides a unique dataset enriched by each subsequent edition. The inventory survey comprises of approximately 10,000 sites across the city's local shopping areas and small retail clusters.

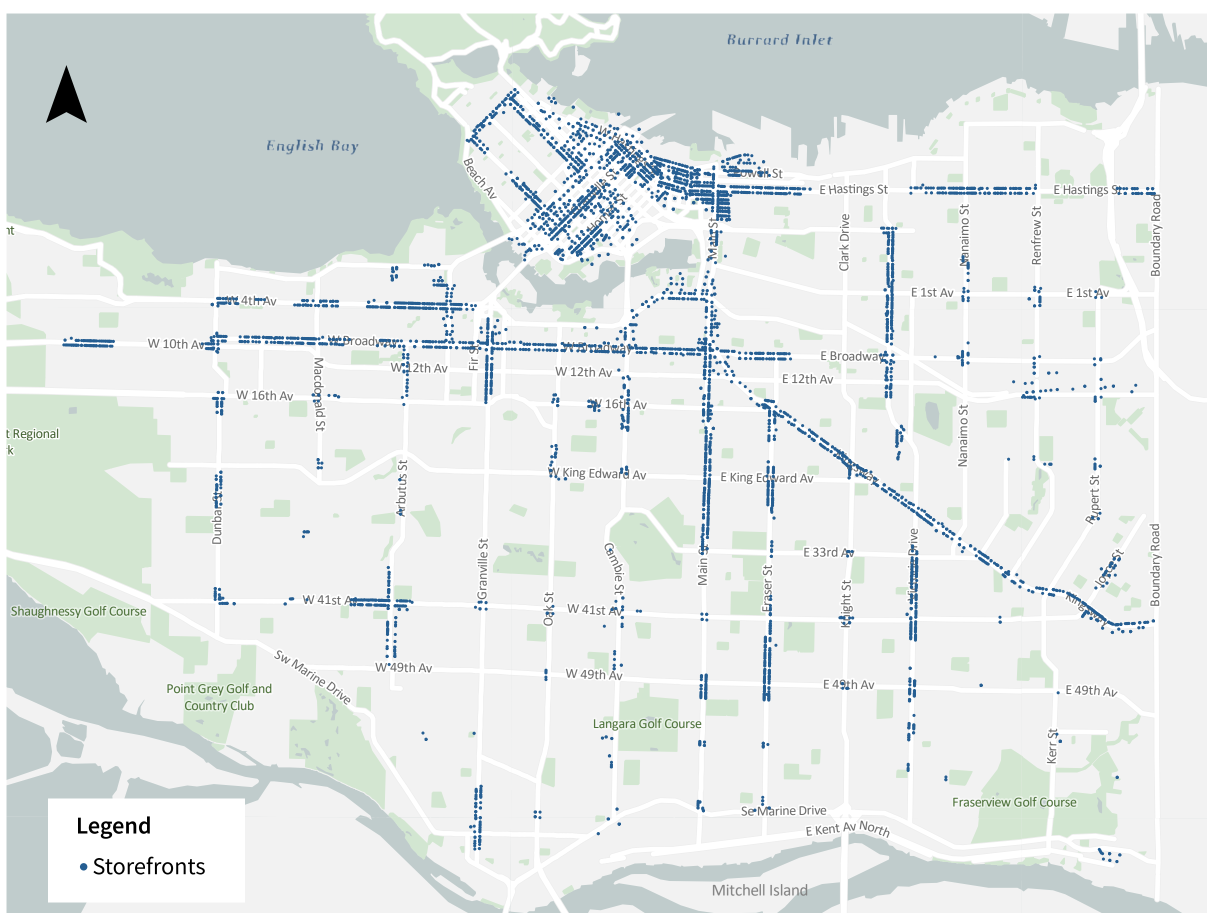
PUBLISHING FINDINGS

In July of 2025, staff provided City Council with the annual update through the 2025 storefronts inventory, an annual report considering storefront trends and metrics including vacancy, turnover (storefront change), ratio of independents, and the distribution of business types. This report updates those findings and provides the annual update for the 2026 storefronts inventory.

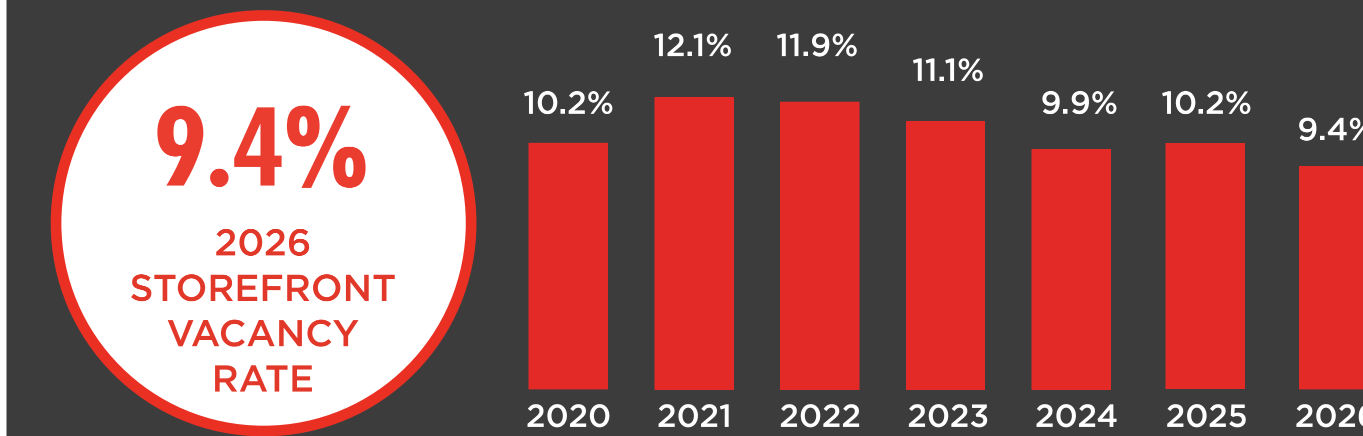
REPORT HIGHLIGHTS

- City-wide vacancy is down 0.8% since 2025, below the pre-pandemic rate of 10.2% (see page 4).
- BIA storefront vacancies continue to trend down with most new vacancies occurring outside of BIAs (see page 10).
- Persistent vacancies, those that have been vacant for 5+ years, account for 30% of all vacancies and 2.8% of all storefronts (see page 5).
- Overall turnover is slightly up compared to 2025 with openings outpacing closings for the 5th year in a row (see page 6).
- Independent stores account for over 75% of storefronts, a stable ratio since 2020 (see page 7).
- City-wide business distribution continues the trend towards experiencial retail with a net increase across Food & Beverage and Service Commercial categories and a slight decrease in Comparison Goods stores (e.g. clothes, furniture, jewlery, etc). This is a four year trend (see page 9).

Location of 2026 City of Vancouver Storefronts

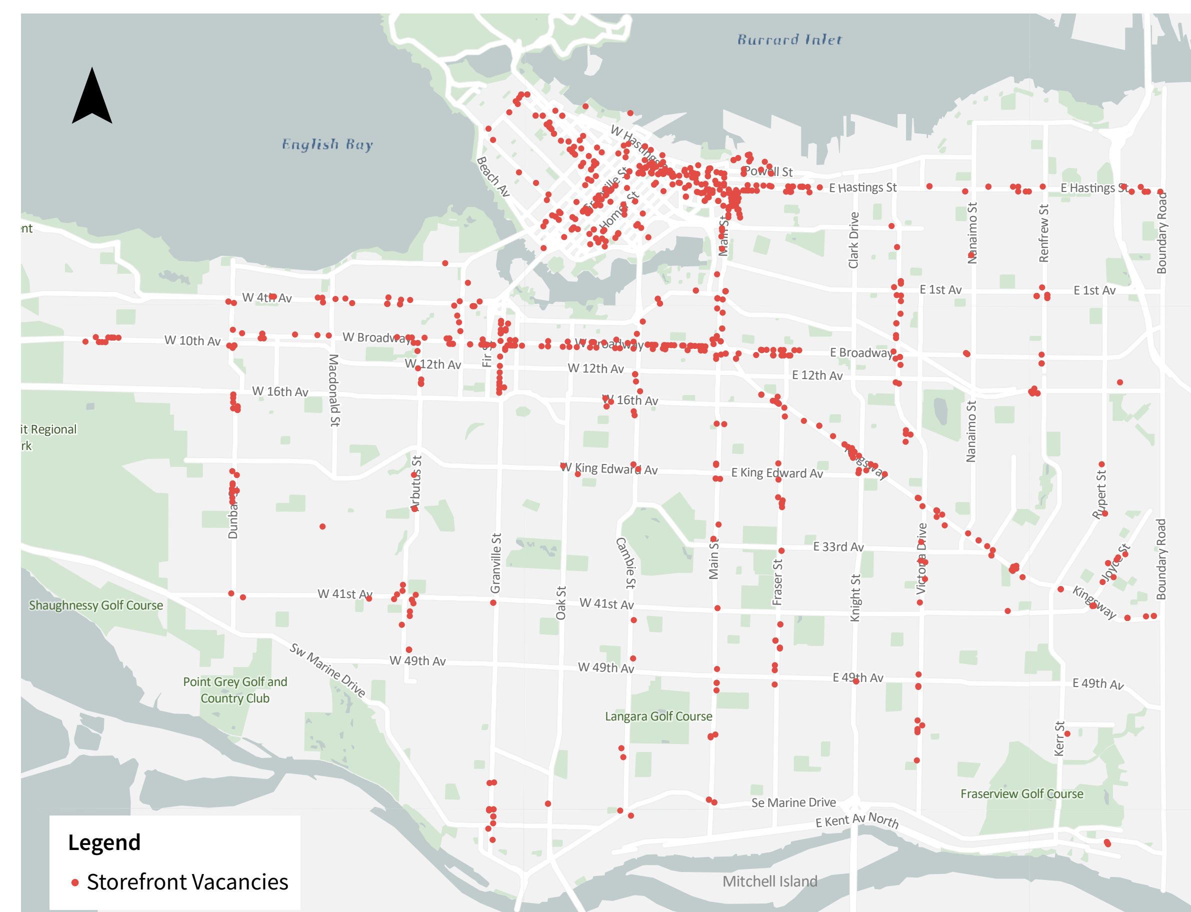


CITY-WIDE VACANCY



THE VACANCY RATE DECREASED TO **9.4%** FROM 10.2% LAST YEAR.

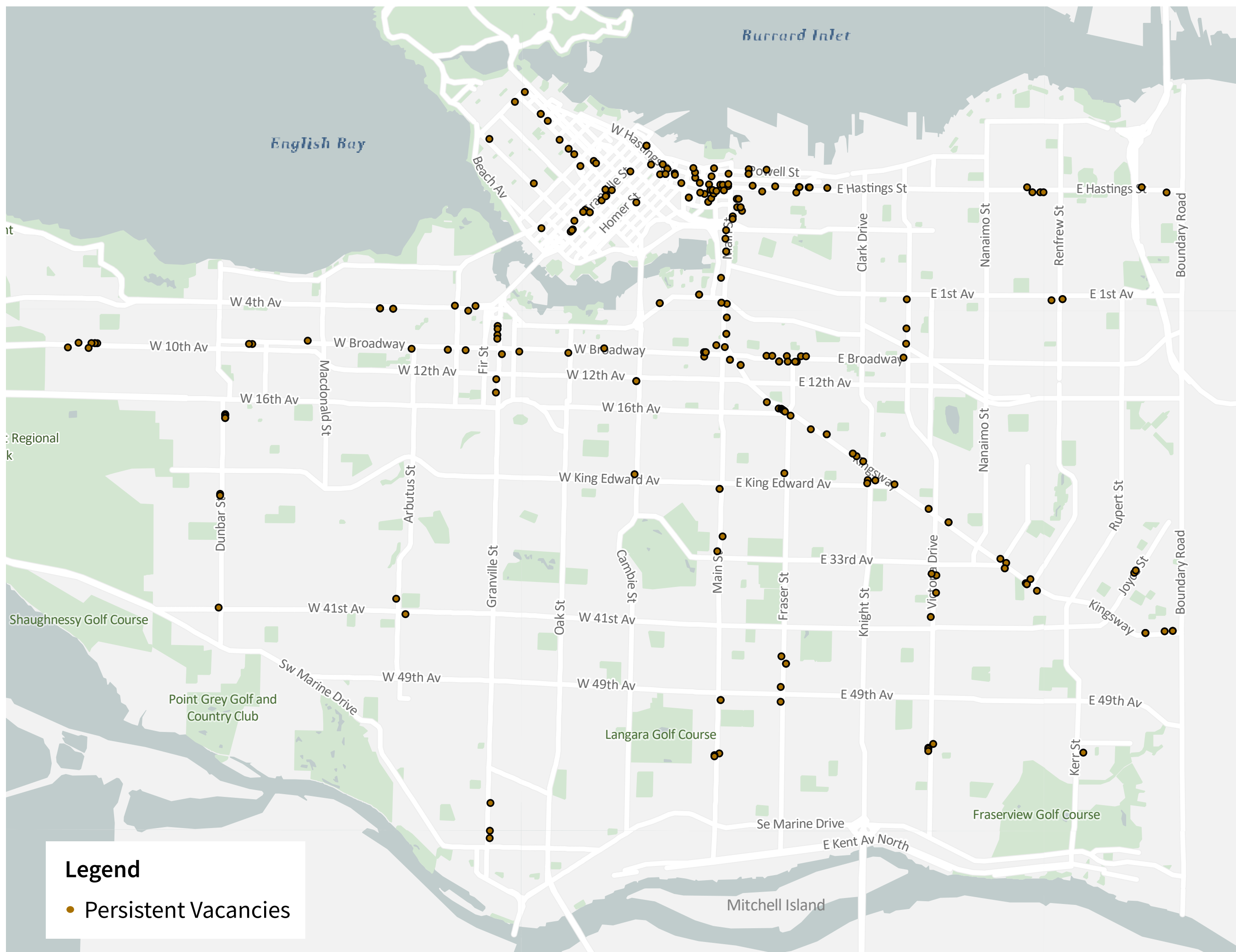
2026 City-wide Storefront Vacancies



TYPES OF VACANCY

Storefront vacancy is a key indicator of a retail area's health. Frictional vacancy refers to temporary, short-term vacancies in retail space due to normal turnover, a healthy part of a functioning market. In contrast, persistent vacancy indicates long-term, often problematic, vacancies that may signal deeper issues in the market, building or area. The frictional vacancy rate range of 5-7% allows for the natural turnover in retail spaces.

2026 Persistently Vacant Storefronts

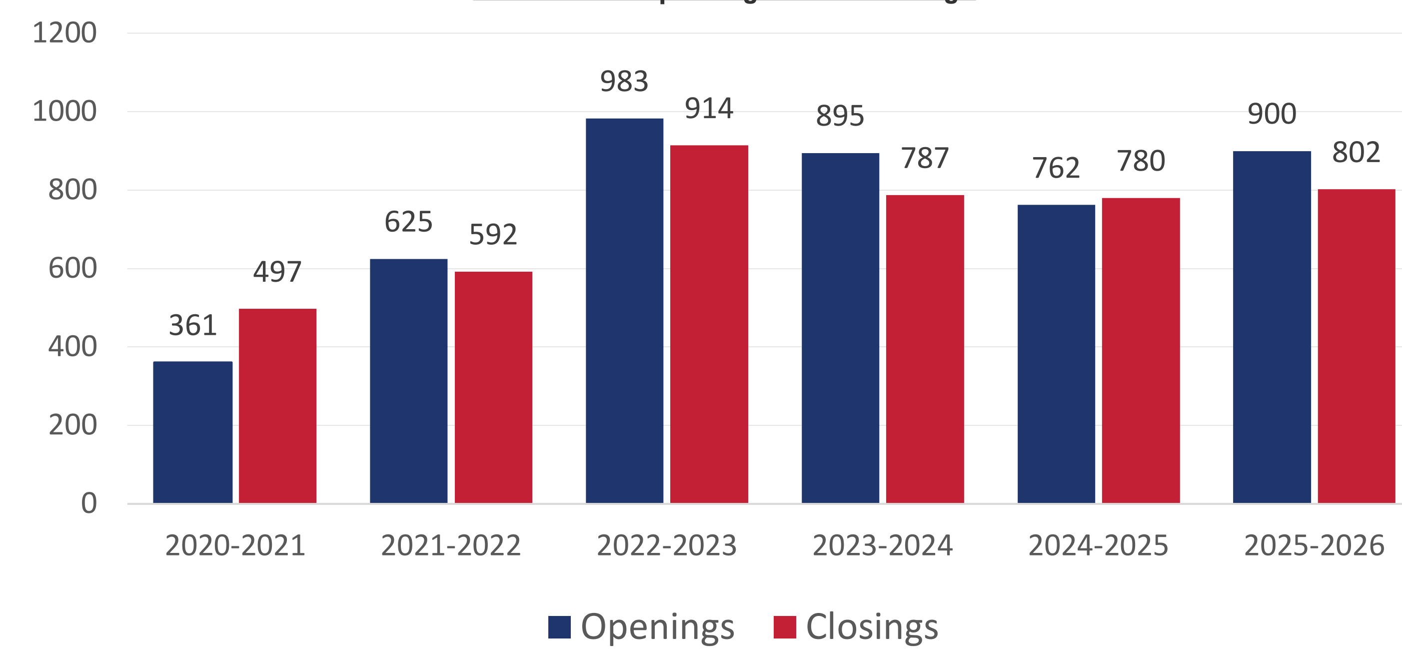


Persistent vacancies (5+ years) account for 30% of all vacancies and 2.8% of all storefronts. Persistent vacancies are most heavily concentrated in the DTES with 50 total across the Hastings Crossing, Chinatown, and Strathcona BIAs.

CITY-WIDE STOREFRONT TURNOVER

Turnover refers to a change in storefront occupancy. Turnover is a normal part of a market cycle. However, high turnover has been found to be correlated with high vacancy and could indicate challenging conditions at the local level. Conversely, low vacancy prevents a healthy amount of turnover where new goods and services cannot enter and existing stores are unable to move or expand. Storefront closures and openings provide detail about storefront turnover. Openings have outpaced closings since 2021. Openings continue to outpace stores closing in 2026 with slightly more turnover overall. The five-year trend indicates more stability in the market and overall improvement of conditions.

Storefront Openings and Closings



Restaurants account for 15% of all storefronts and the most turnover of all storefronts with 141 opening and 144 closing over the last year. New restaurants filled 25 previously vacant storefronts (the most of any business type) with the remainder (115) replacing existing restaurants.

CITY-WIDE RATIO OF INDEPENDENT STOREFRONTS

INDEPENDENT STOREFRONTS

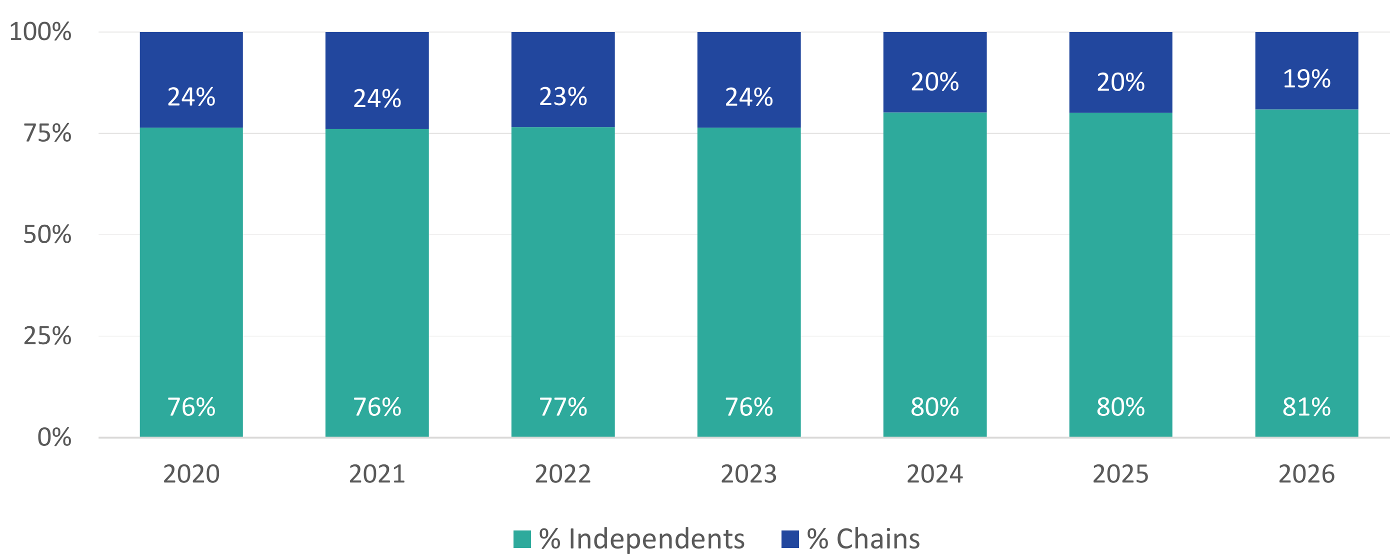
Independent refers to businesses with less than 4 locations. Conversely, “chain” refers to businesses with 4 or more locations[1]. Independent storefronts provide more local character and support greater diversity in the local economy.

RATIO OF INDEPENDENT STOREFRONTS

Independents consistently account for over 75% of all storefronts in the city.

The top 3 types of chain storefronts in 2026 are Fast Food (290), Financial Services (182), and Coffee Shops (133) businesses. The leading 3 types of independent storefronts in 2026 are Restaurants (1314), Barbershops & Salons (819), and Medical & Dental Services (414) businesses.

Ratio of Independent to Chain Storefronts City-wide 2020-2026



[1] Statistics Canada
[2] Retail-Commercial District Small Business Study

CITY-WIDE DISTRIBUTION OF STOREFRONT BUSINESSES

STOREFRONT BUSINESS CATEGORIES

Automotive Goods and Services
Businesses involved with motor vehicles.

Comparison Goods
Business that sell goods purchased less frequently than convenience goods and for which consumers are likely to do comparison shopping such as clothing.

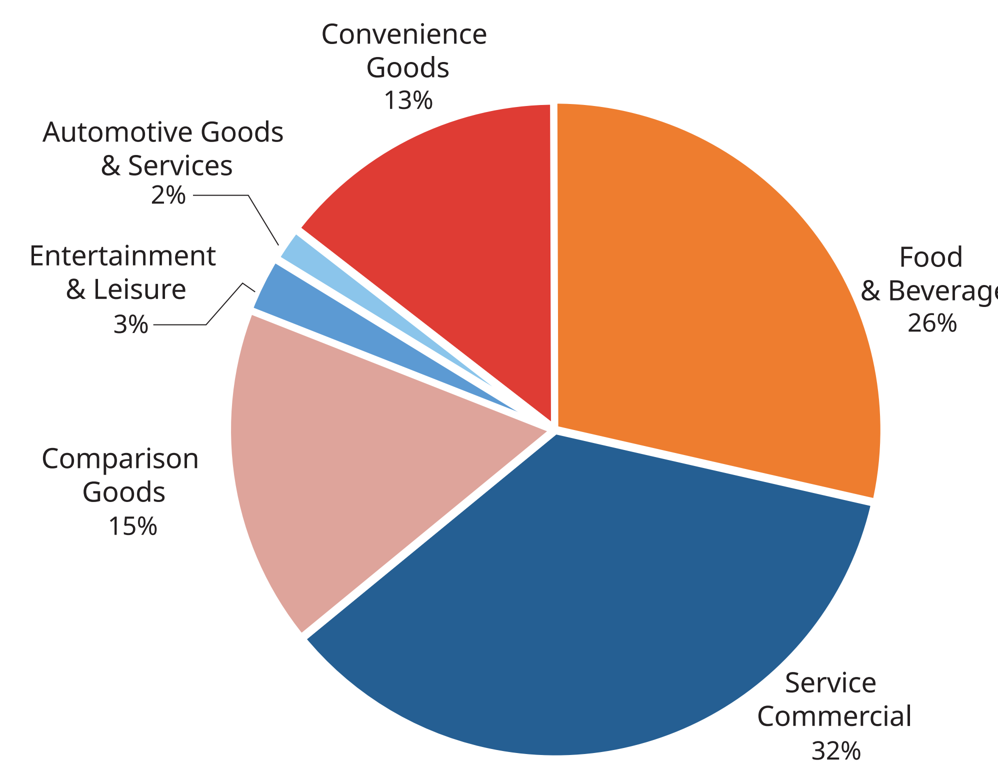
Convenience Goods
Businesses that sell goods purchased frequently such as groceries.

Entertainment & Leisure
Entertainment or recreation venues including theatres, gyms, and yoga studios.

Food & Beverage
All types of restaurants, eating places, and drinking places.

Service Commercial
Commercial services such as hair cutting.

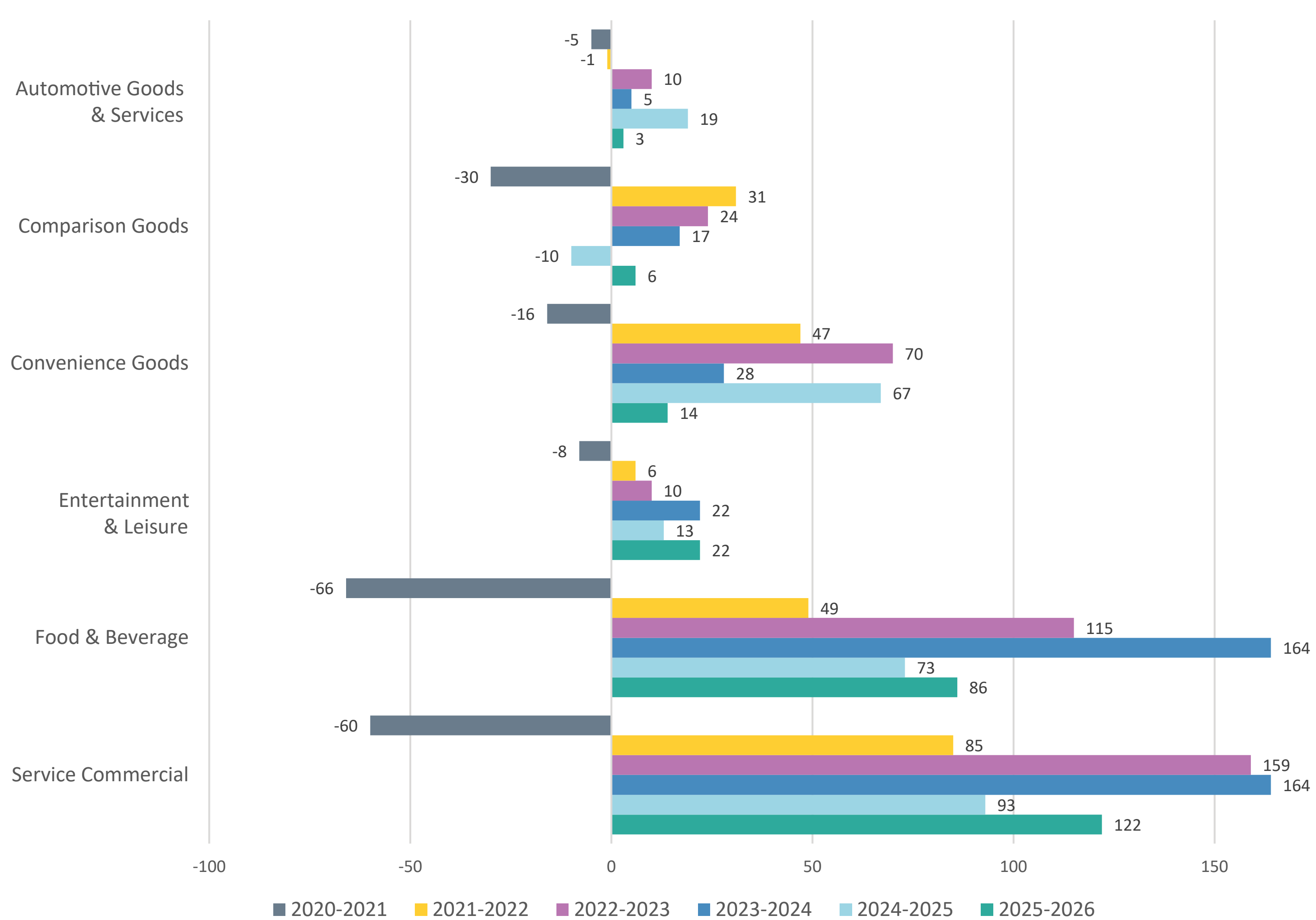
Distribution of General Business Categories



CHANGES IN STORES BY CATEGORY

The distribution of stores overall has trended towards stores focusing on customer experience such as Food & Beverage and Service Commercial stores, increasing in number proportional to other category increases. Over the last year, the net change in the number of stores has improved for all categories accounting for the annual drop in city-wide storefront vacancies. Service Commercial, Food & Beverage, and Entertainment & Recreation stores lead the way with 144, 88, and 22 net new store respectively. Annual Net Change by Number of Stores in General Business Category 2020-2026 Chart.

Annual Change by Number of Stores in General Business Category 2020-2026



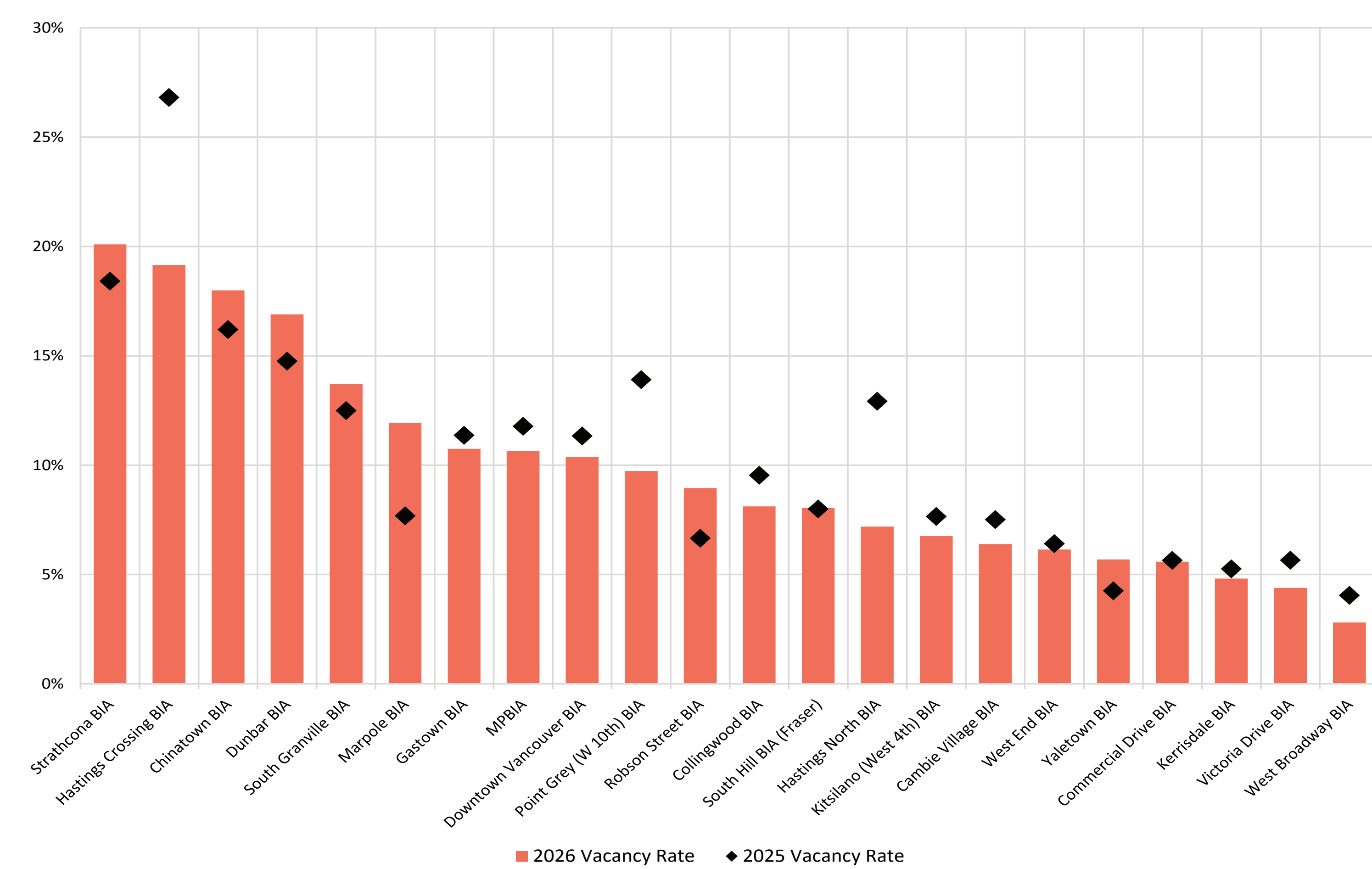
BIA STOREFRONT METRICS

Business Improvement Areas (BIAs) are specially funded business districts managed by non-profit groups of property owners and business tenants. The City of Vancouver has 22 BIAs who aim to promote and improve their respective business districts. The following lists storefront metrics for each BIA.

BIA VACANCY

Retail areas function best with a health vacancy rate between 5-7%, with above 10% considered unhealthy. In 2026, the three BIAs with the highest vacancy rates experienced some improvement. These BIAs covered most of the DTES with the vacancy rate for Hastings Crossing BIA dropping 7.7% to 19.2% compared to a year ago. 15 businesses filled vacancies and 6 vacant units were demolished for development. Strathcona BIA (20.1%), and Chinatown BIA (18.%) vacancy rates remained similar to 2025. In both BIAs improvements through filled vacancies from 2025 were offset by new vacancies in 2026. Unhealthily low vacancy (below 5%) continues to be a concern in some areas as this indicates a tightening of supply and a corresponding increase of lease rates. Overall, vacancy in the BIAs continues to trend downwards since 2021.

2026 BIA Vacancy Rates



BIA STOREFRONTS METRICS

BIA	Vacancy: 2026	Vacancy: 1YR Change	Vacancy: 5YR Change	Turnover: Storefronts that Changed	Proportion of Independents: 2026 Ratio	Proportion of Independents: 1 YR Change in Ratio	Proportion of Independents: 5 YR Change in Ratio
Cambie Village BIA	6%	-1%	-4%	14%	71%	1%	5%
Chinatown BIA	18%	2%	2%	13%	96%	0%	8%
Collingwood BIA	8%	-1%	-2%	7%	85%	1%	7%
Commercial Drive BIA	6%	0%	-3%	6%	84%	0%	4%
Downtown Vancouver BIA	10%	-1%	-2%	13%	73%	2%	10%
Dunbar BIA	17%	2%	0%	17%	76%	1%	13%
South Hill BIA (Fraser)	8%	0%	-2%	9%	77%	1%	3%
Gastown BIA	11%	-1%	-3%	8%	91%	2%	14%
Hastings Crossing BIA	19%	-8%	-9%	17%	91%	2%	16%
Hastings North BIA	7%	-6%	-4%	14%	82%	0%	2%
Kerrisdale BIA	5%	0%	2%	11%	75%	0%	7%
Kitsilano (West 4th) BIA	7%	-1%	-5%	13%	67%	2%	14%
Marpole BIA	12%	4%	1%	9%	79%	1%	11%
Mount Pleasant BIA	11%	-1%	-1%	13%	86%	0%	3%
Point Grey (W 10th) BIA	10%	-4%	-8%	13%	80%	1%	11%
Robson Street BIA	9%	2%	-7%	16%	58%	0%	19%
South Granville BIA	14%	1%	2%	14%	74%	-1%	13%
Strathcona BIA	20%	2%	3%	6%	98%	0%	8%
Victoria Drive BIA	4%	-1%	-7%	6%	88%	0%	4%
West Broadway BIA	3%	-1%	-5%	8%	77%	-1%	4%
West End BIA	6%	0%	-3%	17%	77%	0%	5%
Yaletown BIA	6%	1%	-3%	10%	77%	1%	13%

BIA STOREFRONTS METRICS

	Change in the Types of Businesses											
BIA	Convenience Goods		Food & Beverage		Service Commercial		Comparison Goods		Entertainment & Leisure		Automotive Goods & Services	
	1 YR Change	5 YR Change	1 YR Change	5 YR Change	1 YR Change	5 YR Change	1 YR Change	5 YR Change	1 YR Change	5 YR Change	1 YR Change	5 YR Change
Cambie Village BIA	0%	1%	0%	1%	0%	-1%	-1%	-1%	1%	0%	0%	0%
Chinatown BIA	0%	-2%	-1%	2%	-1%	-1%	1%	-1%	0%	2%	0%	0%
Collingwood BIA	-1%	1%	0%	4%	0%	-5%	2%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Commercial Drive BIA	0%	1%	1%	0%	-1%	0%	0%	-1%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Downtown Vancouver BIA	0%	0%	0%	2%	1%	4%	-1%	-6%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Dunbar BIA	1%	2%	-2%	-3%	0%	2%	1%	-1%	0%	0%	0%	0%
South Hill BIA (Fraser)	1%	0%	0%	3%	-1%	-4%	0%	1%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Gastown BIA	0%	3%	0%	2%	-2%	-1%	1%	-4%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Hastings Crossing BIA	1%	3%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	-2%	0%	-2%	0%	0%
Hastings North BIA	0%	0%	1%	2%	-1%	-1%	-1%	-2%	0%	1%	0%	0%
Kerrisdale BIA	0%	-1%	-1%	0%	0%	2%	1%	-1%	1%	1%	0%	0%
Kitsilano (West 4th) BIA	0%	1%	2%	0%	0%	-1%	-2%	-1%	1%	1%	-1%	0%
Marpole BIA	0%	1%	0%	-1%	0%	0%	-1%	-1%	0%	1%	0%	0%
Mount Pleasant BIA	1%	1%	1%	2%	0%	-1%	-1%	-2%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Point Grey (W 10th) BIA	-1%	-1%	0%	0%	3%	2%	-1%	-1%	0%	1%	0%	0%
Robson Street BIA	1%	4%	0%	-2%	-1%	0%	0%	-2%	0%	0%	0%	0%
South Granville BIA	1%	3%	0%	0%	-1%	0%	0%	-3%	0%	-1%	0%	0%
Strathcona BIA	1%	1%	-1%	0%	0%	-1%	-1%	0%	1%	1%	0%	0%
Victoria Drive BIA	0%	-1%	1%	2%	-1%	-2%	-1%	-1%	1%	1%	1%	1%
West Broadway BIA	0%	0%	-1%	0%	1%	3%	0%	-2%	0%	-1%	0%	0%
West End BIA	-1%	-2%	2%	2%	-1%	1%	0%	-1%	0%	0%	0%	-1%
Yaletown BIA	-1%	0%	-4%	-2%	5%	4%	0%	-4%	0%	1%	0%	0%

METHODOLOGY & ASSUMPTIONS

DEFINITIONS & NOTES

STOREFRONTS INVENTORY

The City of Vancouver's annual Storefronts Inventory surveys storefronts in each local shopping area in the city. Staff observe over 10,000 ground floor sites from the sidewalk for activity in commercial areas across the city each Spring. Staff use a GIS app to efficiently make updates directly in the field. The data is validated through the City of Vancouver business licence data, online research and BIA feedback. Staff code the validated data for business categories to allow for analysis. Non-retail storefronts such as office lobbies, churches, libraries and vacant lots are not included in the calculations.

STOREFRONTS UNIVERSE

A storefront is a ground floor street facing commercial retail unit. As not all businesses are in storefronts (e.g. offices, industrial spaces etc.) not all businesses in the city are included in the annual inventory. The total number of storefronts surveyed is not the entire "universe" of storefronts in the city. The 2020 inventory focused on the high-streets and large storefront clusters, i.e most storefronts in the city. Since 2021, these areas have been fine-tuned each year adding new and additional storefronts in existing survey areas and adding new clusters. Storefront totals change from year to year due to existing storefronts splitting and merging, new commercial space opening, missed storefronts added, and new areas added.

VACANCY CODING

A storefront is considered "vacant" if it is unoccupied, regardless of lease status or permitting status during the annual spring field survey, i.e., the space appears "inactive" and could be occupied. Vacancy includes storefronts used for storage. Storefronts under tenant improvement are considered "Vacant Under Construction" as the space is unavailable, and the work could take more than a year to complete. This category is separate from vacant.

TYPES OF VACANCY

Frictional vacancy refers to temporary, short-term vacancies in retail space due to normal turnover, a healthy part of a functioning market. In contrast, persistent vacancy indicates long-term, often problematic, vacancies that may signal deeper issues in the market, building or area. Location, market conditions, and a range of other factors impact what is considered persistent or the length of time a storefront becomes an unhealthy vacancy. This report considers storefronts vacant 5 or more years as persistent.

HEALTHY VACANCY

The 2020 Retail-Commercial District Small Business Study recommended storefront vacancy as an indicator of retail health. Specifically, the study identified 5-7% as the ideal range of healthy (frictional) vacancy. Over 10% was described as unhealthy. This report uses 5-10% as the threshold for health vacancy levels in an area.

INDEPENDENT STOREFRONTS

Independents have less than 4 locations. Chains refer "to an organization operating four or more outlets in the same industry class under the same legal ownership at any time during the survey year" [source]

TURNOVER

Turnover refers to storefront sites that have changed between inventory years. A site with an opening and closing is only counted once.

OPENINGS AND CLOSINGS

Openings represent all businesses that now occupy a space that was either vacant or previously a different business in the prior inventory. Closings represent sites that are now vacant in the current inventory or businesses that changed since the prior inventory. Both openings and closings do not include "Vacant Under Construction" nor "Non-Retail" sites.

DATA FIDELITY

A master index tracks all storefront spaces in each inventory year to track revisions. Any errors identified are corrected back through each inventory year as appropriate.

2020 VACANCY DATA REVISION

The original 2020 storefront inventory set the baseline for pre-COVID vacancy rates. However, some of the survey work overlapped with COVID restrictions and the closure of many stores. Stores that were temporarily closed due to government restrictions remain recorded as "occupied" in the 2020 inventory. Storefronts that appeared to be temporarily closed during the survey but remained closed in 2021, have been re-coded as "vacant". This adjustment has increased the 2020 city-wide storefront vacancy rate from 9.3% to 10.2%.

BUSINESS CATEGORY

The use of general business category aggregates businesses of common business types. The following table provides a break down of each category by business type and provides examples.

BUSINESS CATEGORY	Business Type e.g., examples
AUTOMOTIVE GOODS & SERVICES	Car services e.g. Gas Station, Car Service, Car Sales, Car Rentals
	Car goods e.g. Car parts
COMPARISON GOODS	Office goods e.g. Office supplies, Stationary
	Art goods e.g. Art gallery & framing, Camera & photo, Antiques, Records & physical media, Musical Instruments
	General merchandise e.g. Second-hand merchandise, General store, Dollar store
	Clothing e.g. All clothing and specialty clothing stores
	Accessories e.g. Luggage and bags, Jewelery, Footwear
	Home goods e.g. Housewares, Appliances, Electronics, Furniture, Home furnishings, Linen
	General hardware e.g. Hardware, Building supplies & services
	Specialty hardware e.g. Paint, Garden Supplies
	Sporting goods e.g. Sporting goods, Bicycle
	Personal goods e.g. Bookstore, Toys & hobbies, Gifts, Glasses & lens, Pets & pet supplies
CONVENIENCE GOODS	Food retail e.g. Supermarket, Grocer & produce, Convenience, Specialty, Other food retail
	General pharmacy e.g. Pharmacy only, Pharmacy plus (sells some additional products), Pharmacy full retail mix
	Convenience Retail e.g. Health & beauty, Specialty
	Regulated goods e.g. Liquor, Cannabis, Other regulated goods
ENTERTAINMENT & LEISURE	Entertainment venue e.g. Live performance venue, Digital entertainment, Cultural venue, Casino, Recreation
	Exercise venue e.g. Fitness & yoga & martial arts
FOODS & BEVERAGE	Drinks & beverages e.g. Bar or pub, Cafe & specialty
	Food services e.g. Fast food, Restaurant, Specialty
SERVICE COMMERCIAL	Personal services e.g. Barber & salon, Shoe repair, Dry cleaner & laundromat, Tailor, Optometrist, Video rental & sales, Travel agency, Cell service
	Office services e.g. Printing & delivery, Office services, Instructional, Elementary & secondary school
	Professional services e.g. Health services, Medical & dental offices, House & property services, Financial services, Legal & Accounting services, Professional services, Repair & trade services, Business services, Animals services
	Community Services e.g. Government & social services, Community centres & organizations