

# BROADWAY PLAN

## Draft Jobs and Economy Policies

March 2022



# Jobs and Economy

## Introduction

The Broadway Plan area is a key employment centre, serving as a vital crossroads for economic activity at the intersection of business, education, healthcare, government, industrial operations, arts, culture, non-profit work and recreation. There are more than 84,000 jobs based in the Broadway Plan area today, making it the second largest employment centre in the Province. Projections show that there is strong demand for more employment space in the area over the long-term, with the construction of the new Broadway Subway making the area even more attractive to employers, entrepreneurs and workers.

## City-wide Context

The City of Vancouver and the Metro Vancouver Regional District are committed to ensuring a strong and sustainable economy. As a regional centre for employment and economic activity, the Broadway Plan area has an important role to play in achieving this objective. Two key policy documents articulate the goals related to jobs and the economy at the Municipal and Regional levels. These documents are important in setting the context for the future of the Broadway Plan area:

- » **Metro 2050: Regional Growth Strategy (2022)** – The regional growth strategy for Metro Vancouver supports a strong, sustainable regional economy through land use regulations and transportation policy. Its policies envisage a region where industrial and agricultural lands are protected, the business sectors dependent on these lands thrive and commerce flourishes in Urban Centres throughout the region.
- » **Metro Vancouver Regional Industrial Lands Strategy (MVRILS - 2021)** – Outlines the challenges being faced by the region's industrial lands and puts forward 34 recommendations, organized into 10 priority actions, and grouped into four Big Moves. The recommended actions in the MRVILS seek to balance regional objectives with local contexts.

In addition to the policies above, City staff undertook the **Employment Lands and Economy Review (ELER - endorsed by Council in 2020)** which set the economic foundations of the Vancouver Plan and the Broadway Plan. Informed by extensive consultation with the city's business and industrial stakeholders, the ELER reviewed and summarized the city's key economic issues and challenges, and forecasted anticipated employment space demands up to 2051.

## Vision

In 2050 the Broadway Plan area is home to a large and diverse mix of employment opportunities, shops and services. A diverse mix of pre-Plan and new office developments provide space for professional services, health and education, research, technology and non-profit service providers. This is complemented by the expanded availability of hotel accommodation, at various service levels, along the Broadway corridor, facilitating the exchange of people and ideas at a national and international level.

Broadway's light industrial areas offer space for a wide range of activities centred on production, distribution and repair, and extending into arts and culture, health sciences as well as media and high technology businesses. The supply of employment spaces in the area is broad, allowing for a variety of businesses, from nascent start-ups to more mature operations, to find the appropriate type for their activities and preferred tenure.

The area's high streets serve as the vibrant hearts of the neighbourhoods they serve, supporting a thriving small business sector, while adjoining residential areas are home to a variety of local-serving commercial uses that add to the area's highly walkable nature.

## Key Directions

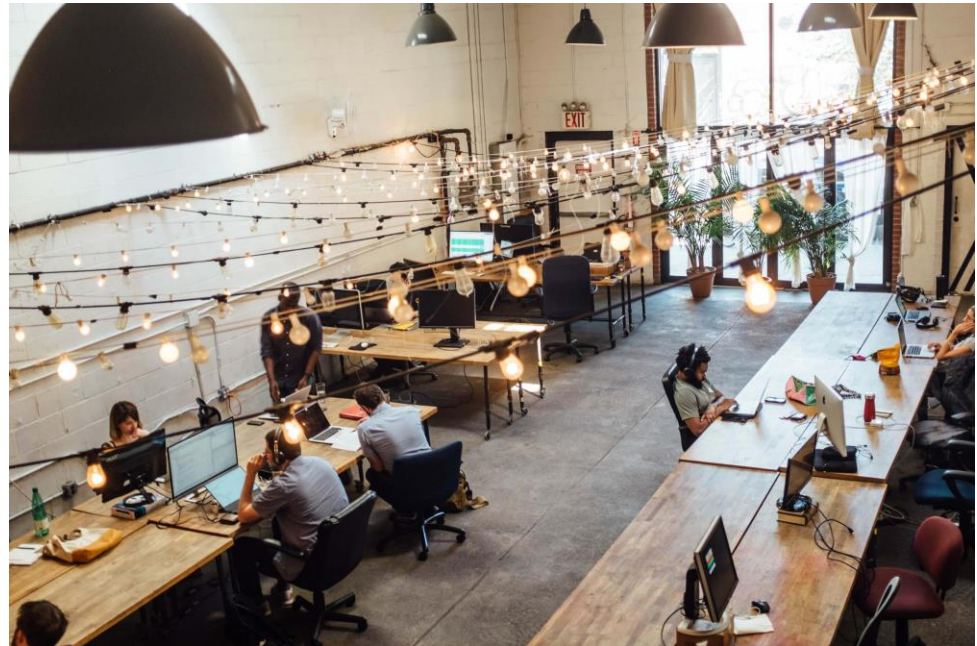
- » Support existing commercial areas and small businesses.
- » Add local-serving shops, services and employment into existing Residential Areas.
- » Protect and intensify industrial / employment areas.
- » Enable the supply of major office and hotel space to meet demand over the long term.

# Plan Policies

## Existing Commercial Areas and Small Businesses

The Broadway Plan area is home to a wide range of shops, restaurants, and services. In many cases, the existing commercial tenants are fixtures in their neighbourhood and provide services that are essential to community well-being. Many of these commercial tenants are small independent businesses, including heritage / legacy businesses, family-run businesses, non-English speaking businesses, ethnic, newcomer and IBPOC businesses as well as a range of social enterprises and non-profit tenants engaged in arts, culture and the provision of social services and food assets.

As change and development occurs in the Broadway area, support for existing local businesses will be critical to ensure that they are able to remain in the city.



- » Focus new growth away from the Villages to help minimize redevelopment pressures on local businesses.
- » In close proximity to commercial high streets, add opportunities for residential growth to ensure a population density that can support local business in the area.
- » Work with Business Improvement Associations (BIAs) and other community partners to assist businesses and landlords to fill vacancies quickly.

- » Amend land use regulations to provide greater flexibility for new business models and activities in existing commercial areas.
- » Amend policies regulating storefront widths, unit sizes, and ground-level unit configurations to enhance pedestrian interest and provide opportunities for affordable storefronts, while maintaining opportunities for retail and non-retail anchors.
- » Continue to advocate to the Province for adoption of a split assessment model for commercial property taxation, i.e. the 'commercial sub-class' proposal recommended in 2019 by the Intergovernmental Working Group, or other similar solution, which would allow municipalities to set a lower tax rate on the unused development potential of underbuilt commercial properties.
- » Monitor commercial area health and partner with BIAs on initiatives to address business mix and vacancy, including measures to augment BIA in-house capacity for data collection and tracking.
- » Continue to develop tools and programs to facilitate BIA- and community-led all-season programming in plazas to enliven public space and support local arts and culture. Continue to support artists and arts organizations to create temporary public art in retail-commercial districts.
- » Continue to explore and implement car-free and car-light retail areas while considering the needs for cycling, transit, loading, deliveries, and servicing and vehicle access/parking.
- » Continue to manage on-street curb space in retail areas to balance the needs for loading, passenger zones, bus stops, bike access, sidewalks, public spaces and patios, and parking.
- » Advocate to senior government for additional supports and services for people experiencing challenges with housing, mental health and addiction, and other issues that can have impacts on safety and/or the perception of safety, of customers, employees and residents.
- » Continue and enhance public realm maintenance and improvement work that is critical to commercial area success, including removal of litter and graffiti, sanitation, sidewalk and street repair, as well as the maintenance of street lighting and signage.
- » Where business relocation is necessary, due to redevelopment or other factors, ensure that businesses are supported with reliable relocation planning resource materials.

- » Seek no net loss of retail-commercial space in redevelopment of large sites such as malls and shopping centres.

## Local-Serving Shops, Services and Employment in New Areas

The city's land use is a major determinant of proximity to daily needs for workers and residents. Locating more shops and services within primarily residential areas that currently lack these amenities will help reduce the need for longer trips and create more walkable, complete neighbourhoods.

**Figure 1: Locations of current and potential future neighbourhood serving retail**



- » Enable new local-serving commercial spaces broadly throughout the Residential Areas for businesses like cafes, small restaurants, local grocery stores, pharmacies and bakeries.
- » Provide greater opportunities for home-based businesses in residential areas by amending the Zoning & Licensing Bylaw, similar to those of surrounding municipalities.
- » Identify areas where the provision of local serving commercial space will be sought in new development (see Figure 1).
- » Add new commercial areas by expanding coverage of existing mixed-use commercial high streets, such as along Fraser Street, Arbutus Street, and Broadway east of Prince Albert Street.



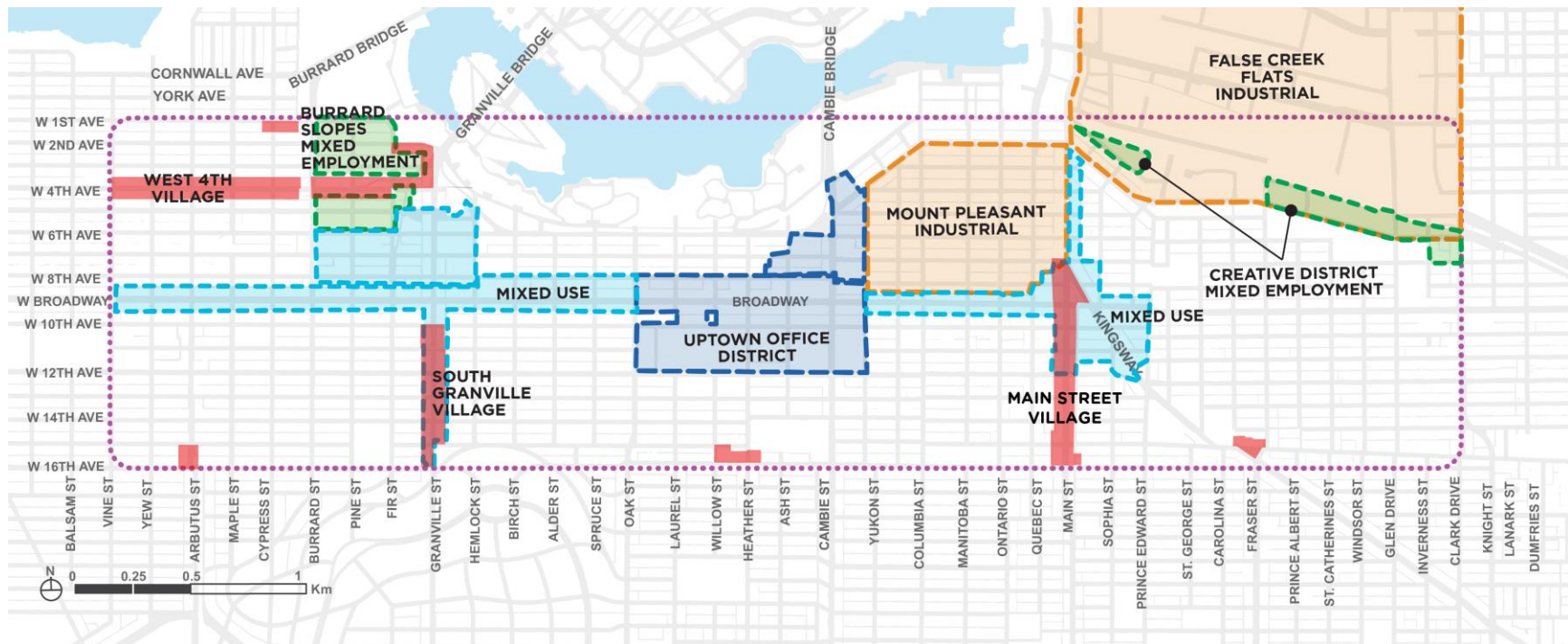
**Image (right):** *The Federal Store in Mount Pleasant*

## Industrial and Employment Areas

The city's industrial and employment lands are critically important to the productivity and resilience of Vancouver's overall economy. Demand for industrial space continues to grow steadily with vacancy rates persistently below 1%, while only 7% of the city's land area (846 hectares) is dedicated to these uses.

The Broadway Plan seeks to protect and intensify these areas while recognizing the unique role that they play in the broader economy as a home for a variety of activities that cannot be accommodated elsewhere.

**Figure 2: Broadway employment areas**





- » Recognize and foster Mount Pleasant, Burrard Slopes, and the Creative District of the False Creek Flats as higher density, more intensive industrial and employment areas within Vancouver's economy.
- » Increase capacity for light industrial and compatible employment spaces in regionally-designated Industrial and Employment areas.
- » Continue to restrict residential uses in regionally-designated Industrial and Employment areas.
- » Continue to support traditional production, distribution and repair (PDR) industrial uses on the ground level in order to preserve the viability of these key city-serving activities.
- » Support existing cultural and arts spaces which require access to industrial lands for production, and incentivize development of new industrial arts and culture spaces, including Artist Studio – Class B.
- » Increase permitted heights and densities in these areas through the Broadway Plan to help modernize and intensify the innovation, creative, bio-tech and city-serving industrial functions of the area while maintaining the ratio of required industrial density to other lighter uses in these regionally-designated Industrial areas.
- » Explore flexibility in upper level industrial spaces by permitting lighter-impact, hybrid industrial uses in higher floors. Such intermediate uses do not require the regular movement of large quantities of materials but need the taller ceiling clearances and open floor plans of functional industrial spaces to operate due to equipment or activity demands. These uses cannot functionally take place in spaces built for office activities but do not require direct access to loading as most production, distribution and repair uses for which the ground level spaces are reserved.
- » Increase flexibility in uses to allow small-scale service and retail functions for local employees.
- » Ensure that educational institutions in these areas are able to expand over the long term to meet demand and support economic growth and diversification in the city and region.
- » Explore the establishment of BIAs in industrial/employment areas, such as the Armoury District in Burrard Slopes.
- » Consider childcare and other uses that have a functional or economic link to industrial uses or area employees in light industrial zones.

- » Review regulations for lounges accessory to Brewing or Distilling Manufacturers.

## Office and Hotel Space

The Broadway Plan area, and in particular the Uptown Office District, is home to the second highest concentration of jobs in the Province, and is the preferred location for many growing sectors such as technology and healthcare. The area is a key location for intensification of both office and hotel space to address capacity gaps in this high demand, transit-accessible area.

- » Intensify the Uptown Office District and Extension area for commercial uses only (office, hotel, service and retail) in recognition of the area's critical economic role as the City's second downtown.
- » Focus the highest intensity (height and density) of new office buildings in the Uptown Office District and in close proximity to Broadway Subway stations.
- » Continue to support office development along the entirety of the Broadway Corridor.
- » In Broadway Station Areas and Broadway Shoulder Areas, require a minimum amount of job space (non-residential uses) on the lower floors of mixed-use buildings (e.g. floors 1-5).
- » Create targets for new hotel rooms in the Broadway Plan area to ensure a net gain of rooms over time to meet demand, including in key locations/destinations such as major employment areas, near Subway stations, etc.
- » Explore land use tools for incentivizing hotels across a range of service and affordability levels.



