

Downtown Eastside Policy Updates to Increase Social Housing

Why are we here?

The Downtown Eastside Plan (2014) identified the urgent need for self-contained social housing at affordable rents. This is supported by feedback from the DTES Plan and through recent community engagement at the DTES Plan Community Fair.

Under the Housing Vancouver Strategy: Three-year Action Plan, modest increases in density and height to facilitate the delivery of more social housing were allowed in recently approved community plans.

As a result, this policy review was identified as a priority action in our DTES Plan Implementation update memo to Council in autumn 2020, and also included as a quick start action in the October 2020 Vancouver Plan Phase 1 report as it aligns with long-term City housing objectives and supports partnership and funding opportunities to create more social housing.

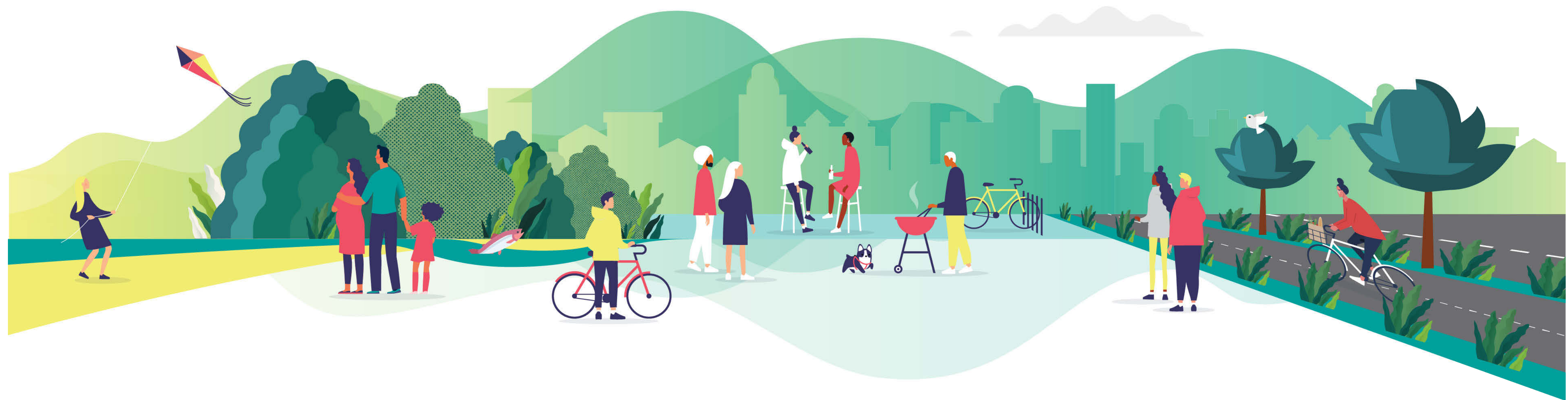
- A Enable a modest increase in density & height for 100% social housing through changes to existing zoning**
- B Create greater flexibility for projects that deliver 100% social housing through the rezoning process**
- C Clarify policies to improve development processes & reduce application times**

What is Vancouver Plan?

The Vancouver Plan is a citywide planning and engagement process to create a long-term vision and strategy for a healthy, just, resilient, sustainable, and vibrant city for future generations. This plan will serve as the city's strategic framework, setting the vision for the future of our city to 2050 and beyond.

The Vancouver Plan is being developed in coordination with a number of programs and quick start actions currently underway, recognizing the need for immediate action on issues such as the housing and climate emergency crises.

For more information on the Vancouver Plan, please see:
<https://shapeyourcity.ca/vancouver-plan>.



Planning Vancouver Together

Context and Rationale

- Downtown Eastside neighbourhoods face intense private development pressure, land speculation, and gentrification
- Immense need for social and supportive housing, persistent homelessness, and inadequate or unsafe housing; this has been intensified by the city-wide housing crisis and COVID-19 pandemic

These proposed changes will:

- Help create more social housing, while reducing development application times for non-profit and government partners
- Provide non-profit housing organisations with more opportunity to leverage current provincial and federal funding programs, and help support COVID-19 recovery



Areas of proposed changes

1 Downtown Eastside Oppenheimer District (sub-areas 2, 3, 4)

A medium density mixed-use residential, commercial, and light industrial neighbourhood of heritage, historic and cultural significance to the Indigenous, and Japanese-Canadian communities.

DTES Plan Policy Directions:

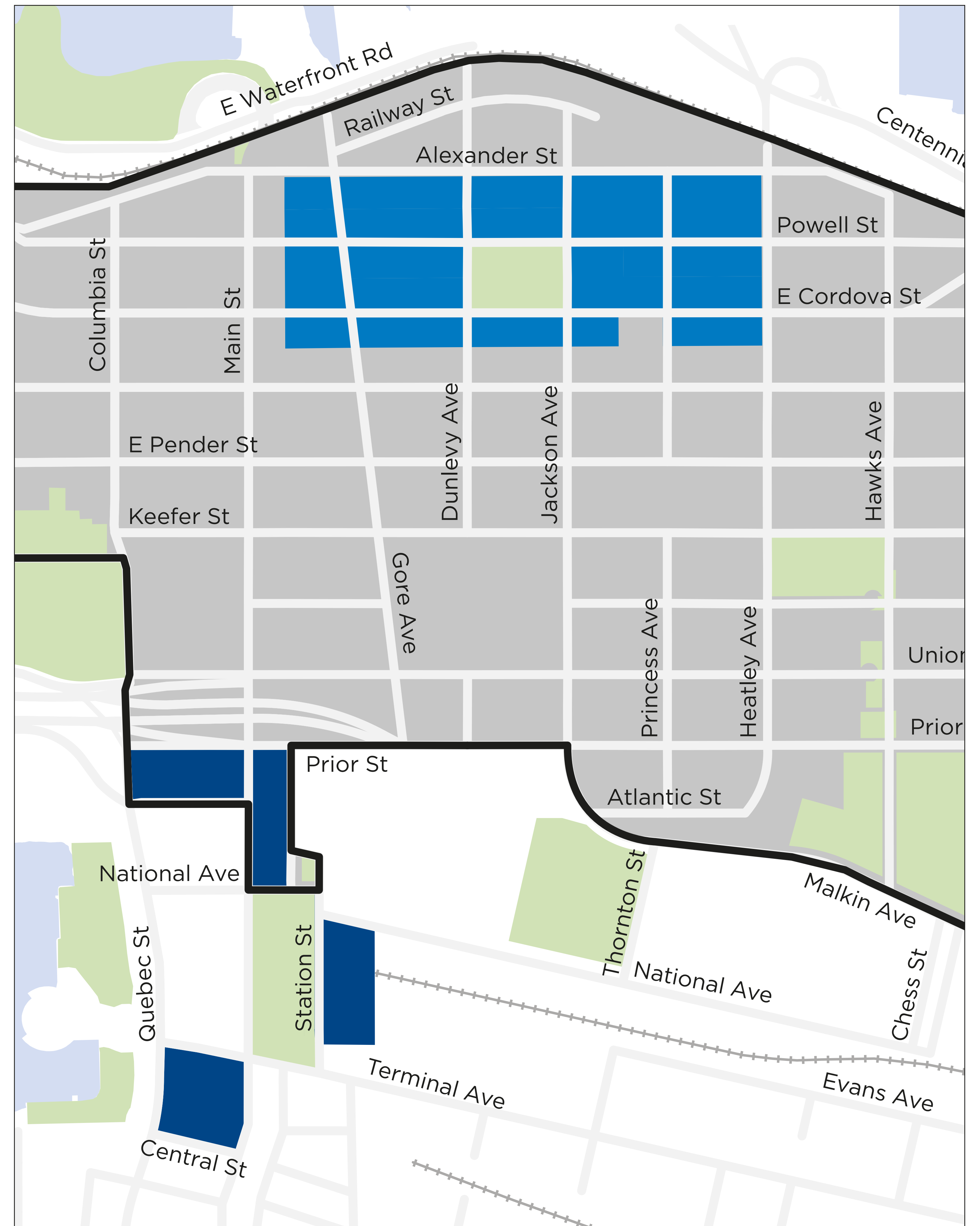
- Support Japanese-Canadian and Indigenous culture and heritage through strategic development and heritage rehabilitation opportunities.
- Facilitate compatible new residential and mixed-use development, while reinforcing the existing scale and character of the area.
- Support developments with social housing or significant heritage assets by offering additional height and related bonus density.

2 Thornton Park / East False Creek

A medium density transit-oriented residential and commercial neighbourhood with several high-density mixed-use buildings.

DTES Plan Policy Directions:

- Facilitate compatible new residential and mixed-use development, while reinforcing existing industrial and commercial uses and neighbourhood scale and character.
- Support heritage rehabilitation, including single room occupancy (SRO) hotels, and consider additional density to create social housing.
- Encourage a range of housing types, including social housing and secure market rental and consider rezoning for additional density to create new social housing.



Downtown Eastside Oppenheimer District (sub-areas 2, 3, 4)

Under existing zoning:

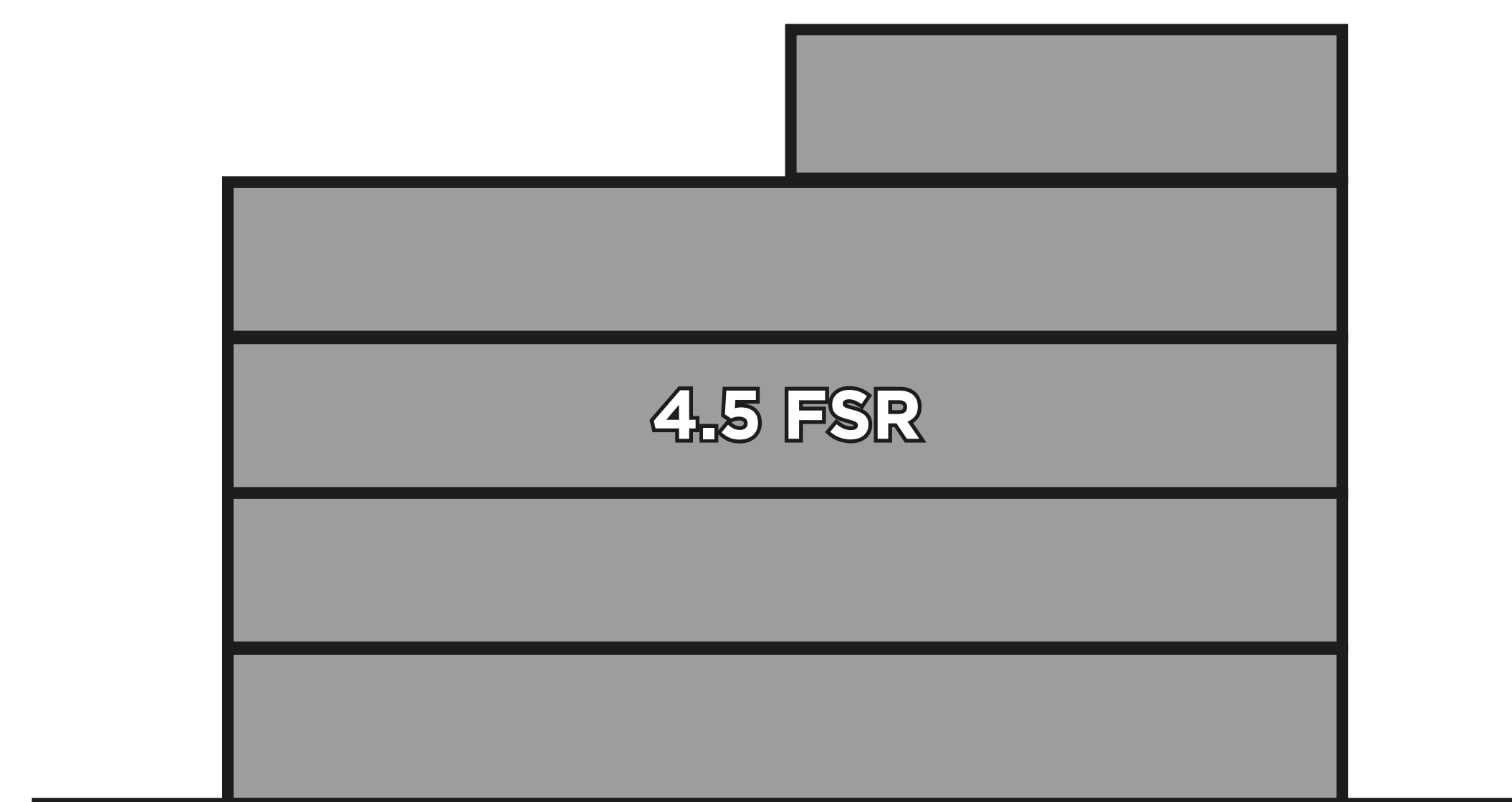
- Max 4.5 FSR (density)
- Max 22.9 metres (height)

Existing rezoning policy:

- Approx. 5.0 FSR (density)
- Approx. 30.5 metres (height)

Currently permitted

- For 100% social housing, existing zoning under the Downtown Eastside Oppenheimer District Official Development Plan (DEOD ODP) permits development up to 4.5 FSR and to a maximum height of 22.9 metres (75 feet).
- Through rezoning for 100% social housing, currently an approximate density of 5.0 FSR and height to approximately 30.5 metres (100 feet) may be considered on a case-by-case basis depending on heritage consideration, site context, urban design performance, and detailed proposal review.



Under present zoning (DEOD ODP):
maximum 4.5 FSR

Proposed changes for 100% social housing

- Under the proposed new zoning, allow an increase in density of 1.0 FSR for a total of 5.5 FSR and an increase in height of 7.6 metres (25 feet) to a maximum of 30.5 metres (100 feet) to assist with project viability for 100% social housing developments.
- The maximum density and height through the proposed rezoning process for 100% social housing would be determined on a case-by-case basis depending on heritage considerations, site context (e.g. site size, location, adjacent buildings, neighbourhood, etc), urban design performance, and detailed proposal review.
- These proposed changes will help enable more social housing units through a simplified development process within the DEOD sub-areas 2, 3 and 4. This helps locate social housing in a neighbourhood that has the greatest concentration of community assets for low-income and vulnerable people.

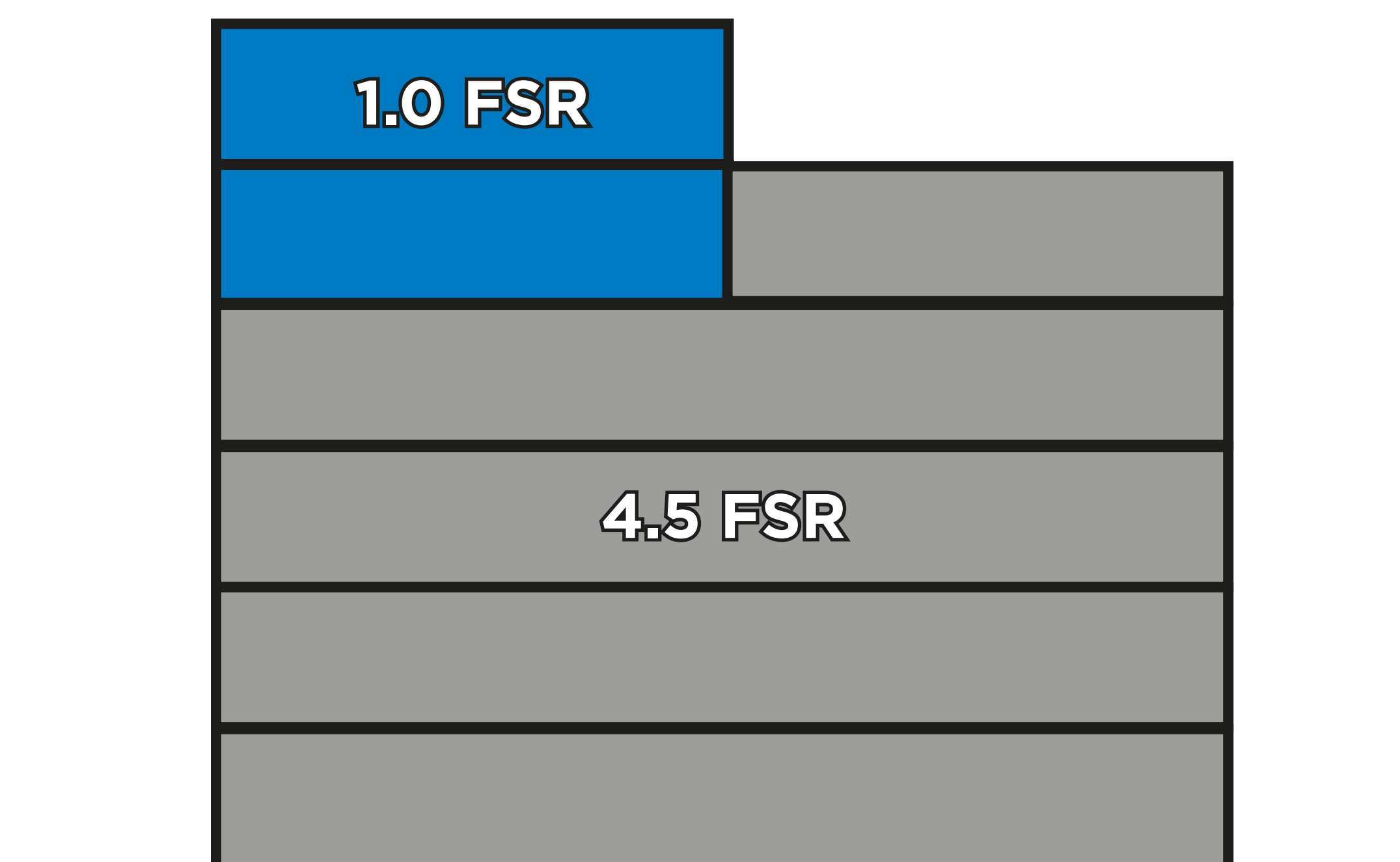
Under proposed zoning:

- Max 5.5 FSR (density)
- Max 30.5 metres (height)

Proposed rezoning policy:

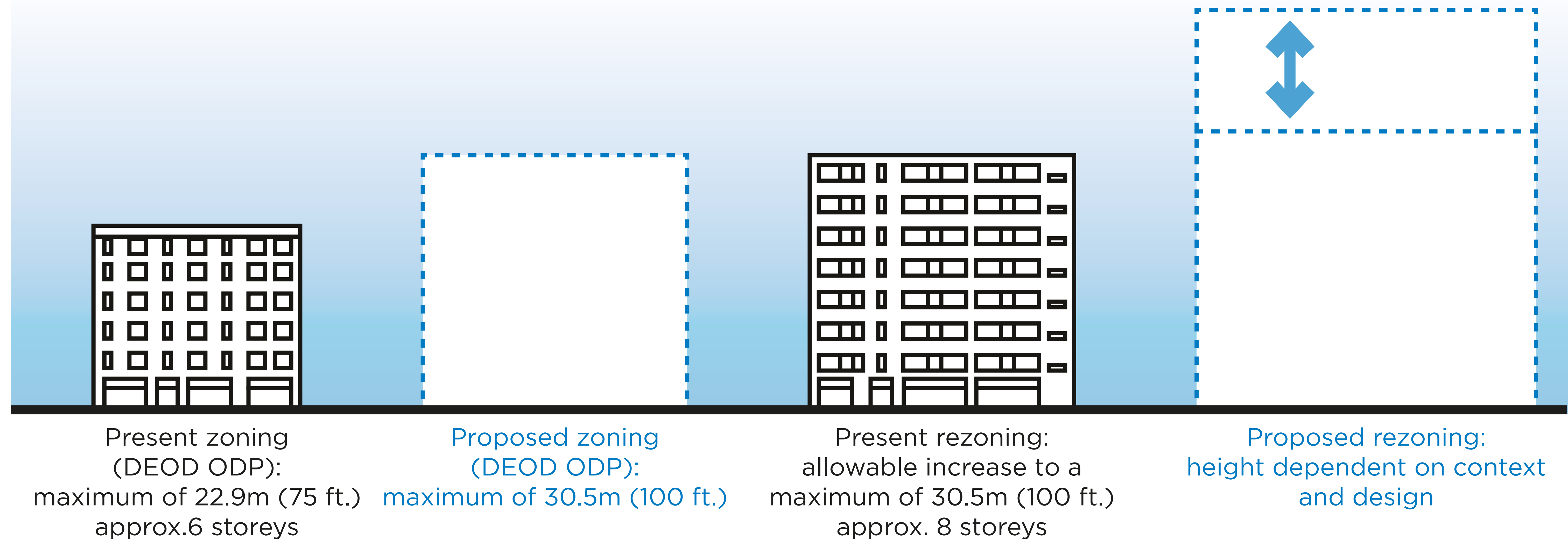
- Additional density & height based on context and design

Proposed additional 1.0 FSR
for a maximum of 5.5 FSR



Under present zoning (DEOD ODP):
maximum 4.5 FSR

Diagram of proposed height changes for 100% social housing (DEOD)



Thornton Park / East False Creek (FC-1)

Under existing zoning:

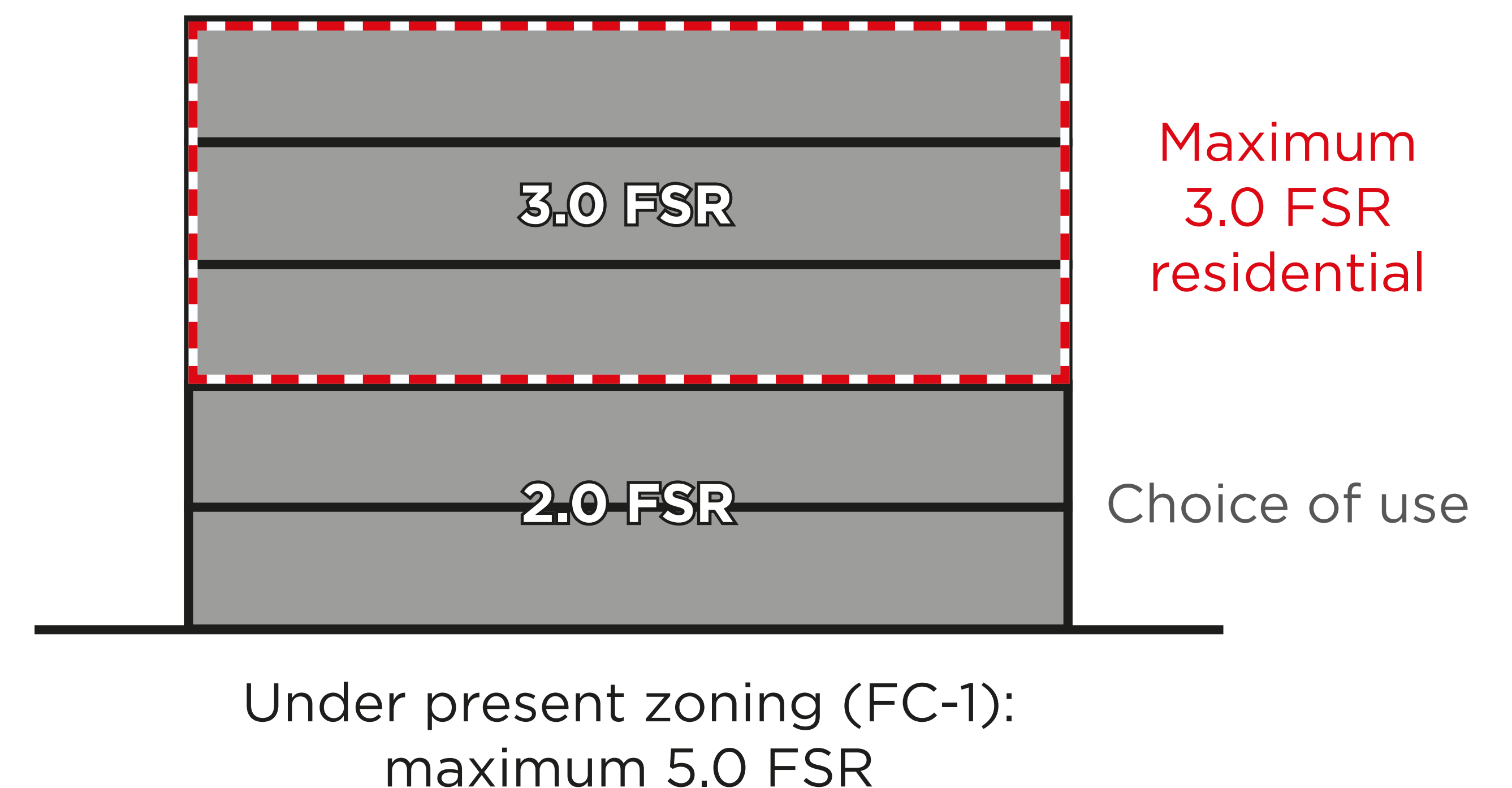
- Max 5.0 FSR with limit of 3.0 FSR residential (density)
- Max 22.9 metres with discretion up to 83.9 metres, not to encroach on the protected public views (height)

Existing rezoning policy:

- Additional density based on context and design

Currently permitted

- The existing FC-1 zoning permits development up to 5.0 FSR (limit 3.0 FSR residential) and a maximum height of 22.9 metres (75 feet).
- The Director of Planning or Development Permit Board may permit an increase in height up to 83.9 metres (275 feet), not to encroach on the protected public views.
- Through rezoning to create or expand social housing, currently a height up to 22.9 metres (75 feet) may be considered with a maximum density determined on a case-by-case basis depending on heritage considerations, site context, urban design performance, and detailed proposal review.



Proposed changes for 100% social housing

- Under the proposed new zoning, allow an increase in density of 1.0 FSR for a total of 6.0 FSR (limit 4.5 FSR residential) to assist with project viability for 100% social housing developments. No change proposed to maximum height.
- The maximum density and height (not to encroach on the protected public views) through the proposed rezoning process for 100% social housing would be determined on a case-by-case basis depending on heritage considerations, site context (e.g. site size, location, adjacent buildings, neighbourhood, etc), urban design performance, and detailed proposal review.
- These proposed changes will help create more social housing units in the FC-1 zone. This is an early transit-oriented development area where a range of housing types, including social housing and secured market rental, are encouraged while supporting the rehabilitation of heritage buildings.

Under proposed zoning:

- Max 6.0 FSR with limit of 4.5 FSR residential (density)
- Max 83.9 metres, not to encroach on the protected public views (height - no change proposed)

Proposed rezoning policy:

- Additional density & height based on context and design

Proposed additional 1.0 FSR
for a maximum of 6.0 FSR

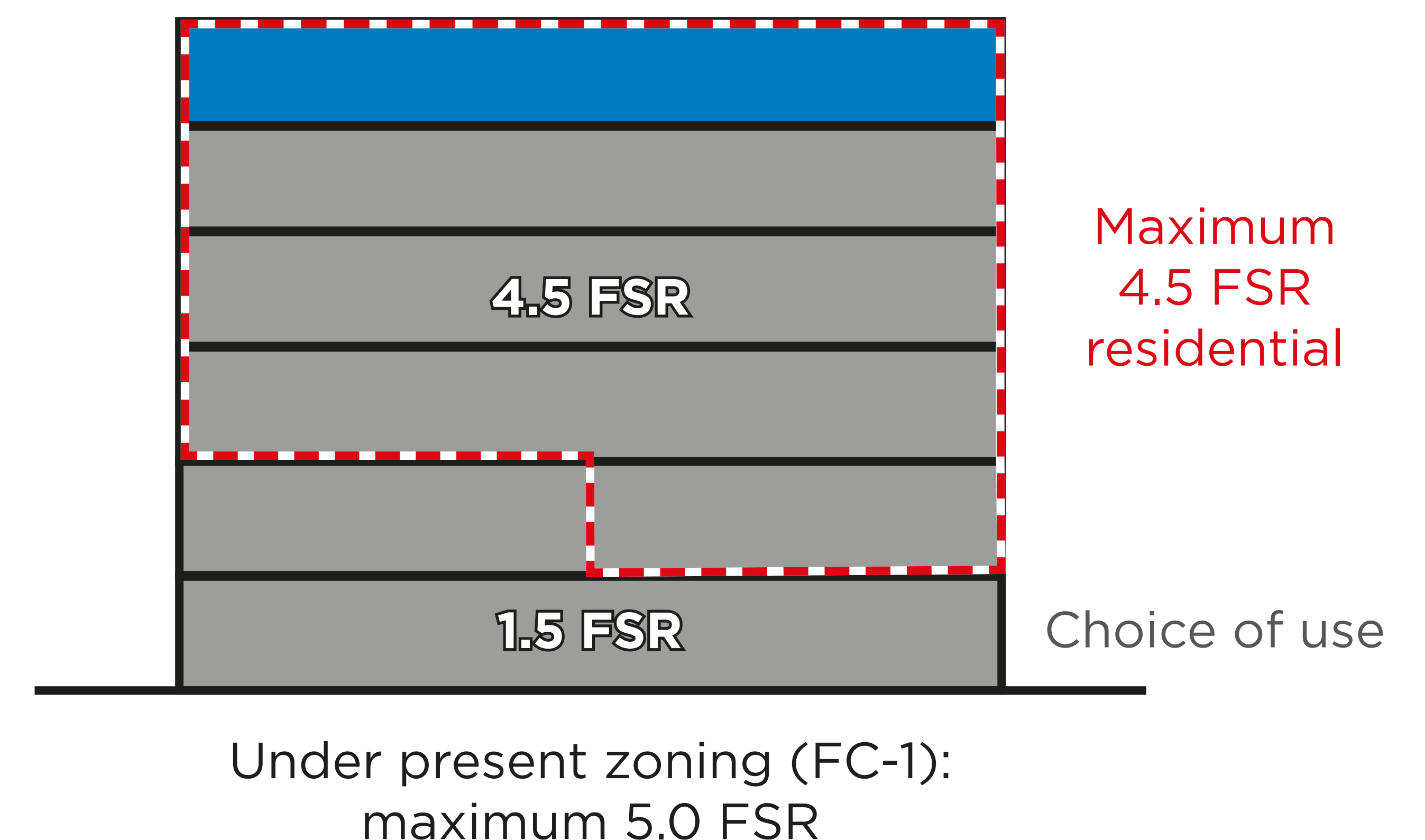
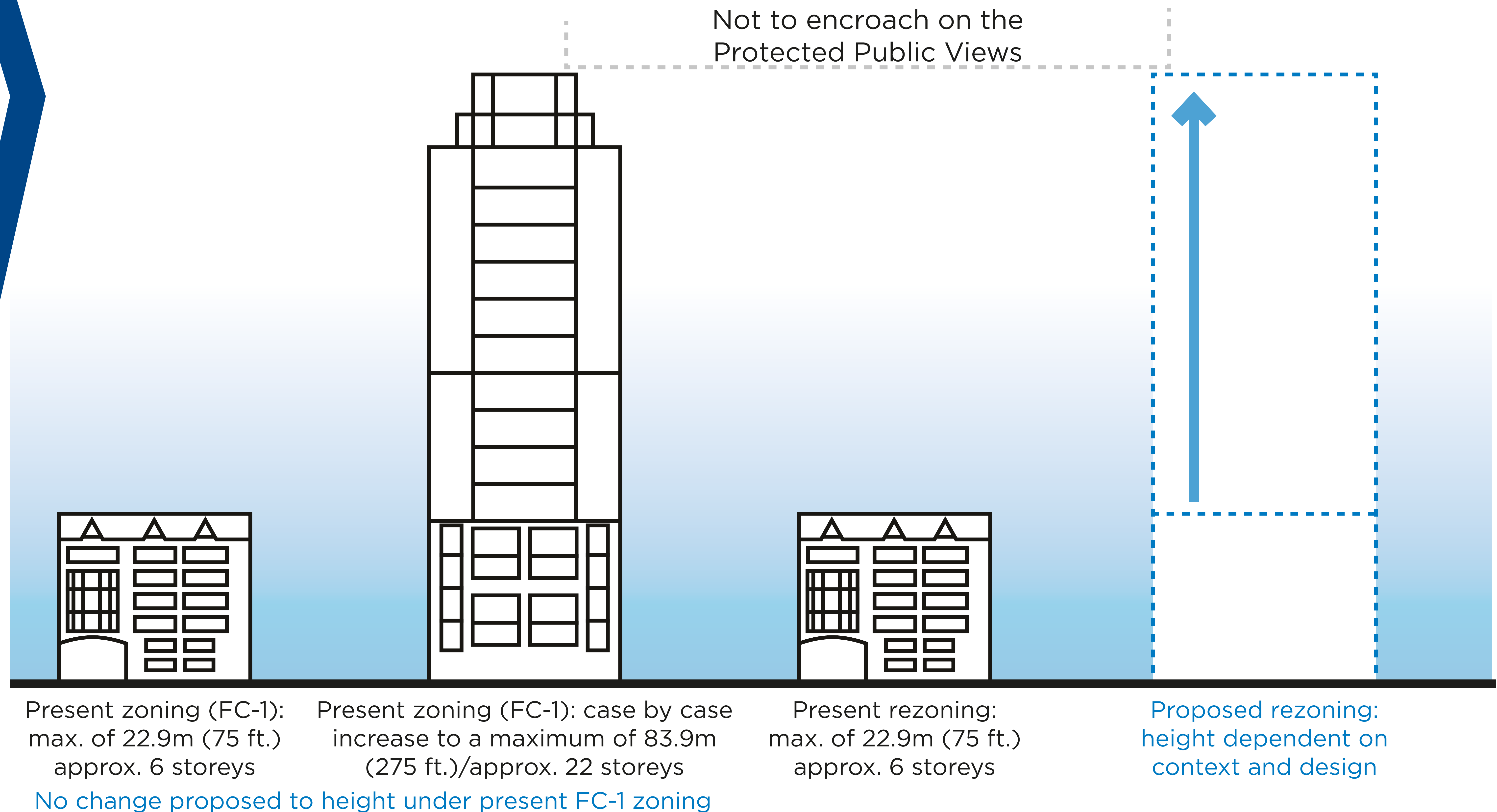


Diagram of proposed height changes for 100% social housing (FC-1)



Share Your Thoughts

- Share your views at <https://shapeyourcity.ca/>
- Send us feedback online at vancouver.ca/dtes
- Contact Downtown Eastside planner Bonnie Ma at dtesplan@vancouver.ca
- Please share your feedback by September 22, 2021

A summary of comments will be presented to Council with the recommended changes. A public hearing on the proposed changes will be held later this autumn.

