FAQ: Bay Parkade Rezoning + the Higher Buildings Policy Review

1. Why is Council considering the Bay Parkade Rezoning application prior to the completion of the Higher Buildings Policy Review?

- In May 2023 Vancouver Council directed staff to discontinue the separate Policy Enquiry Process and instead allow policy non-compliant applications to proceed through a rezoning process, where they could be fully evaluated on their individual merits and brought forward to Council for consideration. This direction recognized that some proposals may offer significant public benefits or advance Council objectives even where they do not align with existing policy.
- The Bay Parkade rezoning application was received in June 2025 and has been proceeding as a site-specific rezoning application through the City's standard review process while the Higher Buildings Policy Review is underway. Applications such as the Bay Parkade proposal, and other projects seeking exceptions to the current heigh limits or geographic scope of the Higher Buildings Policy, have highlighted the need to revise the policy framework. These applications have informed the City's decision to undertake the Higher Buildings Policy Review in Spring 2026.
- Ultimately, Council will consider the Bay Parkade application on its own merits, informed by staff analysis, public feedback on the application, applicable Council policies, and the broader policy context.

2. How does this application relate to the current Higher Buildings Policy?

- The subject site, bounded by Georgia, Dunsmuir, Seymour, and Richards Streets, is located outside the current Higher Buildings Policy area. By comparison, sites immediately across the street are within the policy area, where buildings up to 600ft (183 m) may be considered.
- The proposed rezoning includes three towers with heights of approximately 783' (238.59 m), 889' (270.97 m) and 1,034' (314.89 m)) which exceed the heights contemplated under the current Higher Buildings policy.
- While the project is not located within the geography covered by the Higher Buildings Policy and does not conform to its height limits, staff considered the policy's objectives, evaluation criteria, and urban design principles as part of the assessment of the application. The policy therefore served as an important reference point in evaluating the proposal, alongside other applicable policies, technical considerations, and site-specific circumstances.

3. Did public input on the Higher Buildings Policy Review influence this application?

- No. Public input from the Higher Buildings Policy Review is still being analyzed and was not used to assess this rezoning application. The application was evaluated through the rezoning process based on its site-specific context, applicable policies, urban design considerations, technical review, public benefits, and feedback received through the application's public consultation process and review by the Urban Design Panel.
- The Higher Buildings Policy Review and the Bay Parkade rezoning application have proceeded on separate but parallel timeline. Input received through the policy review will inform the broader policy update and future recommendations to Council, rather than the assessment of this specific application.

4. If buildings that exceed policy height can be considered without amending the policy, is this Higher Buildings Policy Review still meaningful? Will public input shape the future of tall buildings in Vancouver?

- Yes. The Higher Buildings Policy Review remains a separate and important policy process.
- While Council may consider site-specific rezoning applications that do not fully conform with existing policy, updated policy provides clearer guidance for future applications, including where taller buildings may be appropriate, how additional height should be evaluated, and what public benefits, urban design outcomes, sustainability measures, amenities, and impacts on views, skyline, and livability should be considered.
- Public input will help shape those future policy directions and inform recommendations to Council. If Council approves the Bay Parkade rezoning application, any relevant learnings and implications may be considered as part of the broader policy work. However, approval of this application would not replace the Higher Building Policy Review.

5. Does this project set a precedent for other tall buildings in the downtown?

- Not necessarily. Any Council decision on the Bay Parkade application would be specific to that site and proposal.
- Future tall building proposals will continue to be assessed on their own merits, including site context, urban design, public benefits, technical analysis, applicable policies, and public input.
- The Higher Buildings Policy Review will help establish clearer long-term guidance for how future proposals area considered.
- If Council approves the Bay Parkade application, any relevant learnings may inform the policy review, but the decision would not automatically determine the outcome for other tall building proposals.

6. Why is this site being considered if it was not previously identified for higher buildings?

- The site is being considered through a site-specific rezoning application.
- Since the Higher Building Policy was introduced in 1997, downtown Vancouver has changed significantly, including major transit investments, evolving patterns of growth, and a stronger focus on transit-oriented development and public life around key civic and commercial locations such as Granville and Georgia.
- In addition, Council's 2024 updates to the Public Views framework removed the previous 291 ft (89 m) height limit on this site, allowing additional height to be considered through rezoning. While the site was not previously identified under the Higher Buildings Policy, these changes provide a basis for assessing whether additional height may be appropriate in this location, subject to Council consideration.

7. Does the allowance of a substantial number of residential uses in the application set a precedent for non-employment uses in the Business District where residential use is currently limited? What is the rationale for this proposed change in use?

- Not necessarily. The proposed mix of uses is being considered through a site-specific rezoning application and would not automatically establish a precedent for other sites in the Central Business District.
- The current Downtown Rezoning Policy allows residential uses to be considered on large sites where the required employment-generating space is also delivered as part of the overall proposal. In this case, the application includes both residential and non-residential floor area, including a dedicated non-residential tower.
- The proposed phasing would allow the first residential building on Georgia Street to proceed along-side the non-market housing component (on Abbott Street). The required non-residential space would be delivered through the tallest tower and would need to be constructed before, or in parallel with, the second residential tower.
- The rationale for considering residential uses in this location is tied to the scale of the site, the delivery of the required employment space, the inclusion of non-market housing, and the proposal's phasing strategy. Any Council decision would apply to this specific application and would not change the broader policy limits on residential use in the business district.

8. How are mountain views being considered?

- The rezoning review included consideration of the proposal as it relates to the City's protected Public Views.
- The current Higher Buildings Policy has historically allowed taller buildings to be considered within the Queen Elizabeth view corridor.
- From that viewpoint, the proposed buildings would extend above the mountain ridgeline, whereas heights contemplated under the current policy would typically remain below it.
- Staff have reviewed the proposal against other protected public views. Based on that review, the proposal does not affect any other protected view corridors.
- The potential impact on the Queen Elizabeth Park view is therefore a key consideration for Council in assessing the overall merits of the application.

9. Will the public have another opportunity to comment on the broader policy?

- Yes, Phase 1 engagement has recently concluded, and staff are currently reviewing the feedback received.
- An engagement summary is expected to be shared publicly in the coming months.
- That input will help inform policy options for Phase 2, which are anticipated to be brought forward out to the public in early 2027.
- Feedback from Phase 2 will then help shape final recommendations to Council, which are expected to be presented for consideration in Q2 2027.

10. Did the Higher Buildings Policy Review ask specifically about this proposal?

- No. The Higher Buildings Policy Review noted that the Bay Parkade rezoning application had been received but did not seek feedback on the specific proposal.
- The application is being considered through a separate, parallel rezoning process, which includes its own public consultation and technical review.
- Relevant learnings from the application may inform the development of updated policy options, but feedback on the broader Higher Building Policy Review is being used to guide future policy directions rather than to assess this specific rezoning application.

11. I thought my comments would influence Council's consideration of the Bay Parkade proposal as it relates to the Higher Buildings Policy Review. Now that this application is proceeding before the policy review is complete, is there any way for me to share my views with Council?

- Yes, if you would like Council to consider your comments on the Bay Parkade rezoning application, you can share your views directly through the Public Hearing process, including by submitting written comments or signing up to speak at the Public Hearing.
- Comments specific to the Bay Parkade proposal should be submitted through the rezoning application's Public Hearing process so they can be considered by Council when it reviews the application.
- Information about the Public Hearing, including the agenda, staff report, opportunities to submit written comments to Council, and instructions for registering to speak, will be posted on the City's Council Meetings and Public Hearings webpage: https://app.vancouver.ca/CouncilMeetingPublic/. Residents are encouraged to visit this webpage for the most up-to-date information on how to participate in the Public Hearing process.