

Higher Buildings Policy Review

Phase I Engagement Summary

April to June 2026

CITY OF VANCOUVER

The City of Vancouver is located on the unceded, ancestral, and traditional homelands of the xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), Sḵwx̱wú7mesh Úxwumixw (Squamish Nation), and səlilwətaɬ (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations.

These lands have been stewarded by xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), Sḵwx̱wú7mesh Úxwumixw (Squamish Nation), and səlilwətaɬ (Tsleil-Waututh) Peoples since time immemorial, and their unique and inherent relations, history, Title and rights in these territories remains intact.

The City of Vancouver endeavors to strengthen its future as a City of Reconciliation by working collaboratively with the Nations.

CITY OF VANCOUVER | Higher Buildings Policy Review

The **Higher Buildings Policy Review** seeks to align our approach to tall buildings with emerging city priorities, technical considerations, and public sentiment. This policy guides where, how tall, and what criteria and requirements these buildings must meet. For additional information on the details and scope of this process please visit our website at: shapeyourcity.ca/higher-buildings



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Executive Summary

This document summarizes feedback from over 7,800 engagement touchpoints made through engagement on the Higher Buildings Policy review between April and May, 2026. Feedback was gathered at a series of pop-ups, exhibits, workshops, panel discussion, and through an online survey. These findings will inform the drafting of policy options that will be shared for public consideration in early 2027.

In summary, public opinion in Vancouver was largely split on the idea of adding additional height in our downtown, with an observable difference in opinion between those who participated in-person and those that responded online.

For those supportive of height, many were willing to consider substantial departures from our current limits and provided thoughts on where the tallest buildings should be located and the criteria that should guide those decisions.

Participants expressed a strong appreciation for Vancouver's visual connection to the mountains, water, and natural landscape, and consistently identified these views as central to the city's identity.

Support for additional height was often contingent on protecting views to the mountains and natural character, providing needed housing, contributing significant public benefits, ensuring enhanced design quality, and addressing any environmental or safety considerations.

The City of Vancouver would like to thank all participants for sharing their time, ideas, and feedback to help shape the future of tall buildings in our city.



19 in-person Pop-ups

1,570 participants



Online Survey

3,176 responses



3 in-person Exhibit dates

2,927 participants



Competition Launch Event

150 participants

7,800+

total engagement touchpoints

Draw your preferred skyline:

What you would like Vancouver's skyline to look like in the future?
Draw, sketch, use stickers or any other method you want.
Get inspired from what others have shared.

CITY OF VANCOUVER | Higher Building Policy Review



Engagement Overview





1.1 Purpose of Phase 1 Higher Buildings Policy Engagement

This phase of engagement had four primary objectives: introduce the public to the existing policy and build awareness of the process; explore values and preferences when it comes to the skyline; begin to gauge the public's willingness to consider additional height; and understand the priorities, trade-offs, and considerations that should guide a made-for-Vancouver approach to tall buildings.

The input reflected in this report includes feedback received through a series of in-person and online activities, and the results will inform draft policy options that will be brought to the public for additional engagement in early 2027, prior to being presented to Council for consideration.

1.2 Engagement Activities

A key goal of this engagement strategy was to try and reach a broad representation of the public, with a focus on attracting new participants not typically present at public engagement activities. To do this, we employed a multi-modal approach that included meeting people where they were in highly visible public spaces across the city and offering unique experiences to draw in new participants.

Running through April and May 2026, this first phase of engagement generated over 7,800 contact points with the community. Translated versions of the pop-up materials, Exhibit summary and online survey were provided in Traditional Chinese, Vietnamese, Punjabi, Spanish, Farsi, and Korean.

All activities were promoted through multiple channels, including the City's social media accounts, Shape Your City website, and email newsletters. This report was prepared by the City, who conducted the thematic analysis, summarized results, and synthesized findings from the survey, as well as in-person events.

19 in-person Pop-ups
at 7 spots across Vancouver
1,570 participants

3 in-person Exhibit dates
at the Vancouver Lookout
2,927 participants

Competition Launch Event
at the Vancouver Playhouse
150 participants

Online survey
available on Shape Your City
3,176 responses

6 Stakeholder Workshops
online and in-person
61 participants









Language Access

We received 16 pop-up drawing sheets and 11 survey responses in languages other than English. At the Exhibit, staff distributed 198 translated versions of the Exhibit material.



Pop-ups



In April, 19 pop-up events were held at seven locations across Vancouver, engaging approximately 1,600 participants.

Through informational displays and a skyline drawing activity, participants were invited to envision Vancouver's future skyline and share their perspectives on key skyline elements, community values and priorities.













Exhibit

In May, a three-day exhibit at the Vancouver Lookout engaged approximately 3,000 participants.

Through informational displays and interactive activities, participants were invited to learn about the Higher Buildings Policy and share their views on appropriate height and location for tall buildings, and the public benefits and other factors these developments should consider.

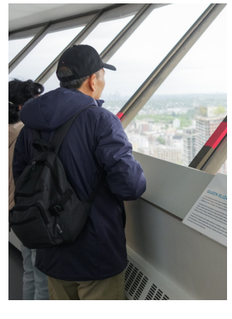
The Exhibit's interactive activities included a ball voting activity, stickers to write comments on, a 3D model of downtown, and a string activity.

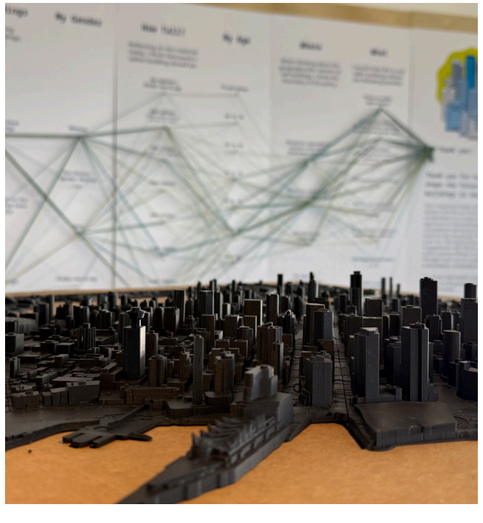












Ideas Competition

On June 1st, we launched an international design competition, Vancouver Tall, to explore a ‘made-for-Vancouver’ approach to tall buildings.

The kick-off of this competition included a panel discussion with three of the local jurors for the competition.

The competition, which runs until November 30, 2026, invites innovative concepts for tall buildings that reflect Vancouver’s values, identity, and urban character and will help to shape ongoing policy consideration. To enter the competition, or learn more, visit: https://architecturecompetitions.com/vancouvertallchallenge/





Launch Event moderated by:



JOSH WHITE
General Manager, Planning, Urban Design and Sustainability
City of Vancouver

COMPETITION JURY



JAMES KM CHENG



ḰESUGWILAKW



DEREK LEE



GORDON GILL



NATHALIE DE VRIES



SUSAN MACDOUGALL



MATTHEW SOULES

Online Survey

Throughout the month of May, an online survey gathered feedback from approximately 3,200 participants.

Information about the survey was shared through the City’s social media channels, email newsletters, and a Shape Your City page, inviting the public to take the survey.

The survey mirrored the in-person engagement activities, asking participants about their willingness to support taller buildings, preferred height limits, and the locational criteria and considerations that should guide future higher-building development in Vancouver.

Stakeholder Workshops

Throughout the engagement period, a series of stakeholder workshops engaged more than 60 representatives from key business, development, tourism, and commercial organizations.

These sessions introduced the Higher Buildings Policy Review and invited participants to share early questions, concerns, and perspectives to help inform future policy development.



he Higher
uildings Policy

e Higher Buildings Policy
rks by identifying where
ler buildings may be
cated, how tall they may be,
d what is expected of any
velopments that comes
rough the policy.

While the original policy placed the tallest buildings in the core of the Central Business District, on the three primary streets of Georgia, Burrard and Granville, over the years additional sites have been added further along these corridors, as well as at the bridgeheads to mark key gateways into downtown.

The Higher Buildings Policy includes expectations for design excellence, public benefits, heritage retention, sustainability performance, microclimate consideration (i.e. wind and shadows), and outlines an enhanced process for review, including guest panelists at the Urban Design Panel.

What is a Higher Building?

While what is considered high (or tall) is admittedly subjective, this policy applies only to the city's tallest buildings. Since it was established in 1997, six buildings have been constructed through this policy (with another eight approved but not yet built). These buildings include the Shangri-la, the Paradox Hotel, Vancouver House, One Burrard Place, the Stack, and the Butterfly.

gher Building Policy Map: current policy

eline of the Higher Buildings Policy

Public Views, the Skyline Study and the original Higher Buildings Policy



Queen Elizabeth Park View today.

There are a few different types of views protected in the Public Views policy. Some are narrower views through downtown to the mountain ridgeline, while others are more expansive or panoramic.

One unique view, at Queen Elizabeth Park, views the city from a higher elevation and places a blanket height limit over most of the downtown peninsula.

As downtown built out in the early 90s, following adoption of the original Public Views policy, what resulted was a skyline that some saw as a boring or flat. A Skyline Study was undertaken and sought to establish a more dynamic 'dome-shaped' skyline. The original Higher Buildings Policy was established in 1997 to implement the outcomes of the Skyline Study.

A key feature of the Higher Buildings Policy, was it invited exceptional projects within the core of downtown to enter into the Queen Elizabeth view to create more visual interest and to enhance the view of the city in nature.



Downtown 1988: Harbour Centre stands out as the tallest building at 482 ft.



Protecting Public Views in Vancouver

Vancouver's downtown policy has long sought to protect key public views dating back to the street end view protection in the 1970s.

In the late 80s, in response to growing tensions around redevelopment and the loss of cherished views to the mountains, Council adopted our first comprehensive Public Views policy in 1989 (originally as View Protection Guidelines). This policy secured a series of publicly accessible views and limited new development from entering those protected views, thereby eliminating the need for a project-by-project public debate. While protecting views, the original policy also ensured that no zoned capacity would be lost downtown.



Diagram of view protection through downtown.

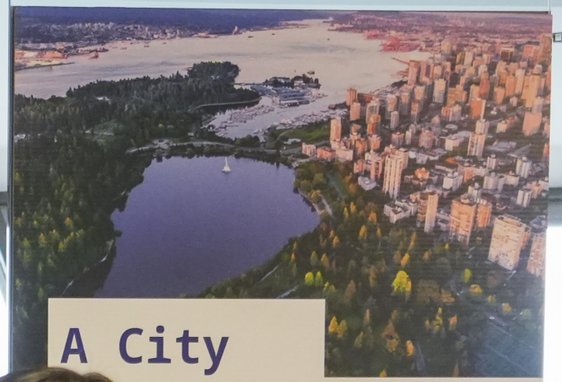


1988



2009





A City Nature

atural environmen
en identified by t
y's most import
e and protect

Going Up in a City

This balance of city in nature ha
foundational to our policies tha
and development in the downto
continues to be home to the cit
buildings, and as this review res
direction from the Granville Street
our Higher Buildings Policy in the City Centre
focuses on making intentional choices about the
skyline that delivers great design while protecting
livability, public views, sustainability, and our
connection to nature.

ngs



Methodology

2.1 Methodology and Analysis

The engagement outlined in this report utilized a multi-modal mixed-method approach to gather public input. This hybrid model combined interactive, in-person public activities that were mirrored with an online survey.

Comments from the pop-up events, exhibit, online survey, and stakeholder meetings (including translated responses) were reviewed, coded, and analyzed together. Responses were separated into quantitative and qualitative results.

Quantitative data — consisting of baseline opinion polling, multiple-choice “string” activities and survey questions, spatial sticker mapping over a 3D urban model, and a visual preference sketch — were processed using descriptive statistics to indicate quantitative directional trends.

Simultaneously, qualitative data was gathered through a series of open-ended questions and workshop boards. Content analysis was conducted using a thematic coding approach to identify recurring ideas, concerns, and priorities. All responses were reviewed and grouped into themes based on repeated keywords, concepts, and underlying sentiment. These were manually coded by staff.

Where responses touched multiple ideas, they were counted across relevant themes. Counts represent the frequency of mentions, rather than unique responses. Unless otherwise stated, general themes represent responses from both online and in-person events combined.

In total 25,533 unique quantitative data points and 21,975 qualitative responses were analyzed.

2.2 Limitations

This approach was intended to provide a high-level synthesis of dominant patterns and signals in the feedback. Data for this evaluation was compiled from a self-selected sample of the public. This included individuals who actively chose to complete the online survey, as well as geographically localized stakeholders who paused to engage with the pop-up workshop activities.

Because participants were not chosen via random, probabilistic sampling, the findings contained within this report do not represent a statistically projectable consensus of the entire City of Vancouver population. Instead, this methodology serves as a robust community barometer and highlights the core values, spatial thresholds, and primary concerns of highly engaged citizens and downtown users. This qualitative and quantitative feedback provides critical, grounded parameters to directly inform the emerging policy for this Higher Buildings Policy Review.



2.3 Differing opinions: in-person and online

Different engagement methods reached different participant groups. Some visible difference in perspective was noted between those who attended in-person events and those who engaged remotely.

For people who attended in-person events, more willingness was shown to consider additional height. In many cases, staff observed and interacted with participants who had mixed feelings, but who upon detailed review of the material, decided to support the idea of additional tall buildings, assuming certain outcomes or criteria were ensured (often linked to the delivery of significant public benefit and thoughtful design).

Online participants generally expressed more caution, with stronger concerns about potential impact on views, livability, and neighbourhood character.

While not statistically verified, the differences may be the result of a more randomized sample of Vancouver residents reached through non-advertised pop-up activities, as opposed to the online survey, which staff observed had online campaigns encouraging participation from groups typically less supportive of new development.















ouver.
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Vancouver.
Higher
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Policy
Revie
When thinkin
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el like:
Vancouver has enough tall buildings
Don't know / Don't have an opinion
Vancouver could have more tall buildings



What We Heard

3.1 Overview: Key Findings

The conversation about additional tall buildings downtown generated significant interest and a diversity of opinions. For some people, taller buildings represent opportunities for new housing, greater vibrancy, improved amenities, and more efficient use of urban land. For others, fears about potential loss of local character, views, sunlight, privacy, additional traffic, and overall negative impacts on livability are front of mind.

The results provide direction on the overall willingness to consider additional height downtown, themes that should inform any policy development, thoughts on acceptable heights for taller buildings, as well as the location criteria that should inform this policy.

To better understand these perspectives, engagement participants were asked not only about their views on building height, but also what aspects of taller buildings they were most excited about and what concerns they felt should be addressed. This helped provide a more complete picture of community sentiment beyond simple support or opposition.

Overall, opinion is mixed on additional height; in-person participants were generally more supportive of additional height than online participants. Our inerpretation is there is conditional openness to additional height: support is often conditional on public benefits and protection of mountain views and Vancouver's natural identity.

In addition to the importance of mountain and water views, other key considerations that people raised include affordable housing as a top desired public benefit, preference for most taller buildings to be in downtown, and strong support for tying growth to infrastructure and amenities.

These findings will be considered as staff develop policy options for Phase 2.

Engagement numbers at a glance:

POP-UPS

611
drawing sheets received in total

470
sheets with a drawing or text in the drawing space

EXHIBIT

2,523
entries in the ball voting activity

3,598
sticker comments on engagement boards

SURVEY

3,176
completed surveys

16,916
written responses to long-form survey questions

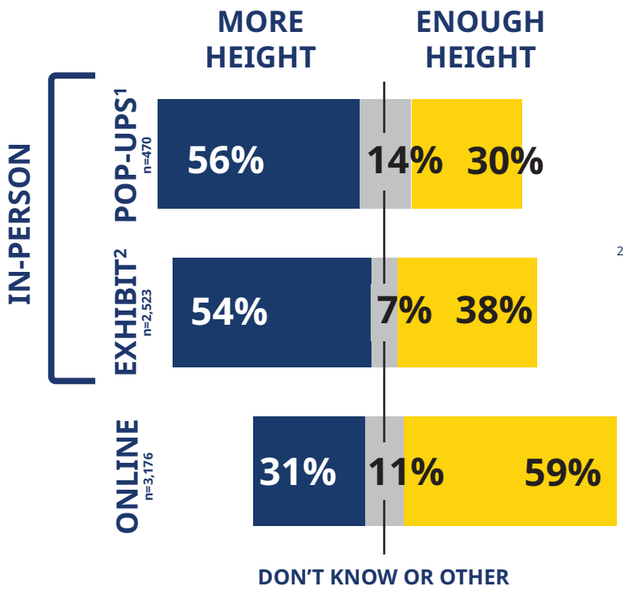
3.2 Mixed views on height

In-person feedback from both the pop-up events and exhibit shows a consistent pattern, with most respondents expressing an openness to explore increased height (approximately 55%), a smaller portion feeling the current height is adequate, and a minority unsure or without a clear opinion.

In contrast, online survey responses reflect a different sentiment. Survey respondents were given the prompt “Thinking about more height in buildings downtown (i.e., beyond the current policy limit of 700 ft (213 m)) ... Select one” and 59% of people responded by selecting “I’m not comfortable with the City allowing more height in tall buildings downtown - they are already tall enough” while 31% selected “I’m comfortable with the City allowing more height in tall buildings downtown if they come with additional public benefits.”

For those who are willing to consider additional height, the strongest overarching message is that respondents want any discussion of additional height to be tied to tangible public outcomes. In other words, many respondents were not categorically opposed to taller buildings, but expressed that height should be justified through housing benefits, exceptional design, and clear public value.

Figure 1. Sentiment on additional height.



[1] Pop-up drawings were analyzed to determine whether additional buildings were drawn as taller than, similar to, or shorter than existing buildings in the skyline as seen from each pop-up location.

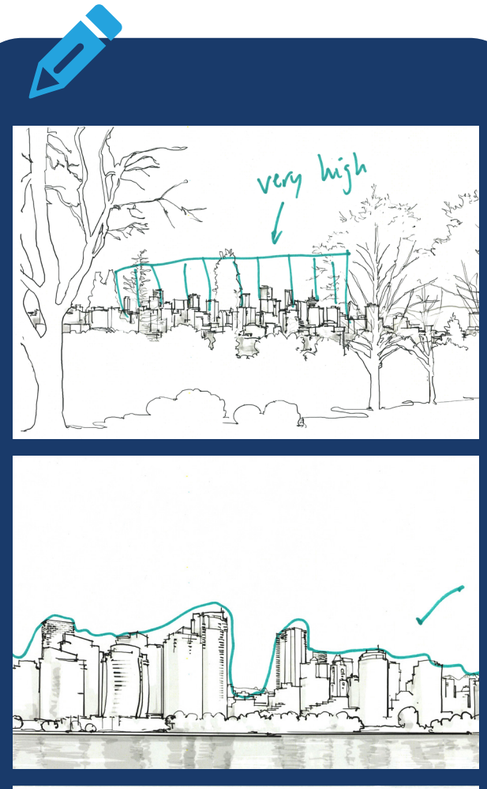
[2] Upon entering the Exhibit, attendees were given a wooden ball and invited to drop it into one of three tubes indicating that Vancouver could have/has more height, enough height, or don’t know.

Source: Pop-up drawing sheets, Exhibit ball activity, and online survey.





> *“We need taller buildings due to the lack of space in the downtown core. It makes no sense to limit height.”*
>
> *“Vancouver should have the tallest buildings in Metro Vancouver.”*
>
> *“Can we shorten the tall buildings already there?”*



3.3 Recurring Themes

The various open-ended engagement activities were coded and placed into themes. Six prominent themes were recurring throughout the various tactics and the next few pages go through those themes which are ordered in terms of magnitude of responses by theme:

3.3.1 – What We Heard – Recurring Themes – Mountains and Nature

1 2 3 4 5 6

1 Protection of mountain views and Vancouver's natural identity

The most prominent theme across all engagement events was the importance of views as a defining element of Vancouver's skyline and identity.

This was tied into preserving Vancouver's identity as a "City in Nature", with views being seen as shared public assets that contribute to the city's character and quality of life.

Many participants emphasized the importance of protecting mountain and water views, access to sunlight, and key public viewpoints as the city evolves, with concerns that these important elements will be impacted by taller buildings.

Comments often reflected a desire for careful consideration of potential trade-offs, particularly where new development could affect valued public views and experiences.

> *"The mountains make Vancouver what it is."*
>
> *"I really like the mountain view and how at night all of downtown lights up."*
>
> *"Many people in Vancouver orient themselves by the mountains so it's important to keep that in mind."*
>
> *"The proximity to nature makes Vancouver world renowned!"*
>
> 「不要堵住看到雪山和大海的空間」
> *Translation: "Do not fill in the gaps from which you can see the snowcapped mountains and ocean."*

3.3.2 – What We Heard – Recurring Themes – Housing

1 2 3 4 5 6

2 Provision of housing tenure, livability, and affordability

Many respondents emphasized that taller buildings should contribute to addressing housing needs by increasing the supply of homes and delivering affordable, below-market, or non-market housing options.

There was a strong interest in ensuring that the benefits of growth are shared equitably, with housing that is accessible to low- and middle-income residents and designed to support livability, including appropriately sized homes for families.

At the same time, respondents expressed concern that new taller buildings may primarily deliver luxury housing, contributing to real estate speculation, investor ownership, empty units, and the financialization of housing.

While some questioned whether these developments would improve affordability, others saw potential for higher buildings to accommodate growth downtown, reduce pressure for suburban expansion, and generate public benefits that could help fund affordable units or additional housing supply that could help improve affordability over time.





> *"Why do we need to make it easier for global capital to shelter here while people from Vancouver have it hard enough to keep a roof over their heads?"*
>
> *"Include affordable housing."*
>
> *"Continuing to focus housing policy on creating more luxury units is the completely wrong priority during a housing affordability crisis."*
>
> *"I'm going to be homeless because my rental sold."*

3 Provision of meaningful public amenities and community benefits

Many respondents consistently emphasized that taller buildings should deliver clear, tangible public benefits. For example, 44% of respondents at the pop-ups would support more height and 24% answered maybe if it was accompanied by more public benefits.

Some respondents expressed an expectation that additional height should come with a visible “give-back” to the city, reinforcing shared spaces and community life, with an emphasis on publicly accessible benefits, not privatized amenities for residents. Other respondents questioned whether those benefits would be sufficient or equitably distributed.

Throughout all the engagement activities, respondents were asked to think about what types of benefits or civic investment they would like to see in exchange for additional height downtown. Top comments expected project benefits to:

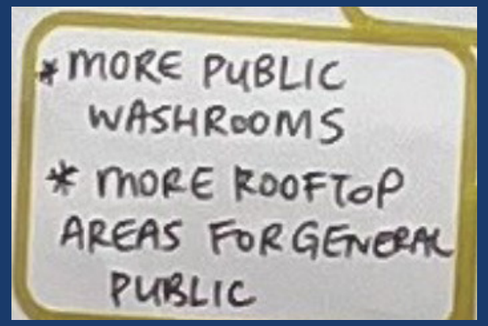
- Deliver meaningful housing benefit
- Create high-quality inclusive public spaces and urban nature (including public plazas, accessible rooftops, and viewing areas)
- Contribute to community amenities that keep pace with growth (including parks, community centres, childcare, cultural spaces)
- Improve safety, health, and social well-being (including improved social service facilities, street cleaning, and public washrooms).

“Include observation decks for the public, like Shibuya Sky.”

“More third spaces like parks.”

“Better services and provisions for the Downtown Eastside.”

“How is a 25 metre pool (new aquatic centre) sufficient to accommodate what is proposed here?”



4 Infrastructure improvements to support growth

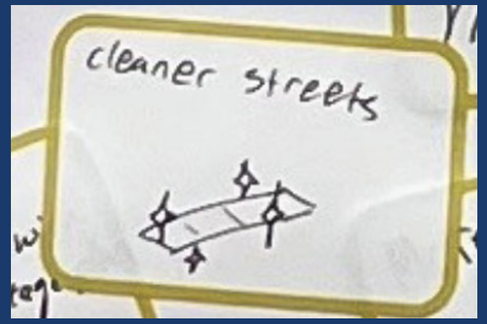
Additional height is widely seen as contingent on infrastructure capacity, with a need for transit, utilities, schools, and emergency services to keep pace with growth.

Many respondents questioned whether downtown infrastructure can support additional growth, with common concerns around traffic congestion, parking shortages, crowded transit, water and sewer capacity and community facilities not keeping pace.

There is an expectation that these buildings should contribute to ensuring that service levels are maintained or increased downtown.

There is also an expectation that dense development should support a less car-dependent city, even as opinions on parking vary.

There are concerns about traffic congestion and infrastructure strain, with respondents supporting adequate car infrastructure but asking how these projects can contribute to enhanced walkability, cycling, and transit and car-free areas.



“Services, like childcare, must be included in these builds in order to ensure that the community these buildings are in are self-sustaining, holistic, and give back to the community.”

“Ensure infrastructure can support it, e.g., traffic, electricity demand, plumbing capacity, other facilities.”

“Consider improving sidewalks for better accessibility.”

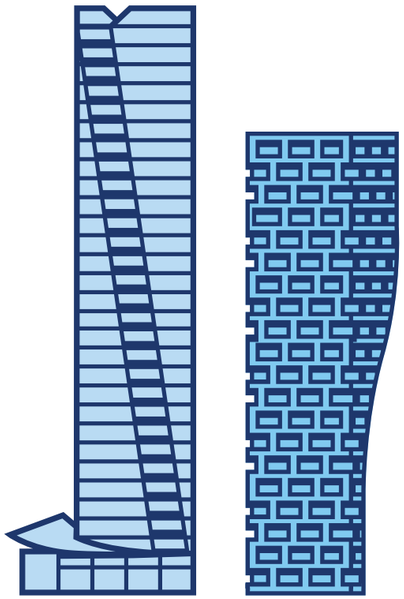
“Vancouver needs more public infrastructure, especially schools and upgraded community facilities.”

5 High-quality architecture rather than height for its own sake

Respondents placed high value on buildings' aesthetics, unique design, limiting scale/bulk and increasing setbacks, using high-quality construction materials and finishings, and creating street-level designs that emphasized quality over specific height.

Desired outcomes included a more dramatic "world-class" skyline with landmark buildings and distinctive architecture that helps promote innovative and sustainable buildings.

There was concern that there is a risk that poor quality architectural design could erode Vancouver's identity and result in us becoming a generic global city, with a degradation of our skyline aesthetics. Many respondents supported additional height only if accompanied by exceptional design.



"Good architecture and thoughtful taller additions to the skyline should make residents proud and contribute to the city's identity, like the Empire State Building in NYC, Marina Bay Sands in Singapore, or the Burj Khalifa in Dubai."

"I'm excited by the possibility of a more distrinctive, international, and intentional downtown skyline."

"Include new and diverse architecture, not just copy and paste."

"Build a landmark for Vancouver. Build a Eiffel Tower, Tokyo Tower, CN Tower or Taipei 101."

6 Consideration of environmental impacts and safety

Some respondents expressed excitement for green buildings and integration with nature, though concerns were raised over tree loss, wind tunnels, urban heat effects, and a disconnect with nature.

A notable minority raised concerns about earthquake resilience and emergency response in very tall buildings, including evacuation challenges and fire safety.

Suggestions included avoiding cutting trees, harming ecosystems, or excessive concrete and support for provision of green space and climate-responsive design.

There is also skepticism of superficial sustainability gestures (e.g., rooftop trees replacing real ecosystems). Overall, respondents want development to integrate with and protect natural systems, not replace them.





"When you look at the physical problems (elevators, flooding) that Vancouver House or the Butterfly have, it makes you worry about the longevity of these buildings, especially in an earthquake zone."

"Consider earthquakes, flooding/ evacuation, wind loads."

"Please ensure that fire emergency services can provide adequate support for tall buildings."

"Consider Vancouver's weather and climate change."

1 2 3 4 5 6

Other themes

Less frequently mentioned but important comments included references to:

- **Reconciliation:** many comments raised the idea of incorporating Indigenous art and design into the architecture of higher buildings.
- **Equity and inclusion:** many calls to consider the needs of equity-denied groups, including children, seniors, recent immigrants, low-income individuals, and homeless people.
- **Development and construction process:** some concerns were raised about how higher buildings projects will be approved and built, including skepticism that the City will be able to secure an appropriate amount of public benefits.
- **Long-term planning:** some comments raised questions about how the Higher Buildings Policy fits in with more comprehensive, long-term planning in the downtown peninsula.

"Include Indigenous design."

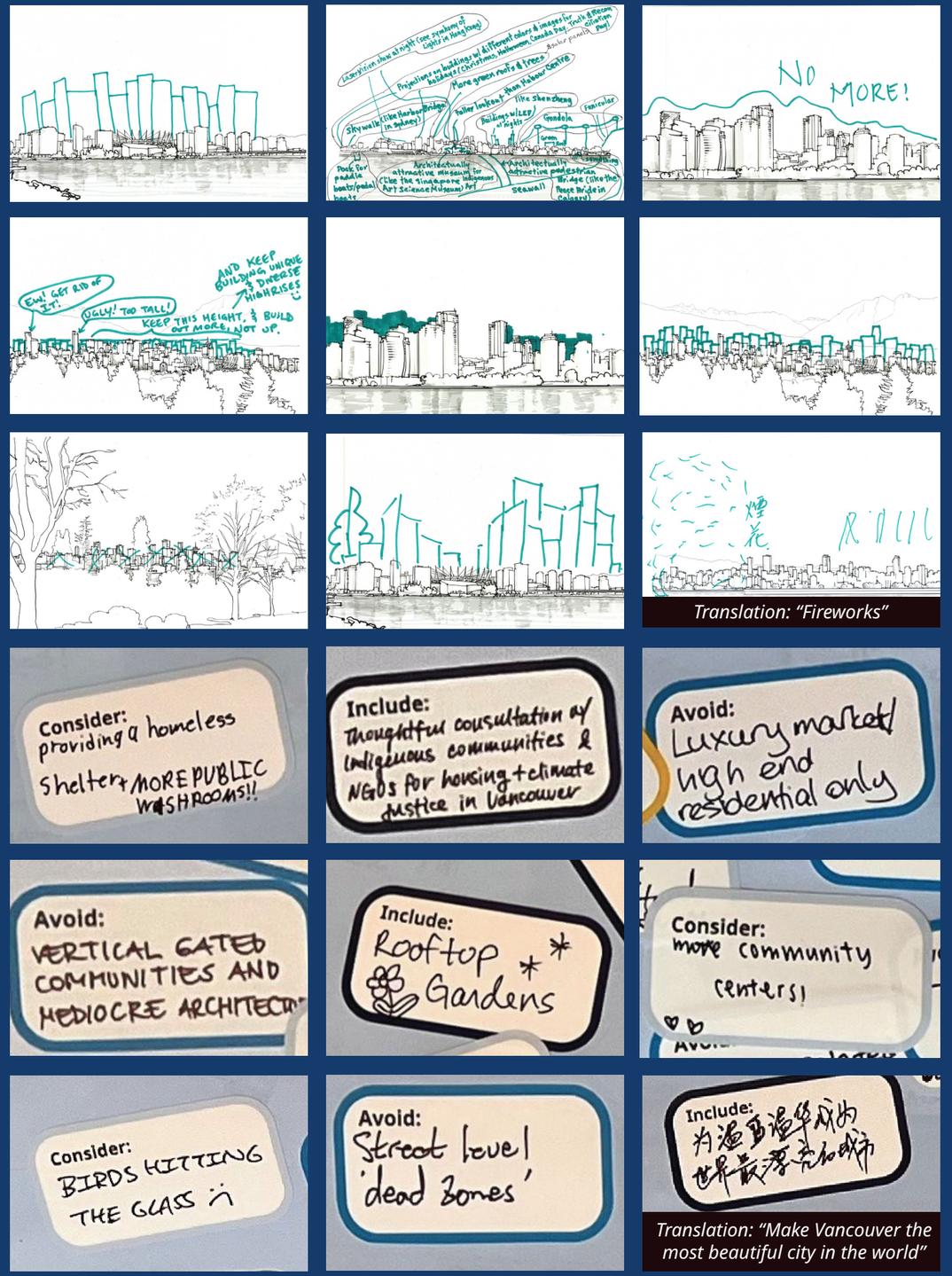
"Don't displace low-income or marginalized communities."

"Please prioritize density! Younger generations need housing, not views."

"I think there needs to be a strong consideration of environmental impacts and societal impacts such as gentrification, social inequalities to health and climate change."

"The land value increase associated with higher density … only benefits a few individuals and not the rest of us. The City needs to capture that benefit much more effectively than is currently the case."

"A key concern is that the policy focuses on individual buildings, rather than how an area is planned and built as a whole. It sets rules for towers, but not how a neighbourhood develops over time. This risks ending up with better-looking buildings, but not better, more complete neighbourhoods."



Translation: "Fireworks"

Translation: "Make Vancouver the most beautiful city in the world"

3.4 ‘How High’ + ‘Where’

Opinions on the appropriate height and location of the city’s tallest buildings were also gathered at the pop-ups, exhibit, and the online survey.

At the pop-ups, participants were invited to draw their preferred skyline which resulted in a variety of approaches to location and height.

At the Exhibit, participants were asked to explore different tower heights with a 3D model of the downtown peninsula and to document their preferences with provided stickers.

In addition, blank stickers were provided to share thoughts on location criteria that should be considered in this policy.

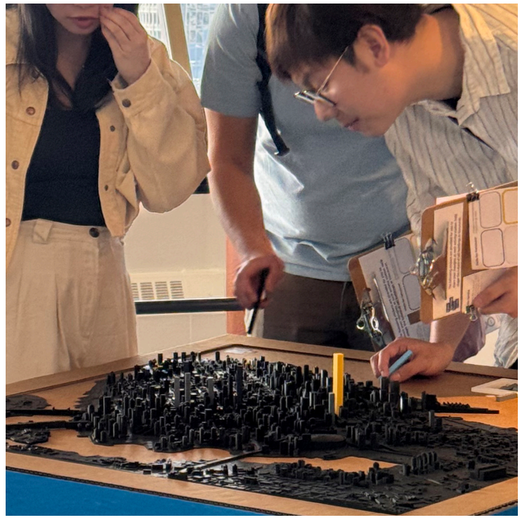
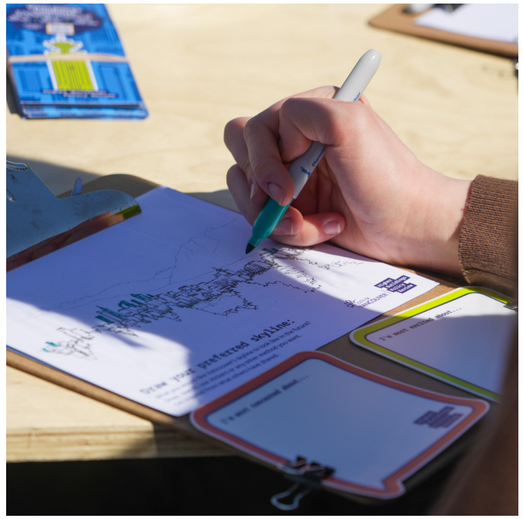


Exhibit participants had a chance to place towers on a 3D model of downtown.



Pop-up participants were invited to draw their preferred skyline.

Where + How High

After exploring the 3D model place stickers on the map where you feel additional height could be accommodated.



Exhibit participants received 12 stickers representing tower heights.

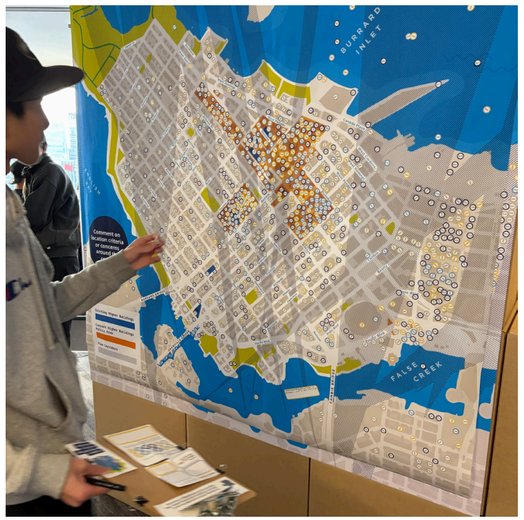


Exhibit participants were then invited to place the stickers on a map of downtown.



Completed drawings were displayed on a board for other people to consider.



Tall Buildings

When thinking about tall buildings, I feel like:

- Vancouver could have more tall buildings
- I don't have an opinion on the number of tall buildings here / prefer not to say
- Vancouver has enough tall buildings
- Prefer not to say

My Gender

- Woman
- Non-binary / gender diverse

How Tall?

Reflecting on the material today, I think Vancouver's tallest building should be:

- No opinion / Prefer not to say
- 659' (201m) today's tallest should remain the tallest
- 700' (213m) current policy height
- 800' (243m)
- 900' (274m)
- 1,[illegible] (305m)
- 1,200' (365m)
- As tall as possible
- Prefer not to say

My Age

- 75 and above
- 65 to 74
- 55 to 64
- 45 to 54
- 35 to 44
- 25 to 34
- 15 to 24
- Under 15 years old

Where

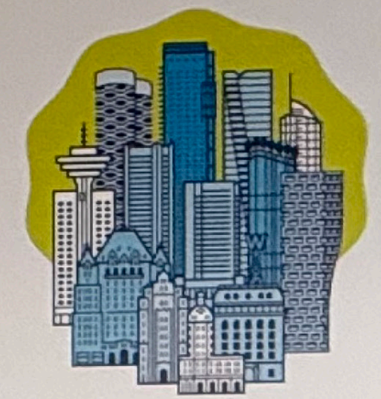
When thinking about the geography (the 'where') of tall buildings, I think the boundary of the policy:

- Should be expanded to include most of the downtown peninsula
- Should be expanded but with limits
- Should not be expanded
- No opinion / prefer not to say

What

I would most like to see taller buildings deliver the following benefits:

- Parks or public open spaces
- Community centres (fitness centres, ice rinks, swimming pools, etc.)
- Social facilities (neighbourhood houses, childcare, etc.)
- Arts or cultural facilities
- Transit improvements (seawall, greenways)
- Street design and public space improvements
- Heritage preservation
- Other public investments
- No opinion / prefer not to say



Thank you!

Thank you for helping shape the future of tall buildings in Vancouver.

Your responses today will inform a design brief for an international ideas competition on a made-for-Vancouver approach to tall buildings. This competition will launch at a public event at the Vancouver Playhouse on June 1st. The inputs from this engagement will inform potential policy options (Phase 2) which will be brought back out for public consultation, anticipated in early 2027.

For more information and to stay up to date on this process please join our email list here.

CITY OF VANCOUVER | Higher Buildings Policy Review

3.4.1 How High?

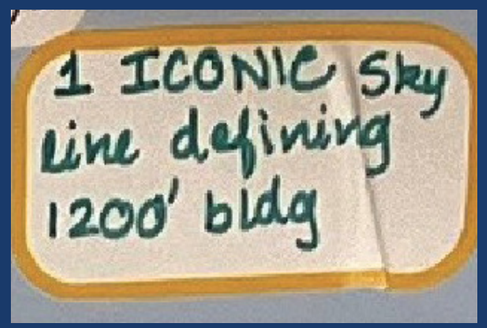
As mentioned, the opinion on where and how high our tallest buildings should be was split.

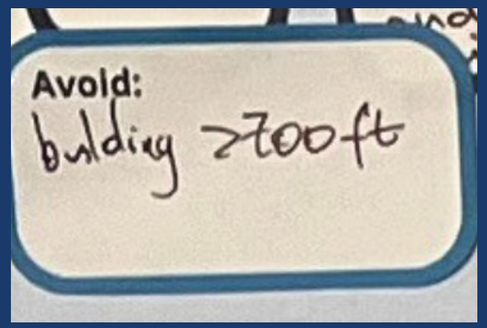
For many, including 59% of online survey respondents, the sense was that our current tallest buildings were tall enough.

These respondents were generally concerned about loss of views, excess density, livability impacts and changes to Vancouver's character. That said, this was by no means a consensus opinion.

As individuals left the Exhibit (immediately following the 3D model and mapping activity to locate preferred height), they were asked to participate in a string activity that asked a series of questions.

At the Exhibit string activity, two-thirds (66%) suggested that the tallest buildings should exceed the current policy limit (700 ft.), with over half (51%) suggesting that the tallest should be 1,000 ft. or taller and over a quarter (27%) suggesting the limit should be "as tall as possible."





"Don't restrict height anywhere within 10 miles of downtown core."

"Current height is tall enough."

"No building should be more than 12 storeys."

"I'd be happy if Vancouver were home to one of the world's tallest buildings — we should be more ambitious as a city."

"We don't need higher than 250m (820 ft.), just better planning and creative design."

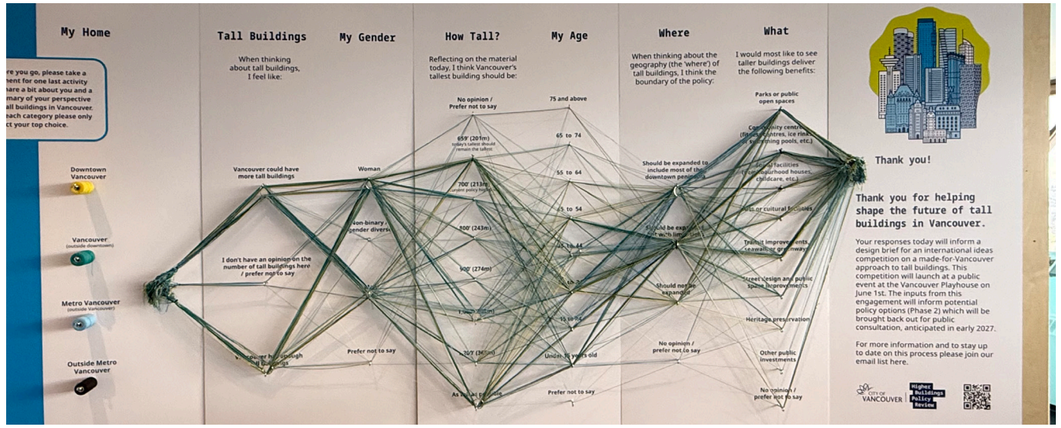
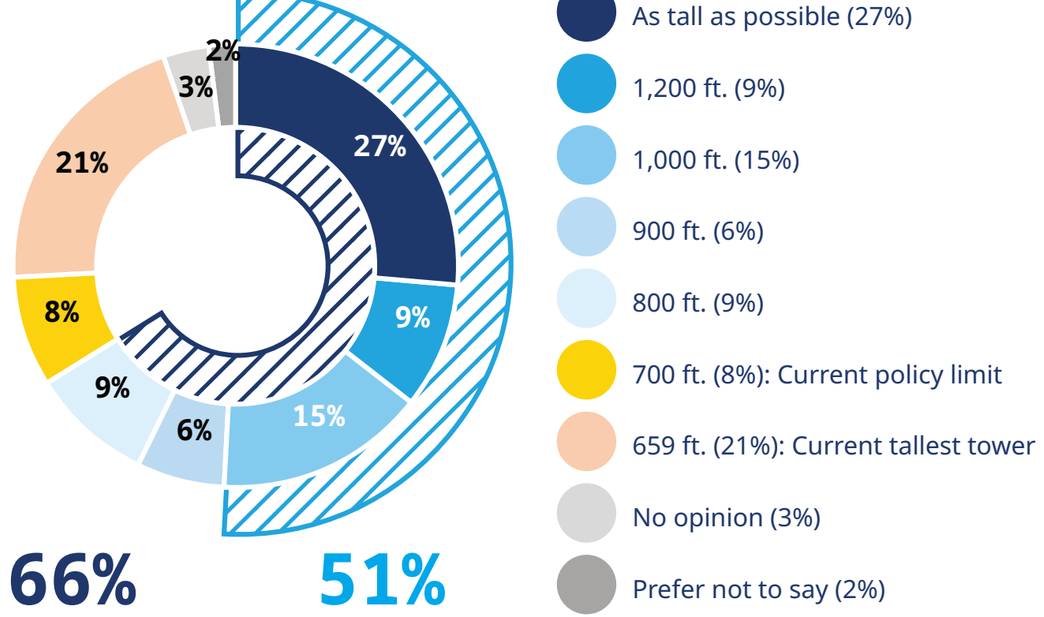


Exhibit participants were invited to loop a string through their preferred answers to various questions, including their preference for the height of Vancouver's tallest building.

Figure 2. Preferences for height of Vancouver's tallest building.



66% selected heights taller than 700 ft., the current limit

51% selected heights taller than or equal to 1,000 ft.

Source: Higher Buildings Policy Review Exhibit String Activity (391 responses)

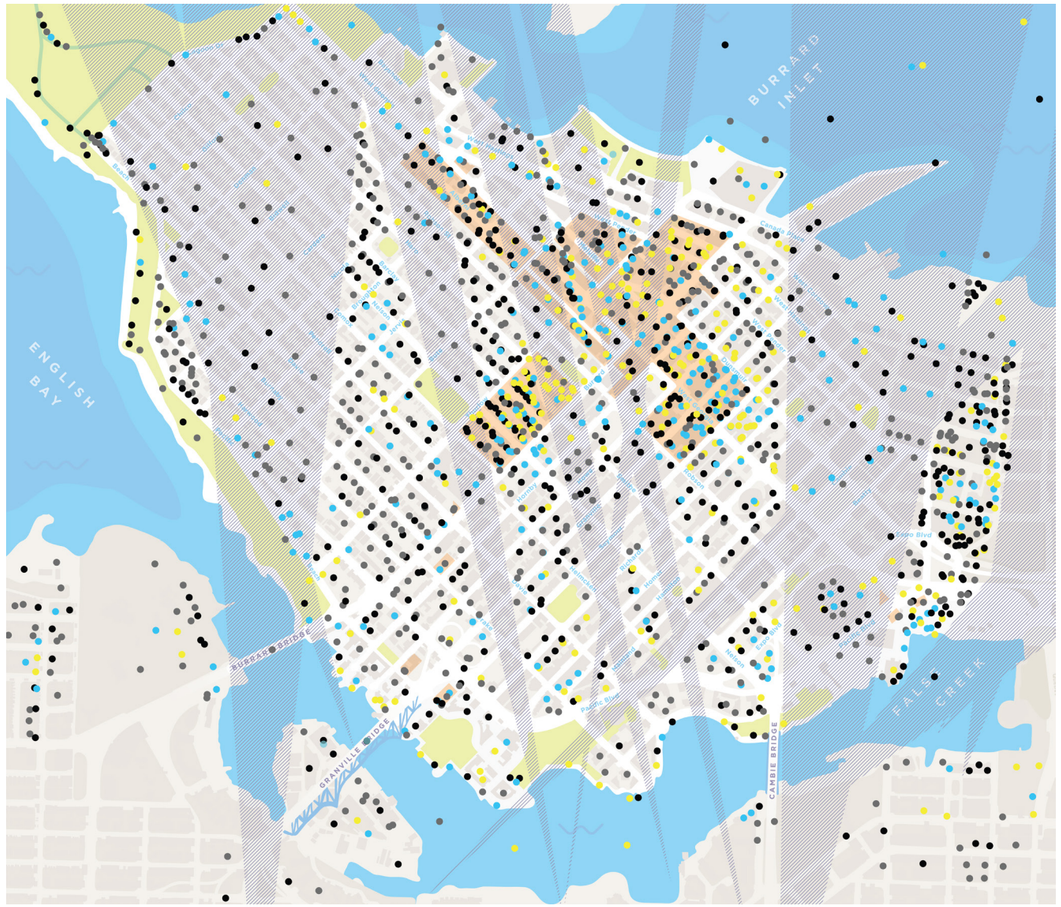
3.4.2 Where?

In addition to overall height, respondents were also asked about expanding the boundaries of the current policy. The map below shows where participants put stickers indicating where additional height could be located.

Of those who support additional height, stickers for lower heights (i.e., 600 ft. and 800 ft.) were dispersed across the entire downtown peninsula, whereas stickers for 1,000 ft. and 1,200 ft. were more concentrated towards the centre of the peninsula and the existing Higher Buildings Policy area.

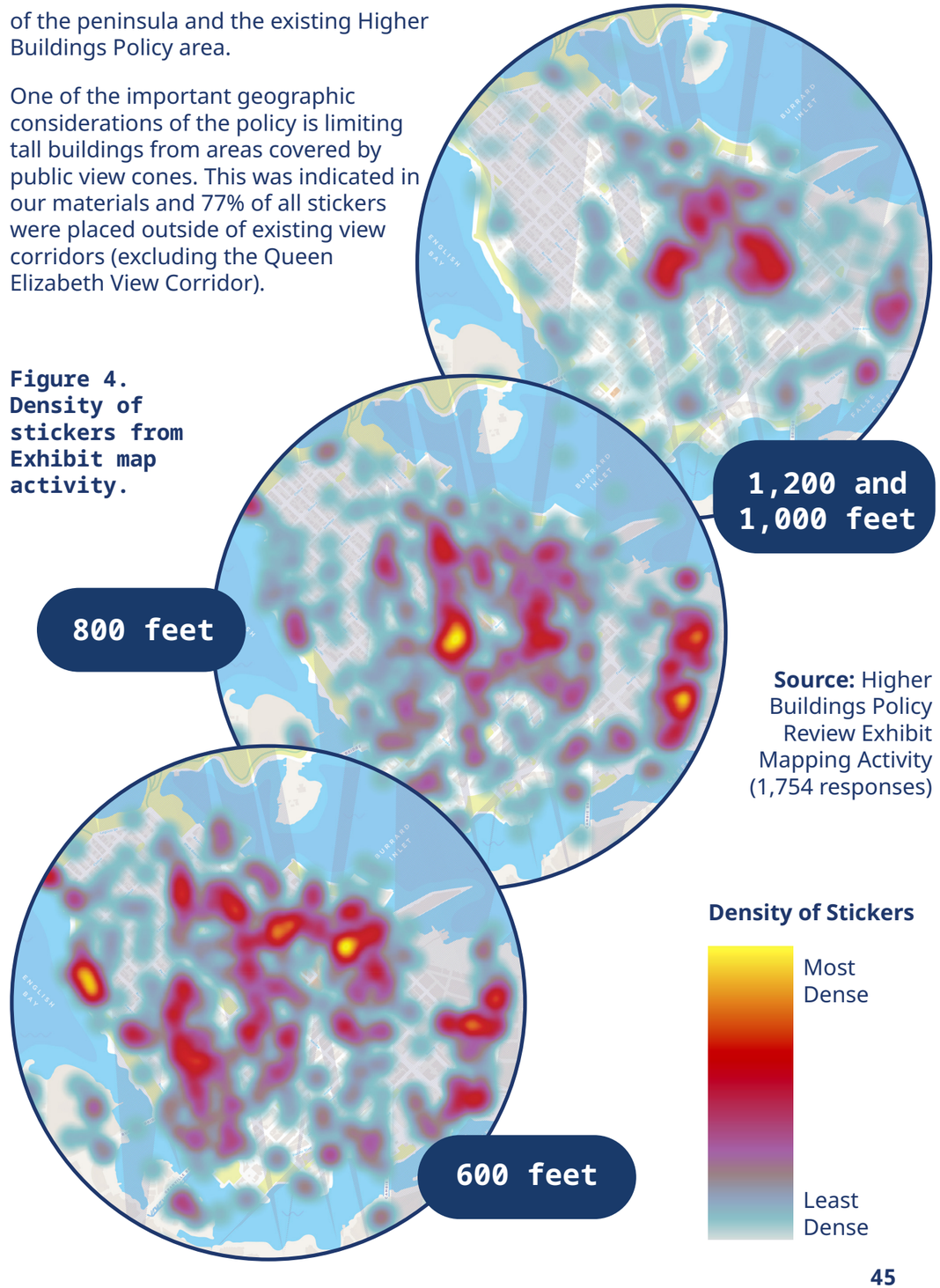
One of the important geographic considerations of the policy is limiting tall buildings from areas covered by public view cones. This was indicated in our materials and 77% of all stickers were placed outside of existing view corridors (excluding the Queen Elizabeth View Corridor).

Figure 3. Distribution of stickers from Exhibit map activity.



Source: Higher Buildings Policy Review Exhibit Mapping Activity (1,754 responses)

Figure 4. Density of stickers from Exhibit map activity.



Source: Higher Buildings Policy Review Exhibit Mapping Activity (1,754 responses)

3.4.2 Location criteria for height

For those willing to consider additional height, the following locational criteria were important.

The categories are ordered in terms of magnitude of responses related to that theme.

These categories summarize what was heard across the Exhibit, the survey, and the pop-ups regarding criteria on where taller buildings should or should not be located.

1 Build in downtown city centre and group towers close together

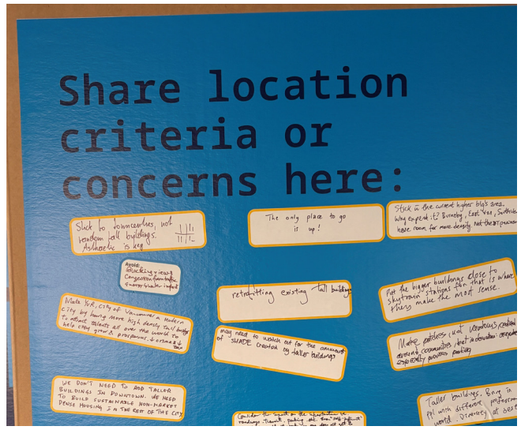
2 Consider key views, including mountain and water views

3 Avoid waterfront, beaches, parks and low-rise areas

4 Consider higher buildings in areas beyond downtown

5 Align growth with amenities, transit and infrastructure





At the Exhibit, participants were invited to share their thoughts on location criteria or concerns on a sticker board next to the mapping activity.

3.4.2.1 – Location criteria – Downtown

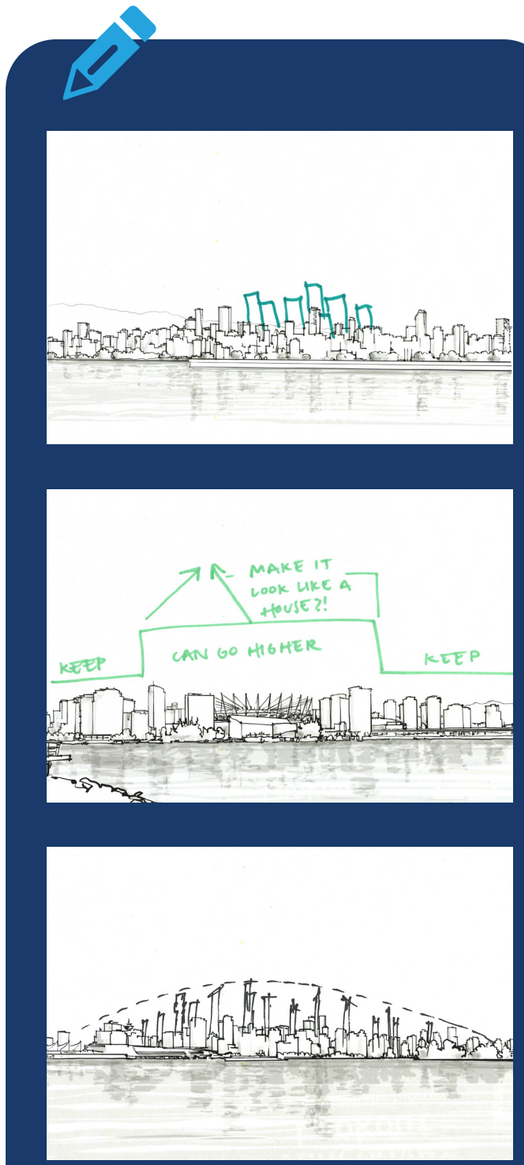
1 2 3 4 5

1 Build in downtown city centre and group towers close together

There was strong support for building in the downtown city centre and for grouping towers in a central area instead of spreading them out.

Specific areas included the Central Business District, Granville Corridor and Entertainment District, and areas already tied to continued residential growth such as Downtown South and Yaletown.

Support for a coherent skyline composition rather than “random” or isolated buildings was expressed, with downtown more appropriate location for landmark towers and encouraging development near transit to reduce vehicle dependance.



> *“Thoughtfully consider overall skyline shape. Don’t be flat with a single supertall building.”*
>
> *“I like the aesthetic of tall buildings clumped together.”*
>
> *“Taller buildings should mount up towards the city’s main downtown core, radiating out from Georgia and Granville and falling away towards the waterfront”*

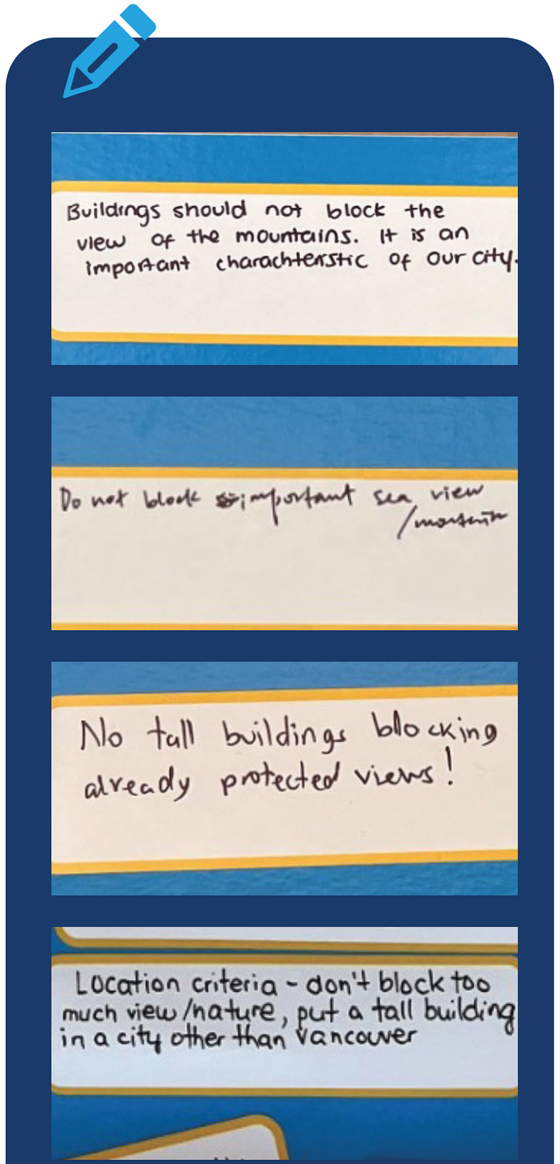
3.4.2.2 – Location criteria – Views

1 2 3 4 5

2 Consider key views, including mountain and water views

There was strong emphasis on preserving mountain, ocean, and key view corridors, including protecting view corridors and public view points, as well as emphasizing visual access to nature, including the North Shore mountains.

Comments often emphasized that Vancouver's identity is closely tied to its views of the mountains.



> *"Tall buildings should be built, but make sure we leave open spaces so that people can still see the beautiful mountains that make Vancouver different from other cities."*
>
> *"Tall buildings should be allowed where it does not impede nature views for the public."*
>
> *"Anywhere where view cones are impacted should be avoided."*

3.4.2.3 – Location criteria – Avoid shadowing + oversight

1 2 3 4 5

3 Avoid waterfront, beaches, parks and low-rise areas

While some individuals placed stickers on these locations, there was generally strong resistance to locating tall buildings near seawalls, beaches, parks, heritage areas and low-rise neighbourhoods, with concerns about shadowing, exclusivity, and loss of public enjoyment.

Respondents frequently mentioned avoiding visual dominance by towers and avoid creating abrupt height transitions to help maintain a human-scale urban form in these areas.

> *"[Avoid] heritage sites, beaches, and waterfront."*
>
> *"There should be no taller buildings allowed towards the existing False Creek waterfront or at bridgeheads. Tower heights should step down towards the water."*
>
> *"They should be avoided where they will shade parks and public spaces."*
>
> *"Avoid shadowing beaches, the seawall, and Stanley Park."*
>
> *"I think that most of downtown can be open to taller buildings but maybe not quite as tall in certain areas where the height is already not quite as tall (e.g., West End) so they don't stick out too much."*

3.4.2.4 – Location criteria – Consider outside downtown

1 2 3 **4** 5

4 Consider higher buildings in areas beyond downtown

While downtown was the focus of this engagement, many in-person comments suggested higher buildings outside of downtown, with support for distributing density to other areas to create multiple urban centres (e.g., East Van, transit corridors, other municipalities).

Alternatively, many online respondents called for concentrating height downtown while avoiding other neighbourhoods such as the West End, Kitsilano, Mount Pleasant, and Fairview.

Concerns generally centered around preserving neighbourhood character, reducing shadow impacts, maintaining livability and walkability, and protecting established communities.

"Why are we building tall buildings just downtown? Why not the whole city? Why does downtown bear all the social burden, i.e., housing, homelessness, social disorder, entertainment, etc."

"Limiting taller buildings primarily to the downtown core risks missing opportunities across the broader city where additional height could support transit-oriented growth, deliver housing and job space, and respond to unique site conditions."

"Buildings of the height covered here should be allowed in all neighbourhoods, not just downtown!"

"Build tall buildings throughout Vancouver, e.g., East Van, South Van."

"We have had enough … Put some super towers in other neighbourhoods now. Leave us downtowners alone."

3.4.2.5 – Location criteria – Align with infrastructure

1 2 3 4 **5**

5 Align growth with amenities, transit and infrastructure

Respondents suggested support for higher towers if they improve access to transportation and downtown infrastructure and provide more amenities to service growth, including affordable housing, community amenities, and public access.

There were repeated calls for transit-first or infrastructure-first development, with concerns about traffic, utilities, schools, and emergency service capacity.





"Higher density development must be accompanied by high density transit."

「在SkyTrain站上蓋多建大廈」
Translation: "Build more towers on top of SkyTrain stations."

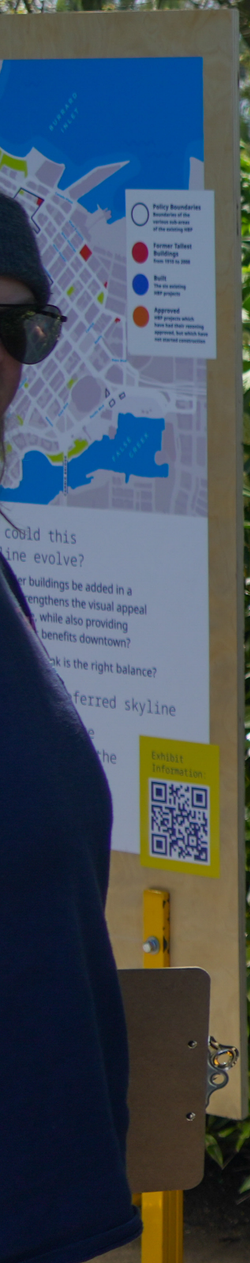
"Along commercial streets where there is transit and parking and current or available room to create infratructure to support, such as Georgia Street, Burrard Street."

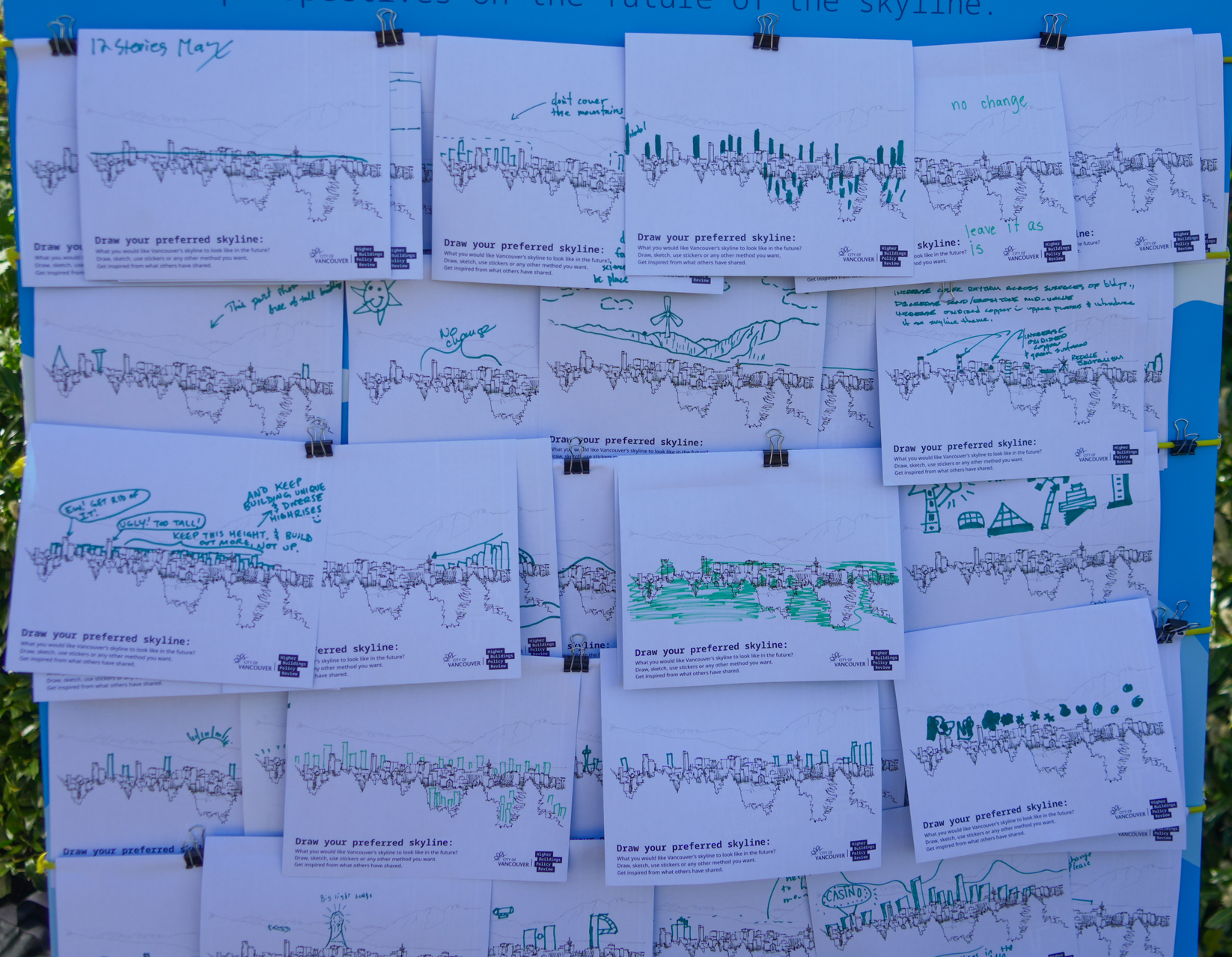
"Taller buildings should be clustered where infrastructure can support them and where they can create a more dynamic urban core without spreading impacts across the entire downtown."

"If tall buildings will have more green space around them … then please allow them to be where there is little green space now."

Your preferred skylines:

Hang your completed activity sheet here. Take a moment to see the ideas others have shared and their perspectives on the future of the skyline.







Summary & Next Steps

The first phase of engagement on our Higher Buildings Policy Review garnered significant public interest and illustrated a complexity of perspectives on the future of tall buildings in our city.

The findings suggest a cautious openness to considering amendments to this policy, but a very clear expectation that any new buildings should be exceptional projects that deliver unmatched public benefits.

While perspectives were split on departing from current policy, there was enough support for continuing with this process and bringing back options for public consideration on how this feedback may inform the City's policy.

Whether participants supported additional height or not, a common theme throughout the feedback was a love for this city, and an expectation that this policy, regardless of where it lands, should be locally specific to the challenges, opportunities, and characteristics that make Vancouver what it is.

The ongoing ideas competition, Vancouver Tall, will remain open until November 30, 2026, and will help inspire design ideas for a made-for-Vancouver approach. This, as well as emerging policy options, will be brought out to the public for consideration in early 2027.

Thank you again for your time and inspiration, and for helping to shape the future of tall buildings in downtown Vancouver.



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Higher Buildings Policy Review