



## Heritage Vancouver

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May 24, 2022  
Mayor Stewart and Vancouver City Council  
Vancouver City Hall  
453 West 12<sup>th</sup> Avenue  
Vancouver BC V5V 1V4

Re: Broadway Plan

Dear Mayor and Council,

Please accept the following comments regarding the Broadway Plan.

Increasing density is necessary to address the severe housing crisis that many face in trying to find affordable and appropriate housing in the city. Certainly, the development of the Broadway subway line provides an opportunity to do this. We recognize how constrained local level government is in what it can do to address affordable housing and manage increasing costs because the financialization of housing and the passing down of government responsibilities are systemic problems the City has little control over. We appreciate how complex and challenging it is for city planning to find ways to create the quantity and type of housing that is most needed. We also regret that the alternative to how the City can meet affordable housing needs, generate revenue for public amenities, and protect renters that are put at risk seems to be a much more entrepreneurial planning of Broadway and its neighbourhoods.

Heritage Vancouver is an organization that is committed to place and we believe that the diverse experiences and qualities of neighbourhoods and their identities are critical to the city. Neighbourhood character should not be used to prevent the provision of housing. It is extremely unfortunate that hardline arguments over the years for single family house character and aesthetic character have contributed to limiting alternatives for the distribution of density, putting pressure on areas in neighbourhoods where there are more affordable rentals and small local businesses of all kinds.

In the Broadway Plan document, we feel that the early section devoted to guiding principles is an extremely important section. It speaks to important values such as reconciliation, equity, local context, distinctive qualities, social connection and cultural expression. However, the rest of the plan predominantly quantifies desired outcomes that are necessary to achieve growth and make the area a second downtown. There is much less emphasis on how to realize or sustain all these important values.

As an example, please refer to the picture on page 361. It is of The Federal Store, a small locally owned business providing daily needs and a place for community to the local Mount Pleasant residential area. It needs to be noted that within a two-minute walk radius, rental, strata, and co-ops in the forms of house, townhouse, three-storey apartment, mid-rise tower and high-rise tower all exist. Despite its small footprint, it activates a street corner along the 10<sup>th</sup> Avenue bike path with its outdoor seating and lineups nestled in streetscape plantings, providing social interaction. Presumably, the picture of The Federal Store in the Broadway Plan is there because it is a good example of the aforementioned qualities. Nonetheless, according to the plan, what is most desirable is for The Federal Store to make way for a 20-storey tower.

There are numerous examples of these types of neighbourhood characteristics that are beneficial to the wide public: immigrant owned small groceries serving cultural communities, streetscapes at a scale where people can comfortably and enjoyably interact with their physical environments (including but not limited to the three cultural landscapes of South Granville, Mount Pleasant and West 4th identified in the Heritage section of the plan), diverse commercial character supportive of a range of needs, interests and price points, and housing where spaces are configured so that neighbours have been able to form connections with each other.

Since many of these will be lost in the process of providing more housing and making a second downtown, the plan needs to detail how it will make these characteristics that give people a familiarity with place and a sense of community come back stronger. In comparison to the quantitative outcomes the City desires through zoning changes, the plan currently contains very little substance on sustaining qualities of place after neighbourhood renewal and how to realize the values it aspires to in its guiding principles.

Sincerely,



Bill Yuen  
Executive Director, Heritage Vancouver Society