



Zoning Bylaw Update Backgrounder 6

for a prosperous city

Zoning for a Prosperous City

The City of North Vancouver continues to grow and change, and our Zoning Bylaw needs to change too. We are currently in the process of updating our Zoning Bylaw to be clearer, more effective and easier to use.

This backgrounder explains how the new Zoning Bylaw can align with City Council's vision of A Prosperous City, which is one that supports a diverse economy where new and existing businesses can grow and thrive.

This backgrounder is one in a series of eight, you can find them all on our project webpage at cnv.org/zoningupdate.



Zoning and a Prosperous City

A zoning bylaw regulates the types of land uses in a city, including where different types of businesses can operate. Much of the content in the City of North Vancouver's existing Zoning Bylaw dates back to the 1960's. Since then, the way businesses operate in the City has changed considerably.

Today, many businesses can be managed remotely and there are manufacturing industries that do not cause any noise, dust or vibration impacts on neighbours. This all means that there are many more businesses today that can be considered compatible with other uses, like residential, and could be placed on the same block or even within the same building, without any issues. Through the Zoning Bylaw Update process, there is an endeavour to explore how new economic opportunities can be enabled through more permissive zoning.



A constraint found in many older zoning bylaws is that there are many limitations on the mix of uses that can exist in a particular zone. For example, let's consider the City's residential zones. There are no retail uses allowed in the RS-1, RS-2, RT-1, RT-2, RG, RM-1 and RH-1 zones. This means cafés and other commercial uses that may be considered for residential areas must be located away from places where people live.

What if there were corner stores and cafes in your neighbourhood again?

By allowing a broader mix of uses in zones, there could be more opportunities for neighbourhood businesses in the city, and this could put more small shops and services within walking distance of more residents.



More businesses closer to the places people live is one way that the City can work towards creating complete communities, reducing carbon footprint and traffic congestion.

Zoning & Equity

Many businesses on the North Shore are understaffed in part because employees cannot afford to live in the City and have to travel long distances to get to work. As captured in the [City of North Vancouver 2021 Housing Needs Report](#), this is “a particular challenge for low-to moderate-income workers, due to the high cost of housing and challenges with transportation” (pg. 74). Through zoning, we are able to permit the development of more diverse housing forms to improve affordability, including for workers who power our local economy.

With new growth in people and jobs, particularly in areas near public transit, it is also important to encourage mixed-use development that provides opportunities for new and existing businesses to grow and thrive, including local independent businesses.

Context

Historically, the city was a place of port-related industry. The diversity of job types continues to grow and self-employment is a part of that growth with 17% of our residents being self-employed. Our top three employment sectors include professional services, health care, and marine-related industries. Jobs in creative and professionalized industries have also become more common in the city.

Metro 2050, Metro Vancouver's Regional Growth Strategy, calls for us to plan for continued job growth. By 2050, there will be nearly 13,000 new jobs in the City of North Vancouver.



Sources: City of North Vancouver Business License Records, Statistics Canada

As our city grows, a greater variety of businesses expand along main and local streets. Commercial uses are faced with some of the following challenges that can be addressed through the new Zoning Bylaw.

- Along main streets, ground floor retail is very valuable and lease rates are climbing. The City is seeing member-based businesses like banks, gyms and dentists opening on key retail streets, but they may not have storefronts that are designed to create vibrant and active streets. A new Zoning Bylaw may explore urban design strategies for creating active and comfortable street frontages.
- The existing Zoning Bylaw places restrictions on commercial uses in residential areas as well as restrictions on home occupations. Increasing flexibility in zoning can enable local convenience uses and support modern enterprises, such as maker spaces, pop up shops, and high tech uses.
- Conversion of industrial lands to office, retail, residential and other uses has resulted in a low supply of industrial land in our city and region. Once industrial employment land is lost, it is very difficult to get back. The new Zoning Bylaw can help protect the key industrial uses in the city while supporting a thriving commercial economy.
- Industrial uses serve several important functions. They provide quality employment opportunities in areas like manufacturing, research and development, technology and design. They are a space for jobs in hazardous or semi-hazardous industries that are not compatible with residential or non-industrial uses and they are a space for important uses that are not compatible with residential and retail areas, such as auto body, appliance and equipment repairs, or other activities that produce noise or odours. The new Zoning Bylaw can help protect these jobs and services by regulating where development can occur.

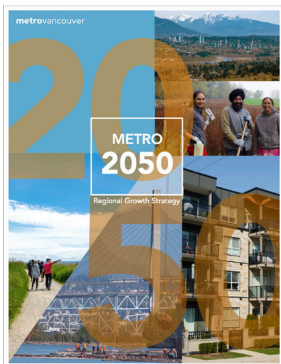
Expanding on the success of Lower Lonsdale, the City wants to ensure that Central Lonsdale becomes the best High Street in Canada.

Existing Objectives, Goals and Directions

The City of North Vancouver is home to many business owners and we want to craft a new Zoning Bylaw that is easy to use and understand. We want the City to be 'open for business' to enable existing businesses to grow and expand and a first choice for attracting entrepreneurs and new investment.



Metro Vancouver



Regional Growth Strategy

[The Metro 2050 Regional Growth Strategy \(2022\)](#) provides direction to protect industrial lands and to accommodate an influx in new jobs.

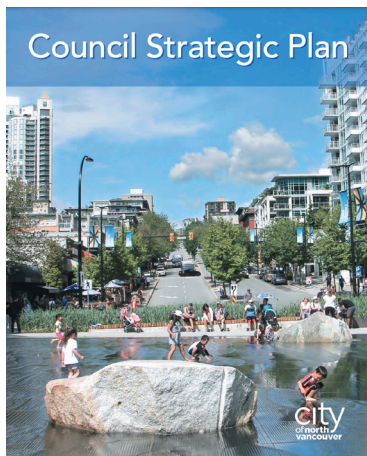
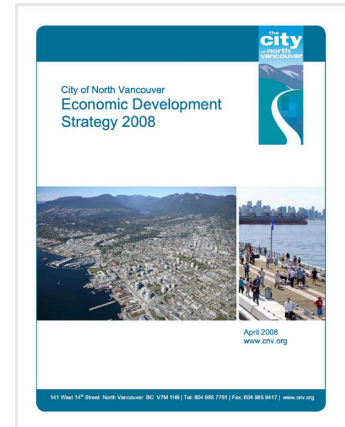
- Metro 2050 predicts a regional growth of 500,000 new jobs by 2050.
- In the city, employment comes in many forms: small businesses, retailers, restaurants, government, health care, ship building and repair, and railroads, to name a few. This diversity of jobs is one way that the city creates a vibrant place to live, work and have fun.

City of North Vancouver

Economic Development Strategy

The City is in the process of updating its Economic Development Strategy. The [Economic Development Strategy \(2008\)](#) identifies opportunities for welcoming more economic activity in the city, including:

- Create and enhance diverse and unique shopping, dining and entertainment opportunities.
- Explore the potential to use density bonusing and other land use regulatory tools to encourage developers to provide more office space.
- Consider pre-zoning lands for future growth and development especially where Metro 2050 has identified growth areas along Lonsdale Avenue, Marine Drive, and East 3rd Street.
- Use zoning to permit/encourage developers to provide more office space and the emergence of a health and bioscience cluster around Lions Gate Hospital.
- Use zoning to maintain industrial land for industrial purposes and support more intense uses of the land while finding ways of adding in complementary uses such as maker spaces, office sharing, dry/wet labs, and other related amenities for workers.
- Large commercial mall sites and lower density commercial developments could provide opportunities for more jobs and residential homes in future redevelopment scenarios.
- Leverage City attractions including The Shipyards and Lonsdale Quay as destinations to help generate economic opportunities within the



Council Strategic Plan

[The City of North Vancouver Council Strategic Plan](#) identifies Council's priorities for each term. One of the priorities is to be a Prosperous City, which calls for us to support a diverse economy by creating an environment where new and existing businesses can grow and thrive.

Unlocking Opportunities with a New Zoning Bylaw

Businesses are constantly evolving.

The existing Zoning Bylaw is organized around permitted uses, but the uses it describes reflect the ones that were around in the 60s. Business and work today is a lot different than it was back then.

Remote work is now a common practice; shopping looks very different today, with many products, food and other goods being delivered right to people's doorsteps; manufacturing can be done in a small apartment with a 3D printer; brick-and-mortar shops often include several business types within the same space, like a barber shop and bar or a shared office space used by several different companies.

Through the Zoning Bylaw Update, we will explore:

- how the Zoning Bylaw can be more enabling for new types of businesses;
- what elements of a business really matter when it comes to compatibility with other use types like residential;
- how to make it easier to understand the rules related to where different types of businesses can be located in the City;
- how businesses are categorized and how we can be more inclusive of a diversity of businesses, retailers and services across the city; and
- how it can be simpler to use with new visuals, a better layout and an online interface.

By allowing a broader range of business activities, the City can permit more places for residents to shop, more services to meet their needs, and more opportunities for residents to open their own businesses right here. With a focus on form based standards, we can also make it easier to allow compatible uses that create vibrant, complete communities.

The City's project team will continue to look more deeply into these issues throughout the project and will explore ways to address them in the new Zoning Bylaw.



Stay Informed

For more information on this exciting initiative, please visit the Zoning Bylaw Update [project webpage](#) and subscribe to our mailing list.

Links To Related Policies + Background Documents

- [Metro 2050: Regional Growth Strategy \(2022\)](#)
- [City of North Vancouver Strategic Plan \(2018\)](#)
- [City of North Vancouver Economic Development Strategy \(2008\)](#)

city
of north
vancouver