

May 16, 2022

Mayor Kennedy Stewart & Councillors
City of Vancouver



Re: City of Vancouver Broadway Plan

Your Worship and Members of Council,

The Broadway Plan is thoughtful and measured, but the City can go further to ensure that life for current and future residents really is “a Broadway”: affordable, livable and green. Renewable Cities encourages Mayor and Council to support the Broadway Plan with amendments.

The proposed Plan makes many important contributions, including:

- Demonstrating the value of integrating land use planning with large transportation infrastructure projects, leveraging taxpayer investments like the \$2.3 billion spent on SkyTrain to create maximum benefits for individuals, the community and the region.
- Accommodating substantial regional residential growth that could otherwise drive development to car-dependent locations far from jobs. If the 30,000 new homes envisioned in the Plan were to be developed at typical densities on Metro Vancouver’s urban fringe, they would consume 2,500-3,500 hectares of forest and rural lands that could otherwise mitigate climate risks such as flooding and heat waves.
- Proposing jobs and housing densities that support healthy municipal and transit budgets, in contrast to peripheral, low-density growth that is a net drain on taxpayers.
- Envisioning job growth that includes industrial intensification, reducing pressure on the limited and economically critical industrial land in the region.
- Capitalizing on the City’s leadership in building performance that has advanced deep reductions in carbon intensity in new towers being built in Vancouver (and has inspired change across British Columbia, Canada and North America)
- Incorporating lower building forms and mid-rise along with towers within the Plan area.
- Addressing housing affordability by maintaining and expanding affordable housing and secured rental stock, while protecting existing renters. With two-thirds of units planned as rental, the Plan will shift supply closer to established housing needs.

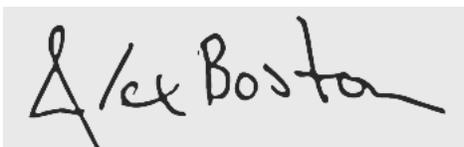
At the same time, Broadway Plan policies require refinement to ensure community goals are met. The following priorities should be addressed through an amendment:

- 1. Strengthen affordability requirements:** While the City has been ambitious, the proposed mix of housing will likely not meet the needs of a large share of households — the bottom half of all households by income. Rents calculated based on the current market rate will not be adequate if rental property costs continue to rise faster than incomes. To ensure future housing supply matches housing needs, affordability commitments for private below-market rental housing must include rent-geared-to-income units for households making less than the median income. Strengthening affordability requirements is consistent with the City’s leadership on housing affordability.

2. **Strengthen housing resilience:** Require lock-off suites in a share of multi-family units to support affordability, aging in place, demographic change and social inclusion.
3. **Leverage public lands to secure affordable housing:** Leverage publicly owned lands to secure affordable housing and complementary uses. The City has already committed to housing over transit stations, we recommend schools and City-owned facilities should also be a focus following the excellent example of integration of social housing into Firehall #5. These sites can be used to provide affordable housing and/or help finance public needs. such as school redevelopment and transit, which also reduces pressure on property taxes, service costs, and service cuts.
4. **Establish green space targets:** Confirm targets for public green space (including privately owned public spaces) and on-site capture of rainfall. The plan’s high-level parks and greenspace commitments are strong, but definitive targets are needed to ensure that the high quality of life possible in high density corridor can be achieved. A commitment to establish green spaces will attract new residents and meet the needs of diverse users, from families to seniors. Ample green space is also essential to reduce environmental impacts and financial costs associated with conventional stormwater management, as well as to help mitigate extreme heat and flood risks.
5. **Promote active travel by investing in green infrastructure innovation:** Advance imaginative and transformative green space innovations that address social, economic, environmental and reconciliation goals. Renewable Cities recommendations include:
 - a) Go beyond the few "green streets" identified in the Public Realm Plan to create a large network of car-free linear parks along secondary streets, giving residents access to parks right outside their door and along the corridor.
 - b) Increase green space and active travel infrastructure along major commercial arteries.
 - c) Surface one of the dozen streams running through the corridor to serve as a green and blue way with active travel infrastructure.

Thank you for your continued efforts to make our city more resilient.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink on a light gray background. The signature reads "Alex Boston" in a cursive, slightly slanted script.

Alex Boston

Executive Director

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Appendix

Green streets ambition is essential to improve the quality of life for city residents.



Woonerf in Abrahama, Poland (Photo credit: Andrzej Otrębski)

There are many opportunities to rediscover Vancouver's streams.

Greenways that surface historical streams renew our connection to place and nature, softening urban spaces and providing relief from modern busyness. They can support quality of life, make space for active transportation, reduce extreme temperatures, help reduce flooding and could support reconciliation.

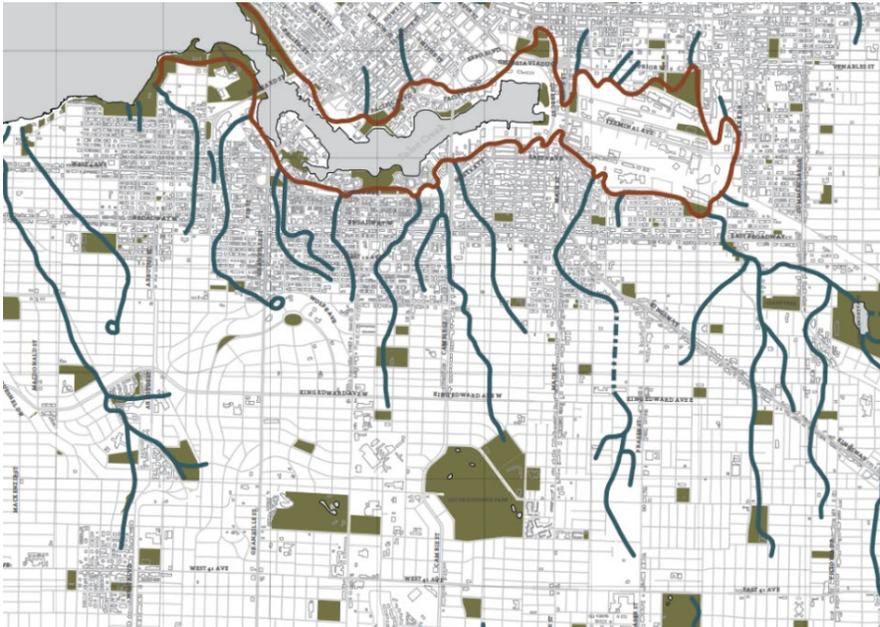


Image Credit: The Dark Mountain Project (sourced UBC Library and the City of Vancouver)

<https://dark-mountain.net/streamkeeping/>