

December 8, 2020

Mayor and Council
City of Vancouver
453 West 12th Ave
Vancouver, BC
V5Y 1V4

Councillors,

Thank you for meeting with the Downtown Vancouver BIA leadership on November 23rd, 2020.

We appreciated the opportunity to have a dialogue about how the downtown area has been impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic. During the meeting we discussed ways in which the City can continue to support businesses and aid economic recovery efforts.

Below is a summary of our recommendations:

- **Increase the supply of rental housing** throughout Vancouver by continuing to approve development applications for secured rental housing.
- **Fast-track commercial renovation permits.** Minor renovation projects such as expanding an office suite or adding a wall between suites will be a common permit application as commercial tenants adapt to new needs for office and retail spaces. Minor renovation applications often trigger major building upgrades, in turn adding costs and delaying the occupancy date for tenants. We recommend that major building upgrades be addressed separately from minor renovation approvals.
- **Expand hours for construction** to reduce construction timelines.
- **Eliminate liquor licensing radius restrictions.** A review of Vancouver's liquor primary moratoria was requested by Councillors Fry and Kirby-Yung in July 2020. We look forward to an update from that review. An increase in liquor primary capacity will support arts and culture, create jobs, improve the tourist experience, and bring Vancouver's live venue capacities in line with other major cities.
- **Advance the Granville Refresh planning initiative.** The impacts of the pandemic are distinctly visible in the vacant storefronts, clubs, and restaurants on Granville Street. A

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Downtown Vancouver BIA

coordinated planning initiative to improve the public realm, land use, and business mix is needed to maximize the potential of downtown Granville Street.

- **Enhance level of sanitation downtown** (litter pick up, street flushing).
- **Expedite approvals for festivals and cultural events** when it is safe to hold public events again. Explore Councillor Wiebe's idea of developing pre-approved event templates for events of various sizes to help in expediting the applications.
- **Create more flexible spaces for outdoor programming** such as road space, plazas, laneways, and Harbour Green park public dock.

Your commitment to the health of our communities and the survival of our businesses has been demonstrated through new City of Vancouver initiatives and pilot projects over the past nine months, such as the temporary patio pilot project, pop-up plazas, and online permit approvals. The recommendations above will further advance the important work already being done to support businesses during this challenging time.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "C. Gauthier". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "C" and a stylized "G".

Charles Gauthier, MCP
President & CEO