

Rezoning Policy for Higher Buildings in the Historic Area (Victory Square, Gastown, Chinatown, Hastings & Main)

DRAFT FOR REVIEW

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Rezoning Policy for Higher Buildings in the Historic Area (Victory Square, Gastown, Chinatown, Hastings & Main)

1 Intent

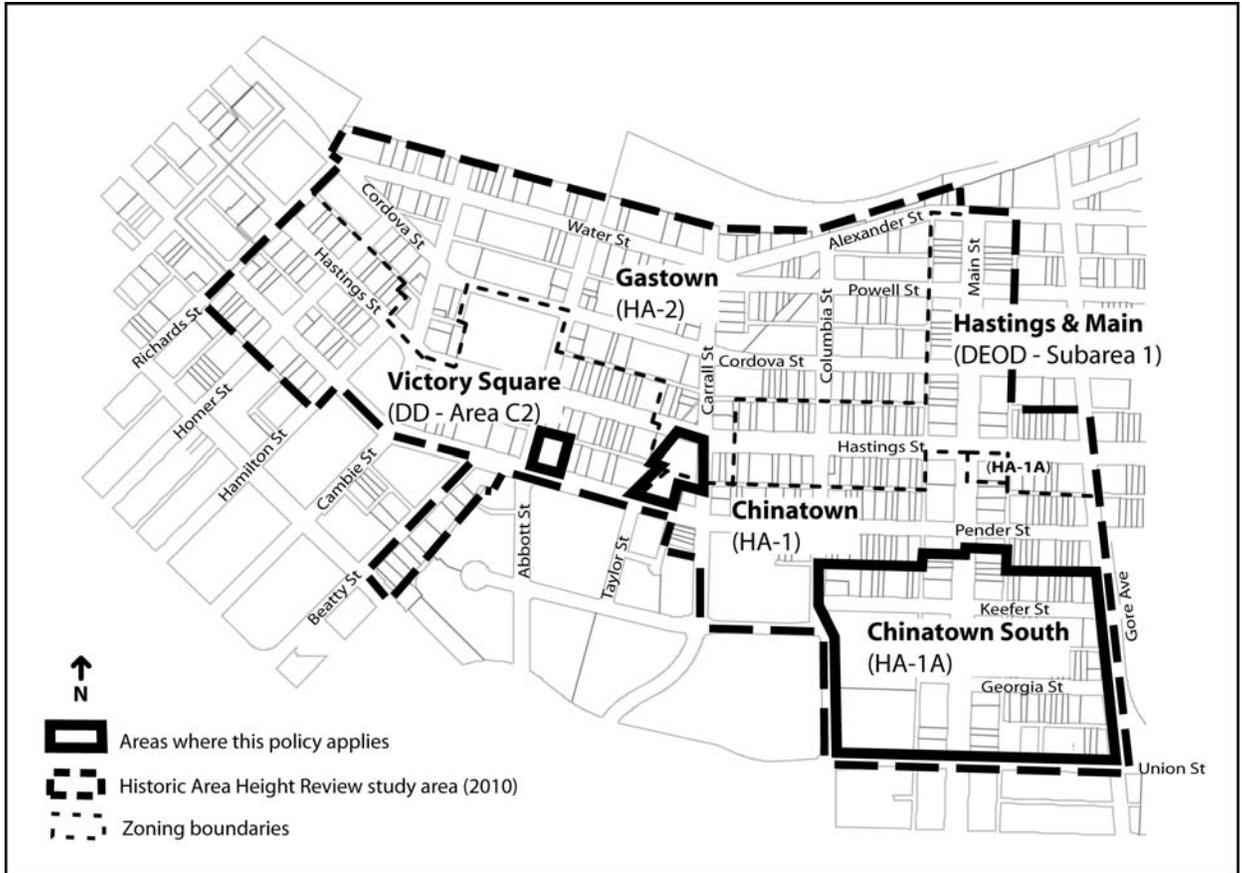
The intent of this rezoning policy is to provide guidance regarding the location and requirements for higher buildings in the Historic Area. Development of higher buildings in these locations shall balance the opportunity for additional growth and resulting public benefits with preserving the important heritage and cultural character of the Historic Area.

As the birthplace of Vancouver, the Historic Area contains many important heritage resources. The overall development scale of the area should thus continue to reinforce and support the prevailing heritage context, fine-grained character, and generally low to mid-rise building forms. Higher buildings are appropriate at specific locations in the Historic Area as outlined in this policy, noting that the prominence of existing landmarks and tall buildings shall be maintained. Overall, any new development resulting from this policy is expected to reinforce the identity and integrity of the Historic Area through a sensitive contextual response.

In addition to the requirements that follow, proposals for higher buildings in the Historic Area shall adhere to applicable Council-approved plans, policies, and guidelines for each site. Particular attention shall be paid to how proposals fit with the Downtown Eastside Housing Plan, and how proposals contribute to the City's objectives for the area related to economic revitalization and heritage conservation. Further, the requirements contained in this rezoning policy do not preclude additional requirements that will be determined during the enquiry and rezoning process.

2 Application

This Rezoning Policy applies to the areas identified by the solid line in Map 1 below. These areas were identified through the Historic Area Height Review and endorsed by Council as suitable locations for higher buildings (see the study area in Map 1). The Historic Area Height Review included extensive analysis and public consultation, and concluded with Council direction on where and how additional height through rezoning in the Historic Area would be considered. For additional information on the Height Review, see the Policy Report dated January 4, 2010, entitled "Historic Area Height Review: Conclusion and Recommendations", located online at the following link: <http://vancouver.ca/ctyclerk/cclerk/20100119/documents/rr2a.pdf>



Map 1 - Rezoning Policy Area

Proposals for higher buildings in the areas identified by the solid line in Map 1 will only be considered under this Rezoning Policy where future planning and design opportunities are not unreasonably precluded. Proposals for higher buildings on all other sites in the Historic Area shall be guided by the applicable Council-approved plans, policies, and guidelines for each site. It is noted that provisions for height relaxations exist in the by-laws, policies, and guidelines for Victory Square and Gastown, as identified in Map 1.

In Victory Square (Downtown District - Area C2), the area's policy plan and guidelines outline provisions for rezoning to a 30m (100 ft.) maximum. In Gastown (HA-2), the district schedule allows the Development Permit Board to relax the maximum height of 22.9m (75 ft.), based on specific considerations as outlined in the HA-2 District Schedule.

3 Definitions

For the purposes of this document:

- *“Chinatown South”* means that portion of the HA-1A zoning district that is south of Pender Street.
- *“Higher building”* means a development proposal that significantly exceeds the maximum height provided for in the site's zoning district schedule and other applicable Council-adopted policies.

- “*Historic Area*” means that portion of the Downtown Eastside which underwent special analysis through the Historic Area Height Review (see study area in Map 1). Specifically, the Historic Area includes Victory Square (DD-C2), Gastown (HA-2), Hastings and Main (portion of DEOD-S1), Chinatown (HA-1 and HA-1A).
- “*Main Street Sub-area*” means that portion of Chinatown South with properties fronting on Main Street.

4 Higher Buildings in the Historic Area

4.1 Policy on Rezoning

No site in the Historic Area shall be rezoned for a higher building, with the exception of sites identified in Sections 5 and 6 of this policy. For sites located in DEOD (Sub-Area 1), west of Gore Avenue, rezonings may be considered up to a maximum height of 120’, if they meet the social housing requirements of the DEOD ODP and provide an additional contribution in the form of affordable housing benefit. For sites located in Victory Square (DD-C2), higher buildings will be considered through rezoning in accordance with Section 2.5 of the Victory Square Policy Plan and Section 4.1.11 of the Victory Square Guidelines.

4.2 Early Review Requirements

Prior to submitting a formal enquiry on any site in the Historic Area, applicants are strongly encouraged to meet with City staff early in their design process. The purpose of this meeting is to review the development concept, ensure proper contextual influences are considered, and clarify design strategies to meet heritage, land use, built form, scale and character objectives. Applicants are encouraged to prepare a site context analysis and preliminary urban design response for discussion at this meeting.

4.2 General Urban Design Requirements

Proposals for higher buildings under this policy must meet the following guiding urban design requirements.

Fit within the existing neighbourhood character of the Historic Area:

- Respect the area’s fine-grain and mid-rise scale, as well as coherent blocks of permanent heritage buildings.
- Reflect the architectural patterning of the area, such as the sawtooth streetscape profile and various narrow building widths. Setbacks in addition to those described in the applicable guidelines will be required for building heights above the outright height maximum.
- Respond sympathetically and respectfully to the surrounding heritage and cultural context through architectural expression, façade articulation, materiality, detailing, and colour.

Serve as a high point for the area without overwhelming the historic development scale:

- Defer prominence to existing higher heritage buildings (Sun Tower, Dominion Building).

- Not exceed height requirements contained in this policy, as well as adhering to existing view protection guidelines.

Contribute positively to the public realm:

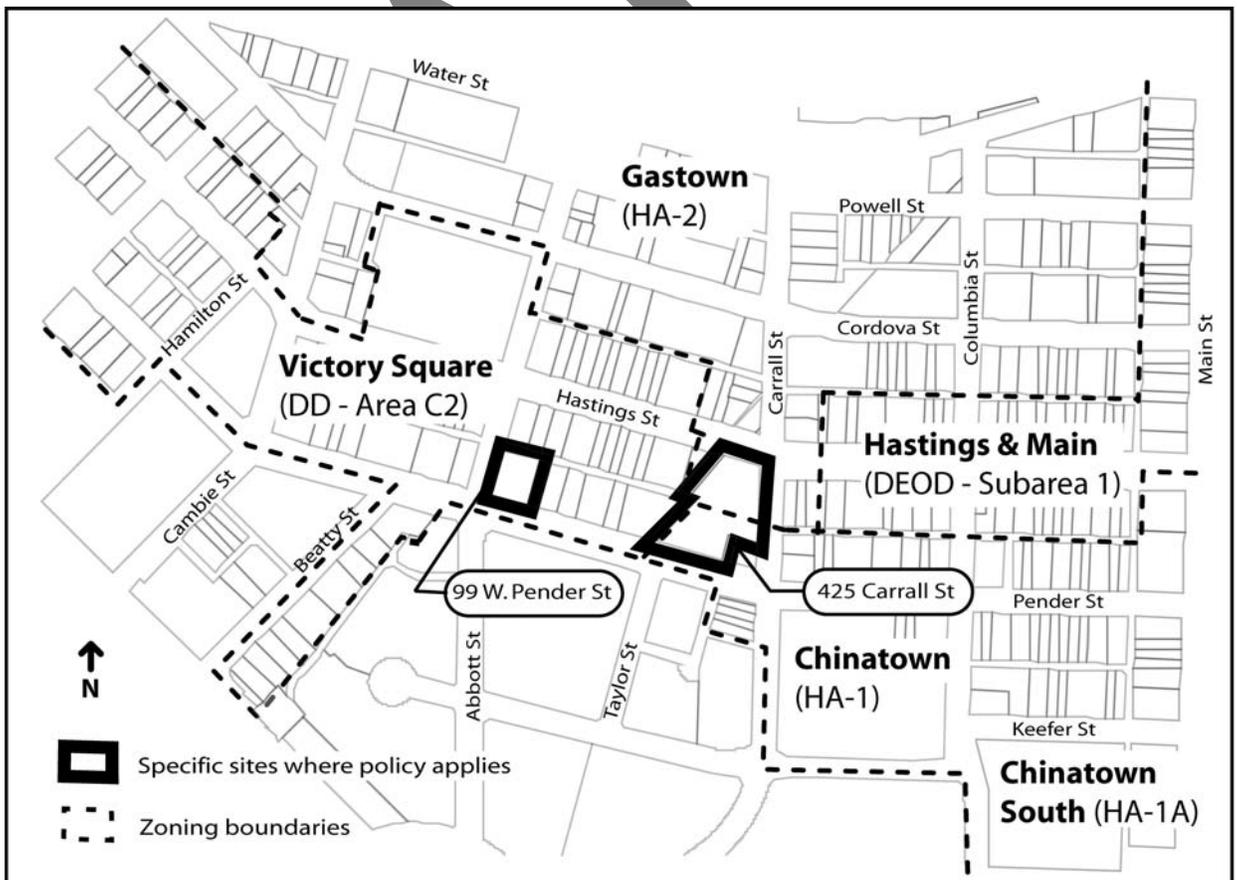
- Minimize shadow impacts on public open spaces, and consider and respect the visual and spatial experience of key public spaces and monuments.
- Ensure pedestrian interest through ground-floor treatment and by providing public amenities and landscaping wherever possible.
- Respond positively to the lane environment at grade.

Demonstrate exceptional architectural and urban design that is compatible with the Historic Area's character and scale:

- Demonstrate a respectful, contemporary architectural expression and building program achieved through a substantive understanding of neighbourhood context.

5 Sites for Higher Buildings

This section provides direction on height, urban design and other requirements pertaining to the two specific sites identified in Map 2 below. These sites were approved by Council as higher building sites through their consideration of the Historic Area Height Review.



Map 2 - Council-Approved Sites for Higher Buildings in the Historic Area

The Historic Area Height Review included detailed urban design analysis and extensive public consultation, prior to Council's decision on appropriate locations for higher buildings in the Historic Area. For additional information on the Height Review, see the Policy Report dated January 4, 2010, entitled "Historic Area Height Review: Conclusion and Recommendations", located online at the following location: <http://vancouver.ca/ctyclerk/cclerk/20100119/documents/rr2a.pdf>

Given the unique nature of these two sites, additional special review of rezoning proposals by City advisory bodies may be required. These bodies include the Urban Design Panel, Vancouver Heritage Commission, the Gastown Historic Area Planning Committee and the Chinatown Historic Area Planning Committee. Additional special review could include presentation of proposals at the enquiry stage, joint workshops, inclusion of guest panel members, etc.

5.1 99 West Pender Street

a) *Height and Massing*

- Additional height of approximately 150 ft. will be considered, subject to consideration of the urban design requirements outlined in this policy (including view cones, shadow, and context analysis).
- Setbacks will be required and determined through context analysis, in order to ensure effective and appropriate transition in form, massing, scale, and character.

b) *Urban Design Requirements*

- Respect proximity and prominence of the Sun Tower heritage building (100 West Pender Street) through building design, such that the scale, form, massing, and architectural detailing of the proposed higher building does not overpower the significance of the Sun Tower on the city skyline.
- Respond to the intersection of Pender and Abbott streets (convergence of the Historic Area and International Village), and to West Pender Street in general, through compatible streetscape design.
- Provide proper transitional scale to the adjacent heritage district.

c) *Other Requirements*

- Any redevelopment proposal for this site shall include an appropriate response to the rezoning requirements outlined in Section 2.5 of the Victory Square Policy Plan, available online at: <http://vancouver.ca/commsvcs/guidelines/V002.pdf>

5.2 425 Carrall Street

a) *Height and Massing*

- Additional height of approximately 150 ft. will be considered, subject to consideration of the urban design requirements outlined in this policy (including view cones, shadow, and context analysis).
- Setbacks will be required and determined through context analysis, in order to ensure effective and appropriate transition in form, massing, scale, and character.

- b) *Urban Design Requirements*
- Ensure no further shadowing of Pigeon Park and minimize shadowing impacts on the former CPR right-of-way.
 - Defer respectfully to the culturally important sites along Pender Street and Carrall Street, including the Millennium Gate, Chinese Cultural Centre, Sun Yat Sen Courtyard, and the Dr. Sun Yat-Sen Chinese Classical Garden, through building design and streetscape treatment.
- c) *Other Requirements*
- This site is located within two zoning districts (HA-2 and HA-1). This rezoning policy and the by-laws, policies and guidelines for each zoning district shall be considered in the development of any proposal. Early discussion with staff on suitable form of development is recommended.
 - This policy is to be used in conjunction with the Chinatown HA-1 Guidelines and the Gastown HA-2 Design Guidelines.
 - Any redevelopment proposal for this site shall include rehabilitation of the former BC Electric heritage building, and for the vacant portion of the site, consideration be given to an interpretive response, either through replication or referencing, to other heritage buildings and structures previously demolished.
 - Any redevelopment proposal for this site shall also secure public access to the former CPR right-of-way, and include an appropriate public realm landscape treatment to this open space.

6 Chinatown South (HA-1A south of Pender Street):

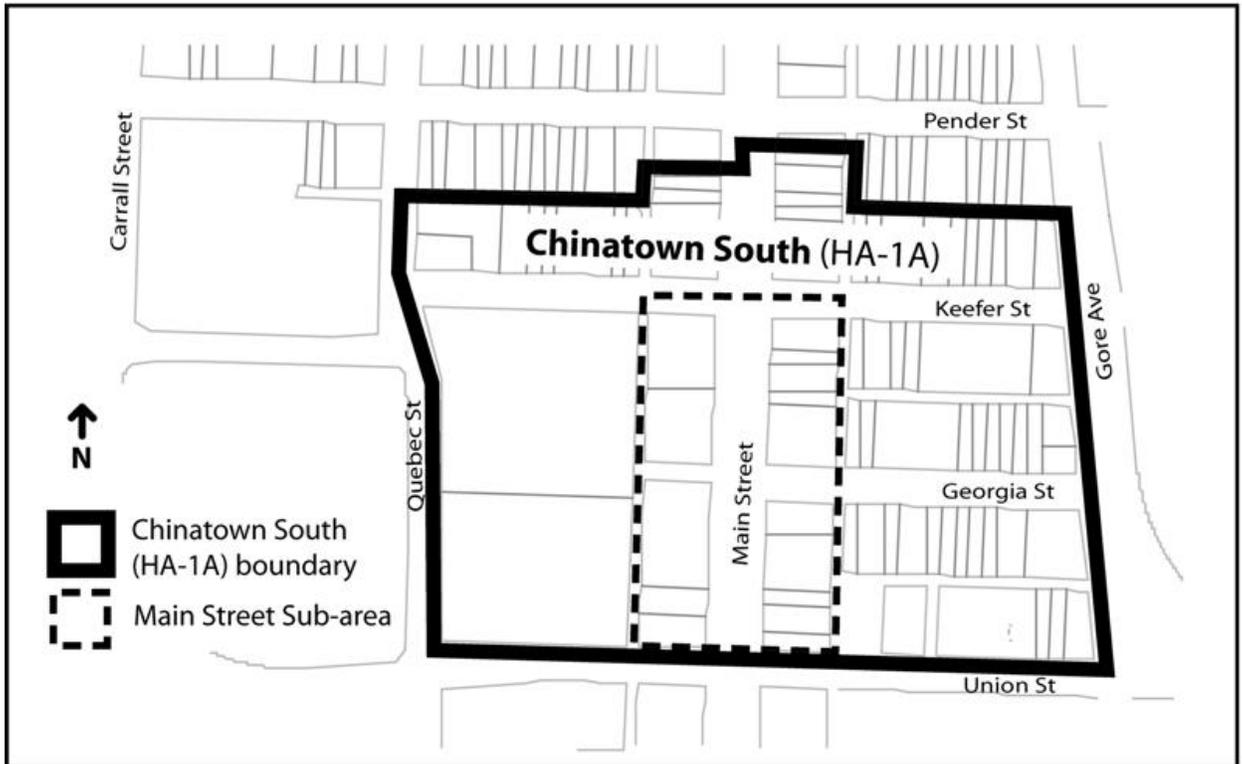
This section provides direction on overall development of higher buildings in Chinatown South. For the purposes of this policy, Chinatown South is defined as the portion of the HA-1A zoning district south of Pender Street, as illustrated in Map 1 and Map 3 below. In order to maintain an appropriate scale adjacent to the historically significant Pender Street (HA-1), this policy does not apply to the small HA-1A area north of Pender Street.

6.1 Overview

Future growth in Chinatown South resulting from this policy is expected to contribute to the overall economic revitalization and residential intensification of Chinatown (HA-1 and HA-1A), as well as to support innovative heritage, cultural and affordable housing projects in the Chinatown area.

There are two provisions for higher building rezonings in Chinatown South, as listed below and illustrated in Map 3:

- *Chinatown South* – HA-1A south of Pender Street.
- *Main Street Sub-area* – Properties in Chinatown South fronting Main Street.



Map 3 - Policy Area for Higher Buildings in Chinatown South

- a) *Height and Massing*
- The following height limits shall apply to higher buildings in Chinatown South:
- *Chinatown South* – Additional height up to a maximum of 120 ft. will be considered.
 - *Main Street Sub-area* – Additional height of approximately 150 ft. will be considered, subject to consideration of the urban design requirements outlined in this policy (including view cones, shadow, and context analysis).

Required setbacks are described in the Chinatown HA-1A Design Guidelines. Additional setbacks may be required and will be determined upon contextually-based analysis towards effective and appropriate transition in form/massing, scale, and character.

- b) *Urban Design Requirements*
- Respect historic Chinatown (HA-1) in terms of adjacent architectural scale, orientation, massing expression, details and materials.
 - The recommended development site frontage is 75 to 125 ft.
 - Vary building facades in order to convey incremental development, and to reflect historic development patterns such as 25 ft. lots, sawtooth building heights, and the resulting asymmetrical streetwall character.
 - For all sites where a higher building would have a visual impact on the protected Olympic Village Plaza view cone (name TBC), upper building massing and roof profile shall be shaped to maintain and respect the mountain profile and further, modulated to provide permeable views to the mountain range and valley profile beyond. Where possible, floor plate

dimensions and shape shall be oriented to maximize the open view to the mountains and valley.

c) *Other Requirements*

- This policy is to be used in conjunction with the Chinatown HA-1A Design Guidelines.
- Developments with frontages on Main Street should emphasize it as a neighbourhood high street with street-oriented retail uses at grade, and lighting and signage distinct from historic Pender Street.
- Proposals for higher buildings in Chinatown South will be considered for the purposes of supporting innovative heritage, cultural and affordable housing projects, as well as to support residential intensification and economic revitalization of the broader Chinatown area.

7 Public Benefits through Rezoning

Appropriate public benefits shall be provided by developments rezoned through this policy, typically in the form of Community Amenity Contributions (CACs), transferable heritage density, or low-income housing. Public benefits will be negotiated on a case-by-case basis as part of a rezoning application, according to the Council-adopted policy “Community Amenity Contributions - Through Rezonings”, available online at: <http://vancouver.ca/commsvcs/guidelines/C025.pdf>

Public benefits provided by rezonings can help to address increased demands that may be placed on City facilities as a result of the rezoning, mitigate impacts on the surrounding community, as well as address neighbourhood needs as identified in plans and policies for the area. For Chinatown, Council endorsed the additional height through rezoning described in this policy for the purposes of supporting innovative heritage, cultural and affordable housing projects, as well as to support residential intensification and economic revitalization of the broader Chinatown area.