

Questions from West Southlands Residents Association co-chair, Mary Tataryn, about

How the recently passed “Vancouver Plan” might affect our area

Answers from Andrew Pask of the City of Vancouver Planning Dept, on Sept 7, 2022

Hi Mary,

Stina Hanson forwarded your inquiry to me, and I've put together some answers to your questions. I've taken the liberty of adjusting the order a bit, where there was some overlap in topic.

One thing to say at the start: many of your queries are about items that are specific to Southlands. The Vancouver Plan is a high-level, city-wide document, so for a number of these topics, the Plan doesn't get to the sort of finer-grain detail that you are looking for. Many of the specifics that you are inquiring about will be addressed as part of future implementation work and related area planning activities. Another thing to note: the Plan is also not a development or rezoning-enabling policy. The specifics of how or where particular types of change might take place, and the various regulatory tools that will be involved, are also part of future work.

Page numbers referenced herein, are to the online version of the Plan available at the vancouverplan.ca website. (Note that these may change in future versions, as the document is being updated to reflect Council amendments passed in late July). Direct link to the plan: vancouverplan.ca/wp-content/uploads/Vancouver-Plan-2022-06-27.pdf

Warmly,

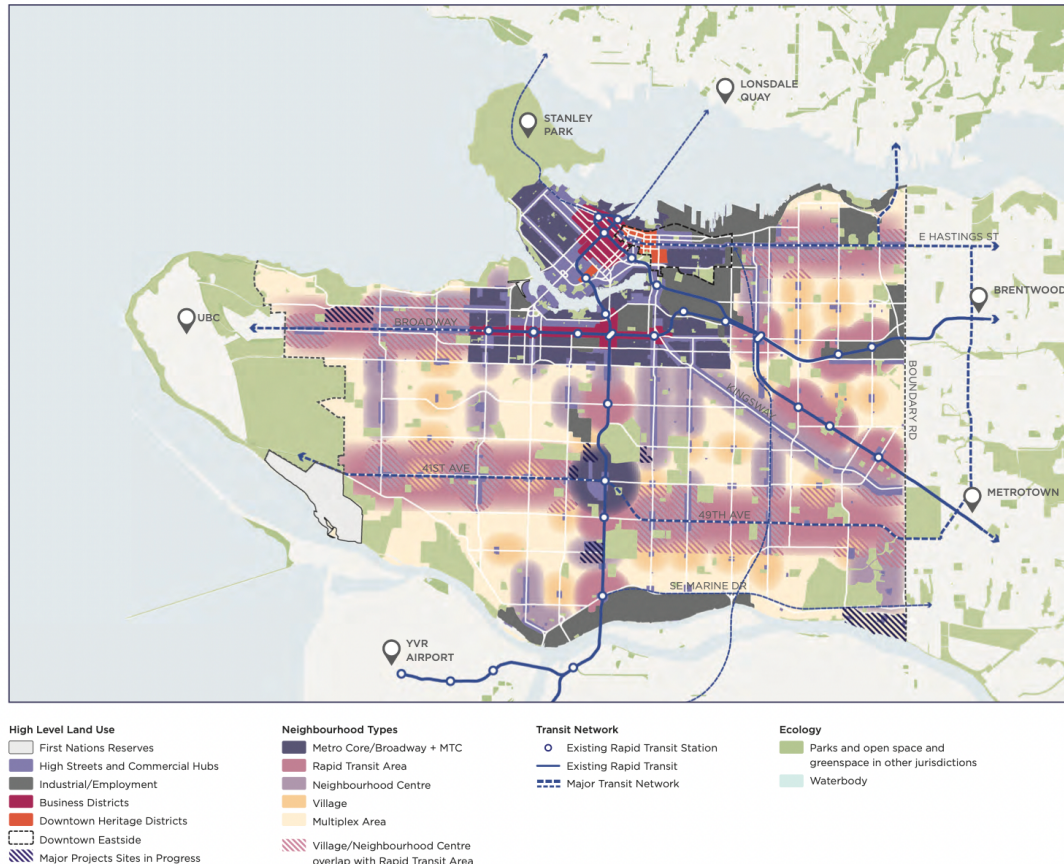
Andrew Pask

Does the Vancouver Plan restrict or encourage development?

The Vancouver Plan sets out a land-use vision for Vancouver through to 2050. As such, it identifies areas of growth and change, the general approaches that will be taken in different types of neighbourhoods, and the supporting policies (for housing, transportation, public space, and a number of other topics) that will guide this change.

The short answer to your question is that the Plan shapes development in different ways across the city. There are some areas which are identified for greater degrees of intensification, and some areas where change is anticipated to be more modest in nature. The following map (p. 55) sets out the Land Use Strategy:

Map 4: Land Use Strategy



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Will the Vancouver Plan allow single family lots to be subdivided to build Multi Family and Duplexes?

The Vancouver Plan is not a development or rezoning enabling policy, so there are no specific provisions around subdivision of lots. Specific implementation tools for the different land-use objectives set out in the Plan will be developed as part of the next phase of work, along with future area planning.

There are couple of caveats to note here. Most single-detached zones (aka “RS”) zones in Vancouver already allow duplexes – and have for about 4 years. Under these regulations, there are also provision for laneway housing, secondary suites, and other types of infill housing (though it does vary by zone, lot size, and a number of other factors).

In addition, City Council recently passed a motion that directed staff to explore “multiplex” housing as a further option in low-density areas. The direction is to explore allowing up to 6-units on a single lot. Work on this is very much at the preliminary stages, and is being advanced as an “early action” for Vancouver Plan implementation. You can read more about this initiative [here](#).

Note that the term “multiplex areas” is also used in the Vancouver Plan to describe a broader series of policy objectives for low-density residential areas (i.e., areas that are not otherwise being considered as a transit node, shopping area, etc.). West Southlands is identified as a multiplex area. (Policy directions for multiplex neighbourhoods can be found on (p. 66-7 and p. 90-1).

Does the Vancouver Plan allow Land Assemblies in West Southlands?

Again, the Vancouver Plan is not a development or rezoning enabling policy. The land use strategy provides a long-term vision for growth and change across the city. Specific details such as block level land uses, heights and densities, urban design requirements, infrastructure provision, services, and amenities will be determined through future area planning. Specific implementation tools associated with all aspects of the Plan (city-wide) will also be developed as part of this work.

Does the Vancouver Plan take precedence over the Southlands Plan of 1988?

The Vancouver Plan is intended to serve as an over-arching land use document. Future implementation work will involve a review of existing area plans, and work to align and streamline or rescind existing policy documents with the directions set out in the Vancouver Plan. As noted in the implementation section (p. 148), “the Vancouver Plan will be the guiding document to update and align existing plans and policies or rescind outdated plans.”

Will the Vancouver Plan affect current protection of the semi-rural character of West Southlands, including no curbs, few sidewalks other than gravel paths and open ditches?

The Vancouver Plan doesn’t address public realm or street design in specific areas of the City, however, it does provide key citywide directions on how the street right of way may be used to meet our long term citywide goals.

In all cases, public safety and accessibility standards will be upheld whenever we are upgrading infrastructure within the street right-of-way. That said, through future implementation work and area planning activities, there will be opportunities to develop public realm standards/designs that consider character of the existing neighbourhoods. Timing of when/where area planning will occur is part of the next phase of work.

What opportunities are provided in the Vancouver Plan for public engagement when land use changes are proposed?

As noted, next component of Vancouver Plan work involves an array of implementation work (p. 148). This phase, which will involve both city-wide and neighbourhood scale activities, will also include further engagement with the community; however, there is no timeline or process yet identified for this work.

Does the Vancouver Plan allow home businesses or commercial or industrial activities in West Southlands?

While expansion and intensification of industrial areas is envisioned in the Vancouver Plan, no new industrial is being considered in the West Southlands area.

Multiplex areas have a general policy to “Support opportunities to add stores, shops, work from home options, home-based businesses and the informal economy to help meet the needs of a growing population. Explore new job space in single developments, clustered, or co-located with community uses.”

Specifically with regard to home home-based businesses, there is also a general policy in the Economy section that may be of interest: Economy Policy 2.5.2 (p. 98) - Provide greater opportunities for home-based businesses in residential areas by amending zoning and licensing regulations, similar to those of surrounding municipalities.

Staff intend to engage stakeholders and the general public on potential amendments that would expand opportunities for home based business prior to presenting more detailed recommendations to City Council.

Will the Vancouver Plan stop development in the flood plain below Marine Drive? Does the Vancouver Plan have any impact on how the City of Vancouver will respond to rising sea levels on the Fraser River as a result of climate change?

One of the foundational principles at the heart of the Vancouver Plan is Resilience, which is defined as “the ability of individuals, communities, organizations, businesses, and systems within a city to survive, adapt, and thrive in the face of shocks (an event or disruption like earthquakes or heat waves) or chronic stresses (an ongoing challenge like unaffordable housing, climate change or social isolation).” (p. 36-7)

Another central tenet of the Plan is Big Idea #3 – Climate Protection and Restored Ecosystems (p. 44-5), which identifies a number of broad objectives for the Plan, including “protecting waterfronts and waterways” and “making space for nature, protecting habitat, and ensuring healthy, thriving ecosystems.”

These & other considerations are also built into the Plan’s long-term (100-year) ecological vision (p. 104). As part of this, you’ll find a city-wide map that identifies some of the area you are inquiring about as ‘ecologically sensitive.’ This is a composite map, & the designation relates to flooding/sea level rise, existing riparian (shoreline) area, broader habitat restoration opportunities, and existing parkland and agricultural areas.

Map 8: Long-term ecological vision



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As with other aspects of the Plan, the more detailed area-specific planning considerations (including where development will or won’t occur) in response to the aforementioned directions will be undertaken as part of future implementation work.

What protection does the Vancouver Plan include for the forested areas and city land currently designated as parkland in West Southlands?

The Vancouver Plan sets out high-level direction to protect and expand on parklands, green spaces, and ecological connectivity to form the Ecological Vision (p. 104). This includes policies on widening setbacks for nature, identifying ecological corridors, biodiversity hotspots, and much more. However, how these policies

physically “land” in specific areas and neighbourhoods will be determined through future implementation work.

The Plan also sets a policy objective to “make space for nature” for existing and new parks and the urban forest (and other areas covered by the ecological vision). There are two related policies which may be of interest:

- Establish a healthy, city-wide ecological network through transforming road space, parkland acquisition, naturalization of parks, and other City-owned public property. Increase the urban forest canopy and expand the blue green network.
- Retain and grow a healthy and resilient urban forest, using City tools such as zoning, servicing and subdivision bylaws, and upgraded street designs to provide more space for permeability, quality soil and increased tree canopy across the city.

The Plan further complements both the City’s Urban Forest Strategy (2018), and the VanPlay: Parks and Recreation Services Masterplan (2020), both of which affirm the importance of existing park space and forested areas.

More generally, one of the main mandates of the Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation is to enhance and expand park space provision. This includes upgrading existing parks to better serve natural functions or expanding/increasing park spaces.

Does the Vancouver Plan say anything about the historic Barry-Downs house at 6275 Dunbar Street?

No. The Plan does not address any specific heritage structure. However, there are a chapter of supporting policies for Arts, Culture, and Heritage that set out broad, city-wide directions. Council also directed staff to further integrate and highlight heritage as part of Vancouver Plan implementation as set out in [amendment M and O](#). Importantly, the Vancouver Plan complements existing city-wide heritage policies, including the [Vancouver Heritage Program](#) and [Culture Shift](#).