



Strathcona BIA 2015

POLICY DOCUMENT



ABOUT THE STRATHCONA BIA

The Strathcona BIA represents over 850 business and commercial property owners within our boundaries of Gore Avenue, Clark Drive, Railway Street, and Venables Street. Our area is a broad mix of industrial, commercial, retail and residential zoning, with over 200 heritage-designated properties. Many of our members have been in the area for longer than 25 years, making Strathcona one of the most stable commercial districts in Canada.

The SBIA is also increasingly recognized for its Green Zone sustainability initiatives and its collaborative approach to community endeavours. All SBIA properties zoned Class 5 and Class 6 are subject to City of Vancouver BIA levies, and anyone paying this levy, whether through property tax or within a lease, is automatically a member of the association.



STRATHCONA BIA CATCHMENT AREA FIG 1.0

The Strathcona BIA Mission

To build a co-operative, safe, and vibrant Strathcona through innovative programming and community collaboration.

The Strathcona BIA Mandate

The Strathcona BIA is a non-profit organization that represents business and commercial property owners in the Strathcona area. We play an important role in the business development, neighbourhood planning, safety, security and street enhancement in Strathcona.

The Strathcona BIA Vision

Strathcona – a thriving and unique Vancouver community, seen as a model of positive change and sustainability.



1.0 Land Use

1.1 / Transportation of Goods & People

That the SBIA seeks to be a good partner with the relevant organizations in order to ensure that transportation of people and goods is efficient, safe and with this minimum negative impact to both the ecological and built environments including visual and noise pollution.

That given the important role of SBIA's light industrial members, the need for larger transportation vehicles to access loading bays and parking within our catchment area does exist, but that transportation of goods should be done with minimal impact on the comfort and ease of use of customers, clients, staff and owners of neighbouring businesses.

That transportation related strategies or plans that improve the efficiency and safety of goods movements while enhancing, or not detracting from, the experience of business owners, clients, customers and staff are deemed of benefit to the BIA and are therefore preferred.

That strategies, plans, policies and adoption of technologies or processes that reduce impact on the ecological and built environment are encouraged and supported by the BIA.

That unsafe pedestrian behavior and street disorder negatively impacts the safe transportation of people and goods.

That illegal street crossing and other unsafe pedestrian behavior should be enforced by police and prevented by the community in the interest of safe and efficient transportation of people and goods.

1.2 / Housing & Development

That the SBIA encourages and welcomes development that will create a healthier and more balanced neighbourhood.

That developers and the City should respect the important role of industrial lands in the BIA.

That development reducing the stock of industrial land through rezoning is not in the interest of the BIA and its members.

That new residential development on industrial lands should respect the important role of light industrial job spaces and retain such spaces for ground floor commercial tenants.

That any changes to industrial lands due to rezoning and development applications should enhance the usability and flexibility of industrial commercial spaces.¹

That policies restricting or mitigating further development, improvement and activation of industrial lands are not in the interest of the BIA and its members.

That flexibility in terms of approved uses of commercial and industrial spaces remains an ongoing need of BIA members, development that creates or enhances commercial and industrial spaces for ease and flexibility of use are desirable.

¹ An example would be allowing a local manufacturer to occupy a space that has split retail, showroom and production space with office and/or residential above, thereby maximizing the productive use of the space.

That adequate housing options for young professionals and families is required to support a local client base for businesses as well as housing for employees and owners of businesses.

That development should favor and enhance the diversity and resiliency of the local business community.

1.3 / Community Amenities – Use of CACs, DCCs and Special Considerations

That CACs for development approved in the BIA catchment area should be negotiated and collected in a transparent way.

That the BIA and other relevant community organizations impacted by new developments should be engaged by the City and the developer to discuss local needs and applications of funds.

That funds procured through CACs are applied locally and for such things that aid in the strategic goals of the BIA.

That Social Housing is a requirement in the DTES broadly speaking, but the addition of new people of any income level to our community without additional support to community centres, public spaces, parks and other amenities is not responsible long-term thinking and threatens programmatic strain on these and other community assets.

1.4 / Social Housing & Affordable Housing

That housing and property managers should be held accountable to ensure abusive and dangerous behavior in their properties is not tolerated.

That Properties deemed to be problematic are a risk to BIA members and the BIA has a responsibility to engage service providers, property owners and local government regarding these impacts.

That housing providers and housing managers have a responsibility, as any other property owner or manager does, to ensure that the tenants of a building are not engaging in unsafe, unsanitary

or disruptive behavior that contributes to street disorder.

That more stringent operator accountability to government and community is required for social and affordable housing facilities in order to keep residents safe and minimize negative conduct in the immediate public vicinity.

That Good Neighbour agreements and management plans should be developed with the community, including monitoring procedures to ensure accountability.

That the BIA supports housing for existing residents for a range of affordable housing levels.



2.0 Public Health

2.1 / Crime & Safety

The the SBIA calls on the VPD and CoV to provide a level of resources that matches the level of criminal activity occurring in Strathcona.

To enable businesses to better participate in reporting the VPD should improve data collection methods.

That the VPD disclose resource allocation policies.

2.2 / Drug Use on the Street

That the public consumption of drugs is a health and safety concern and that bylaws and the criminal code pertaining to drug use and drug selling should be enforced consistently by the VPD.

That the BIA supports equally pursuing the Four Pillars Approach as part of the combined response of community and government to the challenges posed by the drug trade and drug addiction in our catchment area.

2.3 / Drug Dealing

That the illegal drug trade can have a significant impact on local businesses by making places appear less safe, less clean, and less inviting to shoppers and residents, and therefore is a detriment to the local economy and community.

That predatory drug dealing requires a greater level of enforcement to protect vulnerable populations.

2.4 / Mental Health

That mental health related issues link directly to addiction, crime and predatory behavior in our community, contribute to concerns about safety and cleanliness and are a leading cause of street disorder.

That the SBIA supports the Vancouver Police Department's position on the creation of at least 300 new beds for mental health treatment in the city.

That the SBIA calls for the reopening of Riverview Hospital or creation of any such care facility that provides accommodation and treatment of those suffering with mental health illness and removes them from unsafe and predatory environments.

2.5 / Sex Work

That sex work can have a significant impact on local businesses by making places appear less safe, less clean, and less inviting to shoppers and residents, and therefore is a detriment to the local economy and community.

When additional resources are proposed to support sex trade workers, that those resources evenly distributed throughout the city and not concentrated in Strathcona.

2.6 / Property Standard of Care

That the City allocate sufficient resources to maintain a level of cleanliness of public property the same as any community.

That the City increase enforcement of graffiti removal for non-BIA properties and City owned property (utility boxes or other public infrastructure).

That the City better engage the BIAs and businesses concerning resources and programs available to combat graffiti and expand these where possible.

That the City and Province holds themselves to a higher standard in terms of care and maintenance of municipal and provincially owned properties respectively.

That the SBIA will encourage its member businesses and property owners to remove graffiti in a timely manner as it attracts further defacement of property and contributes to negative perceptions of the area.



3.0 Public Realm & Street Disorder

3.1 / Illegal Street Vending

That illegal street vending can have a significant impact on local businesses by making places appear less safe, less clean, and less inviting to shoppers and residents, and therefore is a detriment to the local economy and community.

That the SBIA supports enforcement of the City's bylaws regarding illegal vending.

3.2 / City of Vancouver Public Realm Management

That the City and the Province support cleaner streets in Strathcona through the adoption of strategies and policy changes that address issues of illegal dumping, rough sleeping, open drug use and other such issues.

That the City improve sidewalks through such things as corner bulges, greenery, improved standard of maintenance, cycling infrastructure and improved primary (street) and secondary (sidewalk) lighting.

That public realm issues are not pushed into or hidden in alleys, that the health and maintenance of alleys is integral to business operations, the retaining of good staff and perception of safety.



4.0 / Local Economy

4.1 / Industrial Lands

That the City of Vancouver should lift restrictive policies that are hindering revitalization of Strathcona's industrial lands.

That the industrial lands are an important community asset in Strathcona and in Vancouver.

That the City of Vancouver create a plan for the industrial lands in the interest of supporting business and job growth in the SBIA area.

That major changes proposed to the Port Lands and adjacent industrial lands outside the SBIA catchment area require adequate consultation and advanced notice to the SBIA.

That the industrial lands constitute an important space for culturally appropriate job creation in Strathcona and their activation and revitalization is in the interest of the local economy.

4.2 / Barriers to Economic Development

That the City of Vancouver work with the Strathcona BIA and other stakeholders to identify and acknowledge the barriers its own policies pose to economic development.

That the City engage the Province to enact changes to the tax code to reduce strain on small businesses through such things as de-coupling property value from business taxes.

That all forms of development be assessed in terms of their capacity to contribute positively to the local economy or in terms of the risks they may pose, and that this assessment include input from the SBIA.

4.3 / Business Licensing, Permits & Services

That delays in permits and licenses are a threat to the financial feasibility of businesses and therefore the health and vibrancy of the Strathcona BIA catchment area as a whole.

That the City of Vancouver clearly clarifies the processes with timelines and costs to obtain licenses, permits or other approvals required by small businesses and property owners, and ensures policies and service are applied by City Staff in a consistent manner.¹

That the requirement of criminal background checks or other special considerations of operators for some types of street level businesses be made clear by the City and applied consistently. This includes clarity concerning the locations where these types of additional requests may apply and what kinds of businesses they may apply to.