

Strathcona BIA

7-Year Renewal Planning

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Strathcona is known as a unique urban industrial district, thanks to a diverse mix of commercial uses and zoning options, its proximity to the downtown core, and the existing array of businesses and mixed-use assets in the area. Different competing socio-economic factors and business trends present future challenges and opportunities for Strathcona. These range from tremendous development pressure, the loss of industrial lands, affordability of both residential and commercial spaces, sense of safety, and the condition of the public realm, to name a few.

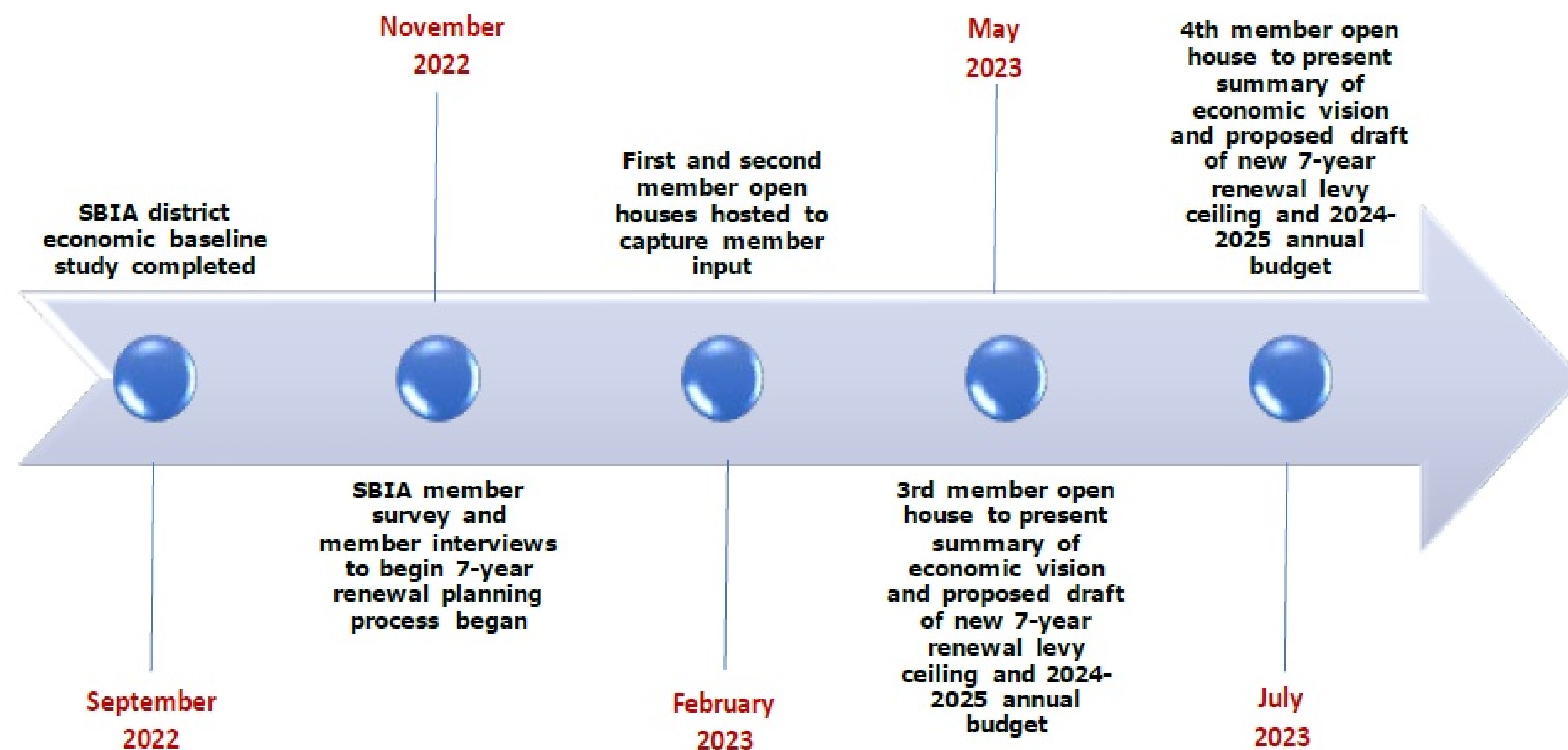
Since the summer of 2022, the Strathcona BIA Board and staff team embarked on a process of developing a Strathcona specific economic vision. One reason for this work is to provide a structural approach for the Strathcona BIA to inform the organization's focus and strategic priorities as part of the SBIA's 7-year renewal.

Another equally important and urgent reason for developing the Strathcona economic vision is to ensure Strathcona BIA plays an effective role in advocating for its members in a rapidly evolving social, political and economic landscape that is constantly being shaped and reshaped by new municipal and regional policy direction, increasing competition for lands, changing business models, national and global economic trends and constraints, etc.

Planning with Strathcona BIA Members

As part of the planning process, SBIA (with the support of an independent consulting firm), engaged with members and the Board of Directors between summer of 2022 and July 2023. The purpose of the engagement process was multi-fold: 1) to better understand the challenges members are facing; 2) to identify opportunities to leverage the unique character and defining features of the BIA; 3) to assess how satisfied members are with the services the BIA provides; 4) to identify potential partnerships that could help the BIA thrive; and 5) to establish priorities and timelines for actions members would like the BIA to take. Input received through the engagement process was used to inform the goals, objectives, and actions put forth in the economic vision. In total, the member engagement included:

- 1 member-wide survey,
- 2 focus groups,
- 4 member open houses
- More than 250 people participating in this process



Five Key Priority Areas



Our vision is for Strathcona members to thrive in a mixed use, inclusive, resilient, and prosperous local economy.



The industrial lands and retail spaces in our community are part of the economic ecosystem that the BIA coordinates to achieve our economic vision and collective success.

Together, business owners, property owners, and members can advocate for policy change and process reform - for things that will make us stronger and more resilient.

Strategic partnerships with the City of Vancouver, Vancouver Police Department, and Strathcona Community Policing Centre will further support this system and contribute to our success.

The **Economic Vision and Implementation Plan** has **Five Focus Areas** to support this system.

The Plan was informed by member interviews, member open houses, an online survey, and workshops with the Board of Directors.



Industrial Lands



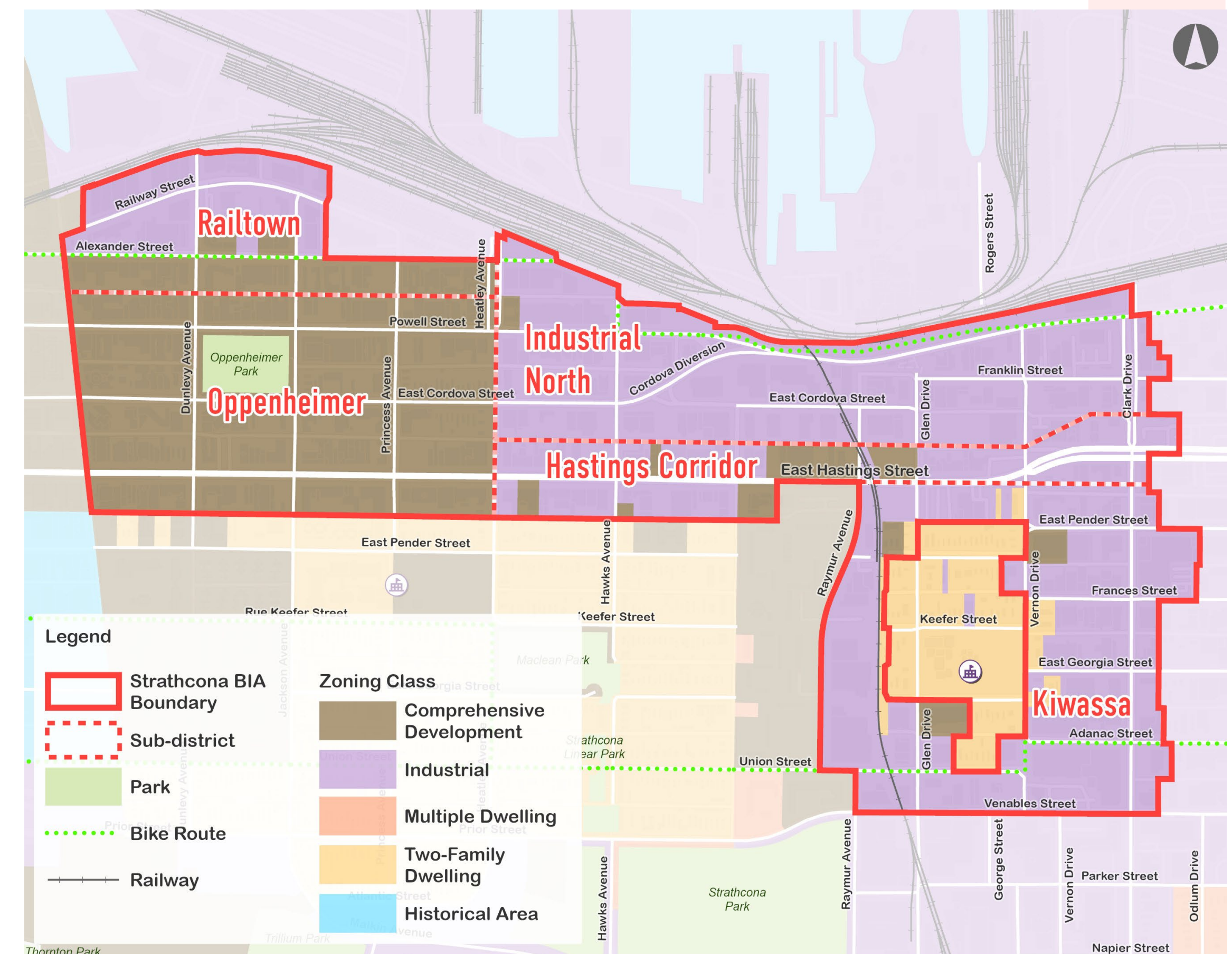
We heard you say our industrial lands are what make us unique.

The BIA is home to five percent of Vancouver's industrially zoned land base.

Our industrial lands are our competitive advantage - they attract revenue, grow the economy, and create jobs for locals.

To remain competitive, the SBIA will work to:

- Leverage unique business clusters in the **preservation, intensification and modernization** of industrial lands zoned "M" and "I;"
- Support the greater mixing and matching of industrial, office, retail/service commercial;
- Attract new and expanding businesses that do not fit the traditional industrial model;
- Leverage the uniqueness of the M-1 zoning along Hastings to attract businesses;
- Seek greater flexibility for industrial, office, retail/service commercial in I-4 zones to support Railtown to strategically develop creative businesses;
- Advocate for more flexible land use through updates to the Downtown Eastside Plan;
- Capture learnings from industrial zoning in other parts of the city that offer more flexibility than our current "M" and "I" zones



Retail Spaces



We heard you say you want Strathcona to have a thriving retail district.

A thriving retail district is essential to the creation of a “complete community.”

Successful retail districts have the following things in common:

- Clean, safe, and accessible streets;
- Compact streets that are walkable;
- Spaces that can meet the needs of a changing community;
- Anchors that draw people in and support other businesses;
- Parking that is easy to access for visitors and employees;
- A mix of tenants and businesses; and.
- A combination of residents, local workforce and visitors as key customer base

Complete Community Definition:

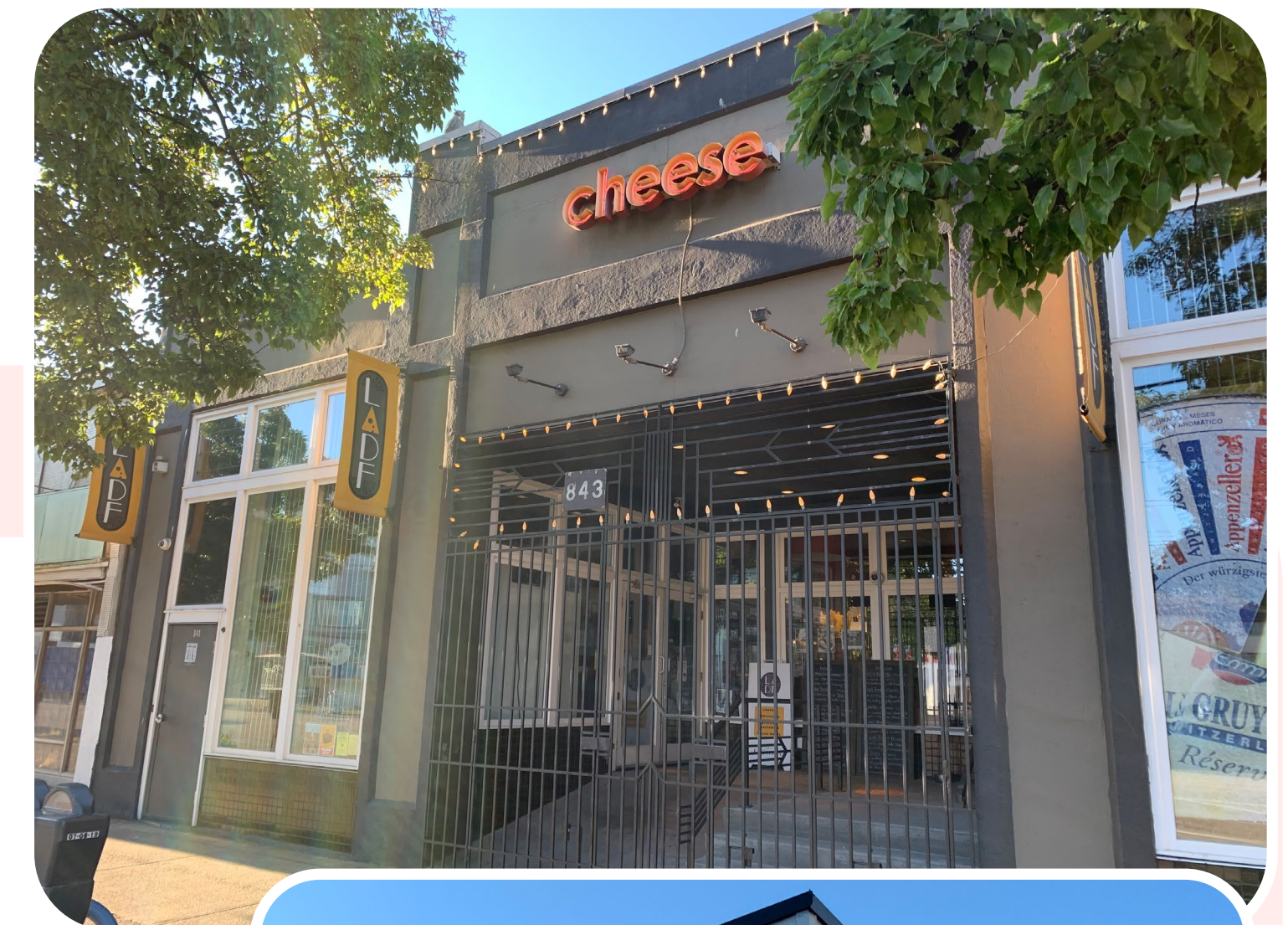
Communities that are walkable, mixed-use, and transit-oriented, where people can live, work and play, at all ages and stages of their lives

Source: [Metro2050](#)

Focus on building the retail cluster through taking a “complete community” lens and working in strategic partnerships with the City of Vancouver planning and regulation

The SBIA will also:

- Advocate for greater zoning flexibility to stimulate retail investment
- Adopt a strategic tenant mix and market position to attract/retain complementary businesses;
- Implement promotional strategies to support the tenant mix and market position;
- Leverage retail space development to strengthen community safety, beautification, and accessibility; and
- Support businesses with the City of Vancouver’s application process.



Communications and Engagement



We heard you say you want to build a closeknit community and to hear more BIA news.

A well-informed, engaged, and growing membership is important to the strength of BIA's advocacy voice

The success of the Economic Vision and Implementation Plan relies on:

- **a strong and supportive membership who use their voices to advocate together;**
- **an effective communication strategy to tell our economic development story; and**
- **a strong relationship with the neighbourhood residents as part of the business development strategy.**

The SBIA will:

- **Build a consistent member attraction and onboarding program;**
- **Implement issue-specific working groups for members to get involved in advocacy and/or planning initiatives;**
- **Host annual community forums and roundtables to facilitate connections between members, City staff and government officials;**
- **Publish unique content to strengthen our economic development story;**
- **Be strategic about sponsoring community arts, festivals, and events; and**
- **Establish a more official and consistent collaborative platform with Strathcona residents.**



Community Safety and Maintenance



We heard you say businesses need stable and predictable conditions to thrive.

- Community safety and maintenance are essential services the BIA provides its members.
- The BIA invests resources to keep the district, safe, clean, and inviting for businesses, property owners, investors, and visitors.
- Our community safety program (which has been modelled by other communities across the city) is not always enough to meet the wide ranging and unique social and economic needs of Strathcona.
- Need to strengthen and deepen strategic relationships with the Strathcona Community Policing Centre, the Vancouver Police Department, and the City of Vancouver. Together we will make Strathcona a safer place to live, work, and visit.

The SBIA will:

- Deepen partnerships with community groups with a shared interest in improving community safety;
- Collaborate with BIAs and the City of Vancouver to establish a cross-district community safety and maintenance performance baseline that sets the consistent expectation for community safety and cleanliness; and
- Provide regular opportunities for members to share experiences and ideas on community safety through engagement forums.



Strategic Partnerships



We heard you say the BIA should build strategic partnerships with the City of Vancouver.



We will use these partnerships to advocate for more:

- increase strategic and targeted land use flexibility and higher densities in industrial zones;
- increase city support for community safety, graffiti removal, street cleaning and other beautification support; and
- efficient permitting and licensing processes.
- aggressive support to grow the retail cluster on Hastings and Powell corridors

The SBIA will:

- In partnership with the City of Vancouver's economic development and community planning teams, position Strathcona as a model "complete community" consistent with the Vancouver Plan.
- Develop a cohesive strategy and implementation of local economic priorities as key drivers for overall community planning for Strathcona.
- Deliver a consistent narrative of BIA roles to City of Vancouver staff and elected officials.
- Increase engagement with City of Vancouver elected officials through SBIA community events.
- Continue to partner with BIAs across Vancouver and BC to advocate for common interests that have direct and indirect impacts on local economic development.

Strathcona BIA - The next 7-Year

There is a new sense of urgency for Strathcona, as an urban industrial business district, to strengthen its economic driver position. In addition, there is also new sense of optimism for Strathcona to realize its potential of being a model complete community.

Strathcona BIA looks forward to working closely with its business and property members in the next 7 years to capture the opportunities and to tackle the barriers in order to reach its potential.

