



**Building Owners and Managers
Association of British Columbia**

October 14th 2021

Mayor and Council
Public Hearing
City of Vancouver

Hello Council and Staff,

My name is Muneesh Sharma, and I am the Director of Government Affairs and Communications with the Building Owners and Managers Association of British Columbia (BOMA BC). On behalf of our Board of Directors, thank you for allowing us to present.

We are delighted to speak in favour of the recommended changes tabled today as we believe they will help our members assist more of their tenants to open and re-open their small businesses.

As you may have already seen, according to a 2020 study by LOCO BC, an organization who speaks for Business Improvement Area Associations and other representatives, it found that the average economic loss per business permit or license delay in the City of Vancouver is over \$720,000.

This includes costs to businesses including lost revenues and leasing costs, and broader economic losses related to lost employment and supplier sales, but is a staggering number by any account.

At the time of the study, the average wait time for permits/ licenses in the City was 8.2 months, and it showed that each week of wait time that can be eliminated it can reduce the average loss per permit or license by \$31,000.

As a member of the Urban Design Panel and the Mayor's Greenest City/Renewable City 2050 Advisory Group for the past six years, I have seen the effects that permitting approval delays can have on development and renovation projects in Vancouver.

And as an employee of BOMA BC, we have been working closely with staff over the past number of years to help provide recommendations that could significantly help improve the City's permitting system.

So we are encouraged by Council and staff's willingness to try these new and innovative ideas, and we appreciate that they have continued to listen to our members concerns.

Removing the upgrade trigger for demising wall alterations, the proposed change of use amendments, relaxing the amount of people allowed to define a small suite and increasing the threshold for parking requirements from 200 to 300m² will provide the flexibility required for landlords and small businesses to make necessary renovations to keep their businesses thriving.

Additionally, as a result of the COVID19 Pandemic and related public health orders, we expect more businesses to be making adjustments to their total floor area requirements when they reopen.

So, we believe that these recommendations will help clear the backlog of delayed permits, and further support efforts to get more businesses opened and re-opened as we recover from the economic impacts of the pandemic.

One more thing that would be helpful to our industry is to make these changes immediately, as there are many projects on the go or in the works that would benefit from these changes right now.

We appreciate Councils determination to help us resolve some of our permitting and licensing issues in the City and we commit to continuing to work with you and staff to get the job done, so to speak.

Thank you for taking the time to hear our thoughts and if I can provide any more information, please do not hesitate to ask.

Sincerely,

Muneesh Sharma

On behalf of the Building Owners and Managers Association of British Columbia (BOMA BC)