

Guidelines

Former Molson Brewery Site:
Guiding Principles and Rezoning Guidelines

Approved by Council July 21, 2026



Table of Contents

1 Background and Context.....3

2 Intent4

3 Guiding Principles5

 3.1 Reconciliation5

 3.2 Land Use6

 3.3 Urban Design.....6

 3.4 Transportation and Connectivity.....7

 3.5 Public Benefits and Public Spaces9

 3.6 Implementation and Delivery 10

1 BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

In July 2025, Council directed staff through a [Council Motion](#) to report back with site-specific information on the future role and land use considerations for five exceptional industrial sites/areas to identify sites that are appropriate for housing development and consideration for redesignation from “Employment or Industrial” to “General Urban” in the [Metro 2050: Regional Growth Strategy](#) (Metro 2050: RGS). The sites/areas are:

- i. The former Molson Brewery site,
- ii. The former industrial sites near Main Street and Terminal Avenue,
- iii. The Railtown industrial district,
- iv. The Marine Gateway area, and
- v. The Mount Pleasant industrial area.

The former Molson Brewery site is the only self-contained site of the five sites/areas identified in the Council Motion and is not contiguous with any other industrial lands. In 2026, Council directed staff to start the process to enable redesignating and redeveloping this exceptional site as a comprehensive mixed-use development, rather than a stand-alone industrial site. Figure 1 shows the location of the Molson site within its surrounding context.

Figure 1: Former Molson Brewery site and context



The Molson Brewery was constructed in 1953 when False Creek was surrounded by heavy industrial uses and connected regionally via the now de-commissioned CP Railway tracks. The [M-2 zoning](#) permits “industrial and other uses that are generally incompatible, potentially dangerous, or environmentally incompatible when situated in or near residential districts.” The 26,300 m² (283,000 ft.²) brewery once employed up to 250 people, but ceased operations in 2019 when it relocated to a larger brewing facility in Chilliwack with direct access to Highway 1. There has been no industrial activity on the site since the brewery’s closure, with limited interim uses such as movie sets and parking.

Over the past 70 years, the surrounding area has transformed into a mixed-use neighbourhood comprising residential uses to the east (False Creek South), light/creative industrial and employment uses to the south and east (the Burrard Slopes’ Armoury District and Granville Island), residential uses to the west (Kits Point) and park space to the north (Vanier Park). The Skwxwú7mesh Úxwumixw (Squamish Nation) is developing the Seńákw development on the Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish) Reserve, a high-density mixed-use project of 6,000+ purpose-built rental units immediately adjacent to the Northeast, sharing a 275 metre (900 foot) property line with the Molson site.

Typical heavy industrial uses under the Molson site’s existing [M-2 zoning](#) (e.g. manufacturing, distribution and repair) generate air and noise contamination through combustion of fuel and metals, handling of solid bulk materials, and food and animal food processing. Considering the site’s proximity to high-density residential uses including and its lack of connectivity to key trucking routes or rail network critical for goods movement, the site is no longer suitable for stand-alone heavy industrial uses.

There is a unique and significant opportunity to capitalize on the 7.7-acre site’s central location within Vancouver’s Metro Core area through a mixed-use redevelopment which delivers new and diversified job space, together with residential uses and supporting public amenities. More suitable job spaces for the site could include compatible light industrial uses such as Laboratories, Production Studios and Creative Manufacturing, Digital Entertainment and Information Communication Technology (DEICT), Office, Hotel, Service and Retail uses. Light industrial uses can be co-located with housing subject to mitigation measures required under the [Vancouver Building By-law](#).

This redevelopment opportunity aligns with the “Metro Core/Broadway” Neighbourhood Type and advances other policy objectives in the [Vancouver Official Development Plan](#) (“*Vancouver ODP*”).

In 2026, amendments to the *Vancouver ODP* were brought forward to Council to redesignate the former Molson Brewery site from “Industrial and Employment” to “Mixed-Use High-Rise 2.”

2 INTENT

The following guiding principles are intended to establish high-level direction to inform the preparation and review of a rezoning application for the site. They identify key planning objectives and considerations, providing a framework for evaluating proposed land use, built form, public realm and public benefit outcomes as the project advances.

The guiding principles will also be used to support an application by the City to Metro Vancouver to amend the site's *Metro 2050: RGS* designation from "Industrial" to "General Urban".

At this early stage, the guiding principles are deliberately broad and strategic in nature. They reflect a preliminary level of technical analysis and initial engagement with the xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish), and səliwətał (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations, Department of National Defence, Provincial Government (Ministries of Transportation and Transit, Housing and Municipal Affairs, and Jobs and Economic Growth), Metro Vancouver, TransLink, Vancouver School Board, Conseil scolaire francophone, and the general public. They are not intended to pre-determine specific design solutions, densities or regulatory outcomes. Rather, they set out the overarching intent for the site's redevelopment, recognizing that further work and engagement is required to test options and respond to technical, policy and contextual considerations.

The rezoning process will provide the opportunity to translate the principles into zoning regulations, development obligation agreements and design guidelines. Through this process, City staff will undertake further engagement, assess site-specific opportunities and impacts, infrastructure / servicing needs and other technical requirements, and identify and address any necessary trade-offs between competing objectives.

3 GUIDING PRINCIPLES

3.1 Reconciliation

3.1.1 Honour the City's commitment to reconciliation with xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish) and səliwətał (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations:

The former Molson Brewery site is located on the traditional and unceded territories of the xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish), and səliwətał (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations. In alignment with the City of Vancouver's commitment to advancing reconciliation through its [UNDRIP Strategy](#), planning for the redevelopment of the site should be guided by early and ongoing mutual collaboration with the local Nations and respect for their rights, cultures, and self-determination.

The site is located near False Creek and the Burrard Inlet, areas of important historical and ongoing cultural significance to all three local Nations since time immemorial.

Through meaningful and mutually beneficial engagement and collaboration, the rezoning process should explore opportunities to honour the location of the site, and strengthen cultural representation and visibility by embedding the local Nations' culture, art, and history into the site's design and public realm.

3.2 Land Use

3.2.1 Deliver significant new job and employment space:

At the height of its operation, the former Molson Brewery contained 26,300 m² (283,000 ft²) of industrial space and employed 250 people. Heavy industrial uses are no longer compatible on the site given its proximity to high-density residential uses.

Redevelopment of the site should include a minimum 1:1 replacement of the floor space previously dedicated to heavy industrial uses with job space that is compatible with on-site and nearby residential uses. Provision of additional net new job space is strongly encouraged.

Types of job space could include light industrial, tech and office, tourism and hotel, retail and service (including grocery stores and restaurants), educational, cultural, and arts uses to meet the needs of businesses, residents and visitors.

Inclusion of significant job space in this central location supports the [Metro 2050: RGS](#) Goal #2 to “Support a Sustainable Economy” to ensure a diverse economy and jobs close to where people live. It also aligns with job space objectives for the Metro Core/Broadway Neighbourhood Type in the [Vancouver ODP](#) (Policy FG1.4.2).

3.2.2 Support a diverse and affordable housing mix:

Redevelopment of the site should deliver a variety of new housing opportunities which could include strata, purpose-built rental, affordable and social housing to support a diversity of household types, incomes, and backgrounds.

The City’s [10 Year Affordable Housing Delivery and Financial Strategy](#) identifies large developments as important opportunities to contribute to the delivery of social and supportive housing options for lower-income households, and housing for moderate income households. The affordable housing requirements for the Molson site will follow requirements outlined in the [Rezoning Policy for Sustainable Large Developments](#), or whichever applicable policies are in place at the time of rezoning.

This principle is closely aligned with the [Metro 2050: RGS](#) Goal #4 to “Provide Diverse and Affordable Housing” by increasing the supply, variety, and affordability of housing, particularly in transit-oriented locations, to create complete communities. It also aligns with [Vancouver ODP](#) objectives to expand affordable housing supply in Metro Core/Broadway (Policy FG1.4.1).

3.3 Urban Design

3.3.1 Encourage contextual design and neighbourhood integration:

The site planning and built form of new development on the former Molson Brewery site should establish a cohesive and mutually complementary relationship with the local context.

The tallest buildings should be located closest to the Seḥákw development on the Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish) Reserve and step down toward surrounding areas to thoughtfully integrate with the existing neighbourhood.

High-quality architecture, landscape design, and building forms should respond to the local urban context, as well as to the historical and ongoing cultural importance of the area to the xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish), and səlilwətał (Tseil-Waututh) Nations.

Careful consideration should be given to solar access on the public realm and open spaces in accordance with applicable City policies and guidelines and the “Mixed-Use High-Rise 2” designation. Built form should contribute cohesively to the surrounding city’s evolving skyline.

The site is centrally located within Vancouver’s Metro Core area and aligns well with [Metro 2050: RGS](#) Goal #1 to “Create a Compact Urban Area” by encouraging efficient land use, reducing sprawl, and enhancing urban centres.

3.3.2 Advance regenerative and climate-responsive site design

Redevelopment of the site should explore regenerative, nature-based site design that protects and enhances ecological systems, and reduces lifecycle greenhouse gas emissions, while meaningfully increasing resilience to climate change.

New buildings and public realm should be designed as integrated systems, where siting, massing, landscape treatment, and servicing collectively reduce energy and water demand, manage rainwater on site, and help mitigate urban heat, flooding, and climate hazards. Consistent with the City of Vancouver’s [Green Buildings Policy for Rezoning](#)s, [Zero Emissions Building Plan](#), and [Rain City Strategy](#), sustainable site design should:

- minimize site disturbance and protect natural features where feasible;
- support permeability, urban biodiversity, tree planting and landscape enhancement
- incorporate green rainwater infrastructure and opportunities for rainwater reuse where appropriate and
- support compact, low-carbon urban form.

Through these measures, redevelopment is intended to contribute to long-term environmental resilience, climate adaptation, and emissions reduction, while creating a healthy, livable, and ecologically functional neighbourhood aligned with the [Metro 2050: RGS](#) Goal #3 to “Protect the Environment and Respond to Climate Change.” This principle also aligns with [Vancouver ODP](#) objectives for climate change adaptation (Policy 3.2.2) and ecology (Policy FG1.2.4).

3.4 Transportation and Connectivity

3.4.1 Support healthy and accessible transportation options:

Concentrating people close to jobs and transit is critical to meeting the City's [Transportation 2040](#) and [Climate Emergency Action Plan](#) goal that at least two-thirds (~66%) of all trips made by Vancouver residents should be by walking, cycling, rolling, or transit, rather than private vehicles. The mixed-use redevelopment of the site should connect communities through a network of convenient transportation options, including robust transit and safe active transportation (walking/cycling/rolling), to support a reduction in car dependency.

Accessibility and universal design should be prioritized across the site, emphasizing walking, cycling, rolling, and transit for people of all ages and abilities with integration into the existing active mobility network.

This site is well-located to encourage reduced vehicle trip demand as it is in proximity to major cycling infrastructure, such as the Burrard Bridge, the Seaside Greenway, York Avenue, and Cypress Street. The site should leverage and improve existing cycling routes to strengthen active transportation connections, including to rapid transit stations (Millennium Line, Canada Line and the Frequent Transit Network).

The street network should provide adequate infrastructure (e.g. greenways, protected intersections, signals, bus shelters, and public bike share stations) to ensure the comfort and safety of people walking, cycling, rolling, or taking transit.

The site design should support a car-lite community through the provision of off-street accessible parking, visitor parking, bicycle parking, passenger and goods loading, while minimizing general purpose vehicle parking, in accordance with the [Parking By-law](#).

The design should provide transportation connections to nearby neighbourhoods (False Creek South, Burrard Slopes' Armoury District, Kits Point) to limit impacts to the existing street network and ensure connectivity to the city and region's broader transportation networks. The site design should also be coordinated with adjacent development to develop a mutually beneficial access, egress and circulation system for the area.

The site is located immediately adjacent to the Seaforth Armoury and the Hoffmeister Building, both of which are owned and operated by the Government of Canada (Department of National Defence). Daily operations at these facilities involve critical circulation and parking for large military vehicles, deliveries and the movement of hundreds of workers and military personnel. Any proposed rezoning or development of the site should carefully consider and mitigate potential impacts to the ongoing and essential operations of these facilities.

3.4.2 Seek opportunities to improve transit access and connectivity in collaboration with partners:

The site is located in an area served by existing bus routes that connect to downtown Vancouver and TransLink's Frequent Transit Network. In partnership with TransLink, opportunities for better transit connections and improved transit service to the site should be explored, beginning with the recently completed Burrard Peninsula Area Transport Plan. These include new and improved transit

connections across the Burrard Bridge, to rapid transit stations (Millennium and Canada Lines), and along existing east-west transit corridors, subject to regional priorities, fleet availability, and funding.

The site should leverage the proposed Burrard Bridge transit hub, anticipated to be delivered by the Señákw development on the Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish) Reserve, by providing new pedestrian and cycling connections from the site to the transit hub.

Both Guiding Principles 3.4.1 and 3.4.2 align with the [Metro 2050: RGS](#) Goal #5 to “Support Sustainable Transportation Choices”. These principles also align with [Vancouver ODP](#) objectives related to connectivity, safety and sustainable transportation (Policies FG1.3.5, 5.1.4, 5.2.1, 5.2.4 and 5.2.9).

3.5 Public Benefits and Public Spaces

3.5.1 Public benefits to support an equitable, livable and inclusive complete neighbourhood:

The former Molson Brewery site should be highly livable and meeting the needs of all ages, incomes and abilities. It should include shops, services, public spaces and community amenities (e.g. childcare, arts/culture spaces) that address the impacts of increased density in the neighbourhood and meet the demand from new residents.

Impacts on school enrolment and capacity will be considered and addressed through the rezoning process in collaboration with the local school boards (Vancouver School Board and Conseil scolaire francophone).

3.5.2 Create public spaces that support community life:

Public open space should be a key organizing element of the site design, with strong connections to existing parks and public spaces in the neighbourhood such as Vanier Park and the seawall.

The site should deliver a diverse mix of urban public spaces for a range of users, including parks and green spaces, plazas, areas for gathering, rooftop gardens and opportunities for local retail activation.

These spaces should receive sunlight at key times and support safety and social interaction, access to nature, and cultural expression.

Design of public spaces should incorporate measures to deter trespassing and maintain appropriate security buffers to the adjacent Department of National Defence property.

Both Guiding Principles 3.5.1 and 3.5.2 align with [Vancouver ODP](#) public realm objectives for the Metro Core/Broadway and broader public space network (Policies FG1.4.5, 9.3.1 and 9.3.2).

3.6 Implementation and Delivery

3.6.1 Phased and predictable implementation:

Development phasing should be planned and coordinated to ensure the timely provision of job space, mixed-tenure housing, municipal infrastructure, amenities and services to ensure growth is adequately supported.

A phasing and implementation plan will be developed at the time of rezoning to ensure the timely delivery of agreed-upon public benefits.