

DOWNTOWN EASTSIDE RETAIL CONTINUITY POLICY



Background

Retail continuity policies support active and vibrant pedestrian-focussed streets by maintaining and reinforcing continuous retail and other similar activities of ground floor storefronts. Within the Downtown Eastside (DTES), retail continuity policies apply in the Victory Square and Downtown Eastside Oppenheimer District.

Retail Continuity Policy Updates

Conditions in the DTES have changed considerably since the retail continuity policies were first introduced in 1982 including social health challenges, high vacancies, reduced retail interest, and increased need for community-serving uses. While the retail continuity policies in Victory Square achieves active pedestrian-oriented retail and commercial streets, updates are needed to the Downtown Eastside Oppenheimer District policies to address changing needs. The DTES Plan requires a review of retail continuity policies with the goal of increasing pedestrian activity, commercial and service uses, and general vitality to Hastings, Main, and Powell Streets as well as removing barriers to new enterprises, development, and creativity (Policies 6.5.9 and 10.3.1).



East Hastings Street



Main Street



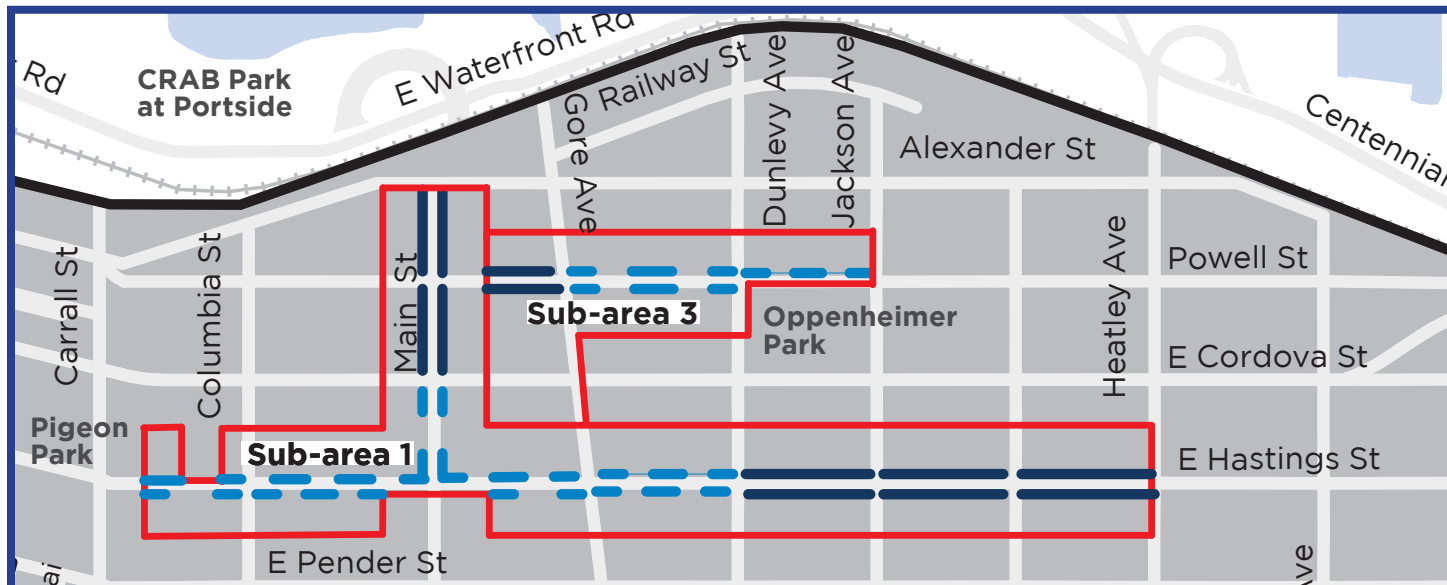
Powell Street

As part of the Employment Lands and Economy Review, staff are proposing a quick start action to update and improve retail continuity policies to:

- allow more flexibility in uses for storefront spaces
- lower barriers to community-serving organisations seeking space in the neighbourhood
- help fill vacant ground floor stores

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Downtown Eastside Oppenheimer District Retail Continuity Policy Areas



Sub-area 1 Main/Hastings and sub-area 3 Powell Street both have retail continuity policy requirements (see map). Within sub-area 1 Main/Hastings there is an exception to the retail continuity policy that allows for a limited set of community-serving uses along Hastings Street, at the discretion of the Development Permit Board or the Director of Planning.

City staff are proposing the following changes:

- Extend the retail continuity exception clause to properties fronting Main Street within DEOD ODP sub-area 1 Main/Hastings;
- Update the types of uses listed in the exception clause from 'social service centre, general office, or healthcare office uses' to 'uses required to serve the educational, cultural, health, social, recreational or local economic development needs of the local community'; and
- Add the same exception clause to properties fronting Powell Street in DEOD ODP sub-area 3 Powell Street.

Next Steps

The proposed changes will go before Council to be referred to Public Hearing on a date to be determined. To learn more please contact: dtesplan@vancouver.ca