



NOTICE OF MOTION

Date: July 17, 2025
To: Mayor and Council
From: Councillor Trudy Klassen
Subject: Vacancy to Vitality: Launching a Temporary Use Pilot for Empty Storefronts in C1 Zone Downtown
Attachments: Councillor Mike Klassen of Vancouver's Motion which Passed Unanimously
Darrin Rigo's article "Downtown Parks to Parking lots"
Downtown Strategy

The date for this motion to be considered is the August 18, 2025 regular council meeting.

RECOMMENDATION:

1. Council DIRECT staff to report, as part of the Downtown Strategy report back to Council by Q4 2025, on a Temporary Occupancy Pilot Program for the C1 zone downtown, allowing vacant ground-floor commercial spaces to allow uses as listed below for up to 12 months without rezoning, provided safety standards are met.
 - community-enhancing uses such as art studios, small retail, new entrepreneurs, and cultural spaces reflecting downtown's character.
 - temporary food uses (e.g., pop-up restaurants, food trucks),
 - community services (e.g., art workshops, sports clinics),
 - light creative manufacturing, and
 - other uses as recommended through consultation with Indigenous communities, the DBIA, Chamber of Commerce, Community Futures, and other relevant stakeholders,
 - attach any recommendations received from stakeholders to the report,
2. That Council DIRECT staff report before the last quarter of the pilot project on outcomes, including business activity, community engagement, and occupancy rates, with recommendations for improvements or city-wide expansion.
3. That Council DIRECT staff to explore a Temporary Retail, Business, and Creative Use Event Licence, similar to special event permits, to support short-term activations, consulting with the DBIA, non-profits, property owners, and Indigenous groups, and report on a draft strategy by Q4 2025 as part of the Downtown Prince George Strategy (Downtown Prince George Development Concept,
4. Include recommendations for infrastructure maintenance, repairs and other infrastructure related issues needed to power the Downtown Strategy and pilot project development in the C1 zone.

Strategic Plan Alignment:**#2 Economic Diversity and Growth**

- Promote Prince George as a thriving business destination.
- Explore incentives to attract and retain professionals, businesses, and entrepreneurs.

Financial Considerations:

Minimal upfront costs, utilizing existing staff resources with limited additional time required. If major infrastructure updates are required, they could be included in Budget 2026 for consideration.

Acknowledgement:

The City of Prince George is advancing the Downtown Prince George Strategy to revitalize the downtown as a commercial and cultural hub (Downtown Prince George Development Concept, Document). This motion proposes a Temporary Occupancy Pilot Program and Event Licence to support the Strategy's goals of economic diversity and community vitality as well as identifying any infrastructure, maintenance and repairs needed to power the Strategy's success

Discussion:

- Downtown Prince George faces economic challenges with C1 zone vacancy rates up to 25%, exceeding the healthy 5-7% range.
- Vacant storefronts fuel perceptions of stagnation, worsened by homelessness and economic transition.
- The city's arts, culture, and Indigenous heritage position downtown as a hub for creative initiatives.
- Artists and entrepreneurs face barriers like complex permits and high start-up costs.
- The DBIA, Chamber of Commerce and other stakeholders support a pilot to activate vacant storefronts.
- Good, functioning infrastructure is needed to support any venture, and so a report back on identified improvements needed to support the Strategy and Pilot project is needed.
- A pilot could enable pop-up shops and community uses, boosting economic inclusion.
- Interest exists in temporary food businesses, arts programs, and light manufacturing, aligning with downtown's mixed-use character.
- Past flexible permitting shows the City can balance access with safety, supporting the 2025 Corporate Work Plan's economic goals.
- See the attached article by Darrin Rigo on downtown successes
- See attached copy of Vancouver City Councillor Mike Klassen's NOM that passed unanimously

Respectfully submitted,



Councillor Trudy Klassen