

## Memorandum

To: ACEDAC Members

Date: Thursday, June 12, 2025

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File: #2715076

Subject: Commercial Tenant Assistance Policy

Staff continue to work on implementing the City's [Retail Strategy](#) (2023), a policy document to guide City decision making around long-range commercial land use planning, strategic commercial area interventions, and proactive tenant retention and attraction. A key goal of the Retail Strategy is to identify opportunities to enhance the retail experience in the city's unique commercial areas and to recommend how the City may leverage its tools in support of a strong retail commercial environment. One of the City's tools is the development of policy, and staff have begun work on the following related recommendation:

- *Develop Commercial Tenant Assistance policy applicable at the time of rezoning to support businesses during redevelopment and rezoning scenarios.*

The intent of this work is to develop a policy to help guide staff and Council during applicable redevelopment considerations, and to develop related program materials that support businesses in relocation planning and decision making. In particular, staff are also looking to ensure that all commercial tenants have equal access to reliable and consistent relocation planning information. With this in mind, we are taking an equitable approach to uplift marginalized businesses, with a focus on:

- Small independent businesses
- Businesses owned or operated by non-English speaking, ethnic, newcomer, or other equity-denied communities
- Non-profit organizations, social enterprises, arts and culture, and food assets

### Current Work

- Drafting information resource guide for commercial tenant assistance (similar to the City of Vancouver). It is important to note that the information being developed in this guide is intended to be a helpful service for business operators and not to be relied on for legal or other professional advice. The guide will include information related to,
  - *Commercial tenant basics*: commercial tenancy, legal and regulatory protections
  - *Lease negotiation*: overview of commercial leases, common clauses and terms



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- *Relocation*: Relocation options, timing, and steps, finding a new space, change of use and other regulatory requirements, renovating new space and permits
- *Redevelopment and zoning*: development review process and timeline
- *City processes*: business licences, permits, renovations and inspections
- Translation of the guide
- **Committee Discussion: are there other items you feel would be helpful resource information for businesses?**
- Exploring North American standards for supporting tenant relocation resulting from redevelopment
- Consolidation of existing CNW business resources to create efficiency in delivering information

### Next Steps

- Refining commercial tenant resource guide
- Consideration of commercial tenant redevelopment policy that outlines City's expectations for developers. Some preliminary items for committee discussion include:
  - Requiring a proposed commercial tenant relocation package to be submitted to City staff as part of the development review process
  - When/how are they communicating with tenants regarding the redevelopment
  - How are they exploring options for retaining existing tenants, especially those with long-term leases and strong community ties
    - First right of refusal to existing tenants
    - Support with real estate services to relocate businesses, with a priority in New West
  - **Committee Discussion: are there other items that you feel should be considered?**
- Continuation of business basics education webinars via partnership with Chamber
- Exploration of affordable lease space amenity where redevelopment scenarios would permit

We look forward to reviewing and discussing this project at the upcoming meeting and gather committee member feedback.