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## Condos pose threat to commercial space

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Vancouver is planning to tighten the rules in yet another central-city neighbourhood to prevent too much condo development, while at the same time offering new incentives for builders to create job space.

Burrard Slopes, the industrial-commercial area that faces downtown between Granville Island and Burrard Street, is the latest subject of the planning department's efforts to preserve retail and office space in a market where condos have increasingly been trumping other uses.

Planner Phil Nolan said a few recent projects had "raised some alarm bells."

One project put only a minimal amount of retail at the street level underneath a larger condo development. Another developer worked out a deal with the city that allowed a two-lot development to put all its condos on one lot and all the commercial space on another. That broke the normal rule for that area, which required all buildings to have commercial space at the street level.

"It was the same amount of space [as would normally be allowed for residential] but it looks different visually," Nolan said.

If council approves the planning department's recommendations Thursday, the city will require that, in any new development in the area, there be as much space built for commercial uses as for residential uses.

As well, the new zoning will allow the city to give a developer more space than is normally permitted in the area if that developer is building commercial space.

Burrard Slopes has about 1.1 million square feet of commercial space and 110,000 square feet of residential space, including all new projects in the pipeline, said Nolan.

The planning department has been clamping down on residential development in commercial areas for the three years, after analysis showed almost all the development outside the central business district downtown was going to residential. A second study suggested that the city ran the risk of running out of job space in its central areas if that pattern continued.

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