

## MEMORANDUM

May 8, 2020

TO: Mayor and Council

CC: Sadhu Johnston, City Manager  
Paul Mochrie, Deputy City Manager  
Karen Levitt, Deputy City Manager  
Lynda Graves, Administration Services Manager, City Manager's Office  
Lon LaClaire, General Manager, Engineering Services  
Jessie Adcock, General Manager, Development, Buildings and Licensing  
Rena Kendall-Craden, Civic Engagement and Communications Director  
Katrina Leckovic, City Clerk  
Anita Zaenker, Chief of Staff, Mayor's Office  
Neil Monckton, Chief of Staff, Mayor's Office  
Alvin Singh, Communications Director, Mayor's Office  
Chris Robertson, Assistant Director, Planning, Urban Design and Sustainability  
Matthew Bourke, Senior Planner, Planning, Urban Design and Sustainability  
Marten Hansen, Planner, Planning, Urban Design and Sustainability

FROM: Gil Kelley  
General Manager, Planning, Urban Design and Sustainability

SUBJECT: Economic Impact of COVID-19 - Monthly Labour Force Data: April 2020

### Highlights: Monthly Labour Force Survey Data, April 2020

- The unemployment rate in Metro Vancouver increased by 3.2 percentage points to 10.8%
- Nationally, the unemployment rate increased by 5.2 percentage points to 13.0%
- Employment in the region decreased by 136,400 (-10.1%) between March and April
- Sectors with the largest employment losses between March and April include:
  - o Accommodation and food services (-19,100 workers, -19.9%)
  - o Wholesale and retail trade (-16,800 workers, -7.2%).
- Overall, employment in the region has decreased by 251,200 (-17.2%) since February

### Purpose of this memo

This memo highlights the monthly Labour Force Survey (LFS) data published by Statistics Canada released on May 8<sup>th</sup>, 2020 for the reference period of April 12<sup>th</sup> to April 18<sup>th</sup>. The LFS provides estimates for the unemployment rate and employment totals by industry and occupation on a monthly basis. The information presented in this memo provides a snapshot of the impact COVID-19 has had on Vancouver's labour force and economy in the short period of time since the Pandemic began. Staff in Planning, Urban Design and Sustainability will provide an updated monthly memo as new data is released. This information is meant to be viewed in conjunction with other socio-economic and community statistics to form a cohesive picture of

the City’s current state and assist with recovery and resilience planning. This information will be posted to the City website and shared with the business community.

**Important notes about the data**

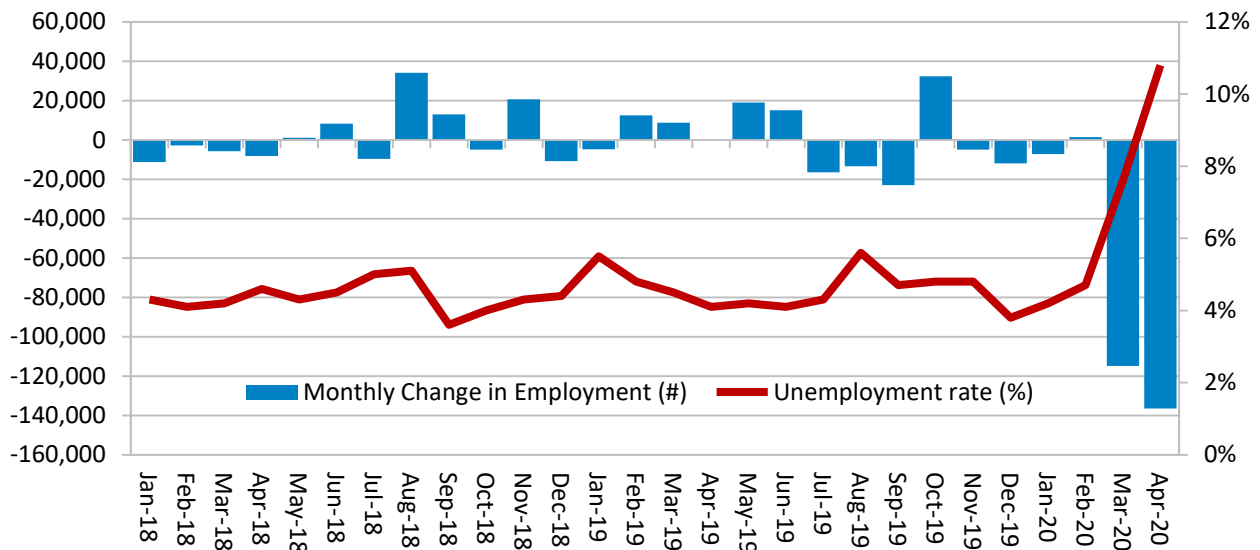
The statistics presented in this memo are for the Metro Vancouver region as the Census Metropolitan Area (CMA) is the smallest geography level available for LFS data tables published by Statistics Canada. LFS data for the city of Vancouver proper is not available. Throughout this memo, the term “Vancouver” refers to the Vancouver CMA. The LFS data used to create the statistics presented in this report are not seasonally adjusted<sup>1</sup>.

**Changes in employment totals and unemployment rate**

Employment in Vancouver decreased from 1,346,600 in March to 1,210,200 in April for a loss of 136,400 (-10.1%) jobs. Overall, employment has decreased by 251,200 (-17.2%) since February; about 61% of employment losses since February were in full-time positions. Since March, the unemployment rate increased 3.2 percentage points to 10.8%, the highest unemployment rate for the region on record<sup>2</sup>. Nationally, the unemployment rate increased by 5.2 percentage points, to 13.0%.<sup>3</sup>

A number of major orders related to the COVID-19 pandemic issued by various levels of government were active during this reference week (April 12<sup>th</sup> to April 18<sup>th</sup>). Please see Figure 6 for a full list. The next labour force survey release will be on June 5<sup>th</sup> (for the reference week May 10<sup>th</sup> to 16<sup>th</sup>).

**Figure 1 – Unemployment rate and monthly employment change in Metro Vancouver**



Source: Statistics Canada. Table 14-10-0295-01 Labour force characteristics by census metropolitan areas, unadjusted for seasonality.

<sup>1</sup> Seasonal adjustments to labour force data are done to eliminate the effect of seasonal and calendar influences (e.g. seasonal shopping or agricultural work).

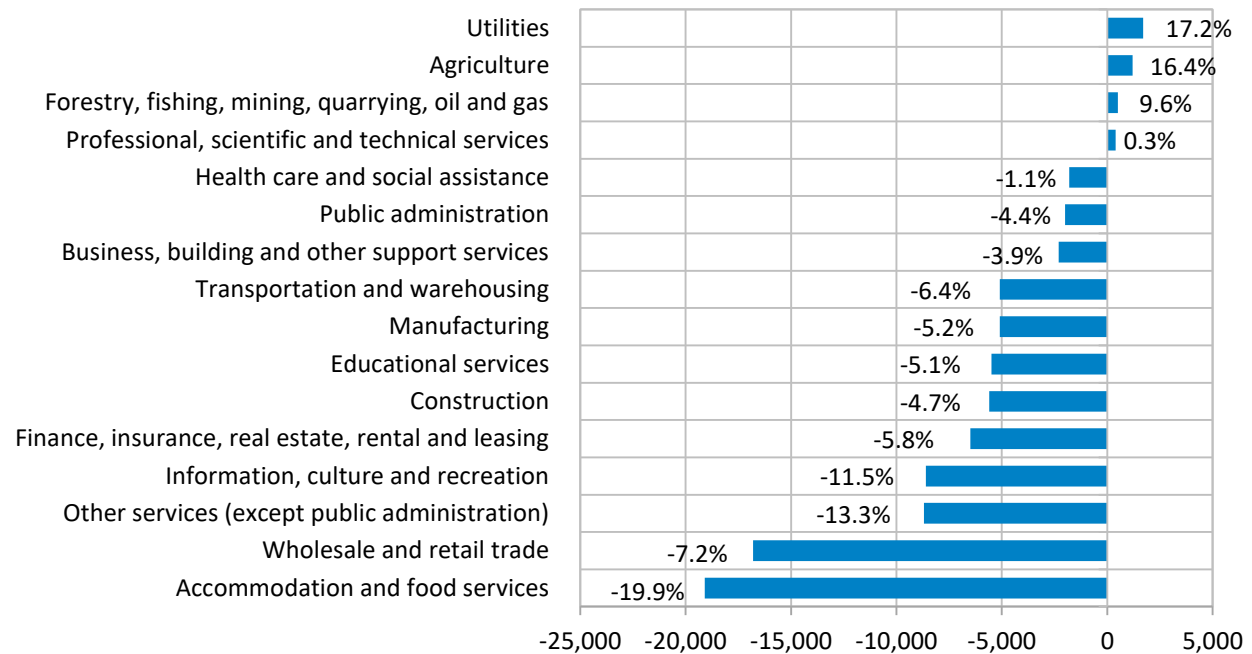
<sup>2</sup> Metropolitan employment data is only available back to January 2001.

<sup>3</sup> Nationally, the seasonally unadjusted unemployment rate increased by 5.1 percentage points to 13.5%

## Industry overview

Employment in accommodation and food services sector experienced the largest month to month (March to April) loss in Metro Vancouver, declining by 19,100 jobs (-19.9%). The second largest sector employment decline was in wholesale and retail trade, which lost 16,800 workers (-7.2%). The third largest employment loss was in other services<sup>4</sup>, which declined by 8,700 jobs (-13.3%). Between March and April, employment in utilities grew by 1,700 people, an increase of 17.2% to its workforce. Employment for the agriculture sector also increased by 1,200 people (+16.4%).

**Figure 2 – Employment change by industry in Metro Vancouver, March to April**



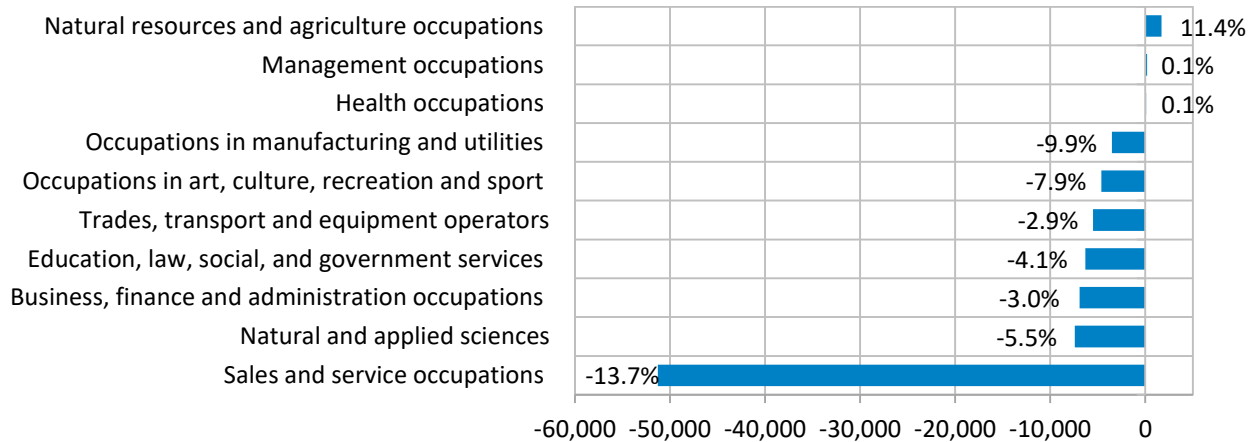
Source: Statistics Canada. Table 14-10-0097-01 Employment by industry, three-month moving average, unadjusted for seasonality, census metropolitan areas.

## Occupation overview

Employment in sales and service occupations experienced the largest month to month loss in Metro Vancouver, declining by 51,300 jobs (-13.7%) between March and April. The second greatest decline was attributed to occupations in natural and applied sciences, which lost 7,400 workers (-5.5%). The third largest employment losses were in business, finance and administration occupations, which declined by 6,900 jobs (-3.0%). Employment in natural resources and agriculture grew by 1,700 workers (+11.4%).

<sup>4</sup> This other services sector includes establishments engaged in repairing, or performing routine maintenance on motor vehicles, machinery, equipment; providing personal care services, funeral services, and laundry services to individuals, such as pet care and photo finishing services; organizing and promoting religious activities; supporting various causes through grant-making, advocating social and political causes, and promoting and defending the interests of their members.

**Figure 3 – Employment change by occupations in Metro Vancouver, March to April**

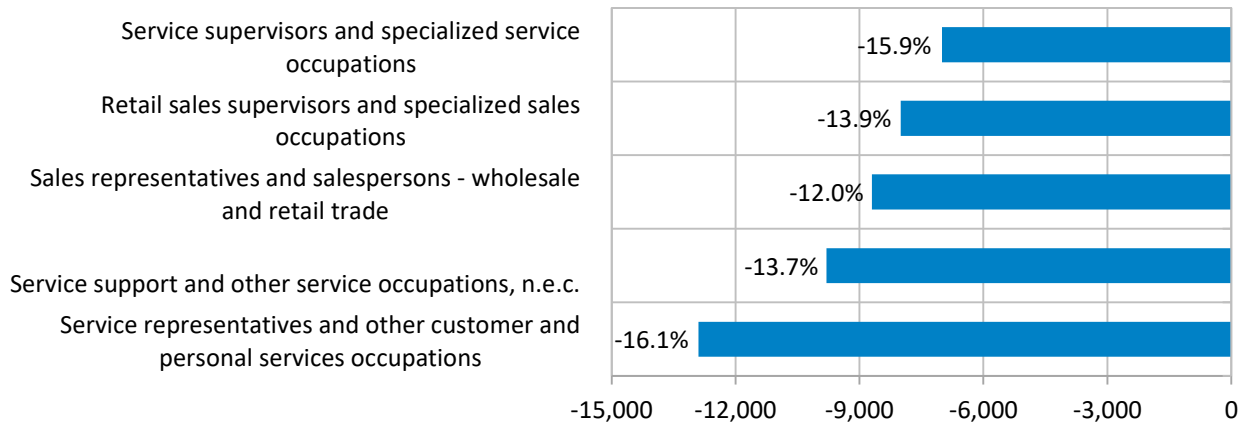


Source: Statistics Canada. Table 14-10-0313-01 Employment by occupation, three-month moving average, unadjusted for seasonality, census metropolitan areas.

The largest decrease in employment by detailed occupations was service representatives and other customer and personal services occupations, which lost 12,900 (-16.1%) workers since the previous month. Other occupations with significant employment losses include:

- Service support and other service occupations (-9,800; -13.7%)
- Sales representatives and salespersons - wholesale and retail trade (-8,700; -12.0%)
- Retail sales supervisors and specialized sales occupations (-8,000; -13.9%)
- Service supervisors and specialized service occupations (-7,000; -15.9%)

**Figure 4 – Most employment losses by detailed occupation, March to April**

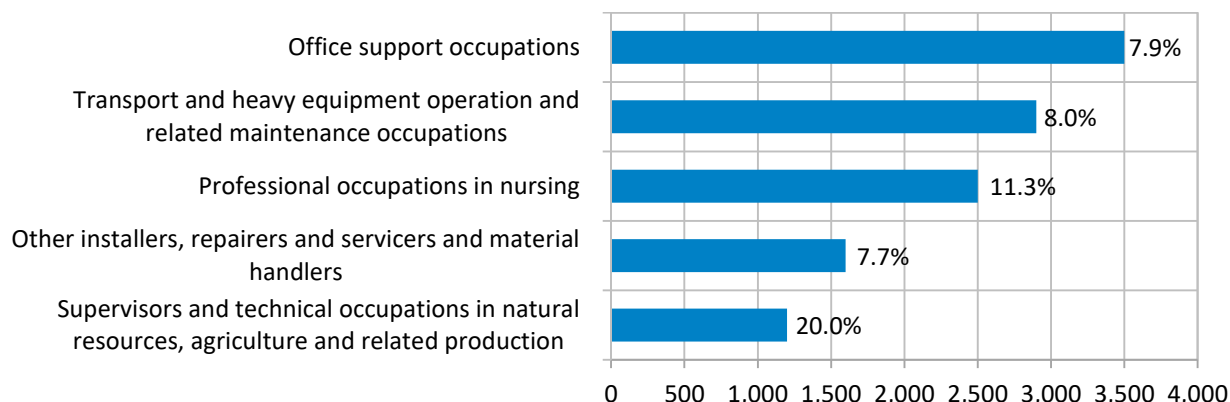


Source: Statistics Canada. Table 14-10-0313-01 Employment by occupation, three-month moving average, unadjusted for seasonality, census metropolitan areas.

The largest increase in employment by detailed occupations was for office support occupations, which gained 3,500 (+7.9%) workers since the previous month. Other occupations with employment gains from March to April include:

- Transport and heavy equipment operation occupations (+2,900; +8.0%)
- Professional occupations in nursing (+2,500; +11.3%)
- Other installers, repairers and servicers and material handlers (+1,600; +7.7%)

**Figure 5 – Most employment gains by detailed occupation categories, March to April**



Source: Statistics Canada. Table 14-10-0313-01 Employment by occupation, three-month moving average, unadjusted for seasonality, census metropolitan areas.

### Government orders

A number of major orders related to the COVID-19 pandemic were issued by various levels of government prior to and during this reference week (April 12<sup>th</sup> to 18<sup>th</sup>). Please see Figure 6 for a full list. The next labour force survey release will be on June 5<sup>th</sup> (for reference week May 10<sup>th</sup> to 16<sup>th</sup>). The data provided in the June 5<sup>th</sup> release will provide important insights into the impacts that senior government mitigation measures taken after April 18<sup>th</sup> have had on employment and the economy.

**Figure 6 – Labour and business-related Government orders and announcements in place during the April 12<sup>th</sup> to April 18<sup>th</sup> reference period**

Government	Date declared	Announcements/Orders
Province of British Columbia	March 12 <sup>th</sup>	Gatherings of over 250 people prohibited
Canada	March 13 <sup>th</sup>	Cruise ships with over 500 people prohibited from docking at any Canadian port
Province of British Columbia	March 16 <sup>th</sup>	Gatherings of over 50 people prohibited
Canada	March 17 <sup>th</sup>	Bank of Canada lowered the interest rate by 50 basis points to 0.75%
Canada		Canada closed its border to non-citizens (with some exceptions); inbound travelers must self-isolate
City of Vancouver / Parks Board		All VPL, Civic Theatre, and Park Board facilities closed
Province of British Columbia		State of emergency declared
Province of British Columbia		Those travelling on or after March 12 <sup>th</sup> must self-isolate
Province of British Columbia		Order to shut down all restaurant and bar dine-in service
Province of British Columbia	Notice to close casinos	
Canada	March 18 <sup>th</sup>	Income tax payment deferral for business to after August 31 <sup>st</sup>
Canada		10% wage subsidy for small employers and non-profits for three months
City of Vancouver	March 19 <sup>th</sup>	State of emergency declared
Canada	March 20 <sup>th</sup>	Canada-U.S. border closed to all non-essential travel starting March 20 <sup>th</sup>

<b>Government</b>	<b>Date declared</b>	<b>Announcements/Orders</b>
City of Vancouver		Order to shut down all restaurant table service starting March 20 <sup>th</sup>
Province of British Columbia	March 21 <sup>st</sup>	Order to shut down personal service establishments (salons, spas, massage and tattoo parlors)
City of Vancouver	March 23 <sup>rd</sup>	Order to shut down personal service establishments (salons, spas, massage and tattoo parlors)
Province of British Columbia		BC Emergency Benefit for Workers provides a tax-free \$1,000 payment starting May 1 <sup>st</sup>
Province of British Columbia	March 24 <sup>th</sup>	School Tax reduction for businesses in property classes 4, 5, 6
Canada	March 27 <sup>th</sup>	Deferral of GST and HST tax payment, and taxes and duties owed on imports until June
Canada		Bank of Canada lowered the interest rate by 25 basis points to 0.50%
Canada		Canada Emergency Business Account provides up to \$25 billion to eligible financial institutions so they can offer \$40,000 interest-free loans to small businesses guaranteed and funded by the Government of Canada; up to \$10K forgivable.
Canada		Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy: 75% wage subsidy up to \$847/week if your business revenue has decreased by 30% because of Covid-19
Canada		Small and Medium-sized Enterprise Loan and Guarantee program that will enable up to \$40 billion in lending
Province of British Columbia	April 1 <sup>st</sup>	BC Hydro announces series of targeted bill relief programs across all customer types
Province of British Columbia	April 2 <sup>nd</sup>	\$300 monthly top-up for income assistance or disability assistance
City of Vancouver	April 3 <sup>rd</sup>	COVID-19 Business Communications and Support Office launched to assist local businesses
Province of British Columbia	April 8 <sup>th</sup>	Emergency Relief Support Fund providing \$225 per month for parents of children with special needs
Province of British Columbia	April 9 <sup>th</sup>	Temporary rental supplement of \$300 per month for eligible households with no dependents (\$500 with dependents)
Province of British Columbia		Residential rental eviction ban
Province of British Columbia	April 14 <sup>th</sup>	Requirement for 14-day self-isolation for all temporary foreign workers arriving in BC for seasonal farm work
Province of British Columbia	April 15 <sup>th</sup>	Provincial state of emergency is extended to April 28 <sup>th</sup>
Province of British Columbia		Additional services for commercial truck drivers

Government	Date declared	Announcements/Orders
Province of British Columbia	April 16 <sup>th</sup>	Further reduction to school property tax rate for commercial properties, enhancement to 50% reduction to provincial school property tax rate that was originally announced for classes 4, 5, and 6
Province of British Columbia		Postponing the date that late payment penalties apply for commercial properties in classes 4,5,6,7 and 8 to Oct. 1, 2020
Canada / Province of British Columbia	April 16 <sup>th</sup>	The Canada Emergency Commercial Rent Assistance program (CECRA) to provide 75% commercial rent relief to tenants
Canada	April 17 <sup>th</sup>	\$675 million for small and medium-sized businesses through Canada's Regional Development Agencies
Canada		\$500 million in funding for Culture, Heritage and Sports
Canada	April 18 <sup>th</sup>	\$306.8 million in funding to help small and medium-sized Indigenous businesses

### Upcoming LFS data releases

Statistics Canada is scheduled to release LFS data on a monthly basis. The following table illustrates the upcoming LFS data releases and their reference period.

**Figure 7 - Schedule of Labour Force Survey release dates**

Release dates	Reference period
June 5, 2020	May 10 to 16, 2020
July 10, 2020	June 14 to 20, 2020

### Additional Data Sources: Employment Lands and Economy Review

The Employment Lands and Economy Review team has also prepared 30 fact sheets using a variety of data sources detailing the economic structure of the city of Vancouver and the role of the city within the regional economy. These fact sheets are available on the City's website here: <https://vancouver.ca/employment-lands>.

### City of Vancouver business support webpage launch

On Friday, April 3<sup>rd</sup>, City staff established the COVID-19 Business Communications and Support Office (BCSO) to assist local businesses at this critical time. The office is a single point of contact for Vancouver's local business owners to get information from the City of Vancouver regarding business support programs, to learn what City-run business services are currently available, and to make suggestions to the City concerning business and the economy. The webpage is available here: <https://vancouver.ca/home-property-development/covid-19-coronavirus-support-for-local-businesses.aspx>.

Staff in the City-Wide & Regional Planning division of the Planning, Urban Design and Sustainability department is supporting the BCSO, ensuring that information for business remains current and accessible as well as assisting with developing resources for responding to concerns raised by local business operators.

If you have any questions or require further information, please contact me or Chris Robertson, Assistant Director, City-Wide & Regional Planning, at 604-873-7684 or [chris.robertson@vancouver.ca](mailto:chris.robertson@vancouver.ca).

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a large, stylized 'G' followed by a horizontal line extending to the right.

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