

What We Heard: External Advisory Group Meeting #1

Employment Lands & Economy Review

The City of Vancouver is developing a long-range land use policy plan to ensure the city has an appropriate supply of land and business space to support jobs and the growth of the economy. As part of this review, the City will be engaging with a range of stakeholders, business sectors and members of the public to collect feedback at key project milestones and help inform the plan.

About the External Advisory Group

The City of Vancouver has assembled an External Advisory Group (EAG) to help inform the Employment Lands and Economy Review. Represented on the EAG is a diverse range of perspectives from industry associations, labour representatives, Indigenous groups, not-for-profit organizations, representatives from the development industry and businesses from over 18 economic sectors. The role of the EAG is to provide input and insight at key milestones throughout the planning process.

Session #1

The first session for the EAG was held on January 24, 2019. Participants were asked to answer two questions about Vancouver's economy and the changing land and space needs of businesses. Summaries from these discussions are outlined in this document.



Question 1: Vancouver's Economy

Given the scope and purpose of the study, what are some of the key considerations that need to be incorporated into the analysis?



EMERGING TRENDS

- The changing nature of work (e.g. rise of co-working space, live/work spaces, demand for flexible work hours, and an increasingly mobile workforce).
- Shifting demographics; retirement of baby-boomers and increasing automation of certain jobs.
- Impact of autonomous vehicles on economy.
- Building complete communities where people can live close to work.
- Workers are moving out of the City due to affordability issues.
- Many new start-ups locating in co-working spaces.
- Loss of hotel space over time
- Growth of retail, tech and e-commerce.
- Decline in manufacturing.



AFFORDABILITY

- Impact zoning has on the affordability of land for small businesses.
- Increasing pressures due to higher land values, increasing tax assessment, and higher payments for property taxes.
- Impact of increased densities in industrial uses.
- Tax assessment based on highest and best use.
- Look at the Ports Property Tax Act for ideas on amendments to property tax in Vancouver.
- Displacement of existing businesses due to re-development.



ADDRESSING KNOWLEDGE GAPS

- Understand the current state of Vancouver's economy and how local economic characteristics have changed over time.
- What additional capacity for jobs currently exists on Vancouver's "jobs only" land?
- Understand all the different types of uses associated with high tech jobs - including the need for both office and manufacturing spaces.
- How many downtown jobs are associated with or serving the tech sector?
- Needs of workers working at home or with no fixed workplace address.
- Role of the Port in Vancouver and the rest of the region.
- Business space needs in the Central Business District (CBD) versus outside the CBD.
- The role of ownership (i.e. stratification) on Vancouver's employment lands in the future.
- World-wide best practices in economic planning.
- Review what worked and what didn't work from changes to certain zoning schedules (i.e. I-1).
- Account for different scenarios for Vancouver when looking out into the future.



SOCIAL EQUITY

- Fair access to jobs for key groups such as people who are low-income, artists and Indigenous groups.
- Social purpose sector is growing quickly and needs to be tracked in the data.
- Prioritization of local businesses and social enterprises.



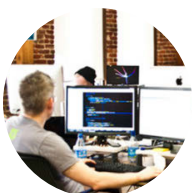
INTER-GOVERNMENTAL COOPERATION

- Better interregional cooperation, including on the projects currently underway (e.g. Metro Vancouver Regional Industrial Lands Strategy).
- Extend regional cooperation to the rest of the Cascadia Region (i.e. Seattle and Portland).



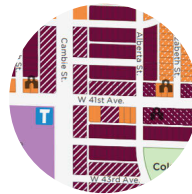
INFRASTRUCTURE CONSIDERATIONS

- Importance of rail corridors and goods movement between the Port, industrial lands and rest of the region.
- Need for more efficient regional transit.
- Ways to revitalize the South Vancouver rail line.



WORKFORCE NEEDS

- Affordable housing.
- Semi-skilled and low skilled jobs are hard to fill.
- Desire for younger workforce to live/work in central areas with restaurants, bars and other services.
- Shortage of workers in trades and construction.



LAND-USE & POLICY CONSIDERATIONS

- Conflict between certain commercial/industrial uses and residential dwellings.
- Industrial land under pressure while the sector continues to grow.
- Improving adaptability and flexibility in zoning to allow more diverse uses.
- How to plan better for jobs located across the city, including in non-employment areas.
- How to integrate cannabis sector as a use on existing employment lands.
- Allowing retail sales in existing warehouses.
- Additional flexibility for uses generally across the city, including support for mixed-use opportunities.
- Better clarity and certainty on zoning and City policies.
- Ensure retail space is occupied in mixed use residential/commercial developments.
- Support complete communities with live/work/play options.
- Look at incorporating rental on top of employment spaces.
- Allow for more density and inclusive zoning around SkyTrain stations; more jobs space and multi-family uses.
- Look outside of the “jobs only” land to allocate more job space.
- Allow for higher buildings.

Question 2: Space Needs

How are business space needs changing? How does this vary by industry? Type of space? Location in the city or region?



EMERGING TRENDS

- Increasing business travel puts pressure on Vancouver's limited supply of diminishing hotel spaces.
- Lack of affordable office space has increased demand for coworking spaces.
- There are new demands for space from the industrial sector (i.e. industrial office).
- Industrial uses are increasingly being pushed out into the region.
- E-commerce and film sectors have very high workers per square foot.



AFFORDABILITY

- Issues of affordability are increasingly being felt by all sectors of the economy. It is especially being felt by social purpose organizations, creative manufacturers, and start-up manufacturers, amongst others.
- High demand for industrial space is driving up land value and lease rates.
- Artist communities and studios are becoming increasingly displaced.



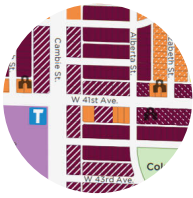
CHANGING NATURE OF WORK

- There is continued demand for coworking. Coworking space goes beyond the tech sector; also includes artists, manufacturers, and other activities.
- Working at home may never fully take hold because people still seek collaboration in social settings.
- Office workers are increasingly working outside the traditional 9-5 work day.
- Companies are increasingly tight for space and have begun implementing hot-desking (i.e. shared workstations).
- Should consider other uses other than high tech when thinking about the economy of the future.



WORKFORCE NEEDS

- Workers are increasingly demanding flexible work hours and tele-working options.
- Increased demand for bicycle storage.
- Need for higher density and affordable housing.
- Coworking clients want space accessible within a maximum 30 minute commute.
- Coworking clients also require spaces to foster a sense of community.



LAND-USE & POLICY CONSIDERATIONS

OFFICE

- Floor space per worker is generally decreasing across industries.
- Offices are adopting open concept designs.
- Early indications of a trend towards smaller strata offices.

INDUSTRIAL

- Industrial land reserve is needed.
- Zoning should accommodate the trend towards multi-level industrial.
- Industrial lands are limited and should be protected. May be mixed with other employment uses but should not be used for housing.
- Heavy industrial continues to play a role, and should be located on main transportation arterials and near the Port.
- There is still a need for large sizes for industrial spaces.

E-COMMERCE & RETAIL

- E-commerce is driving retail storefronts smaller and warehouses bigger.
- Online shopping has space implications for both new and existing businesses (i.e. grocery pickup at supermarkets).

COWORKING

- Coworking clients are increasingly looking for spaces outside of downtown, closer to home and with parking.
- Coworking spaces are serving a key role in supplying space.
- Businesses using coworking spaces downtown are more likely to stay downtown.

OTHER

- Space needs for infrastructure and warehousing are important as it pertains to the movement of goods.
- Current regulations may restrict working at home.
- Use restrictions often prevent small businesses from getting into multi-use buildings.
- Allow for flexibility and scalability of space for tech industry.
- The tech sector increasingly needs space for data servers, delivering services/goods to the end user, and solving the last mile problem.
- Strata commercial can constrain future growth, as has been the case in Mount Pleasant.

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