



# VICTORIA 3.0

Recovery Reinvention Resilience – 2020-2041







# Victoria 3.0 Vision

As the Capital City, Victoria is a future-ready, globally-fluent influencer and innovator. Working within the bounds of the Earth's capacity to sustain us, we will use our status as a small powerhouse and nurture our innovation ecosystem to create a strong and resilient economy that meets our needs now and anticipates the future.

## **COVER**

Expedition leader Adrian Round (left) and ocean operations staff member Jonathan Miller carefully monitor remotely operated vehicle operations on the seafloor more than 2 km below the vessel. Photo by Ed McNichol.



# Acknowledgement of Lekwungen Homelands



*Victoria 3.0* was developed and will be implemented on the homelands of the Songhees and Esquimalt Nations. We are grateful to the Lekwungen people for stewarding these territories for thousands of years and for generously welcoming those of us who are visitors here. This plan contains acts of economic reconciliation that we will carry out by taking direction from the Songhees and Esquimalt Nations and other Nations on Southern Vancouver Island.





# Gratitude and Acknowledgements

In the summer of 2019, City Economic Development staff and a small group of stakeholders and I participated in a “master class” on city building in the 21st century taught by global cities expert, Rosemary Feenan.

Rosemary snapped us to attention. She shared with us “The 10 Traits of Globally Fluent Metro Areas”<sup>1</sup> and presented data and case studies that suggested we’d be wise to assess Victoria’s role in a quickly changing global economy, driven largely by cities. She urged us to create a plan to make Victoria’s place in that economy. We are grateful to Rosemary for her timely intervention; *Victoria 3.0* is in part a response to her challenge.

In the fall of 2019, the City hosted six roundtables (see Appendix A), in which 145 residents and business owners participated. Building on the learnings from the summer and on readings suggested by Rosemary and other city experts, I presented the proposed vision for *Victoria 3.0* and the future of our economy at each roundtable. We then asked participants for their input based on their experience doing business in the city and their aspirations for “global fluency.” We released the plan in January and received public input through an online survey and by email.

Because *Victoria 3.0* is a national and global facing document, we asked a diverse group of practitioners nationally and globally to act as peer reviewers:

- Rosemary Feenan, Executive Vice President Research, Quadreal
- David Forrest, Changemaker
- Bruce Katz, Author, *The New Localism: How Cities Can Thrive in the Age of Populism*
- Carol-Anne Hilton, Founder, Indigenomics Institute
- Grayson Perry, Consul General and Senior Trade & Investment Commissioner, Australian Consulate
- John Stackhouse, VP Innovation, Royal Bank of Canada

We thank them for their insights, their helpful and provocative comments, and their generosity.

After all this work – and before *Victoria 3.0* could make its way to City Council – COVID-19 hit and more work was needed repurpose this plan to focus on recovery, reinvention, and resilience. COVID-19 has shown us – if climate change hadn’t already – that business as usual won’t build the

inclusive, forward-looking economies that we need to flourish.

For input received post-COVID-19, and for giving shape to the final document presented here, I want to thank the wide array of business leaders who contributed their time and insights to refining *Victoria 3.0*, even while they were working hard to keep afloat during the crisis.

The ideas from the roundtables, the survey responses and emails, the thoughtful comments from our peer reviewers, and the learnings through COVID-19 can be seen here, reflected as concrete actions.

I am also deeply grateful to the small group of hard-working City staff who helped to shape this document – from inserting new ideas and fixing acronyms to laying it out. *Victoria 3.0 – Recovery Reinvention Resilience – 2020 – 2041* is the work of many hands. And it will take many more hands, working together, to bring this plan to life.

– Mayor Lisa Helps  
March 2020

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<sup>1</sup> Brad Dearman, Greg Clark and Joseph Parilla, “The 10 Traits of Globally Fluent Metro Areas.” The Brookings Institution Metropolitan Policy Program, 2013.





COAST CAPITAL SAVINGS INNOVATION CENTRE, UNIVERSITY OF VICTORIA



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## Future Design

We are currently working on creating a better version of our product, with the following additions:

- Create a left-handed version of the glove, allowing more coverage of the American Sign Language.
- Implement higher-quality hardware and material resistant to stains/damages.
- Create a more user-friendly application with a higher translation/response rate.
- Remodel current glove and application designs to be more appealing.





# Introduction

**V**ictoria 3.0 is an economic action plan that accompanies the City's *Official Community Plan* to 2041. It's a long-term plan and vision for a sustainable, influential city that will build a strong innovation ecosystem and create a strong and resilient economy now and for the future. The actions laid out here will enable us to build an economy that enables everyone to flourish and that will set Victoria on a path to low-carbon prosperity.

We are making this plan now in order to:

1. Respond to the threats and opportunities created by climate change
2. Recover from COVID-19 and create resilience so our local businesses and economy can withstand emergencies
3. Stimulate and support innovation
4. Substantially leverage our existing skills and assets
5. Build on the economic stability offered by our large public sector employment base
6. Diversify our economy
7. Prepare our workforce for the future
8. Build on BC and Canada's strong international reputations for innovation and access to the world's best markets

*Victoria 3.0* has three main goals. The first and immediate focus is on supporting businesses to adapt to a new normal and become more resilient

in light of experiences and lessons learned during the COVID-19 pandemic.

COVID-19 has shown us how precarious our small businesses and our local economy are. The South Island Prosperity Partnership (more on SIPP below) has created a Rising Economy Taskforce with 13 subcommittees that cover all aspects of our regional economy. *Victoria 3.0* is meant to be complementary to and nestle within this important regional work.

COVID-19 has also laid bare the vulnerabilities in Canadian society, which leads to the second goal: to create a city and an economy for everyone.

The third goal is that while we build our economy over the next two decades, we do so within the boundaries of the Earth's capacity to sustain us. As Kate Raworth puts it in *Doughnut Economics: 7 Ways to Think Like a 21st Century Economist*, we want to create, "human prosperity in a flourishing web of life."<sup>1</sup> *Victoria 3.0*, coupled with the City's Climate Leadership Plan, creates a pathway to low-carbon prosperity.

How will we create a resilient, inclusive and low-carbon economy over the next two decades? By taking an ecosystem or "rainforest" based approach to economic development. Victor W. Hwang and Greg Horowitz authors of *The Rainforest* inspire us.

They say that the inhabitants of a rainforest innovation ecosystem "are part of a voluntary,

extended community participating in a great, never-ending human contest for building better things, changing lives, making friendships, contributing to something bigger than themselves, discovering the unexpected, experiencing both the thrill of victory and the agony of defeat, and perhaps even making a lot of money."<sup>2</sup>

We know that we must be more deliberate about developing a stronger innovation ecosystem and building on our strengths as an ocean city. The first two actions toward Reinvention and Resilience – an Innovation District and an Ocean Futures Cluster – tackle these opportunities. They will also create low-carbon prosperity.

## CLIMATE CHANGE

Job creation and innovation opportunities associated with mitigating and adapting to climate change are priorities in *Victoria 3.0*. There is money to be made and value to be created in the transition to low-carbon prosperity.

This plan aligns with the federal government's *Pan-Canadian Framework on Clean Growth and Climate Change*. It also aligns with the Province's CleanBC which clearly shows how "transitioning to a low-polluting economy will deliver more and higher-value jobs."<sup>3</sup> As noted in *CleanBC*, the global market for clean-tech solutions is estimated at \$3 trillion by 2020.

1. Kate Raworth, *Doughnut Economics: 7 Ways to Think Like a 21st Century Economist*, (White River Junction VT: Chelsea Green Publishing, 2017), 47.

2. Victor W. Hwang and Greg Horowitz, *The Rainforest: The Secret to Building the Next Silicon Valley*, (Los Altos Hills CA: Regenwald, 2012), 132.

3. "Clean BC: Our Nature, Our Power, Our Future," Government of British Columbia, December 2018, 2.





# Introduction, continued

A recent report by the Coalition for Urban Transitions, “Climate Emergency: Urban Opportunity,” estimates that there will be 87 million jobs globally and a \$24 trillion economic opportunity in the next 10 years generated by innovations that address the climate emergency.<sup>4</sup> *Victoria 3.0* will help ensure that local companies are ready to seize these opportunities, to access global markets and to contribute to and share in low-carbon prosperity.

In particular, the actions laid out in Sections 6 and 7 – the Innovation District and the Ocean Futures Cluster and the companies associated with both – will help the provincial and federal governments to achieve their climate targets. They will also position Victoria as an influencer and innovator, developing low-carbon solutions and jobs for the 22nd century.

## CITY 3.0

Currently over half of the world’s population lives in cities and every week, three million people move into cities.<sup>5</sup> Cities consume resources from global hinterlands at unsustainable rates, produce well over 70% of greenhouse gas emissions, and are places of increasing inequality and displacement. Cities are where many of the world’s problems and challenges are found; they are also where some of the most innovative solutions to global challenges will be generated.

Drawing on the work of Charles Landry, Greg Clark, Tim Moonen and others, global cities expert Rosemary Feenan characterizes the changes from the 20th century cities and economies to current 21st century cities in the following way:

**City 1.0** was pre-1990s. These cities were characterized by mass production and massive, monumental buildings. They were siloed, hierarchical and vertical.

**City 2.0** was post-dotcom era. These cities were high tech, integrated, open source, connected, and interactive.

**City 3.0** are cities in the current era. They are co-creative, collaborative, collective, circular, human scale, have smart citizens, and work and think like a network or ecosystem.

## VICTORIA 3.0 - A CITY FOR EVERYONE

*Victoria 3.0* is an economic plan. At the same time, it’s a plan with a clear goal of improving the quality of life and well-being of the community. We can learn from some of the other places that have built high-value economies – they created unlivable cities and left people behind. In the words of Zita Cobb, founder of the Shorefast Foundation, the aim of economic development in the 21st century is to “re-architect the economy to put the community at the centre.”<sup>6</sup>

One of our goals is that by 2030 everyone working in Victoria is making a living wage, not because this is mandated by any level of government, but because of an increase in household sustaining jobs and a strong, inclusive, high-value economy.

In addition to economic prosperity for all working people, there are other issues that we need to address to achieve *Victoria 3.0*. These opportunities and challenges were raised by roundtable participants and by those who submitted feedback during the engagement period. Addressing them is important in our transition to a strong and resilient economy and in creating a strong and healthy community for everyone.

We are hearing from employers that there is a shortage of housing for working people. *The Victoria Housing Strategy, Missing Middle Housing Plan* and *Regional Housing First Program* will create an accessible housing market for working people. We are also hearing about a childcare shortage. An increase in childcare spaces will make it possible for young parents to return to the workforce. And sustainable, affordable transportation options will save people time and money, and make it easier and healthier to get to and from work.

4 Nicholas Stern et al, “Climate Emergency Urban Opportunity: How National Governments can Secure Economic Prosperity and Avert Climate Catastrophe by Transforming Cities,” Coalition for Urban Transitions, 2019.

5 Bret Boyd, “Urbanization and the Mass Movement of People to Cities,” <https://graylinegroup.com/urbanization-catalyst-overview/>

6 Zita Cobb, personal communication, January 26 2020, Ottawa. <https://shorefast.org/>

# Introduction, continued

Working with the Province and partners across the region to tackle the doctor shortage will help to attract people to Victoria and ensure access to medical care for those who are already working here. Advocating to the Province and doing our small part to fix the mental health and addictions crisis will help those struggling and will also address concerns we've heard from some business owners. And working with partners to create low-income supportive housing will ensure that the most marginalized people are not left on the street.

Finally, arts and culture are a strong economic generator in their own right. They are also key to vibrancy and help to make Victoria a fun and happy city. Nurturing our arts and culture sector – and the creative people working in it – through the implementation of *Create Victoria* will continue to build the kind of city that people love to live in and move to.

## ***Plans Underway for a City for Everyone***

### **Housing**

Victoria Housing Strategy (2020–2025)  
Missing Middle Housing Plan (2020)  
Regional Housing First Program (2017–2022)

### **Transportation**

Go Victoria: Our Mobility Future (2020–2030)  
Transit Futures Plan (2011–2036)

### **Childcare**

Childcare Action Plan (2020)

### **Doctor Shortage**

Attraction Strategy (2020–2021)

### **Mental Health and Addictions**

Community Wellness Alliance (2020)  
Community Wellness Peer Informed Task Force  
Homelessness (2020)

### **Homelessness**

Regional Housing First Program (2017–2022)  
Greater Victoria Coalition Community Plan to  
End Homelessness (2020–2025)

### **Arts and Culture**

Create Victoria Arts and Culture Master Plan  
(2017)

## **PIVOTING TO A STRONG AND RESILIENT ECONOMY**

A strong and resilient economy has a diversity of household-sustaining jobs available in a range of sectors, and the skills and training available for those jobs to be filled. It's an innovative economy that develops solutions to pressing global challenges, sells these solutions globally, and brings the money back to Victoria.

Strong, resilient and diverse economies attract talent from around the world to fill the high-value jobs being created and draw a wealth of experience and diversity to the city.

A 2019 Harvard Business Review study puts Canada at the “cutting edge” for both business skills and data science (10th and 14th in the world

respectively) and “competitive” (24th in the world) for technology.<sup>7</sup> With a high-quality of life, a growing innovation ecosystem, and an inclusive approach to economic development, Victoria will continue to attract talent from across the country and capitalize on – and concentrate – Canada's potential.

## **WORKFORCE OF THE FUTURE**

Responding to the changes in the world today including climate change, automation, and an increasing reliance on Artificial Intelligence (AI), will require heavy investments in human capital and the development of talent.

The roundtable participants who shaped this plan cited skilled workforce attraction as a major challenge to being future ready and globally fluent, and to growing their companies.

Over the life of *Victoria 3.0*, BC Stats projects that there will be just shy of 12,000 new jobs in Victoria and close to 50,000 in the region. (SEE TABLE 1.) These jobs will be very different from the jobs of the past – or even of the present – and we need to make sure that our workforce is ready.

Between 2017–2018, the Royal Bank of Canada (RBC) conducted a major study of Canada's workforce.<sup>8</sup> Their researchers talked to students, workers and educators in all sectors. They studied job openings and automation trends and analyzed a wealth of data. They concluded that Canada is shifting from a jobs economy to a skills

7 Emily Glassberg Sands and Vinod Bakthavachalam, “Ranking Countries and Industries by Tech, Data, and Business Skills,” Harvard Business Review, May 27, 2019. <https://hbr.org/2019/05/ranking-countries-and-industries-by-tech-data-and-business-skills>

8 John Stackhouse et. al., “Humans Wanted: How Canadian Youth Can Thrive in an Age of Disruption,” Royal Bank of Canada, 2018.



economy, and that employers, educators and policy makers are not prepared. They cite four important trends that we need to be aware of:

1. Disruption is accelerating
2. Flexibility is the future
3. Digital literacy is essential
4. We need to prepare for the future of work

The COVID-19 pandemic accelerated some of these trends and forced us all to adapt quickly. Strong and resilient economies will be those that have a future workforce with the creativity and skills needed to continue these adaptations.

In the fall of 2019, as part of its “Future Of” series, the South Island Prosperity Partnership (SIPP) hosted John Stackhouse, Royal Bank of Canada (RBC) VP Innovation, in Victoria to discuss the “Future of Work”. He presented the findings of the RBC report. He stressed that technological disruption always creates more jobs, not less.

Over the next five years in Canada, despite heavy job displacement in many sectors, there will be 2.5 million new jobs added. The skill sets needed to do these jobs are different than those in the past. And it is not all about being tech savvy. As John Stackhouse noted in his talk, “We don’t need a nation of coders, we need a nation of collaborators, communicators, critical thinkers and complex problem solvers.”

In their “Future of Education” event, also in fall 2019, SIPP convened the presidents of Camosun College, Royal Roads University and the University of Victoria. All three presidents shared a common message: The skills needed for the workforce of the future are empathy, collaboration, critical thinking and problem solving.

*Victoria 3.0* must take all of these trends and questions seriously and consider what the City, the private sector and post-secondary institutions can do, together, to develop the workforce needed to create a strong and resilient economy.

**TABLE 1: PROJECTED POPULATION AND EMPLOYMENT GROWTH FOR VICTORIA AND CRD REGION 2018 - 2038**

	2018			2038			Population Change	
	Populations	Dwellings	Employment	Populations	Dwellings	Employment	Total	Percentage
<b>Core</b>								
Esquimalt	19,100	9,100	13,100	21,100	10,700	11,000	2,000	10.5%
Oak Bay	19,600	8,200	8,100	19,100	7,700	7,900	-500	-2.6%
Saanich	123,400	49,600	48,500	139,900	56,800	65,600	16,500	13.4%
Victoria	92,700	48,700	91,200	108,900	58,100	10,3100	16,200	17.5%
View Royal	11,200	4,500	5,900	15,400	7,100	9,400	4,200	37.5%
<b>Total</b>	<b>266,000</b>	<b>120,100</b>	<b>166,800</b>	<b>304,500</b>	<b>140,100</b>	<b>197,000</b>	<b>38,500</b>	<b>14.5%</b>
<b>Saanich Peninsula</b>								
Central Saanich	18,200	7,400	9,600	21,500	9,700	12,000	3,300	18.1%
North Saanich	12,200	5,000	5,500	13,000	5,900	9,400	800	6.6%
Sidney	12,700	6,000	6,900	14,000	7,500	7,800	1,300	10.2%
<b>Total</b>	<b>43,000</b>	<b>18,400</b>	<b>21,900</b>	<b>48,600</b>	<b>23,200</b>	<b>29,200</b>	<b>5,600</b>	<b>13.0%</b>
<b>West Shore</b>								
Colwood	18,200	7,100	4,300	22,900	9,900	5,300	4,700	25.8%
Highlands	2,400	900	200	3,200	1,200	700	800	33.3%
Juan de Fuca EA	5,000	2,200	600	5,400	2,600	1,900	400	8.0%
Langford	38,300	15,300	13,300	65,800	29,400	20,200	27,500	71.8%
Metchosin	5,100	2,000	1,300	5,600	2,600	2,500	500	9.8%
Sooke	14,100	5,600	2,800	22,400	9,300	4,400	8,300	58.9%
<b>Total</b>	<b>83,100</b>	<b>33,000</b>	<b>22,400</b>	<b>125,400</b>	<b>55,000</b>	<b>34,900</b>	<b>42,300</b>	<b>50.9%</b>
<b>Totals</b>	<b>392,100</b>	<b>171,600</b>	<b>211,100</b>	<b>478,500</b>	<b>218,200</b>	<b>261,100</b>	<b>86,400</b>	<b>22.0%</b>



OCEAN RIVER SPORTS



# Where We've Come From

## MAKING VICTORIA: UNLEASHING POTENTIAL

In early 2015, the Mayor convened a Task Force on Economic Development and Prosperity to tackle the issues of the day, namely a high retail vacancy rate and a sense that City Hall was not open for business.

After seven meetings and an opportunity for public input, the Task Force released *Making Victoria: Unleashing Potential*, which was adopted by City Council in the fall of 2015. A key recommendation was to open a Business Hub at City Hall and hire a Business Ambassador to:

- Streamline and de-mystify all business and development processes at City Hall
- Make it easier to do business in Victoria
- Advise on how to reduce unnecessary red tape
- Connect entrepreneurs with the resources they need
- Accelerate the development of a vibrant downtown

The Business Hub opened in December 2015. At the time, the downtown retail vacancy rate was over 10 per cent. Pre-COVID-19 it was below 4 per cent and had not gone above this even as retail space from new construction became available. Post-COVID-19 we will need the Business Hub more than ever; it's an example of how a City initiative can deliver change in a solid and timely manner.

*Making Victoria: Unleashing Potential* also recommended building on our assets and playing

to our strengths by focusing on six key sectors:

- Advanced Education, Research and Development
- Ocean and Marine Sector
- Experiential Tourism
- Government
- Technology
- Entrepreneurship, Start-Ups and Social Enterprise

In each of these areas, the Task Force developed a story, objectives, actions and metrics, and assigned responsibility for each of the actions. Many of the actions in the plan have been completed and some have evolved. We did not put in place a good process or resources for tracking the metrics. This is a lesson learned going forward and City Hall is building the capacity to measure progress on economic indicators and other initiatives.

## SOUTH ISLAND PROSPERITY PARTNERSHIP

The South Island Prosperity Partnership (SIPP) was founded in April 2016 through collaboration among local governments, First Nations, the private sector and post-secondary institutions. SIPP was created to take a regional approach to growing a sustainable economy at the same time as attending to the unique needs of its members. The founding members determined that a region-wide, collaborative approach would enable us to tackle systemic issues collectively and to pursue opportunities that might not otherwise be attainable.

SIPP's founding members chose to incorporate as a non-profit society which is member driven, but has an independent, private sector-led board of directors. In order to achieve buy-in and test the model, SIPP was set up as a five-year "project" with four membership categories (government, business, non-profit, and business/industry association). Municipal members had the option to exit as members after the third year; to date none have done so and one more has joined.

In the fall of 2019, nearing the end of its initial five-year term, SIPP formed an organizational review committee to set the stage for its future. In the spring of 2020, SIPP will begin consultations to shape its next five-year strategic plan, building on the rich partnerships and collaborative approaches established during the first few years.

To deliver on its mandate, SIPP's renewed strategy will likely continue to focus on established, export-oriented companies within the region, attracting new businesses and investment, facilitating increased capacity for Indigenous-led economic development, as well as on cluster and sector development and promoting the Greater Victoria brand overseas and within the 'Cascadia' region (Pacific Northwest).

The deep experience and existing collaborative partnerships developed by SIPP will help to accelerate *Victoria 3.0*.

*To learn more about the South Island Prosperity Partnership, please visit [southislandprosperity.ca](https://southislandprosperity.ca).*





# Where We're Going

## VISION

As the Capital City, Victoria is a future-ready, globally fluent influencer and innovator. Working within the bounds of the Earth's capacity to sustain us, we will use our status as a small powerhouse and nurture our innovation ecosystem to create a strong and resilient economy that meets our needs now and anticipates the future.

## WHAT IS "GLOBAL FLUENCY"?

The authors of "The 10 Traits of Globally Fluent Metro Areas," define global fluency as "the level of global understanding, competence, practice and reach that a metro area exhibits in an increasingly interconnected economy."<sup>9</sup> They assert that global fluency is important and possible even for mid-sized metro areas like Victoria. Becoming globally fluent over the next two decades will help Victoria to better understand, respond to and proactively position ourselves for global economic shifts, which are always felt locally. This will help us to build a strong and resilient local economy.

## 10 TRAITS OF GLOBALLY-FLUENT METRO AREAS

1. Leadership with a Worldview – Local leadership networks with a global outlook have great potential for impact on the global fluency of a metro area.
2. Legacy of Global Orientation – Due to their location, size, and history, certain cities were naturally oriented toward global interaction at an early stage, giving them a first mover advantage.
3. Specializations with Global Reach – Cities often establish their initial global position through a distinct economic specialization, leveraging it as a platform for diversification.
4. Adaptability to Global Dynamics – Cities that sustain their market positions are able to adjust to each new cycle of global change.
5. Culture of Knowledge and Innovation – In an increasingly knowledge-driven world, positive development in the global economy requires high levels of human capital to regenerate new ideas, methods, products and technologies.
6. Opportunity and Appeal to the World – Metro areas that are appealing, open, and opportunity-rich serve as magnets for attracting people and firms from around the world.
7. International Connectivity – Global relevance requires global reach that efficiently connects people and goods to international markets through well-designed, modern infrastructure.
8. Ability to Secure Investment for Strategic Priorities – Attracting investment from a wide variety of domestic and international sources is decisive in enabling metro areas to effectively pursue new growth strategies.
9. Government as Global Enabler – Federal, state, and local governments have unique and complementary roles to play in enabling firms and metro areas to "go global."
10. Compelling Global Identity – Cities must establish an appealing, global identity and relevance in international markets not only to sell the city, but also to shape and build the region around a common purpose.

Many Victoria companies are already delivering innovative products and services to a global market. A focus on increasing our global fluency over the two-decade time horizon of *Victoria 3.0* will enable more local companies to grow their global customer base by delivering solutions that the world needs.

An honest self-assessment will show that Victoria is a long way from being globally fluent. Through *Victoria 3.0* we will learn how Victoria's comparator cities globally have pivoted from an insular, short-sighted focus, to using their resources to create future-facing, globally engaged and sustainable economies.

<sup>9</sup> Brad McDearman, Greg Clark and Joseph Parilla, 3.





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# Recovery: Our Small Businesses are the Lifeblood of our Community

## 1. SUPPORT SMALL BUSINESSES

During the COVID-19 pandemic our small business sector has been very hit hard; revenues toppled overnight and there were significant staff layoffs. Many businesses were directed to close to slow the spread of COVID-19 and to reduce the burden on our healthcare system. Many others did so voluntarily. Businesses with already slim margins before the pandemic are in an even more precarious position coming out of it.

The actions in this section are meant to help small businesses – including newcomer and Indigenous-owned businesses and youth – to spring back after the pandemic. There are also actions to create more resilience in order to prepare for future emergencies and economic downturns.

The Ministry of Jobs, Trade and Technology's 2019 Small Business Profile notes that 84 per cent of all small businesses in the province have fewer than five employees, and 98 per cent have fewer than 50 employees. As well, BC's small business sector generated 34 per cent of the Provincial GDP in 2018. Small businesses are key

to providing the amenity-rich lifestyle that helps Victoria attract and retain the workforce of the future.

### ACTIONS

#### 1.1 Continue the work of the Business Hub (Ongoing)

- Streamline and de-mystify all business and development processes at City Hall
- Make it easier to do business in Victoria
- Advise on how to reduce unnecessary red tape
- Connect entrepreneurs with the resources they need
- Accelerate the development of a vibrant downtown

**Lead:** City Staff (multiple departments; this requires a whole of government approach)

#### 1.2 Develop a "How To Adapt to a New Normal" Toolkit for Business (2020)

Create a toolkit that compiles advice and guidelines on how to safely re-open,

re-hire staff, attract customers, and climb out of financial hardship experienced during the COVID-19 pandemic.

**Lead:** City Staff (Economic Development), Downtown Victoria Business Association (DVBA)

**Support:** Think Local First, Community Micro Lending (CML)

#### 1.3 Develop an "Emergency Resilience" Toolkit for Business (2020)

There is potential for another wave of COVID-19 to hit in the future. There may be other disasters and emergencies that businesses and our local economy experience. This toolkit will draw on lessons learned during the pandemic and compile best practices for similar situations in the future.

**Lead:** City Staff (Economic Development), DVBA

**Support:** Think Local First, CML

#### 1.4 **Develop a Business Hub Expansion Strategy (2020-2021)**

- Create an additional position in the Business Hub to support the functions of the Business Ambassador and to elevate resources required in the Business Hub to support *Victoria 3.0*

**Lead:** City Staff (Economic Development)

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#### 1.5 **Create a Downtown Clean and Safe Committee (2020)**

During the COVID-19 pandemic with many businesses closed, there was an increase in crime and break-ins. There was also an increase in graffiti and a need for additional cleaning. A Clean and Safe Committee will help to meet the needs of business owners and ensure that downtown is safe and welcoming for all, at all times.

**Lead:** City Staff (Economic Development, Public Works, Bylaw)

**Support:** DVBA, Greater Victoria Chamber of Commerce (The Chamber), front-line workers from outreach teams, downtown businesses and residents, Victoria Police Department (VicPD)

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#### 1.6 **Develop and deliver a mitigation strategy to help address the impacts of private sector construction and City capital projects on the daily operations of small businesses (2020-2021)**

- With significant business disruption as a result of COVID-19 and to help businesses with a speedy recovery, improve engagement with businesses when there are construction projects that will impact their operations (2020)

**Lead:** City Staff (Economic Development, Finance (Parking Services), Engineering, Engagement)

**Support:** DVBA, The Chamber

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#### 1.7 **Develop a Retail Strategy (2020)**

During the COVID-19 pandemic, people were told to stay home. This likely resulted in an increase in online shopping and people getting out of the habit of coming downtown to meet their needs. Additionally, while Victoria had a historically low retail vacancy rate going into the pandemic, we will likely have a higher rate coming out.

A retail strategy is a key recovery policy to create an amenity-rich downtown and village centres. It will provide a targeted approach to ensure both short and long-term success of the downtown retail core as well as retail in neighbourhood village centres.

- Hire a consultant to guide strategy development and produce a retail analysis report
- Identify and curate gaps and opportunities within the fabric of the city to support a vibrant, livable downtown and neighbourhood village centres
- Create a unified identity and effective marketing strategy for different retail zones downtown and in neighbourhoods
- Develop a set of tactical tools that help property owners improve and reinforce the retail fabric
- Identify and prioritize investments on signature streets and in the downtown core to bolster a sense of place and location

- Focus on needs of growing population of families with children in the downtown and family friendly amenities and retail experiences

**Lead:** City Staff (Economic Development)

**Support:** DVBA, The Chamber, Think Local First

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#### 1.8 **Create a Downtown Ambassador Program (2021)**

Modelled on best practices from other cities (Winnipeg, San Francisco, Kelowna, San Antonio) create a program to increase a sense of safety and welcoming in the downtown for all. The program will be a resource to businesses, downtown residents and visitors, will reduce the front-line resource requirements for police and will provide a visible and welcoming presence for all.

**Lead:** City Staff (Economic Development and Bylaw), DVBA, Coalition to End Homelessness

**Support:** VicPD

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#### 1.9 **Create “How To” Guides for small business start-ups and expansions by sector (2021)**

Starting a small business, particularly a restaurant business, involves multiple approvals from many government agencies. Based on the San Francisco Business Portal the How To Guides will walk entrepreneurs step-by-step through the business start-up process.

**Lead:** City Staff (Economic Development)

**Support:** Relevant small business stakeholders

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**1.10 Promote local economic success stories**  
(Ongoing)

**Lead:** City Staff (Economic Development and Engagement)

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**FUTURE ACTIONS**

TBD 2022 – 2026 Term of Council

**2. SUPPORT YOUTH IN THE ECONOMY**

Participants in the Youth Roundtable that helped shape *Victoria 3.0* pointed to a comprehensive set of needs that youth have and would like addressed, from secure housing to tackling climate change. The *City of Victoria Youth Strategy*, created by and for youth, addresses some of these more general requests as do other City plans like the *Victoria Housing Strategy* and the *Climate Leadership Plan*.

This section focuses on what the City can do to support youth in the economy.

**ACTIONS**

**2.1 Implement a Youth Internship Program and hire more co-op students at City Hall (2021)**

This program will give youth an opportunity to work at City Hall, to learn more about local government and to gain valuable work experience.

**Lead:** City Staff (City Manager's Office and Human Resources)

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**2.2 Continue economic development education work with high school classes**  
(Ongoing)

**Lead:** City Staff (Economic Development)

**Support:** Downtown Victoria Business Association (DVBA), Greater Victoria Chamber of Commerce (The Chamber)

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### 2.3 Continue Mayor's High School Entrepreneur Award (Ongoing)

Two awards, valued at \$250 each, were established by the Mayor in 2015 and are granted annually to two students at Victoria High School who are showing promise as entrepreneurs.

- Increase the value of these awards to \$500 per student and couple the award with an internship opportunity at a relevant business (2021)

**Lead:** Mayor's Office

**Support:** Victoria High School Awards Committee, City Staff (Economic Development) local businesses (for internship program)

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### 2.4 Feature young entrepreneurs and youth business start-ups on the Business Hub website (2020)

**Lead:** City Staff (Economic Development)

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### 2.5 Host Young Entrepreneur Business Info Sessions at City Hall (Ongoing)

**Lead:** City Staff (Economic Development)

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### 2.6 Engage youth on a regular basis to ensure that their needs in relation to economic inclusion continue to be met (Ongoing)

**Lead:** City Staff (Economic Development and Engagement)

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## FUTURE ACTIONS

TBD 2022 - 2026 Term of Council

## 3. SUPPORT INDIGENOUS BUSINESSES

Carol Anne Hilton of the Hesquiaht Nation and founder of the Indigenomics Institute cites a TD Economics report that estimates the current size of the Indigenous economy in Canada as \$32 billion. Her objective is to rally us all around the goal of growing this to \$100 billion over the next five years. The Lekwungen speaking people, the Songhees and Esquimalt Nations on whose homelands Victoria was built, are well-poised to participate in this economic opportunity, as are the other Nations on Southern Vancouver Island. Helping to unleash potential and build capacity while taking direction from the Nations as to what they want and need to be successful are acts of economic reconciliation.

### ACTIONS

#### 3.1 Hold Quarterly Indigenous Prosperity Gatherings (2020 - 2022)

- Implement recommendations generated at the Gatherings

**Lead:** South Island Prosperity Partnership (SIPP)

**Support:** Financial institutions and relevant organizations

---

#### 3.2 Continue Indigenous Connect Forum (2020 - 2022)

The Indigenous Connect Forum is open to all First Nation communities throughout the South Island region, as well as to all Indigenous people on or off reserve. Indigenous Connect engages Indigenous owned/operated enterprises within or separate from Nations. The objectives are to build collective capacity for Indigenous prosperity, including entrepreneurial or management skills, or the administrative capacity to start band-owned businesses or joint ventures.

**Lead:** SIPP

**Support:** Songhees Innovation Centre, other relevant Indigenous-led organizations and businesses

---

#### 3.3 Create a Mentorship Program for Indigenous Business Owners (2022)

Build tools and resources to connect existing business owners and leaders across all industries with Indigenous entrepreneurs and start-ups.

**Lead:** TBD

**Support:** Greater Victoria Chamber of Commerce (The Chamber), Downtown Victoria Business Association (DVBA), SIPP and Victoria Innovation, Advanced Technology & Entrepreneurship Council (VIATEC), University of Victoria (UVIC)

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- 3.4 Create a platform to make it easy for Vancouver Island MASH sector institutions (municipalities, school boards, health regions and publicly-funded post-secondary institutions) and large companies to procure from Indigenous businesses (2020 - Ongoing)**

The purpose of the Coastal Communities Social Procurement Initiative (CCSPI) is to improve the health of communities and the strength of economies on Vancouver Island by changing the culture of public sector procurement. In total, the public sector on Vancouver Island procures approximately \$2 billion in goods and services annually. There is an opportunity through CCSPI for Indigenous businesses to become part of the supply chain for institutional purchasers.

**Lead:** Coastal Communities Social Procurement Initiative (CCSPI)

**Support:** City Staff (Economic Development), SIPP

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- 3.5 Create opportunities for Indigenous businesses to do business with Vancouver Island MASH sector institutions and large companies. (MISSING DATE)**

**Lead:** CCSPI

**Support:** City Staff (Economic Development and Finance), SIPP

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- 3.6 Maintain Indigenous Business Directory (MISSING DATE)**

**Lead:** Greater Victoria Harbour Authority (GVHA)

**Support:** SIPP

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- 3.7 Promote the Inter-community business licence as a measure for on-reserve businesses to work freely and openly across the region (MISSING DATE)**

**Lead:** City Staff (Economic Development)

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## 4. SUPPORT NEWCOMER BUSINESSES

Newcomers to Canada enrich our communities and our economy. Global migration to Victoria is increasing and we need to work hard to welcome and integrate newcomers into our community through economic inclusion. Not only does this enhance a sense of connection and belonging, it makes us a more diverse and resilient community.

A report from the 2017 Victoria Forum notes that “though there are barriers to achieving these goals, it was found that a one per cent increase in ethno-cultural workplace diversity led to one per cent increase in productivity and 2.4 per cent increase in revenue.” There are clear economic benefits to workplace diversity and there are many skilled people in the city and region who have arrived from places around the world and who are looking for meaningful work.

### ACTIONS

- 4.1 Develop a Welcoming Cities Strategy (2021)**

**Lead:** Mayor’s Office

**Support:** Welcoming Cities Task Force

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- 4.2 Continue Business Info Sessions at City Hall for Newcomers (Ongoing)**

**Lead:** City Staff (Economic Development)

**Support:** Relevant partner agencies

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- 4.3 Create a platform to make it easy for Vancouver Island MASH sector institutions (municipalities, school boards, health regions and publicly funded post-secondary institutions) and large companies to procure from newcomer businesses (2020 - 2023)**

The purpose of the Coastal Communities Social Procurement Initiative (CCSPI) is to improve the health of communities and the strength of economies on Vancouver Island by changing the culture of public sector procurement. In total the public sector on Vancouver Island procures approximately \$2 billion in goods and services annually. There is an opportunity through CCSPI for Newcomer businesses to become part of the supply chain for institutional purchasers.

**Lead:** Coastal Communities Social Procurement Initiative (CCSPI)

**Support:** City Staff (Economic Development), South Island Prosperity Partnership (SIPP)

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- 4.4 Create opportunities for newcomer businesses to do business with Vancouver Island MASH sector institutions and large companies. (MISSING DATE)**

- **Lead:** CCSPI

**Support:** City Staff (Economic Development and Finance), SIPP

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Photo: Leanna Rathkelly

## Destination Greater Victoria

According to the United Nations, 80% of economic activity in global tourism is based in coastal destinations. Also, coastal tourism has consistently outpaced overall economic growth worldwide. For example, according to the U.S. National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), “The ocean-based tourism and recreation sector added 73,000 jobs (6.3% growth) from 2015 to 2016 – growing significantly faster than the U.S. economy grew as a whole (1.7% growth).

In Greater Victoria, the overall visitor economy is comprised of more than four million overnight guests annually. This contributes \$2.3 billion in economic activity to the regional economy, while stimulating more than 24,000 direct jobs and \$400 million in local taxes.

Greater Victoria is exceptionally well positioned to leverage the growing demand for innovative coastal tourism – for the benefit of all residents throughout the region. Our world-class ocean-based advanced industries, intelligent blend of

built and natural environments, and collective commitment to sustainability provide huge opportunities to attract high-yield visitors and new residents committed to globally progressive values. It is well known that leisure, business and conference travel is often the first step toward attracting skilled professionals and entrepreneurs to relocate and/or expand their businesses.

Destination Greater Victoria, the region's official destination organization, is focused on powering a high-value visitor economy in collaboration with broader economic development goals. Today, the world's most innovative coastal tourism destinations are leveraging the visitor economy to support local economic, social, cultural and environmental sustainability. Destination Greater Victoria has proven its global leadership in that area with initiatives such as the IMPACT Sustainability, Travel & Tourism Conference and Pacific Marine Circle Route.

Looking ahead, Destination Greater Victoria is developing a new 2022-26 Strategic Plan to further capitalize on the community's strengths. For example, Victoria's meetings and conventions sales efforts are prioritizing the ocean marine and clean tech verticals to attract business that will further enhance leadership in those key industry clusters. The destination of the future is a platform for knowledge sharing, connecting the brightest minds and creative hearts among locals and visitors from around the world. Destination Greater Victoria is providing that platform in collaboration with both the public and private sectors to ensure the best possible future for all residents.

### 4.5 Offer business information and materials in translated versions in order to maximize the ease of understanding and compliance. (2021 – 2024)

This action signifies that the City is open to newcomer businesses and wants them to feel part of the community. Additionally, these materials could offer tip sheets on how to succeed in the Canadian cultural and business context. Newcomers can sometimes be surprised by cultural differences between Canada and their home country. In the meantime, for newcomer business owners that need assistance with COVID-19 recovery, the BC government's services are available in a range of languages at <https://COVID-19.smallbusinessbc.ca>.

- Translate materials into two priority languages per year

**Lead:** City Staff (Economic Development)

**Support:** SIPP (“Digital Welcome Mat” initiative)

### 4.6 Work with the Federal Government to Develop the Municipal Nominee Program (MNP) (2020 – 2022)

Our city and region are failing to attract immigrants at the same levels as major Canadian cities (even on a per capita basis). Immigrants are often entrepreneurial and their cultural and life experiences will make our city more exciting and interesting. Diverse cities are also more innovative. Helping to shape and then adopt the MNP program is a key strategy to attract immigrants to Victoria.

**Lead:** Mayor and SIPP

**Support:** City Staff (Economic Development)



## 5. REDEVELOP VICTORIA CONFERENCE CENTRE (2020 - 2031)

*Phase 1 Feasibility and Design 2020 – 2022*

*Phase 2 Resource and Build 2023 – 2031*

The Victoria Conference Centre (VCC) has been hard hit by the travel restrictions and prohibitions on large gatherings as a result of COVID-19. Yet almost all conferences to be held at the VCC were postponed rather than cancelled. This signals a return to face-to-face meetings in the coming years. It also indicates the importance of conference centre redevelopment as part of the City's mid-term recovery strategy. Businesses, industry associations and non-profits have adapted during COVID-19 with more online meetings. Redeveloping the VCC in a post-COVID-19 world is also an opportunity to become a leader in digital engagement and meetings, targeting a more global customer base, while continuing to provide high-quality in-person experiences.

Pre-pandemic the visitor economy contributed \$2.3 billion to the local economy each year and the conference sector was a major component of this contribution. Conference business spreads demand and spending through the calendar year. Conference delegates are the highest-spending segment of out-of-town visitors.

The VCC has the potential to be a greater economic generator through hosting larger conferences and attracting more international audiences. With a significant digital refresh it can also be a leader in convening people globally through digital platforms, hosting virtual as well as in-person meetings and events.



Our current facility only allows us to host one conference at a time. We want to be able to host two, mid-sized conferences concurrently or one large meeting. A significant renovation or rebuild is necessary.

Conferences are also an opportunity to showcase our own industries. Redevelopment or renewal of the VCC will help to promote and amplify Victoria's tech ecosystem as well as the Innovation District and Ocean Futures Cluster and Innovation Hub.

### 5.1 Undertake a Feasibility Study (2020 - 2022)

**Lead:** Destination Greater Victoria

**Support:** City Staff (Economic Development and City Manager's Office)

### 5.2 Design a new centre based on assessment in Feasibility Study (2022 - 2023)

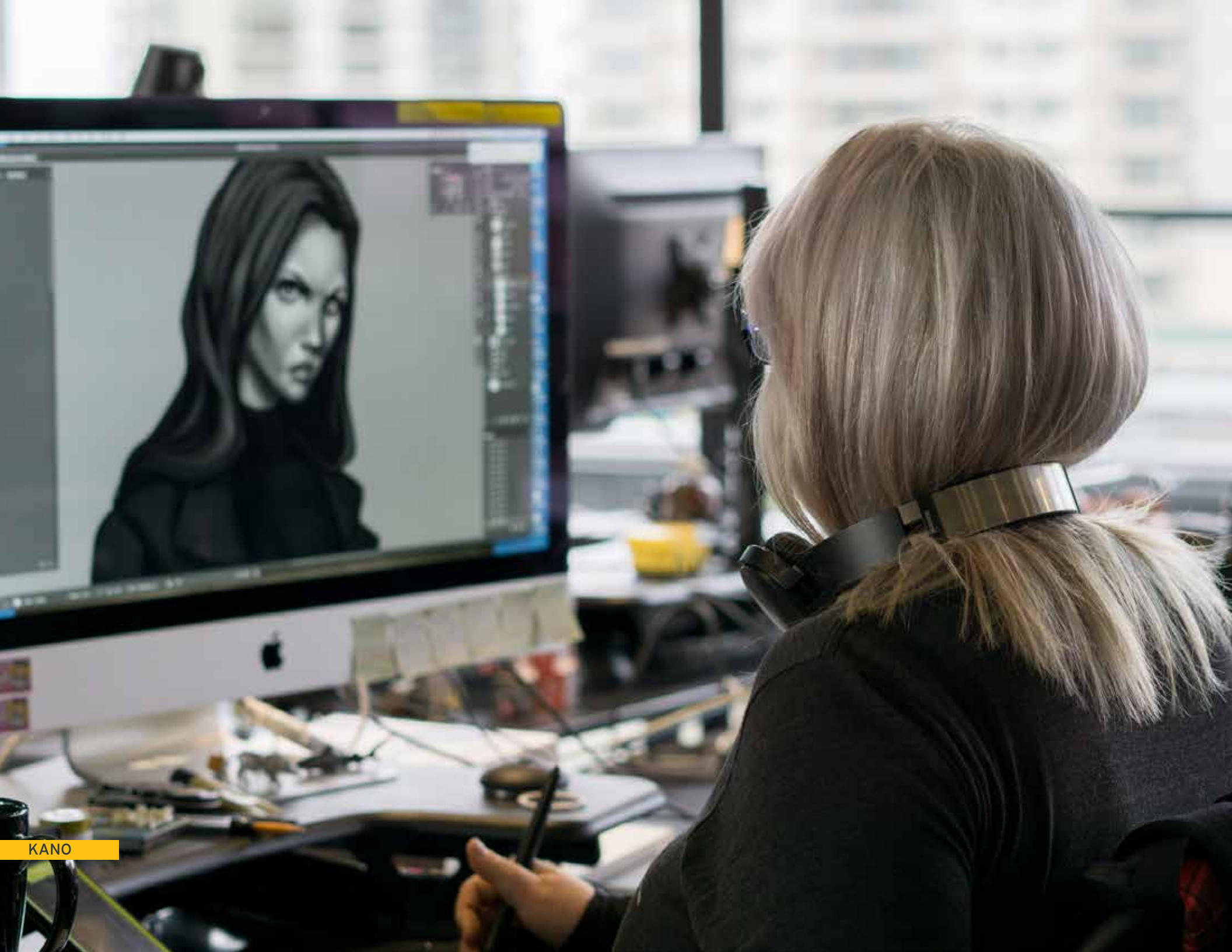
**Lead:** TBD

**Support:** TBD

### 5.3 Secure funding (2023 - 2024)

**Lead:** TBD

**Support:** TBD





# Reinvention and Resilience: Building a Strong and Resilient Local Economy

Even before COVID-19 hit, Victoria 3.0 was a plan to reinvent Victoria's economy and focus to on the future and on what the world needs to live prosperously on a fragile planet. This reinvention is now more important than ever. So too is building a strong and resilient economy that can withstand unexpected events like COVID-19 and the economic disruptions we will face from climate change impacts in the future. The actions outlined in Sections 6-10 will take well-managed, disciplined, focused momentum to achieve.

Our success in achieving these will help to establish Victoria as a small powerhouse city with global influence in particular with respect to low-carbon solutions and the Blue Economy. According to "World Cities: Mapping the Pathways to Success," the capacity of cities to "deliver bold, transformational projects are among factors to consider when assessing the long-term potential" and global reach of a city.<sup>10</sup> We will need to convene small, dedicated and focused groups of community leaders to make these big changes happen.

## 6. CREATE AN INNOVATION DISTRICT (2020 - 2022)

The Innovation District is proposed for the north end of downtown adjacent to the harbour (SEE FIGURE 1). It will be a hub of cross-sector collaboration, a place where research and development lead to ideas that are commercialized (turned into products and services), and where new high-value, future-oriented jobs are created.

The Innovation District will be global facing and export oriented and attract companies that

anticipate and solve the problems of the 22nd century with a focus on low-carbon prosperity. It will also be an amenity-rich place in which small businesses thrive and benefit from the concentration of economic activity in this area.

The area is currently a mix of heavy industry, commercial, retail, surface parking lots, recently remediated land owned jointly by the Songhees and Esquimalt Nations, and craft brewers. Developing a coherent vision for the future of the area while continuing to support the current high-value jobs generated by the industrial lands are critically important.

In 2017, Council approved the *Burnside Gorge Neighbourhood Plan* which includes a vision for future land use, urban form and public realm design of the Rock Bay area. A guiding principle for Rock Bay is "industrial first", ensuring that industrial uses are given precedence as the area continues to serve as Victoria's urban industrial district. This includes harbour-dependent industries and a mix of businesses engaged in the production, distribution or repair of goods or equipment as well as related commercial uses and other employment-generating uses.

<sup>10</sup> Rosemary Feenan, Tim Moonen, et al, "World Cities: Mapping the Pathways to Success," JLL and The Business of Cities, 2018, 6.



FIGURE 1: INNOVATION DISTRICT



Currently, a variety of businesses are drawn to the area's affordable rents and eclectic character. Central to workforce, customers, work sites and adjacent to downtown, it is an ideal location for companies to cluster. These existing businesses provide often well-paying jobs outside of the tourism, government and professional services sectors found downtown, while supporting the broader economy. They support emerging sectors such as food processing, brewing, the approximately 15 per cent of technology-oriented businesses that require industrial zoning, and artists and artisans. Protecting and enhancing these lands and these industries is important, as industrial lands will be increasingly in short supply in the region.

At the same time, many of the area's buildings do not meet the needs of new businesses now and for the future, and significant reinvestment and redevelopment is needed. To that end, the *Burnside Gorge Neighbourhood Plan* includes actions for implementation. One key and immediate action is to update zoning regulations in Rock Bay to support economic development and innovation.

*Victoria 3.0* and the Innovation District provide an opportunity to reconfirm and build upon recent local area planning. There is also an opportunity to use the processes of planning and implementation to focus on UN Sustainable Development Goal 11, "Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable."

The Innovation District is a once-in-a-generation chance to lead and to create:

- Visionary developments that have the right mix of industrial and employment uses
- High-quality public and private spaces
- A catalyst to 22nd century well-being

- Indigenous economic development and resurgence
- A showcase for BC architecture and construction
- A model for climate adaptation and resilience with energy-efficient and sustainable construction and community design
- A model for cultural and social inclusion
- A tribute to BC's marine heritage
- An Ocean and Marine Innovation Hub
- A flagship for Canada

As the authors of *The Rainforest* tell us, "Human systems become more productive the faster that the key ingredients of innovation – talent, ideas and capital – are allowed to flow through the system."<sup>11</sup> In the Innovation District, we'll nurture a flourishing innovation ecosystem to exchange ideas, develop prototypes, establish relationships and increase productivity through shared infrastructure. We'll inspire each other and build great companies.

## ACTIONS

### 6.1 Work with landowners, other stakeholders and the public to develop a vision and implementation framework for the Innovation District (2020 - 2021)

Building on the *Burnside Gorge Neighbourhood Plan* (2017), undertake a charrette (focused-planning process) to develop a Master Plan that includes an implementation framework and phasing strategy.

**Lead:** City Staff (Sustainable Planning and Community Development, Economic Development and Real Estate)

**Support:** Mayor, community stakeholders



## Pani Energy

Pani Energy was founded with the spirit of research within the halls of the University of Victoria's Engineering and Chemistry department. Pani Energy's founder Devesh Bharadwaj brought two passionate research groups together to innovate and develop interdisciplinary technologies that would enable a significant reduction in the cost of producing fresh water from non-fresh sources.

Pani Energy was founded and spun-out with the backing of years of research, alongside Dr. Ian Macdonald and Dr. Tom Fyles, who sprinted towards bringing these technologies from the academic world to commercialization.

Since these early days, intellectual curiosity has remained embodied in Pani Energy's ethos. Pursuing this early passion for R&D has led to the creation of their software and hardware technologies, for both the water and energy industries.

Pani continues R&D in the energy and water nexus, with interests in improving efficiencies through software and novel hardware system designs in desalination and large-scale energy storage, building upon adaptive and intelligent membrane process design and operation.

<sup>11</sup> Hwang and Horowitz, 10.

## 6.2 Pilot a pop-up Micro Innovation District (2021)

This is a small, highly visible project to attract attention and get people to dream of what is possible.

**Lead:** TBD

**Support:** TBD

## 6.3 Undertake a City-initiated rezoning of the Innovation District (2021–2022)

**Lead:** City Staff (Sustainable Planning and Community Development)

## 6.4 Develop a name and brand for the Innovation District (2021)

The name and brand will need to tell the story of the area – its history, its present day story and its future aspirations.

**Lead:** Mayor, City Staff (Economic Development)

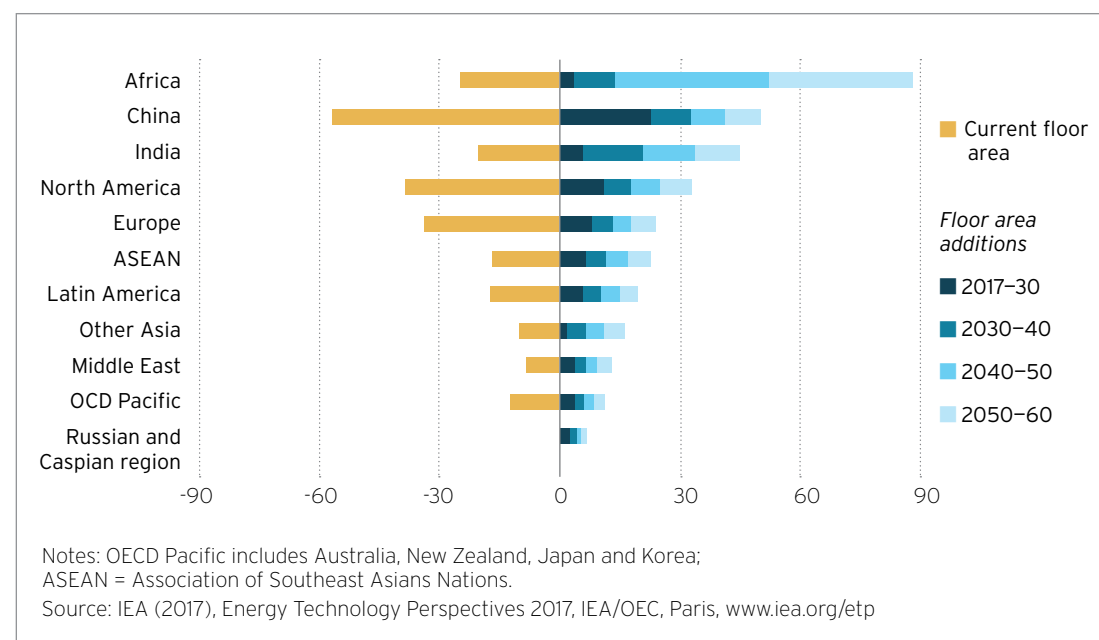
**Support:** City Staff (Engagement), Relevant stakeholders

## 6.5 Develop partnerships with post-secondary institutions to support activities in the Innovation District (2021–2022)

**Lead:** Mayor, City Staff (Economic Development, Sustainable Planning and Community Development and Real Estate), South Island Prosperity Partnership (SIPP)

**Support:** Relevant companies

**FIGURE 2: FLOOR AREA ADDITIONS TO 2060 BY KEY REGIONS**



## 6.6 Consider incentives to stimulate development of the Innovation District (2020–2022)

**Lead:** City Staff (Economic Development and Sustainable Planning and Community Development)

## 6.7 Establish partnerships and/or funding relationships to create the Innovation District (2020–2022)

**Lead:** Mayor, City Staff (Economic Development)

**Support:** SIPP

## 6.8 Develop creative financing models (2020–2022)

**Lead:** Mayor, City Staff (Economic Development)

**Support:** Civic Capital

## 6.9 Create a Building Innovation Incubator to stimulate construction innovation for climate impact (2022)

Viewed through the lens of climate change, buildings account for 39 per cent of greenhouse gas emissions globally and over the next 40 years the global building stock is projected to double. (SEE FIGURE 2.) Over this same time period, greenhouse gas emissions must go from today's record high into negative territory to keep global warming under two degrees Celsius.



Existing building energy efficiency standards such as Passive House and Net Zero are a good start but are insufficient to achieve this emissions reduction requirement in the built environment, and they are not moving into legislation as quickly as the impacts of climate change are progressing.

Starting with the Innovation District, incubating ideas, policies, technologies and skills in the District, then moving far beyond, Victoria can be a place where the skills, knowledge, and construction technology needed to achieve the next steps are developed, built, and exported. These high-value skills are urgently needed and globally relevant.

**Lead:** TBD

**Support:** City Staff (Sustainable Planning and Community Development)

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## FUTURE ACTIONS

TBD 2022 - 2026 Term of Council





ROCKLAND SCIENTIFIC INTERNATIONAL INC.



## 7. CREATE AN OCEAN FUTURES CLUSTER (2020 - 2025)

A significant and under-realized economic opportunity for Victoria is our location as a coastal and island community on the Pacific Ocean. Victoria is close to the shipping gateway to Asia-Pacific markets and a critical transit point to the Arctic Ocean.

To develop the Ocean Futures Cluster and Ocean and Marine Innovation Hub, we will build on major assets like the University of Victoria's Ocean Networks Canada, the Victoria Shipyards (operated by Seaspan), the Esquimalt Graving Dock including Babcock Canada and Lockheed Martin Canada, the Institute of Ocean Sciences and the Camosun Coastal Centre – all of the supply chains around the CFB Esquimalt and Point Hope Shipyard, and all the ocean and marine-related businesses in our region.

We will create a 22nd-century-oriented ocean and marine economic cluster that delivers value to both local and global customers.

The Ocean Futures Cluster will operate through a Blue Economy Framework. According to the World Bank, the Blue Economy is the “sustainable use of ocean resources for economic growth, improved livelihoods and jobs, and ocean ecosystem health.”<sup>12</sup> The Blue Economy recognizes the increased advantage offered by intersecting business growth and development with responsible, sustainable ocean use. The Ocean Futures Cluster will work with the expertise and knowledge offered by First Nations communities who have lived by the Coast Salish waters for generations.

As a key action in *Victoria 3.0*, the Ocean Futures Cluster will grow existing enterprises and attract new ones where the resulting products, services, technology, know-how, and intelligence support the arc that leads to sustainability and climate change mitigation and adaptation. The Ocean Futures Cluster will also help our region and Canada to achieve UN Sustainable Development Goal 14: “Life Below Water – Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development.”

There is an ocean supercluster operating in Atlantic Canada. Victoria's Ocean Futures Cluster will deliver products, services and technology to a global marketplace, further enhancing Canada's reputation as a producer of innovative solutions in the ocean and marine industries.

The cluster will be a platform to pursue shared infrastructure, joint research and development projects, and a coordinated province-wide approach to attract investment and new businesses. It will be a hub and spokes model (or an octopus) with the hub/body in Victoria and the spokes/legs reaching out across the province.

### What is an Economic Cluster?

An economic cluster is a dense network of companies and institutions located in a concentrated geographic area. Clusters are considered to increase the productivity with which companies can compete, nationally and globally.

### Why Cluster Development Matters<sup>13</sup>

- Clusters are foundations of a strong regional economy
- There are positive links between clusters, productivity, and competitiveness

- Clusters help companies connect to the global economy
- Clusters develop and attract public and private resources
- Clusters foster interaction and collaboration amongst firms and provide a positive environment for start-ups
- Clusters provide impetus and direction for innovation activities
- Specialization and co-location create efficiencies and also attracts specialized global talent
- New clusters emerge from existing clusters through diversification over time

### Key Characteristics of Successful Cluster Initiatives<sup>14</sup>

1. A shared understanding of competitiveness and the role of clusters in competitive advantage
2. A focus on removing obstacles and easing constraints: set goals early; return to them often; don't cling to the status quo
3. Emerging clusters should have demonstrable local foundations and bases of firms that have met market tests
4. Appropriate cluster boundaries
5. Wide involvement of cluster participants and associated institutions – don't leave out the difficult people
6. Private sector leadership
7. Close attention to personal relationships
8. A bias toward action
9. Institutionalization of concepts, relationships and linkages over time

<sup>12</sup> <https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/infographic/2017/06/06/blue-economy>

<sup>13</sup> Ifor Fowes-Williams, “Cluster Development Handbook: A practical guide to the development of clusters and smart specialisations, as centre-stage strategies for regional economies,” (Nelson, New Zealand: Cluster Navigators Ltd, 2016).

<sup>14</sup> Michael E Porter, “Location, Competition, and Economic Development: Local Clusters in a Global Economy,” *Economic Development Quarterly* Vo 14 No 1 Feb 2000, 30-32.

## ACTIONS

### 7.1 Create an Ocean Futures Cluster Task Force to develop a strong value proposition and Cluster Implementation Plan (2020)

The Task Force will convene the region's ocean and marine enterprises and organizations to determine gaps, linkages, strengths and immediate next steps of a cluster development program and establish an early baseline.

**Lead:** South Island Prosperity Partnership (SIPP), Mayor and City Staff (Economic Development), Association of BC Marine Industries (ABCMI), Ocean Networks Canada (ONC)

**Support:** All organizations with representatives on the Ocean Futures Cluster Task Force

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### 7.2 Develop a Business Case and Value Proposition for the Ocean and Marine Innovation Hub (2020)

**Lead:** SIPP, Mayor and City Staff (Economic Development), ABCMI, ONC

**Support:** Ocean Futures Cluster Task Force members

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### 7.3 Champion the Ocean Futures Cluster and Innovation Hub with Provincial and Federal governments, taking a whole-of-government approach (2020 - 2021)

**Lead:** Mayor, SIPP, ABCMI, ONC, relevant companies

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### 7.4 Secure funding to establish Ocean and Marine Innovation Hub (2020 - 2021)

The Ocean and Marine Innovation Hub is the first step towards the development of the Ocean Futures Cluster

- Secure Industrial and Technological Benefits (ITB) funding
- Secure Western Diversification funding
- Explore creative financing models

**Lead:** SIPP, Mayor and City Staff (Economic Development), ABCMI

**Support:** Ocean Futures Cluster Task Force members

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### 7.5 Develop an Ocean and Marine Innovation Hub (2020 - 2021)

**Lead:** SIPP, Mayor and City Staff (Economic Development Staff), ABCMI

**Support:** Seaspan, Babcock Canada, ONC, provincial government, Western Diversification (WD)

- Scope a pilot phase and some test cases
  - Establish or identify a bricks and mortar space/spaces to incubate the Ocean and Marine Innovation Hub
  - Determine a feasibility/business model for an Ocean and Marine Innovation Hub in Victoria and work with partners to establish provincial "spokes" that feed into and out of the Hub
  - Implement plan and establish the Ocean and Marine Innovation Hub and link to Canada's Ocean Supercluster and other innovation programs
- 

### 7.6 Partner with First Nations (Ongoing)

Indigenous communities have deep knowledge of the coast and the oceans and 12,000 years of "big data". Traditional knowledge in this area is a huge asset. Working with Nations, we can lead globally in bringing together Indigenous and traditional knowledge with science, data and technology.

**Lead:** ONC, SIPP

**Support:** Relevant businesses and organizations including Llamazoo and Barnacle Systems

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### 7.7 Develop a Governance Structure for Cluster Implementation (2020 - 2021)

Develop a flexible, inclusive governance model that will foster communication, collaboration, cooperation, and inspiration.

**Lead:** SIPP, Mayor and City Staff (Economic Development), ABCMI

**Support:** Ocean Futures Cluster Task Force members

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### 7.8 Establish a Formal Cluster Program and Hire A Cluster Manager (2022 - 2025)

This program will link workforce development, research and multi-government procurement, clean-tech programming, federal and provincial innovation incentives, and the Ocean Innovation Hub to deliberately deepen the cluster.

**Lead:** SIPP



**Support:** Mayor and City Staff (Economic Development), ONC, ABCMI, National Research Council-Industrial Research Assistance Program (NRC-IRAP), Mitacs, provincial government, Victoria Innovation, Advanced Technology & Entrepreneurship Council (VIATEC), Alacrity Canada, Western Diversification (WD)

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**7.9 Develop Investment Attraction Plan for companies participating in Ocean Futures Cluster (2022 - 2025)**

**Lead:** Marine Labs

**Support:** Other companies involved in the Ocean Futures Cluster

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**7.10 Shape and package a promotion program for the Cluster (2025 - 2041)**

Host global-facing events in Greater Victoria to showcase, build connections and put us on the map.

**Lead:** SIPP, ABCMI, Victoria International Marina (VIM)

**Support:** City Staff (Economic Development), VIATEC, ONC, WD

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**7.11 Link the Cluster Globally (2025 - 2041)**

Once established, a global-facing cluster will integrate into other clusters at the national, pan-regional (Cascadia), and global level to establish B2B joint-ventures and R&D collaborations, distribution agreements, and address grand and global challenges (e.g. acidification, ocean plastics, sustainable marine transportation systems, etc.).

**Lead:** Various components led by cluster partners

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## Indigenous Ocean Governance

OceanObs'19 is a meeting held every 10 years that brings people from all over the world together to communicate the progress of ocean observing networks and to chart innovative solutions to society's growing needs for ocean information and governance.

In 2019, an Indigenous Ocean Governance Forum was a central part of OceanObs for the first time. It was led by Victoria's Ocean Networks Canada and included a nine-member Canadian Indigenous delegation at the conference.

This Indigenous Forum resulted in an exceptional international uniting of ocean observation, Indigenous coastal stewardship, and collaborative ocean management. The Indigenous representatives brought unique knowledge of their needs for ocean observing crucial for adapting to climate change; reducing risks to marine hazards; enhancing marine spatial planning and food security; monitoring ocean health and marine traffic in traditional ocean territories; and for capacity-building.

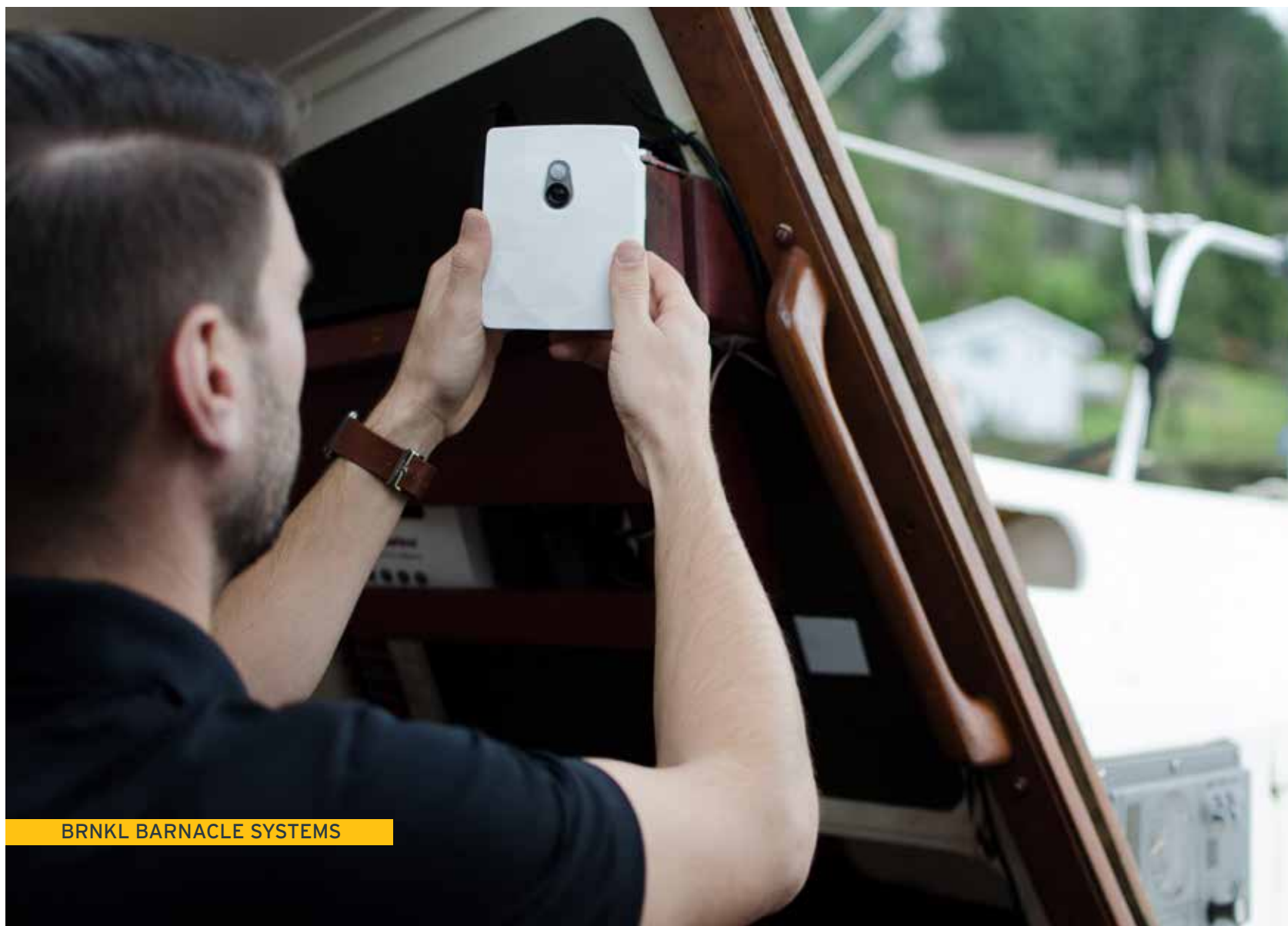
The Forum resulted in a formal declaration, the *AHA HONUA Coastal Indigenous Peoples' Declaration*:

"We, the Indigenous delegates at OceanObs'19, present this declaration known as Aha Honua to our fellow members of the global ocean observing community. Indigenous peoples continue to perpetuate our cultures and governance systems as we have done for generations. Our ancestral, cultural, and spiritual connections to natural resources maintain our inherent governance systems as well as establish the foundation for our principles of sustainability. Our existence comes from all life and therefore we, as first stewards, have a responsibility to our oceans and shoreline ecosystems.



*Kitty Simonds, Executive Director of the Western Pacific Regional Fisheries Management Council, hands the Coastal Indigenous Peoples' Declaration to Vladamir Ryabinin, Executive Secretary of the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission and Assistant Director General of UNESCO at OceanObs'19.*

"We call on the ocean observing community to formally recognize the traditional knowledge of Indigenous peoples worldwide as well as the articles within the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. We will work with the ocean observing community to advance the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals and the goals of the United Nations Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development. We call on the ocean observing community to establish meaningful partnerships with Indigenous communities, organizations, and Nations to learn and respect each other's ways of knowing; negotiate paths forward to design, develop, and carry out ocean observing initiatives; and share responsibility and resources."



BRNKL BARNACLE SYSTEMS



## 8. TECH IS #1 - TELL AND SELL VICTORIA'S TECH STORY (2020 - 2041)

We will support, develop and promote Victoria's flourishing tech industry so that it continues to grow. The tech sector is our region's largest private sector industry, creating \$5 billion of economic impact annually. The sector will grow over the next 20 years. A message received loud and clear from the "Tech, Research and Development Roundtable" is that the City needs to take a leadership role to tell and sell the story of tech nationally and globally in order to ensure strong growth and continued high-value job creation in this area.

### ACTIONS

#### 8.1 Talent Attraction and Retention Initiative (Ongoing)

Choose strategic cities to target with the mission of promoting Victoria's tech industry and attracting senior level executive talent and relevant opportunities to Victoria.

**Lead:** Victoria Innovation Advanced Technology & Entrepreneurship Council (VIATEC)

**Support:** Mayor and City Staff (Economic Development), tech companies, South Island Prosperity Partnership (SIPP)

#### 8.2 Attend relevant trade shows to promote Victoria tech ecosystem and attract talent (Ongoing)

- Attend relevant tradeshow and conferences
- Look for opportunities for the City to amplify existing tech-sector initiatives

**Lead:** Mayor, City Staff (Economic Development)

**Support:** VIATEC

#### 8.3 Assist tech companies with exporting and international sales (MISSING DATE)

**Lead:** SIPP

#### 8.4 Develop Digital Promotion Strategy for global audience (Ongoing)

Tell Victoria's success stories and promote Victoria's tech opportunities and ecosystem to a global audience in order to attract senior level talent and expand opportunities for local companies.

**Lead:** VIATEC

**Support:** City Staff (Economic Development), SIPP

#### 8.5 Create a platform to make it easy for Vancouver Island MASH sector institutions (municipalities, school boards, health regions and publicly-funded post-secondary institutions) and large companies to procure from Victoria tech companies (2020 - 2023)

The purpose of the Coastal Communities Social Procurement Initiative (CCSPI) is to improve the health of communities and the strength of economies on Vancouver Island by changing the culture of public sector procurement. In total, the public sector on Vancouver Island procures approximately \$2 billion in goods and services annually. There is an opportunity through CCSPI for local tech businesses to become part of the supply chain for institutional purchasers.

**Lead:** Coastal Communities Social Procurement Initiative (CCSPI)

**Support:** City Staff (Economic Development), SIPP

### Business Profile



## Checkfront

Checkfront is a booking management platform that provides the tools tourism businesses need to streamline their operations, centralize administration, and sell and market their services online. The SaaS booking application is an all-in-one solution which allows merchants to manage their reservations and optimize their e-commerce functions with analytics, reporting, notifications, automated invoices and more.

Since launching in June 2010, Checkfront has grown to a company of 80; most are located at its headquarters in downtown Victoria. Over the past 10 years, the Checkfront team has accomplished monumental growth, becoming the leading independent booking system in the world for travel experiences.

Over 5,000 tour, activity, and accommodation providers around the world use Checkfront to simplify complex problems, allowing them to focus on doing what they love – providing unforgettable experiences.



## British Columbia Investment Management Corporation

British Columbia Investment Management Corporation (BCI), the leading provider of investment management services to BC's public sector with more than \$153 billion in managed assets, is an example of an organization headquartered in Victoria that creates high-value jobs locally. BCI used to outsource many of its investment decisions to external managers. Today, as an active in-house asset manager, a majority of those decisions are made right here by a growing and dedicated team of professionals from around the world.



**8.6 Create opportunities for small tech companies and start-ups to do business with Vancouver Island MASH sector institutions and large companies.**  
(MISSING YEAR)

**Lead:** CCSPI

**Support:** City Staff (Economic Development and Finance), SIPP

## FUTURE ACTIONS

TBD 2022 - 2026 Term of Council

## 9. LEARN FROM OTHER CITIES (2020 - 2041)

We will learn from the successes and challenges of other cities and build on the national and global networks that Victoria is starting to participate in. The authors of "World Cities: Mapping Pathways to Success," note that, "Cities operate in a context where they share similar styles of assets and advantages with a small group of other cities, most of which are outside their own national urban system."<sup>15</sup>

Preliminary research shows that Victoria's comparative global cities (at the time of plan development) are Oslo, Auckland, Boulder, Bristol and Barcelona. These cities are in the process of pivoting or have pivoted and focused their resources to create future-facing, globally-engaged and sustainable economies. There are likely others to learn from. Work will begin in 2020 to assess Victoria's (City and region's) status globally and global fluency.

## ACTIONS

**9.1 Measure the City and region against 10 Traits of Globally Fluent Metro Areas (2020)**

**Lead:** Business of Cities

**Support:** South Island Prosperity Partnership (SIPP), Mayor and City Staff (Economic Development)

**9.2 Research policies and best practices needed to get us from where we are (largest source of jobs is service and public sector) to where we want to go (balance of public sector and high-value private sector jobs) (2020)**

**Lead:** Business of Cities

**Support:** SIPP, Mayor and City Staff (Economic Development)

**9.3 Undertake case studies on what cities/regions have done with respect to: (2020)**

- Small and medium enterprise innovation/Business Enterprise Research and Development Rates
- Research commercialization (university spin-off)
- Municipal role in economic reconciliation with First Nations that has led to increased empowerment for Nations to successfully lead and/or collaborate on economic development
- Recovery from COVID-19 and other disasters

**Lead:** Business of Cities

**Support:** SIPP, Mayor and City Staff (Economic Development)

<sup>15</sup> Feenan, Moonen et al, 6.



**9.4 Determine comparator cities; assess how we rank in comparison to other small, high-performing, high-calibre cities (2020)**

**Lead:** Business of Cities

**Support:** SIPP, Mayor and City Staff (Economic Development)

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**9.5 Gain insight on advancing key projects: (2020)**

- Innovation District
- Ocean Futures Cluster
- Attracting a post-secondary institution to partner in downtown Victoria

**Lead:** Business of Cities

**Support:** SIPP, Mayor and City Staff (Economic Development)

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**9.6 Develop a measurement framework to track progress over time. How many high-value jobs created? How globally fluent? How many spin-offs from Ocean Futures Cluster and Innovation District? (2020)**

**Lead:** Business of Cities

**Support:** SIPP, Mayor and City Staff (Economic Development)

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**9.7 Create an Annual Education Program modelled on Denver's Urban Exploration Program (2022)**

Since 2008, Denver has been bringing together the public and private sectors, the City and business leaders to take a trip to a downtown somewhere else in the world that they can learn from.<sup>16</sup> They believe that the only way to continue building and growing their downtown is to learn from cities that are facing similar challenges. The group meets with people who have already solved 'that' problem and who can guide them in their pursuit to build an economically vibrant, healthy, and growing city.

**Lead:** TBD

**Support:** SIPP, Mayor and City Staff (Economic Development)

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**9.8 Partner with the Urban Economy Forum on UN Sustainable Development Goal 11, "Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable" (2020 - 2025)**

Victoria will be a United Nations Urban Economy Forum pilot project to develop the Innovation District and the Ocean Futures Cluster and Ocean and Marine Innovation Hub through the lens of Sustainable Development Goal 11.

**Lead:** Mayor's Office and Urban Economy Forum

**Support:** City Staff (Economic Development and Sustainable Planning and Community Development), relevant partners and stakeholders

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**FUTURE ACTIONS**

TBD 2022 - 2026 Term of Council

## **10. RE-DO VICTORIA'S BRAND AND STORY (2023 - 2026)**

As noted in "The 10 Traits of Global-Fluent Metro Areas," having a strong brand and telling a compelling story of a city is important. This is key not only for how the world sees us, but also how we see ourselves. "Rebranding" will allow us to "shape and build the region around a common purpose."<sup>17</sup>

In the fall of 2019, roundtable participants identified the need to tell a cohesive and compelling story about Victoria now and for the future. After the first three years of *Victoria 3.0* implementation, a new story will start to emerge. This story needs to be drawn out of residents and business owners, consolidated and packaged for the community and for the world. "Rebranding" is not an empty or surface exercise. It should be a deep engagement process with the community where we tap into Victoria's authenticity.

### **FUTURE ACTIONS**

This plan should be refreshed at the beginning of each term of Council with clear actions laid out for each of the actions to be undertaken during that term.

TBD 2027 - 2032

TBD 2033 - 2037

TBD 2037 - 2041

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<sup>16</sup> <https://www.downtowndenver.com/membership/civic-leadership/urban-exploration/>

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<sup>17</sup> Brad McDearman, Greg Clark and Joseph Parilla, 4.

# Appendix A – Fall 2019 Economic Roundtables

## **Tech, Advanced Education Research and Development**

This roundtable was for movers and shakers working in tech and research and development in industry or in post-secondary institutions.

## **Indigenous and Newcomer Businesses**

This roundtable was for Indigenous-run businesses and organizations that support Indigenous entrepreneurs. It was also for newcomer-run businesses and organizations that support newcomer entrepreneurs.

## **Ocean Futures Cluster Development**

This roundtable was for those working in the ocean and marine sector. It was by invite only to have a focused conversation on cluster development.

## **Neighbourhood Business and Social Enterprise**

This roundtable was for people who run businesses in the City's neighbourhoods and includes people who work from home in these neighbourhoods. It was also for everyone working in the social enterprise sector.

## **Small Business and Finance**

This roundtable was for anyone who runs a small business in Victoria, with a focus on downtown businesses. It was also for everyone working in the financial sector.

## **Youth Economic**

This roundtable was for youth.

Roundtable participants were asked for one word to describe Victoria in 2020 and in 2041. This is what they said:

A circular word cloud featuring various adjectives and nouns related to tourism. The words are arranged in a circular pattern, with some words being larger and more prominent than others. The colors of the words vary, including shades of green, yellow, orange, red, and blue.

Words included in the word cloud:

- Beautiful
- Quaint
- Potential
- Hopeful
- Comfortable
- Sleepy
- Expensive
- Growing
- Disconnected
- Vibrant
- Unexplored
- Traditional
- Unassuming
- Capable
- Need
- Construction
- Sober
- Business
- Welcoming
- Environmental
- Mantis
- Self-Content
- Troubled
- Philosophical
- Uninvested
- Old
- Fickle
- Invigorating
- Creative
- Building
- Regimented
- Self-Absorbed
- Diverse
- Transforming
- Open
- Slow
- Emerging
- Homeless
- Transitional
- Technical
- Businesses
- shrimp
- Compacent
- Schizophrenic
- Integral
- Peaceful
- Genuine
- Learning
- Unambitious
- Local
- Progressive-ish
- Victorian
- Fresh
- Local
- Volatile
- Ambivalent
- Costly
- Progressive
- Closed
- Nimble
- Sizzling
- Alive
- Small
- Isolated
- Fragmented
- Slow
- Opportunities
- Lifestyle

[illegible]

This plan was shaped by all the residents and business owners who came to the City's economic roundtables in the fall of 2019. As part of the roundtable process (and taking an idea we got from Barcelona, Spain), we asked all participants to provide one word to describe Victoria in 2020 and in 2041. These word clouds show their responses.



The City is located on the homelands of the Songhees and Esquimalt People.



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