



Committee of the Whole Report

For the Meeting of July 21, 2022

To: Committee of the Whole **Date:** July 21, 2022
From: Kerri Moore – Head of Business & Community Relations
Subject: Victoria 3.0: Recovery Reinvention Resilience Progress Report

RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

1. Receive this report for information.
2. Approve the removal of action 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) from Victoria 3.0: Recovery, Reinvention and Resilience economic action plan.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Victoria 3.0 - Recovery Reinvention Resilience is an economic action plan that aligns with 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 resilient and inclusive economy now and into the future. The actions within will build an economy that enables everyone to flourish and that will set Victoria on a path to low-carbon prosperity.

Victoria 3.0 includes three main goals:

1. An immediate focus on supporting businesses to adapt to a new normal and become more resilient considering lessons learned during the COVID-19 pandemic.
2. Creating a city and an economy that is inclusive of everyone.
3. Building a sustainable economy over the next two decades which aligns with the City's Climate Leadership Plan and creates a pathway to low-carbon prosperity.

This report outlines the completed, partly completed, and ongoing action items achieved to date, as well as updated 2022 action items, future targeted initiatives, and a recommendation to remove an action that is no longer relevant.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to provide Council with a progress report on the action items achieved to date within the City's economic action plan, Victoria 3.0: Recovery Reinvention and Resilience and to approve the removal of action 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), as it was determined that the timing of the UN Urban Economy Forum process would not be a fit for the Arts and Innovation District process.

BACKGROUND

In 2019, staff hosted six economic roundtables where 145 residents and business owners participated. At each roundtable, a proposed vision for Victoria 3.0 and the future of our economy was presented. Participants were asked for their input based on their experience doing business in the city and their aspirations for “global fluency”.

In the fall of 2019, working groups were created coming out of the economic roundtables and were focused on the Ocean Futures Cluster & Innovation Hub (now the Centre for Ocean Applied Sustainable Technologies or COAST), the “Big Idea” (now the Arts & Innovation District), and Small Business Support. Participants contributed their time and insights to help drive forward key action items.

To further develop the Ocean Futures Cluster and Innovation Hub, a business case working group was formed, including representatives from the City, the Association of British Columbia Marine Industries, Ocean Networks Canada, Open Ocean Robotics, South Island Prosperity Partnership (SIPP), Province of BC, Ralmax Group of Companies and the Centre for Ocean Ventures & Entrepreneurship in Halifax, to create a request for proposals for a feasibility and business case for an Ocean Futures Cluster & Innovation Hub.

Through a funding application to Western Economic Diversification, the partners secured \$100,000 for this work, and the City also contributed \$20,000. The contract was awarded to Urban Systems and the business case was completed in 2020. Since the completion of the business case, this work has transitioned to SIPP and the project is now called the Centre for Ocean Applied Sustainable Technologies (COAST). COAST is building the region’s ocean and marine ecosystem, including entrepreneurs, corporations, academia, investors and government, to strengthen our position in the immense and emerging blue economy. COAST is currently being incubated by SIPP who are leading the work of this cluster and innovation hub.

Just as Victoria 3.0 was scheduled for Council’s consideration, the pandemic arrived placing the plan on hold and requiring staff to reposition the plan focusing on Recovery, Reinvention, and Resilience.

Recovery focuses on the small business sector which faced significant impacts due to the pandemic including a decrease in revenues, staff layoffs and labour shortages. Many actions outlined under “Recovery: Our Small Businesses are the Lifeblood of Our Economy,” were to provide support to small businesses, including newcomer and Indigenous-owned businesses, and youth through the pandemic and beyond.

Reinvention and Resilience focuses on leveraging Victoria’s strengths and reinventing Victoria for the challenges and opportunities of the 22nd century. Action items focus on developing a stronger innovation ecosystem and furthering our strengths as an ocean city while also creating low-carbon prosperity.

The economic action plan was adopted by Council in May of 2020 and includes 10 categories and 69 action items to be delivered between 2020 to 2026.

As COVID-19 continued, staff work plans and priorities shifted to accommodate the needs of the community and another round of engagement with business leaders was held in 2021 to help refine and pivot Victoria 3.0, and the actions and priorities within, to support businesses through the ongoing pandemic and beyond.

These working groups, roundtables and committees highlight the collaborative and shared responsibility required by community partners, business leaders and City-wide commitment to implement actions within Victoria 3.0.

ISSUES & ANALYSIS

Since adoption by Council in May 2020, 50 of the 69 action items have been completed, partly completed or are ongoing by staff and community partners. This includes 34 initiatives that have been additionally undertaken or are ongoing since staff provided a first annual report on Victoria 3.0 to Council in May 2021 (Appendix A).

The following sections outline actions completed, partly completed or ongoing since inception of the action plan to date.

Recovery: Our Small Businesses are the Lifeblood of Our Economy

1. Support Small Businesses

- Continue the work of the Business Hub (Ongoing)
- Develop a “How to Adapt to a New Normal” toolkit based on WorkSafeBC sector guides (2020) *Completed*
- Develop an “Emergency Resilience” toolkit for Business (2020) *Completed*
- Create opportunities for restaurants and retailers to do business in public space through our Build Back Victoria Program (2020) *Completed*
- Create more space for pedestrians downtown and in village centres to meet physical distancing requirements (2020) *Completed*
- Develop a Business Hub Expansion Strategy (2022) *Completed*
- Develop a Downtown Clean & Safe Committee (2020) *Completed*
- Create a Downtown Ambassador Program (2021) *Completed*
- Create “How to” guides for small business start-ups and expansions by sector (2022 - 2023)
- Promote local economic success stories (Ongoing)

2. Support Youth in the Economy

- Continue economic development education work with high school classes (Ongoing)
- Continue Mayor’s High School Entrepreneur Award (Ongoing)
- Feature young entrepreneurs and youth business start-ups on the Business Hub website (2022 – Ongoing)
- Host Young Entrepreneur Business Info Sessions at City Hall (Ongoing)
- Engage youth on a regular basis to ensure that their needs in relation to economic inclusion continue to be met (Ongoing)

3. Support Indigenous Businesses

- Hold Quarterly Indigenous Prosperity Gatherings (2020 - 2022) *Completed* Lead: SIPP
- Continue Indigenous Connect Forum (2020 - 2022) *Completed* Lead: SIPP
- 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)
Lead: BCSPi

- Create opportunities for Indigenous businesses to do business with Vancouver Island MASH sector institutions and large companies. (Ongoing) Lead: BCSPi
- Maintain Indigenous Business Directory in partnership with GVHA, SIPP, CRD and Animikii (Ongoing)
- Promote the Inter-community business licence as a measure for on-reserve businesses to work freely and openly across the region (Ongoing)

4. Support Newcomer Businesses

- Develop a Welcoming Cities Strategy (2020 - 2021) *Completed*
- Continue Business Info Sessions at City Hall for Newcomers (Ongoing)
- 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)
Lead: BCSPi
- Create opportunities for newcomer businesses to do business with Vancouver Island MASH sector institutions and large companies. (Ongoing) Lead: BCSPi
- Offer business information and materials in translated versions to maximize the ease of understanding and compliance (2021 – 2024)

5. Redevelop Victoria Conference Centre (2020–2031)

- Undertake a Feasibility Study (2020 – 2022) *Completed* DGV

As the pandemic lagged on through 2021, Council directed staff to extend the Build Back Victoria (BBV) Program from October 2021 through to October 31, 2022. This initiative continues to allow opportunities for restaurants and retailers to do business in public space and create more space for pedestrians downtown and in village centres to meet physical distancing requirements. City staff have been working collaboratively to help transition BBV permit holders into more permanent existing licencing programs, like the Sidewalk Café Licence program, as BBV permits end later this year.

In December 2021, the inaugural meeting and committee for the Downtown Clean and Safe Committee was established. The committee, comprised of representatives from the DVBA, VicPD, DRA, City staff (Economic Development, Bylaw, Neighbourhoods), Council representatives, local businesses and landholders established Terms of Reference (Appendix B) early this year and meet quarterly to focus on local issues and measures the committee can reasonably undertake, identify actions that are working or could be improved, and collectively understand bigger issues or advocacy that may be appropriate.

Through the 2022 budgeting process, Council approved Economic Development to implement the Business Hub expansion strategy by hiring one additional FTE, which will be fulfilled in August of 2022. This new position will support the ongoing operations of the Business Hub and assist with delivery of the action items within the Economic Action Plan.

Staff in Economic Development have commenced work on creating “how to” guides for small business start-ups and expansions by sector, which will be available on our website and through visiting the Business Hub. This is an ongoing initiative through 2022 / 2023. Staff have also started work within the City’s website redesign project to identify ways to further promote local economic success stories, both now and into the future.

Additionally, Economic Development staff continued work with high school classes as identified within the action plan. Staff participated in St. Michaels University's (SMU) Grade 12 economics class year end project, helping to frame a final research question exploring economic wellness in the City of Victoria before the students present their findings to a group of invited panelists. Staff will continue to work with SMU in coming years and will look for similar additional opportunities to participate with students at other Victoria area schools.

The Mayors High School award presented each year to two Victoria High School students continues and the value of these awards was increased to \$500 per student. Coupling the award with an internship opportunity at a relevant business is a future priority.

Alongside the work being undertaken on the City's website redesign, Economic Development staff are working on opportunities to feature young entrepreneurs and youth business start-ups on the Business Hub website. Further, Business Information sessions hosted quarterly by the Business Hub at City Hall pre-pandemic will start up again in the fall of 2022 and will continue focusing specific sessions for groups that include, but aren't limited to: Young Entrepreneurs, Newcomers, and Indigenous businesses and individuals. These sessions will allow staff to continue engaging with sector specific groups to ensure their needs in relation to economic inclusion are met.

SIPP took a lead support role in establishing a working group to develop the Indigenous Prosperity Centre (IPC), which emerged from the Rising Economy Taskforce and resulting Reboot: Greater Victoria's Economic Recovery Plan, 2020 – 2022 (Appendix C). After initial consultations through 2021, funded by early sponsors Vancity and Coast Capital Savings Credit Union, the IPC will be conducting an Indigenous Economy Learning Tour starting in 2022. This will include development of a vision and purpose statement, several open house community dialogues with First Nations across the South Island, hosting webinars and learning sessions, and culminating in an Indigenous Economy Summit to present findings and introduce next steps for regional collaboration within the Indigenous economy.

The IPC will also oversee a pilot project with Public Service Procurement Canada (PSPC) with an aim to build capacity for more Indigenous businesses to engage in bidding and supply-chains with the Federal Government. Vancity has recently agreed to a three-year sponsorship of the IPC which will support the IPC in hiring its first Executive Director later in 2022, though the entity will remain part of and receive strong administrative support of SIPP.

Economic Development has partnered with the GVHA, CRD, and SIPP to collaborate on an Indigenous Business Directory alongside Indigenous business Animikii, whose team are taking on building the site and directory as a project. Animikii is creating a standalone site that they will be resourcing to build with interns as a training project. The City, GVHA, CRD and SIPP have committed to developing an MOU that outlines collectively sharing the ongoing administration, budget and responsibilities of the directory now and into the future. Once launched, the site will also be provided as part of City staff training with respect to social procurement considerations for staff purchasing.

City staff continue to promote the Inter-community business licence as a measure for on-reserve businesses to work freely and openly across the region and are working to make the information up to date on our website as it is redeveloped and more communities across the Island participate and come on board.

Staff presented the Welcoming City Strategy and Action Plan at the October 21, 2021, Committee of the Whole meeting. Council unanimously endorsed the strategy and action plan and directed

staff to work with the community to develop community-driven implementation plans. This work is underway with many of the actions supported by the City but led by the community with the support of the Welcoming City Implementation Advisory Committee.

City staff have had resource materials available in the Business Hub translated into French and will continue to translate information and materials in two languages a year to maximize the ease of understanding and continue to enhance economic inclusion of newcomers in our community.

Destination Greater Victoria, in partnership with the City of Victoria and the Fairmont Empress commissioned CBRE to conduct a study on demand profiles of a potential redeveloped Victoria Conference Centre to ensure market demand was in place as the first step in the process. This would be considered a pre-feasibility study. The study had three main conclusions:

- The current Victoria Conference Centre is too small and prevents Victoria from bidding on much of the current meetings business profile due to its small size. The non-contiguous nature of the facility is sub-optimal. The current Victoria Conference Centre could not accommodate two city wide conferences simultaneously in key spring and fall months.
- Hotel room development would need work in lock step with Conference centre development.
- The market could support a conference centre of at least 120,000 square feet, with potential for larger.

The study was largely completed just prior to the pandemic, creating much uncertainty in the meetings and conference business. Re-opening demand profiles are returning, but it would be prudent to ensure they remain in place for the next year before proceeding any further with a conference centre redevelopment plan. Recent meetings the Mayor held with the Federal Minister of Tourism indicated preliminary federal support for a conference centre redevelopment project.

Destination Greater Victoria will be commissioning a holistic Destination Master Plan for the region in the fall of 2022. This will involve broad industry and government input to scope the next phase of exploration of a redeveloped Victoria Conference Centre.

Reinvention and Resilience: Building a Strong and Resilient Local Economy

6. Create an Arts and Innovation District (2020–2022)

- Work with landowners, other stakeholders, and the public to develop a vision and implementation framework for the Innovation District (2020 - 2021) *Completed*
- Develop partnerships with post-secondary institutions to support activities in the Innovation District (Ongoing)

In 2021, Council approved funding to support planning for initial studies and public engagement for the Arts & Innovation District.

As described in Victoria 3.0, the district is proposed to be a hub of cross-sector collaboration, a place where research and development lead to ideas that are commercialized (turned into products and services), where new high-value, future-oriented jobs are created and where Victoria's arts and culture sector can continue to flourish. It will be a global facing and export-oriented district to attract companies that embrace and address the challenges of the 22nd century with a focus on low-carbon prosperity. It will be an amenity-rich place where small businesses and artists thrive and benefit from the concentration of economic activity.

The location started with a focus on the Capital Iron lands, but soon grew to include a larger area at the north end of downtown which will accommodate future key employment uses. The area is currently a mix of heavy and light industry, commercial, retail, surface parking lots, and recently remediated land owned jointly by the Songhees and Esquimalt Nations.

The following activities are underway:

- A development (rezoning) application for the Capital Cultural District was received in 2021 and revised plans submitted on June 16. These plans currently propose a mix of industrial and employment lands, public spaces, residential and live work uses and arts and culture use that seek to meet several objectives of Victoria 3.0 for the Arts and Innovation District.
- Development of the Arts & Innovation District Action Plan

The first deliverables to guide planning have been completed and include an Environmental Conditions study, and a (draft) Market Assessment and Land Economics study. The Environmental Conditions Study, and Summary (Appendix C) provide key background information to inform planning and future engagement by providing a general overview of the area's environmental condition and key considerations that may impact future development. The draft Market Assessment and Land Economics study explores the relationship between market trends and the economics of intensified development; identifies key elements of success critical to innovation districts and provides initial recommendations regarding potential policies and incentives the City of Victoria may consider to encourage development that aligns with the district's vision. Staff expect to have the completed final study from Colliers in the coming weeks.

Some key findings from these studies include:

Environmental Conditions Report (WSP)

- Many properties may have environmental constraints related to current and past activities which require assessment and potential remediation prior to seeking development approval. Some areas are also impacted by tsunami risk.
- The area also contains registered and potential archaeological sites.

Market Conditions, Land Economics and Best Practices Study (Colliers Consulting)

- The Greater Victoria area is expected to see robust demand for light industrial space continue in the future, with record low vacancy and high rents. Targeted industries will also be attracted to office spaces in the Arts & Innovation District area, especially as it develops anchor tenants.
- Land economics assessment finds some mixed employment uses may be viable in the area, subject to consideration of market demand and factors such as environmental remediation costs. Employment development with residential components may offer greater economic viability but should be approached with caution as it may be difficult to integrate residential uses into employment buildings. Residential uses, especially strata, may also compromise some employment activities in the district.
- Practicing artists and arts-based production businesses will continue to face challenges in locating spaces that are affordable, without interventions in the market.
- The area's urban location, distinct character, proximity to Downtown and access to multiple amenities and services position it well to become an Arts and Innovation District.

- Key challenges include potential remediation costs, limited access for freight delivery, parking constraints, economic viability for certain forms of intensified industrial/employment development, and landowner reluctance to redevelop.

In early 2022, a series of stakeholder engagement sessions were held to inform the latter study, as well as provide key inputs for planning. Over 60 stakeholders participated, representing technology sectors, industrial businesses, arts and culture, and the development industry. Staff are engaging with First Nations and will confirm if and how they wish to be consulted before designing and launching the next phase of planning.

Some emerging themes from early engagement include:

- Retain the area's unique heritage industrial character
- Focus on mixed employment with limited residential that is carefully considered
- Integrate arts and culture through development and programming for the area, with a desire for long-term, secure affordable studio spaces
- Retain and utilize access to the deep-water harbour
- Strengthen the physical connectivity and transition to adjacent areas such as Old Town and Douglas Street
- Strengthen multi modal infrastructure and connectivity to the region
- Desire to reduce property crime and improve safety
- Increased food services and restaurants to support local employees, and amenities such as childcare
- Greater flexibility and alignment of policies and regulations within district vision
- Buildings should be designed to encourage collaboration and reflect the space needs of target sectors (e.g., tech, manufacturing, arts), both for start-ups and more mature companies
- The presence of one or more catalysts (e.g., art gallery, post-secondary education, business incubation, library) will support district development

Once First Nations have been consulted and an approach to the next phase of engagement mapped out, an RFP is expected to be released seeking a consultant team to carry out the next phase of planning and engagement, with an expected public launch in fall 2022.

The Arts & Innovation District planning is expected to result in several outcomes that further Victoria 3.0 objectives:

- Updates to land use, public realm, transportation and related policies in the Downtown Core Area Plan and Burnside Gorge Plan
- Update industrial zones contained in Zoning Regulation Bylaw, design guideline updates, and a possible density framework supporting public benefits
- Consideration of incentives to support development and investment in the district
- An Action Plan guiding further actions and partnerships to realize the district's potential

7. Create an Ocean Futures Cluster (2020–2025)

- Create an Ocean Futures Cluster Task Force to develop a strong value proposition and Cluster Implementation Plan (2020) *Completed*
- Develop a Business Case and Value Proposition for the Ocean & Marine Innovation Hub (2020) *Completed*

- Champion the Ocean Futures Cluster and Innovation Hub with Provincial and Federal governments (2020 – 2021) *Completed*
- Build relationship and create programs with Canada's Ocean Supercluster (2020 – 2022) *Completed*
- Secure funding to establish Ocean and Marine Innovation Hub (2020 – 2021) *Completed*
- Develop an Ocean and Marine Innovation Hub (Ongoing)
- Partner with First Nations (Ongoing)
- Develop a Governance Structure for Cluster Implementation (2020 – 2021) *Completed*

After creating the start-up plan for what is now known as the Centre for Ocean Applied Sustainable Technologies (COAST), COAST advisory board members developed a mission, vision and initial membership model, and determined in mid-2021 that SIPP should become the incubating entity to ensure that COAST has a solid foundation with secure funding models in place before transitioning into its own stand-alone entity.

The vision for COAST is to be Pacific Canada's hub for the sustainable blue economy; and their mission is to drive inclusive prosperity in British Columbia's blue economy through entrepreneurship, innovation, and expansive partnerships. To work toward this long-term success, SIPP spent the latter part of 2021 and early part of 2022 developing a 3-year "Catalyst Phase" plan with five key activity areas (listed below). This plan was submitted for funding by Pacific Economic Development Canada (PacifiCan) in May 2022 and is currently under review by the federal government with a decision expected in the coming months. The catalyst phase has over 40 partner organization and businesses engaged.

Five activity areas of COAST's 3-year Catalyst Phase plan:

1. Blue Innovation and Skills Hub
2. Ecosystem Development and Global Positioning
3. Corporate Innovation Projects
4. Indigenous Blue Economy Entrepreneurship and Innovation Capacity
5. Indigenous Growth Through Procurement

The above activity areas further deliver many of the action items outlined within the Victoria 3.0 plan for Creating an Ocean Futures Cluster both now and into the future.

8. Tech Is #1 – Tell and Sell Victoria's Tech Story (2020–2041)

- Talent Attraction and Retention Initiative (Ongoing) Lead: VIATEC
- Attend relevant trade shows to promote Victoria tech ecosystem and attract talent (Ongoing) Lead: VIATEC
- Assist tech companies with exporting and international sales (Ongoing) Lead: SIPP
- Develop Digital Promotion Strategy for global audience (Ongoing) Lead: VIATEC
- 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 (Ongoing) Lead: BCSPi
- Create opportunities for small tech companies and start-ups to do business with Vancouver Island MASH sector institutions and large companies. (Ongoing) Lead: BCSPi

VIATEC continued to lead talent attraction and retention actions within the Tech sector through several initiatives, such as hosting the Victoria Call for Talent Fair. This was a free virtual fair in March of 2021 to connect with Greater Victoria's top tech employers for both remote and local career opportunities. 837 candidates registered, of which 82% were from Canada, and 26% from

Victoria (74% out of region). 54% of respondents indicated they were looking for/open to relocating (out of 329) and 87% of respondents indicated they were looking for/open to remote work (out of 334).

VIATEC, working with BenchMarket, also launched a Talent Study for the tech community to develop tools to help the sector understand which unique differentiators they hold, how they must adapt to keep skilled talent, and how to meet the needs and expectations of out-of-region candidates during the recruitment process. This resulted in a completely new suite of compensation and talent research to address the tech community's needs.

This data includes, but isn't limited to:

- Insight into the compensation practices of other tech hubs across Canada and a cut specific to the Greater Victoria region
- Biannual data releases to keep up with the pace of compensation changes with insights into salary increases
- The whole picture of employee recognition beyond compensation that accounts for non-financial benefits, wellness practices, and other human resource programs.
- The ability to understand how cost of living and compensation across regions are related

Members can participate and receive information through a yearly fee with VIATEC but as a non-profit with a mission of creating the most cohesive tech community in the world, they are committed to ensuring this initiative is open to all Greater Victoria tech companies through other means to participate to ensure generating excellent data.

To further promote the tech ecosystem and attract talent, VIATEC also attended several relevant trade shows and industry events.

To support the Telling Our Story initiative, referenced later in this report, VIATEC provided \$50k in funding to SIPP, for which SIPP will assist tech sector companies with exporting and international sales by including "Victoria's Tech Story" in the more holistic brand narrative project, now being referred to as the "Magnet City Initiative".

Further, VIATEC will be kicking off data collection for their next economic impact study. It's been almost five years since their last report was released and they expect the new results to demonstrate some significant growth. They are targeting late September 2022 for the release of the final report.

9. Learn from Other Cities (2020–2041)

- Measure the City and region against 10 Traits of Globally Fluent Metro Areas (2020) *Completed* Lead: Business of Cities
- 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) *Completed* Lead: Business of Cities
- Undertake case studies on what cities/ regions have done (2020) *Completed* Lead: Business of Cities
- Determine comparator cities; assess how we rank in comparison to other small, high-performing, high-calibre cities (2020) *Completed* Lead: Business of Cities
- Gain insight on advancing key projects (2020) *Completed* Lead: Business of Cities

- 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) *Completed* Lead: Business of Cities

10. Re-Do Victoria's Brand and Story (2023 –2026) Lead: SIPP

Although this work was not set to begin until 2023, the pandemic kickstarted this action early. Emerging from the work of the Rising Economy Taskforce and the 10 supporting committees (multiple sectors of the regional economy), the Reboot: Greater Victoria's Economic Recovery Plan (2020-2022) report outlined 10 Recovery Pillars under which the recommendations and actions were organized. One pillar was "Telling Our New Story", which is a call from multiple sectors, business leaders and other stakeholders to develop a holistic regional story that builds on our well-established tourism and hospitality brand, but expands upon it for two primary purposes:

- So businesses, institutions and other organizations that need to attract talented workers, investment, and partnerships from beyond the region will have tools and brand assets that aligned strongly to their target audiences (beyond attracting tourists and moving into lifestyle alignment).
- Create compelling narratives that attract businesses and entrepreneurs that might align to our region and the collective values and present them with a roadmap to establishing here to create the jobs of the future. This recommendation built on the theme of economic diversification, as we recognized during the pandemic that our region is vulnerable due to a high dependence on tourism and hospitality.

SIPP plans to conduct a final wrap-up report on the Reboot Plan this fall, which will be 2 years since the report was released (it was designed to be a short-term action plan). This does not imply that all 55 recommended actions were implemented but is intended to provide an update and info on the context and any changing circumstances of the actions within.

In 2021, SIPP, in partnership with the City of Victoria, DVBA, and VIATEC, organized a series of focus groups, facilitated by Dr. Tim Moonen and his team at The Business of Cities. From there, SIPP assembled a Creative Working Group to oversee the development of the creative direction, including facilitating the suppliers that will lead the development. This work is underway in 2022 and will be launched in December 2022. Additional activities to increase the adoption of and engagement around the toolkit will follow in 2023. This will also include external marketing campaigns.

Outstanding Action Items

Council also directed staff to report back on outstanding initiatives and future work outlined as deliverables within Victoria 3.0.

Recovery:

Support Small Business:

- 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 (2022 – 2023, Ongoing)
- Develop a Retail Strategy post COVID-19 (2022 –2023, Ongoing)

Support Youth in the Economy:

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

Support Indigenous Business:

- Create a Mentorship Program for Indigenous Business Owners (2022 - Ongoing) Lead: Chamber

Support Newcomer Business:

- Work with the Federal Government to Develop the Municipal Nominee Program (TBD)

Redevelop Victoria Conference Centre:

- Design a new centre based on assessment in Feasibility Study (2023 - 2024)
- Secure funding for the new centre (2024 – 2025)

Reinvention and Resilience:**Arts & Innovation District**

- Pilot a pop-up Micro Innovation District (2023) Lead: TBD
- Undertake a city-initiated rezoning of the Innovation District (2022 - 2023)
- Develop a name and identity for the Innovation District (2022 - 2023)
- Consider incentives to stimulate development of the Innovation District (2022 - 2023)
- Establish partnerships and/or funding relationships to create the Innovation District (2022 – 2024)
- Develop creative financing models (2022 - 2024)
- Create a Building Innovation Incubator to stimulate construction innovation for climate impact (2025)

Ocean Futures Cluster (COAST)

- Establish a Formal Cluster Program and Hire a Cluster Manager (2022 – 2025)
- Develop Investment Attraction Plan for companies participating in Ocean Futures Cluster (2022 – 2025) Lead: SIPP/COAST
- Shape and package a promotion program for the Cluster (2025 – 2041) Lead: SIPP/COAST
- Link the Cluster Globally (2025 – 2041) Lead: SIPP/ COAST

Learn From Other Cities

- Create an Annual Education Program modelled on Denver's Urban Exploration Program (TBD) Lead: TBD
- Partner with the Urban Economy Forum on UN Sustainable Development Goal 11, "Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable" (2020 – 2025) Lead: Mayors Office

The latter action refers specifically to the Arts and Innovation District and is no longer deemed as necessary or achievable by the Mayor's Office given the lack of alignment between the UN Urban Economy Fourm and the City with respect to local leadership in the development of the Arts and Innovation District and the timing of the Arts & Innovation District project. To keep Victoria 3.0 current, and aligned with reality, it is recommended that this action be removed from the plan.

OPTIONS & IMPACTS

Option 1:

That Council receives the report for information and approves removing action 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) from the Victoria 3.0: Recovery, Reinvention and Resilience economic action plan. (Recommended)

The Mayor and staff met with representatives from the United Nations (UN) Urban Economy Forum and determined that the process and timing of the UN Urban Economy Forum would not be a fit for the Arts and Innovation District process, would slow down progress on the Arts and Innovation District, and would lead to more of a top-down rather than bottom-up approach to community planning.

Option 2: Action 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) remains as included within the Victoria 3.0: Recovery, Reinvention and Resilience economic action plan.

Accessibility Impact Statement

There are no impacts to accessibility.

2019 – 2022 Strategic Plan

Strategic Objective #4 – Prosperity and Economic Inclusion; Create Victoria 3.0 – Recovery Reinvention Resilience – 2020-2041 Economic Action Plan

Impacts to Financial Plan

There are no impacts to the Financial Plan

Official Community Plan Consistency Statement

The actions outlined in Victoria 3.0 are consistent with the goals in OCP Section 14 - Economy.

1. 14 (A) Victoria generates economic growth through innovation, entrepreneurship and business formation, and attracts and retains sustainable enterprise well-suited to the region.
2. 14 (B) Victoria contributes to global knowledge, produces and attracts talented researchers, incubates innovation, and brings new goods and services to market.
3. 14 (C) Victorians have the knowledge and abilities to support a vibrant regional economy and the capacity to creatively adapt to economic change.
4. 14 (D) Victoria is the headquarters of the Provincial Government, a premier tourism destination and a gateway to Vancouver Island.
5. 14 (E) A broad range of employment opportunities exist across the city and region providing workers with income to financially support themselves and their families.

CONCLUSIONS

Into the second year of implementation, Victoria 3.0 has delivered many of the action items within the plan, providing support to businesses impacted by Covid-19 and implementing significant action items to ignite economic recovery into the future. Staff look forward to continuing to work closely with business leaders, community partners and organizations in delivering the remaining and ongoing actions set out in the plan.

Respectfully submitted,

Quinn Anglin
Manager of Economic Development

Kerri Moore
Head of Business & Community Relations

Report accepted and recommended by the City Manager.

List of Attachments

Appendix A: 2021 Victoria 3.0 Progress Report
Appendix B: Clean and Safe Committee: Terms of Reference
Appendix C: The Reboot: Greater Victoria's Economic Recovery Plan (SIPP)
Appendix D: Environmental Conditions Study Summary (WSP)