

CITY OF VICTORIA | Sustainable Planning and Community Development

# Arts & Innovation District

## Council Workshop

Committee of the Whole | July 21, 2022



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## Workshop Purpose

Receive input from Council into the creation of an Arts & Innovation District



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## Project Objectives

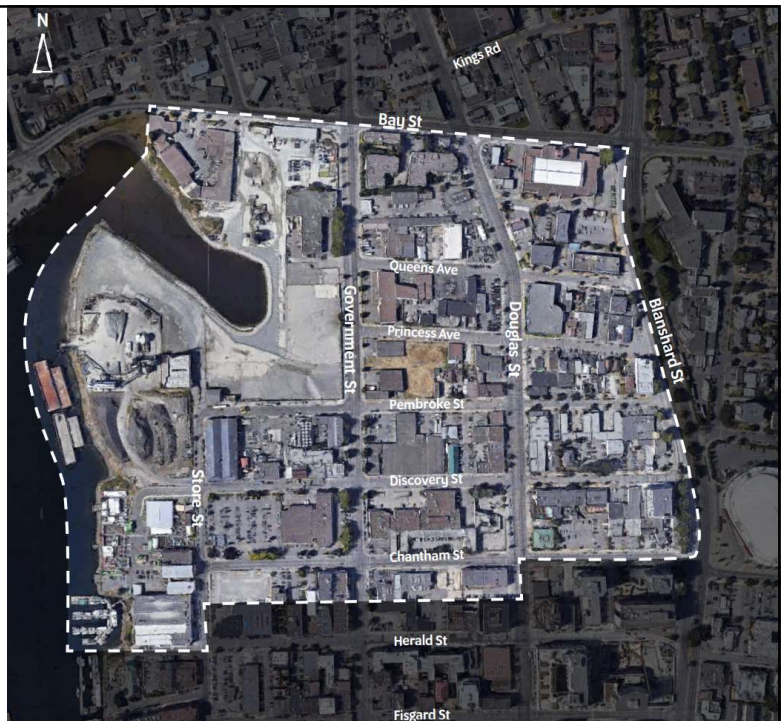
- Protect employment and harbour lands
- Create a focal point for high-value, innovative employment
- Integrate the arts
- Encourage collaboration
- Create a model for climate adaptation
- Create high-quality public spaces
- Support cultural and social inclusion
- Support Indigenous economic success



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## Study Area

- Rock Bay District
- Lands west of Douglas Street envisioned for industrial uses
- Lands east of Douglas Street envisioned for residential and mixed uses



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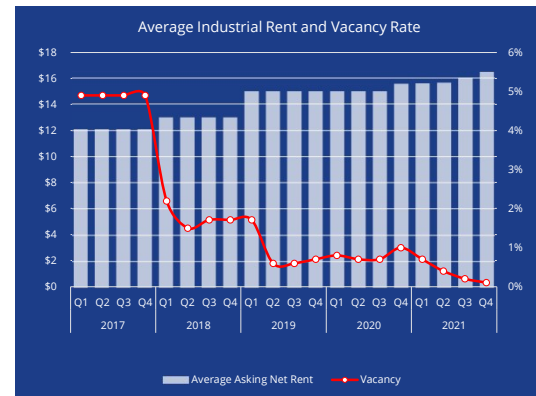
## Background Studies

### 1. Environmental Conditions Report

- High level overview of environmental constraints and approaches to remediation

### 2. Market and Land Economics Study

- Strong demand for light industrial space
- Low vacancy and high rents create a challenge for start-ups and arts groups
- Proximity to Downtown and amenities supports Arts and Innovation District



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## Focus Groups

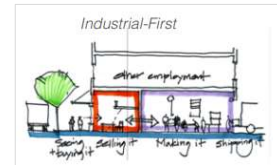
- Virtual focus groups held in early 2022
- Over 60 stakeholders participated representing technology sectors, small business, industrial, arts and culture, and development industry
- Staff are continuing to seek opportunities to engage with First Nations



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## Focus Groups – Key Themes

- Update zoning to allow broader range of employment generating uses
- Retain the area's heritage industrial character
- Avoid losing employment land to residential
- Start-ups need supports and flexible spaces
- Clustering arts and business can present opportunities and partnerships
- Improve transit and maintain freight access
- Limited on-street parking is a concern
- Improve public realm and connections to adjacent areas



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## Lessons - Other Districts

- Clustering of ideas and businesses
- Early public investments or partnerships
- Right market conditions for investment
- Catalyst / post-secondary education
- 18/7 activity
- Access to city, amenities, workforce
- Most directly comparable is Mt. Pleasant (Vancouver)



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## Outcomes

Action Plan to guide and support the District:

- Land Use
- Urban Design and Public Realm
- Mobility and Access
- Development Incentives
- Partnerships



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## Key Challenges

- Identifying how the city and others can support the clustering of high-value, innovative employment.
- Ensuring the district will support start-ups and attract new businesses (from outside the region)
- Despite record high demand for light industrial space, market has not supported new spaces in Victoria's urban industrial districts.
- There is strong interest in production spaces for the arts, but practicing artists require long term, stable affordable rents.



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## Questions

1. What challenges and opportunities do you see for the District?
2. What do you see as the City's role, and role of other entities?

