



# Establishing the City of Vancouver Business and Economy Office

Presented to Vancouver City Council

April 10, 2024

# Council report recommendations



## COUNCIL REPORT

Report Date: March 12, 2024  
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VanRIMS No.: 08-2000-20  
Meeting Date: City Clerks Use Only  
[Submit comments to Council](#)

TO: Vancouver City Council  
FROM: City Manager  
SUBJECT: Establishing the City of Vancouver Business and Economy Office

### Recommendations

- A. THAT Council endorse the mandate and key lines of service for the new in-house City of Vancouver Business and Economy Office, as articulated in this report.
- B. THAT Council instruct Council's appointees to the Metro Vancouver Board and the Invest Vancouver Management Board to make ongoing efforts to ensure that Invest Vancouver's investment attraction and other economic development functions are performing at an optimal level, and are appropriately coordinated and aligned with the City's new Business and Economy Office.

### Purpose and Executive Summary

This report seeks Council direction on the proposed mandate and key lines of service of the new in-house Business and Economy Office.

### Council Authority/Previous Decisions

- In September 2023, Vancouver City Council in their role as Vancouver Economic Commission (VEC) Honourary Board members announced their decision to wind down the VEC.
- In December 2023, Council allocated \$855,000 for the establishment and ongoing operation of a new in-house business support and economic development function, as well as \$145,000 to fund an Indigenous Economic Prosperity function within the City's Indigenous Relations office.

- A. *THAT Council endorse the mandate and key lines of service for the new in-house City of Vancouver Business and Economy Office, as articulated in this report.*
- B. *THAT Council instruct Council's appointees to the Metro Vancouver Board and the Invest Vancouver Management Board to make ongoing efforts to ensure that Invest Vancouver's investment attraction and other economic development functions are performing at an optimal level, and are appropriately coordinated and aligned with the City's new Business and Economy Office.*

1.

Background/context

# Background

SEPTEMBER 2023

Council as Vancouver Economic Commission Honourary Board announced VEC wind-down

DECEMBER 2023

- Council allocated:
- \$855,000 for the establishment of a new in-house business support and economic development function (\$355,000 in 2024)
  - \$145,000 for the establishment of an Indigenous economic prosperity function within the City's Indigenous Relations office

SEPT 2023 TO MARCH 2024

CEO, VEC and City staff have been working collaboratively to wind down the VEC ... HR, programs, contracts, assets, financial, legal, etc.

# Invest Vancouver has responsibility for regional investment attraction

INVEST  
VANCOUVER

Opportunity, Amplified. In a region like no other.



## Purpose

To amplify opportunity.  
To propel prosperity

- Sits within and funded by Metro Vancouver
- Established in 2019
- Three regional lines of business:
  1. Strategic investment attraction
  2. Data, research and policy
  3. Collaboration
- Vancouver taxpayers fund ~ \$1.7 million of Invest Vancouver's \$4.3 million annual budget (40%)

# Many City-business interfaces – support, regulate, policy, fees and taxes

## City Manager's Office

- Business and Economy Office (subject of this current report)
- Film Commissioner
- Indigenous Economic Prosperity



## Arts, Culture and Community Services

- Tourism industry policy/support
- Music industry policy/support
- Sport Hosting Vancouver
- Cultural and business event hosting
- Night-time economy
- Vancouver Civic Theatres
- Community economic development
- Grants, space and infrastructure to arts and culture organisations



## Engineering Services

- Film and Special Events Office
- Street activation
- Engineering-specific Business Improvement Area liaison



# Many City-business interfaces – support, regulate, policy, fees and taxes, cont'd

## Board of Parks and Recreation

- Business Development, Special Events and Filming Office



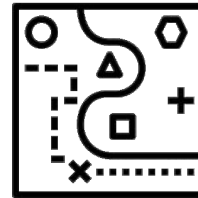
## Development, Buildings and Licensing

- Land use permitting
- Business licensing



## Planning, Urban Design and Sustainability

- Economic land use planning
- Downtown Eastside and Chinatown Special Enterprise Program



## Finance, Risk and Supply Chain Management

- Commercial property tax policies/processes



# Substantial business support and economic development work underway

<p><b>Green jobs report</b></p> <p>Sustainability Group</p>	<p><b>Economic impact of City's green building regulations</b></p> <p>Sustainability Group</p>	<p><b>Green building workforce capacity-building support</b></p> <p>Sustainability Group</p>	<p><b>Film-friendly action plan</b></p> <p>Film Commissioner</p>
<p><b>Chinatown vibrancy</b></p> <p>Business Planning and Project Support</p>	<p><b>Granville Street planning</b></p> <p>Planning, Urban Design and Sustainability</p>	<p><b>FIFA World Cup 2026</b></p> <p>City Manager's Office</p>	<p><b>One-off destination events</b></p> <p>Various departments</p>
<p><b>New Arts, Culture and Tourism Division</b></p> <p>Arts, Culture and Community Services</p>	<p><b>Sport Hosting Vancouver</b></p> <p>Arts, Culture and Community Services</p>	<p><b>Cultural destination events fund</b></p> <p>Arts, Culture and Community Services</p>	<p><b>Night-time economy</b></p> <p>Arts, Culture and Community Services</p>
<p><b>Chinatown/DTES special enterprise program</b></p> <p>Planning, Urban Design and Sustainability</p>	<p><b>Community economic development</b></p> <p>Arts, Culture and Community Services</p>	<p>etc. →</p>	



2.

Stakeholder consultation

# Stakeholder consultation

7. As the City establishes a new in-house business support and economic development function, for each of the below, indicate lines of service you believe are the most important for this office to deliver?

	Very Important	Moderately Important	Not Important
a. Investment attraction and retention activities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
b. Local business liaison and support	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
c. Economic data analysis and research	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
d. Ensuring business implications are appropriately considered in the development and execution of the City's policies, regulations, programs and services	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
e. Stewarding the City's partnerships and collaborations concerning economic development and/or business support	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
f. Supporting Indigenous economic development	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
g. Sector-specific business support, investment attraction and/or economic development activities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

8. As a follow up to the above Question 7g, please identify which specific sectors the City should actively support. Leave blank if this is not important to you.

- Survey sent to ~ 100 stakeholders, 70 responses
  - Diverse mix of BIA executive directors, representatives of various industry sectors, regional economic development professionals, academics, leadership of social enterprises
  - Many respondents had an affiliation with the Vancouver Economic Commission
  - Not a representative sample
- 14 in-person interviews, Q4-2023 and Q1-2024

- **Most important role for the new Business and Economy Office? (top three)**
  1. Stewarding the City's partnerships and collaborations concerning economic development and business support
  2. Ensure business implications are appropriately considered in the development and execution of the City's policies, regulations, programs and services
  3. Local business liaison and support

## Survey/stakeholder feedback, continued

- Which if any lines of service NOT to be in? (top three)
  1. Investment attraction
  2. Thought leadership/research
  3. Homelessness/addiction services

## Survey/stakeholder feedback, continued

- Which, if any, sector to focus on? (top three)
  1. Green business, sustainability, climate, cleantech
  2. Storefront retail, hospitality/tourism
  3. Technology and innovation

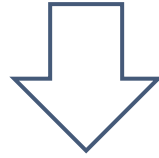


*It is noted that these responses will vary substantially depending upon the population being surveyed.*

3.

The new Business  
and Economy Office

# The new City of Vancouver Business and Economy Office



The proposed mandate of the City of Vancouver Business and Economy Office is to ensure that the City's regulations, policies, processes and programs are designed to **support and to minimise obstacles for local business**, and to serve as an **internal centre of excellence** concerning business support, economic development and investment attraction.

**\$855,000**  
annual budget

Little/no third  
party funding

**5-6**  
staff members

# How the City can support business, four key mechanisms

– RECOMMENDED FOCUS OF THE BUSINESS AND ECONOMY OFFICE –

2.

## Direct investment

City policies, regulations, programs, services and infrastructure that directly support existing business

3.

## Attraction/retention

Direct investments into attracting/retaining business investment

1.

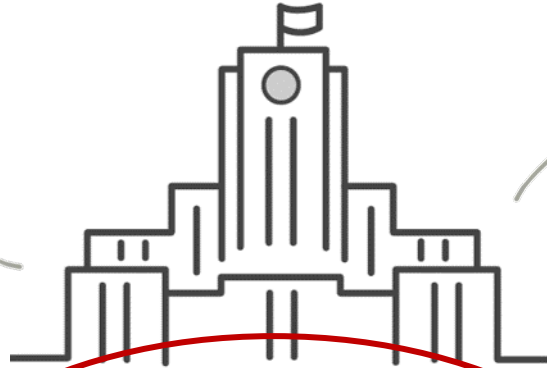
## The business/City interface

Optimise how City impacts businesses via all direct interactions with policies, regulations, regulatory processes, programs, services and infrastructure

4.

## Indirect support

Policies, regulations, programs, services and infrastructure that support a healthy economy and generally create a business-friendly environment





**A.**  
**Local business support**  
*Ensure that City Council and staff have a clear understanding of the needs and opportunities associated with local business so that City departments can appropriately support local business*

**B.**  
**Policy and strategy**  
*Ensure City Council/staff apply the appropriate “business lens” to the development/delivery of municipal policies, regulations, programs and services, and optimise business-City interfaces*

**C.**  
**Data and research**  
*Ensure City Council, City staff and other interested parties have the Vancouver-specific business-related data and information they need*

**D.**  
**Investment attraction support**  
*Ensure companies and individuals seeking to invest in Vancouver are appropriately supported – complementing the work of Invest Vancouver, who has primary responsibility for regional investment attraction*

**E.**  
**Collaboration and convening**  
*Ensure the City of Vancouver is an active part of the regional, provincial and national economic development ecosystem, and that current economic development thinking and trends are incorporated into City policy and programs*



## A. Local business support, proposed key activities



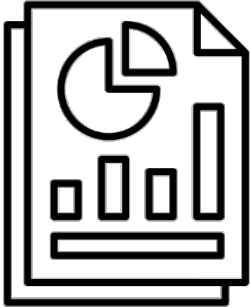
1. **Communication** – set up structures/processes to regularly meet with business representatives and ensure their perspective incorporated into City work
2. **Resource hub** – Establish a hub that points individuals to business resources
3. **Business Improvement Area program** – Ongoing legal, financial, administrative oversight

## B. Policy and strategy, proposed key activities



1. **Policy and regulation.** Ensure business implications are considered in the development/delivery of municipal policies, regulations, programs and services – with ultimate objective of optimising business-City interfaces and supporting the success of local business
2. **Proactive strategies/tactics.** Take Council direction on developing proactive economic development strategies and/or tactical plans concerning specific issues
3. **Internal coordination and alignment.** Maintain central inventory of business-City interfaces, issues/opportunities, ensure coordination and alignment across City departments
4. **Expert advisory.** Provide one-off subject matter expertise support to a select number of high-priority City projects
5. **Compliance.** Monitor relevant long-term Community Contribution Agreements with business/economic commitments to ensure they are meeting contractual requirements

## C. Data and research, proposed key activities



1. **Vancouver datasets.** Maintain relevant business-related datasets for Vancouver
2. **One-off research projects.** Undertake one-off data/research projects for the City Leadership Team and/or City Council, as required and as resources allow

## D. Investment attraction support, proposed key activities



- 1. Investment attraction support.** Complement the regional investment attraction and retention work of Invest Vancouver, as well as that of various provincial, federal, Indigenous and other economic development agencies, e.g.,
  - respond to Vancouver-specific inquiries
  - provide data/information
  - host incoming trade missions/delegations
  - introductions to other relevant organisations and individuals
  - support Mayor's Office
- 2. Proactive strategies/tactics.** Develop proactive investment attraction strategies/tactical plans, per Council direction
- 3. Narrative.** Working closely with the City Communications and various partner agencies, help drive the City's business-friendly narrative

## E. Collaboration and convening, proposed key activities



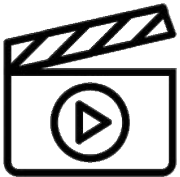
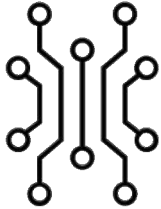
1. **Invest Vancouver.** City representative on at the appropriate Invest Vancouver committees
2. **Networks.** Attend relevant conferences, summits and tables in order to maintain industry connections and networks
3. **Convener.** Potentially play a convening role within certain industries or concerning specific issues/opportunities, as appropriate

## PROGRAM DELIVERY



- Recommended that delivery of business support/training programs be **outside scope** of the Business and Economy Office, e.g.,
  - grants/programs that directly support entrepreneurs and businesses
  - programs to help businesses lower carbon footprint
  - technology demonstration opportunities
  - training programs, etc.
- Can undertake program feasibility/ evaluation/design for programs delivered by other departments
- Provide a hub to point to these resources, e.g., regional, provincial, federal, academic, non-profit, private
- Consider one-off opportunities case-by-case

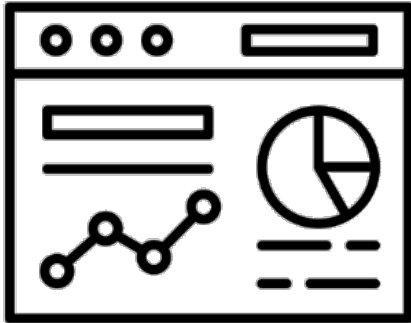
## SECTOR FOCUS



- Many business sectors in Vancouver
  - Sector (e.g., retail, hospitality, film and digital, technology, augmented reality/virtual reality, land development, transportation and logistics, etc.)
  - Geography (e.g., Business Improvement Associations)
  - Size (small and medium, large)
- If Council opts to focus on a subset of all Vancouver businesses, this needs to be revisited regularly
- New Director, Business and Economy to report back to Council with recommendations



# WORKPLAN AND PERFORMANCE MONITORING



- New Director, Business and Economy to report back to Council with
  - a recommended workplan
  - recommended performance measurement framework

4.  
Vancouver Economic  
Commission Wind-Up Status

# Vancouver Economic Commission wind-up, status

- By 2024-04, VEC will have no staff; City employee will continue to serve as CEO, VEC
- VEC programs/services:
  - 32 initiatives completed before wind-down
  - Transferred some components of Indigenous economic prosperity to the City
  - Transferred some components of Project Greenlight to Foresight CAC (demonstration program for cleantech innovators)
  - Transferred some components of the VEC's Zero Emissions Economic Transition Action Plan (ZEETAP) to local non-profit Zero Emissions Innovation Centre (ZEIC)
  - All other VEC programs have been wound down/discontinued

5.  
Next steps

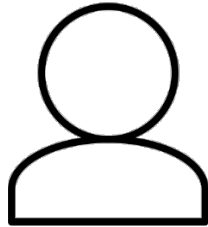
# Business and Economy Office, next steps

April 2024



Council provides direction re: mandate/lines of service

Target by June 2024



Hire Director, Business and Economy

Target by October 2024



Hire rest of the team

Target by October 2024



Bring workplan to Council

End