



SOUNDING BOARD



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Red tape, housing, and public safety top issues for business

MUNICIPAL | Businesses weigh in on municipal priorities

The Greater Vancouver Board of Trade surveyed members regarding key issues for the business community in the upcoming municipal elections this fall.

The survey found that more than two-thirds (68%) of respondents believe it has become harder to do business in the region in the last five years, with nearly the same number (67%) indicating that the possibility of businesses closing due to rising costs is a “major concern”. According to the businesses surveyed, the top five issues facing municipalities are: permitting, licensing and red tape reduction (50%), housing (48%), crime and public safety (44%), economic or business-friendly policies (44%) and taxes (35%).

“The business community is calling on municipal governments to streamline permitting, increase the supply of a range of housing options, and take meaningful action to reduce street-level crime and target repeat offenders.” said Bridgitte Anderson, President and CEO

of the Greater Vancouver Board of Trade. “Public safety concerns have not registered this high on businesses’ radars in recent memory, and we are calling for a multi-pronged, cross-government solution to improve the situation on the ground.”

Other Key Findings

Businesses were most satisfied with their local governments’ response on core services, climate change, culture, and reconciliation with Indigenous peoples. Members were most unsatisfied with the response on homelessness (68%), housing (68%), ease of doing business (58%), and public safety (47%).

Housing

Housing availability and affordability are making it challenging for businesses to recruit and retain talent, and there is strong support in the business community for aggressive action from governments to address the problem.

■ A strong majority of survey respondents (83%) indicated



the cost of housing in Greater Vancouver has a large impact (40%) or some impact (43%) on their ability to recruit or retain employees.

■ Survey respondents strongly support municipal zoning changes to allow various kinds of multi-family units to be built in areas currently zoned for single-family detached homes, with a strong majority (70%) supportive of upzoning all or some areas.

■ Most respondents (79%) support provincial intervention if cities reject affordable housing projects, but a third (32%) of all respondents indicated that proposed legislation is too

heavy-handed.

■ The business community expressed support for municipalities prioritizing supply-side housing policies (45%) while recognizing the importance of policies addressing both supply and demand (44%).

■ Improving services for businesses is a high priority for respondents, with less than a third (31%) reporting a somewhat positive/helpful experience engaging with local government on issues relating to their business.

Economic

In order to spur economic recovery, businesses are looking to municipalities to redouble their efforts to streamline services for business owners.

■ The vast majority of businesses surveyed (88%) think more coordination between municipalities on economic development and licensing is needed.

■ Nearly three-quarters (72%) of businesses surveyed believe local governments need to better plan for the housing, infrastructure and services growth required to meet the needs of a growing population.

■ Only a small minority (10%) of respondents believe increased property taxes have been invested in a way that improves city services.

Other

■ More transit investment remains key to combating congestion, with more than half (62%) of respondents believing the region needs more investment in transit to keep up with the needs of the population, with broad support for extending the SkyTrain to UBC (83%), Rapid Transit to the North Shore (81%), and SkyTrain to Langley (76%). A substantial majority of respondents (71%) support an Indigenous-led bid for Vancouver to host the 2030 Olympic Winter Games. **SB**

The 2022 Municipal Elections Survey contains data collected from 180 Greater Vancouver Board of Trade members Apr. 4 – 22, 2022.

Bill 10 undermines the legitimacy of union certifications

LABOUR | Proposed legislation weakens workers’ rights

Despite serious concerns raised by the business community, Bill 10 passed Third Reading on May 17, 2022, and is expected to receive Royal Assent by June 2, 2022.

Bill 10 includes two significant amendments to the BC Labour Relations Code. The bill will reintroduce “card-based” certification and remove the waiting period for union raids in the construction industry.

Under existing legislation, a secret ballot vote is triggered when more than 45 per cent of the proposed bargaining unit members sign union cards. Bill 10 will allow “card-based” certification to occur without a secret



ballot vote if more than 55 per cent of the proposed bargaining unit members sign union cards. The Secret ballot is a funda-

mental component of our democratic system and a standard that should apply in workplaces just as it does in other facets of

public life. The right to choose union representation is guaranteed through legislation, but the method workers choose to decide who should represent them is critical to the legitimacy of the process and its outcome.

The changes outlined in Bill 10 will also significantly impact the construction industry by reducing the time a collective agreement must be in effect before rival unions can raid and replace the existing union. Currently, if a collective agreement is in force for a term of more than three years, a union can only raid during July and August of the third year and each subsequent year of the collective agreement

or any continuation. The amendments in Bill 10, once effective, will allow unions to raid in July and August of each year of the collective agreement or any continuation with no waiting period.

The business community has repeatedly expressed frustration that changes to employment legislation have been made without a proper or fulsome consultation process.

At a time when the government is seeking to create a more inclusive economy, Bill 10 will foster divisiveness within the workplace. We urge the government to instead focus on economic recovery for the benefit of all British Columbians. **SB**

RECOGNITION | Congratulations, Chief Sparrow

Leading our community through strength, purpose and authenticity

On behalf of the Vancouver Airport Authority, I would like to extend my heartfelt congratulations to Chief Wayne Sparrow of Musqueam Indian Band for receiving his much-deserved Rix Award for Engaged Community Citizenship.

An Engaged Community Citizen describes a visionary—a person who applies their exceptional skills, talents, and drive to making a positive impact in society and I had the honour of presenting Chief Sparrow with this award.

I had the pleasure of working with Dr. Rix early in my career, and watched as he seamlessly blended health and well-being, business and community. Something we have all benefitted from as he created the community laboratory capacity that was essential to our ability to navigate through the pandemic. It is fitting that another leader – Chief Sparrow – who is equally focused on people, purpose, community

and economic-well being would be chosen to receive the award that bears his name.

Chief Sparrow has served as elected chief of Musqueam Indian Band since 2012, after serving as an elected councillor since 1998. Musqueam's core vision is to be a complete and healthy community through protecting their inherent Indigenous rights and re-establishing their self-governance. To do this, Musqueam is building capable governing institutions and economies that match their culture and enhance the quality of life now and for generations to come.

There are a number of recent agreements and initiatives that Chief Sparrow has been instrumental in as he works towards realizing his community's vision, including developing and innovating economic opportunities that benefit not only Musqueam, but the entire region.

Under his leadership, Musqueam signed the Musqueam



Indian Band-YVR Airport Sustainability & Friendship Agreement—a historic, 30-year partnership based on friendship and respect to achieve a sustainable and mutually beneficial future for the community and lands on which we operate.

The agreement is a testament to Chief Sparrow's ability to balance community leadership with strong business acumen in advancing partnerships that recognize Musqueam's ongoing stewardship of their lands and waters, and also prioritize economic, and education and training

opportunities for members.

Notably, Chief Sparrow joined leaders from Lil'wat, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh Nations, as well as mayors from both Vancouver and Whistler, to announce that they signed an MOU to explore the possibility of a bid for the 2030 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games. If the bid is presented, it would be the first Indigenous-led Olympic bid in the history of the Games.

All of this reflects my own experience of working alongside Chief Sparrow. Over the past two years, I have had the privilege of

working with him on many occasions; in fact, too many for me to count. Through the power of his leadership, he's educating us collectively on who we are, what legacy we want to leave, and what true reconciliation – true partnership – really is.

At YVR and as British Columbians, we all benefit from having Chief Sparrow as a leader to guide us as we acknowledge the past while also looking ahead with a continued commitment to reconciliation and to pursuing opportunities that will strengthen our partnerships and community.

It's this kind of commitment and courage that make Chief Sparrow a very deserving recipient of the Rix Award. So congratulations, once again, Chief Sparrow. Your leadership is truly valued, and we at YVR are honoured to be your friend.

I look forward to many more achievements in the years ahead, as we at YVR work with Musqueam to realize our shared goals and vision. **TV**

Tamara Vrooman is the President and CEO of the Vancouver Airport Authority.

EDI | EDI Conference: Building a better future together

Inaugural conference aims to empower participants



The Greater Vancouver Board of Trade's Diversity and Inclusion Leadership Council is bringing together business professionals on June 24 to inspire action, results, and impact the advancement of Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, Truth, and Reconciliation.

Research has shown that racially and ethnically diverse companies outperform industry norms by 35 percent (McKinsey & Company) and 76 percent of job seekers seek a diverse workforce when considering jobs (Glassdoor). To drive systemic

and equitable change in our workplaces, we must accelerate EDI workplace strategy and enhance learning, understanding, and solution development.

The day will provide participants with strategies and initiatives to build and leverage a talent pipeline with diverse skills, experiences, culture, background, and abilities to contribute to an organization's success. **SB**

Register today at boardoftrade.com/edi.



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