

Targeted OCP Review

COVID-19 SUPPLEMENTS

January 19, 2021



These COVID-19 Supplement Papers are an addition to the four White Papers on Transportation, Economy and Employment Lands, Housing, and Climate Emergency that were developed as part of the District of North Vancouver's Targeted Official Community Plan (OCP) Review. The four White Papers and Snapshots were delivered in February 2020 and reflect a point in time immediately before the emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic in Canada. The pandemic has since changed how we move, work, live, and allocate resources as households, businesses, and at all levels of government.

At the time of writing of this document, British Columbia's COVID Restart Plan is in Phase 3. The province will enter Phase 4 when there is wide vaccination, community immunity, and / or successful treatments. Phase 4 will include a loosening of restrictions, with tourism and large gatherings returning. When this shift happens, new patterns and trends will emerge with long-term consequences and implications for the four OCP Review Focus Areas. This supplement to the four White Papers contemplates the changing patterns and government responses observed during the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, both regionally and across the country; the lessons learned that can be applied locally and carried forward; and potential long-term changes to trends and responses identified in the original White Paper.

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for

the District of North Vancouver



COVID-19 & TRANSPORTATION

1. HOW HAS COVID-19 CHANGED ACTIONS THAT WILL ADVANCE THE DISTRICT'S OCP GOALS?

The Transportation White Paper and White Paper Snapshot identified actions that are expected to move the District of North Vancouver (District) towards its OCP goals and address existing issues. The COVID-19 pandemic has created new patterns and trends and, as a result, some new actions have arisen, while others have changed in emphasis or importance. These changes are highlighted below.

- **Leverage senior government pandemic recovery funding to accelerate investments in transportation infrastructure.** Senior levels of government are targeting infrastructure investment – including in active transportation and transit – as part of pandemic recovery programs. The Transportation White Paper and Snapshot pointed to the opportunity to leverage investment from senior levels of government to address the most pressing transportation needs. Pandemic response and recovery strategies have intensified this opportunity. The Livable Deep Cove COVID Resilience Project application to the Canada Infrastructure Program – COVID-19 Resilience Infrastructure Stream is one example of this type of action.
- **Continue to develop Town and Village Centres with diverse land uses and housing types where people can work, live, learn, shop, and recreate within a 15-minute walking distance.** The experience of the pandemic pointed to the value of local business and services for local residents, as well as the ability to recreate in natural space with safe, comfortable, and convenient access by active transportation. When combined with other housing actions, 15-minute neighbourhoods also provide access to essential services and transportation options for some equity priority groups.
- **Actively support & promote hybrid work from home for municipal employees and DNV residents as a strategy to reduce trips and greenhouse gas emissions generated during peak hours.** Commuting patterns throughout 2020 have shown that some sectors of the population can work from home on a full- or part- time basis, including some District staff. Traffic patterns in fall of 2020 show that peak hour, peak direction trips continue to be lower than previous years and demand for some types of parking – including for the District Municipal Hall and Operations Centre lots – have decreased. There is an opportunity to reduce congestion during the peak period on an ongoing basis by investing in resident-focused Transportation Demand Management measures that encouraging people who can work from home to do so either full- or part-time. Residents working from home – especially those in Town Centres – are also potential customers for local businesses.
- **Accelerate the study and implementation of improved curbside management.** COVID-19 accelerated the move to e-commerce for residents and businesses and increased the overall demand for curbside space in residential, commercial, and recreational / tourism areas. As noted in the Economy COVID-19 Supplement, businesses of all sizes are transitioning to hybrid brick-and-mortar and e-commerce operations. These trends require careful consideration of curbside uses in to facilitate high value commercial and passenger loading activities.



2. IMMEDIATE IMPACTS & LESSONS LEARNED

| Key Impact | Key Facts & Lessons Learned |
|--|---|
| Combination of mandatory and recommended travel restrictions at the local, regional, national, and international levels, including the closure of the Canada-US border resulted in significant change in travel patterns, with differences in trip distance, duration, and type and destination. | <p>Travel restrictions resulted in a number of changes in community movement to specific locations, as tracked by Google COVID-19 Community Mobility Trends. Canada saw a spike in visits to parks over summer 2020 and a decrease in trips to retail, recreation, workplaces, and transit stations, while people spent longer durations of time at home (Roser et al., 2020). District staff report that regional use of North Shore parks increased significantly (around 75%) and that there was high overall demand for parks – especially waterfront parks – in summer 2020.</p> <p>There was a decrease in average trip distance and duration as people stayed local and made only essential trips. According to Environics Analytics, as Canada moved from a state of relatively low cases at Labour Day into a second wave of COVID-19 in October the average maximum distance away from the home postal code and the time away from home postal code in Canada dropped by 26% and 23% respectively (CUI, 2020).</p> <p>Lesson learned: When people turned towards their local communities, trips became shorter. This indicates the utility of co-locating retail, services, and residential land uses in reducing congestion and emissions, which is consistent with the Town and Village Centres as envisioned in the OCP. These patterns also show the importance of outdoor facilities – like parks – in neighbourhoods to support community health and well-being.</p> |
| Business and office closures resulted in a largescale transition to remote work and post-secondary education for some population groups, significantly reducing commuting trips. | <p>According to Statistics Canada, 5 times more Canadians were working from home than before COVID-19. Teleworking increased from 4.1% of commutes pre-COVID-19 to 21.6% in June 2020. In 2016 just over 12% the District's local labour force worked from home.</p> <p>TransLink estimates approximately 50% of workers in Metro Vancouver have been able to work from home during the pandemic (Mayors' Council, 2020). A BCCDC survey found that 66.6% of residents in the North Vancouver Local Health Area (which includes DNV and CNV) have been able to work remotely during the pandemic (BCCDC, 2020).</p> |



Key Impact

Key Facts & Lessons Learned

Workers with higher levels of education were more likely to telework, while financially vulnerable workers (e.g., younger workers or those with lower levels of education) were less likely to have jobs for which telework was an option (Savage and Turcotte, 2020). The percentage of people working from home across different demographic categories in the North Shore/Coast Garibaldi Region (BCCDC, 2020) is summarized below.

- By income:
 - Less than \$20,000 – 46.4%
 - \$20,000 to \$59,000 – 43.4%
 - \$60,000 to \$99,000 – 56.9%
 - \$100,000 to \$139,000 – 60.7%
 - More than \$140,000 – 74.8%
- By education:
 - Below high school – 40.8%
 - High school – 47.2%
 - Certificate or diploma – 54.4%
 - University degree – 78.0%

Lesson learned: The technical capacity and organizational capability exists to allow more than half of District residents who are employed to work from home, at least part of the time. However, working from home percentages differ greatly based on education, income and other demographics and the opportunity to work from home is not equally available to all residents. System-wide transportation improvements remain important to support residents and businesses that continue to rely on the transportation network.

Traffic volumes dropped significantly early in the pandemic and then rebounded over the summer.

In April 2020, traffic was down 30-40% on Golden Ears, Pattullo, and Knight Street bridges (Metro Vancouver, 2020). The City of Vancouver saw 48% decrease in/out of downtown and a 39% increase in/out of the city boundaries (City of Vancouver, 2020). Data from the BC Ministry of Transportation indicates that average daily traffic volumes crossing the Ironworkers Memorial Bridge and the Lions Gate Bridge decreased 24% and 28%, respectively, between March 2019 and March 2020. The District's traffic count



Key Impact

Key Facts & Lessons Learned

program found a 57% reduction in traffic from pre-COVID volumes on Indian River Drive.

These traffic volume decreases were not permanent, as daily traffic volumes have now rebounded – data from MOTI shows that daily traffic volumes returned to near pre-pandemic levels by June (Gawley, 2020), and TransLink data for major regional bridges showed daily traffic volumes up to 93% of pre-COVID volumes by late summer (Chan, 2020c).

Although daily traffic volumes have largely recovered, peak period, peak direction volumes remain lower than typical. In September 2020, the volume of traffic crossing the Ironworkers Memorial Bridge from North Vancouver to Vancouver in the morning peak period was down more than 20% from 2019 and the return trip in the afternoon peak hour was down around 15%. Traffic volumes throughout the remainder of the day have largely returned to pre-COVID levels.

The reduction in traffic volumes contributed to improved air quality and reduced greenhouse gas emissions in many cities around the world (American Geophysical Union, 2020).

Lesson learned: Although daily traffic volumes returned to levels close to pre-COVID when many restrictions lifted during Phase 3 of BC's Restart Plan, traffic volumes remained lower than normal during the peak hours, which are typically the most congested. This suggests that transportation demand management strategies, including those focused on encouraging residents to work from home, could decrease congestion during peak times; however, it also indicates that the majority of daily trips are not easily reduced. Continued implementation of transportation plans, strategies, and infrastructure will continue to be important.



Key Impact

Transit ridership¹ dropped significantly and has not recovered to previous levels; however, transit remained an essential service, especially for captive riders, many of whom are also essential front-line workers. The decrease in transit ridership resulted in significant revenue losses for TransLink, BC Transit, and other transit agencies around the world.

Key Facts & Lessons Learned

The need for physical distancing, proximity anxiety, increase in work-from-home, higher unemployment, and less overall travel and activity have all contributed to the decrease in TransLink's ridership (Chan, 2020c). Thanks to a number of adaptations, transit has not proven to be a source of significant COVID-19 transmission, despite initial concerns (Sam Schwartz Consulting, 2020a). Even so, April 2020 ridership was down 83% for TransLink compared to April 2019 (Gawley, 2020; Metro Vancouver, 2020; Chan, 2020c).

Former transit users in Vancouver switched to driving (19%) and active transportation (21%), according to research from the University of Toronto (City of Vancouver, 2020a). The rest of the former transit users remained with transit.

Beyond the initial impacts, transit ridership has not recovered as quickly as other transportation modes. Canada-wide, visits to transit stations have only recovered to about 50% of normal as of December 4, 2020 (Roser et al., 2020). TransLink's ridership recovery has essentially been flat since August (in line with international trends) with a high of 44% of pre-COVID levels in fall 2020 (Mayors' Council, 2020a). A University of Toronto survey of Vancouver and Toronto showed that 27% of former transit riders will only return once they are vaccinated (City of Vancouver, 2020a).

Buses have provided an essential transportation mode during the pandemic, with ridership recovering faster on buses than other modes. As of December, TransLink buses were operating at 45% of normal levels, compared to the Expo and Millennium lines (38%), Canada Line (32%), SeaBus (31%), and West Coast Express (15%) (Mayors' Council, 2020a).

The demographics of transit users has also changed, with an increase in captive riders and essential workers using the system. During the pandemic, most transit riders were women, 80% of transit riders had no access to a car, and more than half earned under \$30,000 (CUTA, 2020; APBP, 2020; Palm and Farber, 2020). This is one of the ways that

¹ For context, prior to the pandemic, both BC Transit and TransLink were experiencing North American-leading high ridership growth: between 2016 and 2020, TransLink ridership increased 21% and BC Transit ridership increased 12% (BC Transit and TransLink, 2020).



Key Impact

Key Facts & Lessons Learned

COVID-19 has exacerbated existing inequalities in the transportation system.

TransLink estimates a revenue shortfall of \$600 million to \$1 billion through 2021, depending on COVID-19's trajectory and the pace of the ridership rebound (Chan, 2020c). In October, TransLink predicted revenue losses of ~\$2B to \$4.5B over 10 years (Mayors' Council, 2020b).

Lesson learned: Transit is an essential service and facilitates travel by captive riders and essential workers, many of whom cannot work from home.

The pandemic illustrated that ridership and the resulting fare box revenues can be unreliable and insufficient to provide service that facilitates travel by essential workers and others who need to access jobs and / or services but cannot use other modes. Because of the essential nature of transit service, there is a need for all levels of government to seek reliable funding for transit capital and operations. Municipalities can also support through bus priority measures, as discussed in the Transportation White Paper.

The requirement for physical distancing resulted in more space needed for public realm, including active transportation facilities and, transit facilities.

With lower initial demand for driving and higher demand for recreational, physically distant walking and cycling, the lack of active transportation infrastructure (including insufficiently wide sidewalks and gaps in the walking and cycling network) has been exposed (Nurse and Dunning, 2020; Gutierrez, 2020).

Lesson learned: The pandemic revealed that relatively little space in cities is allotted to walking, cycling, and activation of the public realm and much space is allocated to the operation and storage of private passenger vehicles. There is an opportunity to reallocate space used for other purposes on an ongoing basis.



Key Impact

Changes to active transportation patterns throughout the pandemic have been highly variable and depending on trip type, land use perceived risk of exposure, season, and other factors.

The overall trend shows that recreational walking and cycling volumes increased as people sought outdoor recreation / exercise and avoided transit.

At the same time, active transportation trips for commuting and non-local shopping decreased, especially early in the pandemic. Walking also decreased in denser urban areas in the early pandemic.

Key Facts & Lessons Learned

Several reports indicate that walking and cycling have increased (IEA, 2020); however, trends have been mixed depending on trip purpose, location, weather, and other factors. Apple Maps data showed decreases in denser urban corridors (Wilson, 2020; Sam Schwartz Consulting, 2020b) and the City of Vancouver reported a decrease of 40-55% in pedestrian volumes in April 2020 (City of Vancouver, 2020c). A Montreal case study from March 2020 showed a consistent decline in pedestrian activity in downtown business and commercial areas (as much as -80%), but a consistent increase in recreational trips (as much as +162%) (Eco-Counter, 2020a). This is consistent with data from across the US, which showed increases in park and trail user volumes (Eco-Counter, 2020b).

Walking increased in the summer as people enjoyed the outdoors and COVID-19 cases were lower and the means of COVID-19 transmission were better understood / guidance from healthcare professionals evolved. Data from Apple Maps² comparing direction requests in 2019 vs. 2020 shows that in the City of Vancouver³, year-over-year walking routing requests were down— by 60% in April, climbed steadily up to +60% in September, and a return to near baseline (-4%) as of December 9 (Apple, 2020).

Some people have become more active while others have become less active. Across North Vancouver, 38.5% of residents walk/run/cycle more for recreation, although 27.3% walk/run/cycle less for recreation (BCCDC, 2020). Rails to Trails Conservancy (US) reported a 200% increase in trail usage over 2018 (Wilson, 2020).

In Vancouver, recreational cycling was up 6-50% in April, but commuter cycling was down 35-50% (City of Vancouver, 2020c). Countries across Europe saw cycling volume increases of 20% to over 100% (IEA, 2020). Many people who did not previously cycle (or cycled infrequently) turned to bicycles as a safe and efficient form of transportation and

² This data is generated by counting the number of requests made to Apple Maps for directions in select countries/regions, sub-regions, and cities.

³ Data for the DNV and other North Shore municipalities was unavailable.



Key Impact

Key Facts & Lessons Learned

recreation. This is evidenced by increased demand for bicycles resulted in record sales across Canada and supply shortages globally (Mayors' Council, 2020b; Sharp and Chan, 2020).

In the District, weekend volumes increased by approximately 10% (compared to volumes in 2019), while weekday volumes decreased approximately 20%.

Changes in walking and cycling were not consistent across geographic areas. Sustainable mobility infrastructure is unevenly distributed, resulting in fewer mobility options for people in certain areas (City of Vancouver, 2020a).

Lesson learned: Active transportation played an important role in recreation and health for some parts of the population throughout the pandemic, and there was an increased interest in cycling for recreation and transportation.

The ability to safely and comfortably walk and cycle is related to the quality of infrastructure and active transportation for recreation is linked to access to parks and trails. Social services providers consulted by the District report that geography and weather can limit seasonal access to essential services by all modes of transportation for equity priority groups in the District, making investment in active transportation important. The provision of accessible and comfortable active transportation facilities can support community health.

Global demand for freight has generally been depressed but there has been an increase in home deliveries across sectors.

In the US, local deliveries of less than 100 miles (160km) have increased by 100% due to shelter-in-place orders and closed retail (Sam Schwartz Consulting, 2020b). The growth in e-commerce is explored further in the Economy COVID-19 Supplement.

Lesson learned: E-commerce puts increasing pressure on local road infrastructure and increases competition for curbside uses (on-street parking, loading, etc.).



Key Impact

Visits to Main Street shopping areas across Canada dropped significantly as compared to the same month in 2019 (CUI, 2020).

Key Facts & Lessons Learned

As noted in the Economy COVID-19 Supplement, main streets are becoming dependent on their immediate local markets, which has relevance for local transportation patterns. Main Streets can be increasingly served by walking and cycling. Main Streets with hybrid brick and mortar and e-commerce operations may require more curbside space allocated to more frequent short-term loading.

Lesson learned: Locally focused retail with good active transportation connectivity – like the Town and Village Centres envisioned in the District’s OCP – may be more resilient to economic changes. When local businesses engage in e-commerce they require curbside space for loading, making careful management of the curbside increasingly important.

3. PANDEMIC RESPONSE

Response

Road space reallocation that converted motor vehicle travel lanes and/or on-street parking to prioritize walking, cycling, and safe access to businesses and services.

Lessons Learned

Existing best practice standards for active transportation infrastructure (e.g., sidewalk/multi-use pathway/bicycle lane widths) and building access (e.g., space for queuing) are not sufficient to maintain physical distancing, thus necessitating additional space for active transportation.

Various strategies included:

- Full street closures (closing to motor vehicle traffic)
- Implementation of “slow/open/quiet street” programs that restrict through motor vehicle traffic
- Temporary pedestrian lanes (expanded sidewalks)
- Temporary bicycle lanes
- Curbside queuing areas outside of businesses
- Priority loading areas for quick pick-up/drop-off
- Temporary parklets and patios for outdoor seating, shopping, and eating (e.g. District Temporary Outdoor Business Area Policy)



Response

Lessons Learned

Changes have also been made to the operation of existing active transportation facilities, including:

- Changing sidewalks, pathways, or trails from two-way to one-way operation
- Closing multi-use pathways to bicycles (and providing separate accommodation for bicycles)
- Closing narrow trails and attractions (e.g. Lynn Canyon suspension bridge, Quarry Rock trail)

Temporary, rapid response road space reallocation measures can be quickly and inexpensively implemented following a tactical urbanism approach. Temporary approaches require ongoing maintenance to ensure they remain accessible (FCM, 2020; Sam Schwartz Consulting, 2020b). Throughout the pandemic, municipalities proved that they have the capacity to act quickly (NCC, 2020).

Temporary measures can be hugely successful. The Room to Move – Beach Avenue project in Vancouver became the busiest cycling route in the city, regularly exceeding 10,000 cyclists per day (City of Vancouver, 2020b). The facility is now being transitioned to an interim design. Within the District, the curbside lane on Gallant Avenue between Panorama Drive and Banbury Road was reallocated to pedestrian space in May. This was followed by reallocation of the eastbound travel lane in August. The reallocated space was used as an expanded pedestrian zone and to accommodate public seating and improve accessibility. A survey indicated that 78% of respondents support the pilot and 70% of respondents agreed that the changes should be made permanent.

Many cities (e.g., Seattle, Paris, Berlin, Brussels), including the District, have or are planning to expand their temporary road space reallocation measures and make them permanent (FCM, 2020; Sam Schwartz Consulting, 2020b).

The reconfiguration of streets and curb space can promote both public health and economic recovery, including providing space for restaurants and other businesses to expand into the street or other underutilized areas (FCM, 2020; Sam Schwartz Consulting, 2020b). The District has implemented a Temporary Outdoor Business Area policy to support these types of reallocations.



Response

Lessons Learned

Automation of pedestrian pushbuttons to reduce the need for touching surfaces

Automated signal timing can provide adequate service at many intersections. The District has implemented automation of pedestrian pushbuttons at the following locations:

- Lynn Valley Rd @ Mountain Hwy
- Lynn Valley Rd @ Ross Rd
- Mt Seymour Pkwy @ Mt Seymour Rd/Roche Point Dr
- Marine Dr @ Lloyd Ave
- Marine Dr @ Pemberton Ave
- Marine Dr @ Bridgeman Ave
- Marine Dr @ Philip Ave

The automation of pedestrian pushbuttons should consider accessibility needs (e.g. audible pedestrian signals) and delay to both motorists and pedestrians. In some cases, pedestrian push buttons may decrease pedestrian delay.

Management of trails and parking around tourist and recreational sites

Municipalities and other agencies responded to increased demand for outdoor recreational sites by managing on-street parking in local neighbourhood and in high-demand lots, restricting access to narrow trails, increased traffic control, bylaw enforcement, and other measures. The District has developed a new on-street parking policy for areas around parks and other recreational and / or tourist destinations. Metro Vancouver ran a pilot shuttle system to Lynn Headwaters to reduce parking demand.

Increase in infrastructure stimulus/relief funding from Federal and Provincial governments.

BC Federal and Provincial governments combined to provide one-time emergency operating funding to TransLink (\$644M), BC Transit (\$86), and BC Ferries (\$308M) (Chan, 2020 b) in order to maintain safe service levels.

Senior levels of government are also including investments in transportation as part of recovery stimulus spending proposals. For example, the Covid-19 Resilience Infrastructure Stream (CVRIS) supports the development of active transportation networks, with eligible projects including parks, trails, foot bridges, bicycle lanes, multi-use pathways, and street and park furniture (Government of British Columbia, 2020).



4. LONGER-TERM KEY TRENDS AND EMERGING ISSUES

| Key trend | How can local governments respond? |
|---|--|
| There is positive momentum towards making major shifts in the way cities operate, including being more equitable, inclusive, and sustainable (i.e., “building back better”) (Keesmaat, 2020; World Resources Institute, 2020). This momentum includes changes in the way people and goods travel and the way transportation infrastructure and services are provided. | Move aggressively on existing local and regional transportation targets (such increasing mode shares for walking, cycling, and transit, reduction in overall vehicle kilometres travelled, and reduction in greenhouse gas emissions). TransLink has a long-stated goal of reducing motor vehicle traffic and enabling most trips to be made by active and shared modes (Mayors’ Council, 2020). Shifts in travel behaviour during the COVID-19 Pandemic have shown underlying demand for cycling and walking and created an opportunity to accelerate progress towards these targets. Achieving targets for walking, cycling, and transit, along with expanding the use of new and emerging modes, will rely on advancing many of the actions identified in the Transportation White Paper. |
| Renewed interest in the importance of “15-minute neighbourhoods” that allow people to meet their daily needs within a 15-minute walk of their home (Leanage and Filion, 2020; Keesmaat, 2020) | Continue to implement mixed-use Town and Village Centre plans with a range of housing types, such as secondary suites, multi-plexes, townhouses and low-rise apartments (Litman, 2020; Keesmaat, 2020). This is explored further in the Housing COVID-19 Supplement. Permit corner stores, local retail, and live-work housing to create neighbourhood hubs and add more local parks, recreation opportunities, and amenities that are accessible by people of all ages and abilities (Keesmaat, 2020). In parallel, enact stronger restrictions on low density, auto-oriented development to mitigate the potential negative impacts (congestion, greenhouse gas emissions, etc.). |
| Permanent hybrid work arrangements / increase in full- or part- time work from home across certain sectors and job types (Mayors’ Council, 2020c) | Explore opportunities for targeted transportation demand management focusing on portions of the population that can work from home full- or part-time. This has the potential to decrease motor vehicle trips during peak periods, which could mitigate congestion issues and reduce greenhouse gas emissions from transportation. Local government can participate by continuing to enable hybrid work arrangements for staff and by reducing the number of in-person meetings. Transportation demand management strategies focused on reducing peak-hour, peak direction vehicle trips and parking demand may also help sustain a lasting transition to work-from-home for those |



residents with jobs that allow it. Complete, connected neighbourhoods (i.e. 15-minute neighbourhoods) can also make it more convenient and enjoyable to access services and amenities within each worker's home neighbourhood while working from home.

Local governments can also consider how zoning requirements for residential uses can change to better support hybrid work arrangements and full- or part- time work from home across different densities and scales of development. This is also noted in the Housing COVID Supplement Paper.

Increased reliance on e-commerce and home delivery services (Mayors' Council, 2020c)

Regulate the urban freight delivery sector through street and traffic bylaws to support goals such as congestion mitigation, incentivizing low emissions and right-sized deliveries, and better curb management (Mayors' Council, 2020b).

Prioritize and coordinate flexible curbside space for pick-up and drop-off. This can be complimented by increased access to urban freight deliveries by biking, walking, or transit. One example is TransLink's smart locker pilot program, which allows customers to have deliveries sent to secure 'smart lockers' at SkyTrain stations that notify users when the delivery has arrived (The Canadian Press, 2020). Also consider changing needs for on-site delivery accommodation within multi-family residential, commercial, and mixed- use buildings.

Encourage deliveries via bicycle/e-bike/cargo bike by expanding the active transportation network, ensuring facility widths and parking areas support wider/larger bicycles, and implementing an e-freight hub where vehicles can transfer to low emissions, right-sized, or active mode delivery vehicles for last mile distribution (Mayors' Council, 2020b). The North Shore municipalities are collaborating with UBC in an application to be a test site for a cargo bike distribution study.

Curbside management needs are also noted in the Economy COVID-19 Supplement.



Opportunity for lasting demand for active transportation infrastructure at the neighbourhood level and improved active transportation infrastructure because of the short-term injection of stimulus funding.

Accelerate the trend by rapidly expanding active transportation networks through road space reallocation, including rapidly deploying low-cost car-free zones, slow/open streets, additional public realm, and expanded walkways and cycling facilities. Ensure these active transportation improvements are neutral or positive for transit operations (Mayors' Council, 2020c)

Make key safety improvements at high collision locations to make walking and cycling safer and more comfortable. Deploy slow speed zones by lowering the speed limit and using traffic calming and diversion (Mayors' Council, 2020b). Consider implementing a Vision Zero initiative to end transportation fatalities.

Provide additional active transportation amenities, including bike parking, shared micromobility systems, and other programs to increase access to active transportation (Sam Schwartz Consulting, 2020b).

Create larger pedestrian spaces, including providing enough width to maintain physical distancing (Sam Schwartz Consulting, 2020b).

E-mobility may be a safe and sustainable way to relive transit demand and provide cost-effective alternatives to increased motor vehicle use (Palm and Farber, 2020).

Provide e-bike training and education (Mayors' Council, 2020b) and provide e-bike infrastructure including charging and secure bicycle parking.

Implement an electric bike share program. The DNV and CNV are currently working on developing an electric bike share system for the North Shore.

Potential for an increase in driving mode share, including ride-hailing (Mayors' Council, 2020c).

According to a survey from the Greater Vancouver Board of Trade in May 2020⁴, 36% of Metro Vancouver residents plan to increase use of their car or

Implement Transportation Demand Management (TDM) measures to encourage more efficient travel behavior (Litman, 2020). Work with TransLink and other regional partners to discourage unnecessary driving and facilitate lasting transition to hybrid work-from-home for those who are able through marketing campaigns, support increasing the fuel sales tax, support regional mobility pricing, and create a permanent inter-municipal business license (IMBL) for ride-hailing, with focus on pricing to mitigate congestion impacts (Mayors' Council, 2020c) Reduce space available for driving and parking

⁴ The survey was conducted online from May 20th to 25th. An online panel was used for sampling, which is a randomly recruited research panel consisting of residents from Metro Vancouver, 18 years of age and over. The margin of error on the sample of 300 is +/-5.6%, 19 times out of 20.



car ownership because of COVID-19, while respondents expect to decrease use of transit (34%), car-sharing (13%), and ride-hailing (12%). 32% of respondents desire to increase active transportation – this preference was much more pronounced in the City of Vancouver (43%) compared to the rest of the region (27%) (Greater Vancouver Board of Trade, 2020)

private passenger motor vehicles by reallocating road space to other priority uses (Mayors' Council, 2020c).

Encourage development of charging infrastructure for electric vehicles to ensure that if driving does increase, climate goals are not compromised (Mayors' Council, 2020c)

Invest in transit optimization (i.e., bus priority) measures to avoid buses getting stuck in congestion (Mayors' Council, 2020c).

Partner with TransLink to pilot municipal mobility pricing (Low Emissions Zone) (Mayors' Council, 2020b).

Increase access to vehicles without needing to own one. Vehicle ownership is strongly correlated with high vehicle kilometers travelled, whereas shared vehicle ownership or access (e.g., car share, taxis, or ride-hailing) naturally limits use due to the pay per use model (Mayors' Council, 2020b). Allow free or low-cost on-street parking for car share vehicles, especially in underserved areas (Mayors' Council, 2020b). Partner with industry to co-promote solutions that increase access for new drivers, non-English speakers, and others who are new to shared mobility (Mayors' Council, 2020b).

Transit ridership should eventually rebound, but not until a full return to pre-COVID conditions.

Statistics Canada found that of those who used public transit before the pandemic and who said they were not comfortable going back to their usual place of work, 94% reported that the fear of using public transit was one of their concerns about returning to their physical workplace (Savage and Turcott, 2020). Ridership likely to be suppressed until widespread vaccination, there is confidence in the system, and people start returning to work (Bernardo, 2020). Only 2% of transit riders surveyed said they would never return (Palm and Farber, 2020).

To facilitate the rebound in transit ridership, municipalities should invest in transit optimization (i.e., bus priority) measures to increase the convenience and reliability of transit, using measures outlined in TransLink's Transit Priority Toolkit (2019) and other best practices (Mayors' Council, 2020c). Transit ridership can also be encouraged by investing in measures to make bus stops comfortable and accessible, as noted in the Transportation White Paper.



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COVID-19 & ECONOMY & EMPLOYMENT LANDS

1. HOW HAS COVID-19 CHANGED WHICH ACTIONS WILL ADVANCE THE DISTRICT'S OCP GOALS?

The White Paper and White Paper Snapshot identified actions that are expected to move the District of North Vancouver (the District) towards its OCP goals and address existing issues. The COVID-19 Pandemic has created new patterns and trends and, as a result, some new actions have arisen, while others have changed in emphasis or importance. These changes are highlighted below.

- **Continue to support the Union of BC Municipalities' (UBCM) on-going discussions with the Province of BC around changes to BC property assessment and taxation changes.** The relative importance of businesses' struggle with respect to property assessment and taxation being driven by a property's "highest and best use", rather than actual use, was accentuated by the COVID pandemic. While occupancy costs remained high – in part due to property tax increases – many businesses, particularly in the restaurant and entertainment sectors, saw their revenues plunge from March to April¹. Particular attention will need to be focused on the potential for municipalities to create a new commercial property sub-class which would allow for valuation of actual use and development potential separately. This would allow municipalities to set lower tax rates for the portion of the land assessment related to unused development potential, thus lowering overall taxes for these types of properties.²
- **Explore ways to address business operational challenges.** The COVID -19 pandemic has intensified operational challenges for local businesses, and both retail and restaurant businesses have had to broaden their digital presence to support and expand their brick-and-mortar business, the District will need to continue to explore:
 - Means of leveraging support from the Metro Vancouver Regional Prosperity Initiative's [Digital Main Street](#) initiative and partnership with both the City of North Vancouver and Capilano University to support expanded digital platforms for local businesses. This can include expanded "Buy North Shore" and "Staycation" marketing programs to increase awareness for local and regional residents.
 - Curbside management, including provision of sufficient space for pick-up, delivery, and short-term parking capacity.
 - Flexible zoning to allow local businesses to pivot / adjust to remain viable. This may include added flexibility in allowing for on-site micro-manufacturing, introduction of take-out windows, and allowances for change of primary use.

¹ Includes 68% of business with fewer than 10 employees and 74% of businesses with 10 or more employees. The importance of this as a key issue for DNV businesses was reiterated in the District's Targeted OCP Review Business Survey, which was undertaken in mid-December, 2020. 69% of the 180 businesses responding indicated that this issue was "Very Important" to address 76% of respondents stated that advocating for provincial assessment review and reform through the Union of BC Municipalities was Important / Very Important.

² The Province enacted an 'interim business property tax relief program' for the 2020 tax year, allowing municipalities to exempt eligible commercial properties from a portion (or all) of their municipal taxes, provided a tenant is on a 'triple net lease'. While this addresses year-over-year volatility, it does not address the issue of taxation on unused development potential.



- **Play a leadership role as an organization, using flexible work schedules and remote work options to support improved traffic flows and reduce congestion.** Dramatic growth in the proportion of the employed labour force working remotely / at home in response to COVID-related measures has resulted in employers reevaluating their in-house vs. remote staffing needs. Resulting shifts in commuting and traffic patterns have also given employers more confidence in exploring flexible work arrangements with staff, which in turn can help mitigate oft-cited transportation challenges.
- **Collaborate with the North Vancouver Chamber to explore efforts to retain head offices that would prefer a north shore location.** As COVID-19 has accelerated e-commerce and thus demand for large-scale logistics and warehousing facilities in other areas of the Lower Mainland, there is an increasing chance that local head offices will consider relocation to sites closer to these logistics operations or to markets with less challenging housing and transportation pressures.
- **Support employee attraction and retention efforts.** The District should support continued investment in the evolution of the District's Town Centres, including locating more new housing options close to commercial employment and retail / service amenities. The COVID-19 pandemic has placed added emphasis on the benefits of more complete, walkable neighbourhoods. During the pandemic, tourism-focused main streets experienced more dramatic declines in activity and revenue than their more local-resident-focused counterparts (CUI, 2020). The evolution of Town Centres as more complete, mixed-use nodes will also help to mitigate vehicle trip requirements for shopping, dining and recreation.

2. IMMEDIATE IMPACTS & LESSONS LEARNED

| Key Impact | Key Facts & Lessons Learned |
|---|---|
| Immediate pivot to increased proportion of staff working from home for office-related employment, yet continued need for local service and other place-based employees to travel to work. | <p>5.0M workers across Canada shifted to home working arrangements in late March (in addition to 1.8M already working from home pre-COVID-19³). 2.8M were absent from their regular place of work in late March, 2020, due in part to layoffs and other issues related to COVID-19. Pre-COVID-19, 10% of the national workforce worked from home. This increased to 40% by the end of March, 2020.</p> <p>In the District, in 2016 just over 12% of the local labour force worked from home. According to the BCCDC's BC COVID-19 SPEAK results, 67% of the North Vancouver Sub-Region's labour force was working remotely as of May 2020.</p> <p>The ability to work from home increases with income level. For the North Vancouver sub-region, the work-from-home propensity steadily increases as incomes rise above \$60,000:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Less than \$20,000 – 46.4% |

³ [StatsCan reports numbers on working from home | Investment Executive](#)



Key Impact

Key Facts & Lessons Learned

- \$20,000 to \$59,000 – 43.4%
- \$60,000 to \$99,000 – 56.9%
- \$100,000 to \$139,000 – 60.7%
- More than \$140,000 – 74.8%

Lesson Learned: The capacity for various sectors to accommodate work-at-home arrangements has been greater than expected. More flexible or hybrid home/office work arrangements will likely endure for office-based employment. That said, the District should recognize that many District jobs, particularly in the tourism, health care and service sectors, continue to be place-based. As such, the District should continue to invest in:

- Improved and expanded public transit service
- Expanded array of local housing options
- Town Centre housing, employment and commercial amenity uses

Local traffic volumes plunged in April, 2020 in large part as a result of the increased shift to work from home arrangements.

As noted in the Transportation COVID-19 Supplement, April 2020 traffic volumes were down 30-40% on the Golden Ears, Pattullo, and Knight Street bridges (Metro Vancouver, 2020). The City of Vancouver saw a 48% decrease in/out of downtown Vancouver and a 39% increase in/out of the city boundaries (City of Vancouver, 2020).⁴ Data from the BC Ministry of Transportation indicates that average daily traffic volumes crossing the Ironworkers Memorial Bridge and the Lions Gate Bridge decreased 24% and 28%, respectively between March 2019 and March 2020.

Lesson Learned: Forced work-at-home and hybrid home/office work arrangements have shown that most office-based companies and their employees are able to work effectively outside of a traditional 9 to 5 regular place of work arrangement. Company and employee adaptability suggests that more flexible work arrangements are likely to persist beyond the immediate COVID response period, and that this could be an effective tool for managing transportation flow challenges cited by many local businesses as a key impediment to growth.

⁴ http://www.metrovancouver.org/boards/COVID19/COVID-19_2020-Apr-22_PPT.pdf



Key Impact

Key Facts & Lessons Learned

The District must continue to recognize that there are myriad economic sectors on the north shore (tourism, health care, marine industrial, service sector) for whom on-site jobs are an essential operational requirement. For this reason, and due to uncertainty with respect to post-pandemic office needs, the District should continue to actively pursue the evolution of its Town Centres and related expansion of both housing and public transit options.

Restaurant food & beverage spending in Metro Vancouver dropped significantly in March and April, 2020, and has only partially recovered into fall, 2020.

Month to month, Metro Vancouver food services and drinking places receipts fell 28% between February and March 2020, and a further 41% from March to April (58% drop from February to April)⁵ Receipts rebounded through the summer months, but have again contracted into the fall (to October). Year-over-year, Metro Vancouver food services and drinking place receipts remain down -19% and -20% in September and October 2020, respectively.

Year over year, Metro Vancouver total food services and drinking places receipts:

- March 2020 vs. 2019: down \$363.6m, or 34%
- April 2020 vs. 2019: down \$618.7m, or 60%
- May 2020 vs. 2019: down \$545.5m, or 48%
- June 2020 vs. 2019: down \$325.7m, or 28%.
- July 2020 vs. 2019: down \$260.1m, or 22%
- August 2020 vs. 2019: down \$252.4m, or 20%
- September 2020 vs. 2019: down \$209.7m, or 19%
- October 2020 vs. 2019: down \$218.0m, or 20%.

Lesson Learned: Restaurants in urban areas and, in particular, those located in higher density urban residential and employment centres, initially saw large decreases in sales volume and struggled to retain staff. Beyond seeking funding assistance at the federal level, it is critical that local restaurants have the flexibility to adapt to COVID-driven protocols and spacing needs, including provision of more creative outdoor seating solutions to support needed volumes of patrons. Longer term, it will be important that some COVID-driven adaptations are reviewed, and that those which are proven to be popular and appealing are retained.

⁵ Statistics Canada Table 21-10-0019-91 Monthly Survey of food services and drinking places.



Key Impact

Immediate term impact in overall year-over-year retail sales volume at the Metro Vancouver level from March to October, 2020 (all categories)

Key Facts & Lessons Learned

Metro Vancouver retail sales volume impacts (year-over-year) included⁶:

Overall, Metro Vancouver saw its year-over-year sales volumes fall from March through May, before showing a rebound in June and beyond. There are, however, significant differences on a category-by-category basis, as noted below.

- Furniture and home furnishings saw a 60% and 54% year-over-year decline in April and May respectively, with a rebound since July.
- Electronics sales remained robust through the early months of COVID-19, as many people outfitted themselves for work-at-home and home entertainment. Year-over-year sales increased 20% in March, 14% in April, 17% in May and 23% in June. From March through October 2020, the average monthly year-over-year increase was 17%.
- Building materials and garden stores also saw robust sales throughout COVID, with year-over-year increase of 23% in March, 1% in April, 10% in May, and 44% in June. Average monthly year-over-year increases have been 26% since July.
- Clothing stores have seen substantial sales drops since the onset of COVID, with year-over-year declines of 59% in March, 65% in May, 23% in June and 21% in July. From August to October, the average year-over-year decline in sales is 15%.
- Retail food stores (i.e. grocery, convenience, specialty foods), have seen substantial increases in sales since March 2020.
 - Year-over-year increases were 36% in March, 25% in April, and 20% in May.
 - The spike in sales volumes has been maintained through the fall, with average monthly year-over-year increases of 21% June through September, and 39% in October.

Lesson Learned: COVID's impact on retail spending has varied widely by category. While some retail sectors have experienced significant drops in brick & mortar spending as consumers shift to online options, others have seen volume growth. While the longer-term impact is unknown, commercial property owners and major tenants in categories seeing high volumes of

⁶ Statistics Canada Retail Trade sales by industry. Table 20-10-0008-02. <https://doi.org/10.25318/2010000801-eng>



Key Impact

Key Facts & Lessons Learned

customers may need to consider expansion, access, or circulation improvements to remain functional. As commercial property owners are likely to pivot away from categories most negatively impacted by COVID-driven shopping changes over time, this may require additional flexibility in accommodating non-traditional uses in commercial properties.

Spike in e-commerce retail sales activity across Canada⁷

Canada-wide, there was an immediate impact post March 2020, in both dollar volume and proportion of total (on-line + brick and mortar store sales):

- Unadjusted e-commerce sales volume (year-over-year) up 42% in March, 124% in April, 116% in May, and on average 70% June through October.
- As a proportion of total retail sales, March increased from 3.2% to 5.0%, April went from 3.2% to 10.4%, and May increased from 3.1% to 8.3%.
- From June through October 2020, e-commerce accounted for an average of 5.4% of BC retail sales (compared to 3.4% in 2019).

Lesson Learned: It is likely that the e-commerce sales volume and proportion of total sales increase observed since March 2020 represents more of a longer-term trend or permanent shift in shopping behaviour. Individual and business consumers who may have been more hesitant to shop online in some or all categories, have been forced to explore options that reduce their need to interact in public rather than have goods shipped to a preferred address. While businesses will have to manage the need to balance both brick-and-mortar locations and their online presence, municipalities such as the District will have a key role to play in addressing the business community's increased needs related to increased last-mile delivery and pick-up options. Key aspects of this include assessing and amending curbside demand management, short-term parking / pick-up capacity.

Acceleration in challenges for small businesses in main street / neighbourhood commercial locations

Small independent businesses of all types were experiencing varying degrees of operational struggle prior to the pandemic, mostly due to a combination of high occupancy costs, coupled with employee attraction and retention issues driven by both

⁷ Statistics Canada. Retail e-commerce sales – unadjusted. Table 20-10-0072-01. <https://doi.org/10.25318/2010007201-eng>



Key Impact

Key Facts & Lessons Learned

transportation and housing challenges. COVID-19 has accelerated these struggles for many sectors⁸ and local shopping areas, as operational costs have increased while revenues have languished.

While the reasons for small business challenges are varied, and while they vary area to area and category to category, recent (i.e. post-COVID) North Vancouver Chamber outreach/surveys to North Vancouver businesses identified the most pressing issues facing north shore businesses during the prolonged pandemic, including the following:

1. Customer and employee confidence in safe public transit use (concerns over health and exposure)
2. Inconsistent application of recommended public health measures across different workplaces (social distancing marking, mask policies, in-store capacities)
3. Getting customers back (after COVID-related drops in regular visitation)
4. Getting employees back (after COVID-related staffing retention challenges)
5. Uncertainty surrounding school and child-care programs, access, schedules

As noted by the North Vancouver Chamber, these additional COVID-related challenges are adding additional operating costs and limiting revenues while the following broader issues perpetuate:

- Government regulation
- “Highest and best use”-driven property tax (province of B.C.)
- Transportation challenges, investment in public transit infrastructure
- Availability of housing options
- Challenges in attracting and retaining skilled staff

⁸ Intuit QuickBooks Canada’s holiday sentiment survey indicated that 48% of Canadian small business owners in retail and hospitality stated that they need help from the community and customers through the holiday season, while only 18% of Canadian consumers are expected to do most of their holiday shopping at small businesses. [Nearly half of Canadian small business retailers are relying on the support of their communities to survive the holiday season, says new research from Intuit QuickBooks Canada | Digital Main Street](#)



Key Impact

Key Facts & Lessons Learned

Lesson Learned: The extent to which businesses can resume pre-pandemic operations will depend on the degree of success in containing COVID-19 and the public's degree of comfort in gathering in larger groups again. While the vaccine roll-out continues across the country, the positive impacts of this may not be fully felt until Fall 2021. As such, local businesses will need to continue to explore means of supporting health safety in public spaces, including aligning their interpretations of public health recommendations re: physical distance marking, mask-wearing mandates and related signage, in-store customer limits and the like.

Local businesses in the District, as in most jurisdictions, should continue to explore means of expanding their customer-reach strategy, and in particular leveraging social media and enhanced online presence to support increased customer pick-up and delivery orders as a proportion of total sales. As noted in the earlier actions, the District can play a key role in streamlining permit processes, continuing to advocate for public transit investments identified for the North Shore, and in actively exploring improvements in curbside management, short-term parking and pick-up areas.

Dramatic Impact in B.C.'s Film & TV Industry, followed by strong recovery

Film activity essentially halted March 12th, leading to a massive-drop off in revenue and about 15,000 film industry workers across the province having to sign on the federal CERB program.

Large studio spaces remained booked, as they were tied to ongoing productions and film companies need the certainty that access to such spaces brings.

Aligning with the province of B.C.'s Phase 3 opening in August, television commercials and product placement advertisements began filming again, which has helped to get people back to work.

Lesson Learned: The Metro Vancouver and B.C. film industry has weathered the COVID-19 pandemic significantly better than any other North American hub. Within 6-8 months after B.C. first declared a public health emergency, the film industry has re-mobilized and is busier than ever. Keys to success include strong new public health and worker safety guidelines that have generated certainty and regularity in film work environments.



Key Impact

Tourism-Related Businesses experienced a Dramatic Decline in Visitors and Revenues due to COVID-related travel restrictions.

Key Facts & Lessons Learned

Tourism-related businesses, particularly those supported in large part by international and out-of-province visitors, experienced a dramatic decline in customers and revenues early on in the pandemic and through the summer of 2020. A Destination B.C. report from December, 2020 forecasted that full recovery in the sector may only be reached between 2024 and 2026⁹. The report does point to increases in domestic overnight visitation, which is evidence of B.C. residents' more localized travel and day-trips. Though quantitative data is not yet known, interviews with key local economic development representatives¹⁰ indicated that the following North Shore business types have been particularly hard hit by the pandemic:

- **Unique Tourist Destinations** – Capilano Suspension Bridge Park, which relies heavily on cruise ship and international tourists to support its business, saw activity drop off dramatically in the Spring. Without regular tour bus traffic, the park is operating at a bare minimum and naturally has seen a dramatic decline in gift shop and gate receipts. Grouse Mountain also saw significant decline in visitor volumes and activity, but this is being mitigated in part by local winter ski season visitors.
- **Restaurants** - Though catering to a broader customer base, the decline in tourism has also been a factor driving reduced restaurant expenditures. The B.C. Restaurant and Foodservices Association estimates that roughly 20% of B.C.'s restaurants have closed as a result of the pandemic and that this could potentially rise to more than 30% before restrictions ease.¹¹ The North Vancouver Chamber estimates the impact on north shore restaurant businesses to be roughly in-line with these provincial figures.
- **Travel Agencies** – The North Vancouver Chamber also indicated that local travel agencies have been particularly hard hit by pandemic-related travel restrictions and that some of these businesses will not be able to survive the prolonged decline in customers, or related loss of employees

⁹ Destination British Columbia – “COVID-19 Research Roundup” – December 14, 2020.

¹⁰ North Vancouver Chamber / Economic Partnership North Shore (EPNS)

¹¹ Business In Vancouver. “B.C.’s recovery economy: Pandemic ravages B.C. tourism and hospitality businesses” – January 12, 2021



Key Impact

Key Facts & Lessons Learned

- **Hotel Businesses** – Though more relevant to the City of North Vancouver than the District, due to the limited supply of DNV hotel rooms, the negative impact on hotel occupancy has also had a dampening impact on local spending, particularly at restaurants and specialty retail shops. At the end of 2020, provincial hotel occupancy rates were down 60% relative to 2019¹². As 82% of all BC hotel properties are small and medium-sized, this decline is not just affecting larger global brands. By way of example, the Lonsdale Quay Hotel was the only north shore hotel operating during the summer of 2020. The Pinnacle Hotel, by contrast, was shut down, and did not reopen until September, 2020.

Lesson Learned: Many local businesses are particularly vulnerable to drops in out-of-province and international tourism volumes and must rely on increased local visitor activity to sustain operations. Staycation marketing programs such as those driving increased local traffic to the Lower Lonsdale/Shipyards District in the City of North Vancouver's can have a positive impact in driving local visitation and sustaining revenues. A City of North Vancouver report recommends the city work with both the Districts of North and West Vancouver, the Vancouver North Shore Tourism Association and the Lower Lonsdale Business Improvement Area to support the Staycation Campaign on the north shore¹³.

3. PANDEMIC RESPONSE

Response

Lessons Learned

Improved business data collection and dissemination (e.g. focused outreach to better leverage North Vancouver Chamber business surveys and interviews)

Post pandemic, the importance of collecting and sharing current information about local business areas has increased. It would benefit the District to liaise more regularly with the business community, via the North Vancouver Chamber, to learn from the following:

¹² IBID

¹³ City of North Vancouver – “Business Roundtable Report” – December, 2020



Response

Lessons Learned

| | |
|--|---|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Targeted business surveys to better understand pandemic-related impacts and challenges on a sector by sector and geographic sub-area basis.• Business closure (i.e. exit interview) surveys to better understand drivers behind business closure and/or relocation to other locations, including resulting commercial vacancies as a measure of a commercial area's health and vitality.• Better tracking of business types, mix and potential gaps by location, particularly for street retail locations. This data is not effectively tracked by other entities (e.g. brokerage firms, which tend to track data at a very broad north shore level of geography for economics of scale). This may involve District planning staff better leveraging business licensing data to track change by local sub-area over time. |
| Community business liaison within a municipal planning department to provide advisory to local businesses around local, provincial, and national programs of relevance to their survival, as well as discuss challenges relating to planning and development issues (securing permits, streamlining approvals, etc.) | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Rather than duplicating economic development efforts, which continue to be strong on the north shore, the District should prioritize outreach to local business groups, including the North Vancouver Chamber, to better understand businesses' and sectors' location-specific needs. |
| Extend relaxed permitting approvals for outdoor restaurant patio space (e.g. temporary patio programs) as the ongoing pandemic continues to create challenges for local restaurants given maximum indoor occupancy limits. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The District introduced new temporary outdoor business areas, where customers can shop or eat while maintaining safe physical distancing protocols. Though the program was originally intended to run until October 31, 2020, it has now been extended to October 31, 2021, to reflect ongoing COVID-19 pandemic challenges¹⁴. Given the myriad challenges facing local businesses and restaurants, the District may wish to consider extending a version of this program beyond a purely pandemic-related response. 13 have been approved to date across the District, including Deep Cove, Edgemont, Maplewood, and Lynn Creek. |

¹⁴ www.dnv.org/government-administration/temporary-outdoor-business-areas

Response

Lessons Learned

| | |
|---|--|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Another example is the City of North Vancouver Temporary Patio Program – In mid-September, Council unanimously approved an extension of the city’s Temporary Patio Program for the duration of the COVID-19 pandemic. This allowed neighbourhood pubs, breweries, restaurants, specialty food services and retail businesses with existing permits to apply for an extension. • City of Vancouver Temporary Expedited Patio Program¹⁵ - proved to be a critical initiative to support local restaurants in adapting to COVID-driven spacing requirements and indoor patronage limits. Outdoor seating capacity has become a critical factor for both independent and chain restaurant establishments alike. |
| Supporting small business in adopting digital technology for transactions, expanding online / digital presence to broaden customer reach. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The City of North Vancouver and the District are working with Capilano University to help build online platforms for SME businesses. This partnership effort should continue beyond the pandemic, as businesses of all sizes are recognizing the need to broaden their customer reach beyond their brick-and-mortar locations. Development of these programs should include discussions of related requirements for improved curbside management, short-term parking and pick-up areas to support a broader array of customer interactions. • A successful running program example is the Digital Main Street Program (free business support program based in Toronto, support across Canada)¹⁶ <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Digital Main Street’s shopHERE (Ontario) initiative aims to help small businesses create and configure online stores, trains businesses how to manage online systems, and provides support to bring stores online. The program also offers web-based marketing assistance |

¹⁵ [Temporary Expedited Patio Program | City of Vancouver](#)

¹⁶ [Sign up for ShopHERE to get online today \(digitalmainstreet.ca\)](#)



Response

Lessons Learned

Consider more permanent permit fee reductions (various) or elimination of permit fees as part of more extended temporary outdoor business area program.

- The District currently states that application fees and rent for municipal land are reduced to zero for proposals that comply with the guidelines¹⁷. These fee reductions should be combined with reduced processing times as local businesses need to respond quickly to changing market conditions.

In partnership with other Lower Mainland municipalities, continue to lobby the provincial government, as a member of the Union of BC Municipalities, for commercial tax reform

- As noted in its National November 2020 COVID-19 Retail Recovery report¹⁸, 44% of respondent businesses indicated plans to apply for the new Canada Emergency Rent Subsidy (CERS). Across all retail businesses surveyed, retailers saw their operating costs increase by 25% relative to pre-pandemic operations. Cleaning costs and Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) requirements accounted for about 24% of these operational cost increases. As many businesses were struggling with high occupancy costs (e.g. triple net leases) prior to the pandemic, these increases were especially difficult to absorb.

Supporting programs to provide low-cost options for emerging local businesses

- There is a need to better understand the nature and quality of local inventory of vacant and under-utilized commercial (or other) spaces as emerging businesses tend to need more affordable space options than seasoned businesses.
- Management of this type of dataset would ideally be undertaken by the recommended business liaison position, which should be directly involved in tracking business area mix and vacancy conditions, leveraging information from business licensing renewals and applications.

Focused effort on better understanding nature, mix and customer base of local businesses and clusters given the added challenges of post-COVID operation.

- While the major brokerage firms do track overall market statistics (vacancy, rental rates, general office inventory, etc.) they do not track data on more local commercial districts that would be most relevant to the District (e.g. Edgemont Village, Deep Cove). The District should explore ways of filling data gaps in the existing secondary research, which might involve, for example, partnering with Capilano U students and faculty to better track the business mix,

¹⁷ <https://www.dnv.org/sites/default/files/edocs/temporary-outdoor-business-area-policy.pdf>

¹⁸ "Retail Recovery: Sales, traffic and changes to retail space" – Reporting on COVID series – November, 2020. Colliers Real Estate Management Services.

Response

Lessons Learned

vacancies, and health / vitality of local commercial areas, ideally on an annual basis. This would entail structured field research to build and maintain a database of commercial areas which would include:

- Business mix (units and floor area) by NAICS categories
- Vacancies (units and floor area)
- Number of employees
- Independents, regional and national chains.
- Actively secure and leverage data from secondary sources (e.g. Environics Analytics) to better understand the customer base and visitor volumes associated with each commercial shopping area of interest. This increased understanding of local area change would in turn assist in supporting changes to planning policy and public realm regulations over time.

4. LONGER-TERM KEY TRENDS & EMERGING ISSUES

Key Trend

What is needed from local governments?

Shifting nature of work and related office requirements for desk job sectors; increase in flexible work arrangements (e.g. home vs. office schedules).

More flexibility from local governments in their zoning bylaws, building permits, change of use requirements and other applicable land use regulations to allow for any or all of the following:

- Design shift for new residential homes to accommodate work at home functions (all types).
- Reduced parking ratios/requirements.
- Mixing of non-traditional uses (e.g. office, light industrial, retail, residential).

Continued demand for place-specific work, particularly in the service and light-industrial sectors

Continued commitment to exploring solutions to improve:

- Public transit access and expansion of reliable service.
- Access to broader array of housing options, particularly in walkable Town Centre locations.



Key Trend

What is needed from local governments?

Disruption in office market demand

Disruption across office classes – decreases in Class A office lease rates have driven some businesses to move out of Class B and Class C space. On the whole, however, the market disruption has led to a significant increase in sublease space, as companies have rationalized their needs for space. Downtown Vancouver leads in this category, with 40% of its available office space now attributed to sublease¹⁹.

The Greater Vancouver Area market (as tracked by Colliers), recorded an increase of 68% in subleases from Q1 2020 through to Q2 2020, while Q3 saw a increase of 45%, ending the period at 1.6M sq. ft. of sublease space. This sublease trend contributed to a net Q3 return of nearly 439,000 sq. ft. of available space to the market.

These trends have yielded downward pressure on office rents, which in turn tends to expand businesses' relocation options. The following north shore data is indicative of the change:

- Between Q3 2019 and Q3 2020, Class A office space in Colliers' "North Van" market saw its average net rental rates move from \$24.10 per sq. ft. to \$23.25 per sq. ft.
- Class B office space in North Vancouver saw its net rental rates move from \$21.63 /sq. ft. in Q3 2019 to \$20.28/sq. ft.

Though it is still too early to tell what the longer-term impacts may be on office space demand in various Lower Mainland markets, including North Vancouver, municipalities such as the District should track these market rate and vacancy trends to gauge overall market health and to see if impacts persist over a longer period. The District may want to consider future flexibility in allowing for potential conversions of office buildings to other uses (e.g. residential, mixed commercial).

¹⁹ Colliers International. Greater Vancouver Area Office Market Report – Q3 2020.



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COVID-19 & HOUSING

1. HOW HAS COVID-19 CHANGED ACTIONS THAT WILL ADVANCE THE DISTRICT'S OCP GOALS?

The White Paper and White Paper Snapshot identified actions that are expected to move the District of North Vancouver (the District) towards its OCP goals and address existing issues. The COVID-19 Pandemic has created new patterns and trends and, as a result, some new actions have arisen, while others have changed in emphasis or importance. These changes highlighted below.

- **Increased urgency toward the implementation of the Housing White Paper actions calling for housing diversity across the housing continuum that will focus on enhancing housing security among vulnerable populations.** The pandemic has highlighted the housing vulnerabilities of specific population groups, including seniors, women and children, people with disabilities, people experiencing or at risk of homelessness, and Indigenous and racialized communities. There is elevated need to create adequate and affordable, supportive and transitional housing units to address their housing vulnerabilities within the community.
- **Continue to address the demand for affordable housing as it is likely to grow as COVID-19 income assistance benefits cease and economic recovery gradually resumes.** The COVID-19 pandemic amplified affordable housing as a policy imperative. This was the result of public health orders requiring people to remain at home contributing to job losses and business closures. Financial assistance programs like the Canada Emergency Response Benefit (CERB) and Rental Assistance Programs (RAP) were required to support people in maintaining their access to basic needs (shelter, food, and clothing). The BC Economic Recovery Plan is expected to be gradual, however, financial assistance programs will come to an end. This may again increase financial hardships for households as they transition into employment and resume paying full rent for their housing. Rental rates will need to be monitored and housing that is affordable will require local government regulation to guarantee affordability for residents.
- **Consider the needs of diverse households and vulnerable groups in housing developments to provide appropriate space to support healthy living among vulnerable, low-income multi-generational, and larger households.** The pandemic highlighted the disproportionate health impacts on Indigenous, racialized and other vulnerable groups who live in over-crowded housing or shared accommodations with restricted space for physical distancing. The lack of adequate supportive and transitional housing options for seniors, women fleeing violence, and people at risk of or experiencing homelessness further increased the vulnerability of these groups. Local governments will need to apply an equity focused lens to their response and recovery actions to address core housing challenges facing the most vulnerable community members. Widespread lifestyle changes have shifted housing preference among urban dwellers towards housing that offers greater indoor space and access to green space within close proximity to transportation and amenities in complete neighbourhoods. (See Section “Immediate Impacts and Lesson Learned” for key trends and analysis).



- **Leverage senior government funding and development industry partnership opportunities to secure affordable housing projects.** An effective response to the housing challenges faced by vulnerable groups who are experiencing or at risk of homelessness are strong partnerships and commitments from all levels of government, non-profits and private sector stakeholders. This collaborative approach will drive a community's success in addressing the impacts of the pandemic and the shortage of affordable housing. Local governments play a critical role in the response and recovery from the pandemic. This may include the allocation of land assets and the application of regulatory tools to facilitate the development of residential development that offers a range of affordable housing options.

2. IMMEDIATE IMPACTS & LESSONS LEARNED

| Key Impact | Key Facts & Lessons Learned |
|--|---|
| Job or income loss leading to housing insecurity for renters | The onset of the COVID-19 pandemic saw a sharp increase in the provincial unemployment rate that jumped from 5.2% in February 2020 to a high of 13.1% in June 2020. This has since declined to 7.9% in November 2020. Regionally this represents an additional 145,000 people out of work, directly due to COVID. ¹ BC Housing reported processing rental supplement applications for 98,800 households between April and August 2020 and of these 87,000 households were eligible for the supplement. ² BC Housing reported receiving applications for 3,287 households in the North Vancouver. ³ Prior to the pandemic, the District of North Vancouver observed low vacancy rates (<3%) where healthy vacancy rates hover between 3-5%. ⁴ In 2018, the average vacancy rate for purpose-built apartments was 1.7% and 0% for Bachelor suites, 0.9% for 1 bedroom, 3.2% for 2 bedrooms, and 1.9% for 3+ bedrooms suits. ⁵ The extremely low vacancy rates in the District indicate the potential for increased housing vulnerabilities due to continuous economic insecurity during to the pandemic. |

¹ BC Labour Market Statistics – November 2020. BC Stats. https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/data/statistics/employment-labour-market/lfs_data_tables.pdf

² COVID-19 Housing Sector Updates. 2020. BC Housing. <https://www.bchousing.org/COVID-19>

³ Data received by District of North Vancouver staff through private data request to BC Housing on January 13, 2020.

⁴ Big city rental blues: a look at Canada's rental housing deficit. 2019. RBC. http://www.rbc.com/economics/economic-reports/pdf/canadian-housing/housing_rental_sep2019.pdf

⁵ Metro Vancouver Housing Data Book – September 2019. Metro Vancouver.



Key Impact

Key Facts & Lessons Learned

In December 2020, the District hosted the Social Services Stakeholder Workshop as a part of the Targeted Official Community Plan Review. The workshop provided stakeholders an opportunity to share insights into the core social challenges faced by the community and identify potential actions to address these challenges. Housing insecurity was a common concern expressed by participants. They reported that high rents are a challenge for private households and for non-profit social services providers who are unable to cover operational costs. Participants also noted that some renters are subjected to continuous uncertainty and a lingering sentiment of “where will we go next?” The rents for subsidized housing units are often too high for eligible households and often these units are not near transportation, amenities and services that can support reducing other household expenses.

Lesson learned: The immediate impact of job losses pointed to the increased housing vulnerability across the region. A lack of income challenged vulnerable individuals in safely sheltering in place as a requirement of local public health orders. This demonstrates the centrality of housing as a core determinant of community health. It also highlights the importance of securing stable housing options for renters who are facing core housing needs and who are at greatest risk of homelessness. The Housing White Paper defines core housing need based on if a person’s housing does not satisfy the housing standards of adequacy, affordability, or suitability and is compounded if the household spends more than 30% of its total before-tax income on housing. The economic instability created by the pandemic also made visible households who typically have been more secure and stable in their housing. This was the result of unforeseen economic or social disruptions brought on by public health orders. Perhaps even more important now, local governments should be reviewing, enhancing, or developing policies that encourage purpose-built rental construction through regulatory incentives and/or working with local non-profit organizations to establish a Rent Bank emergency loan program. Intentional policy effort in this direction will support increased access to affordable housing and emergency supports for households to attain and/or maintain their housing.



Key Impact

Overall homelessness has increased in the North Shore, meanwhile emergency shelter providers express concern over low vacancy rates

Key Facts & Lessons Learned

The Metro Vancouver Point-In-Time Count conducted at the beginning of March 2020 found the number of people experiencing unsheltered homelessness in the North Shore to have increased from 11 individuals in 2017 to 46 individuals in 2020; meanwhile a total of 121 individuals were counted as experiencing homelessness in the North Shore, an increase from the 100 individuals counted as experiencing homelessness in 2017.⁶ Total homelessness is comprised of individuals who are experiencing unsheltered and sheltered homelessness. Unsheltered homelessness refers to individuals who report on the night of the count to have stayed outside, such as in a makeshift shelter, tent, vacant building, in a vehicle or were staying temporarily indoors (couch-surfing). Sheltered homelessness includes individuals who report on the night of the count to have stayed in emergency shelters, transitional housing for women fleeing abuse, safe houses for youth, in jails, and health or detox facilities.

The increase in people experiencing or who are at-risk of homelessness has likely been exacerbated due to the pandemic as individuals in core housing need face a higher risk of homelessness. Social Services Stakeholder Workshop participants who provide homelessness services reported facing challenges in providing safe shelter during the pandemic. This was the result of a reduction in the number of shelter beds they were able to provide as part of public health measures and the inability to find more stable housing due to the low vacancy rate of 1.7%.⁷

Lesson learned: There is a clear need for increased social supports and housing options for people experiencing homelessness. The increase in people who are visibly homeless (including homeless encampments) reaffirmed the importance of emergency shelters and housing navigation supports to find stable permanent housing.

⁶ 2020 Homeless Count in Metro Vancouver. August 2020. BC Non-Profit Housing Association.
<https://vancouver.ca/files/cov/2020-homeless-count-metro-vancouver-preliminary-data-report.pdf>

⁷ Richter, Brent. "North Shore homeless numbers climbing, survey finds." August 6, 2020. North Shore News.
<https://www.nsnews.com/local-news/north-shore-homeless-numbers-climbing-survey-finds-3125991> Accessed December 17, 2020.



Key Impact

People experiencing homelessness are disproportionately impacted by disease and epidemics⁸

Key Facts & Lessons Learned

People experiencing homelessness are among the most vulnerable to contracting severe COVID-19 infections due to underlying health conditions, in addition to limited access to hygiene and sanitation facilities, and increased chances of exposure due to continuous movement across locations and overcrowding in shelter facilities.⁹ The transmission rate at shelters is expected to be high, leaving 10-20% of the shelter population at risk of contracting COVID-19.¹⁰ As there are 121 individuals counted as homeless in 2020 in the North Shore, of whom 75 were in shelters, approximately 8-15 individuals in the shelter population face high risk of transmission. Furthering this impact is the duality of the opioid overdose crisis. While not all individuals experiencing homelessness use illicit drugs, those that do are at an increased risk because their health is already compromised due to use of those drugs. Each month the BC Coroner's office releases a report on the number of fentanyl detected illicit drug toxicity deaths. In 2020, BC experienced the loss of 1,288 people to illicit drug deaths. In the North Shore/Coast Garibaldi region 33 people's lives were lost to an illicit drug overdose. Local data is not available to understand how many were experiencing homelessness but within the Vancouver Coastal Health region from 2010-2020, 13.1% of reported deaths were outside, and of the inside reports 47.7% were in other residences which includes hotels, motels, rooming houses, SRO (single room occupancy, shelters, social/supportive housing etc.).¹¹

⁸ Giorgis-Audrain, Alexandra and Neil Arya. "Canada's Responses to COVID-19: Impacts on Vulnerable Populations Experiencing Housing Insecurity." July 21, 2020. Balsillie Papers. <https://www.balsillieschool.ca/canadas-responses-to-covid-19-impacts-on-vulnerable-populations-experiencing-housing-insecurity/>

⁹ Government of Canada: Guidance for providers of services for people experiencing homelessness (in the context of COVID-19). June 29, 2020. Government of Canada. <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/2019-novel-coronavirus-infection/guidance-documents/homelessness.html>

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¹¹ Illicit Drug Toxicity Deaths in BC. 2020. <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/birth-adoption-death-marriage-and-divorce/deaths/coroners-service/statistical/illicit-drug-update.pdf>



Key Impact

Key Facts & Lessons Learned

Lesson learned: The rise in homelessness and illicit drug overdose deaths in the North Shore indicates an elevated need to create more transitional housing and social supports that include harm reduction services for people experiencing homelessness. There is also a need to invest in supportive housing services that offer essential social and medical supports for people who are experiencing homelessness and have severe mental health and substance use challenges. Supportive housing provides housing and the necessary supports for individuals who require ongoing assistance to live independently.

Seniors in long-term care facilities face inadequate living conditions increasing their risk of contracting the virus.

Public health orders for physical distancing exacerbate social isolation for seniors leading to severe physical and mental health impacts

The pandemic exposed housing and health vulnerabilities experienced by seniors and who are at a greater risk of mortality from COVID-19. Public inquiry into the living conditions of long-term care facilities for seniors has elevated as they have become sites for large COVID-19 outbreaks across Canada. The first reported COVID-19 outbreak and deaths in BC occurred at the Lynn Valley Care Home in the District of North Vancouver raising public concern over the operational management of care facilities.¹²

During the Social Services Stakeholder Workshop, concerns were expressed regarding the limited supply of supportive housing options for seniors in the North Shore. In addition, examples were shared of seniors in transitional housing unable to transition to permanent housing due to a lack of affordable housing options that meet their needs. Seniors are vulnerable to the rising cost of living as they have greater income fluctuations that increases their risk of experiencing homelessness.

Furthermore, the higher risk of mortality among older adults and seniors has required a stricter enforcement of physical distancing measures for seniors, increasing their social isolation. Prior to the pandemic, almost 50% of the adults over the age of 80 reported feeling lonely and experienced higher rates of suicide. This is confirmed in seniors care

¹² Hager, Mike and Andrea Woo. "How the coronavirus took North Vancouver's Lynn Valley Care Centre." March 21, 2020. *The Globe and Mail*. <https://www.theglobeandmail.com/canada/article-how-the-coronavirus-took-north-vancouvers-lynn-valley-care-centre/>



Key Impact

Key Facts & Lessons Learned

facilities where 44% suffer from depression and this lack of social network is linked to a 60% increase in dementia and cognitive decline.¹³

Lesson Learned: The impacts of the pandemic on seniors demonstrates a clear need for more supportive housing options for seniors. A federal inquiry found inadequate living conditions in long-term care facilities to have contributed to the high percentage of COVID-19 linked deaths being among seniors residing in care facilities.¹⁴ The findings suggest the need for all levels of government and regulators to establish and enforce design and operational standards that promote healthy living conditions in long-term care facilities.

Local governments can support housing operators in providing recreational and social services for seniors to maintain healthy lifestyles. Along with services, local government can utilize the same tools available to increase affordable housing to secure more senior oriented housing through the development process and increase their advocacy to other levels of government for increased investment in care facilities.

Increased gender-based violence and heightened need for services and resources to support women and children fleeing violence

Earlier in the pandemic, the federal government cited a 20%-30% increase in intimate partner violence. A 2019 report found that women and children seeking support had been turned away from shelter almost 19,000 times a month across Canada.¹⁵ The need for more shelters and social supports for women fleeing violence was expressed by participants at the Social Services Stakeholder Workshop.

Lesson Learned: The increase of violence cited above confirms the persistence of gender inequities, emphasizing a

¹³ National Seniors Council Report on the Social Isolation of Seniors, 2013 -2014. *Government of Canada*. <https://www.canada.ca/en/national-seniors-council/programs/publications-reports/2014/social-isolation-seniors/page05.html>

¹⁴ Chu, Charlene, Donato-Woodger, S. & Dainton, C.J. "Competing crises: COVID-19 countermeasures and social isolation among older adults in long-term care. July 2020. *Journal of Advanced Nursing*. <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/pdf/10.1111/jan.14467>

¹⁵ Ghossoub, Michelle. "COVID-19 exacerbated violence against women. Frontline workers want essential service funding." December 6, 2020. *CBC News*. <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/british-columbia/covid-intimate-partner-violence-1.5830614> Accessed December 9, 2020.



Key Impact

Key Facts & Lessons Learned

need for further local government action to create more emergency, transitional and second stage housing and supports for women, girls, and persons who identify as 2SLGBTQIA* who are fleeing violence. Flexible or inclusive zoning related to the creation of shelters in the community will provide greater support to diverse populations who may require privacy protection differing from traditional shelter programs located in urban centres.

Overcrowding among visible minority groups corresponds with greater risk of COVID susceptibility

Neighbourhoods across Canada with visible minority populations higher than 25% have been founded to be at a greater risk of COVID-19 infection and mortality. This attributed in part to a higher proportion of these groups more likely to live in overcrowded housing conditions and to work in occupations with greater risk of exposure to the virus (e.g., custodial, hospitality, food services, etc.). In BC neighbourhoods where the visible minority population is higher than 25%, the COVID-19 related mortality rate is 10 times greater than in neighbourhoods where the visible minority population is less than one percent of the overall neighbourhood population.¹⁶

During the Social Services Stakeholder Workshop, participants expressed concerns of housing discrimination based on race, age, sexual orientation and or income status. Participants noted a lack of culturally safe housing options and discrimination against Indigenous youth. Additionally, lifestyle choices such as larger families, smoking and pets further reduce adequate housing options for renters.

Lesson Learned: Greater diversity within the housing supply is required to enhance and support household diversity in the District. A range of housing options in terms of size, form and tenure at different levels of affordability is needed to meet the housing needs of households with larger-sized and multi-generational families who choose to cohabit and for individuals living in shared living spaces. The creation of culturally safe housing options offers the opportunity to address housing needs of renters who face racial discrimination.

¹⁶ Subedi, Rajendra, Greenberg, L., & Turcotte, M., "COVID-19 mortality rates in Canada's ethno-cultural neighbourhoods." October 28, 2020. *Statistics Canada*. <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/45-28-0001/2020001/article/00079-eng.htm>



Key Impact

Key Facts & Lessons Learned

Reduced demand for short-term rentals and international student accommodations due to border closures and reduced immigration/travel

The rental market has seen considerable variability as demand for short term rentals remains impacted due to a decrease in tourism, immigration and international students attending school during the pandemic.¹⁷ In 2019, the long-term rental market in Metro Vancouver experienced a record increase in long-term condominium rentals but fluid market conditions have left the rental supply volatile adding to housing insecurity among long-term tenants seeking rental tenure.¹⁸

Lesson Learned: Understanding factors influencing short-term rental and student housing variability present an opportunity to leverage available spaces in the short-term rental market to create more transitional or long-term affordable housing options. Low vacancies in hotels, event halls and conference spaces also serve as opportunities to utilize spaces for emergency housing. As immigration resumes and more permanent residents and international students come to urban centers, additional pressure is likely to be placed on demand for affordable housing options. Meanwhile, the lack of affordable housing options continue to impact households across the region. Local governments can consider the development and implementation of short-term rental regulations to help reduce negative impacts and promote stability in access to available rental supply.

Fire risk from increased activity in homes from rise in remote work environments and people sheltering in place; elevated risk for individuals in aging buildings.

The onset of the pandemic saw an initial increase in residential electricity use due to increase in home activity from people working and cooking more at home.¹⁹ An increased risk of house fires has been observed as a result of the rise in activity at home across Canadian communities.²⁰

¹⁷ Zeidler, Maryse. "Is the pandemic really reducing rents in Metro Vancouver? It's complicated." August 23, 2020. *CBC News*. <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/british-columbia/metro-vancouver-rents-pandemic-1.5696656> Accessed December 16, 2020.

¹⁸ CMHC Housing Observer. "Increase in supply of rental condominiums in Vancouver." November 26, 2020. Canada Mortgage and Housing Association. <https://www.cmhc-schl.gc.ca/en/housing-observer-online/2020-housing-observer/increase-supply-rental-condominiums-vancouver>

¹⁹ BC Hydro Powering the new normal: How COVID-19 has changed British Columbians' daily habits and electricity use. June 2020. BC HYDRO. <https://www.bchydro.com/content/dam/BCHydro/customer-portal/documents/news-and-features/powering-the-new-normal-report.pdf>

²⁰ Simmons, Taylor. "Fires up more than 13% in Toronto amid COVID-19 pandemic." July 29, 2020. *CBC News*. <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/toronto/toronto-fire-calls-up-1.5666141> Accessed December 16, 2020.



Key Impact

Key Facts & Lessons Learned

The District of North Vancouver Fire Department responded to an increase kitchen fire calls at the start of the pandemic as more people were relying on cooking at home.

Lesson Learned: Maintaining consistent fire and life safety education in the community to reduce fire risk in multi-family units and in older, non-sprinklered buildings, including 3-storey walkups is an important preventative measure that needs to continue. As noted in the Housing White Paper, the District has a large aging housing stock as most houses were constructed between 1950 to 1980. Consistent implementation of routine fire and life safety inspections of multi-family and mixed-use occupancies will remain key to addressing the fire risk within the aging housing stock.

Lifestyle changes and health concerns created initial shift in housing preference among urban dwellers opting for less-congested and more complete transit-oriented neighborhoods with access to greenspace; economic recovery efforts and return to business trends create an evolving opportunity for urban centres to combine live/work/play lifestyles.

The shift to remote working environments at the onset of the pandemic increased pressures within households for greater space to accommodate requirements for home offices, gym, children play and learning areas and access to outdoor green space. In addition, early fears on the health impacts of densely populated and crowded public transit corridors also challenged urban residents to feel safe commuting. PwC and the Urban Land Institute highlighted that while some residents may seek suburban environments the trends from before related to creating transit-oriented communities still apply but may evolve with new work from home/live/play lifestyles.²¹ Contrary to this, the most popular property type in housing demand in 2021 in North Vancouver is expected to be single-family detached homes. An estimated 3% to 5% increase in housing prices for the area will likely increase pressure for first time buyers and low-income families to secure housing.²² The rise in housing prices will challenge existing resident and potential new residents from living in the area if affordable and diverse types of housing are not planned for.

²¹ Emerging Trends in Real Estate 2021. PwC and the Urban Land Institute. <https://www.pwc.com/ca/en/real-estate/assets/p737730-emerging-trends-in-real-estate-2021.pdf>

²² RE/MAX North Vancouver Housing Market Outlook 2021. Remax. <https://blog.remax.ca/north-vancouver-housing-market-outlook-2021/>



Key Impact

Key Facts & Lessons Learned

Lesson Learned: Future Town Centre developments are to consider the change in lifestyles and provide a range of affordable housing options in terms of size and access to greenspace, transportation, and amenities. More diversified housing types will need to be created to reduce overcrowding in urban multi-family units to align with health and housing considerations of urban dwellers. Both suburban and urban areas will see a demand for more complete, transit oriented and walkable neighbourhoods.

According to 2016 Census Profile for DNV, 365 households out of 31,115 in the District had more than 1 person per room (approximately 1.2% of households), and 1,090 households were in housing deemed as 'not suitable' (which refers to whether a private household has enough bedrooms for the size and composition of the household, according to the National Occupancy Standard).²³

3. PANDEMIC RESPONSE

Response

Lessons Learned

Federal CERB²⁴ payments offered support to households experiencing income or job loss; additional provincial income assistance²⁵ for people with disabilities and seniors supported households facing heightened vulnerabilities due to economic uncertainty

Emergency income assistance has played a significant role in supporting the most vulnerable populations in securing resources to maintain a basic standard of living. CERB has demonstrated the efficacy of rapid government response and intergovernmental and cross-sectoral partnerships in offsetting impacts of job losses. The pandemic has brought forward unprecedented relief efforts and cooperation from all levels of governments that have assisted vulnerable populations to sustain themselves during this period. However, the lasting

²³ Statistics Canada (2016). "North Vancouver, District municipality [Census subdivision], British Columbia and Quebec [Province]". Retrieved from: <https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/dp-pd/prof/details/Page.cfm?Lang=E&Geo1=CSD&Code1=5915046&Geo2=PR&Code2=24&Data=Count&SearchText=Low&SearchType=Begin&SearchPR=01&B1=All>

²⁴The Canada Emergency Response Benefit (CERB) provided financial support to employed and self-employed Canadians who were directly affected by COVID-19. Applicants received \$2,000 for a 4-week period (the same as \$500 a week), between March 15 and September 26, 2020.

²⁵BC COVID-19 Support for Income and Disability Assistance. 2020. BC Government. <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/family-social-supports/income-assistance/on-assistance/covid>



Response

Lessons Learned

| | |
|--|---|
| | <p>impacts of the pandemic are still to be fully understood and as economic recovery will gradually lead to job creation, further income support and relief is necessary to support households most at risk of homelessness and or facing food insecurities.</p> <p>Reducing financial pressures by expanding affordable housing options and social supports for people living with disabilities supports them in remaining housed and access essential items such as food, utilities and participate in activities to maintain a healthy lifestyle.</p> |
| Enhancement to Canada Child Benefits | Focusing additional supports on families with children – and especially those with young children – mitigated the risks of job loss and homelessness and allowed more families to access – or to maintain – affordable and appropriate housing. |
| Mortgage deferrals support homeowners experiencing job loss | Demonstrates the role of the financial sector in increasing access to affordable housing options. While most homeowners resumed payments at the end of deferral periods, almost 16% of mortgages in bank portfolios chose to defer payments during this period indicating the vulnerability of the housing market and potential long-term impacts on housing prices. ²⁶ Homeowners deferring payments increased their household indebtedness and those households who are unable to resume payments at the end of the deferral periods risk foreclosure of their properties. |
| BC Provincial Temporary Rent Supplement implemented; ended August 31, 2020 | Supports renters who have lower incomes than homeowners and are more likely to be at risk of eviction. The second wave has continued to impact job loss and caused disruption to many industries, resulting in challenges for renters in accessing housing. |
| BC Hydro COVID-19 Relief Fund Program; ended June 30, 2020 | Demonstrates the ability of crown agencies and other organizations to provide support in securing basic amenities to maintain a healthy standard of living. The cost of essential utilities and access to internet services is a core affordability |

²⁶ Hague, Robert. "Seven ways COVID-19 is affecting Canadian housing." October 29, 2020. *RBC Economics*. <https://thoughtleadership.rbc.com/seven-ways-covid-19-is-affecting-canadian-housing/> Accessed December 8, 2020.



| Response | Lessons Learned |
|--|--|
| | challenge that will continue to impact individuals facing financial pressures. |
| Provincial rent increase freeze; extended to July 2021 | <p>Demonstrates the utility of cross-governmental policy tools in creating affordable housing options.</p> <p>This allows individuals to continue to reside in housing without the additional financial burden of increased housing costs. However, individuals who have faced job loss will continue to face challenges with unaffordable market rentals.</p> |
| Emergency provision of hotel occupancy for individuals experiencing homelessness | <p>This demonstrates the success of a cross-sectoral response that centered the provision of housing as an effective response in stabilizing homeless population. BC Housing also provided one community site for self-isolation in North Vancouver with 20 spaces²⁷.</p> <p>Continued advocacy is needed to secure these units as long-term supportive housing for individuals experiencing and / or at risk of homelessness.²⁸</p> |
| <p>Additional resources (e.g., additional shelter spaces) to supporting decampment and housing for people experiencing homelessness;</p> <p>In 2020, the District of North Vancouver allowed recipients of its Municipal Community Service Grants (i.e. social service providers) to repurpose a portion of their grant to assist and protect residents impacted by the pandemic</p> | <p>There has been clear demonstrated need for political support and investment of resources to deliver social programming to meet the complex, range of needs of people experiencing or at the risk of homelessness.</p> |

²⁷ Community Self-isolation Sites and Shelter Expansions. 2020. *BC Housing*. <https://www.bchousing.org/COVID-19/community-sites>

²⁸ McElroy, Justin. "Vancouver hotels being used for homeless should be bought by government," April 29, 2020. *CBC News*. <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/british-columbia/vancouver-homeless-hotels-bc-government-covid-19-coronavirus-1.5549370> Accessed December 8, 2020



4. LONGER-TERM KEY TRENDS & EMERGING ISSUES

| Key trend | What is needed from local governments? |
|--|---|
| Continued political support for adopting innovative practices to address homelessness may lead to a reduction in chronic homelessness. | Local governments can place a continued emphasis on housing as the basis of community health as they develop and implement strategies to provide housing for people experiencing or at risk of homelessness. As mentioned in the previous section, the provincial government purchase of motels for use as emergency housing demonstrated the effectiveness of implementing a Housing First approach in addressing homelessness. A Housing First approach removes sobriety or recovery as a precondition for housing. This approach provides stable supportive housing options for people experiencing homelessness and mental health illness and/or substance use challenges. Local governments can consider adopting a Housing First approach and partner with relevant stakeholders to facilitate the creation of more supportive housing units to address chronic homelessness in the community. |
| Households with reduced or lost incomes will continue to face heightened housing vulnerabilities after federal and provincial income assistance ceases; low-to-moderate income households will continue to face housing insecurity, particularly renters | <p>Local governments can support vulnerable households facing housing insecurity through facilitating development of affordable housing and rental units across housing types through leveraging municipal regulatory tools and streamlining the development approval process. The financial strain on households due to pandemic-related job losses will continue to perpetuate housing vulnerabilities the implementation of income assistance highlighted the need for stronger income supports and a more comprehensive affordable housing response from all levels of government in support of vulnerable households with low-to-moderate incomes.</p> <p>The District can continue to explore partnerships with non-profit organizations, private developers, local and senior levels of government to secure affordable housing and to create a diverse mix of new market and non-market housing of all types. The Housing White Paper recommends potential actions for the District to incentivize non-market and other desired forms of housing. The development review process can be further leveraged to ensure proposed housing projects meet the diverse housing needs within the</p> |



Key trend

What is needed from local governments?

community. An equitable approach to housing requires the creation of affordable and adequate housing that support community members across all demographic groups to live and thrive in a healthy living environment.

The District will be developing a Housing Needs Report of a Housing Needs Report to identify needed affordability levels and prioritize current and future housing needs. A Housing Needs Report is now a provincial requirement to be completed by April 2022. The findings of the report can inform the development of a Housing Strategy for the District that sets targets and measures to meet the housing needs in the community.

Housing prices are expected to rise amidst continued shortage of supply

Local governments can facilitate faster development through enhancing the approval processes and utilization of municipal land for residential development to increase the supply of housing. Increased housing diversity can also be facilitated through implementing town and centre plans as envisioned in OCP.

As stated in the Housing White Paper, if factors impacting the cost of living are not addressed, then the District will continue to experience the “missing middle,” an absence of the demographic group between the ages of 25-40 years who cannot afford to live in the community. In the long-term, the “missing middle” creates low enrollment in public schools and in recreational organizations, shortage of workers in service industries, and fewer small businesses as families continue to be pushed out of the District. The “missing middle” scenario highlights a situation where the District is populated mainly by those households who were fortunate to purchase housing before the market changed and by affluent households who can afford real estate. Young buyers hoping to purchase their first home may have to remain in the rental market for a longer period. This puts additional pressure on the existing stock of rental housing.



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COVID-19 & CLIMATE EMERGENCY

1. HOW HAS COVID-19 CHANGED ACTIONS THAT WILL ADVANCE THE DISTRICT'S OCP GOALS?

The Climate Emergency White Paper and White Paper Snapshot identified actions that are expected to move the District of North Vancouver (the District) towards its OCP goals and address existing issues. The COVID-19 pandemic has created new patterns and trends and, as a result, some new actions have arisen, while others have changed in emphasis or importance. These changes are highlighted below.

- **Opportunity to accelerate the reduction of GHG emissions from transportation.** As identified in the Transportation COVID-19 Supplement, the pandemic has changed transportation patterns, with people making shorter trips, choosing to walk or bike more for some types of trips in some areas, and some people working from home. Municipalities that take this opportunity to invest in active transportation infrastructure may be able to sustain more active transportation trips over the long term. Facilitating ongoing work from home opportunities for municipal staff may translate to long-term reductions in GHG emissions."
- **Leverage federal and provincial recovery funding to increase the resiliency of municipal assets and invest in energy efficient infrastructure.** There is increased funding to assist municipalities advancing climate action in tandem with recovery efforts. In December 2020, the federal government announced details of Canada's strengthened climate plan. This announcement highlighted that "climate change is the biggest long-term threat of our generation, but it is also the greatest economic opportunity."¹ The Province of British Columbia also included climate action incentives in the StrongerBC Plan². The District should consider this opportunity in the context of their own recovery plans and climate action initiatives.
- **Increased need to continue and enhance leadership in climate action.** The District has taken a leadership role in climate action through establishing OCP goals related to climate action, developing and implementing climate action plans, declaration of a climate emergency, and participation in regional coordination and partnerships to enhance resilience. The pandemic presents factors that could both accelerate or postpone climate action, depending on recovery actions taken.³ Lessons from the pandemic have proven that piecemeal, independent actions are insufficient to solve systemic problems. The District should continue, and consider enhancing, actions of coordination, partnership⁴, and targeted advocacy in support of climate action.

¹ <https://pm.gc.ca/en/news/news-releases/2020/12/11/prime-minister-announces-canadas-strengthened-climate-plan-protect>

² <https://strongerbc.gov.bc.ca/stronger-communities>

³ <https://www.mckinsey.com/business-functions/sustainability/our-insights/addressing-climate-change-in-a-post-pandemic-world#>

⁴ One example of a partnership model is 2030 Districts as seen in the Greater Victoria 2030 District <https://www.2030districts.org/greater-victoria>



2. IMMEDIATE IMPACTS & LESSONS LEARNED

| Key Impact | Key Facts and Lessons Learned |
|--|--|
| Short-term reduction of GHG emissions and improvements to air quality ⁵ | <p>Global greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions are projected to be approximately 7% lower in 2020 than in 2019.⁶ A temporary reduction in GHG emissions was to be expected given the decrease in travel and economic activity. However, as Bill Gates highlights, “what’s remarkable is not how much emissions will go down because of the pandemic, but how little.”⁷ Emissions are expected to rebound in 2021 as restrictions are lifted and governments at all levels invest in economic stimulus.⁸</p> <p>Lesson learned: Climate leadership, bold targets and significant action are still required. This relates to actions that the District can take directly, as well as advocating for provincial and federal recovery programs that prioritize climate action.</p> |
| Public and private organizations looked for ways to improve indoor air quality to reduce risk of transmission in buildings where people gather, including schools, health care facilities, and workplaces. | <p>In attempts to reduce COVID-19 transmission risk, buildings have been recommissioned to operate in ways that draw as much fresh air as possible and mechanical systems are run outside of occupied times.</p> <p>Lesson learned: Enhanced air quality requirements implemented post-construction can lead to an increase in building energy consumption and associated GHG emissions. To understand the potential increase in building energy consumption, the District would need to monitor at a building level and incorporate findings into existing goals and strategies to reduce GHG emissions.</p> |
| Office closures and an increase in remote work for many office jobs. | <p>As noted in the Transportation and Economy COVID Supplements, approximately 2 out of every 3 North Shore residents were able to work from home during the early</p> |

⁵ This is corroborated by research summarized in the following 2020 article: Environmental effects of COVID-19 pandemic and potential strategies of sustainability.

⁶ <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2020/09/5-things-covid-19-has-taught-us-about-curbing-climate-change/>

⁷ <https://www.gatesnotes.com/Energy/Climate-and-COVID-19>

⁸ <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2020/dec/11/rebound-in-carbon-emissions-expected-in-2021-after-fall-caused-by-covid>



Key Impact

Key Facts and Lessons Learned

days of the pandemic. This shift to working from home partially contributed to the reduction in GHG emissions.

Lesson learned: The pandemic has demonstrated that technology exists to support working at home across many industries and that remote work is viable for many organizations. Enabling more employees to work from home on a permanent basis may provide an opportunity to reduce the District's GHG emissions.

3. PANDEMIC RESPONSE

Response

Lesson Learned

Pandemic recovery plans being integrated with climate action plans

As communities consider how to recover from the impacts of COVID-19, there is an opportunity to integrate recovery plans with climate action plans that advance a low-carbon and resilient future. There are many synergies and co-benefits to this approach. The City of Vancouver, for example, has included the following in their recovery response plan⁹:

- Added \$12 million to climate emergency projects via Capital Plan Recalibration
- Identifying climate-related projects for potential provincial/federal stimulus funding
- Working on a plan to get people back onto transit
- All Climate Emergency Action Plan policies being analyzed through an equity/affordability lens

The Province of BC has integrated climate action incentives into stimulus and recovery programs, several of which compliment the District's priorities for climate action.

⁹https://council.vancouver.ca/20201103/documents/p2presentation.pdf?_ga=2.69040849.1310613946.1608235471-1880168481.1608235471



Response

Lesson Learned

Changes to the Heating, Ventilation and Air Conditioning (HVAC) systems in buildings to reduce risk of Covid-19 exposure

Buildings can be designed and operated in such a way to increase air ventilation and filtration. For existing buildings, this may require adjustments to HVAC systems and building controls, which may have an impact on building energy consumption and associated GHG emissions. Below are some relevant examples of HVAC system changes¹⁰:

- Increase outdoor air ventilation
- Disable demand-controlled ventilation
- Further open minimum outdoor air dampers, thus eliminating recirculation
- Improve central air filtration
- Consider portable room air cleaners with HEPA (high-efficiency particulate air) filters.

The district would need to monitor energy consumption on a building-by-building basis to understand the level of impact the new operating regimes have on energy consumption.

Facilitation and development of remote work support systems

Many organizations, including the District, have shown that remote work support systems could be deployed relatively quickly and efficiently during the pandemic. Supporting remote work for District employees is one way an organization can help to reduce GHG emissions associated with transportation.

Increased active transportation infrastructure and road space reallocation

As noted in the Transportation COVID Supplement Paper, communities, including the District, rapidly reallocated road space for active transportation options (e.g., walking, cycling) to allow for appropriate physical distancing. One example is the partial reallocation of Gallant Avenue in Deep Cove to provide expanded pedestrian and seating space. Developing active transportation options can also help to reduce a community's carbon footprint.

¹⁰ https://www.ashrae.org/file%20library/technical%20resources/ashrae%20journal/2020journaldocuments/72-74_ieq_schoen.pdf



4. LONGER-TERM KEY TRENDS & EMERGING ISSUES

| Key trend | How can local governments respond? |
|--|--|
| Increased resiliency for communities that implement recovery plans in tandem with climate action | <p>Local governments need to seize this opportunity to implement recovery plans that also include climate action.</p> <p>Local governments can provide political leadership locally, and advocacy with the provincial and federal governments to inform recovery plans and grant programs.</p> <p>Local governments can also embed a climate and equity lens on projects to increase likelihood of leveraging provincial and federal grants and climate action incentives.</p> |
| Buildings with better indoor air quality | <p>It is important for local governments to ensure that their own buildings are meeting or exceeding indoor air quality standards.</p> |
| Permanent and flexible remote work opportunities | <p>Local governments are implementing permanent and flexible work opportunities for their staff. This is a way to reduce GHG emissions while also having health-related co-benefits for staff.</p> |
| Increased demand for active transportation options | <p>Local governments can take a leadership role in advancing active transportation infrastructure (e.g., wide sidewalks, bike lanes). This is a way to reduce a community's GHG emissions while also having health-related co-benefits for its citizens. Further details can be found in the Transportation Covid-19 Supplement Paper.</p> |



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