

To: Richmond City Council  
From: Richmond Economic Advisory Committee

22 February 2011

Re: City of Richmond Employment Lands Strategy

Mayor and Councillors,

By way of this letter, the Economic Advisory Committee (EAC) wishes to advise Council that the EAC accepts the findings of a consultant study titled "City of Richmond Employment Lands Strategy" (the Study). A summary of these findings is included in Attachment 1 to the Staff report under the same agenda item as this letter.

The Study was commissioned by the City of Richmond to assess long-term employment land needs and associated policy implications, in conjunction with the current Official Community Plan (OCP) Update to 2041.

The EAC and Staff jointly developed the Terms of Reference (TOR) for the Study and approved the consultant (AECOM) in the fall of 2009. The TOR delineated two distinct phases for the study – Analysis Phase and Strategy Phase – and included EAC consultation after each phase. In October 2010, as the Analysis Phase was delayed and work on the Strategy Phase was almost complete, consultation with the EAC was pushed back to November. The EAC received a first draft of the Study for feedback in November, 2010.

In its regular quarterly meeting on December 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2010, the EAC discussed the report presented by AECOM. Two significant areas of concern or gaps with the Study were identified in the EAC discussion that ensued:

1. The Study undertook a land use driven, rather than industry driven approach to policy – i.e. future industrial land needs should be framed under the Asia-Pacific Gateway initiative and its impact on industries and jobs throughout Richmond, including significance of the two core enablers: the Vancouver International Airport (YVR) and Port Metro Vancouver (PMV)
2. The Study could be misleading by projecting surplus of industrial land to 2041, as these projections:
  - did not account for the unavailability of YVR and PMV lands for general industrial use
  - conflicted with other data that is not currently in the public domain
  - did not account for possible erosion of industrial land to "highest and best use" (such as office in industrial business parks)

Subsequently, discussions between the EAC Land Use Sub-Committee and Staff reassured the EAC that these concerns will be addressed by Staff in both, the upcoming Report to Council on

the ELS and on an ongoing basis, through the OCP update process. In response to the above concerns, Staff agreed to:

1. Use an industry driven, rather than land use driven, approach to the “Economy” section of the forthcoming OCP Update 2041
2. Change industrial land treatment in the ELS and forthcoming OCP Update 2041 to:
  - properly reference the availability of future industrial lands not as surplus but rather as Remaining Available Land
  - highlight the factors that are likely influence future availability of industrial land (i.e. YVR, PMV lands unavailability for general industrial use; erosion to “highest and best use”; etc.)
  - describe the City's commitment to monitor and participate in (wherever possible and in the public domain) concurrent or future industrial land supply processes and studies, with the intention to adjust City industrial land strategies accordingly (this includes PMV, YVR and MV strategies, and continuous monitoring of industrial business parks for land price changes due to "highest and best use" pressures.

We are very pleased with this outcome, achieved through Staff’s steadfast collaboration with the Land Use Sub-Committee and the broader Economic Advisory Committee. We are highly appreciative for the opportunity to work together with Staff to generate the best possible advice to Council on issues of such critical importance to the current and future economic well-being of Richmond.

Respectfully submitted (on behalf of the EAC) by:

Tom Corsie – Chair, Economic Advisory Committee