

**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Wednesday, February 26, 2025**

A Regular Meeting of the Economic Development Advisory Committee convened on Wednesday, February 26, 2025 at 7:01 p.m. in the Council Committee Room, City Hall, 3000 Guildford Way, Coquitlam, BC, with the following persons present:

**Indicates Virtual Attendance*

COMMITTEE MEMBERS: Councillor Robert Mazzarolo, Chair
Councillor Teri Towner, Vice Chair
Laurel Alexander, Citizen Representative
Leslie Courchesne, Tri-Cities Chamber of Commerce
Mohammad Darwish, Citizen Representative (arrived at 7:03 p.m.)
Haley Hodgson, Citizen Representative
Marion Lochhead, Citizen Representative
Amanda Maharaj, Citizen Representative
Nicole Paul, Citizen Representative (arrived at 7:03 p.m.)
Deryck Persaud, Citizen Representative
Araz Rismani, Citizen Representative*
Matthew Sebastiani, Citizen Representative
Catherine Williams, Douglas College – Coquitlam Campus
Yasmin Jalali, Citizen Representative

ABSENT: Jacqueline Wan, Citizen Representative (Regrets)

GUESTS: John Nan, Senior Account Manager,
Business Development Bank of Canada (re Item 5)

STAFF: Eric Kalnins, Senior Manager Economic Development
Edward Tain, Manager Business Growth
Meghan Malkowich, Committee Clerk

CALL TO ORDER

The Chair called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m. and provided an Indigenous territorial acknowledgement.

The Chair and the Vice Chair provided introductions.

ADOPTION OF MINUTES**1. Minutes of the Economic Development Advisory Committee Meeting held on Wednesday, October 22, 2024**

The Minutes of the Economic Development Advisory Committee Meeting held on Wednesday, October 22, 2024 were approved.

NEW BUSINESS**2. Committee Welcome**

The Committee Clerk gave a presentation entitled “2025 Advisory Committee Orientation Session” and referred to slides contained in the Agenda package.

Discussion ensued relative to Committee members needing to request hardcopy agenda packages in their response to attending the meeting.

The Chair conducted roundtable introductions of Committee members, guests and attending Staff.

3. Review and Adoption of the 2025 Economic Development Advisory Committee Work Plan

The Senior Manager Economic Development and the Manager Business Growth provided introductory comments relative to the Draft 2025 Economic Development Advisory Committee Work Plan.

Discussion ensued relative to Item 9 on the Work Plan being revised to high priority status due to the potential impacts of provincial legislation on transit oriented areas.

**COMMITTEE
RECOMMENDATION**

That Council approve the 2025 Economic Development Advisory Committee Work Plan.

4. Review of the Economic Development Division

The Senior Manager Economic Development and the Manager Business Growth gave a presentation entitled “Review of the Economic Development Division” and referred to slides contained in the Agenda package.

Committee member, Matthew Sebastiani, provided a brief overview of the North Road Business Improvement Area at the request of the Manager Business Growth.

Discussion ensued relative to the following:

- The City’s Economic Development Strategy and the frequency at which it is reviewed.
- The planned Economic Competitiveness Study and inquiries into the possible comparative cities at a provincial, national and international level.
- The role of the City in the development of Business Improvement Areas (BIAs) and opportunities for new BIAs to utilize seed funding from the City.

5. Intelligence to Action – Responding to Tariff Threats

The Senior Manager Economic Development, the Manager Business Growth and John Nan, Senior Account Manager, Business Development Bank of Canada gave a presentation entitled “Intelligence to Action – Responding to Tariff Threats” and referred to slides contained in the Agenda package.

Discussion ensued relative to the following:

- The actions that local businesses have proactively taken in preparation for planned tariffs, including considerations to downsize and obtaining materials from alternative sources.
- The necessity of risk mitigation as a Canadian business owner.
- Opportunities to develop creative ways for the City and consumers to support local businesses.
- The potential result of many current markets being primarily focused in the United States leading to local producers not having the necessary quantities to meet the demands of Canadian businesses and incurring higher cost of local materials.
- The high cost of local industrial real estate potentially resulting in local producers relocating elsewhere in Canada.
- Consumer led decisions to purchase local goods in stores and opportunities to utilize social media and other methods, such as Made in Canada stickers, to facilitate the purchase of Canadian goods.
- Potential consumer confusion about Canadian-owned franchises of American Brands.

- Opportunities for businesses to leverage existing Free Trade Agreements (FTAs) with countries other than the United States, and the challenges individual businesses may face in establishing these international connections.
- Opportunities for business owners to engage with the Federal Minister of Export Promotion, International Trade and Economic Development, and the Minister of Small Business, such as the recent "2025 Team Canada Trade Mission" where the Minister led a delegation of Canadian businesses to Australia.
- The need for more Canadian manufacturing to support a long-term solution.
- The potential removal of interprovincial barriers and how it could assist in local economic growth.
- Changes to federal immigration policies, such as international students and the temporary foreign worker program, and how they may impact the local economy.

6. Support for Small Business

The Senior Manager Economic Development and the Manager Business Growth gave a presentation entitled "Support for Small Business" and referred to slides contained in the Agenda package.

The Committee participated in an exercise to answer the following questions and were invited to share emerging economic issues and events in their communities:

- Are there other policy levers in other jurisdictions that enable or remove obstacles for small businesses?
- What is the #1 obstacle small businesses are facing today?

Discussion ensued relative to the following:

- Concern regarding local business capacity in the Vancouver Downtown core due to community safety issues and how that may make Coquitlam an attractive alternative.
- Opportunities to share information and training with small business owners related to operational requirements, such as Human Resource issues and taxation.
- Opportunities for concentrated marketing campaigns for specific neighbourhoods or districts in the City to increase public awareness of nearby business communities.
- Opportunities to incentivize businesses to open or relocate to Coquitlam, such as Chilliwack's District 1881 offering a free 6-month lease to new businesses.
- Difficulties faced by newcomers accessing start up resources to open new businesses.
- An increasing need for commercial and industrial spaces of all sizes.

- Opportunities to make regulatory environments that are welcoming to new and small businesses to assist in mitigating the impacts of rising operating costs.
- Opportunities to utilize zoning amendments to incentivize developers to increase commercial spaces.

7. Committee Members’ Roundtable / Emerging Economic Issues

This item was addressed in Item 6.

OTHER BUSINESS

NEXT MEETING DATE – Wednesday, May 21, 2025

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 9:00 p.m.

MINUTES CERTIFIED CORRECT:

Councillor Robert Mazzarolo, Chair

Meghan Malkowich, Committee Clerk