

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Wednesday, October 22, 2025

A Regular Meeting of the Economic Development Advisory Committee convened on Wednesday, October 22, 2025 at 7:00 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
Mohammad Darwish, Citizen Representative
Marion Lochhead, Citizen Representative*
Amanda Maharaj, Citizen Representative
Jennifer McKinnon, Tri-Cities Chamber of Commerce
Nicole Paul, Citizen Representative
Deryck Persaud, Citizen Representative
Araz Rismani, Citizen Representative
Matthew Sebastiani, Citizen Representative*
Catherine Williams, Douglas College Coquitlam Campus*

ABSENT: Yasmin Jalali, Citizen Representative (Regrets)
Hayley Hodgson, Citizen Representative

GUESTS: Katie Fitzmaurice, Executive Vice President, Invest Vancouver
(re Item 3)
Aaron Aerts, Vice President, Strategic Investment, Invest Vancouver
(re Item 3)

STAFF: Eric Kalnins, Senior Manager Economic Development
Heidi Hughes, Manager of Tourism and Visitor Economy
Jenalee Kluttz, Manager Environment and Sustainability
Edward Tain, Manager Business Growth
Shanna Killen, Sustainability Programs Specialist
Alex McLellan, Committee Clerk

CALL TO ORDER

The Chair called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. and provided an Indigenous territorial acknowledgement.

ADOPTION OF MINUTES**1. Minutes of the Economic Development Advisory Committee Meeting held on Wednesday, July 23, 2025**

The Minutes of the Economic Development Advisory Committee Meeting held on Wednesday, July 23, 2025 were approved.

NEW BUSINESS**2. Climate Action Plan Update**

The Manager Environment and Sustainability and the Sustainability Programs Specialist gave a presentation entitled “Climate Action Plan” and referred to slides found in the Agenda package.

Discussion ensued relative to the following:

- Concern about the impact of the number of towers being constructed on the flow of air, creating a heat island effect and leading to increased use of air conditioning.
- A suggestion of localized air quality measurement that could be tied to traffic and other factors for the purpose of identifying and developing responses to localized problems.
- A suggestion to consider and be prepared to adapt to changing approaches to sustainability from other orders of government, including potential loss of funding opportunities and changes in demands placed on municipalities.
- A desire to see targeted consultation with businesses, and a suggestion of collaboration with the Tri-Cities Chamber of Commerce, in particular a possible panel or roundtable with energy experts on possible business actions.
- The importance that the Plan does not hinder business growth and objectives.
- A suggestion to remove restrictions on sustainable home construction; for example, recycling rainwater or installing solar panels.
- A suggestion that the Plan focus on the jurisdiction of the City as opposed to other orders of government; for example, educating the public on energy efficiency initiatives related to utilities may not be in scope.
- A suggestion to investigate the Canada Plastics Pact, an industry-led group promoting a circular economy for plastics, which may have useful tools for municipal governments.

In response to Committee discussion, staff noted the following:

- The urban heat island effect can be mitigated by limiting concrete surfaces, increasing tree canopy, and protecting watercourses, and related actions are anticipated in the Climate Action Plan and other City planning documents.
- Measurement of air quality is a responsibility of Metro Vancouver, which provides comprehensive monitoring and live reporting online.
- Recreation facilities have been upgraded for capability to serve as cleaner air facilities, and air quality in these facilities could be monitored in the future for performance.

The Manager Environment and Sustainability and the Sustainability Programs Specialist left the meeting at this point and did not return (7:37 p.m.).

3. Invest Vancouver 2025 Investment Attraction Update

The Invest Vancouver Representatives gave a presentation entitled “Invest Vancouver: A Service of Metro Vancouver” and referred to slides found in the Agenda package.

Discussion ensued relative to the following:

- Appreciation of the exemplary work done by the Economic Development Division, particularly in business retention and expansion.
- A suggestion to promote the development of satellite offices by major employers in order to reduce the proportion of the workforce that commutes.
- The importance and challenge of attracting venture capital, particularly in the high technology industry, and the need to establish clear responsibility amongst Invest Vancouver, Trade and Invest BC, the federal Trade Commissioner, and Innovate BC.

Catherine Williams left the meeting at this point and did not return (8:02 p.m.).

- Understanding opportunities for Coquitlam to better position itself for strategic investment through developing specific and unique value propositions.
- The importance and opportunity of quantum industries for Coquitlam.
- A suggestion to research Coquitlam’s specific workforce strengths and weaknesses as part of the region, particularly in light of its diverse population and high numbers of internationally trained professionals who have been historically underemployed.
- The importance of using database services to benchmark Coquitlam for the purpose of identifying or validating value propositions.
- The importance of commercial development and the need for large multinational enterprises to kick start construction of new buildings.

- The impact of international economic instability on the timelines and rates of investment lead conversions.

The Invest Vancouver Representatives left the meeting at this point and did not return (8:17 p.m.).

4. 2025 Year-End Review / 2026 Work Plan Development

The Senior Manager Economic Development and the Manager Tourism and Visitor Economy gave a presentation entitled “Economic Development Advisory Committee” and referred to slides found in the Agenda package.

Discussion ensued relative to the following:

- A desire to connect events with local businesses to a greater degree; for example, encouraging restaurants to extend hours or offer specials during Lights at Lafarge.
- A suggestion to capitalize on the opening of the SFU Medical School to support life sciences business development.

In response to Committee discussion, staff noted the following:

- Work is ongoing to collaborate with and leverage unique strengths of regional post-secondary institutions to build out program subsectors such as pharmaceuticals and veterinary technology.
- Opportunities for the Committee to be engaged next year include feedback on an expanded communications strategy, investment attraction for specific subsectors, and development of targeted business outreach tactics.

5. Committee Members’ Roundtable / Emerging Issues

The Chair invited Committee members to share emerging issues and information regarding events occurring in their communities.

Discussion ensued relative to the following:

- Concern about and opportunities in an aging population for the development of hospice services and affordable housing.
- Concern about and opportunities in an aging professional workforce for the development of associations to provide advice and mentorship.
- The Tri-Cities Chamber of Commerce hosting a post-budget event with all area Members of Parliament next month.
- A Zero Waste Conference taking place in Vancouver next week, and may be informative for the City’s Climate Action Plan.

- Appreciation of the strategic and data-driven approach the City is taking in economic development in the face of significant challenges for the region, province, and country in the coming year.

OTHER BUSINESS

NEXT MEETING DATE - 2026

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 8:55 p.m.

MINUTES CERTIFIED CORRECT:

Councillor Robert Mazzarolo, Chair

Alex McLellan, Committee Clerk