



# City of Burnaby Dialogue: Summary Report

On May 4, 2021 the Burnaby Board of Trade was joined by over 50 representatives of major employers and key business stakeholders for a special *Government and Business Forum* with elected representatives of Burnaby City Council.

The event featured facilitated roundtable discussions where attendees shared the business issues that were top of mind for them, and discussion was held on how best to ensure Burnaby remains a desirable place to locate and do business. Joining the business representatives in this session were Mayor Mike Hurley and five City Councillors. The general themes of those discussions were captured and have been condensed into this summary report:

## Top Discussion Points

- Taxes and Economy
- Permits and Zoning
- Transportation and Traffic
- Housing
- Climate Change and Sustainability

## Taxes and Economy

There was discussion around the City’s proposed property tax increase this year of 2.95%. Discussion included positive comparisons with other neighbouring jurisdictions and the importance of maintaining tax competitiveness with the rest of the region.

In addition, the issue of property tax increases driven by “highest and best use” evaluations by BC Assessment was discussed. It was raised in the sessions that the City of Burnaby has appealed to the province to change the method of determining property values to mitigate the impact of redevelopment potential on businesses’ property tax bills. Several attendees raised this as a significant concern for business, and something the Burnaby Board of Trade has been advocating for with the province for several years.

## Key Sectors in Attendance

- |                       |                |
|-----------------------|----------------|
| Digital Media         | Energy         |
| Technology            | Biotech/Health |
| Finance/Insurance     | Construction   |
| Manufacturing         | Non-Profit     |
| Education             | Telecom        |
| Hospitality           | Retail         |
| Professional Services | Film/TV        |



The Burnaby Board of Trade is one of the largest and most active business networking and advocacy organizations in the region, and has a unique economic development role in the City of Burnaby. Find out more about the Burnaby Board of Trade at [BBOT.ca](http://BBOT.ca)

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## Permits and Zoning

Some discussion was had around zoning and finding space for businesses as residential use expands. As the City matures and neighbourhoods change, certain types of employers (manufacturing, light industrial) may be forced to move. The concern raised at the session was that if we do not create new places for them to move to within Burnaby, that they would move to other cities.

In addition, there was discussion about the record-breaking number and value of development applications and permits in the city. There was discussion about the length of time building and development applications currently take and if the process can be streamlined or additional resources assigned to ensure timelines don't also increase as application volumes remain high.



## 1.45 billion

*Value of building permits issued in 2020  
by City of Burnaby*

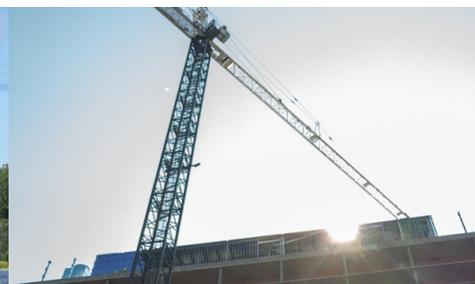
## Transportation and Traffic

Movement throughout the city was raised in several of the discussion groups, with a focus on both mass transportation options and improvements to the road network. In line with previous Burnaby Board of Trade priorities, the issue of North-South transportation was raised and discussed throughout the event, with participants recognizing the need for increasing such transportation options within the city.

Grade separation was raised in the discussions as a way of increasing efficiency of the road network and reducing conflicts between transportation modes such as pedestrians, cars and trains. Elevated pedestrian walkways and road overpasses were raised as examples of infrastructure improvements which could help facilitate the movement of people and goods, particularly along North-South routes.

Several participants voiced support for expanding and enhancing the bike routes and bike lanes in the city as a way of encouraging more cycling and supporting employees who choose to commute by bike.

Several bottlenecks, particularly in south Burnaby, were raised as concerns and discussion was had about possible solutions on the road network.



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## Climate Change and Environment

Climate change and the City's actions to address and mitigate it was discussed by participants at the session. Conversation focused on the City's goal of achieving net zero carbon emissions by 2050, and that the City has chosen to prioritize initiatives that reduce emissions from transportation and buildings as part of its plans.

Discussion also touched on efforts to retrofit older municipal buildings, electrify the City's own transportation fleet, and supporting further rollout of electric vehicle charging stations in the city.

## Housing

The availability and affordability of housing was discussed throughout the event. Discussion focused on the need for diverse housing options including more affordable and family-sized options such as larger condos, basement suites, laneway housing and townhomes. The issue of 'gentle density' was raised as a way of increasing this type of housing supply throughout the city.

The idea of creating more 'complete communities' was raised as a way of providing options for people to access goods and services closer to home without the need for driving.

The discussion around housing was underpinned by a concern that a lack of affordability makes it more difficult for local employers to attract and retain talent, and makes them less competitive against other jurisdictions. This was raised as a particular concern with employers which were recruiting skilled talent which was mobile and sought-after in many competing cities.

**Thank you to our local elected officials for participating:**

**His Worship Mayor Mike Hurley**

**Councillor Pietro Calendino**

**Councillor Sav Dhaliwal**

**Councillor Colleen Jordan**

**Councillor Joe Keithley**

**Councillor James Wang**

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