



# City of Port Moody

## Report/Recommendation to Council

Date: October 18, 2021  
Submitted by: Community Development Department – Economic Development Office  
Subject: Moody Innovation Centre as a Provincially-Supported Innovation Precinct

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### Purpose

To provide Council with information on research related to innovation precincts.

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### Recommended Resolution(s)

**THAT the report dated October 18, 2021 from the Community Development Department – Economic Development Office regarding Moody Innovation Centre as a Provincially-Supported Innovation Precinct be received for information.**

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### Background

In October 2019, Council approved the terms of reference for the Moody Innovation Centre Task Force. The purpose of this body is to explore and advance opportunities for partnering among the public/governmental entities that own land in the Moody Centre Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) area with the goal of joint investment in, and development of, an economically vibrant business, educational, and/or light industrial zone that cultivates and offers excellent jobs focused on emerging technologies, science, and innovation.

In January 2021, Council approved staff to proceed with investigating an innovation precinct for the city. Provincial Support for Innovation Precinct is a priority 1 Council Strategic project (**Attachment 1**). In March 2021, Council approved the Economic Development Committee (EDC) Work Plan, which includes a track for an innovation precinct working group.

Alan Winter, BC's first Innovation Commissioner, released [a final report](#)<sup>1</sup> in May 2020 outlining how the provincial government can support and grow innovation. One of the recommendations is to fund and support the establishment of innovation precincts, which comprise various elements including post-secondary institutions, venture capitalists, scale, purpose, and networking space. While there are several incubators and accelerators in BC, there are few regional precincts. Innovation precincts generate more innovation, diversification, and opportunities. Early this year, the Provincial government announced plans for a Kelowna-based

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<sup>1</sup> Province of BC, "Putting Innovation to Work for British Columbia: Growing B.C. Companies," [https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/government/final\\_ic\\_report\\_2020.pdf](https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/government/final_ic_report_2020.pdf)

[innovation precinct in partnership with UBC](#)<sup>2</sup>. While formally not recognized as an innovation precinct, [Surrey's Health and Technology District](#)<sup>3</sup> has been designed along similar principles.

Canada's largest innovation precinct is the [MaRS Discovery District in Toronto](#)<sup>4</sup>, which supports startups in the health, cleantech, fintech, and enterprise sectors. It opened in 2005.

## Discussion

Through discussions with the Province's Ministry of Jobs, Economic Recovery, and Innovation (JERI), the Province indicated that it does not have a clear definition of what constitutes an innovation precinct. There is no formal process or checklist per se that a municipality would follow to establish one. However, representatives did convey the following as key considerations for the City:

- municipalities need to clearly articulate what their economic development goals and how these align with Provincial goals (e.g. CleanBC, Ministerial mandate letters);
- each project or concept is unique and should be based on the strengths and assets of the municipality;
- provincial and federal agencies will come to the table as progress is made;
- as innovation is driven by the generation and commercialization of new ideas, universities that conduct research are critical components of an innovation precinct; and
- organic growth is likely the most viable way to proceed though this is a long-term timeline.

An example from Surrey was provided. Simon Fraser University began with a "beta space" composed of classrooms and research and study areas in a repurposed department store. In 2006, a new campus building, which is integrated into the Central City Mall, was constructed. Expansion of the campus occurred in 2011 and subsequent funding from government was secured: \$90 million for the Sustainable Energy Engineering program, \$17 million in 2019 from the Province for the Quantum Algorithms Institute, and an additional \$2.2 million from Western Economic Diversification Canada in 2021, also earmarked for the Institute. While the circumstances related to the Surrey campus development were unique, this example illustrates how additional government funding could be attracted as progress is made. However, as noted earlier, timelines are long-term.

Other feedback that was received included that the Ministry of Advanced Education has a ten-year capital funding cycle, so any capital funding for post-secondary projects requires early queuing, and Pacific Economic Development Canada (formerly Western Economic Diversification Canada) is often the agency to provide early support in innovation projects.

Through outreach related to this project and others, contacts have been established with JERI, including trade and investment representatives on both the east and west coasts of the United States, as well as with Pacific Economic Development Canada and Invest In Canada.

The objectives of this project were to develop relationships with relevant Provincial contacts regarding Port Moody's interest in establishing an Innovation Precinct in Port Moody and to create bilateral communications to share information, updates, leads, and contacts. This work includes:

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<sup>2</sup> University of British Columbia, "UBC Innovation Precinct," <https://ubcinnovationprecinct.ca/>

<sup>3</sup> Health and Technology District, <https://healthandtechnologydistrict.com/>

<sup>4</sup> MaRS Discovery District, <https://www.marsdd.com/>

- establishing contact with the Province and notifying them that Port Moody has an interest in establishing the Moody Centre TOD area as an innovation precinct;
- understanding the criteria the Province uses to designate an area as an innovation precinct;
- maintaining periodic discussions with key provincial representatives to share information, updates, leads, and contacts relevant to innovation precincts; and
- forwarding information and opportunities into existing processes such as the OCP and TOD master planning process as appropriate.

### Next Steps

1. The Economic Development Committee (EDC) is continuing its work on innovation precincts as part of its 2021 Work Plan. A report back to Council on its findings is anticipated for the first quarter of 2022.
2. Staff will continue to explore opportunities to add and foster relevant contacts and potential partners and investors that may support the future establishment of a precinct.

Upon completion of the work by the EDC, this project may be marked as closed. Subsequent specific actions can be brought forward as Council strategic priority projects.

### Other Option(s)

This report is provided for information only. No other options are being proposed.

### Financial Implications

There are no financial implications associated with the recommendation in this report.

### Communications and Civic Engagement Initiatives

There are no communications and civic engagement initiatives associated with the recommendation in this report.

### Council Strategic Plan Objectives

This recommendation is aligned with the Economic Prosperity priority – Enhance economic development opportunities in Port Moody and Identify and explore opportunities to develop economic zones in key neighbourhoods.

### Attachment(s)

1. Provincial Support for Innovation Precinct Council Strategic Project Outline.

### Report Author

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## Report Approval Details

Document Title:	Moody Innovation Centre as a Provincially-Supported Innovation Precinct.docx
Attachments:	- Attachment 1 - Provincial Support for Innovation Precinct Council Strategic Project Outline.pdf
Final Approval Date:	Oct 29, 2021

This report and all of its attachments were approved and signed as outlined below:

Kate Zanon, General Manager of Community Development - Oct 26, 2021 - 6:31 AM

Dorothy Shermer, Corporate Officer - Oct 27, 2021 - 10:23 AM

Rosemary Lodge, Manager of Communications and Engagement - Oct 28, 2021 - 9:00 AM

Paul Rockwood, General Manager of Finance and Technology - Oct 28, 2021 - 10:45 AM

Tim Savoie, City Manager - Oct 29, 2021 - 9:47 AM