

11. ECONOMIC VIBRANCY

A vibrant and sustainable economy is one that provides diverse and viable economic opportunities that meet the needs of present and future generations – it is an important feature of a prosperous community. The Uptown Douglas Corridor (UDC) has close to 10,000 employment opportunities, a diversity of shops and services, and a developing housing stock. With regionally significant transportation corridors and proximity to downtown Victoria, it is a true economic centre in the Capital Region. With continued development in the Westshore and downtown Victoria, and the planned expansion of high frequency transit lines, the area is well positioned to be an economic hub for the region into the future.

Significant economic advantages, including commercial, industrial and transportation assets will be built upon to enhance and diversify the area. Numerous retail and commercial outlets such as the Uptown Shopping Centre, which continues to develop, the Saanich Plaza and the Gateway Plaza will serve as a foundation for economic growth. The UDC's future as a dense, mixed use community offers an opportunity to enhance these existing assets and create a sustainable, prominent regional hub, with a vibrant and diverse local economy. Additionally, new infrastructure to support quality of life and livability, such as parks, daycares, social gathering spaces and shops will help businesses attract and retain employees.



The area also has a strong industrial presence with 30% of Saanich's industrial lands. Industrial lands are important to both the local and regional economy, providing employment opportunities and essential services. In recent years, industrial vacancy rates have been declining and the demand for industrial land is growing, signaling a need for intensification. Additionally, the types of industrial spaces required have been shifting with trends in the larger economy, resulting in new space requirements for emerging sectors. The UDC has an opportunity to meet the needs of a changing economy while preserving industrial uses and creating a dynamic, integrated neighbourhood. Being at the forefront of an emerging economy offers an opportunity to grow the UDC in an economically, socially, and environmentally sustainable way.

Economic vitality in the UDC will be strengthened and supported through the realization of the land use intensification and transit supportive development directions found throughout this Plan. This section focuses specifically on economic growth and diversification in the UDC, and how appropriate supports can be provided for entrepreneurs and businesses of all sizes and types to continue to thrive.

OBJECTIVES

- A. Become a preeminent regional center for commerce, employment, arts, culture and entertainment.
- B. Support and encourage a diversity of commercial uses, including both regional and local serving retail, office, technology oriented, institutional and visitor accommodation uses.
- C. Enhance urban realm conditions to create a leading location in the region for business and commercial activity and an attractive location for new development.
- D. Allow more flexible uses in industrial areas to accommodate the changing needs of this sector.
- E. Foster innovative business and urban development by supporting emerging industries and associated education opportunities.
- F. Support greater access to and expansion of economic opportunities for all in order to achieve an equitable allocation of the benefits of development and economic growth.

11.1 ECONOMIC ENHANCEMENT AND DIVERSIFICATION

This Plan aims to retain and increase employment within the Uptown – Douglas Corridor to enhance its status as a key economic centre in the region. Employment retention and growth will be achieved by providing opportunities for intensification and diversification of commercial and industrial lands to support a growing variety of business needs

Commercial intensification will help to create a hub of retail and services. Diversification emphasizes the importance of

retaining industrial lands while recognizing the growing shift away from traditional industrial forms towards lighter, multi-purpose forms, including the tech industry.

The policies in this section seek to promote economic enhancement and diversification in the UDC area and three Neighbourhood Sub-areas (the Douglas - Oak Hub, Tolmie Quarter and the Tennyson Industrial Quarter).

GENERAL POLICIES

- 11.1.1 Foster the UDC as an employment centre for office, professional services and retail by supporting existing and new development and attracting anchor tenants, with a focus on areas identified as Core in Map 5.1.
- 11.1.2 Strengthen the UDC as a location for job creation by supporting a variety of commercial uses that attract both regional and local serving retail.
- 11.1.3 Support efforts to make the UDC area a competitive and affordable location for development and business location and operation.
- 11.1.4 Explore the introduction of cultural facilities in the UDC and encourage physical links to related businesses such as restaurants, cafes, and visitor accommodations (See also Policy 10.3.3).
- 11.1.5 Support greater access to and expansion of education, housing and employment opportunities for groups facing longstanding disparities to ensure an equitable allocation of the benefits of development and economic prosperity.

NEIGHBOURHOOD SUB-AREA POLICIES

Douglas - Oak Hub

- 11.1.6 Support development applications along Douglas Street that accommodate a strong concentration of employment and commercial uses along with complementary uses such as multi-unit residential development, hotels, restaurants, public institutions, personal service businesses and retail stores.
- 11.1.7 Support development along Oak Street and Audley Crossing that includes new multi-family buildings and more pedestrian-oriented commercial including retail, restaurants, cafes, and entertainment.

Tennyson Industrial Quarter

- 11.1.8 Support density increases that provide additional employment opportunities and protect the industrial character of the area (See also Policy 5.8.1).
- 11.1.9 Encourage a range of businesses to locate in the Tennyson Industrial Quarter, from start-up firms to corporate headquarters, with particular focus on knowledge-based industries such as technology, research and development.
- 11.1.10 Support the growth of new industrial sectors and promote this sub-area as a place where startups can transition to mature businesses.

Tolmie Quarter

- 11.1.11 Support live-work units, preferably fronting the Galloping Goose Trail or Boleskine Road, as a means to support small, local businesses.
- 11.1.12 Promote mixed-employment as a means to establish the area as a centre of learning and community services.

11.2 ECONOMIC SUSTAINABILITY

The Uptown – Douglas Corridor (UDC) is an economic hub for the Capital Region, envisioned to remain robust and resilient into the future. One way of achieving resiliency is through creating and maintaining a diversity of economic assets and, as articulated in the Community Values section of this Plan, supporting economic investment and development that fosters a range of business and employment opportunities. A diversity of assets will be realized through supporting local economic

development, providing services for employees in the area, providing opportunities for new businesses to establish and thrive, and providing diverse transportation options for employees to commute to and from the UDC.

The policies in this section aim to establish and enhance a diversity of economic assets in the UDC area and two Neighbourhood Sub-areas (the Douglas - Oak Hub and the Tennyson Industrial Quarter).

GENERAL POLICIES

- 11.2.1 Support the development of a Business Improvement Association to provide business support and marketing to business owners, help navigate business and development processes, and build a collective identity for the UDC.
- 11.2.2 Ensure job space is well integrated with the transportation network by providing greater proportions of office and other higher ridership uses in proximity to transit stations and the Galloping Goose and Lochside Trails.
- 11.2.3 Engage businesses in providing daycare facilities on-site to attract and retain a diverse workforce.
- 11.2.4 Encourage “high performance areas” that promote energy efficient and low carbon building design and practices, particularly in areas with large amounts of planned new development.
- 11.2.5 Encourage flexible building design and construction that allows buildings to be repurposed and accommodate a variety of uses in the future.



SUB-AREA POLICIES

Douglas - Oak Hub

- 11.2.6 Enhance the vibrancy of the Douglas Street corridor to optimize its potential to attract investment and the development of new commercial uses.

Tennyson Industrial Quarter

- 11.2.7 Promote the Tennyson Industrial Quarter as a center for innovative business and development practices, fostering job creation in sustainable industries.
- 11.2.8 Foster the long term success of industrial businesses while supporting their evolution into places with a broader mix of businesses, living-wage jobs, and higher employment densities.
- 11.2.9 Improve the urban design and character of streets in the area to increase its attractiveness to existing and future employers.

Tolmie Quarter

- 11.2.10 Encourage a Master Plan for the redevelopment of the School Board site, ensuring a commitments towards the preservation of its heritage assets and supply of new community facilities.

