

Vancouver Economic Commission

COVID-19 Economy Update to City of Vancouver and VEC Staff

July 16, 2020

Updated: 16-July-2020

This document is a monthly roundup of the COVID-19 related impacts, mitigations, and recovery planning for the Vancouver economy with additional global insights and thought leadership. The purpose is to provide a Vancouver-centric briefing to City of Vancouver leadership and staff at the Vancouver Economic Commission.

Purpose

1. Provide an overview of the Vancouver economy, including key COVID-19 related economic impacts, mitigations and recovery planning efforts
2. Consolidate and escalate outstanding priority industry asks of all levels of government, including COV
3. Provide key regional and global insights by sector, including thought leadership, innovations and evolving economic recovery plans to inform COV and VEC's own recovery efforts

Disclaimer

1. The information contained in this report is updated with quantitative and qualitative data from various reputable sources
2. The insights in this report are drawn from the work of numerous other datasets that vary in scope and scale; as such, VEC acknowledges it has made judgment calls when processing the raw data to generate pertinent Vancouver-centric numbers for reporting and analysis
3. All efforts have been undertaken to capture the best relevant available data and intelligence, but the findings may not be fully representative of all businesses and sectors
4. Key assumptions have been made to develop the most accurate metrics at the point of report delivery. These metrics and assumptions are under continuous review
5. Sector specific summaries are available on request

Further Information:

For a summary of the latest Government support and industry guidance to businesses and individuals, please refer to VEC's COVID-19 webpages: <https://www.vancouvereconomic.com/covid-19>

Executive Summary

Through June and July, we have seen a cautious and gradual re-opening of businesses in Vancouver and the Metro region. Enhanced hygiene, PPE and work protocols are visible across the city, in line with [health officials advice](#):

Vancouver's unemployment rate has risen to 13.0% in June 2020, up from 10.8% in May 2020. This compares to similar increases seen in other major Canadian cities.

Unemployment rate (%) 3 month moving average, 15 years and over, comparison of major cities

	January 2020	February 2020	March 2020	April 2020	May 2020	June 2020
Montréal	5.6	5.5	6.7	10.7	14.1	15.0
Toronto	5.0	5.0	6.0	8.0	11.6	13.8
Calgary	7.1	7.4	8.9	10.9	13.3	15.2
Vancouver	4.3	4.2	5.4	7.6	10.8	13.0

Key efforts to support economic recovery include:

- Supporting local travel for Vancouverites, [Tourism Vancouver](#) has launched a contest to support local businesses and get more people out in the community
- Businesses, services and community facilities continue to reopen in Vancouver, including restaurants, retail, service industries, office spaces the [Vancouver Public Libraries](#), [Bloedel Conservatory](#) and [outdoor pools](#). There is also increased access for [active transportation](#) through Vancouver streets
- As of July 14, the City of Vancouver created nine [pop-up plazas](#) to allow residents more public space outside, and has continued its rollout of the “slow streets” program
- COV, VEC and other Metro Economic Development teams are proactively advocating to the Provincial and Federal governments for financial support for the [Digital Main Street Program](#) and [ShopHERE](#) sub-program (see [Appendices](#))
- COV and VEC are working with Statistics Canada on a Data Pilot to provide faster, more informative city-level economic, business, and social data
- COV and VEC are working with McKinsey Consulting as part of COV's COVID-19 Economic and Community Recovery Program
- VEC continues to collaborate and advocate at all levels of government for key sectors including the Film and TV, Clean Tech and the Tourism and Hospitality sectors
- Council constituted a [Council COVID-19 Recovery Committee](#) and VEC [presented](#) an outline of the impacts of COVID-19 to the local economy and a path to economic recovery and resilience

Impacts and Government Support

The Government of Canada recently released its [Economic and Fiscal Snapshot 2020](#) sharing the impact of COVID-19 on Canadians. Key findings include:

- In March and April, over 5.5 million Canadians – representing 30% of the workforce – lost their jobs or saw significant scale-back of hours
- In May, unemployment rose to 13.7%
- National GDP dropped by 8.2% (annualized)
- The COVID-19 Economic Response Plan has provided more than \$230 billion – nearly 14% of GDP – to financially support and protect the safety of Canadians

BC Chamber of Commerce, Business Council of BC, Greater Vancouver Board of Trade, and the Mustel Group released the results from their fourth [Pulse Check Survey](#) on July 16, with further background information [here](#).

- 65% of businesses surveyed are using some type of government support
- Only 28% of businesses currently on government support programs expect to return to normal once the support programs end
- One-in-ten of businesses on government supports will have close either temporarily or permanently

Financial and health/safety support programs have significantly benefitted Canadians and their businesses. Known impacts of these programs are as follows:

- The [Federal Canada Emergency Response Benefit \(CERB\)](#) processed over 19.02 million applications and paid a total of \$54.79 billion in benefits, as of July 5
- The [BC Business COVID-19 Support Service](#) served over 4,200 businesses through phone, chat and e-mail since its launch in April
- The City of Vancouver launched the [Temporary Expedited Patio Program](#), and has expedited over 180 temporary patio permits to date

COVID-19 continues to disproportionately affect visible minorities and women, on both a national and international scale. For example, [Statistics Canada](#) has reported that visible minorities are more vulnerable to the financial impacts of COVID-19. New research from the [Province](#) shows that workers most affected by COVID-19 are in public-facing service jobs, and with higher percentages of unemployment for women and young people.

Business Needs Amidst Reopening

1. **Rent Supplement:** Making rent payments remains a large concern for residents and businesses locally and nationally. The Province of British Columbia has extended the Temporary Rent Supplement for residents (up to \$500) until August 31, 2020. Additionally, the federal government has extended the Canada Emergency Commercial Rent Assistance (CECRA) program for eligible small businesses until the end of July. However, many small businesses are advocating for increased eligibility for the program, as [41% of small business owners](#) who believe they qualify for CECRA say their landlord has not applied for the program.
2. **Liability Insurance coverage:** The Province has also provided [protection from COVID-19 liabilities](#) for amateur sports, to allow British Columbians to experience the health benefits of the outdoors. As

businesses continue to reopen, the federal and provincial governments have been asked to create a government-backed business insurance coverage fund, since insurance companies are currently excluding communicable diseases from claims, exposing companies to liability.

3. **Buy-Local:** There is an ongoing call to purchase local. Research by [LOCO BC](#) shows local businesses recirculate up to 4.6 times more revenue in the local economy compared to multinational businesses, indicating their key role in economic recovery.

Further information on national efforts and curated thought leadership included in the report:

1. The [Provincial Reopening Table](#) highlights the phase each province is in, key business industries that have recently been opened, and the number of people allowed at indoor and outdoor gatherings.
2. The [Thought Leadership](#) table continues to showcase pieces about an inclusive, green and sustainable recovery from COVID-19 at a global and local level.

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1. Industry Priority Asks of Government

The ongoing capture of industry feedback and requests in this section have been collected through key VEC stakeholder channels and partners, with a focus on new and current government stimulus packages and the outstanding needs of the business community.

1.1 Top Outstanding Asks to Government

Sector in Focus – Creative Sector		
Level of Government	Type of Ask	Ask
Federal	Reopening	Work with the federal government and Statistics Canada for better sector-specific data, including film
Federal and Provincial	Financial Support & Health/Safety	Government-backed insurance coverage fund – currently, insurance companies are excluding communicable disease claims from policies, exposing companies
Federal and Provincial	Financial Support	Economic relief measures (especially operational relief and subsidiaries) should consider ongoing challenges to live performance venues, which will need to stay closed longer than other businesses
Provincial	Financial Support	Continued stability of motion picture production incentives, to maintain BC's competitive advantage and protect a high-emplying sector that spends \$3.8 billion annually
Provincial/City	Health/Safety	Public promotion of the motion picture industry's safe working practices

Asks for the City of Vancouver	
Type of Ask	Ask
Financial Support	Working with the Province, consider new parameters for SME property tax calculation. Small businesses in areas such as Commercial Drive are struggling to make rent as their property taxes are based on air space above buildings
Financial Support/Reopening	Decrease wait time for business licensing, which would allow businesses to experience less economic loss due to inability to operate – LOCO BC
Financial Support/Reopening	Offer a sustainable business tax credit for businesses whose practices support the environment and human wellbeing – LOCO BC
Health/Safety	Public promotion of the motion picture industry's safe working practices

Asks for the Provincial Government

Type of Ask	Ask
Financial Support	Defer property and payroll tax payments, and review timelines for public sector construction projects. Accelerating projects in K-12 and post-secondary institutions could lessen impact on the construction sector
Financial Support	The Small-Scale Meat Producers Association requests more meat processing infrastructure in the region to better improve BC's food security
Financial Support	Continued support and long-term solutions for BC transit after summer funding ends
Financial Support	Continued stability of motion picture production incentives, to maintain BC's competitive advantage and protect a high-emplying sector that spends \$3.8 billion annually
Health/Safety	Public promotion of the motion picture industry's safe working practices
Health/Safety	Public inquiry into construction site sanitation, further laws, guidance, and oversight
Health/Safety	Financial support for restaurant so reopening plans are feasible at 50% reduced capacity
Reopening	Uphold the Province's commitment to Community Benefit Agreement (CBAs) as part of recovery planning

Asks for the Federal and Provincial Government

Type of Ask	Ask
Financial Support	\$500 million to be deployed for workforce training, with up to \$1,000 per employee for stipends and other income supplements
Financial Support & Health/Safety	Government-backed insurance coverage fund. Currently, insurance companies are excluding communicable disease claims from policies, exposing companies
Financial Support	Economic relief measures (especially operational relief and subsidiaries) should consider ongoing challenges to live performance venues, which will need to stay closed longer than other businesses
Financial Support	Temporarily suspend hotel tax before lifting restrictions, and continue to work with the federal government to support regrowth in the sector by funding tourism associations
Financial Support	Request for GST/HST relief waiver for the first quarter of 2020 to relieve financial stress for businesses in tourism and hospitality sector
Financial Support	\$1.5 billion recovery package for the sector, as outlined in a recent Tourism and Hospitality Roundtable with the Premier

Asks for the Federal Government

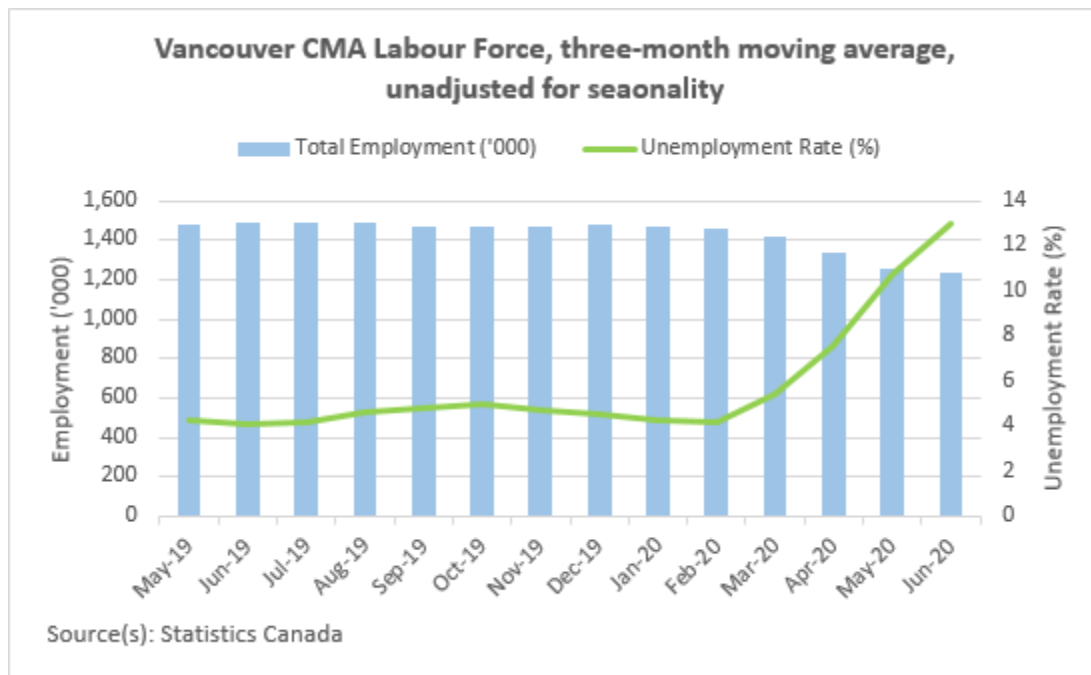
Type of Ask	Ask
Financial Support	Canada Emergency Commercial Rent Assistance (CECRA) should increase accessibility for SMEs. Forty-one percent of small business owners who believe they qualify for CECRA said their landlord has not applied to the program
Financial Support	Improved and accessible municipal-level data from Statistics Canada
Financial Support/Reopening	Creation of a nation-wide investment retrofit program, and retrofit federal buildings
Reopening	Continue to communicate that Canada will expand its best-in-class climate and environment policies

2. Economy at a Glance

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- [3.1 Vancouver](#)
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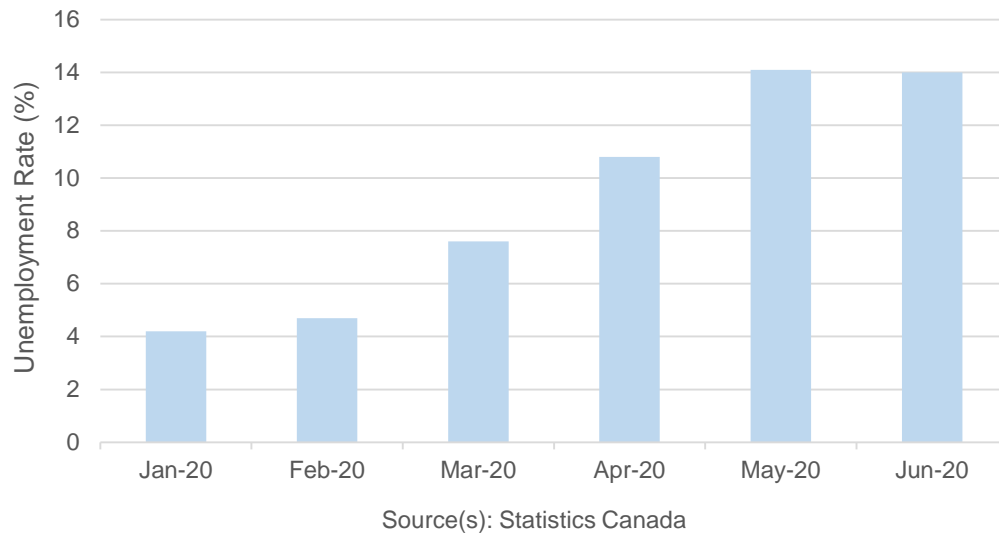
2.1 Vancouver Economy at a Glance



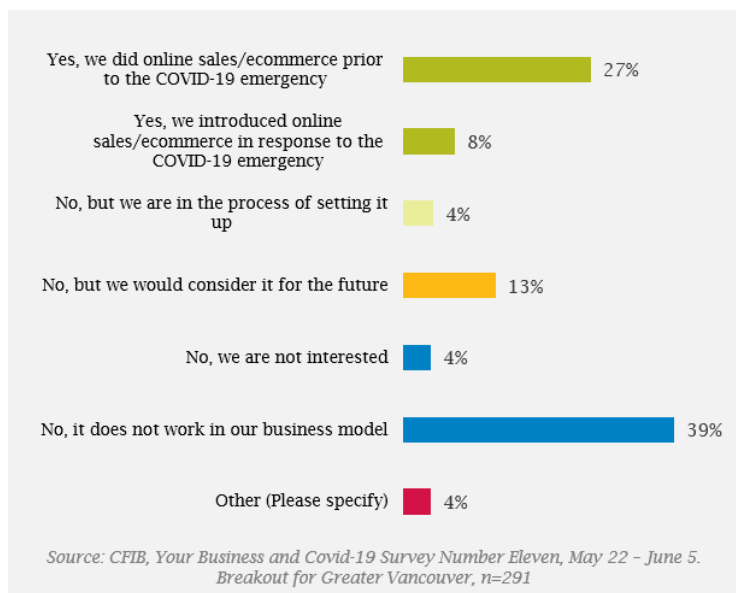
Source: [Statistics Canada](#)

- The Vancouver CMA unemployment rate (three-month moving average) for June 2020 was 13.0%, up from 10.8% in May – compared to June unemployment rates for Montreal CMA at 15.0% and Toronto CMA at 13.8% - [Statistics Canada](#)

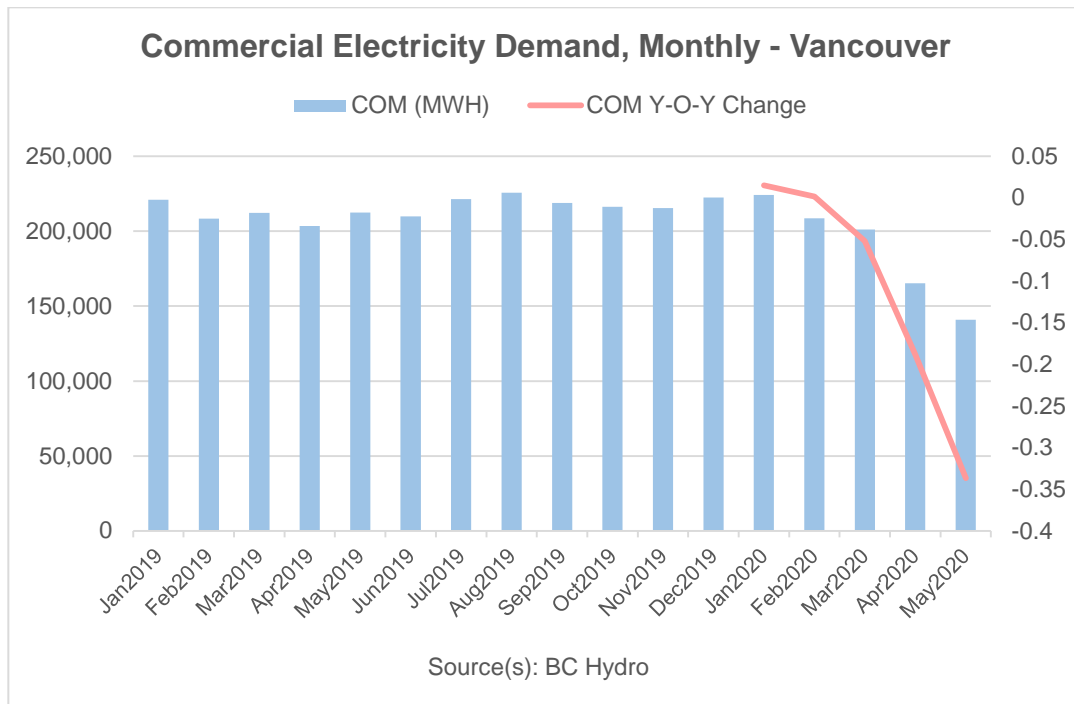
Vancouver CMA Unemployment Rate, monthly, unadjusted for seasonality



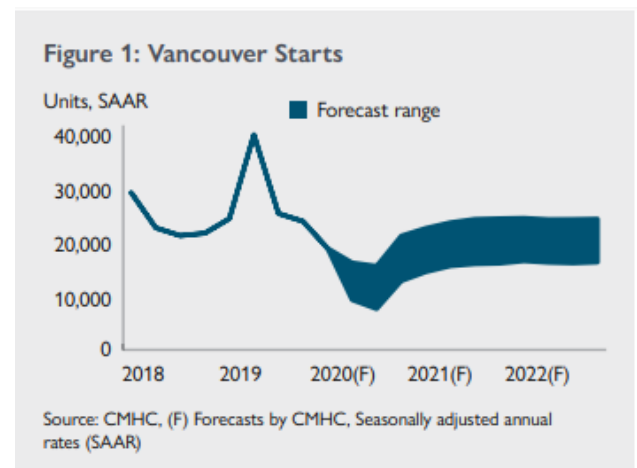
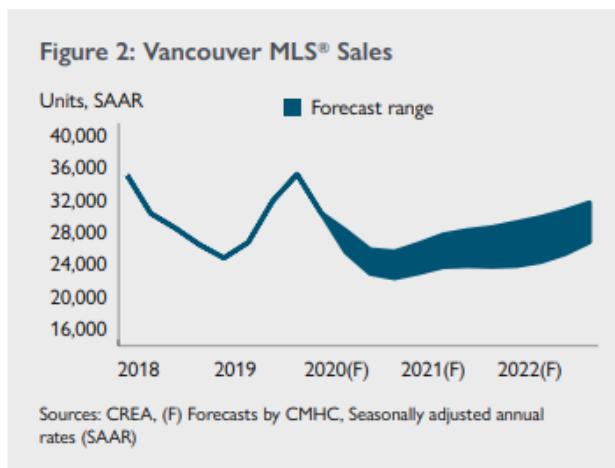
- Vancouver CMA unemployment rate for June 2020 was 14.0%, down 0.1% from 14.1% in June. In comparison to the moving average data above, monthly data is not smoothed out to account for possible fluctuations, but does suggest that the unemployment rate is starting to stabilise [Statistics Canada](#)



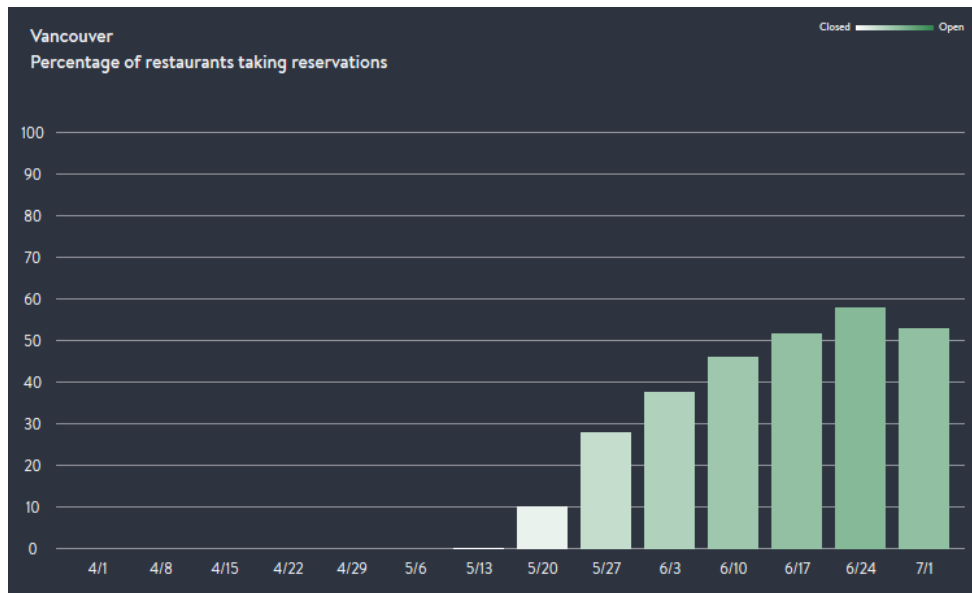
- Results from CFIB find that 39% of businesses in Greater Vancouver surveyed are unable to pivot their business to online sales due to current business model - [CFIB](#)



- New BC Hydro data obtained by the VEC shows that commercial and industrial electricity demand has declined significantly, while residential demand has increased due to more employees working remotely
- In downtown Vancouver, office vacancy rate in Q1 increased for the first time in many years, from 2.2% to 3.3%, while net rent fell \$1.62 to \$44.62 per square foot - [CBRE](#)



- As of June 2020, for Vancouver CMA it is forecast that home resale market sales will contract and remain low for 2020, and begin to improve in 2021. The price of homes will begin to recover in late 2022 - [CHMC](#)
- In June 2020, home sales in Greater Vancouver increased by 64.5% compared to May 2020 – a 17.6% increase year-over-year, but still 21.9% below the 10-year moving average for June - [Real Estate Board of Greater Vancouver](#)



Source: [OpenTable](#)

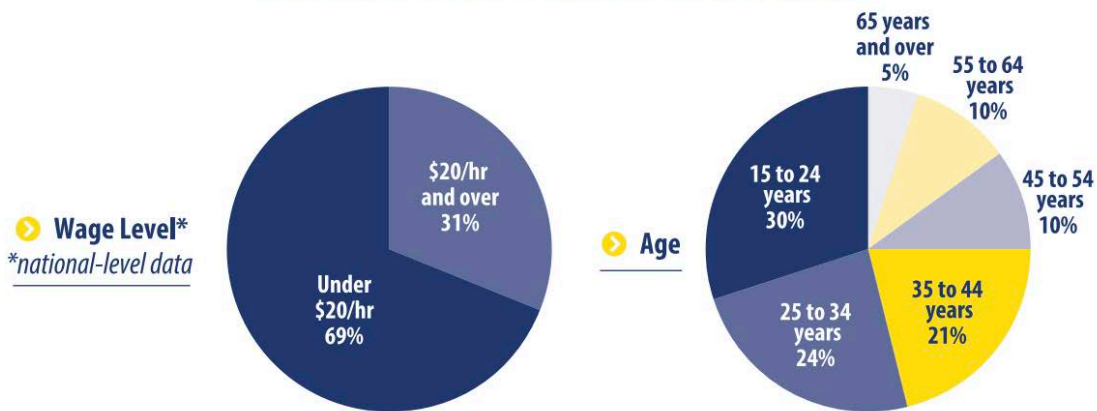
- As Vancouver reopens, the percentage of restaurants taking reservations continues to increase - [Opentable](#)
- Due to financial restraints, Vancouver non-profits surveyed may have a reduction of 21% in their full-time workforce by June 1, 2020. Within the next six months, 121 Vancouver non-profits are at risk of folding – an approximate loss of 3,000 jobs (Vantage Point BC Non-Profit Sector COVID Impact Survey, April 2020)

2.2 British Columbia Economy at a Glance

FIGURE 1: BC industries with biggest job losses due to COVID-19

	% of industry's jobs lost	Share of total job loss	% of job losses that were women
All industries	13%	100%	54%
Accommodation and food services	50%	30%	65%
Retail trade	19%	19%	57%
Construction	14%	11%	10%
Information, culture and recreation	22%	8%	57%
Other services (except government)	29%	11%	70%
All other industries	4%	22%	49%

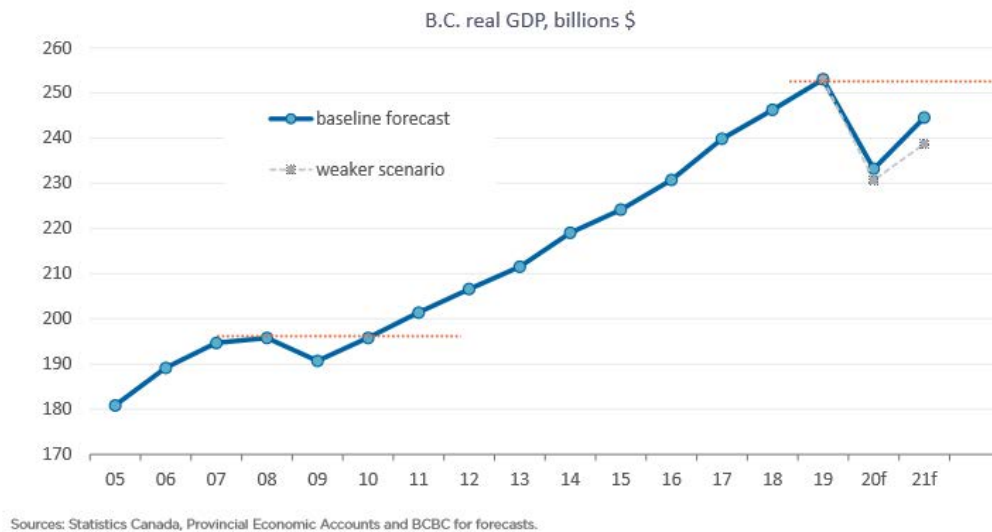
FIGURE 2: Share of total job losses by category



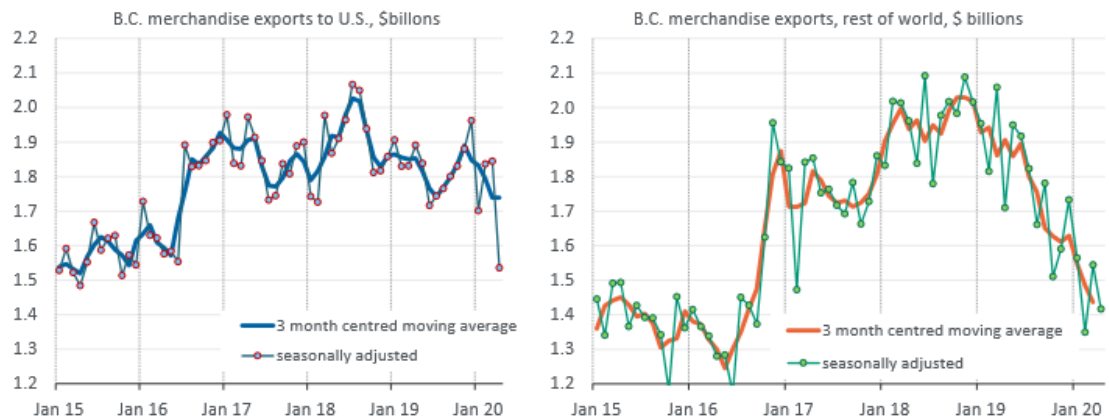
Source: All data is from the Statistics Canada Labour Force Survey. All numbers are unadjusted. February to May 2020.

Source: [Province of BC](#)

- New research from the Province shows that workers most affected by COVID-19 are in public-facing service jobs, and with higher percentages of unemployment for women and young people - [Province of BC](#)



- The BC economy is forecast to shrink by 7.8% in 2020, and grow by 4.8% in 2021. However, economic output will remain below the 2019 peak - [Business Council of BC](#)
- A different forecast from TD suggests that, as of June 17, BC real GDP is forecast to decrease by 5.6% in 2020, but almost fully recover with an increase of 5.4% in 2021. Nationally the real GDP is forecast to decrease by 6.1% in 2020, and increase by 5.2% in 2021 - [TD Economics](#)

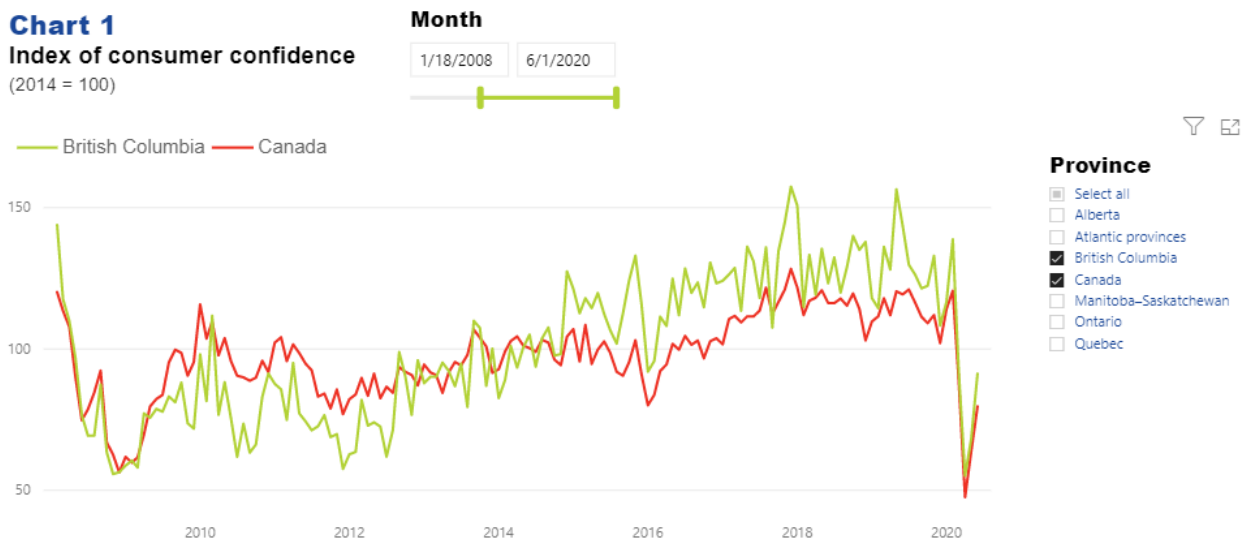


Source: BC Stats. Latest data April 2020, seasonally adjusted, [Business Council of BC](#) from June 2020 Report

- Over the first four months of the year, total BC merchandise exports were down 15%, compared to the same period last year - [Business Council of BC](#)

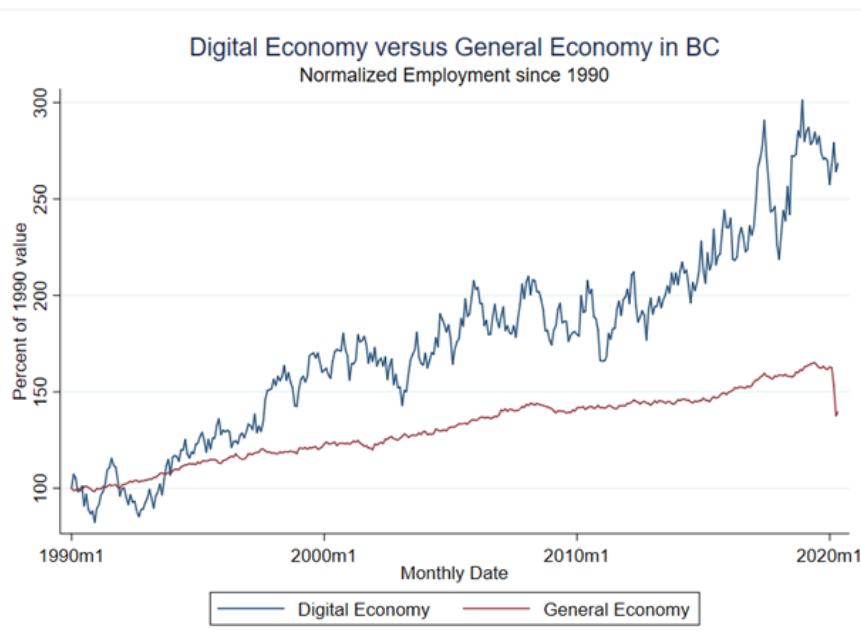
Chart 1

Index of consumer confidence
(2014 = 100)



Source: [Conference Board of Canada](#)

- BC had the largest increase in the Index of Consumer Confidence across Canada in the month of June, and nationally were the most optimistic about labour conditions. However, BC was also one of two provinces to harbour sentiments about current financial decreases in June - [Conference Board of Canada](#)
- Local businesses recirculate up to 4.6 times more revenue in the local economy compared to multinational businesses, indicating the importance of local to the economic recovery [LOCO BC, Presentation to City of Vancouver Economic Recovery Committee](#)
- A 10% shift in shopping from chains towards local businesses creates 14,150 jobs and \$4.3 billion in the BC economy [LOCO BC, Presentation to City of Vancouver Economic Recovery Committee](#)



Source: [Information and Communications Technology Council](#)

- Since 1990, the growth of digital employment in BC has increased at a much higher rate than the general economy. The two largest periods of rapid growth include 1993 to 2000 and 2012 to 2020 [Information and Communications Technology Council](#)

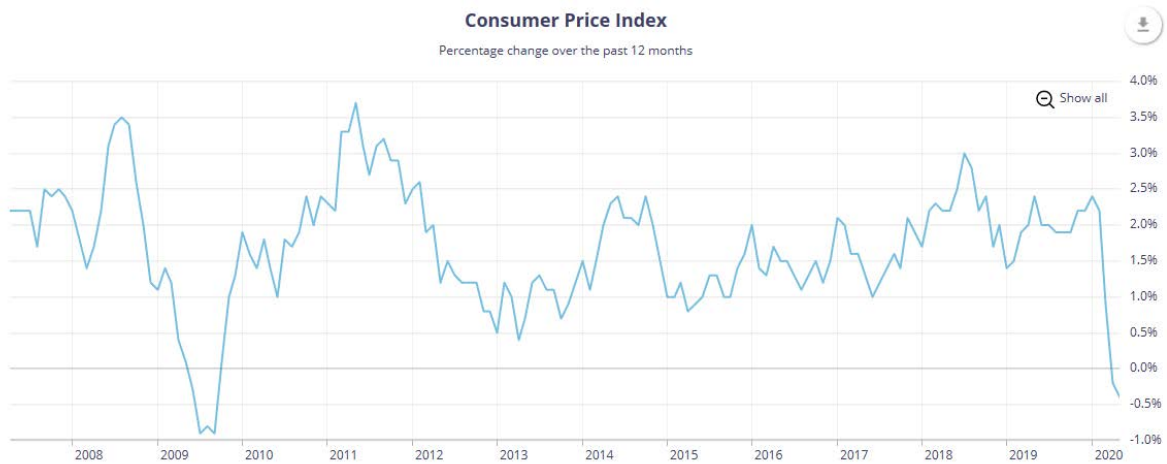
2.3 Canadian Economy at a Glance

Self-reported employment and financial impact of COVID-19 and use of federal income support among crowdsourcing participants by visible minority groups, 2020

	Experienced job loss or reduced hours among individuals employed before COVID-19	Reporting strong or moderate impact of COVID-19 on ability to meet financial obligations or essential needs	Applied and received federal income support among individuals reporting strong or moderate impact of COVID-19
	percent		
South Asian	36.7	38.5	50.8
Chinese	31.2	26.8	49.5
Black	37.9	38.5	54.5
Filipino	42.2	42.9	64.5
Latin American	34.0	31.7	63.5
Arab	32.7	44.0	52.6
Southeast Asian	40.2	40.3	54.7
West Asian	46.5	42.0	61.1
Korean	40.1	36.1	67.7
Japanese	34.5	25.3	50.7
Other visible minorities	36.6	33.1	55.3
White	34.1	23.2	45.7

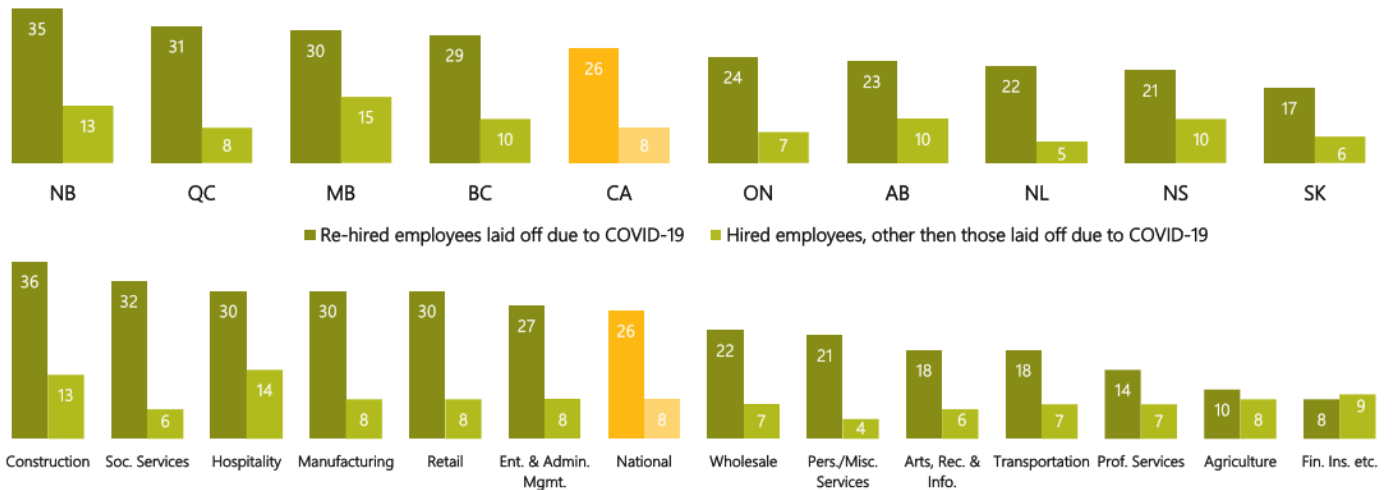
Source: Statistics Canada, Impacts of COVID-19 on Canadians - Trust in Others: Data Collection Series (5323)

- When asked through a crowdsourcing questionnaire about the way COVID-19 impacted their ability to meet financial needs, most visible minority groups reported a stronger or moderate negative financial impact than White participants - [Statistics Canada](#)
- As of June 28, over 18.71 million CERB applications have been processed, and a total of \$53.53 billion have been paid in benefits - [Government of Canada](#)
- Canadian inflation is projected to be 0.8% for 2020, and will increase to 1.6% in 2021 and 1.7% in 2022 - [Desjardins Economic Studies](#)



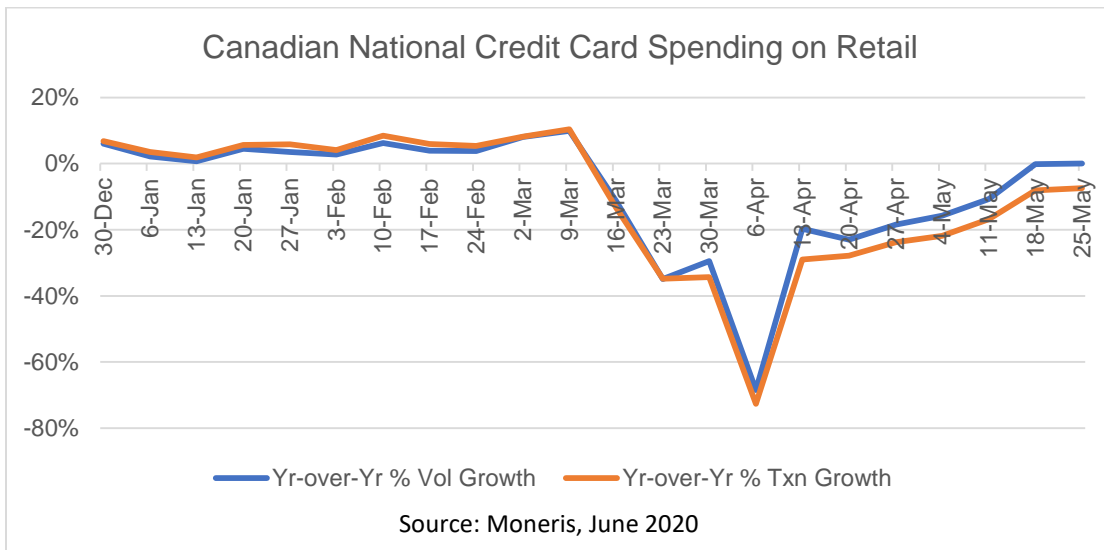
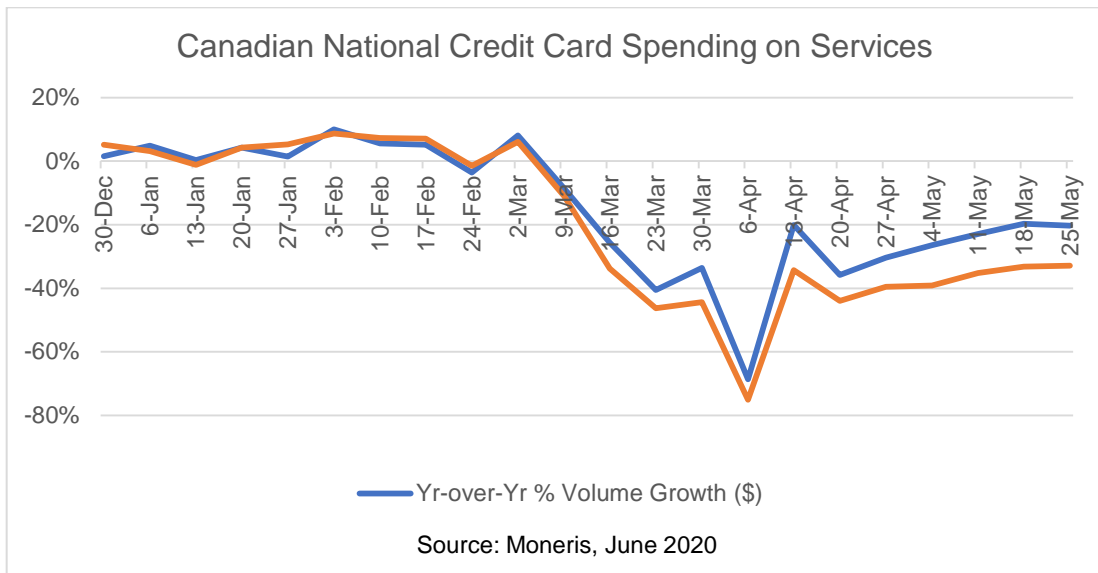
Source: Consumer Price Index 2008 to Present, [Bank of Canada](#)

- As of May 2020 the Total CPI was -0.4, which is still higher than the previous low of -0.9 in September 2009 – [Bank of Canada](#)



Source: CFIB, Your Business and COVID-19 – Survey Number Twelve, June 2020, preliminary results, n = 4,603.

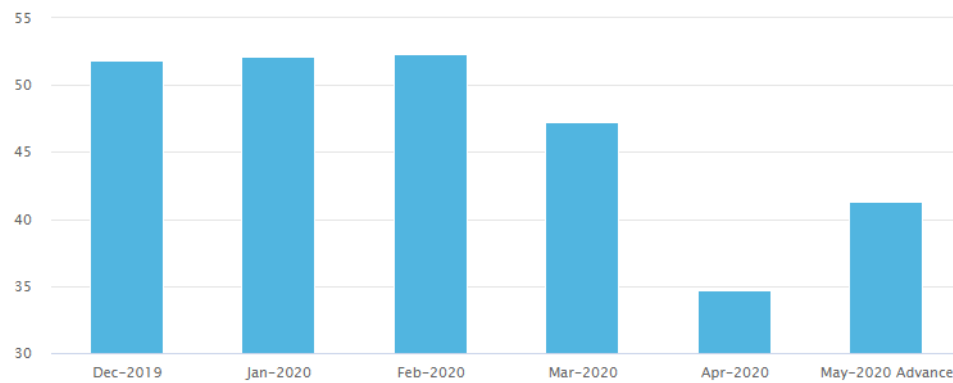
- Businesses have begun to rehire employees who were laid off due to COVID-19, and hire new employees, based on responses from 4,603 businesses surveyed on June 8 - [CFIB](#)



- New credit card data obtained from Moneris shows a dramatic decline of 70% in spending on services and retail in early April. Since then, transaction volumes have returned close to the levels seen last year – *Moneris*

Canada Retail Sales

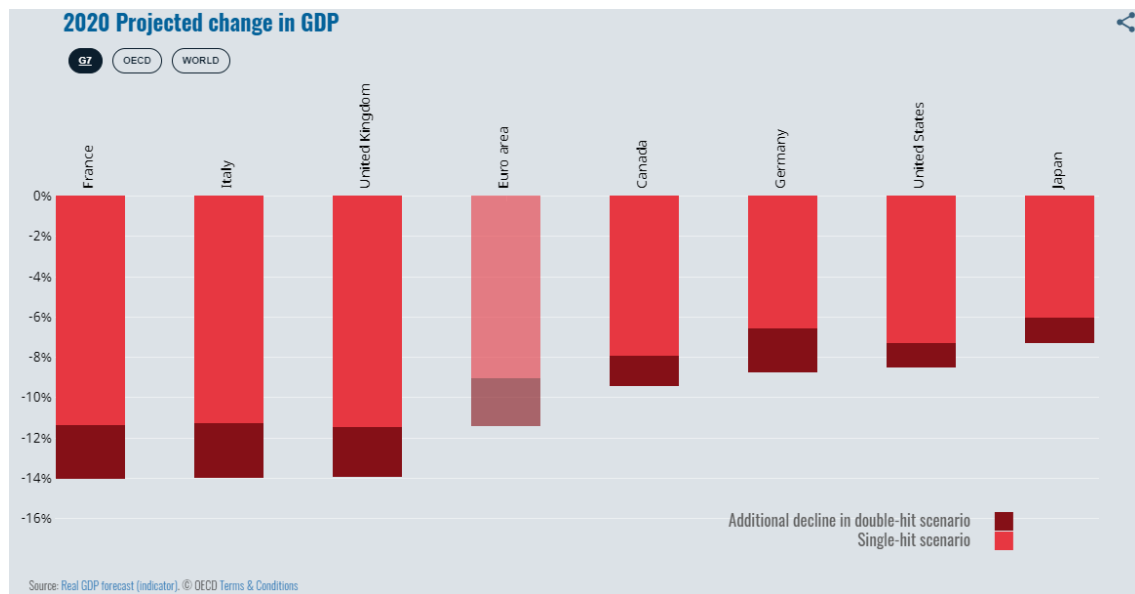
\$, millions



Source: Statistics Canada, RBC Economics

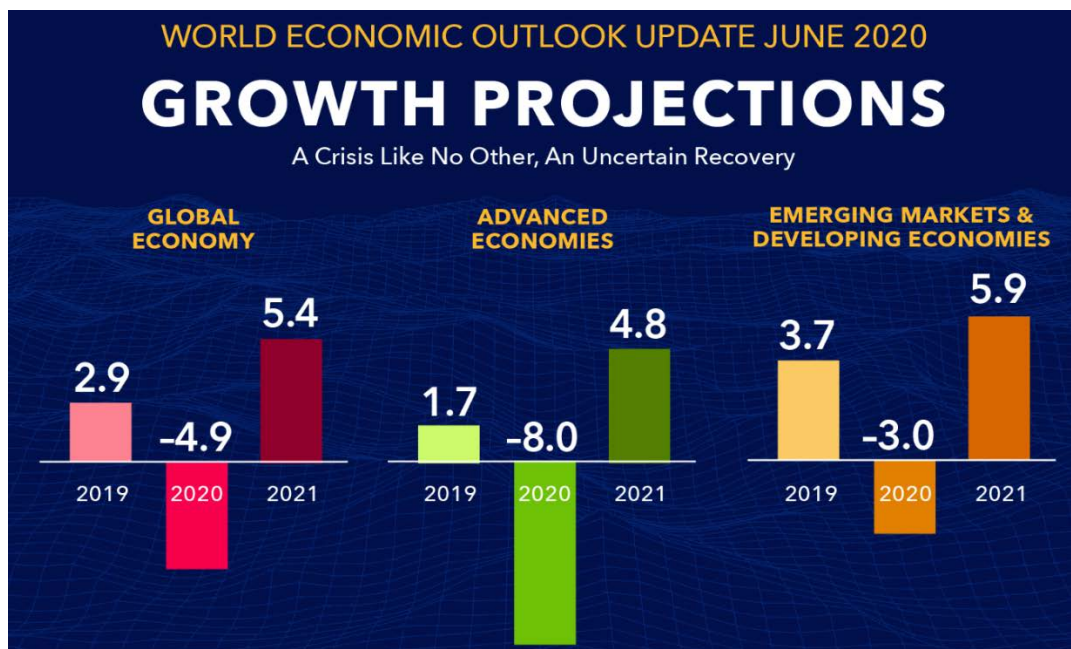
- Preliminary estimates indicate 19% increase in retail sales in May - [RBC Economics](#)
- Canadian are spending less and changing their habits due to COVID-19. People are buying more necessities such as food, products and personal care products, and online sales are up 40% compared to 2019 - [Bank of Canada](#)
- The total value of building permits issued by Canadian municipalities in May increased 20.2% from April, to \$7.4 billion - [Statistics Canada](#)
- The Canadian Purchasing Managers' Index experienced a four-month high in June, at 47.8, up from 40.6 in May and 33.0 in April - [Canadian Manufacturing](#)
- The Government of Canada's COVID-19 Economic Response Plan included more than \$230 billion – representing nearly 14% of GDP – in measures to provide financial stability and protect Canadians - [Government of Canada](#)

2.4 Global Economy at a Glance



Source: [OECD](#)

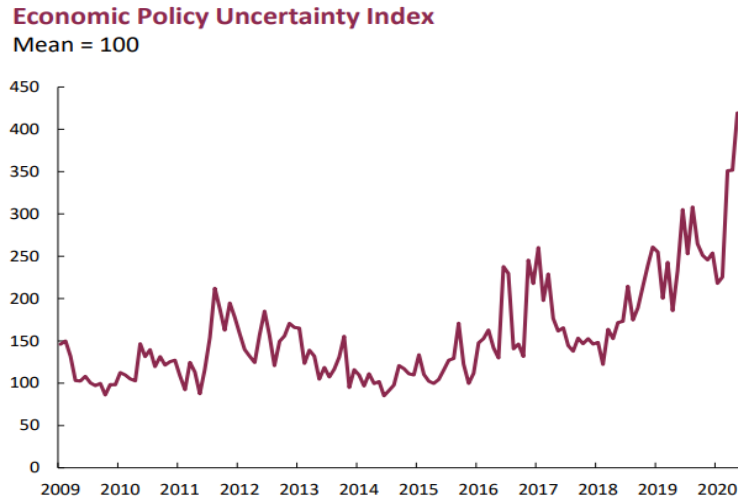
- The OECD GDP forecast focuses on two scenarios: one, if a second wave of COVID-19 hits before the end of 2020; and the other, if another major outbreak is avoided, thus providing a range of -8% to -10% for Canada - [OECD](#)



Source: [International Monetary Fund](#)

- The IMF predict global growth to be 1.9% lower than stated in the April 2020 World Economic Outlook forecast, at -4.9%. Forecasting for 2021 global growth is projected at 5.4% - [International Monetary Fund](#)

- Trade in developing countries is expected to decrease dramatically in Q2 of 2020. The value of international trade in goods declines by 5% between January and March 2020; between April and June 2020, it is forecast to plummet 27% - [United Nations](#)



Source: PolicyUncertainty.com, Haver Analytics, [EDC Economics](#)

- Measures of global economic uncertainty have reached an all-time high during COVID-19, due to the dependence on containment of the virus and unprecedented policy responses - [EDC Economics](#)
- Drawing on new data that suggests a larger impact than expected, particularly in developing regions, the ILO has substantially revised its estimate of global working-hour loss in the second quarter of 2020, compared with previous estimates. The latest estimates reveal a decline in global working hours of 14% in the second quarter of 2020 (up from the previous estimate of 10.7%), which is equivalent to 400 million full-time jobs - [ILO](#)

3. Key Government Announcements Impacting the Business Community

3.1 Latest government announcements identified as most beneficial/having the most positive impact

- Slow/pedestrian-only lanes in Vancouver
- Expedited patio permitting by City of Vancouver, enabling businesses to serve more customers
- More than [157,000 K–12 students](#) (approximately 30% of BC's total school population) returned to school during the first week of the Province's gradual return to classrooms
- [Film and TV sets reopened](#) as BC entered Phase 3 of the Provincial Restart Plan

3.2 Provincial Reopening and Recovery Plans

**Last updated July 13, 2020*

Ten provinces have announced reopening and recovery plans. The table below provides an overview and relevant quick links:


Provincial Reopening and Recovery Plans			
Province (with link)	Summary		
Alberta	Due to a lower number of cases than expected, Alberta moved to Stage 2 on June 12, one week sooner than expected. Stage 3 , with further reopening of workplaces and public gatherings, does not have a date.		
	Most recent businesses opened : <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Movie theatres and libraries with restrictions• Personal services	Max number of people for indoor gatherings 50	Max number of people for outdoor gatherings 100
British Columbia	On June 24, BC moved to Phase 3 of reopening. Phase 4 , the final stage, is conditional on the global availability of a vaccine or treatment.		
	Most recent businesses opened : <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Motion picture and television production• Ministerial order to protect amateur sport reopening	Max number of people for indoor gatherings 50	Max number of people for outdoor gatherings 50
Manitoba	On June 21, Manitoba entered Phase 3 . Retail businesses, restaurants and bars can operate if they ensure members of the public are able to reasonably maintain separation of at least two meters, except for brief exchanges.		
	Most recent businesses opened : <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Film production• Childcare services at regular capacity	Max number of people for indoor gatherings 50	Max number of people for outdoor gatherings 100

New Brunswick	Between May 22 and 29, all seven zones of the Province have entered in the “yellow” phase of recovery. To move to the final “green” phase, there must be a vaccine, or we must have more information about how to protect the public from the virus.		
	Most recent businesses opened : <ul style="list-style-type: none">Swimming poolsCinemasTrade shows	Max number of people for indoor gatherings Close friends and family only	Max number of people for outdoor gatherings 50
Newfoundland and Labrador	On June 25, Newfoundland and Labrador entered Alert Level 3 . There are five levels, with level one allowing for most businesses to reopen. As of July 3, travel between the four Atlantic Provinces will be allowed, without the requirement of self-isolation.		
	Most recent businesses opened : <ul style="list-style-type: none">Bars and loungesMovie theatresPerformance spaces	Max number of people for indoor gatherings 50	Max number of people for outdoor gatherings 50
Nova Scotia	As of July 3, weddings, funerals, and arts and cultural events run by a recognized business can welcome up to 250 people outdoors, or 50% of the venue's capacity to a maximum of 200 people.		
	Most recent businesses opened : <ul style="list-style-type: none">Restaurants at 100% capacity with physical distancing	Max number of people for indoor gatherings 50	Max number of people for outdoor gatherings 50
Ontario	Ontario has a regional approach to reopening, and there is a list of regions who have been moved to Stage 2 (of three stages). These three stages are part of Phase 2, of a longer-term three phase plan. Ontario has partnered with the federal government to provide \$57 million for a Digital Main Street .		
	Most recent businesses opened : <ul style="list-style-type: none">Outdoor seating only at restaurantsFilm and TV productionPlaces of worship at 30% capacity	Max number of people for indoor gatherings 10	Max number of people for outdoor gatherings 10
Prince Edward Island	On June 26, Prince Edward Island moved to Phase 4 , the new “normal”. What comes after Phase 4 has not yet been determined.		
	Most recent businesses opened : <ul style="list-style-type: none">Personal servicesChildcare	Max number of people for indoor gatherings 50	Max number of people for outdoor gatherings 50
Quebec	Quebec continues to reopen and has moved into Phase 6 . After Phase 6, there will be subsequent phases that have not yet been released.		
	Most recent businesses opened : <ul style="list-style-type: none">All economic activity can resume except for festivals, major events and vacation camps.	Max number of people for indoor gatherings 50	Max number of people for outdoor gatherings 50










<u>Saskatchewan</u>	On June 22, Saskatchewan entered <u>Phase 4</u> , Part 1. Part 2 began on June 29.		
	Most recent businesses opened: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Restaurants at 50% capacity • Remaining personal services • Childcare can now offer spaces for 15 children 	Max number of people for indoor gatherings 30	Max number of people for outdoor gatherings 30
<i>*All data is as correct as possible. Each Province has different protocols, restrictions and guidelines for reopening.</i>			

3.3 New Key Announcements by All Levels of Government





Tables updates as of July 15, 2020















Click on  for the link to government news release

Updates from the City of Vancouver



Link	Update Type	Description
	Financial Support	Starting the week of June 15, property owners began to receive annual property tax notices, but payments are not due until September 30
	Reopening	City of Vancouver has launched a survey to track how behaviours are evolving as the City continues to reopen
	Reopening	Over 180 temporary patio permits have been issued since the launch of the Temporary Expedited Patio Program
	Reopening	Beginning July 1, the City will resume outdoor sport facility permits for teams and childcare programs
	Reopening	Vancouver City Council has created a special committee, Council COVID-19 Recovery Committee, to gather insights as the City continues to reopen
	Reopening	Over the summer, Vancouver Park Board is opening four outdoor pools, 10 spray parks and staffing lifeguards at nine beaches
	Reopening	Stanley Park will reopen with modified vehicle access
	Reopening	Four plazas have been erected along popular corridors to allow people to socialize while maintaining physical distance
	Reopening	Vital community facilities (Carnegie, Evelyn Saller and Gather Place Community Centres) all reopened July 15 in DTES and Downtown Vancouver


















Updates from the Provincial Government

Link	Update Type	Description
	Financial Support	An additional \$250,000 has been supplied to help farmers transition online through the BC Partnership Program
	Financial Support	\$14 million in grants will be provided to support over 150 projects in rural communities for economic development and recreational activities
	Financial Support	The Province is extending the Temporary Rental Supplement of up to \$500 until August 31, 2020
	Financial Support	COVID-19 support for children with special needs will continue through the summer, including extending the Emergency Relief Support of \$225 per month from July 1 to

		September 30, 2020
	Financial Support	Moratorium on rent evictions has been lifted, for any reason other than late payment or non-payment
	Financial Support	The Province has extended temporary layoff provisions to a maximum of 24 weeks, expiring on August 30, 2020
	Financial Support	Government of BC and BC Hydro are extending the opportunity for businesses to defer 50% of their electrical bills for another three months.
	Financial Support	Extension of federal employment insurance exemptions and the Provincial temporary crisis supplement
	Financial Support	BC families receive additional \$450 with boosted climate action tax credit
	Financial Support	New supports for post-secondary students this fall with recently opened application for StudentAid BC and new non-repayable BC Access Grant
	Financial Support & Health/Safety	\$1.88 million in funding will be provided to the BC's Farmers Market Nutrition Program to ensure lower income households have access to healthy, locally grown food. The funding increase resulted from higher demand for food programs during COVID-19
	Financial Support/Reopening	The Province has approved a temporary wholesale pricing model for facilities with liquor licenses, which will run from July 2020 to March 31, 2021
	Financial Support/Reopening	There will be a focus on mass timber building products to support the economy, forest workers, local workers and CleanBC
	Health/Safety	State of Emergency extended until July 21, 2020
	Health/Safety	As of June 20, 2020, the Province will cease its provincially led COVID-19 border check points for residents heading home from travel. Federal screening measures will remain in place
	Health/Safety	The Province has introduced the COVID-19 Related Measures Act, which will allow the Province to formalize and unwind emergency measures currently in place
	Health/Safety	All inland ferry passengers are required to stay in their cars during crossing
	Reopening	The Province has created a ministerial order that protects amateur sport organizations, their employees and volunteers from liabilities of COVID-19, in support of reopening

Updates from the Federal Government

Link	Update Type	Description
	Financial Support	BC is to receive \$280.4 million through the Federal Gas Tax Fund for the most pressing infrastructure needs
	Financial Support	An additional \$133 million will support Indigenous businesses

	Financial Support	Canada Emergency Response Benefit (CERB) has been extended by eight weeks, making the benefit available to eligible workers for a total of 24 weeks
	Financial Support	As of June 19, the Canada Emergency Business Account (CEBA) has increased eligibility to include owner-operated small businesses that were ineligible for the program due to lack of payroll; sole proprietors receiving business income directly; and family-owned corporations paid in dividends rather than payroll
	Financial Support	Trudeau announced in a press conference, Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy will be extended until the end of 2020
	Financial Support	To support a clean and sustainable reopening, the Canadian government has invested a total of \$41.8 million in 10 small Canadian businesses
	Financial Support	The federal government has extended temporary layoffs by up to six months
	Financial Support	Launch of the Canada Student Service Grant, which supports post-secondary students and recent grads with a one-time payment between \$1,000 and \$5,000 while they volunteer in their communities
	Financial Support	CECRA has been extended by one month to cover eligible small business rents in July
	Financial Support	Phase 2 announcement of disbursement of the \$500-million Emergency Support Fund for Cultural, Heritage and Sport Organizations
	Financial Support	Canadian seniors eligible for Old Age Security, Guaranteed Income Supplement or Allowances received a one-time tax-free payment
	Financial Support	Indigenous BC entrepreneurs can apply for up to \$8,000 in specialized planning and coaching services to develop and plan food or agricultural businesses
	Financial Support	\$30 million provided to SMEs in the forest sector to offset additional costs for COVID-19 safety measures
	Financial Support & Health/Safety	\$43.4 million for proposals to support the Local Food Infrastructure Fund and increase food security of Canadians
	Financial Support & Health/Safety	Federal and Provincial partners will contribute \$109.7 million towards COVID-19 research
	Health/Safety	The Canadian Armed Forces will transport medical and humanitarian supplies from distribution hubs in Africa, Europe and the Middle East on behalf of the World Food Programme and World Health Organization
	Health/Safety & Reopening	Federal government has partnered with POST (People Outside Safely Together) Promise program, a voluntary commitment from business owners to customers to adhere to public safety precautions
	Reopening	As of June 22, a number of national parks and historic sites across Canada reopened
	Reopening	The federal and provincial governments are investing in infrastructure in the Lower Mainland to create jobs, with 21 projects recently announced

4. Thought Leadership Resources

Key economic reports, letters, blog posts and webinars published by VEC and other key stakeholders:

Thought Leadership for the Future Economy

For up-to-date access to VEC's newest articles and opinion pieces, [sign up](#) for our newsletter [The Lens](#) or check out our [blogs](#). Recent blogs include:

- [British Columbia's Blockbuster Motion Picture Industry is Back in Business Under Phase 3 of the BC Restart Plan](#)
- [Why the Call for a Global Clean Restart?](#)

Diversity & Inclusion

International Labour Organization	As jobs crisis deepens, ILO warns of uncertain and incomplete labour market recovery, and offers three scenarios that include impact on women
International Monetary Foundation	The Global Economic Reset – Promoting a More Inclusive Recovery
Statistics Canada	Economic Impact of COVID-19 among Visible Minority groups
World Economic Forum	Great Reset: Why LGBT+ Inclusion is the Secret to Cities' Post-pandemic Success

Equitable Financial Models

Harvard Law School	The Impact of COVID-19 on Shareholder Activism
McCarthy Tetrault	What's Happening in Shareholder Activism in Canada?

Local Economies & Cities

Bloomberg CityLab	The Lasting Normal for the Post-Pandemic City
Canadian Urban Institute	COVID Signpost 100 Days (examines how Canadian cities have changed over the first 100 days of the pandemic)
Downtown Vancouver BIA	State of Downtown 2019
Bring Back Main Street	Memo#7: Reallocating Main Street Space to Support Community Wellbeing
Pembina Institute	Opportunities for a Resilient Recovery for BC's Economy
Province of BC	Building BC's Recovery, Together

Sustainability & Renewable Energy

BSR	Resilient Business Strategies: The Road to Recovery Based on Sustainability Principles
McKinsey & Company	How a Post-pandemic Stimulus can Both Create Jobs and Help the Climate
United Nations	What will Power the Post-pandemic Economic Recovery?

Workforce Resilience & Retraining

C40	A Green, Just & Job-rich COVID-19 Recovery: How Cities can Rapidly Boost Good, Local Employment
Corporate Knights	Building Back Better: A Roadmap to the Canada We Want
The Economist	Death of the Office

5. Appendices

Appendix A: Letter to Support Introduction of Digital Main Street



May 17, 2020

Dear Ministers:

RE: Support for Introduction of the Digital Main Street program in the City of Vancouver

The City of Vancouver provides support to the many retail-commercial districts across the city, through its relationships with 22 Business Improvement Areas (BIAs) and the roughly 15,000 small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) located within them. The Vancouver Economic Commission (VEC), an agency of the City, engages with the small business community in other ways including providing impact programming, ecosystem building, and referrals to capital and global market access.

Despite the introduction of generous senior government emergency programs and the anticipated easing of restrictions, small business survival post-COVID-19 cannot be guaranteed, and the permanent closure of storefronts will have significant implications on the vibrancy of business districts and local employment.

Small businesses able to survive the short-term situation will likely face a 'new normal' of continuing restrictions, a post-COVID-19 economic recession, and an altered retail landscape marked by shifting consumer preferences and a significant increase in on-line purchasing. One solution to mitigate business risk is the innovative Digital Main Street (DMS) program which was developed to support small 'bricks and mortar' businesses to be more competitive in the on-line retail landscape through digital transformation.

Ninety-eight percent of Vancouver businesses are small and medium enterprises having fewer than 50 employees. Collectively these businesses have a significant economic impact in our city. Province-wide, 34 percent of provincial GDP is attributable to the small business sector.

Prior to the COVID-19 crisis, SMEs in storefront locations played a central role supporting the vibrancy of our downtown districts and neighbourhood shopping streets. In addition to providing employment, supporting entrepreneurship, and fostering innovation, these businesses contribute to social life, complete communities, neighbourhood identity and a host of attributes that have made our city a great place to live, work and thrive.

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vancouvereconomic.com

We are hearing from BIAs across the city that up to 90% of businesses in their districts have closed – either voluntarily or due to mandatory orders – since the implementation of restrictions to support physical distancing. According to a recent survey conducted by the BC Chamber of Commerce of 8,000 businesses in BC, 73 percent of businesses expect their revenues will drop by 50 percent or more, with nearly a quarter saying revenues will drop by 100 percent, as a result of the current restrictions.

The DMS business model assists small businesses with building on-line presence and sales capacity through on-line resources and training and one-on-one coaching. As the program was developed to be rolled out in partnership with BIAs, the program is well suited to Vancouver which, like Toronto, has a well-developed BIA network. As part of post-COVID-19 recovery efforts, we believe the deployment of Digital Main Street will be critical to rebuilding our commercial districts.

Both the City and VEC fully support Small Business BC's application for grant funding to pilot Digital Main Street in Vancouver at this pivotal time and look forward to this timely opportunity to partner with them once again.

Yours truly,



Gil Kelley, FAICP
General Manager
Planning, Urban Design & Sustainability



Eleena Marley
Acting CEO
Vancouver Economic Commission

Appendix B: Support for Digital Main street and ShopHERE Program



July 13, 2020

Barbara Motzney, Assistant Deputy Minister
Western Economic Diversification
90 Sparks Street
Ottawa, ON K1P 5B4
Via email: barbara.motzney@canada.ca

Re: Support for Digital Main Street and ShopHERE Program

Dear Ms. Motzney:

We are a group of Metro Vancouver municipalities working together on initiatives to support local businesses impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. We are writing to you to express our support for federal funding that would enable the expansion of Digital Main Street and the ShopHERE program to our region.

Small businesses in sectors such as retail, food services and personal services are not only core to the fabric of our communities, but they also represent a large share of local employment. These businesses and their workers are especially vulnerable to the major economic shock caused by the current global pandemic that has forced businesses to close and people to stay at home. In our outreach to these businesses, we have heard that a critical issue for them to remain viable and reach their markets is to build their online capabilities and sales.

Facilitating the adoption of digital tools and technology, such as e-commerce platforms, by these small businesses will not only help them survive, it will help local economies become more resilient to future economic shocks. ShopHERE is a program that has proven to be successful in Ontario and that we believe can be replicated quickly and successfully in Metro Vancouver and British Columbia to help achieve these goals.

Municipal economic development officers in Metro Vancouver are an important part of a robust and collaborative small business support ecosystem that exists in the region. We engage regularly with local businesses and key stakeholders including Chambers of Commerce, Boards of Trade, Destination Marketing Organizations and Business Improvement Associations, and understand the specific needs of our individual communities. We are keen to support this program and contribute to a successful implementation by means of engagement, outreach, marketing and communications.

The City of Vancouver and the Vancouver Economic Commission have also been integral to the business support network in Metro Vancouver as we explore opportunities to collaborate on regional initiatives to support our businesses during this difficult time. They have previously submitted a letter in support of the Digital Main Street program, which is attached for reference.

While we believe there is an immediate need and an opportunity to expand the ShopHERE program to our region in the short term, we also recognize that there continues to be an ongoing need to build greater overall capacity in digital skills and technology for small businesses and workers.

To that end we are also supportive of any programming, such as the larger Digital Main Street program, that would help to achieve these longer term goals by providing small businesses and employees with ongoing support, capacity building, digital skills training, and grants for technology adoption. This framework is critical to ensuring that businesses taking part in the ShopHERE program have the ability to not only survive in the short term but thrive in the long term.

We sincerely thank you for your consideration,



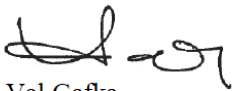
Katie Ferland
Manager, Economic Development
City of Richmond



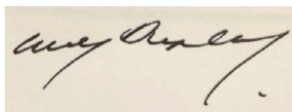
Stephen Wu
Manager, Economic Development
City of Surrey



Blair Fryer
Manager of Economic Development & Communications
City of New Westminster



Val Gafka
Senior Manager, Economic Investment & Development
Township of Langley



Wendy Dupley
Director of Economic Development and Civic Property
City of Maple Ridge



Lee-Ann Garnett
Assistant Director, Long Range Planning
City of Burnaby

Att. 1: City of Vancouver / Vancouver Economic Commission Letter of Support for Digital Main Street