

A9 - Creativity & The Inner City-Unlocking The Potential Of Commercial & Industrial Spaces

Presentation title: Creativity and the Inner City: Unlocking the potential of commercial and industrial spaces.

Presenters:

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Abstract

The intent of this presentation is to explore the options for integrated policies and mechanisms that make better use of underutilized inner city spaces with the aim of fostering creative communities and alternative forms of development. Despite the growing reinvestment in many city cores, critical gaps exist in how municipalities are able to address issues of disinvestment, displacement, unfavourable development economics, emerging space needs, and apprehension surrounding neighbourhood change in the inner city. As areas of central cities densify and creative hubs develop, concerns related to noise, civic disorder, and regulation can have divisive and corrosive effects. Further constraints on suitable, affordable spaces further exacerbate these effects and also bring forth deeper questions concerning long-term social sustainability and economic viability (i.e. displacement of low-income residents and small businesses/industry). Underutilized commercial and industrial spaces in the inner city can offer distinct advantages in terms of size, relative affordability, central location, and adaptability of use. This presentation will stress the importance of pursuing forms of development that can enhance and benefit from the unique assets of the inner city. By facilitating innovative reuse and redevelopment of underutilized spaces, municipalities can foster and enhance community creativity by expanding opportunities for talent incubation, identity creation, and entrepreneurship. Our point of departure will be to argue for increased flexibility for commercial and industrial spaces in the inner city. New approaches to rehabilitation and adaptive reuse of buildings hold the potential to enhance the public realm and provide new economic and social opportunities for citizens. Using Vancouver as a principal example, this presentation will explore some of the barriers and opportunities for the development of underutilized spaces in the inner city. A second broader question will explore new approaches that would make development of commercial and light industrial spaces viable and attractive in inner city locations. Culling best practices both from Vancouver and other cities in North America, potential tools available to planners, policy makers, entrepreneurs, and citizens will be discussed.

Speaker Biography

Mark Pickersgill Mark is a city planner, freelance writer, and musician with a keen interest in the arts and economic development. Mark holds a Master of Arts (Planning) degree from the School of Community and Regional Planning at the University of British Columbia, and has worked as a planner for the Corporation of Delta and City of Surrey.

Jason Blackman Jason is a city planner with a background and interest in the study of innovation in regional economies as well as local economic development in the inner city. He holds a Master of Arts (Planning) degree from the School of Community and Regional Planning at the University of British Columbia.