



Vancouver unlikely to meet 2020 target for 'green' jobs despite strong growth: report

Vancouver will fall short of its commitment to double the number of "green" jobs in the city by 2020 unless more effort is made to adhere to the city's Greenest City Action Plan, according to a new report by the Vancouver Economic Commission. The city has witnessed a strong 19-per-cent growth in green tech and food jobs since 2010, when it embarked on a plan to foster growth in green and sustainable industries, the report says.

BY VANCOUVER SUN JUNE 20, 2014

growth/capita is much less - cjk

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As of 2013, there are 19,929 such jobs in the city; of those 13,942 are classified as "green jobs" and the rest are "local food jobs," which are loosely defined as jobs producing, selling or processing food that originated in B.C. The definition of what constitutes a "green job" is subject to interpretation.

The VEC said it borrowed from the United Nations Environment Program to define a green job as having a focus on those activities that "restore or preserve environmental quality, reduce energy, materials and water consumption, de-carbonize the economy, and minimize or altogether avoid the generation of all forms of waste and pollution."

In order to meet the city's 2020 Greenest City Action Plan goals, the VEC says annual job growth will have to increase to 7.7 per cent, well above the national average.

However, that presents the city with a challenge. The VEC projects three scenarios for growth over the remaining seven years of the target period. It says a low-growth scenario of four per cent would create 23,900 jobs, a moderate growth scenario of six per cent would create 29,500 jobs, and a highgrowth scenario of 7.7 per cent would mean 33,308 jobs.

But it says the expected rate is closer to seven per cent, leaving the city nearly 2,500 jobs short of its target.

The city has taken a heavy hand in encouraging clean tech and local food businesses, adopting new policies set out in its ambitious Greenest City Action Plan. It brought in new building codes to require sustainable construction, and even requires buildings

headed for demolition to be deconstructed piece-by-piece. It has created room for more farmers' markets, and poured millions of dollars into grants and loans to small businesses and community organizations to mount green initiatives.

Mayor Gregor Robertson said he's not disappointed with the results, and instead called it a validation of his council's efforts.

"Doubling green jobs in a decade was a very ambitious goal," he said. "I am still bullish that we will get there. You see

the awareness growing around the world ... we have many clean tech companies here growing by leaps and bounds."

He acknowledged the city has to ramp up its efforts in order to meet its promise, but said Vancouver is already leading the country.

"Six per cent (annually since 2010) is astounding in these economic times, almost triple the rest of the economy for growth. We anticipate the curve to swing up, averaging seven per cent to 2020 given all of the policies and regulations and consumer demand."

The report's authors said the city must do more to meet its 2020 goals.

"To achieve this, a sustained and unprecedented effort needs to be made to create a positive climate for growth for green economy businesses, and address current and anticipated green workforce development gaps," the report says.

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What are 'green' jobs?

Vancouver says it considers green jobs to be in the following categories:

Local food

Green building design and construction

Clean technology, alternative energy and green building products

Green infrastructure, transportation and planning

Sustainability services and education

Land and water remediation and environmental consulting

Materials management and recycling

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