

CASTLEGAR EMPLOYMENT LAND ANALYSIS BY RTA

The purpose of Employment Lands research project was to better understand land supply, demand usage and constraints on wealth generating lands in the Columbia Basin-Boundary region of BC. With an improved understanding of the region's 'employment lands' landscape, the region will be in a better position of make informed land use decisions and attract and retain business and investment. The project aimed to explore assets and gaps in the region's employment lands landscape, assess whether employment lands can accommodate investment and business growth, and identify where employment lands are underutilized and / or possibility constrained due to land use tensions.

The Employment Lands applied research project was undertaken by the Columbia Basin Rural Development Institute (RDI) and Selkirk Geospatial Research Centre (SGRC), with funding and project management support from Community Futures East Kootenay (CFEK), and funding from the Southern Interior Beetle Action Coalition (SIBAC) and the Columbia Basin Trust. A project advisory committee comprised of local government, economic development and First Nations representatives guided the 2-year project. Consultations with and survey data generated from investors, real estate representatives, accountants, and economic development practitioners supported the development of the resulting site selector tool within the *Digital Basin Assets & Indicators Geospatial Portal* (<http://www.cbrdi.ca/state-of-the-basin/digital-basin-portal/>).

Using the results of the regional Business Retention & Expansion (BRE) survey and data supplied by BC Assessment to proxy for demand and supply respectively, this study analysed the location and sector concentrations of constraints to investment imposed by a lack of suitable premises (employment lands). Results fail to support the argument that employment lands are insufficient to accommodate investment and business expansion, although some retail trading areas (RTAs) and sectors appear to be experiencing limitations. This reporting series presents findings at the community level for each of the 28 municipalities in the Columbia Basin-Boundary region.

INTERPRETING THESE RESULTS

The results of this supply and demand analysis should be interpreted with caution. The proxy indicators used in the analysis (BRE survey responses and BC A data) are imperfect substitutes for the data required to get an accurate picture of the employment lands market. These data should not be relied upon, exclusively, to form policy.

What these data DO provide is a refined and improved picture of the employment lands situation. Prior to this analysis stakeholders had to rely on anecdotal evidence and intuition. It is anticipated that these results will spur further questions about employment lands that will be addressed at the local level, with local knowledge of the landscape.

DEFINITIONS

The following definitions and descriptions provide context for some of the specific terminology used in the discussion:

DEMAND

Demand, for the purposes of this project, has been identified using the results of the Business Retention & Expansion (BRE) survey. As of the time of writing, 20 of 28 municipalities within the Basin-Boundary Region had participated in the BRE process, either as part of their own program or under the umbrella of another organization's program¹.

SUPPLY

Data Coverage:

There are varying degrees of completeness and accuracy of data across communities. Where possible, municipal zoning information has been given supremacy in the following community level analysis.

Geography:

This analysis includes the areas under municipal governance and its surrounding Retail Trade Area (RTA). RTAs are determined using a function of a municipality's population and the distance to the next competing (for retail trade) municipality.

¹ For example, KAST and KRIC lead a process of BRE surveys being administered across municipal boundaries. This process was focused on the manufacturing and technology sectors.

Vacancy:

Vacancy is defined, for this report, as those properties listed as vacant through BCA. While this is the best source for accurate date, there may be hidden incentives to mis-lead, depending on “actual use”.

Ownership:

After initial analysis, researchers discovered a large number of properties with ownership listings at “Parliament Buildings”, both in Ottawa and Victoria. The term “Crown”, for the purposes of this report, is a blanket label for those properties where ownership is listed as “Parliament Buildings”, either in Ottawa or Victoria. “Local” is used for all other ownerships (regardless of location).

Zoning Types:

Land types of principal interest are: industrial, commercial, other.

Industrial:

Municipally zoned as such, or listed with BC Assessment as such

Commercial:

Municipally zoned as such, or listed with BC Assessment as such

Other:

BC Assessment use-types: residential (over 2 acres), agricultural lands (grain & forage, vegetable & truck, fruit trees, small fruits, beef, dairy, poultry, mixed, and other)² and civic or institutional

DEMAND

The community of Castlegar only had 2 BRE respondents that indicated they were restricted by a lack of suitable premises. These complaints were generated from the manufacturing and the information & cultural sectors (the only two sectors surveyed). The “lack of suitable premises” responses form a large percentage of both the Castlegar respondents and their respective sectors (50% and 20%). This is indicative of a possible employment lands demand constraint that should be further explored. These responses represent a fairly limited sampling from the businesses in Castlegar. As such, they should be interpreted with caution.

Castlegar						
# RTA Respondents	Sector NAICS Code	# Sector Respondents	Sector Weight	# Constrained	% RTA	% Sector
7	32	2	29%	1	14%	50%
	51	5	71%	1	14%	20%

Table 20: BRE Suitable Land Constraints for the Castlegar RTA

Source: Columbia Basin Rural Development Institute BRE Survey Database

² Only those “vacant” agricultural lands outside of the ALR were considered.

SUPPLY

Commercial Lands						
	Vacant		Non-Vacant		Total	
	Crown	Local	Crown	Local	Crown	Local
Parcels	1	42	2	253	3	295
Area	54	175	4	656	58	831
Industrial Lands						
	Vacant		Non-Vacant		Total	
	Crown	Local	Crown	Local	Crown	Local
Parcels	3	36	4	110	7	146
Area	1258	2634	253	3110	1511	5744
Other Lands						
	Vacant		Non-Vacant		Total	
	Crown	Local	Crown	Local	Crown	Local
Parcels	319	494	70	5685	389	6179
Area	55,811	90,929	2783	42,673	58,594	133,602

Table 21: Vacant Lands in the Castlegar RTA

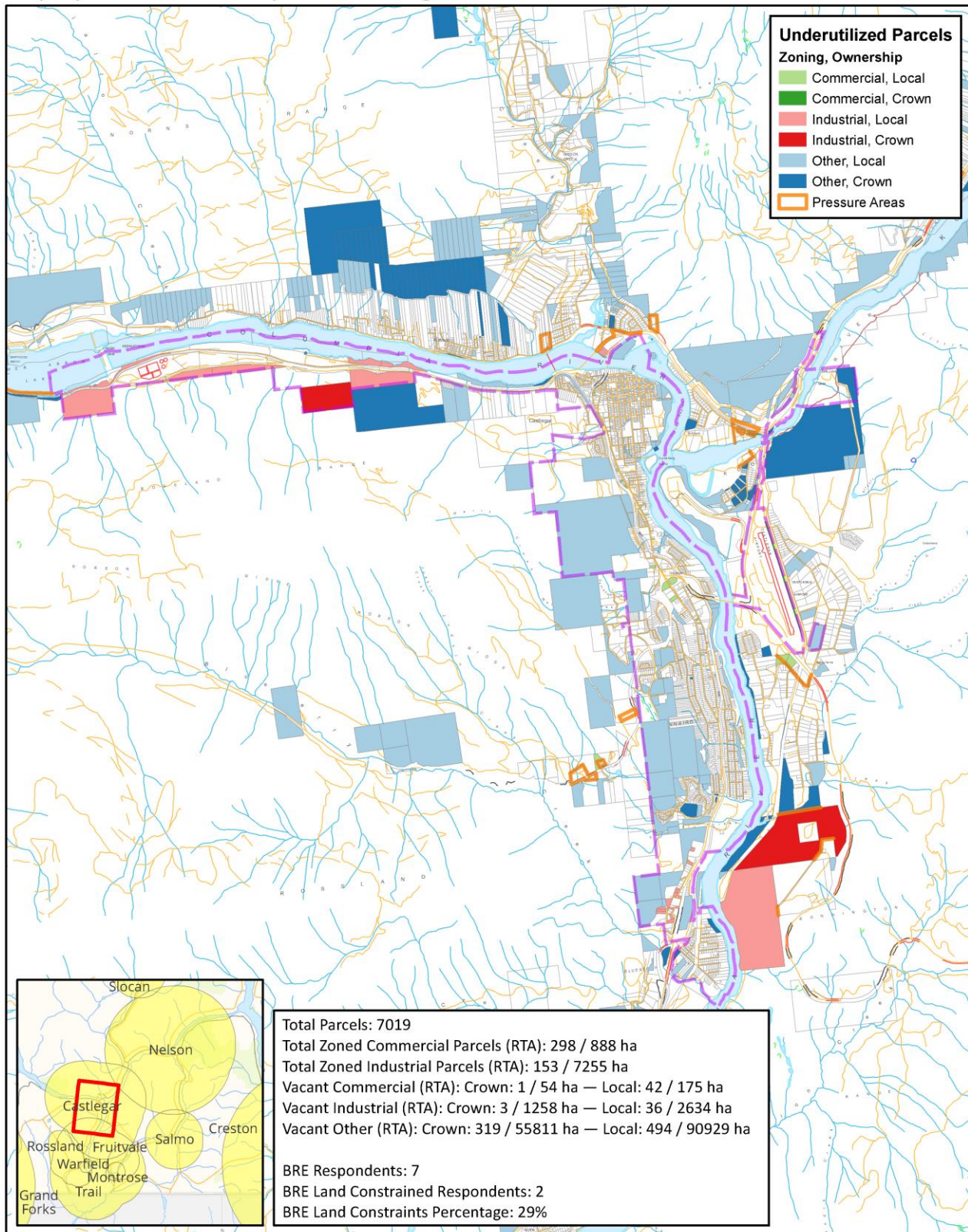
Source: BC Assessment Roll Data (2008)

EMPLOYMENT LANDS

Castlegar may be facing an employment lands constraint³. Meanwhile, there appears to be considerable privately owned vacant lands within the Castlegar RTA. This suggests a matching problem in the commercial real-estate market. A further examination of these figures, with local knowledge and additional BRE data, is recommended to confirm and better understand the magnitude and nature of constraints.

³ The weak statement is a result of low sample rate in the BRE survey.

Employment Lands Analysis for Castlegar



Source: Province of BC, Government of Canada, Local and Regional Governments, RDI, SGRC
Datum / Projection: NAD 1983 BC Environment Albers