

Lack of industrial land in the city of Kamloops

Summary: The City of Kamloops is concerned about the amount of available industrial land within its boundaries. In many municipalities throughout the province, a shrinking supply of industrial land is a concern as residential and commercial property development expands. An adequate supply of industrial land is critical to economic development both provincially and locally.

DETAILS OF THE PROBLEM

In order to promote economic development for the City of Kamloops, it is imperative that the City ensure that there is an adequate supply of industrial land suitable for intended uses such as light manufacturing, transportation and warehousing firms. These uses will create jobs and maintain levels of employment as well as provide diversity for the local economy.

The definition of “available” land must take into account various factors that would impact a users’ decision to locate or relocate to Kamloops:

- 1) Location – must be central, preferably within 5 – 10 minutes of the City Centre
- 2) A range of sizes – 5 – 20 acres
- 3) Access to major transportation routes including railway
- 4) A range of utilities available – hydro, gas, water, sewer
- 5) Minimal environmental concerns
- 6) Limited site-topography constraints
- 7) Tenure – users want the option of purchasing rather than leasing
Unless long term land leases can be secured

The interest of new industrial users will depend on most or all of these factors ranking successfully as well as the end cost for the land which may be significantly impacted by environmental and site topography constraints.

As well, the City of Kamloops should take steps to position itself as a destination for those industrial uses that best suit our location, amenities, work force and transportation assets.

The development of industrial areas to attract new manufacturing and transportation users is not listed as a priority item in the Economic Development Plan prepared by Venture Kamloops.

The City of Kamloops completed a study in 2002 and again in 2005, both reports concluded that there is not a sufficient supply of “appropriate” industrial land available. The City is in the process of completing another study (February 2011) which appears to indicate that there is an adequate supply of land for the next 20 years.

Our analysis based on the information provided by the February 2011 report suggests that the available industrial land is approximately 105 hectares. From 2008 to 2010, building permits were issued for industrial land comprising 50 hectares. Based on these figures Kamloops has 4 years until all available industrial land has been absorbed.

The southwest and Kamloops Indian Band lands were identified as possible areas for new industrial development in stakeholder discussion. Iron Mask west and Domtar south have been identified as special industrial development areas.

In the next few weeks, the Mayor and Council will be presented with the City's Industrial Land Review as prepared by City staff. It is imperative that the report be reviewed carefully to ensure that maintaining an adequate supply of industrial land is identified as a priority to the economic development for the City and the Region.

THE CHAMBER RECOMMENDS

That the municipal government:

- 1) implement the recommendations as outlined in the August 2005 and February 2011 studies of industrial land availability.
- 2) undertake a report that will identify the private sector demand for industrial land to include specific requirements with regard to location, transportation, utilities, etc.