



# The Year in Review. 2019

and what to expect from VSIR next year

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## INTRODUCTION

This year, VSIR made notable progress on its primary objectives: 1) engaging in collaborate partnerships that support effective knowledge mobilization; and 2) participating in local and regional discussions with a view to providing strategic intelligence on contemporary security challenges, global mobility trends, and urban governance developments.

As always, VSIR is committed to organizational learning, intelligent decision-making, and a future focus.

### 1. KNOWLEDGE MOBILIZATION EFFECTIVENESS

In 2019, VSIR welcomed new partnership opportunities in both the public and private sectors. VSIR's vision of becoming one of Vancouver's premier knowledge innovation and strategic intelligence enterprises requires proactive engagement and a mission-driven purpose. VSIR remains inspired by reciprocal knowledge sharing that enriches the livability, global appeal, and sustainability of this exceptional city.

In addition to providing high-quality consulting services, VSIR expanded its "network intelligence" by attending world-class conferences, collaborative workshops, and urban planning exercises that reflect a diversity of perspectives, experiences, and viewpoints. This year, we also redesigned the VSIR web page to make it much easier for viewers to access the post-event analysis and related VSIR articles that they find most informative.

Operationally, VSIR's work continues to be guided by four cardinal principles: *Be Engaged; Be Curious; Be Generous; and Be Agile*. As a knowledge broker committed to catalyzing decisive change, VSIR invests considerable resources ensuring these principles are embedded in its daily practice.

### 2. STRATEGIC INTELLIGENCE VALUE

In today's complex world, organizational performance and strategic agility in both the public and private sectors remain contingent on an in-depth knowledge of global trends and their complex interaction. An intensification of these converging forces will challenge Canada to become more adept at agile decision-making with imperfect knowledge. To that end, it is imperative that senior managers learn to collaborate on a global scale and that they continue building strategic research capacity in diverse social, economic, and institutional environments. VSIR is very pleased by the fact that our analysis on the important role of cities in [immigration policy](#) is reflected in the federal policy [priorities](#) announced at the end of 2019.

The world is experiencing an urban revolution and yet the strategic importance of cities is often overlooked. To address this knowledge gap, VSIR introduced a new publication entitled *Urban Dispatch*. This strategic intelligence brief summarizes and clarifies contemporary city-related trends, strategic management issues, and research questions. Consistent with VSIR's mission-driven focus, VSIR contributed a short article to [Mark and Focus](#) magazine (Vol. 2, Issue 2) on the subject of intelligent urban design. We hope this article will inspire thoughtful public dialogue in the City of Vancouver which recently launched an historic, city-wide planning process.

**VSIR's principal aim in 2020 is to be recognized for its contributions in organizational learning, strategic intelligence, and foresight analysis in Metropolitan Vancouver.**

## THE YEAR AHEAD

**Superior economic performance will be contingent on the ability to scale-up human-centred technologies and to scale-down information asymmetries.**

Canada's declining productivity and competitiveness is well-documented. Canada's relatively small and aging population base means that large and medium-sized cities will have to become significantly more innovative if the country is to change this reality in the near-term. Likewise, enterprising organizations committed to enhancing their near-term productivity and competitiveness will face enormous pressure to synchronize their human capital development and the 21<sup>st</sup> century skills revolution.

In 2020, a key interest area for VSIR will be organizational learning and human capital development among small and medium-sized enterprises (SME) since they have the least amount of time and margin for error when addressing challenges like unexpected talent loss, technological disruptions, demographic shifts, and the pending restructuring of the workforce.

## **The accelerated shift to a knowledge-based urban economy will raise the premium on municipal leadership.**

Municipal leaders and urban planners will have to think purposefully about the next-generation institutions and workforce competencies that Canada needs to thrive in the 21<sup>st</sup> century knowledge economy. A first-order challenge will be enhancing the capacity of cities in their strategic role as “gateways” to foreign countries and as economic “shock absorbers.” The learning curve is likely to be very sharp for many city-regions across the country as advanced urban technologies and social infrastructures are functionally integrated with legacy systems designed for an earlier and more predictable era. While formidable, this multi-generational challenge can be overcome with right mix of intelligent design principles and integrated learning solutions. To that end, VSIR is going to update *A Primer on the Global Knowledge-Mobility Nexus*, part of our strategic intelligence series. Additionally, VSIR is planning the release of a new quarterly publication, *The Future of Knowledge*, to coincide with the 5<sup>th</sup> annual BC Tech Summit (*Scaling Up for Global Growth*) in June 2020.

## **Anticipating global risks and opportunities in today’s hyperconnected world is going to be a vital source of competitive advantage.**

Managing the “future” has become a shared preoccupation of management consultants, academics, think tanks, innovation labs, and various government departments. The complex intersection of intensive urbanization, large-scale immigration, structural changes to the workforce, and the impact of climate change presents an historic opportunity for audacious thinking about Canada’s medium (ie., five to seven years) and long-term (ie., 20 to 30 years) future. In that context, strategic foresight provides an intellectual framework to imagine “big” while reducing the constraints on innovation excellence. Throughout 2020, VSIR will continue to prioritize collaborative partnerships and projects with the potential to raise private and public sector awareness about the strategic value of foresight analysis.



## About VSIR

Vancouver Strategic & Integrated Research (VSIR) is a management consultancy specializing in knowledge mobilization, strategic intelligence, and foresight analysis. VSIR uses integrated frameworks and methods to make sense of the complex intersection of international geopolitics, global mobility, and urban economic innovation. VSIR actively promotes interdisciplinary knowledge in support of intelligent decision-making in the public, private, and third sector.

The VSIR mission is to collaborate with public and private sector organizations in the co-production of new sources of social and economic value. A catalyst for interdisciplinary networking and organizational learning, VSIR partners with its clients to enhance their strategic agility and competitive advantage. Our integrated products and services are designed to foster foresight and confidence at multiple decision-points along the value chain.



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