



Year in Review 2021

and what to expect in the year ahead



INTRODUCTION

In 2021, VSIR made important progress on its main objectives. Amidst the turbulence of the global COVID-19 pandemic, VSIR was able to grow the business model, delivery quality services, and nurture collaborative partnerships. Looking back on the year, one clear lesson stood out: Adaptive leadership is intrinsically linked to knowledge mobilization and strategic intelligence. Bridging knowledge mobilization and strategic intelligence is both the challenge and the opportunity for 2022.

1. KNOWLEDGE MOBILIZATION EFFECTIVENESS

In 2021, VSIR prioritized knowledge mobilization effectiveness in various articles and web page blog posts. The articles are typically twice the length of a newspaper op-ed and much shorter than an academic research paper. This format balances the need for in-depth analysis of complex global issues and efficient knowledge transfers in a time-compressed world. Many of the articles reflect the Canadian experience with the COVID-19 pandemic. They define some of the key challenges and opportunities facing political, business and community leaders this year and in the coming decades. In April, VSIR published [The Future of International Travel: Implications for Canada](#), a preliminary analysis of one of the year's top-order policy challenges: Enabling population mobility without sacrificing public health security.

Interdisciplinary thinking, public awareness raising, and strategic dialogue are critically important to effective knowledge mobilization. To deepen the public understanding about the growing nexus between knowledge mobilization and intelligence analysis, VSIR authored [Designing a Global Pandemic Intelligence Service](#) in July. This article complemented the comprehensive analysis on the “vaccine passport” issue and informed the “futurist” consulting work that VSIR performed for the World Health Organization (WHO). This was a highlight of the entire year. Not only did the experience validate VSIR's integrated business model, working for the WHO highlighted the company's unique ability to bridge strategic research and global policy design.

Throughout the year, VSIR remained committed to providing prospective clients and interested readers with critical insights that support robust public dialogue and strategic decision-making. Picking-up on the article published in the Canadian Government Executive magazine in 2020, VSIR released [A Pandemic, An Election, and the Future of Canadian Cities](#) in May 2021. In addition to predicting the Fall 2021 federal election, VSIR anticipated the strategic importance

of cities to Canada's economic recovery strategy. A key measure of performance in 2022 will be making the implicit link between federal policy priorities (as defined in the ministers' mandate letters) and urban governance more explicit.

2. Strategic Intelligence Value

The pandemic-altering experiences of 2021 combined with major geo-political and geo-economic realignments confirmed the value of strategic intelligence. The end-of-year discovery of a yet another COVID-19 variant (ie., Omicron), underscored the urgent need for all government levels, private businesses, and community-based organizations to better understand a bewildering set of complex forces that are shaping the strategic environment and our engagement with the world.

To that end, VSIR published [The Global Knowledge Mobility Nexus: Transitioning from the Tactical Present to the Strategic Future](#) in March 2021. This remains the signature product in VSIR's strategic intelligence series. This brief provides an analytic framework to help decision makers and planners decipher the intersecting mega-trends that are shaping the 21st century and to comprehend their significance. In this year's edition, special attention is given to the disruptive effects of the COVID-19 pandemic and other compelling drivers of systemic change. Understanding the latent (and often-overlooked) ways in which knowledge is globally distributed by strategic decision-making and human mobility preferences is a pre-requisite for a post-pandemic transition. The blended analysis of emergent change drivers and mobility patterns unique to this strategic intelligence brief is designed to inspire futures thinking and strategic foresight activities among enterprising business owners, non-government organizations, think tanks, and local community leaders.

As a complement to *The Global Knowledge Mobility Nexus (2021)*, VSIR has posted new issues of the *Knowledge Futures* and *Urban Dispatch* exclusively on the VSIR LinkedIn page. Now in its second year, the *Knowledge Futures* series is designed to provoke constructive public dialogue on the strategic issues of our time. Thought-provoking questions about alternative future scenarios are also used to stimulate futures "literacy."

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VSIR's closed the year with another provocative article, [Building Canada's Strategic Capabilities Using Knowledge Mobilization](#), which uses a case study method to suggest ways on how to strengthen the country's adaptive leadership potential in the near-term future.

THE YEAR AHEAD

In 2022, VSIR plans to further develop and strengthen the knowledge mobilization and strategic intelligence capabilities which reside at the core of its value proposition. Building on the successes and lessons learned of the past few years, VSIR will continue to expand its capacity for quality consulting services including foresight analysis.

In this section, you will find a preview of the broad-based challenges and opportunities that VSIR anticipates in the year ahead.

CHALLENGE: The global COVID-19 pandemic, now entering its third year, has revealed the limits of siloed managerial approaches to complex problem solving. In addition to lasting much longer than many people had expected, the pandemic crisis has been an extraordinary lesson that Canada's fate is shaped by globalizing forces which are not easily anticipated, understood, or managed.

OPPORTUNITY: Canada has a strategic window of opportunity to shape a more resilient future. But this will place high expectations on political and business leaders to design strategic frameworks and knowledge mobilization infrastructures that evolve with changing public demands. VSIR is well-positioned to help enterprising organizations better anticipate emerging risks and opportunities with a view to fostering foresight and strategic agility.

CHALLENGE: Two years into the COVID-19 pandemic, the province of British Columbia experienced some of the worst environmental and climate disasters on record. These experiences are a stark reminder about the urgent need to cultivate a culture of preparedness and innovation within both the public service and the private sector.

OPPORTUNITY: The global pandemic and BC's unprecedented weather events inspired a robust public dialogue about the challenge of quickly adapting to a more complex and uncertain future. Deep structural change is inevitable if Canada and BC are to create the conditions for a more secure, sustainable, and democratic future. VSIR views these challenges as a unique opportunity to develop the capabilities needed for enhanced public service delivery.

CHALLENGE: Although Canada enjoys one of the world's highest living standards, it lacks a national urban strategy to sustain the country's future competitiveness, social cohesion, and prosperity. Scaling up the adaptive leadership of Canadian large and medium-sized cities is imperative if Canadian cities are to remain vibrant places to live, work, and play.

OPPORTUNITY: The federal government has been developing a Municipal Nominee Program (MNP) since late 2019 and elevated it as a national policy priority in 2022. Ottawa has also raised Canada’s immigration target levels to more than 400,000 annually, placing additional demands on urban planning capabilities, affordable housing supplies, and public transportation. VSIR views these developments as significant planning milestones and as such, will continue to leverage partnership opportunities that strengthen the vibrancy and resilience of Canada’s metropolitan communities.

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

If you are a mission-driven organization that shares VSIR’s commitments and principles, then we would like to hear from you.

About VSIR

Vancouver Strategic and Integrated Research (VSIR) is a management consultancy specializing in knowledge mobilization, strategic intelligence, and foresight analysis. Since 2017, has functioned as a catalyst for interdisciplinary collaboration, organizational learning, and distributed knowledge sharing.

VSIR uses multi-disciplinary techniques to facilitate the effective exchange of research, evidence, and expertise in support of intelligent decision-making. VSIR’s core mission is to collaborate with mission-driven organizations in the co-production of new sources of social and economic value.



VSIR invites you to review the company’s web page and LinkedIn page where you will find detailed information about specific product and service offerings.

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 daily practice:

<p>Be Engaged</p>	<p>Be Curious</p>
<p><i>Commit to mutually beneficial knowledge exchanges.</i></p>	<p><i>Cultivate a durable interest in discovery-led learning.</i></p>
<p>Be Generous</p>	<p>Be Agile</p>
<p><i>Actively share insights to foster community and trust building.</i></p>	<p><i>Learn to play the short and long game simultaneously.</i></p>

Ideas
Insights
Knowledge



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