

For Immediate Release

Cascadia Innovation Corridor Launches Virtual Forum Series Focused on Cross-Border Collaboration and Economic Recovery

New Cascadia 2050 report will outline bold, sustainable vision for the region

SEATTLE, Wash. — Sept. 14, 2020 — Business, academic, public health and non-profit leaders from British Columbia, Washington state and Oregon will convene for the first of four virtual forums hosted by the Cascadia Innovation Corridor, designed to help the region manage the health and economic impacts of COVID-19.

Topics include:

- **September 15:** Innovating International Travel, co-hosted by Dr. Laurie Trautman of Western Washington University and Matt Morrison of the Pacific Northwest Economic Region, Co-chairs of the Cascadia Innovation Corridor's sub-committee on efficient cross-border movement.
- **October 9:** Connecting the Cascadia Corridor, co-hosted by Kevin Desmond, CEO of Translink and Paula Hammond, SVP at WSP USA, Co-chairs of the Cascadia Innovation Corridor's sub-committee on housing, transportation, and connectivity.
- **October 27:** Local Farms, COVID-19 and the Future of Sustainability, hosted by Dr. Rickey Yada, Dean of UBC Faculty of Land and Food Systems and Co-chair of Cascadia Innovation Corridor's sub-committee on sustainable agriculture.
- **November 17:** Life Sciences in Cascadia, co-hosted by Dr. David Grossman, National Senior Medical Director for Community Health at Kaiser Permanente and Lesley Esford, Life Sciences industry expert, Co-chairs of the Cascadia Innovation Corridor sub-committee on life sciences.

“Our world quickly changed because of COVID-19. Even with the temporary closure of our border, we must remain open to strategic collaboration across the entire Cascadia mega-region,” said Christine Gregoire, CEO of Challenge Seattle and former Governor of Washington state.

“As our economies reopen, the regional collaboration envisioned in the Cascadia initiative can bring about stronger, more robust recovery than if the individual economies of the region work independently. Now more than ever is the time to work together to bring these long-term goals to life.”

Additionally, the Cascadia Innovation Corridor Steering Committee will release a report with new data on the need for responsible development of housing, transportation, and environmental stewardship. The analysis from the Boston Consulting Group details how the region can serve as a global model for sustainable growth for the next 30 years. The report, available September 21, includes a set of strategies and new recommendations to develop a mega-region that embraces economic success while providing inclusive livability.

“Cascadia is the world’s first self-aware mega-region. The strategy it outlines in the Cascadia 2050 vision paints the way toward a brighter future,” said Richard Florida, economist and Urban Studies theorist at the University of Toronto. “COVID-19 makes it imperative that metropolitan areas, and cities and suburbs that make up mega-regions, work together to address pressing health issues as well as economic and fiscal challenges despite temporary border closures. This new vision for Cascadia can spur other mega-regions, and cities and communities around the world, to build stronger, more resilient and more inclusive economies.”

The Cascadia Innovation Corridor is a global innovation hub that addresses critical contemporary issues at a mega-regional scale. This includes a specific focus on the region's response to the COVID-19 crisis, including factors that impact public health, inclusive economic development,

higher education, affordable housing, and other issues that advance regional growth and build regional resilience for future crises.

“While we aren’t able to meet in person, I look forward to this chance to actively restore our economic health and realize a vision for the Cascadia mega-region where collaboration expands opportunity for all,” said Greg D’Avignon, President and CEO of the Business Council of British Columbia. “Now is the time to engage, innovate and intelligently act on economic recovery.”

To learn more about the virtual forums or to register, visit www.connectcascadia.com.

Additional Quotes:

Jay Inslee, Washington Governor: “The Cascadia Innovation Corridor shows us that we can accomplish so much more when we collaborate on talent, transportation and opportunity. These efforts are more important now than ever before. Today, we must continue to think beyond our borders as we address challenges that impact each one of us like COVID-19. Innovation will help strengthen our economy and connect our cities, schools and medical research centers.”

John Horgan, Premier of British Columbia: “While the Canadian-U.S. border remains closed in order to keep people safe through the COVID-19 pandemic, it is essential that we continue to work collaboratively and innovatively with our partners in the Cascadia Innovation Corridor.

The Cascadia Innovation Corridor Virtual Forums will bring together leaders from the public and private sectors to help our countries tackle the challenges we face, maximize our regional advantages, and build a recovery that works for people on both sides of the border.”

About the Cascadia Innovation Corridor Initiative: The Cascadia Innovation Corridor Initiative, led by the [Business Council of British Columbia](#) and [Challenge Seattle](#) links Vancouver, BC, Seattle, and Portland, holding the promise of increasing economic opportunity beyond what the cities and their surrounding regions could expect to achieve independently. With a focus on areas including sustainability, life sciences, higher education research excellence, transformative technologies, the efficient movement of people and goods across border, best and diverse talent, transportation, housing and connectivity, the Cascadia Innovation Corridor is committed to enhancing the lives of people living in the region, and beyond. Read more about the Cascadia Innovation Corridor [here](#).

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