

## **E-Commerce for Sustainable Cities: From Logistics to Land Use**

The Covid-19 pandemic has accelerated the growth of e-commerce and omni-channel retail in Canada. In 2016, the proportion of retail e-commerce sales was 2.4 per cent. By December 2020, e-commerce accounted for 7.8 per cent of total retail trade. This growth is having a transformative impact on consumer travel patterns, freight movement, and land use.

As we continue to trace the emergence of new post-pandemic approaches to sustainable city-building, retail presents both challenges and opportunities. In the transportation sector, the growth of e-commerce has the potential to displace consumer shopping trips but is also associated with rising volumes of freight traffic and heightened competition for curb space. E-commerce has important implications for land use planning, creating new demands for fulfillment space, and ushering in profound changes for bricks and mortar retailing.

The Conference Board of Canada and CPCS are hosting two roundtable events to explore the implications of e-commerce for sustainable urbanism in a post-pandemic context. The roundtables bring together public and private stakeholders to assess the state of current knowledge and discuss how best to shape emerging trends in ways that align with our visions for the future of Canadian cities.

**October 26, 2021**

### **Meeting Location**

Virtual, via Microsoft Teams

### **Time**

1:00 – 2:30 pm Eastern Time

## **E-Commerce for Sustainable Cities: Mobility and Last Mile Logistics**

In the transportation sector, the growth of e-commerce presents several challenges. Rising freight volumes and delivery traffic may increase road congestion and transportation-related emissions, as well as intensify competition between users for access to the curb. But alongside these risks, e-commerce also presents unique opportunities to reorient travel demand and mobility patterns in ways that enhance sustainability objectives.

To manage these traffic flows, more cities are developing comprehensive freight and goods movement strategies, often with a focus on improving last-mile logistics. Innovative solutions for last-mile logistics include microhub consolidation centres, cargo delivery cycles, pickup points, off-hour delivery, and automated sidewalk robots. In this roundtable, we will discuss the role that new logistics strategies can play in advancing sustainable mobility agendas.

- How is innovation and new technology disrupting traditional supply chains?
- How can new last-mile logistics solutions help advance sustainable mobility in Canadian cities?
- How do last mile delivery solutions relate to broader planning visions, like the 15-minute city?
- What regulatory and data collection barriers limit innovation in the urban logistics sector?

**October 28, 2021**

**Meeting Location**

Virtual, via Microsoft Teams

**Time**

1:00 – 2:30 pm Pacific Time

**E-Commerce for Sustainable Cities: Land Use and the Future of Retail**

E-commerce will continue to disrupt bricks and mortar retailing, while also creating new land use requirements. For example, the accelerated growth of e-commerce is fuelling demand for new urban consolidation and fulfillment centers, including innovative microhubs in non-traditional locations. Bricks and mortar retailers are also adapting store space to facilitate omnichannel commerce.

The disruption of conventional retail forms will have profound effects on urban development and land use planning. This transformation presents a unique opportunity for cities to re-imagine the relationship between retail and urban form. In this roundtable, we will discuss how e-commerce will impact urban development and how stakeholders can harness these dynamics to promote new visions of sustainable urban life.

- How will microhubs integrate into non-traditional neighbourhood spaces and are there opportunities to repurpose underused spaces, to facilitate last mile deliveries?
- How will e-commerce affect the life of traditional main streets and what opportunities exist to re-imagine these environments?
- What impact will e-commerce have on suburban shopping malls and big box developments, and how might these environments evolve in response?
- Can e-commerce strategies contribute to new sustainable urban forms, like polycentric 15-minute cities?