SFU Urban Studies
M.Urb Research Summary

Title: Creative Industry in the Mt. Pleasant Slopes: Understanding the locational requirements of industrial and creative firms in Vancouver’s I-1 Industrial Area

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Geographic focus: Mt Pleasant, Vancouver, BC; British Columbia; Canada

Research Question/s:
What are the factors that have allowed creative economy and light industrial firms co-locate within the Mt. Pleasant Slopes industrial area over the last 20 years? How can these factors inform urban planning work which seeks to increase the economic potential of light industrial lands through the introduction of new and compatible land uses?

Significance:
This research focuses on understanding the locational decisions of both industrial and creative economy firms that located in Vancouver’s Mount Pleasant Slopes light industrial area between 1995 and 2015. Answering these questions is important for future economic development and land use policies that seek to intensify how industrial lands are used, including for the purposes of the creative economy, as well as to increase job activity and economic growth.
Winterbottom uses Marshall’s theory of firm agglomeration as a framework to examine the firms’ locational decisions through the factors of goods movement, labour and knowledge. Winterbottom also develops the built environment as a fourth factor.

Findings
Through a combination of firm interviews and a survey to assess how the identified factors were considered in each firm’s location decisions, Winterbottom concluded that labour and the built environment were the primary locational factors for both types of existing firms in the area. Both expressed a desire to be located close to pools of skilled labour in adjacent neighbourhoods and within built environments with features such as high ceilings and open floor plans. Land costs through both lease and ownership were also a consideration and indicate a potential threat as firms compete for similar locations or are potentially outbid by firms entering the study area through new office development activity.