
Present:

Mayor McCallum – Chair
Councillor Nagra
Councillor Patton
M. Heeney, President & CEO, SCDC

Guests:

Dr. G. Thomas, Surrey Board of Trade
E. Model, Downtown Surrey BIA

Regrets:**Staff Present:**

D. Jones, General Manager, Investment &
Intergovernmental Relations
V. Lalonde, City Manager
J. Lamontagne, General Manager, Planning &
Development
S. Simpson, Director, Information Technology
S. Wu, Manager, Economic Development
L. Anderson, Legislative Services

A. ADOPTION OF MINUTES

It was

Moved by Councillor Patton
Seconded by Councillor Nagra
That the minutes of the Investment &
Innovation Impact Committee meeting of July 24, 2020, be adopted.
Carried

B. DELEGATIONS**1. Snapshot of Surrey's Economy - COVID-19 Recovery**

Andy Yan, Director of City Programs, SFU, was in attendance to provide a presentation snapshot of Surrey's economy - COVID-19 recovery.

A PowerPoint presentation was given, illustrating research in terms of the characteristics of Surrey's urban economy and post pandemic recovery.

Comments were as follows:

- Results of a recent online survey on the COVID-19 outbreak concluded 42% of Canadians think the worst is either probably or definitely ahead of us; 61% of British Columbians believe the worst is either probably or definitely yet to come.
- In the context of Surrey, it is connecting the type of economic research with what Surrey has been able to do.
- 90% of the firms in the City of Surrey are small/medium sized enterprises, typically 20 employees or less, which gives an understanding to the scale of businesses hit hard by the pandemic.
- Over one-quarter of small businesses in Metro Vancouver have seen over 50% of business decline; that is the impact. At the same time, the foundations of the economy in Surrey have been moving, in part prior to the pandemic, with Surrey's economy being quite healthy and growing well. The size of firms has

been developing in the last five years, with a 35% increase in the number of firms with 50+ employees.

- Crunchbase data of entries for start-up businesses and businesses seeking funding from venture capitalists, to be headquartered in the City of Surrey, show a 27% increase in entries over the six-month period from March to September 2020; a really strong sign of positive activity for Surrey.
- Another aspect is character testing and the types of employment by industrial sector and regional share. 33% of all transportation and warehousing jobs, and another 28% of all manufacturing jobs in Metro Vancouver, are in the City of Surrey. One in four industrial jobs are in Surrey.
- It is important to note how the type of employment is attached to a labour force. The amount of people that live and work in Surrey is 44%, demonstrating a shift in how the regional and economic sectors are working; more people are living and working in the municipalities they live.
- Understanding city and regional connections and commute flow from and to Surrey, provides a foundation for economic response and recovery plans.
- Examples of COVID-19 impact recovery initiatives in Toronto, Halifax and Auckland, were given.
- In terms of urban development, something to watch for in the way of larger initiatives is the "Bring Back Main Street" initiative. This is a nationally coordinated research and advocacy campaign to gain a deeper understanding of neighbourhood characteristics when it comes to the vitality of businesses and the types of challenges they are facing.
- COVID-19 has really identified how we live, work and move around in cities. In one way interrupting and in another, destruction and amplifying pre-existing conditions. Connecting with other organizations in the region and understanding a recovery strategy is a connection with those other systems to provide a more robust delivery; a recovery strategy that recognizes both the short-term (public health emergency) effects and unchartered long-term (economic) effects.

The Committee expressed their appreciation for the informative presentation and a brief discussion ensued with respect the changing urban landscape of Surrey, where it is now and future plans; where the City can assist businesses in terms of their needs (e.g. permitting as quick as feasibly possible, deeper/adaptable transportation logistics, etc.), noting the added benefit of being a young city, with a young hungry attitude, providing a unique moment in the City's history to nurture.

C. OUTSTANDING BUSINESS

D. NEW BUSINESS**1. Land Development Business Process Modernization**

Remi Dube, Manager, Building Division, and Jerome Thibaudeau, Manager, Business Transformation, provided a presentation on Land Development Business Process Modernization.

A PowerPoint presentation was given, providing an update on how the Land Development services, jointly delivered through the Planning & Development and Engineering Departments, are being transformed to better meet the needs of clients.

Comments were as follows:

- A data driven approach is being used to guide the work and identify areas where investment is needed most. Data is used to provide insights and inspire actions. Working with stakeholders and clients to streamline processes, leveraging technology for improved service delivery. A good example is the Trade Permit Portal with 98% online electrical permitting and 76% online plumbing permitting. A deeper analysis shows that four of every 10 trade permits are initiated outside of regular business hours.
- Investments into Electrical permit capabilities were made prior to 2019, resulting in current online permitting of nearly 100%. Similarly, in 2019 strategic investments were initiated in the Plumbing section, focussing on high volume permits that were not available online. The investment impacts have been significant, moving from 18% online permitting to 76% in 18 months.
- The growth in online permitting was organic. Contractors had the option to apply for their permits in person and choose to engage with the City digitally for added flexibility, improved transparency and permitting efficiencies. City staff have also benefitted with reduced front counter visits and less time spent following up with contractors.
- A similar analysis for opportunities to streamline was performed for Inspection Request services. Currently contractors submit Inspection Requests using various means, with the most popular being email. Investment for a series of improvements in this area will take place in the coming months.
- The impact of COVID-19 forced the rapid development of modified business processes to maintain business continuity. Acting as a catalyst for digital transformation, staff and contractors were forced to embrace a new normal.
- Using teamwork, innovation and technology, existing tools were leveraged to maintain service. This includes using emails, digital and physical drop-boxes to accept plans and documents, and Microsoft Teams to provide remote meetings with clients. To date, these modified measures have been well received, with services now more accessible than ever.
- One area that has seen great transformation is the customer service counter. With the closure of City Hall, a call centre was quickly rolled out and within one day digital applications were enabled via email and in-person payments were moved to remote credit card payments. This is not an automated system,

staff/clients usually at the counter are now online or the phone, e.g. a typical month saw 3,000 visits at the front counter, now our customer service group takes in 4,500 calls and almost 600 additional emails.

- Digital applications and digital plans are accepted in many areas, including the use of digital Seals and digital Stamps to validate provenance and authority, and staff are increasingly doing their reviews digitally. In order to support this new business model, improved and enlarged digital storage facilities have been accessed that also enable the ability for inspectors out in the field to access data and drawings.
- Data and feedback indicate that the current virtual service delivery and digital engagement process, including the modified business processes, are meeting client needs and also valued by staff.
- Using existing tools, staff teams can meet client demand without the need to visit City Hall; staff can be reached via email, phone, portal and can initiate a video conference using Microsoft Teams.
- Next steps, based on feedback and overall success:
 - Work to formalize and enhance modified business processes; and
 - Continued investments to enable digital engagement: education and training; process streamlining (linking systems, leverage automations of tasks); and technological investments.
- In conclusion, continue to partner with the Engineering and IT Departments to leverage technology and best practices to enhance service delivery:
 - Permit technology review and acquisition;
 - Inspection scheduling, including 2-hour window for inspections;
 - Streamline Tennant Improvement Permits; and
 - Additional online permits (Sign, Sprinkler, etc.).

With all these tools, Surrey will be at the forefront of the Land Development services in the region.

The Committee thanked staff for the thorough presentation and additional comments were as follows:

- Online development is the way of the future. Surrey has become leaders in the field, receiving positive feedback for the technology and speed of services.
- As a result of the pandemic, there has been an increase in requests for permits for improvements to residential homes. Immediate steps taken earlier in the year was to analyse data for tenant improvement and implement a change in the structure of the team that works on tenant improvements, enabling quicker reviews. Also looking to address the sprinkler review process by hiring a dedicated professional for that purpose, which will also be included on the online portal.
- Providing educational information has reduced much of the back and forth with clients, resulting in faster processing times; on track to reach the target reduction in processing times by 25% by the end of the year.

- With respect to concerns raised of tenants applying for a new Business License in an old building (e.g. daycare) and the City's expectation that the building needs comply with the current zoning, this is something that staff are looking at as part of the educational component; recognizing a requirement to be involved with the client early in the process.
- The City is developing a tool to post daily inspection schedules on the City's website/portal to replace the current call in system. This should address concerns raised regarding communication with inspectors confirming date and time of inspections.

2. Economic Development Update

Stephen Wu, Manager, Economic Development, provided a brief presentation and update on economic development activity, in terms of economic recovery and support, since the last meeting of the Committee.

Comments were as follows:

- Farina Fassihi is one of the SFU grad students that has been working with Economic Development collecting and analyzing data and will continue until the end of the year.
- Now understanding the need for data driven: What type of start-ups, what is the sophistication, where are the innovation clusters happening, etc.
- What we find is that innovation is not happening in one area, it is in clusters across the city. One example is Pill Pocket, an online pharmacy that is app/tech driven and home grown in Surrey.
- COVID-19 changed things, which has provided a greater understanding of the situation with Surrey's economy and how to build in a way of understanding on the ground and able to support right away.
- There are four components in Surrey's economic recovery:
 - Engage – Continuing to engage with calls to follow-up and understand how needs are evolving:
 - Assist in forming business consortiums
 - Connecting businesses to aid
 - Entrepreneurial innovation
 - Education for local businesses/public
 - Programs - In next few weeks increasing Store to Door (with major upgrade to portal) and more Buy Local, targeting consumption of all Surrey products.
 - City initiated Buy Local
 - Surrey Store to Door
 - ShopHERE e-commerce
 - Sales success metrics
 - Data collection & monitoring
 - Surrey Makes PPE campaign

- Economic Opportunities – fortunately, Surrey's economy is well diversified and able to take advantage of the increased leads for manufacturing requirements that are coming to Surrey.
 - Capacity building for digital business models
 - Strategic investment attraction (Chip Mfg)
 - Investment prospectus
 - Expanding Surrey Makes PPE program
- Additional Support – expedited permitting.
- Key factors for priority sectors:
 - Essential businesses
 - Number of employees
 - Future strategic sector growth opportunity
 - Impact on GDP
 - Business tax provided to City

Monitored sectors:

- Retail – especially essential services
- Construction Materials – continuing to grow with incentive put in place before the pandemic.
- Manufacturing – still doing really well, continuing to generate sales.
- Food & Beverage Manufacturing
- Office / Professional Services – a lot of people are still working from home and hesitant in taking new office spaces; as they get back, looking to move people to offices. Need to collaborate in terms of sharing ideas.
- Current focus of Surrey's economic resiliency and recovery – anticipate challenges in preparation of second wave of COVID-19:
 - Increase business success/reduce closures
 - Increasing business competitiveness
 - Fostering employment opportunities
 - Growing value chain resiliency

Foundationally working with businesses to ensure they have every tool they need; facilitate with the provincial and federal governments to provide best chance for success; and look at how they can compete online. Also want to grow all these companies – not just one or two.

- Looking at Surrey Makes PPE - over \$10m completed sales – success in every category manufactured in Surrey:
 - 322,500+ face shields
 - 18,500+ face masks
 - 13,000+ gowns
 - 775,000+ litres of disinfectant and hand sanitizer
 - 600,000+ disinfectant wipes
 - 5,200+ barriers
- Surrey is the only municipality working with Health Canada and others to achieve a new standard, and the only city helping companies work with provincial health buyers to sell their goods.

- The federal government released new N-95 equivalent (95PFE) Canadian guidelines of which three Surrey manufacturers are pursuing 95PFE manufacturing.
- The City approved a Building Permit in three weeks for a 13,000 sq. ft. facility currently undergoing renovations to manufacture 95PFE.
- A second Surrey manufacturer has successfully completed and received a Medical Device Establishment License (MDEL) to manufacture 95PFE masks.
- Group buy campaign – gowns: increases purchasing power of municipalities and health organizations across Canada looking to purchase in-demand gowns.
- There has been a lot of economic benefits in the first three months. Demand will continue for PPE for the next 24 months and manufacturers are well positioned to realize that.
- Current initiatives:
 - Economic Recovery Action Plan
 - Surrey Makes PPE
 - Surrey Store to Door / Shop Local Upgrade
 - Digital Main Street ShopHERE Program
 - Emergency Operations Centre
 - COVID Resource Centre & Business Communications
 - SparkBIZ Program – Business engagement
 - Investment Attraction
 - Expedited Permitting

E. INFORMATION ITEMS

F. OTHER BUSINESS

G. NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Investment & Innovation Impact Committee will be held on Friday, October 16, 2020 at 11:00 a.m.

H. ADJOURNMENT

It was

Moved by Councillor Patton
 Seconded by Councillor Nagra
 That the Investment & Innovation Impact

Committee adjourn.

Carried

The Investment & Innovation Impact Committee adjourned at 12:00 p.m.

Jennifer Ficocelli, City Clerk

Mayor McCallum, Chair
 Investment & Innovation Impact Committee