

Present:

Councillor Bains, Chair
Mayor Locke, Vice Chair
D. Barbour
J. Curry
R. Helsley
A. Huberman
R. Khanna
E. Michielsen
A. Parker

Absent:

P. Poulain
P. Smailes

Staff Present:

D. Jones, General Manager, Investment & Intergovernmental Relations
S. Simpson, Chief Information Officer, Corporate Services
S. Wu, Manager, Economic Development
S. Lee, Administrative Assistant

INTRODUCTIONS

A roundtable of introductions was held.

A. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

It was

Moved by Mayor Locke

Seconded by R. Khanna

That the agenda of the Investment, Innovation
and Business Committee meeting of May 9, 2023, be adopted.

Carried

B. NEW BUSINESS

1. Review of the Terms of Reference

It was

Moved by Mayor Locke

Seconded by A. Huberman

That the Investment, Innovation and
Business Committee support the IIBC Terms of Reference as presented.

Carried

2. Annual Workplan

The Committee reviewed the 2023 Committee Workplan Draft and provided the following comments:

- Invite Surrey City Development Corporation (SCDC) as a delegation to a future committee meeting.

It was Moved by D. Barbour
Seconded by R. Khanna
That the Investment, Innovation and
Business Committee support the 2023 Committee Workplan as presented, with the
possibility of inviting SCDC as a delegation to a future committee meeting.
Carried

3. 2023 Committee Meeting Schedule

The Committee was requested to review the proposed 2023 meeting schedule.
Meetings are proposed to be held in person on the first Wednesday bi-monthly at
6:00 p.m.

It was Moved by Mayor Locke
Seconded by D. Barbour
That the Investment, Innovation and
Business Committee adopted the 2023 meeting schedule as presented, with the
possibility of rescheduling July 5th meeting to a different date in June.
Carried

C. STAFF PRESENTATION

1. Economic Development Overview and Strategy Update Plan

Stephen Wu, Manager, Economic Development, provided a presentation on the
context for economic development in Surrey, key lessons from 2017-2027 economic
strategy, and economic strategy priorities, update, and process. The following
information was highlighted:

- 63% of residents currently live and work in Surrey. There is room for increasing the median household income from \$113,000 by helping Surrey residents get better paying jobs. Surrey's population growth is projected to surpass the City of Vancouver by 2036. Surrey has an aspirational goal of 1:1 jobs per resident ratio target. Though business spaces and new jobs have increased, this goal is not being achieved at an accelerated rate because the population in Surrey is also growing rapidly.
- Surrey is creating the second downtown in Surrey's City Centre with the presence of Simon Fraser University (SFU), Kwantlen Polytechnic University (KPU), and University of British Columbia (UBC). Since 2020, the educational institutions have strategically made investments, including the Quantum Algorithms Institute, the Innovation Plaza, the BC Centre for Agritech Innovation, and a lot of other assets centralized within City Centre to help drive economic development, and technology and innovation into Surrey and the Fraser Valley.

- There are over 130 organizations in Surrey employing over 200 people across the city. Major employers not only create jobs but also help anchor opportunities for local small and medium businesses. Newton is an area where companies scale up and they tend to expand locally into Campbell Heights.
- Surrey's strength includes having 29% of the vacant industrial lands in Metro Vancouver, over \$300 million public investment into post-secondary and research innovation over the past 5 years, two US border crossing locations, and 25% of population under 19 years old (future workforce) living in Surrey. Since there is increasing competition across the region for economic activity and growth, the City needs to remain competent and support the factors that build out the uniqueness of Surrey.
- An updated economic strategy is currently required due to accelerated economic growth over the past 5 years, COVID-19 pandemic related opportunities and challenges, increasing regional industrial land scarcity, new provincial and federal economic priorities, global uncertainty and challenges to rules-based global systems, and increasing regional competition. The City needs to create a strong foundation to grow off from. In addition, though there has been accelerated economic growth over the past 5 years, this growth may not continue the same way due to current challenging interest rates.
- Economic strategy update process started in late 2022 with a comprehensive review of existing strategy. A macroeconomic analysis of business and resident insights was conducted to understand who the residents are and what type of businesses they want to see within the community that have meaningful impacts overall. The City is currently launching consultations with key business and government stakeholders to receive feedback. There will also be a few consultations with this Committee before the new economic strategy goes to the Council for adoption and hopefully launched by the end of 2023.
- There have been several strategies and research that are either underway or completed, and they are divided in understanding employment lands, talent and workforce, local business support, and investment readiness. In 2017-2027 economic strategy priorities, the four key pillars were to create jobs and develop workforce, attract investment to transform Surrey, build distinct and competitive communities, and grow Surrey's innovation economy. The staff went through these priorities from the initial strategy as it was important to learn from the experience of the last 5 years to define where they are going.
- The workforce is changing dramatically, and their development and training is critical. Since 2017, there has been a 26% increase in professional, scientific, and technical job opportunities. Since 2019, Economic Development supported 62 companies locate in Surrey with over \$280 million in investments creating over 3,000 jobs. Surrey is often the only location in BC for major industrial companies. Opportunities are becoming increasingly sophisticated and require more support. There is clean technology, food processing, high-tech, and EV manufacturing with long decision process (24-36 months). The staff is working with the companies to understand what they are and how to locate them. Since the lands are limited, the City need to prioritize high value opportunities for the economy to create new jobs and leverage the land resources in the most efficient way.

- The City also considers national priorities such as agri-tech, battery or fuel cell manufacturing, hydrogen technology, agri-food processing, and hi-tech, along with investment readiness by ensuring the sites are appropriate with power capacity, transportation infrastructure, and skilled technical talent. There are unique opportunities in Surrey to grow businesses tailored to the characteristics and needs of each community. 51% of residents shop within their town centres. Surrey households spend about \$530 million within Surrey and \$146 million outside of the city each month. Of these spends, approximately \$50 million in spending on restaurant dining, entertainment, and recreation a month can be redirected back to Surrey. Surrey has a growing innovation economy where a lot of assets are being centralized within City Center such UBC and Quantum Algorithms Institute. It is unique in the City Center that every organization collaborates well and see value in each other.
- In response to a lot of changes and things the City learned that they need, the strategic themes for the new economic strategy were introduced such as investment readiness and attraction, employment lands optimization, future economy and innovation, economic resilience and security, local business and vibrancy, distinct and competitive communities, and supporting talent and workforce for tomorrow. The objective was not just to grow the business base, but also to ensure the City is bringing in the right opportunities that support the community. They need to be strategic about the industries they bring in to ensure they are future-proofed and align with the market as well as the senior government desires. There are going to be a lot of different elements that will be explored within these strategies. There will be consultation sessions focused on the different areas, and the City will be bringing stakeholders from across the region – locally, nationally, and internationally. The City is currently in the consultation phase with key business and government stakeholders. There are still a number of steps that need to be taken, and a lot of the findings will be discussed with the Committee to determine how the new strategy is going to look like.

In response to questions from the Committee, Staff provided the following information:

- Staff will share location quotients and key demographics insights of Surrey with the Committee.
- While developing the new economy strategy update, the staff collaborate with all City departments (such as planning, parks, arts, and culture) to inform them of what they do and bring in their unique contributions into this involvement.

The Committee noted the following comments:

- The City should consider attracting more companies and organizations that want to be connected to the research at UBC, SFU, or KPU. It was also suggested that agriculture, forestry, and mining sectors be included in the consultation phase of the economic strategy update process.

- The City should consider rebranding from "the future lives here" to "the future is here" as Surrey has the most set of newcomers and refugees. 50% of the population has mother tongue other than English. The global connection is significant to really that industry that we need.
- People are still going to Downtown for entertainment and live music. The city needs those live music venues and entertainment, and the City should consider cultivating that environment together with the communities.
- Housing supply and affordability are key aspects for attracting talents and businesses, but they were not mentioned much on the presentation. The City should also consider how the trend of working from home is going to affect Surrey.
- Surrey has six distinct town centres. It is important to recognize and build on those differences in the new economic strategy. Every community need an asset to bring people in and we should leverage and enhance these assets by looking at it from six different lenses rather than one big lens.
- On the other hand, these six communities need to be connected to ensure there is still one city as the whole in order to avoid the risk of the six communities growing independently. The City should ensure there are transportation links between these six communities along with efficient and effective movement of the economy. Hence, on top of the six different lenses, there is still a need to have the one big lens.
- The City should consider building an energetic and business-friendly Downtown Surrey. It was recommended that the Committee invites a futurist as a delegate to understand what work is going to look like in the next 30 to 40 years and try to project that far ahead in the downtown core.

D. OTHER BUSINESS

1. Roundtable

A roundtable discussion ensued as follows:

- The Council has recently shifted 132 Street on the Engineering 10-Year Capital Plan from long-term plan to short-term plan in order to start coordinating the road as it is needed for going into Newton industrial area. It was recommended that Staff share the link of the Engineering 10-Year Capital Plan with the Committee.
- In the new economic strategy, the City should consider making Surrey a strong tourist destination. The city needs a reinventing exercise to uplift its image as it has a lot of assets to offer to make it attractive for the visitors.
- Creating an environment where the livability of the community will not suffer as their population expands rapidly is as important as economic growth. The City should consider that Surrey remains attractive with livability and affordability as it continues to grow.

E. NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Investment, Innovation and Business Committee of Wednesday, July 5, 2023 to be rescheduled.

F. ADJOURNMENT

It was

Moved by E. Michielsen

Seconded by J. Curry

That the Investment, Innovation and

Business Committee meeting be adjourned.

Carried

The Investment, Innovation and Business Committee adjourned at 7:00 p.m.

Jennifer Ficocelli, City Clerk

Councillor Bains, Chairperson