

**Present:**

Councillor Bains, Chair  
Mayor Locke, Vice Chair  
A. Parker  
D. Barbour  
E. Michielsen  
J. Curry  
P. Poulain  
P. Smailes  
R. Helsey

**Absent:**

A. Huberman  
R. Khanna

**Staff Present:**

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

**Guest:**

M. Heeney, President and CEO, Surrey City Development Corporate  
R. Singh, Director, Innovation & Technology, BC Centre for Agritech Innovation

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**A. ADOPTIONS****1. Adoption of the Agenda**

It was

Moved by R. Helsey

Seconded by E. Michielsen

That the agenda of the Investment, Innovation  
and Business Committee meeting of June 29, 2023, be adopted.

Carried

**2. Adoption of the Minutes – May 9, 2023**

It was

Moved by E. Michielsen

Seconded Mayor Locke

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

Carried

**B. DELEGATIONS****1. Michael Heeney, President and CEO, Surrey City Development Corporate**

The delegation provided an overview of Surrey City Development Corporate (SCDC). The following information was highlighted:

- SCDC works to make Surrey better for its citizens by using the power of real estate to the best advantage for the city. As a for-profit real estate company, SCDC mandate is to build a revenue producing portfolio, develop City-owned surplus lands in ways that advance the city into a more modern and complete community, and provide the best return for surplus city-owned lands.

- SCDC values include being a beacon of excellence, leaving a legacy with a conscious commitment to city building, teamwork, integrity, honesty, and governance. Their Vision in the next ten years is to undertake ten significantly scaled and catalytic projects that will positively impact the city financially, socially, economically, environmentally, and physically.
- SCDC is an incorporated company owned solely by the City of Surrey who appoints the auditor and board of directors. The board currently comprises of two city directors appointed by Council, currently the City Manager and the Director of Special Projects, and five independent directors with deep industry experience who are endorsed by Council. The board of directors hires management and appoints Development Committee, Audit and Finance Committee, and Governance, Human Resources, and Compensation Committee.
- Regarding SCDC Governance, the Mayor and Council from the City of Surrey set direction and approve strategic plan, business plan, and any transactions greater than \$5 million, and the board and staff from SCDC deliver. SCDC also provides Annual Shareholder's Letter of Expectations which informs the Strategic Plan updates and Business Plan.
- SCDC is committed to working with the private sector to bring in expertise they do not currently have in-house and to effectively deliver projects. They have a positive track record of working with some one of the top real estate companies in the region such as Townline, Beedie, Century Group, and Bosa Properties. SCDC currently focuses on three specific areas – City Centre, Newton, and Campbell Heights. Some of their active projects are Centre Block, Gateway, Newton Town Centre, Lot 10 in Campbell Heights, Campbell Heights East, and Brooksdale. A brief overview on each project was provided.

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

- SCDC needs to do a master plan for Newton Town Centre project. Since the City has a number of civic facilities there, SCDC will help the City refine their plans for those facilities. SCDC will also have a meeting with TransLink to consider making Bus Rapid Transit user-friendly and integrated into the master plan of Newton Town Centre project.

**2. Joanne Curry, VP External Relations, and Rahul Singh, Director of Innovation and Technology, BC Centre for Agritech Innovation, Simon Fraser University**

The delegation provided a presentation on growing investment and innovation of Simon Fraser University (SFU). The following information was highlighted:

- Ranked No. 1 worldwide for sustainable cities and communities and No. 5 worldwide for climate action by Times Higher Education Impact Rankings 2023, SFU has over 35,000 students across three campuses in Surrey, Vancouver, and Burnaby.

- With TechBC closing, SFU established campus in Surrey's Central City Mall in 2002 and made an impact on branding and confidence in the area for others to move in. The mall became rejuvenated, 30+ residential towers were built in the surrounding area due to close proximity to SFU, and Surrey School District now has one of the highest transition rates from high school to university in BC.
- SFU contributions to the economy of Surrey includes mobilizing the resources of the university such as research and innovation, enterprise and business development, human capital development, and enhancing social equity for the benefit of regional development. Surrey School District is the largest in the Province and is BC's future workforce. It is the number one feeder district to SFU's 3 campuses. Companies grow and come to BC for their talent, both BC-grown and those attracted to the province. High-tech industry needs advanced skills – graduate students and postdoctoral fellows from research universities.
- University research and development increases productivity through knowledge transfer and improved capabilities. Research universities birth and support the growth of BC companies, including through their research facilities and international partnerships. Investment in a university education does more for short-term job growth among equity-deserving groups than any other investments. Research universities contribute to a more inclusive, more sustainable, more resilient society.
- SFU is proud of creating Cost Capital Venture Connection at SFU Surrey. This initiative has served over 10,000 student entrepreneurs and over 280 ventures have been launched. Starting at SFU Surrey, the services are available on all three campuses. Some areas of strength of SFU Surrey that are related to City of Surrey economic potential include health innovation, clean tech and sustainable energy, and creative technologies. SFU Surrey is a part of an ecosystem and the BC Centre for Agritech Innovation (BCCAI), Digital Health Circle, and Quantum Algorithms are parts of this system.
- Funded by Federal and Provincial Governments, BCCAI is a province-wide initiative focused on adapting to climate change pressures, building resilient supply chains, and improving food security by empowering small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in BC to achieve faster growth for local and global impact. BCCAI applies the Circle Innovation model to help SMEs develop, test, and pilot their products to reach the market sooner.
- Headquartered at SFU Surrey, BCCAI brings together a multi-stakeholder network of agri-food producers, government, academia, industry, Indigenous communities, not-for-profits, and environmental organizations across BC. BCCAI has focused on two main pillars – Agtech Commercialization and Skills Development. In the process, they are establishing a province-wide network called BC Agtech Network. BCCAI's five-year goal is to develop more than 45 new technology projects, create 320 jobs, support 70 BC businesses in growing their revenues, and 1250 highly qualified personnels (HQP) trained, including 35 Indigenous HQP.

- The first industry projects launched by BCCAI are Aeroroot, Nutriva Group, Lucent BioSciences, Inc., and Agrotek. BCCAI attempts to establish close relationships from other universities who can support the technology advancement. Industry projects supported are climate-controlled greenhouses; sensor-monitoring technologies; testing new amendments and fertilizers; automation and robotics solutions; precision agriculture and food; emerging technologies of vertical farming; aquaculture; cleantech; waste management; and training and upskilling.
- Outcomes of industry projects include locally produced products and services; new jobs and training for HQPs; and social and economic development. BCCAI has a unique model of working with companies by understanding their needs and taking over their project requirements and providing solutions.
- Partners engaged with BCCAI are within BC and beyond. They continue to build this ecosystem to co-create strength in BC. Locating in Surrey provides access to rest of the Province with Surrey serving as a gateway and uniquely focused on agritech and agriculture. A lot of cool technologies are being developed at SFU Surrey.

The Committee noted the following comments:

- Social innovation and social interaction with the City is not always championed, but it is important to what SFU does in terms of social infrastructure for Surrey. The partnership between SFU and the City of Surrey has been phenomenal.

## **C. STAFF PRESENTATIONS**

### **1. Surrey's Smart Cities Journey**

Chief Information Officer, Corporate Services, provided a presentation on Surrey's Smart Cities Journey. The following information was highlighted:

- A smart city is a city that uses technology and data to improve the quality of life for its citizens and enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of its municipal services. The goal is to create a city that is more sustainable, livable, and responsive to the needs of its residents. Smart City has a role in many different industries such as agriculture, energy, and manufacturing. Looking specifically at Surrey, some of the opportunities and challenges include a rapidly growing, young, and diverse population with more than 30% of population under 19; the opportunity to shape the development of the emerging downtown core through investment in innovation and technology; and Surrey's large land area, which poses a challenge in the provision of services such as cellular coverage.
- With a growing population, there is an increased demand for services offered by the City. Hiring more staff to keep up with the demand would not be the best practice. Critical to guiding this growth is to leverage innovation. With that in mind, the City developed a Smart Surrey Strategy in July 2014 to guide growth from an innovation and technological perspective. The strategy also supports the principles of Surrey's two leading documents, the Official Community Plan and the Sustainability Charter.

- Building on the common smart city definition, the City further defined it as one that creates sustainable economic development and high quality of life by considering innovation and technological advancements as a key ingredient in its decision making, strategy, and investment. With innovation as its anchor, the City developed four key areas of action to deliver on its vision - Service Delivery Innovation, Engagement and Digital Inclusion, Sustainable Infrastructure, and Facilitating Economic Growth. More than 40 key initiatives are part of the Smart Surrey Strategy.
- The Service Delivery Innovation Pillar focuses on technology and innovation driven initiatives that seek to improve the resident customer experience when doing business with the City. Residents have created 175,066 MySurrey Accounts which provided improved information and 24/7 access to the services. It also resulted in less travel to City Hall, less calls and emails, and lower cost per service transaction.
- The Engagement and Digital Inclusion Pillar seeks to provide equitable access to the City's services. For example, the City launched a website hub for seniors to help them discover an array of services including how to acquire a device, how to use the internet, and get technical support and training. The belief is to not simply launch a new online service like permitting, without first considering newcomers to Canada or people without the financial means to purchase technology who will access these services in the first place.
- Eduroam is an international service used for partnership by BCNET, CANARIE, post-secondary institutions, and libraries to enable direct connectivity to their applicable organizations. It creates a virtual campus, allowing students, researchers, and staff from participating institutions to obtain internet connectivity to their institutions' services. Students with eduroam configured on their devices will automatically connect to Wi-Fi when they visit library branches and recreation centres throughout Surrey, thereby further advancing Surrey as a world-class connected City.
- The next component of Smart Surrey is Sustainable Infrastructure Pillar. The City's Traffic Management Centre (TMC), the most advanced in Canada and potentially North America, allows for the monitoring and real-time management of traffic throughout the city, where hundreds of cameras are used at key locations and staff are able to change signal timings to ease traffic congestion. For example, the Advanced Traveller Information System which detects anonymized Bluetooth-enabled devices on the roads, encrypts the data and routes it to the TMC, where a computer tracks the speed and travel time of the detected devices as they move through the city. The City intends on building on this innovation progress with future advancements in connected vehicles.
- Broadband strategy is a component of the Smart Surrey Strategy. Partnered with District Energy Program, the City tries to encourage competition for businesses and residents to get a cheaper rate on internet connectivity. They have partnership with KPU and SFU Surrey Campus and pay the City to use their fibre. The City has over 21 kilometers of fibre throughout Surrey.

- There are many benefits to investing in smart city technology and innovation in municipal services. By using data and technology to optimize the services, the City can improve the quality of life for the citizens, reduce costs, and create a more attractive environment for businesses.

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

- The City of Surrey has forged partnerships with SFU's co-op programs, benefiting from fresh perspectives from academia that may be unfamiliar to them. This collaboration has led to three co-op students transitioning into full-time roles within the City. Additionally, the City has engaged in numerous initiatives with academia including UBC and KPU, fostering a productive relationship between the public sector and higher education institutions.
- The City's IT department comprises of 130 individuals, who function within a collaborative framework. For example, they partner with Engineering staff and support them in transportation areas. The department is able to achieve more by working with all departments across the City, academia, and outside institutions through collaboration and partnership.

## **2. Economic Strategy Engagement Feedback**

General Manager, Investment and Intergovernmental Relations, and Manager, Economic Development, provided a presentation on Economic Strategy Engagement Update. The following information was highlighted:

- The City is undergoing the process of updating its economic strategy, and the most important part of the process is to hear the voices across industries, academia, and companies from across the region. The goal of the economic strategy is to create one job for every resident worker within the City. For engagement, the City reached about 60 industry and academic leaders from about 40 organizations in the first two consultations. The first consultation session was held on May 13 and it focused on innovation. When asked how to foster innovation within Surrey, some early feedback received were collaboration with universities, increase livability, define a strong identity for Surrey, explore what the City's vision is and where they want to be, and focus innovation on solving real problems such as health, environment, and transportation?
- The second consultation session was held on May 22 and focused on industrial and manufacturing growth to discuss how to strategically leverage 29% of the industrial lands in Surrey to not just support warehousing but higher employment growth on these assets. When asked how to protect and grow opportunities within the industrial areas, some early feedback received included facilitating mixed-used industrial developments, increasing awareness of the value of trades, prioritizing retention of local industrial businesses, permitting process efficiencies, increasing livability and vibrancy, local manufacturing consortiums, and transportation access to employment areas.

- The third consultation session is expected in July and will focus on supporting local business and area vibrancy. With economic conditions shifting and interest rate rising, they will discuss the needs of local businesses and how to create resilient businesses. In addition to repeat participants from the first two sessions, the Board of Trade members, the Chamber of Commerce members, and many businesses from the local communities will also be participating in this consultation.
- In addition to the three formal consultation sessions, the City is also working with the Board of Trade and Chambers of Commerce members by hosting roundtables in partnership with Surrey Board of Trade on August 22, South Surrey White Rock Chamber of Commerce on a future date, and Cloverdale Chamber of Commerce on a future date. The goal is to hear local businesses' perspectives of what makes those areas great and how the City could support them.
- A lot of comments from the first two consultation sessions validated that the City is on the right track; but more importantly, some challenged the current track and helped open the minds to see other possibilities. There was also a very strong recognition that to create an economic strategy, it is important to get the foundational piece right, such as the lack of educational and health infrastructure, and to support the citizens and businesses before thinking about anything else. This feedback was something unexpected but interesting, and it showed that people are paying attention to what is going on in the city.
- Another highlight from the first consultation was vision. In the previous economic strategy, the City developed the following bold vision statement with the community partners: "The City of Surrey will become the regional nexus for commerce and a nationally recognized centre for innovation within the next decade". Based on the early feedback from the first two consultation sessions regarding livability and other aspirations, staff asked the Committee if the current vision statement is still relevant or do they need to modify it.

The Committee noted the following comments:

- While many rapidly growing cities historically implement measures to curb growth, Surrey is taking a distinct approach by actively accommodating it, a task that might present challenges. The Committee recommended adding livability and vibrancy to the City's vision. This involves recognizing that incoming businesses necessitate suitable housing for their employees, spaces to nurture families, and access to adequate services. It is also important to showcase everything that the city has to offer.
- The objective is to encourage more than just visits; the aim is to foster investment, whether through families settling in the area or the establishment of businesses. The City of Surrey's identity is characterized by numerous companies that have expanded not solely due to domestic success, but through strategic global partnerships that facilitate investment, enabling these businesses to flourish and grow.

- The Committee recommended setting the vision of building the next modern and livable city in Canada. With ample space, a high level of livability, and a significant youth population, the city possesses the essential attributes to accomplish this goal. Notably, the building aspect holds significance as they are creating a city and does not contend with the historical presence of older buildings, distinguishing it from many other cities.

**D. NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting of the Investment, Innovation and Business Committee is scheduled for Wednesday, September 6, 2023.

**E. ADJOURNMENT**

It was

Moved by D. Barbour

Seconded by J. Curry

That the Investment, Innovation and

Business Committee meeting be adjourned.

Carried

The Investment, Innovation and Business Committee adjourned at 7:09 p.m..

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Jennifer Ficocelli, City Clerk

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Councillor Bains, Chairperson