

TEAM SURREY 5-YEAR STRATEGY 2025-2029



Designated Recipient: Destination British Columbia

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MRDT Repeal Date: June 1, 2025

Five Year Period: June 1, 2025 to May 31, 2030

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BACKGROUND

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BACKGROUND

INTRODUCTION

Surrey, British Columbia, finds itself at a pivotal juncture in its history, marked by a burgeoning population, a strategic geographical position, and a richly diverse community. With these factors in play, Surrey possesses the potential to emerge as a premier destination for both visitors and investors.

Over the next five years, Surrey aspires to foster industry growth, boost overall revenue, and engender a positive social impact for the city through collaborative efforts with its partners.

Despite projections indicating that Surrey will become British Columbia's most populated city within the 2025-30 plan timeframe, its current status as a tourism hub lags behind that of its counterparts in the Lower Mainland.

This forthcoming plan period commences against a backdrop vastly different from the current 5-year plan. In Canada, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's Calls to Action calls for training and tactics to foster a more knowledgeable and respectful approach to building Indigenous relationships in respect to tourism. With this in mind, many DMOs are looking to support and leverage Indigenous tourism experiences, and this sector is anticipated to achieve \$2.2 billion in GDP by 2024.

Climate change has inflicted significant consequences across the province, prompting Destination Marketing Organizations (DMOs) throughout British Columbia to adapt to and mitigate the effects of extreme weather events.

Simultaneously, global instability, marked by heightened diplomatic tensions and conflict, threatens international travel markets. This instability has already affected Canadian tourism, evidenced by declining visits from China.

Domestically, elevated interest rates and mounting household debt present challenges to the domestic travel landscape as individuals in their prime spending years re-calibrate budgets and adjust travel plans accordingly.

Central to this plan is an examination of the evolving role of Destination Marketing Organizations, particularly how these changes affect Discover Surrey and its partners moving forward. While Destination Marketing remains a core aspect of their mandate, the Ministry of Tourism, Arts, Culture and Sport is pushing for DMOs to broaden their scope of services.

This expanded remit places greater emphasis on collaboration and relationships amongst key partners - Discover Surrey, the City of Surrey (the City), and the Surrey Hotel and Motel Association (SHMA), collectively known as "Team Surrey". Success hinges on these entities working together cohesively and agilely.

Seamless collaboration is crucial to properly implement strategies and ultimately grow Surrey's tourism sector. Creating strong partnerships and aligning efforts will be paramount.

Discover Surrey must work side-by-side with the City of Surrey, the Surrey Hotel and Motel Association, and the hospitality industry to craft compelling visitor experiences and market Surrey effectively. This plan integrates the priorities of all Team Surrey partners to ensure a cohesive and comprehensive strategy for Surrey's tourism and accommodation sector. The integration focuses on clarifying responsibilities, addressing the various market segments, and incorporating essential KPI metrics. Through synergistic teamwork, Team Surrey can elevate Surrey's profile as a vibrant destination.

BACKGROUND

PROJECT DESIGN

Team Surrey acknowledges that fostering a robust and socially beneficial tourism industry hinges upon collaborative efforts. Industry stakeholders' engagement in shaping this plan will be instrumental in determining the sector's success and expansion over the next five years.

In line with this collaborative ethos, a comprehensive discovery process was instituted to involve diverse individuals who wield influence over the industry's well-being and whose future actions will drive its growth. This process entailed extensive consultations, including one-on-one interviews and group workshops, which engaged stakeholders in the preparatory stages of plan development. The project design includes a clear delineation of responsibilities among Team Surrey to avoid duplication of efforts and ensure efficient resource allocation.

Team Surrey aims to synchronize its activities with the objectives, strategies, and implementation efforts of Destination BC and Vancouver, Coast & Mountains, ensuring alignment across all fronts.

PARTICIPATING STAKEHOLDERS

One-on-One Interviews

- Councillor Linda Annis - City of Surrey; Surrey First
- Councillor Mike Bose - City of Surrey; Surrey First
- Councillor Doug Elford - City of Surrey; Safe Surrey Coalition
- Councillor Mandeep Nagra - City of Surrey; Safe Surrey Coalition
- Caroline Chiu - City of Surrey; Business Relationship Specialist
- Stephen Wu - City of Surrey; Director, Economic Investment
- Ryan Gallagher - City of Surrey; Arts & Culture Director

- Kerri Van Eaton - City of Surrey; Youth Engagement & Intervention, Manager of Healthy Communities
- Kristin Bishop - Civic Hotel, General Manager and Discover Surrey, Board Chair
- Jimmy Darbyshire - Central City Brewing, Director of Marketing and Discover Surrey, Vice Chair
- John Kearns - Sheraton Vancouver Guildford Hotel, Regional General Manager and Surrey Hotel and Motel Association, Chair
- Eric Miller - Marketing Consultant for SHMA

Regrets

- Mayor Brenda Locke - City of Surrey; Surrey Connect
- Councillor Gordon Hepner - City of Surrey; Surrey Connect

Group Workshops

Workshop 1 - Friday, March 22, 2024

- Jerrilin Spence - Historic Stewart Farm
- Nick Blaga - City of Surrey; Sport Surrey
- Cassie Gibeau - Honeybee Centre
- Jujhar Mann - Mann & Co Bakeshop
- Patrick Akuagwu - Sandman Guildford

Workshop 2 - Monday, March 25, 2024 AM

- Tobias Brown - Tommies Jerk
- Stephen Plant - Heritage Rail
- Sami Ghawi - Fusion Presents (Music City)
- Manjot Dhillon - Wayback Brewing
- Julia Barreiros - Four Points by Sheraton
- Kathy Sheppard - Cloverdale Rodeo
- Parm Kooner - Comfort Inn & Suites

Workshop 3 - Monday, March 25, 2024 PM

- Lynn Saffery - Museum of Surrey
- Paul Oraziatti - Cloverdale BIA
- Elizabeth Model - Downtown Surrey BIA
- Lise Hines - Chew On This Tasty Tours
- Steve Watts - Mainland Whisky
- Kristin Bishop - Civic Hotel

BACKGROUND

2025-2030 STRATEGIC CONTEXT

The next five years of growth for tourism in Surrey will be powered by Team Surrey executing on the Vision and Mission of the organization.

VISION STATEMENT	Our vision is to elevate Surrey to a top-tier, vibrant, four-season destination with a mosaic of iconic tourism experiences showcasing the city's diverse culture, urban nature, and authentic community.
MISSION STATEMENT	To champion the ongoing development of unique tourism experiences and partnerships to attract visitors and create an environment where tourism can thrive in Surrey.
BRAND PROMISE	Behind every discovery is a story — a journey, a connection, the start of something special. From tidal beaches to green spaces to authentic global culture, visiting Surrey provides a unique mosaic of experiences that inspires visitors to discover more.
POSITIONING STATEMENT	Surrey's story is greater than the sum of its parts. It is a compelling tapestry of experiences told with unpretentious eagerness and authentic expertise. Surrey spans vast and varied landscapes, but we share our array of approachable tourism experiences in an inclusive, welcoming, and layered way. Our mosaic of vibrant voices challenges perceptions and offers a heartfelt invitation to explore the undiscovered and unexpected.

Our strengths as a growing and evolving tourism community are depth and diversity. Together, we inspire increased visitation in the "True Surrey" way.

BACKGROUND

OPERATING ENVIRONMENT

Canadian Tourism

The Canadian tourism sector has made remarkable strides in its recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic, with total tourism revenue surpassing pre-pandemic levels in 2023. Leading this resurgence is domestic tourism, which reached 104% of 2019 levels in 2023.

According to the Destination Canada Fall 2023 Tourism Outlook report, spending within Canada's tourism industry is forecasted to grow at an annual rate of 5.8% from 2024 to 2030. This trajectory suggests a potential revenue of \$140 billion by 2030, a significant increase from the \$105 billion recorded in 2019. However, when adjusted for inflation, this growth appears negligible.

Despite these positive indicators, the recovery has been uneven, with certain regions and sub-sectors still grappling with challenges. Furthermore, the industry faces intense competition in the global marketplace, with capacity constraints hindering its full potential.

Destination Canada has identified a revenue potential of \$160 billion for the tourism industry by 2030, contingent upon a transformative approach to address existing constraints and shift demand. Key strategies include workforce development, expanding capacity beyond peak seasons, attracting high-yield guests, improving air access, and fostering new investment and reinvestment.

To support this transformative agenda, the federal government has adopted a proactive stance, launching initiatives such as the Federal Tourism Growth Strategy and allocating an additional \$50 million in funding for Destination Canada's International Business Events. Collaboration among federal, provincial, territorial, and industry stakeholders will be imperative for the success of these strategies.

Consistent with increased federal support, Destination Canada's 2023 Tourism Corridor Strategy aims to develop tourism corridors across Canada, connecting destinations with significant attractions. This collaborative project involves stakeholders across provincial and territorial boundaries, enhancing Canada's competitiveness by offering visitors more reasons to explore new regions.

A potential key initiative for Surrey is the Sustainable Journey from Prairies to Pacific corridor, utilizing Highway 3 to link Southern Alberta and British Columbia's Lower Mainland. This project integrates existing strategies in both provinces to create investment opportunities and infrastructure enhancements, aiming to grow demand and manage long-term visitation.

In summary, while the Canadian tourism sector is poised for growth, it must undergo significant changes to fully unlock its potential and emerge as a resilient, sustainable, and prosperous contributor to the national economy.



BACKGROUND

OPERATING ENVIRONMENT

British Columbia

Destination BC's outlook for the province's tourism industry in 2024 and beyond is marked by optimism and a focus on sustainable, inclusive growth. After weathering the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, labour shortages, and weather-related emergencies in 2023, the industry is experiencing a strong rebound, prompting Destination BC to revise its performance forecasts upward. As the recovery continues to gain momentum, the organization aims to position British Columbia as a premier destination for sustainable, inclusive, and culturally immersive experiences.

This vision encompasses promoting Indigenous tourism, creating accessible and inclusive tourism products, and encouraging responsible travel practices that contribute to environmental protection. Destination BC's strategy will continue to emphasize investment in destination development, focusing on improving infrastructure, accommodations, and recreational facilities to ensure visitors enjoy world-class experiences. Enhancing transportation networks and respectfully growing Indigenous tourism opportunities are key priorities within this development approach.



By prioritizing sustainable development and inclusive experiences, Destination BC aims to foster a tourism industry that benefits local communities while preserving the natural and cultural heritage that attracts visitors worldwide. This commitment to sustainability and inclusivity will be reflected in the organization's marketing priorities for 2024 and beyond.

Destination BC's key marketing initiatives will focus on rebuilding international visitor markets through increased brand focus and targeted campaigns in key overseas markets. Expanding the "Invest in Iconics" strategy, which promotes iconic BC travel routes and experiences, is also a priority to achieve geographic and seasonal dispersion of visitors. For Discover Surrey, there appears to be a significant opportunity surrounding aligning marketing activities to the Rockies to Rainforest Iconic strategy.

Moreover, the marketing strategy will highlight sustainable, inclusive, and culturally immersive experiences, aligning with BC's tourism vision. Promoting the concept of the "responsible traveller" – visitors who respect the places they visit and the people they meet – will be a central theme.

Destination BC will adopt a digital-first and privacy-centric approach, leveraging technology and data-driven marketing tactics to reach target audiences effectively. While rebuilding international markets is a priority, the organization will continue encouraging domestic travel by British Columbians and Canadians, and attracting visitors from key regional markets like the United States.

Destination BC's outlook for 2024 and beyond reflects a commitment to sustainable growth, inclusive experiences, and strategic destination development, underpinned by targeted marketing efforts that position British Columbia as a world-class, responsible travel destination.

BACKGROUND

OPERATING ENVIRONMENT

Surrey

After years of uncertainty surrounding the Municipal and Regional District Tax (MRDT) and industry non-alignment, Team Surrey and the tourism sector are now poised for long-term growth. With a professional destination management team, Team Surrey has led the industry forward, making significant inroads required for progress. After the COVID-19 pandemic, Surrey's tourism sector has experienced unprecedented growth, with occupancy rates reaching 83% during the summer of 2023. However, this peak in high-season travel has also highlighted the need to facilitate seasonal dispersion, increase accommodation options, and contribute to facility growth.

While OAP funding is expected to decrease by 20-30% in 2025 with the new provincial regulations, MRDT revenues have increased, with budgets allocated among Team Surrey. Historically, Discover Surrey has focused on leisure travel marketing, while the SHMA has promoted group travel and business transient travel, and the City has allocated staff resources.

Available and future hotel accommodation is focused on the city center, with several proposals for new hotel projects within the next 5 years. However, accommodations currently remain constrained during peak seasons, with the city losing many rooms since the pandemic. The loss of short-term rental accommodations further exacerbates the situation, placing additional strain on the industry's capacity.

Sports tourism remains Surrey's claim to fame, with a focus on providing accessible facilities; however, with accommodation at a premium during the summer months and limited options for accessible accommodations, the sector has limited capacity for growth during peak travel periods or with accessible audiences.

Additionally, the lack of major sporting facilities limits hosting large-scale national and international events. Future growth must come through seasonal dispersion and the development of new tourism offerings.

Despite these challenges, Surrey residents understand and support tourism's value to their community. With 82.6% of residents valuing the contributions tourism makes to Surrey – higher than the British Columbia average – this endorsement, combined with other positive sentiment factors measured by Destination BC, indicates that residents fully endorse growing the sector and believe strongly that it plays a positive role in economic development. A key reason for resident support is that an estimated 27,780 tourism jobs exist in Surrey, representing about 9.9% of total employment, compared to the national average of 8.2%.

As Surrey prepares to become British Columbia's most populated city by the end of the decade, City staff have tabled an aggressive Economic Development plan that will lay significant groundwork for the growth of infrastructure, amenities, hotels, motels, private residences, and experiences. In its current state there are limited tourism industry businesses to support growth, such as outdoor rentals (e.g. bike, kayaks, paddle boards), culinary experiences (e.g. cooking classes, wine or food tours), and infrastructure (e.g. hotels in the south, multi-use venue space). This development will be transformative for the City and its tourism sector.

Until these new tourism products come to market, Team Surrey's focus must be on seasonal dispersion, operational efficiencies, building brand awareness, and maximizing partnerships. Collectively, these efforts will establish Surrey as a preferred destination and provide prospective investors with the confidence in the industry required to attract capital investment.

SWOT ANALYSIS

Strengths

Weaknesses

Threats

Opportunities



SWOT ANALYSIS

As part of the discovery process, participants were asked to discuss their opinions regarding Surrey's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats as a travel destination. The results have formed the basis for many of the strategic recommendations in this plan.

In the post-COVID environment, tourism in the City of Surrey has flourished and is experiencing impressive year-over-year growth. However, this impressive growth will eventually plateau as the city faces the reality of a constrained product that will directly impact the next 5-year planning period.

The 5-Year Plan has been designed to ensure investments in the city capitalize on its strengths and opportunities while addressing threats and areas of weakness that can be improved.

The following strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats identified during the discovery process will shape the plan's content and recommendations.



STRENGTHS

Affordability:

Surrey offers a slightly more cost-effective alternative compared to Vancouver, rendering it an alternative for business, group, and touring demographics seeking budget-friendly options.

Strategic Location:

Situated as a prime drive market, Surrey boasts convenient accessibility for regional, US, and international visitors alike, enhanced by its proximity to two international airports.

Sports Tourism:

Surrey maintains a strong reputation in sports tourism, supported by its robust sports infrastructure and accessible facilities, drawing thousands of sports enthusiasts and events to the city each year.

Surrey also has the highest number of public golf courses of any community in Metro Vancouver or the Fraser Valley.

Diversity of Cultures:

Surrey's rich cultural tapestry and burgeoning population contribute to a vibrant community ambiance, enriching the city with a plethora of cultural experiences and broadening its appeal to a diverse range of travellers.

Approximately 170 different languages are spoken in Surrey.

Consent to Operate:

Surrey benefits from a resident market that holds a favourable view towards tourism, as measured by Destination British Columbia.

Natural Beauty and Distinct Neighbourhoods:

Surrey's natural landscapes, 800 parks, and over 100 km of trails are hidden gems, complemented by its six distinct neighbourhoods, providing a broad range of attractions and activities.

Vancouver-Based World-Class Events:

The hosting of prestigious events such as the FIFA World Cup, Invictus Games, and the Grey Cup in proximity to Vancouver will continue to strain the city's accommodation inventory, presenting an advantageous opportunity for cities like Surrey due to greater affordability.

Surrey's skytrain access to downtown Vancouver provides a significant opportunity.

Surrey Large-Scale Events:

Surrey currently hosts several events that attract a number of regional visitors including the largest Canada Day celebration in Western Canada (90,000+ attendees), the multicultural Fusion Festival (100,000+ attendees) and the Cloverdale Rodeo (70,000+ attendees).

There are other opportunities such as the Surrey's International Writers conference, Festival of Dance, Vaisakhi, Halal Food Festival, Latin Festival and 5X that could grow to attract more visitors with diverse backgrounds and interests.

Opportunities around Visiting Friends and Relatives (VFR):

Surrey's diverse multi-culturalism lends itself to a significant opportunity to promote VFR travel, especially during off-peak travel times.

WEAKNESSES

Need for Stronger Identity, Branding, and Reputation Management:

Surrey needs to establish a distinct identity and value proposition as a tourism destination, overcome negative perceptions around crime and drugs, and address the absence of signature attractions compared to other local DMOs. Many of Surrey's experiences and products remain underdeveloped with low public awareness.

Accommodation Constraints:

A lack of new hotel development has placed more pressure on peak-season accommodation availability, with high room rates driving sports events and teams playing in Surrey to other municipalities.

In May 2024, the Province of BC introduced new rules to short-term rentals in order to create more options and affordability for long-term rentals. The new rule limits short-term rentals to the host's primary residence plus one secondary suite. The removal of short-term rentals from the market exacerbates issues of affordability.

Infrastructure Constraints:

A lack of convention and event space limits growth during off-peak months as larger group business goes to neighbouring municipalities.

A lack of large sports and multi-use venues that can attract international and national events also drives these groups to other municipalities.

Partner Alignment:

In Surrey's tourism industry, the main stakeholders – the City, Discover Surrey, and the Surrey Hotel and Motel Association (SHMA) – often lack alignment, leading to a lack of cohesion.

Feedback indicates that the City holds significant influence in decision-making, yet there is no City Councillor assigned to the Board, and tourism is not prominent in the City's Economic Development Plan. Additionally, the City does not currently have an overall tourism strategy.

Moreover, not all accommodators share the same objectives, further contributing to the lack of alignment.

Value of Tourism Knowledge:

The role tourism plays in the economy is underappreciated. With no Value of Tourism Study in place, there is no way to quantify the sector's contribution to the community, industry, and city.

Seasonal Dispersion Required:

Limited opportunities, products, and events for winter and shoulder seasons result in low occupancy rates during these periods.

Challenges in Transportation Connectivity:

Without a direct link to the airport and with limited options for public transit, Surrey faces challenges in transportation connectivity. Additionally, the city has six geographically dispersed neighbourhoods which are difficult to navigate for the uninformed.

SWOT ANALYSIS

THREATS

Fluctuating Funding:

The variability in funding and historical support for the industry poses a significant risk to the continuity and effectiveness of tourism initiatives. Perceived instability will hinder the long-term planning and development of the tourism sector in Surrey from an outside investment perspective.

Perceived Value of Tourism:

The lack of a Value of Tourism Study for Surrey leads to diminished importance being placed on the sector by the public, City employees, and most councillors.

Sports Tourism:

The City continues to promote sports tourism during peak summer months when accommodators cannot or will not participate in bids due to high occupancy rates. Not all hotels being used in bids are suitable for sports tourism, and the competitive landscape is increasing.

Regulatory and Bureaucratic Challenges:

Stringent liquor laws and bureaucratic obstacles in obtaining event permits are limiting the range of entertainment options available, detracting from Surrey's appeal as a vibrant destination for hosting events.

Competition and Lack of Distinctive Attractions:

Competition from neighbouring cities and the absence of unique, iconic attractions in Surrey, coupled with stiff competition from larger cities like Vancouver, risk diverting potential tourists to other destinations.

Balancing Tourism with Local Needs:

Effectively managing tourism's impact on the local community and infrastructure while simultaneously providing a fulfilling experience for visitors remains a delicate balancing act.

Record High Household Debt:

Record high household debt in Canada and high interest rates impact discretionary retail spending, affecting travel and tourism across the board and accentuating young families and those in their prime debt relationships.

Geopolitical Instability:

Geopolitical instability around the world threatens travel trends significantly. The US 2024 Election could significantly impact Canada-US relationships, potentially impacting the open border status.

Governance and Strategy Alignment Issues:

The absence of a Councillor appointed to the Discover Surrey Board of Directors violates the Board's by-laws, and may lead to a disconnect between City governance and tourism strategy execution, especially with the lack of an overall tourism strategy.

OPPORTUNITIES

Brand Value Proposition:

Define and develop Surrey's tourism brand value proposition to align residents, industry, and City staff.

Cultural Diversity:

Leverage Surrey's cultural diversity as a promotional lever for product development and promotion.

Sports Tourism:

Seek to expand upon the current schedule of events, targeting larger, more provincial sports tourism opportunities and off peak season sporting events.

Promote new opportunities associated with the City's sport infrastructure builds and upgrades.

Stronger Partnerships:

Work closer with Team Surrey and industry partners such as Destination Canada, Destination British Columbia and Vancouver Coast & Mountains to accentuate and power overall direction and objectives.

A Place of Families, Hope, and Optimism:

As a young city with a growing population, Surrey attracts families, often multi-generational, from across the globe, fostering a mindset of hope, opportunity, and enduring optimism.

Development of Themed Experiences:

Capitalize on cultural, film, and food festivals during shoulder seasons. Focus on more tourism friendly events such as the International South Asian Film Festival.

Package and promote local experiences such as group guided culinary tours or outdoor experiences (e.g. RV parks/camping, trails, bird-watching and other nature-based experiences).

Capitalizing on Accessibility and International Markets:

Leverage Surrey's strategic location near major transportation hubs to attract visitors from the international market, particularly focusing on regions with strong cultural ties to Surrey's South Asian population.

Enhancing Collaboration Among Tourism Organizations:

Foster stronger partnerships between the City's tourism department, local businesses, cultural organizations, and sports clubs to create a unified approach to tourism.

Community-Driven Tourism Development:

Encourage residents to develop and share experiences unique to Surrey, such as home-based cultural tours, workshops, or local dining experiences, boosting the economy and instilling community pride.

Surrey Economic Development Plan 2024:

Tourism opportunities in the proposed Cloverdale and Downtown Entertainment Districts are significant. While the projects are years away from breaking ground, there will be opportunities for Team Surrey to provide valuable input. The City will need to ensure that regulations support growth in this area.

The Canadians of South Asian Heritages Museum is considering Surrey as a location. This may be developed as a multi-use space that could be used to grow and create world-class South Asian signature events such as 5X, the South Asian Film Festival, or South Asian eSports events.

Seasonal Dispersion

Developing and promoting things to do in Surrey in the off-season is paramount for tourism growth.

AUDIENCE



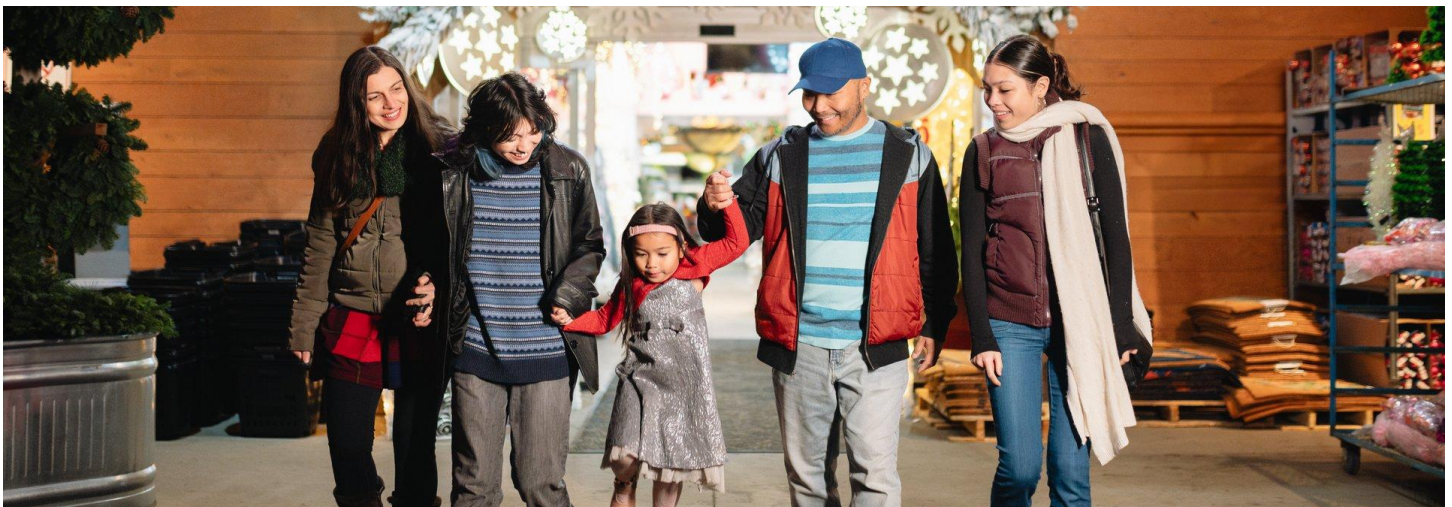
AUDIENCE

The primary target markets for the 2025 - 2030 Surrey MRDT Plan have been divided into Consumer Markets, Business Markets, and Stakeholder Markets. This is based on best available information in 2024, but may evolve as new data is acquired and priorities shift.

CATEGORY	SEGMENT	GROUP / TRANSIENT	DESTINATION LEAD	KEY PARTNERS
Primary Consumer Markets	Leisure day trippers from communities in and around Metro Vancouver and Fraser Valley	Transient	Discover Surrey	
	Visiting Friends and Relatives (VFR)	Transient	Discover Surrey	
	Leisure visitors from other parts of BC and Alberta	Transient	Discover Surrey	
	Sports Groups	Group	City of Surrey	Discover Surrey, SHMA
Secondary Consumer Markets	Drive-through traffic: Surrey is an alternative accommodation choice to Vancouver, Whistler or other destinations	Transient	Discover Surrey	
	Washington State	Transient	Discover Surrey	
	Overnight visitors to Vancouver	Transient	Discover Surrey	
	Overflow: Surrey is a lower-priced alternative for travellers to Vancouver	Transient	Discover Surrey	
	International opportunities associated with DBC Iconics	Transient	Discover Surrey	
	Travel trade – tour operators and tour groups	Group	Discover Surrey	SHMA

AUDIENCE

CATEGORY	SEGMENT	GROUP / TRANSIENT	DESTINATION LEAD	KEY PARTNERS
Key Business Markets	Meetings & Conventions	Group	SHMA	Discover Surrey
	Business Travellers	Transient	SHMA	Discover Surrey
Team Surrey Stakeholders	Partners - City of Surrey, Surrey Hotel and Motel Association, Discover Surrey, tourism businesses, partner organizations, industry developers	n/a	Discover Surrey, City of Surrey	SHMA
	First Nations - Semiahmoo, Katzie, Kwantlen are the main but others include Kwikwetlem, Qayqayt and Tsawwassen	n/a	Discover Surrey	City of Surrey
	Residents	n/a	City of Surrey	Discover Surrey
Investors	Large-scale infrastructure developers	n/a	City of Surrey	
	Small and medium-sized businesses	n/a	City of Surrey	



8 KEY LEARNINGS



8 KEY LEARNINGS

1

There is currently limited peak season capacity. Until new accommodation properties increase supply, organizational priorities need to facilitate occupancy during the off-peak season.

2

Effective collaboration and clear allocation of responsibilities among stakeholders is critical for achieving strategic objectives and avoiding duplication of efforts.

3

Surrey's value proposition and brand have yet to be fully articulated internally and externally, and agreed upon by key partners.

4

There is a limited understanding of the value of tourism for the city of Surrey. Future industry growth will depend on residents, the City and industry fully understanding the sector's role in the city's economic development.

5

In the absence of a marquee attraction, Surrey needs to lean heavily toward promoting experiences, events, and facilities to attract visitors.

6

The development of off-peak events and experiences holds the key to visitor attraction.

7

Governance agreements for the Discover Surrey Board are not being followed by the City Council. Without Council representation on the Board, Discover Surrey will not be able to fulfill growth partnerships.

8

The City's economic development plans will reshape its product offerings across all sectors. The next five years will require planning and consultation between Discover Surrey and the City.

PRIORITIES, OBJECTIVES & STRATEGIES

2025–2030
Plan Objectives

2025–2030
Plan Priorities



PRIORITIES, OBJECTIVES & STRATEGIES

The discovery process and the resulting SWOT analysis have provided valuable insights, guiding the prioritization of plans and projects for the 2025-2030 period.

While the resulting output yielded a comprehensive list of opportunities, these can be distilled into three key areas - Destination Marketing, Development and Management. This streamlined categorization will enable Team Surrey to efficiently allocate resources and prioritize opportunities.

To successfully execute these strategies, a collaborative effort from all partners is imperative, necessitating elevating the working relationship to new levels. Clear delineation of roles and responsibilities will be pivotal for ensuring seamless collaboration and moving the business of tourism forward.

One opportunity for improvement identified during the discovery process is the perception that the City of Surrey is reluctant to collaborate within the tourism sector and the lack of a defined strategy for the municipality to support tourism. Addressing this challenge will be essential for realizing the desired outcomes.



PRIORITIES, OBJECTIVES & STRATEGIES

2025-2030 PLAN OBJECTIVES

Destination Marketing

Drive Off-Season Visitation: Implement digitally-led marketing campaigns, leverage industry partnerships, and attend key trade shows to increase traveller awareness, visitation, and seasonal dispersion, prioritizing leisure, business, group, and sports travel during off-peak periods.

Targeted Audience Engagement: Leverage data-driven insights to develop targeted marketing, grants, and sales strategies that resonate with diverse visitor segments, effectively promoting Surrey's unique accommodations, experiences and offerings.

Grow Visitor Services Operations: Promote and raise awareness of visitor experiences in Surrey for both locals and visitors, to raise the profile of Discover Surrey.

Destination Development

Develop Visitor Experiences: Identify and address gaps in Surrey's tourism offerings by facilitating the development of new attractions, services, and amenities that consistently meet and exceed visitor expectations while providing exceptional value and memorable experiences.

Foster Sustainable Tourism: Promote sustainable tourism development practices that balance economic growth, environmental conservation, and community well-being, ensuring the long-term viability of Surrey's tourism industry.

Destination Management

Establish Tourism Leadership: Empower Discover Surrey to lead the coordination of all tourism efforts on behalf of the City and the Surrey Hotel & Motel Association (SHMA), advocating for and fostering enhanced collaboration among City staff, City Council, and industry stakeholders.

Strengthen Stakeholder Alignment: Facilitate effective communication, coordination, and alignment among all tourism stakeholders, including the City, Discover Surrey, SHMA, local businesses, and community organizations, ensuring a cohesive approach to tourism planning, marketing, and development initiatives.

Develop and Promote Inclusivity: Make and promote Surrey as a more inclusive destination for all visitors by continuing the existing efforts towards becoming rainbow certified and supporting other city-wide DEI initiatives.

By focusing on these objectives, Surrey's tourism industry can drive off-season visitation, enhance visitor experiences, establish strong leadership and collaboration in destination management, and ultimately position the city as a preferred travel destination.

The chart below provides a high-level overview of key objectives, related audiences, priority ranking and the proposed operational lead.

PRIORITIES, OBJECTIVES & STRATEGIES

2025 – 2030 PLAN PRIORITIES

LEGEND:

Key Priority (complete before April 2025)	Key Priority	Medium Priority	Priority dependant on outside factors
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Overall Plan Objective	Related Objectives	Audience	Priority / Timing	Responsible
DESTINATION MANAGEMENT	Define Specific Roles and Responsibilities of Team Surrey Partners	Discover Surrey; City of Surrey; SHMA	MOU completed, ongoing monthly partner meetings	City of Surrey to coordinate between Discover Surrey and SHMA
	Discover Surrey to Lead Coordination of DMO Activities	SHMA; Discover Surrey; City of Surrey	To be ready for the June 2025 MRDT commencement	Discover Surrey to lead with SHMA and the City of Surrey support
	Restoring Governance Compliance and Partner Alignment	SHMA; Discover Surrey; City of Surrey; Residents	To be ready for the June 2025 MRDT commencement	City of Surrey to appoint
	Support Indigenous Tourism Relationship Development	Local First Nations; Stakeholders (Discover Surrey, City of Surrey)	Ongoing	Discover Surrey with the City of Surrey
	Promote Awareness and Support the Value of Tourism	Stakeholders; Residents; Investors	Conduct in Year 1; ongoing	Discover Surrey to lead with support from SHMA / hotels
	Develop a Tourism Partners Engagement Plan	SHMA; Industry; Discover Surrey	Conduct in Year 1; ongoing	Discover Surrey in collaboration with industry and hotels
	Building a Destination Management Organization	SHMA; Discover Surrey, City of Surrey	Conduct needs analysis prior to 2025 MRDT commencement; launch roles in Year 1; ongoing	Discover Surrey with key support from SHMA and the City of Surrey

PRIORITIES, OBJECTIVES & STRATEGIES

2025 – 2030 PLAN PRIORITIES

LEGEND:

Key Priority (complete before April 2025)	Key Priority	Medium Priority	Priority dependant on outside factors
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Overall Plan Objective	Related Objectives	Audience	Priority / Timing	Responsible
DESTINATION MARKETING	Promote Surrey's Destination Brand	Leisure; Sports; Meetings and Conventions; Business Travellers; Residents; City of Surrey, SHMA	To be ready for the June 2025 MRDT commencement; ongoing efforts	Discover Surrey to lead with key support from SHMA and the City of Surrey
	Increase Off-Season Occupancy	Leisure; Sports; Meetings and Conventions; Business Travellers; Stakeholders	Launch year one; ongoing efforts	Discover Surrey in collaboration with SHMA and City of Surrey
	Develop Yearly Tactical Marketing Plans	Leisure; Sports; Meetings & Conventions; Residents; Stakeholders	Launch year one; ongoing efforts	Discover Surrey in collaboration with SHMA, City of Surrey, local industry and other DMOs
	Strengthen the Delivery of Surrey's Sports Tourism Proposition	Sports Travellers; City of Surrey; SHMA	To be discussed with the City	Co-developed between Discover Surrey and the City of Surrey based on infrastructure development

PRIORITIES, OBJECTIVES & STRATEGIES

2025 – 2030 PLAN PRIORITIES

LEGEND:

Key Priority (complete before April 2025)		Key Priority	Medium Priority	Priority dependant on outside factors
Overall Plan Objective	Related Objectives	Audience	Priority / Timing	Responsible
DESTINATION DEVELOPMENT	Promotion and Development of Destination Visitor Experiences	Leisure; Residents; Stakeholders; Investors	Conduct needs analysis prior to 2025 MRDT commencement; ongoing planning for development and promotion	Discover Surrey with support from industry
	Build Surrey's Reputation for Hosting Events and Festivals	Leisure; Stakeholders; Residents	Form Event Working Committee in Year 1; ongoing efforts	Discover Surrey in collaboration with SHMA and the City of Surrey
	Support Major Economic Development Projects	Stakeholders; Investors; Residents	Ongoing	The City of Surrey to lead and inform Discover Surrey for promotion

MRDT FUNDING & PROPOSED ALLOCATIONS



MRDT FUNDING AND PROPOSED ALLOCATIONS

Current Funding

- Net MRDT: \$1,854,565.24
- Net OAP: \$526,675.04
- Combined: \$2,381,240.28*

**Note: With the loss of the George Point Inn and the new STR Provincial Guidelines, there was a shortfall of \$280,447.73 that was covered by Discover Surrey and SHMA reserve funds.*

Projected Funding

Funding Year:	2025 (+5% MRDT / -20% OAP)	2026 (5%)	2027 (5%)	2028 (5%)	2029 (5%)
Net MRDT:	\$ 2,253,832	\$ 2,366,524	\$ 2,484,850	\$ 2,609,093	\$ 2,739,547
NET OAP:	\$ 481,725	\$ 505,811	\$ 531,102	\$ 557,657	\$ 585,539
Combined:	\$ 2,735,557	\$ 2,872,335	\$ 3,015,952	\$ 3,166,749	\$ 3,325,087

Proposed funding allocations between the City of Surrey, Discover Surrey and the SHMA are as follows:

Funding Year:	Allocation	Allocation (%)
Discover Surrey	1.8	64.3%
SHMA	0.6	21.4%
City of Surrey	0.4	14.3%

Activities for each are listed within this plan, and a complete budget will be provided in the 1-Year tactical plan.

DESTINATION MARKETING



DESTINATION MARKETING

Increase traveller awareness, visitation, and seasonal dispersion by promoting Surrey's brand and the unique events, activities, specials, and amenities that the city offers.

Prioritize the promotion of off-peak season visitation for leisure, business, group, and sports travel segments that are most likely to be drawn to Surrey's unique tourism offerings.

Key Objectives:

1. Promote Surrey's Destination Brand
2. Increase Off-Season Occupancy Rates and Daily Room Rates
3. Develop Yearly Tactical Marketing Plans
4. Sports Tourism Partner Alignment



OBJECTIVE 1: PROMOTE SURREY'S DESTINATION BRAND

The development of Surrey's destination brand provides a defining narrative to guide all communications across leisure, business, and sports markets.

The new brand, being developed by Discover Surrey, goes beyond just a logo or slogan; it will serve as a unifying rallying point for travellers, industry stakeholders, the SHMA, City staff, and residents - fostering pride and acting as a catalyst for broader economic development opportunities beyond tourism.

Actions:

1. Continue to develop Surrey's brand and value proposition to shape all communications strategies.
2. Socialize the brand to build stakeholder understanding, trust, and advocacy.
3. Launch the brand across all owned and paid content platforms.
4. Ensure that the Discover Surrey brand feels consistent across all partners - joint assets from the SHMA and City of Surrey should feel in-line with the Discover Surrey brand.
5. Continue to build on an on-brand, on-the-ground Visitor Services program within existing spaces, at events, and at key tourism locations to increase awareness, improve visitor experience and community sentiment.
6. Continue to engage in travel trade and media tactics to promote Surrey as a destination.
7. Develop and enhance sales mechanisms to generate and manage group leads across key digital platforms, conferences/trade shows, accommodation partners.
8. Conduct pre- and post-tracking research studies to measure efficacy.

Rationale:

By strategically developing and effectively communicating Surrey's brand and value proposition, Discover Surrey can leverage a compelling narrative to address reputation management challenges, attract visitors, cultivate community pride, and drive broader economic development initiatives.

Audience:

- Leisure travel market
- Sports, meetings and conventions
- Business travellers
- Resident market, City of Surrey, Surrey Hotel and Motel Association (SHMA)

Key Performance Indicators (KPIs):

- Increase in positive perceptions of Surrey as a Tourism Destination as measured by pre and post-surveys.
- Increase digital interactions amongst key target audiences.
- Increase the number of group event leads provided to Surrey properties.

OBJECTIVE 2: INCREASE OFF-SEASON OCCUPANCY

In the summer of 2023, Surrey's accommodations reached a record-high occupancy of 83%. With limited capacity, significant revenue growth during peak season is constrained. Without immediate new hotel developments, Surrey must attract off-peak visitors to drive growth. The greatest potential lies in achieving seasonal dispersion by enticing travellers during slower periods.

Actions:

1. Develop compelling off-season trip ideas and itineraries to promote weekend getaways.
2. Grow visitation from Washington State through targeted marketing campaigns promoting US long weekend travel.
3. Foster collaborative partnerships with industry stakeholders to develop new off-season events and experiences.
4. Prioritize sports tourism and meetings & convention opportunities between October to April.
5. Reframe the narrative for months like January and February, highlighting destination attributes the city is known for by creating new events such as February Family Month and the January Festival of Spice.
6. Drive heads in beds for Surrey hotel and motels during off-peak season with focused campaigns that drive immediate results.
7. Distribute incentives, seasonally adjusted, to qualified leads to help secure key events during off-season period.

Rationale:

Focusing on increasing off-season occupancy and daily room rates, Surrey can achieve more sustainable growth for stakeholders, while maximizing revenue potential throughout the year.

Audience:

- Leisure travel market
- Sports, meetings and conventions
- Business travellers
- Stakeholders

Key Performance Indicators (KPIs):

- MRDT collected in shoulder seasons increases year over year.
- Increase Surrey accommodators off-peak season occupancy (November to March) compared to rest of their competitive set.
- Increase group leads provided annually to Surrey accommodation properties.
- Increase the number of Surrey city-wide conferences.

OBJECTIVE 3: DEVELOP YEARLY TACTICAL MARKETING PLANS

In today's digital age, travellers seamlessly navigate multiple platforms and devices during trip planning, resulting in a fragmented and ever-changing media landscape. This underscores the importance of tailored communication strategies that address audiences' specific informational needs and preferences—critical factors influencing their travel decisions.

Team Surrey's marketing efforts will blend profile-building activities with digitally led tactics, leveraging digital marketing tools and data analytics for optimization. These tools will continuously analyze and optimize all marketing efforts.

Marketing tactics will be evaluated annually to ensure they align with traveller preferences, technology trends, and the goal of maximizing return on investment for Team Surrey's stakeholders.

Actions:

1. Develop and implement a yearly content marketing plan encompassing the website, content, e-newsletter, and other promotional materials.
2. Conduct highly targeted and data-driven paid media campaigns to drive visitation during desired periods.
3. Market Surrey as an alternative for accommodations via brand and activation campaigns targeted to BC, Alberta, Washington and Ontario.
4. Implement tactics to achieve seasonal dispersion by promoting off-peak season visits for leisure, business, group, and sports travel.
5. Promote events, activities, specials, and amenities to increase awareness and make Surrey a more attractive travel destination, including for the LGBTQiA+ community.
6. Provide continuous maintenance and enhancement of discoversurreybc.com.
7. Cultivate relationships with media outlets, journalists, and influential content creators to amplify messaging and generate earned media coverage for Surrey.
8. Partner with Destination BC, Vancouver, Coast & Mountains and media relations to amplify marketing reach.
9. Engage in resident market activities, such as the Through My Lens Campaign and Global TV promos, to encourage community participation and support.
10. Produce and distribute high-quality print materials, such as brochures and maps, to support visitor information and promotion efforts.
11. Develop a clear strategy for conference attendance by Team Surrey including identifying financing partner, representative brand, and attending partners by key event.

DESTINATION MARKETING

OBJECTIVE 3: DEVELOP YEARLY TACTICAL MARKETING PLANS

Rationale:

The British Columbia destination marketing landscape is highly competitive and constantly evolving. With a vast array of content, advertising, and media relations vying for audience attention, marketing success requires a unified, agile, and coordinated approach across all platforms.

Audience:

- Leisure travel market
- Sports, meetings, and conventions
- Business travellers
- Resident market
- Stakeholders

Key Performance Indicators (KPIs):

- Increase in year-round occupancy rate/seasonal trip night dispersion
- Average daily rate



OBJECTIVE 4: STRENGTHEN THE DELIVERY OF SURREY'S SPORTS TOURISM PROPOSITION

Surrey boasts a distinguished legacy in sports tourism, which is arguably the city's most notable achievement in this sector. With a history of excellence in developing and investing in top-tier sporting facilities, many which are accessible, Surrey has successfully attracted visitor groups for athletic events of various scales.

However, as peak season occupancy and nightly rates surge to unprecedented levels, sporting event visitors face increasing challenges in securing suitable, accessible accommodation. This often forces travellers to seek lodging in neighbouring areas, endure high rates within Surrey, or settle for hotels primarily tailored to business travellers. High peak season occupancy rates have resulted in hotels not replying to bids with room blocks.

Consequently, sports tourism visitors are left disappointed, and tensions with accommodators rise. This strain has led to a decline in accommodators' participation in city-led bids to host events, jeopardizing Surrey's iconic sports tourism legacy.

Actions:

1. Align the City's objectives and industry needs through mediated planning sessions.
2. Establish a long-term vision agreement centred on mutually beneficial solutions through the Surrey Sports Tourism Strategy.
3. Foster working relationships to bolster the city's capacity to attract larger provincial and national calibre events.
4. Explore new small-scale growth opportunities like e-sports and other emerging sports aligned to non-peak months.
5. Attend relevant sporting conferences and provide information on civic facilities to generate leads.
6. Provide grants to qualified applicants to help secure key sports tournaments in Surrey.

Rationale:

The current operational landscape poses challenges to growth and fosters animosity among partners. As aspirations expand to include larger provincial and national opportunities, securing buy-in from all stakeholders is crucial, necessitating a shared vision and plan.

Audience:

- Sports travellers
- City staff
- SHMA members

Key Performance Indicators (KPIs):

- Agreement on long-term vision in 2024.
- Attraction of two major sports events by 2030.
- Hosting of small-scale events during off-peak periods.
- Increase sports events secured through grants annually by 2029.

DESTINATION MANAGEMENT



DESTINATION MANAGEMENT

Destination Marketing Organizations (DMOs) in British Columbia are transcending their traditional promotional roles in today's rapidly evolving tourism landscape. They actively shape tourism products and experiences through collaborative planning and development efforts. As the industry dynamics shift, DMOs are increasingly recognized as strategic leaders, fostering partnerships with local Indigenous and non-Indigenous governments, businesses, and communities to drive sustainable growth and enhance visitor experiences.

MRDT (Municipal and Regional District Tax) funding is distributed to the City, SHMA, and Discover Surrey. The three entities operate under the internal banner of "Team Surrey." Clear delineation of the roles and responsibilities of each entity, identifying who takes the lead, when they lead, and with what resources, is thus critical to ensure reduced overlapping responsibilities and functions, and clarity for the outside industry. While these roles and responsibilities have been outlined in the 2025-2030 MRDT MOU Agreement, the Team Surrey partners will need to meet monthly to ensure there is continued clarity to ensure effectiveness and efficiency.

To remain competitive and position Surrey as a premier destination, Team Surrey and its operating partners must continue to evolve their relationships. This evolution will enable Team Surrey to become a more agile and efficient DMO capable of responding effectively to shifts in the tourism landscape, industry trends, and stakeholder needs.

Key Objectives:

1. Define Specific Roles and Responsibilities of Team Surrey Partners
2. Discover Surrey to Lead Coordination of DMO Activities
3. Restore Governance Compliance and Partner Alignment
4. Support Indigenous Tourism Relationship Development
5. Promote Awareness and Support the Value of Tourism
6. Develop a Tourism Partners Engagement Plan
7. Build a Destination Management Organization



OBJECTIVE 1: DEFINING PARTNER ROLES, RESPONSIBILITIES AND RESOURCE ALLOCATION

Team Surrey recently held a Partner Workshop which resulted in an MOU between the City of Surrey, Discover Surrey and the SHMA to define the roles and responsibilities, listed below. Tourism Partners Meetings will be held each month with at least one representative from each partner organization to ensure continued alignment and adjustments, when needed.

CITY OF SURREY

The City of Surrey will retain 0.4% of MRDT funds to support the City-led tourism initiatives.

With tourism becoming a strategic focus of the City's economic development plan, the City is exploring opportunities to build up Surrey's six residential communities as viable destinations beyond 'bedroom communities'. Partnering strategically with Surrey's various business organizations, Discover Surrey, and the SHMA, Surrey will be transformed to offer unique experiences showcasing Surrey's multiculturalism, dining experiences, and leisure activities.

Specifically MRDT Funds will support City staff with:

1. The administration of the MRDT program,
2. Administration and coordination of Team Surrey partners meetings and plan development,
3. The Sport Surrey Tourism Strategy and brand campaign to highlight Surrey's sporting amenities and attract more sport hosting events during the shoulder season,
4. Applications to one-off national and international events to enhance Surrey's reputation and recognition on the global stage, and

5. Lead the development of a Surrey Destination Development Plan, with a focus on hotel growth and entertainment development.

MRDT funding will also support the City in studying the feasibility of establishing a multipurpose events venue that can bring in more large-scale sporting events and festivals, and two entertainment districts.

Specifically, one entertainment district will be in the city centre and the other will be at the Cloverdale Fairgrounds. In addition to feasibility and economic impact studies, MRDT funds will support the City's existing projects of conducting consumer insights which provide immense value to businesses such as hotels, restaurants, and multinational entertainment companies looking to invest in Surrey.

Actions:

The City of Surrey will remain as the designated recipient, and be responsible for:

1. **Tourism Reporting Coordinator**, responsible for coordinating, tracking and compiling reporting requirements. This role will also support destination development research and support work related to City-led tourism priorities. Supporting relationship engagement between all tourism partners and stakeholders, the coordinator will also oversee the coordination of a monthly Tourism Partners Meeting among all Team Surrey partners.

OBJECTIVE 1: DEFINING PARTNER ROLES, RESPONSIBILITIES AND RESOURCE ALLOCATION

CITY OF SURREY

Actions: (Continued)

- 2. Sport Surrey Program Coordinator**
responsible for updating and implementing the Sports Surrey Tourism Strategy which includes administering the City of Surrey Sport Grant Program, overseeing civic sporting facilities, identifying and attracting sport hosting opportunities, attending sport tourism related events, maintaining and building relationships with sporting organizations, and managing and supporting sports event organizing coming to Surrey. Understanding that sports tourism is a main catalyst for driving hotel occupancy currently, the City will focus attraction efforts during the shoulder season.
- 3. Special Events and Business Conferences:**
establish funding mechanisms to support the attraction of national and international events, and major business conferences and meetings with a focus on tourism shoulder seasons. This will be done in collaboration with Discover Surrey and SHMA.
- 4. Destination Development Research**
Support: The City will conduct economic feasibility assessments for destination supporting assets that augment tourism and leverage this information to attract and qualify private capital investment that will advance tourism in Surrey. This will be done in collaboration with Discover Surrey and SHMA.
- 5. Development of a Surrey Tourism Strategy and Destination Development Plan,** in collaboration with Discover Surrey and SHMA.
- 6. Events/Shows attendance where applicable and required.**

Rationale:

Staffing up and structuring City Staff to help deliver on the growing Tourism opportunity will ensure the City fulfills its mandate to support its partners in growing the business of tourism in Surrey.

Audience:

- Discover Surrey, Surrey Hotel and Motel Association
- City Staff & Council
- Sports, meetings and conventions

Key Performance Indicators (KPIs):

- Reporting and funding to be completed on time.
- Accommodation providers list maintained.
- Increase leads, bids and events for Sports.
- Increase leads and business outreach with private capital investments.
- Increase bids, attendees and official partnerships for major events.
- Support studies related to destination development.
- Develop a Surrey Tourism Strategy and Surrey Destination Development Plan in collaboration with Discover Surrey and SHMA.

OBJECTIVE 1: DEFINING PARTNER ROLES, RESPONSIBILITIES AND RESOURCE ALLOCATION

SURREY HOTEL & MOTEL ASSOCIATION

The Surrey Hotel & Motel Association will be responsible for the representation of all Accommodator Providers, generating 50%+1 support for the MRDT funding and the collection of Accommodators signatures.

The SHMA will receive 0.6% of MRDT funding to support SHMA-led initiatives. Member relations, group sales, incentives and grants, direct property support, and program participation will be a strategic focus for the SHMA yearly plan.

Actions:

The SHMA will be responsible for:

- 1. Tourism MRDT signature collection**, securing 50%+1 signatures required to activate MRDT funding.
- 2. Advocacy and representation** in the interests of member hotels and motels with local and provincial government bodies and Surrey residents.
- 3. Group event lead and distribution** to member hotels and motels through key sales channels such as conferences, trade shows, CVENT, and SHMA website.
- 4. Marketing and promotion** that drives heads in beds through joint marketing and advertising initiatives targeted to government, corporate, association, business and other group travel that directly support member hotels and motels.
- 5. Allocation of key grants and incentives** to qualified applicants who meet minimum criteria as set out in governance and approved by the SHMA board of directors. These include the Cultural Celebration Sponsorship Grant, Surrey Meetings and Conferences Incentives, and the SHMA Sports Tourism Sponsorship Program.
- 6. Networking and collaboration** through events, workshops, facilitating ongoing communications and promoting partnerships among the membership base.
- 7. Member support and resources**, providing members with access to industry trends, data, and market intelligence.

DESTINATION MANAGEMENT

OBJECTIVE 1: DEFINING PARTNER ROLES, RESPONSIBILITIES AND RESOURCE ALLOCATION

SURREY HOTEL & MOTEL ASSOCIATION

Rationale:

By clearly communicating the benefits and showcasing the positive impact of MRDT-funded initiatives, the SHMA can continue to create a collaborative and supportive environment among accommodation providers.

Audience:

- Members of the SHMA
- Group Touring Market
- Meetings & Conferences
- Business Travellers

Key Performance Indicators (KPIs):

- 50%+1 support for MRDT and corresponding signatures attained.
- Increase group occupancy year-round by 1 point compared to the rest of the Fraser Valley by 2029.
- Increase contract occupancy year-round by 1 point compared to the rest of the Fraser Valley by 2029.
- Ongoing reporting.
- Drive 20,000 member website visits in 2029, up from 17,388 in 2023.
- Generate 750 member property phone calls in 2019, up from 516 in 2023.
- Increase group travel bookings secured through grants annually by 2029.



OBJECTIVE 1: DEFINING PARTNER ROLES, RESPONSIBILITIES AND RESOURCE ALLOCATION

DISCOVER SURREY

Working in partnership with the City of Surrey and the Surrey Hotel & Motel Association (SHMA), Discover Surrey plays a crucial role in promoting the city as a desirable travel destination, supporting the local tourism industry, and enhancing the visitor experience.

As part of the "Team Surrey" collaboration, Discover Surrey will receive 1.8 of the MRDT funding to support its initiatives. These efforts will be carried out in conjunction with the City of Surrey and SHMA, as well as in collaboration with regional partners such as Vancouver, Coast & Mountains and Destination British Columbia.

Specifically, the MRDT funds will enable Discover Surrey to promote Surrey as a premier travel destination, while also supporting the development of compelling tourism products and experiences. By leveraging these resources, Discover Surrey aims to attract more visitors to the city, encourage longer stays, and foster a positive image of Surrey as a vibrant and welcoming destination.

Specifically MRDT Funds will support the promotion of Surrey and the development of product and experiences.

Actions:

- 1. Destination marketing and promotion** developing and implementing marketing campaigns to attract visitors to the city, promoting seasonal dispersion and travel during off-peak times, including sports tourism.
- 2. Management of all key digital channels,** including the official Discover Surrey website, social media channels and other digital marketing platforms.
- 3. Produce promotional materials,** videos, and content highlighting Surrey's attractions, events, and experiences.
- 4. Stakeholder engagement and collaboration** with the SHMA, the City, BIAs, restaurants, retailers, and other local businesses to ensure tourism development aligns with community interests. Also engage with regional, provincial and federal partners to ensure plan alignment at all levels.
- 5. Research and data analytics,** leverage market research and visitor surveys from Vancouver, Coast & Mountains, Destination BC, Destination Canada and Destination Vancouver to gather insights and inform strategic decision-making. Collect and analyze visitor data, such as visitor spending, length of stay, and demographic information.

OBJECTIVE 1: DEFINING PARTNER ROLES, RESPONSIBILITIES AND RESOURCE ALLOCATION

DISCOVER SURREY

Actions: (Continued)

- 6. Product and experience development** through identifying opportunities to develop new tourism experiences and attractions for the city, in collaboration with the City of Surrey. Working with local businesses, event organizers, and community partners to enhance the visitor experience.
- 7. Oversee and administer the Tourism Event Marketing Grant** to attract new and diverse events to the city.
- 8. Attend and lead** in travel media, trade shows and industry events to showcase Surrey on behalf of all partners.
- 9. Maintain an up-to-date database** of local businesses, attractions, accommodations, and events. Note that anything sport-related is to be maintained by the City of Surrey.
- 10. Provide Visitor Services**, responding to inquiries and providing personalized travel planning assistance to visitors.
- 11. Hire additional support.** In order to act on these strategies and tactics, along with supporting the City and SHMA initiatives, Discover Surrey will require additional support on their team to assist with campaign and content development, management, and collaboration with stakeholders.

Audience:

- Travellers and prospective travellers
- City of Surrey, SHMA and Residents

Key Performance Indicators (KPIs):

- Increase in MRDT funds collected for off-peak months.
- Development of new products and experiences.
- Attraction of new events secured through the grant.



OBJECTIVE 2. DISCOVER SURREY TO LEAD COORDINATION OF DMO ACTIVITIES

Discover Surrey will assume a centralized role in coordinating and streamlining a significant portion of partner marketing activities related to tourism promotion. By coordinating most marketing efforts under Discover Surrey's leadership, the industry will benefit from streamlined coordination of marketing activities, reduced audience confusion, consistent brand representation, and more efficient resource allocation.

Actions:

1. Continue to meet with Team Surrey on a monthly basis at the Tourism Partners Meeting to ensure continued alignment on roles and responsibilities.
2. Determine key conferences / trade shows for attendance, and clarify roles around financing partner, representative brand, and attending partners.
3. Adjust Discover Surrey staffing resources to reflect the required remit.
4. Development of an ongoing Stakeholder Engagement Plan.

Rationale:

Continuing to collaborate on a monthly basis during the Tourism Partners Meetings will enable Discover Surrey to ensure that partner marketing activities are cohesive, impactful, and aligned with the overarching tourism promotion goals, ultimately driving increased visitation and economic benefits for the city.

Audience:

- Stakeholders: SHMA, Discover Surrey, City of Surrey

Key Performance Indicators (KPIs):

- Reduced cost redundancies as reflected in coordination of trade show attendance, digital marketing efforts and the development of marketing materials.

OBJECTIVE 3: RESTORING GOVERNANCE COMPLIANCE AND PARTNER ALIGNMENT

To ensure effective governance and alignment with the best interests of the tourism industry, the City of Surrey, and its residents, it is crucial to have City Councillor representation on the Board of Discover Surrey. Not having a City Councillor violates Discover Surrey bylaws, which in itself threatens the operations of the entity.

Achieving full partner buy-in at the Board level will uphold governance requirements, encourage greater collaboration and alignment, represent a full diversity of residents' interests, and enhance the credibility and trust of Discover Surrey.

Actions:

1. City staff to advocate for a City Councillor to be appointed to the Board seat.
2. City Councillor to be on-boarded by Discover Surrey team.

Rationale:

Currently, all information provided to the Council is filtered through City staff, which limits the Council's full understanding of the opportunities within the industry.

Audience:

- Stakeholders: SHMA, Discover Surrey, City of Surrey, Residents

Key Performance Indicators (KPIs):

- City Councillor appointed to the Board.



OBJECTIVE 4: SUPPORT INDIGENOUS TOURISM RELATIONSHIP DEVELOPMENT

Currently, Team Surrey has a limited relationship with the local First Nations peoples. The primary First Nations in the area include the Semiahmoo, Katzie, and Kwantlen, with others such as Kwikwetlem, Qayqayt, and Tsawwassen also having ancestral ties to the land on which Surrey is built.

Despite these connections, there has been limited engagement with regards to the development of the tourism industry thus far.

Actions:

1. All new and existing team members to complete ongoing cultural sensitivity training to understand protocols to foster respect and understanding.
2. Assign the Indigenous Engagement roles and responsibilities to an existing or new Discover Surrey role, and determine the City of Surrey's involvement as-needed through the Monthly Partners Meetings.
3. Team Surrey to support the development of an ongoing relationship and longer term plan, with a focus on how to respectfully consult and engage with communities.
4. Build and maintain the relationship with ITBC for counsel and support on developing a five-year plan commiserate with the MRDT planning cycle.
5. Work with ITBC to identify and attend tourism-related events that local nations are attending or hosting.
6. Identify and establish relationships with existing and new Indigenous events and offerings such as Surrey's National Indigenous Peoples Day, Semiahmoo Fish and Game Club (hatchery, venue and Salmon Sessions Music Festival) and others.
7. Uncover opportunities to work with Indigenous partners on featuring Indigenous experiences and products at hotel and motel properties.

Rationale:

Truth and Reconciliation has highlighted the importance of engagement and the moral imperative of First Nations engagement on a variety of issues, including tourism. The need for ongoing collaboration and engagement plays a critical role in the future development of the industry.

Audience:

- Semiahmoo, Katzie, and Kwantlen, with others such as Kwikwetlem, Qayqayt, and Tsawwassen peoples.
- Stakeholders: Discover Surrey, City of Surrey, SHMA

Key Performance Indicators (KPIs):

- All existing and new team members to complete training.
- Increased communications with ITBC and local First Nations to build relationships and identify opportunities to collaborate.
- The development of a long-term plan to grow these relationships and opportunities to showcase Indigenous cultural experiences.

OBJECTIVE 5: PROMOTE AWARENESS AND SUPPORT OF THE VALUE OF TOURISM

Research by Destination BC highlights that Surrey residents recognize the positive impact of tourism in enhancing the quality of life within their community. However, while the resident market acknowledges that visitors contribute valuable economic benefits, there is a lack of quantifiable studies illustrating the financial value the tourism sector provides to the city. This gap in tangible data has led to an underappreciation of the industry's significance among some stakeholders.

Fostering a comprehensive understanding and awareness of the vital role tourism plays in Surrey's economic development is critical to ensuring sustainable growth and garnering resident endorsement for the sector. By effectively communicating the measurable contributions of tourism, such as job creation, tax revenue generation, and support for local businesses, Team Surrey will increase stakeholder appreciation and support for tourism, facilitate collaboration and alignment with the City, residents, and industry partners, advocate for policies and investments that promote tourism development, and enhance community pride and engagement in tourism-related activities and events.

Actions:

1. Conduct a Value of Tourism Study.
2. Continue to participate in Destination British Columbia's Resident Research Study.
3. Leverage other tools and research such as the Destination Canada TourismScapes and LASR Systems, and the Destination British Columbia Resident Sentiment Survey to develop a comprehensive understanding of the value of tourism.
4. Ongoing promotion and distribution of the Value of Tourism and Resident Engagement Studies.

Rationale:

Promoting awareness and support for tourism's value is essential for maintaining a favourable environment for the industry's sustainable development and ensuring that Surrey capitalizes on the economic, social, and cultural benefits that a thriving tourism sector can provide.

Audience:

- Stakeholders
- Residents
- Investors

Key Performance Indicators (KPIs):

- Completion rates of the study.
- A continued positive endorsement from Resident Research Study.

OBJECTIVE 6: DEVELOP A TOURISM PARTNERS ENGAGEMENT PLAN

In the wake of the approval of the new five year plan, it will be crucial to mitigate the risk of accommodation providers feeling unheard and underrepresented. To address this concern, Discover Surrey with the support of the SHMA will develop a comprehensive Tourism Partners Engagement Plan aimed at establishing regular collaboration, open communication, and proactive relationship-building with industry stakeholders.

An ongoing Tourism Partners Engagement Plan will establish a platform for bringing together accommodation providers, tourism businesses, and other industry members to contribute their insights, concerns, and ideas.

Actions:

1. Assign the Partner Engagement remit to an existing or new Discover Surrey role.
2. Develop a marketing plan for industry engagement.
3. Stage quarterly industry meetings with industry stakeholders.
4. Discover Surrey to administer the annual Stakeholder Survey, with support from the SHMA and the City of Surrey.

Rationale:

Implementing a Tourism Partners Engagement Plan will enable Discover Surrey to strengthen the industry's cohesion, foster a sense of inclusivity and appreciation among accommodation providers and other stakeholders, and ultimately position the organization as a collaborative leader in driving destination marketing and development for Surrey.

Audience:

- Stakeholders: SHMA/hotels, Industry, Discover Surrey

Key Performance Indicators (KPIs):

- Development of a remit around Partner Engagement.
- Partner satisfaction as measured by the annual Stakeholder Survey.

OBJECTIVE 7: BUILDING A DESTINATION MANAGEMENT ORGANIZATION

Since the development of the previous 5-year strategic plan, the role of Destination Marketing Organizations (DMOs) in British Columbia has undergone a significant transformation. Once solely focused on marketing efforts, DMOs now encompass broader destination management responsibilities driven by shifts in the tourism landscape, emerging industry trends, and evolving stakeholder needs.

DMOs in BC are increasingly being called upon to play a more strategic role in planning and development, moving beyond merely promoting destinations to actively shaping the tourism product itself. This expanded mandate involves collaborating with local governments, businesses, and communities to develop sustainable tourism strategies and cultivate compelling visitor experiences.

To meet the challenges of the next five years and effectively fulfill this expanded role, Discover Surrey will need to build out the organization to meet the demands that come with this added responsibility.

By strategically allocating resources and establishing dedicated roles focused on marketing, stakeholder engagement, partnership development, and collaborative initiatives, Discover Surrey can effectively represent stakeholder interests, align strategies and resources leveraging the collective strengths and resources of all partners, and ensure accountability and shared ownership of all tourism goals.

Actions:

1. Conduct a Comprehensive Organizational Needs Analysis. Identify all current and future organizational functions, responsibilities, and staffing requirements necessary to fulfill the DMO's expanded mandate.
2. Consult with experienced DMOs in British Columbia that have previously undergone a similar transformation from a marketing organization to a destination management entity.
3. Develop a Stakeholder Engagement Plan that outlines the process, communication channels, roles, and responsibilities for collaboration with key stakeholders, including the City of Surrey, the SHMA, local businesses, and the community.
4. Restructure and build out the organization based on the insights gained from the needs analysis and consultations to match the identified requirements.
5. Continuously evaluate the effectiveness of the organizational structure and stakeholder engagement efforts. Adapt and refine the structure based on feedback, evolving project needs, and changing industry dynamics.

Rationale:

Following this comprehensive approach, Discover Surrey will effectively transition into its expanded role as a Destination Management Organization, focused on collaboration, aligning strategies, and representing the diverse interests of all stakeholders, while driving tourism growth and success for the destination.

DESTINATION MANAGEMENT

OBJECTIVE 7: BUILDING A DESTINATION MANAGEMENT ORGANIZATION

Audience:

- Stakeholders: SHMA, Discover Surrey, City of Surrey

Key Performance Indicators (KPIs):

- Stakeholder/partner satisfaction as measured by an annual survey.



DESTINATION DEVELOPMENT



DESTINATION DEVELOPMENT

Ensuring visitor satisfaction and capitalizing on tourism opportunities in Surrey necessitates investing in and cultivating market-ready products and experiences.

In Surrey, the development of experiences and infrastructure has not kept pace with the region's increasing visitor numbers and population growth. Prioritizing investment in and development of new attractions is essential to ensure positive visitor experiences.

The ultimate goal for the next five years is to enrich and broaden the range of market-ready tourism offerings, providing exceptional visitor experiences throughout Surrey, as major tourism-related development plans progress through the City planning cycle.

Key Objectives:

1. Promotion and Development of Destination Visitor Experiences
2. Establishing Surrey as British Columbia's Premier Event Hosting Destination
3. Support Major Economic Development Projects



DESTINATION DEVELOPMENT

OBJECTIVE 1: DEVELOPMENT AND PROMOTION OF DESTINATION VISITOR EXPERIENCES

Surrey must clearly define and actively promote its market-ready visitor experiences to compete with its better-known neighbours. At the same time, Surrey must initiate the planning and development of new major tourism projects.

It's arguable that the development of experiences and infrastructure has not kept pace with the growth in visitors or the region's population. Thus, investment in and development of attractions are crucial to ensuring positive visitor experiences.

Despite lacking a single signature attraction, Surrey offers a multitude of activities. The city can adopt a "sum of the parts" strategy, highlighting its diverse offerings and moving people throughout the city. The ultimate goal is to enhance and expand the available list of things to do in Surrey.

Actions:

1. Conduct a Traveller Experience Gap Analysis to identify new opportunities for destination development, and develop a Surrey Destination Development Plan.
2. Attract investment to develop the experience opportunities highlighted in the GAP Analysis and Destination Development Plan. Seek to quickly activate areas such as bike, SUP, and kayak rentals.
3. Develop day-trip itineraries to provide experience trails. Utilize the Spice Trail as a template, looking toward activity-themed planning ideas packaged (golf, ale, nature) for easy promotion.
4. Discover Surrey to help promote City-owned amenities, historic facilities, and experiences to increase visitation and ensure positive visitor experiences.

Rationale:

Travellers constantly seek information on activities and experiences to enjoy during their visits. Surrey can increase its appeal as a destination by expanding and growing the range of available experiences. Developing compelling experiences benefits visitors and serves the local resident market. Residents can take advantage of these new offerings, fostering a sense of community pride and engagement with the city's attractions and activities.

Audience:

- Leisure travel
- Residents
- Stakeholders
- Investors

Key Performance Indicators (KPIs):

- Conduct GAP analysis
- Development of the Surrey Destination Development Plan

DESTINATION DEVELOPMENT

OBJECTIVE 2: BUILD SURREY'S REPUTATION FOR HOSTING EVENTS AND FESTIVALS

Building on a track record of successfully staging four major events, Surrey has the opportunity to establish itself as a regional player known for its proficiency in hosting events.

During the Discovery process, it became evident that organizers are increasingly discouraged by encountering issues of cost, bureaucratic red tape, and lack of vision which resulted in abandonment of plans. Future actions should address these barriers to entry in the city and seek ways to make the process more welcoming and efficient.

With an established reputation and the existing infrastructure, Surrey is well-equipped to broaden its calendar of events, appealing to both the local drive and short-haul US markets. While there is a need for larger multi-use venues, which will be addressed in the building of the upcoming entertainment districts, current infrastructure should be leveraged, and events with multiple partners or locations considered.

Events can play an integral role in addressing the issues of seasonal dispersion, be a significant part of Surrey's visitor attraction strategy, and provide entertainment options for the residents of Surrey.

Actions:

1. Leverage existing success and a proven track record of hosting major events that attract visitors to recruit new events to be hosted by the city and private businesses.
2. Promote the Festival and Cultural Celebrations Grant to bring diverse and engaging events to the city.
3. Discover Surrey and the SHMA to meet with the City of Surrey and provide feedback on event challenges to date.
4. Form a stakeholder-led Event Working Committee to establish a plan to recruit future events and review application and permitting processes to eliminate unnecessary red tape and costs.

Rationale:

Events should be integral to Surrey's visitor attraction strategy over the next five years, especially during off-peak months. Events also help drive resident satisfaction.

Audience:

- Leisure Market
- Stakeholders
- Residents

Key Performance Indicators (KPIs):

- Create a list of red tape challenges and have ongoing conversations to improve processes via the Event Working Committee.
- A robust event calendar filled all year long with activities for Discover Surrey to promote by 2030.
- New festivals hosted or staged in Surrey.

OBJECTIVE 3: SUPPORT MAJOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS

The City of Surrey recently unveiled an updated and ambitious Economic Strategy “Investing In Our Future” for the next 30 years, aligning with its projected status as British Columbia's largest city (by population) by the decade's end. The strategy focuses on actions that will transform Surrey into a modern, highly-livable, world-class city where visitors and residents can live, work, and play. It also envisions Surrey as a recognized vibrant economy boasting investment and innovation opportunities. While the plan does not explicitly mention tourism destination development, it highlights three key projects that hold significant potential benefits for both residents and visitors alike.

1. **Downtown Core Transformation:** The plan envisions transforming Surrey as the second metropolitan centre in the region, envisioning a vibrant downtown with development opportunities for offices, hotels, academic institutions, and an entertainment district offering a diverse range of attractions, dining options, and cultural experiences.
2. **Cloverdale Revitalization:** Similarly, the historic Cloverdale area is set to become a regional destination, leveraging its unique character and charm. The transformation will include an entertainment hub offering cultural activities, dining options, leisure experiences, events and festival space, and bookable experiences.
3. **Multipurpose Events Venue and Conference Centre:** A major component of the plan is constructing a state-of-the-art multipurpose events venue and conference centre, which will serve as a premier venue for hosting various events and conventions.

These identified projects present opportunities to enhance Surrey's appeal as a destination for visitors and residents. The development of entertainment districts and related infrastructure will provide new attractions and experiences for locals and create compelling reasons for tourists to explore and visit the city.

Furthermore, recognizing the importance of accommodating the anticipated influx of visitors, the City continues actively pursuing the development of additional hotel accommodations in both the Downtown and Cloverdale areas. This includes exploring more accessible hotel options. This proactive approach ensures that Surrey is well-equipped to cater to tourists' needs and support the growth of its tourism industry.

This strategic alignment of economic development initiatives with tourism potential demonstrates the City's commitment to fostering a vibrant and thriving community that appeals to a wide range of audiences.

DESTINATION DEVELOPMENT

OBJECTIVE 3: SUPPORT MAJOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS

Actions:

1. Provide tourism input, counsel and marketing support as needed regarding ongoing development plans.
2. Engage with tourism stakeholders for input and feedback on these transformative projects.
3. Conduct economic impact studies on large hotel and entertainment investments through the gathering of market intelligence, generating a list of prospective business leads, qualifying leads, and conducting 1:1 outreach to showcase opportunities that promote Surrey on the global stage.
4. Explore place branding opportunities for the redevelopment of the Downtown Surrey and Cloverdale entertainment districts similar to District 1881 in Chilliwack, as an example.



Rationale:

By leveraging these transformative projects and infrastructure developments, Surrey is positioning itself as an attractive destination for both residents and visitors, offering a diverse range of entertainment, cultural, and recreational experiences that will encourage more hotel developments and more visitors to stay in Surrey throughout the year.

Audience:

- Stakeholders
- Investors
- Residents
- Visitors

Key Performance Indicators (KPIs):

- Economic impact studies exploring the development of the multipurpose events venue, downtown and Cloverdale entertainment districts.
- Conduct market research on the investment opportunities for the hotel industry and businesses in the entertainment industry.
- Generate lists of prospective businesses to conduct investment attraction business outreach.



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