



Annual General Meeting
October 27, 2022

CHAIR'S REPORT

Good morning everyone, and welcome to the 20th Annual General Meeting of the Surrey Tourism & Convention Association, doing business as Discover Surrey.

Discover Surrey acknowledges the traditional territories of the Semiahmoo, Katzie, Kwikwetlem (*kwee-kwet-lum*), Kwantlen, Qayqayt (*key-kite*) and Tsawwassen First Nations on which we live, work and thrive.

Discover Surrey, with the support of the City of Surrey (CoS) and the Surrey Hotel & Motel Association (SHMA) were able to qualify for the 3% Municipal Regional District Tax (MRDT) program in the fall of 2019, with a June 2020 start. The funding is based on collecting the 3% MRDT from hotels, motels and Online Accommodation Platforms (OAP) from AirBnB stays in Surrey.

With the uncertainty of travel restrictions for group gatherings for sport tournaments and conferences, along with continued international travel restrictions, we adjusted our initial 2021 MRDT forecast from \$650,000 to under \$500,000. However, Discover Surrey successfully pivoted to attract domestic leisure travel from within BC and AB, and were able to leverage the strong domestic travel from within Canada to BC for longer trips. Surrey's tourism recovery started to rebound strongly by June of 2021 with the lifting of restriction for large events and tournaments and they were able to generate just over \$1.2 million in MRDT revenues.

Pandemic travel regulations brought many challenges to 2021. The tourism and hospitality sector were hugely impacted with continued restrictions, testing requirements upon arrival and the use of the ArriveCan app. As a result, international arrivals continued to be limited by air and transportation capacity issues, especially for Travel Trade.

In Surrey, COVID-19 recovery started slowly from the fall of 2020 and continues to rebound steadily with stronger than anticipated Occupancy and Average Daily Rates (ADR) from June 2021 onwards. As of December 2021, Surrey had a year-to-date occupancy of 53.3% with an ADR of \$128.86 compared to 2020's 41.2% occupancy and ADR of \$115.82, and 2019's 73% occupancy and ADR of \$150.64, as verified by Smith Travel Report (STR).



Discover Surrey began development of the culinary Spice Trail in the fall of 2020. The program was designed to attract both locals and visitors to Surrey to support Surrey's "Family-owned and operated" global dining experiences. The team engaged 30 partners and launched in July of 2021. Discover Surrey's media hosting program was able to garner over 20 stories for the Spice Trail including the Daily Hive, Vancouver is Awesome, Surrey Leader, Vancouver Sun, Toronto Star and more.

Discover Surrey continues to explore new regional partnerships to drive more visitors to Surrey. Partnerships we continue to work with are the BC Bird Trail and BC Ale Trail. As well, West Coast Food has helped garner new imagery and b-roll for its marketing use and has leveraged provincial and city destination marketing organization partnerships.

We are pleased to advise that our media hosting program led to strong story development for Surrey in 2021, in particular for the Spice Trail and BC Bird Trail, including a Canadian travel show, Seeing Canada. The program continues to generate great awareness for our tourism partners and tourism experiences, and Surrey, with Destination BC's media and content teams.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, in 2021 Sport Surrey had to reschedule national and North American sports events to future dates, however they continued to market for sporting events for 2022 and beyond. Discover Surrey's goal for Sports Tourism, is to work closely with the Surrey Hotel & Motel Association and the City of Surrey/Sport Surrey to promote and attract sporting events and visitors to Surrey, that will produce overnight stays.

Discover Surrey will work with the SHMA and our tourism experience partners to promote and develop group experiences and net rates to market Surrey as a place to visit and stay for the Travel Trade sector. We will reach out to Destination BC's Travel Trade team to learn about how we can become more involved in bringing travel trade to Surrey once we have more sellable experiences developed.

In 2022, Discover Surrey is working on creating a Tourism Experiences Strategic Plan to guide the development of tourism experiences in our City and focus our efforts on expanding and attracting new festivals and cultural events to Surrey that are multi-year and generate overnight stays.

As we all learned in many ways through this pandemic that more than ever, tourism marketing is also evolving. Destination Marketing Organizations like Discover Surrey must continue to remain abreast of technology changes and leverage regional, provincial, and national tourism partner programs to increase awareness of their destinations.



Discover Surrey is committed to promote all that Surrey has to offer, leverage all available and future opportunities with regional, provincial, and national tourism partners to extend the awareness of Surrey as a tourism destination.

Discover Surrey Board is comprised of representatives from various sectors of tourism, volunteering their time to promote Surrey as a tourism destination. I would like to sincerely thank the Discover Surrey Board of Directors for their outstanding support, commitment and contribution to the organization and the Tourism Industry. I would like to acknowledge Roop Kooner's many years of service on our board, as he has decided not to run for re-election this year. Also, I would like to congratulate Ellie King on her recent retirement from the Royal Canadian Theatre Company and term on the Discover Surrey Board.

I would also like to thank our Executive Director, Ange Chew, for her relentless work during the past 2 plus years. She has increased the awareness for Surrey and Discover Surrey by leveraging her professional relationships within the travel media, Destination BC and Destination Canada teams. She is constantly seeking innovative and expanded ways of reaching out and promoting our partners and attracting visitors with a small team of one and a half members.

Lastly, thank you to all our partners for your continued support and involvement with Discover Surrey. You are the backbone of our organization and by working together we share the unique story of Surrey, and all businesses will benefit.

This concludes the Chair's Report.

Motion:

"To accept the Chair's Report as present"

1st:

2nd:

Vote – please vote using the polling buttons.