

# Downtown Surrey BIA

2023

## Annual Report

We respectfully acknowledge that the Downtown Surrey BIA, and Downtown Surrey is located on the unceded traditional and ancestral lands of the Kwantlen, Musqueam, Katzie, Semiahmoo, Tsawwassen, Qayqayt and Kwikwetlem peoples.



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[downtownsurreybia.com](http://downtownsurreybia.com)

[Surreycitycentre.ca](http://Surreycitycentre.ca)



## CHAIR Report

The Downtown Surrey Business Improvement Area remains dedicated to its members and the community through engaging in advocacy and nurturing relationships as we build the downtown of what will soon be the largest city in BC.

The year 2023 will go down as a year of successes and challenges. In June, our Economic Development Committee hosted an open house to showcase all the developments planned for the area including municipal and institutional.

This event was followed in November by a keynote speech by Minister Rob Fleming and a special panel on transportation moderated by Jonathan Cote. Our community events demonstrated a remarkable rebound, with all activities experiencing a notable increase of 25-100% over 2022, attracting a greater influx of people into the area. In 2023, we initiated additional placemaking activities, a trend that will persist as we move into 2024.

In 2023, our bike patrol experienced unprecedented demand, addressing a total of 4,602 incidents, and reaffirming our commitment to serving our members. The number of fires in the area have been growing and we continue to work with Surrey Fire Services to mitigate the problem. We hope that the opening of 60 beds in Safe Sleep will provide more people with shelter and the 60 beds of supportive housing on Bentley Road financed by Federal and Provincial funds on City owned land will not just supply beds but homes for people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness.

I have truly enjoyed my tenure on the Board, particularly these past two years as Chair. Serving as the representative of such an innovative and inclusive business organization at various meetings, events, and announcements has been an enriching experience. Amidst the dynamic landscape of downtown Surrey, where change is the only constant, observing the growth reflected in the number of towers, cranes on our skyline, and development proposal signs lining our streets has been truly remarkable.

A heartfelt thank you goes to my esteemed colleagues around the Boardroom table. It is both an honor and a privilege to serve as the Chair of this Board, collaborating with exceptional community leaders. Their insights, unwavering dedication, and visionary contributions collectively shape the success of the BIA, making it the outstanding organization that it is. I extend a personal thank-you to our CEO, Elizabeth, for her invaluable friendship and unwavering support throughout this journey.

**SHIRLEY**  
Samujh-Dayal



## CEO Report

2023 has been another year of progress for the Downtown Surrey Business Improvement Association (BIA), marked by the changing landscape and positive transformations. The 2023 Annual report highlights key accomplishments, initiatives, and indicators that underscore the organization's commitment to fostering a vibrant, inclusive, and thriving business community in Surrey's downtown core. The BIA's strategic initiatives as outlined in the Annual Report played a role in supporting business growth and expansion and encouraging existing ones to broaden their outreach for customers.

Investments by the development community and growth in infrastructure is playing a crucial role, long term, in changing the landscape the overall appeal of Downtown Surrey. From the DSBIA's beginnings, we have successfully advocated for improved public spaces, upgraded street lighting, and enhanced pedestrian-friendly zones (i.e. reduced block sizes). This is contributing to a more attractive and accessible downtown area.

Community engagement remained a top priority for the BIA throughout 2023. The organization organized a series of events, festivals, and cultural activities that brought residents and visitors together. These initiatives not only enriched the rich and diverse cultural fabric of Downtown Surrey but also stimulated local businesses, fostering a sense of community pride and involvement.

Embracing technological advancements, the BIA facilitated the integration of digital tools and platforms for our local businesses. This included the support, help and implementation of e-commerce and digital marketing.

Our focus on safety has been a priority in fostering a secure and welcoming environment. We continue to collaborate with local law enforcement, By Laws officers, the City and implementing increased BIA sponsored community bike patrols.

The year 2023 has, yet again, been a year of growth and positive transformation for the Downtown Surrey BIA. The organization's dedication to economic development, community engagement, sustainability, and safety has resulted in a downtown core that is poised for continued success in the years to come. The DBIA looks forward to building upon these achievements, fostering innovation, and ensuring Downtown Surrey remains a dynamic hub for businesses, residents, and visitors.

Huge thanks to an exceptional Board of Directors for their steadfast leadership, focus, interest, and involvement. A very special thank you is extended to the DSBIA Chair, Shirley Samujh-Dayal, for her two years of commitment as the Chair of the DSBIA and her leadership, time and direction to the organization. Finally, my thanks and appreciation to Bonnie and Tracey for their dedication, work and service to the DSBIA. Together, everyone's collaborative efforts build a better Downtown and a better City.

**ELIZABETH**  
Model

**Great things in business are never done by one person; they're done by a team of people.**

- Steve Jobs

# Board of **Directors**

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Westland Living



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**Steve Dooley**  
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**Maury Dubuque**  
Nicola Wealth



# STAFF

<b>Elizabeth Model</b>	CEO
<b>Bonnie Burnside</b>	Operations Manager
<b>Tracey Gravel</b>	Administration
<b>Andrew Abdella</b>	Spring Intern
<b>Emily Palmer</b>	Spring Intern



<b>Alex Masse</b>	Summer Intern
<b>Anika Richards</b>	Summer Intern
<b>Max Ghilarducci</b>	Summer Intern
<b>Meera Patel</b>	Summer Intern
<b>Rowan Koenig</b>	Summer Intern
<b>Saije Rusimovici</b>	Summer/Fall Intern
<b>Shenae Meekerk</b>	Summer Intern
<b>Travis Nguyen</b>	Summer Intern

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# Looking Back At **2023**

Click on Surrey Team



In our local community, businesses continue to face the challenges of persistent labor shortages and supply-chain disruptions, while the shadow of COVID still lingers. Nevertheless, the memories of lockdowns and closures are gradually fading.

Exciting news came in early 2023 when Mayor Locke and the Council voted in favor of renewing the Downtown Surrey Business Improvement Association (DSBIA) for another five-year term. Despite the constraints posed by higher costs of goods and services, the DSBIA Directors and staff are dedicated to maintaining a high level of service in Downtown Surrey.

In 2023, our Click on Surrey Team underwent a strategic restructuring, operating from May to August, with an unwavering commitment to supporting small businesses. We expanded our services beyond the realms of marketing, social media, and websites, now encompassing graphic design, filming, photography, newsletters, and merchandizing.



The Long, Long Table

## Elf on the Shelf

In late November, our Elf on the Shelf initiative moved to King George Hub, inviting participants to follow clues and discover hidden elves, offering a chance to win gift cards to local businesses. December brought our popular Gingerbread Contest outside Winners in Central City Shopping Centre for the seventh year.



Community and City events have surged back to, or even exceeded, pre-pandemic levels. Our active participation in numerous festivities, including Party for the Planet, Canada Day, Fusion Fest (setting a new attendance record), and the Surrey Tree Lighting Festival (expanded to multiple days, doubling attendance), highlights our collaborative efforts with the City of Surrey. Other notable events organized by the Downtown Surrey BIA included SurreyFest Downtown (with increased attendance at Central City Plaza), the Long, Long Table (returning outdoors after rain in 2022), Surrey Voices (moved to King George Hub), and Movies Under the Stars (with over 6,000 attendees).

November was a bustling month for us. As a newly appointed member of IDA Canada (International Downtown Association), Elizabeth Model, our CEO, joined the group in Ottawa to address Members of Parliament on crucial issues affecting our area, such as the extension of the CEBA loan deadline, transit funding, and the continuation of the Canada Summer Jobs Program. The following week, we hosted a transportation panel moderated by Jonathan Cote, featuring keynote speaker Minister of Transportation Rob Fleming. Panelists included Kevin Quinn, CEO of TransLink, Freddy Thomas – Stantec, and Darren Bromley – Power Tech.

To stimulate local commerce, Laura Ballance Media Group (LBMG) led a PR campaign encouraging patrons to shop in Downtown Surrey. Additionally, we proudly sponsored Shop Local through LOCOBC from November 27 to December 4, further reinforcing our commitment to the local business community.

## Transportation Forum



## Gingerbread Village

# In 2023, we also continued with ...

## Economic Development



Downtown Surrey is identified as THE place to locate, invest, develop, support business, enhance our employment and residential base & overall economic well being.

Updates and Progress Expo at SFU Surrey

### Marketing

Strategize and identify opportunities to support, enhance and achieve the objectives, goals and work of the DSBIAs Statement of Purpose and standing Committees.

### DSBIA Economic Development & Marketing:

**Updates & Progress Expo** – Showcasing Growth in Downtown Surrey: Expo event -Grand Hall SFU - highlighting the growth and developments in Downtown Surrey by local development community and transportation with SLS included

**Transportation Forum** – Key to Surrey’s Growth: Keynote speaker: Minister Rob Fleming followed by panel Discussion: Moderator: Jonathan Cote ; panelists Kevin Quinn Translink CEO; Freddy Thomas Stantec; Darren Bromley – Powertech Labs

### Media (in conjunction with Marketing Committee)

- **LBMG - DSBIAs Media Campaign** (Laura Ballance Media Group: Media & Public Relations, Advertising & Promotions for Downtown Surrey 2023 and a 2023 Seasonal Christmas campaign
- **Media personnel** - Meetings, connections, interviews & education to develop & highlight features in publications with “good news stories” South of the Fraser

**ICSC Whistler** – attended and participated with DSBIAs Trade show booth - showcasing happenings, educating and highlighting continued opportunities business growth, retail & education; connections with DSBIAs developers & key & interested stakeholders in the industry and growth of Surrey City Centre

**BUILDEX Vancouver** – Western Canada’s largest conference & tradeshow for Property Management, Interior Design, Architecture, Renovation, Construction & Real Estate; attended and participated with DSBIAs Trade show booth, sponsored, showcased, educated & promoted Downtown Surrey; excellent connections and established follow up with numerous leads



Minister Rob Fleming

[www.surreycentre.ca](http://www.surreycentre.ca) – continued monthly stats and updates on growth and development in Downtown Surrey

**Vancouver Real Estate Forum** – attendance and networking opportunities

**IDA Economic Summit** – Downtowns and future thinking

**Presentations** – commercial brokers; REITs, local realtors; development community;

- Focus on the collaborative efforts of the overall developments of Downtown Surrey
- Panel discussions – The investment of connections – Community Leaders & Organizations
- Discussions with GVBOT, UDI, NAIOP & BOMA

### **Sponsorships & Support**

- NAIOP – Patron Sponsor
- BC Chamber Cabinet Meeting Sponsorship
- BOMA – Kevin Quinn; - sponsor
- GVBOT – Transportation forum - sponsor
- UDI – Mayor’s Forum - sponsor
- SBOT – Minister Rob Fleming - sponsor
- ICBA – Gala sponsor
- South Surrey White Rock Chamber – Mayor’s Roundtable forum sponsor
- Pacific Chapter – American Chamber in Canada
- SFU – Anniversary – Community Mixer – sponsor
- SFU – Medical School & Health Sciences ED – Lena Hozaima

### **Transportation Initiatives**

- Moving in a Livable Region (MLR) attendance, support & improvement for transit & transportation in Metro Vancouver
- Mayor’s Council & Translink Chair spoke at Skytrain Langley naming announcement
- Metro Vancouver – Steering Committee – Driving Down Emissions
- Mayor’s Council – Mtgs Mike Buda – DSBI input
- TransLink: Meetings with CEO TransLink Kevin Quinn roundtable – CEO’s Metro Van
- Discussions with SLS Skytrain updates

# Government Relations

Advocate, partner and work with all levels of government, crown corporations, business, industry sport expansion and cultural leaders to facilitate the opportunities with Downtown Surrey's growth and development for a diverse and inclusive City

## Government Representatives Meetings & Advocacy Work

- Surrey BIA's meeting with Mayor
- Meetings with City of Surrey Councillors – individual
- Attended &/or input:
  - MLA's meetings & discussions on issues in Downtown Surrey
  - Meetings with; MLAs: Surrey MLA's
  - UBCM Attendance – networking and discussions – elected officials
- GVBOT – Regional & Civic Affair Committee - joined
  - DSBIA input for regional focus



## Federal

- IDA (International Downtown Association) Canada – Meeting with MP's and staffers (all provinces represented) 30 meetings with Ministers & MPs
  - 5 MP's personal meetings – Randeep Sarai, Tako Van Popta, Tracy Gray, Richard Cannings, Parm Bains
  - Highlighted issues; housing, homelessness, mental health & addictions and support to municipalities; CEBA loan repayment; small businesses and support
  - Meetings & input with MP Randeep Sarai

## Presentations



Elizabeth with Andrew Peck, Richard Canning, and Jeff Bray at the IDA Canada

- MP Randeep Sarai
- GM - Don Luymes – City of Surrey
- Continued meetings, discussions & presentations with City & MLA's
- Visit and DSBIA office discussions with MLA's and MP's
- Attendance, discussions and networking at Metro Vancouver events with elected officials Municipal, Provincial & Federal

### Surrey City Council Meetings

- Support of local development in City Centre – Public Hearings
- Meetings for support & local engagement in relation to DT Surrey

### City Staff and Departments

- Meetings with City staff throughout the year; Growth and development and issues impacting Downtown Surrey
- Transportation discussions & input
- Marketing City Centre

## Safety



### Bike Patrol

The DSBIA Bike Patrol made a provider switch to Guardteck in January 2020. Their patrols extended from Monday to Saturday between 9 am and 7 pm throughout 2023, with additional patrols conducted four days a month from April to November. Beyond responding to local businesses' calls for assistance, the Bike Patrol also reported incidents such as broken windows, graffiti, and illegal dumping. The Bike Patrol was involved in 4602 incidents in 2023 of which 98 required assistance from the RCMP/SPS, 58 required assistance from Surrey Fire Service and 23 required medical assistance.

### Safety Audit

As for other community safety initiatives, SFU Co-op Student Max Ghilarducci completed the 19th Annual Safety Audit, with over 150 street-level businesses participating. The audit revealed that the most prominent issues faced by businesses in the neighborhood were public consumption of drugs and alcohol, public intoxication, and loitering. Drug consumption was noted to have worsened over the past year. Notably, police presence and the cleanliness of the area were perceived to have improved. Panhandling, which was a significant problem for 70 percent of respondents in the previous year, saw a decrease to 37 percent in the current year.

Consistent with previous years, the top crimes experienced included verbal threats, theft, and vandalism. Over 80 percent of those who experienced a crime reported it to the police, a significant improvement from the 52 percent reported in 2022.

Safety Meeting, March 2023



### Safety Meeting

In the Spring, a safety meeting addressing fire problems in the area was held at Chuck Bailey Rec Centre, followed by a summer follow-up meeting. DSBI staff actively participated in monthly Whalley Integrated Service Team (WIST) meetings, monthly meetings on local shelters, and safe consumption site meetings.

Businesses expressed environmental safety concerns, particularly regarding the lack of public washrooms, trash disposal, and needle services like disposal containers. Based on survey results, the author's recommendations include advocating for public washrooms, safe-use injection sites, affordable housing, services for those experiencing homelessness, and education on fire prevention.

Additionally, the DSBI provided financial support for a province-wide campaign through BIABC to raise awareness of small businesses' safety concerns at the provincial level. The campaign resulted in funding for vandalized businesses and upgrades to crime prevention systems. Funding grants are accessible through the BC Chamber of Commerce.

## Area Enhancement & Placemaking

### Goodbye Graffiti

In 2023, Goodbye Graffiti removed spray paint and marker tags, posters and stickers from businesses' exterior walls.

### Clean Streets Program

The Clean Streets Program, provided by Phoenix Drug & Alcohol Education Centre, ran from January 1-December 31, 2023. They pick up litter along a variety of streets every day between 8am-11am.

Community Cleanup



The DSBIA has an ongoing program to identify Bylaw infractions and report to appropriate departments at the City of Surrey. Staff also forward complaints from the Bike Patrol and the community to the City.

During the summer, our interns organized a community clean-up attended by 15 people from Phoenix Society and collected 20 bags of garbage.

We also continued a pilot project with Goodbye Garbage to pick up large items dumped in our area.

### Games Night

We facilitated a number of placemaking activities. Our most popular activity in 2023, was our game night at King George Hub. Lessons learned were included in two reports written by Rowan Koenig on the importance for community bulletin boards and tables as well as seating to be included in new developments.



## Events

In 2023, most of our events returned along with a few new ones.

### DSBIA Signature Events

- **Movies Under the Stars** - August

Movies in 2023 included “Turning Red”, “Puss-in-Boots: The Last Wish”, and “Super Mario Bros. Movie”.

- **Gingerbread Village** - Christmas Season

The Downtown Surrey BIA held the 6th Annual Gingerbread Village Contest at Central City Shopping Centre from December 3-11. The number of entries continues to increase since the height of the pandemic with 42 entrants registered in 2023. The People’s Choice Award raised over \$1900 for the Surrey Christmas Bureau.

# Schedule of Events 2023

April 30

**Party for the Planet**

June 17

**Surrey Fest Downtown held at Central City Plaza in collaboration with Whalley Community Association**

June 27

**The Long, Long Table**

July 1

**Canada Day in Cloverdale**

July/August

**3 Surrey Voices at King George Hub**

July 22, 23

**Fusion Fest at Holland Park**

August 5, 12, 19

**Movies Under the Stars at Holland Park**

October 31

**Halloween at Central City**

November 25 & 26

**Tree Lighting Festival at Civic Plaza**

November 20 - December 10

**Elf on the Shelf**

December 3 - 10

**Gingerbread Village at Central City**



## Marketing

- In 2023, the DSBIA continued a comprehensive Public Relations campaign with Laura Ballance Media Group (LBMG) focused primarily on reminding the public that our businesses were open for business and the benefits of shopping local. In late 2023 the focus returned to the importance of supporting local businesses
- In addition to updating the DSBIA Restaurant Guide and posting it on our website, we distributed 3000 copies to highrises in the area



- The Click on Surrey Team assisted local businesses with websites, social media, marketing ideas and graphic design
- Over \$1000 in gift cards to local businesses were distributed via social media.

## Member Services & Communications

- The New View – publication distributed six times per year via email as well as posted on our website - sharing positive stories about the community
- It's News Downtown – email newsletter to Members sent out 40 times per year (as warranted).
- What's Up Downtown – a newsletter distributed by unaddressed admail to businesses in the DSBIA area and sent out 5-6 times per year. This newsletter updates the Members on specific projects in the area as well as the projects the staff are working on.
- Social Media – DSBIA has a presence on Twitter (@dtsurreybia), LinkedIn, Facebook, Instagram (@dtsurrey) and TikTok. Also, for the investment community, we have a Twitter account @downtownsurrey that is tied into the surreycitycentre.ca website.

# THANK YOU

We appreciate the sponsorship of our activities. We couldn't do it without your help.

## SFU Academy to Community Award for Spring Intern

### *Movies Under the Stars*

**Presenting Sponsor**



**Gold sponsors**



DAWSON + SAWYER



**Silver Sponsors**

Hamilton Duncan, ICBA

**Bronze Sponsor**

KPU

**Prize Sponsors**

Central City Fun Park, Dell Lanes, Tim Hortons, 99 Nursery and Florist, Chopped Leaf

### *The Long, Long Table*

**Presenting Sponsor**



**Hosted by**



**Gold Sponsors**

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**Silver Sponsors**

Fasken Law, Goodbye Graffiti, Janda Group

### *Gingerbread Village*

**Venue Sponsor**

CENTRAL CITY

### *SurreyFest Downtown Community Festival*

**Music and Stage Sponsor**



**Venue Sponsor**

CENTRAL CITY

**Gold Sponsors**



DAWSON + SAWYER



**Silver Sponsors**

Anthem, ICBA, Bozzini's Restaurant

**Bronze Sponsors**

Dan the Man's

### *Surrey Voices*

**Sponsor**



**Venue Sponsor**

