



# Greater Vancouver Board of Trade Annual Report 2016–17

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# MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR



2016-17 was an industrious year for the Greater Vancouver Board of Trade, with many successful events and policy initiatives that have moved our organization forward.

When I assumed the role of Chair at last year's AGM, I highlighted three priorities for the year, following in a long-standing

tradition. These three priorities served as goalposts that helped guide our organization over the past 12 months.

The first priority identified for 2016-17 was to leverage the results of the *Greater Vancouver Economic Scorecard 2016* — released last spring following more than two years of groundwork and research with the Conference Board of Canada — and integrate those findings into all of our advocacy efforts.

I'm pleased to report back that our team delivered on this priority, in spades, as you will see reflected in the Policy Highlights section of this Annual Report.

The second priority I highlighted was to refresh the mission, vision, and values of the Greater Vancouver

Board of Trade, an effort that was undertaken and completed by a sub-committee of the board led by Evi Mustel. You can find the new mission on the back cover of this report and online at [boardoftrade.com/mission](http://boardoftrade.com/mission).

The third priority was to ensure that we continue building on the strength of our four Signature Programs. We accomplished this by hiring two new full-time employees to focus on program development. In addition, we also expanded our Company of Young Professionals program to Members of the Richmond Chamber of Commerce, North Vancouver Chamber of Commerce, and Tri-Cities Chamber of Commerce as part of an exciting new regional collaboration.

In short, it has been another productive year for your Board of Trade. I'd like to thank the staff for their dedication and hard work, and the board of directors for their guidance, vision, and volunteerism in support of a stronger regional business community. It has been an honour to serve as your Chair.

## **Robin Silvester**

2016-17 Chair, Greater Vancouver Board of Trade  
President and Chief Executive Officer,  
Vancouver Fraser Port Authority

# MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT AND CEO



On behalf of my terrific, committed colleagues at 999 Canada Place, I am pleased to advise the Membership of another successful year.

The 2016-17 achievements of our unique Signature Programs, our legendary Events programming, our nationally-recognized policy team, and our successful

transition to our new Tiered Membership model has positioned us to take to another level our ability to deliver value for the Membership fees and sponsorship we solicit from you each year. Your feedback has been highly instrumental in these changes and improvements — thank you for investing your time, talents, and hard-earned resources in this great organization to make it even more relevant, and thus even more successful.

Clearly, our most notable achievement of 2016-17 was securing the \$2.5-million partnership with the B.C. Government to re-establish the World Trade Centre – Vancouver. As many of you know, we have owned this licence for over 40 years, though WTC-V has been operationally dormant for over 20. Indeed, our building

at 999 Canada Place is called “The World Trade Centre” because we are in it.

The reinstatement of WTC-V is focused on increasing the export capacity of B.C.'s small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) through the delivery of three distinct, but integrated, elements, including a unique four-day training workshop, the coordination of B.C.'s export development programs and services (e.g., matchmaking), and the engagement of international experts to develop a sector-based, regional export implementation framework. You will hear more about this in the coming months, never fear!

As you are well aware, we enter our 131<sup>st</sup> year under the cloud of unprecedented political, and thus economic, uncertainty. Please know you can count on us to engage with you, confirm your views, and then respectfully — but very clearly — communicate to our political leaders the ideas, priorities, and advice of B.C.'s job creators.

Thank you in advance for your ongoing support as we do this crucial work on your behalf.

## **Iain Black, ICD.D**

President and CEO, Greater Vancouver Board of Trade

# 2016 – 17 YEAR IN REVIEW

The Greater Vancouver Board of Trade kicked off its 2016-17 year by unveiling its five inaugural Pillar Partners: TELUS, CN, Vancouver Airport Authority, Pacific Blue Cross, and BCIT. Announced at last year's AGM, these partnerships are very special relationships that are customized to the individual needs of the Pillar Partners and defined by a minimum-commitment, multi-year arrangement.

2016-17 marked the first full year under the new Tiered Membership model, which reduced our number of membership categories from 17 to 6 and redefined the value of membership. So far, the transition has been immensely successful. In fact, we have recorded a ten-fold increase in enterprise-class businesses joining the Board of Trade.

We've also seen an overall increase in membership renewals. Our current renewal portfolio is trending 5% above projections. What's more, our renewal rates are once again well above industry standards and lead the chamber movement nationally.

We achieved a 16% increase in Chambers of Commerce Group Insurance Plan memberships. After only 36 months in the program — which offers access to affordable benefits plans for small businesses — the Greater Vancouver Board of Trade is now the #1 Chamber Plan group insurance provider in B.C. and #7 in all of Canada.

Document certification also over-achieved in 2016-17, growing by more than 20% over last year's performance. Part of this growth is due to our eCertify service, which gives Members and exporters the option to complete their paperwork online, expediting the process.

We also launched online account management — allowing Members the option to update their Member records through our website — as well as online account renewals.

We are currently in the process of rolling out a new Member engagement strategy. This includes our "Board 101" sessions for new Members, which have been very successful to date, as well as a series of Discovery Meetings that will take place over the summer with many of our larger Members.

Our Leaders of Tomorrow mentorship program continued its popularity, with more than 50% of applicants being turned away in 2016-17. We also expanded this Signature Program's presence to Douglas College's campus this year as part of a collaboration with the Tri-Cities Chamber of Commerce.

Our under-35 Signature Program, the Company of Young Professionals, grew its program reach to neighbouring chambers of commerce in North Vancouver, Richmond, and the Tri-Cities. All three of those chambers also participated in the program's 2017 BIG Idea video contest, which engaged a record number of teams while discussing how we can support mental health in the workplace.

Our Women's Leadership Circle Signature Program once again hosted the We For She Conference, which has now grown to become the largest leadership diversity conference in Western Canada. The 2016 event drew more than 1,500 guests, including 800 high-school students from across B.C., and featured dozens of inspirational speakers, including Premier Christy Clark.

Our Small Business Council Signature Program established and successfully launched its new Thrive Series of breakfast events, which expose local small business owners to the latest trends and opportunities to drive business growth. To date, this popular series has engaged nearly 1,000 guests.

Overall, the Board of Trade hosted 122 events in 2016-17 engaging more than 20,000 attendees. We continue to be the most active business organization in Western Canada and one of the leading events platforms in the country.

Following the launch of the *Greater Vancouver Economic Scorecard 2016* last spring, our public policy and advocacy team had a very busy year, weighing in on a number of key issues of regional, provincial, and national importance, including public transit, housing affordability, ridesharing, energy policy, and the 2017 Provincial Election. For a full summary, see the Policy Highlights section of this report.

In addition to our local advocacy efforts, we also joined the Canadian Global Cities Council in 2016 — a coalition of Canada's eight largest urban regional chambers of commerce. In its first report, the CGCC called on the federal government to increase global connectivity and economic value through Canada's international airports.



# EVENT HIGHLIGHTS 2016-17



1) Unveiling our Pillar Partners at our 129<sup>th</sup> AGM, June 27, 2016. 2) Minister Navdeep Bains, Sept. 19, 2017. 3) BC Hydro CEO Jessica McDonald, Jan. 24, 2017. 4) Bill Good and Kinder Morgan Canada President Ian Anderson, Nov. 3, 2016. 5) AFN National Chief Perry Bellegarde, Oct. 26, 2016. 6) NBA: Building a Winning Culture, Sept. 30 2016. 7) Panel discussion on technology with BCIT President Kathy Kinloch, Feb. 7, 2017. 8) WestJet CEO Gregg Saretsky, June 1, 2017. 9) Transportation Summit with TransLink CEO Kevin Desmond and Mayor Gregor Robertson, March 3, 2017. 10) Air Canada CEO Calin Rovinescu, April 20, 2017.





11) GVBOT Director Meredith Powell with Dragons' Den stars Manjit Minhas and Bruce Croxon, March 13, 2017. 12) GVBOT CEO Iain Black with Uber's David Plouffe, Oct. 11, 2016. 13) B.C. Political Panel at 28<sup>th</sup> Annual Economic Outlook Forum, Jan. 20, 2017. 14) Tim Manning inducted the Council of Governors, April 3, 2017. 15) BC NDP Leader John Horgan, Feb. 10, 2017. 16) GVBOT Governor Sue Paish with Premier Christy Clark, Feb. 22, 2017. 17) BC Green Party Leader Dr. Andrew Weaver, Feb. 3, 2017. 18) Housing Forum 2017: The Missing Middle, April 18, 2017. 19) Students at the We For She Conference, Oct. 14, 2016.

# PUBLIC POLICY AND ADVOCACY HIGHLIGHTS 2016-17



## 2017 B.C. ELECTION ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY

Following the release of the *Greater Vancouver Economic Scorecard 2016* last spring, the Board of Trade aimed to put the Scorecard “to work” in 2016-17.

One key way that this was achieved was through the development of a comprehensive, non-partisan engagement strategy for the 2017 B.C. Provincial Election.

The multi-stage plan involved the creation of an official GVBOT Provincial Election Platform, which outlined the priorities of our Members and served as the foundation on which we provided commentary throughout the election.

It also involved hosting the leaders of all three major parties in February 2017, including Premier Christy Clark, BC NDP Leader John Horgan, and BC Green Party Leader Dr. Andrew Weaver.

To ensure our Election Platform accurately reflected the priorities of our Members we conducted a comprehensive survey in Fall 2016 that polled the region’s business community on a wide swath of issues, ranging from housing affordability and transit and transportation priorities, energy and natural resource development, PST reform, ridesharing, and more. This led to the creation of five key Priority Focus Areas for the election: Transit and Transportation, Human Capital, Business Competitiveness, Gateway Resources, and Fiscal Responsibility.

As the parties rolled out their policies and platforms in the lead up to the election, the Board of Trade assessed their ideas and provided platform summaries and analysis on our online 2017 Provincial Election Dashboard.

This was coupled with weekly e-blasts to our Members, providing updates from the campaign trail, helping to ensure the Greater Vancouver business community was informed and empowered during the provincial election. See our Election Platform and online Dashboard at [boardoftrade.com/election2017](http://boardoftrade.com/election2017).



## REPORT ON HOUSING AFFORDABILITY

In April 2017, the Greater Vancouver Board of Trade released a new report on the region’s housing affordability crunch, identifying seven steps local governments can take to help unlock housing supply and improve affordability for residents.

The report was developed over the past year after the *Greater Vancouver Economic Scorecard 2016* revealed that affordability is one of the biggest challenges facing our region’s economy. The report was released as part of the Board of Trade’s 2017 Housing Forum.

The report focuses on a concept called the “Missing Middle” which refers to people who are currently priced out of Greater Vancouver’s housing market, such as new families, middle-income earners, seniors, and empty-nesters. The “Missing Middle” also refers to alternative housing forms such as townhomes, duplexes, triplexes, laneway homes, and co-ops.

The report makes recommendations for local governments that would help unlock supply across the region. So far, the recommendations have been well received by municipal officials and have received strong support from housing groups and developers alike.

To read the full report and the paper’s recommendations, visit [boardoftrade.com/housingreport](http://boardoftrade.com/housingreport).





### BIG WIN ON RIDESHARING AND TAXI MODERNIZATION

In March 2017, the Greater Vancouver Board of Trade welcomed the announcement that the Provincial Government is shifting gears and moving towards the introduction of ridesharing in B.C. and the modernization of the taxi industry.

For more than two years, the Board of Trade acted as a leading voice on this issue. In February 2016, the organization issued a research paper entitled *Innovative Transportation Options for Metro Vancouver*. The report made four specific recommendations to the Provincial Government, which were successfully reflected in the Province's policy framework.

In a Fall 2016 survey of Members, 80% of respondents said they support allowing ridesharing services to operate in our region — which is now the largest metropolitan region in North America without ridesharing services.

The organization also hosted events with Uber's Chief Advisor David Plouffe in October 2016 as well as an event with the Vancouver Taxi Association in June 2016, in an effort to better inform the regional business community about the evolving ride-for-hire industry.

Read the Greater Vancouver Board of Trade's ridesharing report at [boardoftrade.com/ridesharing](http://boardoftrade.com/ridesharing).



### REGIONAL PRIORITIES AT BC CHAMBER AGM

This year, all five resolutions submitted or supported by the Greater Vancouver Board of Trade were adopted at the BC Chamber of Commerce AGM in Victoria.

Each of the resolutions addressed pressing issues facing our region's business community. One of the most high-profile resolutions calls on the Federal Government to maintain the current governance model for Canada's ports and airports, given that they are economic drivers for our national economy and crucial pieces of transportation infrastructure.

Another resolution adopted with near-unanimous support was entitled "Removing Uncertainty from Community Amenity Contributions." This resolution provides developers with greater certainty and reflects the findings of our April 2017 report, *Unlocking Supply: Housing Affordability and the Missing Middle*.

The Board of Trade also supported resolutions dealing with issues such as property taxes, mental health and addictions, and the modernization of regional districts. Resolutions adopted during the AGM process become a part of the BC Chamber's advocacy agenda to the Provincial Government.

Read the five policy resolutions supported by GVBOT at [boardoftrade.com/bcchamber17](http://boardoftrade.com/bcchamber17).

**OUR PURPOSE** is to support sustainable prosperity throughout the Greater Vancouver region.

**OUR VISION** is to be an active, innovative, trusted, credible business organization, known for influencing decision-makers, and educating, connecting with, and engaging our communities.

**OUR MISSION** is to provide leadership, information and connections, and public policy support that help ensure the Greater Vancouver region is competitive and the preferred Pacific Gateway for trade, commerce, and travel.

**WE ARE** informed, respectful, principled, collaborative, and professional.



GREATER VANCOUVER  
**BOARD OF TRADE**

**Greater Vancouver Board of Trade**

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