



GREATER VANCOUVER
BOARD OF TRADE

ANNUAL REPORT

2021-22

MESSAGE

FROM THE CHAIR



It has been an honour to serve as Chair of the Greater Vancouver Board of Trade over the past year as our region grappled with the effects of increased climate-related emergencies, global unrest and the ongoing challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Greater Vancouver Board of Trade was born out of the ashes of the Great Fire that devastated Vancouver in 1886 and has advocated on behalf of and supported the business community ever since. Then, as now, the importance of the work that happens at the Board is felt most acutely during times of uncertainty. The human cost of the Russian invasion of Ukraine has been devastating and raised questions around global food and energy security that have yet to be resolved. The past year was marked by a number of events with historical significance and the GVBOT stood by our members through each of them providing the insights, knowledge and advocacy that make us the

most active and influential business organization in Western Canada.

In October, RBC joined TELUS, CN, the Vancouver Airport Authority, BCIT and Air Canada as our sixth Pillar Partner. These organizations provide crucial support that enables our efforts to ensure a prosperous and sustainable future for our community.

In April, our annual Governors' Gala and Rix Awards gave us the opportunity to highlight exceptional contributions to the community made by Chief Wayne Sparrow of the Musqueam Indian Band, London Drugs, and Public Health Officer Dr. Bonnie Henry, who accepted the Special Rix Award for Outstanding Public Service on behalf of all healthcare workers. The Gala is always an amazing event but after mostly communicating through screens for two years it was especially gratifying to see everyone in person.

Over the past year, our policy team has engaged governments at all levels to tackle the challenges facing businesses in our region. Ahead of the federal election last fall, we partnered with Mustel Group to convey the most pressing issues for Metro Vancouver. In the spring, we polled the business community again - this time on the issues impacting them at a local level ahead of the municipal elections. From hosting government ministers on our stage to high-level meetings and policy consultations, our advocacy efforts have touched on the industrial land shortage, housing affordability, labour challenges and many other issues that impact the business community.

I also had the pleasure of serving as Chair of the Digital Transformation Advisory Committee during my time as Chair of the Board. The committee was comprised of five additional board members with experience in large-scale digital transformation, project, change, technology and contract management. Collectively, we identified opportunities to elevate the member experience in addition to enhancing analytics and increasing efficiency for Board of Trade staff. In July, we deployed a major update to our technology that will serve as the backbone for this work, while providing greater security for member data.



The outstanding events team at the Greater Vancouver Board of Trade spent the last year further refining the virtual-event model they pioneered at the onset of the pandemic and introduced the hybrid-event model as health measures were eased. In-person main stage events with leaders like our federal and provincial finance ministers kept our local business community connected with developments in Ottawa and Victoria and our lineup of networking events kept them connected with other business leaders in the region.

I count myself lucky to have worked with the phenomenal staff, committee members and business leaders who enable the work of the Board of Trade. I look forward to seeing the legacy of working to make Greater Vancouver the best place to work and live continue under the oversight of my exceedingly capable successor, Radha Curpen. ■

Kirsten Sutton, ICD.D

2021-22 Chair
Greater Vancouver Board of Trade

MESSAGE

FROM THE CEO

Adaptation and resilience have been critical qualities for individuals and businesses alike over the last year. The resurgence of the COVID-19 pandemic and the catastrophic climate events in B.C. forced us to think differently about everything from how we interact with people in day-to-day life to the ways we build bridges, highways and communities.

It was a challenging year. The emergence of the Omicron variant last summer required a significant shift in our COVID-19 response. In order to help businesses reopen and stay open safely, we supported the introduction of the B.C. Vaccine Card to protect their staff and customers while we also advocated for relief programs for hard-hit sectors like events, tourism and hospitality. Soon after, we were cut off from the rest of Canada as historic flooding destroyed sections of Highway 1 and the Coquihalla in addition to damaging rail lines. As disaster relief efforts were underway, our team worked with governments and industry stakeholders to ensure alternate routes through the U.S. were opened for those displaced from their homes and critical arteries were repaired.

Despite how turbulent the last year has been, there has also been much to celebrate. The easing of health restrictions last October allowed us to begin hosting in-person events after more than 18 months, just in time to welcome Vancouver Fraser Port Authority President and CEO Robin Silvester to speak about leveraging the pandemic re-set to future proof Canada's largest port. We also welcomed RBC into the circle of Pillar Partners that support the vital work we do, advocating on behalf of our 5,000 members across the Greater Vancouver region.

Thanks to the leadership of our Board of Directors and the tireless work of our committee members, volunteers and staff, we met and exceeded the goals laid in year one of our strategic plan. We are growing our membership and increasing membership satisfaction rates while advocating on key issues like red tape, labour challenges and the shortage of industrial land with governments at



every level. Earlier this year, we passed a significant milestone in our digital transformation: upgrading our underlying network infrastructure to make the system faster and more secure so we can build and incorporate features that will improve our members' user experience. The strategic plan has been a crucial roadmap guiding our work and we are well positioned to meet our objectives in year two.

Taking meaningful action to advance reconciliation in our region was a key priority for the Greater Vancouver Board of Trade in the past year. We partnered with local First Nations to host a number of events aimed at advancing economic reconciliation, including Indigenous Opportunities Forum 2021 and Vision for Economic Development: First Nations shaping future growth and prosperity. We also delivered an Indigenous-led cohort of the Trade Accelerator Program (TAP) through

World Trade Centre Vancouver and facilitated diversity and inclusion training for more than 300 of our members in partnership with the CCDI this year.

World Trade Centre Vancouver (WTC-V) had a phenomenal year, welcoming Purolator as a Global Partner alongside Air Canada and Fasken. WTC-V continues to play a crucial role in helping B.C. companies reach international markets by delivering programs that address the needs of small- and medium-sized businesses, like the Trade Accelerator Program (TAP). This year alone, TAP alumni from B.C. generated over \$350 million in new export sales.

The Board of Trade is constantly evolving to better lead, unite and champion the business community. In October, we announced the Engaged Leadership Program through the Rix Centre for Leadership and launched GVPOD – Greater Vancouver’s business podcast. In

January, we partnered with the BCIT School of Business and Media to launch the ESG Fundamentals Microcredential, recognizing a shortage of the talent required to help companies measure and report on their environmental, social and governance factors. In June, we partnered with the Business Data Lab at the Canadian Chamber of Commerce for the first time to analyze localized Statistics Canada data on business conditions in Metro Vancouver.

Taking time to reflect always inspires me to look to the future. Businesses in Greater Vancouver are facing inflationary pressures, worsening labour shortages and a challenging economic outlook. Newly elected city councils will soon face the reality of executing the visions they campaigned on. If the past year has taught us anything its that the year ahead will bring a new set of challenges that will force us to adapt again, and we need to be prepared. I look forward to continuing our work, advocating on behalf of our members and working with government and industry stakeholders to ensure that Greater Vancouver is positioned to thrive no matter what the future holds. ■



Bridgitte Anderson
President and CEO
Greater Vancouver Board of Trade

PUBLIC POLICY & ADVOCACY

HIGHLIGHTS 2021-22

Committee Advocacy Work

GVBOT policy committees meet regularly to help inform Greater Vancouver Board of Trade advocacy objectives and host a dialogue on major issues impacting the business community in the region. We are grateful to our member volunteers who participated in our three policy committees: the Regional Transportation and Infrastructure Committee (RTI), the Government, Budget and Finance Committee (GBF) and the Regional and Civic Affairs Committee (RCAC).

RTI explores all things related to the movement of goods, people, and services in our region. Over the past year, this committee had productive discussions on the shortage of industrial lands in the region, major transit projects in the region and the recovery of the airplane/airline and tourism sectors following the COVID-19 pandemic.

GBF helps inform the GVBOT budget submissions and provides input and analysis on GVBOT's response to the government budgets. In addition to these discussions, over the past year, GBF also explored topics pertinent to the economy including promoting prosperity and growth and improving the property tax system.

RCAC monitors and influences urban policies and projects in the Greater Vancouver region. This committee has a broad focus, which allows it to explore topics including land-use planning, poverty, arts and culture, building development and more. This year, this committee focused heavily on housing and heard directly from the provincial Minister of Housing regarding the province's plans to improve housing affordability in the province. ■

Response to B.C. Floods

In November, an atmospheric river caused unprecedented and incredibly destructive flooding and mudslides throughout the Greater Vancouver region and beyond. Throughout the following weeks and months, GVBOT helped lead the business community response to the disasters imposed on our communities and infrastructure. We advocated directly to all levels of government on the need to secure critical routes through the United States and maintain the flow of goods. We also advocated for the provision of immediate emergency relief to all businesses and individuals impacted by these events.



In December, the RTI committee engaged with the Fraser Basin Council about its research on flood risk management in the Lower Mainland and developed advocacy priorities on this issue. GVBOT then wrote a letter to the government outlining these priorities, to which other local chambers signed on.

GVBOT continues to monitor the government's response to the flooding events and directly advocates to all levels of government on the need to engage in emergency planning. ■

Responding to Government Budgets

The GVBOT policy and advocacy team participates in the provincial and federal governments’ consultation on their budgets every year. These submissions outline the Greater Vancouver Board of Trade’s priorities for the upcoming year, and this year, the submissions highlighted our priorities for economic recovery and disaster management and planning.

On the day each budget was released, GVBOT released a statement on the budget. The statements, with quotes from President and CEO Bridgitte Anderson, acknowledge positive measures in the budget that affect B.C. businesses, and identify missed opportunities for needed action to support the business community.

Soon after the release of the B.C. Budget 2022, GVBOT hosted B.C. Finance Minister Selina Robinson for a well-attended virtual event exploring the budget and province’s fiscal situation in more detail. Later in the spring, GVBOT hosted Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance Chrystia Freeland for an in-person event soon after the release of the federal budget. These events provide an opportunity for members to hear directly from the finance ministers in the days following the budgets and ask questions about how the budgets will support businesses. ■

Taking the Pulse of the Business Community During Election Periods

Ahead of the federal election in fall 2021, GVBOT conducted a survey of members and the public in partnership with Mustel Group. The results of this survey were published on our website as a federal election dashboard to provide information to our members, as well as candidates. On Sept. 14, 2021 GVBOT hosted an event with candidates from each of the four major political parties. This event allowed candidates to respond to the issues raised in the survey and created an opportunity for GVBOT members to hear directly from candidates on these relevant issues.

In spring 2022, GVBOT conducted another survey of our members, again in partnership with Mustel Group. Although the municipal elections would not take place until October 2022, this survey took the pulse of GVBOT members well in advance of the elections. The results helped inform GVBOT advocacy with municipal governments in the months leading up to the election. ■



StrongerBC Economic Plan Response

In February, the B.C. government released the StrongerBC Economic Plan. GVBOT staff reviewed and analyzed the plan upon its release and released a statement featuring quotes from our President and CEO Bridgitte Anderson. The statement indicated the business community’s alignment with the broad goals and central themes of the plan, inclusive and clean growth, but also pointed out the lack of implementation details in the plan.

GVBOT staff and policy committees continue to be engaged with the provincial government on the rollout of the new economic strategy. ■

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS



The Leaders of Tomorrow (LOT) is a mentorship program that connects top post-secondary students with leading industry professionals.

LOT was launched back in 1999 and is recognized as the premier mentorship program in British Columbia. Candidates go through a competitive and rigorous selection process to undergo a year of accelerated professional and personal growth.

Over the past year, the LOT program hosted more than 10 events and workshops that helped educate and support our students, including private roundtables with leaders from Electronic Arts Vancouver and Deloitte, and also with TransLink CEO, Kevin Quinn, and SFU President and Vice

Chancellor, Joy Johnson.

In addition to leadership, mentorship and networking, volunteerism is also an important pillar of the program and our students were able to earn their targeted volunteer hours with community outreach initiatives that supported local organizations such as the Shoreline Cleanup, Arts Umbrella and the Greater Vancouver Board of Trade itself.

The LOT program continues to be a valuable tool for individuals who wish to accelerate their personal and professional development alongside mentors who understand the importance of shaping the next generation of leaders. ■



The Greater Vancouver Board of Trade is committed to building thriving communities. The late Dr. Don Rix, a renowned philanthropist and Governor of the Board of Trade, was dedicated to supporting the development of young people. Through his generosity, the Rix Centre for Corporate Leadership Endowment was established in 2009 to support emerging leaders.

Through the Rix Centre for Leadership, the Board of Trade has built on that vision and launched the Engaged Leadership Program (ELP) back in January 2022. ELP is targeted at managers and entrepreneurs who are looking to take the next step in their career progression. The program aims to provide these future leaders with resilient leadership training, mentorship, and community engagement opportunities because we believe that engaged citizens make stronger, healthier, more connected communities and that up-and-

coming professionals with strong leadership skills, values, and community involvement are key to economic recovery and resiliency.

This year's ELP participants got to experience a total of four courses followed by four private roundtables with notable business leaders in the region like the Hon. Janet Austin - the Lieutenant Governor of BC, Digital Technology Supercluster CEO, Sue Paish and Indigenous Tourism Association of Canada CEO, Keith Henry.

Thanks to the RIX ELP Advisory Committee, we were able to support the local non-profit sector by hosting the 5th Annual Night of Non-Profit Engagement, where we provided members and non-members with the opportunity to network with more than 20 local non-profits and charities to access opportunities at the board-level or long-term skill-based volunteer positions. ■



DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION LEADERSHIP COUNCIL

The Diversity and Inclusion Leadership Council (DLC), an evolution of the Women's Leadership Council program, is an inclusive program that champions and advocates for leadership that best reflects the diversity of the Greater Vancouver region.

Through diversity and inclusion focused programs, initiatives, and events, the DLC offers practical business development education, advocacy, recognition and networking opportunities to advance inclusive growth.

Over the past year, we hosted 20 events and

workshops through the program. We continued to work in partnership with the Canadian Centre for Diversity and Inclusion (CCDI) to educate and provide training on important D&I themes, which resulted in more than 270 member certifications.

The DLC lens has also been applied to our event offerings, with the Honouring Black History Month: Inclusive Leadership in Action event in February, the Creating and Maintaining an Accessible Workspace event during Accessibility Week in May and our first ever EDI Conference in June. ■



SCALE-UP CENTRE FOR SMES

The Scale-up Centre for SMEs (SCS) provides a series of curated program offerings to help high-potential firms from various sectors overcome barriers to continued growth and elevates their growth trajectories.

This year, the SCS program held six events and workshops. We leveraged the official partnership with the Montreal Chamber of Commerce and we were able to create more networking opportunities for our members, including two cohorts of the

National Business Crews in partnership with the Montreal, Toronto and Winnipeg Chambers.

In addition to these opportunities, we also created the Small Business Toolkit. This toolkit is filled with offers that are exclusive to members of the Board of Trade and includes services that fit the unique needs of different business: from human resources and legal services to telecommunications, there are a broad range of tools that can help business grow and escalate. ■

ESG Fundamentals Microcredential

The Greater Vancouver Board of Trade and the British Columbia Institute of Technology (BCIT) launched the Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) Fundamentals Microcredential in January 2022, an ambitious and innovative program designed to equip British Columbians with the skills and training to position our region at the forefront of the global ESG movement.

Delivered by BCIT, the ESG Fundamentals Microcredential is a forward-thinking collaboration between the business community and academia

that was developed in response to the evolving demands of investors, shareholders and consumers alike.

As the world grapples with the interconnected crises of climate change and social inequality, every company must develop and communicate its ESG strategy to remain competitive and collaboratively build an economy that takes care of people and the planet. This program will ensure that there are British Columbians with the skills to build and advance an ESG strategy in all sectors. ■

EVENT HIGHLIGHTS



EVENT HIGHLIGHTS



WORLD TRADE CENTRE VANCOUVER



The Greater Vancouver Board of Trade relaunched its World Trade Centre Vancouver (WTC-V) subsidiary in July 2017 with the goal of strengthening the international performance of small and medium-sized businesses across British Columbia.

Over the last five years, WTC-V has worked with partners in the public and private sector to introduce programs, workshops and events that help B.C. businesses address barriers in order to successfully expand internationally. Common barriers identified by GVBOT members include how to find the right customers, people, and partners to be successful while mitigating their risk.

With these barriers in mind, WTC-V has worked closely with public and private sector partners to launch the Trade Accelerator Program (TAP) in November 2017, the Global Performance Series of events in February 2018, the Integrated e-Commerce Essentials workshop in December 2018, and the Market Activation Program (MAP) for virtual delegations in September of 2020.



Integrated e-Commerce Essentials (ICE) Progress to Date



Market Activation Program (MAP) & Global Performance Series (GPS) Progress to Date



Trade Accelerator Program (TAP) Progress to Date



The World Trade Centre Vancouver continues to evolve to the needs of SMEs and now hosts TAP cohorts specifically for women owned and lead businesses in partnership with WEBC, indigenous owned and lead in partnership with the Canadian Council for Aboriginal Business, and a Creative and Cultural Industries with Canadian Heritage.

WTC-V continues to closely monitor the results of program alumni as all offerings remain results-oriented and focused on helping companies discover new knowledge, engage with experts,

and create a tangible path forward. TAP B.C. alumni alone are now on pace to generate over 350 million dollars in new export sales and hire over 3500 people this year.
(Direct and Indirect Hires)

World Trade Centre Vancouver is pleased to recognize its Global partners Air Canada, Fasken and Purolator. These organizations are passionate champions of helping B.C. SMEs to successfully grow and support the work of WTC-V through the year. ■



Any company wishing to access new customers in growing markets will benefit from TAP. Whether you are new to exporting or have been doing it for decades, the shared experiences and best practices in TAP allow you to sidestep time-consuming and costly mistakes.

Kryton International Inc. | VANCOUVER, B.C.



I'd recommend the TAP program to any small to mid-sized company considering expansion via exporting their goods or services to another country. It was a great experience and I learned a lot! I feel much more confident in moving forward with our new Export Plan, which was the direct output of the TAP program.

VMAC | VICTORIA, B.C.



TAP has been invaluable to Velox at this point in our growth. We needed all the information TAP offered right at the right time they offered it. The knowledge is very deep in TAP and has and will continue to prove itself invaluable to our success and growth. We wouldn't be anywhere near where we are today without TAP.

Velox Manufacturing | LANGLEY, B.C.



This was an exceptionally well-designed program that took us from our export idea all the way to ready to a solid plan, in just four program days. The ability to get such great feedback from so many experts was tremendous. I had planned for just my business partner to go but am extremely glad I was required to go as well! Highly recommended.

DreamRider Productions Society | ABBOTSFORD, B.C.

THANK YOU

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Greater Vancouver Board of Trade Pillar Partners



World Trade Centre Vancouver Global Partners



OUR PURPOSE: To lead, unite and champion business to ensure Greater Vancouver is thriving and our region is the best place to live and work.

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

OUR MISSION: 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.



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