



**DIVERSEcity**  
community resources society



# DIVERSEcity **Strategic Plan** 2024–2029

DIVERSEcity COMMUNITY RESOURCES SOCIETY

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## Our Work in Surrey Takes Place ...

On the ancestral, traditional and unceded territories of the SEMYOME (Semiahmoo), q̓ícəy̓ (Katzie), kʷikʷəłəm (Kwkwetlem), q̓ʷɑ:ńłəń (Kwantlen), qiqéyt (Qayqayt), xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam) and s̓cəwaθən məsteyəxʷ (Tsawwassen) First Nations. The knowledge and traditions of these communities are significant in providing context to the work we do, and DIVERSEcity recognizes the importance that reconciliation has in building truly inclusive and strong communities.

# Message from the CEO and Board Chair

Across our history, from 1978 to the present day, DIVERSEcity has responded to the changing needs of both the world around us and the people and communities we serve.



**Neelam Sahota**  
*Chief Executive Officer*  
DIVERSEcity Community  
Resources Society



**Upkar Singh Tatlay**  
*Board Chair*  
Chief Technology Officer,  
Oxus Machine Works Inc.

And now, it's time for us to evolve again. Here is where we're going next and how we plan to get there. Our destination: an inclusive, equitable and regenerative society that puts people and the planet first — a North-Star vision guiding DIVERSEcity Community Resources Society.

We are committed to empowering every individual to realize their potential and embrace their unique journey. We also recognize that good governance and stewardship of an organization is important and especially so in these times of constant change and uncertainty. DIVERSEcity's commitment to truth and reconciliation, justice and equity and to systemic change anchors us and provides us purpose and direction. Our values will guide our collective efforts to make meaningful changes for individuals and communities so that we think about not only the present but also to the future.

From the beginning of the strategic planning process, we have rooted the concepts of reciprocity and care ensuring that every element — Vision, Mission, Values and Priorities — is understood and affirmed by our community members, staff, volunteers and other interested parties. This nearly year-long process has been enlightening, engaging and inspiring. The Board and I truly appreciate the time and effort that all of our constituents and members of the community gave to the development of this plan. We would also like to acknowledge Jody Johnson and Trevor Van Eerden of PEERs Employment and Education Resources who led us through all elements of the development of this plan. We deeply appreciate the guidance, expertise and enthusiasm they brought to this important work.

Our vision is a hopeful one. And one that is possible. Over the next five years, this plan will guide our decision-making. Our commitment to you is to continue to adapt and be flexible to achieve the goals that we have set together. We remain committed to ensuring that DIVERSEcity works on your behalf toward an abundant and fair world that we all deserve — and need.

# Who We Are



DIVERSEcity Community Resources Society is an award-winning multi-service registered charity governed by a dedicated Board of Directors.

Above: DIVERSEcity Board of Directors, along with Neelam Sahota, CEO, (centre) and Garrison Duke, COO (bottom left). See list of Board members on page 19.

We support individuals and communities by providing resources, education and training, creating pathways for all to be a part of connected, stronger and healthier communities. Our organization is committed to providing opportunities for all British Columbians to ignite their individual potential, fostering a sense of belonging and building a future that protects the earth and guarantees equity for all.

Representation and lived experiences matter when it comes to delivering on our strategy; we commit to a compassionate and thoughtful approach that includes the experiences of individuals and communities. To this end, our work is led by a team of more than 500 staff and volunteers dedicated to delivering on our vision. With more than four-and-a-half decades of experience, we've refined our approach, yet remained nimble, allowing us to responsively address emerging community trends and needs with compassion and care.

We began our story in the City of Surrey, now the second-largest city in British Columbia with a population nearing 600,000. The city is located within Metro Vancouver and bordered by the United States to the south, the City and Township of Langley to the east, the Fraser River to the north and the Cities of Delta and White Rock to the west. Working in collaboration with community partners, we now offer services in multiple regions across the province.

Working within one of the fastest growing and most diverse regions in Canada has instilled innovation in everything we do. From Indigenous communities to the business sector and government, our ecosystem of partners is as diverse as the communities we serve and enables us to deliver collective impact through collaboration.

# Development of the Plan

This plan stands as the product of extensive consultations with those intimately familiar with DIVERSEcity – its dedicated staff, volunteers, management team, community partners and our Board.

Consultation and development of the strategic plan was initiated in January 2023. In the successive months, the input gathered from consultations led to several iterative drafts and the final plan was presented and approved by the Board in November 2023. This collaborative engagement process led to the identification of new Vision, Mission and Value statements, along with five strategic priorities and their respective goals. In January 2024, operational and implementation plans will be initiated.

## STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS



## People at DIVERSEcity

The people at DIVERSEcity mirror the people in the community and those we serve.

**250+ Staff**

**240 Volunteers**

**12+ Languages available for staff delivered services**



**BIPOC Representation on the Board of Directors**



**Women on the Board of Directors**



**BIPOC Representation on the Executive Team**



**Women on the Executive Team**

## Vision, Mission, Values

DIVERSEcity, its staff, volunteers, management and Board are committed to the Vision, Mission and Values articulated here.

These statements serve as our compass, shaping our daily endeavours and propelling us toward the realization of our goals. They are not just words on a page; they are the foundation of our actions, providing guidance to every initiative, decision and interaction we take.





## Vision

**“An inclusive, equitable and regenerative society that puts people and the planet first.”**

Our vision is our North Star — a guiding light that illuminates our path — leading us to build a society that cares for both people and the planet, which is inclusive, equitable, and has the ability to renew and revitalize itself.



## Mission

**“Together, we build connected, stronger and healthier communities.”**

Our mission guides our daily endeavours, moving us toward communities and a world that is unified, strong and healthy.



## Values

Our values guide our work, shape the culture of our organization and breathe life into our aspirations. These values steer us toward a future where everyone thrives, where our collective efforts build a world we are proud to be a part of and to pass on to the generations to come.

### Connection and Purpose

We connect people and ignite purpose, fostering a sense of belonging and value for every individual.

### Interdependence and Responsibility

We recognize our interdependence and exercise responsibility for each other, the environment and future generations.

### Curiosity and Adaptability

We encourage curiosity in spirit and mind, promoting active listening, continuous learning and adaptability to a changing world.

### Collaboration and Equity

We collaborate with diverse partners to create an equitable and just society, acknowledging that meaningful change requires collective action aligned with our vision.

### Truth and Reconciliation

We are committed to truth and reconciliation, ensuring equitable access to opportunities for all and fostering meaningful relationships with Indigenous partners. We embed Indigenous principles and practices, prioritizing cultural safety and humility in our work.

### Global Awareness and Empathy

We know that the world, its people and its events are interconnected, and we work to understand the impacts on our communities and our staff who support them.

# Strategic Priorities



Through comprehensive consultation, DIVERSEcity has identified five key strategic priorities and corresponding goals.

These strategic pillars define our commitment to foster community connection, champion truth and reconciliation, nurture organizational capacity and wellbeing, drive thoughtful growth and expansion, and optimize collective impact and advocacy. Each priority and their accompanying goals provide us a roadmap toward making a lasting difference in the communities we serve and the achievement of our Vision.



**PRIORITY 1  
Strengthening  
Community Connection**

We will foster a sense of belonging and social cohesion by enhancing our role as a community connector and convenor, building and improving platforms to ensure space for underrepresented voices and knowledge mobilization.

**PRIORITY 2  
Commitment to  
Truth and  
Reconciliation**

We will establish meaningful and collaborative relationships with Indigenous communities and organizations and embed Indigenous knowledge and perspectives into the organization's policies, programs and decision-making processes.

**PRIORITY 5  
Collective Impact  
and Advocacy**

We will strategically build our profile and visibility to increase awareness, engagement and support. We will listen and elevate the voices of individuals, share their concerns and advocate for their needs, positively impacting our communities and the people we serve.

**PRIORITY 3  
Organizational  
Capacity and  
Wellbeing**

We will attract and retain the best people by offering opportunities for growth, providing the necessary tools, demonstrating care for the environment and creating a supportive workplace to empower our team.

**PRIORITY 4  
Growth and  
Expansion**

We will focus our energy and resources on creating regenerative pathways that contribute to the long-term sustainability of our communities and our planet.



# Strategic Priorities and Goals

1

## PRIORITY 1 Strengthening Community Connection

We will foster a sense of belonging and social cohesion by enhancing our role as a community connector and convener, building and improving platforms to ensure space for underrepresented voices and knowledge mobilization.

### GOALS

#### 1 Capitalize on community knowledge

Community leaders, organizations, residents and local cultural practices help inform and create spaces that improve the vitality of our communities and promote people's health, happiness and wellbeing.

#### 2 Platforms and safe spaces for open dialogue

The strategic partnerships and relationships are in place to create platforms and safe spaces for open dialogue.

#### 3 Networking, mentorship and knowledge-sharing

Opportunities for networking, mentorship, knowledge-sharing and cultural expression enhance the collective capacity of staff and our communities to support our participants.

**LET'S CREATE SPACES THAT IMPROVE THE VITALITY OF OUR COMMUNITIES AND PROMOTE PEOPLE'S HEALTH, HAPPINESS AND WELLBEING.**



## Strategic Priorities and Goals



Above: Language programs at DIVERSEcity help newcomers in their journey toward success.

Left: DIVERSEcity staff foster awareness and connection by taking part in BC's annual Charity Summer Games.

## Strategic Priorities and Goals



The Surrey Local Immigration Partnership and DIVERSEcity were honoured with the 2022 BC Reconciliation Award for the development of the *Surrey First Peoples Guide for Newcomers*. DIVERSEcity's Lenya Wilks, Director of Partnerships and Stakeholder Engagement, (left) and Neelam Sahota, CEO, (right) accepted the award from Premier David Eby at Government House.

# 2

## **PRIORITY 2 Commitment to Truth and Reconciliation**

We will establish meaningful and collaborative relationships with Indigenous communities and organizations and embed Indigenous knowledge and perspectives into the organization’s policies, programs and decision-making processes.

### **GOALS**

#### **1 Enhancing Practices and Internal Operations**

Our practices and internal operations are enhanced through constant review and with the ongoing advice and support from Indigenous leaders and knowledge keepers.

#### **2 Cultural Safety and Humility Awareness**

Cultural safety and humility awareness of all staff, volunteers and Board Directors is enhanced by providing resources and opportunities for discussion and learning on an ongoing basis to equip them to engage respectfully with Indigenous communities.

#### **3 Building Trusting Relationships**

DIVERSEcity has meaningful and trusting relationships with Indigenous communities and organizations that foster open communication, mutual respect and cultural humility to manifest safe spaces for dialogue and shared experiences.

**PROVIDING RESOURCES AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR DISCUSSION AND LEARNING ENHANCE CULTURAL SAFETY AND HUMILITY.**

#### **4 Understanding and Participation**

With the Truth and Reconciliation Calls to Action woven into newcomer communities, we foster and promote education, awareness and dialogue through our trauma-informed programs and services. By committing to this, we will ensure capacity building for sustainable knowledge transfer.

#### **5 Community Engagement and Cultural Exchange**

DIVERSEcity supports community engagement and cultural exchange between newcomers and Indigenous communities by establishing platforms for reciprocal awareness-building of history and ways of being and the celebration of arts and culture. This includes important dialogue, planning and overarching social interactions, furthering the ability for ownership of positive reinforcement of Indigenous knowledge.



**PRIORITY 3**  
**Organizational Capacity and Wellbeing**

We will attract and retain the best people by offering opportunities for growth, providing the necessary tools, demonstrating care for the environment and creating a supportive workplace to empower our team.

**GOALS**

**1 Talent Attraction and Recruitment Excellence**

Top talent that reflects the diversity of our communities is recruited and retained.

**2 Employee Development and Training**

An employee development program that offers continuous learning opportunities, training and workshops to enhance skills, knowledge and professional growth is developed and promoted across the organization.

**3 Supportive Work Environment**

DIVERSEcity is recognized as a supportive, inclusive and accessible work environment that respects the intersectionality of its workforce and promotes collaboration, open communication and a sense of belonging.

**4 Technology and Tools Enhancement**

Employees have access to and the ability to effectively use technology systems, tools and applications to excel in their roles.

**5 Leadership and Succession Planning**

We have the workforce, leadership and governance in place to meet our succession needs.

**6 Space Utilization, Sustainability and Access**

Through collaboration, strategic co-location and a commitment to the environment, DIVERSEcity aims to optimize the placement of its staff, programs and services, fostering a more sustainable and accessible ecosystem.

# 4

## **PRIORITY 4 Growth and Expansion**

We will focus our energy and resources on creating regenerative pathways that contribute to the long-term sustainability of our communities and our planet.

### **GOALS**

#### **1 Enhancing Stability and Sustainability**

By leveraging and building upon our core strengths, DIVERSEcity has an established and diverse base of stable and sustainable revenue.

#### **2 Community Impact and Systems Change**

Our services, programs and community involvement are embedded in communities where the need is greatest, resulting in systemic change.

#### **3 Strategic Geographic Expansion and Scalability**

Our services are delivered in multiple jurisdictions, forging partnerships with aligned parties and embracing diverse methods of delivery.



#### **4 Reducing Environmental Impact**

As DIVERSEcity grows and expands, our commitment to reducing our carbon footprint will guide our actions and decision-making.

**DIVERSEcity manages two community gardens where people can grow their own food and find community connection.**

## Strategic Priorities and Goals



Above: Our Youth Employment Programs prepare leaders of the future, including these Future Leaders program graduates.

Right: Our staff reach out to people with information and resources at community events throughout the year.



# 5

## **PRIORITY 5** **Collective Impact and Advocacy**

We will strategically build our profile and visibility to increase awareness, engagement and support. We will listen and elevate the voices of individuals, share their concerns and advocate for their needs, positively impacting our communities and the people we serve.

### **GOALS**

#### **1 Brand Recognition**

DIVERSEcity's brand, vision and mission is well-recognized in the communities it serves.

#### **2 Thought Leadership and Expertise**

DIVERSEcity is a key source of information for external interest groups and government entities, providing essential insights and expertise on BIPOC leadership, migration, settlement and integration.

#### **3 A Respected Advocate**

DIVERSEcity is a respected advocate on key social issues.

#### **4 Creating Changemakers**

Future generations of changemakers are identified and equipped with lifelong skills, motivation and the networks required to create a more equitable and sustainable world.



## Programs by the Numbers\*

\*Based on 2022–2023 data

### Community Development

- 1,500** newcomers using settlement services
- 800** non-permanent residents supported
- 3,800** one-on-one sessions
- 3,000** information sessions with refugees
- 2,000+** accompaniments in the community

### Child and Family Services

- 500** families with young children supported
- 3,100** home visits to mothers and families
- 220** newcomer and diverse youth supported
- 1,745** seniors served
- 391** Community Garden participants

### Employment and Language Programs

- 96%** employment and education outcomes youth (15–30)
- 99.5%** employment and education outcomes for adults
- 300** jobseekers helped
- 2,751** English language learners

### Partnership Services

- 130+** community partners

### Mental Health, Substance Use and Gender-based Violence Counselling

- 400** clients served
- 23** different programs

### Social Enterprises

- 300+** languages through our DIVERSEcity Interpretation & Translation Services
- 11,000** interpretation client appointments
- 1,001** learners through DIVERSEcity Skills Training Centre
- 2,792** CELPIP test takers

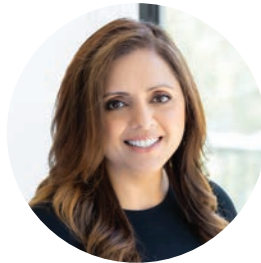
## Board Acknowledgements

DIVERSEcity's Board of Directors wishes to acknowledge the invaluable insights, diverse perspectives and wealth of experiences shared by our staff, volunteers, management team and community partners. We extend our gratitude for the comprehensive strategic planning process facilitated by our leadership team, as well as the thoughtful contributions of every individual involved. This collective effort has resulted in a strong plan with priorities and goals which, as we achieve them, will transform our communities and move us toward achievement of our Vision.



**Upkar Singh Tatlay**  
**Chair**

*Chief Technology Officer,*  
Oxus Machine Works Inc



**Kam K. Raman**  
**Secretary**

*Vice President,*  
RBC Commercial  
Financial Services



**Sonia Parmar**  
**Treasurer**

*Partner,*  
David Pel & Company



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**Special Advisor  
to the Board**

*President,*  
Indigeknow



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**Vice Chair**

*Director of Finance,*  
Thomas Downie Holdings



**Jason Wong**  
**Owner,**

Beta Collective



**Jane Shin**

*Vice President,*  
Students & Community  
Development,  
Vancouver Community  
College



**Susan Wells**

*Retired Business  
Leader*



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DIVERSEcity's strategic plan is community-driven and everyone has an opportunity to engage with the plan. Whether you wish to learn more about our progress or provide feedback to help it grow, the leadership team welcomes you to get in touch.

Please contact us at

[ea@dcrs.ca](mailto:ea@dcrs.ca)



@DIVERSEcityBC



Let's do our part to protect our planet. Please recycle or forward this plan to someone you think might be interested.

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