



# SUNÐAR

## **SOUTH ASIA INTERNATIONAL EXPO** Surrey, British Columbia, Canada

### DRAFT PROPOSAL FOR REVIEW AND CONSIDERATION

Updated: May 1, 2019

April 25, 2019

Attention: Mayor Doug McCallum and City Council  
City of Surrey

Dear Your Worship Mayor Doug McCallum and City Council,

We are writing to propose that the City of Surrey assess the feasibility of hosting a “South Asia International Expo” in Surrey.

The city in collaboration with the BC and Canadian governments would invite the countries of South Asia and their diaspora communities around the world to establish exhibits and pavilions at the South Asia International Expo in Surrey.

The South Asia International Expo will promote peace, goodwill, and cross-cultural understanding and will showcase to the world that the diverse people and countries of South Asia and their diaspora can come together as one in common unity and solidarity.

This event will bring South Asia and the world to Surrey. It will be a truly international event that hasn't been done before in this format anywhere to our knowledge at-least in North America.

## ENDORSEMENTS

- This proposal has been endorsed by Ravi Kahlon who is the Parliamentary Secretary for Sport and Multiculturalism in the BC Government of Premier John Horgan. Ravi stated on OMNI News that “he hopes the City of Surrey supports the plan and he is looking forward to review final proposals.”
- This proposal was endorsed by Anita Huberman who is the Chief Executive Officer of the Surrey Board of Trade.
- This proposal was endorsed by Ken Dhillon who is the President of the South Asian Business Association.
- Hundreds of people have commented and liked posts about this proposal on Facebook and social media.
- The interview that Alex Sangha and Upkar Tatlay did with OMNI News regarding this proposal got over six thousand (6000) views in less than one day. Here is a link to the video:

<https://www.facebook.com/OmniPunjabi/videos/297776494432161/UzpfSTUxNzM0NTc4NDoxMDE1NjA2ODU5OTEyMDc4NQ/>

If the above link does not work. Go to “OMNI Punjabi” Facebook Page and search for “South Asian Expo.”

## GUIDING CONCEPT

- Sundar is a common word for “beautiful” in Sanskrit. This is a tentative name for the South Asia International Expo. A planning committee can determine a permanent name at a later date.
- To build bridges and peace and harmony between the various peoples, cultures, languages, and faiths of South Asia and their diaspora worldwide through the free expression of art and culture.
- To promote equality, diversity, freedom of artistic expression, and social impact through peaceful and progressive means.
- To encourage creation, collaboration, connection, community, and celebration within the South Asia and diaspora community.

## PROPOSAL

- For the countries of South Asia and their diaspora communities to be invited to set up exhibits and pavilions at the South Asia International Expo in Surrey.
- Tentative Name of Expo: SUNDAR – which means “beautiful” in Sanskrit
- Logo: Beautiful purple colourful peacock with golden wings
- Tentative Theme: Earth, Air, Water, Fire
- Location: Bear Creek Park
- Opening and Closing Ceremonies: The track at Bear Creek Park can be refurbished into an outdoor stadium
- Tentative Date: Summer 2022
- Number of Pavilions: 15 to 25 from the countries of South Asia and their diaspora worldwide
- Formal Reception Centre: The Surrey Arts Centre in Bear Creek Park can be expanded and be a formal reception centre for dignitaries, high level politicians, and other guests who need tight security.
- Transportation: Shuttle buses can leave from King George Station and Newton Exchange to Bear Creek Park which is very centrally located in Surrey

## RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That the City of Surrey assess the feasibility of hosting a South Asia International Expo.
2. That the City of Surrey strike a planning committee and consult with the following:
  - The South Asian community
  - The Surrey Board of Trade
  - South Asian Business Associations
  - South Asian Faith Based Organizations
  - South Asian Cultural Organizations
  - South Asian and Local Media
  - Local MLA's and MP's
3. That the City of Surrey liaise with the Province of BC and Government of Canada and Indigenous communities and gauge interest of such an Expo among the countries of South Asia and relevant diaspora communities.
4. That the City of Surrey consult with the respective embassies, consulates, and representatives.

5. That the City of Surrey have its Events Department provide an initial report on the feasibility of such an exposition in the city.
6. That the City of Surrey consult with the City of Vancouver to gather expertise from Expo 86.

## **BENEFITS**

- Increased economic activity
- Increased local, regional, and international tourism
- Increased positive media coverage
- The South Asia International Expo could be marketed widely and help put Surrey on the map.
- Increased opportunities for Surrey residents to participate in a unique arts and cultural event and learn about the diversity and diaspora of South Asia
- This proposal is in line with the City of Surrey's strategic plan to develop the arts and cultural sector and help foster and facilitate the growth of the performing arts.

## **HOW IS THE SOUTH ASIA INTERNATIONAL EXPO DIFFERENT**

This proposed South Asia International Expo for Surrey is different from other local South Asian festivals because:

- The countries of South Asia and diaspora communities around the world will be "directly invited" to set up their exhibits and pavilions instead of Metro Vancouver locals determining how their countries should be represented.
- The countries of South Asia and diaspora will be building long term partnerships and networks with businesses, organizations, government, and the people of Surrey for mutual socio-economic benefit.
- The goal is to create an event where people can "experience" South Asia.
- The South Asia International Expo would be inclusive of all the diversity of South Asia and the diaspora. It will not focus on just Bhangra or India or the Punjab. It will also be more than just a festival where people can try food from different cultures and countries and watch live performances. The Expo will embrace and

be open to all of South Asia and its arts, culture, heritage, history, and future ideas.

- The South Asia International Expo will basically be a mini-Expo 86 for all of South Asia and their diaspora worldwide. Expo 86 was a huge success and put Vancouver on the map. Many countries from around the world had pavilions at Expo 86. The South Asia International Expo will have approximately 15 to 25 national pavilions representing countries and diaspora communities. It is a much more focused and feasible project for a city the size of Surrey to pull off with its sizeable South Asian population to be an immediate draw.

The South Asian community is an important and integral part of the City of Surrey. It is fitting, therefore, that an Expo about South Asia and its diaspora be hosted in our beautiful Surrey.

The Expo will promote unity in diversity among the people of South Asia and their diaspora and send a message that peace and goodwill is possible by coming together and learning from each other.

We are requesting a formal response from the Mayor and Council in regards to the recommendations in this letter. Thank you for your review and consideration. It is appreciated.

In Gratitude,

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