

**Downtown Surrey BIA
Questions for Mayoral Candidates 2018**

1. Why are you running for Mayor?

I am running for Mayor of Surrey because there is no one running for Mayor I can support. People have told me that none of the candidates for Mayor are a credible choice. No one is raising the critical issues that I want to raise in this election.

2. Citizens of Surrey have a sense of pride in place and in community – what is your platform to help keep this momentum going?

I believe in preserving Surrey's ecological heritage while promoting a sustainable economy. I do not support LRT nor Skytrain. I support the reactivation of the Interurban community rail that was originally supported by Diana Watts and Surrey Council. The Interurban is a planned community rail service south of the Fraser that would run for Scott Road station through Newton, Sullivan, Cloverdale, Clayton, Langley, Abbotsford all the way to Chilliwack at the fraction of the cost of the proposed LRT or Skytrain. The new high-tech trams would be hydrogen powered and would be even cheaper than buses. The tracks are intact and have been preserved for commuter rail service. Both LRT and Skytrain will damage the fragile ecology of the Green Timbers Urban Forest, particularly in the construction phase. The Skytrain noise will permanently disturb the diverse ecology of the forest

3. The City of Surrey Tax rate per capita is the lowest in Metro Vancouver. What are your views on this? What are your priorities?

The interurban will reduce the burden of spending unnecessary funds for expensive rapid transit. The money can be better spent on more buses to supplement the interurban, providing much better transit to Surrey residence. The new cannabis economy will also help our tax revenue. Lower tax rate will encourage new businesses as well high-tech green technology to Surrey, while increasing tax revenue.

4. The Downtown Surrey Business Improvement Association had advocated for the past five years for a professionally managed purpose-built shelter in Surrey. What is your commitment to have this project move forward?

We need purpose-built shelters that would also have supportive services including counseling for mental health and addiction as well as safety and accessibility for all residents. We can also look at models of shelters built in Oregon and Washington state that have been very successful models.

5. It is necessary for municipal leadership to insure there is affordable housing dispersed throughout the City. What strategies would you consider implementing?

We now have both federal and provincial funding in place to build more social and supportive housing. Cities including New York and Hong Kong build public housing. There is no reason why we can't build social, supportive and affordable housing in this city.

6. The temporary modular housing is scheduled to be removed from the locations in Downtown Surrey in two years. Do you support the City's housing strategy that moves people from the current temporary housing into supportive housing throughout the City? If not, what is your solution?

We need to build permanent social and supportive housing along with a supportive infrastructure to provide counseling, settlement and retraining opportunities.

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7. We know there is always a debate between perception and reality. Everyone wants a safe place to live and do business. What is your strategy to deal with the root causes of crime?

If we can provide a social infrastructure with counselors, social workers, youth and support workers as well as support programs for youth and families that foster better understanding between parents and the youth, that can potentially mitigate violent crimes in Surrey.

8. In response to the current City budget, what changes in staff at City Hall would you make to enhance your ability to meet your priorities?

If we can reorganize spending priorities and capitalize in new cannabis and high-tech economies, we can hire more staff including more by-law officers, more park rangers as well as social, community support and youth workers like other cities in Metro Vancouver have done to meet their priorities.

9. How would you describe your leadership style?

With my counselor training, I am very open and approachable to work with community and business stakeholders to create and common vision for prosperous and sustainable future.

10. Voter turnout in municipal elections is historically low – do you think that a change to the ward system would heighten awareness in local issues ultimately increase voter turnout?

I do not support a ward system which is an undemocratic first past the post system that causes vote splitting electing false majority governments like we have provincially and federal. I would support a proportional voting system which would also have ward like neighbourhood electoral districts that would provide neighbourhood representation that ward provide, but we with proportionality to make is more democratic. If people get the result they voted for, maybe there would more inclined to vote and participate in the democratic process.

11. Economic Development in the 21st Century requires leaders to position the City globally – learning and recruiting from the best. How do you plan to position Surrey to take care of business globally?

We would host a high-tech summit inviting global high-tech gurus to promote new green high-tech and renewable energy such and solar, turbine, tidal and other energy sources to capitalize on the new sustainable high-tech boom. Australia's solar industry is booming and we can invite new partnerships that will bring investments, high-tech professionals and jobs to Surrey.

12. Innovation in the medical and technology sector is attracting the best and the brightest to our area. What are your thoughts to further job growth and attract businesses in these sectors to the Downtown Surrey?

Our high-tech summit would include and number of high-tech sectors including the medical high-tech sector. There is a lot of innovation around cancer research which would benefit the Cancer Agency at Surrey Memorial Hospital.

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13. We know we can expect over 1 million new residents to arrive in Metro Vancouver over the next 30 years, so we need to take the necessary action now by investing in our transportation system. As Mayor, what would you do on the Mayor's Council for Regional Transportation to ensure Surrey's requirements are highlighted?

This is why we should not waste any more time and refocus on reactivating the interurban. The tram system can be running through out the valley faster than both proposed phase one and two of the current LRT or the Skytrain system proposed by Surrey Safe Coalition. A combination of the interurban and supplementary buses and trams will give us much extensive transit system, much faster and cheaper than is being currently proposed.

14. How do you plan to address the overcrowding of schools in Surrey?

We do need developers to contribute more towards the building of schools and amenities in the community. With growing population, we need to build more efficient and high-tech school for the students of the future. Using technology, we can improve education delivery to student in a more efficient way, allowing teachers to give more time and attention to the students.

15. The creation of a City Centre and a vibrant Downtown core is vital to the growth of Surrey. What is your strategy and commitment to business - arts – culture – technology and community in Downtown Surrey?

We need to invest more into the arts and entertainment spaces in the downtown core. With building of the new Pattullo Bridge, we have the opportunity to open up the access the Fraser River in the industrial area and develop art and entertainment on the water front with a public market like Granville Island and New Westminister Quay across the river. We also need develop the park under the bridge to improve easier public access to the river. We also need to hire more park rangers and keep parks in the downtown area cleaner and welcoming. New Westminister, Richmond, Burnaby, Vancouver, North Vancouver and West Vancouver have done much better with the river access, improving the local arts and cultural sector. We can learn from that.

16. How would a municipal police department be different than the RCMP to residents and businesses? Have you studied the studies and what are the financial implications?

We currently have a lot of problems with the RCMP. Crime is getting worse. We have many complaints from the public about racial profiling and lack of fair complaints process. For these and many other reasons, there is little trust in the RCMP and the public. This needs to change. With new police force, we have an opportunity to set up a better more accountable and responsive system. We currently have the RCMP defending their position and a former Mayor saying that they did not respond to him. Some of the other electoral organizations are advocating for more police. With growing population, we eventually may need more police. So, there are already financial implications there. The public is tired of non-action and they want to see change. Changing to a different police structure to do things differently may improve the situation and improve the working relationship between the community, the political leadership and the police.

17. Do you support child care space in developments? How would you implement this within the City Development process?

Yes indeed. We can learn a lot from places like Japan where they provide childcare in the workplace, so that the children are close to where parents work. We should have more childcare spaces in new developments. We should encourage childcare spaces in new development proposals.

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18. A number of developers have requested shorter waiting time on their projects to commence. What would you implement to ensure this happens?

While having a balance between making sure that there is fair and due process and also making sure that all safety standards are followed, we do need to find ways to streamline the process with better technology, so that the waiting times are not too long. There needs to be a process to make inquiries to check where the process is and how it can be expedited.

19. What would you do to address “the silos that operate in isolation at City Hall” – meaning many of the departments don’t communicate what is happening. What would you do to address this huge issue?

We need to improve communication at city hall so that the toxic environment that caused the collapse of Surrey First is mitigated. What happened there is indicative of how bad the problem is throughout the whole system. We have seen innovation summits organized by the city. What we need is communication summits at city hall, where there will be more information shared of what is happening at city hall and also what is happening with different public agencies that serve the public in Surrey.

20. How should requests for decreased amenity space in City Centre developments be accommodated?

New developments bring with it more demand for amenities and services to serve the public. Amenity spaces should be encouraged in new development and priority should be given to such developments. We should look at codifying what amenity spaces may be required with certain types of developments and they should be required with as part of development proposals.

21. How would you bring transparency into Surrey City Hall?

The lack of transparency and accountability is one of the main reasons why I am running for Mayor. I have attended public hearing where not enough information is given to the public about many processes. When public show concern and ask questions, they are ignored. City hall has been negotiating with Kinder Morgan about the proposed route of the expanded pipeline through Surrey Bend and under the Fraser River. This is highly ecologically a sensitive area. An oil spill there would be devastating. Yet, city hall did not consult the public, nor did they think it was important to inform the public about the great public risk they are putting us in. The public has a right to know. We need to review all by-laws and make sure that there are processes in place to that will demand transparency and accountability similar to the new process of transparency and accountability in the new election financing process.