

Downtown Surrey BIA
Questions for Council Candidates 2018

1. What makes you think you are qualified to run as councillor?

As a city planner with experience in government and the private sector, I understand best practices in community engagement and how to build a more sustainable, affordable, and vibrant community. It is rare for a planner to run for elected office, yet most of what a Council will review are development applications and high-level policies for growth. I believe my skills will prove to be quite valuable at the Council table. In addition, as I was born and raised in Surrey, my experience dealing with the challenges of rapid urban growth have shaped who I am and my understanding of the issues we need to fix.

2. What skills do you bring to Council if you are elected?

Best practices in community engagement: As a planner, I understand that our primary goal when developing the city is to understand, through rich and ongoing engagement, how to realize the vision and goals of the community at-large. I also have a background in collaboration, negotiation and facilitation, important skills when navigating tough issues.

3. In your opinion, what do you think is the most positive thing that has happened in Surrey recently that makes you proud to live in here?

The 135A St housing initiative. As the strip grew over the years, it didn't seem like there could be any improvement. Yet, with the investment of the province, and the dedication of multiple agencies in Surrey working together collaboratively, the rapid construction of the temporary units, as well as the relocation of residents into the units, was so well done that there was almost no media coverage. This is a huge success that we should all be proud of. As I work in the vicinity of the shelters, I have not experienced any issues and am happy to see that our community could come together to help house the most vulnerable.

4. Are you committed to a strong City Centre and the creation of a vibrant Downtown core? What is your strategy and commitment to business - arts – culture – technology and community in Downtown Surrey?

Absolutely. Developing our core is essential to the identity and success of Surrey. We have some great assets to build off of: SFU and KPU, the Civic Plaza, Holland Park, Innovation Boulevard, and an engaged business community. Continued expansion of our post-secondary institutions, and relocation of other agencies, will help propel our economy forward for decades to come. A stronger focus on attracting offices to locate in Downtown Surrey will also help build a strong economic anchor to our core, rather than the other regional town centres which are primarily centred on residential or shopping. The Surrey First commitment to building a performing arts centre in the core will also help advance our arts and culture sector, as well as create more nighttime vibrancy, supporting restaurants in the area.

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5. 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?

I support any efforts to ensure we have a full continuum of professionally-managed housing to address the growing homelessness in Surrey.

6. What do you see as the top five issues facing Surrey?
1. Crime and Public Safety
 2. Sustainable Development
 3. Rapid Transit
 4. Community infrastructure and amenities
 5. Community engagement
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?

Surrey First is committed to investing in our children and youth to help prevent going down a negative path. That's why we have committed to free access to all recreation centres, pools and rinks for all kids under 18. We are also committed to working more closely with our partner agencies to align the various anti-gang programs available to at-risk youth to ensure the referral and support process is as effective as possible. We also need to work more closely with our schools and the Ministry to flag at-risk behaviour at a young age to intervene and provide wrap around services when they are most effective. I also strongly support the City taking a leadership role, in partnership with the provincial government, to build much needed child care spaces in Surrey, as we know that investment in early childhood pays dividends down the road.

8. Do you support child care space in private developments?

Yes. We need to use every tool available to support construction of much needed child care spaces in the City.

9. How should requests for decreased amenity space in new residential or mixed-use developments (both indoor and outdoor) be addressed by the City?

Multi-family living often trades private space for public spaces. The challenge in Downtown Surrey is we don't yet have all of our public spaces built out to support the growing population. If developers are requesting major reductions in amenity space, we need to ensure that either the cash-in-lieu

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process is tied to inflationary pressures that the City will face over the coming years to build public facilities, or it must be made quite clear to developers that these reductions will not be approved. I have larger concerns with the minuscule size of some of the condos that have been approved in City Centre, which will ultimately force residents to also rely more heavily on public spaces.

10. 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?

While I agree with BC Housing's mandate to provide housing in all areas of the City, it is important to balance that with the realities of limited infrastructure and services, as well as the importance of helping maintain or preserve the sense of community folks have built over the years. BC Housing needs to work with the City to initiate a new engagement process that speaks to the entire community about the need for housing, addresses any concerns, and collaboratively decides where the best locations across the City are for the permanent facilities.

11. How would you make Council decisions more transparent?

I don't have any concerns about transparency for Council decisions per say, but rather exploring opportunities to have richer community engagement on issues before they come to Council, whether that's major developments or City-led infrastructure projects. I support the establishment of an Office for Community Engagement, where qualified staff can help support various departments and initiatives to ensure that the community is fully involved in the development of projects in advance of their review by Council. This will help build greater community capacity and involvement in decision making, as well as reduce the opportunity for controversy or conflict at Council.

12. What do you think is the priority for public transit South of the Fraser? What do you support?

I have been an outspoken advocate for better transit South of the Fraser for a decade. 10 years ago, neither the province, nor TransLink, nor Council either believed or were pushing for better transit in our area. We know that the only way we can continue to grow so rapidly is to provide convenient and comfortable alternatives to the car. I am a proponent of light rail for Surrey, a proven system in over 400 cities across the world, as we will be able to build an entire network to connect all our communities to high quality rail transit.