

**Downtown Surrey BIA
Questions for Mayoral Candidates 2018 - TOM GILL, SURREY FIRST**

1. Why are you running for Mayor?

It is time to build a 21st century city and for me to give back to a city that has given so much to me. As a Certified Professional Accountant (CPA) and serving on Surrey City Council since 2005 I have been guided by fundamental belief that his job is to give a voice to all constituent and work toward responsible growth in the creation of a fiscally sound and socially progressive city.

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

There is so much to be proud of in Surrey. And there is so much work still to do. I imagine a Surrey that is safe for everyone, where our city is known to be strong and inviting. I imagine a Surrey that is rich with opportunity and vibrant with culture. My vision is to engage the youth and families of Surrey so that, together, we shape the future of our city.

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?

It's always important to create an environment where taxes are kept low but we also need to ensure that services are not compromised. We need to continue to remain competitive and ensure that our residents directly benefit from low taxes and this is why we need to continue to invest in our youth and our families.

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?

With my 24 years of experience working with one of the leading non-profit associations in the province, I know and understand the importance of supporting our at risk and vulnerable population.

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

We need to ensure that affordable housing is available in every part of our city and accessible to all and not just concentrated in one geographical area. We will be announcing our full housing platform in the next few weeks which will take historic steps to ensure affordable housing not just now but into the future.

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?

As a founding member of Surrey Homelessness and Housing Society, I have been an advocate for social housing for over 25 years and I endorse the City's housing strategy.

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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?

In order to keep Surrey safe, Surrey First has a comprehensive strategy to fight crime today and build an engaged community where everyone is safe. Surrey First is committed to working across sectors and all levels of government to implement a results-focused public safety strategy. We are committing \$50 million over 5 years with a bulk of that funding ear-marked for prevention because we need to get to the root of these issues.

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?

We will be initiating a core review of all city departments to assess their resources and capabilities at which time I am willing to make investments to ensure that we are able to meet our commitments to the public.

9. How would you describe your leadership style?

Collaborative and consensus building. I believe it is important to listen to differing opinions before making any major decisions.

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 believe that for a city that is still building, it is important to have at large representation because ward-systems sometimes create division and put one area of the city against the other. I do think that we need to increase voter turnout by engaging with our youth and continually communicating with our residents and build civic pride

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 need to expand our post secondary infrastructure and attract investment in the tech sector and the smart economy. This will allow us to attract talent from across the world and allow us to complete globally.

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?

This is a sector where we need to continue to support and engage. We need to look at incentives to bring innovative companies to Surrey and identify how we can further collaborate with universities and colleges in Surrey. Build on the success of Innovation Boulevard.

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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?

We need to have a long term vision when it comes to rapid transit and encouraging transit use. Surrey First is committed to connecting Surrey's communities. The Light Rail Transit (LRT) expansion is the single greatest transit investment in our city's history. Surrey First is committed to the construction and further expansion of Surrey's LRT network to ensure that our residents have their mobility needs met.

Surrey First is also committed to working with our neighbors in Langley and residents along the Fraser Highway corridor to determine what technology best suits the needs of today and tomorrow and advocate for that.

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

We need to work and have better coordination with our partners in the provincial government to address this important issue.

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?

For the City to maintain a world class feel, we need to ensure we have an animated downtown core. Arts are the fabric of our society and we need to make sure we build a vibrant city that represents the 102 languages spoken in this city.

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?

Surrey is a growing and vibrant city. The city needs policing that adapts and reacts to the needs of our communities. The Surrey First team recognizes this as a priority when working to address this issue.

We need to have a serious, community-wide discussion about how we police ourselves as a city. It's time to ask if we've outgrown the RCMP after 60 years, and should we have our own police force and what those costs and transition time will be? This is why I commit to holding a referendum which allow us to study this topic in depth as community.

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

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We led by example by putting designated child care space at City Hall. We need to encourage major developments in our city to support the needs of the community by expanding child care spaces.

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

Within 12 months of taking office we need to have clarity and expectations for a clear and efficient process to get projects built with a focus on customer service and this means - reducing building permit times to 10 weeks and tenant improvement times to 4 weeks.

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?

To change the focus of City Hall to enhance and boost customer satisfaction we need to ensure that residents and stakeholders have 1 central contact at city hall that can work across all departments to ensure that services are being delivered. The mayor’s office needs to play a leadership role in making sure all departments have increased communication.

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

There should be minimum threshold for amenity space in indoor and outdoor City Centre developments subject to the size of the development. We also need to take into account the proximity of the development to civic amenities and look at opportunities to maximize cash in lieu and use that to leverage additional capacity.

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

We as a city really need to take a deep look at how we communicate with our residents, we need to proactively engage with our community and keep them up to date with what is going on at city hall.