

Upkar Tatlay
Council Candidate

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

As Executive Director, I have developed non-profit programs that have successfully engaged and mentored youth leaders in a high-conflict gang zone. Our programs consistently show a 100% success rate over the past 7 years – no single youth that went through the program has had involvement in crime. I have seen turbulent community conditions and mobilized on ideas to meet the community's needs to engage youth and increase public safety. I work as a Managing Director, supporting and producing innovative clean tech initiatives and plan to utilize that lens to planning for the future of an innovative city like Surrey. I have utilized my university education at both UVic and post-baccalaureate studies at UBC and have also worked as a firefighter, working to serve the community and meet its needs.

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

I am a mobilizer. As a highly community driven man, I have a genuine interest in fueling initiatives that will provide benefit for all. I take solid initiatives and mobilize on them, producing tangible and supportive programming with real impact for families. I listen to the voices of our community and engage highly with our citizens. I also bring my ideas, my university education, my ability to lead and develop solid programs, and my constant orientation to service and community benefit.

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?

In my estimation, the most positive thing to date in our City has been the support the people of our City have shown to ban handguns and engage our youth in positive activities by providing free access to rec centres. The strong voices of our citizens around these coming initiatives have been resoundingly clear and this support is a very positive occurrence in and of itself. Further to this, the support the City and the people of Surrey have provided in reaching out to the citizens of our City who are homeless and struggling with addictions has been humbling – the City has partnered with our citizens in need and transitioned them into more supportive housing situations and programs. This is a positive step in a City that clearly cares for the welfare of its citizens.

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?

I am strongly committed to building a vibrant and lively City Centre. Our plans to bring innovation to Surrey speak to our commitment to this, as does the support for the Light Rail Transit system. It is my intention to bolster the programming in our City – we have a deep and diverse pool of talent right here in our City that needs only to be tapped to flourish here. It is incumbent upon us to actively foster and facilitate growth in business, in the arts, in innovation, in culture, and in the building of a solid and vibrant Downtown core, befitting a City of this size and stature. I believe our citizens can enjoy living and working here, and be proud to call Surrey home – their diverse, vibrant, lively, and innovative home.

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 am in alignment with this proposed initiative as it contributes to forward movement in creating the bustling downtown core and provides support to our citizens where they live and when they need it most. I support furthering this initiative wherever possible, and providing a sense that we are a community who takes care of all of our citizens. This would also contribute significantly to the building of a vibrant City core.

6. What do you see as the top five issues facing Surrey?

- Public safety (gang violence and involvement with crime)
- Engagement of our youth
- Supporting families (through meaningful measures that produce real impact for families)
- Transportation and Infrastructure – building accessible infrastructure for the citizens of our City
- Innovative solutions – speaking to the needs of our City with its population growth contributing to congestion, parking issues, and demand for schools, medical care, etc., the intentional development of a vibrant downtown core, and the infusion of clean technologies in Surrey as a city of the future.

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?

- To action the ban on handguns in Surrey
- to initiate and mobilize on prevention methods that are concrete and tangible, that produce real results
- to significantly engage the youth of our City through a strong approach in our programming, providing free access to all youth under 18 to access recreational facilities, which provide them with safe and supportive environments, develop their skills, contribute to their natural development, and foster active involvements in positive activities in the way they use their time.
- To provide supports and programming to support families as we build their capacity to prevent criminal involvement in youth and support them in reducing the vulnerability of youth to this.

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

Yes, the more child care spaces we are able to foster the development and regulation of in our City, the better we can serve the needs of the young families that form the fabric of our community. I support the exploration of innovative solutions including in private developments, with process measures in place to regulate and provide oversight to ensure standards of care are in place. There is a need for the City to make tangible plans to increase child care space and all innovative solutions including space in private developments need to be explored and considered.

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

I believe the requests should be given due consideration as brought forward by the citizens of our City, but recognize the need for the City to ensure there is adequate amenity space for the use of the residents. The City can develop measures to ensure that this is examined with due diligence before determining the appropriate process measures are in place to ensure the needs of our citizens are provided for.

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?

Yes, I am in support of the City's housing strategy to transition people from temporary modular housing into supportive housing. To me, it makes perfect sense and is our profound responsibility to ensure that the needs of our citizens from all walks of life are accounted for. As we help people move into temporary housing and provide them with supports, we will work on skill development to help people sustain independence in other supportive housing settings. This will help us serve the people of our City, providing them the help and support they need, in the City they call home. People helping people - a City being there for its citizens and reaching out to lend a hand when it is needed.

11. How would you make Council decisions more transparent?

While the public has access to all Council decisions and Council is accessible, I would propose that Council actively engage with the public and have it intentionally be publicly and widely known that we are available to hear from our citizens. I would promote the provision of agendas to upcoming meetings in a timely manner that makes sense for families to plan around and be able to prepare to attend. I would advocate for our processes to be very clear located and understood by the public as well.

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

I support the building of solid infrastructure within and for our City to significantly increase accessibility to various parts of the City for our citizens and contribute to the building of a vibrant downtown core. I am in support of Light Rail Transit as it will serve the various centres within our City and speak to the ability of our growing population to be able to live, work, and play right here in our City much more easily. The people of our City will be able to move much more easily throughout our City and this will further build existing communities within our City so that they may grow to serve our growing population. Building the right infrastructure within our City to help people move through our City with much more ease is a priority given the demands on our infrastructure from our population growth.