

Downtown Surrey BIA
Questions for Council Candidates 2018

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

I have many years of experience working in community, and as an incumbent Councillor, feel as though I have had a positive impact in our City and have supported deep policy work that will ensure positive change well into the future.

I have a degree in Business and Liberal Studies from SFU which has given me a solid basis for my work with the City, in particular on the Finance Committee. As a City we have over \$1B in property tax and other income that needs to be managed prudently for our citizens. Keeping taxes low while providing world class services has been a focus for me.

Housing affordability is one of the most pressing issues facing our residents. Over the past four years I have focussed on market supply through the negotiation of purpose built rental in market developments, increasing the number of non-market units, i.e. social and low income housing, and protecting current supply. I was proud to be part of a council that passed the most stringent Manufactured Home Bylaw in the Province, and an Affordable Housing Strategy that protects current purpose built affordable housing, and ensures that the City of Surrey is able to purchase land for future residents through a housing levy.

I have co-chaired the annual Social Innovation Summit which has grown over the years and has been sold out over the past two. Bringing together business, community and academia to solve complex social problems, and putting Surrey on the map as a leader in social innovation. I have the honour of being one of the top 10 municipal innovators.

And finally, the City of Surrey has the largest and youngest Urban Indigenous population in BC. My work with the Surrey Urban Indigenous Committee has resulted in Provincial and National attention.

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

I am a collaborative and thoughtful councillor. I can work across partisan lines to achieve objectives meaningful to the citizens of Surrey.

I am someone who can work through complex issues and move important projects forward. Citizens can count on me to work hard, read and understand the incredible volume of documentation required, understand all the issues and concerns raised on applications, and to make informed decisions.

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 recent movement of over 220 homeless and vulnerable people from the tent city on 135A street is an incredible example of how business, government and our non-profits can come together to achieve something that has not been done in any other city. Surrey has a long history of doing things differently, and I'm incredibly proud that this movement of people from tents and into homes was completed in a kind and compassionate way.

While much of the focus of this move has been on the vulnerable living in tents, we also knew that supporting the small businesses that were at the epicentre also had to be part of a solution that would be successful over the long term. I know that there is more work to do, but I was proud of our staff, their collaborators, and the local business community for making it happen.

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- 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 fully committed to a vibrant downtown core as I have been able to see the beautiful transformation and progression as new businesses and residences have enlivened our city centre. I have always been an advocate for the arts and will work hard to ensure that the capital art projects such as the move of the Arts Centre to downtown, along with the development of a major performing arts centre, spectator arena and other amenities that fit with the kind of sophisticated, urban, downtown core that we aspire to have.

I continue to be supportive of applications that bring density to the downtown core so that our local businesses do well, that there is a sense of a thriving and bustling urban centre.

- 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?**

As a council we have been incredibly frustrated that the new shelter has not moved forward more quickly. As a councillor I have ensured that the new shelter remains on the agenda, and have pushed to move it forward. In addition we have already rezoned the land that the shelter would be built on.

I have also been working with Elizabeth Fry Society on their expansion of shelter beds for women and children. This project is moving forward and will soon break ground.

I am fully supportive of distributing our formerly homeless residents to all town centres throughout our city. It is critical that the next phase of permanent modular housing move forward quickly.

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

1. Public Safety
2. Families
3. Housing affordability
4. Congestion
5. Civic Pride

- 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 has committed \$50 Million to a comprehensive strategy to deal with crime that focusses on prevention and intervention. We are ensuring that we support our youth with significant investments in after school activities by offering free recreation, enhancing programs that inoculate against gang involvement, supporting parents and grandparents as they raise their children. As well, our citizens tell us that they want a handgun ban in cities. We feel it is critical to work with higher levels of government to make that happen. Finally, we will also add 120 more police officers and the support staff required.

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

Yes. A recent study of childcare in Surrey identified a significant shortage of licensed childcare space. In fact the Vancouver Sun identified Surrey as being a “childcare desert.” I will support daycare space in private developments, but also provide support for the increase in non-profit service providers who have been shown to support the entire family. As well, I will advocate for

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the addition of student spaces for the Early Childhood Educators programs to be delivered here in Surrey as we are facing a shortage of qualified service providers.

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

Amenity space is an important component of any development. If a developer is asking for a reduction in amenity space it would be important to understand the rationale. For example, I live in a small townhouse development where the amenity space only gets used once a year for the AGM. However, in some of the high rises, where there are micro-units, amenity spaces are very important for socializing, for studying or for holding important community meetings. Each development is different. While I think it is important that staff have the ability to negotiate amenity contributions, we also need to have a level playing field, so perhaps have different amenity contribution rates for small and large developments.

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?

I absolutely support the strategy of moving people into more permanent housing throughout the city. Homeless people come from all across the city, and should have an opportunity to move back to their neighbourhood of choice.

Whalley has borne the full weight of the homeless crises so we need to ensure that more is done to distribute housing throughout the city.

11. How would you make Council decisions more transparent?

One of the most important things I have learned as a new councillor is that City Government is very complicated, and development applications, bylaws, and corporate reports can sometimes seem less than transparent. Given this, I believe that it is critical that we find ways to ensure that our community understands the decisions that are being made, and the processes used to come to decisions. We are bound by the Local Government Act which lays out how and when community is to be consulted. As technology changes we need to find better ways to ensure our citizens have the information they need in order to both understand the decisions, and the processes.

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

I support LRT. Over the years staff has provided extensive briefing notes, business plans and other technical reports that have led to a unanimous decision by Surrey City Council to endorse rapid rail.