

Downtown Surrey BIA
Questions for Council Candidates 2022

1. Describe the skills and experience that you will bring to Council if you are elected?

I have been a Real Estate agent, with experience in Strata Management and banking, since 2003. I bring an understanding of real estate, housing and development and the ability to negotiate with people who have differing views.

My husband and I have five children, one with very severe special needs. Not only have I navigated the “usual” parental commitments of managing various sports team, being a PAC secretary, fundraiser, etc, I have also advocated for many, many years for the inclusion of special needs children in the school system. We were instrumental in creating a Support Worker program, for children with Autism, in our Surrey School District and am now an advocate for supported housing for adults with disabilities.

2. Are you committed to a strong City Centre and the creation of a vibrant Downtown core?

Absolutely! I was just at the opening of the new “King George Hub” in downtown Surrey and am excited to see this vibrant city centre.

a. Do you support an entertainment district in Downtown Surrey?

YES! With Simon Fraser University expanding and the addition of a new UBC campus, I think it is vital to create an exciting entertainment district. We don’t want our youth feeling that they have to head into Vancouver to visit restaurants, nightclubs or concerts. We need people to “play” where they live.

b. What is your plan to attract investment - arts – culture – technology and community to Downtown Surrey?

Our family have always been huge supporters of the arts. I was a fundraiser with the Semiahmoo Music society for over eight years. It’s my belief that art, entertainment, and music are essential so it is important for cities to have venues for them.

Sky Train is a great addition to the City Centre and all things can flow from improved, reliable transportation to these art venues. I also believe encouraging more Post Secondary institutions to locate in Surrey, and creating affordable housing will add the youth, the artists, the entertainers and the workforce.

3. Councillors not only have to solve problems but also act as ambassadors for the City. In your opinion, what are the five top reasons people should live or work in Surrey?

First; Our diversity. Surrey is one of the largest cities in B.C., in size, and is home to many different cultures. It is said that over 100 different languages are spoken here.

Secondly; Surrey is still affordable and we will continue to become more affordable as we accommodate our amazing growth by continuing to densify and build along transit lines.

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Third; Education opportunities. Post-secondary institutions are either expanding, as in the case of Simon Fraser University, or moving to Surrey, as in UBC. We already have Kwantlen University and, perhaps, even BCIT in the future. Educated students contribute to the fourth attraction...

Fourth; employment opportunities. Small businesses are already moving to Surrey but large businesses are also beginning to relocate here, to take advantage of the educated workforce.

Finally; Surrey is beautiful and exciting. We are the city of trees and parks where residents are encourage - with walking tracks, swimming pools, ice arenas, pickle ball courts and recreation centres - to get out, meet other people, and enjoy their city!

4. We know there is always a debate between perception and reality. Everyone wants a safe place to live and do business.

a. What is your strategy to deal with the root causes of crime?

Crime is often the result of poverty and poverty often leads to homelessness. It's a vicious multifaceted, cycle of tragedy with no ONE solution. At the forefront of this tragedy is drug addiction and the opioid crisis. Surrey has one over-burdened detox centre and I am committed to doing what I can to improve this. We need more detox and rehabilitation facilities.

Surrey has built a complex care facility called Foxglove. It is designed to give people, struggling with multiple challenges, such as mental health issues and addiction, access to "wrap-around" care. It is the first of it's kind in B.C. and I would fully support a second such facility. We also have several new modular housing complexes, complete with small kitchens and clean living spaces, built to support the homeless, throughout Surrey. We need more because with a home comes dignity.

Finally, along with the Federal and Provincial Governments, I fully support the transition to a Municipal Community Police Force. I believe we can begin to discourage crime at the source by creating a relationship with the public and members who are part of a community - not a force who are governed by a bureaucracy far off in Ottawa.

a. Do you support the recent call by BIABC (speaking on behalf of 70 BIAs within BC) to make a commitment to support core funding that will mitigate main street issues through increased policing resources, street lighting, sanitation, and anti-graffiti programs, as well as stronger bylaw enforcement?

I completely support all BIA'S. Our local Downtown Surrey BIA does amazing work promoting our local businesses and keeping our downtown clean and safe. Safe, clean, garbage and graffiti clear areas promote economic development.

5. Now that the Skytrain to Langley is underway, what do you think is the next priority for public transit South of the Fraser?

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Sky train to Clayton Heights is finally underway, after both the Provincial and Federal Governments said it wouldn't happen. Our Safe Surrey Coalition has committed to beginning the next stage of Sky Train from City Centre to Newton - and not a moment too soon - as that is the busiest stretch of road in all of Metro. It is essential to get people out of their cars and moving quickly, not just for the environmental implications, but to make Surrey more "livable". No one wants to sit for hours in traffic. While we wait for Sky Train we do have Rapid buses, leaving every few minutes, to move our riders - but its not enough. We definitely need more transit. The second part of this issue, after improving public transit, is to also improve the existing roads. Traffic congestion leads to stress and less time spent with family.

6. Seniors, students, single parent families, one income families and people who are homeless are all looking for housing that is affordable. In June of this year, the CMHC issued a report that stated that the last time housing was affordable in Canada was in 2003. If elected to Council, what initiatives would you support to deal with the housing affordability crisis and to insure a variety of housing types in Surrey to meet their needs?

I recognize that the only way to keep housing affordable is to meet the demand and increase the supply of homes. It is said that over 1200 people per month are moving to Surrey and this number will only increase when Immigration is completely opened up again. These are Families - they will need a variety of homes, including townhouses and condominiums. We alleviate some pressure by increasing density, especially along transit routes.

I would love to see - would encourage and support - partnerships that create more subsidized housing, supported housing, and below market rentals. Housing the vulnerable has always been an important issue for me. My special needs son now lives in a supported care home, very close to me. It took years of collaboration with all levels of Government to secure his housing.