

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 an executive director for over 27 years with the Downtown Chilliwack BIA and the majority of my time with the Cloverdale BIA. As a marketer, my company did the first advertising campaign for the Downtown Vancouver BIA in 1991. I have worked on several official community plan updates for the City of Chilliwack and Surrey. I also have extensive experience on working on numerous committees with the City of Surrey.

I am a founding director of the Surrey Tourism Assoc. (Discover Surrey), Founding Director & past president of the Surrey Heritage Society dba the BC Vintage Truck Museum, current director of the Cloverdale Chamber and Surrey Assoc. for Community Living.

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

It is absolutely essential that the City Centre (downtown) be seen as the life-blood of the community. It needs to be full of activity and life every day.

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

Yes, an entertainment district will keep residents and visitors entertained locally. There is a need to turn some parks into plazas along with a major pedestrian plaza in the heart of the city centre. This is where you can locate outdoor open markets, amphitheatres, public art, night lighting, multiple stages, small venue plazas. We need to add performing arts, modern art museum, convention space and possibly a casino.

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

The City needs to rebrand, focusing on a higher quality of life for the City ie The Best vs the Biggest. The City of Surrey is enormous and needs an injection of vibrancy especially when it comes to adding cultural development to the city centre core. For the City of Surrey to be successful there needs to be a critical mass of like businesses that needed to be recruited. For example: Restaurants, Destination Retail, Entertainment facilities that are also open after 6pm.

3. Councilors 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?

1. Livability. Public safety, accessibility along with a strong social safety net.

Generally, this is a very safe city to live in but does needed more health care services.

2. Affordability. The City will need to accommodate a variety of different housing types that will be built in the different town and city centres.

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3. Opportunity. Since the City of Surrey has a large amount of land to continue to increase and diversify. It will need a nimble and responsive City Hall that process greater volumes of building permits/applications. We need a comprehensive growth strategy for the City in light of the new Metro Vancouver growth strategy.

4. Natural Beauty. This City is beautiful and is great for raising children and taking your dog for a walk. We need to add more landscaping and greenery. We need to move away from deforestation to replacing plants after the original ones are removed. It would be nice to have a linear park along King George that accommodates multi modal transportation and a Bus Rapid Transit lane.

5. Diversity. The City is blessed to be home to over 100 different nationalities. The City should be more supportive to these groups with special event funds to hold festivals.

6. 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?

We need a more modern police force which has increased supports to deal with mental health and substance abuse issues. Education at an early age is very important along with a large supply of housing stock available for a range of people that need assistance.

b. 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?

As a BIA representative, I couldn't agree more with the BIABC on this matter. We have seen a pronounced uptick in nuisance behaviour & mental health issues that are very dangerous. Our police force is in transition and we require more police officers to keep up with our population.

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

There is a new for a Rapid Bus Network for the major arteries including Newton. There is an even greater need to increase bus frequencies throughout the City. In the Cloverdale Town Centre the bus comes through the town twice an hour.

8. 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.

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This would be one of Surrey First's top priorities to increase housing stock right across the board. There is a need to add not for profits building supportive housing where they do not have to pay any Development Cost Charges.

- a. 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?

We propose to resurrect the Surrey Development Corporation with a division that would hold real estate assets (Land Trust)

In order to address the housing crisis, new self-sustaining funding models for affordable housing are emerging. We would like to consider a Land Trust like the Vancouver Community Land Trust Foundation, an arm's length organization of the Co-operative Housing Federation of BC.

"The Foundation is working on a cross-subsidy rental model, which relies on a portfolio model approach. Rents at one of the three sites will be set at market-rate levels. The net income cash flow from that site will subsidize the other two, which can then be rented at affordable levels".