

BC ACORN

Surrey Municipal Platform
and Questionnaire

RESPONSES

acorncanada.org



MAYOR

Inclusionary zoning by-laws are a way for municipalities to use their development regulation and approval process to have private developers provide some affordable in all (or nearly all) market projects. It increases the amount of affordable housing stock.

Will you support mandatory inclusionary zoning by laws?

LINDA HEPNER (SURREY FIRST)

“Surrey First is committed to building a community where all residents can afford a quality home. That is why Surrey First created the Plan for the Social Well-being of Surrey residents (Social Plan, <http://www.surrey.ca/community/3194.aspx>) that includes a Housing Action Plan (<http://www.surrey.ca/files/HAPBackgroundInformationRevisedJan2010.pdf>).

To ensure a continuum of affordable housing, Surrey First has built 447 social housing units and is committed to another 450 units by 2017. We are also a community that suits the inclusionary housing approach, given our seven years of record construction, \$11 billion of private sector investment and being named the best place to invest in BC by the BC Real Estate Investment Network.

We will strengthen affordable housing in Surrey by having developers contribute a surety either through contributions through development cost charges or through inclusionary bylaws. In partnership with the Surrey City Development Corporation, Surrey First will also establish an Affordable Housing Land Trust, ensure our zoning protects existing housing and rental stock and host a Social Innovation Summit in 2015 that will bring together leading thinkers to examine ways in which market mechanisms can be used to support social causes, and this would be an ideal venue to explore approaches such as inclusionary bylaws.”

MAYOR

Will you support mandatory inclusionary zoning by laws?

DOUG MCCALLUM (SAFE SURREY)

“Inclusionary zoning by-laws are an effective tool for municipal governments to use when considering development proposals. It is clear that Surrey has an affordability problem like all municipalities in Metro Vancouver. This has resulted in thousands of illegal secondary suites that have created public safety and resourcing problems in many neighbourhoods.

These suites are the stop gap solution that the current Mayor and Council have embraced and allowed to happen under their watch. While the City of Surrey allows for one legal secondary suite per house, it is estimated that there are over 20,000 illegal suites that have been ignored over the past 9 years.

This "strategy" is not the answer to solving affordability or creating greater housing stock.

I am absolutely interested in inclusionary zoning and moving forward with growth in a responsible fashion. This means examining mixed use development, adequate amenities for new residents moving into neighbourhoods, and looking at tools to encourage developers to include affordable housing options into their proposals.

Each development must be considered individually on its own merits, as there is no one-size-fits-all solution to creating affordability. As an example, affordable housing components of any development must have easy access to public transit. Thus, if a development proposal is looking to receive benefits by building affordable housing in an inaccessible area of Surrey, it makes no sense to proceed.

Enabling smart growth at the municipal level must be grounded in balance and careful consideration, and this is exactly the approach I will take as Mayor.”

BARINDER RASODE (ONE SURREY)

“We need more rental apartments and rent to own options. Also, more affordable housing for youth.”

MAYOR

The single biggest problem related to housing identified by low income families who rent in Surrey is the problem with the state of disrepair in apartment buildings. The problems are severe and include; pest infestations; elevators not working for long periods of time; problems with proper heating; mold; safety issues related to doors not locked properly; and basic repairs in apartments that tenants are entitled to but not receiving.

In short, enforcement mechanisms at the municipal level need to be improved. There should be a more severe consequence to landlords and set timelines in which landlords need to repairs for their tenants.

Will you support stronger enforcement protocols for the Standards of Maintenance By-Law and establish real consequences for landlords and set timelines for repairs?

LINDA HEPNER (SURREY FIRST)

“Improving enforcement and city services is an ongoing process and Surrey First will continue to work to ensure it well thought-out bylaws that are effectively and efficiently enforced. Working with the community, we will identify areas of improvement including in quality of housing codes.

Surrey First will continue working to examine the right balance between penalties for lack of timely enforcement as well as incentives to get developers and landlords to be committed to increasing the stock of affordable housing units that are in good repair.”

DOUG MCCALLUM (SAFE SURREY)

“One of the biggest reasons for the poor state of many apartment buildings in Surrey is the complete lack of by-law officers on staff. Currently there are only 24 by-law officers in place for a city that has a 2014 population of 509,610.

I and the Safe Surrey Coalition are committed to doubling the amount of bylaw officers to 48 so that we can be more proactive. We must get ahead of slum landlords and illegal suites without proper fire and safety precautions by beefing up adherence to bylaws and toughening enforcement for those who do not.

I am very strong on ensuring that seniors, renters and young families trying to build a base in Surrey are not taken advantage of. No one should be put in danger because of unscrupulous landlords who care more about money than the laws that keep all Surrey residents safe.

Increasing the amount of by-law officers on staff, changing the way they are deployed into neighbourhoods, and most importantly, tackling problems proactively and head on, are all huge priorities for me. I will be taking immediate action on these steps as Mayor.”

INDEPENDENTS

Inclusionary zoning by-laws are a way for municipalities to use their development regulation and approval process to have private developers provide some affordable in all (or nearly all) market projects. It increases the amount of affordable housing stock.

Will you support mandatory inclusionary zoning by laws?

MARTIN ROONEY

“Yes. We must partner with developers and planners to ensure that there are multiple affordable housing options in all future developments, both in the rental and purchase markets. We also need sustainable shelters in our communities. “

TEAM SURREY (BRENDA LOCKE & STEPHEN GAMMER)

“Addressing homelessness and providing social housing that keeps up with Surrey’s growth are one of our top priorities. To accomplish this, we would allow for affordable rental housing in secondary suites for families, singles and seniors.”

SAIRA AUJLA

“Rents are getting too high and we need proper housing for low income people. I would support the use of zoning to ensure that affordable housing in Surrey was more available. “

RICK SCORSESE

“I have identified homelessness and housing as one of my top 5 priorities. If elected, I will fully support the master plan for housing the homeless. In addition, I will consult with the Surrey Homeless and housing Society, Surrey Board of trade Social Housing Policy Team, Fraser Region Aboriginal Friendship Center and the City of Surrey Social Policy Advisory Committee to make more affordable housing a reality. “

FIONA DIONNE

“I do agree that both subjects you bring up here need attention and as a single mom relying on low cost housing, I do think it is an important place to put some good effort into.”

INDEPENDENTS

The single biggest problem related to housing identified by low income families who rent in Surrey is the problem with the state of disrepair in apartment buildings. The problems are severe and include; pest infestations; elevators not working for long periods of time; problems with proper heating; mold; safety issues related to doors not locked properly; and basic repairs in apartments that tenants are entitled to but not receiving.

In short, enforcement mechanisms at the municipal level need to be improved. There should be a more severe consequence to landlords and set timelines in which landlords need to repairs for their tenants.

Will you support stronger enforcement protocols for the Standards of Maintenance By-Law and establish real consequences for landlords and set timelines for repairs?

MARTIN ROONEY

“I have no problem exploring and advocating for a stronger enforcement protocol for the Standards of Maintenance By-Law. I also support increasing the number of active By-Law officers, and giving them more power and resources.”

RICK SCORSESE

“I would consult with the City By-Law department, Landlord Associations, and tenant groups on this issue, in an effort to find the best solution possible.”

SAIRA AUJLA

“I used to be a landlord, and understand the difficulties renters face. I would support a review of this by-law and look for ways to make it stronger and more effective. “

SCHOOL BOARD

Access to reliable high-speed internet has become increasingly important for participation in many facets of life such as homework, job searching, accessing government services, and fully participating in the modern digital society. However, accessing the internet is a hardship for many Canadians.

ACORN Canada has responded to this lack of affordable access with our Digital Access to Opportunities campaign – we are asking the telecommunications companies to bridge the digital divide by providing \$10/month high speed internet to low income families and assist in providing the associated connection devices.

Last month, the Burnaby School Board voted to endorse our Digital Access to Opportunity Campaign.

If elected will you support the Digital Access to Opportunity Campaign?

KIRSTY PETERSON

“I agree that there are many families who cannot afford internet, which makes life very difficult for students. I think ACORN has a great idea in this program I am very much in support of organizations like ACORN because the low income folks need a voice so badly. I have done a lot of work with marginalized populations, mainly youth, but also justice involved and street level poverty. In employment services, at that (prior to the new Work BC model), so I know how important internet is to people. If elected, I would love to meet with ACORN about how we can advocate for the Surrey School Board to be more active advocates. I can promise that if I get elected, you will have a strong and dedicated voice for the low-income of our community. “

DAVID MATTA

“No, it is not the role of a school board to be involved in such matters.”

SARA SHARMA

“Yes, I would support that campaign. It is important for low income families and students to have affordable access in their homes.”

JULIE TAPLEY

“The Digital Access to Opportunities campaign is an issue that, if elected, I would like to advocate to my colleagues to consider supporting.”

SCHOOL BOARD

If elected will you support the Digital Access to Opportunity Campaign?

NICOLE JOLIET

“As a socialist, I think we should go further than merely asking telecommunications companies to grant us affordable access from on high. I believe telecommunications infrastructure should be nationalized (as it is in Saskatchewan with SaskTel) and subsidized, with a progressive income-based billing scheme that would have low-income earners and those on social assistance or EI paying next to nothing for mobile phone and internet access; public institutions such as school districts would also have the services provided free of charge, which would free up money in their respective budgets for the restoration of services like our public school system.

I do of course support this motion as an immediate solution, but while I would vote in favour if it came up I would use my speaking time to push for a resolution supporting the nationalization of telecommunications services, in recognition that telecommunications are a need and thus a human right in today's society.”

CANDIDATES IN SUPPORT OF BC ACORN CAMPAIGNS

MAYOR

Linda Hepner

Doug McCallum

Barinder Rasode

CITY COUNCIL/MAYOR

Saira Aujla

Fiona Dionne

Martin Rooney

Rick Scorsese

SCHOOL BOARD

Nicole Joliet

Kirsty Peterson

Sara Sharma

Julie Tapley