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PLANNING CONTEXT

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PLANNING CHALLENGES

PlanSurrey 2013: The Official Community Plan is intended to guide the development of the City of Surrey over the next 30 years. As such, the Plan responds to both current conditions and to emerging trends. Together, these form the context for planning policies and for evaluating the success of these policies.

In considering current conditions and looking forward to emerging trends and projections, several major challenges have been identified and are addressed in this Official Community Plan.

CHALLENGE #1:

Accommodate Continued Population Growth

Surrey, along with the Metro Vancouver region as a whole, is an attractive place to live. Projections contained in the Metro Vancouver *Regional Growth Strategy* are for over 1 million additional residents moving into the region by the year 2040. This growth is driven by inter-provincial and international migration and stable rates of natural generational replacement. Surrey is expected to receive a substantial portion of this growth due to a relatively affordable cost of housing and a somewhat abundant land base that can accommodate urban development. It is expected that Surrey’s population will continue to increase by approximately 2% per year over the next three decades resulting in a population increase of approximately 267,475 by the year 2041, for a total population projection of 770,200 (see Table 1). This growth will need to be allocated in ways that maximize the efficient use of urban land while minimizing the impacts of change in existing neighbourhoods.

Table 1

Surrey Projected Population Growth and Dwelling Units		
<u>Year</u>	<u>Population</u>	<u>Dwelling Units</u>
2012	502,725	164,935
2017	553,475	184,385
2021	593,600	199,950
2026	639,600	219,450
2031	685,250	238,800
2036	727,750	256,800
2041	770,200	274,900

SOURCE: City of Surrey and Metro Vancouver
NOTE: Dwelling Units refer to occupied units.

CHALLENGE #2:

Match Population Growth with Business Development and Employment Opportunities

Key to supporting a sustainable community is developing a robust and diverse local economy which provides a wide range of jobs close to where people live. Over the past 50 years, as Surrey has transitioned from a rural economy to a suburban “bedroom” community, and then to a more integrated urban community, the balance of local jobs to the size of the labour force has also changed. Currently Surrey has approximately 0.70 jobs for every member of the labour force. A key planning challenge is to move this ratio closer to a balance of 1:1 which becomes more imperative in the context of strong population increases. The benefits of a better balance of local jobs to population include reduced time spent commuting, reduced traffic congestion and greenhouse gas emissions, a more resilient economy, and a diversified tax base reducing the burden of property taxes on residential properties. The goal of the OCP is to accommodate an additional 125,400 jobs over the 30-year planning horizon (see Table 2).

Table 2

Surrey Projected Employment Growth	
<u>Year</u>	<u>Jobs</u>
2012	171,200
2017	195,200
2021	214,200
2026	236,200
2031	257,950
2036	277,450
2041	296,600

SOURCE: City of Surrey and Metro Vancouver

NOTE: Dwelling Unit s refer to occupied units.

CHALLENGE #3:

Reduce Reliance on the Private Automobile

Much of Surrey’s “first wave” of urban growth occurred in the 1970s to 1990s, a period of high automobile use that influenced how communities and neighbourhoods were designed and laid out. Higher fuel prices, increased traffic congestion and an increased understanding of the need to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, as well as the connection between active transportation (walking and cycling) and healthier communities, are now all compelling reasons to reduce people’s reliance on cars for everyday transportation (see Tables 3 and 4). This shift requires decisive and long-term efforts to reorient land use patterns, increase mixed-use development, plan higher density developments in conjunction with frequent public transit, influence individual behavior and invest in cycling and walking infrastructure that allows for convenient alternatives to the automobile.

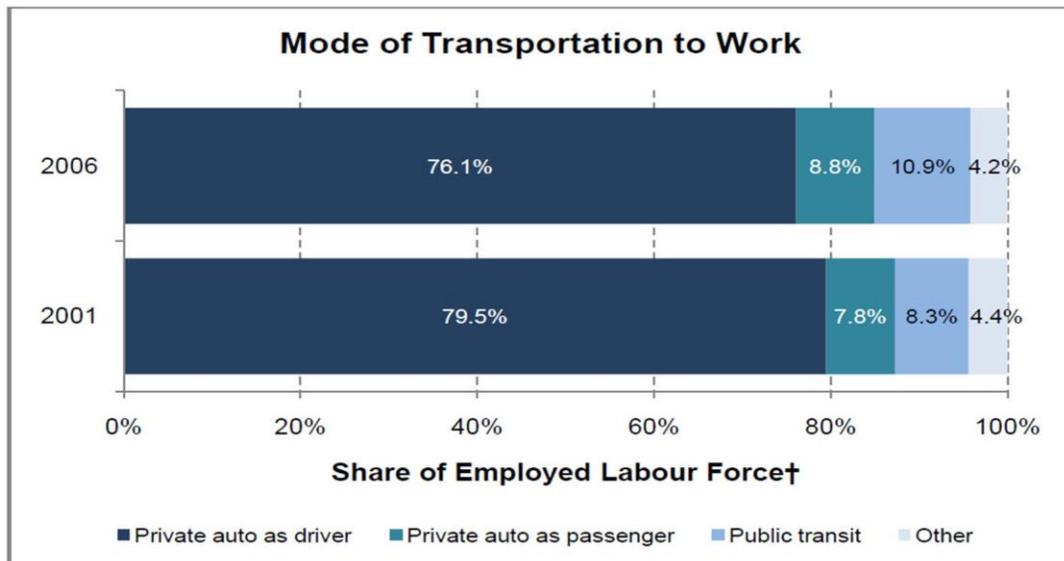
Vehicle-KM Travelled Per Capita (VKT)

Table 3

	2007*	2010*	2040**
Daily VKT	19.16	19.05	18.2
Annual VKT	6,994	6,949	6,643

* 2007, 2010 Data Source: BC Ministry of Environment CEEI Report
 ** 2040 Projection: HBLG Analysis; Based on “Business as Usual” using current plans for projections

Table 4



† Does not include those working at home or working outside Canada.
 SOURCE: Census Canada

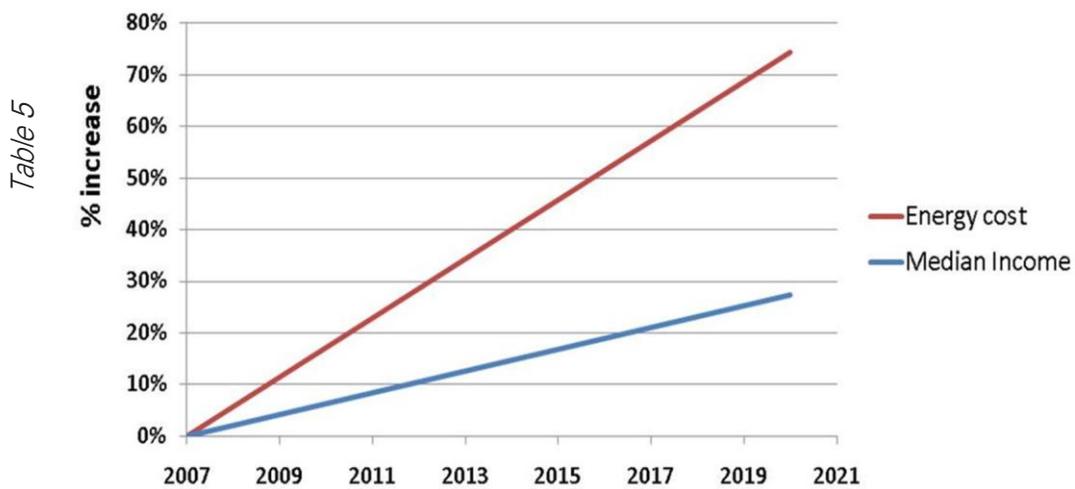
CHALLENGE #4:

Ensure a Resilient City in Response to Rising Energy Costs and A Changing Climate

While the future is uncertain, current trends point to a changing climate characterized by more intense winter precipitation events, lower snow packs in the mountain watersheds that feed the Region and the City’s water system, and longer periods of summer drought. Sea levels are forecast to rise, putting pressure on the dykes and drainage systems protecting Surrey’s floodplains which contain critical infrastructure and a majority of the City’s productive farmland. It is likely that energy costs, including fuel for transportation, as well as gas and electricity for appliances and building heating and cooling, will increase in price, taking up a larger share of household, business and institutional operating budgets (see Table 5).

The OCP addresses resilience to these likely changes by emphasizing a compact urban form which reduces the required extension of infrastructure systems, improves the financial viability of transit and clean, renewable district energy infrastructure, reduces the amount of vehicular travel per capita and avoids development in vulnerable floodplain and escarpment areas.

Projected % Increase in Energy Spending & Family Income in Surrey

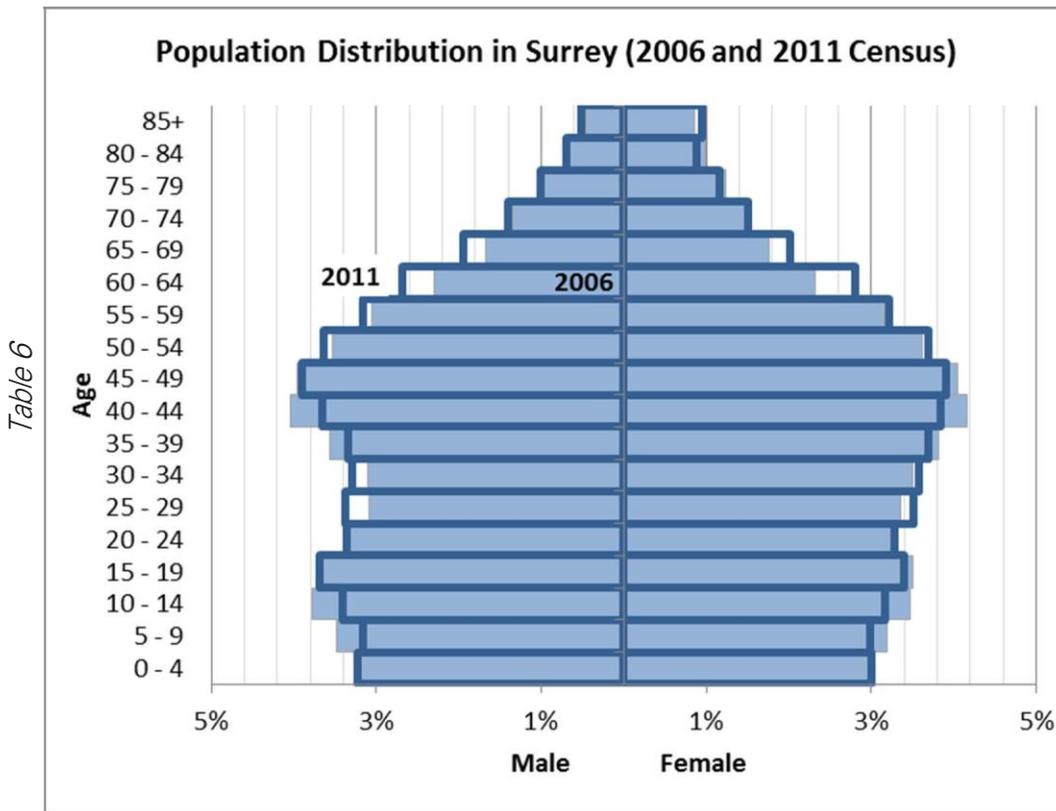


SOURCE: Census Canada

CHALLENGE #5:

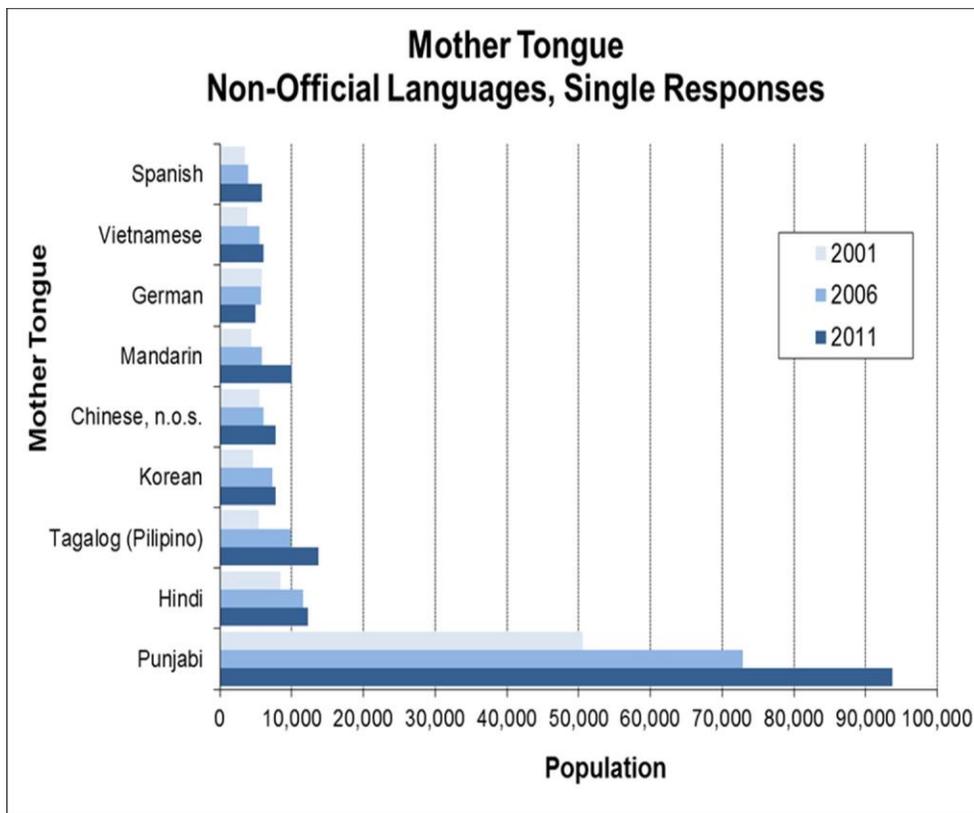
Serve the Increasingly Diverse Needs of Surrey’s Population

Surrey’s urban population is increasingly diverse (see Table 7) and includes groups of people who have unique needs. A growing population of seniors requires new forms of housing or adaptations to existing housing in order to allow them to remain in their neighbourhoods. New Canadians need access to community services in languages they understand and need support as they integrate into Canadian culture and into unfamiliar communities and institutions. As the City grows, additional services helping persons who are homeless or with mental illness or addiction issues are needed. Ensuring that Surrey’s large population of children and youth (see Tables 6) are prepared for and able to engage in learning and healthy lifestyles remains a challenge, particularly among more vulnerable populations including immigrant and refugee families and families living in poverty.



SOURCE: Census Canada

Table 7



SOURCE: Census Canada

