

A Kid's Guide to Surrey City Hall

# exploring city hall





# hi!

**I'm Amira and that's my classmate, Daniel.**

Our families live in Surrey, just like yours. Let's take a tour of Surrey City Hall together and learn more about our city and how it works.



# getting to know surrey

## How big is Surrey?

Surrey is really big. We are the largest city and municipality in Metro Vancouver.

Extending over 316 square kilometres, Surrey is almost the size of Vancouver, Burnaby and Richmond combined (which is about 335 square kilometers).

## How many people live in Surrey?

In 2024, the number of people living in Surrey was estimated at 615,000. About 10,000 people (enough people to fill a good-size town) move to Surrey every year, making it one of the fastest growing cities in Canada.

## How many parks are there in Surrey?

We have over 800 parks in Surrey for people, plants, and animals! 570+ of our parks are meant for people to play, socialize, or relax. These parks have a special feature like a playground, water park, sport court, or trail (to name a few!). 207 parks are protected for natural area only. That means people are not invited in and we protect the trees, plants, animals, and streams in these parks.

## How much park land and green space does Surrey have?

Surrey has over 2,872 hectares (7097 acres) of parkland. One acre of land is equal to the size of half a soccer field. This means Surrey has over 3,500 soccer field sizes of park land and green space.



## Our History

We would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge that Surrey is situated on the traditional, ancestral, unceded territories of the Salish Peoples, including the **se'mya'me** (Semiahmoo), **q̓'w̓a:n̓l̓əḥ̓** (Kwantlen), and **q̓içəy̓** (Katzie), land-based Nations. The City recognizes the importance of honouring the Indigenous heritage of this place.

People from around the world have chosen Surrey as the city in which they want to live. We are proud of our ethnic and cultural diversity which brings together many different traditions and languages from other countries.

- |   |  |  |
|---|--|--|
| <b>1855</b> Gold was discovered   | <b>1960</b> Port Mann Bridge opened  | <b>2005</b> Surrey citizens elected its first female Mayor   |
| <b>1860</b> Hand logging started along the Fraser River   | <b>1962</b> New Municipal Hall constructed at No. 10 Highway.                  | <b>2009</b> Surrey adopted a new corporate image with a new logo and tagline "the future lives here" |
| <b>1879</b> Surrey became a district municipality on November 10, with a population of 35                 | <b>1971</b> Surrey's population reaches 96,000                                 | <b>2010</b> Surrey becomes a venue city for the Winter Olympic Games                                 |
| <b>1881</b> First Town Hall built at Surrey Centre (east of Cloverdale, now the Surrey Archives building) | <b>1990</b> The SkyTrain Expo Line expands from New Westminster to Surrey      | <b>2014</b> City Hall moves to new building at 104 Avenue  |
| <b>1904</b> Fraser Bridge opened  | <b>1993</b> Surrey celebrated becoming a city                                  | <b>2018</b> Surrey Biofuel Facility and Museum of Surrey opened                                      |
| <b>1929</b> Surrey Leader newspaper first published   | <b>1996</b> Surrey's population reached 300,000                                | <b>2024</b> Surrey population estimated at 615,000   |
| <b>1937</b> Pattullo Bridge opened  | <b>2001</b> Surrey named 11th largest city in Canada                           |  |
| <b>1940</b> King George Highway officially opened   | <b>2002</b> The city's first university campus (Simon Fraser University) opens |  |





CITY OF  
**SURREY**  
the future lives here.



Surrey is one of the fastest-growing cities in British Columbia, with a population that's continually expanding. Our population is expected to surpass Vancouver within the next few decades!

Surrey is committed to ongoing transformation to become a greener, more complete, compact and connected community. We aim for resiliency, safety, inclusivity, health and beauty. We serve our community to improve the quality of life for everyone.

We're proud of our cultural diversity. Did you know over 100 different languages are spoken in Surrey? We are committed to being an inclusive and welcoming community that embraces all people and cultures.

## did you know?

The City of Surrey is so big we have six unique town centres. Each is a distinct neighbourhood that act as a community hub—Fleetwood, City Centre/Whalley, Guildford, Newton, Cloverdale and South Surrey.



# your city government

## Canada has three levels of government:



### Canada Federal Government

The federal government in Ottawa takes care of issues the whole country faces. Things such as the Navy, the Air Force, and trade and friendships with other countries.



### British Columbia Provincial Government

The provincial government in Victoria takes care of things such as health care, education and transportation, including public transit (buses and SkyTrain), major highways and bridges.



### Surrey Local Government

Local governments, such as City of Surrey, are responsible for things closer to home, such as making sure we have a clean and green city, safety issues (police and fire departments) and fun things like your playgrounds and swings in parks.

## Who takes care of Surrey residents?

Mayor and Council take good care of Surrey residents. Surrey City Council is made up of eight councillors and a mayor. Mayor and Council are elected by Surrey residents every four years.

## When can I vote for Surrey City Council?

When you turn 18 years old, you can vote for the people you think will do the best job of running the city you live in.

## What's a Bylaw?

City Council creates bylaws, which are the rules of living in the city, making sure the city is run smoothly. For example, the Unsightly Premises Bylaw ensures that your neighbourhood is clean and safe.

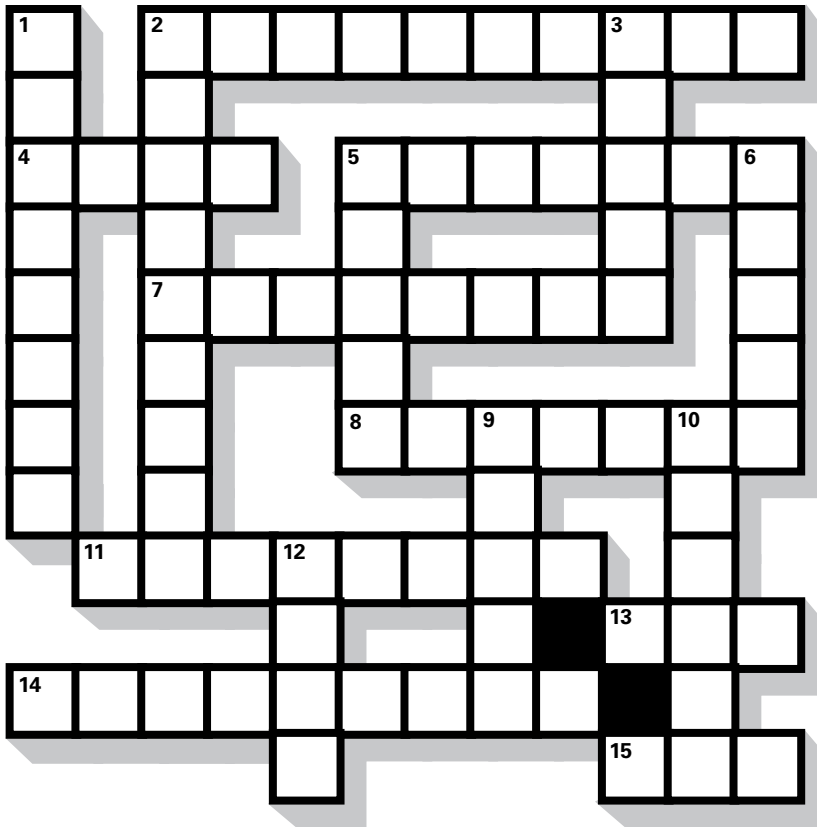
## did you know?

Bylaws ensure that the city runs smoothly.





## City Hall crossword



### Across

2. One of eight elected representatives
4. Taxpayers are often called \_ \_ \_ \_ payers.
5. The top bureaucrat (paid official) is the City \_\_\_\_\_.
7. Where Council decisions are made.
8. The City Clerk's Department keeps plenty of these.
11. This rapid transit system is a great way to travel Surrey.
13. Most of Surrey's funding comes from this.
14. Surrey has nine of these making it a bookworm's paradise.
15. Something you'd pick up at the City Pound.

### Down

1. You'll need these to build a house.
2. This official keeps records of Council decisions and bylaws.
3. With the appropriate rezoning, your development will be \_\_\_\_\_.
5. The top elected position in Surrey.
6. To smooth traffic flow, Surrey needs plenty of these.
9. The good efforts of the police keep this down.
10. Council discussions involve much of this.
12. Many of Surrey's parks are set aside for \_ \_ \_ \_ sports.

## Learn the Municipal Talk

City Hall has a unique way of talking. Here are some commonly used words.

**Bylaw** – a rule made by Council to help run the city.

**City** – a large town.

**City Council** – the Mayor and eight councillors are elected by residents to help run the city.

**Councillor** – a local person elected every four years to be a part of City Council.

**Mayor** – a local person elected every four years to head City Council and council meetings.

**Municipality** – a town or city with its own government.

**Rezoning** – when an area of land is changed from one category to another. Council must pass a bylaw before any changes are made.

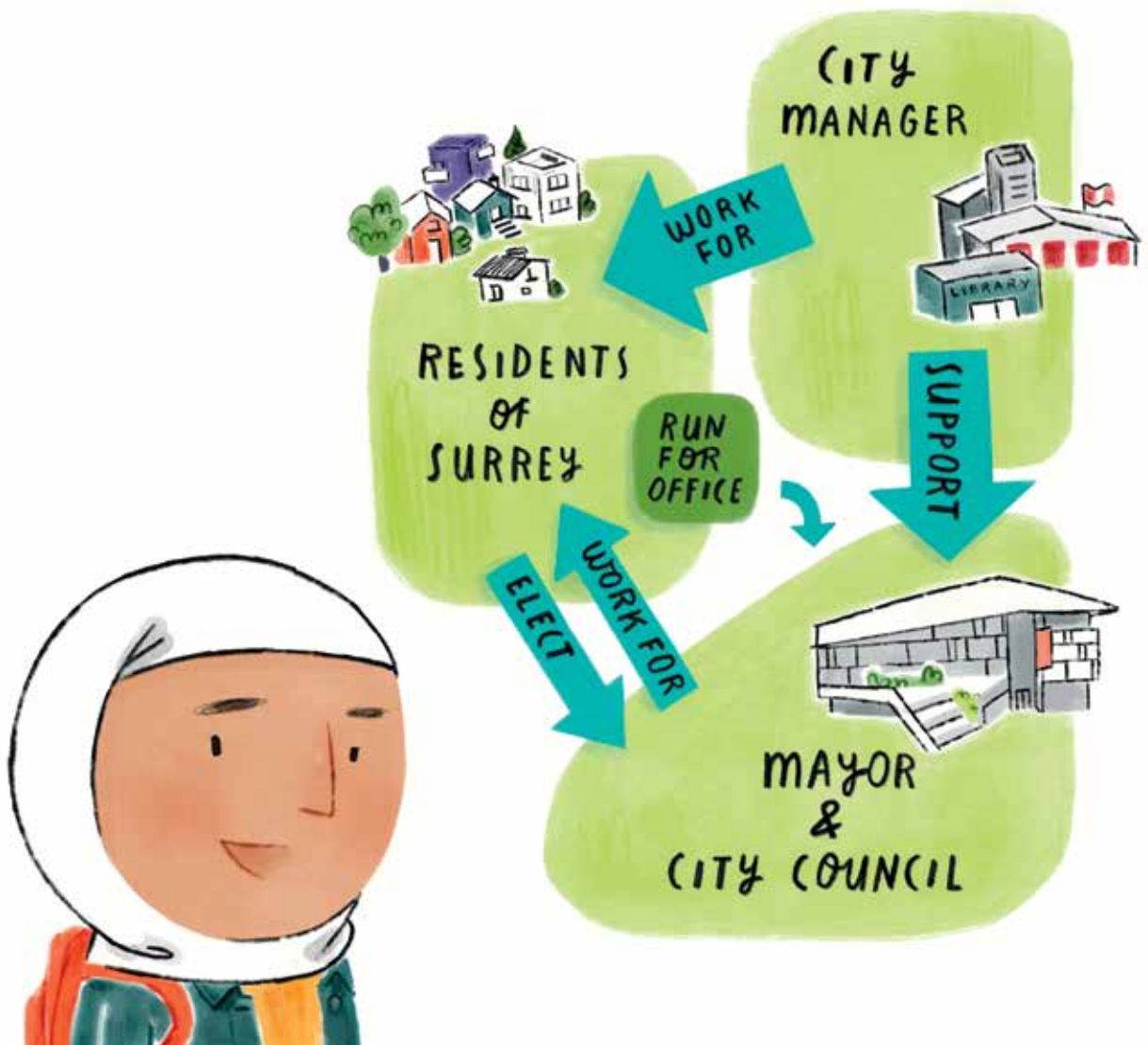
**Zoning** – areas of land divided into sections. Surrey has four major zones:

- farmland
- commercial
- houses
- industrial

# how city hall works

The mayor and eight councillors are picked to make up Surrey City Council by the people who live in Surrey. We call this an election. Elections for a new Mayor and Council take place every four years.

You will be able to vote when you turn 18 years old. Until then, you can participate by reminding your parents to vote every time there's an election.





## did you know?

The Surrey City Hall building has many sustainable features including lights that automatically dim or brighten depending on how much daylight there is.

### The City of Surrey mayor is:

---

#### **What does the mayor do?**

The mayor is the leader at City council meetings. They are usually the person you'll read about in the newspaper, see on television or hear on the radio.

The mayor answers questions and makes announcements on major events that happen in our city.

The mayor represents the people of the city. At special events like Canada Day, the mayor welcomes visitors and important people from other cities in Canada, even around the world.

#### **What do City councillors do?**

City councillors take care of the people that live in Surrey. Councillors are neighbourhood leaders and they help make decisions on how to run the city. These decisions are important in maintaining a clean and safe city for us to live in.

When there is a decision to be made, City councillors vote on what they think is best for the people that live in Surrey.

#### **What do the staff at City Hall do?**

People who work at City Hall make sure the decisions that City Council make are followed. City staff work hard to make sure the people who live in Surrey are safe, informed and proud of the city in which they live.

Turn the page to find out more about the City Manager and City staff.

# how city hall works



## What does the City Manager do?

Because running the city is such a big job, City Council hires someone to help them – someone who works every day at City Hall and who knows all about making a city operate smoothly. This person is called the City Manager.

The City Manager's job is to make sure the City is taking care of the needs of everyone living in Surrey and all City services and programs run smoothly. All City departments report to the City Manager.

## **Corporate Services**

Bylaw and Licensing Services is responsible for enforcing the hundreds of bylaws, or City rules, that govern the conduct of all residents and visitors of the city.

Human Resources hires the best people to work for the City and creates a safe and supportive work environment for staff.

Information Technology (IT) provides the right technology and information to make sure the city's work is done efficiently and effectively.

Legislative Services prepares council meeting agendas and preserves City records. They also arrange elections for Mayor and Council.


Marketing and Corporate Communications helps promote all City programs and initiatives by providing advice to departments and managing the website and social channels.

## **Finance**

The Finance Department manages the City's money. One of their main tasks is to create a budget. This budget shows how much money should be spent on different City services that help the people living in Surrey. The money needed to run the city comes from taxes. Every year, people who own property or businesses must pay these taxes.

## **Social Infrastructure & Community Investments**

This department is made up of teams that support the social well-being and community safety in Surrey, including job creation and business development, housing support, and Indigenous relations.



**did you know?**

The Technology Division maintains over 4000 computers used by staff throughout the City.

# planning and development

Surrey is one of the fastest growing cities in Canada. We are almost three times the size of Vancouver and that's a large area of land to work with.

## **What do planners do?**

The people who work in this department are called planners. Planners imagine what Surrey will look like in years to come and follow decisions made by City Council on growth and development in the city.

## **How do planners decide what goes where?**

All of Surrey is divided into land categories showing what can be built in different areas of the city. Planners use these categories to decide what goes where. For example, schools and parks go near where the houses are but not warehouses and factories.

## **Here are four types of categories in Surrey:**

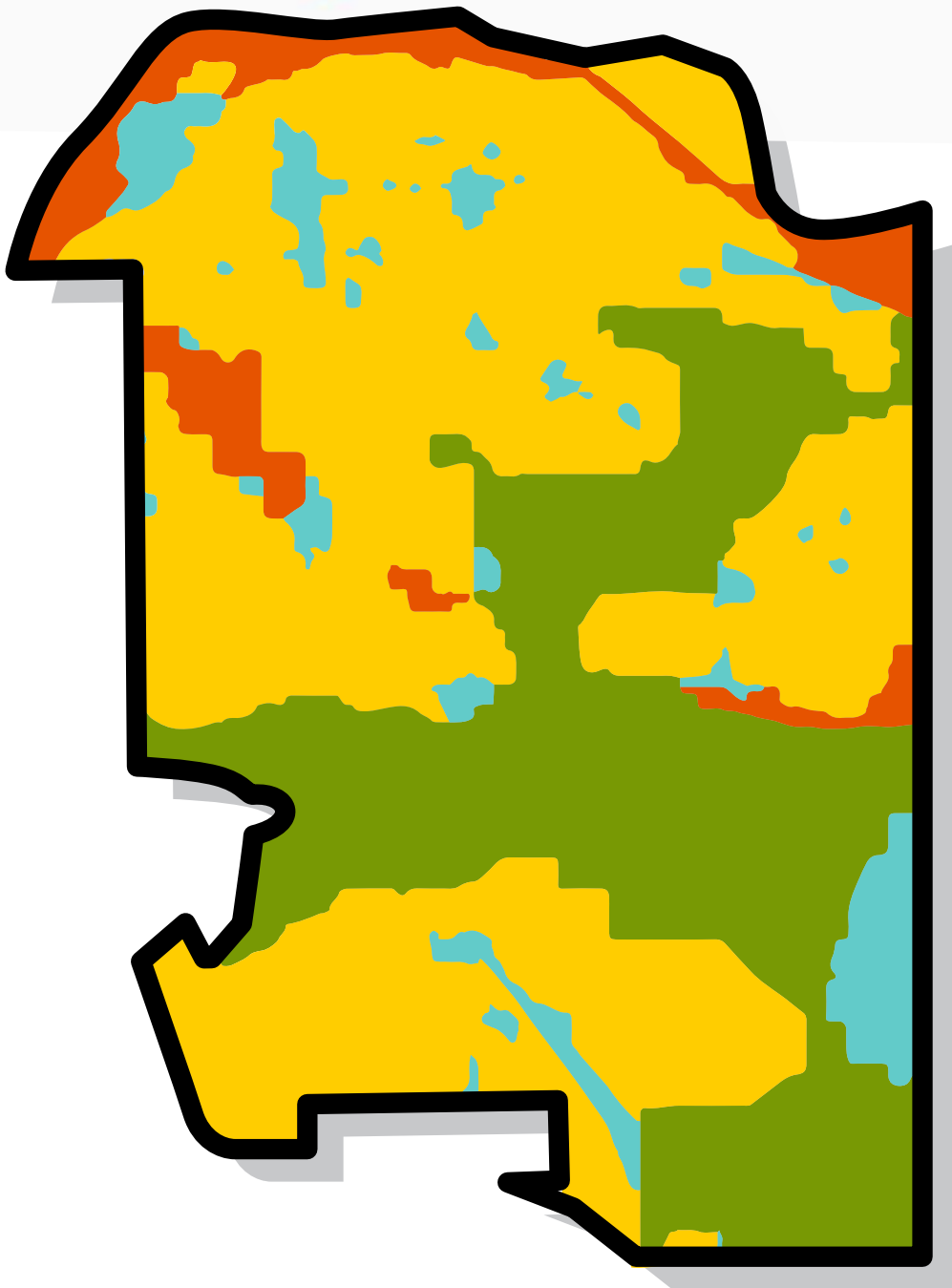
Housing – where you live, play and go to school.

Farmland – where farmers grow fruits and vegetables.

Commercial – where you find stores, offices and shopping centres.

Industrial – where people work in warehouses and factories.

See if you can find the four types of categories on the map provided.



### Legend

- Where farmers grow food
- Where people live, play and go to school
- Where people work in stores and offices
- Where people work in warehouses, factories and drive trains

# engineering

The Engineering Department does so much around the city to make sure we can get around safely, have clean water to drink and use, and keep our city clean.

They build and fix roads so that we can drive, walk, bike or take a bus in the city. They also take care of traffic signals, sidewalks, bike lanes and electric charging stations.

They salt and clear snow from the roads in the winter to keep us safe.

They build pipes so we can get fresh drinking water in our homes, and can remove the dirty water from our sinks and toilets through sewer pipes.

They pick up our garbage and recycling to keep our city clean and planet healthier.

They protect our city from flooding by building dykes and storm drains.





## Sustainability Charter

Sustainability is important to us! This is why the City has a 40 year plan to make Surrey a thriving, green and welcoming city.

This plan is shown in a document called the Sustainability Charter 2.0. The charter is like our map to follow to make sure all City decisions keep us on track to become the kind of vibrant city shown in the plan.

Surrey residents, staff, Mayor and Council and others involved all work together to update the charter and make sure it is in step with our community's values. The City and the community must work as a team to achieve the big goals set in the charter!

The Sustainability Charter 2.0 is one of several plans that keep the City on track like the Official Community Plan, Poverty Reduction Plan and Surrey Transportation Plan. Each plan complements one another and guides the City as we keep improving Surrey and make it one of the best places to live, work and visit.

## Litter sorting activity

**Do you know how to sort your recycling and garbage correctly?** Help Amira and Daniel decide how to dispose of their waste items by drawing a line from their item to the correct bin.



## Our City

Our City is a program that encourages the people of Surrey to get creative and improve their neighbourhoods.

Past projects included litter cleanups, fence arts, tree planting, community gardens, block parties and more.

**You can get involved!** If you have an idea to improve your neighbourhood, check out the help available through Our City. The City provides grants, tools and learning opportunities to help you bring your ideas to life!

Learn more on our website at [surrey.ca/ourcity](http://surrey.ca/ourcity).



# fire service

We have all seen the big red fire trucks and heard their sirens wailing as they respond to a 9-1-1 call for help. What an exciting but dangerous job firefighters have as they protect lives and property.

Surrey Fire Services is the second largest fire department in British Columbia. We have 390 career firefighters and 15 fire halls that are staffed 24 hours a day. We have additional support from 22 on-call firefighters that are alerted using a phone app when they are needed.

Every year, our firefighters respond to more than 30,000 emergency calls, which include medical emergencies, car accidents, structure fires, outdoor burning and grass fires, chemical spills, and fire alarm calls.

Surrey Fire Service also works with volunteer organizations and support groups who come together to prepare for emergencies like earthquakes and floods through the Surrey Emergency Program. Surrey Fire Service and our many community partners work hard to help keep our city and citizens safe.

## Smoke alarm tips

Ask your parents to check your smoke alarms to see if they're working.

Also remind your parents to maintain smoke alarms by:

- Testing your smoke alarms once a month
- Changing the battery once a year
- Cleaning your smoke alarms with a vacuum twice a year.

## Police Services

Police Services are like the safety superheroes in our neighborhoods.

They keep us safe by making sure everyone follows the rules, helping people when they're in trouble, and catching bad guys who break the law.

They patrol our streets, respond when we need help, and work hard to make sure our communities are safe and happy places to live.

Sometimes they also teach us how to stay safe and be good citizens. So basically, they're the ones who make sure everything runs smoothly and everyone can feel secure.

### Police word scramble

See how fast can you unscramble these words!

<b>alw</b>	---
<b>freciof</b>	-----
<b>recmi</b>	-----
<b>mrtempdaet</b>	-----
<b>cleipo</b>	-----
<b>efsa</b>	----

Answers: law, officer, crime, department, police, safe

## did you know?

Did you know that Surrey is in the process of building its own police department?



# parks, recreation

Our Parks Recreation and Culture department works hard to make sure you have fun and clean places to play, explore and rest.

Surrey offers a wide variety of different things to do while getting outdoors and enjoying nature. Here's a list of outdoor facilities:

**2,500,000+** visitors to recreation and culture facilities

**5** indoor pools

**8** outdoor pools

**5** ice arenas providing

**9** sheets of ice

**8** skate parks including

**2** covered youth parks and

**2** parkour parks

**13** community recreation centres

**1** nature centre

**402** seats in the Surrey Civic Theatres Main Stage

**55** full sized soccer fields

**51** 8 v 8 sized soccer fields

**5** mini soccer field

**66** softball diamonds

**37** baseball diamonds

**17** cricket pitches

**2** football fields

**3** rugby fields

**1** kabaddi field

**3** track and field complexes

**17** artificial turf fields



# & culture

The Parks, Recreation & Culture Department has many fun programs for you to join, and events and experiences to take part in.

You can learn to dance and play badminton, take classes in gymnastics and hockey or go on outdoor trips to discover new things.

You and your friends can ride the waves and experience the thrill of our awesome waterslides at the City's pools.

Feel the glide of the ice at one of Surrey's arenas, learn how to draw or watch a performance at the Surrey Arts Centre, count the different species of birds at Blackie Spit or step back in time and learn how to make hand-churned butter at the Historic Stewart Farm.

The Special Events team puts on five major events in Surrey each year including Party for Planet, Surrey Spark Stages, Surrey Canada Day, Surrey Fusion Festival and Surrey Tree Lighting Festival.



## Healthy Communities

The Healthy Communities section is an important part of the Parks, Recreation & Culture Department.

For starters, they organize support during community emergencies and also make sure everyone can join in on recreational activities, no matter their situation. They also support the health and happiness of older adults and create programs to involve and support young people, promote fairness and inclusivity. Additionally, Healthy Communities supports city volunteers and the staff who work hard to engage them.

The Healthy Communities section also focuses on sports, health, and wellness by promoting our community as a great place for sports events and activities. They encourage everyone to live healthy lives and also support the well-being of City staff.

Overall, Healthy Communities helps make our community a better, healthier, and more enjoyable place to live.

## did you know?

Volunteering is a great way learn new skills, make new friends, have fun while helping your community.

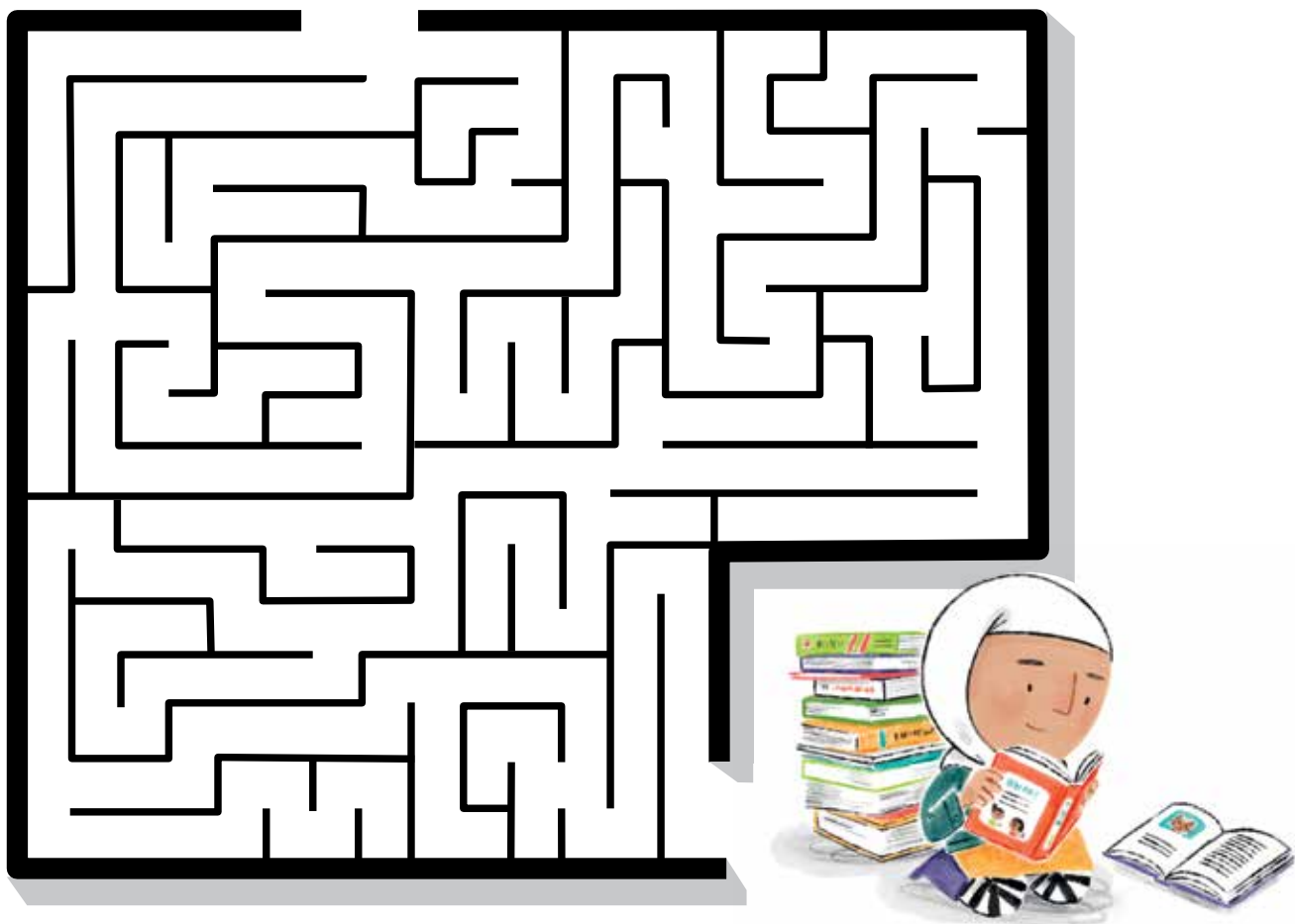


# surrey libraries

This is the place you visit to borrow books. There are lots of books to choose from including novels, short stories, picture books, even magazines. Inside you'll find interesting facts, stories and pictures to help you learn new things and discover ideas and places you never knew existed.

Reading is a wonderful way to visit far away countries, explore exciting adventures and learn about different topics. Surrey Libraries loans out millions of books and other items every year (e.g., DVDs, eBooks, eAudiobooks to name a few).

## Find your way to Amira and her big pile of books



# city hall trivia

**1. Surrey celebrated becoming a city in**

- a) 1879
- b) 1943
- c) 1993

**2. There are \_\_\_ councillors representing the people of Surrey**

- a) 5
- b) 8
- c) 10

**3. The mayor and councillors are elected every \_\_\_ years**

- a) 5
- b) 4
- c) 10

**4. I can vote when I turn \_\_\_ years old**

- a) 18
- b) 19
- c) 21

**5. Surrey's tagline is "the \_\_\_\_\_ lives here"**

- a) beavers
- b) mayor
- c) future

**6. The \_\_\_\_\_ is the head of City Council and council meetings**

- a) City Manager
- b) Fire Chief
- c) Mayor

**7. There are over \_\_\_\_\_ playgrounds in Surrey**

- a) 250
- b) 130
- c) 500

**8. The \_\_\_\_\_ department takes care of road repairs and water pipes**

- a) Engineering
- b) Planning & Development
- c) Parks, Rec & Culture



**9. Bylaws which govern our city are created by**

- a) City Manager
- b) City Council
- c) City staff

**10. There are four types of zones in Surrey. The \_\_\_\_\_ zone is where factories are located**

- a) housing
- b) farmland
- c) commercial
- d) industrial



## did you know?

Surrey is a member of the Metro Vancouver regional district. Metro Vancouver is made up of 20 communities that make up the area of Greater Vancouver.

# message from the mayor

On behalf of Council,

Congratulations on a job well done! I hope you enjoyed learning about our civic government. We work hard at City Hall to make Surrey a great place to live.

You are important to us. It's a big job running one of the fastest growing cities in the nation and we need to work together at building a strong and vibrant city.

I encourage you to participate in the many programs and opportunities we offer in Surrey. Round up your friends and family and attend one of our special events, take a class at a recreation centre, or plant a tree in one of our parks. Join in and be an active part of building a fun, clean and safe city.

## Questions for the Mayor...

Write your questions below



---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

# certificate of achievement

This is to certify that

---

\_\_\_\_\_ has successfully completed a virtual or in person City Hall Tour.  
Thank you for being an engaged citizen!



Hope you enjoyed the tour!  
See you again soon at

[surrey.ca](http://surrey.ca)

