



Thursday, February 12, 2026

BACKGROUND

***Imagine Surrey -- CITY COUNCIL CANDIDATE* biographies**

William Li – Imagine Surrey City Council Candidate 2026

William Li is a committed community advocate, entrepreneur and experienced professional in finance, international trade and investment.

William immigrated to Canada with his family at the age of seven, growing up with a clear memory of a time when homes were more affordable, neighbours looked out for one another, and families felt secure. Those early experiences shaped his belief that communities thrive when people care, and when opportunity is within reach: so families can build their lives with hope, stability and consistency.

Today, as a proud Surrey resident raising his family in Sullivan, William is ready to help restore that same sense of opportunity, trust and safety for generations to come. Graduated from Simon Fraser University with a Bachelor of Business, he combines proven business leadership with a commitment to community and public service.

As Sales and Brand Director of an international trading company, he connects Canadian products to global markets, while his entrepreneurial and investment experience gives him a broad understanding of the economic challenges families face today. Beyond his professional life, he serves actively in organizations like the Rotary Club of Surrey -- where he was honoured as *Rookie of the Year* -- and the Sunshine Lions Club, supporting scholarship and food programs along with many other charitable initiatives to benefit local residents and people in need.

Guided by integrity and compassion, William believes leadership is about listening *and* really hearing, action and results, not titles. He spent years building trust through everyday service -- helping seniors, supporting small businesses, and volunteering at community and cultural events. He understands what it takes to balance family, work and community responsibilities while consistently showing up for others. For him, public service and his Imagine Surrey council candidacy is about responsibility: doing what's right even when no one is watching.

William is running to make life better for families, with a focus on affordable living, safer streets and efficient, effective public transportation solutions. He is committed to providing more opportunities for youth while representing Surrey's diversity through inclusive leadership and a heart for service.



Kevin Wilkie – Imagine Surrey City Council Candidate 2026

Kevin Wilkie has called Surrey home for more than 30 years. He is a husband, a proud new dad, and an enthusiastic dog-owner.

Kevin grew up on the rinks and fields of his city, surrounded by neighbours who looked out for one another and families who shaped the character of Surrey. Those early experiences still guide him today. He appreciates what it means to 'belong' and for a community to welcome and support people from every background and stage of life.

Professionally, Kevin works in Business Development at Black & McDonald, where he helps businesses operate more efficiently by reducing costs, improving processes and finding innovative, more sustainable solutions. Known for his collaborative and practical approach, he brings a future-focused mindset shaped by years of turning challenges into opportunities.

Kevin entered the public arena during the 2025 Federal Election, running as the Green Party candidate for Cloverdale-Langley City. That experience deepened his understanding of the issues facing local families, businesses and neighborhoods, strengthening his commitment to community-centered leadership with a green vision around climate resilience and urban carbon-capture/reduction. It heavily reinforced what Kevin will bring to the Imagine Surrey slate as a council candidate: real progress that comes from hearing people, valuing different perspectives and collaborating on thoughtful, sustainable decisions.

Whether he is chatting with neighbours on his street and at the local community centre in South Surrey -- or connecting with other new parents and their families -- Kevin values relationships and believes strong communities grow from coming together in everyday interactions. For him, opportunity is more than economic success: it means families feeling secure, newcomers feeling welcomed and long-time residents knowing they are valued.

A committed family man and community advocate, Kevin is passionate about helping Surrey fulfill its promise as a place where everyone can feel at home, grow and thrive.

Narima Dela Cruz – Imagine Surrey City Council Candidate 2026

Narima Dela Cruz is a deeply engaged, longtime resident of Surrey and a leading voice for young people, service organizations and underserved communities of all kinds.

An involved parent, Narima served for many years as a Parents' Advisory Council (PAC) officer at her children's former schools in Guildford. She is also a passionate, dedicated community volunteer, having contributed nearly two decades of service in various capacities to charitable foundations, immigrant communities and service-oriented groups.

Narima is the founder and long-standing leader of SPIDS, an organization representing Surrey's hardworking, welcoming, and vibrant Filipino community. She is a tireless stakeholder and community advocate, inspiring others to get involved and make a difference in their city.



Narima mobilizes and leads diverse groups in a wide range of advocacy and volunteer initiatives, including: community clean-up campaigns, food bank volunteer days, blood donation drives, tree planting efforts, health awareness activities, political engagement and cross-cultural 'lift' initiatives. Currently serving on Kwantlen Polytechnic University's Advisory Committee for Asian Studies, she continues to help shape a future where student and youth voices are given space and weight in society.

Narima's leadership-by-example energy creates a ripple effect, inspiring and motivating others to get involved. This is precisely the impact she is expected to bring to her role as an Imagine Surrey council candidate.

As a parent, Narima's closest and most personal influence is seen plainly in her two young-adult children, who are making significant contributions to community-building and volunteerism all on their own. Daryl Dela Cruz is a well-known public transportation advocate who has been instrumental in several successful transit-related campaigns benefiting Surrey communities. Narima's daughter, Glisha, is an artist and musician who brings immense pride to Surrey's arts, music and cultural scene. The family now resides in Surrey Centre.

Narima is committed to applying herself to public service with diligence and integrity, and will take immediate action to keep our city affordable, safe, healthy and easier to move around in. She wants to expand public consultations and community outreach on critical issues, and advocate to higher levels of government for the resources and support that a growing Surrey needs.

Yousef Aldabainah-Barakat – Imagine Surrey City Council Candidate 2026

Yousef Aldabainah-Barakat is a proud Canadian of Arab-Palestinian descent who has called Surrey and his Newton neighborhood home since immigrating to Canada in 2010.

A devoted husband to Aseel Barakat and proud father of four children -- Ryan, Eve, Amer Joe, and Tia -- Yousef is deeply rooted in family, community and a professional tradition of public service. He began his career as a protocol coordinator before becoming Office Director for the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Palestinian Authority. This experience shaped his lifelong commitment to service, collaborative diplomacy and expertise in stakeholder and community engagement.

Yousef next worked in settlement and integration services for newcomers, including with OPTIONS Surrey. He later served as Coordinator of Outreach and Employer Relations with WorkBC, where he built strong relationships with business owners, service organizations and diverse communities across the province, and especially in Surrey. Through this work, he has consistently promoted diversity, inclusion, and intercultural understanding.

Yousef plays an active role in fundraising and community-building initiatives supporting multicultural, academic, and humanitarian causes. His efforts earned him recognition as one of the 500 Most Influential Muslim Personalities in the World (2015), by the Royal Islamic Strategic Studies Centre in Amman, Jordan.



Yousef previously served as Outreach Director for the federal Liberal Fleetwood–Port Kells riding association under MP Ken Hardie, and is a Laurier Club member within the Liberal Party of Canada. His community impact extends out through several respected organizations, including the National Council of Canadian Muslims (NCCM), British Columbia Muslim Association (BCMA), Muslim Business Council and the Muslim Food Bank network.

As Founder and President of the Canadian Arab Forum (CAF) of British Columbia, Yousef leads the non-profit organization to focus on celebrating Arab and Muslim heritage within Canada's diverse, multicultural society. CAF promotes unity and understanding among both Muslim and Christian Arab communities while fostering wider cultural dialogue across Canada through conferences, public discussions and stakeholder engagement – precisely the kind of powerful, productive outreach he will undertake as an Imagine Surrey city council candidate.

Yousef is widely respected by community, business and political leaders for bridging communities, connecting residents with information and support services, and encouraging citizen-participation across social, cultural, and civic life. He holds a Bachelor of Arts in French Literature and is fluent in Arabic, Hebrew, French, and English. Yousef currently serves as a professional legal interpreter, facilitating communication and access to justice for diverse communities.

With a strong record of service, leadership, and community engagement, Yousef remains committed to building a more inclusive, connected, and prosperous Surrey for all.

Mike Starchuk – Imagine Surrey Leader & Mayoral Candidate 2026

Mike Starchuk has spent his life on the front lines of Surrey -- showing up when things go wrong, standing up for what's right, and supporting the people who do the hard work that keeps a city running.

Raised and educated in Surrey's Newton area, Mike served 32 years with Surrey Fire Services and retired in 2014 as the City's Chief Fire Prevention Officer. During his firefighting career, he was also deeply involved in the labour movement -- serving as a Local 1271 union officer and was known as a staunch defender of firefighters' rights -- including service as a workers' compensation advocate whom the IAFF reports helped secure more than \$14 million in wages and benefits.

Mike's public service didn't stop at the station door. He is a founding member of the Surrey Fire Fighters Charitable Society, and he's been recognized for his many community contributions, including receiving the Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Medal and the King Charles III Coronation Medal.

In elected office, Mike brought forward the same practical, protect-the-public mindset. He served on Surrey City Council and later as MLA for Surrey–Cloverdale. As MLA, he worked on issues that hit working families directly: public safety, health, and the cost of living. Mike served as Chair of the Select Standing Committee on Finance and Government Services, leading provincewide consultations on how to fund the services and infrastructure people rely on.



Now, as Leader and mayoral candidate with Imagine Surrey, Mike is running to deliver a city that's safer, faster and more affordable -- because for working people, results aren't theoretical: they're the difference between getting ahead and falling behind.

-30-

Mike Starchuk and council candidates are available for interviews. For more information contact:

Scott Williams, Imagine Surrey – 604-356-7606 | media@imaginesurrey.com