



SURREY
LOCAL IMMIGRATION
PARTNERSHIP

Surrey LIP Community Plan 2024 – 2029

A SETTLEMENT STRATEGIC
PLAN FOR SURREY

Funded by:

Financé par :



Immigration, Refugees
and Citizenship Canada

Immigration, Réfugiés
et Citoyenneté Canada

www.surreylip.ca



LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

On the ancestral, traditional and unceded territories of the SEMYOME (Semiahmoo), qíćóy (Katzie), kʷíkʷəłəm (Kwkwetlem), qʷa:ńłəń (Kwantlen), qíqéyt (Qayqayt), xʷməθkʷəyám (Musqueam) and sćəwaθən məsteyəxʷ (Tsawwassen) First Nations. The knowledge and traditions of these communities are significant in providing context to the work we do, and the Surrey Local Immigration Partnership recognizes the importance that reconciliation has in building truly inclusive and strong communities.



Neelam Sahota
CEO, DIVERSECity
Community Resources Society

Message from the Chair

On behalf of the Surrey Local Immigration Partnership, I am honoured to introduce our Community Plan for the next five years. This Plan encapsulates our joint aspiration to foster a city that epitomizes diversity, inclusion, and equity at its core.

This plan emerges from consultations with newcomers representing diverse backgrounds, ages, and genders alongside invaluable input from community leaders and partners. Informed and guided by the experience and expertise of the Community Planning Working Group and the LIP Committee, this plan embodies the collective efforts and dedication of all involved. Their generous contribution of time, experience, and insight reflects a profound commitment to shaping Surrey into a genuinely welcoming and inclusive city.

Surrey welcomes individuals from all over the world with open arms. Our immigrants and refugees arrive with aspirations and a sincere desire to shape their new surroundings positively. While we understand that barriers to integration and complete community engagement still exist, we firmly believe in our collective ability to dismantle them and create a city where every resident can flourish.

At the heart of this Plan lies our commitment to cultivating a community where every individual feels a profound sense of belonging and all reap the dividends of diversity, inclusivity and equity – residents, businesses, or institutions.

I extend a heartfelt invitation to you to partake in this shared endeavour. Together, let us forge a city where the richness of diversity is celebrated and where every voice, every talent, and every perspective contribute to the tapestry of Surrey, rendering it an even more remarkable place to call home.



Development of the Plan

This plan reflects the input, ideas and aspirations shared in consultations with those who directly support the work of the Surrey Local Immigration Partnership. Consultation and development of the Plan was initiated in August 2023. Input collected in consultations led to several iterative drafts and the final plan was presented and approved by the Surrey LIP Committee on February 13, 2024.

This engagement process led to the development of new Vision and Mission statements and a fulsome update of the LIP's Mandate and the Principles that will guide its work. Three of the previous five strategic priorities areas have been carried forward and updated from the previous 2016-2019 Surrey Immigrant Integration Strategy and two new priority areas were identified.



The Surrey LIP and its membership are grateful for the funding provided by Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada to support this planning and its implementation.

STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS

- Aug. 2023 — ● Project Initiation / Review of Background Information
- Aug. – Sept. 2023 — ● Facilitated Management Review(s) and Input
- Oct. 2023 — ● Development of 1st Drafts and Key Statements
- Oct. 17, 2023 — ● Presentation and Review of Working Draft by LIP Council
- Oct. – Nov. 2023 — ● Identification of Working Group and Key Informants
- Oct. – Dec. 2023 — ● Working Group Meetings
● Development of Revised Drafts
- Dec. 2023 — ● Consultation with Immigrant Advisory Table & Surrey Youth Newcomer Council
- Jan. 2024 — ● Key Informant Interviews
● Working Group Review and Final Input
● Management Team Review and Final Input
- Feb. 13, 2024 — ● Final Draft and Presentation to the LIP Council
- Feb. 2024 — ● Council Approval of the Plan

What are Local Immigration Partnerships?

Local Immigration Partnerships (LIPs) are funded by Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) to develop and implement plans to improve immigrant and refugee settlement and integration.

These partnership tables convene to support local research and planning to build the capacity of communities to be welcoming and inclusive and to ensure immigrants have opportunities to fully participate economically, socially, politically, and culturally. The federal government began funding LIPs across the country in 2008 and in 2014, began funding LIPs in BC. Currently there are about 90+ LIPs across Canada and 18+ in British Columbia.

Surrey Local Immigration Partnership

The Surrey Local Immigration Partnership (LIP) was founded in 2014 supported by funding from Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC). Prior to the formation of the Surrey LIP, the Surrey Welcoming Communities Project operated for two years and provided a foundational membership as well as a basis of collective knowledge.

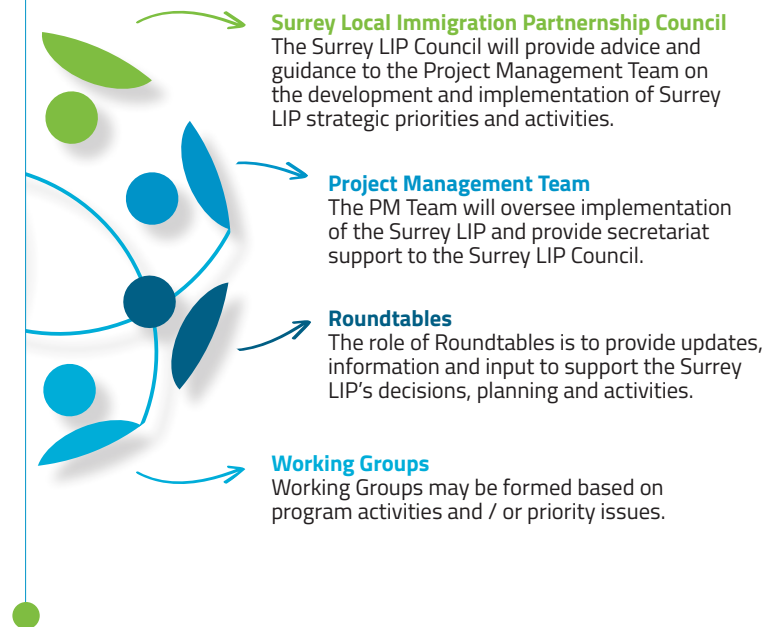
Today the Surrey Local Immigration Partnership (LIP) continues with strong community support and local capacity with a robust LIP Council made up of 35+ community organizations representing community and immigrant service agencies, education, business, government, libraries, health, parks and recreation, faith, and others.

The Surrey LIP is a collective of community partners united in the vision of cultivating a fair and inclusive city where all immigrants, refugees, and citizens thrive. Through dialogue and research, Surrey LIP membership collaborates on innovative and community-driven initiatives to meet the changing needs of one of the fastest-growing cities in B.C. They leverage their diverse perspectives, their expertise and pool resources to develop and deliver on strategies that prepare the community to welcome and fully include new immigrants and refugees.

SURREY LIP GOVERNANCE MODEL

The Surrey LIP is led by a 30+ member council and is chaired by DIVERSEcity's CEO, Neelam Sahota.

DIVERSEcity Community Resources Society holds the contribution agreement with Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada for the Surrey LIP. As such, DIVERSEcity is responsible for ensuring the deliverables are met on time and within budget. Information and updates on the progress and results of the Surrey LIP will be provided to the full community of stakeholders.



Surrey LIP Roundtables

The work of the Surrey LIP is supported by the lived experience and insights of these advisory groups.

Immigrant Advisory Table

The Immigrant Advisory Table brings together the voice and input of Surrey immigrants and refugees to the Surrey LIP Council’s research and planning processes.

Immigrant Women Advisory Table

Valuing the lived experiences of immigrant women from diverse backgrounds, this roundtable provides updates, information, and input to support the Surrey LIP’s decisions, planning and activities.

African and Caribbean Diaspora Table

This roundtable brings the lived experiences and perspectives of the African and Black communities forward, offering the council updates, information, and input.

Surrey Youth Newcomer Council

The Surrey Youth Newcomer Council (SYNC) is a community of Surrey youth who are passionate about making Surrey a better place for newcomer youth.

SURREY LIP COUNCIL MEMBERSHIP

1	Alexandra Neighbourhood House	23	Surrey Board of Trade
2	Association of Neighbourhood Houses	24	Surrey Interfaith Council
3	City of Surrey	25	Surrey Libraries
4	Douglas College	26	Surrey Now-Leader newspaper
5	Fraser Health Authority	27	Surrey Schools
6	FRAFCA (<i>Fraser Region Aboriginal Friendship Centre Association</i>)	28	Umoja
7	IECBC (<i>Immigrant Employment Council of BC</i>)	29	UNITI
8	ISSofBC	30	Vancity
9	Kwantlen Polytechnic University	31	YMCA
10	Ministry of Municipal Affairs B.C. Government	32	YWCA Metro Vancouver
11	MOSAIC	33	Surrey Schools
12	Muslim Food Bank	34	BC Housing
13	Oak Avenue Neighbourhood House	35	Surrey Police Service
14	Options		
15	Pacific Community Resources Society		
16	Pacific Intercultural Community Services		
17	Pacific Immigrant Resources Society		
18	RCMP (<i>Royal Canadian Mounted Police</i>)		
19	SHER Vancouver		
20	Simon Fraser University		
21	Sources		
22	SUCCESS		



Why Does Surrey Need a LIP?

The City of Surrey is growing at an unprecedented rate, adding more than 51,000 people since 2016. Expressed another way, over the last five years, Surrey welcomed 28 new residents every day. At the current rate, Surrey is on track to become the province's largest city around the year 2040, surpassing Vancouver in population.

Surrey attracts an increasing portion of immigrants to British Columbia. In 2021 immigrants made up 45% of Surrey's population, slightly higher than Metro Vancouver's regional level of 42%. In 2021, 39,910 (20%) of recent immigrants to B.C. (those who arrived between 2016 and 2021) lived in Surrey. Recent immigrants made up 7% of Surrey's total population and comprised 78% of the City's total population growth between 2016 and 2021.

As one of British Columbia's fastest-growing cities, Surrey requires a Local Immigration Partnership (LIP) for several reasons. The Surrey LIP will convene and increase the capacity of Surrey to:

Over the past 20 years, the immigrant population in Surrey has increased from 33% to 45% of the total population.

Recognize and Celebrate Diversity

Surrey is a culturally diverse city with a significant immigrant and refugee population. The Surrey LIP helps ensure that the unique needs and contributions of these communities are recognized and addressed.

Facilitate Integration

Immigrants and refugees often face challenges when integrating into a new society, including language barriers, cultural differences, employment challenges, access to information and services, among others. The Surrey LIP facilitates the integration process by fostering collaboration and service coordination among community partners to provide support and resources tailored to the unique and varied needs of newcomers.

Embrace Social Cohesion

By promoting inclusivity and social cohesion, the Surrey LIP helps build stronger, more resilient communities. By bringing together diverse voices and fostering understanding, empathy and cooperation, the partnership contributes to a sense of belonging and unity among residents.

Leverage Skills and Experience

Immigrants and refugees bring valuable skills, experiences, and entrepreneurial spirit to Surrey. The Surrey LIP raises awareness of these assets to stimulate economic growth and innovation, benefiting the city as a whole.

Enable Policy Development

The Surrey LIP creates platforms for dialogue and collaboration between government, community organizations, and other interested parties. This enables the development of informed policies and initiatives that address the evolving needs of the immigrant and refugee population.



Mandate

The aim of the Surrey Local Immigration Partnership is to improve the settlement and integration outcomes of immigrants and refugees by enhancing the welcoming and inclusive nature of Surrey where everyone belongs and thrives.

The mandate of the Surrey LIP is to:

- Conduct research and community needs assessments and share findings;
- Raise awareness of immigration policies and practices, immigrant settlement and the importance of welcoming and inclusive communities;
- Increase engagement of the whole community by including settlement organizations as well as organizations that serve the whole community;
- Work with variety of involved parties to identify gaps in services and develop strategies to address these gaps;
- Create opportunities for newer and established residents to connect, share and learn from each other; Inform community planning processes and advocate for adjustments and additions to policies and practices that affect immigrants and refugees;
- Centre and amplify the voices and lived experiences of immigrants and refugees in Surrey; and
- Seek truth, understanding, and healing by collaborating with Indigenous communities to create environments that integrate and provide the opportunity to share Indigenous knowledge, culture, and perspectives.

Vision, Mission, and Guiding Principles

We are pleased to present this strategic foundation for the Surrey Local Immigration Partnership. The following statements will guide our work ensuring that we stay focused and achieve our goals to shape a community that embodies inclusivity, opportunity, and collaboration.

Vision Statement

Surrey is a community where diversity is valued; social, economic, and cultural opportunities are accessible to all; and new and longer-term residents work together to build a more welcoming and inclusive city.

Mission Statement

We increase the capacity of Surrey to integrate and support immigrants and refugees by assessing and addressing evolving community needs and sharing information and leading change.

Guiding Principles

The work of the Surrey LIP is guided by the following principles:

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

We are accountable for advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion in all our work and we have practices and structures in place that uphold these principles within our ever-evolving community.

Expertise and Collective Commitment

We acknowledge, respect, and leverage the expertise and lived experience held by our members and believe that meaningful change results from their active participation and full commitment to our work.

Engaging the Community

By listening, learning, and collaborating with a diverse range of community representatives, we deepen our understanding of our communities and build strong and enduring relationships.

People Centred

Our work reflects and serves the unique and diverse needs of both our newest and more established residents.

Evidence-based Decision-making

Our decision-making and our work are guided by data and evidence ensuring purposeful and effective action and demonstrated outcomes.

Various organizations, government initiatives, and community support groups are working hard—and increasingly successfully—to help immigrants integrate.



NIGERIA

SURREY FUSION FESTIVAL

According to Census 2021, 43% of Surrey's population identifies as racialized, considerably higher than Greater Vancouver at 31%.

Strategic Priorities, Goals and Objectives

Through comprehensive community and stakeholder consultation and engagement, the following five priorities were identified as critical for the Surrey LIP to address over the next five years. Annual action plans will be developed by Surrey LIP working groups with the guidance of the project team which will aim to achieve the goals and objectives articulated below.



Accessible Services

Ensuring access to vital settlement and community services stands as a cornerstone of our commitment to supporting immigrants, refugees, and those assisting them in their journey towards successful integration and empowerment. In the case of some service types, there are limited or no services available.

Engaged Community

Engaging the community in this work is a testament to our collective commitment to fostering a welcoming and inclusive city for all residents.

Meaningful Employment

Recognizing the critical role that meaningful employment plays in the lives of immigrants and refugees, this priority embodies our collective commitment to ensuring equitable access to economic opportunities and pathways to success.

Learning and Embedding Indigenous Perspectives

In recognition of the rich cultural heritage and profound contributions of our Indigenous communities, the Surrey Local Immigration Partnership has committed itself to fostering a meaningful and collaborative relationship with local Indigenous groups.

Inspiring Humanitarianism

This priority stands as a beacon of compassion and solidarity within the City of Surrey. With a steadfast commitment to fostering empathy and support for immigrant and refugee resettlement, this priority area encapsulates the essence of Canadians' humanitarian values and the spirit of inclusivity that defines our nation.



1

Accessible Services

Ensuring access to vital settlement and community services stands as a cornerstone of our commitment to supporting immigrants, refugees, and those assisting them in their journey towards successful integration and empowerment.

In the case of some service types, there are limited or no services available. In the case of others, lack of awareness of available services, issues related to referral processes and insufficient service coordination and communication make access difficult.

In some cases, service location and transportation add to the problem. Surrey is geographically large, and services are concentrated in a few areas, mostly central, while the settlement patterns of newcomers are more and more dispersed. In addition, cultural differences, limited English, or a disability can make it difficult for immigrants to access immigrant-specific services as well as information on general services such as education, training, and healthcare.

Many service areas remain under capacity regardless of enhanced coordination. This can be a result of inadequate funding, a rapid influx of a specific immigrant populations or the emergence of new challenges or requirements needing to be addressed.

Increasing awareness and improving coordination of services is a persistent pursuit. The Surrey LIP will work towards a future where access to services is equitable, responsive, and empowering for all residents.



GOAL

Surrey has a robust and fully resourced settlement and community services infrastructure where immigrants and refugees and those assisting them have ready access to the services, supports and information they need.



OBJECTIVES

1. Conduct an assessment to gain a full understanding of the current settlement and community services infrastructure.
2. Determine the capacity and the demand for immigrant and refugee programming in Surrey to inform service planning and articulate community needs.
3. Develop, promote, and disseminate information tools and resources to enhance referrals and service coordination.
4. Improve access to education, training and healthcare services for immigrants and refugees by working with member agencies and other planning tables and coalitions to address cultural, linguistic, and systemic barriers.



2

Engaged Community

Engaging the community in this work is a testament to our collective commitment to fostering a welcoming and inclusive city for all residents.

At the heart of this priority lies the vision of a community where individuals from all backgrounds are empowered to build meaningful connections, actively participate in civic life, and contribute to the dynamic tapestry of Surrey's social fabric.

With more than 45% of Surrey's population made up of people born in dozens of countries from around the world, engagement of the whole community is complex, yet critical. The overarching goal of "Engaged Community" is to cultivate a sense of belonging and empowerment among immigrants and refugees, ensuring they have the opportunity to make meaningful connections and actively participate in all facets of life in Surrey. To do so, longer term residents need to understand the barriers and challenges immigrants and refugees face as well as their skills and talents and the contributions they are prepared to make. Spaces and places need to be created to support connecting and sharing and positioning newer residents to have a voice and influence in shaping their new community.

Raising awareness, eliminating discrimination, and elevating the voices of our newest residents is an ongoing endeavour. The Surrey LIP will work towards a future where diversity is celebrated, inclusion is the norm, and all residents have the opportunity to participate fully.



GOAL

Surrey is a welcoming and inclusive city that supports immigrants and refugees to make community connections, and actively participate in all that Surrey has to offer.

OBJECTIVES

1. Encourage and support the delivery of programs, services, and activities to assist immigrants and refugees to make connections with Indigenous Peoples, established residents, and longer-term immigrants.
2. Increase awareness of the specific needs of immigrant and refugee populations to inform adjustments to current programming and the development of new or additional programming.
3. Increase awareness of and promote anti-racism issues and initiatives in Surrey to reduce incidents of discrimination and racism.
4. Collaborate to ensure the increased involvement of immigrants and refugees in community and civic planning processes and bodies (committees, boards, advisories, etc.) to ensure their voices contribute to community development.



In the 2021 Census, immigrants accounted for 50% of Surrey's workforce. Recent immigrants had a higher labor market participation rate than both immigrants and the Canadian-born.

3

Meaningful Employment

Recognizing the critical role that meaningful employment plays in the lives of immigrants and refugees, this priority embodies our collective commitment to ensuring equitable access to economic opportunities and pathways to success

Several persistent barriers to labour market participation exist for new immigrants and refugees. Some aspects of labour market participation are unique to Surrey. Among these is a relative lack of industries that employ professionals / paraprofessionals paired against the significant majority of Surrey's recent immigrants - skilled and highly educated workers who arrive within the Canadian immigration economic class. Many Surrey employers are smaller businesses lacking substantial Human Resources (HR) capabilities that could lead to better recruitment, onboarding, and training of immigrants. In addition, Surrey receives a relatively high number of Government Assisted and Privately Sponsored Refugees, who may be less prepared for the labour force than other newcomers and require different kinds of employment supports and services.

All these factors contribute to higher unemployment rates and lower incomes. As well, a significant proportion of Surrey newcomers are entrepreneurs or self-employed and would fare better if more help were available in dealing with new and unfamiliar systems. The Surrey LIP will work to build a Surrey where every individual has the opportunity to realize their full potential and contribute meaningfully to our vibrant community.

GOAL

The community has the knowledge and tools needed to support immigrants and refugees to meaningfully contribute to the labour market.

OBJECTIVES

1. Establish partnerships with business, industry, and government to increase understanding of Surrey's labour market and the employment service needs of specific immigrant populations (women, youth, diverse abilities, etc.)
2. Facilitate networking amongst immigrant serving organizations, immigrant job seekers, employers, and industry groups to create connections and expedite the integration of immigrants and refugees into the local job market.
3. Support employers to increase mentorship, co-ops, work experience and volunteer programs for immigrants and refugees to increase options for gaining local experience and building a sense of belonging.
4. Encourage and support businesses in developing and implementing diversity and inclusion policies that actively promote the hiring, training, and advancement of immigrants and refugees in the workplace.
5. Develop, distribute and promote information related to the local labour market and immigrant and refugee employment services.



4

Learning and Embedding Indigenous Perspectives

In recognition of the rich cultural heritage and profound contributions of our Indigenous communities, the Surrey Local Immigration Partnership has committed itself to fostering a meaningful and collaborative relationship with local Indigenous groups. Grounded in principles of respect, inclusion, and mutual learning, this priority is a cornerstone in the LIP's mission to create an inclusive and culturally diverse community in Surrey.

At the heart of this priority lies a steadfast commitment to integrating Indigenous knowledge, culture, and perspectives into all facets of the LIP's work. Through active listening, dialogue, and genuine collaboration, the LIP endeavors to honor the diverse histories, traditions, and lived experiences of Indigenous peoples within the Surrey region.

In embracing these objectives, the Surrey Local Immigration Partnership aspires to play a meaningful role in advancing Truth and Reconciliation and building a more inclusive and culturally vibrant community for all residents of Surrey. Through ongoing collaboration and engagement, the LIP remains dedicated to learning from and alongside Indigenous peoples as we collectively strive for a better future.



GOAL

The Surrey Local Immigration Partnership has a meaningful relationship with local Indigenous communities and through listening and collaboration we have integrated Indigenous knowledge, culture, and perspectives into our work.



OBJECTIVES

1. Continue to build collaborative and respectful partnerships with Surrey's Indigenous communities, organizations, and leaders to increase awareness and understanding of Truth and Reconciliation and the Calls to Action, Indigenous cultures, histories, and perspectives among the project team, LIP members and advisories, immigrants, and the broader community.
2. Integrate Indigenous perspectives and considerations into the policies, procedures, and decision-making processes of the Surrey Local Immigration Partnership to ensure inclusivity and cultural sensitivity.
3. Support and promote community-led events and initiatives that celebrate Indigenous cultures, traditions, and art to provide opportunities for training, cultural exchange and dialogue.
4. Create platforms and resources that share Indigenous knowledge, stories, and cultural practices to encourage learning and appreciation.



Be well, continue your learning about the land and the First People, and always remember to treat one another with compassion. Those are the laws of the land here.
- Len Pierre, Ktzie First Nation



In the last Census, 11% of Surrey's recent immigrants arrived as refugees, a significantly higher proportion than Greater Vancouver's regional level of 8%.

5

Inspiring Humanitarianism

This priority stands as a beacon of compassion and solidarity within the City of Surrey. With a steadfast commitment to fostering empathy and support for immigrant and refugee resettlement, this priority area encapsulates the essence of Canadians' humanitarian values and the spirit of inclusivity that defines our nation.

At its core, the priority of "Inspiring Humanitarianism" is to cultivate a deep-seated understanding and appreciation among Surrey residents for Canada's longstanding commitment to providing sanctuary and opportunity for vulnerable immigrants and refugees. Through education, advocacy, and direct engagement, this priority seeks to ignite a sense of shared responsibility and empathy, motivating individuals to actively contribute to these crucial humanitarian efforts.

As we embark on this collective journey of compassion and solidarity, let us remember that it is through our shared humanity and unwavering commitment to justice and inclusion that we can truly build a more welcoming and compassionate society.

GOAL

Surrey residents understand and value Canadian humanitarian efforts in immigrant and refugee resettlement and are motivated to support and engage in these efforts.

OBJECTIVES

1. Increase awareness and understanding of our humanitarian commitments among residents to reduce discrimination and increase active involvement in these efforts.
2. Cultivate empathy and foster connections by creating opportunities for Surrey residents to hear directly from immigrants and refugees about their journeys, challenges, and contributions to Canadian society.
3. Advocate for and contribute to policies that uphold Canadian humanitarian values to ensure the fair and compassionate treatment of immigrants and refugees.
4. Identify and partner with other organizations doing aligned work to collectively advocate for and support refugee resettlement initiatives.
5. Create, amplify and promote avenues for Surrey residents to volunteer, donate, or offer support to immigrant and refugee resettlement agencies or programs, encouraging direct involvement and tangible assistance.



**SURREY
LOCAL IMMIGRATION
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If you are interested in the work of the Surrey Local Immigration Partnership, please visit our website.

www.surreylip.ca

And, follow us on Facebook or X



If you like to discuss how to become involved, please send a message to:

surreylip@dcrs.ca



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