Amarjit Singh Lalli
Candidate for Council

Transportation.

There is increasing frustration among citizens and visitors alike regarding traffic congestion, particularly on the major routes around and through the city. This is resulting in added commuting time for employees, and delays for trucks and services vehicles moving around and through the city. A previous vision of Council and the City included placing a high priority on the north end connector to ease congestion while reducing greenhouse gas emissions. There have also been past discussions on a second crossing and an improved regional transportation network to make it easier for semis, logging trucks, delivery vehicles, etc. to move through the city to keep the economy moving while ensuring efficient supply lines for commercial businesses.

Q: If elected, aside from improved transit for those that don't require a vehicle to commute or as part of their employment, what would you do to further improve the City's/region's road/transportation network?

A: A free flow of traffic is essential for a city to function. To reduce gridlock in our city we need better planning. Use of perimeter roads is a must. Extension of existing roads to easy pressure off main arteries is needed. A good example of this is extension of Burtch Rd to KLO. Completion of the north end connector to Hwy 33 should also be a top priority. To take pressure off Hwy 97 we need to have a road connecting Penticton and Kelowna on this side of the lake. Extension of left and right hand turn right of ways need to be a priority. There are two many intersections that back up when vehicles are blocking the through lanes while waiting to turn.

Downtown Kelowna.

The downtown Kelowna street environment has changed over the past twelve months. There has been an increase in criminal and nuisance behaviour.

Q: If elected, what role would you as Mayor/Councillor play in ensuring a safe environment for businesses, their employees & customers, and for tourists and residents visiting and living in the downtown area?

A: The city is responsible for issuing business licences for all businesses. All businesses operate under certain guidelines. We need to make sure there are guidelines in place when licences are issued for

services of this nature. There needs to be more frequent street and side walk cleaning. We need more police presence in these areas. On a temporary basis the police should be given more powers for random searches in the red district of downtown. This would discourage the drug dealing that is going on. We need to lobby government to standardize services that are provided by various groups. There needs to be a proper rehab program available in Kelowna.

Question #3

Cost of Government.
The increasing cost of government (municipal tax hikes beyond the rate of inflation, raises in services fees, and development cost charges) are a concern. The Chamber understands the City has a critical role to play in providing services and regulating businesses, but believes in continual efforts to cut red tape, streamline approval processes and explore cost-saving service delivery options.

Q: If elected, how would you address this concern?

A: Since we have just hired a new city manager it is a perfect time to evaluate all the services provided by the city. All out dated programs and process should be eliminated. Meetings should be held with business organizations to discuss concerns and to ask for recommendations to streamline approval processes. Making sure there is consistency in the system would allow businesses to plan smarter. City hall needs to operate as a lean and efficient entity.

Question #4

Variable Tax Rates.
Municipal governments have the authority to establish variable tax rates for the various tax classes. Many organizations have called for a ratio that should not exceed 3:1 for commercial vs residential class.

Q: If elected, what would you do to ensure businesses are not carrying an unfair amount of the tax burden, given business owners don't have a vote but still are required to pay for public services, they don't use?

A: It is important to note that individuals do not mind paying their fair share if they see value in it. Small business is the back bone of a health economy. If a cap was required I would be open to the idea. The rate would be set after proper consultation from all parties.

Question #5

Dealing with other governments.
Local Government is often called upon by citizens who have concerns about new or existing taxes/regulations that are in place at the provincial/federal level. The proposed speculation tax and provincial health employers' tax are two recent examples of provincial policy that will have a negative impact on small businesses and the economy in Kelowna and elsewhere.

Q: What do you believe is the Mayor's/Council's role in dealing with these concerns?

A: As a small business owner, I feel the squeeze for all levels of government. Councils role is to make sure that the issue is identified properly and that the policy that has been developed will have the desired outcome. It is imperative that council takes the lead on denouncing policy that is detrimental to the economy of the area. Council must counter with meaningful alternatives.

Question #6 – submitted by the Canadian Home Builders Association - Kelowna

BC Energy Step Code
Research indicates that homes built pre-1985 use 100% more energy than homes built today. Statistics Canada reports 60% of homes in BC were built before 1985. New homes built this year account for only 1% of housing stock in BC.

Q: If elected, would you support government bringing existing home stock's energy efficiency on par with today's standard of efficiency, before further increasing costs to new construction?

A:

Question #7 – submitted by the Urban Development Institute - Kelowna

Affordability.
The issue of housing affordability has grown in prominence over the years with many people finding it more difficult to afford to live in the place where they work.

Q: If elected, what would you do to help address this difficult and complex issue?

A