



Gord Lovegrove Candidate for Council

Question #1 - 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 green house 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: Build more roads! is one idea, but the research suggests that they'll just encourage more driving, more congestion, more noise, more safety problems, and more frustration, not to mention they cost \$20 million/km – that's not smart tax dollar spending – that's a 'tailpipe solution'

We need to look at the whole system – the 'whole bus' so to speak – how about ways to give people more choices so not everyone has to drive? Less cars means less congestion, noise, pollution, crashes! And roundabouts are cheaper and safer than traffic signals, and reduce congestion.

Lets 'complete' our existing communities, put 50% of jobs and services within a 20 minute walk/bike of home – this 50% job/home ratio is what works elsewhere.

Let's get innovative transit programs here – NECO-Pass in Boulder, CO – a U-Pass for residents (like UBCO student U-Pass) has increased transit ridership over 20%, we have done the research to show the same could work in Kelowna.

Active transport networks (bike/walk) take a fraction of the space, cost less to build and maintain, and promote health and well-being – not to mention offering another way to get folks out of their cars.

Moreover, let's take a longer term view, a strategic approach, and start planning for an Okanagan Valley Regional Electric Passenger Rail. Research has been going on for over 10 years at UBC, and makes economic sense as a 20 to 30 year vision – but we need to start planning for it now. It would cost less than \$2 million (yes two million) per kilometer to build, take 30% of cars off the road, be zero emission, using made-in-BC technology and renewables.

These ideas on strategic, system-thinking solutions are NOT expensive tail-pipe solutions. And they will give us more choices and reduce congestion, at lower costs than building more roads.

Question #2 – 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: As someone who has been the victim of crime - both minor and major - this issue hits close to home for my family and I. Even one crime is too much when you are the victim. Criminologists at UBC have developed design techniques, "Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design" (CPTED), that I've had training in and can be applied to reduce crime. Briefly, CPTED looks at controlling three factors: Perpetrator, Victim, and Place (environment).

Perpetrators can be controlled thru patrols and enforcement, but police cannot be everywhere 24/7. Kelowna has great volunteer community patrols to help (my father-in-law is one), but we need more volunteers to help later into the night, especially at 2 am when pubs get out. This is a GREAT way to volunteer – join the RCMP Community Patrol. And keep RCMP resources indexed to Kelowna's population growth.

Everyone can minimize the chances of being a victim by taking reasonable precautions, take self defence courses, stay out of dark alleys, don't leave items on your car seat. I would push our Parks & Recreation Department to offer low-cost, family-friendly self defence programs as part of their membership privileges, for example Karate at Parkinson Rec Cntr.

Environment – how we design our communities – is the most controllable aspect. For example, put a light in that dark alley! I would push for CPTED experts to be more involved. City Park is a concern – how about more solar-powered LED lights at night? More 'eyes on the street' thru more events and buskers in the Park? Is bringing back the Kelowna Aquatic Center a possibility, so we can take back our Park?

Lets use our trusted voices – volunteers, police, academics, residents, businesses – to tackle this complex problem with each of us doing our respective part.

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: Service delivery: Just today I was speaking with a group of farmers having problems getting enough short term housing for their seasonal workers, due to 8 month approval process by City Hall. I will need to find out more on whether this is related to the city's recent AirBnB policy reviews, but certainly more consultation through Public Advisory Committees that include a Council member, staff experts, academic experts, business reps and resident volunteers could help assess and champion such needs quicker than 8 months. Not only would this assist our farmers to meet Kelowna's 100 Mile diet needs, but it would also reduce the cost of government and delays to business.

DCCs: Last week I was speaking to a developer friend who is frustrated by the City's lack of flexibility on assessment and payment timing of DCCs. He would like to see rear loaded payments introduced, which would reduce his financial burden. Subject to legislative requirements, this makes sense. Most infrastructure to service a site is usually not needed until occupancy permit, so why not tie DCC payment to that?

Taxes and fees: Sustainable funding models are needed that take a lifecycle cost (LCC) approach. We each need to pay our fair share, and that means considering all benefits and costs of proposed policies, programs, plans, and developments that we are about to approve and/or offer. For example, let's take traffic lights versus roundabouts at intersections. Initial construction costs are roughly the same, some initial cost due to a bit of extra property at the corners can occur, but is offset with less property needed for medians and left turns at signals. But roundabouts reduce delays and crashes by 75%! Your travel-time savings, and your safety must be accounted for, and LCC would justify a roundabouts first policy for Kelowna.

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: My vision for Kelowna is to continue to implement the strategic plans and policies that your great input - residents, visitors, and businesses - has helped city staff to craft over the past few years. See my website at lovegrovekelowna.ca for more details. One of the most contentious aspects of implementing those plans will of course be tax rates, and, the ratio of commercial vs residential class tax rates. I am

not a proponent of making significant changes to our current tax ratio equation. It has worked to date to promote our thriving economy, why change it? I am a proponent of progressive, proactive and strategic-thinking tax policies that promote a thriving economy and accommodate growth in sustainable development patterns.

Growth provides jobs and a thriving economy. Business owners may not be voters (for example, if not Kelowna residents), but they fuel our economy through services and jobs that our residents and tourists and other businesses rely on to sustain our great Kelowna quality of life. Therefore, if we are to grow – and Kelowna is a destination for retirees as well as for new employees as our businesses and job market grows – we must appreciate the critical role our businesses play and support them.

However, growth also costs money to service and provide infrastructure to support new residents and growing businesses. The question is how to pay for it, are increased taxes the only way? My research and experience suggests that we can accommodate growth without increasing taxes through smarter growth management strategies like the city's growth management strategy scenario 3, which would focus growth in developed neighborhoods. Focused, smarter growth has been shown to use tax dollars more efficiently, raise quality of life, and reduce Lifecycle Costs such that more growth can be accommodated in a sustainable manner.

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 elected officials, your entire city council can be your advocate on matters within its jurisdiction, including policies, plans, programs, bylaws and regulations on such things as housing, land use, taxation, transportation, parks, and crime for example. Regarding matters outside its jurisdiction, or when dealing with agencies outside City Hall, typically, it is your Mayor or designate that must speak for the City, especially to higher levels of regional, provincial, and/or federal government.

For example, just this week our Mayor Basran spoke out at the Union of BC Municipalities conference regarding concerns over the proposed speculation tax, with some innovative ideas and suggestions for the provincial government (i.e. opt-in provisions). It is however, not prudent to speak or act too soon without hearing all the details of any proposed legislation. Rather, my approach is to 'engineer' relationships with our partners in other agencies and levels of government, such that two-way dialogue based on needs – not positions – can take place in a safe, trusted environment. I have found this approach – based on Yuri Fisher's book "Getting to Yes" – to work well in even the most contentious projects that I have worked on in several city halls across BC over my 35 year career as both civil engineering staff and consultant.

On the specifics of the taxes, I have heard that the Speculation tax will only apply to homes left vacant for more than 6 months and of a value greater than \$400,000. If the average Kelowna home is \$700,000 according to our latest statistics, by my math a BC resident would pay 1% or \$3,000 tax per year. If

correct, this \$3,000 could be recovered in less than two months, using the UBC-created happipad.com or some other management agency (e.g. VRBO). We will have more details soon, so stay tuned!

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: We are in final permitting to build our Valley's first certified (BC Energy Step Code level 5, CHBA, CMHC) Net Zero carriage home. We know the implications of this question. Costs either way, but generally, I want ALL construction – NEW and OLD – brought up to snuff, for the benefit of our long term community quality of life. The cost of new construction – that's a developer consideration initially – is passed onto new homebuyers, at 1% a relatively small segment of our community, when most of us can only afford to buy existing, older homes. Lets get it done right now. In both cases tho, the homebuyer (and renters) are the ones footing the ongoing heating bills, not the builders/developers, who will continue to make their mark-up, so long as the legislation applies equally to level the playing field. Lets think about homeowners – the end user – cost over its LIFECYCLE. Over 40% of energy use and GHG emissions come from buildings – including housing. Over the life of a building – its lifecycle - the total cost of power to heat water and space is a far greater burden on homeowners, often \$100's per month. Why not reduce it to near zero and save homeowners the monthly burden; payback periods more than offset the original STEP Code investments within a few years. Do we want to fuel climate change, and the 2% plus hit on our GDP and local economy from flood, drought, fires, extreme weather events? I think not, we need to act now. Grandfathering & incentives work and soften the economic burden of new legislation on existing stock. I would support the provincial and federal push. But they need to work together to reduce bureaucracy, and add incentives (e.g. energy advisor fees) to make it easier for developers large and small!

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: I co-lead UBCO Housing research to support the City's Healthy Housing Strategic Plan, and invited members of the public, industry, city staff and governments to a Housing Research Symposium to address knowledge gaps. It's a very strong plan and I'm excited. But now comes the hard work to follow through on its implementation, from great plans to great actions, and to give you what your City Council promised. We must address issues of the 'missing middle', that housing for young families – among others - who cannot afford single family attached, but must have ground-based access for toddlers to access nearby playgrounds and yards. Empty nesters and seniors who downsize and wish to age in place need infill and ground-oriented smaller units. The sheer cost of new construction, however, can make these types of dwellings expensive to buy, so rental units are also needed. I am working with

the City, Interior Health and Kelowna Intentional Communities, to develop Kelowna's first co-Housing development (see cohousing.org, there are 100's across NA). It will address social isolation, affordability, density, availability, aging-in-place, and diversity all in one shared-economy, community-first model. Moreover, we need to reduce the cost of travel to/from and around Kelowna, which would also improve housing affordability and access to more housing choices.

Actions I would push for:

1. Implement and monitor the success of all parts of the City Housing plans
2. Expedite approval of Kelowna's first co-Housing development demonstration project
3. Expedite the missing middle – ground-based homes using the RU7 zone created by the city's award-winning Baxter Design.
4. Expedite seasonal worker housing approvals to help our farmers supply local food at competitive prices.
5. Push to expedite infill housing in existing neighborhoods, with increases to side and backyard setbacks if needed to preclude privacy invasion of existing neighbors.