



Craig Hostland

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: The problems are real and are not being solved by conventional wisdom or status quo. Communities learned decades ago that building more roads only delays congestion by a few years. We are and remain a car society. To change the end result – grid lock at rush hours, we have to change the way we think and live. We just spent 20 million dollars or more widening hwy 97 to six lanes. There are still long backups at various intersections and it WILL get worse. Is that what we want as a society, to carry on status quo, knowing things will only get worse? I say not.

Solutions to traffic congestion and overuse of vehicles in our daily endeavors will require a lot of creativity as well as attitude adjustment. I would start with the obvious to me, reduce traffic signaled intersections and build more roundabouts instead. There is proof this speeds up traffic and reduces overall cost. I will work with City Staff to connect our outer communities (Crawford, Black mountain, Kettle Valley, etc.) with a more reliable transit system and funnel new road budgets towards common transportation systems that entice ridership. I am captured by UBC programs like U-pass that is proven to increase transit ridership

and reduce the cost of a ticket. The longer term cost effective solution is to build up the job market in the outer communities, install all electric hydrogen rail and improve the network of integrated bike paths, a borrowed vision of Gord Lovegrove, Professor, proven innovator, and also candidate for Council. I will work to focus down to the most cost effective methods of getting cars off the streets at rush hour times in a manner that is enticing to the people of Kelowna. My Civil Engineering background demands it.

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 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: Safety in our community is an important plank in my platform. I want to walk with my family anywhere in Kelowna and feel safe. The change I see over the past few years is the increase in vagrancy, petty theft and break-ins, among others. This is a concern and clearly what is being done is not enough, so resources have to be redirected. I feel that a round table discussion at Council with input from the recent survey will help refocus our efforts towards addressing this problem. The problem will not go away, so we must figure out a way to minimize its impact and reduce its growth. This is a team approach I am eager to be involved in. Clear minds and well thought out cost effective strategies are possible. We will incorporate other Cities' successes and find ways to mimic their methods.

Is the problem the catch and release program that allows perpetrators to be released based on voluntary reporting to court several months later? The legal environment must first of all be stricter. There must be real and immediate consequences for illegal behaviour. Otherwise, Kelowna, one of the most weather friendly Cities in Canada is a magnet. With regard to vagrancy, that is a much deeper problem that requires a collaboration of mental health providers and transition programs, in concert with City police, City officials, and volunteers. The first ever Third Space fund raiser I was at with my wife this past week was a real eye opener as to the extent of human issues and how volunteers are making a positive difference.

Let's put an open public face to this epidemic with the help of community professionals and volunteers, police, academics, residents, and businesses – to tackle this complex problem with each of us doing our 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: The public chooses Council members for various reasons, but there should always be fiscal prudence as an underlying premise. When City Hall begins to run a profit through efficiency gains, right sizing management, and by cutting out excess, then it should only have some discretionary freedom in spending the taxpayer's dollars, not before. I also strongly believe that Government should only fill in municipal needs when a competitive private sector cannot justifiably provide those services. Small business should be the basic economic engine for our community, not Government employment. I will work with council towards strengthening competitive private sector services and focus staff on management and oversight which I am aware they are keenly able to do. The totality of our existing staff is necessary to ensure this focus works cost effectively.

I have been impressed recently with the efforts of City Hall to cut red tape, provide direct services support to public needs, with direct contact initiatives that bring staff to the forefront of problem solving, hopefully with reduced paperwork.

Sustainable funding models require a lifecycle social cost benefit approach. Too many projects are built without a sustainable program that keeps them supporting Municipal initiatives. That is, initiatives are scrutinized to overall value taking into account all aspects of community, beyond mere dollar outlay over long periods of time. For example, I refer to Gord Lovegrove's roundabouts first initiative which I endorse. Initial construction costs are roughly the same, but roundabouts reduce delays and crashes by up to 75%. Travel-time savings, and safety is accounted for in a roundabouts first policy for Kelowna. My PhD paper on the medical system can come in handy exposing opportunities to ring out unsustainable programs and replace them with value added results.

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: I know that when I go shopping and I fill up my car with gas that taxes are a large burden. I know when I remit taxes for my employed Team and for my businesses that large sums are being transferred to Government coffers. I also know high taxes kill business growth and employment. The comparative amount may have an effect on jobs and sustainable living. I will learn the criteria and existing funding model, review with my peers, determine boundaries and options and then decide if there is an unfair tax burden and address it – if I am asked, when on council.

I know that the tax burden on higher earning people and businesses were well more than they are now. I know that well off people and corporations are willing to pay more for their quality of life and optimal business environment, but now with a low business tax regime they need to be won over based on proven methods and results. I will take that into account in my deliberations. As a Professional Engineer of 35 years I am not only well trained in problem solving and gaining best results through modelling and optimization, my business acumen has helped to grow successful businesses that focus on results through careful relationship building no matter the tax level. I look forward to challenges as opportunities to

advance and support better ideas, to build consensus, and to focus on getting Council's agenda completed. That and a tenacity for outcomes will help on this and many other matters that will present themselves during my tenure.

My economics background and training will also be helpful as we work towards taxation solutions that are cost effective and fair and which support economic growth and activity in our City.

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: I see the Mayor's role as providing overall leadership. Whereas council's role is to deliberate and gain consensus on municipal issues put before them so as to direct staff on required actions through the Chief Administrator. In this case, I more see the Mayor take the leadership role on Provincial matters as required or necessary, and that Council provide support in the form of availability, research, and outreach where able.

On behalf of the people of Kelowna, Council can also be a voice for change, a voice of reason, even beyond its borders towards regulations that affect the City, but defer to the Mayor as Leader. For example, how the speculation tax has been implemented directly reflects on the condition of our marketplace as housing sales is a big part of our economic engine. Council should know provincial policy in how it may affect our quality of life and business environment and be reflective of the people who are affected and be satisfied the Mayor reflects the wishes of the general public.

But let's also not lose focus on Council's own priorities and plans to enhance our quality of life by maintaining good governance, being fiscally prudent, while striving to meet our planning goals. We have little direct control over Government policy, but through vehicles such as the Union BC Municipalities, we can lobby for what is best for the City of Kelowna and what is best for BC and Canada and partner with like-minded municipalities to build consensus on issues that face our constituents: out of sight home prices; safety on our streets; traffic congestion; among others noted in the most recent city-wide survey. Personally, I leave it to our Mayor to address Provincial matters and Council to take care of the business of the City of Kelowna.

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: I do not support Government's involvement in the housing market to bring older homes up to the energy standard of today's new homes for practicality and cost reasons. I would leave older home energy retrofits decisions to the private sector with today's ongoing Government and private sector rebates that provide awareness and interest and minor support to those able to facilitate improvement.

As a building science professional Engineer for 35 years, I have an opinion. In a perfect world, all buildings will meet or exceed today's building and energy standards. Those standards are a result of much study and practical knowledge developed over many years and builds. Those standards require thicker walls, deeper attics, a preparation for additional future connection to solar, and a lot more money for materials and labour that don't directly transmit into older homes without extensive renovation (even demolition) at much higher cost.

Building code upgrades are based on long term best practices with an eye towards future energy costs and future energy types. The changes do not reflect short term cost effectiveness which drives the housing market. It is not for Government to dictate how older homes are to be improved. It is for Government to lay out a cost benefit proposal towards sustainable energy based upgrading, but they will be unable to do so, as one does not exist at this time within the timeline of typical home ownership.

I just finished building a new home and I am well aware of the new energy standards versus even standards set just a few years ago. I paid a significant premium to meet those new code requirements that will not pay off for 20 years. Having to do them, rather than wanting to do them sticks a bit in my craw.

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: Housing affordability is a critical issue in our City and forms a major emphasis in my run for Councillor along with the work Council and staff has done to date on the City's Healthy Housing Strategic Plan. From my business I find well too many people living adhoc in suites (basements, etc.) poorly developed for quality of life. Those limited by financial means are even more enveloped on unhealthy/ unsafe environments.

Being able to live and work in Kelowna is a blessing. Living environments should be safe and healthy and provide a positive outlook on our City. People are being crammed into smaller and smaller spaces or into poorly conceived illegal rental spaces. The City promised to help alleviate illegal suites, but the latest versions of suite development bylaws are onerous and difficult to undertake and expensive in relation to owner skillsets and potential income. We have also seen too many acquaintances that have ceased to rent because of the onerousness placed on tenant rights and owner obligations. Somewhere in the middle, is a happy medium of content owners and tenants. On Council we review these conditions and move forward in a more sustainable way.

We will also reduce the tenancy overload with affordable resale housing. That will require densification and continuance beyond the RU-7 zoning that will combine health and harmony with the facts of today's

economic condition. The densification requirements leads into the SMARTer housing vision of Gord Lovegrove who is wholly inclined in this area. It will address social isolation, affordability, density, availability, and family structure diversity all in one shared-economy, community model. My professional background and focus will help to cull out the least beneficial options so we can focus on the prime solution contenders. I will work for feasible solutions and timely results.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak to these and other issues.