



Dustin Sargent

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: First of all I believe its important to understand the limitations placed directly on the city staff and engineering departments by the Ministry of Transportation who are in control of the main hwy thoroughfares and surrounding 1 block streets that intersect our community. I would be looking to ensure that there is fluid means of communication with the MOT for not only our signage but long term goals laid out in the OCP regarding overdue overpass planning construction and starting with a connection from Central Green to the Downtown City Center.

My pie in the sky dream however would be to see seasonal E.V. public transportation running from downtown to the airport along the rails and trails path. I always felt that corridor passing from our waterfront by Prospera Stadium, Apple Bowl, Shopping Malls and all the way to our University then Airport was and is destined for greater things.

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: I would like to see pocketed tax initiatives for a lower variable ratio rate created to attract more and healthy businesses to some of the less desirable areas. I am also an advocate for satellite RCMP or City offices to these areas of Kelowna. Also to continue to work with the different B.I.A. to ensure their allocated funding to help ensure stay focused on cleanliness and security.

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: I believe I would be asking the uncomfortable questions at the heart of what the red tape is and explore needless regulations, paperwork and undue or duplicate processes. Some of which extend beyond city staff but are still granted city funds.

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: The variable tax rate is another example of an older speculated provincial government exercise that is in constant flux with different tax brackets and changing economic conditions. Although municipalities have been granted the authority to set variable tax rates, I believe in fare transparent communication with community stakeholders needs to take place. If elected I would welcome the

opportunity to work with and understand the current conditions of our business community to have the most up to date information at hand before engaging in type of ratio related tax discussions.

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: The speed and research to which these proposed upper level taxes are parachuted into communities needs to slow down! If using a word like speculation isn't tell I don't know what is. We need to mend the communication between the different levels of changing government and our non-partisan municipalities. Starting with having a consistent message from our mayor and council to address our business communities needs. We need to work as a unit delivering one message. Slow down and work with us.

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: No. I can't say that I could support an initiative for bringing historical housing stock up to today's efficiency standards and increased new home construction costs. This doesn't mean however that should you apply for a major renovation permit you shouldn't be held accountable to today's standards.

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: Encourage multi-unit development and continue to encourage development of rental units by increasing the rental housing grants. Encourage urban infill with grants and remove barriers to increase and expedite diverse housing options for builders.