



## Loyal Wooldridge 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:** It's clear we need a mix of varying transportation initiatives to lessen the frustration of a strained road network while managing future **tax** increases. With 13% of the 10-year capital plan allocated to transportation infrastructure (majority of which is currently unfunded), it must be recognized that any significant road improvements within the current funding system will affect taxes. Our multi-faceted efforts regarding transportation must allow residents to move through the city in a safe, reliable, efficient and cost-effective manner. With 33% of residents preferring to maintain current infrastructure and maintain current property taxes and with 29% keen to expand or improve services (with an increase to property tax) we must prioritize high-benefit projects in a balanced funding approach to improve the lives of residents. The following action items are part of my election platform:

- Review & refine current road assets to maximize life span or schedule improvements to increase performance through Asset Management Analysis.

- Collaborate with the development community and the Province of BC to build new infrastructure in outlying areas with a development based Transportation Upgrade Strategy.
- Reduce strain on current routes through advocating for an alternative arterial route in the North End (ie. Clement)
- Determine the best way to improve congested intersections long term with upgrades such as roundabouts and intelligent transportation technology systems that will improve traffic flow and reduce delays to drivers.
- Work with the Province of BC to regulate ride sharing while ensuring taxi companies receive equal opportunity to compete.
- Increase transit ridership to improve the pay-for-service model and reduce property tax-subsidized costs using GPS tracking ridership data to re-calibrate rapid transit schedules.
- Advocate the provincial government and Okanagan region municipalities to maintain long-haul bus service to small towns and rural areas.

## 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:** People are not feeling safe in our community. Contributing to this challenge has been the lack of funding from provincial and federal government partners and uncoordinated support resources for those who authentically need support and help. Criminals have seen this as a prime opportunity to prey on the vulnerable population which has perpetuated drug use and overall crime. There is no 'silver bullet' fix, but numerous immediate actions and long-term strategies can be implemented to increase safety in Kelowna:

- Firm prosecution for high-level criminals preying on the vulnerable.
- Exclusion of high level criminals from varying city areas while on parole or after prosecution to limit impact on those with low resiliency.
- Justice for victims and rehabilitation of offenders for low level infractions can be addressed with Restorative Justice. Using a Community Court (comprised of business, enforcement, social and community leaders) offenders can be held accountable for their actions. Retribution through community service provides purpose and an opportunity to be triaged through coordinated rehabilitation services.
- Crime lurks in darkness; foot traffic and lighting discourages criminal activity. Crime Prevention by Environmental Design draws foot traffic to previously contentious areas and improved lighting to areas like City Park. Entrepreneurial concepts like temporary food vendors and art markets attract volumes of people deterring criminal activity.
- De-centralize shelter and support services from downtown. Use the Housing First strategy to build dormitory style shared accommodations WITH supportive wrap around services throughout the city.
- Work with the RCMP on an app style reporting model for non-emergency nuisance/crime. Patrols and focus can be placed on recurring hot spots.

- A Peer Clean Up Crew with lived/living experience homeless population to aide in daily clean-up of parks and streets.
- Advocate the province to distribute cannabis taxation to fund addiction rehabilitation & social services.

### 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:** Services offered by the City must be reviewed on a consistent basis to ensure that the maximum benefit is being realized by the community and that dollars and time are not wasted. As in business, it is crucial to analyze all budget items to ensure services are still relevant and every dollar is being maximized to its full potential. I would support, similar to other municipalities, a set review schedule (2-5 years) created to audit and recalibrate services to best meet the needs of the community. It's important to note that, as we continue to grow as a municipality, the needs for services will increase – we must make sure that these services are as relevant and cost effective as possible. Transparency is key in communicating new initiatives or job positions within the City that improve processes (ie. Planners and Permitting) so taxpayers are clear where their tax dollars are allocated. I support continued DCC grants for purpose built development (ie rental/affordable housing) to meet the growing demands as we welcome more residents to Kelowna. Through consultation with private enterprise partners, the City is best able to coordinate its efforts based on the needs of today.

### 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:** We must ensure a careful balance. Our capital investments must meet the needs of one of the fastest growing municipalities in BC and must address the needs of businesses and residential owners. There are specific services that some use and others do not. For example, school tax when you don't have children, or snow removal when you live in a strata or perhaps the library that you don't use. As we reach for affordability in housing we must be conscious that further distribution to residential property taxation will ultimately affect personal living costs. This community is a collective that supports one another and we want to live in a place that is safe, clean and well connected. Determining this ratio should be a transparent process through public consultation so taxpayers could provide feedback on the services they are receiving. In my experience, people don't mind paying for services that directly affect them. As we coordinate the voices of our business community and invest in services needed to enhance business, these costs will be shared amongst all taxpayers, residential and business combined.

## 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 collective governing body, it is our responsibility to ensure higher levels of government are advised on the concerns of our residents with alternative solutions to challenges we are trying to solve. Nobody likes to pay tax for something that offers little value to them. Although the City is a 'child of the provincial government' it is our duty to collaborate with like-minded municipal leaders and advocate the provincial and federal government to find solutions that work for everyone. In instances where specific regions bear the burden of taxation, it would be my position to advocate that these funds are returned to that municipality to address the specific concern they have been created for (ie. Speculation Tax to fund affordable housing). In instances where a higher level of government's decision can't be changed we must advocate for the fair distribution of funds or services to our city so businesses receive maximum benefit.

## 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:** Our environment is the most important asset that we must maintain while balancing attainability of housing for residents. We know that old technology and building practices earlier than 1985 (similar to automobiles) use more energy and waste resources. Fundamentally, the Energy Step Code makes sense and the majority of actions have currently been implemented by builders since a change to the BC Building code approximately 4 years ago which increased overall soft costs \$8K-\$12K (1-2%) per home. In contrast, the Province could incentivize homeowners to upgrade the energy efficiency of their older homes to maximize consumption. For example, awareness of consumption could be increased with mandatory 'blow tests' on conveyancing of home sales, similar to a home inspection. This would allow purchasers to have knowledge of what upgrades could increase efficiency and savings (i.e. weather stripping, windows etc.) Incentive versus regulation allows for flexibility to minimize the impact of housing attainability for the end user. There must be a careful balance to ensure the private sector, is incentivized to build much needed housing inventory and also for homeowners of older properties that leak far more energy than new builds. As we reach higher to energy efficiency the incentives to the end user must ensure an appropriate return on investment is realized for their commitment to the environment.

## 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:** We know the demand on housing will only increase as we welcome 50,000 more residents to Kelowna in coming years. Varying types of inventory will be required to accommodate family sizes, investment levels while minimizing our impact on the natural environment. With average single-family homes costing \$650,000 and new builds \$1.1M it's clear expectations for our definition of 'housing' needs to shift to the modern era. 'The Missing Middle' concept of infill housing options provides a more compact footprint, reduced strain on our transportation infrastructure and pricing attainability. We must focus development to core urban cores close to services, transportation and business areas so residents can live work and play conveniently. With a rental vacancy rate of less than .2% further incentives should be given to purpose built rental buildings to encourage development in this sector. As we enhance the Official Community Plan and zonings attention must be focused on pre-zoning a large enough amount of land to mitigate significant land value increases, like we have seen with our current RU7 four-plex model. Actions I support are:

- Pre-zone 'Missing Middle' land to increase housing inventory supply in identified urban centers.
- Reduce builder costs for purpose built rental near urban centers and transit with parking requirement concessions.
- DCC offset grants for purpose built rentals in urban centers.
- Co-housing and tiny home concepts to increase density and maximize land use.
- Developing an Affordable Land Strategy to acquire land for supportive and affordable rental housing.
- Advocating for provincial government funding to build supportive/below market rental units
- Fund Affordable Land Strategy with taxation earned on local Short Term Rentals