



Luke Stack

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: I have always supported the north-end connector from Spall to Highway 33. The current plan calls this "the Highway 33 extension." It should be noted that this very expensive roadway is in the long term road plan, but it has never been funded. Putting a road into the plan and finding funding to build that new road are two very different things. The key to advancing this important road extension will be to get the Province and Federal Government to fund the majority of the construction as a highway extension. This is where the real work needs to take place to build this important artery.

The major road improvement just completed is the John Hindle Drive connection from Glenmore to UBC. I have long supported this initiative and I am excited to see it finally completed. The cost of this road was \$11.7 million dollars. This was shared by the City, The Province and the Federal Government.

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: Each year the City expands the RCMP Police Force and Fire Department. In my last term 16 RCMP and 12 Firefighters were added to City staff (as well as many support workers.) I will continue to support the expansion of "Protective Services" provided we keep this within reasonable tax increases. Each RCMP officer added to the force costs taxpayers \$173,000 per annum. If the City wants to add 6 new RCMP, the cost will be close to \$1 million per year. Currently, approximately 1/3 of total property taxation goes to protective services. We need to continue to grow these departments, but it must keep in step with City growth and ability to pay.

I also supported the addition of new By-law officers this last year. They were added specifically to help keep order in the downtown core. Council also established the PACT team. This is where an RCMP officer is teamed up with a mental health nurse to deal with people in a mental health crisis. All of this was done to improve the safety and livability of down town.

Finally, I have supported the work of the Journey Home task force. They have the challenging job of establishing a new back-bone organization to address the complicated issues of drug abuse, mental health, law and order and homelessness. I believe this is our best strategy moving forward.

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: Generally I think the "cut red tape" to solve our financial challenges is a convenient myth. Candidates love to throw this challenge out to incumbents. The truth is that Kelowna was named the top place to open a business by the Canadian Federation of Independent Business in 2018. The City consistently wins awards for its budgeting process and execution of the annual budget. Kelowna taxes are consistently below the "average" taxes paid in comparable sized cities in BC. The City is doing well.

Kelowna has been the fastest growing City in Canada in recent years. We have a booming business and agricultural sector. The expansion of UBCO, Okanagan College, Interior Health and the Kelowna International Airport are testament to the ever expanding economy. The reality is that this level of growth places a strain on City services. What I hear most from people is that Kelowna needs to add more services, expand parks, add recreation facilities and improve roads and pathways. All of these initiatives take money. I have supported annual tax increases to help fund these requests and I would

suggest that, whomever gets elected to represent the City, they too will be increasing taxation in the term to come. Should Council remain vigilant? – of course it should; but the main message I hear is that the citizens feel they get pretty good bang for the tax buck and that they want more services – sooner than later please!

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 have always supported a business tax ratio of close to 2:1. This is far less than the 3:1 ratio many City's place on business. I believe in keeping business taxes low and I am proud of the fact that Kelowna leads many communities in this.

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: Mayor and Council have a role to play by communicating effectively with senior levels of government on municipal concerns. Building relationships with elected officials, Ministers and senior government employees is the key to this success.

A great example of this relationship building took place by the Mayor and Council this last term. Mayor and Council made a strong case for upgrading domestic water services in East Kelowna. Through heavy lobbying, and building a strong case, Kelowna secured \$55.9 million dollars in grants to help pay for this needed infrastructure. To put this in perspective this is almost ½ of the total amount of annual property taxes collected for the City in one year.

Whining and complaining about other levels of government may make one feel good, it might even get your name in the media - but it does not accomplish much. To get things done three things are needed: Building solid relationships; establishing a strong business case; and thirdly - strategic timing. Mayor and Council need to identify the right issues to take forward to senior levels of government at the right time. If all of these three things align: relationships; good business case and good timing, then impressive results can be achieved.

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. It is clear to me that this Provincial policy to implement the Step code is well underway. I could see the timing of some of the recommended changes could be reviewed and modified, but I would not support stopping its implementation.

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 have made promoting affordable housing a life-long challenge:

1. I would continue to implement Housing objectives at the City that encourage affordable and attainable housing. These includes incentives like funding the "Housing Opportunity Fund." This is funded each year to help offset some of the costs of DCC on purpose built rental housing.
2. The City of Kelowna has streamlined the secondary suite process so that rezoning is no longer required. I supported this policy.
3. I will encourage Kelowna City Council to consider simplifying the Carriage Home rezoning process to make the process faster and more efficient.
4. I will continue to support the City purchasing strategic properties that can be used as an incentive to encourage purpose built rental housing.
5. I will continue to support the Kelowna administration team that oversees the issuance and monitoring of building permits.
6. I support new OCP strategies to move Kelowna toward a more multi-family urban City. Smaller and more urban units (especially town homes) are less expensive to build and will help toward making homes more affordable.
7. I have supported, and will continue to support, property tax incentives to encourage preferred housing types in the City.
8. I have supported and will continue to support modifications to zoning bylaws that make the development of new infill housing more achievable.

*Thank you for the opportunity to share my views,
Luke Stack*