



Mark Boyer 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 would like to see the left turn at Abbott Street eliminated with a double left turn onto Water Street. There should only be right turns onto and off of Abbott Street.

All other current intersections at Harvey Avenue should left turn arrows in all directions. This would help move traffic along and decrease intersection accidents. The left turn light at Dilworth needs to be synched with the lights on Enterprise to prevent the current backups.

With the location of the Tolko plant there will always be large truck traffic through the city. If possible a ring road around the city should be looked at but the local terrain and road structure would require expropriation with a large road corridor dividing neighbourhoods. Having a safe and viable through way on the west side to Vernon would probably make the most sense.

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 think we have seen that large shelters only attract large groups, the size of shelters should be limited with restrictions on how close they can be located to each other. Regular By-Law and RCMP foot patrols are needed.

A system of recognition/information is needed as another tool for use by the RCMP. There are individuals roaming the streets at night, usually dressed in black on BMX bikes with no lights. Stopping them and finding out who they are and recording that information could be handy when there is a theft, vandalism or fire in the area. It could also record those who are in obvious need of mental health.

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: Costs go up and so does the cost of running a city. I believe that the front line workers for the city know where the waste is and can help in cutting costs. More common sense needs to be used in some of the decision making. I believe there could be some cases where “one stop shopping” at City Hall can happen. There have been what I feel are disturbing comments from City Hall regarding city property and services, these need to be addressed.

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: A 3:1 ratio seems a fair number for the services that businesses do use directly or indirectly. Again it comes down to the efficient use of resources the city has at its disposal. In actuality business owners do get to vote, the business itself doesn't. Other than the school tax and garbage collection portion a business does use a lot of city services.

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: Dealing with the Provincial and Federal Governments is part of doing business.

In dealing with the homeless, addiction and mental health issues which do tie heavily into the areas of those two governments will require a lot of work. City Hall also needs to form good relationships with the local Indigenous Bands with help in those regards as well.

A lot of businesses are paying part of the MSP premiums so I look at it as a wage increase for those who work for or close to minimum wage. It will increase the employees spending power helping everyone.

The speculation tax in my opinion was rushed. Everyone has seen what offshore home speculation has done to the house market in Vancouver and other parts of the lower mainland. I think penalizing Canadians from other parts of the country for owning property in BC is wrong. I believe a tax in flipping property above and beyond the Capital Gains Exemption is probably the better way to go.

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 think that any incentive program from the Federal and Provincial Governments are great ideas. That being said I have also seen where initiatives to conserve water has resulted in Cities seeing a shortfall in their water revenues causing them to increase rates.

Individual homeowners will ultimately make that decision based on their ability to keep pace with energy rates.

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: This is a national problem that seems to get ignored until election time. There needs to be affordable housing for seniors and those trying to survive on minimum wage. When development plans are proposed the priority should be on affordable housing first before the grand homes are built. Street

design should be such that mass transit can be added to the community and not discarded later because the infrastructure can't support it.

There are initiatives coming to help ease the shortage but it is slow in coming. The City may very well have to become a landlord to ensure that people have a roof over their heads.