



## Ryan Donn 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:** A few terms ago Kelowna City Council of the time removed Hwy 97/Clement extension from the DCC plan in order to maintain the total DCC budget rather than expand it due to growing costs. I understand this was done to keep taxation lower but I believe that was a mistake that we now need to untangle. It's a disheartening stat that we only have \$220 of a \$450 million transportation plan funded. Grant funding will now be needed to make it happen. Transportation will also require a multi-pronged approach. In the next term Councillor will be asked to vote on over 7000 extra hours of transit which will also be an important aspect of getting around. In 2016 we launched the new City of Kelowna Transportation Master Plan process. The new plan will help map out our next steps. In a perfect world the next council will be able to get \$100 million in grants towards moving our community around. If we are successful we still have to come up with our 1/3rd of the costs from City funding. During this election my hope is to ask and clearly hear from the public and interest groups how they want the next city council to deal with this reality. If we want infrastructure and we hit the jackpot and get grants we still need more taxation funding. It was interesting to hear the Past President from the Chamber of Commerce note in his

announcement for Mayor state that he wanted this road but also complained about taxes. I'd be open to hear how it's possible to raise the \$30 million needed if we got \$70 million in grants without raising taxes. We have a difficult choice to make on this topic in the next few years.

## 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 its fair to say that everyone is concerned about any level of crime in our community. Interestingly crimes rates against people have dropped about 12% in the last three years while property crime such as bike/car theft has gone up about 20%. I personally feel that illegal drug activity and addiction are playing a substantial role in the property crime issue. If re-elected I'd advocate for six action items .

1. Hire more RCMP funded through the current annual RCMP operating surplus. Doubling the PACT team that pairs a nurse with an RCMP officer. We need to focus on a "foot patrol" model of service in Kelowna. This will require a new Downtown Enforcement Unit is fully staffed.
2. Advocate for more drug rehab programs so we are reducing the root cause. We have an embarrassingly low availability of drug rehab programs in the Central Okanagan.
3. This may seem like a pivot but I believe this is a key issue so I will also continue to advocate for West Kelowna counterparts to hire more RCMP. Currently Kelowna has roughly 1 RCMP for every 700 citizens while West Kelowna has 1 RCMP for every 1400.
4. As we see areas negatively effected by crime we need to not only focus on enforcement but also focus on positively animating our public spaces. Did you know that Parks Alive! started as a way to increase the positive animation of our parks?
5. There has also been some work done recently looking at the option of adding a community court in Kelowna for those who plead guilty to crimes. I think this is a step in the right direction and hope to see it happen in the next year or two.

## 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'd be honest about our reality. Lets use park development as an example those specific costs have risen 20% in the past three years. So the city has a choice to either reduce our plans (as happened in 2008/2009 with the HWY 97 Extension). Using the parks example I think reducing the plans to ensure that we only match inflation isn't what the public want. Mind you raising our budget 20% also isn't the option. In Kelowna we have always chosen to balance those realities and for the past few years have landed at 3.0-3.5 %. For me though I would point out that we are in the lower 30th percentile for our overall taxation costs. I do think we need to maintain our current tax trajectory to ensure we are adding to

our level of service while prudently cutting what we don't need. Our DCC rates are now on an annual renewal or review vs longer gaps. Costs are rising and so will DCC's but I feel we are balancing those needs well in Kelowna. We may need to reduce our expectations for park development in this case if we can't fund it. One idea that City council in the next term will look at is a Park Development DCC. I believe that UDI and other groups are currently in discussions with city staff about this potential. One way to streamline the development process more is to have a few more planning staff. We got hit hard this past year with the additional work from record development numbers and complicated new regulations such as cannabis and short term rentals.

#### 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 get yearly awards from, CFIB, the main business lobby in the province saying we have the most friendly tax rates for the balance of business and residential, open for business, and lower levels of red-tape. One of the few areas that we need to get better is that our business license is still not online. This is truly embarrassing. For all of our talk about being a tech savvy city this shows our hypocrisy. It's unacceptable that we use up business owners time to come to city hall when the technology exists for them to do it online. Kelowna will keep this "open for business" designation regardless of who is on council. The Chamber of commerce is a guiding hand (also called a lobby group) in ensuring this and that is something you should be proud of. I'm not sure if you are aware but 10 minutes after your past president announced for Mayor you sent this question to every council candidate. I don't think the timing was a coincidence or out of step. It's part of our community conversation. The Chamber lobbied for a significant increase to services downtown over the past few years. Those services need to be paid for by taxation. Businesses have a strong voice in Kelowna. It is in a state of constant rebalancing.

#### 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:** My goal is to be effective. Secondly my goal is often to be quiet about it and not take credit for individual action as that takes away from the "council as a whole" best practice but it's an election so here goes. Here is what I did on March 17th, 2018. I'm passionate about demystifying government for everyone so I had worked with our MLA to (on my own expense) travel to Victoria to shoot two videos so we could understand how our provincial government works. It was a great time hanging out with Norm Letnick and he was a gracious host. As someone who builds relationships with those who we need to know in the government I also sent an email to Andrew Weaver saying I was in town. At the end

of the day with our MLA he welcomed me and gave me a quick tour of their new offices. We spoke about a number of initiatives and then we had a chance to speak about the Speculation tax for a few moments. I'll keep this story short but basically everything we talked about regarding the speculation tax and some unintended consequences was front page news in BC the next day as Weaver noted my comments to Horgan in the legislature. My goal is to be effective. I'm good at building relationships with any political leanings at any level of government. This past provincial election we went from knowing everyone in government to knowing no-one. Having me on city council will only strengthen the depths of our relationships across the spectrum of politics provincially and federal as I'm not a member of any political party and I value my independence.

### 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:** The Step code is going to be mandatory by 2030. It was a provincial policy brought in by the BC liberals and is now up to municipalities to implement their own local solution. We need to build up our ability to actually do the work and the idea of going from step 1 to step 5 in a few short years isn't good for business. Other communities will have more labour who specializes in this. While it may have more costs upfront those savings are passed onto the home owners long term. Authentically I also should note that I voted for the staff recommendation that others voted to defer so I feel that states my option clearly and honestly. So while we may not have the home builders association agree with me on that vote I know my value to the community at council is broader than one vote that one industry disagrees with.

### 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:** Supply is one of the best mechanisms that governments can support to increase the affordability of our community. Our infill challenge was an amazing example of working with industry to create practical ways to add infill to our community. Our DCC offset grants are now at \$500,000 and we have been able to allow 3000 rental units in this term. While the offset grants are supposed to be temporary I think they need to be permanent and the sunset clause of 3% needs to be removed so that even when there is 4% vacancy we are still adding to the rental supply. The city has a new Healthy housing strategy that we will be implementing over the next term. We will also be approving an update to the Official community plan. I believe that we need to look at the rental only zoning as a way to add a density bump. So for example lets say the maximum storeys allows in a property is 3. I think the new rental only zoning should be an overlay zoning that allows developers to build 4-5 with staff support if they shift to a rental only zoning. In order for our community to be

more sustainable we need to have some hard discussions about the wages we are paying our staff. The new minimum wage will be at \$15 during the next term and the effect is going to mostly be felt by those currently paying \$17 for much more skilled jobs. I do expect that our rental rates will start to level off over the next four year and perhaps even drop from the crushing increases that they have experienced. On another note maybe I'll get some new ideas at the "Future City" conference later this October.

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