



## Tom Dyas Candidate for Mayor

### 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:** Traffic congestion on Hwy 97, Enterprise and Springfield Roads as well as commutes from Upper to Lower Mission, Glenmore and other areas is one of my main concerns. The current council has made little to no progress on these major issues in the past few years. As Mayor, I will ensure this is once again a top priority and progress is swift and substantive. We need to make up ground for the lack of attention in recent years and ensure our City has the road capacity for the existing population and expected growth.

Relieving traffic congestion and improving road safety is not only vital for our residents and visitors but also for business owners and workers to improve prosperity and reduce stress. The costs associated

with congestion are considerable both in time, money, stress and general well-being. It is time we do better and put our focus back into creating better roadways both short term and long term.

The much studied, and much promised, North End Connector (truck bypass) has been shelved by the current council and this is unacceptable. A bypass route around Kelowna can no longer be ignored and we need to move forward to select the best route to help ease congestion from other routes. In addition, we need to consider a second crossing of Lake Okanagan for the safety of all our citizens.

In the long run we need to consider an above ground light rapid transit system from various regions of the city to downtown. Although costly for construction this method of transportation would do a great deal to decrease the number of single occupied automobiles and allow transportation to and from downtown quickly and affordably. Most motorists will not support public transport until it is cheaper, quicker or safer.

## 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:** As an original task force member of the Journey Home Project, I have been very involved in these discussions from the start. I have a good understanding of the many complex issues and have established strong relationships with many of the agencies involved. Unfortunately, I do feel this committee should have involved elected officials and more business owners whom are directly affected by the environment in the downtown core. Therefore, as per my election platform, I WILL actively consult those directly affected. This is my style, my reputation and the key leadership difference and strength that I offer voters.

As Mayor, I will ensure solutions are found to create a safer, healthier, more vibrant downtown by addressing issues through consultation of all agencies and parties involved. I believe that strong leaders get personally involved, just as I have in the downtown homelessness and safety issues. It is vitally important to me to be involved, gain the knowledge first hand and not rely only on second hand reports. I will read all the material, obtain a variety of perspectives and harness the collective intelligence for the best solutions to problems.

From my personal involvement, I recognize the long-term importance of the work of Journey Home Task Force but believe some shorter-term action was not addressed. We need to:

- Reintroduce and re-establish an Integrated community court to deal with criminals
- Lobby governments for the reactivation of the auxiliary policing program which previously provided up to an additional 80 individuals to help secure our streets
- Re-establish the meetings with BC Housing, RCMP, the City, Interior Health, and community representation that the city walked away from six months ago
- Align key agencies to support victims and people suffering from mental illness.

## 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:** Tax increases – accountability for value delivered

Being business friendly means less bureaucracy, express services, easy to do business with and integration of online accessibility for licensing requirements by the City.

As Mayor, I would task staff with process improvement and set specific targets to reduce waste. There are many 'lean' type best practices. Less processing time and more efficiency means more tax dollars available for infrastructure, roadways, affordable housing projects, homeless care, bike paths, music in the park, etc.

A unified vision needs to be incorporated throughout the entire organization; feeling good about achieving meaningful efficiency goals. I have a great vision for a well managed City and a place that City workers feel proud to work and are appreciated for their contributions. Everyone working toward a common goal for the betterment of the community.

It takes strong, positive, experienced, leadership and I have a proven track record in business, sports teams, community initiatives and political processes. I roll up my sleeves and lead by example; I don't delegate to staff and walk away.

City tax has increased an average of 3.5% per year over the last four years and are above cost of living. I believe that tax payers and citizens are not clear why these increases along with the increases in property values are justified. Did tax payers get good value for these increases? What did we receive for this?

- Additional Administration Costs?
- More Crime?
- More Homelessness?
- More Congestion?
- Fewer Family Amenities?
- Senior services?
- What did our agriculture industry get?
- Higher Development Charges?
- Longer processing times?

We need to do better. As Mayor, I will bring leadership and focus to these areas to ensure good value for our tax dollar. I will insist on it.

## 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 would like to take a broader view rather than committing to a random ratio of commercial vs. residential taxes. The overall health and prosperity of a City is partially based on people having good paying jobs. High employment rates, with good wages to support a good standard of living. Jobs come from business and in Kelowna most of our employment comes from small to medium sized businesses. So as Mayor and Council, one of our key jobs is to ensure that Kelowna attracts and retains good business.

One of the key factors in having good business in your City is to have a very competitive business tax base to allow business to flourish, create more jobs, invest more in equipment and assets, etc. As a result of business prosperity, the City benefits overall from better employment, more tax revenue and more dollars to re-invest into community services.

So as Mayor, I will ensure whichever tax model we use it is attractive to businesses, competitive and provides good value for all citizens.

Entrepreneurship, small business and innovation are at the core of our economic and social well-being. As Mayor, my vision and goals are to create a vibrant community with economic and lifestyle prosperity. That starts with having the best business and employment environment in Canada! Several years ago, our City was focused on this goal and achieved it! Recently, we have lost our way somewhat, lost our vision, focus and cohesiveness.

My extensive experience with Chamber policies and business have provided me with an incredible passion and determination to create a healthy and prosperous Kelowna, which starts with a healthy job market and a supportive business environment.

Keeping commercial taxes fair and equitable will provide that supportive business environment required by all to grow and prosper.

## 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:** In my Chamber of Commerce roles as Policy Chair, two-consecutive term President and ten years as a Director, I have championed many issues on behalf of the Business community.

I recently championed the Kelowna Chamber's opposition to the real estate speculation tax and continue to press for this tax to be abandoned. As Mayor, my efforts to persuade government not to move forward on this tax will substantially increase and I will ensure Kelowna will be heard. Working in conjunction with our neighbouring communities, to help strengthen our position and affect position change, I have built many relationships with both Provincial and Federal Government policy makers and politicians. I have earned the respect and trust required to effect change by leveraging these relationships.

As Mayor, I will continue to work with all levels of government to enact only policies that are in our community's best interest. Taxes that hurt the economy, small business, or residents are not in our best interest. Both the speculation tax and the employers' health tax are policies that negatively impact small businesses, the trades they employ, and the economy of Kelowna and our province. I am on record for opposing both suggested taxes and am working hard with the Provincial Government to reconsider their position. As Mayor, I would immediately begin discussions with the province on both taxes as I am familiar with the appropriate members of government to contact. My wish is that both taxes are dismissed, and current provincial policy makers truly understand the far-reaching negative impact of these misconstrued taxes.

#### 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 am supportive of working in collaboration with industry professionals to ensure that City of Kelowna has an increase stock of affordable and accessible housing. I have spoken with members of the construction and development industry who have been working with various municipal representatives regarding the Step Code. Detailed costing analysis has been completed to show the impact of the Step Code on Okanagan housing. The general sentiment is that implementing the Step Code would add costs to housing for negligible benefit in energy efficiency, especially since with the current Building Code requirements, new housing is already fairly energy efficient. The general feeling is that there is much more opportunity to bring older, existing housing stock up to higher standards of energy efficiency and those are some of the recommendations that both groups put forward to the municipalities. Personally, I would first like to see municipalities adopt this in step with each other rather than have different standards in different municipalities. I have also heard from some constituents that believe that it would be better to simply wait for the changes to be implemented into the Building Code.

## 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:** Attainable housing for both rental and ownership are key issues that as Mayor, I want to personally be involved with and ensure I work alongside with UDI, CHMC, OMRED and other key stakeholders to collaborate and find made-in-Kelowna solutions. Kelowna is known for its high cost of living and the ratio of income to cost of housing is one of the worst across the country. We need to have better a supply of affordable, attainable housing built to accommodate our community needs and ensure Kelowna continues to attract dynamic businesses with higher wages.

CMHC reported in 2016, the average rent for 2-bedroom condo in Kelowna was \$1066.00 and now in September 2018, it is reported at \$1520.00. According to reports, the average cost of a 2-story home in Kelowna now costs in excess of \$700,000.00, an increase of over 5% from 2017.

Much of our workforce is trying to survive on the minimum wage of \$12.65; making it very difficult to find quality housing, pay for food, transportation and the basics for a healthy life.

I have been actively involved in community-based committees and fought on behalf of our community with regard to the speculation tax. I have engaged with the Journey Home Task Force to find short- and long-term solutions to the housing crisis.

Urban development in our downtown core is important, but as projects are running at \$700 per sq. ft. to purchase, most are attainable for new home owners. Areas of the City that have been somewhat ignored for development; Uptown Rutland and Glenmore for example would be more cost effective due to the lower development costs.

City Hall needs to ensure it does not add undue costs, regulation, permitting and additional red tape; but instead work with the development community to find solutions through transparent communication.