

2022 MAYOR/Council Candidate Questionnaire - Colin Basran Response

Thank you for your email and the questionnaire! I appreciate every opportunity to provide some insight into how things work, and what we are doing about our challenges.

Here is the response. Please confirm once you receive it :)

Kindly,

Colin.

1. Should all sectors have affordable housing and permanent rental stock, or should one or two sectors be designated for rentals and designed for low income no income people?

There should be a diversity of housing types in all areas of our community.

2. Should all neighborhoods have small complex care housing as has been suggested by research?

Yes, all neighbourhoods should have a diversity of housing types. Complex care should be smaller in scale and dispersed throughout the City and the region. Neighbouring municipalities should also have social supports in place and not leave it to Kelowna to provide it all. West Kelowna, Vernon and Penticton are all willing to do their part as they too are experiencing significant social issues on their streets. This is not a Kelowna only issue.

3. One of our members was advised that in March 2023, the Ministry of Social Development & Social Innovation office will be moving from Dilworth Drive to the old CIBC building across from the Petro Canada on the corner of Dougall Road South and Highway 33. This has sparked concerns that community safety will be put further at risk as the population of repeat offenders and transients will increase even further and we have already seen a large increase over the last year. What actions would you take to ensure that residents are informed of matters that affect community safety in the area?

City Council is not aware of or involved in the day to day operational decisions made by the many provincial ministries that operate in Kelowna.

In this particular instance, I was informed by the Uptown Rutland Business Association and worked with them to try and get information and advocate to ensure proper measures are in place to ensure the safety of those in the area. In this particular instance, I would have asked that the Ministry had done a better job of communicating with the neighbourhood and working with area residents to make sure your concerns were addressed.

4. Neighborhood Associations previously had access to speak at City Council meetings open to the public on any matters affecting residents living within their boundaries. Recent changes to City policies severely limited the ability of Neighborhood Associations to bring forward their concerns and discuss these at Council meetings. What would you do to ensure that Neighborhood Associations are included in decisions being made at the municipal level?

The ability of Neighborhood Associations to address Council at public hearings was not severely limited as stated in this question. It was found over the past several years that there were very few instances when someone would request to speak on behalf of an Association. And there were also times when someone would claim to be speaking on behalf of a neighborhood

association only to find out that not all members of the association agreed on the issue. Under our current procedures, every individual who wants to speak to Council at a public hearing can do so. This is the most fair and equitable way for everyone to have their voice heard.

5. We constantly hear that 'community safety is everyone's responsibility'. Do you think that this has contributed to a level of vigilantism within the community?

I don't think this has contributed to vigilantism. Getting to know your neighbours and looking out for one another helps create a sense of safety in a neighborhood. Frustration is what is creating vigilantism. Everyone is frustrated with continual property crimes and the catch and release cycle of our justice system. This is why I've successfully worked with the Provincial government on much needed changes to our justice and healthcare systems so that repeat offenders, who are responsible for a significant amount of crimes in our city, not only face consequences but also get treatment for their underlying mental health or addiction issues. These recommended changes were announced by the Provincial government last week and will have a significant positive impact on the safety of our community.

6. What would you like to see municipal, provincial, and federal governments do in terms of addressing safety concerns in our community (as well as others)?

There are many things that need to be done by all levels of government to deal with community safety in Kelowna and there is a lot of collaboration taking place to tackle this complex issue many different ways. Kelowna is leading the way through the advocacy of City Council and the BC Urban Mayor's Caucus which I Co-Chair. We are working collaboratively on the following:

Community court

Increased permanent shelter spaces

Increased temporary shelter spaces

Increased supportive housing spaces

Complex care housing

Increased RCMP officers

Increased Bylaw enforcement

Advocating for implementation of Repeat Offender recommendations which includes more resources for crown prosecutors, involuntary custody of violent repeat offenders, increased mental health supports like stabilization centres to decrease burden on RCMP officers and treatment options for those in custody.

These are just a few of the initiatives currently underway. I also encourage you to have a look at the recently adopted Community Safety Plan for Kelowna.

7. Do you support replacing the current Kelowna Theatre and what priority does this project have to you?

I am excited to support the building of a world class performing arts centre for our community and ways we can advance it in our current 10 year capital plan.

8. What is one specific process or decision of the last council that you disagreed with, and what specifically would you have done differently on this file?

Making decisions on City Council is, at times, difficult because you can't make everyone happy. Tough decisions are a daily reality that require a disciplined, level headed leadership. Personally, I resent the concept of populism which aims to please at the expense of real policy and real progress.

9. What are your 3 main reasons for running for Mayor or Council?

Firstly, I'm running for Mayor because I love my community! I care about the legacy we leave behind and the kind of city we build for our children. Secondly, many of the top issues facing our City require strong leadership and great relationships with the Provincial and Federal governments, which I have. The top three issues facing Kelowna are crime and social issues, affordability and transportation and mobility. I have consistently stated that I want Kelowna to be a progressive, vibrant, inclusive, safe, prosperous and affordable place for everyone!

10. Do you believe that residents associations should play a bigger role in development and planning within their areas, should their voices be given more value?

All residents have the ability to have their voices heard in the planning of our community. For example, we just updated our Official Community Plan after undertaking the most robust public engagement process our City has ever seen. Residents Associations have the ability to participate like everyone else, and it's highly encouraged they do so!

11. URBA and possibly the Downtown Kelowna Association receive funding from the City and are often called on to speak as stakeholders for an area. Do you feel that Neighborhood/Sector Residents Associations should have a valued voice equal to the business association voice?

It's important to point out that businesses located in downtown Kelowna and in Rutland fund these organizations through a levy. They are not funded by the City of Kelowna. Residents associations do already have the opportunity to participate in various City initiatives if they choose to.

12. The residents' associations would not want to be paid for by the city because their voices need to be kept separate and responsive to residents' but do you feel small grants from the City could be allotted to keep the voices of citizens in neighborhoods heard?

Small grants are already available to Neighborhood Associations and it's something I support.

13. If elected, how would you work to have resident's associations voices involved at the beginning of planning and development in their areas rather than an after thought when the planning is already well on its way to being completed?

As mentioned, Residents Associations have the opportunity to be involved in the development process as an application makes its way through City Hall, just like everyone else.

14. If elected, would you look at why so many variances are made after the initial development approval where neighbors have some input? Variance which can change the whole character of the initial proposal are approved without further resident/neighbor input. For example: Neptune/Mercury Road was to have a development of townhouses to be owned by purchasers which close neighbors agreed with so didn't present anything to Council. After approval the developer changed this to be a rental development where tenants do not own the property and possibly will not have the same initiative to look after the property.

It is not up to Council whether a home is owned or rented. There are good owners and bad owners. And there are good renters and bad renters. We need housing of all types and tenures. Council also cannot control whether a development property is sold to another owner during or after the project is approved. We live in a free market economy that allows the freedom of property ownership and transfer.

15. If you are elected, how would you address that development permits which include zoning changes are then allowed to sit idle sometimes for years until the property is sold, based on that change to zoning, with a totally different developer/development than what caused a zoning change?

Once a property is zoned, whether it is sold or not isn't something Council can control. Zoning runs with the land while development permits expire after two years.

16. If Kelowna does not build for 40,000 people who want to come here by 2040 what do you think those people will do? Move to a different city? Become homeless?

If Kelowna doesn't prepare for future residents, we will have no one to care for us in the hospital, provide the personal services we need or serve us when we go out for dinner. The sustainability, development, and overall success of our City requires growth.

17. How would Kelowna be run differently and look if we were not focused on building for the multitude of people who want to move here, and instead built well planned affordable housing and neighborhoods for those who are already here?

We are doing both.

18. What do you think Kelowna would be like if we planned affordable neighborhoods with as much care as we plan our more expensive neighborhoods?

Making sure we have services and amenities in all neighborhoods is important. Every neighborhood would love to have an arena, swimming pool, seniors centre, Boys and Girls Club, gymnastics centre, sports fields and Centennial park like Rutland has. However, we need to be fiscally responsible and make tough decisions as to where future investments are made, at what priority.

19. Our latest OCO (2040) has increased the heights for many areas, but developers still want to build higher. What do you believe is important for assessing increased building heights? Should residents in an area be given a chance to speak to major variance changes when they are presented to Council?

Variations require a public hearing, so Residents do have an opportunity to speak to Council about it. Where appropriate, I do believe building heights can exceed guidelines in the Official Community Plan. I want to reiterate that the OCP provides guidance and is not absolute. As the needs of our City change, as technology advances and for various other compelling reasons, OCP amendments are in the best interest of the community as a whole. Each individual application is evaluated on a case by case basis and is not precedent setting. There are several factors that should be considered when dealing with a height variance. Some of them are, in no particular order: design quality and architecture, distance between neighbouring buildings and tower separation if in an urban centre, proximity to amenities and transportation options, the need for housing, the use being proposed (ie. below market rental housing) the location of the application in question, its current OCP designation and zoning and the future land use of the neighbouring properties are just a few of the things City staff and Council must consider.

20. If elected, do you plan to bring more and diverse industry or manufacturing to our area where citizens can learn and progress from a ground level job to a well-paying job through

education and work experience? (At this point, many of the people working in the service industry and at ground level jobs may have to work 3 jobs to even survive and there is no real opportunity to advance in those jobs.)

I absolutely support the growth of a diverse economy. Tourism and agriculture were our traditional industries but under the leadership of City Council, we've seen continued growth in sectors like aviation and technology which are now providing good paying jobs and helping attract and retain people here. The City of Kelowna is a partner with the Central Okanagan Development Commission whose sole purpose is to grow our local economy and most industries are represented on the COEDC Board and involved in strategies to build our economy and attract businesses here.

21. If you witnessed an incident of bullying, intimidation, or discrimination against another Council member, would you be willing to act as witness for that Council member?

Absolutely, yes I would be willing to support my colleagues and I have in fact stood up for them multiple times as Mayor.