

2022 Mayor/Council Candidate Questionnaire

- 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?**

We all have our part to play in addressing the affordable housing crisis. However, designating a single area to be home to all affordable housing units is not fair, and it does not create the best outcomes for residents of the neighbourhood or those being housed in the units.

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

Similarly to affordable housing units, complex care housing should also be spread out amongst the community. This is better for the receiving community and the people being housed in the facilities. As the question has noted, research has been clear that spreading out these facilities creates the best outcomes.

- 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?**

The City cannot regulate what types of businesses occupy these commercial spaces, therefore it's important to be clear that even if the City felt that this was not the right location for the Ministry of Social Development and Innovation, they would not be able to prohibit the move.

The most important tool that the City can do to ensure citizens feel safe in their communities is to actually do something about the increasing crime rates in Kelowna. Today, after eight years under our current leadership, Kelowna has Canada's highest crime rate.

I am proposing a number of initiatives to help address our crime rate and get a control over our fading community safety. This includes partnering more mental nurses with our RCMP officers, empowering and hiring more bylaw officers to free up RCMP resources, creating a violent and organized crime task force, improving lighting and cleaning on our streets, and getting tough on repeat offenders.

We've seen recently that when the Uptown Rutland Business Association put out a release saying that the current rate of crime was unsustainable, our current Mayor stated that it was not his fault and blamed other levels of government. When others won't act, leaders will act in their place, and that's what I'll do as Kelowna's next Mayor.

- 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?

As Kelowna's next Mayor, I will ensure that for major projects including major OCP amendments, that the City creates an Advisory Committee. This Advisory Committee would be made up of environmentalists, builders, business owners, engineers, impacted residents associations and more. This would ensure that neighbourhood associations get an additional voice at the table for major projects impacting their neighbourhood.

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?

The rise of vigilantism is a result of a lack of action from our local government in addressing the very real concerns and issues people are facing. Kelowna has Canada's highest crime rate and 1 in 4 Kelowna residents has reported being the victim of a crime.

When these issues are brought up to City Hall, our current leadership has blamed the provincial government while offering no solutions locally. After eight years, we've ended up with numerous studies, no action, and Canada's highest crime rate. Additionally, the deflection of people's concerns with the crime rate is also troubling.

At a recent public hearing when a student raised concerns about crime in the downtown core, the Mayor stated that if crime was so bad, we wouldn't have tourists. This attitude is leading to frustrations. People are tired of being victimized and seeing City Hall deflect to other levels of government, they want action.

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)?

The provincial government needs to come to the table with a real solution for career criminals whose crimes feed their drug addictions and other mental health challenges. We need to provide compassionate care options for those who want to get help, and we need to get tough with those who don't want help. Funding 20 complex care beds, creating a study, and blaming the previous provincial governments is simply not enough. The province also needs to hire more crown prosecutors so that people face consequences for committing crimes.

The federal government needs to reverse a number of changes they made in the last five years that reduced the burden of proof for holding offenders after they have been arrested. Recent changes have made it difficult for judges to hold criminals after they've been arrested for crimes and are awaiting trial, this is a contributing factor to the revolving door we see in the justice system.

Locally, there are a number of measures we can take – including partnering more mental health nurses with RCMP officers, shutting down bicycle chop shops, creating a violent and organized crime taskforce, creating a Kelowna Citizens' Patrol, and more. One of the other important

strategies cities can use is crime prevention through environmental design. This revolves around initiatives such as cleaner streets, installing more lighting, cleaning up graffiti, ensuring there is safe bicycle storage and more. It's all about making our streets look and feel safer to make committing crimes more uncomfortable. This work is backed up by leading urban planners and designers from across the world.

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

Over the last eight years our property taxes have skyrocketed by 30% and at the same time we've seen record new developments approved, while receiving more development cost charges (DCCs).

Yet our crime continues to skyrocket, our roads are congested, we have more homeless residents and our community assets like the Kelowna Community Theatre fall behind. I believe we must replace the Kelowna Community Theatre. Kelowna continues to lose valuable arts and culture events to neighbouring communities, which all have larger performing arts centres, while still being smaller and more affordable to book than hockey rinks such as Prospera Place.

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?

The processes and decisions taken by Council and Mayor over the last eight years that have led Kelowna to having the highest crime rate in the country are their worst decisions made. The Mayor's continued insistence that there is nothing more to be done is simply not true.

There's a number of positions I've taken that will make a difference on the crime front that are specifically within the control of local governments. For starters, I would establish a Kelowna Citizens' Patrol as Kelowna is the only Okanagan city without one. I would also partner more mental health nurses with RCMP officers to free up RCMP time and ensure people in distress have the supports they need. Further, I would prioritize crime prevention through environmental design in new project approvals. Simple actions like ensuring bicycle storage for new buildings are at the front of buildings where there's foot traffic and visibility on the street have been proven to reduce crime, however these actions are not being taken in Kelowna. My entire platform is available at tomdyas.com/our-platform.

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

I've always believed giving back to the community is of the utmost importance. That's why I've been involved in numerous city-building committees, like the Journey Home Task Force, the Child Advocacy Centre, the Airport Advisory Committee, the Kelowna Chamber of Commerce (two years as President and nine on the advocacy committee), the committee for new course development at Okanagan College.

Over the last eight years our city has seen some important progress, but on our main challenges like crime, safety, traffic and homelessness we've trended in the wrong direction. I've seen too many local experts and community members being ignored by an approach at City Hall where the Mayor believes he knows what's best for everyone.

I know I'm not an expert on everything, that's why I rely on speaking with our residents, being involved in the community and listening to people in order to lead. No one knows everything, but not every

leader is willing to recognize that. By simply listening I've heard numerous ways we can improve our City. Actions like crime prevention through environmental design, bicycle valets, an RCMP community policing office at UBCO aren't my ideas – they came from our community. That's why my platform is called 'Our Platform', it was made by our residents for our community.

We can't keep ignoring our communities and our residents, we all deserve to have our voices heard, even if we don't agree with each other.

That's how I'll lead as Kelowna's next Mayor.

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

I strongly believe that residents associations play a valuable role in our community. From organizing community events – like BBQs, community cleanups and movie nights – to keeping the community informed about major new projects, community associations are valuable.

I believe that for major new projects that will greatly impact local communities, we require a residents advisory committee. This Advisory Committee would be made up of environmentalists, builders, business owners, engineers, impacted residents associations and more. This would ensure that neighbourhood association's get an additional voice at the table for major projects impacting their neighbourhood.

This committee would issue a report and recommendation, similarly to city staff, for council to review prior to project approvals. This would ensure that when Council is making major decisions, in addition to public hearings and submissions, they have a formal recommendation from the community and City staff.

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?

To me, neighbourhood association voices are just as important as the voices of our business associations. While this hasn't been the case under our current leadership, where neighbourhood associations are often ignored and devalued, that will not be the case when I'm Kelowna's next Mayor. Together, we can ensure that everyone's voice is heard and no one feels as though their opinion isn't valued.

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?

Many of our neighbourhood associations put on excellent events throughout the year and the City contributes nothing to making them a success. Specifically, I was recently a part of the KLO Neighbourhood Association's Imagine Pandosy event which was an incredible success. However, this event received no funding from the City of Kelowna.

As Kelowna's next Mayor I intend on creating an events grant program, where non-profits can

apply for non-repayable grants, to help put on events. This would apply to smaller events like movie nights in the park and larger events like the previous Fat Cat Festival. The goal is to continue to build a sense of community in our City, even while we continue to experience incredibly fast population growth.

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?

My response from earlier questions applies to this question as well. I believe that for major new projects that will greatly impact local communities, we require a residents advisory committee. This Advisory Committee would be made up of environmentalists, builders, business owners, engineers, impacted residents associations and more. This would ensure that neighbourhood association's get an additional voice at the table for major projects impacting their neighbourhood.

This committee would issue a report and recommendation, similarly to city staff, for council to review prior to project approvals. This would ensure that when Council is making major decisions, in addition to public hearings and submissions, they have a formal recommendation from the community and City staff.

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.

Once again, I believe the most important step is for our Mayor to respect and listen to the positions of concerned residents. We won't always agree, I know that, but as long as we're both trying to make Kelowna the best it can be, we will be fine.

Further, I believe my previously mentioned Advisory Committee for major projects would be useful as well. This would solidify the role of neighbourhood associations as trusted partners in the planning process.

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?

One of the key issues with this topic is the lack of understanding by Council in many re-zoning applications. We often see council members discuss how much they approve what the proposed development will look like and what it will bring to the community – however the look and feel of a project is not related to the re-zoning application. The re-zoning application is purely to deal with the land-use and the look and feel of the building are not related. Rather those considerations come into play when dealing with the development permit. As Kelowna's

next Mayor I will review re-zoning applications in the way they are intended – based purely on land-use considerations.

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?

Kelowna has a housing shortage there is no doubt. Canada has the lowest number of homes per capita in the G7 and Kelowna has the lowest vacancy rate in major Canadian cities at 0.6%. This low vacancy rate and high competition plays a role in our high housing costs and the number of tenants willing to work outside of the protections of the Rental Tenancy Act.

If we don't build more housing, our housing prices will continue to climb and people will move to neighbouring communities in higher numbers than they already are. People will move to West Kelowna, Lake Country, Vernon and more while commuting to Kelowna and using our resources and roads – yet they won't pay any property taxes to us. It is not uncommon for people across major cities to commute for over an hour for work, and should our housing prices and availability continue to decline that will happen here as well.

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?

Kelowna must plan for both there's no way around it. However, development over the last eight years has been geared entirely towards the people who want to move here, while ignoring the people who do live here.

For example, if we planned for the people who do live here we would follow our OCP as intended. Rather we see a Mayor who believes the OCP is not necessary and ignores it regardless of the significant community consultation that was undertaken in order to finalize the plan. Projects must benefit the residents of the City who already live here, we need to have park space, child care spaces, and more.

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?

In order to plan affordable neighbourhoods we need to listen to our community members and their needs. This means upgrading our existing neighbourhood parks with splash pads, skateparks, basketball courts or anything else that our communities feel like they're lacking. Making improvements in our downtown and urban centres is important, but too often these are done at the expense of upgrading our existing neighbourhoods.

I believe together we can build affordable well-planned communities but we can only do that by responding to the concerns of neighbourhoods – not ignoring them and telling them the time to hear their opinions has ended. We must work together, and that's what I'll do as Kelowna's next Mayor.

19. Our latest OCP (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?

I believe in holding new buildings to the heights set out in the OCP 2040, that is what residents agreed to during the City's lengthy consultation process and that's what residents should get. The Advisory Committee for major new projects would apply in situations where developers want to go above and beyond the OCP height limits, and this would provide a significant avenue for residents to voice their concerns.

However, it is important to note that there will be situations where I believe developers should be allowed to exceed the parameters of the OCP 2040. These will be situations where they are providing a net benefit to the receiving community – not the community as a whole, but the actual community where the project is occurring. If Rutland is getting a new building above the OCP's 2040 height guidelines, then Rutland should get a benefit. Benefits I want to see in exchange for height variances would include things like park spaces, child care spaces or units available at below-market rent to name a few. I want to be clear though that affordable units are not the same as supportive units. This doesn't mean supportive units which require a much more substantial public consultation. Affordable units are those that may cost 20-40% less than market rent so people like single mothers working full-time at Tim Horton's can afford to live in our community.

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.)

Kelowna has a distinct advantage in that everyone wants to live here and bring business here. We need to get out of the small town mindset we once had where we must bow to all industry demands in order to get them to move here, that's not the case any more.

One issue I've heard continuously from industrial business owners is how the lack of public transit options and frequency to industrial hubs. They've told me that while they have good candidates looking to begin working in better-paying industrial jobs, that they cannot get frequent or reliable enough transportation through our bus system. That's why I'm committing to improving our bus network, with increased frequency to industrial hubs, UBCO and Okanagan College. As well as conducting an external audit of our network to see where improvements need to be made to increase ridership while keeping costs to a minimum.

If people can't get to industrial hubs, they can't work there in the first place.

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?

Yes absolutely. Over the last several years we have seen a reduction in the decorum of Council meetings and public hearings. Many people challenging the status quo, whether they are a councillor or member of the public, has been belittled or made to feel that they do not belong there.

This has to change. Speaking at Council meetings takes courage. We need to make Council chambers as welcome and inclusive as possible.