

**Nikki Csek, Candidate for Kelowna City Council**  
**2026 Municipal Candidate Questionnaire**

1. What are your three main reasons for running for Mayor or Council?

I'm running for three reasons: my love for this community, the experience I can bring, and the need to finally solve issues that have lingered for decades. I've lived in Kelowna for 28 years, and I believe where you live you give. I am the CEO of Csek Creative and NowMedia Group with online news platforms KelownaNow, PentictonNow and KamloopsNow. I have worked with thousands of businesses across hundreds of sectors, mostly here in the Okanagan. I served eight years on the Kelowna Chamber board, including as President, and have chaired multiple boards and led mergers and acquisitions. The city has struggled with the same unsolved issues for multiple elections, which is why I bring analytical thinking. I always pursue the solution, but I weigh cost and results, starting with a full budget audit before new spending. I listen more than I talk, and I will work with any mayor to get results.

2. Are you in favour of limiting the number of years an individual can sit as Mayor or as a city Councillor?

I'm open to it, but I would want to look at the evidence before deciding. I'd research what is done consistently in other cities, provinces, and countries, and what actually serves residents better. My instinct is that qualifications and results matter more than years served. If someone is making a real impact and voters keep choosing them, losing that experience has a cost. Voters also have the power to make a change at every election. The ultimate question is what serves the people best, and I'd let the research guide the answer.

3. Should major city projects be done using a public/private contracting?

Only when the numbers clearly support it, and I would decide case by case. A public-private partnership makes sense where the business case beats traditional delivery on full life-cycle cost and risk, not just the upfront price. Whatever the approach, residents deserve transparency about the costs, the risks, and who is accountable.

4. Are there too many staff at City Hall? Are there too many upper level managers and directors at City Hall which taxpayers have to fund?

I think it comes down to right-sizing. Many organizations and businesses are taking a hard look at how to manage economic pressures, and the city should too. We have to look at everything, and nothing is off the table. Council members are stewards of residents' dollars, and that means more than taxes. It includes reserves, fees and grants. I would support a thorough review of how the city is structured and staffed, done in partnership with staff, to make sure every dollar is as effective as possible and goes toward what residents actually need and want. City staff work hard, and a respectful review helps put resources where they matter most.

5. Should Taxpayers have more say in the development of their neighbourhoods? Has the current development process gone to far in eliminating resident's voices and concerns about developments in their neighbourhoods?

Yes, residents should have a meaningful voice in how their neighbourhoods change. I understand the frustration when people feel decisions are made before they are heard. Provincial legislation now restricts public hearings for many housing applications that are

consistent with the Official Community Plan, so council can't change that on its own. What we can do is engage residents and resident associations earlier and genuinely listen. Keeping the Official Community Plan also gives neighbourhoods predictability about what is coming.

6. Many people are disillusioned and have lost pride in our community with the current state of street dysfunction and open drug use seen in many areas of our city. What are mayoral and council candidates prepared to do about visible drug use, comatose substance users, increased crime rates, feelings of lack of personal safety especially around low-barrier and transitional housing as well as in our public parks? How do you, the candidate, propose to mitigate the negative affects in neighbourhoods where there is daily dysfunction? This is not *just* a Downtown problem or a business person's problem. How will you restore our resident's feelings of personal safety, enjoyment of life in their homes and neighbourhoods, and renew resident's pride in our city?

I hear this concern in every part of the city, including Rutland, and I agree it is not just a downtown problem. The current approach, which leans heavily on supportive housing and harm reduction sites, is not saving people or helping the neighbourhoods they are in. I believe in a wider range of solutions. Some are basic, like better lighting, relaunching neighbourhood watch programs, and adding private security where it makes sense. I would review our bylaws, use the full extent of the law with repeat and criminally active offenders, and free police officers from administrative work so they can be out on foot patrol and visible in our neighbourhoods and parks. On the care side, I would advocate to the province for involuntary mandatory care for those who cannot help themselves. I would map our service providers and fill the gaps in the path to recovery and support proven recovery programs like Freedom's Door. Restoring pride starts with feeling safe at home and in your neighbourhood, and I will measure progress by results residents can see.

7. Are you in favour of the increasing elimination of single family dwellings in previously single detached housing neighbourhoods?

I support densifying where it makes sense, but I believe it was a mistake for our Official Community Plan to stop planning new single-family neighbourhoods like Kirschner Mountain. Those communities need to stay part of the housing mix. It should never be one or the other. We need to build what people can actually afford, both rental and ownership, based on the real income levels in our city. I would review our current housing stock against what residents need and fill the gaps accordingly, so single-family homes remain a real option for Kelowna families.

8. Do developers get too many breaks at the expense of tax payers?

In my experience, this is largely a myth. Developers take on significant risk, and they pay development cost charges, build roads and servicing, and contribute amenities that benefit the whole community. Those costs end up in the price of every new home. Where incentives do exist, they are targeted, such as encouraging purpose-built rental or affordable housing, and they should always be tied to a clear public benefit. Growth should pay for growth, and it largely does. Builders are important partners in housing our community, and fair, predictable rules are good for them and for taxpayers.

9. Should infrastructure be a priority pre-development instead constantly tearing up streets and playing catch up, which seems the current protocol, considering the amount of growth that is expected in the future?

Kelowna has strong planners who look 20 to 40 years ahead, and the city already has policies to coordinate road, water, sewer and utility work so streets are not dug up twice. Where we are challenged is funding. Many of our neighbourhoods were built 50 to 60 years ago, and the city's own plans acknowledge a gap in renewing aging infrastructure. I agree infrastructure must keep pace with growth, and ideally get ahead of it. I would make sure our long-range plans are funded and followed, so roads, water and services are ready before growth arrives, not after.

10. **The 15 minute walkable urban planning concept** works well in communities which have enough employment within that community. There are many neighbourhoods in Kelowna which do not have an abundance of employment opportunities in the 15 minute bubble so workers have to travel a distance to be gainfully employed. These same workers require vehicles to travel to work with equipment and/or supplies.

- Would you prioritize making our neighbourhoods livable and enjoyable rather than building to an ideal that *forces* a 15 minute walkable bubble on communities?
- Yes, I would prioritize livable, enjoyable neighbourhoods that reflect how people actually live and work. Walkability is a good goal, but many Kelowna residents, especially trades and service workers, need vehicles to get to jobs with tools and supplies. Planning should reflect real data about where people work and how they travel, neighbourhood by neighbourhood.
- Would you increase the amount of vehicle parking required per development back to what it was several years ago?
- I support parking requirements that match real needs, and I would review them with residents' experience in mind. Where neighbourhoods are seeing spillover parking problems, that data should guide decisions. To be clear, provincial rules now remove minimum parking requirements in designated transit-oriented areas, so council's ability to raise them is limited in those locations.
- Should green space be essential within a development's foot print rather than a 15 minute walk?
- Green space close to home matters, but I would look at it case by case. It depends on what counts as green space. School playgrounds, regional parks and provincial parks all give residents real access to nature and play, even though they are not always counted in the city's park designations. Where a development is near those spaces, requiring more green space on site may not be the best use of land. Where a neighbourhood is lacking, green space should absolutely be part of the plan. What matters is that every resident has a park or play space within a short walk.

11. Should the city prioritize the purchase of new park land available to all citizens, and in so doing protect vulnerable green space from being paved over and developed? Should land which is *currently* city owned be prioritized for green space instead of being sold to developers?

It depends, and I would decide case by case. First, we need an honest inventory of what we count as park and green space. Whether Kelowna is short on parkland depends on what is included, such as school grounds, regional parks and provincial parks. The city also owns a

significant amount of land. Some of it is right for parks, and some may serve the community better in other ways, such as housing, a school or a service residents need. Where a neighbourhood is truly lacking green space, I would prioritize protecting or buying it. Every decision should be based on what serves residents best over the long term.

12. Do you believe that all Cultural infrastructure should only be in the downtown core instead of shared throughout the city. Are you prepared to change the bylaws that restrict Cultural development to ONLY downtown?

No, I don't believe all cultural spaces should be limited to downtown. A major venue like a performing arts centre has specific needs, such as size, access and transit, and those needs guide where it can go. But culture is much more than one building. Neighbourhoods like Rutland deserve arts and community spaces too, such as smaller venues, studios, gathering places and outdoor events. I would support a shared civic space policy and a review of any bylaws or policies that make it harder to bring cultural uses into our neighbourhoods.

13. As things are developing more in the Pandosy–Lakeshore area, parking lots are being turned into housing developments and parking is harder to find. Residents who do not live within a few blocks of Okanagan Lake can not easily enjoy their own beaches because of lack of parking. Yet these beaches are readily available to tourists and those who can afford to live within walking distance of the lake. Should more parking be made available so *all* residents of Kelowna are able enjoy the Okanagan Lake shoreline and beaches?

Yes, all residents should be able to reach and enjoy Okanagan Lake, not only those who live close by. I would look at a practical mix of solutions: parking where it makes sense, better transit, shuttles, and safe bike access. The lake belongs to everyone in Kelowna, and our planning should reflect that.

14. What are your thoughts regarding Resident Associations and Affiliate Agreements? Do you think Resident Associations should be restricted from speaking against City decisions / plans which may adversely affect a Neighbourhood?

Resident associations are valuable partners, and they should never be muzzled from disagreeing with the city. Healthy communities depend on people being able to speak up respectfully when they have concerns. Any affiliate agreement should support a strong working relationship without limiting an association's right to advocate for its neighbourhood. I listen more than I talk, and I welcome that input, including when it challenges council.

15. What efforts will you make to include all Resident Associations in any consultation process where it relates to matters affecting the health, safety and well-being of residents within their boundaries?

Yes, absolutely. Residents' associations should have a seat at the table. The city recently ran a pilot that gave funding to five neighbourhood associations, and it showed real success. I was disappointed to see that Rutland wasn't one of them. A residents' association should be part of how the city communicates with a neighbourhood, along with many other ways of hearing what the community needs, like surveys, open houses, door-to-door conversations and online feedback. No single group can speak for everyone, but an association that knows its neighbourhood well is an important partner, and I would make sure Rutland is included going forward.

