

RON CANNAN FOR MAYOR

Rutland Residents Association — Candidate Q&A

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

I am running because I believe Kelowna needs stronger leadership, greater accountability and a clear focus on the issues that matter most to residents.

First, public safety. People should feel safe in their homes, neighbourhoods, parks and businesses.

Second, affordability and responsible spending. We need to manage taxes carefully, control spending and make sure growth does not place an unfair burden on existing taxpayers.

Third, trust and accountability at City Hall. Residents deserve transparency, meaningful public engagement and a thorough review of City finances, programs and operations. I believe government works best when decisions are made openly and residents can see how their tax dollars are being spent.

2. Are you in favour of limiting the number of years someone can serve as Mayor or Councillor?

I am open to reasonable term limits for both Mayor and Councillors.

Public office should be about serving the community, not becoming a lifetime position. Any change, however, would need to comply with provincial legislation governing local government elections. The reason I stepped forward is nobody else was challenging Tom in his leadership and I want to offer my experience and change.

3. Should major City projects use public/private contracting?

Public-private partnerships can be valuable when they provide better value, appropriately share risk and protect taxpayers.

However, I don't believe they should automatically be used—or rejected—for every project.

Each project should be evaluated on its own merits, including cost, transparency, accountability, risk and long-term value to taxpayers.

The goal should be simple: deliver the best possible service and value for residents.

4. Are there too many staff at City Hall?

Kelowna has grown significantly, however City Hall has also grow at a faster rate.

I believe it is reasonable to ask whether every position, management layer and program is still providing the value taxpayers expect.

If elected, I will recommend that Council undertake a comprehensive, independent Core Services and Operations Review.

That review should examine:

- staffing levels and management structure
- programs and services
- administrative costs
- consultants and contracts
- duplication of services
- opportunities for greater efficiency

This isn't about cutting people simply looking at efficient Operations

Just your Household budget.

It is about making sure every taxpayer dollar is being used as effectively as possible.

If a position or management layer cannot be justified by the service and value it provides, we should be prepared to make changes.

5. Should taxpayers have more say in the development of their neighbourhoods? Has the development process gone too far in limiting residents' voices?

Yes.

Residents deserve a meaningful voice when decisions will fundamentally change their neighbourhoods.

Provincial legislation has changed the development process and, in certain circumstances, municipalities can no longer hold public hearings for residential developments that comply with the Official Community Plan.

That makes early public engagement even more important.

Residents need to be involved when neighbourhood plans and the OCP are being developed or changed—not after the major decisions have effectively already been made.

As Mayor, I will look for additional ways to engage Resident Associations and neighbourhood residents early in the process and ensure their local knowledge is heard and considered.

6. Public drug use, street disorder, crime and neighbourhood safety

Every resident should be able to walk through their neighbourhood, take their children or grandchildren to a park, operate a business or use public spaces without feeling unsafe.

We need a coordinated approach involving the RCMP, bylaw enforcement, fire services, outreach organizations, Interior Health and the provincial government.

We also need more treatment and recovery options for people struggling with addiction.

Compassion and public safety are not opposing goals. We can help people while still having clear expectations for behaviour in our public spaces.

As Mayor, I would focus on consistent enforcement, faster responses to neighbourhood concerns and better coordination between agencies.

I also believe surrounding neighbourhoods should not be expected to simply accept ongoing negative impacts from supportive or low-barrier housing without appropriate management and accountability.

My goal is to restore pride in Kelowna by making our public spaces safe, clean and welcoming to everyone.

Long-Term Vision: One Region. One Strategy. One Continuum of Care.

Addiction and homelessness are not problems that stop at Kelowna's boundaries.

I want to bring together the Mayors and Councils of the Central Okanagan, Westbank First Nation Chief and Council, Interior Health, BC Housing, the RCMP, frontline responders and community organizations to develop a regional strategy for treatment, recovery and housing.

The goal should be a clear pathway:

Crisis → Detox → Treatment → Recovery → Second-Stage Sober Housing → Stable Housing → Employment and Community

The City cannot provide every service in that pathway, but the City can lead the coordination.

We can bring people together, reduce duplication, break down silos, identify gaps and work together to secure the provincial and federal resources required.

Ultimately, I want to work toward a regional Campus of Care, drawing on successful models such as Project NEXUS in Red Deer, Alberta whom I have been working with.

This is about compassion with accountability, recovery with dignity and public safety with measurable results.

We need to change what we doing as over the past 4 years we have spent over \$80 million and we are not getting the results the community needs.

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

I support providing a range of housing choices, but I don't believe every neighbourhood should lose its character in the process.

Kelowna needs housing for families, seniors, young people and workers. That means apartments and townhomes, but also single-family homes, duplexes and secondary suites.

We should also encourage more ground-oriented housing, particularly two- and three-bedroom homes.

There are innovative options worth considering, including smaller lots and "skinny homes" that allow a traditional lot to be divided while still providing families with a small yard.

The key is responsible growth that considers infrastructure, traffic, parking, parks and the character of existing neighbourhoods.

8. Do developers receive too many breaks at the expense of taxpayers?

I support development, but incentives should have a clear and measurable public benefit.

Kelowna currently offers incentives for certain rental developments, including reductions in parking requirements and a temporary property-tax incentive. I believe Council should regularly review whether these incentives are still achieving the purpose for which they were created.

Housing conditions have changed considerably, and policies should change when the circumstances change.

If taxpayers are providing an incentive, we should be able to clearly answer:

What are taxpayers receiving in return?

I would be more interested in incentives that help create attainable home ownership and family housing, rather than simply subsidizing private development.

Responsible growth also means ensuring development contributes fairly toward the infrastructure and services it requires.

9. Should infrastructure be a priority before development rather than constantly playing catch-up?

Absolutely. This is one of my highest priorities.

Kelowna has significant infrastructure needs, and we already know many of the roads, intersections, utilities and transportation improvements that will be required as our community grows.

We need to better coordinate growth and infrastructure, rather than approving growth and then spending years trying to catch up.

Before major development proceeds, residents deserve to know:

- What infrastructure is required?
- What will it cost?
- Who will pay?
- When will it be built?
- Does the City have the capacity to support the growth?

Infrastructure first doesn't mean stopping growth. It means making sure growth is responsible and properly planned.

10. What are your thoughts on 15-minute neighbourhoods, parking and green space?

I support livable, complete neighbourhoods, but we need to recognize that Kelowna residents have different needs.

Walking, cycling and transit are important options. But many residents are tradespeople, caregivers, shift workers, seniors or people who need vehicles for work and family responsibilities.

Our planning needs to reflect the reality of how people actually live.

Parking

Parking requirements should reflect the needs of the neighbourhood and development.

Where changes to parking requirements are creating spillover parking problems for surrounding residents, Council should be prepared to review those policies.

Green Space

Absolutely.

As we increase housing density, we should also ensure residents have access to trees, parks, playgrounds, trails and usable outdoor spaces.

Families shouldn't have to choose between housing and quality of life.

11. Should the City purchase more parkland and protect City-owned land for green space?

Yes.

As Kelowna grows and land becomes more expensive, acquiring future parkland becomes increasingly difficult.

We need to think decades ahead.

I would be cautious about selling strategically important City-owned land if it could serve future needs for parks, recreation, community facilities or other public purposes.

Once public land is sold and developed, getting it back can be extremely difficult and expensive.

I also support practical parks and open spaces that residents will actually use, including trails and regional connections.

We need to be thoughtful about the standards we build to ensure taxpayers receive good value while protecting quality green space.

12. Should cultural infrastructure be limited to downtown?

No.

Arts and cultural opportunities should be available throughout Kelowna, including Rutland and other neighbourhoods.

Neighbourhoods can benefit from appropriate community gathering spaces, performances, arts and cultural activities.

Kelowna's current Official Community Plan already contemplates smaller-scale cultural spaces and public art outside the downtown core.

I would be open to reviewing policies that unnecessarily prevent appropriate cultural facilities from locating in neighbourhoods such as Rutland.

13. Should more parking be available so residents can access Okanagan Lake beaches?

Public beaches belong to the entire community.

We need to consider public access when making parking and transportation decisions.

Not everyone can walk or cycle to the lake. Families may have young children, mobility challenges or equipment such as paddleboards, coolers and beach gear.

I support finding practical ways to maintain reasonable public access to our beaches—including appropriate parking—while recognizing that shoreline land is limited.

The objective should be access for everyone while being responsible with limited public land.

14. What are your thoughts on Resident Associations and Affiliate Agreements? Should Resident Associations be restricted from speaking against City decisions?

No.

Resident Associations provide an important connection between City Hall and the people who live in our neighbourhoods.

They should be able to raise concerns, disagree with City policies and advocate for their communities respectfully and constructively.

An Affiliate Agreement should not be used to discourage legitimate disagreement or advocacy.

Disagreement is part of democracy.

City Hall should welcome constructive criticism because residents often have valuable local knowledge that can improve decisions.

15. What will you do to include all Resident Associations in consultation?

I believe Resident Associations should be involved earlier, rather than being brought into the process after major decisions have already been made.

When significant development, infrastructure, transportation, parks, public-safety initiatives or City facilities could substantially affect a neighbourhood, the relevant Resident Association should receive timely information and a meaningful opportunity to provide input.

I would also support more regular communication between the Mayor's Office, Council and Resident Associations.

Residents have valuable firsthand knowledge about their neighbourhoods.

City Hall should see that knowledge as an asset—not an obstacle.

I would also like to explore opportunities for residents to provide input following Council meetings, so people have a greater opportunity to be heard on issues affecting their communities.