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Strong Towns: 10 questions for Candidates in 2026

Website: strongtownskelowna.org

Here is an example of how we are displaying the answer's on our website, we will paste your answers verbatim with minor adjustments to the formatting (use of headings and quotes, etc) as seen here:

<https://strongtownskelowna.org/2026/candidates/>

Closer to election day, they may share them with Castanet for potential publication

Keep each response to **100 words or fewer**.

1. Do you think our main street or downtown is successful? If not, what would you do to change that?

No. Kelowna is working hard to create five vibrant, walkable, transit-oriented town centres in Rutland, Mid-town, Capri, Pandosy & Downtown as set out in our OCP 2040. Sadly, it is all being built on an historically sprawling footprint centred around Highways 33 & 97, & inherited from the 1974 Rutland/Kelowna amalgamation. Dense, mix-use, well-integrated residential & commercial developments are being pursue in our Zoning. Much work remains. Our staff presented to Council on these five town centres are, & remaining needs to make them more liveable. Downtown needs more transit, schools, & tree canopy, and must reduce crime & homelessness.

2. How do you feel about the transportation options currently available in our city? Can all of our residents affordably get where they need to go? If not, what will you do to improve transportation in our city?

Sad. No. Highway 97 is a congested eyesore & parking lot that needs major help. The joint City/MoTT Study showed that a 2nd Bridge is not the answer, adding more transit is. My explicit Council push has been to explore transport alternatives (e.g., light rail) between YLW & Downtown to reduce congestion. Add more & more frequent, weekend, evening buses, get 90% of homes & businesses within a 5-minute walk to a bus. Complete our bike path & sidewalk grids. Integrate & connect to our Valley via Inter-city tram-trains - a more affordable retrofit than roadbuilding (see lovegrovekelowna.ca).

3. What's more important for our city right now: building new homes and commercial space, or rehabbing, expanding, or better utilizing our existing homes and storefronts?

Both. Heritage & embodied carbon should be saved, as should low-income, affordable housing; however, that is not always possible. We have beautiful historic character buildings across our City that could & should be re-used & upcycled (e.g., Shane Worman's corner restoration at Water/Leon). Sadly, there are too many examples where low-income housing has been torn down for redevelopment, and the site is still sitting empty (e.g., Bernard east of D'Anjou). However, if the land value significantly exceeds the building value, and zoning (& fit) allow, non-heritage value homes should be rebuilt to meet market demand & create more liveable communities.

4. Some people in our community say we have traffic problems. What do you think? How would you mitigate those concerns or change the situation?

Traffic congestion is the #2 concern of Kelowna residents & businesses, after homelessness but even before safety. HDR Analytics confirms Kelowna's cost of congestion – delays, crashes, lost productivity & spin-offs – approach \$1/2 Billion, per year - traffic is a problem! My UBCO Engineering Professor research, plus my prior transportation work across BC, suggest more roads is unaffordable; as noted about in answers 1, 2 & 3, providing more choice is more affordable, effective, and financially sustainable. And it will help everyone – drivers have less traffic; we all pay less for goods & services; and, emergency vehicles arrive sooner!

5. If you could change one thing in our zoning code, what would it be and why?

One thing I would change relates to parking minimums – get rid of them thru incentives, such as cash in lieu, transit passes, car shares, bike shares, & other emerging mobility choices. We know that each parking stall in multi-family housing costs in the range of \$50,000, or roughly 5 to 10% of a MF unit. Kelowna transit, cycling, and mobility choices have been improved over my term. I will continue to push for more mobility choices, and for more affordable housing. We no longer need to plan just for cars – lets plan for people and a more liveable Kelowna.

6. How do you plan to involve residents in the decision-making process in our town?

We were just talking about that today (Aug 31) at Council! First, bring back engaging them more in Council Advisory Committees, such as: i) Agricultural; ii) Accessibility; iii) Community Events; iv) Liveability; v) Transportation; vi) Heritage & Culture. Second, bring back the ability to bring delegations to regular City Council meetings. Third, bring Council meetings back to the community through our partnering Neighbourhood Associations. It would build back public trust in Council and development processes, especially as both residents and developers sit at the same table. Our existing Agricultural Advisory Committee is an excellent example of how well this works.

7. If someone came to you with a proposal to build a new piece of public infrastructure in our city (road, bridge, etc.), how would you evaluate whether or not that project was worth implementing?

Right now on Council I use many tools to assess, including: OCP2040/TMP (is it part of our approved City Plans?); Is it a Council Priority? (e.g., Safety, Homelessness, Affordable Housing, Transportation, Agricultural & Environment, Economic Development); What are our residents and businesses saying? Who pays its lifecycle costs (capital, operating)? What wider community costs (and/or benefits) would it bring to Kelowna? What are our staff recommending? For example, a recent Hall Road development proposed sewer and water upgrades to an entire neighbourhood at developer cost. Residents opposed; staff opposed; it was not OCP/TMP compliant, nor Council priority. I opposed it.

8. If elected, what three steps would you take to put our city on a firmer financial footing?

If re-elected, my first three steps would: 1) Conduct a line-by-line budget audit and identify what can be cut without impacting service levels. For example, I would immediately remove over \$210 million in capital spending on a 2.3 km Clement extension (cross-town connector to nowhere). 2) Re-allocate savings into other priority areas (e.g., build 1st phase of the Transit Operations Centre & procure more buses), & reduced tax increases and DCCs; 3) Change the scope and ToR of the City's audit committee back to external auditors, & all minutes & reports to be promptly shared with all of Council.

9. If you received a \$1m grant to use for the city any way you wanted, what would you do with it and why?

Create a Partnership fund to pursue Council priorities, keeping a minimum 10% as a reserve. Leverage the rest of it in partnerships, minimum 2:1 return & ideally a short payback, on Council priorities that provide a sustainable community benefit toward innovation & liveability. Some thoughts: (mobility) YLW-Downtown light rail; (sports tourism) covered outdoor pickleball / tennis courts; (food security) vertical farm technology; (economic development) data centre; (innovation) UBCO research; (climate resilience) home energy retrofits & tree planting. All informed by our staff experts, discussion with my Council colleagues, and public engagement!

10. What neighborhood do you live in? Why? Where are your favorite places to spend time in our town?

Pandosy by the hospital. We fell in love with the Abbott Street ATC & treed corridor, the walkable community, access to transit, KGH, the Lake, and, our home's Frank Lloyd Wright architectural style. And its convenient to work, shops, culture, concerts & services by multiple modes. Love our Lake (ATLS finisher), our ATCs/parks, our Downtown/Town Centres, our pools (in Winter), our ORT (I'm a cyclist), or, just at home in the Net Zero carriage house I designed and built myself, putzing around taking care of my fruit trees and garden. Happily married with two cats and a bZ!