

IAN GRAY – Council Candidate

Question #1 - I have to start by saying some very smart people who work on the City team have already outlined the top priorities for our community in two different documents, mainly in the Corporate Strategic plan, but also in the OCP. I have browsed these plans and feel that many of the infrastructure concerns, wants, and needs have been addressed.

Things that I would like to see more collaboration on is the "unsheltered residents" of Salmon Arm. Clearly this is global issue, and many approaches have been lackluster in achieving the balance of remaining passionate but also finding a lasting solution to deal with the drugs, alcohol and mental health issues of these individuals. I am excited to be able to dig in with those that are currently working on this issue to see if my thoughts are already being acted on or if I can bring some new ideas to the table.

Cutting the red tape - in a time when lack of speed kills deals, with so many communities working extremely hard to attract, secure and maintain strong businesses that will bring good paying jobs, we need to be much more fluid in our ability to close deals quickly, make decisions based on common sense and not rely on Bi-laws that could be outdated and counter intuitive to creating a robust environment for business in Salmon Arm. Being open and supportive to work outside the box to create more opportunities to grow our tax base and improve foot traffic for merchants across the community, will allow more residents to shop at home!, investing in our community which will help create the tax base required to complete required infrastructure and facilities.

Infrastructure - There are many projects that come to mind, but likely the improvement or replacement plans for our water treatment system needs to be top of mind. Each year we wait, the price to complete will go up. Pools, art and recreation centers and indoor soccer complexes can only be realistic if the first two items above are achieved.

Question #2 - I think the City already invests in this area with partnering with the Economic Development team downtown. Kate Watson and her team are working hard every day to increase our exposure to all people in the province of BC and beyond.

The current fire and climate issues that face our regions and others have been at the top of everyone's minds for the last few years. We should remember that global weather patterns have intensified the shortage of water, dryer and hotter summer and will do so for likely one more summer, at which time El Nino will begin to weaken, and our regular seasonal weather will return. I think the fact that the PC party of BC is currently stating that they will invest in a fleet of water bombers that the province will own..that they also plan on linking all the different fire prevention groups together to work as a team, allowing quicker action to extinguish fires will be a big step forward.

That all being said, I do think that there needs to be more awareness of the community fire plan, so residents can be more prepared, understanding the role we all play.

I would like to see more dedicated downtown signage on the east side of our town as you come down the hill that points out the next four exits are specific downtown shopping. I also think we

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need to be more strategic in who is located downtown. As I tourist I am looking for more retail stores with specific and unique offerings.

I would also like to have a bigger focus on cleaning up our waterfront. For as long as I have been in Salmon Arm, I've been told that the summer bloom, the shallow sludge filled water is all natural, but I have been to every corner of the Shuswap lake and there is not another bay like this to be found. We have created much of this by running our storm sewers into the bay for years and not having a long-term plan to rectify the problem. This is where our drinking water comes from. Fix the lake, make it more attractive and user friendly, more environmentally healthy, promote our great wharf and grow our tourist foot traffic.

Question #3 - I think I touched on this in my answer above. Making the downtown more vibrant for visitors and citizen starts by creating a singular identity and I am not in a position to speak to what that identity and drawing card should be. I would suggest that with being fortunate enough to have traveled a fair bit around the world, our downtown has the distinction of being on the shores of one of the most spectacular lakes in the world. Whether it is raining or the sun is shining, the views are second to none. We also have an amazing pier that no one else in the interior of BC can claim to have, yet from a retail standpoint it sits mostly untapped. Utilizing Alexander as an one-way treasure chest of experiences could be exploited more and closed to cars potentially for vendors to move their offerings out onto the street.

I think that up the road in Sicamous where people get the choice to go down around Mara Lake or come up the number #1 Highway to SA should be predominately signed as the gateway to the Shuswap, home to ???? The identity we choose.

Make boat and houseboat traffic a priority 6 months a year, clean up the bay and make access to our marina easy. Give visitors a reason to come walk our pier and downtown.

Question #4 - Infrastructure and community attractions - I truly think I have shared my thoughts on this in previous questions along with finding a solution that allows us to be compassionate and at the same time create a safe, clean environment for residents and visitors.

As a past business owner in Salmon Arm (Salmon Arm GM), I really do understand the frustration of having someone camped out front of your store front, the frontage you pay taxes to occupy, the frontage that you want welcoming to all guests, the one you should not have to police. We need to find a way to not remove the problem but to solve the problem. As suggested, I am eager to consult with those that are already collaborating on this issue in our City and see if my thoughts are old news or potential for a new approach.

Thanks again for the opportunity to participate in sharing my thoughts. I guess I would like to really make it clear that I do not have the answers, but I do believe I have a unique skill of bringing people together and bringing out the best in them. Working together, we will surely find some amazing solutions to take Salmon Arm and the Downtown to new levels of prosperity.

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Please take advantage of the privilege we have here in Canada to participate in the future direction of our community and Vote!