

LOUISE WALLACE RICHMOND – Incumbent Councillor

1. Community priorities and leadership

What do you believe are the three most significant issues Salmon Arm will face during the next four years? What role should City Council play in addressing them, and what specific progress would you hope to see by the end of your term?

Salmon Arm is experiencing record multi-family housing builds. Since 2023, we've seen 469 additional housing units providing densification and diversification of homes choices. This demonstrates confidence in our market and keeps local contractors and businesses busy despite an uncertain provincial economy. As such, we must ensure that the housing supporting infrastructure, such as water, wastewater, roads and transportation networks keep pace with that change. At the same time, the retail and service business is under pressure with the proliferation of online stores and services. While I acknowledge that convenience, rarely do we recognize that online providers do not contribute to the local tax base while commercial and industrial pay a higher percentage of property tax than residential properties. With that said, here are what I believe to be Salmon Arm's top three issues.

1) Secure funding from the provincial and federal government for the wastewater treatment plant. We pay the same PST, GST, income and corporate tax as everyone else. We need our fair share. This council has built good relationships with senior government and we must leverage that to advocate for our city. I will continue to do that.

2) As housing changes and increases, we must address our need to also grow community amenities so our residents benefit from that growth. I will advocate the planning of a multi-purpose, multi-partner, regional community centre that could include a new pool and indoor sport facility.

3) Downtown Salmon Arm is a key anchor in our economic and community well-being. We must ensure that our retailers and service providers can thrive so as to ensure our quality of life. This is why I supported the OCP plan to develop a long term downtown development plan bringing together stakeholders to secure its future in a time of significant economic disruption.

2. Year-round economic vitality and resilience

Wildfire smoke and increasingly unpredictable fire seasons can significantly affect the summer economy that many Salmon Arm businesses rely on. At the same time, local spending alone may not be enough to sustain a diverse small-business community throughout the year. What role should the City play in building a stronger year-round economy, attracting customers and investment during the spring, fall, and winter, and supporting partnerships, infrastructure, events, and community amenities that help local businesses remain viable in every season?

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Many major summer events and festivals have had to re-scheduled or cancel in the Southern Interior. The cost and disruption has often led to the elimination of beloved, long standing events and amenities. I am grateful to local event organizers who have successfully adapted to new formats and schedules. Downtown Salmon Arm should be acknowledged for their hard work and commitment in collaborating with event organizers and local organizations. This is why I appreciate the planning and partnership that created Tourism Salmon Arm in 2025. While our previous partnership with Shuswap Tourism delivered benefits, in an increasingly complex set of conditions, Salmon Arm can now better leverage our MRDT (hotel tax) funds and be laser-focussed on our own needs. This includes attracting more events and tournaments to Salmon Arm. We have recently seen an increase in shoulder season travel and I expect that will continue to be the case. Visitors spend an estimated \$400 million in Salmon Arm supporting over 3,000 local jobs. Any opportunity we have to amplify that is most welcome.

3. Growing and protecting our downtown

Downtown Salmon Arm is one of the defining physical attractions of our community and continues to be an important draw for residents and visitors. Protecting its character and long-term vitality requires a healthy balance of commercial activity and thoughtful, higher-density residential development. What is your vision for growing our downtown, and what actions would you support to attract investment, increase housing, strengthen existing businesses, and maintain the qualities that make the area distinctive?

I marvel at the time, talent and investment businesses contribute to our downtown. I often reflect on my early days in Salmon Arm when traffic was much lower as were the retail, services and restaurant choices. To keep that going and growing, we must continue to add and enhance downtown amenities and events. This ranges from small improvements and upgrades to the development of additional housing units in the core. I was born in Quebec City, a world-renown tourism destination. I visit often to see my parents. On each and every visit, I notice how much attention is placed on small impactful design elements creating unique moments of joy and surprise, from tiny outdoor play areas, and public art to giant lampshades on light posts created by local artists. There was a time here where those improvements were beyond available budgets. Now, given the healthy collaboration, the hotel tax and the establishment of Salmon Arm Tourism, we have that opportunity. Quebec City is also known for its enormous German Christmas market attracting visitors from around the world and we have one now too. Forage General Yuletide Village, which launched last year, is a herculean effort of collaboration with Downtown Salmon Arm and merchants. Having seen both, ours is as good, if not better and I am wildly confident that it will become a key driver of additional tourism. It exemplifies how truly lucky we are to have a group of such dedicated businesses and organizations downtown. Thank you all.

4. Infrastructure, economic growth, and community attractions

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Maintaining and improving municipal infrastructure is essential to the success of existing businesses and the broader community. At the same time, Salmon Arm must continue investing in amenities and attractions that enhance quality of life and help draw visitors, residents, investment, and new businesses. How would you approach these priorities, and what infrastructure or community investments do you believe should be advanced during your term?

While it's not very glamorous, given our record building stats, we must upgrade our wastewater plant. Important too, I think, that we recognize that Salmon Arm is a hub city for the Shuswap which has grown considerably in recent years. Many who work, shop and dine here live outside the city meaning our population grows especially on weekdays. So while we are a small city, we serve a large area and that must be taken into account when planning infrastructure updates. Once we secure the funding and begin the wastewater upgrade, it will be time to turn our attention to a multi-user, multi-partner regional community facility that could include a pool and indoor sports field. Finally, as we change the way we live, work and play with housing densification, we must above all, deliver core services as efficiently and effectively as possible from annual paving programs, sidewalk upgrades, to fresh water infrastructure, transit and trail expansion. I'll add that in the near term, an e-bike storage location would be much welcome given their value, practicality and popularity.

5. A safe, welcoming, and compassionate downtown

Salmon Arm's street solicitation bylaw was controversial when it was introduced. In our experience, Bylaw 4273, together with an increased bylaw presence, has helped reduce persistent solicitation and loitering downtown, concerns that have become more pronounced across many BC communities. People experiencing homelessness, mental health challenges, addictions, and poverty require appropriate and compassionate support. At the same time, a healthy business and property base is essential to the municipal tax base and our community's ability to fund services. How would you pursue compassionate solutions while ensuring that downtown businesses and property owners are supported when dealing with these challenges?

Salmon Arm is a generous and compassionate community. Our social services teams are dedicated, trained professionals who deserve our thanks and respect. It's difficult work. I acknowledge worry, frustration and concern of businesses and residents. I share and understand that. While the province has made important social housing investments in Salmon Arm such as emergency shelter beds, supportive housing and subsidized units, the gap persists. However, provincial data demonstrates that the increase (+15 from 2023 to 2025) is below that of similar sized and smaller communities without these facilities. For the part we can control, we've added three by-law officers who now provide seven day coverage and RCMP patrols continue to increase. They are in regular contact with vulnerable people and social agencies. In 2023, Council revised its outdated Use of Public Spaces bylaw prohibiting encampments on city lands. Only fire and police can respond at encampments on provincial land. Vulnerable people in encampments fall prey to drug dealers, traffickers and thieves. We continue to advocate for additional provincial support for prevention, rapid re-housing, treatment and justice reform for repeat offenders. We all pay provincial taxes for social housing and criminal justice. I will not commit Salmon Arm property tax payers to cover the cost that the province collects for. I will never agree to make you pay twice.

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That said, I have had a front row seat at the enormous collaboration between RCMP, Bylaw Officers and social agencies. I especially appreciate the RCMP's offer to help local businesses optimize their own security systems and CMHA's outreach to the downtown business community. In addition, I've long advocated for a community dashboard so residents can be provided regular updates on the impact and outcomes of this work because I firmly believe that you cannot fix what you do not measure.