

VIC HAMILTON – Council Candidate

1. *Community priorities and leadership*

I see three significant issues facing Salmon Arm over the next four years.

The first is essential infrastructure, specifically the upgrade or replacement of our sewage treatment plant. It isn't glamorous, but everything else depends on it, including new housing and business growth.

The second is our recreation facilities. Too many are in decline, and some services simply aren't there anymore. Recreation isn't a luxury. It's a big part of what makes Salmon Arm a place people want to raise a family, and it's how we attract the doctors, engineers, teachers and skilled trades our community needs.

The third is managing growth. Salmon Arm is growing, and we need our economy, housing and services to keep pace so families can put down roots here.

Council's role is to set clear priorities, plan for the long term, and pay for things responsibly. That means distinguishing what needs to happen now from what can wait. It also means working hard to bring provincial and federal dollars home.

By the end of my term, I'd like to see three things:

- The sewage treatment plant project funded and underway, with borrowing kept within an affordable debt servicing range.
- A costed, community-supported recreation facilities plan, with the first phase approved.
- Real movement on diversifying our economy.

2. *Year-round economic vitality and resilience*

Smoke seasons have shown us how exposed a summer dependent economy can be. The City can't control the weather, but it can help build an economy that doesn't rely on eight good weeks.

I see the City's role as an enabler rather than an operator. That starts with diversification. I'd like to see us attract light industrial, manufacturing and knowledge-based employers whose paycheques circulate here all twelve months..

Second, partnerships. Downtown Salmon Arm, the Chamber, the Arts Council, Shuswap Tourism and our festival organizers already know how to fill a calendar. The City can support them with dependable venues, simpler permitting and consistent promotion of shoulder-season events. My years on the Arts Council board showed me how much these groups accomplish with modest support.

Third, amenities that work in any season. Good recreation facilities host tournaments, swim meets and sporting events in the spring, fall and winter. Those events bring visitors who book rooms, eat in our restaurants and shop downtown when it matters most.

3. *Growing and protecting our downtown*

Our downtown is one of the things that makes Salmon Arm feel like home. It's welcoming and walkable, and it's still full of locally owned businesses. I want to protect that while making it busier.

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The simplest way to strengthen downtown businesses is to have more people living within walking distance of them. I support thoughtful, higher-density residential and mixed-use development in and around the downtown core. I'd back clear, predictable approvals so good projects aren't stalled by process.

"Thoughtful" is the key word. New development should respect the scale, streetscape and character that make downtown distinctive. Growth and character aren't at odds if we plan well.

I also sat on the City's Downtown Parking Advisory Committee, so I know parking gets personal quickly. As density grows, we need a practical parking strategy that works for customers, residents and employees alike.

Beyond housing, I'd support continued investment in downtown revitalization, such as streetscapes, lighting and public spaces, to encourage people to linger. And I'd make sure Council keeps listening to downtown merchants, who usually see problems and opportunities well before City Hall does.

4. Infrastructure, economic growth, and community attractions

My approach comes from more than thirty years in finance. Take care of what's essential first, then invest wisely in what moves the community forward.

Essential infrastructure comes first. The sewage treatment plant replacement is the priority for this term. Without adequate capacity, housing and business growth stall.

Recreation and community amenities come next, and they matter more than many people think. They are how we compete for families and skilled workers, and they bring visitors to town yearround.

On paying for it, most major projects are funded partly from reserves, with the balance borrowed. My focus would be keeping debt servicing within an affordable range at budget time. I'd also make sure every major project includes a long-term maintenance cost analysis. The price tag on opening day is only part of the story.

And I'll ask the hard questions. Is this the best use of taxpayer dollars? Can we do it more efficiently? What will it cost us five or ten years down the road?

During my term, I'd like to see these advanced:

- The sewage treatment plant.
- A clear plan and first phase for recreation facility renewal.
- Continued downtown revitalization.

5. A safe, welcoming, and compassionate downtown

This is one of the hardest issues facing BC communities, and I don't think anyone is served by pretending there's a quick fix. Homelessness, mental health and addiction are complex and costly, and they involve many agencies and levels of government.

Much of the funding and responsibility for housing, health and addictions services sits with the province. I'd continue to support the mayor and Council in lobbying senior governments for the

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supports Salmon Arm needs. I'd also back close coordination with the local agencies doing this work every day.

At the same time, downtown businesses and property owners shouldn't be left to manage these challenges alone. A stronger bylaw presence has made a real difference downtown. I'd support continuing what is working, paired with making sure people are connected to services.

Compassion and a healthy downtown aren't opposing goals. A strong business and property base funds the services our whole community relies on, including the ones that help our most vulnerable residents.