



Shuswap Climate Action Society

Candidate Questions – Salmon Arm Municipal Elections 2022

In the last few years, we have witnessed severe weather across the globe, from heat domes, drought, wildfires, atmospheric rivers, tornadoes and hurricanes to destructive flooding. The role of climate change in the severity of the destruction and loss caused by these disasters has been front and centre. This underscores that we must double down on our efforts to avert the worst impacts and costs of these catastrophes. We know that municipalities are hardest hit by climate change but also directly or indirectly influence roughly half of Canada's GHG emissions. Never has there been a greater need to elect leaders who both understand and will act to protect communities from the effects of the climate crisis.

As part of our ongoing efforts to inform our community, Shuswap Climate Action Society has contacted all the candidates and asked four climate-related questions. Their responses will help voters decide which of the candidates has the vision to steer the community through the climate challenge, making the community more sustainable and resilient to current and future impacts. In this upcoming Salmon Arm municipal election there are three mayoral candidates and 11 people vying for six councillor positions. Below we present the responses to our questions that we received from the candidates, none of which have been edited or altered in any way.

The following candidates chose to address all four questions in one reply:

Nancy Cooper (mayoral candidate) – Recently, the term ‘forest bathing’, also known as Shinrin-Yoku, came to my notice, a term which means the calming benefits of spending time in nature.

As a council, I believe, we need to keep in mind the necessity of green space when choosing when, where, and how to approve development. It would include the consideration of the transportation methodology of reaching that development, whether it were residential, commercial or industrial.

Education is another component of council's duty to uphold its commitment to climate and environmental awareness; if more people rode the bus, for example, it would become more self-sustaining, and the city could offer more service and more frequency on some routes.

As an Emergency Support Services volunteer for more than 20 years, wildfires and floods are a top priority. Last year alone our group assisted our Kamloops group with fire evacuees from Lytton, more fire evacuees in the Sicamous area near Two Mile, as well as the 500 flood victims from Merritt that we sent here to Salmon Arm, so I agree major events are of great concern.



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Conservation can be a significant part of mitigating these catastrophic events. Working with well established agencies to underscore their efforts in preventing soil erosion, water loss, and participating in Fire smart efforts are a good beginning.

We can all be a part of the solution with recycling, looking for the Power Smart stickers on new appliances, and paying heed to sprinkling restrictions when in effect.

Spend time in nature, take advantage of forest bathing, but leave the matches at home during the heat of our summers.

Because we all live here, and Salmon Arm matters.

Kevin Flynn (candidate for council) – I find the questions and answers all inter-related so will do one broad answer. Here it is.....

In my opinion the biggest threats to the Shuswap and Salmon Arm residents from the impacts of Climate Change are wildfire and water concerns, either potential flooding of our rivers and lakes, or potential drought conditions. Clearly, recent wildfire seasons have been challenging for our Province, and the water level and water quality of Shuswap Lake is always a concern. There is no question that we need to be more proactive to improve our preparedness for climate change issues.

The difficulty of the complex issue of Climate Change is our lack of funding and limited resources. A smaller community like ours, relying solely on property tax revenues, can only allocate so many dollars to making changes. We cannot make material changes and improvements on our own. The Federal and Provincial governments must be at the table with money, resources and expertise.

That being said, we have been doing a lot of things to make a difference. We are slowly replacing our vehicle fleet with Hybrid vehicles where and when we can. We are working hard to reduce emissions from our buildings. We are piloting solar initiatives and any future buildings will be designed for maximum energy efficiency. We have been working on significant Firesmarting initiatives with Provincial funding and new developments are being asked to look at Firesmarting and water efficient landscaping.

Another project that will provide guidance for carbon emission reduction is the recent Active Transportation Task Force work on creating a comprehensive plan. This has been a significant community project, 2 plus years in development, that looks at alternative transportation modes like biking, walking, running. Obviously, the goal is to reduce our dependence on vehicles and we are about to release the detailed plan that will guide how we become more alternative transportation friendly. The Greenways Liason Committee, Shuswap Trail Alliance, and the new Active Transportation Plan are all focused on improving walkability and bikeability.



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An example of the focus on alternative transportation is that the planned Lakeshore Road upgrades that will include significant parallel walking/cycling infrastructure. The Underpass also has been designed with walking/cycling in mind. Further, we worked with the Province to ensure all the recent highway improvements west of town have significant alternative transportation options. Connectivity in our new subdivisions is also a focus of Council and our planning team

Time, money, limited resources and land constraints are all challenges. I think we are making progress and we are looking for Climate Change solutions and funding resources all the time. This important work must continue and we must all work together to reduce our impacts on our Climate.

Question 1. *What do you believe are the main risks to Salmon Arm - its citizens, its infrastructure, its economy - from climate change impacts? What specific actions do you think the municipality should take to reduce emissions, adapt to these risks, and build a more resilient community?*

Mayoral Candidates

Alan Harrison – The biggest risk to Salmon Arm, from climate change impacts is wildfire. I know when smoke blows into our region, everyone's stress level increases. Breathing becomes more difficult. Tourists stay away. The City of Salmon Arm has recently completed a Wildfire Prevention Plan, with Fire Smarting, including fuel mitigation as an important tool. In cooperation with the Columbia Shuswap Regional District we have also built an emergency response plan.

Luke Norrie – No response to date.

Council Candidates

Daniel Bardy – No response to date.

Debbie Cannon – No response to date.

Brian Fletcher – No response to date.

David Gonella – The risks to Salmon Arm are multi-level and will require Federal and Provincial leadership to provide support and resources to combat successfully. For the residents of Salmon



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Arm the risk of food insecurity, extreme heat events and forest fires are real and present. In the short-term the community and leadership must continue to focus on reducing our individual carbon emission output, support regional food security initiatives, and invest in emergency preparedness precautions and planning.

Deb Haukedal – No response to date.

Robert Johnson – No response to date.

Tim Lavery – Thanks to SCAS for posing these important questions. I'll provide summary responses here from my platform of Four Pillars of a **Liveable, Reliable, Affordable & Sustainable Salmon Arm**. Please check out timlavery.ca for further information related to all of these questions.

I believe that I am a climate-sincere local politician who is trying to make a difference amidst significant restraints of funding. I read extensively on this and attend every federal, provincial and regional session that I can to more fully understand what communities our size are and can be doing.

Climate change is real and here! Larger scale risks of inadequate storm water infrastructure, wildland urban interface fire exposure and food security are at the top of my mind. There are many other concerns as well but these current community-wide risks stand out for me.

Work is underway to assess and address improvements to our storm water capacities, harden our critical infrastructure, incorporate FireSmart principles in new builds, reduce fuel load build up in public spaces and encourage homeowners and neighbourhoods to become FireSmart. These initiatives are taking a beginning hold and need to expand. I support ongoing funding to advance them. I have played a key role – with the support of council - in getting the city to where we are now on fuel load mitigation. There's a lot more to be done for sure and lots of conversations on how to best implement these actions but they have begun in this current term.

We need a Not-Net-Loss tree bylaw for our urban trees and forests. I'm looking forward to the upcoming report from the EAC and have researched how other communities are implementing similar bylaws as well as including natural environmental systems into their asset management plans. We need to do this too.

I have long been an advocate for the city to develop a Food and Urban Agriculture plan to increase our resiliency to climate change. I've been unsuccessful so far in convincing a



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majority of council to have this as a short term goal but I will continue to not only strongly argue for this but also to seek funding to get this done asap.

There are many more aspects to this question. Please check out my site and do feel free to contact me at twlavery@gmail.com.

Sylvia Lindgren – I think that, long term, both fires and floods are real risks in our area. We saw flooding in our area in 2014 where the Armstrong Askews was flooded up to it's front door. Many areas had similar experiences. Forest fire is just a matter of time. We have had fires all around us for several years in a row and our turn will inevitably come. The extreme weather events that are causing natural disasters across the globe are predicted to increase in both frequency and intensity. To be ready we need to continue fire smart treatments around our community. I know this is not popular with some residents but I believe its the only way we can protect ourselves from a Lytton type disaster. We can protect infrastructure such as roads and water treatment but improving the way we build them and building in protective infrastructure where necessary. A fulsome Emergency Response Plan in conjunction with community partners will be needed to react in a timely fashion to the eventual occurrence of one or both of these events. Short term we will likely need easily accessible cooling shelters for extreme heat events as well.

Louise Wallace Richmond – Frankly, it's less about risk and more about reality. It's the cumulative effect of climate change that concerns me most and mitigation and prevention measures must consider the entire eco-system rather than focus on a single risk. Take the summer of 2021 for example, the heat dome led to severe drought, the drought led to forest fires. The atmospheric river was made worst by drought conditions because the soil could barely absorb normal precipitation never mind an actual river of rain. I believe it prudent to take a three prong approach; emergency planning for catastrophic incidents, climate mitigation planning for all city assets and infrastructure and community messaging and support around the role we must all play to minimize climate change's impact.

Specific actions include continuing to measure our municipal GHG emissions and using the resulting provincial funding to resource climate resiliency initiatives such as electrifying the city's fleet of vehicles and moving to renewable energy wherever possible. That data piece is critical to measuring impact and improvement and transferable to other organizations. This is where community groups like Shuswap Climate Action play a critical role inspiring local households, organizations and businesses to undertake their own GHG reduction plan. I would advocate for robust partnerships and specific measurable plans. Only a cumulative approach to climate action can minimize the cumulative effect of climate change.



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Kristine Wickner – No response to date.

Question 2. In August 2019, Salmon Arm City Council declared a climate emergency and formally “recognized that climate action is a strategic priority to be considered in decision making and investment moving forward”; furthermore, Council recognized the “urgent need for a Climate Action Plan and corresponding action for the City of Salmon Arm”. Council followed up by having a Community Energy and Emissions Plan (CEEP) prepared and published in March 2020, providing the foundation for a climate action plan. *If elected, what do you see as the next steps needed to expedite the development and implementation of a comprehensive climate action plan?*

Mayoral Candidates

Alan Harrison – There are two parts to this. The first is the City lowering its green house gas emissions. We have been successful in this by moving to electrification of the City fleet, introducing street side recycling and composting, implementing innovations at our pool and arena and expanding our trails network. The second is making it easier for residents to lower their carbon footprint. Ensuring higher levels of government provide incentives to residents for changing heating and cooling of our homes to alternatives like solar or heat pumps, and continue to make it more affordable to move to electric vehicles and bikes.

Luke Norrie – No response to date.

Council Candidates

Daniel Bardy – No response to date.

Debbie Cannon – No response to date.

Brian Fletcher – No response to date.

David Gonella – Although not a perfect document, the CEEP is a worthy work in progress and a positive starting point the City can lead with the support of the community.

Deb Haukedal – No response to date.



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Robert Johnson – No response to date.

Tim Lavery – The CEEP plan has been an introductory step but a more comprehensive and prescriptive plan of climate action best-practices needs to happen – and soon! With new and increased provincial funding just now available, we first need to prioritize developing such a robust plan over the other worthy priorities competing for local funding.

There has been some debate over how a new comprehensive climate action plan should best be developed. **I support contracting recognized-expert consultants** to help develop a modern Climate Action Plan and *then* **determining our approaches for implementing the best-practice initiatives** identified through that process. This consultancy approach has been highly successful in developing our Housing Plan and the soon-to-be-delivered Active Transportation Plan. The new provincial funding referenced above is sufficient to accomplish this. That's my first priority for those funds!

I also feel that it's important to recognize initiatives already underway – something that can be either missed or under-emphasized in our conversations. Salmon Arm, because of its curbside organics collection program, has seen our lowest GHG emissions in the past two years since counting began 12 years ago. This is no small matter. On top of that, the diverted tonnage to the landfill has significantly extended the timeline of its capacity. Many local governments are still either still considering implementation of something similar, or in a pilot or early implementation phase (e.g. Kamloops or Vernon). It's been a game changer and I feel that this fact should be front and centre in all of our conversations. There is more to do for sure but actions are underway.

Sylvia Lindgren – I think the next steps for the city are to assign the work of a climate action plan to someone, whether that is a new staff member, an existing staff member, or an outside agency. This can be done through grant funding in my opinion. I don't think we will ever have a comprehensive approach to climate action without the overarching plan. Council has supported a Cultural Plan, an Active Transportation Plan, and others. Clearly they know that a comprehensive plan is necessary to a successful approach and climate is the biggest threat to our community right now.

Louise Wallace Richmond – The CEEP

(https://www.salmonarm.ca/DocumentCenter/View/3998/2020_CEEP-SalmonArm-final-Nov2020) lays out the current state of affairs and the way forward focussing on six areas of mitigation; zero emission transportation, zero emission buildings, closing the



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loop on waste, organizational capacity, sequestration and actions to build for big moves. In addition, it lays out the budget implications. Our tendency to focus on the cost of doing things rather than the cost of not doing things creates resistance. It's my view that all climate action initiatives have a valuable cost benefit and I'll continue to focus on that if re-elected (and even if not). Clearly, the cost of not moving forward is far greater than the investment of building climate resilience. The next step is to continue to implement the initiatives laid out in the CEEP Report and explore the viability of building in a community climate planner role within the City or contributing funding of one through a like-minded organization

Kristine Wickner – No response to date.

Question 3. Like many municipalities across Canada, the largest proportion of Salmon Arm's GHG emissions come from transportation (driving fossil-fuel powered vehicles), and the second largest proportion comes from buildings. *What do you see as the most effective ways of reducing the emissions in these two sectors?*

Mayoral Candidates

Alan Harrison – In addition to the information shared in the previous question, local governments have tools through the Official Community Plan and Zoning Bylaw to densify housing closer to services. By having people live closer to services, alternate transportation to vehicles is more realistic. In Salmon Arm, we have developed an Urban Containment Boundary, and modified our OCP and Zoning bylaw to encourage densification close to the town core. We recently also expanded our transit services, and will need to expand further as we grow.

Luke Norrie – No response to date.

Council Candidates

Daniel Bardy – No response to date.

Debbie Cannon – No response to date.

Brian Fletcher – No response to date.

David Gonella – The scale of the solutions necessary to adequately address the climate crisis are beyond the capacity of a city of 19,000 residents to solve alone. We will need the Federal



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and Provincial governments to set standards and augment resources to lower municipal carbon output across Canada and BC.

On the local level the City, under my leadership, will focus on the opportunity to reduce emissions through capital purchases, adjustments to the building bylaws, and developing more public/private transportation options.

The next phase to addressing the climate crisis must include input/buy-in from all members in our community. Expecting one group to convince another of the risk of the climate crisis is a bygone era, as we are all on this planet together and need to unify to solve it long-term.

Deb Haukedal – No response to date.

Robert Johnson – No response to date.

Tim Lavery – These two sectors are indeed large sources of emissions. I'll distinguish between corporate emissions and those of citizens and I recognize that my answers here may not please everyone. The city has just begun to decarbonize its fleet. That's a good thing. That'll continue where appropriate. We need to extend those expectations to contracted service fleets as well. I support and monitor this decarbonization.

What is perhaps more debatable for me is the exact role of the city in encouraging changes in the adaptive behaviours of residents. We all need to change our consumptive habits. Incentivization is a topic that is front and centre and comparables with other jurisdictions are often brought up.

Here's where I stand. The city needs to take a greater role in education and providing information for sure. While many local governments provide some incentives, it's rarely mentioned that in most cases of jurisdictions our size, the amount and number of those incentives are capped at relatively small amounts.

I believe that the main focus of city funding needs to be on the larger community-wide risk concerns referred to in question #1. These are big ticket items that have community-wide implications. It's about protecting critical public infrastructure imo. I want to see residents who can and should be making changes to their own daily habits be celebrated and take advantage of incentives offered by higher levels of government. My main focus is on planning and adequately funding our local critical infrastructure exposed to climate change risks.

Sylvia Lindgren – Vehicles are huge emitters of GHG and we are all going to have to work together to reduce our transportation needs and move to zero emission vehicles.



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In my first term I encouraged the city to start replacing the vehicle fleet with electric cars and they bought their first fully electric vehicle for the bylaw officers. I hope to see more vehicles replaced with electric over the next few years as they come up for replacement. Two level 2 chargers were also installed in the parking garage in preparation for conversion to some electric cars. However, its going to take far more than the city's vehicles converting and we are going to all have to play a part. As far as buildings, the arena and swimming pool are by far the biggest emitters of GHG. When the new pool is built I will encourage the city to build it as green as possible. There are many examples of this around the world and my goal is for us to be a leader in this. The arena gets upgraded as often as possible to new technologies that are more efficient and I will continue to support this trend.

Louise Wallace Richmond – Salmon Arm, for a relatively small city, has a large land footprint (second only to Vancouver) thus creating a dependency on personal vehicle travel. As we slowly move to electrification of vehicles, there are still steps we can take to change the way we move around our city including ongoing efforts to densify neighbourhoods especially those close to the core, thereby reducing transportation emission. Car sharing, increased transit and more robust cycle routes will also have a positive impact. Fully half of the new housing units approved in the last four years, are multi-family. To create the much needed substitution effect (substituting personal vehicle travel for other lower GHG emitting options such as walking, cycling and transit), requires that we cast a climate lens on land use decisions so as to create neighbourhoods and business districts that are dense, walkable and well-serviced.

Kristine Wickner – No response to date.

Question 4. “Bikeability” and “walkability” in cities is becoming increasingly important not just for health reasons but also to address climate change. A high [walk score](#) in a city reduces vehicle traffic and congestion and improves air quality. Salmon Arm currently has an average [walkability score](#) of 21. A good score would be 70 or better and a score of 90 or greater would be considered a walker’s paradise. *What will you do if elected, to improve these important aspects of climate mitigation and adaptation in the community?*

Mayoral Candidates

Alan Harrison – Over the past two years, Councillor Lavery and I have co-chaired the Active Transportation Task Force. This task force is amongst the most high-functioning groups I have worked with. With 18 members, from all facets of the community, members have worked well together. Over the past 8 months, the ATTF has engaged the community, gathering input as we build an Active Transportation Network Plan. This plan will be completed this year. It will guide the community on the building of



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trails, walking paths, sidewalks, bike paths and non-motorized corridors throughout our City over the next 10 years. I am committed to supporting resource dollars at budget time, to help build these active transportation routes.

Luke Norrie – No response to date.

Council Candidates

Daniel Bardy – No response to date.

Debbie Cannon – No response to date.

Brian Fletcher – No response to date.

David Gonella – Beyond the direct benefits to lowering emissions and helping to reduce our carbon output, increasing “bikeability” and “walkability” in the City makes sound financial sense. Investments to increase bike lanes and trails increase the livability, improves the quality of life in the community and directly benefits Salmon Arm’s status as a marquee tourist destination.

Investigating adopting what communities with comparable topography challenges (i.e. steep hills, etc.) have implemented with things like bike sharing, ebike plug-ins, scooter rentals, walkability improvements, and increasing options to get folks back "up the hill" are all important pieces in getting folks out of vehicles.

At the same time, our city layout does not allow for the majority of citizens to shop and work within an easy "walking distance" to their home. Having a focus on incentivizing things like car-sharing, carpooling, and reimagining public/private transit options will be vital to increasing the travel options in Salmon Arm and creating a cultural shift in transportation norms.

Deb Haukedal – No response to date.

Robert Johnson – No response to date.

Tim Lavery – Great question and there’s an imminent and exciting response to address this. I’d add that it’s all about improving safe and connected infrastructure for All Ages and Abilities (A3) over the next 20 years.



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For the past 8 months, there's been a huge amount of effort from the community and the city working with top-shelf AT consultants to develop an Active Transportation plan that addresses a wide scope of needed infrastructure and connectivity. The plan itself – one of current best practices - will be delivered to council by the consultants on October 11th. Some of you may have provided input to the process. Many residents did!

It is robust and comprehensive and contains not only suggested priority actions but a way to track progress. I have to say that this process has been one of the most collaborative and important files that I have worked on. Mayor Harrison and I have co-chaired the process with a large table of community organizations and citizens-at-large. There's been a huge amount of heavy lifting to get this plan to the public.

A close-to-final **draft** of the AT plan can be found at www.connectsalmonarm.ca - Click the links to review the [Draft Plan](#) , [Summary Document](#), and [Engagement Summary](#) ! Look for the final version of the plan on October 11th.

Thanks again for the great questions SCAS! Please check out my full platform at timlavery.ca

Sylvia Lindgren – Active transportation, transit, and densification all play an important role in reducing vehicle reliance. Allowing commercial development like grocery and convenience stores and pubs in neighbourhoods allows people to walk to stores. Currently there is great development in the Downtown and Bastion neighbourhoods and many people in the surrounding areas walk daily to do their daily chores. Hillcrest, in my opinion, would benefit from some small commercial conveniences in their neighbourhood. But we need to do more because many, if not most, of our daily driving is to go to work and back. I am in favour of more transit, both in routes and frequency. Bike lanes are long overdue in our city and the possibility of being able to bike downtown and then get on the transit to go home is very attractive. But its not just Salmon Arm's local population. Many people come to Salmon Arm to work from the outlying communities. Many of them would be happy to get on the bus and leave the car at home if it was available and convenient. I would love to see a partnership between the city and the school district to fund transit together so that kids could get to school, the rest of the community could get to wherever they are going, and bus drivers could get full time work (which is currently a huge deterrent to finding bus drivers for SD83....its hard to live on 5.5 hours/day).

Louise Wallace Richmond – Within the city itself, there are neighbourhoods and districts that are very walkable. Canoe, my neighbourhood is a prime example of a walkable neighbourhood. The downtown core, which is relatively condensed, is also very walkable. The connections between the 6 major neighbourhoods, 4 commercial



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and 2 industrial zones needs work. Our active transportation plan has been designed thanks to dedicated community members and subject experts will, with necessary investment and implementation, improve this.

The changing nature of work, high speed internet and work from home options will also change neighbourhoods themselves. In the last 50 years, planning was about compartmentalizing certain activities in certain zones - separating industrial, residential, commercial and institutional. I foresee a move towards the 15 minute neighbourhood concept, relatively high density (smaller footprint homes with secondary suites or duplexes), walkable residential areas with a central cluster of diverse land uses such as services and small retail. Part of the reason Canoe is so walkable is because we have a school, a post office, a daycare, parks, playgrounds, fields, trails and a full service village market. It keeps us from diving to town. It's an older style of planning that has shown itself to be resilient and regaining in popularity. The 15 minute neighbourhood concept reduces longer private vehicle trips thus reducing GHGs. It will take time, it will take planning and it will take a willingness to change the way we move around our city. In thinking about this over the last few years, I made a commitment to take local transit for a month if only to understand it better. It's changed my perspective so much so that I ended up using local transit for the better part of a year and still do on occasional user. I'm always struck by transit concerns from those who have never had the pleasure of taking the bus. I highly recommend it. And you might just see your city in a different way which is the first step to any improvement.

Kristine Wickner – No response to date.