

**TO: Comox Valley Record**  
**ATTN: Terry Farrell, Editor**

**FROM: Steve Blacklock, Comox Council Candidate**

**RE: 2022 Municipal Election Questions**

**1 - Active transportation has been a hot-button topic for a few years now, with the expansion of bike lanes, etc. Where do you see your support going in regards to active transportation infrastructure? Are you in favour of continuing to expand on such projects, or should efforts and attention be paid toward motor vehicle transportation infrastructure (I.e. an additional river crossing)?**

I enjoy riding my e-bike to get to many different places around the Town of Comox. Our Town invests significant property tax dollars each year in replacing our aging infrastructure (roads, sidewalks, water, and sewer pipes). Infrastructure asset management is one of our core municipal government functions and it is critical we do it well.

I was pleased to see that improved cycling infrastructure was a component of our recent upgrades along the south side of Comox Avenue. If elected, I will advocate for adding bike lanes on identified bike routes, along with safety enhanced pedestrian crosswalks. These type of future infrastructure improvements should coincide with the scheduling of future road resurfacing.

We will have an upcoming opportunity to make infrastructure enhancements in Comox during the upcoming sewer force-main replacement project.

Each trip completed by bike represents one less car on our increasingly congested roads. Many of the Comox residents I have spoken to over the last few weeks, have told me that vehicle congestion, pedestrian safety, and traffic flow issues are a major concern. Supporting strategically placed cycling infrastructure reduces cyclist-driver-pedestrian conflicts and helps Comox reach GHG emission reduction targets.

**2 - What is your view of public transport in your community? Is it sufficient, and if not, where are improvements needed?**

BC Transit has a goal of growing transit ridership to a 3% transit mode share by the year 2038 (Source: *Transit Future Action Plan, 2022*). With the increased costs associated with vehicle ownership and/ or private driving services, public transit is the only available means of transportation for many in our community; particularly students, seniors, and those with mobility challenges.

Comox should be encouraging transit-oriented development along our key arterial routes. More connectivity of our system with adjacent communities would also be great to see because every trip made by bus helps reduce congestion on our increasingly busy roads.

BC Transit has identified improving frequency of service on the “Route 3 – Comox” bus route as one of five current service improvement priorities. If elected to council, I look forward to receiving the results of planned future analysis around “on-demand short service options”. This style of transit service has been a success in other similarly sized communities, like Powell River, and may be a viable solution in Comox.

### **3 - What are your ideas/solutions regarding the housing/affordable housing crisis in the town?**

As a property valuation professional, I understand the myriad of complex issues associated with development and land use planning.

The Comox Valley needs to add supply of all types of housing, including both market and non-market units. Partnering with or assisting our existing, well-established, non-profit housing organizations in building more affordable social housing and senior housing is required throughout the Comox Valley. I support the idea of density within our municipal boundary as opposed to sprawling out into the neighbouring CVRD areas. I do not support the establishment of a municipal housing authority.

New supply must include what is known as the 'missing middle': higher density townhouse, apartment, and patio home type projects, along with in-fill addition of rental suites and carriage houses within established neighbourhoods.

New proposed developments in Comox will need a careful examination of existing infrastructure capacity with respect to parking, traffic flows, and tree retention.

If elected, I will work with Town Council, staff, and the development sector, to make sure affordable units are a necessary component for new proposed multi-family projects in Comox.

**4 - Crime, particularly crime against properties (theft/vandalism) is on the rise. How can this be addressed?**

The RCMP are limited in their ability to effectively deal with prolific offenders who commit a large majority of property crimes in our community, especially if the individual is suffering with addiction and/ or mental health issues. My sister and her husband are both RCMP members and my parents were both family doctors. I've learned from them that compassion is required to help people living with mental health and/ or addiction.

I am supportive of the efforts of health care professionals and existing non-profit organizations currently operating in the Comox Valley. I am proud to support these on-going efforts through my volunteer work with the Rotary Club of the Comox Valley.

Comox also experiences some property vandalism committed by youth. Town Council has sought to engage Comox's youth with respect to improved or new recreation opportunities. I support the existing council initiative for to apply for grant funding to construct a new skate park and pump track in Comox. I think new outdoor recreation opportunities for youth are worthy of Comox council's attention and resources.

**5 - Reconciliation is an ongoing process. Where is your community lacking in that regard and how can we improve relations?**

I am the grandchild of settlers of unceded territory who came to Canada from Scotland. I have followed the full accounting of the atrocities visited upon First Nations Peoples since first contact. Since the release of the 'Truth and Reconciliation Commission Report' and the 'UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples'. I acknowledge my personal responsibility to support the implementation of the commission's calls to action. I have sought to educate myself through research and through discussions with the First Nations people that I know. I encourage all citizens to read Bob Joseph's book, "21 Things You May Not Know About the Indian Act", as well as Bev Sellars' "They Called Me Number One". We cannot change our shared history. However, with understanding and knowledge, we can move forward into a brighter shared future.

As a council candidate in Comox, I completely support our local KFN government as they move into the final stages of modern treaty negotiations with British Columbia and Canada. I have worked with KFN in my professional career. I am committed to a future where Comox and KFN work in a more collaborative manner with respect to land use, environmental protection, and regional economic development.