

Civic Election 2014: "What the Candidates Are Saying They'll Do for Rockland"

Candidates for Mayor: Lisa Helps

Candidates for Council: Jonathan Carroll, Ian Hoar, Ben Isitt, Erik Kaye, Jeremy Loveday, Sean Murray, Paul Servos, Geoff Young

Lisa Helps

1. Will you actively support existing zoning and discourage site-specific rezoning in Rockland?

The short and honest answer is no, not in every case. The Official Community Plan calls for sensitive infill housing in existing neighbourhoods and sometimes, larger scale buildings along corridors. I support this. Sometimes this means that zoning needs to be changed. BUT, and this is very important, I will listen to you. I will listen to most affected neighbours. I will do site visits. I will try to understand the changes and challenges from your perspective. I commit to this.

The other thing I commit to, that is related, is for the City to play a more facilitative role between neighbourhood Associations and developers. Right now there are silos. The developer meets with the neighbourhood. Then the developer submits plans and works with the City. At no time in the current process do all three parties – City, neighbourhood, and developer – sit down together. I think this needs to be changed; a better process can lead to better results for everyone involved.

2. Will you make local area plans a priority, especially along corridors?

For existing neighbourhoods that are not anticipated to have large-scale and / or much new development the local area planning process is not scheduled to happen for some time. In general, I support this. However, I like the suggestion of having smaller scale local area plans along corridors even in neighbourhoods where great change is not anticipated. Unlike the former Official Community Plan where the scale of planning was whole neighbourhoods, when the Local Area Planning process was designed/refined as part of the current OCP, the spirit of the planning process proposed is to allow for planning as planning is needed. I am in favour of allocating planning resources to areas in existing neighbourhoods where change is anticipated, especially, as the question indicates, along corridors.

3. Will you advocate for the acquisition of parkland for Rockland?

Yes. Parkland is important for our city, particularly in a beautiful and very green neighbourhood like Rockland.

4. Will you use your vote on council to prevent the loss of green space in Rockland?

Green space is very important to me. Preventing the loss of green space in the City fits with the vision of Victoria that I share with so many people; our natural beauty is the Victoria's number one asset. Creating, maintaining and preventing the loss of green space in our Victoria is a top priority. As mayor I will work hard to prevent the loss of green space in Rockland as well as our other neighbourhoods.

5. Will you vote to support the 40 km speed reduction initiative?

Yes. I think that safe streets start with reasonable speed limits. If the residents of Rockland feel that a 40km speed reduction is in the neighbourhood's best interests then I will vote to support that.

6. Will you support further development of the Integrated Transportation Network, including greenways and cycling routes?

Improving and developing an Integrated Transportation Network is one of my key goals as mayor. I am a big believer that City Hall can do much more in this regard. There is nothing stopping Victoria from becoming a leader in green transportation infrastructure and cycling infrastructure in North America and the healthiest city in Canada. With the right

political will, courageous leadership and direction from City Hall, Victoria can vastly improve its active transportation and greenways network.

Jonathan Carroll

1. Will you actively support existing zoning and discourage site-specific rezoning in Rockland?

I will do all that I can to maintain the fantastic character and historical significance of the Rockland area if that is what the residents desire. I would not commit myself totally to rejecting any and all rezoning in any area, but I will work with communities to make sure that any changes that do happen, do so in a way that is respectful and beneficial for everyone.

2. Will you make local area plans a priority, especially along corridors?

Absolutely. I think any mechanism that can be used to involve citizens directly in planning for the future of their area is a must. Having clearly stated goals and objectives that are shaped by the needs and desires of a community is absolutely essential in ensuring socially responsible growth. Local area plans provide an excellent method of bringing clarity and accountability to matters that happen within an area, and I will involve myself in every way I can with making them a reality.

3. Will you advocate for the acquisition of parkland for Rockland?

Yes. In my personal opinion the parkland of Victoria is part of what makes it such an amazing place to live. It is the city's duty to protect and manage our parkland and I will always advocate the acquisition of such areas for public good.

4. Will you use your vote on council to prevent the loss of green space in Rockland?

Yes. I will advocate the importance of our green space in Victoria in every way I can. I believe that not only is it an important social fixture of our city, but its removal would be an irresponsible dismissal of our environmental responsibilities.

5. Will you vote to support the 40 km speed reduction initiative?

I will vote for such an initiative if it is made clear to me that the residents of the area want it. I am not prepared to say unequivocally yes or no on the matter, without first interacting with local residents and taking every precaution that the needs and desires of all people affected are being expressed. If I am satisfied that such is the case then I would gladly support such action.

6. Will you support further development of the Integrated Transportation Network, including greenways and cycling routes?

I am fully supportive of the installation of new greenways and cycling routes in the city. I think they are an excellent way to beautify the city whilst encouraging more environmental and social responsibility, and that it is a terrible shame that the greenways plan that is already in existence has not seen more action. I am all in favour of improving our local transit options, and would be happy to devote my time to investigating exactly what changes can be brought about to meet the increasing needs of our residents in terms of transit. As things currently stand I know that I, and many others, are dissatisfied with the transit services in the area and I would like to collaborate with the other municipalities to ensure that the needs of all of our people are being met.

Ian Hoar

1. Will you actively support existing zoning and discourage site-specific rezoning in Rockland?

I need some more information on this. Is there a specific issue that is contentious with respect to rezoning. Zoning is an extremely touchy matter in most communities so I'd rather not make a blanket statement about my views.

2. Will you make local area plans a priority, especially along corridors?

I think local area plans exist for neighbourhoods for good reason, so I would absolutely respect them in the context in which they were created. I don't think one needs to make them a priority for them to be effective.

3. Will you advocate for the acquisition of parkland for Rockland?

I think more parks is a good thing, but I would like to see specifics before commenting on what my decision would be.

4. Will you use your vote on council to prevent the loss of green space in Rockland?

Same as above, green space is good, but not at any cost. If there is a specific case you'd like me to comment on I'd love to investigate further.

5. Will you vote to support the 40 km speed reduction initiative?

I don't think that reducing speed limits is a priority for council. If there are certain nuisance roads in the Rockland area that become dangerous, I would fully support a reduced speed limit, traffic calming and increased enforcement as I would on any road in the region.

6. Will you support further development of the Integrated Transportation Network, including greenways and cycling routes?

Absolutely yes. This is a huge priority for me.

Ben Isitt

1. Will you actively support existing zoning and discourage site-specific rezoning in Rockland?

Yes, I believe the City should generally respect existing zoning and move away from the practice of creating a new zone for each individual development project. This is particularly important in a heritage neighbourhood such as Rockland. The current system ties up substantial resources in the City's Planning Department in the analysis and preparation of site-specific zones, and creates acrimony in the community between project proponents pursuing increased density and residents who feel these applications conflict with their reasonable expectations for their neighbourhood. These Planning resources could be better deployed in the updating of Local Area Plans, which facilitate redevelopment that is predictable and transparent for residents and project proponents.

2. Will you make local area plans a priority, especially along corridors?

Yes, I believe the City should invest resources in updating Local Area Plans to ensure that the zoning is appropriate and consistent with residents' reasonable expectations and visions for their neighbourhood, while accommodating some new housing as envisioned in the Official Community Plan. Proposed development along the Fort Street corridor and elsewhere in the City is likely to create tension between residents and project proponents in the absence of updated Local Area Plans. By proactively pursuing local area planning in advance of new development applications being submitted, the City can facilitate a community dialogue over what kind of zoning is appropriate, helping to reduce conflict over land use.

3. Will you advocate for the acquisition of parkland for Rockland?

Yes, I have advocated consistently for the acquisition of parkland in Rockland during my term as City Council liaison to the neighbourhood, including designating new parkland as a priority in the Official Community Plan, moving forward

with planning for the Pemberton Trail and improved access between Government House and Fairfield, and pursuing the creation of new parkland through the gifting and/or purchase of land.

4. Will you use your vote on council to prevent the loss of green space in Rockland?

Yes, I have voted against land-use proposals that I believe negatively impact greenspace, harm protected trees and heritage features, and undermine the privacy and reasonable expectations of Rockland residents. I anticipate applying similar values to land-use decisions if re-elected to City Council.

5. Will you vote to support the 40 km speed reduction initiative?

Yes, I supported the request from 10 of Victoria's 11 community associations to introduce safer speeds on secondary arterial roads such as Richmond and Richardson. Residents on both these streets petitioned City Council for the speed reductions, leading to the inclusion of these streets in the proposed amendment to the City's Streets and Traffic Bylaw. I support completing three readings and adoption of the bylaw amendment, as a first step in a broader strategy of traffic calming in our neighbourhoods.

6. Will you support further development of the Integrated Transportation Network, including greenways and cycling routes?

Yes, I am a strong advocate for greenways for walking and cycling, within neighbourhoods and connecting neighbourhoods throughout the City. I have worked with the Rockland Neighbourhood Association and Rockland residents to pursue greenway connections through Government House and elsewhere in the neighbourhood and I introduced an amendment to include the Pemberton Trail in Victoria's Official Community Plan. I also advocated successfully for the re-opening of the Chandler-Gonzales pathway and for planning to proceed on a multi-use trail along the Dallas Road waterfront. More work remains to be done on greenways, which have big benefits from the standpoint of personal health, active transportation, climate action, and vibrant neighbourhoods.

Erik Kaye

1. Will you actively support existing zoning and discourage site-specific rezoning in Rockland?

I would be legally obliged to keep an open mind about any rezoning application as a city councilor. That said, my general approach would be to ensure that any development proposal is consistent with the Official Community Plan, and to be to work with local residents on the creation of local area plans to ensure that neighbourhood values and priorities shape development decisions (see response to question 2 below).

2. Will you make local area plans a priority, especially along corridors?

Yes. As a long-standing member of neighbourhood association board member, I recognize that most neighbourhood plans are over 20 years old. We need to prioritize local planning on key corridors, and incorporate neighbourhood traffic plans to allow residents to devise solutions to local traffic and safety concerns.

3. Will you advocate for the acquisition of parkland for Rockland?

Yes. I would advocate for an equitable distribution of park land across all neighbourhoods in Victoria, with the goal of all residents having access to parks within a reasonable walking distance from their homes. I am aware that certain neighbourhoods such as North Jubilee and Rockland do not currently enjoy adequate park space compared to other neighbourhoods in Victoria.

4. Will you use your vote on council to prevent the loss of green space in Rockland?

My approach would be to not only preserve green space as much as possible across all neighbourhoods, but to seek opportunities to convert parking lots and other asphalt landscapes into green space where appropriate.

5. Will you vote to support the 40 km speed reduction initiative?

The speed limit reduction pilots are currently underway on selected Victoria streets. I would wait for the results of the pilots, and an evaluation of the impact of the reduced limits on actual road speed, before deciding how to vote on further reductions to speed limits.

6. Will you support further development of the Integrated Transportation Network, including greenways and cycling routes?

Yes. Promoting walkable communities and sustainable transportation alternatives would be one of my top priorities if elected to Victoria City Council. I believe we need separated bike paths to encourage cyclists of all abilities to travel Victoria streets by bike. The greenway network and cycling routes must be integrated to support a seamless commute to major destinations in Victoria, eventually connecting to the Galloping Goose Trail.

Jeremy Loveday

1. Will you actively support existing zoning and discourage site-specific rezoning in Rockland?

I believe that it is important to keep the character of neighbourhoods like Rockland intact. Any changes to bylaws and zoning should be made with care and only after meaningful input from neighbourhood residents.

2. Will you make local area plans a priority, especially along corridors?

Yes. Smart planning around corridors make sense given the high traffic. Long term planning requires us to ensure that corridors are well thought out so that they are able to accommodate change in neighbourhoods over time.

3. Will you advocate for the acquisition of parkland for Rockland?

Yes. Parkland improves the vibrancy of neighbourhoods and the city should be working to make sure that all neighbourhoods have their fair share of parkland.

4. Will you use your vote on council to prevent the loss of green space in Rockland?

Yes. I will be a strong voice for the preservation of green space.

5. Will you vote to support the 40 km speed reduction initiative?

Yes, I am in favour of reduced speed limits in residential neighbourhoods. I believe that our streets should be safe for everyone. If elected, I will advocate for streets that are safe for drivers, cyclists, and pedestrians. A reduction of speed has been shown to increase road safety for all users and reduce the severity of injuries if accidents do occur.

6. Will you support further development of the Integrated Transportation Network, including greenways and cycling routes?

Yes. As a board member of the Greater Victoria Cycling Coalition, I have been a vocal advocate for safe, accessible and complete transportation networks. Integrated transportation networks that include greenways and cycling routes make neighbourhoods more vibrant, remove cars from the road and make transportation safer.

Sean Murray

1. Will you actively support existing zoning and discourage site-specific rezoning in Rockland?

I would try to be sensitive to the wishes of the land owner.

2. Will you make local area plans a priority, especially along corridors?

I would make local area plans a priority.

3. Will you advocate for the acquisition of parkland for Rockland?

I like parks and the answer is yes.

4. Will you use your vote on council to prevent the loss of green space in Rockland?

I will try to keep green space in Rockland.

5. Will you vote to support the 40 km speed reduction initiative?

I do not know enough detail to comment responsibly on this subject.

6. Will you support further development of the Integrated Transportation Network, including greenways and cycling routes?

Yes!

Paul Servos

1. Will you actively support existing zoning and discourage site-specific rezoning in Rockland?

Yes, but we need to acknowledge it sometimes is required and beneficial.

2. Will you make local area plans a priority, especially along corridors?

Now that the Official Community Plan is completed the update of the local area plans should be a priority – these plans are in some cases quite dated, but the spirit of them should be followed until they are renewed.

3. Will you advocate for the acquisition of parkland for Rockland?

I believe that parkland is an essential service to our community and enhances quality of life. In older established communities finding opportunities is limited so we need to be creative.

4. Will you use your vote on council to prevent the loss of green space in Rockland?

Yes, although the question must be situational.

5. Will you vote to support the 40 km speed reduction initiative?

No, I do not believe it is necessary.

6. Will you support further development of the Integrated Transportation Network, including greenways and cycling routes?

Yes, greenways and cycling routes enhance the vitality of our City.

Geoff Young

1. Will you actively support existing zoning and discourage site-specific rezoning in Rockland?

I believe the purpose of zoning is to provide residents as much information as possible about the future of their neighbourhood, although many other factors also play a role. Sometimes development can strengthen a neighbourhood that is facing transition, but I have tended to oppose development such as some small lot rezonings that have densification as the sole purpose.

2. Will you make local area plans a priority, especially along

corridors?

I support some densification along corridors, since often higher density development along busier routes makes sense. However, I have expressed opposition to high density proposals in Fernwood that are located in areas near urban villages or along corridors but that have long been planned to remain as traditional residential development. I believe this consequence of the new Official Community Plan needs to be re-examined. The last thing we want is to signal that some of our strong and stable residential areas are slated for redevelopment merely because they are near transit routes or urban villages.

3. Will you advocate for the acquisition of parkland for Rockland?

The City has not had the resources to acquire significant new parks over the last few years, and some other neighbourhoods are also short of park space. Better pedestrian links between parts of the neighbourhood can help make up for the shortfall.

4. Will you use your vote on council to prevent the loss of green space in Rockland?

I am not clear which threat to green space is at issue. While some densification of Rockland is inevitable, as I outline above I am not in favour of a high degree of development in most of the neighbourhood.

5. Will you vote to support the 40 km speed reduction initiative?

I have done so.

6. Will you support further development of the Integrated Transportation Network, including greenways and cycling routes?

Yes, have done so. I have been a strong supporter of separated bike paths, and while we cannot achieve these everywhere we should strive to meet the objective of safe and comfortable non-motorized travel.