

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

Candidates for Mayor: Dean Fortin, Jason Ross

Candidates for Council: Marianne Alto, Chris Coleman, Margaret Lucas, Pam Madoff, Andrew J. Reeve, Charlayne Thornton-Joe

Dean Fortin

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

Council has recently approved the Official Community Plan, which sets forth general zoning across the city. It is important to respect the OCP and the broad consultation from which it was developed. The OCP provides certainty for neighbourhoods. While this existing zoning generally sets the expectation for communities and council, we are legally required to accept applications for site-specific rezoning. We are not required to approve. Where these applications are made, the process ensures that community and neighbourhood voices are welcomed and heard.

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

Yes. The Rock Bay area and the Douglas Street Corridor are our top priorities for local area plans; I look forward to continuing the renewal of local area plans across the city, particularly in our urban and neighbourhood village centres.

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

Yes. We will always look for opportunities to expand our green space in the city of Victoria. It is important that every neighbourhood have access to quality parkland.

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

Yes. Green space is extremely important to preserve and enhance in all communities, including Rockland.

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

I did, as part of a unanimous vote on council. It is important that we follow up with traffic calming measures which will lead to lasting reductions in speed.

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

Yes. I have been proud, along with Councillors Alto and Isitt to lead the update to the Cycling Master Plan and look forward to its full implementation as soon as possible. We have expanded transit services, including the addition of late night buses and dedicated bus lanes on Douglas street. This council has expanded greenways and I look forward to further opportunities to foster active transportation across the city.

Jason Ross

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

Yes. I believe in maintaining the character of our historic neighbourhoods and encouraging development primarily in urban centres.

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

Absolutely. I would like to work with the community associations, residents, and local businesses to update existing neighbourhood plans and ensure that the Official Community Plan, local area plans, and zoning are in synch.

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

Yes. And I would focus on parkland that can be multipurpose and ideally a destination for local community events.

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

Yes. Green space is a vital part of a good community.

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

Just reducing the speed limit to 40km/h will not solve safety and community issues around traffic. I would like to perform traffic studies to determine areas of the neighbourhood that are most afflicted by traffic issues and identify changes to the road structure and employ traffic shaping techniques to reduce traffic speeds. I would also want to followup with further studies to determine if there are unintended consequences on adjacent roads after such changes are implemented.

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

Yes. Making it easier for residents to travel around our city in modes other than the automobile reduces traffic congestion and improves livability in our neighbourhoods. I would also push to reform our transit system to better serve our communities as a further means of reducing car traffic.

Marianne Alto

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

I support the Official Community Plan's zoning designations for every neighbourhood. I would not rule out considering appropriate rezoning should such proposals enhance neighbourhoods in unpredicted ways. No plan can anticipate every future opportunity for positive change.

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

Yes. I think neighbourhood transportation and land use planning should be a priority, within the broader context of the Official Community Plan.

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

Yes. I will advocate for additional parkland, green space and other public spaces throughout the city.

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

I'll vote to protect public urban green space throughout the city.

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

Yes. I have already voted in favour of reduced speed limits on some neighbourhood streets.

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

Yes. As a member of the City's recent Cycling Task Force, I supported expanded cycling infrastructure and green space, and as Council liaison to Oaklands neighbourhood, I expedited cycling and greenways enhancements in the Doncaster corridor.

Chris Coleman

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

Neighbourhood plans & existing zoning should always serve as the basis for land use decisions. A strong justification must be required for any diversions from identified zoning entitlements.

That said, it must be remembered that Council is mandated, by law, to keep an "open mind"..... right up to the closing of a Public Hearing. To actively "discourage site-specific rezoning in Rockland", could lead to litigation.

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

Local Area Plans are necessary, but the initial focus will be concentrating on detailed plans for our "Village Centres". The next level of interest, I would suggest, would be the corridors that link the Village Centres.

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

I am willing to do so but the frank truth is that we probably need to find more "parkland/community space" in all our neighbourhoods. Our first obligation, however, is to fulfill the "parkland promise" made to the Burnside-Gorge Neighbourhood in exchange for the shelter housing at Selkirk Landing.

The other aspect that needs to be considered in this question, is that "new parkland" is often create/acquired as part of an exchange for greater density on other sites. Clearly this reality causes much distress in neighbourhoods & requires much community engagement.

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

The concept of protection of green space is fundamental to protecting the "Quality of Life" indicators that we all hold dear. Rigid adherence to the "prevention of loss of green space" may, however, deny some opportunities with supportable land swaps. I would rather we be guided by a "no net loss of green space".

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

I already have.

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

Yes.....these are also critical in the evolution & growth of neighbourhoods that also increase the sense of greater Quality of Life.

Margaret Lucas

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

Neighbourhood plans are important and vital to the planning process. Staff use these plans and they are an important part of the decision making process for Council. Changing existing zoning should be used in rare circumstances and should be used in conjunction with current strategies for that area. As areas grow and the population increases we need to work with private land owners to review specific requests and make sure they align with the current Official Community Plan and the vision that has been developed for the neighbourhood/City.

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

Same answer as above.

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

Parkland is extremely important to our communities. It makes our communities healthy and vital. If the opportunity existed for the acquisition of parkland in any neighbourhood I would consider it very carefully.

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

My understanding is that the Green Space in the Rockland neighbourhood is already below City standards. I will encourage staff and council to carefully consider that in their planning.

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

I would be interested to know all the public consultation that has been done to date and the technical analysis so that I could make an informed decision with regards to traffic calming. We must make sure that our neighbourhoods are safe and livable for all.

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

We should continue to invest in walking and cycling networks that benefit both the citizens of Rockland and connect with the other neighbourhoods to encourage alternate forms of transportation. I have always believed that one of the beautiful things about Victoria is that it is a "Walkable City" and we should find ways to continue to invest in these forms of transportation.

Pam Madoff

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

I would support site-specific rezoning if it was identified by the community as a desirable improvement over existing zoning.

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

Absolutely. The current rezoning request on Elford Street, in close proximity to the Rockland border, has identified the dramatic impact that applications that are supported by policies related to corridors and urban villages can have on neighbourhood character. I have identified the need for local area planning to be updated each time an application such as this has come before Council. I have not supported these applications moving forward. In the absence of local area planning which identifies expectations related to residential areas located in proximity to areas identified for higher density I fear that the desire for densification will trump other community goals.

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

Increased green space and parkland is desirable in all neighbourhoods. The City should be both proactive and able to respond to opportunities as they arise in our communities.

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

Yes, including opportunities to increase green space which may occur when considering development proposals.

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

Council has already supported this initiative.

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

Yes, greenways and cycling routes are important components of vibrant and livable communities.

Andrew J. Reeve

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

Zoning is a means to an end; put in place to effect a certain outcome. To respect this desired outcome, site specific rezoning should be a rare occurrence. If it were to become common-place, why would we bother having specific zoning in the first place? That being said, as context changes over time, site specific rezoning should not be explicitly prohibited.

Inevitably, circumstances will arise that require site rezoning to serve the common good of the community or Victoria as a whole. A situation could easily arise where a site- specific rezoning might, over the long term, actually serve to further the goal of the original zoning. Addressing these two considerations should be a requirement for any site-specific rezoning applicant. We must always look to the future, but the past must always be kept in mind.

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

Yes, the same criteria from the above answer (#1) would apply to my approach to the prioritization of local area plans.

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

Yes.

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

Yes. Green space and the tree canopy is a defining characteristic of the Rockland neighbourhood.

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

No. City staff concluded there is “no technical data to support the reduction in speed limits.” This conclusion was also supported by the Victoria Police Department. City council should not have ignored the evidence, experts, and common sense. The existing sub-50km/h speed limits on certain sections of roads (for example Richmond and Rockland) have been set with support from the experts and should not be altered.

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

Yes.

Charlayne Thornton-Joe

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

Whenever possible I would support existing zoning. There are often times when decision making is not so black and white and the zoning assists in guiding us on what the neighbourhood desires.

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

We have increased staffing to help us in this endeavour.

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

There are many neighbourhoods in the City that are in need of parkland/park space. We still need to fulfill our commitment to the Burnside Gorge for the replacement of green space. Downtown is also in need of green space. We will need to look at where greenspace is most needed and work to fulfill the deficiency in all neighbourhoods.

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

I support maintaining green space in all neighbourhoods unless there is a reason that the loss of green space fulfills an important goal in our OCP which outweighs the desire to keep the space. If this were done, I would expect that the green space would be replaced somewhere else in the neighbourhood.

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

I had difficulty in this initiative as evidence shows that speed limits do not reduce driver speeds. However, many spoke in favour of this and the desire to make their streets feel safer. I supported it when it came to council.

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

Absolutely!