

Tofino Ratepayers Association



Al Anderson

Thank you to the TRPA for this opportunity to respond to your questionnaire. Apologies for my somewhat late reply.

1) So, the first question is the obvious one. Tell us about yourself and in general terms why you have chosen to run.

I am a current member of council and am seeking re-election to continue the work of council and to further the aspirations of our community in this special place we call home. I believe I have proven myself to be dedicated to our community and its hopes for the future. I have been privileged to serve for many terms on council and I believe my experience to be a valuable asset to the work at the council table. Tofino is a special place to all of us and needs careful management and planning to protect its character as the place we live and enjoy. I believe in solid planning and guidance embodied in our Vision to Action plan and OCP. These and other community driven plans represent our collective vision for Tofino and provide the best guidance in the council decision process.

2) What qualification or life experience has prepared you for the responsibilities you are seeking by running for office?

I bring many years of council experience to my candidacy including one term as mayor. I have served as director representing Tofino at the ACRD table, have been a trustee for the Vancouver Island Regional Library, and a provincial appointee to the Central Region Board. I am a local business owner with a long history in the service industry. I have served as chairperson on several committees of council and am currently a member of the Tofino Housing Corporation board. I have been a volunteer at times for fundraising events and enjoy supporting community events and initiatives where I can.

3) Residents have expressed many concerns over the years. Number the items from 1 to 14 on the basis of your sense of priorities with #1 as your top priority. The item you would feel most urgently needs to be addressed. Should you wish to comment on any item please do so below your ranked list.

I chose rank the issues presented in this TRPA question in broader categories as I don't see them existing in isolation. Rated top to bottom:

1. Housing. Privately and publicly developed, sometimes in partnership.

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2. Livability. Including but not limited to: recreation facility, rec programming, arts, culture and heritage,(including first nations heritage), affordability, taxes, emergency preparedness, hospital, school, childcare.
3. Managing growth. This include infrastructure need, tourism expansion, residential development, commercial space, community space (library, museum, theatre) ,parks, trails and beaches.

Reconciliation, climate action, environmental protection, inclusivity, accessibility reside in and are implemented and guided by existing policy and planning documents as are goals towards economic diversity. These areas are permeate the work of the district and are important to all staff and council work and need not be ranked as more or less important.

4) Recent studies have identified that, over the course of a year, for every Tofino resident there are 300-500 tourists, depending on the study. Should tourists be paying a greater share for operating the municipality?

Yes.

5) Last year Tofino initiated a pay parking scheme for the beach areas. Partly in an effort to secure money from tourists to help the town in paying for needed infrastructure. It seems to be a success. The plan was that this year the program was to expand into the downtown area where summer parking problems abound. The implementation of that plan has been delayed, apparently while the need for Offshore parking and the parking needs for downtown businesses are reconciled. Do you think pay parking is an important initiative for the community and a good way to generate money? How would you proceed? How should any revenues over the costs of operation be spent?

Yes pay parking should be expanded into downtown. Question is how to facilitate the consultation that must take place. Will take effort to meaningfully engage businesses residents and other users to come to a solution. Some incentive might be to use some of the funds to develop better parking solutions. Some funds should support community projects. I would support revenue contributing to a rec center.

Increasingly, housing issues in Tofino are becoming complex. Businesses are buying existing residential homes and converting them to staff housing. Vacation rental by absentee property owners seems to be commercializing our residential areas. These more commercial uses of residential property can apparently pay a higher purchase price for the home than families trying to live here can afford. They may also be able to write off expenses against income that resident homeowners are unable to do.

Rates of home ownership in Tofino are in decline.

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6) Currently we have a complaint driven bylaw system in which bylaw responds to problems only when infractions are reported by citizens. Issues such as illegal vacation rentals and illegal uses of property with, for example, trailers and motor homes parked as rental units on residential property are becoming increasingly problematic. This pits neighbour against neighbour. The argument is that lack of enforcement of vacation rental infractions and other forms of commercialization results in a loss of much needed residential housing units while the quality of neighbourhoods is deteriorating as they fill up with temporary and substandard rental units. For the good of the town, does bylaw need to be more proactive in enforcing important Municipal bylaws?

We need better enforcement and we need our zoning to better protect our existing residential housing stock. The issues addressed in this question are complex and are impacted by commodification of housing, short term rental platforms, decades of defunding of housing at the national level and seasonality of demand. Housing supply is part of the answer. Tofino could better use zoning as a tool that protects housing for residential use.

7) Going forward, will increasing numbers of vacation rental with absentee owners, and other quasi commercial uses of residential property actually reduce the number of residential properties and pose a threat to the long-term viability of Tofino as a place to live?

No increasing STR as a use in new development is not a great idea. However its known that having this use has made it possible for some to afford a home.

8) Tofino's taxation and spending increases at a rate exceeding the rates of population growth, inflation, and wages for the average Tofitian. It has been argued the divergence is so apparent in terms of livability, versus the cost of operating the municipality, that spending must be curbed, and/or alternate sources of revenue must be found. In response to this dilemma, it has recently been proposed that Tofino petition the provincial government to allow a sales tax to be applied to all commercial transactions (hotels, retail stores, charter operations, restaurants, etc.) in an effort to 1) secure the infrastructure Tofino needs as it grows and 2) to place the burden of the necessary taxation more properly on tourists. Please comment.

The impact of tourism on taxation is an issue facing several resort municipalities. We should work together with them to make the case for a new taxation structure that is more equitable.

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9) Do you think Tofino is facing a crisis as families leave because they cannot afford to live here? The **Tourism in the Clayoquot Sound Biosphere Region A Vital Snapshot | 2021** report states the following re: the Living Wage:

At \$19.63, our region's living wage—the hourly pay that each parent must earn to cover the basic expenses of an average family of four—was the highest in BC in 2019.

Few people actually receive this wage, however, and more than half of the region's population earns below \$31,000.¹⁵ Over 16% of women and 18% of men earn less than \$10,000 a year.

Between 2017 and 2019, monthly family expenses have increased by approximately \$300 (or 5%) in our region. Rising housing costs are largely driving up the cost of living.

Please comment.

Secure, stable, affordable housing is a cornerstone of a thriving community and a flourishing economy. Good housing creates the stability needed to grow in a career, raise a family, be a volunteer. Lack of housing leaves people outside of participation in citizenship.

10) It has been 20 years since Tofino has done anything significant to improve/increase its water supply. It is an issue for discussion in many reports and council meetings. For example, the availability of water is often cited in regard to the consideration of rezoning for housing development. Recommendations from the most recent staff report offer, as a solution, further water restrictions and methods to reduce consumption layered on top of the current system of seasonal water restrictions. It also tentatively suggests the consideration that certain businesses in Tofino may need to close for the summer months. As well, the study identifies opportunities for increased supply and storage to avert the potential for summer shortage. The report identifies that within a few years of the end of the upcoming council term, Tofino's water demands will begin exceeding supply. Are you prepared to make the decisions necessary to avert Tofino's current and looming water insecurity?

The water study is more nuanced than the preamble to the question would suggest. We need both water management strategies and look towards increasing capacity. Large infrastructure projects are done with federal and provincial partnership and with consultation with TFN. Meeting future needs will take into account more than just the demands of Tofino.

11) What else would you like to address?

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Library build, rec facility build, DL114 planning, improve downtown vitalization upkeep and maintenance, asset management, replace crumbling roads...all that and what remains on the five year financial plan.

12) Let's say you have a very successful term in office. How would Tofino be better in the future than it is today, because of your successful efforts? How did you bring that about?

At the end of the term I hope that each elected member will have felt that they made a difference in improving the lives in our community. I hope to use my experience to maximize the effectiveness of council as a whole. I believe in having a clear strategic plan and adhering to it. I believe in good governance and that respect around the table is essential to a productive term. The success of council depends on support of the community and commitment to the collective vision expressed in the OCP. I would like to end the term knowing that each elected member achieved something of what they set out to do with a deeper love and understanding of their town. I would also be super stoked if we had a rec center and a new library.