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Position Running For: Mayor

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1) What role do you see tourism playing in Kamloops' economic growth, and how would you support the sector?

Tourism is vital to our economy, and I believe there is significant opportunity to grow the sector. We need to continue investing in the community assets and facilities that give people more reasons to come to Kamloops, stay longer and return.

Our Tournament Capital program has been incredibly successful, but we are starting to fall behind in the facilities needed to attract larger provincial, national and international events. If we want to continue competing for these tournaments, we need to make sure we have the infrastructure to host them.

I also believe there is a largely untapped opportunity in business tourism. Kamloops is a regional hub with a strong business community and an excellent location, and we should be looking seriously at the potential for a conference centre. Attracting conferences and business events would bring visitors to Kamloops, support our hotels, restaurants and local businesses, and help diversify our tourism economy.

Tourism should be viewed as an important part of our broader economic development strategy. By investing in the right facilities and supporting new opportunities, we can create benefits for both visitors and the residents who call Kamloops home.

2) How would you support events, sports tournaments, and other initiatives that attract visitors to Kamloops?

We need to continue investing in the facilities and infrastructure that allow Kamloops to attract major events, tournaments and visitors.

While the Kamloops Centre for the Arts and the new multiplex arenas are underway, there are other opportunities we need to pursue. I believe one of the highest-return and best returns on investment opportunities is in new soccer fields. With new land recently secured from School District 73, we have an opportunity to continue growing soccer in our community and strengthen Kamloops' ability to host large tournaments that can bring thousands of visitors to our city.

These tournaments have a significant economic impact. Visitors stay in our hotels, eat at our restaurants, shop in our businesses and experience everything Kamloops has to offer.

While there are a lot of things to do in Kamloops, we also need to continue supporting the development of iconic attractions and experiences in Kamloops. We need to give visitors—and residents—an iconic answer to the age-old question: "What is there to do in Kamloops?"

Creating more things to see and do will encourage visitors to stay longer, return to our community and recommend Kamloops to others. Supporting events, sports and unique attractions should be part of a broader strategy to grow tourism and diversify our local economy.

3) What infrastructure or municipal investments do you think are most important for supporting both residents and the Kamloops visitor economy?

We must continue the Build Kamloops program. There is simply no time to delay the projects that have already been identified as priorities for our community.

While the first two major projects—the Kamloops Centre for the Arts and the new multiplex arenas—are underway, we need to continue planning for the next generation of community facilities. That includes a new curling centre, indoor pickleball facilities, an indoor soccer field and a new pool on the North Shore.

I also believe there are significant opportunities to grow soccer in Kamloops. With the land recently secured from School District 73, we have an opportunity to expand our soccer infrastructure and strengthen our ability to attract tournaments that bring thousands of visitors to our community.

The important thing is that these investments benefit both residents and visitors. A new pool, curling centre, pickleball facility or soccer complex gives residents more opportunities to participate in recreation and improves quality of life, while also giving Kamloops the infrastructure needed to attract regional, provincial, national and international events.

Build Kamloops should not just be about building facilities. It is about building the community we want to live in while creating the infrastructure that helps grow our visitor economy.

4) What role do you believe the City of Kamloops should play in supporting the attraction, expansion, and long-term sustainability of air service at YKA to strengthen tourism, events and regional economic growth?

The City of Kamloops needs to continue working aggressively to attract new airlines and new routes to Kamloops Airport (YKA). Reliable and affordable air service is important not only for tourism, but also for attracting business, investment, conferences, sporting events and visitors to our community.

There is always a chicken-and-egg challenge with air service. The City can tell an airline that Kamloops has the demand to support a new route, but the airline wants to see higher passenger numbers before it commits to that route.

I believe Kamloops has the potential to support new direct routes to important destinations such as Toronto, Seattle and a sun destination. We should be prepared to explore tools such as seat guarantees or other incentives to help establish new routes and demonstrate to carriers that there is a market here.

At the same time, we need to focus on the service we already have. Competition and affordable fares on existing Vancouver and Calgary routes are extremely important to local residents and businesses. When fares are too high, people are forced to drive to Kelowna or other airports to access more affordable options.

The City should work with YKA, airlines, tourism organizations and the business community to increase competition, improve affordability and build a stronger passenger base. Better air service will make Kamloops more accessible, strengthen our tourism and events economy, and make our community more attractive for business investment.

5) How would you work with Tourism Kamloops and local tourism businesses to strengthen Kamloops as a destination?

The City of Kamloops should continue to work closely with Tourism Kamloops and local tourism businesses to understand what the industry needs and where the greatest opportunities are.

Tourism is an ever-changing industry, and the City needs to listen to the people working in the sector and adapt its support in a timely way. Tourism Kamloops has a strong understanding of what visitors are looking for, what local businesses are experiencing and where there are opportunities to grow.

That partnership needs to include major capital investments, but it should also include supporting smaller initiatives that can have a meaningful impact. A good example is the tourism kiosk in Riverside Park, which is an initiative led by Tourism Kamloops that helps visitors discover what our community has to offer.

As Mayor, I would make sure the City continues to have a strong working relationship with Tourism Kamloops and local tourism operators. We need to listen, respond and work together to make Kamloops a stronger destination for visitors while creating economic opportunities for local businesses.

6) What do you see as the biggest opportunity for Kamloops' tourism sector over the next four years?

I believe the biggest opportunity for Kamloops over the next four years is to build on our success as the Tournament Capital and attract more major sporting events, conferences and visitors to our community.

We have already proven that Kamloops can attract tournaments that bring thousands of visitors to our city. With the new land secured from

School District 73, there is a significant opportunity to grow our soccer facilities and attract even more tournaments. I believe soccer could be one of our strongest opportunities for tourism growth.

At the same time, we need to give visitors more reasons to stay once they arrive. That means continuing to invest in recreation facilities, cultural amenities and iconic attractions that provide an answer to the question, "What is there to do in Kamloops?"

I also see a significant opportunity in business tourism. A stronger conference and meetings sector could bring visitors to Kamloops during different times of the year and provide a new source of economic activity for our hotels, restaurants and local businesses.

The opportunity is to build on what Kamloops already does well while investing in the facilities, attractions and infrastructure that will allow us to take tourism to the next level.