

Nelson & District Chamber of Commerce Candidate Question Two – October 2018

Economic infrastructure is defined by the basic services that represent a foundational tool for the economy of a city which can include physical structures, systems, institutions, services and facilities.

As the October 20 municipal election approaches in Nelson and the Regional District of Central Kootenay, it's an opportunity for voters to help shape the future of our region. This year's election has a diverse range of committed community members who have put their names forward to help lead us over the next four years.

In its role of providing important information and advocacy for the business community, the Nelson & District of Chamber of Commerce is helping scratch beyond the surface with candidates to help understand what contributions these candidates would make should they be successful at the polls. The Chamber's Board of Directors have posed three questions to all candidates for mayor, council and RDCK Area E (Area F director Tom Newell is in by acclamation). The answers to Question Two are provided below.

It is important to note that each candidate had a maximum of 250 words to answer the question. All candidates were contacted with the question and provided the opportunity to respond. With the exception of Bernie Brown (mayor), Brittny Anderson (council), Leslie Payne (council), Joseph Reiner (council) and Robbie Kalabis (council) who did not respond by deadline, you will find their responses. The answers are provided in the order received. Questions Three will follow next week.

We hope that this is helpful information in determining which candidates will provide the kind of leadership that you value. And please don't forget to vote on October 20!

QUESTION TWO: What are the most Important elements of Nelson's economic infrastructure?

Jesse Woodward (council)

I think there are many elements of Nelson's economic infrastructure that are important but I feel that there are two that stand out for me. Number one is that Baker St. must be well maintain and invested in. Baker St. is the beating heart of Nelson and that heart needs to be cared for and developed into a strong economic centre or this whole town will suffer greatly. We, as a community, cannot let Baker St. slip into a torpor. I feel that there needs to be more investment in the general look of Baker St. (better awnings, plants, lighting, etc.) and also the feeling of the street. People should want to come and visit, shop and be downtown and not just rush in and rush out without enjoying the setting. Number two is that Nelson cannot become totally reliant on tourism as our meal ticket. As we have all seen over the last number of years climate change is real and it is happening now. The fire and smoke is going to be with us into the foreseeable future and tourism will be negatively affected over the long haul. More time,

energy and money must be invested into growing our local economy so that when tourism is cut down by climate change we have something to fall back on. A resilient and strong local economic scene is what we should be all moving towards.

Rik Logtenberg (council)

We have a strong tourism and hospitality sector, a diverse retail sector, a booming building sector and a wide array of locally-focussed services. We also have a remarkably strong, and growing tech community, which brings significant revenue from outside the region. To support tourism, Council needs to be a strong partner to Nelson-Kootenay Lake Tourism Assoc. and the Chamber. Together, we can do things like support more event-focussed entrepreneurs to create (or grow) annual events that will attract new visitors. To support retail and restaurants, especially on Baker St, we need to improve parking and transportation so that it's easier for people to come downtown and spend time there. We also need to recognize that our cultural and recreational assets, like the Civic and Capitol Theatres, Touchstones, the arena, soccer and baseball fields, etc., play a key role in encouraging people to come into town, or downtown, and spend money.

But with all that being said, one of the most important elements of Nelson's economic infrastructure is government. Salaries (and pensions) paid to teachers, doctors, nurses, officers, social workers, etc., are worth tens of millions of dollars a year to Nelson's economy. If we lose a ministry office or a large social services contract, the business community will feel it. In the years ahead, I want to improve our relationship with provincial and federal ministries and bring them creative project proposals that will help us build a wildfire mitigation industry, a regional tech hub, affordable housing developments and more.

Rob Richichi (council)

By continuing to implement the master and capital replacement plan, with regards to water, and our sewer system, we will be developing a safe and adequate water supply for a very long time. Everything we do from here on in is important, however, in my opinion, water is the most important element of Nelson's infrastructure. Global warming continues to affect us all. Our winters are getting colder and our summers are getting hotter. We must be proactive in upgrading and possibly developing a secondary water source to make our community more resilient to droughts.

Obviously, the cost will be high to replace and develop our water and sewer infrastructure. We can continue to teach citizens to reduce water consumption, however, if our population increases as we expect it to, we need to expedite our plans to improve our water and sewer demands.

Other important elements of Nelson's economic infrastructure include:

- Transportation services. We must continue to repair our roads. Potholes are becoming a nuisance to all of us. There has to be a better way.
- Energy. We must produce and deliver energy in a profitable manner.

- Health and Education. Although these are provincial responsibilities, we must push the government to keep improving our school and hospital situations in our area. We can never be good enough in both of these areas.

Michelle Hillaby (council)

The most important element of Nelson's economic infrastructure is our downtown core and the future Railtown development.

Maintenance of these areas is critical to the health of our town and our business owners. Businesses rely on the cleanliness and friendliness of our streets, because that's what encourages the vibrant flow of both tourists and locals.

It is absolutely crucial that we move aggressive panhandlers off Baker Street, to guarantee the safety of the people visiting Baker Street and the businesses trying to operate. I have many more ideas on this issue but this isn't the place for it.

Speaking with our local police also brought up the idea of "Crime Prevention through Environmental Design." This is something the City of Nelson can help local businesses implement to lessen opportunity for crime to take place around your business.

We need to invest in the look and feel of downtown, especially during important seasons like Christmas and summer. Christmas lights in the winter and friendly lighting design in the summer create a positive ambience and attract visitors and locals alike.

The most important thing I can do as a councillor is to listen to our business owners. For example, I believe we need to actively get the input of businesses before streets are closed for markets and events and construction. Business owners are resourceful and can help find better solutions, but only if the Council is willing to talk to them.

Charles Jeanes (council)

Under global capitalism, I see no worth in defining economic infrastructure contained within one city's borders. We live in a global village. Everything everywhere impacts economies; Nelson is a particular kind of city, feeling global forces differently from how industrial towns (our near neighbours) feel them.

Again, Nelson is unusual. It's why we chose it as home.

Again, as a socialist, I am opposed to fundamentals of capitalism and wish to end its reign.

We have recently lost CanFilter, a local industry. Pacific Insight is likely to follow. Global market forces, such as changed owners of local activities, make decisions that throw people out of work.

[\[https://www.pacificinsight.com/pacific-insight-and-methode-electronics-complete-plan-of-arrangement/09_29_18_Municipal_Election_Candidate_Question_Two.docx\]](https://www.pacificinsight.com/pacific-insight-and-methode-electronics-complete-plan-of-arrangement/09_29_18_Municipal_Election_Candidate_Question_Two.docx)

Without doubt, internet broadband -- “the information highway” -- access is essential to Nelson and to our online professionals and innovators who can “live here, work anywhere” (as the KCR co-op radio documentary said.) Rubber-tire traffic on the old paved highway is essential to any business dependent on out-of-town shopper/tourists, whether that person is coming from Slocan Valley, New York City, or Australia. I am not going to evaluate one of these “highways” above the other.

This ends my observations judging infrastructural elements.

Nelson needs to forget all the old ways of business, do as much as possible to disengage from the overworld of banking, fiat money, real estate, and corporations, and prepare for the end of capitalism when the next Wall St. collapse hits.

Please educate yourself reading *Sacred Economics*, and other teachings of Charles Eisenstein.

[\[www.charleseisentein.net09_29_18_Municipal_Election_Candidate_Question_Two.docx\]](http://www.charleseisentein.net09_29_18_Municipal_Election_Candidate_Question_Two.docx)

Stephanie Wiggins (council)

We are incredibly lucky to have a vast wealth of natural resources here in the Nelson area. I believe that our most important economic infrastructure would be our dams that supply us with power. Having Nelson Hydro as a utility for the city is incredible. Our river is life giving, not only to businesses but to every citizen that calls this wonderful city home.

Brian Shields (council)

Small Business

Small business, both home and brick and mortar, are a principle driver of our economy. The employees spend their wages in town, the employers spend their profits here, the businesses use local resources and the money goes round and round. In addition, small business generates a corner stone of our community, Baker Street.

Tourism

Baker Street is a major draw for tourists. Hotels, restaurants, bars, stores, the mall, coffee shops and rentals all benefit from visitors to our City. Sports tournaments, conferences, music competitions and special events all add to our tourism.

Cannabis Culture

The Kootenays are famous for our cannabis culture. The people who grow, clip, package and transport, spend their cash in Nelson and is an economic driver for the community. The current retailers also spend their money in town and the new taxes from coming legislation will add further add to the tax coffers.

Government

The Interior Health Authority, the Provincial Government, the Federal Government and Civic Government (City of Nelson). These agencies are all part of the City and are all important elements economic infrastructure. The spinoffs go on and on; the wages. the taxes paid. the rentals, resources used. wages spent. Government is a huge contributor.

Margaret Stacey (council)

Of the basic infrastructure services needed for a city to thrive, they are **all** important: transportation, energy, water, emergency planning, financial, health and education, protection of quality of life, public spaces, culture, technology and environmental systems. We have all of these addressed and covered in our civic sustainability action plans that are well under way, and we are fortunate to have natural resources, but we do have to be ready to respond to global things out of our control as well as we can.

Our biggest liability (and some would say greatest asset) is our remote location and inaccessibility. If I had to identify any gaps here, I would have to say that access is a tough one, as shipping and transportation systems are vital for goods and services, community health services, and tourism services; in that area, air, bus and rail transport are not serving us as well as they could. Really good communication technology is a partial mitigation for a remote community's well-being. Emergency planning also rises to the top of my list, in the wake of recent wildfire, as does water protection, and additional sources of it.

I think our city has been quite visionary in its planning and actions on all fronts; we are significantly dependent on provincial and federal funding to build what we need, and have been pretty good at acquiring it for infrastructure improvements.

Robin Cherbo (council)

The most important element of Nelsons economic infrastructure is the vibrancy and success of small businesses. With the assistance of high-speed fiber throughout the downtown core helps are tech companies success.

Along with this is the spending power in the City to buy local goods and services. With this we need good paying jobs such as Police, Fire and Government employees to spend locally. With the living wage in Nelson being over twenty dollars an hour we also need investment in affordable rentals and housing.

What also helps in the NAEDP (Nelson & Area Economic Development Partnership) which supports the retention and attraction of new businesses.

Cal Renwick (council)

I believe Transportation, Energy, Water, Health and Education, Public Spaces, and Culture are most important to Nelson's economic infrastructure.

Transportation services such as roads, bridges, etc. in Nelson are crucial for people to commute and carry on with day to day business. Our local Airport is a very important piece as well and we need to make sure it's kept in good repair.

Nelson's own power generation plant that provides us with an abundance of clean affordable power may be the most important of all our city services. The income from power generation puts millions of dollars into our city coffers year after year.

We are also blessed to have a great supply of clean water in Nelson. We need to look at increasing storage capacity and accessing water from the west arm during our dry months.

We are very fortunate to have a great hospital and a diverse selection of schools in Nelson.

Beautiful, functional and well used parks, playgrounds and public gathering spaces add to Nelson's uniqueness.

Nelson boasts its own museum, Touchstones, with great local history, archives and art galleries. Capitol Theatre and its world class programming, the very unique Civic Theatre and their hard working society that provides a vast array of events.

Deb Kozak (mayor)

Every counterpart of our diverse economy deserves acknowledgement and appreciation for contributing to the excitement, liveliness and economic well-being of our community. Nelson's economy flourishes when all engines are firing, and this includes our vibrant downtown businesses and services, a world-class recreation scene, a rapidly-growing entrepreneurial and tech sector, an abundance of health, education and human services, home-based businesses, and an impressive array of cultural attractions. While not what it once was, our industrial base still has some horsepower, too.

By investing in civic infrastructure like water, sewer, roads and broadband – coupled with enhanced public spaces, beautiful artwork and new amenities – the City has served Nelson residents and inspired newcomers to invest in our community and expand our economic reach.

Business owners who invest in their buildings and businesses also contribute to our economic development. In addition to public buildings, private buildings and spaces are the stages the economy performs on.

Although sometimes overlooked, the work of Mayor, Council and City staff to secure funds outside of taxation is integral to our economic growth. Major grants recently leveraged Nelson taxpayer dollars to invest in The Civic Complex re-fit and Hall Street re-development – projects that could not have been funded with tax dollars alone. The City also successfully accessed a \$200,000 Columbia Basin Trust grant to repair and protect our landmark heritage building that is home to Touchstones Museum and Art Gallery, which has paid off in attracting a remarkable number of visitors and creating exciting, lively spaces for the people who live here.

John Dooley (mayor)

Nelson's central business district is a critical part of our unique economic infrastructure: The mix of businesses and events give it a vibrancy that people want to be part of. We need to ensure that we preserve, enable and celebrate our downtown, respecting the fact that there are many other important elements of our economic infrastructure. Our growing technology sector has the potential to attract and support entrepreneurs.

The mindset and values of the Mayor and Council have an incredible impact on our economic infrastructure: They must lead a culture which:

- views business retention and expansion as core values.
- expects that City Hall is clearly focussed on supporting economic development
- ensures policy, regulatory, tax, application and permitting processes are timely and supportive.

There are several aspects of our economic infrastructure that I would like to see explored in terms of future potential, including:

- Nelson Hydro
- better promotion of the use of our broadband and fibre optics cabling
- use of our airport, both in terms of governance and functionality.

The Mayor needs to seek out and nurture dynamic partnerships to maintain and expand them. It is also important to attract an international following, with people coming to enjoy the natural beauty, recreational opportunities, and our vibrant city. If I am elected Mayor, I will bring a business background and attitude to City Hall that works to sustain and grow our economic infrastructure in a way that works for our citizens and businesses.

Laureen Barker (council)

Nelson's industry and business drive the economic infrastructure of Nelson.

Supporting policy that encourages new clean businesses to locate in Nelson is important to me. I believe the fiberoptic network project will be important for future growth in this area.

I believe it is important to welcome residents and visitors to a vibrant downtown. This perpetuates the viability of downtown businesses. I believe in supporting Heritage and Cultural initiatives to make downtown a welcoming place.

Travis Hauck (council)

All economic infrastructure is important, because it is what supports creation of jobs. Physical infrastructure that helps us attract and retain business is crucial (everything from the airport to high speed internet to biking trails), but it's also important that our Council is an advocate for new businesses, by reducing red tape costs.

Looking at physical economic infrastructure like the Airport, we need to ensure that we're not ignoring the basic maintenance needed, and that we're also always on the lookout for chances to improve it. There are many businesses in the area that depend on the airport, there are dozens of jobs attached to it: everything from contractors to build new hangars to high-tech execs who need to be able to fly in and out to do their jobs. I'm interested in hearing more from the new non-profit Society that is proposing to take over operations, as they might be the better option to grow this piece of economic infrastructure.

Janice Morrison (council)

The most important element of Nelson's economic infrastructure is our intellectual capacity. Nelson is replete with innovative, creative and entrepreneurial residents. One of our many local success stories is Morgan Dehnel, founder and chief science-and-innovation officer of his company, D-pace (www.d-pace.com). Morgan, a professional engineer with a PhD in accelerator physics, was born and raised in Nelson and relocated to earn his PhD. His vision and goal was to return home, to raise his family and enjoy all that Nelson has to offer. Now with ten people on staff plus three PhD students working in research and development, and with revenues approaching \$2 million per year, he has achieved his goal. Nelson can be home to a successful company that might normally be seen in a Silicon Valley or housed with an academic institute.

Another Key element is our capacity to develop our green infrastructure (GI.) GI uses vegetation, soils and other elements – such as permeable pavements – to restore some of the natural processes required to manage water and create healthier environments. GI will help assist the city as it faces future urban and climatic changes.

Fundamental to all of these is our "grey infrastructure": streetscapes and buildings (schools, businesses and housing), transportation and communication systems, sewer/water, and utilities, as well as services like the hospital, Police and Fire Departments. Nelson has some excellent forward thinking plans to maintain and improve these, i.e., Railtown Sustainable Neighbourhood Action Plan, and Nelson downtown revitalization project. We are all stewards of these important resources.

Keith Page (council)

Many of us who have moved here because we discovered the place through tourism and now our businesses are supported by the thousands of people who swell our ranks during the summer and winter seasons. We depend on those additional cash flows to get through the shoulder seasons and to introduce our products to those outside of the region as we endeavour to make life long customer connection. We need to make sure Short Term rentals have a place in this area so tourist have enjoyable and unique visits to our area.

For those of us who stay it's for life style. Biking, Skiing, Hiking, fishing, and great people are all natural treasures at our very door step. For that promise of a High Quality of Life to be fulfilled we need our own homes that we can afford. Our resident population keeps business

going through the shoulder seasons and are invested in making this place what it is. When they have money in their pockets they spend it in our economy, when their rent is too high they have no extra cash to spend in our businesses and eventually they leave.

We have a beautiful city and strong economic outlook but we need to ensure that a hot housing market doesn't undermine the reset of our economy.

What can we do:

- * Complete the vacant land survey phase 2 so we jump on opportunities to increase the housing stock

- * Streamline planning with pre-approved plans for laneway housing and design guidelines for freehold housing

Area E Candidates

Ramona Faust (director)

Economic infrastructure can be brick and mortar or our web of organizations. We have exceptional assets in both areas. I think the new Chamber of Commerce Building is a terrific asset and shows that the region values history, local craftspeople and sustainability. It is welcoming, comfortable and connects visitors to many recreational assets in RDCK Area E and the region.

I believe a mosaic of small and large businesses have served Nelson well and the downtown core is appreciated for its creativity, history, walkability and the central services it provides to the 20-kilometer radius around Nelson. Its a symbiotic relationship that should be recognized.

As an RDCK Director I know that our RDCK Community Complex and our Parks and Trails play a key role in tourism. Area E's Whitewater Ski Hill and Apex Trails are a huge draw to the area and the lake of course is a summer attraction. Kokanee Park and the Kokanee Mountain Zipline are really popular and the Balfour Golf Course is our other anchor business.

We are fortunate to have the plethora of recreation and art and cultural experiences in the entire region. This web of organizations that together and independently provide venues and facilities is outstanding.

I applaud Nelson Kootenay Lake Tourism, The Nelson and District Economic Development Partnership , Community Futures, Kootenay Association of Science and Technology and Balfour and Area Business and Historic Association for collaboration in our part of the region that brings a wealth of assets to our communities.

Reggie Goldsbury (director)

Five big issues facing local business include attracting skilled workers, keeping up with technology, government red tape, sustainability and succession planning. By addressing these

concerns government helps our business community build a dynamic rural economic infrastructure.

Skilled workers are attracted to the Nelson region by our amazing Kootenay lifestyle. For these needed workers to stay we must focus on affordable housing, effective transportation, recreational opportunities, family and other services. As your representative I will work diligently to support local business with practical and affordable social initiatives.

Keeping up with 21st century practices is essential. I will push for action on current communication technology and shifting trends. Improving access to government with new interactive platforms is a must. It's hard to solve today's problems with yesterday's tired ideas. It's time for a fresh perspective.

Fostering a client-centred culture in government oversight, functions and facilities is also important to me. We need to put people-service before bureaucracy. Our business community is already overwhelmed. We need to clean up governmental red tape and become user-friendlier.

Sustainable economic development is progress that moves ahead yet respects the environment and our rural lifestyle. We can help green our businesses with improved recycling opportunities, by protecting our watersheds, encouraging green innovation... without oppressing productivity. It's a tough balance, but a tenet in continued economic viability.

Finally, many business owners are looking to retire. Efforts to help find succession for their vital business services is imperative for our economic infrastructure. For more info visit ReggieGoldsbury.ca