

2008 Candidates for Saanich Council comment on **COMMUNITY ISSUES**

- Sewage
- Transit
- Housing
- Climate Change
- Community Infrastructure
- Tax Reform
- Accountability
- Amalgamation



Each candidate was asked in a telephone interview for their brief response to a number of issues raised by SCL members. Questions were not provided to interviewees ahead of time. All candidates for Saanich Council Election 2008 were invited to participate.

Candidates' response to sewage treatment

Susan Brice	<i>Support.</i>
Judy Brownoff	<i>Strongly support. Higher levels of government mandate it be done now.</i>
Patrick Chenier	<i>Strongly support using innovative technologies for resource recovery. We need the three levels of government to co-operate to fund project plan and implementation.</i>
Vic Derman	<i>Strongly support. We need an integrated resource system, at low cost, with environmental benefits. We are pumping enough energy into the ocean daily to provide energy requirements of 30,000 homes..</i>
Paul Gerrard	<i>We are mandated to do it. I support smaller plants with resource recovery.</i>
Victor Hughes	<i>Support treatment, but where? Will it be put in a low-income neighbourhood?</i>
Wayne Hunter	<i>Support the integrated resource process that is currently happening.</i>
Frank Leonard	<i>No response.</i>
Dean Murdock	<i>Strongly support. Crucial to include energy and resource recovery.</i>
Vicki Sanders	<i>The debate is over. We have to do it. There are economic benefits in resource recovery.</i>
Leif Wergeland	<i>Has been mandated by the province but if I had a billion dollars there are other areas that would be a more cost effective benefit to the environment than sewage treatment, e.g. transportation.</i>
Rob Wickson	<i>We have to be responsible for our sewage.</i>
Harald Wolf	<i>It has to happen. We just need to do it right.</i>

Continue to scroll for responses to Rapid Transit

Candidates' response to Rapid Transit

- Susan Brice** *Support a regional strategy.*
- Judy Brownoff** *Strongly support. To build compact communities we need efficient, fast moving transportation to get people where they need to go.*
- Patrick Chenier** *Support LRT as an option. Needs to be done in phases. Need the three levels of government to co-operate to create and fund the project plan and its implementation.*
- Vic Derman** *Strongly support. A network of dedicated right of ways. Rapid transit, probably LRT.*
- Paul Gerrard** *Strongly support integrated LRT throughout CRD.*
- Victor Hughes** *A CRD issue. Start with a circular, city route rapid bus service. LRT needs to be cost-assessed.*
- Wayne Hunter** *Definitely support it and many other transportation alternatives, including electric automobiles.*
- Frank Leonard** *No response.*
- Dean Murdock** *Strongly support. Crucial to community growth.*
- Vicki Sanders** *Strongly support. We need more efficient ways to move people and get people out of their cars.*
- Leif Wergeland** *LRT is very expensive. I don't think we have the population density yet, but we need a long-term plan to possibly implement it in 10, 20 or 30 years.*
- Rob Wickson** *100% supportive.*
- Harald Wolf** *Strong advocate of improved public transportation. Implement light rail when and where it makes sense.*

Continue to scroll for responses to Affordable Housing

Candidates' response to Affordable Housing

- Susan Brice** *Support a range of affordable housing options.*
- Judy Brownoff** *Strongly support. Saanich needs to develop policies to work with the development industry to supply affordable units as part of densification of our urban villages.*
- Patrick Chenier** *Need to address this. Urban village concept is one way. We need to raise the bar with developers for public amenities and let developers know what the community expects. This will also help developers plan.*
- Vic Derman** *Must address it immediately. Needs to be multi-faceted. Need to involve public and private sector in solutions.*
- Paul Gerrard** *One of our key issues especially entry level, working poor, and small family housing. Have to get senior governments to also support building rental units.*
- Victor Hughes** *Strongly support starting with low cost rental units. We have publicly owned properties that could be developed. (Closed) school lands should revert to municipality for municipal housing needs.*
- Wayne Hunter** *Strongly believe municipality must be a partner with the other levels of government with a strong focus on affordable housing.*
- Frank Leonard** *No response.*
- Dean Murdock** *Strongly support. Council has missed a lot of opportunities to include affordability in private development. Policy needed to encourage affordable housing.*
- Vicki Sanders** *I support truly affordable housing e.g. for people paying more than 30% of their income on shelter. At this point, we're looking to developers' contribution - which is good, but Saanich needs to create housing partnerships.*
- Leif Wergeland** *We have to look at opportunities for rental housing, housing for working families, as well as social housing for those who need a helping hand. It is a federal and provincial responsibility. We need them in as partners.*
- Rob Wickson** *Strongly support. It ties into land use and transportation.*
- Harald Wolf** *Support a wide variety of housing stock by expediting process of legalizing secondary suites and ensuring more apartment building are built through the zoning/permitting process.*

Continue to scroll for responses to Climate Change

Candidates' response to Climate Change

Susan Brice	<i>Extremely important.</i>
Judy Brownoff	<i>Strongly support a local action plan so we are all involved.</i>
Patrick Chenier	<i>Definitely need to take action. My platform includes property tax exemption (e.g. the \$75 credit for low flush toilets) for renewable energy installations, specifically solar because we are in a climate conducive to it.</i>
Vic Derman	<i>Most critical issue we face. We have to address it.</i>
Paul Gerrard	<i>It's not the first thing I think of when I get up in the morning. In principle, I agree with it but economy is the number one issue we have to address.</i>
Victor Hughes	<i>We have to do everything possible to reduce our carbon footprint. City hall vehicles a good place to start.</i>
Wayne Hunter	<i>Very big issue that runs the continuum of municipal responsibilities, as well as provincial and federal responsibilities. Climate Change is much more than being carbon neutral or lowering green house gas emissions. It is about how we need to deal with the impacts e.g. build infrastructure to take care of greater amounts of rain and water, dealing with drought.</i>
Frank Leonard	<i>No response.</i>
Dean Murdock	<i>Strong support action on climate protection. Saanich is a leader but there is far more we could be doing e.g. expanding transportation alternatives.</i>
Vicki Sanders	<i>Strongly support climate action. We need to ALL do our part. It's about behaviour change.</i>
Leif Wergeland	<i>As individuals and governments we have a responsibility to continue to reduce waste, conserve, not pollute, use and share our resources better.</i>
Rob Wickson	<i>We have to deal with it today. There is no choice.</i>
Harald Wolf	<i>Biggest challenge of our time.</i>

Continue to scroll for responses to Community Infrastructure

Candidates' response to Community Infrastructure

- Susan Brice** *There is no end to this work but we need to work with the community to determine priorities given budgetary limits each year. Best example is sidewalks.*
- Judy Brownoff** *We have to invest more in our infrastructure e.g. sidewalks, underground, water & sewage, storm water etc. as well as retrofit our facilities in a sustainable way. We have a very high infrastructural deficit; property taxes cannot keep up with improvements needed.*
- Patrick Chenier** *There is a lot that needs to be done. We need to find innovative ways of financing, funding, delivering and maintaining public infrastructure. The three levels of government must work together. U.S. municipalities can issue bonds for infrastructure projects.*
- Vic Derman** *We are only starting to address our infrastructural deficit e.g. underground pipes, bridges, etc. Need to be dealing with it or it will cost us a lot more in the future.*
- Paul Gerrard** *Strongly support. Many neighbourhoods feel they should have sidewalks. I live in an older community without curb and gutters. On our main arteries we must improve pedestrian and cycling.*
- Victor Hughes** *Saanich better off than others. Significant issues with pipes and facilities that require more money from provincial and federal governments. CRD level collaboration needed.*
- Wayne Hunter** *Saanich is probably the only municipality that has a plan for sustaining and replacing infrastructure. E.g. by 2013 Saanich water and sewage infrastructure will be sustainable.*
- Frank Leonard** *No response.*
- Dean Murdock** *There's a deficit e.g. in sidewalk enhancement, utility infrastructure, transportation alternatives, water and sewer and, in a community sense, there's work to do on our trail and parks systems, activity centres, performance and art exhibit space.*
- Vicki Sanders** *We have an infrastructure deficit; especially need a better pedestrian environment/safety. From public perspective, we also have a long way to go on arts and heritage issues.*
- Leif Wergeland** *No one wins if we add infrastructure that we can't maintain in the future. Trails, parks and recreation centres are as important as roads, sidewalks and sewers. The community needs to better understand the costs to maintain it and still keep Saanich an affordable place to live.*
- Rob Wickson** *Saanich needs to make significant investment in infrastructure in order to be prepared for the future.*
- Harald Wolf** *We need to make transition from car corridors to building people corridors.*

Candidates' response to Tax Reform

- Susan Brice** *The federal and provincial governments have to provide more resources for affordable housing. Tax increases should be backed up by the facts and support of the community -- consultation.*
- Judy Brownoff** *Strongly support tax reform. We've done some work e.g. in water/sewer service billing. There are some residents who have no garbage pickup and yet pay for pickup. Municipal tax system is a creature of the provincial government. We get a percentage of the federal gas tax, for instance, but it's earmarked for transportation. Property taxes cannot keep up.*
- Patrick Chenier** *Advocate of fair taxation. We need to explore taxing options other than market value assessment so people are not forced out of their homes as taxes increase.*
- Vic Derman** *Currently municipalities get 8 cents of every dollar of taxation. We desperately need the provincial and federal governments to share more of the taxes they collect, with us.*
- Paul Gerrard** *In Saanich we get good value for our dollar in most services, but we need more economic development. E.g. as Langford has with its developers and 'big box' stores financing infrastructure. Town & Country, if done right, could add a huge tax base.*
- Victor Hughes** *We need to look at how much money we're spending and consider levying a city services tax on hotels, ferries, etc.*
- Wayne Hunter** *I never like to increase taxes above 4% and would strive to keep it lower. Municipality needs to bring Gary Lunn and Keith Martin to the table, along with our provincial legislators, on some issues.*
- Frank Leonard** *No response.*
- Dean Murdock** *Senior levels of government have given municipalities more responsibilities than we were intended to absorb. Property taxes are a regressive and inadequate way to finance the capital expenses municipalities have been asked to absorb. Need to examine re-allocation of the resources needed, starting with UBCM and FCM.*
- Vicki Sanders** *Federal and provincial governments have downloaded too much responsibility onto municipalities. It is a false sense of 'economy' to cut back on services, like infrastructure, which cannot be left to the future. We're basically a residential community dependent on property taxes.*
- Leif Wergeland** *We are moving toward user pay tax reform e.g. now billing for waste water on water bills. Saanich can only tax property. We need to find new revenue sources.*
- Rob Wickson** *I Support examining options for generating revenue within the community. I am concerned about the ratio of business to residential taxes.*
- Harald Wolf** *No increase in taxes beyond possible cost of living increases. We have to re-evaluate discretionary funds to see if they can be better allocated.*

Candidates' response to Council Accountability

- Susan Brice** *Satisfied.*
- Judy Brownoff** *Council now does an Annual Report / performance reports on goals – which is some improvement. It is also up to citizens to act.*
- Patrick Chenier** *Fairly good. Need to ensure a fair, efficient government. Need to make sure our goals are realistic, and to report in a timely manner.*
- Vic Derman** *Citizens deserve to see all decisions I make as their councillor, and the rationale for it. I think citizens deserve to know what their elected representatives are doing. Televised council meetings would great.*
- Paul Gerrard** *People should get more immersed in council matters. No use saying council should be accountable if citizens don't show up.*
- Victor Hughes** *Dissatisfied. Mayor and Council appear uninterested in getting public involved in municipal issues. After 19% voter turnout in last election, why didn't Council actively pursue service clubs, seniors' orgs, graduating students, religious communities for their input and opinions on progressive change? On involvement for greater voter turnout?*
- Wayne Hunter** *Satisfied. Saanich has a good process. Also a very good staff to assist us. But we are always looking for ways to be more accountable.*
- Frank Leonard** *No response.*
- Dean Murdock** *Dissatisfied. Saanich deserves credit for an open council but Council has become quite insular. Decision are occurring where public has no input.*
- Vicki Sanders** *Some council members are more open to community input than others. We were elected to represent citizens so I consider all tax payers to be my boss.*
- Leif Wergeland** *We are a very accessible Council. Anyone can come to Committee of the Whole and speak to items. We find a high percentage of our community is pleased with how the municipality is managed and operated*
- Rob Wickson** *This is very important. I am somewhat dissatisfied with current accountability.*
- Harald Wolf** *Not satisfied. Currently citizens are not being heard. One way to improve accountability is to strengthen the role of advisory committees.*

Continue to scroll for responses to Amalgamation

Candidates' response to Amalgamation

- Susan Brice** *Opposed, but totally support integration of services such as police forces. Need to protect community identity.*
- Judy Brownoff** *Not in favour. There is no financial gain for Saanich taxpayers. Other core municipalities, for instance, have even older infrastructure.*
- Patrick Chenier** *Prefer inter-municipal collaboration on common issues. Need to expand the collaborations now being used by police and fire departments, to other services such as emergency preparedness.*
- Vic Derman** *Not a fan. Greater integration of some services, and in some cases. And, integration with teeth in areas like the Regional Transportation Authority that deals with regional transportation approach and decision-making.*
- Paul Gerrard** *Integration not amalgamation. Integration of services; maybe some police force services. Definitely integrated transit. Amalgamation is not a huge success in bigger cities and won't save the money people think it will.*
- Victor Hughes** *Amalgamate fire and police and have them report to a CRD sub-committee of attending community members. Amalgamate four core municipalities with a ward system.*
- Wayne Hunter** *Would not be a benefit to Saanich. Amalgamation would decrease Saanich amenities due to enhancing other municipalities' services. Prefer integration of services e.g. police.*
- Frank Leonard** *No response*
- Dean Murdock** *Opposed. Some regional service collaboration and integration but not amalgamation.*
- Vicki Sanders** *I support regional integration of some services but there are no cost savings in amalgamation. In many ways Saanich is the model. Sewage treatment, transportation, and rec centres are some examples of services where people to take their 'community hats' off and think about the benefit to the region. Regional integration of services requires good leadership e.g. at the CRD level.*
- Leif Wergeland** *Do not support. Yes, we have too many municipalities and for regional planning one municipality would be more efficient. But people are attached to their cities. The answer is continued integration of services.*
- Rob Wickson** *If we are going to be true to the tax payers, we must examine the governance structure on a continual basis, and I don't think we have done that adequately. E.g. recent transit planning identified the need for a regional transportation planning body.*
- Harald Wolf** *Not in the foreseeable future.*