Alberni Valley Chamber of Commerce

VOTER GUIDE · CANDIDATE RESPONSES

2026 Business Priorities: Where Port Alberni Candidates Stand

City of Port Alberni | 2026 General Local Election

General voting day is Saturday, October 17, 2026

ABOUT THIS GUIDE

This summer, 63 local businesses told the Alberni Valley Chamber of Commerce what matters most to them heading into the 2026 local election. We turned their answers into five business priorities and asked every candidate for Mayor and Council in the City of Port Alberni to respond.

Candidate answers are published as submitted, listed in alphabetical order by last name. This guide includes responses received by end of day October 13, 2026. The Chamber does not endorse candidates. Our goal is to help members and voters see where each candidate stands on the issues local businesses raised, so you can make your own decision at the ballot box.

SURVEY RESULTS

What local businesses told us

Public safety was the top concern for local businesses, and the area where they felt local government had performed worst over the past four years.

The "We're Listening: Make Your Voice Count" survey ran July 29 to August 27, 2026. It drew 63 responses: 39 Chamber members (62%) and 24 non-members (38%). 73% of respondents operate within Port Alberni city limits; the rest are in ACRD electoral areas, home-based, or mobile.

Ranked priorities

Respondents ranked 8 issues, 1 = top priority. Bars show the share of respondents placing each issue in their top 3.

	ISSUE	IN TOP 3	AVG. RANK	NAMED #1
1	Public safety and public disorder	73%	2.83	18 (29%)
2	Economic growth and investment	57%	3.56	11 (17%)
3	Commercial revitalization	51%	3.76	7 (11%)
4	Business regulations (permitting and zoning)	46%	3.81	9 (14%)
5	Workforce recruitment and retention	40%	4.08	**15 (24%)**
6	Commercial recycling and waste infrastructure	13%	5.54	1 (2%)
7	Housing for the workforce	13%	6.06	1 (2%)
8	Public transit and active transportation	8%	6.37	1 (2%)

NOTE Workforce recruitment was named the #1 priority almost as often as public safety (15 vs. 18), showing it is the most pressing issue for a sizable group of employers.

SURVEY RESULTS

Local government performance over the past four years

% rating ineffective or very ineffective

76%
Public safety

60%
Economic development

59%
Growing the tax base

Other key findings

Taxes	56% would accept an average annual tax increase of no more than 0 to 5%. Only 8% would accept 9% or more.
Cost pressures	Property taxes (44%) and permitting delays (17%) were the two biggest costs cited.
Safety actions wanted	Foot patrols or a consistent presence in Uptown and commercial areas (67%), enforcement on vacant and derelict buildings (56%), faster encampment and needle-debris response (41%), police and mental health co-response (40%).
Visitor services	67% support increased investment in visitor services over the next term. Only 14% are opposed.
Uptown corridor	Written comments focused on Uptown, 3rd Avenue and the Argyle corridor, citing open drug use, vacant storefronts, and concerns about the proposed supportive housing development.

The five business priorities

The Chamber's Advocacy Committee used these results to set five business priorities. Each includes what businesses are asking for and the question every candidate was asked to answer.

1 · Safe, Vibrant Commercial Districts
2 · Cut Red Tape, Grow Investment
3 · Solve the Workforce Gap
4 · Fiscal Responsibility and Tax Base Diversification
5 · Invest in the Visitor Economy

1 Safe, Vibrant Commercial Districts

Address street disorder and rebuild confidence in Uptown, 3rd Avenue and the Argyle corridor. Public safety ranked first and was rated the worst-performing area of local government (76% ineffective or very ineffective).

WHAT BUSINESSES ARE ASKING FOR

- A Business Safety Strategy with public reporting on crime and disorder in commercial districts
- Foot patrols or a consistent presence in Uptown and the commercial core
- Enforcement on vacant and derelict buildings
- Faster encampment and needle-debris cleanup in business areas
- Coordinated police, bylaw and mental health co-response for acute crises
- Argyle Street upgrades tied to a visible commercial revitalization plan

QUESTION FOR CANDIDATES

Do you support a Business Safety Strategy with public reporting on crime and disorder in commercial areas? (Yes / No / Partly) What would you do in your first year to improve safety in Uptown, 3rd Avenue and the Argyle corridor?

2 Cut Red Tape, Grow Investment

Make City Hall faster to work with and attract new business. Economic growth ranked #2 and business regulations #4. 60% rated economic development ineffective or very ineffective.

WHAT BUSINESSES ARE ASKING FOR

- Published service standards and target timelines for commercial and industrial permits and zoning approvals
- A single point of contact for businesses working through multi-department approvals
- Annual reporting on red-tape reduction
- A commercial recycling and waste-infrastructure pilot to support local jobs and reduce illegal dumping costs
- Competitive, predictable municipal fees and development charges

QUESTION FOR CANDIDATES

Do you support published permitting timelines and a single point of contact at City Hall for business approvals? (Yes / No / Partly) What would you change first?

3 Solve the Workforce Gap

Help local employers find and keep the staff they need. Nearly one in four respondents (24%) named workforce recruitment their top priority.

WHAT BUSINESSES ARE ASKING FOR

- Support for attainable workforce housing, including streamlined permitting for purpose-built rental
- Safety and community reputation treated as a workforce-attraction issue, not only a downtown issue
- Continued support for local training, apprenticeships and newcomer-to-workforce pathways

QUESTION FOR CANDIDATES

What specific actions will you take to help local employers attract and keep workers, including improving housing availability?

4 Fiscal Responsibility and Tax Base Diversification

Grow the tax base instead of the tax rate. 59% rated tax base diversification ineffective or very ineffective, and property taxes were the most-cited cost pressure (44%).

WHAT BUSINESSES ARE ASKING FOR

- A public, multi-year plan to diversify the tax base beyond residential and commercial property tax
- Annual tax-increase targets that reflect what businesses told us (56% would accept no more than 0 to 5%)
- Public reporting on where new revenue and cost savings are applied

QUESTIONS FOR CANDIDATES

What is your plan to grow and diversify Port Alberni's tax base? What average annual tax increase do you consider sustainable over the next four years?

5 Invest in the Visitor Economy

Keep the Valley's front door open year-round. The Port Alberni Visitor Centre on Highway 4 is often the first stop for travellers heading to Tofino, Ucluelet and the Pacific Rim, turning drive-through traffic into local spending. The Chamber has operated it on behalf of the community since 1983.

When the City's visitor services contract ended in December 2024 without a new agreement, the Centre closed for three months in 2025. Since reopening in June 2025, the Chamber has subsidized its operations. As of September 30, 2026, the Centre has served 1,834 parties and 3,673 visitors this year. Two-thirds of survey respondents (67%) support increased investment in visitor services.

1,834
parties served in 2026

3,673
visitors in 2026

67%
support increased investment

WHAT BUSINESSES ARE ASKING FOR

- Stable, adequately resourced Visitor Centre operations and hours, developed in partnership with the Chamber and community partners
- A coordinated destination and events strategy that brings foot traffic to Uptown, Harbour Quay and other commercial areas
- Clear wayfinding and signage to underused commercial districts

QUESTION FOR CANDIDATES

Do you support stable, multi-year funding for year-round Visitor Centre operations? (Yes / No / Partly) How would you approach a long-term funding model?

BEFORE YOU VOTE

General voting day is Saturday, October 17, 2026.

Port Alberni voters elect a mayor and six councillors for a four-year term.

CITY OF PORT ALBERNI

For advance voting, voting locations and eligibility, visit portalberni.ca/municipal-elections or email election@portalberni.ca.

ACRD ELECTORAL AREAS

Voters in ACRD electoral areas can find their information at acrd.bc.ca/2026election.

SECTION TWO

Candidate responses

Candidate responses follow, listed alphabetically by last name. Responses received by end of day October 13, 2026 are included.

Sam Atwal

CANDIDATE RESPONSES

2. Do you support a Business Safety Strategy with public reporting on crime and disorder in commercial areas?

Yes | No | Partly

4. Do you support published permitting timelines and a single point of contact at City Hall for business approvals?

Yes | No | Partly

9. Do you support stable, multi-year funding for year-round Visitor Centre operations?

Yes | No | Partly

3. What would you do in your first year to improve safety in Uptown, 3rd Avenue and the Argyle corridor?

My first priority would be to initiate a quick response team for quick cleanup of uptown areas along with scheduled daytime and evening foot patrols. Partner with the Chamber and Uptown merchants to conduct Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design audits, identifying quick-win improvements in commercial lighting, sightlines, and alleyway management. And also establish a quarterly safety briefing between commercial property owners, the RCMP, Bylaw, and Island Health to track street-level trends and ensure repeat issues are addressed systematically rather than after complaints pile up

5. What would you change first to cut red tape and grow investment?

Ensure all requests are assigned a single staff "navigator" for tracking and reporting across departments to applicants. If there are standard applications, set a turnaround timeline target for staff to achieve for increased customer service and streamline checklists so changes to existing and new storefronts can be done quicker.

6. What specific actions will you take to help local employers attract and keep workers, including improving housing availability?

Streamline permitting for infill and multi-family builds. Back recreational facilities, accessible parks, and youth spaces so workers put down roots and not worry about their families not enjoying the area. Also supporting regional marketing partnerships that pitch Port Alberni to young tradespeople, medical professionals, and remote workers looking for attainable housing and outdoor amenities.

7. What is your plan to grow and diversify Port Alberni's tax base?

You can't just keep leaning on residential property taxes every time the budget tightens. Homeowners are tapped out. I know red tape kills momentum. We need faster licensing, clear timelines, and predictable fees so our local shops, light industrial operators, and makers can actually expand. Housing plays into this, too. Smart infill and mixed-use builds grow the assessment roll using pipes and roads we already maintain, instead of sticking taxpayers with expensive new sprawl. On top of that, leaning into our sports tourism, parks, and waterfront draws real outside dollars into local restaurants and supply stores. It's about building a town where businesses can set up without a fight and keep their money circulating right here.

8. What average annual tax increase do you consider sustainable over the next four years?

Somewhere in the realm of 3.5%. My priority on Council will be driving efficiency within core operations, identifying non-tax revenue streams, and funding new capital investments primarily through new assessment growth rather than hiking rates on the existing tax base.

10. How would you approach a long-term funding model for Visitor Services in the Alberni Valley?

Shift away from uncertain year-to-year grant requests to predictable 3-to-4-year service contracts tied to clear performance metrics, allowing the Chamber to retain skilled staff and plan ahead. And collaborate with the Alberni-Clayoquot Regional District (ACRD) and neighbouring communities, as the Port Alberni Visitor Centre acts as the gateway hub for the entire west coast corridor, not just city limits.

Debbie Haggard

CANDIDATE RESPONSES

2. Do you support a Business Safety Strategy with public reporting on crime and disorder in commercial areas?

Yes | No | Partly

4. Do you support published permitting timelines and a single point of contact at City Hall for business approvals?

Yes | **No** | Partly

9. Do you support stable, multi-year funding for year-round Visitor Centre operations?

Yes | No | Partly

3. What would you do in your first year to improve safety in Uptown, 3rd Avenue and the Argyle corridor?

1. Development of a Community Crime Prevention Action Plan 2. Establish a Neighborhood Watch Program 3. Improve street lighting 4. Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design 5. Host community safety workshops 6. Community events, such as block parties or clean up days 7. Encourage reporting 8. Focus on identifying and addressing the root causes of crime 9. Allocating resources to crime prevention programs 10. Implementation of a Crisis Response Team

5. What would you change first to cut red tape and grow investment?

It is impossible to establish permitting timelines, sometimes the process is straightforward, and other times it is a much more complex process and will take more time. One of the City's biggest challenges is understaffing in the Planning Department. Planners are in high demand and difficult to recruit, and the recent retirement of the Director of Planning has further reduced capacity. Completing the OCP also placed additional demands on the department and required significant staff time. Meaningful improvements will require the department to be fully staffed. One possible approach is to create a Small Business Roundtable whose mandate would be to identify the specific challenges facing local businesses and collaborate with the Vity on practical, actionable measures to address them.

6. What specific actions will you take to help local employers attract and keep workers, including improving housing availability?

One of my priorities is attracting young families to the community to expand our workforce and grow our population base, doing so will require family oriented recreational amenities, recruitment of family doctors, and affordable housing. The City needs to determine which housing options young families prefer, such as row houses, condominiums, co-operative housing, or alternative single-family models, the City's Housing Needs Assessment indicates that many three or four bedroom homes are occupied by only one or two people. Some older residents may want to downsize but have nowhere suitable to go. Building more patio homes could give them options to age in place while freeing larger homes for families.

7. What is your plan to grow and diversify Port Alberni's tax base?

The City must increase density. For example, the old high school site contributes approximately one million dollars in taxes. If this was single family homes, the tax contribution would be between $300,000 - $ 500,000.

A second priority is to rebuild the tax base with the development of the Somass Lands. This will not happen overnight, but when completed, it is anticipated that this property will generate $3-$5 million dollars annually.

8. What average annual tax increase do you consider sustainable over the next four years?

The new Council must ensure that essential infrastructure projects continue in accordance with the City's Master Plans, that funds are allocated to the appropriate reserve accounts to support future needs, and that the quality of life residents expect and enjoy is maintained and improved for future generations.

10. How would you approach a long-term funding model for Visitor Services in the Alberni Valley?

The funding model cannot rely solely on the City of Port Alberni. It must also include contributions from Sproat Lake, Beaver Creek, Cherry Creek and Beaufort. Because all areas of the Alberni Valley benefit either directly or indirectly from these services, all areas should share in the financial responsibility. Another option is to receive some funding from Alberni Valley Tourism. AVT attracts visitors to the Alberni Valley, while an open Visitor Centre encourages them to stay longer, book local accommodations, dine at local restaurants, and shop at our many specialty stores.

Adam Hayduk

CANDIDATE RESPONSES

2. Do you support a Business Safety Strategy with public reporting on crime and disorder in commercial areas?

Yes | No | Partly

4. Do you support published permitting timelines and a single point of contact at City Hall for business approvals?

Yes | No | Partly

9. Do you support stable, multi-year funding for year-round Visitor Centre operations?

Yes | No | **Partly**

3. What would you do in your first year to improve safety in Uptown, 3rd Avenue and the Argyle corridor?

I regularly have conversations with business owners who are frustrated by theft, vandalism, public disorder, and the impact these issues have on customers and employees. In my first year on Council, I would prioritize public safety by supporting increased enforcement of existing bylaws, strengthening collaboration with RCMP and community partners, and advocating for greater accountability for repeat offenders. At the same time, I would push the Province to provide additional funding for policing, health care, addictions treatment, and supportive services. Port Alberni has been asked to shoulder significant social challenges, but the necessary resources have not always followed. Safe, vibrant commercial districts are essential to attracting investment, supporting local businesses, and creating a community people are proud to visit and call home.

5. What would you change first to cut red tape and grow investment?

Residential and commercial developers aren't asking for shortcuts; they are wanting certainty. Developers will be able to hire quicker with a focus on streamlining approvals, reducing duplication, and allowing multiple departments to approve their portions at the same time. When investors know what to expect and how long it will take, they are more likely to choose Port Alberni. Economic growth starts with a City Hall that is efficient and responsive with predictable timelines.

6. What specific actions will you take to help local employers attract and keep workers, including improving housing availability?

I would support increasing housing supply through a faster approval process, which includes market and below-market housing options. I also believe in supporting workforce development by working with employers, North Island College, ADSS and First Nations to connect people with training and employment opportunities. Finally, when industry relocates their operation from another community to Port Alberni, like Amix did, we need to make a BIGGER deal about it so the rest of BC knows about the opportunities here.

7. What is your plan to grow and diversify Port Alberni's tax base?

We need to attract industrial and commercial investment while supporting existing businesses to lessen the tax burden on the residential tax base. We need to aggressively pursue opportunities connected to the proposed Port Alberni Transportation Hub project, value-added forestry, marine industries, and tourism. At the same time, City Hall must be easier to work with by streamlining approvals and reducing unnecessary delays. Every new business, industrial investment, and commercial property helps broaden the tax base and reduces the burden on homeowners. Growth should be strategic, sustainable, and focused on creating local jobs while increasing municipal revenues.

8. What average annual tax increase do you consider sustainable over the next four years?

I believe annual property tax increases should be kept as close as possible to British Columbia's annual inflation rate. Residents and businesses need predictability and affordability, especially during times of economic uncertainty. We must also continue exploring opportunities to leverage our assets, attract investment, and strengthen alternative revenue streams. By growing and finding new ways to increase city revenues, we can reduce our reliance on property tax increases.

10. How would you approach a long-term funding model for Visitor Services in the Alberni Valley?

I would support a funding model that reduces reliance on local taxpayers by combining contributions from local governments, Destination BC funding, tourism-related revenues, sponsorships, and industry partnerships. Visitor services should be viewed as a shared investment between government and the tourism sector. A diversified approach creates stability, reduces risk, and allows us to adapt as tourism grows. As new hotels are built in Port Alberni, the Hotel Room Taxes collected by the new hotels can be considered in the funding model.

Diljeet S. Hundal

CANDIDATE RESPONSES

2. Do you support a Business Safety Strategy with public reporting on crime and disorder in commercial areas?

Yes | No | Partly

4. Do you support published permitting timelines and a single point of contact at City Hall for business approvals?

Yes | No | Partly

9. Do you support stable, multi-year funding for year-round Visitor Centre operations?

Yes | No | Partly

3. What would you do in your first year to improve safety in Uptown, 3rd Avenue and the Argyle corridor?

Co-Ordinate resources RCMP By laws services citizens on patrol

5. What would you change first to cut red tape and grow investment?

examine what are the Stumbling blocks that are hindering processes and streamline them

6. What specific actions will you take to help local employers attract and keep workers, including improving housing availability?

Some type of incentive programs not sure at this point

7. What is your plan to grow and diversify Port Alberni's tax base?

work with provincial and federal partners to bring more industries to the city

8. What average annual tax increase do you consider sustainable over the next four years?

0-5%

10. How would you approach a long-term funding model for Visitor Services in the Alberni Valley?

Partner with provincial and federal Partners

Richard Huneault

CANDIDATE RESPONSES

2. Do you support a Business Safety Strategy with public reporting on crime and disorder in commercial areas?

Yes | No | Partly

4. Do you support published permitting timelines and a single point of contact at City Hall for business approvals?

Yes | No | Partly

9. Do you support stable, multi-year funding for year-round Visitor Centre operations?

Yes | No | **Partly**

3. What would you do in your first year to improve safety in Uptown, 3rd Avenue and the Argyle corridor?

I work night in taht area and constantly interact with police and people. Busy street and public presence helps reduce crime. See something say something. Id like to continue the work the city is doing with the RCMP and community policing to increase patrols and coverage in these areas. Working with the province on addiction and homelessness will have s positive in pact in the area as well.

5. What would you change first to cut red tape and grow investment?

A part of the issue is staffing. Working with our staff to fill and keep people in these position will help release some stress. I also think having a single point of contact helps navigate the difference department and requirements when looking for a license or permit.

6. What specific actions will you take to help local employers attract and keep workers, including improving housing availability?

Being proactive and willing towrk with well thought out plans when people wish to change zoning or open a new business. We can help differe some cost when a new employee take on x amount of employees and or take a vacant space in the uptown. The OCP already has highlighted the need for low to medium level houseing and multi family hosuing. Which will open up housing market to new family's attracting people like the family who loved here and open stores like Unilow food. Which is great for our community.

7. What is your plan to grow and diversify Port Alberni's tax base?

Diversification of our economy and business types. Our old system relied on 4 large industry business that 3 of which no longer excist. I want to work with new industry like ones that use our deep sea port and small family business to help spread the tax burden. Encouraging the city staff to expedite licensing and permits for well planned out business proposals so family can open up faster and start their dreams.

8. What average annual tax increase do you consider sustainable over the next four years?

I honestly dont have a hard answer for this without more information. Ideally I want to keep it as low as possible but that is hard to do when the public is not willing to cut or reduce services. First Id like to engage the public both for input and education. See if we can find service that can be altered or reduced that we the public will accept. Home owners are struggling enough already and I dont want to be tone deaf to their needs while trying to milk them for ever drop. Our elders should worry about loosing their homes in their golden years because of outrageous properties taxes. More homes and more businesses will help control the taxes.

10. How would you approach a long-term funding model for Visitor Services in the Alberni Valley?

Long term Id like to see contribution from the city, ACRD, province, vancouver island tourism and other partners territories in the area. Tourism is a great for the city and other like Bamfield Ulkee Tofino, also for business. There is a clear social benefit and Id support some level of funding. I know the ACRD contributed 40k this year and the city did 80k last year. Id need to look into why the city stopped and get feed back from city and budget question to be more informed.

Nina Kossenko

CANDIDATE RESPONSES

2. Do you support a Business Safety Strategy with public reporting on crime and disorder in commercial areas?

Yes No Partly

4. Do you support published permitting timelines and a single point of contact at City Hall for business approvals?

Yes No Partly

9. Do you support stable, multi-year funding for year-round Visitor Centre operations?

Yes No Partly

3. What would you do in your first year to improve safety in Uptown, 3rd Avenue and the Argyle corridor?

I would start by bringing local merchants, residents, RCMP, bylaw staff, First Nations, non profits, Island health and other housing partners together to agree on practical actions, clear responsibilities and regular public updates.Businesses need a consistent presence, this includes occupancy with housing. There needs to someone to contact and follow-through when they report theft, damage or disturbances. A centralized system. I would push for more foot patrols with volunteers from community policing, that have mental health awareness, better lighting in problem areas, especially alley ways, timely debris cleanup, and enforcement on unsafe, neglected buildings.Through my work in housing, mental health and substance use, I see where services fall short. I would advocate for coordinated crisis responses and better access to treatment, recovery and housing with proper supports and clear expectations.Along Argyle, I would also press for clear construction updates, safe access to businesses and a plan to bring customers back, keeping the HGTV boost going. Public reporting should show what is improving and where more work is needed. Safety is essential.

5. What would you change first to cut red tape and grow investment?

I would start by talking with local business owners and City staff about what they say is taking too long and what can we do to make it easier. Opening a business is a big deal. It's already scary and people need to feel supported. People need to know what paperwork is needed, what it will cost and how long it should take. Cutting pieces of the process that are asking the same information. Having one person at City Hall to guide them through the steps would help. When things get delayed, people deserve an update and a clear explanation why. We need to support the businesses we already have and welcome new ones. I would listen, ask questions and follow through to help people move their plans forward.

6. What specific actions will you take to help local employers attract and keep workers, including improving housing availability?

A job offer only goes so far if someone cannot find a home they can afford, rent has really gotten out of hand for what people get for the price they pay. My housing experience has shown me that people need different options at different stages of life. I would work with housing providers, First Nations and other levels of government to pursue funding and partnerships for attainable housing.I would also like to see more opportunities for people in recovery to get back to work in part time or entry level positions at the new housing development. A job can help someone rebuild confidence, find purpose and move forward. Working with willing employers that support giving people a chance, with the support they need to succeed.

7. What is your plan to grow and diversify Port Alberni's tax base?

I don't have all the answers to growing our tax base, but I know we can't keep putting everything onto the homeowners and businesses already here.I would start by listening to local business owners about what would help them stay and grow. Then work with City staff and the Chamber to learn what we can do to bring more businesses and jobs to Port Alberni.I would like to see fewer empty storefronts, support to local businesses, events and tourism is part of that. Allow people easier access to business in their home in order to help offset cost,I'm willing to learn, ask questions and work with people who know this area better than myself o we can make good decisions.

8. What average annual tax increase do you consider sustainable over the next four years?

I would hope to keep the average annual tax increase at 3-4 %each year I know as a homeowner how tough it is. Young families are really struggling, our food banks are so stretched because so many young families and seniors just can't make it. I would need to look closely at the budget before saying what is possible. I would ask why an increase is needed, where we could save money and whether some projects could wait. We still need to look after infrastructure as leaving repairs too long can cost us more later.I would also look for funding from other levels of government to help with those costs. I cannot promise a fixed increase before doing that work, but I can promise to ask questions, listen and be careful with taxpayers' money.

Nina Kossenko

CONTINUED

10. How would you approach a long-term funding model for Visitor Services in the Alberni Valley?

I support funding that helps keep the Visitor Centre open year-round that comes from all areas, the city ACRD and other businesses. The visitor center is the first thing people see and a reason to stop in Port Alberni. To visit our local events, attractions and spend money at businesses. Keeping it open is something we should all do together. I would want to understand what it costs to run and what funding and grants are available, including looking at casino revenue. Through volunteering at local events, I see the value visitors bring to our community. They shop, eat and hopefully sleep here. I don't have the whole funding answer today, but bringing people together, finding resources and following through are things I have experience doing.

Sukhdev Krishan

CANDIDATE RESPONSES

2. Do you support a Business Safety Strategy with public reporting on crime and disorder in commercial areas?

Yes No Partly

4. Do you support published permitting timelines and a single point of contact at City Hall for business approvals?

Yes No Partly

9. Do you support stable, multi-year funding for year-round Visitor Centre operations?

Yes No Partly

3. What would you do in your first year to improve safety in Uptown, 3rd Avenue and the Argyle corridor?

Public safety is both a community issue and an economic issue. In my first year, I would support a Business Safety Strategy for Uptown, 3rd Avenue and Argyle with measurable targets and regular public reporting. Priorities should include a visible business-area presence; coordinated RCMP, bylaw and mental-health response; faster needle and debris cleanup; and consistent enforcement on unsafe or derelict properties. I would establish baseline measures so businesses and residents can see whether conditions are actually improving. Revitalization cannot succeed through construction alone: employees, customers and investors must feel safe using the area. My approach is straightforward: set the baseline, assign responsibility, measure the result and report it publicly.

5. What would you change first to cut red tape and grow investment?

My first step would be to map the current commercial and industrial approval process, identify recurring bottlenecks and publish realistic target timelines for common permits and zoning applications. Businesses should not have to navigate City Hall department by department without knowing who owns their file or when they can expect an answer. I support one accountable point of contact who can coordinate across planning, engineering, building and other departments. When a target is missed, the applicant should receive a clear explanation and next step. Good regulation protects the public interest; unnecessary uncertainty discourages investment. Port Alberni should be known for clear requirements, predictable timelines, practical problem-solving and accountability when files stall.

6. What specific actions will you take to help local employers attract and keep workers, including improving housing availability?

Workforce attraction requires more than recruitment. It requires housing, safety, training, infrastructure and confidence in the community. I would support faster processing of purpose-built rental and workforce housing that meets planning requirements, while pursuing provincial and federal infrastructure and housing funding so growth does not simply shift costs onto existing taxpayers. I would strengthen connections among employers, North Island College, trades and apprenticeship programs, youth, newcomers and local training providers. I would also be prepared, as Mayor, to sit with the Chamber, major employers, our MLA and MP when a funding or policy barrier requires provincial or federal action. Port Alberni has repeatedly adapted as its economy changed; we should apply that same practical approach to today's workforce gap.

7. What is your plan to grow and diversify Port Alberni's tax base?

Port Alberni cannot solve affordability by continually dividing rising costs among the same taxpayers. I would pursue a multi-year tax-base diversification strategy focused on marine and industrial opportunities, technology and innovation, tourism, small-business growth, appropriate housing and commercial development, and productive use of underutilized land and buildings. Outside funding should become a standard part of project planning. Current federal and provincial economic-development programs show that opportunities exist when projects are ready and partnerships are in place. As Mayor, I would be happy to sit with the Chamber, our MLA, our MP and funding agencies to identify eligible projects and help Port Alberni compete for investment. Grow economic activity and assessment—not simply the tax rate.

Sukhdev Krishan

CONTINUED

8. What average annual tax increase do you consider sustainable over the next four years?

I would treat the 0–5% range identified by a majority of Chamber respondents as an important affordability benchmark, but I would not make an artificial four-year promise before seeing each annual budget, inflation, contractual obligations and infrastructure requirements. My objective would be to keep increases as low and predictable as reasonably possible by controlling operating growth, reviewing programs for measurable results, coordinating capital projects, pursuing grants and partnerships, and growing the tax base. Any unusually large increase should require an unusually clear public explanation: what changed, why it changed, what alternatives and savings were considered, and what result taxpayers are buying. Fiscal responsibility is not simply cutting services; it is obtaining the greatest public value from every dollar collected.

10. How would you approach a long-term funding model for Visitor Services in the Alberni Valley?

I would support a stable, accountable multi-year partnership rather than repeatedly creating uncertainty about whether year-round Visitor Services will continue. Funding should be tied to transparent outcomes such as visitor contacts, referrals to local businesses and attractions, year-round hours, emergency-information capacity, wayfinding and measurable economic impact. I would also pursue provincial and federal tourism and community-development funding so the full burden does not fall on local taxpayers. Highway 4 gives Port Alberni a major opportunity to convert West Coast through-traffic into local spending. As Mayor, I would gladly sit with the Chamber, neighbouring communities, our MLA and MP to build the strongest eligible funding partnerships. The goal should be simple: turn more travellers who drive through Port Alberni into people who stop, explore, spend and return.

Michael Moore

CANDIDATE RESPONSES

2. Do you support a Business Safety Strategy with public reporting on crime and disorder in commercial areas?

Yes | No | Partly

4. Do you support published permitting timelines and a single point of contact at City Hall for business approvals?

Yes | No | **Partly**

9. Do you support stable, multi-year funding for year-round Visitor Centre operations?

Yes | No | **Partly**

3. What would you do in your first year to improve safety in Uptown, 3rd Avenue and the Argyle corridor?

I would bring together the organizations already working on the community safety to identify where services overlap, where gaps exist, and what additional support is needed. Data driven project with measurable results, is how I feel the city should spend its time. Try an approach, if it works continue doing it, if there isn't a mensurable improvement then change the focus. Issues in uptown are not going to be solved in a single year but we should be able to see improvements.

5. What would you change first to cut red tape and grow investment?

I believe in reviewing software options to manage all facets on building and development. I do not believe in a single point of contact as this leave the city open to issues if this person leaves. Permitting and, inspections should can be setup with a public facing app that can show timelines and process expectations, allowing contractors, builders, and developers to anticipate, where their projects are. This kind of software and interaction means that both the public and staff can better manage projects making providing both more efficient.

6. What specific actions will you take to help local employers attract and keep workers, including improving housing availability?

first make it easier to build housing, next work directly with local employers to identify workforce challenges. finally connect training with actual employment opportunities. My work with the Alberni Makerspace and North Island College, I've seen what can happen when training is developed around real industry needs. I'd support stronger partnerships between employers, educational institutions, WorkBC, and local training organizations to create pathways into trades, manufacturing, technology, health care, and other sectors where employers need workers.

7. What is your plan to grow and diversify Port Alberni's tax base?

Growing Port Alberni's tax base means attracting investment, supporting existing businesses, and making better use of our commercial and industrial properties. My first priority would be working with City staff to streamline business licensing, zoning, and development approvals. Clear requirements and reasonable timelines make it easier for businesses to invest and expand. I'd also focus on encouraging redevelopment of vacant and underused properties, particularly in Uptown. If the goal is to grow our economy, create local jobs, and spread municipal costs across a broader tax base, we will need to utilize existing resources while working to build new ones.

8. What average annual tax increase do you consider sustainable over the next four years?

5-8% is where I am comfortable at but there is no way to set this in stone nor should anyone try.

The reality is that costs are increasing, roads, utilities, emergency services, and other essential infrastructure requires funding. Ignoring those costs today can create much larger expenses tomorrow.

My priority would be to carefully review spending, identify opportunities for savings, and ensure taxpayers receive measurable value for any increases. I pay property taxes too, and I understand the pressure on households and businesses. I don't want taxes increasing any more than necessary, but I also don't want to make promises that leave the next Council with bigger problems to solve.

Michael Moore

CONTINUED

10. How would you approach a long-term funding model for Visitor Services in the Alberni Valley?

Visitor Services are important to our economy, supporting tourism, local businesses. I don't believe their long-term funding should depend on annual uncertainty or fall entirely on municipal taxpayers.

I would start by bringing together the City, Chamber of Commerce, ACRD, tourism operators, and other community partners to establish a multi-year funding agreement.

That agreement should clearly define the services being delivered, each partner's financial contribution, and measurable outcomes. We should also explore provincial tourism funding and opportunities for industry participation.

We need to recognize that tourism benefits the entire Alberni Valley, not just the City.

A predictable, shared funding model that allows Visitor Services to plan ahead while ensuring taxpayers receive value for their investment, is the best option for stable operations.

Cindy Solda

CANDIDATE RESPONSES

2. Do you support a Business Safety Strategy with public reporting on crime and disorder in commercial areas?

Yes No Partly

4. Do you support published permitting timelines and a single point of contact at City Hall for business approvals?

Yes No Partly

9. Do you support stable, multi-year funding for year-round Visitor Centre operations?

Yes No Partly

3. What would you do in your first year to improve safety in Uptown, 3rd Avenue and the Argyle corridor?

Yes, I support looking at a Business Safety Strategy, including public reporting, because I believe we need to measure what we are doing, what is working and what still needs improvement.

Public safety is something I take very seriously. Having been in business myself, I understand the frustrations businesses are experiencing. I hear it from business owners, employees and residents, and I share many of those frustrations. Nobody should feel unsafe going to work, operating a business, walking down the street or living in the neighbourhood. And my concerns are not just about Third Avenue but upper Redford Street, and Johnston Road and other areas throughout Port Alberni.

This affects our entire community.

The City has been working on public safety for years through our RCMP, community policing, bylaw enforcement, cleanup programs and partnerships with health and social service organizations. We have also worked with community partners because we recognize that these problems cannot be solved by one organization alone.

One of the biggest challenges is the cost of policing. According to the City 2024 financial information, net policing costs represent approximately $8.6 million in municipal tax funding, representing 27.56% of the City's total taxation. That is a considerable expense. I certainly don't want to see police services reduced. I would welcome having more officers, but we also have to be realistic about what additional policing would cost taxpayers. That's why I believe we need to continue examining different models.

Not every situation requires an RCMP officer. Sometimes people need medical assistance, mental-health support, outreach or help from another properly trained service. We need to look at ways these services can work together, with appropriate teams responding to situations within their expertise, allowing our police officers to concentrate on matters requiring police involvement.

At the April 27, 2026 Council meeting, Council endorsed the concept of a Crime Prevention and Community Safety Program, with the proposed services and funding requirements to be considered during the 2027 financial planning process. The proposal includes looking at a targeted non-police safety presence, cleanup and graffiti response, crime-prevention assistance for businesses and other preventive measures. It is not a fully funded program yet, but the work has been brought forward for further consideration. I also believe safety must involve our regional partners. The challenges we're dealing with don't stop at City boundaries. We need to keep working with Regional District, RCMP, Island Health, provincial agencies, First Nations and community organizations.

Upper Third Avenue Revitalization

I also brought forward my Upper Third Avenue Revitalization Concept Plan motion at the August 24, 2026, Council meeting. The motion called for investigating costs, consultation, funding opportunities and future planning and budget considerations. The concept includes public safety, sidewalks, pedestrian safety, accessibility, lighting, parking, vacant and poorly maintained buildings, existing businesses and future development. It also calls for reviewing previous studies and involving businesses, property owners, residents and community organizations.

With future development being planned for the Somass Lands, improvements around Harbour Quay, and work is underway on Argyle Street, upper Third Avenue is another logical area to examine. Major improvements will require planning, funding and time. With continued housing development in and around Uptown we need to plan for additional residents who will use our streets, sidewalks, businesses and services.

In my first year, I would like to see continued consideration of the Crime Prevention and Community Safety proposal, progress on upper Third Avenue concept and stronger coordination among the organizations working on public safety.

Cindy Solda

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5. What would you change first to cut red tape and grow investment?

Yes. City Hall should be easier to work with, with clearer permitting timelines and better coordination for businesses. The City has experienced staffing pressures while handling significant development activity. I believe we need to look at the combined figures for the entire Council term, recognize the work that has been done and continue improving how applications are handled. We hear the frustrations from businesses and developers, and we need to keep working toward clearer timelines, more efficient processes and better online services. I do know Mayor Minions has also said the same.

Clear timelines are important, while recognizing that complex applications may require additional review. Staff also need the tools, training and resources to provide timely service. We must continue meeting provincial building codes, safety standards, zoning requirements and other legal obligations. The goal should be to maintain those safeguards while making the process as clear and efficient as possible.

6. What specific actions will you take to help local employers attract and keep workers, including improving housing availability?

Housing and workforce recruitment are closely connected. If people cannot find an affordable place to live, it is difficult for businesses to attract and retain employees. Housing is only part of the solution. We also need good infrastructure, healthcare, recreation, public safety and educational opportunities. Port Alberni has seen considerable housing development this during this term and it continues. Affordable, supportive, seniors' and market-housing projects have been completed, are underway, approved or under review, including M'akola Housing Society's 40-unit project on Fourth Avenue. These projects demonstrate that housing is being built and planned, but we must ensure roads, water, sewer, sidewalks, recreation facilities and other infrastructure can support that growth.

I would like to see more educational and training opportunities in Port Alberni, including healthcare programs, apprenticeships and trades training. We have been working with the Provincial Government, North Island College, First Nations, employers and community partners to create opportunities for people to train and work locally.

7 & 8. What is your plan to grow and diversify Port Alberni's tax base? What average annual tax increase do you consider sustainable over the next four years?

Growing and diversify our tax base is important. I cannot promise a zero-percent tax increase. The City must fund employees, negotiate union wages, services, equipment and infrastructure, while also managing inflation and rising construction, insurance and operating costs. New development, efficiencies and additional revenue can help offset some costs, but it would not be responsible to promise a fixed tax increase for the next four years with reviewing the financial information annually. The City is required to adopt a balanced financial plan. We need to control costs where possible, maintain existing assets and avoid deferring maintenance that could create larger expenses later. Growing the tax base means encouraging responsible residential and commercial development while supporting existing businesses. Growth can increase revenue, but it also creates additional demands on infrastructure and services, so both benefits and cost must be considered. Responsible financial planning means providing value for taxpayers, protecting essential services, maintaining infrastructure and keeping taxes as reasonable as possible.

I am one voice and one vote: Council makes these decisions collectively.

10. How would you approach a long-term funding model for Visitor Services in the Alberni Valley?

Yes. The Visitor Centre supports tourism, local businesses and visitors throughout the region. Its benefits extend beyond Port Alberni to Sproat Lake, Bamfield, Tofino, Ucluelet and other destinations, so funding should be considered regionally. The City previously provided funding directly to the Chamber, and the ACRD has also provided grant funding. Discussions about a regional model should continue. A stable, multi-year arrangement would provide more certainty than relying on one-time requests. Any long-term commitment, however, must be affordable, transparent and approved by the appropriate governing bodies. We should review the total cost, services provided, visitor numbers, who benefits and what would constitute a fair contribution from the City, the ACRD, and other partners. I support finding a sustainable funding model that recognizes tourism as a regional benefit while respecting the needs of all taxpayers.

Charles Walter Mealey

CANDIDATE RESPONSES

2. Do you support a Business Safety Strategy with public reporting on crime and disorder in commercial areas?

Yes | No | Partly

4. Do you support published permitting timelines and a single point of contact at City Hall for business approvals?

Yes | No | Partly

9. Do you support stable, multi-year funding for year-round Visitor Centre operations?

Yes | No | Partly

3. What would you do in your first year to improve safety in Uptown, 3rd Avenue and the Argyle corridor?

I have my RCMP clearance to be a Community Policing Volunteer and would work one or two specific shifts a month to add to the local RCMP's efforts in the area. This would also (hopefully) bring more volunteers by bringing the program more exposure, thus bringing more people to the downtown area to do patrols. I will try to lead by example and get out on the street to help monitor and report.

5. What would you change first to cut red tape and grow investment?

We need to make sure that the department responsible has the full compliment of employees, something that has been lacking for a long time. This has resulted in delays, and we understand that's not the hired employees fault, but something that has been lacking for a long time. I come from a customer service background, and when the staff compliment is full, I would love to see a customer service based review to ensure all permits are gone through properly and expeditiously by any staff that deal with them.

6. What specific actions will you take to help local employers attract and keep workers, including improving housing availability?

Work with BC Housing to ensure more housing of all kinds can be built here, from low-income/low-barrier on up. We would encourage "carriage homes" or "garden suites" in suitable Residential zones to help offset the influx of workers that want to live, work and play in our City. Also, encourage thoughful denisty in areas that already have more than just single family residential, so it fits with the neighbourhood that's already there.

7. What is your plan to grow and diversify Port Alberni's tax base?

Somass Lands are the big one, at this point. I would love to see Light Industry as part of that project, bringing more taxation in at that level to help what we've lost to this point. Of course, I see Commercial and Residential there, and that would help spread out the taxation levels on those catagories as well. I will be more than happy to personally meet with anyone that wants to invest in this community and sell them on the reasons to purchase and develop here.

8. What average annual tax increase do you consider sustainable over the next four years?

I would hope that a goal like 2%+inflation would be not only sustainable, but achievable without damaging the likelyhood of needed infrastructure projects in the next 4 years. With Argyle St being under budget, and hopefully the Josephine Sanitary Forcemain Replacement Project also being under budget, we can go ahead with other projects without taxation, or even use some of that to reduce upcoming budget increases.

10. How would you approach a long-term funding model for Visitor Services in the Alberni Valley?

As a Valley-wide service, through the Regional District. All will benefit, so we should all chip in. I would support this at the ACRD Board level. I would also be willing to come volunteer during peak tourist time to bring awareness to what the Visitor Center offers our visitors to the Valley and West Coast.

Sharie Minions

CANDIDATE RESPONSES

2. Do you support a Business Safety Strategy with public reporting on crime and disorder in commercial areas?

Yes No Partly

4. Do you support published permitting timelines and a single point of contact at City Hall for business approvals?

Yes No Partly

9. Do you support stable, multi-year funding for year-round Visitor Centre operations?

Yes No Partly

3. What would you do in your first year to improve safety in Uptown, 3rd Avenue and the Argyle corridor?

Improving public safety is a significant opportunity for our community, and I support a coordinated Business Safety Strategy developed with local businesses, the RCMP, bylaw services and provincial partners, with clear accountability and measurable results. I would continue work already underway to secure additional provincially funded RCMP and mental-health response resources, while improving coordination between enforcement agencies and local businesses. We also need more consistent enforcement, timely cleanup and stronger action on problem properties. I would like to pursue decisive action on a specific Uptown property, similar to the steps we took with the Port Pub. We need to address immediate public safety concerns while continuing to advocate for provincial action on the underlying challenges contributing to disorder in our community.

5. What would you change first to cut red tape and grow investment?

I would establish a committee of local business owners, developers and residents who have firsthand experience navigating City Hall's processes to identify barriers and recommend improvements. While staffing challenges have contributed to delays, we've also heard concerns that go beyond staffing levels. We need to listen to the people working through these processes and make meaningful changes. One of the best ways to attract investment is to make Port Alberni an easier place to build and do business, with streamlined processes and predictable timelines, while maintaining the standards we've established for our community.

6. What specific actions will you take to help local employers attract and keep workers, including improving housing availability?

Attracting workers requires more than good jobs. People need attainable housing, childcare, safe neighbourhoods and a community where they want to raise their families. We've made significant progress with approximately 600 new homes, expanded childcare opportunities and investment in community amenities. My priorities include continuing to grow housing supply, advancing the Somass Lands redevelopment, supporting education and training opportunities, and working toward a new regional aquatic centre. We need to make Port Alberni a community where people can build both a career and a future.

7. What is your plan to grow and diversify Port Alberni's tax base?

Growing our tax base is essential to making Port Alberni more affordable. Decades of industrial decline have shifted more of the tax burden onto residents, and spending reductions alone won't reverse that.

The Somass Lands redevelopment is a major opportunity to create housing, businesses, jobs and new tax revenue. We need to be intentional about maximizing the long-term tax revenue generated by new development, while ensuring we preserve sufficient industrial land for emerging sectors like shipbuilding, food processing and high-value forest product manufacturing. Understanding these industries and having built connections here is critical.

My priorities include attracting investment, supporting existing industries and streamlining approvals. Growing our tax base means reducing the burden on those already here.

8. What average annual tax increase do you consider sustainable over the next four years?

I believe we should work toward annual increases in the 1–3% range, bringing them down as much as responsibly possible.

I recognize how difficult recent increases have been. Much of that investment has addressed decades of underfunded infrastructure, putting us on a more sustainable path.

Sharie Minions

CONTINUED

8. What average annual tax increase do you consider sustainable over the next four years? *(continued)*

I've personally brought forward approximately $2 million in reductions to general taxation and will continue identifying efficiencies and savings.

We've also changed how we manage large-scale infrastructure projects and continue to see projects come in under budget, allowing more funding to be directed toward future infrastructure needs.

We must also grow our tax base, maximize grants and pursue fairer provincial policing cost-sharing to sustainably reduce pressure on taxpayers.

10. How would you approach a long-term funding model for Visitor Services in the Alberni Valley?

I support stable, multi-year funding for year-round visitor services through a sustainable regional partnership that recognizes the benefits tourism brings to the entire Alberni Valley.

I would work with the Chamber, Alberni-Clayoquot Regional District, Alberni Valley Tourism and other partners to establish a long-term funding agreement with clear expectations.

Tourism is a significant economic opportunity for our community, particularly as we build on the momentum of Home Town Takeover. Visitor services should be part of a coordinated strategy that encourages people to stay longer, explore our waterfront, Uptown, Harbour Quay and surrounding attractions, and support local businesses.

Our goal should be to make Port Alberni a destination in its own right, while ensuring visitor services are funded fairly and sustainably across the region. The opportunity for tourism in Port Alberni is now.