

Village of Cumberland Candidates

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Questions to the Cumberland Candidates

1. Please tell us how you currently use the Cumberland Trail Network?
2. Do you support mountain biking and how do you envision mountain biking being part of Comox Valley's future?
3. Why do you feel that the Cumberland trails are an important community asset/amenity for the Comox Valley, and how would you champion them?
4. Would you support a permanent regional funding stream for UROC to continue to manage the Trail Network? What would a sustainable local government funding model for the Cumberland Trail Network look like to you?
5. A sustainable and functional trail network depends on well planned access/egress and Village/park interface. How do you envision UROC playing a role in Village infrastructure planning and park master planning?

For reference we included the UROC Trails Strategic Plan to every candidate.

VILLAGE OF CUMBERLAND MAYORAL CANDIDATES

Leslie Baird

1. At the present time I use the Cumberland Trail Network on occasion.
2. When I first became Mayor in 2011, I asked our CAO to work on making our trail system operate on the land legally. The goal was to make the Cumberland Trail System a recreation destination. Under his guidance we hired our first outdoor recreation worker.

I just recently signed the updated Land Access Agreement between the two Forest Companies and the Village.

3. The trails are important to the citizens of Cumberland who use them daily to walk, run and bike. They offer year-round recreation opportunities for all ages and fitness levels. This is also true for the rest of the Comox Valley. The yearly events bring many tourists to the community, it helps our local businesses during the shoulder season, it keeps jobs in Cumberland. I attend many of the events.

The Village council just signed on to work with the CVRD and Vancouver Island Tourism to focus advertising on what we desire to highlight in Cumberland.

4. I support UROC receiving funding from the CVRD. It makes sense as many of the users are from outside of Cumberland. We need funding that is fair and balanced, at least five years or longer, to give UROC stability and time to plan and work into the future. It should also contain a 2% increase every year.

I believe the Village and CVRD should work together to provide staff time for UROC on projects to support the trail system.

5. It is very important for UROC to play a role in infrastructure planning and park master planning. We need to listen to the people that are building and using the trail system daily to see what needs to change, what we need to focus on, and how we make the system work for everyone. This information will inform how we move forward.

We need to come up with a creative solution to address the parking issue at the Recreation Center and other areas in the Village.

Vicky Brown

1. I am a daily walker/hiker/dogwalker, so I tend to use the lower trails in bad weather or busy days, and get higher up on good weather days and when I have more time. I love these trails and have been walking them – first with my kids, who then switched to their bikes and left me behind and then with my dog(s) and my husband, for decades now! I love how the network has expanded and the new signage clarifying trail types for all users. I am very appreciative of the maintenance work that goes into keeping the trails functioning and safe for all users, year-round.
2. Mountain biking is a great outdoor sport! It is low impact and self-propelled and gets people out into the natural world. I understand that the sport is booming (especially through covid) so we likely need more trails, spread throughout the Valley and trail management so that they can sustain the extra use. I think UROC has done a fabulous job of looking at the Cumberland trail system as a whole and plan strategically for flow and trail and trail head capacity. I think we could also look at the Valley wide trail system in the same way. With the new collaboration with Tourism Vancouver Island in the Valley this would also give them the information they need to manage tourist visits and spread them out through the broader network.

3. I'm in the trails most every day so for me – they are both personally and organizationally important. My heart is in those trails. I believe the forest (and so the trails) are a big part of the reason people live here in the Village and the Valley as a whole.

These trails are also a big part of the reason why we have also become an international destination.

They are an economic driver for our community. So, it is in our interest as a community to advocate for the maintenance and expansion of the trail network across the Valley. There are several ways we can champion them:

- Collaboration with Council – It is extremely helpful to have the positive relationship we do with UROC. As leaders in the community, it is imperative that we understand the network, the demand for expansion and maintenance and the safety and risk factors inherent in the system so that we can support as needed.
- Supporting funding for trail management – Trail building and maintenance is not cheap and needs consistent planning and operational oversight. Currently, the village has a service agreement with UROC so, I would advocate for regular review and renewal of the agreement to ensure it's working effectively. I also appreciate the work UROC has done with the Access Agreement and the renewal of it, this was a long and complicated renewal process and I imagine it was quite stressful and time consuming.

4. Yes. I believe that trails are used by people from all over the Valley and need to be supported regionally.

Aside from local users, they are (as I've said) also an extremely valuable destination tourism asset and should be supported regionally through the tourism service with the support of UROC and the Village.

I would also say that there is a possibility of funding support through the MRDT (Municipal & Regional District Tax Program) and would support this as well.

5. I believe that together, we have created the foundation for a thriving collaboration between the Village and UROC with both staff and Council support. I would continue to support that collaboration. This includes consultation and collaboration on system access and egress and management of the flow through our parks. I would also ensure that UROC and other user groups are included in any parks planning processes. Ensuring that we have ongoing communication around emergent issues is also key to the success of this collaboration. I am committed to honest, thorough and effective communication.

CUMBERLAND COUNCIL CANDIDATES

Troy Therrien

1. I am an intermediate level mountain biker who doesn't get out as often as I should or would like to. I also enjoy the occasional run or hike on the trail network. The Rapture trails and Fuji Jim in the Eastern Bloc are my go-to areas.
2. As a resident of Cumberland, I feel mountain biking should form a big part of our future. It is both an economic driver for the community and a way for our residents to enjoy a healthy lifestyle. I would love to see more trails, and a greater variety of trails for everyone - not just the experts but also for the nervous beginners and everyone in between!
3. The world-class trail network that has been built in Cumberland is certainly a great asset for the community - like I said above, our trails are an economic driver for the valley, supporting many bike shops, bike manufacturers, guides, races directly and many other tourism and service businesses indirectly. They also support our valley residents in developing and maintaining a healthy lifestyle - I've seen such a wide range of people using our trails.
4. Yes. The CVRD is currently implementing a parks service agreement in cooperation with the 3 municipalities, and this will cover the lands in the community forest. I would definitely like to see funding for the rest of the trail network as this is an amenity that is enjoyed by people valley wide. As the trail network grows and demand grows along with it, a sustainable funding model should be based on contributions from all users in some way.
5. UROC should be part of the conversation for any planning that is going to directly or indirectly affect how the trail system is accessed or used. It is important that UROC plans, and Village plans work in harmony. I plan on being a very consultative councilor who will seek opinions from our very knowledgeable community. And when it comes to mountain biking, that's you guys.

Also, I would like to explore additional parking spaces for trail users at Trent River Main. The new manufactured home park is required to have a back entrance on to Trent River Main. Maybe one solution could be to move the gate 200-300 meters past that entrance to create angled parking.

A question for you: Is there somewhere to build more green trails near the bottom of the network? It would be nice to have more easy areas for beginner riders to practice their skills and encourage more people to take up the sport.

Thanks again for the opportunity to respond to your membership.

Jesse Ketler

1. I currently use the trails to escape! Sometimes from the heat of the day, other times from a busy workday into the tranquility of the forest. I find the forest is invaluable for my mental health. On occasion you might find me accompanying one of my children as a parent supervisor for a class trip in the community forest. For the most part, it's just my dog and myself enjoying the high-quality trails.
2. I do support mountain biking and I have for many years. It took Council direction and A LOT of dedicated Village staff time to work with UROC, Mosaic, Manulife and Cumberland Community Forest Society to develop the Memorandum of Understanding and Trail Access Agreement that sanction the use of the trails. Access to the trail network is provided through the Village, and in that way, the municipality contributes

to mountain biking through the maintenance of roads, parking lots and parks. Infrastructure changes were needed to ensure safe trail access, so a bike lane was added to Sutton Rd from the parking lot to the yellow gate. Also, washrooms and a bike wash were added to the CRI parking lot by Coal Valley Estates as an amenity contribution for use of Village land for the pump house.

3. Cumberland trails provide an amazing amenity to the people of the Comox Valley and act as a draw for both new residents and visitors. I have supported, and I will continue to support, the trail network as I feel it is a big part of the quality of life of our residents.
4. Currently the regional funding provided to UROC comes from our Regional Recreation Grant on a year to year basis. This is like the Cumberland Community Grant program that also provides funding to UROC. I would consider providing multi-year funding grants so that there is more certainty and financial security provided to UROC.
5. Village staff should be contacting UROC for input into our plans including Transportation, Parks, Asset Renewal, Tourism as well as Comprehensive Development Agreement proposals from developers. UROC should reciprocate by including the Village in their strategic planning process. With over 80,000 trail users a year it is critically important to have good communication and to coordinate the movement of people through the Village. The Village and UROC need to work strategically together with 4VI, our new tourism contractor, to plan events, manage visitor flow and access tourism funding. I would also like to see us increase the number of access points and parking in other areas so that we can alleviate some of the pressure on the CRI parking lot and Comox Lake Road.

Tanis Frame

<https://tanisframe.wixsite.com/tanisframe>

1. I am an avid mountain biker and use the trail network extensively.
2. I absolutely support mountain biking and have been a Platinum donor to UROC.
3. They are important to all community members and users. The wonderful network of trails provides opportunities for all user types. Being right in our backyard I believe it is important to promote such a great asset for our local village.
4. I would support this absolutely.
5. I believe an integrated collaborative planning committee would be beneficial in working through this. I believe UROC has the most knowledge about how this could work best.

Neil Borecky

1. I use it for mountain biking, mushroom-picking, access to areas further afield, lazy walks with the family, cross country-skiing when we get snow, and general communing with nature. The busy nature of the trails as of late has sent me further afield in recent years in search of solitude.
2. I feel like this is a leading question. I do support mountain biking. I think we should have 2 more bike-wash stations and a bike caddy for the steep sections. All joking aside, I recognize that mountain biking is to Cumberland as surfing is to Tofino. It's been part of an organic branding for the town, bringing both tourism as well as local health benefits to our community. Supporting a community-based organization like UROC is invaluable to local governments as the passion, hard-work, and expertise of volunteer members eclipses anything that the village would be able to support through staff alone. I'm intimately familiar with this from my years on the board of directors at Mount Cain Alpine Park Society.

3. Cumberland is one of those more unique places in that we have developed a 'common' directly adjacent to our village. I would support this both financially in terms of expanding land acquisition, where feasible, continuing support for facilities and signage at facilities at ingress/egress points to the trail system, as well as through supporting local events. I also feel these trails are incredibly important for other user groups in the community, many of whom do not mountain bike, but still enjoy the trails for health and recreational purposes. I appreciate the steps that UROC is undertaking to minimize conflicts through both outreach and improved sightlines. I also applaud UROC for securing such a robust land-use agreement with other landowners, thereby leveraging trails within the village lands.
4. I would support a permanent regional funding stream that perhaps also reflects the diversity of community use. Given that a majority of trail users are from outside of the town itself, it might be appropriate to approach the Regional District to partner with the village in this regard.
5. I would see UROC having a seat at a park planning committee that reflects a diverse group of users. We have similar committees such as the Advisory Planning Commission, Heritage Committee, etc. Forgive me if there currently exists a recreational planning committee but if we don't have one, I feel it merits looking into to give council a second citizens' perspective in order to find successful outcomes for the mountain biking community.

Sean Sullivan

1. I used to ride downhill, but a shoulder injury at work put a kibosh on that. I currently use the network for walking in the lower trail system. I have been threatening to get back up there though!
2. I support mountain biking. Mountain biking will always be a large part of our vibrant active community, long into the future.
3. The Cumberland trail network is a monument to the energy and commitment of UROC staff, its membership, Village staff, and the thousands of hours put in by hundreds of volunteers over the years. It is internationally recognized, an invaluable eco-asset, and a massive draw within the Valley. In 2014, the council championed outdoor recreation by working towards becoming the island's "recreational hub". The trail network certainly achieved that goal! I believe the council and staff have had a positive and supportive working relationship with UROC since that time and continue to improve.
4. I would absolutely support a permanent regional funding system. UROC and the Village have done an exceptional job creating and maintaining a world-class trail system that is enjoyed by a vast array of Valley residents. The Village is not financially capable to support the system on its own and funding needs to come from multiple sources. UROC Membership dues and grants are necessary, and a regional funding system would help to ensure the quality of the trail for years to come.
5. I would invite and encourage UROC to be involved in any and all Parks Master plan conversations. I bet you guys have some bitchin interface ideas!