



In an effort to provide people living with disabilities in the Victoria area some insight into what candidates for Victoria City Council would do regarding disability issues if elected on October 15, the Victoria Disability Resource Centre (VDRC) posed a series of three questions related to disability issues to all eight candidates for mayor and 37 candidates for councilor.

The questions were designed to not only elicit information from the candidates, but to bring awareness to them about the systemic disability issues that exist in our city.

We want to thank those candidates who were able to provide answers to these questions.

The VDRC encourages everyone to vote. For more information about the accessibility of voting in this municipal election, go to the City of Victoria's webpage here:

<https://www.victoria.ca/EN/main/city/local-government-election/information-for-voters.html> or contact us at 250-595-0044 or at reception@drcvictoria.com.

Here are the questions that were asked:

Question 1. Many people with disabilities live on fixed incomes. Persons With Disabilities assistance from the provincial government includes a shelter portion of only \$375 per month. BC Housing has a waitlist of potentially nine years (priority is given to families with children or those without housing). If elected, what would you do to create a more livable, affordable city for PWD recipients?

Question 2. The city has an Accessibility Advisory Committee that provides feedback to city council and staff on a range of city initiatives, programs and services through an accessibility lens. If elected, how would you involve the Accessibility Advisory Committee in city planning?

Question 3. In 2020, the city introduced the Accessibility Framework to proactively remove and prevent barriers in the community for those with disabilities. If elected, how do you see your role on council in influencing accessibility and inclusiveness throughout the community?

****The answers to all questions below have been edited for formatting purposes only and are otherwise unedited and appear below as they were sent to us. The candidates for mayor are listed first, in alphabetical order, followed next by the candidates for councilor, again in alphabetical order.*

Candidates for Mayor (two respondents)

1. [David Arthur Johnston](#)
2. [Michelle Wiboltt](#)

David Arthur Johnston

Answer 1: As Mayor of Victoria I will be working to end the addiction epidemic outright (might take a couple years... Please see my platform on my campaign page (<https://www.facebook.com/DAJ4Mayor>) which, in turn, will make tent-cities tenable (it can only be done by a pragmatic hippy that does not have the capacity to hate). Though, I'm not suggesting all people with disabilities could take advantage of them a significant portion of the population will (guessing 10%+) leaving landlords with a need to lesson rents across the board as incentive.

Answer 2: Everything built by the city will take into account full access (though, I'm guessing that is mostly the case already). Every development proposed, if it gets through my almost arbitrary denial of more condominiums and the like, will require maximum accessibility.

Answer 3: Firstly, in general, the tyrannically imposed addiction epidemic consequence of the ocean of anxiety engulfing all of outside will be removed. So, in that rareness those with anxiety-based traumas will have an easier time. Beyond that, mayhaps (not promising, but just thinking now) a wheelchair accessible boardwalk lining the beach from Cook down to Clover Point.

Mayhaps City Hall also needs a large hanging embroidery displaying all the means of personal transport to always remind us of the great diversity.

I appreciate the chance to answer your questions.

Michelle Wiboltt

Answer 1: I'm on disability. I more than understanding. Bailiff threw me out of my market rental in Esquimalt, couldn't keep affording the \$1440 a month, pandemonium. Where was there for me? Only the lowest barrier "wet shelter" in the city, I'm not wet so, yeah, learned that completely inhumane. The staff doing best they could we, what? 60 severe trauma, drug using

residents and a building with shared rooms filled with cot's. So, yeah, hideous. "POD villages" is the solution I like. Also, tax religious buildings same as any other business, over 70 in Victoria and if congregations can't pay their taxes, government gets land back, gifting to first's and if used for low income housing first people keeping the "property freeze" nominal, compared to what churches currently pay, nasal. More idea, differently/bettering ideas, duets telling?

Answer 2: The accessibility group's very important cause my "social experience", new world's, No more divisive sports groups rather, each groups comprising everyone, old and fat/young and fit/whatever everyone is, team. Imagine, a football field with me, 55 overweight smoker:) an older grannie, a disabled, a 5 year's old, a completely femmes males? Just a wonderful colourful group who reinventing to accommodate? Fun, I think. Want to see new pathway's, lane for walkers, another one for 4 wheel scooters and another lane for the 2 wheel standings. How? Taking a lane of trafficking :) having train reinstated, inclusiveness being key. Due note: "big" new worlds ideas need supports so, only if other's same mind, this is the challenge...

Answer 3: Answers aboveboard...

Candidates for Council (eleven respondents)

1. [Riga Godron](#)
2. [Stephen Hammond](#)
3. [Sandy Janzen](#)
4. [Jason Jones](#)
5. [Susan Kim](#)
6. [Anna King](#)
7. [Jeremy Maddock](#)
8. [Derek Pinto](#)
9. [William Scott](#)
10. [Susan Simmons](#)
11. [Dave Thompson](#)

Riga Godron

Answer 1: The city of Victoria currently has a housing trust and the CRD provides housing, although the city tries to legislate housing through amenity capture at the time of development, in order to actually get housing built that is designated to be allocated for PWD recipients the city of Victoria needs to be the property owner, developer, and property manager, thus allowing for

publicly funded affordable housing to be fully and efficiently processed right from the initial zoning stages right to tenant occupation.

Answer 2: Right now the city of Victoria has 12 advisory committees, and while there is some belief by some segments of the population that tokenistic representation leads to better informed policy: having individuals with lived experience of the realities of living with disabilities, poverty, racial oppression, sexual orientation marginalization, etcetera at the council table is the only true way to move the agenda forward and actually get the ball of systemic change and paradigm shift rolling.

Answer 3: In order to enact change you have to be aware that something needs to be changed. As a person living with invisible disability I am able to see what needs to change and be a voice on council to advocate for improvements that would benefit many in the disability community.

Stephen Hammond

Answer 1: I am vice-chair of the Gorge View [Housing] Society, providing truly affordable housing for seniors, a number of them with disabilities. I am personally committed to the cause, and professionally where I educate/lecture Canadian employers regarding human rights, including the rights of persons with disabilities. I will gladly take this knowledge into Victoria City Council, where I am acutely aware that we have a significant population with disabilities. We have an aging population and I've known from my work that the older we get, the greater chance we will have a disability. Since the City has already given the "fast track" for non-profit affordable housing, and David Eby's pronouncement this week that his government will give more money for non-profit housing, I will support the City's process for further truly "affordable housing". At all times, I will ensure there is sufficient affordable housing for persons with disabilities.

Answer 2: The city has an Accessibility Advisory Committee that provides feedback to city council and: staff on a range of city initiatives, programs and services through an accessibility lens. If elected, how would you involve the Accessibility Advisory Committee in city planning?

Through the recent MNP report, I have become aware that there can be silos within the City. While the job of City Council is not to run the city, but to ensure the City is run well (quote by the late Victoria Councillor Frank Carson), I will want City staff to incorporate recommendations from the Accessibility Advisory Committee. I will want to re-read the MNP report to consider their recommendations, along with the recommendations of others, to see how best to ensure the needs of persons with disabilities are considered in all aspects of planning, and not just an "add on" or "other" consideration. Persons with disabilities make up a large percentage of our population...as you've pointed out.

Answer3: I will be active in giving policy direction and in asking important questions of City staff regarding accessibility and inclusiveness throughout our City.

Sandy Janzen

Answer 1: This is not acceptable, at all. BC Housing has really dropped the ball, and the existing city council has failed to show any creativity in finding feasible solutions. One possible solution I would support is the suggestion that the city introduce a housing subsidy that is attached to the person with a disability, instead of being attached to the housing unit. The big benefit of a program like this is that it would give people with disabilities many more options to choose where they live and what those accommodations are like. I know we can find other solutions. If elected I will work with council to make housing solutions for people living with disabilities a priority.

Answer 2: The proper time to consider accessibility issues is at the very beginning of the planning process, not after something has already been designed and initiated. City council should be making accessibility reviews performed by the Accessibility Advisory Council (AAC) a priority. The planning department can and should be consulting with the AAC at the earliest possible stages of any new initiatives and development plans. This not only will ensure that accessibility is important consideration early on, but it will also save money from having to later backtrack and fix costly mistakes when something is found to be inaccessible.

When specific expertise is needed, we typically look to experts for advice. The AAC are our experts providing accessibility related advice. If elected I will work hard to make sure that city council listens well to that advice and follows through on recommendations.

One more thing, I also think that the Chair of the AAC must be occupied by a person who has a disability.

It does not make sense for an able-bodied person to be Chair. Optics are important.

Answer 3: The Accessibility Framework is a great start to moving us in the direction we need to go. From my perspective, one of the biggest issues holding us back from making more progress is a generalized lack of awareness about the prevalence of disability in society. Few people know that the disabled community is the largest single minority group in the world, or that about 1 in 4

people are living with at least one disability. Exclusion is a huge issue that so many do not well understand.

If people do not have good awareness about disability or related accessibility issues, they are less likely to support initiatives to make improvements. If am elected, I will introduce an initiative to promote an accessibility education and awareness program to help people, business owners and developers gain a much better understanding of the significance of this issue. I believe that people do care and will better support the Accessibility Framework and goals if they better understand the ‘why’ behind it all.

Jason Jones

Answer 1: I'll petition the province on the behalf of Victoria PWD recipients for a higher shelter payment rate, along with pushing for renovating a good number of these downtown empty office spaces into residents, we need to realize and understand many people that are working from home will not return. So time to start changing those into housing.

Answer 2: I would offer the AAC a personal invitation to every VIVA open house, as our councillors plan to host twice a month meetings to hear from groups and residents in open mic style with minutes taken discussions, on top of the weekly council meetings. As for the staff I would encourage them to work with the AAC to make a stronger community.

Answer 3 My role would be the voice that's missed in decisions made by the present City Hall, like Clover Point and the new off leash fencing at Dallas rd. Both had no thought for accessibility and inclusiveness in their planning.

Susan Kim

Answer 1: I unabashedly call PWD “legislated poverty” and was pleased to sign the Accessible Housing Pledge. First off, I would lobby the province to raise disability rates to *at least* the poverty line, increase the shelter rate and push the federal government to follow through on the disability benefit, as well as a Canadian Accessibility Act. The city can also use rent banks, bursaries, subsidies and supplemental funds to keep people housed.

According to the 2020 Housing Needs Assessment for Victoria, “as of 2016, 36% of renter households and 8% of owner households with at least one person with a disability were in Core Housing Need, compared to 26% of renter households and 6% of owner households without anyone with a disability. As of 2020, there are 230 people with disabilities on BC Housing’s waitlist seeking non-market housing in Victoria, in addition to 51 households requiring wheelchair accessible units.”

The city must prioritize developments that address this and meet particular accessible designs for doorways, hallways, bathrooms, kitchens, floor plans and ramps. Since there are a variety of accessibility needs, this housing should be flexible and adaptable. We can also work with the province to make the BC Building Code safe, inclusive and accessible.

Other things the municipality can do include hiring a team of housing advocates and caseworkers to bridge local property management companies, property managers and landlords with provincial caseworkers and residents in need. Additionally, I would explore incentives and tax rebates to improve accessibility for public and private housing and a possible design challenge to developers for innovative and affordable housing designs.

The city also needs to protect current renters with disabilities. To do this, I will amend the current Tenant Assistance Policy to protect renters from demoviction and renoeviction with a right of first refusal to return to homes at the same rent; lobby the province to limit rent increases in between tenancies; maintain the quality, safety and liveability of rentals by actively inspecting and issuing enforceable work orders to landlords in non-compliance of Victoria's Standards of Maintenance bylaw; direct Victoria police to intervene when landlords illegally lock out tenants; and explore a maximum temperature bylaw or regulation in rental units to complement existing minimum temperature regulations.

Answer 2: Following the imperative of "nothing about us without us," I would involve the committee in planning for active transportation options and housing programs and incentives. Instead of just seeking input to plans already made, I would encourage the committee to proactively suggest infrastructure upgrades and programs and services the city could pursue.

It's important to ensure we're hearing from community members who have a harder time engaging with city hall, including younger people, busy families and newcomers. For membership, I would make sure the committee represents a wide age range, from youth to seniors, and those of different economic and cultural backgrounds.

The committee should also be involved in emergency planning and around climate resiliency, such as my platform plan to create an up-to-date extreme weather event and preparedness plan that includes more cooling and warming centres and ways for seniors and those with disabilities to access these spaces. I would also seek input on how we can create more equal access to public and green spaces like the ramp access and summer mobility mat at Ross Bay.

Answer 3: It's important to collaborate the city's efforts to prevent and remove barriers in our community by working with the provincial parliamentary secretary for accessibility and the new federal chief accessibility officer.

The 2020 Accessibility Framework provided tangible recommendations that Victoria has started to implement. That work needs to be carried forward. The City has already begun work to upgrade transit shelters and dedicated loading zones for accessibility support vehicles such as HandiDART buses. By working with the transit commission I hope to extend the accessibility of our public transportation system to explore initiatives such as the installation of reader boards on buses to help those with hearing impairments. I would also like to see accessibility measures in our green spaces, for example wheelchair-accessible planting beds in community gardens and a selection list for low-allergen plantings.

We create accessibility throughout the community by making sure everyone can access all parts of the community. I will expand the city's free transit initiative to low-income households and seniors as the next step towards universal, fare-free transit, while also pushing for improved service. I will also push to create more and better accessible pedestrian sidewalks and road crossings and to expand and improve the city's All Ages and Abilities cycling and rolling network, welcoming use by other wheels including wheelchairs and mobility aids.

Anna King

Answer 1: I think that it's absolutely imperative that we take care of Persons With Disabilities (PWD). It's unacceptable that the BC Housing waitlist is 9 years. I believe we need to be building more suites suitable for PWD. We can include accessible suites by allowing bonus density in new buildings and specifically requiring a certain amount of units of % of units to be accessible and affordable. The municipality may also use funds allocated to community amenities to create accessible and affordable suites for those with disabilities. Further, we need to advocate for increased subsidies from the provincial government on behalf of Victoria residents as the cost of housing is extremely high and \$375 a month is not enough to help. Lastly, using City-owned land to create more accessible and affordable suites is also something we need to consider and act on.

Answer 2: We live in an ableist world. We need everything to be safe for children and those with accessibility challenges. If we design for PWD, the city would be safe and accessible to everyone. An accessibility lens needs to be used for designing playgrounds to ensure children with disabilities can simply be children. We need to consider accessibility in public pools, bike lanes, roadside safety and visibility, park usage and more. Daily tasks cannot be obstructed. We need to consider accessibility in all things and remove barriers as often as possible. I hope that the Accessibility Advisory Committee consists of paid appointments because those with disabilities are the experts in these areas and City Council ought to value your time and live-experiences accordingly.

Answer 3: As a person who has a disability myself, it is on my heart to be inclusive of all in our community and bring down barriers where we see them. I think preventing barriers to begin with is key. The onus is not on PWD to speak up about each barrier and do the work for the City, but rather the responsibility is on the city planners, the council, and engineers to make something accessible to begin with. Hence, I believe, the Accessibility Framework should be applied in all circumstances.

Jeremy Maddock

Answer 1: For persons with disabilities, the issue of housing is two-pronged: not only must be housing be affordable to a person of modest means; housing must also be accessible to a person of modest means who lives with a disability.

On the first prong, housing can be made more affordable by facilitating creative new forms of housing within the context of existing neighbourhoods. We should remove regulatory barriers to secondary suites and tiny homes, while providing meaningful tax relief to homeowners who create new housing units at a rate that low-income people can afford. Furthermore, Airbnb rentals should be subject to a revenue-neutral sales tax, with proceeds earmarked to incentivize the creation of affordable housing and/or subsidize the rents of low-income tenants, perhaps with priority for persons living with disabilities.

On the second prong, incentives to create new housing should be designed to ensure a sustainable supply of accessible housing. Developers and homeowners who build secondary suites should be told about the optional building code CSA-B651, which significantly enhances accessibility. Where the physical location is conducive to accessible housing, additional incentives should be provided to build new units to this standard.

Answer 2: Accessibility Advisory Committee: The Accessibility Advisory Committee (“AAC”) should have a broad mandate to provide feedback on all matters before Council, and should be given an opportunity to do so as early as possible in the planning process. When recommendations are made by the AAC, care should be taken to either implement them, or respond in a way that gives rise to constructive dialogue. Members of the AAC must not only be heard, but must know that they are heard, which will incentive more volunteers to fill this important role.

In order to be representative, the AAC should be chaired by a person who lives with a disability. Chairing the AAC should be a dedicated part-time position with the City, as opposed to a volunteer role.

Design changes to roads and parks should always be reviewed by the AAC. The current design of cycling infrastructure, which requires blind people to walk across a two-way bike lane in order to access certain bus stops, is a classic example of a policy on which the AAC should have had more input. The closure of roads and parking at Beacon Hill Park and Clover Point have also given rise to serious accessibility issues, on which residents with disabilities were not adequately consulted.

Answer 3: City Council must keep the disability community in mind when making decisions, and to ensure this mindfulness is apparent in the decisions made. At the same time, it must be remembered that not all systemic problems can be solved by government. It is therefore essential for Council to show leadership in promoting education and awareness of disability issues among the general public.

In terms of built environment, Council should ensure that roads and sidewalks are accessible to all who need them, whether they walk, drive, cycle, or use a mobility scooter.

In terms of governance and services, our commitment to accessibility must go further than ensuring physical access to City Hall. For example, livestreams of City Council meetings should be closed-captioned, so that those with hearing disabilities can fully participate.

As for capacity and collaboration, it is essential to set the right incentives (through the tax system or otherwise) for private entities in the City to have accessibility policies that ensure the duty to accommodate is honoured.

Derek Pinto

Answer 1: Housing stock and affordability is a priority issue for so many of us, including myself. I want to increase housing stock, and one of the differing ways to do that is by making the rezoning and permit process more expedient, therefore making it a more attractive and viable option. With increased stock there is less competition, therefore driving rents down. The same applies for increasing stock for those with differing disabilities, and needs to include missing middle homes that have suites with ease of access for those using walkers or in wheelchairs, or at the very least, adequate space to build a safely sloped ramp or entryway. The city in general needs to be more accessible as well. My wife works with individuals, some of whom are in wheelchairs, and she will often comment that she would not be able to push an individual in a

wheelchair down such and such street because the hedges are too overgrown, making the sidewalk too narrow, or garbage and compost bins are left in the middle of sidewalks, etc. Individuals need to aware that blocking off portions of the sidewalks, make getting around so much more difficult for certain members of our city.

Answer 2: The Accessibility Advisory Committee needs to be consulted with regards to some of the finer details involved in city planning. "Able" bodied individuals often do not understand the particulars involved for some individuals that may not be able to move as fast, see up as high (eyeline is different for those in wheelchairs), curb transitions, ramp widths, sidewalk and aisle widths, etc.

Answer 3: The city of Victoria is meant to be place where all individuals can be involved and have access to all that the city has to offer. If a space open to the public is not accessible to all individuals, I want to know why. We are in 2022, and there are few, if any, good reasons why a space cannot accomodate all modes of movement.

William Scott

Answer 1: My main platform position when viewed with an accessibility lens are vital to the City's response to PWD needs and the barriers they face (votewilliamscott.ca).

We need measures to reduce the severe uncertainty felt by very-low to moderate income renters, be they seniors, working families, PWD, or students, as they face real possibilities of renovation, demoviction and homelessness. Improved tenancy protection at the provincial level is required.

We can get more rentals out of the existing housing stock through incentivizing house conversions with accessibility requirements, and through enacting Residential Rental Tenure zones (rezoning land for rental housing only). Most of our existing multi-unit rental buildings need this protection to prevent them from being destroyed and turned into concrete, luxury condos.

Vacancy control to limit the rent increases between tenants, coupled with specific renovation grants applicable only to the landlords providing truly affordable rental stock, should be enacted.

AirBnb's should be put back into the rental market ((possible options to consider could be capping numbers, banning them outright, restricting them to involved owner occupiers, mandating that they act as emergency relief (be it a low rental situation or earthquake event) and loss of the AirBnb status if the property changes hands.)

The replacement of smaller single-family homes with mansions can be made far more difficult by regulating size limits on new single family homes. Much of Victoria's rental stock is in older homes with suites (67% of neighbourhoods are rental already). We must act to get retrofit grants available to landlords to make more of our existing stock truly accessible.

I agree with BCGEU local government policy statements 1-7 in their report, Affordable BC: What Can Local governments Do? (August 1, 2018) and to their key measures for the provincial governments can do. It is four years since this report was released and precious little has been accomplished. Since this reports release, developers have been allowed to up zone parking lots and remove buildings in the downtown core without providing greenspace or services (public washrooms for PWD access for example). Unfortunately BCGEU lately is putting their support behind MMIH blanket rezoning, which puzzles me greatly.

Developer-driven densification is making things worse not better for low-income people with disabilities. Steel and concrete towers for wealthy investors or retirees from elsewhere contribute massively to our carbon footprint. We cannot talk about sustainability without considering our carrying capacity and serving the needs of locals first, including a major focus on PWD.

Instead of greenwashed planning to gentrify and densify everywhere in the city, and instead of pitting at-risk renters and local home buyers against existing middle class single-family home owners, we need to mobilize the entire citizenry to put pressure on the federal and provincial governments. They are fundamentally responsible for the housing crisis and we need them to help provide the accessible housing, rental protection, existing-rental retrofits for PWD we need, where we need them.

The Victoria Housing Strategy identifies the need for "two and three bedroom units close to schools for families earning moderate or lower incomes," so accessible Co-op housing and multi-unit buildings based on median income should be our first priority.

Livability in a climate crisis is dependent upon protecting and enhancing our ecosystems, including the vital tree canopy. Rules as they exist for protecting urban shade trees by the City are more PR than actual protection. For very low-moderate income people in poorly ventilated housing in a heat crisis they can be life savers

PWD accessibility, community gardens, pollinator pathways along bike paths and or all streets, and back yard biodiversity are vital to the health and well being of all the city's inhabitants. The AAA cycling network is crucial to the connection of neighbourhoods with the wider community and region. It requires continued effort to ensure safety, accessibility, and integration with the transit network. Many of the concrete sidewalks (high carbon footprints) are canted towards the street and some driveways have a significant grade, making the danger of flipping higher specially with powerful chairs and they also make walking and talking together impossible.

Ecological restoration as part of city planning is a form of respect and reconciliation. The Songhees and Esquimalt peoples, as with all First Nations, have a wider concept of home than does the City's Development Services. Home is conceived as "the relationships which connect a person to all that surrounds them," including people, plants, animals, insects and the land as a "place to connect with family, community, ancestors and all of creation."

Over-densification for luxury condos and developments are dangerous. The pandemic and heat dome have demonstrated the importance of public green space and for urban trees. Such gentrification results in the loss of affordable rentals, neighbourhood uniqueness, and green space. It also places immediate stress upon city services and health care, exacerbating our crime and mental health problems. There are limits to growth and there is such a thing as carrying capacity in terms of food, water, energy, waste disposal and effective city services for all. Especially dangerous is the increased demand on an already floundering health care system, where existing locals, including PWD, health needs are being neglected or delayed to the point that people are unnecessarily suffering, if not dying, from delayed or lack of proper care.

Susan Branford local author in her book "Fake it So Real" aptly states, "people experience paradise on the backs of others," and I believe this applies to very low income PWD.

Answer 2: First, It would be natural for me to bring the lenses of real empathy, my lived experience, and my range of skills to the committee's table I was a teacher for 33 years, teaching thousands of younger students and adult learners over my career. One of my first full time jobs as a teacher was in the Nisga'a village of New Aiyansh for two years and then Prince Rupert for another two years. I would bring my training and experience as a hospital orderly (from most departments extended care to the urology) and as a First Aid attendant in schools as well. In my role as a junior secondary and senior sciences teacher, I have had students in my class with a wide range of visible and invisible disabilities. Some that come to mind include cerebral palsy, muscular dystrophy, partial paralysis, requiring wheel chair access, alcohol-fetal syndrome, severe deafness, blind, ADD, OCD, and mental health conditions. Each individual required unique accommodations and often what we could do was not enough. For example, the physical space in the science labs were not built with wheel chair access and technology for the hard of hearing was primitive and made random noises, which were disruptive and embarrassing for the student.

Technology, science and society have changed, but the innovative and practical solutions that exist need to be fully implemented to remove barriers and allow the skills and abilities of PWD to flourish.

Answer 3: I see myself supporting all 9 purposes of AAC, my eye for detail and ability to point out incongruities in policy have been honed by years of work on school, district and provincial level curriculum design and implementation. I would therefore see myself specifically

useful and an advocate for AAC's purpose statements (specifically in 2-4, and 7-9) as stated on the City website.

Understanding and working with people with polar opposite views is also essential, and I have had a good deal of experience with that. I am comfortable with heated discussions and I get calmer doing so. For example, one of the reasons I was asked by the superintendent of Saanich (SD 63) to create their first WHMIS implementation plan was that I had gone above my principals head (after a heated disagreement) to argue for the correct storage of chemicals and for shut off valves to in-classroom student gas supply. It also helped to have experience and training in teaching senior Chemistry. I have done similar things during my career which are always difficult to engage in.

One thing that I think should be undertaken by the City is annual large and small events celebrating the abilities of local (Joe Coughlin comes to mind) and national PWD (art, culture, music, dance, drama, sport, paralympics etc), and the relevant NGO's and universities experts, and sport medicine/physiotherapy experts. A larger event could also focus on raising awareness for what has been achieved and what needs to be done, combined with fund-raising, requiring public speaking from notable PWD, accessibility experts and provincial politicians to the local MP.

All of what I say above has to be taken with a large grain of salt. What I do know is tiny compared to what I don't know. A. L. Mencken said, "For every complex problem there is an answer that is clear, simple and wrong. I am reasonably intelligent, but I have fallen for simple answers before. There often have unintended consequences for anything we propose. Dialogue with a wide range of people with different political views, including those with expertise within the area of concern (AAC and individuals with invisible and visible disabilities in this case) is very valuable and I will continue to take this approach as Councillor.

Better solutions to the complex problems facing PWD in this city are truly achievable.

Susan Simmons

Answer 1: As a City Councillor I would work to build a strong relationship with both the Provincial Government and the private sector. It is important they have a clear understanding of the needs. We also need someone with a disability at the table. I am that person.

I coach Special Olympic athletes. A number of them live in assisted living communities. I would work to increase the number of assisted living facilities in Victoria.

For those who are live independently I would like to see tax or other incentives given to those who provide residence for PWDs. I would be keen to meet with members of the community to

explore options for co-ops, suites within homes, carriage houses, tiny homes and other alternative lodging. I believe we can make the permitting process easier for those who are providing homes to PWDs.

PWDs are my priority. I feel PWDs have not had a voice at city hall for a long time.

Answer 2: The Accessibility Advisory Committee has come up with some great ideas, but sadly has no official power. I would take the actions proposed by the committee and ask the Mayor and Council to commit in writing to each of the items identified. I recognize that some have been addressed, but I feel we can do better.

I want us to go from a committee that provides feedback to one that influences and has a seat at the table. If you elect me, you will, and plan to bring the disability lens to all decisions.

Answer 3: I would like to be the person who brings accessibility and inclusion forward at the council table as often as possible. I would also like to work on community education programs with other PWDs. I have found as an advocate that rich story telling, and sharing ones life experience, often brings people to a place of understanding. Many non-PWDs do not understand what it is like to live with a disability and the barriers that are placed in front of us. I would like to share more of these stories, as often as possible, so people gain more understanding and approach community design with us in mind.

My website is www.susansimmonsforcouncil.ca

Dave Thompson

Answer 1: People on disability social assistance are over represented in homelessness and in housing insecurity. We need to make affordable housing far more available, including purpose-built rental. We will need to attract provincial and federal dollars that are starting to flow to support a deeply affordable housing. To do that, we need to ensure that the Rapid Deployment of Affordable Housing and Villages & Corridors initiatives are succeeding. So within the first year I would want to see regular staff reports indicating that we have received many applications, and in subsequent years that the actual construction numbers increase, including in areas rollable/walkable from transit stops (not just polluted arterials). If we don't see those significant increases in applications and construction, then we need to adjust the policy.

See also my letters to Council: <https://tinyurl.com/3xtjm76e> and <https://tinyurl.com/3ybxth9t>

We also need to dramatically scale up property acquisition for deeply affordable housing - financed, for example, through tax increments from approving more homes generally to expand the tax base.

We also need to join other municipalities and a union of BC municipalities in advocating for more increases to the shelter amount.

Answer 2: I would involve the committee in several ways.

First is our highest planning document, the Official Community Plan (OCP). Council should develop a new OCP that is inclusive, and makes inclusion a key element for all lower level plans. The Committee should be invited to participate in developing the new OCP, as well as lower level plans.

Council should require that staff report regularly on inclusion and steps staff have taken to ensure consideration of accessibility whenever bringing forward a new lower level plan.

The City needs to develop a checklist of considerations that developers need to include in their plans and proposals, including accessibility.

Answer 3: We need to build neighbourhoods that are inclusive, with local amenities that are accessible to all and we need to continue to work on inclusion of people with diverse abilities in our governance, city staff, local workforce and our communities. Engagement with individuals and organizations representing diverse abilities is important in the planning stages. I will continue the work the City has started with the Accessibility Framework, across governance, capacity and collaboration and the built environment, and will continue to support and work with the Accessibility Advisory Committee.