

2SLGBTQIA+ Questionnaire for Waterloo Region Municipal Candidates

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Do you identify as a member of a 2SLGBTQIA+ community?

No

What role are you running for?

Kitchener City Council

What do you believe are the most critical issues for the local 2SLGBTQIA+ community? If elected, how would you work with the local community to address these issues?

(Just want to start by saying "thank you" for this survey!)

Most critical issues:

- bigotry and barriers faced in everyday personal and work life.
- mental health issues/depression related to the above and the general lack of supports.

Have you ever participated in 2SLGBTQIA+ Cultural Competency Training?

Not yet... but being implemented at the City.

Systemic homophobia, biphobia, and transphobia are still prevalent in our community, resulting in significant socioeconomic disparities within 2SLGBTQIA+ communities. If elected, how will you combat homophobia, biphobia, and transphobia?

As the incumbent, we have already made Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion a cornerstone of our governance. We were the first locally to approve an EDI staff team in 2020 (5 members). We approved our Equity/Inclusion policy in 2021 which includes formal training, data collection, and transparency there-in. And we formed a new Equity/Anti-racism committee with paid members to advise staff & council going forward.

If elected, how would you address the ongoing issues of homelessness and mental health, especially as they disproportionately affect members of the 2SLGBTQIA+ community?

Homelessness and mental health are the jurisdiction of the Regional Government (with, some funding, albeit inadequate, from the Province). At my city-level we're only supposed to be supportive, but we've been much more. A Better Tent City would not exist without our involvement and donation (on city land to this day). We've donated \$2M+ worth of land on Blockline where a supportive building (housing 41) now sits... and in our Economic development plan we have about \$15M more planned to create affordable housing. We have also approved items like fee-waivers for affordable housing and backyard tiny-homes as lack of supply is a key factor in homelessness.

Do you agree with the statement that "trans rights are human rights, and must be protected as such?"

Yes

What is one motion would you bring to council that you think will improve the lives of specifically queer people, racialized individuals and/or marginalized residents and why?

In my experience, I've found motions brought forward by politicians to be somewhat superficial compared to the more comprehensive recommendations & actions brought forward by professional staff on advice from stakeholders. As I do not identify as 2SLGBTQIA+, in this instance, I would look forward to supporting items brought forward by our Equity staff team and our new EDI Committee that has the lived-experience required.

When thinking about our schools, do you agree that 2SLGBTQIA+ representation in books and lessons is critical at all grade levels? How would you support 2SLGBTQIA+ students in schools?

I believe 2SLGBTQIA+ representation is critical in our education system to encourage open minds, overcome ignorance, and to support those that have been traditionally unsupported. The "how" and "when" shouldn't be a decision of politicians but that of professional educators who develop curriculum and better understand childhood development and ability to grasp concepts.