

Mayor and Councillor Candidate Questionnaire

This questionnaire is prepared on behalf of 2SLGBTQ+ voters in Kelowna based on community input regarding issues that are important to them regarding the October 2022 election. All candidates for mayor and council are invited to complete the questionnaire. Results will be published on Advocacy Canada's website as well as on social media. In the spirit of transparency, results will include a mention of any candidates who do not complete the questionnaire.

The deadline for completion is September 30, 2022. Thank you in advance for your response.

Email *

colinbasrancampaign@gmail.com

Your First and Last Name *

Colin Basran

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

There are several critical issues our local 2SLGBTQ+ community are faced with. Intolerance and discrimination still exists in Kelowna, making it difficult for the 2SLGBTQ+ community to openly and freely be who they were born to be. This is why it is important for the City to make sure public spaces are free from hate and are safe places that promote diversity, inclusion and acceptance. There is also a lack of housing and supports for mental health and these are issues we need to work collaboratively with the Provincial government on to help address and there is some good work happening on both those fronts. We also need to make sure the youth of our 2SLGBTQ+ community are given access to supports and that we advocate to the Ministry of Education and local school board to make sure our education system can provide a safe learning environment.

Homophobia, biphobia, and transphobia are still prevalent in Kelowna, resulting in significant socio-economic disparities within 2SLGBTQ+ communities. If elected, how will you combat homophobia, biphobia, and transphobia? *

Combatting homophobia, biphobia and transphobia starts with leading by example. It means being a true and genuine ally all the time, not just the few weeks leading up to an election. I have been proudly promoting, supporting and attending 2SLGBTQ+ events since before I was Mayor. Installing rainbow crosswalks, hosting the Sugar Plum Ball and being named Grand Marshall of the annual Pride Parade are some of my proudest moments as your Mayor. I would like to look at ways for the City to help with the creation of more 2SLGBTQ+ events through possible grant funding opportunities. Advocacy to higher levels of government is also important, as we did by writing a letter to the Federal government offering City Council's support to ban conversion therapy. As an organization, we must also continue to offer training and education to City of Kelowna staff regarding stigma reduction and ensure our partners like the RCMP are doing the same.

Have you ever participated in 2SLGBTQ+ cultural competency or equivalent training? *

I'm sorry to say that this is actually the first I've ever heard of it. I consider myself a strong ally of the 2SLGBTQ+ community but I would absolutely be open to participating in such training.

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

More than 300 homeless individuals in Kelowna have been housed over the course of this term through supportive housing, but there is still much more work to be done. This is a very difficult situation to deal with because most Kelowna residents agree that everyone deserves a home, but not everyone agrees where those homes should be located. As an elected official, this is an incredibly difficult decision that requires strong leadership in order to make progress. Making decisions for the betterment of the community means you can't make everyone happy. Although hundreds of people have been housed, when walking through some parts of our city it appears that little to no progress has been made. This is because those on our streets with the most complex trauma, mental health and addiction issues still remain on our streets. That's because they are often a harm to themselves and to others and the level of health supports they need is not offered in existing supportive housing projects. This is what motivated City Council and the BC Urban Mayor's Caucus (a group of Mayors from BC's 13 largest cities which I Co-Chair) to lobby for Complex Care Housing. This housing would provide intensive, 24/7 care and supports for these individuals and will help keep our community safer by keeping them off our streets. It also keeps those needing complex care out of our hospital resulting in fewer interactions with the RCMP. Thanks to this advocacy work, I am proud to say that 20 complex care spaces have recently been announced for Kelowna through partnership with the Provincial Government and the Interior Health Authority. While this is a good start, I look forward to continued advocacy work to see more supportive, complex care and rehabilitation spaces provided in Kelowna and the surrounding municipalities. I also want to thank the incredible service providers and healthcare professionals who are doing their best to help our vulnerable residents. We must be mindful that finding skilled and knowledgeable healthcare workers and service providers is becoming tougher as they are in short supply which will also have an impact on how quickly these solutions can be implemented. The City of Kelowna's homelessness strategy 'Journey Home' is up for review in this next term and including members of our 2SLGBTQ+ community in any potential updates or revisions of the plan will also be important. Advocating for more space, resources and funding for incredible organizations providing services to our youth for mental health like the Foundry and Child Advocacy Centre will also be important moving forward to prevent our young people from ending up on our streets once they age out of support programs.

If elected, how would you address issues impacting 2SLGBTQ+ seniors, particularly with regard to affordable housing? *

As the fastest growing City in Canada, it is becoming harder for people to find a place to live and the cost of a home for purchase or rent is becoming out of reach for many and is also inhibiting businesses ability to attract and retain talent. One important factor City Council has direct control over to help with housing affordability is through the supply and creation of more housing of all types as set out in our Healthy Housing Strategy. High rise condo towers get a lot of attention, however, it is not my intention to have everyone live in a condo. We need to continue to do what we can to create diverse housing options for all of our residents, including 2SLGBTQ+ seniors... supportive housing, subsidized housing, market rental and for purchase homes at various rental rates and purchase prices. We have had tremendous success with the building of purpose built rental housing which has been encouraged through our City of Kelowna rental housing grants. We also have the Housing Opportunities Reserve Fund which we utilize to purchase property in order to partner with BC Housing for much needed social and below market rental projects. I would support increasing the amount of this reserve fund in order for us to purchase more properties for such partnerships including for projects specifically for 2SLGBTQ+ seniors. We have a strong relationship with BC Housing as evidenced by its significant investments in our community over the past four years. While not always popular, more homes have been built in Kelowna than ever before under my leadership and I will continue to make sure the right supply for those who need it, is built in the appropriate places so that all of you can find a place to call home in our beautiful community.

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

☒ Yes

☐ No

If elected, would you support funding for 2SLGBTQ+ community and social services? *

☒ Yes

☐ No

This form was created inside advocacy-canada.lgbt.

Google Forms