

Kingston Labour Council Survey

1. If successful, what would be your three priorities for your district and our city?

I want to see Kingston maximize our social, environmental and economic potential by promoting cooperation, creativity and compassion in Council's behaviour and policies.

Cooperation between staff and councillors for the strongest evidenced based policy; between districts for deeper unity across boundaries; between neighbourhoods for greater sense of place; between neighbours for right relationships; and between departments for integrated and innovative programming.

Cooperation says no to pitting parts of the city against each other, no to siding with interest groups for personal gain, no to bloc voting for the sake of it and no to In-Camera sessions for political self-protection. Cooperation says yes to honest debate, yes to more public meetings and yes to seeing Kingston as one.

Creativity in finding solutions to challenges; in looking beyond Council Chambers to carry out our mandate of well-being; in engaging community groups and small businesses to see meaningful consultation and programming; in referencing other institutions to share best practices; and in partnering with other cities for policy perspectives.

Creativity says no to generic plans, no to fear-based decision-making and no to doing something because it's always been done that way. Creativity says yes to many voices, yes to open idea generation and yes to new ways of thinking outside the box.

Compassion to debate issues (not each other); to make decisions in the best interest of all residents (not any one group); and to consider well-being (defined by Council at the start of our term) as the ultimate mandate to which we will work, mindful of the most vulnerable.

Compassion says no to bullying, no to partisan political posturing and no to programs that harmfully exclude. Compassion says yes to honesty, yes to sensitivity and yes to making decisions for the greater good.

2. Three definitive ways in which I've tried to make Kingston better:

I) **Director, Kingston Youth Shelter:** I love working with young people and believe deeply that investing in youth should be a city priority. This is why I am part of a team supporting the amazing work of this organization - the leadership, staff and volunteers - who want to see youth transition back to home or gain skills that allow them to find meaningful work and safe shelter.

II) **Co-chair, Education and Supports, Poverty Reduction Initiative:** I believe it is important to define what you are for (not always what you are against). I am for eradicating poverty in Kingston, which is why I help lead and bring prospective solutions to this group so we can indeed do so.

III) **Member, Kingston Frontenac Antiviolence Coordinating Committee:** I speak out strongly against violence against women and work with parties from across Kingston to advocate for change as part of the planning team for the local “Don't Be That Guy” initiative.

3. Explain your position on the contracting out of or privatization of public services?

I believe that the city hires talented, competent staff. I believe that capacity issues that arise from time to time (not enough employees to work a certain event, for example) is one of the few justifications for “contracting out”. Simply stated, we need to be utilizing the public workforce that we have.

4. Kingston has a lack of access to affordable housing, to healthy food options, and to food services for those living in poverty. Describe how you plan to address these issues.

We - not just me - need to address these issues in three main ways:

I) **Honouring the feedback that we receive from local practitioners working in the field and residents living in poverty/food insecurity.** For instance, it is not acceptable that key stakeholders were essentially ignored in the crafting of the recently passed 10-Year Housing and Homelessness Plan. This plan is flawed due, in part, to the fact that these individuals’ and organizations’ opinions were not taken into account. We ought to include all voices in eradicating poverty and realizing food security.

II) **Redefining our revenue streams and reprioritizing what is important to us as a city.** For instance, it is not acceptable that Council denied dental assistance to those in need. Nor was it acceptable for Council to close down programs that play such a key role in providing meals to those in need: a false choice was created and made between food and shelter. We ought to remember all aspects of life in addressing the issues in question.

III) **Bringing healthy (hopefully local) food to our community.** For instance, the recent growth of farmers' markets allows us to see how decreasing barriers (such as fees for parking and centralized locations) increases the potential for people to have access to healthy food. We ought to emulate this all across our community.

5. How do you propose to provide needed infrastructure improvements in Kingston?

To start we need to prioritize immediate infrastructure needs versus what can wait. We need to consider if our current infrastructure links to the vision of the city we want to build (in this case literally).

When Council makes a significant infrastructure decision we have to do so in a socially, environmentally, and economically responsible way. Simply, we should look for projects to increase quality of life, minimize ecological impact and pay for themselves.

We also ought to consider pursuing healthy relationships with our provincial and federal representatives. We don't have to be related to them, nor do we have to follow their lead, but we need to stay abreast with provincial and federal political realities, personalities and funding opportunities.

6. Please give us your view on the city budget, taxes and how you would handle financial short falls.

We must work to live within our means while serving the most vulnerable and keeping property taxes affordable. In fact, municipalities must balance their budgets on an annual basis. Ideally, this is done without harming quality of life for those whom are served - an exercise I have experience doing as a Student Affairs professional and former President of the Federation of Students at the University of Waterloo.

I hope to freeze current tax levels and if possible reduce them; but I will not do so at the expense of important social or environmental programming or in a way that unsustainably increases infrastructural debts.

The city can lessen financial pressures in many ways. For example, saving money by hiring fewer external consultants and instead investing in city staff to help Council meaningfully engage our community. The city should also consider additional revenue streams - if necessary.

Both instances suggest that it is possible to spur well-being (i.e. public participation and disincentives of individualized transportation) while getting the books in order. This is

the philosophy that will guide my fiscal decision making, especially when in times of constraint.

7. How would you increase transparency and public participation at city council?

If elected, I would limit In-Camera sessions. I would publish all of my spending online so that citizens could see what I am doing with their money. Likewise, I suggest an electronic calendar that would detail my public meetings on a weekly basis.

Regarding participation, I would move Council meetings to different locations across the city to engage all residents, in all districts of our community. I would also try to pick an agenda item that the public would be invited to vote upon electronically each Council meeting to gauge public attitudes regularly. And I would encourage further efforts to bring community groups to present at Council as delegations on given topics.

And lastly, regarding transparency, I am committed to publish everyone who donates more than \$200 to my campaign on my website during the election.

8. Living Wage? Yes I would support city Council adopting a living wage policy.

9. Why should Labour Council encourage working people in Kingston to vote for you? If endorsed how would you be accountable to the Labour Council?

I am accountable to fostering a more cooperative, creative and compassionate city regardless of whom or what endorses me. My beliefs in, and policies promoting, transparency (e.g. listing my donors on my website) keep me accountable to all residents of our community.

The Labour Council should encourage working people to vote for me because of the integrity I have championing well-being. In the previous questions I have spoken in favour of Living Wages, our public servants, and my experience considering people in my work as a professional and dedicated community builder.

Simply, I am committed to leading us to build a Kingston in which everybody can find meaningful and engaging work, healthy and safe spaces and quality of life.

10. How would you lead city council through a progressive productive term?

When elected I would start by building consensus on a Code of Conduct that we, as the newly elected Council, would enact. We would share this with citizens and ask them to see we behave progressively. I commit to modeling the behaviour that I expect all of us to exhibit.

I would facilitate conversations around placing councillors on committees that utilize their experience and expertise to create a productive term: and to set the level for decision-making to be evidence based.

And, again - as stated above through all the questions - I would look to realize our collective social, environmental and economic well-being. This mandate will be reflected in my leadership and all my votes: from favouring community art initiatives to working against casinos.

Finally, I would never take for granted the privilege that I have to serve the people of Kingston.