



## Municipal Election 2018 Candidate Survey Responses

Immigration is important to community and economic development. Elected municipal officials are responsible for overseeing services that impact the lives of newcomers, and have a role in working with their federal and provincial counterparts to ensure that Waterloo Region can address its residents' challenges and fully benefit from the contributions of immigrants and refugees. Ahead of the October 2018 Municipal Election, the Immigration Partnership asked all election candidates in Waterloo Region to share their responses to three questions. The follow responses were received from candidates.

For questions about the survey contact: [ImmigrationPartnership@regionofwaterloo.ca](mailto:ImmigrationPartnership@regionofwaterloo.ca).

Don't forget to vote on October 22!

### Candidate questions

1. Immigrants and refugees account for 22.6% of Waterloo Region's population, and the community attracts a growing number of temporary migrants (international students, temporary foreign workers, refugee claimants) each year. **If elected, how will you work with the Immigration Partnership and other stakeholders to ensure the community has the supports and conditions it needs for newcomers to successfully settle, work and belong?**
2. Access to public transportation is essential for recent immigrants, refugees and other people living on low income to be able to get to work or school and fully engage in community life, yet many can't afford it. **If elected, how will you address the affordability of public transit for newcomers and other people living on low income in Waterloo Region?**
3. Each year, new immigrants move to Waterloo Region and pay municipal taxes, but they cannot vote in municipal elections. **Do you support permanent residents voting in municipal elections and what steps would you take to address this locally if elected?**

# Regional Council

## Regional Chair

### **Robert Deutschmann**

1. My spouse is a co-chair for a refugee committee. Their committee sponsored a family from Eritrea and the family is currently living in Cambridge. I have observed first-hand the amount of work to not only sponsor a family to Canada, but also the extent of the work involved after arrival to help the family integrate into all aspects of life in Canada. The assistance of local agencies has been very helpful.

I appreciate that having the necessary supports in place in the community is crucial. There have been a lot of positive experiences in working with organizations that assist in refugee integration in Waterloo Region. There is a strong network in place, but I acknowledge that more can be done. As Regional Chair I would work with existing social agencies and the Regional government to assess the extent of services available and determine where the shortfalls are and determine how we can improve refugee services working with local groups.

2. I have witnessed first-hand how important the transit system is to refugees. The refugee family that my wife is working with is active users of transit for work and shopping. It takes a very long time to qualify for a license so the refugee family is dependent upon access to transit. As Regional Chair I would ask for a report from GR Transit that would estimate the cost of extending free or a reduced fare transit to refugees. It could be free or a reduced fare for a limited time such as one year while they are working towards obtaining a driver's license.

We also need to continue to improve our transit services so that there are enough routes and buses available to offer better transit that covers a wider area for a longer period of time during the day and week. For example, for those refugees that work an evening shift at a local factory that might start Sunday evening, there may be inadequate transit options available to allow the person to take a bus to work Sunday evening.

3. I support permanent residents voting in municipal elections. Permanent residents pay taxes and many play an integral role in all aspects of the day to day affairs in our communities. They should be provided with some say in what is happening in our local community by voting in a municipal election. As Regional Chair I would bring forward a motion to council asking them to support the proposition that permanent residents be provided with the ability to vote in municipal elections. This resolution would be asking the Ontario government to make the necessary changes to the Municipal Elections Act to allow permanent residents the opportunity to vote in municipal elections.

We will keep working until every Ontarian enjoys truly equal rights and opportunities and is able to live freely with a strong sense of community belonging – without harassment, intimidation, or discrimination. Andrea Horwath and the NDP are committed to working collaboratively with partners to identify and remove systemic as well as structural bias, working to promote equity and inclusion.

## **Karen Redman**

1. Our community is pragmatic. The historic strength and success rests in a collective respect for diversity. Key to meeting the needs of newcomers are the partnerships formed by faith groups, social agencies and individuals who come together. Regional government has provided leadership and coordination. Areas of immediate need like housing, language training and school are best addressed by civil society and other partners. Long term needs like employment and culturally sensitive healthcare have been addressed through leadership within the community. Social justice is fundamental to ensuring that groups have their needs addressed. Temporary migrant laborers require advocates to ensure that they have access to freedom of movement and that their human rights are respected. The Region provides social housing, public health, social services and policing--services integral in successful integration of newcomers.
2. Building and providing public transit is expensive. Affordable public transit particularly impacts people on limited incomes. As an ILCWR board member, I understand the challenge for people living with disabilities to find assessable transportation options. The Region is the licencing authority for taxis and ridesharing providers. This next iteration of public transit needs to be held accountable for providing affordable accessible service.

Public transit in the Townships is inconsistent. A pilot project that is running accessible bus service that connects with the GRT bus into Elmira. This is a creative project that will provide information for future routes.

GRT offers a variety of reduced fares (students, seniors, veterans, Ontario Works recipients attending St. Louis School in Cambridge and Kitchener, U-Pass for university students, children under 4 ride free). One fare will allow the user to have a seamless ride using bus and ION trains in a single trip.

3. I believe that citizens of Canada should have the right to vote.

## **Regional Councillor – Cambridge**

### **Jeffrey Shaver**

1. Information is key and I wish to develop a better online system of communication information to the public of available services and interaction with services (or the start administration tasks of them online).
2. I will address the issue of high cost and low available transit for shift workers buy using a dial a bus system that offers more flexible transit options for shift workers.
3. This is a Provincial issue as the municipal elections act 1996 would need to be changed by the Province.

## **Regional Councillor – Kitchener**

### **Elizabeth Clarke**

1. During my term on Council, several initiatives to support newcomer settlement were launched, including our Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Plan. The plan outlines how delivery of Regional services must

change to better serve all members of our community. A second initiative, Wellbeing Waterloo Region, identified social inclusion as one of its priorities, and is planning a strategy to build a community movement to celebrate diversity. I have been supportive of initiatives such as these.

Council must reach out in order to overcome social and cultural issues leading to newcomers' experiences of exclusion from political participation. I've regularly attended community meetings and events organized by the Immigration Partnership or by newcomer groups, and their perspectives have informed my policies. I continue to be committed to ensuring that all residents have equal access to our community's resources and opportunities, and to engaging all residents in Regional decision-making.

2. When I first ran for Regional Council in 2014, expanding access to transit subsidies for people living in low income was among my primary objectives, as it continues to be. The transit subsidy program the Region had in place at the time, which provided half-price passes to some people in low income, was inadequate as demand greatly exceeded supply and as the cost remained unaffordable for individuals and families relying on Ontario Works.

I believe my advocacy work outside of and within Council contributed to the fact that in 2018 the Region is conducting a formal transit subsidy pilot study, reviewing the opportunities and costs of four different fare models, and we expect to have the results of that study for Council's 2019 budget deliberations. It's my intention to propose and support a new fare subsidy model that substantially increases both the depth and the availability of transit subsidies.

3. Currently, permanent residents are entitled to live, work and study anywhere in Canada. They're entitled to protection under Canadian laws and the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. They pay municipal taxes and are subject to the decisions of municipal governments, but they're not entitled to vote in municipal elections. This should change.

Forty five countries extend some form of voting rights to permanent residents and some dozen municipalities in Canada, with large immigrant populations like Waterloo Region's, are considering doing so. They recognize that there are few better ways to make newcomers feel valued and included than giving them a political voice. They recognize, too, that low voter turnout in municipal elections is problematic, and empowering and encouraging increased resident engagement is a positive thing for communities. Waterloo Region should join these municipalities in petitioning our provincial government to change this outdated law.

### **Tom Galloway**

1. To start off with the Region does directly support the Immigration Partnership with co-located office space and other services. This should continue.

We need to work with the Partnership on various service related strategies so that the unique needs of newcomers are taken into account. This would include the service areas of housing, public health, child care, social services and others. This would include membership of newcomers on strategic initiative task groups as well as collecting input from these populations in specialized ways that ensures participation. We also need to have our Police Service continue its outreach to newcomers and other marginalized groups to make sure special concerns and needs are accommodated.

2. The Region currently spends several million dollars per year on free and subsidized bus passes and tickets through various programs for low income citizens. I feel that this program needs to transition towards a more needs based free pass/ticket system. The buses almost always have available space that costs nothing to fill. However, this system needs to ensure need.

3. I can support the right to vote for permanent residents, however, this is Provincial jurisdiction. Municipalities cannot make their own eligibility rules. At the local level we could try to get the Association of Municipalities of Ontario to put this on their agenda.

### **Tom Hiller**

1. The Immigration Partnership can expect a continuing commitment from Regional Council I believe, and certainly from me. Despite a growing community, and corresponding needs, it is very possible that additional financial resources may be difficult to maintain in the face of political change at Queen's Park. And while the local economy remains buoyant, there is evidence that the broader economy is being stressed and inevitable cyclic change will necessitate a focused prioritization of all resources and supports, as well as collaborative efforts by everyone, to improve end results. I recognize the economic and social benefits to our society by seamlessly enhancing the sense of belonging achieved by enabling newcomers to establish themselves and contribute as I know they wish to. My career has been based on my analytical and collaborative skills. I will draw together consultative assets and listen to ensure we can accomplish shared goals.
2. Public transit is a Regional keystone focus - getting the LRT operational will be a major step forward but it's been expensive & stage 2 is waiting. It's imperative that we expand usage of GRT resources & entice drivers to switch to public transit if we're to realize our more environmentally sound dream. For this reason my efforts will be to avoid fare hikes & to enhance the public feeder services to the LRT stations. While we continue to invest in GRT our vision also requires expanded cycling infrastructure to enable those users even greater cost savings.

Ideally we'd eliminate GRT fares but it's not practical. However there are various fare structures & supports for designated groups currently - these should remain. Overall, GRT services are heavily subsidized. Further selective subsidization of routes or users would be eagerly promoted if the proposals included a significant probability of user base expansion across all demographics hence also addressing car traffic congestion.

3. I do not support permanent residents voting in municipal elections. The cornerstone in a democracy is the vote of citizens.

Until or unless we enact mandatory voting, or otherwise approach 100% eligible voter turnout, from rates considerably less than 50% (actually 32% regionally last election), I cannot consider expansion of voting rights to non-citizens even though they be permanent residents. Though they are denied voting rights they still enjoy the protection of The Charter of Rights & Freedoms, eligibility for health care, most social benefits, plus opportunities for work and education.

### **Geoff Lorentz**

1. The Region of Waterloo has a lengthy history of supporting immigrants and refugees with our community partners. As a current member of Regional Council, I would always support these initiatives.....Diversity makes communities stronger and more livable.
2. Access to public transit is definitely a necessity! All of our subsidized funding comes from the Federal and Provincial government. So I would want us to continue the current programs with both levels of government. Regional taxpayers potentially subsidizing any of these programs would have to be a decision by Regional Council based on good information and rationale.
3. That is an interesting fact that I was not aware of. As you are probably aware Municipal government, including Municipal elections are a Provincial responsibility. This is an issue that should be discussed with our Provincial MPP's and the Association of Municipalities of Ontario. This could not be decided

locally and the Provincial government has that responsibilities. I would like to have more information of this issue; it certainly seems to make sense to me.

### **Ted Martin**

1. I will use my experience on the Mennonite Coalition for Refugee Support and my experience on the School Board to guide me in advocating for supports for newcomers to successfully settle, work and belong here, and I will reach out to organizations such as yours to see what we can do as a Region to put the conditions in place to be an even more welcoming community.
2. Improving the functionality and affordability of our public transit system is an important goal that should be addressed by the next Council. I will support aligning our bus routes with the ION and providing more frequent service on routes feeding into the ION, and I will support increasing the subsidies to ensure the system is affordable for those on Ontario Works, ODSP and others living in low income.

A public transit system that is affordable enough for people living in low income and can be used for all travel needs -- to work, to shops, to appointments, to schools, to leisure activities -- benefits the entire community. It increases social inclusion and helps alleviate poverty for those using the system, but it also reduces traffic congestion, lowers greenhouse gas emissions, supports urban intensification and protects rural areas for everyone.

3. I absolutely support enabling permanent residents to vote in municipal elections; after all, they can work, they can own homes, they attend school, they pay taxes, so they should be allowed to vote. I would support Waterloo Region joining with other municipalities, such as Toronto, to lobby the provincial government to change this rule.

### **Kari Williams**

1. If elected I would work with and learn from the Immigration Partnership and other organizations that support newcomers to our region in order to make our services as accessible as possible. I would also work toward meeting the diversity and inclusion recommendations the region set. I am proficient in Spanish and am okay at written French so I could also help translate and encourage communication directed to me personally. I would meet with organizations and representatives to make sure that there are supports in place and that they are effective. I will listen and consider recommendations as well, because I believe being informed and engaged is important.
2. I think this is an important issue and that one that needs to be reviewed. I think subsidies are necessary and may need to be expanded to more people as public transit is a vital service. One other aspect is making transit more connected so that walking and biking are safe and viable options during the nicer months. These modes of transportation are very cost effective and it's unfortunate that many people are unable to use them. With the LRT coming online, it will be very important to make sure that transit works for everyone and that it is affordable. It will take time to get statistics and numbers, but once we have them it will give us a good start to work with any reviews and recommendations.
3. The way to address this would be to help permanent residents to get involved in other ways. The election rules cannot be changed at the municipal level right now. The great thing though at the municipal level is that they can access and communicate with elected representatives and organizations to ensure that their concerns are addressed, status aside. They can also support candidates by volunteering or meeting with them to let them know what they are thinking and what is important to them, so that once elected, they can implement things that benefit all residents. While I know there can be significant barriers, we need to encourage an open dialogue between residents, organizations and candidates/councillors. Once elected I would make sure I was aware of key issues they are facing so I

could work toward effective solutions.

## Regional Councillor – Waterloo

### Jim Erb

1. Wellbeing and belonging are one of the five key issues I have highlighted in my campaign – you can get more info at [www.jimerbwaterloo.ca](http://www.jimerbwaterloo.ca). I have been actively involved assisting three immigrant families sponsored by our church and understand the need to have the proper supports in place. Whether I am elected or not elected, I will continue to work with agencies who advocate for immigrant support and with the private sector to create more affordable housing, employment opportunities and general awareness on the importance of being a welcoming and caring community to newcomers. My wife and her family were newcomers to Canada and so our family fully understands the challenges of integrating into a new community and the barriers that are present.
2. Grand River Transit needs to plan transit services from areas that are away from the LRT line that are easily accessible from neighbourhoods to eventually access the ION. There can be no satisfaction with our new LRT system if those who have been displaced by intensification along the LRT are not able to easily access the ION. To address the affordability, I would try to advocate for the goals of Immigration Partnership with Grand River Transit and other Regional officials, including council members, who could hopefully find a price structure that is acceptable.
3. My initial response is that I would support permanent residents who are not Canadian citizens to be able to vote, however first I would want to understand the reasons why they are currently not eligible to vote. My assumption is this is provincial legislation that the Region must enforce. In the last couple of months, I have met many residents who are permanent residents and would love the opportunity to work given their immersion in our community.

### Jane Mitchell

1. Regional Councillors and myself recently approved an increase in funding for the Immigrant Partnership of 110,000. The Region contributes 50,000 a year to the partnership. It is money well spent. I am very supportive of the work of the partnership as well as the work of various organizations such as the Coalition of Muslim Women and the Multicultural Centre. Waterloo Region should be very proud of our acceptance of immigrants and particularly the Syrian refugees.
2. The Region is presently conducting a pilot with low income riders to see what would work best. There are programs for the poor, refugees, and those on Ontario Works and Disability but of course it is not nearly enough. Once the pilot is over, I am committed to helping those who need subsidy to use transit.
3. I want voters to be Canadian citizens. However I would also like the Federal Government to return to a quicker and less expensive ways for people to become citizens.

### Sean Strickland

1. I have supported regional funding for the Immigration Partnership in the past and will continue to do so in the future. I have also supported and will continue to support in kind support from the region of Waterloo including the use of meeting spaces and admin support provided by the region from time to time. I will also continue to support funding for language translators to help new immigrants/refugees access Regional services.
2. Currently GRT fares are amongst the lowest in the country and our system provides great access to travel across the region. When ION is complete it will be fully integrated with GRT thus improving access for newcomers across several more neighbourhoods. I will continue to support subsidized fares

and passes for low income families that are currently in place. For the future I will work to ensure our transit system remains affordable.

3. This is a Federal issue where requirements for voting in any election are prescribed by the Government of Canada. Generally I support all avenues that encourage and result in more people voting and participating in our democracy.

### **Beisan Zubi**

1. As a sitting member of the Immigration Partnership WSG, I have a good understanding of the work you do to engage, connect, and find meaningful and lasting employment for our newcomers.

I think the Region needs to do better on a couple key issues: education (making sure people know employment laws, their rights and responsibilities, understand work culture and make sure they know how to find and apply to open positions) and activating the tech community are top of mind.

I'll also work with partners like the Multicultural Centre, Reception House, Lutherwood and more to make sure newcomers spend as little time as possible unemployed-- we all know that the more time one spends out of the workforce, the harder it is to get back in there, so a quick turnaround is key to productivity and integration.

2. Transportation is a basic right and it's our Region's responsibility to ensure no one in our community, new or old, is priced out of accessing this infrastructure.

I will make sure we have adequate numbers of subsidized passes so that the people relying on public transportation are able to get to errands, work and home without breaking the bank.

3. I do support permanent residents voting in municipal elections, and would work with the province of Ontario towards this.

## **City of Cambridge**

### **Mayor**

#### **Ben Tucci**

1. Please go to my platform on my website at [electbentucci.com](http://electbentucci.com). It speaks to my intent to form advisory groups across several key areas of community. This could be an additional one that would include our MPPs & MPs. It would be formed to ensure Council celebrates diversity promoting inclusion for groups that have been traditionally underrepresented or excluded from participating fully in our community.

In addition, as Mayor, I will champion where possible taking our celebrations across our community vs. centered in a certain core area of the community. As an example, imagine taking our Celebration of the Arts or parts thereof to the Sikh temple, the Portuguese or Italian Clubs etc... and how that would promote inclusion. Another example is having the Farmer's Markets host ethnic specific days when the ethnic community being celebrated that day would bring their foods, art etc... to the market and set up booths amongst the others. This could apply to each of the groups and newcomers.

2. Transit (GRT) is a Regional jurisdiction. As part of my role as Mayor I will automatically sit on Regional Council as one of 3 Cambridge representatives and voices of our constituency to the Regional Council.

My platform at electbentucci.com speaks to the topic of Governance as well. In the platform I speak about the need for a complete review of the Regional operating and capital budgets. The review is intended to be undertaken with a goal of finding efficiencies and savings. The savings would be used in part for funding of improved service delivery without the need for taxpayers to foot the bill. An example is a goal of reduced fares or and elimination of fares for seniors depending on age brackets. This concept could be expanded in a review of GRT fares for youth and for low income families including newcomers just starting out.

3. We are required to follow established rules and policies which in this case are Federally mandated. Though Federally legislated, I support assisting newcomers in moving towards complete inclusion in the election process by attaining first, their Canadian Citizenship. This would be done by working with the elected MPs and MPPs of our City to provide required assistance in educating new comers in the process and to structure programs that would facilitate access to Canadian Citizenship as a means to allow full participation in the election process.

In the interim and as newcomers working towards Canadian citizenship, it would provide them with the opportunity for civic participation in the election process as well. This allows for engagement to prepare them for a time they too can seek political office.

It is not lost on me that there are no members of ethnic minorities represented as candidates in this year's municipal election. We have some work to do.

### **Colin Tucker**

1. I would contact Job finding companies, such as Express Jobs, and let them know the situation we are in. Then, with the Immigration Partnerships help, we can jobs best suited for each newcomer. From there I would work closely with the Immigration Partnership to find ways to make the transition for all newcomers as easy and smooth as possible. I.e.: support groups.
2. For public transit I would try to get a cheaper monthly pass for newcomers and for those with lower income. The buses are empty as it is. If we lower the price of our bus passes this will put more people in our buses. The city would make more money if we did this. It's a win/win situation and helps people at the same time.
3. I do support permanent residents voting in municipal elections as long as they have Canadian citizenship. I would encourage newcomers to obtain their Canadian citizenship as soon as possible so they do have say in all the elections.

## **Councillor – Ward 1**

### **Kevin Hiebert**

1. I will listen and learn. It is important to me to fully understand the current state of our supports and programs and find out what is working and what needs to be done better for all immigrants and refugees.
2. See #1. I am not fully aware of the current offerings. I believe in giving people a hand up, especially those facing challenges. Newcomers and other people trying to navigate our world on low income face many many challenges and I support ways to make public transit more accessible to them.
3. That is a very good question, and one that is worthy of discussion. Voting is a core right of our democracy. Currently we require voters to be Canadian citizens to vote municipally. At the same time, the turnout in Cambridge has averaged 30% over the last 33 years. 7 of 10 eligible voters did not vote in the 2014 election in Cambridge.

I personally SUPPORT the idea of permanent residents voting in municipal elections. If elected, I would advocate for electoral reforms aimed at increasing voter turnout, and this measure would be one I would propose for consideration. Major electoral reforms, regardless of whether I support them or not, require extensive vetting and debate with all residents. I would consider a referendum of all voter prior to enacting major changes. I think it is important to hear from all residents on a right as important as voting prior to implementing.

## Councillor – Ward 4

### Edwin Friest

1. As Candidate for Lower tier Municipal Council, I would help voice the concerns of the residents and businesses within my selected Ward, and be a representative of elected, of the diversity of Cambridge and Waterloo Region. I would look at what services we have and ask the mayor to bring it to the upper tier and provincial and federal government's attention.
2. There are people in Cambridge already surviving on low income. I myself am such. I would help people understand the importance of balancing housing needs and transportation needs. 86 dollars a month is not bad for every single day of taking the bus. I would also suggest that they download the easygo application which will help with scheduling for buses.
3. That would be outside of the responsibilities for the lower tier municipal government. I would voice any concerns and act as mediator however residents would need to contact the incumbent or Bryan May or current MPP.

## Councillor – Ward 7

### Ryan Coles

1. I have a great deal of respect and compassion for those who are new to this country of diversity and freedom. I will work hard to support the programs for immigrants by ensuring they're well funded and operating efficiently and effectively. I will continue to encourage and educate for a diverse community and bright future.
2. I think if the bus services in Cambridge were more effective it could justify the \$3.25 bus fair. I think bus transfers should be longer than 90 min due to the time it takes to travel on the buses in Cambridge. I think that the public bus system in Cambridge works on a supply and demand basis comparing to the cost of operation. I think it would be beneficial to also implement a new service of smaller busses available by call (dial-a-bus) to service shift workers and areas not covered by the regular routs. Ride shares and other alternative modes of transportation are becoming popular and this tells me that the city also needs to be forward thinking and provide efficient public transportation services.
3. I would consider other options. At this time I'm in support of the voting requirement that you have to be a Canadian Citizen.

## Councillor – Ward 8

### Carla Johnson

1. As the grand daughter of immigrants and refugees, I welcome new faces and new cultures to our community. Over the years I have worked with many, many families who have recently arrived and I

know they bring a wealth of information, ideas and creativity. I will not only be a voice to not only let newcomers know they are welcome, I will also be a voice to let everyone else know they are welcome. And I will be very happy to lend a hand in any way I can.

2. I will be happy to help out in any way I can. I know that university students get passes for a greatly reduced rate, so I would be willing to look at that see if I can help facilitate that happening, along with any other options someone may wish to propose.
3. This is something worth giving consideration to. If elected, I would be very interested in spending time looking more closely at the municipal elections act and what options could be considered.

## City of Kitchener

### Mayor

#### **Narine Sookram**

1. As a Job Developer, facilitating networks to help immigrants and refugees find work is one of my greatest strengths. So, I intend to use my skills to help immigrants overcome barriers to employment, find work that matches their skills and credentials, and receive necessary supports. I will reach out to different organizations and communities to help immigrants build their networks, including mentorships in workplaces.

I will also create a “one stop shop” where immigrants/refugees can share information in different languages, because I believe this is key for success. At this “one stop shop”, immigrants/refugees will be able to have access to supports and services. In addition, I will introduce a pre-arrival service that will help immigrants/refugees to find alternative career paths to good jobs. Alternative career information will be shared and expressed in a positive language so that immigrants perceive an alternative career pathway as a success rather than a “failure.”

2. I strongly believe in getting to the root cause of the problem. So, again I will advocate for immigrants/refugees and other people living on low income to have meaningful payable jobs so that they can afford transportation on their own. Having said that though, I will ensure that the region produces transit information in all needed languages and will provide free fares until they are working. As a Job Developer, I see first-hand the many barriers facing immigrants in our community. I am an immigrant myself and was named one of RBC’s Top 25 Immigrants in Canada in 2013, because I was given some great opportunities to serve and utilize my skills here in the Region of Waterloo. If elected, I will give the same kinds of opportunities to immigrants/refugees, so they too can get to utilize their skills and being able to work in fields that matches their qualifications and pays well. This will allow for sustainable living in general.
3. Yes! I personally support permanent residents being able to vote, because the decisions council members make affects them as well. However, I will suggest a minimum residency in the area of approximately six months. When elected, I will bring forward a motion at city council and regional council to allow it as a pilot project and ensure the change is well communicated in the networks that support new Canadians. The six-month residency will give immigrants the opportunity to understand some of the issues in the Region and hopefully get to know some of the local politicians as well so that they can make an informed decision. I think this will be motivated for permanent residents as well, knowing that they have a say as to who gets elected in office and it probably is a good first step to encourage non-voters to cast their votes as well.

## **Berry Vrbanovic**

1. New Canadians, both permanent and temporary, play an important role in our region's cultural, economic and social development. As such, it is important for both local and regional governments to play a leadership role - directly and indirectly - to ensure these new Canadians are appropriately welcomed and supported. Directly, we must ensure our program offerings in public health, social services, culture, recreation and other areas meet the needs of these new Canadians. Indirectly, we must not only support partner agencies such as Reception House, KW Multicultural Centre and others in the work that they do, but also assist them in their advocacy with the provincial and federal governments so as to ensure our region attains the resources we need and deserve. Finally as local elected leaders, it is critical that we speak out - both in terms of welcoming our new Canadians but also to help others to understand why they are an important part of a growing, vibrant and diverse community.
2. Ensuring residents of the region have food security, adequate housing and access to public transportation is absolutely essential in terms of key indicators for success in any community, including the region of Waterloo. There is more we can and must do as a region to make public transportation available for those who most need it in our community in order to ensure their economic success. We need to look at making excess capacity of public transit available for those who need it the most, and when not sufficiently available, provide additional resources to provide subsidies on the basis of substantiated economic need.
3. Traditionally, the right to vote, was a right and responsibility associated with Canadian citizenship. Increasingly the conversation has been turning to the idea that all residents of a community, whether citizens or not, should be entitled to vote in municipal elections since they determine the government which most impacts our day-to-day lives in our communities. I think there are many merits associated with investigating this idea further and engaging in a community dialogue around this issue. Like anything, this dialogue would identify both the strengths and challenges associated with such a suggested new approach to local elections. I would be prepared to welcome and encourage this dialogue and see where it would potentially take us as a community. If this is something that we collectively determined was appropriate for our community, I would certainly then engage in the needed advocacy with the provincial government to work to have it implemented.

## **Councillor – Ward 1**

### **Scott Davey**

1. While this isn't squarely within our (lower tier) jurisdiction... we're working towards multi-language and simple-language documents in Kitchener to ensure a maximum audience. We also partner/fund with the WR Small business centre to help find jobs and start businesses.
2. This is not a lower tier jurisdiction, but I will continue to advocate for efficient and low-cost transit options.
3. I do support permanent resident voting. Anyone that pays taxes directly, or via rent, should have a say in how we run our city.

### **Susan Stark**

1. Kitchener was built primarily by immigrants. I have heard from people new to this city that one of the key factors they struggle with is acceptance which provides a sense of belonging. A girl I went to school with in the 60's was new to Kitchener - her family came from Germany. I encountered her many

years later as an adult and she shared that she had been mocked and teased by other children. I was stunned. At that time we were still a large German community but sadly we are often intimidated by what is different or what we don't know.

As a city council we have to ensure that newcomers know they are welcome. We can encourage them in their business interests to help them adjust faster and to feel like positive contributors to the community. Kitchener Council must ensure that we are providing the supports necessary to local social agencies to ensure a sense of acceptance and belonging to newcomers as well as programs such as ESL and other integrations supports.

2. Part of my focus as a member of council is to provide a greater level of support for those living on a low income, both immigrants and existing citizens. If as a city we provide more affordable housing for all people that desire a safe place to live, that will free up funds for other items such as food, transportation, and social engagement. Until that happens we should be offsetting the price of public transit for this group in order to make community events and school travel accessible. Seniors should be included in this as well although they are beyond the scope of the Immigration Partnership. A key component of feeling accepted and belonging is being able to participate in community events. Transit travel also helps newcomers see different parts of the city and experience local culture.
3. If a person has gone to the trouble of becoming a permanent resident, is paying taxes, and is an engaged part of their community they should be able to have a say in who is making decisions on their behalf. While opening my campaign bank account I had a good discussion with the bank employee. She came to Kitchener/Waterloo from Russia to attend school. She has been working as a financial consultant for 5 years and we discussed the fact that she cannot vote although she is a permanent resident. She is very engaged in the community and I would support having a discussion with Regional Council to identify if this is a decision that can be made locally or if it has to be a Provincial or Federal decision. It is definitely something we should pursue and promote as a council.

### **Stephanie Stretch**

1. I will commit to working with local partners including the Immigration Partnership; I will listen to the stories of newcomers to our region, and move forward on practical initiatives that increase inclusion in our community for all. I believe Waterloo Region can be a welcoming place for immigrants and refugees and that our cities are made richer by the addition of newcomers. Our social fabric is strong and is strengthened by increasing diversity and new perspectives. When newcomers successfully settle, work and belong we all benefit.
2. Public transportation is essential for people living on a limited income - especially in an urban centre where amenities & supports can be spread out, and job opportunities are not always located conveniently. Our region requires a person to have access to transportation in order to experience practical community inclusion. There are reduced fare programs in place to allow for people to access our local transit system at lower cost, but the parameters of these projects are often rigid - scoping people out of eligibility instead of in. Public transit ridership is not at capacity - far from it - and we are poised to increase capacity in our system as a streamlined network of buses interacts with the new light rail system in Kitchener and Waterloo. We have an ethical and fiduciary duty to use our transportation resources effectively, and in my vision of Waterloo Region, that means increasing access to our transit system by reducing fares for people on a limited income.
3. Municipal elections in Waterloo Region attract a low voter turnout. One way to increase community engagement and a sense of personal agency where municipal politics is concerned is to broaden the voter base, and one reasonably innocuous way to increase the voter base is to allow recent immigrants to vote. Newcomers are invested people who care for our city and make-up an important demographic of citizens in our rich community. Newcomers to the region bring a unique perspective that should be celebrated and included in the democratic process. As the question states, new

immigrants who move to Waterloo Region pay municipal taxes - if they are included municipally at an economic level, why not include them at the polls? I will advocate for election reform on this issue of fair representation of this dynamic region, and work with community partners to introduce reasoned, sustainable practices for further inclusion.

## Councillor – Ward 2

### Dave Schnider

1. All levels of government need to work together and support each other. I'd support what needs to be done at the municipal level of responsibility.
2. I'd support either free, lower or assisted fee transit passes for those who need it until they are at a place in their life where they can financially support paying for it on their own. Some on fixed incomes or mobility issues may never reach that point and should always have access to transit.
3. Yes. If someone pays taxes, they should absolutely have a vote to determine who they want to represent them in the spending of those taxes they're contributing to the city. I would support efforts to address this.

## Councillor – Ward 3

### James Howe

1. Ward 3 is home to many newcomers to Canada when they arrive in Kitchener. As I have done so when working for the YMCAs of Kitchener-Waterloo and Cambridge and at Toronto's Daily Bread Food Bank, I will work to ensure newcomers have the support they need to settle, work and belong in our city. I'd pay particular attention to programs and services delivered by the city especially in neighbourhoods with community centres such as Kingsdale and Courtland-Shelley. I have already worked to help Traynor-Vanier residents to make their voices heard about the need for a LRT crossing to return the neighbourhoods walkability and a result the crossing has been expedited.
2. This question is best for those who are running for Regional Council.

Personally, I'm in favour of allowing children up to age 12 to ride free instead of age 4. If the TTC can do it, we can too. I also like the idea in principle of providing free passes to people living on low incomes. Both measures would increase ridership and make it easier for people to get around when it is too far or not possible to ride a bike or walk.

As a City Councillor, my impact on these issues is indirect but I'd look for opportunities to advocate for them with my Regional colleagues.

3. Yes, I support voting rights for permanent residents in municipal elections. In August, I wrote in The Community Edition:

"Municipal government is so vital to how we live, that the topic of this column was intended to make the case for allowing permanent residents to vote in municipal elections. A permanent resident is someone from another country who has been given permission to live and work in Canada without being a citizen. They pay municipal property taxes and their daily lives are as affected as the rest of us but they have can not vote for who is on school boards or municipal councils. In Waterloo Region, that is up to 33,000 people or about six per cent of the total population who have no voice in selecting who is elected.

Cities across Canada, including Toronto and Hamilton have proposed giving permanent residents the right to vote. "

That decision is up to the provincial government but I'd support a motion to request the change. I'm pessimistic it would be heard.

### **Paras Solanki**

1. I definitely support our newcomer population in Waterloo Region! Spending plenty of time interacting with friends and family who immigrated from another country, I truly understand their situations and how many of them work hard in various aspects where the community and government can be of help to support. From finding jobs, affordable housing, navigating the region through transit, these are various aspects that greatly impact the lives of newcomers. It is essential to continuously be on top of improving affordable housing, available jobs, and efficient and wide-reaching transit to not only greatly support the newcomers in having an easier time creating their lives but also support the rest of our community and the positive growth of our city. I aim to be a strong voice on these issues so our newcomers can truly feel warmly welcome in our region.
2. Transit prices often rise and single-ride tickets can become expensive. Making monthly passes and bulk tickets more affordable can significantly improve the issue of justifying public transit for many newcomers and low-income communities.
3. Definitely! If you are paying taxes, supporting the economy, and have the potential to be impacted by municipal decisions, then yes, I agree that permanent residents should have the right to vote in municipal elections.

## **Councillor – Ward 4**

### **Florence Carbray**

1. Thank you so much for this question. The first thing I will do is ASK YOU what is required of me to fulfill such a role. I will then add that through my professional career in the Co-operative Housing sector, I have worked very closely with immigrants and refugees and am very sensitive to their issues and needs.
2. As a community activist for over 38 years and through my capacity as president of the Doon Pioneer Park Community Association (DPPCA) I was instrumental in lobbying the city in order to get the Doon Pioneer Park Community Centre built in 1989. I also organize the annual Christmas Miracle Hamper project for our community, and everyone who knows me will confirm that I work diligently towards alleviating poverty.
3. I believe that goals can be accomplished by building consensus, and so what I can promise is that I would wholeheartedly use my negotiating skills to create a positive environment for getting our needs addressed and fulfilled through working with the team of Councillors and city staff.

### **Wes Hill**

1. After my work with reception house helping find suitable housing for new refugees it has been on my mind as to how we can do more. I have seen families where every member was out looking for a job to help support their needs. I have also seen new refugees start companies to help more of their community and see opportunities in so many areas from job placements to affordable housing, easier access to public transportation passes and all the help from city hall. This region was at one point all immigrants and our social responsibility to help all should not stop at their way of traveling here.

2. We need to look at ways to get transportation passes to the people who need a little help. The ability to get to work, school, doctor's appointment or anywhere is the start to sense of a normal life, a sense of community and a feeling of home. I know that there are discounted rates for students and seniors but what about someone that just needs a hand.
3. I truly feel that their voice needs to be heard as much as everyone's. I was shocked when I found out that landed immigrants no matter how long they have lived here can not vote especially municipal elections. I also feel people with student visas should be able to vote in municipality elections, we have a massive student population in Waterloo Region and they may have new ideas that we have not thought of.

I plan to bring this up at council and try to take a page from British Columbia as some municipalities have started to allow this.

### **Upneet (Sasha) Sidhu**

1. If elected, I intend to work collaboratively through extensive consultation and open communication with stakeholders, the immigrant partnership and across different levels of government to ensure newcomers are welcome in Kitchener. I am looking to work with the Immigrant Partnership collaboratively aligned with its 2017-2019 Community Action Plan (CAP) that reflects the needs, capacities and commitments of the Waterloo Region community to better outcomes for immigrants, refugees and the broader community.

I firmly believe the diversity and richness of differences in cultural backgrounds strengthen Kitchener. I plan to ensure Newcomers can access services (e.g. Language and education) without any barriers. I am looking to ensure Kitchener is more responsive, inclusive and agile to meeting the emerging and existing needs of newcomers with solutions – positive changes newcomers will see themselves in.

2. If elected, I intend on addressing transit accessibility issues with Grand River Transit for newcomers, refugees and other people living on low income. My current strategy is looking to strengthen partnerships with existing local agencies and programs that address urgent needs of our community such as through the Community Connections program and YMCA's Citizenship Support Group. I plan to expand the already unique combination of services that are designed to welcome new immigrants to Waterloo region and build a vibrant and more inclusive community.
3. I believe that municipal elections should be inclusive of everyone residing in the community. If elected, I plan to address this issue and also integrate education programs on voting in the Community Connections programs that Kitchener currently offers as part of a combination of services that are designed to welcome new immigrants to Waterloo region and build a vibrant and more inclusive community.

## **Councillor – Ward 5**

### **Aizad Ahmad**

1. I immigrated to Canada in 2004 based on the points system due to my education (MBA and MSc), work experience (10 years in food processing), family, and other attributes. I came alone to Toronto and left my wife and then 4-year old son while I settled down. I took advantage of Govt. facilities such as Newcomer offices, and support system from friends. I undertook licensing exams, applied to many jobs, had interviews and then finally sponsored my family (wife, son and infant daughter) to come over here. I worked hard to obtain certifications, meet and exceed job requirements, and got promoted in my job and climbed up the corporate ladder. Thus, if elected, I will have empathy to understand the needs of newcomers and ensure that municipal facilities are able to assist them in their integration in the society. Students need employment guidance, foreign workers and refugees need

support to seek relevant certifications which are in demand. I will work with all concerned to ensure this.

2. I think that commute time is a major factor in the development of a community. As Kitchener expands towards the southeast and other areas which are not served by frequent bus service, it is essential to plan future routes taking the needs of people living in all areas of the city. More express routes to the LRT will also be of benefit. We need to ensure transit is in line with growth in real estate developments. I am real estate licensed, thus I have a wide perspective of various areas and how we can enhance the transport system based on population growth. Bus shelters also need to be more safe from weather elements. There is a need to coordinate all elements of the transport system. Also car dealerships should be able to provide affordable second hand cars.
3. Currently the citizens of Waterloo region vote at a rate of around 30%. It is first essential to increase participation of people who have citizenship in our community. First they need to be educated what are the responsibilities of federal, provincial, regional, municipalities and school trustees. Then they need to be involved in community activities. I think that PR may be too early a stage for election purpose. They are still not fully aware of the Government roles and they are not sure if they will stay here the full duration of their residency. So we should focus on those with Citizenship first for an effective democracy. When I have been door-knocking, I find that voters are neither aware of the election process, nor of the Government policies impact on their lives. We need to address that aspect first.

#### **Andres Fuentes**

1. Ensuring that immigrants can properly settle in our community is vital. We need to work with businesses, universities and community organizations to make sure we all understand the needs of these residents and can provide the appropriate services and support. It is also important that we engage immigrants, refugees, and temporary migrants in conversation so that we can effectively support them and incorporate them into the community. This will help us ensure that the programs the city offers meet their needs. Communicating the programs and services offered is one of the largest challenges. Working with organizations like the Multicultural Centre, cultural groups and associations, and workplaces and educational institutions, we can spread better awareness of what the city has to offer. We can also make sure key information for those settling into our community is accessible in multiple languages for better access.

It is also important that we raise awareness in our community around immigration. The Immigration Partnership has done several great campaigns around this, the "I am Waterloo Region" campaign, which I was a part of, made residents aware of the diverse contributions that immigrants make to our community. The more recent campaign around the employment of immigrants is also important as so many of our immigrants have knowledge, skills, and experience that could help local businesses grow. I believe the city can work with Immigration Partnership to continue to raise awareness around relevant issues. Our economy is growing in this area because of the talent that we are attracting, be it students, temporary workers, or professionals; a key part to sustaining this growth is making sure that they feel at home here in Kitchener.

2. Grand River Transit currently has a very limited program (for people on Ontario Works) for people with low income; expanding the criteria for this program could be incredibly useful in making our city more accessible to new immigrants. I also think that service areas limits the areas in which people who rely on transit are able to live, meaning some may have to choose between more affordable neighbourhoods and more accessible neighbourhoods. As a city councillor I will advocate for programs that make transit accessible to all and to make public transit a feasible option in all areas of the city.

Each year, new immigrants move to Waterloo Region and pay municipal taxes, but they cannot vote in municipal elections. Do you support permanent residents voting in municipal elections and what steps would you take to address this locally if elected?

3. I've spoken to many Permanent Residents at the door who are engaged in their community and care deeply about our municipal government. They contribute to the community not just through taxes, but in many other ways. I believe that changing voting laws is incredibly serious and requires extensive discussion; the City needs to listen to stakeholders and weigh all sides in order to decide how we would like to become advocates to the Province on this issue.

### **Kelly Galloway-Sealock**

1. It's important to have the supports and services to make sure that anyone moving to our city can succeed. I will continue to work with organizations, especially the City of Kitchener neighbourhood associations to make sure they are offering programs to assist those in need. I will also help promote opportunities of any and all programs to the community. Kitchener Ward 5 is a very diverse community ensuring the residents understand what programs are available to assist them is extremely important. In short I will do whatever I can to assist making sure residents feel like they belong in our community.
2. As this is a regional service governed by the Region of Waterloo I would be willing to advocate on behalf of all those requiring affordable transit. In the past I have advocated to get more transit routes out to the newer subdivisions in ward 5. Not only is affordability important but having access to transit is just as important. Assisting those who want to have a voice, I will ensure they know who to connect with to advocate for affordable transit and access to transit.
3. Yes - I believe everyone deserves to have a voice in who is being elected, permanent residents included. Ward 5 in Kitchener is very diverse leaving many residents unable to vote yet they pay taxes. I will advocate for this change at the municipal level, AMO (Association of Municipalities of Ontario), FCM (Federation of Canadian Municipalities) and speak with local MPs and MPPs.

## **Councillor – Ward 8**

### **Zyg Janecki**

1. Once I am aware of an immigrant who needs assistance in any variety of issues, I would direct them to Waterloo Region Immigration Partnership as this agency has excellent resources to help them in their needs to assimilate into our community.
2. The Region's Grand River Transit currently offers various discounts for seniors, students, children, veterans, and those with mobility issues and on a monthly basis. The GRT already offers free bus service for those attending St Louis school and learning the English language. The Region is the final body who sets the bus rates for different groups of people.
3. To vote in municipal elections or even provincial or federal elections one must be a Canadian citizen. For permanent resident to become a Canadian citizen they must meet the minimum waiting period and pass an exam. The rules for changing the requirement for all permanent residents to vote needs to be changed by the upper level of government. I would speak with the local member of provincial and federal government and express my views on this issue to change the requirement.

## **Margaret Johnston**

1. I am really eager to meet with the Immigration Partnership folks to learn what gaps they see in their work and how Council can address them.

For example, can Council support more targeted programming at the Kitchener Public Library and at our community centres?

As an overall perspective, you can count on me to celebrate and value diversity at the Council chamber, just as I have done the past 4 years volunteering here with the Victoria Hills Neighbourhood Association. As you know, it is a neighbourhood with many New Canadians. I supported extra funding for such programs as Project Read at the Community Centre which helps new families read with their children and ready their children for the School system.

I volunteer at all the Victoria Hills Community/Neighbourhood multicultural events and will continue to do as Councillor. I really want to learn from the Immigration Partnership as to how I can help the community be of assistance to our new neighbours.

2. This is a challenge for recent immigrants, refugees and those living on ODSP to be able to affordably access Regional transit. I would work with our Regional Councillors and Mayor to advocate for assistance for some transit coverage.
3. Yes I do support permanent residents being able to vote in Municipal elections. Currently no Canadian Cities let permanent residents vote Municipally, but there is a strong movement to do so. I would recommend that the City of Kitchener join with other communities like Vancouver, Calgary Toronto and Hamilton and take a motion to the Federation of Canadian Municipalities to see if through the power of partnering with these large centres we can get this archaic rule changed.

## **Councillor – Ward 9**

### **Melissa Bowman**

1. The question itself touches on partnerships as having key importance. We're fortunate to have great organizations working alongside and in support of newcomers to our city. I've become connected with some of these organizations through: writing an article for The Community Edition that explored the experiences of long time residents and newcomers to the Victoria Park area (<https://communityedition.ca/if-streets-could-talk-victoria-park/>); attended Walk With Refugees, the CCORIC Launch at THEMUSEUM, Reception House's agm and Not Another Gala. City councillors help inform and connect residents to the work these organizations are already doing and can encourage more connections between organizations such as the partnership between SASC and KW Multicultural Centre, a youth-led program for immigrant and newcomer men. City committees must actively seek committee members from underrepresented groups such as newcomers. An inclusive city creates a welcoming environment and values its diversity.
2. Developing a connected, protected system for walking and cycling supports those who do not own a vehicle, enabling them to move easily and safely throughout the city. I would work towards implementing a number of improvements to our overall transportation network in the region. We need to continue to fill in gaps in our sidewalk network and improve trails by widening some, adding lights, and improving crossings. A snow clearing pilot project could also identify the best way to ensure walkable streets year round. Of course, improving transit so it connects with these other systems as well as light rail is important. Transit needs to be affordable for all in our region, especially those with low income. Through discussions with our regional partners and social service agencies, I will explore options for making transit affordable to those who most need it.

3. Immigrants play an important role in the diversity of our community, and their numbers continue to grow. I support encouraging new immigrants to voice their perspectives to local governments that affect their daily life. This includes extending to them the right to vote in municipal elections. Kitchener can follow the lead of many international cities that have accomplished this, as well as several Canadian cities calling for this important change. I support such measures that encourage citizen engagement and actively seeking out and including diverse voices.

### **Debbie Chapman**

1. With anti-immigrant-and-refugee sentiment being increasingly fomented by the far right it is essential for those in public office to express visibly their support for the immigrant/refugee community and visibly to oppose the hate directed towards them. When I was a member of the "Inclusion" subcommittee of Kitchener's Safe and Healthy Community Advisory Committee we held focus groups of immigrant communities to learn their needs. If elected, I will continue to meet with and solicit advice from these communities as well as from Immigration Partnership, Reception House, the Multicultural Centre and related organizations, in order to press their needs upon Council as a whole. I will pursue available avenues to sustain and increase where possible the resources – particularly community space - available to immigrant communities and their support organizations, and I will take every opportunity to express my support for them and my opposition to their detractors.
2. Following the example of many comparable cities around the world, such as Tallinn in Estonia and Hasselt in Belgium, it is time for Waterloo Region to make public transit free, if not for all then certainly for those on low income, including recent immigrants and refugees. If elected, I will introduce a motion to this effect at City Council to instruct Kitchener's regional councillors to bring this idea forward at Regional Council. After affordable housing affordable transportation is a vital need for all members of the precariat. Making public transit free has the additional advantage of decreasing car use and therefore lowering greenhouse gas emissions. It could be paid for from carbon taxes collected by the federal government, returned to the provinces and passed on from there to regional municipalities.
3. I do support permanent residents being able to vote in municipal elections for the reason given. It has been frustrating to meet permanent residents at the door when canvassing who are otherwise fully engaged members of Canadian society but are unable to vote. If elected, I would seek support from Immigration Partnership and fellow councillors to bring a suitable motion to the floor of City Council. Such a motion, if passed, would act as an incentive, if not a directive, to higher levels of government to make the necessary changes in the relevant legislation. The Cities of Toronto, Hamilton and, earlier this year, Vancouver have all passed motions to this effect. Given that Kitchener has at least as big a permanent resident population proportionally as these other cities it behooves us to follow suit.

### **Philip Molto**

1. Housing , employment and social services are just a few of the challenges for newcomers. The first thing that must happen is a warm welcome, one which I would enjoy giving personally. Housing is a big challenge in our growing community, but affordable and available housing is essential for new members to our community. Encouraging local employers to offer opportunity is important as many of our newcomers have skills and experience that can go unnoticed and underutilized. Immigration is a federal portfolio but at the municipal level there is plenty we can do to help them settle in to a new life. Personally, we have a daughter who is married to a young man from Malawi. We are witnessing first hand the challenges in getting him here on with permanent resident status, let alone the settling in work that we need to do. From this first hand experience, we can fully appreciate the struggles that newcomers are facing.
2. Getting to work and to services is very important, and while transit is a regional portfolio, I at the city level would support subsidized passes for newcomers. "Public transit" is a misuse of those words, if not

all of the public can afford to utilize it. Access to transportation is key if their housing is also in a location that makes transit access more practical. This is also true for all people living on a low income. We can not expect them to work their way out of poverty if they can not get to the work that provides the opportunity for financial advancement. Transportation for everyone to get to work, night school and social services can only happen if we make public transit available and affordable.

3. This is incredibly complex with very different viewpoints, perspectives and opinions of citizenship. Vancouver recently voted in favor of this idea, and in reflecting on that, we must look at the massive number of permanent residents there versus other cities that may not be as open to the idea. A recent article in Global News stated: "They're entitled to social benefits and health care coverage, and can also work, live or study anywhere in Canada. They're also entitled to protection under Canadian law and the Charter of Rights and Freedoms."

Given their dedication to Canada it is difficult to deny them the right to have a say in municipal affairs. If they are part of a city's character and identity and they want to vote on municipal issues, why should they be denied that right? If a newcomer is a truly dedicated part of Kitchener's identity and character, I believe they should have a say in municipal decisions. In Canada, we have come a long way since 1916...

## Councillor – Ward 10

### **Sarah Marsh**

1. Having served on the KW Multicultural Centre board for my first three years on Council, I have been keenly aware of the challenges faced by newcomers of all backgrounds, and the supports they need. I feel strongly that Kitchener residents need to embrace opportunities to connect with newcomers, to help navigate, and to share their own connections within their networks. If re-elected, I would support programs that foster this type of interaction, such as the connector program offered by the KW Multicultural Centre that matches working professionals with newcomers in similar fields.

In 2015, I voted in favour of Kitchener's contribution to the Syrian refugee settlement efforts. On a personal note, our family joined many others in Kitchener's core neighbourhoods to welcome a Syrian family of seven, and it was a profound experience.

I will vow to continue to work with our community partners on ensuring our city becomes even more welcoming and accessible for newcomers.

2. As a City Councillor, I do not have jurisdiction over public transit fees whatsoever, as it is a Regional Council issue. That said, I am a big believer in the importance of affordable public transit. I would advocate with my Regional colleagues to provide better accessible rates for those in need.
3. I support the idea of permanent residents voting in municipal elections. In my next term of Council, I would advocate for the Province to allow permanent residents the right to vote municipally.

## City of Waterloo

### Mayor

#### **Dave Jaworsky**

1. When the Syrian refugee crisis occurred, I joined many others in the community and sponsored a family to come to Waterloo. We can be proud that we welcomed nearly 3000 newcomers to our

region in the past four years, with essentially zero disruption. I was honoured to be a part of the Resettlement committee. Together, we turned this 'crisis' into a 'Waterloo region welcome wagon' - as we always do. I was on the KW Community Foundation a decade ago when we decided the key to building our community was ensuring that newcomers felt they belonged. That same sentiment continues to be the approach we need to take today. If I'm re-elected, I'm happy to continue to work closely with and support our community partners and organizations working on the ground to help newcomers successfully settle in Waterloo.

2. At the regional level, we offer several levels of payment, all of which are below cost, with subsidies provided by upper levels of government. These are important programs, and I believe there is an opportunity to offer other programs that could utilize unused capacity outside of rush hours to benefit our citizens with affordability concerns. Accessible and affordable transportation is an important factor to help residents in Waterloo fully engage with the community. I'm looking forward to seeing the impact of the ION in combination with the GRT system act as a catalyst to help lift families in our community.
3. As mayor of Waterloo, I represent all residents regardless of their voter status. Whether people have been Canadians for generations or they are new to Canada this year, I listen to their stories and their needs and consider how we can improve Waterloo. Each year I run a grade 5 Council for a Day contest for our youth, to get them engaged in our municipality, even though they cannot vote. I support efforts to get residents informed and involved and encourage anyone who is interested to participate in community forums and committees. Voting rights decisions are made at the provincial level. I encourage all to advocate for those rights with the provincial government. I would support this movement by writing a letter to the provincial government to advocate for all residents to have a voice in the election.

### **Chris Kolednik**

1. Each year immigrants and refugees choose Waterloo Region to become their permanent home. As someone who is a First Generation Canadian, and whose parents came from Eastern Europe, I understand the importance of what immigrants and refugees offer a community. From a cultural aspect, to bringing viable skills to help fill jobs, while bringing their own entrepreneurial talents, immigration is key to making not only our region grow but Canada as well. I believe new immigrants and refugees must learn English as their first essential skill, if they do not know the language already. Without a fundamental understanding of the language it is hard to social integrate and compete for jobs in our Region. I believe in a strong importance of teaching English to our new comers, and having as many classes and lessons as possible to help break many barriers. This will lead to many successfully settling and belonging in a community.
2. As part of my campaign, a central issue is Active Transportation. We need to help people continually move in our Region so people can get to their jobs, to meetings, to their families and friends, and to other venues where people would like to go. As your Mayor, I would make it my ultimate goal to keep public transportation as inexpensive as possible. For example, ION is said to be Advertisement Free i.e. no advertisements to maintain a "clean look". As a Region we should look to be selling advertisements on the ION and taking in any revenue and reinvesting in public transportation to keep fares low.
3. Being a first generation Canada, my parents came to Canada separately and met here in Waterloo Region. They were granted permanent residency upon their arrival and had to wait to be granted full Canadian Citizenship. In that time they were not allowed to vote but were on a permanent path of what it means to be Canadian. If we continually cheapen and dilute what it means to be a Canadian, we lose our self identity as a country. I believe people need to wait the full length of time to have the privilege of voting in Canada. If we make exceptions now, what other exceptions will we make in the future?

## **Kelly Steiss**

1. In my current role in municipal government, I am a member of the Immigration Partnership. If elected, I look forward to continuing my involvement and supporting the involvement of City staff on the Partnership as well as being active participants in creating a community where everyone feels that they can settle, work and belong.

Our community is stronger when we can find ways to welcome people and make sure that there is a strong sense of inclusion. This can be accomplished by making sure that we support, advocate and ensure that there is adequate affordable housing, that the programs and services meet the diverse needs of the community and that our staff reflect the people that live in our community.

I have a strong history of bringing people together, facilitating the partnerships necessary and promoting an approach to serving the community that is inclusive and supportive. Diversity is our strength.

2. Public transit is a Regional issue. However, the Mayor of Waterloo is a member of Regional Council and as such has the responsibility to advocate and ensure adequate representation of the needs and interests of the residents of Waterloo. If elected, I will make sure that we strive to keep public transit affordable and accessible for those that want and need to use this system. In addition, it will be important that the routes that are planned make sense for where people are located, that the schedule fits the lifestyle and schedule of the people living in those neighborhoods and that information about our public transit system and any changes are communicated well and communicated clearly.

Not only does public transit facilitate the movement of people in a City but also making sure that we have a connected and consistent trail system is important. Providing opportunities for people to cycle and walk throughout our community can also be an effective tool in creating access.

3. It feels inherently wrong that we take money from people in the form of taxes but provide no forum or opportunity for being part of the decision-making and electing those who take care of that money. As such, I would support permanent residents voting in municipal elections. The Elections Act governs the rules affecting who gets to vote. If elected, I would work with the provincial government to advocate to seek changes to the current system.

## **Councillor – Ward 1**

### **Adam McCarthy**

1. I have a direct and personal interest in the maintenance and development of supports for our new citizens. As a teacher at Eastwood Collegiate, I have the fortune to work with some of the most inspiring young people from around the World. A full one-third of our population are first generation immigrants that are looking for a better life in Canada. I have taught English Language Learners from numerous countries and know first hand the struggles they contend with in their new home of Canada. The School Board provides translators, social workers, assessment teams and community connections to help newcomers settle into our Region. There are many times in the classroom when these students teach me as much as I teach them. Working with the Immigration Partnership is a natural choice when a constituent requires the services or referrals provided by our network. It will be my role to offer communications, outreach and liaise between all stakeholders.
2. Certain programs already exist to help support recent immigrants when it comes to public transportation. Bus tickets and passes can be subsidized by sponsors, charities and some government programs. But an increase in funding (or protection of the current funding) is essential to promote. This process needs to be seen as an investment and not as an expense. Affordable transportation lets

citizens get to schools and jobs that pay dividends to our community in the future. In addition, I think the Region is in danger of losing its primary customer base for the LRT if it charges commuters too much in the beginning of operations. I recognize that the price tag for the LRT has been substantial, but we need to grow ridership by offering short term price incentives in order to make its use into a habit. If elected, I will foster connections with Regional Council that will address these issues for Ward 1 in Waterloo.

3. Offering voting rights to new immigrants that start to pay municipal taxes will all depend on our agreed definition of a 'permanent resident'. Consideration should be made for obtaining Canadian Citizenship or even starting the process of gaining Canadian Citizenship. Of equal concern is the access of our new citizens to the necessary language translation needed for them to make an informed decision during the election process. Assumptions are often made that residents that don't speak English will have 'someone' to help them understand their election options and I don't think that's always the case. A central languages Helpline should be sponsored by Elections Canada, Elections Ontario and the Municipality to offer language resources for citizens who have campaign, registration or other voting questions.

## Councillor – Ward 2

### Royce Bodaly

1. My vision for the City of Waterloo surrounds Connected Community. One of the core tenets of that vision is Embracing Diversity. Ensuring that members of our community who come from different backgrounds are welcomed in our community and that we embrace a sense of belonging for everyone is essential to feeling connected. I am proud to live in Waterloo and feel privileged that my children are growing up in such a diverse community. Immigration Waterloo Region and its partners do great work in the areas of Settle, Work and Belong. As councillor I will advocate for policies and support initiatives that support these goals.
2. With the arrival of the ION it is an exciting time for transit in Waterloo Region. Particularly for members of Ward 2 some of these initiatives can seem far away. Another core tenet of a Connected Community is ensuring that our physical connections to the core of our society are strong. This includes infrastructure for roads, active transportation and transit. It is imperative that connections to the core of our city, where we often work and play are efficient and easily accessible for all members of our community. I will work hard to advocate for strong artery service into the ION for Ward 2 as part of the regions master transit plan. With respect to affordability, I believe there is logic in offering discounts to newcomers and low income families, who are the highest adopters of transit in our community. I would advocate that the Region conduct a feasibility study in this regard.
3. Another tenet of a Connected Community is ensuring that our residents feel connected to their elected officials through honest, open and straight-forward communication. In the instance of permanent residents it is hard to feel connected to city hall when they don't even have a voice come election time. I think this is an important connection and would advocate for permanent residents to be allowed to have their say on municipal issues in the next election.

## Councillor – Ward 4

### Diane Freeman

1. Over the past years on Council I have routinely participated in meetings, forums and social media discussions with citizens from all backgrounds. I make balanced decisions based on what is best for all people not just those who can vote or who pay into the property tax base. I believe in building a community that cherishes diversity and inclusivity. I routinely participate in programs at focus for ethic

woman related to finding rewarding work in Waterloo Region. I also mentor many immigrants and refugees to acquire licensure to practice in regulated professions in Ontario, such as engineering.

2. Public Transit is not a City of Waterloo operated service. As a City Councillor I will continue to advocate to higher levels of Government including the Region of Waterloo and the Province of Ontario to make public transit affordable for newcomers and other people living on low income in Waterloo Region.
3. Yes. Municipal governments serve all citizens living in a municipality through their work. Municipal governments provide services related to fire rescue, property tax rates, economic growth, infrastructure, recreation and cultural services. If you are a permanent resident directly affected by these services I believe you should have a democratic right, through voting, to have your voice heard.

## Councillor – Ward 5

### Jen Vasic

1. To begin, I would set up meetings with key stakeholders in order to better understand factors and conditions that support newcomers to successfully settle, work, and belong. Through experience, front-line support, and familiarity with evidence-based research, newcomers themselves, the Immigration Partnership, and other stakeholders are the experts about what newcomers need to feel comfortable and to thrive in this community. In addition, I would support and encourage increasing representation on committees of council and in public consultation processes, so that newcomers' experiences, points of view, and recommendations would be considered in decision-making.
2. If elected, I would share information with the Region about what I am hearing from constituents in Ward 5 and beyond about the benefits and challenges of affordable public transportation. I would also support, attend, and invite others to attend public education sessions about affordable public transportation, sessions that I hope would also debunk the misconceptions that those who would qualify for affordable public transportation are lazy. Finally, I would learn more about the research that led to the Region's Transit Affordability Study, so that I might answer some of the questions I have about the process of implementing affordable public transportation, its benefits to individuals and the broader community, as well as the challenges. I would also like to get a better sense about examples from other communities that have affordable, or zero-cost, public transportation.
3. I support permanent residents voting in municipal elections. Over the course of this election I have heard from numerous permanent residents that they would like to be granted the right to vote in municipal elections and it's not only because they pay taxes. It's because they love, are committed to, and are invested in this community. They want to make a contribution to the place where they have raised or are currently raising their families, and where they intend to stay.

If elected, I would first like to get a better understanding about past attempts – both internal and external to the city – at pushing for permanent residents' right to vote. I would also discuss with other elected officials at the municipalities and province about how we could collectively advocate for changes to provincial legislation that would allow permanent residents to vote.

## Councillor – Ward 6

### Jeff Henry

1. Whether here temporarily or permanently, I believe all residents of Waterloo should feel like they belong here. I am always happy to hear from Immigration Partnership about what more we can do to help.

I know that parks, libraries, and recreation facilities are critical spaces for newcomers to learn about local culture, access computers to support searches for work, and make new friends to help belong. I was glad to support additional resources for all of these city-funded spaces and they continue to be a priority for me. I also participated in a rental housing forum to discuss opportunities for landlords to support newcomers. I will continue to work with staff to make that process easier.

I am also working to integrate our international student community, prioritizing more university-community connections through events and outreach, and presenting to new students about what is available to them in their new home.

2. As a public transit user myself, I know how important it is to have reliable, frequent, fast transit that connects to services, jobs, and housing. We recently had our first child, and my wife has relied on the bus to escape what can be a very isolating time, making new friends with other passengers along the way.

As a city councillor, I do not have a vote on the policies that prevent too many low income people, including newcomers, from accessing affordable transit. The current pilot project is long overdue and I hope that the Region acts on the data. It doesn't cost more to have more riders on all but the most popular routes. But not being able to afford transit costs low income residents access to work, to services, and to making new connections. It has to change.

Finally, in my role at the city, what I can do is continue to provide support to deeply affordable housing near good transit and to use inclusionary zoning to expand moderately priced housing.

3. The voices of all members of our community need to be heard to build a city and region that works for all of us. Missing from too many of our policy discussions are the voices of new immigrants and children, both of whom cannot vote, as well as people living on low-incomes and post-secondary students who can but often don't. I have always believed that including everyone is important, regardless of whether or not they can or do vote.

Permanent residents pay municipal taxes, but they also pay much more in provincial and federal income and sales taxes, so the argument for expanding voting rights in municipal elections is also an argument for expanding voting rights in provincial and federal elections. Canada has the highest rates in the world of new immigrants becoming citizens and among the shortest times before new immigrants can become full citizens. If that were not the case, I would agree that this is a pressing challenge that would need a solution.

## Councillor – Ward 7

### Tenille Bonoguroe

1. I am proud to be an immigrant to Canada. I was a temporary foreign worker before becoming a permanent citizen and now a naturalized Canadian. The process wasn't easy, and yet I am one of the lucky ones: my professional qualifications and experience were recognized; English is my native language; and I come from a Commonwealth country that shares many cultural similarities. As Councillor for Ward 7-Uptown, I will bring that personal history, and the understanding of my own privilege, to issues that impact immigrants and refugees. I will eagerly work with stakeholders in the community to help newcomers settle, work and belong. I believe community programming is central to this, so I will strongly support our library system, educational programming for all ages, cultural engagement opportunities, and equal access to work. I will also advocate for housing affordability measures so that Uptown remains a place that everyone can call home.

2. GRT is a Regional system, so as a City Councillor I will advocate to the Region on behalf of constituents. Currently, children 4 and under travel for free on GRT. I would like to see that increased to the age of 10 in order to help all families -- particularly new arrivals and low income residents -- and to encourage more families to include public transit in their day-to-day life.

For adults, I would like to see new immigrants to Canada offered access to reduced-price bus passes for their first year, and to also have the reduced-price passes available to all people on low incomes.

For newcomer adults completing full-time language studies, I would like to extend the free bus service as offered in the Ontario Works Transit Affordability Pass Program.

I would also like to see the option of a reduced cost "off peak" bus pass for all transit riders. Public transit is a valuable resource and an essential part of making sure all people have equal access to everything our community offers.

3. As a former permanent resident and now a Canadian citizen, I do support this idea. Permanent residents have already made significant commitments to this country and to their communities. They work, study, pay taxes, own homes, have kids and more. I believe that extending the right to vote locally reflects these contributions and commitment, and provides an avenue for permanent residents to get more involved in civic life. (This would not extend to holding office, however, which should remain only for citizens.)

Provincial and federal elections - and through them, the policies that shape immigration - should remain for citizens alone. However, municipal elections provide a forum in which permanent residents can have a say over the issues that most directly touch their everyday lives.

To bring such a system to Waterloo, I would first study other global examples, such as the systems in New Zealand and Ireland. I would also support local groups planning to draft a referendum on the issue.

### **Carol Parsons**

1. We are living in "the age of migration." More people than ever now live outside their country of birth. Social inclusion does not just happen organically – local government has a responsibility to develop local policies that manage diversity and integrate newcomers and long-established residents into social, economic and political environments. Settlement services are a vital part of the integration process, providing support, knowledge, and resources that aid newcomers to our community - I look forward to including representatives from Immigration Partnership in an Advisory Group I will establish in hopes of increasing collaboration within our communities.
2. Affordable transit is critical to people in need in our community, it allows them to access education, employment, and recreation opportunities. I would be in favor of exploring the option of a discounted transit pass for low income residents, something that is already in place in cities such as Brampton, London and Edmonton. This program could involve collaboration with and support from other partners such as local libraries, recreation facilities and the provincial government.
3. Permanent residents are people who have immigrated to Canada but who are not Canadian citizens. They're entitled to social benefits and health care coverage, and can also work, live or study anywhere in Canada. They're entitled to protection under Canadian law and the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. I believe that extending voting rights to permanent residents is long overdue; if you want immigrants to feel like they belong, one way to accomplish this is to give them a voice and give them a vote.

## Township of North Dumfries

### Mayor

#### **Sue Foxton**

1. Inclusiveness and acceptance are not just a campaign slogan but a lifestyle we must all live. With the exception of the indigenous people, we are all descended from immigrants who helped to shape our society today. When I think of the great courage it takes to seek out a new home and lifestyle it is overwhelming. I am Armenian, my Grandfather escaped just before the genocide, immigration is a vital part of our society and I will do all I can to be inclusive and honour their courage as a politician and as a citizen.
2. I have always thought we should subsidize transit for newcomers and low income. It is sad that we run buses that are not full yet so many need the service and how wonderful to assist those in need and see our buses full.
3. Yes and I have promoted this in the past, I will continue to address this issue.

## Township of Wellesley

### Mayor

#### **Berenia Wheaton**

1. First, we need to ensure that the Immigration Partnership has the provincial and/or federal funding that it needs to support new Canadians to our area. Secondly, we need all 7 of the member municipalities to support the partnership through awareness and to celebrate the economic and community impact that a diverse region brings. All levels of government as well as economic development agencies can help new Canadians connect with employment opportunities. In my professional capacity as an economic developer, I have found that making the connection between New Canadians and local employers to be of great benefit to both groups.
2. At the rural municipal level, we do not have any transit or public transportation options, which makes locating in the rural areas of Waterloo Region a challenge for new Canadians. Within urban areas, Settlement Services should have access to discounted or free transit passes, much like other social service departments have. Perhaps the reduced fare for seniors and students could be extended to new Canadians for a fixed amount of time.
3. Given that the residency requirement for permanent residents only requires 730 days of residency during each five year period, I don't believe that voter eligibility should be extended. Once a PR becomes a Canadian Citizen, they will have the privilege of voting.

# Township of Wilmot

## Councillor – Ward 3

### **Barry Fisher**

1. I will support the efforts of the Immigration Partnership and other stake holders to make all of the new comers welcome. Wilmot is a rural township which relies on temporary workers. Pfennings Organic Farms as an example have dozens of temporary workers each year. They feel comfortable in the area which is located between New Hamburg and Baden. They provide a great service to the area.
2. Wilmot Township three years ago lobbied for a bus route to Kitchener Waterloo. The township currently subsidizes the bus route ( I believe it is just over \$100,000 annually) to provide this service to our residents. The bus comes from the Boardwalk on Ira Needles Boulevard and goes to New Hamburg many times a day, which allows people to connect with other bus routes from there. I believe the cost of the ticket is currently very affordable.
3. I do support the idea of immigrants being allowed to vote. I could ask council to pass a motion to send an official request to the appropriate governments to allow this to happen. If passed it could be shared with many other municipalities in Ontario and sent off to the Provincial of Federal government.

## Councillor – Ward 4

### **Steven Martin**

1. I am interested in supporting and welcoming immigration and refugees into our community. There are opportunities for jobs, and there are places that we have needs that immigrants and refugees can fill. Sometimes they have skills that are needed in our community. I believe that we benefit by opening up our communities to newcomers. So it is a good thing to work with the Immigration Partnership. When requests are brought to the Township Council, I would want to support programs that welcome immigrants and refugees into our community. Locally, the Wilmot Family Resource Centre is an important program in our community, and I would want to promote and support it. Local agencies, churches, and individuals have sponsored refugees, and their work should be encouraged. I am interested in learning more about how I can be supportive, and I would want to listen to people in my community about how to support immigration as well as how to support refugees.
2. I would want to work with our Township Council and the Region to continue to work on making public transportation affordable. We now have public transportation in Wilmot Township, and I would want to do what I can to make sure that it continues. There are subsidies that could be developed in working with an agency like the Wilmot Family Resource Centre. There needs to be a social service agency that is designated for subsidies for transportation, and I would want to see what could be done. Already the Wilmot Family Resource Centre gives out bus tickets, and this program is important to support. Many people in the community support the Resource Centre, and if elected I would want to do whatever I could to continue to promote and support this agency.
3. I do support permanent residents voting in municipal elections. I think that encouraging people to become Canadian citizens is one important step. Another way to work at it would be to work on the issue of permanent residents voting in municipal elections. Cities across Canada have been voting in favour of this issue. I would recommend to Wilmot Township that we also vote in favour of permanent residents voting in our municipal elections.

## **Jennifer Pfenning**

1. I recognise the value of new residents of all kinds to our community. As an employer, I have hired many recent arrivals to the area. If elected, I would work to ensure that systems are open and accessible to newcomers. I would connect with the settlement agencies in larger urban centres in the region to ensure that we are making our community a welcoming place for all.
2. The recent addition of a bus route serving this community is one that I applaud. As Councillor I would work to advocate for increased service and development of a plan to ensure an effective transportation solution for our community as we grow into the future.
3. I support all residents having the right to vote in Municipal elections. While the legal process to address this is not familiar to me, I would support the work of agencies already involved in working on this issue.

## **Township of Woolwich**

### **Councillor – Ward 1**

#### **Scott McMillan**

1. I am willing to meet and hear the concerns of any community partner working out of Woolwich township. While migrants may not settle in Woolwich at the same rate as other municipalities in the Region we are starting to see more, which is great. They bring a diversity to our community that enriches the lives of everyone here. Working together to limit barriers caused by language, or customs is something I have been committed to as an elected official. Creating spaces that celebrates identity and empowers everyone through equitable and inclusive policy is something I will always be committed to.
2. We have one bus line in Woolwich, route 21. The ridership has been slow through the first few years, and it's been difficult to justify the public expense. However, when doing a cost benefit analysis, it has to be understood that the people who do benefit from it, while they may be smaller in number, the benefit to them is disproportionately large. We have many marginalized and disadvantaged groups that benefit immensely from this bus route. Recently Kiwanis transit has partnered with GRT to create a pilot project to try to diver passengers from Kiwanis to the GRT. I am hopeful that creative solutions like this can be found to increase ridership and justify the cost of the transit.
3. Permanent residents should be able to vote. People who live here, pay taxes here, work here are doing so without representation. Taxation without representation is the antithesis to the idea of responsible government that this country was founded on. I hope we can work to correct this situation.

### **Councillor – Ward 3**

#### **Patrick Merlihan**

1. Woolwich Township is set for unprecedented growth for the next two decades. The municipality has taken a slow-growth approach to development making it easier to plan and pay for infrastructure to support this growth. Elmira, Breslau and St. Jacobs will see major increases in density which will account for more people and a greater variety of housing types and affordability. Traditionally, Woolwich has been a welcoming community to refugees through various church groups and faith-based organizations. While inviting newcomers to the municipality hasn't been a formal service, I would like

to see that change. As part of my re-election platform, I will advocate to explore ways to become more inclusive, welcoming and helpful to all new residents. I would certainly seek out stakeholder groups to gather information to insure we could meet the needs of new immigrants to our communities.

2. Woolwich Township has a bus route which serves as a connection point to the GRT and eventual LRT. Through partnership with Kiwanis Transit a free Elmira shuttle bus service recently started shuttling residents within town to current GRT bus stops. A future Go-Train stop in Breslau might be possible to support a bus route connecting Kitchener to Breslau. I would much rather see all of our transit options in use by residents then seeing empty buses circling routes. I would support providing essential transit for low-income riders at a rate based on their use and income. Woolwich Township is a lower-tier government, so that is a decision for Waterloo Region Council.
3. I would support allowing permanent residents the right to vote in municipal elections. Voting is a symbolic gesture of belonging and inclusion. If you live here, you should have a say in how your municipality is governed. I would also support lowering the voting age to 16 including young people in more decision-making. This makes for a more engaged citizenry in our community. I would be happy to start the conversation in Woolwich Township while working within the framework of the Municipal Act. I would also want to consult the Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO), a policy and advocacy group, to explore this issue further.