

Aurora Votes 2022: Delivering a new high school while tempering traffic top of mind for Ward 5 candidate Lounds



His experience as a member of the Town's Heritage Advisory Committee has opened Robert Lounds' eyes to how to stick within parameters and maintain the historic character of a community.

Now, he's looking to find a place at Aurora's top table as a candidate for Ward 5 in this month's Municipal Election.

A resident of Ward 5 for more than 18 years, it's an area of Aurora close to his heart. As he goes door-to-door, he is mindful of present issues, as well as issues that might arise in the future as the York Region District School Board moves to relocate Dr. G.W. Williams Secondary School to Bayview Avenue at Spring Farm.

‘I am interested in seeing the new high school get built and I feel that's important not only for Ward 5 but for the Town of Aurora to have this built sooner rather than later,’ he says. ‘I know it has been pushed out numerous years and it looks like it's being locked down for 2025, but as a candidate one of my priorities is making sure this is built by 2025 on time.’

As much as he says this will be a benefit of the community, he says he's also keeping an eye on the impact the school might have on local traffic.

‘We don't want Spring Farm being gridlock from 8 a.m. to 9 p.m. and between 3 and 4 p.m., and part of that is making sure the Official Plan is followed and making sure that we take all considerations into play as we make the best decisions as to how traffic should flow to avoid gridlock and the annoyance of neighbours living across the street,’ he says. ‘The feedback I've received mostly from Ward 5 is they're excited about it. You can see new fields being built that the community will be able to participate in and it's exciting to finally get this done.’

Living within the Ward with his wife and their two sons, Lounds says he has experience as a coach and a convenor in the community and has always looked at ways to become more involved. This led to his appointment to the Heritage Advisory Committee, something he says served as an ‘eye-opener’ to ‘how much goes on in this Town and how much you can actually be involved with it.’

That triggered his excitement to throw his hat in the municipal ring, he says, but he was also galvanized by development both within and outside the ward. These development areas include Mavrinc Boulevard at Wellington and the northeast quadrant of Wellington and John West Way.

"I want to make sure the Official Plan is followed once it has been determined and they're taking into consideration all the environmental policies that might land within that area," he says. "Wellington and Industrial is also a development area that could cause concern with traffic and everything like that. It is just making sure that the proper actions are taken to make sure there's a steady flow of traffic and minimal disturbance to the communities."

As a candidate, he says he's dedicated to measures that will keep the ward clean and businesses stay open. This includes working closely with business owners as well as laying the groundwork for events within the ward to "stimulate growth and participation, which will always lead to foot traffic and participation within this community."

He wants to be "a part of the solution" to residents' concerns over train whistles, for instance, and setting parameters on the size and massing of buildings that are proposed for Aurora "residential and otherwise."

"I am a big supporter of what the Town is doing with Town Square. I think it is critical to continue to create those opportunities for foot traffic, for participation. I can just imagine what can come out of this where it is going to be art shows, music shows, food events. What they do today is so beneficial for the community. I love the fact I am able to go to Ribfest and just see a massive group from the Town supporting an event, raising money for great causes. Hoedown" is always a great fundraiser and just the whole Town coming together. It's exciting.

"I have been in the supply chain world for the past 20+ years and what are some of the most important things? Delivering a product to a customer on time, every time. That's the motto, doing everything possible to make those scenarios come to life and happen. It is budget-management, delivering a product on time, it's communicating the right information. It is just communicating information, really, to the residents of Aurora that would be key. That's something I can do: open door policy, listening to everyone, and being a voice for others to get facts on the table and just keeping this Town as it is beautiful today."

By Brock Weir
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