

Aurora Votes 2022: Ward 5 candidate Ian Clark vows to keep eye on growth development



In his first two bids for a seat at the Council table, Ian Clark was focused on growth, development, and how a community like Aurora should move to accommodate a significant influx of people over the next 20 years.

These issues, he says, may have been overshadowed in 2014 and 2018 to other hot-button topics but he's back in the race, this time for Ward 5, and the issues he's still running on are ?more relevant? than ever before.

?The first time I ran in 2014, I was running on the same campaign I am running on now, which is about responsible growth in Aurora,? says Clark. ?How do you grow a community like ours? How do you prepare to take on the type of population that's anticipated to come to Aurora over the next 20 years and still maintain what I tend to call Aurora's brand, which is the green factor, the family-friendly factor, and how do you maintain and grow our community??

Intensification will need to take place in order to accommodate growth targets handed down to Aurora from the Province and Clark says intensification will impact Ward 5 ?on everything from traffic, to safety, to just greenspace and the community we live in.?

?I have described myself as ?NIMBY? (Not in My Back Yard) and I tend to be a candidate who is more of a protectionist candidate for neighbourhoods and the people who live here now,? he says. ?I am always looking to make sure the people who are living in Aurora?that we honour their wishes when we proceed with any new infrastructure projects or construction.?

An example he gives in this regard is the stacked townhouse complex on Yonge Street, just north of Wellington, which he says did not fit into the Aurora Promenade Plan. With little setback from the street, it's ?an example where (development) is done wrong? and any future construction ? intensification, infill or otherwise ? needs to respect the ?spirit? of the Town.

?We moved to Aurora for a reason and I think it was appealing for a lot of people that lived here, mostly for the greenspaces that we have, the safety of the community, [and] the aesthetic of the Town,? he says. ?In the upcoming years, I think that's going to be under a lot of pressure as I don't think we're going to be building single detached homes in Aurora.?

He estimates that 7,000 units of housing will be needed to accommodate this growth and a key question will be the style of what's ultimately built.

?I want to encourage conversations around if we're going to build 7,000 units of housing, what are those 7,000 units and can we talk about them now instead of discovering them as they are built across the street from you or around the corner? Those are the issues of the future for Aurora and I think a lot of it is going to centre around we're growing: our service levels, the facilities we have built today. None of the facilities are ready to accommodate 40 per cent more people in any regard. My focus as a candidate is more about maintaining a lifestyle for the citizens of Aurora around a time of expansion, focusing on infrastructure facilities, and be sure that what's built integrates with our Town and doesn't disrupt the lifestyle and lives of the current citizens of Aurora.?

?There are probably 1,500 people who live in the area right around us,? he continues, gesturing to the areas around Queen's Diamond Jubilee Park. ?Any further intensification of this area is going to have a huge impact on the citizens who live here, even being able to just navigate around the Town, get out of your subdivision in the morning. If they proceed with constructing [the new Dr. G.W. Williams High School on Bayview Avenue] we will have schools and high traffic areas on our major exits out of Ward 5 and it is going to be a challenge. If we don't invest in infrastructure and services then more population just means a decline in services because you're going to do more with the same service levels. We should be focusing on facilities, upgrading our facilities, [and] making sure we have infrastructure.?

Clark is not a fan of the Ward System Aurora recently adopted, stating that with multiple people running in each ward, voters are somewhat short-changed if they think more than one Council candidate on their ballot would be a good voice at the table and they're only able to pick one. That being said, he says it's helped candidates like him focus their attentions more locally.

?I am really a candidate who appreciates the community we have and I know looking to the future you can't stop change, but if you can get out in front of change you can make sure it aligns with the priorities of the people who live here now,? he says.

By Brock WeirEditorLocal Journalism Initiative Reporter