

## Aurora Votes 2022: Ward 6 candidate Kim hopes to continue engaging community



When he first ran for Council in 2010, Harold Kim set out on a mission to get new residents engaged in the community.

Two terms on, and in the running for a third, this time as a candidate for Ward 6, that is still the primary motivation for going door to door.

The reason I moved to Aurora was because there was something special [about the community], which is the spirit of volunteerism, he says. You don't get that anywhere else in the GTA: We get all these new volunteers to organize various programs and events and we were getting a lot of new residents from across Southern Ontario and the GTA and I didn't want this spirit of volunteerism to be diluted. I felt I needed to make an effort to engage them into the community and the migration in of new residents has accelerated and all the more reason I need to stay on board to get them engaged.

A banker by trade, Kim says he wants to be accountable for the Town's finances and budgets, and he also wants to help steer a number of initiatives begun by the outgoing Council through to completion, including the redevelopment of Town Square.

We still have a few months to go [and] unfortunately it overlaps with the new term and I want to make sure the project is completed and there are no hiccups, he says. In the last two or three years, with the pandemic and seeing retailers and small businesses struggle and be challenged by this pandemic, it puts more of that human element and I want to contribute to trying to change that around for small businesses because they're Aurorans.

I was part of the Small Business Continuity Task Force when the pandemic happened and when you can participate in something that can change someone's or families' lives, it gives you that motivation for wanting to serve.

Servant leadership, is very important to him, he says. He says it's a theme he lives by and it's not just a tagline.

Going door-to-door this time around, he says the residents of Ward 6 have shared their thoughts on property taxes, as well as development particularly what is being constructed east of Leslie Street.

They're excited by incoming businesses like Winners, HomeSense and Farm Boy coming into the area, but questions have been raised about where intensification might happen once the area reaches build-out.

As Ward 6 becomes more fully developed, there are spots where intensification is happening [and residents want to know] how can we get engaged, he says. I think it is a perfect formula because many people get engaged because they want to look after their

neighbourhood and homes when you see development happening adjacent to their neighbours.

?After COVID, many people have dogs and they want to make sure they're allowed to walk their dogs on the wilderness trail. Why not? You're not going to leave your dog. The trails system is meant for you and your family and for many people dogs are part of your family. If you live alone, all the more reason you don't leave your dog behind. That is one of the items that will be discussed in Council chambers. The development on 271 Holladay Drive is certainly a concern. There's a house in the ward that burned down a couple of years ago that stands empty right now, so that has been a topic of concern and I will certainly bring it up in Council chambers or to staff in terms of cleaning up that property sooner rather than later.?

Infill development is an issue that goes far beyond Ward 6 and it's one Town-wide concern he says he wants to keep a close eye on if re-elected. In addition to Leslie and Wellington, particular areas include Aurora's southeast quadrant and around Aurora High Schools.

As he looks back on his time on Council, Kim says he's proud of not just his work engaging residents, but his service on the Town's Finance Advisory Committee (FAC) where he was ?able to initiate department-wide, Town-wide due diligence in all the departments and I made it clear that it wasn't just an efficiency or cost-cutting activity, it was also [identifying] gaps.

?We need to allocate resources to an area where we need more resources, we need to understand that,? he says. ?We did Town-wide due diligence over the last four years and I am very pleased about that. [?] The last four years has been the lowest property tax increase relative to the previous four terms, so out of the five terms this has been the lowest property taxes in five terms. We're proud of that and the recommendations came from the FAC, so I am very happy I was able to contribute to that.

?For me, it is about serving. It is not about the position, it is not about anything else; it is really about serving the community. I hope I am re-elected. I do believe I have another four years to give and I hope that the residents would give me the opportunity to serve them another four years. It would be an honour and I would be grateful for their support.?

By Brock WeirEditorLocal Journalism Initiative Reporter