



LEAP Thunder Bay Candidate Survey

Kim Ducharme

1. What contribution to making Thunder Bay a better place to live are you most proud of?

There are a couple of things:

- a) I am very proud that my college students join me each year in a number of community events including: Coldest Night Walk, Chew ON This Campaign, Food Security Forums, MMIW Memory Walks, Youth Homelessness forums, Point in Time Counts;
- b) Developing a Community Development Facebook page for CYCs.

2. What are three priorities that would guide your work on City Council?

Three priorities that I have during my term on council include serving as the Children's Advocate, enhancing safety in the community and engaging in a needed discussion about racism.

- I. My goal is to revive the role of Children's Advocate & support the development of a youth services task force. Ensuring that the new money from the federal government for the Youth Inclusion Program is used in the most effective manner.
- II. Safety within our community must be addressed. Too many kids have died in our community. It's got to stop. I want answers, accountability and like you, I want change. I am anxiously awaiting the OIPRD report and the now delayed Ontario Civilian Police Commission (OCPC) report. I want to work with all parties to ensure that recommendations are addressed in a timely manner.
- III. It is time to start talking about racism, this conversation is long overdue. We need to start building a culture of respect and one that fosters diversity and values the inclusion for all. The first step in solving a problem is recognizing there is one. I don't believe our leaders have done this to date. Our reputation in this province is extremely troubling.

3. What three community organizations in Thunder Bay are you most interested in supporting?

I am most interested in supporting the SOS (Street Outreach Services) Program and the development of a much overdue youth shelter. I also believe the grassroots programs like Stand Up for Clean Up and the Bear Clan Patrol also need to be supported by our city.

4. How would you build relationships between the City of Thunder Bay, Indigenous residents and neighbours?

Having spent my career as a CYC, I have learned that solutions are all about relationships. These take investment of time and require engagement: listening, insight and mutuality. The first step is to show up in all neighbourhoods and communities and start listening to people – holding public forums/community gatherings.

5. What should the City of Thunder Bay do to pursue reconciliation with Indigenous peoples?

- I. Again, community forums/gatherings to start hearing from Indigenous people directly about what the City of Thunder Bay can do to pursue reconciliation. We need to listen and respond to the feedback.
- II. Recommend the creation of a civilian task force with significant representation from the Indigenous community, along with other marginalized sectors of our community, as a mechanism to gauge the temperature of our community. Reporting directly to City Council, this task force would act as a bridge between the current racially polarized community and those sworn to protect it.

6. The city of Victoria, BC recently removed a statue of Sir John A. MacDonald from in front of their City Hall due to his role in starting Indian Residential Schools. What is your opinion on this?

Statues are not going to change history or pave the road to reconciliation. What we need to do is build strong relationships and work together to build an even stronger Thunder Bay.

7. Is the City of Thunder Bay doing enough to mitigate and adapt to climate change?

To be honest, this is an area where I know I need to do more studying. I'm not sure WHAT they are doing. I am aware of the document *Thunder Bay Climate Change Connection*, which I believe needs to be marketed better and definitely shared and championed in collaboration with our youth.

8. The City of Portland, Oregon voted to ban all new fossil fuel infrastructure. Would you vote to do the same in Thunder Bay?

Climate change is happening and we need to work together to build a resilient community. We need to examine alternative sources of energy and sustainable ways of conducting business. It's time.

9. The Nuclear Waste Management Organization is currently looking at Ignace as a possible site to bury nuclear waste from southern Ontario. Would you vote to prevent the transportation of nuclear waste through our city?

YES.

10. Would you be willing to get arrested at a protest to protect our natural environment?

This is a toughie. I would LOVE to say yes to this, but in all honesty, no. I am a Child & Youth Care Practitioner. A criminal record would make it difficult for me to keep doing what I love. I WOULD be willing to support a protest in a million other ways.

11. Tell us one example of how you would reduce homelessness and increase housing in Thunder Bay.

“It is argued that the average monthly costs of housing people while they are homeless are \$1,932 for a shelter bed, \$4,333 for provincial jail, or \$10,900 for a hospital bed.”
(Wellesley Institute’s Blueprint to End Homelessness, 2007).

Compare this to the average monthly cost of rent in Thunder Bay. We could reduce homelessness with rent supplements, housing teams, or special outreach teams that can make connections with those who need support in getting housed. Best Practices indicate the need for a city councillor championing the issue of homelessness and poverty. As for increasing housing in Thunder Bay, let’s examine our vacant properties and explore how we can turn them into housing.

12. Would you appeal to the Province to re-instate the Ontario Basic Income Pilot? If so, how?

Yes. First, by putting forth a motion “denouncing” the provincial government’s cancellation of the Basic Income Pilot Project; second, by supporting those organizations and groups in their efforts to protest or rally – letter writing campaign, petition, etc.; third, by supporting our local participants to join the class action lawsuit started in Lindsay, ON.

13. Tell us one thing you would do to support local businesses.

Reform bylaws and reduce red tape!! Work towards improving the relationship between our city departments and our local businesses. The City should be asking local businesses regularly “*how can we help you thrive?*” At the moment, I am hearing more complaints about the City’s practices and how difficult it can be to move a local business forward. I have spoken with local businesses who would like to move forward in beautifying/engaging their neighbourhoods but the red tape is discouraging.

14. Tell us one thing you would do to support local food production.

There are a few things:

- Look for ways to increase urban gardening...changing zoning to allow for use of vacant property to garden;
- Follow Quebec’s lead and join the campaigns for anti-food waste law to be implemented in Canada, nationwide. Quebec is now requiring that all supermarkets give unused food to foodbanks. I love that;
- Evaluate the city’s processes for accessing federal and provincial funding initiatives, most recently the missed opportunities through the Municipalities for Climate Innovation Program (MCIP) and the Municipal Asset Management Program (MAMP).

15. Tell you one thing you would do to improve the public transportation system.

Start by closely examining Kingston Transit's Five-Year Plan. I LOVE everything about it, especially;

- *Introduce express routes;*
- *Provide high school students with travel training sessions that provide an orientation to transit travel, then offer free transit to continue exposing youth to the benefits of using public transit;*
- *Expand the free child fare category to include all children 12 and under;*
- *Expand the youth fare category to include all youth ages 13 – 24 to support youth*
- *Strategies;*
- *Expand the family pass to include larger families and reduce the overall cost;*
- *Establish a group rate for elementary schools using Kingston Transit for school trips;*
- *Provide more affordable transit options for low income transit users;*
- *Continue free promotional days in conjunction with broad based community events – Santa Claus Parade.*

.....I could go on. 😊

16. Do you support lowering bus fares?

See above.

17. Would you work to have the Memorial Link, a proposed bike lane linking Port Arthur and Fort William, built within three years?

That would be great. I would however work with my City Council team on whatever decision was moved forward to ensure that it support public transit efforts.

18. Tell us one thing you would do to help Thunder Bay neighbourhoods become safer and more vibrant.

Identify priority neighbourhoods that are struggling with crime and violence and work with the community on developing an action plan! Call emergency neighbourhood meetings in those areas struggling the most and start asking the neighbours what they need. Support grassroots movements like Evergreen in several key neighbourhoods in each Ward. Community consultations with neighbours, local businesses, organizations around the topic of safety and creating more vibrant communities, in addition to #5(II).

19. Tell us one thing you have done to support racialized people, to increase accessibility, or to support LGBTQ+ people in Thunder Bay.

I have done many things to support these groups;

- Participated in community events supporting these groups, i.e. Memory Walks, PRIDE, rally's, etc.;
- Created opportunities for my students to host community events supporting these groups;

- Advocated for the involvement of community members in supporting these groups via my FB pages and role as Professor;
- Volunteered at community events supporting these groups;
- Read, consult, listen, engage with members of these groups to support my own knowledge and allyship.

20. Tell us one thing you would do to support urban infill?

- Advocate for the preservation of open spaces, green spaces, farmland, natural beauty and critical environmental areas (Kam Park). Continue the open streets initiatives, perhaps make some of them permanent;
- Direct development towards existing communities/neighbourhoods by utilizing the resources that are already in place. No more new subdivisions.

21. How would you put pressure on the province to proceed with the planned safe injection centres in Thunder Bay?

Much of the same as #12.

22. Is there anything else you would like us to know about the vision you have for Thunder Bay?

- More women are needed on city council; that's why I am running in this election;
- We need to better streamline the bureaucracy to find the cost savings;
- Let's get better at auditing our services, our decisions, our practices – public self-assessment/reflection is missing. Let's introduce something like a monthly coffeehouse with a city councilor. I plan to continue my *Tuesday Tabletalk with Kim Ducharme* (see my FB page, where every Tuesday, I initiate a chat with the community on a topic);
- People need to know HOW and WHY decisions are made. Let's start talking the language of the people. City Council needs to be accessible and that means RELATABLE;
- City Council needs to operate as a TEAM. This means trust, support and collaboration. As in CYC practice, if the team is not cohesive, the youth become unsettled.