

## 2SLGBTQIA+ Questionnaire for Waterloo Region Municipal Candidates

**Name:** Shannon Weber

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**Do you identify as a member of a 2SLGBTQIA+ community?**

No

**What role are you running for?**

Mayor of Waterloo

**What do you believe are the most critical issues for the local 2SLGBTQIA+ community? If elected, how would you work with the local community to address these issues?**

I believe that in Waterloo Region, our 2SLGBTQIA+ community faces many barriers still, including systemic discrimination in processes, policies and service delivery. As Mayor, I will work with the community to tackle these barriers and help our City and Region be a more welcoming, inclusive and liveable community for all.

**Have you ever participated in 2SLGBTQIA+ Cultural Competency Training?**

Yes, I have through a variety of leadership roles and volunteer work both directly within the community or with organizations supporting community initiatives. For example, I have participated in Rainbow Health Ontario training through my work at the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario and various equity training programs through my work at Laurier, Wellbeing Waterloo Region, and the KW Community Foundation.

**Systemic homophobia, biphobia, and transphobia are still prevalent in our community, resulting in significant socioeconomic disparities within 2SLGBTQIA+ communities. If elected, how will you combat homophobia, biphobia, and transphobia?**

I will continue to support and amplify voices of organizations like Spectrum WR. As Mayor, I will continue to support the Indigenous Initiatives, Anti-Racism, Accessibility and Equity team that has been created at the City of Waterloo as well as the equivalent work at the Regional level. This work is critical to understanding and tackling systemic challenges in our organizations with the goal of a more inclusive recovery in the City and Region as a whole.

**If elected, how would you address the ongoing issues of homelessness and mental health, especially as they disproportionately affect members of the 2SLGBTQIA+ community?**

As Mayor, I will advocate for community members who have been disproportionately affected by discrimination and legacies such as homophobia and transphobia at all levels of government. At the Regional level, this will involve inclusive and culturally-sensitive approaches to housing and public health. As a community leader and volunteer in this space and someone who has worked to advance the focus on affordable housing through my work at the Community Foundation, Wellbeing Waterloo Region and House of Friendship, I will advocate for more wrap-around, inclusive and culturally-sensitive services that can recognize the intersection of needs related to mental health, housing and overall wellbeing.

**Do you agree with the statement that "trans rights are human rights, and must be protected as such?"**

Yes, I agree.

**What is one motion would you bring to council that you think will improve the lives of specifically queer people, racialized individuals and/or marginalized residents and why?**

I will maintain a focus on Indigenous Initiatives, Anti-Racism, Accessibility and Equity team as we all continuing to engage with groups like Spectrum to tackle systemic challenges through our decision-making.

**When thinking about our schools, do you agree that 2SLGBTQIA+ representation in books and lessons is critical at all grade levels? How would you support 2SLGBTQIA+ students in schools?**

While schools are outside of the jurisdiction of municipalities, I think that we play a role in partnering to create welcoming and safe spaces and to encourage inclusive practices and services. For example, municipal services and affiliated organizations can promote learning and advocacy for 2SLGBTQIA+ students in museums, libraries, recreational programming and more. I have been part of the work with the Children & Youth Planning Table, Wellbeing Waterloo Region and Smart Waterloo Region and I see opportunity to build-out our youth connector program at the neighbourhood level. Here I think that our youth can be empowered to advocate for and program safe, inclusive spaces and activities at the neighbourhood level and in partnership with schools.