

Candidate Details

David Alton

Mayor of Kitchener

What is your motivation for running for election?

I currently work as a community facilitator bridging between advocates and municipal staff. The most disruptive and difficult part of this work is the interference of elected officials. They put tremendous stress on all the stakeholders I work with and bring chaos to a community of people genuinely trying to improve housing outcomes. I am running to create a more caring environment so all the amazing people I work with can succeed.

What are your top three priority issues you want to address at Regional Council?

Housing, municipal finance, anti-hate work

What is your vision for each of the issues you identified above?

I have extensive platforms on these issues at davidalton.org. But for a quick summary: for housing I want to jump start non market solutions and establish a base of human rights to stabilize the system. For municipal finance I want to aggressively address the capital debt issues through public education, more efficient development, and leveraging social housing tools. For anti-hate work I want to set a clear time from the mayor's office and direct expand funding and local community control of upstream initiatives.

What tangible steps would you take to increase the supply of affordable housing across the Region?

I want to implement a vacancy tax and acquisition strategy to get underutilized land redeveloped or in to the public domain where they can be leveraged through land leasing and partnerships with non market housing providers. I want to increase funding to municipal housing providers and set up public finance systems that allow us to leverage their assets for further social housing construction. I want to protect current affordable housing stock through a tenant rights hub and landlord licensing. I want to launch a age in place program that would redevelop low density seniors housing into affordable mid rise senior housing.

What is your plan to expand access to affordable, high-quality child care and create additional child care spaces?

I want to revisit the region childcare services that were shut down and learn from the staff expertise that remains.

What is your position on the Provincial government's efforts to increase private sector involvement in drinking water and wastewater services?

Absolutely opposed. From Walkerton to Sidewalk Labs privatizing public services only increases risk and often expenses. We need to address the water infrastructure capital debt with more efficient development, public education, and water conservation efforts especially towards high users.

What role should the Region play in protecting publicly owned water services?

I think public education is critical. There was a lot of misinformation about the water crisis this year. But more importantly the pressure to privatise is coming from decades of wasteful

development and neglect. The public needs to understand how water infrastructure works.

What forms of inequity do you believe are the most significant challenges in our community? How would you address them?

The most critical inequities are the ones being created by the social apartheid nature of our housing system. We are now at a place where many homeowners are even experiencing precarity and where homeless people are becoming supportless and having their fundamental human rights violated. We need to tackle this system through aggressive social housing efforts, low barrier supports, and ultimately litigating and enshrining the right to housing.

This social apartheid system means that lower income residents are subsidizing higher income residents which needs to be addressed through property tax reform, public education, and more efficient development.

There are also some serious hate risks in our community. There is growing Islamophobia that is reaching line wolf incident level risk. And white supremacist are organizing. Similarly there has been a spike in anti-newcomer sentiment spurred on by the scapegoating of the economic situation and harmful narratives related to Conestoga College and Tim Hortons. Newcomers need to know that they will be protected by strong anti-hate leadership from elected officials and in practice through upstream safety supports where they have agency and funding to build neighbourhood level safety.

What organizations, initiatives, or movements have you supported that work to address systemic discrimination or oppression? Please describe your involvement.

Community legal services and the many co-creator a from the plan to end chronic homelessness should be commended for their efforts to protect the right to life liberty and security of the person. I wrote an affidavit in the court case and have been an active stakeholder in lobbying council and changing public narratives. Through my work at the social development centre I work closely with a network of lived experts and grassroots organizers. I cofounded groundupwr and queer youth defense to address queerphobic issues at school boards and the kpl. I even got fined by Wilmot for organizing against white supremacy in the township. I have been embedded in willow river centre and a better tent city organizing for many years now. I act as a bridge communicator between facilities and fightback to minimize conflict over 100 Victoria. From street level organizing to more formal non profits like the centre for mutual well-being I am involved in networks of anti hate organizing.

Can you commit to publicly speaking up in favour of these demands, including at Council meetings?

Yes