

Warm Welcome Coalition Municipal Election Questions

Preamble

The **Warm Welcome Coalition** is a group of committed Churches, Agencies and Community activists coming together to support our houseless community, address food insecurity, and collaboratively strive towards a more equitable world for everyone. We are committed to encouraging governments to develop a real strategy to end houselessness. As we approach the Municipal Election, we invite you to answer to following questions as a resource to voters discerning during this election.

Please send responses to:

warmwelcomeregina@gmail.com

1. Will you make ending houselessness in Regina one of your primary goals as a councilor?
2. When the 2025 City of Regina budget is being debated, will you call for an amount equivalent to 15% of the Regina Police Service operating budget to be allocated to ending houselessness? (This does not mean taking the money out of the RPS operating budget, but rather using the budget as a base on which to make a calculation. It also doesn't mean using the money to support CBOs such as Carmichael. That money should come out of a different fund. Rather, it means using the money to actually provide housing, with wraparound supports, if necessary, for unhoused people.)
3. If Regina's houselessness crisis has not been satisfactorily resolved by August 1, 2025 will you push for a plan that will ensure that all residents have barrier-free access to safe temporary shelter/warming space by October 1 and through to May 30?
4. Where do you stand on encampments? If, in the absence of permanent housing, tent-encampments are established, will you work to ensure that the City of Regina, rather than orchestrating their destruction, provides support, including toilets, water and electricity, garbage collection, and fire and health services, to keep people safe and secure?
5. Will you follow the recommendations of the Federal Housing Advocate's Final Report On Encampments, including:
 - a. Act immediately to save lives, including by ensuring that people living in encampments have access to the basic necessities they need to survive and live in dignity.
 - b. End forced evictions of encampments and put in place alternatives that are designed following meaningful engagement with encampment residents.
 - c. Work with all governments [that] provide support to municipalities.
 - d. Respect the inherent rights of Indigenous Peoples.
 - e. Respect and uphold human rights, including the right to adequate housing.
 - f. Offer people permanent housing options as rapidly as possible.
 - g. And address the root causes of encampments.

<https://www.housingchrc.ca/en/federal-housing-advocates-final-report-calls-for-national-response-to-the-crisis-of-encampments>

6. The current City Council orchestrated the destruction of every tent encampment that appeared in the City. What plan would you have for where unhoused people should go? (In 2004, Regina City Council passed a bylaw that includes the following: “No person shall remain in a park between the hours of 11:00 p.m. and 6:00 a.m.”)
7. Will you speak up if city officials or citizens, when talking about encampments, use discriminatory language against unhoused people? Here are 2 all-too common examples:
 - a) Making reference to “public safety” concerns about an encampment, and thus positioning unhoused people as dangerous: It is unhoused people who are in danger, with each day being a matter of life and death. (The life expectancy of an unhoused person in Canada is 39 years.)
 - b) Claiming that all unhoused people are drug addicts: US data shows that there is no statistical relationship between substance use disorder and houselessness. One can assume that the same holds true in Canada.
<https://datasmart.hks.harvard.edu/exclusive-gregg-colburn-explains-why-homelessness-housing-problem>. Many people with substance use disorder live in houses. The determining factor of houselessness is not substance use disorder, but rather race and class. If you are born with both white privilege and middle class privilege, you are very unlikely to experience houselessness. 80% of unhoused people in Regina are Indigenous.
8. Will you advocate for the construction of affordable rental housing in every Regina neighbourhood and be prepared to support excluding any NIMBYISM against any such developments (discriminatory language against groups coming into a neighbourhood)? NIMBYISM is a form of discrimination according to the Ontario Human Rights Commission.
9. Will you advocate for the City of Regina to put pressure on the provincial government to make available for occupation the 700 empty Sask Housing units in the city asap?