

Questionnaire

1. Many newcomers and marginalized folks, including Chinese seniors and families, use and frequent community centres to stay active and involved. Some community centres are located in neighbourhoods with high concentrations of the Chinese community such as the Kanata Recreation Centre, Richcraft Recreation Complex (Kanata), Minto Recreation Complex (Barrhaven), Walter Baker Sports Centre, Plant Recreation Centre, McNabb Community Centre and more. How will you ensure these community centres are accessible to those who do not speak or read the dominant languages, being English or French?

A series of postcards for community groups to hand out would spread the word about drop-in use of community centres and recreation centres. For specific programs, some of the issue is the guide and registration. It is pretty complex to use for first timers in any language. The online registration needs to be plainer and clearer.

I'd also recommend that settlement programs consider (additional) field trips to our community / recreation centres. There will be issues about conduct that differ between cultures. So explaining Canadian practices will reduce fear of doing the "wrong thing". e.g. Is showering naked okay or must I keep my swim suit on? (All users could use an orientation to the facilities where any question can safely be asked.)

English or French as a second language courses might include reading from the Recreation Guide as part of their curriculum. Basic signage on pricing and rules in languages other than English and French would be appropriate in some locations.

2. OC Transpo

a. This fall, numerous bus routes were changed and shortened to encourage LRT transfers. The LRT has since been delayed to Winter of 2019. Shortened routes like that of the #11 that passes through Somerset St. West and the Chinatown area impact the Chinese community, including seniors, where additional transfers and shortages may affect their accessibility to and from destinations. What will you do to address these issues while the LRT is delayed and while the LRT is operating?

Both now and in the future, Routes 11 and 12 should share a short stretch of route so that people can easier transfer from one to the other. It makes no sense to have people transfer from bus to train and then transfer again one stop later.

I wrote the Transit commission about this very issue on August 4, 2018. In particular, I commented that the proposed Confederation Square endpoint will not feel very safe late at night. As a single female traveller, I prefer to transfer at well populated stops where many people are waiting. So I asked them to end both routes at Rideau where brights lights and crowds will still remain in the post LRT future.

b. How will you engage customers whose dominant language is not English or French in public consultations regarding issues such as bus route changes, town halls and customer feedback?

OC Transpo is generally not great at public consultation. Even as a transit advocate who watches for announcements, I did not see any consultation notice for any of the changes made for September 2nd. For example, the Orléans changes were not discussed in the last round of consultations made in Orléans.

I would propose that advocacy groups like the Chinese Canadian Collective and the Council on Aging are unique groups which should be routinely consulted about route changes which impact their communities. I'd like route changes to trigger notifications to community groups in the same way planning consultations are announced. Finally, transportation costs need to be covered for low income residents who need to travel to participate in the consultations.

But the basic issue is the general lack of commitment to meaningful public consultation.

c. What will you do to ensure that OC Transpo's services are more affordable and accessible for low-income folks?

If the mayor thinks the city can manage with only a 2% raise, OC Transpo can't raise their fees more than 2%. (I want to freeze fares. I'd like to lower fares but the transit budget is a mess since LRT service has been delayed.)

Second, I would start promoting the existing EquiPass. Fewer people applied for it than anticipated. Perhaps, people don't know how to apply or it is too hard to apply. Once we have a revised budget, we should review the lowering the cost of the EquiPass.

Third, I would like to change the way the seniors' free service works - giving seniors 3-4 free day passes on their Presto cards rather than free service every Wednesdays. Putting free service only on Wednesdays means poor service on routes which lots of seniors use e.g. Route 85.

Fourth, I would like to raise the kids ride free maximum age. Raising the age to 10 lower profit a little but is a huge benefit that mostly low income families would use.

3. Current Rideau Raceway casino ads are targeting the Chinese community in Ottawa with orientalist graphics and advertisements written entirely in Chinese characters. Gambling is a social activity ingrained in Chinese culture and is also a common problem within the community. How will you ensure that the community is not being unfairly targeted for gambling? What will you do to also challenge the stereotypes and racial bias that is prevalent in the city and that Chinese Canadians continue to face?

I was not aware that Rideau Raceway was targeting anyone other than those who like gambling. (I don't ever see ads for it myself.) We do need to make sure anyone who needs support with problem gambling can get help. This may mean we need to provide support in languages other than French and English.

I see my role in fighting racial bias as supporting other groups promote their own stories. As a white woman, I try to be mindful of whose stories I have the right to share. I act as an ally by promoting groups on social media so their message is boosted. When I see attacks, I jump into to make it clear that this behaviour is not acceptable.

4. Post-amalgamation, the City of Ottawa has never had a Black, East or Southeast Asian councillor on city council. What will you do to ensure that marginalized groups have the same opportunity and chance to be involved in municipal politics as others do?

In Ward 1, we have two oddities -- lots of candidates and lots of diversity among the candidates. I think other wards should prepare for large pools of candidates as a more diverse pool of people run. I commend Councillor Bob Monette for encouraging so many diverse people to consider running. His willingness to work with all kinds of leaders is one step all councillors can take to encourage future leaders to step forward.

Part of the issue is the pipeline of potential candidates. Often the leaders from marginalized groups are pulled in lots of directions as they are frequently asked to join other groups to improve the other group's diversity. We need to focus on broadening the number of leaders rather than pulling forward the few leaders we already know. Then, more people would have the background experience and name recognition you need to explore running for council.

5. Chinatown has been experiencing gentrification for years. Newer development is pushing out lower income families and local businesses, changing its landscape and affordability. Chinatown is not only a home to many, but a hub for those from the Chinese community living in other wards to come together to reconnect with food, family and history. How will you ensure that affordable housing and suitable businesses remain while retaining the history and heart of the neighbourhood?

I worry about gentrification in all the areas where affordable housing has traditionally been located. It is a city-wide issue. The recent move to inclusionary zoning (the requirement to have low income / affordable housing as a component of all large developments) will help oppose gentrification. In addition, we must build and maintain Ottawa Community Housing projects in all areas of the city. Finally, the Heron Gate evictions by maintenance neglect show that the city has a role in protecting renters from predatory developers.

I'm torn about maintaining Chinatown as the only Chinese hub. This area developed out of racist rental practices in our past. But it is part of our history. As the city grows, I want to see other areas develop a Chinese focus in addition to maintaining a healthy Chinese sector in Somerset Ward.