

What place should the francophone community have in Thunder Bay?

Thunder Bay's francophone community has an important place in our city and in our future. It is part of our history, our culture and increasingly part of our opportunity for growth.

I am not bilingual, and I think it is important to be upfront about that. But you do not have to speak French to recognize the importance of supporting a strong and growing francophone community.

One of the main themes of my campaign is people. I want Thunder Bay to be a community where people from different backgrounds feel welcome, included and able to participate. Our francophone community is an important part of that.

I also see this as an economic and population-growth opportunity. We need to attract more people to Thunder Bay, particularly young people, families, professionals and skilled workers. Being a community where francophones can live, work, raise a family and receive services in French makes Thunder Bay more attractive to people from across Canada and to French-speaking newcomers from around the world.

I would want the City to have a strong relationship with organizations such as AFNOO and to make sure the francophone community has a voice when we talk about economic development, immigration, tourism, culture and the future growth of Thunder Bay.

For me, inclusion means more than saying everyone is welcome. It means making sure people have a meaningful opportunity to participate in the community.

What sort of policies would you put forward to make available or to improve access to municipal information in French?

My campaign has put a strong emphasis on transparency and making City Hall more accessible to the people it serves. Language can be part of that accessibility.

I don't think the answer is simply translating every City document and creating a large new bureaucracy. I would rather start by identifying where providing information in French would make the biggest difference and then build from there.

I would support making important public-facing information available in French, particularly information involving essential municipal services, emergency and public-safety information, elections, major public consultations and information intended to attract new residents, businesses and investment to Thunder Bay.

Technology also gives us opportunities to provide more information in French at a reasonable cost. I would like the City to examine how its website and digital services can provide better French-language access without creating unnecessary administrative costs.

Most importantly, I would want the City to have that conversation directly with the francophone community. Rather than City Hall deciding what francophones need, I would ask organizations such as AFNOO and francophone residents where the greatest barriers currently exist and what improvements would actually be useful.

Transparency only works when people can access and understand the information being provided. If there are practical and affordable ways of removing language barriers and allowing more residents to participate in their municipal government, I would fully support that approach.