

***Kristin Akervall responses to questions from Wilsonville Spokesman 09/03/2020***

*Wilsonville is a predominantly white city but does have a growing Latinx population and some diversity overall. Meanwhile, in terms of representation in leadership, there isn't as much diversity. How can the Wilsonville government ensure that minority voices are being heard?*

I welcomed Metro's recent grant of \$81,200 to Wilsonville to support work with a community partner to bring the Latinx community into the discussion on housing needs in our city. The long-term goal is to build relationships that support the involvement of the Latinx community in decision making and representation in Wilsonville. While the Town Center plan included involvement with the Latinx community, we need strategic, on-going interaction in a broad variety of projects—park and library programming, bike/pedestrian improvements and transit service enhancements.

I would like us to consider how we can better encourage the involvement of underrepresented voices in city programs like the Citizen's Academy which brings in community participants to learn about government departments and how they operate. Giving the Latinx community and other marginalized groups a safe space to speak about community issues can help to broaden the diversity of city leadership.

Finally, we need to be mindful of how we present opportunities for engagement, ensuring invitations are respectful and authentic. Translation services should be available at open houses, and our youth should be welcome to attend community feedback events.

*What do you think about the city of Wilsonville's contract with Clackamas County Sheriff's Office for policing services? How would you evaluate the Wilsonville police overall?*

Our contract with Clackamas County Sheriff's Office brings our community access to tools and services like a special investigations unit and traffic team, and also the Behavioral Health Unit. This program brings three full-time mental health clinicians into partnership with CCSO to assist when responding to a person in crisis. The size of Wilsonville limits our budget for these types of services, so the contract allows for more complete community services without cutting other important community programs.

I have appreciated the open conversations with Wilsonville police on how we bring greater transparency and community building to our city. I have also welcomed hearing perspectives from the community and plans to hold a community wide listening session on this topic. We need to examine our practices and consider how we can make improvements—this is always part of growth and especially timely with the reckoning our society is experiencing regarding social justice and systemic racism. I am grateful for the willingness of all parties to do this work—including the Wilsonville police, city staff, and community members.

*Do you support or oppose the proposed formation of a citizen committee that would assess allegations of police misconduct in Wilsonville? Why or why not? Is there anything else you think city council can do to make sure Clackamas County Sheriff's Office is serving the community justly?*

I support actions that help develop trust in our interracial community relationships, address implicit bias we all hold, and strengthen productive communication channels. I support the idea that this work might be done through a group that reviews policing data and assists in community relationship building, and I will want to explore how this initiative is executed, what does the structure, membership, and defined responsibility of this group look like, and how does it interact with existing community groups that are also looking to forward Diversity, Equity and Inclusion issues. There are many different models and careful analysis will be needed to find what best fits the needs of our community. During these discussions we need close collaboration with community members, the city, and CCSO. I believe we must have everyone at the table to bring the most enduring and effective actions. Work examining police misconduct also needs to include the changes at the State Legislative level including the work of HB 4201, HB 4207, SB 1604.

*Do you have any other ideas for how to make Wilsonville a more welcoming place for all walks of life?*

I want a reality where respect, care, and dignity for all people is held as a common value. In the first few months during my time on council, I was happy to vote in favor (and see support from so many in our community) for a Resolution that calls for Wilsonville to be an inclusive city that honors and respects all people. However, this is ongoing work and I recognize we still have gaps in the opportunities available for and treatment of some community members. In my view, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion work should be cross-cutting themes and woven into everything we do. This includes examining how our city staff reflects/or does not reflect our community, continuing to support programs that provide support to all community members (such as SMART transit and the equity work being done in our school district), offering implicit bias training for staff and council, reviewing our city youth programming and community event outreach, and as our city grows, building quality neighborhoods that include a range of housing options that support safe homes for all people. My vision is for a city that sees the value and the wonderful contributions from all in our community.