

Gerard Balan

Candidate for: Hopkins City Council

How long have you lived in your community?

10 years

Please list any notable supporters or groups of supporters for your campaign

www.hopkinscoalition.com

What are the most important housing challenges facing your community?

Affordability; increasing housing density; redevelopment

The Twin Cities Metro is facing a housing shortage unlike any we have experienced in recent history. What will you do to increase the number of homes available to residents of your community?

I will support redevelopments that increase density and respect the character of the neighborhood.

REALTORS® hold Diversity, Equity and Inclusion as core values. Please describe how you view the importance of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion in your role as an elected official.

Hopkins is city that is culturally rich and melds together different races, ethnicities and viewpoints. While the city is nearly 40% nonwhite, this diversity is unfortunately not reflected in the current City Council or on the City's boards and commissions. As Hopkins continues to grow and change, it is imperative to have City leadership that reflects the point of view and lived experience of all citizens. As city counselor, I will advocate for and seek out opportunities to bring all voices to the table and to assure that everyone feels heard.

Minnesota has one of the largest homeownership gaps between Whites and Blacks, Indigenous, and People of Color. This is one of MAR's primary concerns. What would you propose at the local level to close this homeownership gap?

I would support removing rules and regulations that make it difficult for developers to build cheaper single family homes.

How do you think the city can best balance the rights of tenants and property owners to effectively manage rental housing?

- The city should not interfere with a landlord's right to collect rent and evict delinquent tenants. However, the tenants' right to privacy must be respected and their repair concerns must be addressed promptly by the landlord. The city should step in in any case where the landlord is providing a dwelling that is uninhabitable or condemned.

What are your views on property tax rates in your community? Do you have concerns related to the city's property tax rate? If so, how would you address those concerns once elected?

Our property tax rates are among the highest in the region and too high in general. High property taxes result in higher mortgage payments for homeowners and higher rents for renters who bear the brunt of these increases that get passed on to them. These higher payments disproportionately affect residents of color and senior citizens on fixed income who have called Hopkins their home for a generation. As city counselor, I would look for opportunities to reduce costs by removing duplicate or unnecessary services and raising revenue outside of just property tax increases.

Please provide links to all social media accounts connected to you or your campaign if any.

<https://www.facebook.com/BetterWithBalan/> <https://www.instagram.com/betterwithbalan/>
<https://twitter.com/BalanWith>

