

2026 SARNIA MUNICIPAL ELECTION:
MEET THE CANDIDATES

MORE VOICES. BETTER DECISIONS.



We asked every candidate the same questions about the issues residents care about. Here is what residents told us, and how candidates answered, in their own words.

3 OF 5

MAYOR CANDIDATES
RESPONDED

9 OF 17

CITY AND COUNTY COUNCILLOR
CANDIDATES RESPONDED

12 OF 21

CITY COUNCILLOR CANDIDATES
RESPONDED

VOTE 2026 • VOTE 2026 • VOTE 2026 • VOTE 2026 • VOTE 2026

NON-PARTISAN • NO SCORES • NO RANKINGS • NO ENDORSEMENTS

nuSARNIA • MEET THE CANDIDATES. VOTE 2026.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

HOUSING AND ZONING

- Q1 What is one specific action you would take during your term to increase the supply of affordabl...
- Q2 Sarnia's current parking requirements can add significant cost to new housing and can limit the...
- Q3 Currently there is an outstanding Council motion requiring City staff to identify and address b...
- Q4 How should the City balance accommodating additional housing with ensuring that neighbourhoods...

PARKS, WATERFRONT AND EVENTS

- Q5 Sarnia has invested significant time and public money developing master plans for places such a...
- Q6 Many cities such as Vancouver, Toronto, Calgary and Detroit have successfully developed public...
- Q7 What do you believe is currently the biggest municipal barrier to hosting more large-scale fest...
- Q8 What is one specific investment you would make to help Sarnia's public spaces, main streets and...

SAFE AND CONNECTED MOBILITY

- Q9 Sarnia's Active Transportation Master Plan identifies investments needed to make walking and cy...
- Q10 Will you support prioritizing completion of a connected citywide walking and cycling network—ev...
- Q11 Will you support increasing investment in traffic calming on residential streets where speeding...
- Q12 Sarnia Transit is an essential service for residents who do not drive, yet route coverage, serv...

ECONOMY AND LOCAL BUSINESS

- Q13 What specific type of new employment or economic activity do you believe Sarnia should be activ...
- Q14 What do you believe is the single biggest municipal barrier facing small businesses and entrepr...
- Q15 Sarnia is developing an Economic Development Community Improvement Plan that could provide fina...

COMMUNITY CONNECTION AND PROJECTS

- Q16 Would you support the City establishing a dedicated program or funding mechanism that provides...
- Q17 Loneliness and social isolation are increasingly recognized as community issues. Do you believe...
- Q18 What specific barrier would you address first and how would that enable more community led acti...

BUDGET, CHALLENGES AND ENGAGEMENT

- Q19 What do you believe will be Sarnia's single biggest challenge over the next four years, and wha...
- Q20 Council will inevitably face decisions where a significant portion of residents disagree with t...
- Q21 Sarnia has numerous adopted master plans outlining long-term investments, as well as conflictin...
- Q22 What specific change would you make to Sarnia's public engagement process so residents can mean...

ABOUT THIS REPORT

All candidates for Mayor and City Council were invited to complete nuSarnia's candidate questionnaire. Each candidate was asked the same set of questions on key issues facing our community.

The responses included in this report are presented as submitted by candidates and have not been edited for content.

43

**CANDIDATES
INVITED**

24

**RESPONSES
RECEIVED**

CANDIDATES WHO DID NOT SUBMIT A RESPONSE

The following candidates did not submit a response to the questionnaire and are therefore not included in the question-by-question sections of this report.

MAYORAL CANDIDATES

Bill Dennis
George Stanko

CITY COUNCIL CANDIDATES

Bill Anning
Margaret Bird
Andy Bruziewicz
Al Duffy
Mario Fazio
Peter Goodman
Ed Gresham
Brian White
Honie Chumko

Josh Coutts-Smith
Stevie Devlin
Ray McMaster
Roza Panjehbandpour (Phox)
Briana Reid
Scott Jr Spinks
Hari Srinivasan
Jonathon Walker

WHAT RESIDENTS TOLD US

Before we ask candidates, we asked Sarnia.

In our 2026 Community Survey, 812 Sarnia residents shared how they feel about belonging, safety, public spaces, community connection and having a say in the decisions that shape their neighbourhoods.

Here's some of what residents told us.

49%

describe their sense of belonging as strong
(45% weak)

42%

have face-to-face contact often or very often
(27% rarely or never)

55%

spend time in parks, trails, downtown or
other public places at least weekly

52%

feel safe getting around their neighbourhood
(43% feel unsafe)

44%

agree residents can influence neighbourhood
decisions (41% disagree, 14% unsure)

1.9x

Residents who feel they can influence
neighbourhood decisions have nearly twice the
odds of reporting a strong sense of belonging.

Influence was the only factor that remained significant after accounting for social contact, time in public spaces, safety, age, gender and neighbourhood.

That's why we asked candidates how they would respond to the issues residents raised.

HEALTHY, CONNECTED NEIGHBOURHOODS



FROM NUSARNIA'S COMMUNITY SURVEY

In nuSarnia's Community Survey, 22% of residents aged 18 to 34 named housing affordability as Sarnia's top priority for City Hall, more than double the 10% of residents 65 and older who said the same. This age pattern is suggestive rather than statistically confirmed. Worth reading each candidate's answer below with that generational gap in mind.

1

What is one specific action you would take during your term to increase the supply of affordable and attainable housing in Sarnia, and what would you expect that action to accomplish by the end of your four-year term?

MAYOR

MIKE BRADLEY

Brought the motion in 2023 to County Council to make affordable housing the number one priority. Has led to new housing of close to 200 units opening or planned. Would add Transitional housing for women to motion.

CARRIE MCEACHRAN

I will establish a Mayor's Action Group on Housing, bringing together the City, County, housing providers, developers, mental health and community partners, people with lived experience, and organizations already working on housing projects. The goal will be to identify barriers, coordinate efforts and get projects moving. We will commit to meeting the City's target of 30% of new housing being affordable, while increasing the supply of attainable housing in Sarnia. By the end of four years, residents will see more affordable and attainable housing approved, under construction and completed across our community.

SCOTT MOLSON

One specific action I would take is to make it faster and less expensive to build housing in Sarnia by creating a streamlined "Housing Fast Track" for projects that meet our Official Plan and zoning requirements. Sarnia already has tools to encourage affordable housing, including grants, fee reductions and reduced parking requirements through its Affordable Housing Community Improvement Plan. I would build on those tools by setting clear approval timelines, eliminating unnecessary duplication and reviewing municipal fees and parking requirements that add costs without providing sufficient public benefit. I would also prioritize using surplus or underutilized City-owned land for attainable and affordable housing—an approach already contemplated in Sarnia's Official Plan. By the end of four years, my objective would be measurable: more approved and completed housing units, shorter municipal approval times, and more housing options at different price points—including rentals, starter homes, townhouses, apartments and additional residential units. The City cannot control interest rates, construction costs or federal and provincial housing policy, but we can control how difficult, expensive and time-consuming City Hall makes it to build. My focus would be on the things Sarnia can actually change.

CITY & COUNTY COUNCILLOR

PATRICK COUTU

Waiving or reducing steep municipal building fees specifically for rental housing developers is one option. This will help attract building and development to the area and announce that we are open for business.

ADAM KILNER

I think what I would like to do is to move toward the treatment of affordable housing as "core infrastructure". This would mean that Sarnia and the County of Lambton would need to pre-plan expansion for both housing and other forms of infrastructure - water, waste water, pipes for different resources like natural gas, etc. - into new developments. This planning would need to be forward thinking as it would impact both the City's and the County's official plans.

MARK LAMORE

Eliminate the red tape for anyone wanting to invest here.

CHRISSY MCROBERTS

One specific action I would take is to make small-scale infill housing a priority—particularly smaller homes and Additional Residential Units (ADUs) on existing serviced lots—and use the recently approved removal of development charges for new residential builds to help make those homes more attainable. I would work with staff and builders to remove unnecessary barriers and encourage projects that add smaller homes, including homes around 400–600 square feet for first-time buyers. We already have serviced land and infrastructure in our existing neighbourhoods, so we should be building smarter before simply expanding outward. The removal of development charges gives us an opportunity to make these smaller homes more affordable to build and, hopefully, more affordable to purchase. By the end of my four-year term, I want to see a measurable increase in smaller, attainable homes being built, more opportunities for first-time buyers and seniors, and a housing supply that better matches what local residents can actually afford. We don't just need more houses—we need homes people can actually afford to buy.

CHARMAINE MURRAY

One specific action I would take is to educate our community about homelessness and the importance of supportive housing. By helping residents understand why supportive housing is needed, I would work to build greater community support for increasing it in Sarnia.

JOHN RICHARDSON

Beyond voting to support geared-to-income and supportive housing projects that come with staff recommendation, the most substantial thing I can do is push for permissive zoning that allows infill and missing middle housing as-of-right, without every project having to clear a discretionary variance process first. There are over 700 suppressed households across Lambton County, adult children still living with parents, people sharing housing with roommates they would rather not need. If Sarnia is the community that actually accommodates that demand through permissive infill and missing middle zoning, those households land here, raising Sarnia's assessment base by roughly 2% without needing to attract a single new resident to the region. Early in the new term I hope to have this zoning in place, so that by the end of the four-year term we can start to measure its actual impact on the suppressed-household gap.

MIKE STARK

During my last term on Lambton County, we approved three affordable housing units (Indigenous Apartment on Confederation St., affordable apartment on London Road and the still under construction units on Kathleen Ave.). While this represents progress, we need to move much quicker from approval to completion. As such, I would expect new projects that reflect realizable goals with a completed schedule date during the current upcoming term. Anything less than completed projects does little to alleviate the current housing shortfalls and documented needs.

GEORGE VANDENBERG

5 per cent of each new build would be dedicated to affordable housing. The owner would get a tax break or some other kind of incentive.

PAUL WIERSMA

I would move that Sarnia City Council and Lambton County Council jointly identify surplus or underutilized municipally owned properties and declare them priority housing assets. Council would then offer long-term ground leases or land donations at nominal cost (\$1) to non-profit housing providers, cooperative housing groups, or housing authorities in exchange for binding commitments to maintain deeply affordable and attainable rent structures. By the end of the four-year term, I would expect 1. the construction of 100-250 new units. Land acquisition costs (15%-25% of the total cost) would be removed and would allow providers to secure federal/provincial funding significantly faster. 2. accelerated shovel-ready timelines bypassing lengthy site-acquisition processes and enabling non-profits to start construction within 12-18 months. 3. long-term affordability through binding covenants attached to municipal land leases ensuring units remain capped at below-market rates for 40+ years, directly expanding the housing inventory for low-to-moderate-income families, seniors, and local workers.

CITY COUNCILLOR

TERRY BURRELL

We have lowered fees. We will continue to facilitate projects as they come forward. We have met and will continue to meet all Provincially set targets.

LO-ANNE CHAN

I would advocate for funding models that ensure people facing financial barriers can access stable housing. Encouraging multi-unit homes through gentle intensification also strengthens neighbourhoods. Removing barriers so homeowners can add units, and creating clear zoning pathways for builders are low-impact ways to grow our housing supply while keeping rental rates competitive and avoiding unnecessary sprawl. We must also protect the rental stock we already have. Vacancy (urban blight) taxes used in other municipalities show that discouraging long-term vacancy brings units back into use, reduces local crime/vandalism, and keeps housing serving residents rather than sitting empty for profit. Modernizing zoning and redesigning our Community Improvement Plans to prioritize affordable and rent-gearred-to-income units will help ensure new supply meets real community needs.

NATHAN COLQUHOUN

Quick approvals and funding.

RICHARD C (DICK) FELTON

The housing situation is a very complicated issue, especially with the first site chosen by the County for Indwell to put in a facility. The neighbourhood does not want high aquitu people there; however the Indwell model demands a number of this type of tenant to make it economically feasible to manage. I believe that with some care and consultation that an end goal can be reached whereby both the housed and the homeless can be satisfied. I am still learning in this area and will be formulating a plan well beyond this writing. My ultimate goal for the end of my four years on council, would be to have housed the majority of our homeless, if not all, and to do it satisfying most of the people in Sarnia (lofty I know!) Should facilities go in where there are dangers to a neighbourhood, I believe that the City and the Police have a responsibility to keep the area around and supportive housing facility safe and clean.

DAVID GHOBIL

Allow smaller houses on smaller lots like we did after the war(ww2).

ANNE MARIE GILLIS

Ensure that the Zoning By-Laws are flexible so that the Middle Housing and affordable housings need are not lost in the rush to build single family Homes . As well the Zoning By-laws need to be flexible when promoting infilling and recognize the transformational opportunity that it presents.

CLARA JAMES

Left blank.

TAMMY MATHIESON

One specific action I would support is identifying City-owned or underused land that could be made available for affordable and attainable housing partnerships, with clear conditions that the resulting housing actually remains affordable. I would work with the County, other levels of government, non-profits and responsible private-sector partners to leverage available funding rather than placing the full cost on Sarnia taxpayers. By the end of four years, I would expect this approach to have moved suitable properties into development, increased the number and variety of attainable housing options, and created a practical pipeline for additional housing beyond the term.

CHRISTOPHER ORAM

Working with the County to identify what we can do to build on the good work already being done by different organizations to address the housing issues. Also a more proactive outreach to the community to promote a neighbourhood buy-in in an effort to minimize negative controversy about any project. Funding is always an issue, as is actual management of the facility once it is established. The County is the level of government responsible for housing, but the city is a stakeholder, and should be an active partner, as we have the lion's share of housing issues as a city. By the end of the term, a modest goal would to have cut the number of homeless in the city by a minimum of 50%.

MICHELLE PARKS

One specific action I would take is to create a City-led Affordable and Attainable Housing Action Plan that removes municipal barriers to building more housing, while setting clear four-year targets for what we actually want to achieve. That means identifying City-owned land that could be made available for housing, speeding up approvals for projects that provide affordable or attainable units, reviewing zoning and development policies that unnecessarily limit housing options, and working with non-profit, private and senior levels of government to bring those projects forward. I would also want the City to establish a clear definition of what "attainable housing" means for Sarnia—not just subsidized housing, but housing that working people, young families, seniors and first-time buyers can realistically afford.

By the end of my four-year term, I would expect us to have measurably increased the number of affordable and attainable housing units being built and created a pipeline of additional projects on City-owned or appropriately designated land. More importantly, I would want residents to be able to see exactly what was promised, what was approved, what was built, and how many people were housed as a result. We cannot build our way out of the housing crisis overnight, but we can make it easier, faster and more predictable to build the right kinds of housing in Sarnia. My goal would be to move from talking about the housing crisis to having a measurable four-year housing strategy with real results.

CHRISTOPHER PETTIT

One specific action I would take is to identify City-owned land and underutilized properties that could be made available for residential development, while streamlining the municipal approval process for projects that provide a mix of attainable housing options. The goal would be to increase the supply of housing by making better use of land Sarnia already has, while encouraging private and non-profit developers to bring projects forward. I would also want clear targets and regular reporting so Council and residents can see whether these changes are actually producing results. By the end of a four-year term, I would expect to see additional housing units brought to market, more housing choices for working families and individuals, and a measurable reduction in unnecessary delays and barriers within the City's control.

ANDREW STOKLEY

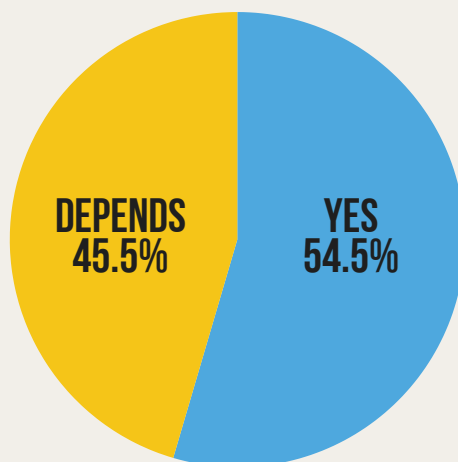
Look at changing current bylaws and implement zoning changes to incorporate stacked townhouses or multi-residential units on single family dwelling lots which will make housing more affordable. This will free up rental units and put downward pressure on rent rates.

2

Sarnia's current parking requirements can add significant cost to new housing and can limit the number of homes that can be built on a property. When a proposed development demonstrates that it can function safely and successfully with fewer parking spaces than the City's current minimum requirement, will you support reducing the parking requirement? (Yes / No / Depends on the circumstances)

AT A GLANCE

Scott Molson
Mark Lamore
Charmaine Murray
Terry Burrell
Richard C (Dick) Felton
Anne Marie Gillis
Tammy Mathieson
Christopher Oram
Michelle Park
Chris Pettit



Mike Bradley
Carrie McEachran
Patrick Coutu
Adam Kilner
Chrissy McRoberts
John Richardson
Mike Stark
George Vandenberg
Paul Wiersma
Lo-Anne Chan
Nathan Colquhoun

David Ghobril
Clara James
Andrew Stokley

MAYOR

MIKE BRADLEY

Yes.

CARRIE MCEACHRAN

Yes. When a development can demonstrate that reduced parking will work safely and appropriately for the location, I would support reducing the parking requirement. This can help reduce development costs and make better use of available land while still protecting the needs of the surrounding neighbourhood.

SCOTT MOLSON

Depends on the circumstances. I support flexibility where it makes sense, but not a blanket reduction across the entire city. Each development should be considered based on its location, density, access to public transit, available street or nearby public parking, accessibility requirements, and the potential impact on neighbouring residents and businesses. If a developer can demonstrate that fewer spaces will meet the actual needs of the development without pushing the parking problem onto surrounding streets, I would support a reduction. My goal is to remove unnecessary barriers to housing while protecting existing neighbourhoods.

CITY & COUNTY COUNCILLOR

PATRICK COUTU

Yes. A developer will make a proposal for who and how they plan to market the finished product to. If they make a good case it should be supported by council.

ADAM KILNER

Yes. If the particular housing development is focused on demographics that don't tend to own vehicles it makes little sense to have the same requirements as those developments built with vehicles in mind. Location can impact this. Socio-economic target-group for the development can influence this.

MARK LAMORE

Depends on the circumstances. Certain places do not require as much parking why force it. Government needs to get out of the way.

CHRISSY MCROBERTS

Yes. Yes, I would support reducing the required number of parking spaces when a development can safely function with less parking. We need to look at how people live today. The cost of buying a vehicle and carrying the insurance is getting harder for people who are renting or trying to get into their first home. At the same time, we are seeing more people biking, walking and using scooters to get around Sarnia. I believe it is reasonable to reduce parking requirements by a percentage, where the location and development can support it. If we don't need to build as many parking spaces, that land and money can instead go toward building more homes. We need to stop doing things simply because "that's the way we've always done it." If we can reduce parking safely and use that space to create more attainable housing, I believe we should.

CHARMAINE MURRAY

Depends on the circumstances. Yes, depending on the circumstances. We need to stop putting unnecessary or unrealistic roadblocks in the way of building housing, particularly affordable housing. If a proposed development can demonstrate that it can function safely and successfully with fewer parking spaces, I would be open to reducing the parking requirement. However, I would want each situation considered individually. I would not support reducing parking requirements if doing so would create significant parking shortages or congestion for the surrounding neighbourhood. We need to make it easier to build the housing we need without creating new problems for the people who already live in the area.

JOHN RICHARDSON

Yes. Yes. Parking minimums add \$30k to \$100k or more per space to a building, and that cost is fundamentally at odds with affordable housing goals. It also vastly outstrips the cost of the city's own development charges per unit. Forcing that parking cost onto every unit, plus the real ongoing cost of car ownership itself, does not square with what affordability actually requires. Cities around the world have already moved on this. Sarnia is still losing new builds that people desperately need because a fixed parking count outweighs the actual demand a developer has already researched and priced into their project. I would support reducing the minimum wherever a developer has done that homework and can show there is a market for the housing at the parking ratio proposed. The market, not an outdated citywide formula, should decide how much parking a specific building actually needs.

MIKE STARK

Yes. Most people who require affordable housing rely on public transit and therefore do not require parking, thus reducing the amount of parking needed for approval.

GEORGE VANDENBERG

Yes. We rely too much on the automobile.

PAUL WIERSMA

Yes. Maintaining the historical requirement of 1.5 parking space per unit adds 15%-20% cost to the total construction costs. It reduces the number of units that can be built on a property as well as the amount of green space. It limits the ability to infill in older neighbourhoods through the use of multiplexes and additional residential units. It increases the number of variance requests for lower parking space requirements for specific projects.

CITY COUNCILLOR

TERRY BURRELL

Depends on the circumstances. The minimums have a purpose. Each property should look after its own parking and not burden the neighbourhood.

LO-ANNE CHAN

Yes. Parking is a car-centric perspective for development, and many residents may not even have a vehicle requiring a parking space. With increase in active transportation mediums like bicycles, e-bikes, or increase in transit use, there are many other ways for citizens to get around the city. If the developer can demonstrate transit accessibility mitigation through other means, this could help reduce the reliance on minimum car parking requirements.

NATHAN COLQUHOUN

Yes. I don't think parking should determine builds at all.

RICHARD C (DICK) FELTON

Depends on the circumstances. Sarnia needs to reduce the parking restrictions in INFILL situations. We also need to reduce other restrictions to allow multi family, triplex and town houses to be built where there are existing services. Most supportive and low cost housing does not need the parking spaces now demanded by the City bylaws.

DAVID GHOBIL

Yes. Where a development can clearly function without creating parking, traffic or safety problems for the surrounding neighbourhood, I support reducing the parking requirement. Requirements should reflect the actual needs and location of each development rather than applying an unnecessarily rigid standard.

ANNE MARIE GILLIS

Depends on the circumstances. Different types of supportive and affordable housing may not need the required residential parking, but they have a high rate of services that visit on a daily basis to provide assistance. That could take many forms from care workers, to pharmacy deliveries, food deliveries, Meals On wheels and services that promote their well being. A larger complex will require more than a smaller one, and that can be determined during the pre building stages.

CLARA JAMES

Yes. As mentioned above it would have to be demonstrated by the developed and other parties invested that parking reduction would not negatively impact the build.

TAMMY MATHIESON

Depends on the circumstances. I would consider each development on its individual merits. Factors would include the location, availability of nearby parking and public transit, the needs of residents, accessibility, traffic and pedestrian safety, and the potential impact on surrounding neighbourhoods. I would support reasonable flexibility where a development can clearly demonstrate that fewer spaces are appropriate, but not when it simply shifts parking problems onto neighbouring streets or residents.

CHRISTOPHER ORAM

Depends on the circumstances. Most supportive and assisted housing projects cater to a clientele of which the majority may not have a vehicle. In those cases, a variance is more than reasonable.

MICHELLE PARKS

Depends on the circumstances. I support a flexible, evidence-based approach to parking requirements, particularly where reducing minimum parking requirements can help make new housing more affordable and allow more homes to be built. Parking requirements should not become an unnecessary barrier to creating housing, but they also need to reflect the realities of the neighbourhood and the people who will live there. I would consider reducing the requirement where a developer can demonstrate that the proposed parking supply is sufficient based on factors such as: proximity to transit, employment, schools, shopping and other amenities; the type and affordability of housing being proposed; walkability and access to active transportation; expected car ownership of the residents; availability of on-street or alternative parking; accessibility and visitor parking needs; and whether reducing parking would create spillover parking or safety concerns for surrounding residents. I would also want the City to consider shared parking and other creative solutions rather than automatically requiring every unit to have its own dedicated parking space. My approach is consistent with my broader platform: remove unnecessary barriers to housing while making responsible decisions that work for the whole community. If a development can safely function with less parking, I don't believe taxpayers or future residents should be forced to absorb the cost of parking spaces that aren't actually needed. At the same time, I would not support reducing requirements simply to maximize density if it creates predictable parking, traffic or safety problems. The goal should be more housing, better affordability and well-planned neighbourhoods—not one-size-fits-all rules.

CHRIS PETTIT

Depends on the circumstances. Yes, when a development can demonstrate that reduced parking can safely and realistically meet its needs without creating significant parking problems for surrounding residents.

ANDREW STOKLEY

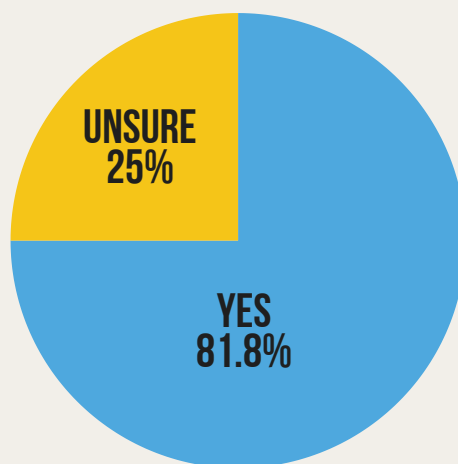
Yes. Yes, I fully support reducing minimum parking requirements when a proposed development can safely and successfully function with fewer spaces. Mandatory parking minimums increase construction costs which drives up purchase and rental prices for residents. By allowing developers to match parking capacity to actual demand rather than rigid statutory minimums, Sarnia can unlock underutilized land, encourage higher density housing development, and make new homes significantly more affordable and accessible

3

Currently there is an outstanding Council motion requiring City staff to identify and address barriers in the proposed Zoning Bylaws, with the goal of achieving a minimum 80% pass rate for properties seeking up to three dwelling units without a minor variance application. Will you commit to supporting the continuation of this work, ensuring the bylaws are amended to satisfy this motion? (Yes / No / Unsure / need more information)

AT A GLANCE

Mark Lamore
Mike Stark
George Vandenberg
Terry Burrell
Favid Ghobril
Clara James



Mike Bradley
Carrie McEachran
Scott Molson
Patrick Coutu
Adam Kilner
Chrissy McRoberts
Charmaine Murray
John Richardson
Paul Wiersma

Lo-Anne Chan
Nathan Colquhoun
Richard C (Dick) Felton
Anne Marie Gillis
Tammy Mathieson
Christopher Oram
Michelle Parks
Chris Pettit
Andrew Stokley

MAYOR

MIKE BRADLEY

Yes. Self explanatory

CARRIE MCEACHRAN

Yes. I support continuing this work and ensuring the new Zoning By-law achieves the 80% target established by Council. If we want to increase attainable housing, our zoning rules need to make it practical for property owners to add housing without unnecessary applications, costs and delays.

SCOTT MOLSON

Yes. I support continuing this work. Sarnia needs more housing, and our zoning rules should not create unnecessary barriers to adding appropriate housing within existing neighbourhoods. Where a property can safely accommodate up to three dwelling units while meeting reasonable requirements for servicing, drainage, fire safety, parking and neighbourhood compatibility, the process should be as straightforward as possible. Requiring an unnecessary minor variance adds time, cost and uncertainty; Sarnia's 2026 minor-variance fee alone is \$656.75. I support reviewing the proposed zoning standards to identify unnecessary barriers and working toward the 80% objective in Council's motion. At the same time, I would not support lowering legitimate safety, infrastructure or environmental standards simply to meet a percentage. The goal should be clear rules, faster approvals and responsible housing growth. The City already recognizes attached and detached additional dwelling units, and notes that development charges generally cannot be imposed, subject to conditions, on second or third residential units accessory to a house. That gives you a defensible position: support the 80% goal while retaining safeguards rather than promising automatic approval of every three-unit proposal.

PATRICK COUTU

Yes. Density intensification helps make a city more efficient. That is certainly a good goal.

ADAM KILNER

Yes. On paper this way forward cuts red tape and allows more flexibility without the same cost.

MARK LAMORE

Unsure / need more information. Certain standards need to be maintained or else Sarnia will go from a retirement community to a flophouse community

CHRISSY MCROBERTS

Yes. Yes, absolutely. I would support continuing this work and making sure the zoning bylaws actually achieve the 80% pass rate Council has already asked staff to work toward. If we want more housing in Sarnia, we need to make it easier to create it. Allowing up to three units on a property without having to go through a minor variance process is a practical way to add housing within our existing neighbourhoods. We already have the Council motion. I believe we need to follow through on it, identify the barriers, fix the bylaws to represent changes in housing the last 50 years. We need to build smarter, use the properties and infrastructure we already have, and make it easier to create attainable housing in Sarnia.

CHARMAINE MURRAY

Yes. I would support the continuation of this work because I believe we need to identify and remove unnecessary barriers to creating more housing in Sarnia. However, I would want to understand which zoning requirements would need to be changed in order to achieve the 80% target before committing to every amendment. I support making it easier for property owners to create additional dwelling units where it can be done safely and reasonably. At the same time, I would want to ensure that changes do not create unreasonable impacts on neighbouring properties. Each proposed change should make sense for our community rather than simply being made to achieve a target.

JOHN RICHARDSON

Yes. This motion is already aimed at the right problem, and I would push it further, up to fourplex, not just triplex, provided the requirements are common sense enough that they do not require review, or the delay and risk of a trip to Committee of Adjustment. The goal is to democratize development. Right now, only people with deep pockets and patience for a drawn-out variance process can take on a vacant or deteriorating property with any confidence. A local resident or small investor cannot take on that kind of risk with a question mark hanging over the project.

You need to know what you are allowed to build before you take out the mortgage on the property, not after. Getting this bylaw to a genuine 80% as-of-right pass rate is how Sarnia actually gets infill built at scale, one small local investment at a time, instead of waiting on a handful of large developers to take on all the risk themselves.

MIKE STARK

Unsure / need more information. I would need additional information as to whether this was a request of staff for more information or a formal motion of Council.

GEORGE VANDENBERG

Unsure / need more information. I have to review that Motion but it appears to be on the right track.

PAUL WIERSMA

Yes. Under Ontario's More Homes Built Faster Act (Bill 23), municipalities are legally required to allow up to three residential units as-of-right on urban residential lots (such as a main home plus a basement suite and a garden suite/accessory dwelling unit). However, while the use is permitted as-of-right, existing or proposed technical zoning restrictions often force homeowners and small developers into time-consuming and expensive minor variance applications. Allowing 4 out of 5 typical residential lots in Sarnia to add a second and third residential unit will reduce costs, project delays, and uncertainty. To achieve an 80% pass rate will require an evaluation of lot coverage and back yard setbacks, parking mandates, building height and scale restraints, servicing and infrastructure requirements, and neighbourhood character concerns.

CITY COUNCILLOR

TERRY BURRELL

Unsure / need more information. We need to make sure the neighbourhoods work for everyone, not just the developer.

LO-ANNE CHAN

Yes. This aligns directly with my commitment to removing barriers for homeowners, creating clear zoning pathways for builders, and expanding the ability to build additional dwelling units (ADUs). Sarnia needs more gentle density options to relieve our current housing shortage, and modernizing the zoning bylaw is one of the most effective tools the City has to make that possible. Supporting this motion means making the process simpler, more predictable, and more accessible for residents who want to add units to their properties and ensuring our zoning framework reflects the housing needs of today

NATHAN COLQUHOUN

Yes. Building is a priority, I'll support all motions that speed it up.

RICHARD C (DICK) FELTON

Yes. This is the only way Sarnia will move forward with affordable housing

DAVID GHOBIL

Unsure / need more information. Yes. I support removing unnecessary zoning barriers so suitable properties can accommodate up to three safe, code-compliant homes without an expensive minor-variance process. Requirements protecting safety, servicing, drainage and neighbouring properties must still apply.

ANNE MARIE GILLIS

Yes. If you want infilling to be effective , you have to design the by-laws to reflect that transformation. However to be effective, a majority of Councillors have to agree.

CLARA JAMES

Unsure / need more information. I need to familiarize myself on this topic more.

TAMMY MATHIESON

Yes. Yes. I support continuing the work to remove unnecessary regulatory barriers that make it more difficult or costly to create housing. At the same time, changes to zoning must be responsible and consider safety, infrastructure capacity, parking, accessibility and the character and needs of existing neighbourhoods. Allowing appropriate properties to accommodate additional dwelling units can increase housing options while making better use of existing infrastructure.

CHRISTOPHER ORAM

Yes. Restrictive bylaws must be addressed, especially any that if reasonably relaxed can lead to a solution.

MICHELLE PARKS

Yes. I support continuing the work required by Council's motion and ensuring the Zoning Bylaw is amended to achieve its intended goal of allowing properties to create up to three dwelling units without unnecessary minor variance applications. If we are serious about increasing housing supply and improving affordability, we need to remove unnecessary municipal barriers to creating additional homes within our existing neighbourhoods. Requiring a minor variance for projects that should reasonably be permitted as-of-right adds time, cost and uncertainty for homeowners and developers without necessarily providing a meaningful community benefit. This also aligns directly with my platform commitment to streamlining permitting and reducing unnecessary red tape, while pursuing an affordable and attainable housing plan that works for Sarnia. That does not mean removing appropriate planning, safety or building standards. The City should establish clear, predictable rules that protect neighbourhoods while making it easier to create additional housing where it can be accommodated responsibly. I would expect staff to identify where the proposed bylaws are preventing the 80% target from being achieved, bring forward specific amendments, and report publicly on progress. If the intent of the Council motion is to make three-unit housing more attainable without unnecessary variances, then we need to finish the work and make sure the bylaws actually deliver on that objective.

CHRIS PETTIT

Yes. I support continuing this work because Sarnia should be making it easier to add housing where appropriate. Our zoning bylaws should not create unnecessary barriers to creating up to three dwelling units on a property. At the same time, changes should maintain appropriate standards for safety, servicing, parking and neighbourhood compatibility

ANDREW STOKLEY

Yes. Sitting on the current Sarnia Committee of Adjustments this would be a yes for me. I fully commit to supporting the continuation of this work and ensuring the proposed Zoning Bylaws are amended to satisfy Council's motion. Removing unnecessary administrative hurdles and achieving a minimum 80% pass rate for properties seeking up to three dwelling units is essential for streamlining housing supply, reducing costly delays for homeowners, and building a more flexible, accessible community. Prioritizing this effort ensures our planning policies deliver real, practical solutions to housing demand without tying up residents in avoidable minor variance applications.

How should the City balance accommodating additional housing with ensuring that neighbourhoods have the parks, sidewalks, active transportation connections, transit and other amenities needed to support the people who will live there?

MAYOR

MIKE BRADLEY

By proper planning so all the issues are worked on as a package

CARRIE MCEACHRAN

As we add housing, we need to plan for the complete neighbourhood, not just the number of units. That means ensuring growth is supported by parks, sidewalks, active transportation, transit and the infrastructure residents rely on. I will ensure these needs are considered at the beginning of the planning process, with growth helping to support the infrastructure it requires. We can increase housing supply while also building connected, safe and vibrant neighbourhoods where people want to live.

SCOTT MOLSON

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CITY & COUNTY COUNCILLOR

PATRICK COUTU

Smart planning is the key. We can strategically plan to have higher density where amenities exist.

ADAM KILNER

Seeing affordable housing as "core infrastructure" gives the City an opportunity to plan its own growth, while also enacting growth planning based on its Active Transportation Master Plan, optimizing transit routes, including buses, bicycles, walking trails/sidewalks, etc.

MARK LAMORE

The city needs to do a lot before it can even begin to focus on this. It has blown its reserves way behind in infrastructure and no current plan to increase the tax base. Who is going to pay for all this with a shrinking tax base?

CHRISSY MCROBERTS

Absolutely — I'd frame this around building the right housing in the right places, not simply building more. We need to grow, but we need to grow smart. The biggest issue I see right now is affordability. Infill and gentle intensification can help us add housing without continually expanding our boundaries, but we also need to make sure neighbourhoods have the infrastructure and amenities to support that growth — sidewalks, parks, transit, active transportation connections and access to services. We also need to look honestly at what the market is telling us. If we have roughly 400 homes sitting on the market longer waiting to sell, and we're considering eliminating development charges on larger homes costing \$500,000 and up, I don't believe the answer is simply building more of the same. We need to encourage smaller, more attainable homes for first-time buyers, seniors and working families. Growth should come with planning. Before we approve significant intensification, we need to understand what that neighbourhood needs and make sure the infrastructure keeps pace. Build smarter, build smaller where appropriate, use the land and infrastructure we already have, and create neighbourhoods where people can actually afford to live.

CHARMAINE MURRAY

Whenever possible, I believe we should encourage additional housing in areas where parks, sidewalks, transit and other necessary services and amenities already exist. To me, that is a common-sense and cost-effective approach. At the same time, we need to make sure that what is already there can support the additional residents and that we are not overcrowding neighbourhoods in the process. Where more housing is needed and existing services or amenities are not sufficient, improvements should be considered as part of planning for that growth. Adding housing should not simply mean adding more buildings. We need to make sure we are creating neighbourhoods that work for the people who live there.

JOHN RICHARDSON

Streamlining infill development is actually the first step toward answering this well. Once as-of-right zoning is in place, the city can see in real time which neighbourhoods are actually absorbing density, instead of guessing years in advance where growth will land. From there, the city needs to prioritize infrastructure investment in the neighbourhoods that are absorbing that density: active transportation connections, transit frequency, and the roads and sewers underneath it all, so growth is matched with the capacity to support it rather than left to catch up years later. That is the balance: let development happen where the market and the zoning allow it, then follow with the infrastructure spending where the growth is actually showing up. Some form of value-per-acre mapping, the kind of analysis firms like Urban3 have done for other municipalities, should be part of that work too, so council can see which parts of the city are actually productive from a tax and cost perspective, not just assumed to be, before deciding where density and infrastructure dollars go next.

MIKE STARK

There needs to be a balance for all new neighborhoods which should follow the PPP(provincial planning policy) which promotes orderly developments including appropriate inclusions of all components of sustainable development and amenities.

GEORGE VANDENBERG

I think that we just keep doing what we started 8 years ago.

PAUL WIERSMA

Implementing the Active Transportation Master Plan ensures infill and new developments automatically integrate built-in sidewalks, multi-use pathways, and safe cycling connections. Directing higher-density housing along primary transit corridors creates direct links to commercial hubs and parks, reducing private vehicle dependency. Expected federal and provincial funding in lieu of Development Charges will fund capital expansions for parks, transit fleets, fire protection, and active transportation connections triggered by growth. Where land dedication is impractical for compact infill, taking cash-in-lieu allows the city to upgrade nearby neighborhood parks with playgrounds, lighting, or community gardens rather than creating isolated green strips. Area Secondary Plans and Urban Design Guidelines will require developers to incorporate connected trails, naturalized stormwater green spaces, and local park hubs during initial subdivision approvals. Finally, aligning Sarnia's Official Plan with County social service plans ensures new dense housing developments have direct access to health services, childcare, and community support centers.

CITY COUNCILLOR

TERRY BURRELL

Evaluate each project and consult with the neighbours. Do not give developers blank cheques.

LO-ANNE CHAN

The City can balance new housing with strong neighbourhood amenities by focusing on thoughtful densification. When we build “up” instead of “out,” we use land more efficiently, increase per-square-foot tax revenue, and reduce strain on utilities. This approach frees up space for the things residents rely on like parks, sidewalks, active transportation routes, and community gathering areas. Higher-density neighbourhoods also make transit and active transportation more viable. With more people living within walkable distances, it becomes easier to create neighbourhood hubs that connect directly to centralized amenities. Strong transit and safe pedestrian/cycling routes ensure that new residents can access schools, parks, shops, and services without needing a car for every trip. By pairing additional housing with smart land use and improved mobility networks, we can grow while still strengthening the livability and character of each neighbourhood.

NATHAN COLQUHOUN

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RICHARD C (DICK) FELTON

Active transportation priority for those areas having multiple dwellings is far more important than parking spaces. It is difficult to add parks in existing infill areas; however bus routes and multi use paths can easily meet the needs in these areas. I am in full agreement with adding active transportation infrastructure in all areas of Sarnia

DAVID GHOBIL

The City should encourage housing first in areas where roads, water, sewer, transit and community amenities already exist. This keeps costs down and makes better use of infrastructure taxpayers have already funded. For larger new developments, parks, sidewalks, transit connections and other services should be planned from the beginning and phased in as the neighbourhood grows. Development should contribute fairly toward the additional infrastructure it requires, while avoiding excessive fees that make housing unnecessarily expensive.

ANNE MARIE GILLIS

With Good planning , and transformational By Laws that recognize that folks want to have a neighbourhood that is connected to the amenities they need , as you stated to have .

CLARA JAMES

I believe the city should be focused on building more affordable housing units first, and maintaining and improving existing infrastructure that makes life accessible for all Sarnians.

TAMMY MATHIESON

Housing and the infrastructure that supports it need to be planned together. As Sarnia adds housing, we need to ensure that neighbourhoods remain safe, functional and welcoming for both new and existing residents. I would support considering infrastructure and community needs as part of development planning, including roads, sidewalks, parks and recreation, transit, active transportation where appropriate, emergency services and other essential amenities. We also need to consider whether existing infrastructure has the capacity to support additional growth before simply adding more density. At the same time, we need to be fiscally responsible. New development should contribute appropriately toward the infrastructure it requires, while the City should pursue provincial and federal funding and partnerships wherever possible rather than placing unnecessary additional costs on existing taxpayers. Good growth is not simply about building more homes. It is about creating safe, connected and complete neighbourhoods where families, seniors and residents of all ages can live well.

CHRISTOPHER ORAM

According to the needs/abilities of the occupants and neighbourhood amenities and infrastructure

MICHELLE PARKS

We need to accommodate more housing while making sure neighbourhood infrastructure keeps pace with growth. The answer is not to prevent new housing because infrastructure isn't perfect; it is to plan growth responsibly and make strategic investments alongside it. Before approving significant new development, the City should look at the capacity and availability of sidewalks, parks, transit, active transportation connections, roads, drainage and other essential infrastructure. Where gaps exist, they should be identified early and incorporated into the City's capital planning. I also believe we need to make better use of the infrastructure we already have. Infill and gentle density in existing neighbourhoods can make efficient use of existing roads, transit, parks and services, while helping us add housing without continually expanding the City's infrastructure footprint. Development charges and other appropriate growth-related funding should help ensure that new development contributes its fair share toward the infrastructure required to support that growth, while avoiding policies that make housing unnecessarily expensive. This is ultimately about good planning. We should be asking: Where can we add housing, what infrastructure is already there, what is missing, and how do we make sure the two grow together? My goal is to create more housing while building complete, connected and livable neighbourhoods—and to make those decisions transparently, with residents involved in the planning process.

CHRIS PETTIT

The City should plan housing growth and infrastructure together. I support adding housing, but we need to make sure neighbourhoods have the infrastructure and services needed to support that growth. When significant new development is proposed, the City should look at the capacity of roads, water and wastewater systems, parks, sidewalks, transit and active transportation connections. Developers should contribute appropriately toward the infrastructure and amenities required by their projects, while the City remains responsible for planning the broader infrastructure needs of growing neighbourhoods. We also need to be realistic about the cost. Sarnia already faces significant infrastructure challenges, and we cannot continue approving growth without a clear plan for how the supporting infrastructure will be funded and maintained. Housing growth and responsible infrastructure planning should go hand in hand.

ANDREW STOKLEY

To successfully support housing growth, municipalities must integrate infrastructure development directly into the planning process through strategic funding and design framework updates. We need to be sure to build a walkable sidewalk network and extend transit access alongside new construction. This synchronized approach prevents neighbourhood strain, transforms new housing into a catalyst for community amenities, and ensures that growing populations enjoy vibrant, walkable, and fully supported urban environments.

VIBRANT PUBLIC LIFE



FROM NUSARNIA'S COMMUNITY SURVEY

55% of Sarnia residents told nuSarnia they use the city's parks, trails, downtown, or other public spaces at least once a week. The survey's own conclusion was that public space is part of everyday life in Sarnia, not a side issue. This question asks candidates what they would actually fund to act on that.

5

Sarnia has invested significant time and public money developing master plans for places such as the waterfront, Canatara Park, Germain Park, and Norm Perry Park. Many of the recommendations in these plans ultimately depend on Council allocating capital funding yet have been repeatedly deferred. What specific projects or improvements, if any, would you prioritize and where would you find the money?

MAYOR

MIKE BRADLEY

City Council needs to stick to the Bradley Basics on our own needs and not outside projects. Waterfront, Norman Perry are key projects. A lot of money has been spent in various parks this last term including Canatara, Kenwick Germain and Tecumseh

CARRIE MCEACHRAN

Yes. We have invested significant time and public money developing these plans, and I believe we need to start delivering on them. My priority would be moving the Waterfront Master Plan forward, while continuing phased improvements to Canatara, Germain and Norm Perry Parks, with a focus on maintaining and improving the assets we already have, accessibility, safety and amenities that provide the greatest benefit to residents. We cannot fund every recommendation at once, nor should the entire cost fall on property taxpayers. I would establish clear priorities within our capital plan and actively pursue provincial and federal grants, partnerships, sponsorships and other funding opportunities. For the waterfront specifically, I would also pursue the revenue-generating opportunities contemplated in the existing Master Plan, including appropriate redevelopment of City-owned lands. Residents participated in developing these plans. They should be more than documents on a shelf. My focus will be on setting priorities, identifying the funding and getting projects moving.

SCOTT MOLSON

I support investing in Sarnia's waterfront, parks and public spaces. They are important to our quality of life, tourism, recreation and our ability to attract families and investment. But we also have to recognize our financial reality. We cannot fund every master plan at once. My first priority will be the basics: water and sewer infrastructure, flood mitigation, roads and the maintenance of the assets we already own. The 2026 budget itself committed \$65.5 million to infrastructure renewal and improvements, including sewer separation, flood mitigation and road reconstruction. For recreational projects, I would focus first on improvements that provide the greatest community benefit at a reasonable cost: safe and accessible washrooms, trails and pathways, playgrounds, lighting, accessibility improvements, shoreline protection and improvements that make our waterfront and parks more usable for residents and visitors. I would also prioritize projects that can leverage outside funding.

Canatara's plan, for example, specifically positions projects so they are ready when grant opportunities become available, while Germain Park's plan identifies approximately \$7 million in phased improvements and Norm Perry's approximately \$13 million. Where does the money come from? Not automatically from higher property taxes. I would first look for provincial and federal grants, partnerships and sponsorships, development-related funding where legally applicable, and savings identified through a detailed review of City spending. Major projects should then be phased over a realistic long-term capital plan rather than trying to build everything immediately. Sarnia's waterfront is one of our greatest assets, and I want to see it become more vibrant and economically productive. But my approach is simple: maintain what we have, fix the basics first, pursue outside funding, and build the future as we can responsibly afford it

CITY & COUNTY COUNCILLOR

PATRICK COUTU

I would prioritize connecting the waterfront to downtown, building an amazing pavilion with proper amenities at Canatara and connecting London line to the city west of HWY 40 for pedestrian traffic. Funds will come from projects like the one I have suggested for the city property located at the corner of George and Front St. Here is a video for details <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oA5NG4HDLV0&t=19s>

ADAM KILNER

Given the significance of different parts of the city to these projects, my first reaction is to break down these projects into smaller, more manageable pieces budget-wise - especially focusing on public-facing improvements. Obviously a priority is going to be federal or provincial funding/grants. Each of these assets are ones I have used with regularity over the past decade or so, so I support improvements in each and any one of them. However, if asked to prioritize, I would look to Canatara and the waterfront. I think their daily usage and their quality of life impacts, and their connection to the geography of our home make them obvious choices to move projects forward.

MARK LAMORE

As usual the city uses band aid fixes for these things and never think about anything long term if elected my top priority is to make Clearwater Arena a true family centre by adding two ice pads and closing Pat Stapleton arena which is a money pit anyway and making one of the new pads multi use.

CHRISSY MCROBERTS

My first priority would be projects that improve safety, accessibility and everyday use — maintaining our parks and waterfront, improving trails and active transportation connections, and completing projects that have already been planned and are ready to move forward. Where would I find the money? I would start with the budget we already have and to outside funding opportunities, grants and partnerships, and prioritize capital spending based on need and community benefit. We can't promise everything at once. We need to prioritize, fund it properly, and actually finish what we start. Master plans should guide our decisions, but they should also come with a realistic timeline and a funding plan. My goal is simple: protect the assets we already have, make smart investments in them, and stop kicking important projects down the road until they become more expensive.

CHARMAINE MURRAY

I would prioritize any necessary repairs and safety issues first. I have not had the opportunity to learn the specific projects or improvements that have already been recommended in these master plans well enough to know what I would prioritize at this time, nor where the money would come from. Before deciding, I would want to know what is being proposed, why it is needed, what we already have, whether something we already have could meet the same need, and what it would cost. I would rather be honest about what I don't know and do my homework before making a commitment.

JOHN RICHARDSON

The money question comes first, because it and the city's overall success hinge on more productive land use and higher assessment per acre across residential, commercial, and industrial land, the kind of value-per-acre analysis mentioned in the previous answer. I would not commit to new master plans until we find a real path to funding the ones already adopted. On the waterfront specifically, I would prioritize Ferry Dock Hill and the Market District together, since both connect directly into downtown and can act as the hinge that drives revitalization and, eventually, real tax revenue to help fund the rest of the plan. Funding the remaining pieces, Canatara, Germain, and Norm Perry, will largely come down to whether the city is willing to grow its tax base without growing costs at the same rate, which is what permissive zoning and infill density actually deliver. That kind of zoning also makes Sarnia a more competitive applicant for federal and provincial grant programs, which increasingly favour density and intensification over sprawl. Getting our own zoning right is not a side project, it is the funding mechanism for everything else on this list.

MIKE STARK

Waterfront development is constantly cited by the public as a priority. I delivered a speech to the Seaway Kiwanis in 2021 that included my vision for the advancement of several additions starting with the creation of pods along the river walk that could be rented as satellite locations for existing Downtown, Mitton Street and Northgate merchants to showcase their goods and services. This would offer the opportunity for restaurants to expand their exposure and revenue.

GEORGE VANDENBERG

All are good plans. The money needs to come from an increased tax base such as housing, industry, etc.

PAUL WIERSMA

Park & Waterfront Upgrades

- Germain Park: Add dedicated outdoor pickleball courts, an accessible playground, a splash pad, multi-use courts, and expanded pathways.
- Canatara Park: Construct raised boardwalks for beach accessibility and dune protection, replace aging washrooms/lifeguard facilities, and establish trail loops.
- Norm Perry Park: Update spectator amenities, replace field lighting and fencing, and reconfigure parking and entryways.
- Waterfront: Connect missing trail links, update washrooms, and add shoreline seating and shade structures.

Funding Strategies

1. Grants: Secure provincial infrastructure and federal sports/active transportation grants.
2. Housing Incentives: Direct provincial allocations to public spaces near high-growth areas.
3. Infill Funds: Utilize cash-in-lieu of parkland from infill projects for capital upgrades.
4. Partnerships: Partner with service clubs, sponsors, and sports associations via naming rights or matched funds.
5. Municipal Reserve: Allocate annual municipal operating surpluses into a dedicated parks capital reserve.

CITY COUNCILLOR

TERRY BURRELL

There will always be more projects than dollars. Consult the public as we go along, do what is necessary and avoid feel good vanity projects.

LO-ANNE CHAN

I believe the City should focus on completing the projects already underway. Norm Perry Park, for example, is in the middle of a significant upgrade. Finishing it fully would open the door to hosting more school sports, regional tournaments, and local league events, bringing both community activity and revenue to a completed, high-quality facility.

According to the Sarnia Journal (Feb. 2026), the City is debt-free and has access to \$304 million in credit. That gives us room to evaluate what level of serviceable debt is appropriate for building assets and amenities that generate long-term returns, such as community centres, field rentals, or event-ready spaces.

Using responsible debt (as opposed to tax increases) as a tool for strategic capital investment would allow Sarnia to finish priority projects, strengthen our recreational infrastructure, and create amenities that pay back into the community over time.

NATHAN COLQUHOUN

Waterfront plan immediately.

RICHARD C (DICK) FELTON

With the City not being a good place in regards to finances right now, my input would be to prioritize spending money to attract business to Sarnia, allow us to increase the tax base, The waterfront is four years into a master plan but we are still at year one!? There are a lot of things that can be done on the waterfront without spending a lot of money. We need to set some goals for each one of the masterplans and then plan how to advance towards those goals yearly. Everything does not have to be done at one time. I believe it is called planning. I think the waterfront is the one area where there would be financial payback and that is where I would recommend focus.

ANNE MARIE GILLIS

When I put valuable tax payers money into creating Excellent Master Plans, I expect some action as a result. There have been a lot of work on all the parks that you have mentioned and we are seeing the visible results. It is my hope that the next Council will keep those recommendations moving along. These master plans are a work in progress and I have seen a lot of good results.

CLARA JAMES

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TAMMY MATHIESON

If the City has invested significant time and taxpayer dollars developing master plans, those plans should lead to action where it is financially responsible to do so. I would prioritize improvements that address safety, accessibility, aging infrastructure and amenities that are well used by residents and families. Our parks, waterfront and recreational facilities are important community assets, and I would like to see continued investment in them rather than allowing existing infrastructure to deteriorate until repairs become significantly more expensive. Priorities should be based on demonstrated community need, condition of existing facilities and the benefit to the greatest number of residents. Funding does not automatically have to mean higher property taxes. I would look first at existing capital budgets and priorities, available reserves where appropriate, provincial and federal grants, sponsorships and community or private-sector partnerships. Larger projects may also need to be phased over several years. I believe in planning for the long term, following through on priorities and making responsible investments without placing an unnecessary additional burden on taxpayers.

CHRISTOPHER ORAM

That is a good question. As a first time candidate, I see a lot of plans that never seem to get fully carried out. I believe increasing capital funding is a necessity to carry out these plans. I think Canatara Park is the biggest draw, so, in my mind, it would be a priority, but they are all important.

MICHELLE PARKS

I believe we need to stop developing master plans that sit on shelves and start turning the plans we have already invested in into reality. Bringing the Waterfront and Germain Park master plans to fruition would be a priority for me. These are not simply recreational projects—they are investments in Sarnia's quality of life, tourism, economic development and the places where families and residents spend their time. We need to take the vision that residents have already participated in creating and establish a realistic, phased implementation plan with clear timelines and costs. I recognize that we are facing significant financial pressures, so I would not suggest that we can build everything at once. I would prioritize the projects within those plans that provide the greatest community benefit and are ready to move forward, then phase the remaining work over the four-year term. Where would I find the money? I would start by reviewing the capital budget and our existing priorities and making some difficult choices about what can be delayed or eliminated. I would aggressively pursue provincial and federal infrastructure and recreation funding, tourism and economic-development grants, corporate sponsorships and appropriate community partnerships. I would also look at whether certain projects can generate revenue to help offset their ongoing costs. My goal would be that, by the end of my four-year term, residents can see tangible progress—not another master plan. I want to see major components of the Waterfront and Germain Park plans funded, underway or completed, with a transparent timeline for the remaining work. We have already asked residents what they want these spaces to become. Now we need the leadership and financial discipline to actually make it happen.

CHRIS PETTIT

Sarnia has an infrastructure backlog estimated at hundreds of millions of dollars. We cannot pretend that we can address that entire backlog before investing in anything else, but we also cannot ignore critical infrastructure while funding every public “want.” My priority would be to establish a clear capital plan that separates urgent and critical infrastructure needs from lower-priority projects. Emergency repairs and infrastructure that presents a safety, service or significant financial risk must come first. Beyond those immediate needs, Council should evaluate projects such as waterfront and park improvements based on their cost, public benefit, economic impact and available funding. I would pursue grants, partnerships and other funding sources wherever possible and avoid taking on projects that the City cannot responsibly afford. Master plans should guide Council's decisions, but they should not become commitments to spend money regardless of the City's financial circumstances. We need to balance quality of life investments with the responsibility to maintain the infrastructure residents depend on.

ANDREW STOKLEY

While Ferry Dock Hill is a critical piece, the first initiative I would fund focuses on low cost, immediate activation of our waterfront spaces. By bringing in pop-up markets, community events, food trucks, and accessible public seating, we instantly give people a reason to come downtown that does not wait on an anchor tenant or years of heavy construction. We could have a third party company come in and build a water obstacle course like the one in St. Mary's Quarry in Sarnia Bay and charge rent. We need to find quick return, easily executed ideas for our waterfront to get it moving.

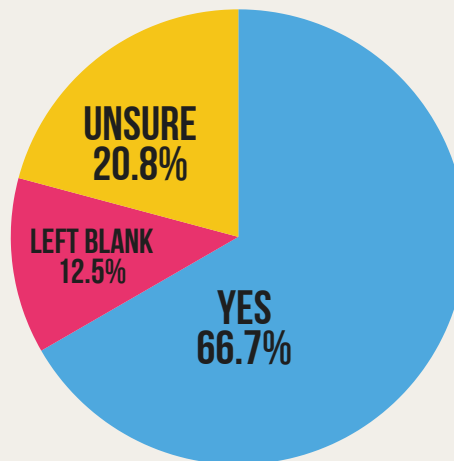
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Many cities such as Vancouver, Toronto, Calgary and Detroit have successfully developed public-private and community partnerships that allow qualified non-profit, business and community organizations to take on stewardship, programming or management roles in public spaces while the City retains public ownership. Would you support the City creating a formal framework that actively reduces municipal barriers—such as permit fees, insurance requirements, facility costs and administrative requirements—that make it difficult for community organizations to operate? One that allows community organizations, non-profits and other qualified partners to enter into agreements to activate, program, improve or steward selected City-owned public spaces, while maintaining public ownership and public access? (Yes / No / Depends on the organization and the circumstances)

AT A GLANCE

Charmaine Murray
David Ghobril
Clara James
Christopher Oram
Chris Pettit

Mike Bradley
Chrissy McRoberts
Terry Burrell



Carrie McEachran
Scott Molson
Patrick Coutu
Adam Kilner
Mark Lamore
John Richardson
Mike Stark
George Vandenberg

Paul Wiersma
Lo-Anne Chan
Nathan Colquhoun
Richard C (Dick) Felton
Anne Marie Gillis
Tammy Mathieson
Michelle Parks
Andrew Stokley

MAYOR

MIKE BRADLEY

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CARRIE MCEACHRAN

Yes. What resources, financial, staff or otherwise, should the City make available to support these partnerships? The City should make it easier for qualified community organizations and partners to bring good ideas forward. That can include a clear point of contact at City Hall, streamlined approvals, reasonable fees and insurance requirements, access to existing facilities and public spaces, and assistance navigating permits and available grants. Where a partnership makes better use of existing City infrastructure, there can be a clear benefit to both the community and the taxpayer. Where financial support or new infrastructure is proposed, we need to understand the full capital and long-term operating costs, the contribution being made by the partner, and the benefit to the community before making a commitment. The goal should be to remove unnecessary municipal barriers and help strong community-led initiatives succeed, while ensuring public resources are used responsibly. **What specific barrier would you address first and how would that enable more community led activation?**

CARRIE MCEACHRAN

The first barrier I would address is the complexity of navigating City Hall. Community organizations should have a clear, streamlined process and a single point of contact to help them understand what is required, rather than navigating multiple departments, permits and approvals on their own. Making the process easier to navigate would allow organizations to spend less time dealing with administration and more time delivering programs, events and improvements that benefit the community.

SCOTT MOLSON

Yes. What resources, financial, staff or otherwise, should the City make available to support these partnerships? I support community partnerships, but they should be structured so taxpayers, public ownership and public access are protected. The City's role should be to enable community initiative, not create another layer of bureaucracy. **What specific barrier would you address first and how would that enable more community led activation?** I would establish a single point of contact at City Hall to help qualified non-profits, service clubs, neighbourhood groups and businesses navigate permits, insurance, facility use and approvals. Where there is a demonstrated public benefit, I would consider reduced or waived municipal fees, reasonable access to City facilities and equipment, and limited staff assistance. Financial support should be based on clear criteria, measurable community benefit and affordability—not simply handing out taxpayer dollars. Wherever possible, I would favour partnerships that leverage volunteer labour, donations, sponsorships and private investment. Sarnia already has programs such as Adopt-A-Park and community playground partnerships, so we don't need to reinvent everything; we can build a broader, simpler framework from what already works.

CITY & COUNTY COUNCILLOR

PATRICK COUTU

Yes. What resources, financial, staff or otherwise, should the City make available to support these partnerships? Economic development staff can be tasked with identifying viable projects to partner with. **What specific barrier would you address first and how would that enable more community led activation?** There is currently nobody on staff that can act as concierge to help applicants find the best path. We should have staff be available to hold a person's hand so to speak from start to finish for legitimate projects.

ADAM KILNER

Yes. What resources, financial, staff or otherwise, should the City make available to support these partnerships? One way to address this is to standardize a framework for community groups. Rather than asking staff to take on more work, we might do well to introduce automated forms of permitting. Software that is able to standardize forms that outline plans and guarantee standards can be completed on the front-line, while also making sure staff are the ultimate green light after they personally review files on this. **What specific barrier would you address first and how would that enable more community led activation?** I would imagine that insurance issues will likely be the most significant issue. Municipal-pooling opportunities in terms of insurance may be a way to address this to mitigate exposure over time. Tiered, reduced permit fees for non-profits can also be part of the discussion.

MARK LAMORE

Yes. What resources, financial, staff or otherwise, should the City make available to support these partnerships? Set staff up in position for them to be able to help these people. Because finances are going to be limited. **What specific barrier would you address first and how would that enable more community led activation?** Lowering of or reducing fees

CHRISSY MCROBERTS

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CHARMAINE MURRAY

Depends on the organization and the circumstances. I believe the City should provide whatever resources and staff support are reasonably available to help these partnerships succeed. However, if additional financial costs are involved, I would want to consider each situation individually and look at what other funding options may be available before committing additional taxpayer dollars. These partnerships can benefit our community, and I believe the City should do what it reasonably can to support them. **What specific barrier would you address first and how would that enable more community led activation?** Before deciding which barrier should be addressed first, I would want to hear from the nonprofits and community organizations themselves. They are the ones dealing with these barriers and would be in the best position to tell us what is making things difficult for them. I would support the City doing what it reasonably can to lower costs and remove barriers without creating an additional financial burden for the City. If there would be a significant cost involved, I would want to look more closely at the circumstances and other options before making that decision.

JOHN RICHARDSON

Yes. What resources, financial, staff or otherwise, should the City make available to support these partnerships? Yes. This is the same problem I have raised throughout this campaign, the city says yes to something in principle and then buries it in fees, insurance requirements, arbitrary rules, and administrative steps that make the yes meaningless in practice. That pattern shows up with housing, and it shows up here too. Groups I have spoken to consistently point to city liability concerns as the actual sticking point, and note that other municipalities have found ways to move past the same concern. I want to understand that gap better, why other cities have managed it and Sarnia has not, and use that to streamline our own process rather than assume our situation is unique. Whatever framework comes out of this needs a real requirement for meaningful public access built in, not just public ownership on paper. Without that, this risks becoming an amenity that only well-resourced groups can actually use, which defeats the purpose. **What specific barrier would you address first and how would that enable more community led activation?** Insurance and liability requirements. That is usually the point where a volunteer group or small non-profit gets stuck before they even start, and it is exactly the barrier other municipalities have apparently found ways around. A shared or blanket municipal policy that qualified partners can be added to would open this up faster than fee relief alone. A micro grant program could also be implemented to help with some of this, and proactively budget the city costs for it.

MIKE STARK

Yes. What resources, financial, staff or otherwise, should the City make available to support these partnerships? Will need to be studied and co-ordinated with the originators of the concept. Certainly staff participation will be and should be involved. That does not mean the concept needs to be driven by staff but rather a collaborative approach would be best. **What specific barrier would you address first and how would that enable more community led activation?** The less than enthusiastic support of the present Council appears to pit some Council members against a committed group of volunteers who have secured land and initial funding. We need all members of the new Council to fully support this group in addressing what the public has expressed genuine support.

GEORGE VANDENBERG

Yes. What resources, financial, staff or otherwise, should the City make available to support these partnerships? Have the CAO attend those meetings. **What specific barrier would you address first and how would that enable more community led activation?** RED TAPE.

PAUL WIERSMA

Yes. What resources, financial, staff or otherwise, should the City make available to support these partnerships? Sarnia can support community partners and streamline park activations through the following initiatives:

- Financial & Insurance Support: Waive fees for permits and equipment rentals, offer small capital matching grants to unlock external funding, absorb baseline utility costs, and provide low-cost insurance coverage.

- **Administrative Simplification:** Assign a dedicated Parks and Recreation staff contact, implement a 14-day fast-track event approval pathway, and offer pre-approved legal templates (MOUs).
- **Infrastructure & Maintenance:** Grant access to city-owned event equipment (stages, seating, barricades) and establish a clear maintenance divide where the City handles structural upkeep while partners manage light daily operations.
- **Marketing & Recognition:** Promote partner-led events on official municipal channels and install co-branded site signage to highlight community contributions.

What specific barrier would you address first and how would that enable more community led activation? To launch successful community-led space activations in Sarnia, I would address administrative complexity and fragmented processes. Community groups and non-profits are routinely stalled by high insurance costs, complex legal agreements, multi-department approvals, and unpredictable timelines. When the administrative barrier to host an event or steward a park is too high, community initiatives fade before they begin.

Resolving this bottleneck enables partnerships by:

- **Establishing a Single Point of Contact:** A dedicated Parks and Recreation liaison eliminates departmental silos, streamlining permitting, risk management, and accessibility reviews.
- **Lowering Legal and Financial Barriers:** Standardized MOU templates and low-cost user insurance remove expensive legal and liability burdens for non-profits.
- **Providing Predictability:** A fast-tracked 14-day approval timeline gives partners the confidence to secure grants, recruit volunteers, and schedule programming early.
- **Unlocking Grassroots Energy:** Handling core structural compliance and heavy maintenance frees community groups to focus entirely on local programming, site activation, and neighborhood engagement.

CITY COUNCILLOR

TERRY BURRELL

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LO-ANNE CHAN

Yes. What resources, financial, staff or otherwise, should the City make available to support these partnerships? The City has already taken steps through Invest Sarnia, which helps residents and businesses navigate permits, insurance, and other requirements. I would advocate for City Hall to build on this work by translating these experiences into a clear, consistent partnership framework that streamlines workflows and reduces administrative friction. To make this successful, the City should continue fostering the growth of Invest Sarnia, enhance Parks & Recreation, and ensure these departments are accessible and well-resourced to support partnerships. We've already seen how effective this can be: the 2024 collaboration between Invest Sarnia and Mitton Village Neighbourhood Connects transformed a City-owned space into the Mitton Village parkette - a vibrant neighbourhood gathering place that now hosts neighbourhood events and strengthens community identity. By expanding staff capacity and improving administrative support, the City can empower qualified partners to bring creativity, programming, and stewardship to public spaces while maintaining public ownership and access.

What specific barrier would you address first and how would that enable more community led activation? From experience accessing resources from Parks and Recreation & Invest Sarnia, city departments need increased resources to achieve more for its citizens. Increasing human resources to interact with the city's people to collaborate and support navigation through city procedures & bylaws to accelerate implementation of ideas. The city has liability insurance for its programming (e.g. Community Activities); the city could consider extending insurance coverage for community-led activities in public spaces to help remove the barrier of individual organizations needing to seek their own liability insurance, or provide a preferred insurer familiar with the city's public space to help accelerate the process. By forming official partnerships with these initiatives, the city could develop a framework for obtaining liability insurance through the municipality's provider to remove this barrier from community organizations. Some community centers and churches already do this.

NATHAN COLQUHOUN

Yes.

RICHARD C (DICK) FELTON

Yes. What resources, financial, staff or otherwise, should the City make available to support these partnerships? I really can not answer this question right now; however I like the concept and I would be in favour of investigating this further. Perhaps a trial of a particular space. **What specific barrier would you address first and how would that enable more community led activation?** I think the first thing I would address is the red tape to start a project in a public space. The answer should first be YES for any qualified organization wanting to do an event and then - sit down and work out details and responsibilities . A rial run first with each organization applying; however after an organizations proves themselves, then the next opportunity should even be easier

DAVID GHOBIL

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ANNE MARIE GILLIS

Yes. What resources, financial, staff or otherwise, should the City make available to support these partnerships? Money to support to create the framework. It would have to be developed utilizing the legal department and Park and Rec to determine how it will work . It is an exciting proposal and it's success relies on a good plan ,how it is financed , who will be responsible for maintaining it, so that a good idea doesn't become a burden. **What specific barrier would you address first and how would that enable more community led activation?** In the recent past we have had great co-operation with various service groups to bring new programs into the parks . The BMX Track in Canatara is a good example. It has gone from its humble beginnings to what it is now. How will it be maintained and what are the cost to the city regarding staffing and continued funding.

CLARA JAMES

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TAMMY MATHIESON

Yes. What resources, financial, staff or otherwise, should the City make available to support these partnerships? I would support a practical partnership model that makes it easier for qualified community organizations, non-profits and businesses to contribute to our public spaces while ensuring those spaces remain publicly owned, accessible and accountable to residents. The City's first contribution does not always need to be additional taxpayer dollars. We can start by reducing unnecessary administrative barriers, simplifying application and approval processes, providing a clear City contact to help organizations navigate requirements, and reviewing fees or facility costs where there is a demonstrated community benefit. Where financial support is appropriate, I would favour leveraging grants, sponsorships, donations and other levels of government before creating new pressures on municipal taxpayers. Any partnership should have clear expectations regarding safety, accessibility, maintenance, financial accountability and continued public access. Sarnia has many community organizations and residents willing to contribute their time, expertise and resources. City Hall should make it easier, not harder, for responsible partners to help improve our community. **What specific barrier would you address first and how would that enable more community led activation?** The first barrier I would address is the complexity of navigating City requirements. Community groups and volunteers should not have to navigate multiple departments, unclear processes and unnecessary administrative hurdles simply to bring a good idea forward. I would support a streamlined, one-window process with clear requirements and a designated point of contact. Making City Hall easier to navigate would allow community organizations to spend more of their time and resources actually delivering programs, events and improvements for residents.

CHRISTOPHER ORAM

Depends on the organization and the circumstances. What resources, financial, staff or otherwise, should the City make available to support these partnerships? Again, depends on the situation and organization. **What specific barrier would you address first and how would that enable more community led activation?** Establishing a committee focused on these things – To promote such endeavours, and to attract Interested parties who would facilitate the events. That would address the communication barrier

MICHELLE PARKS

Yes. What resources, financial, staff or otherwise, should the City make available to support these partnerships? I support providing targeted City resources to make these partnerships practical, while ensuring we are leveraging community investment and volunteer capacity rather than simply shifting costs onto taxpayers. The City should provide:

- A dedicated staff contact or partnership coordinator to help organizations navigate permits, insurance, approvals and City requirements.
- A simple application and agreement process with clear expectations, timelines and responsibilities.
- Small grants or a community partnership fund for eligible projects that demonstrate a clear public benefit. Funding could support programming, accessibility improvements, beautification, equipment or activation costs.
- Reasonable reductions or waivers of municipal fees where appropriate, particularly for non-profits and community-led projects that provide free or low-cost public programming.
- Access to existing City facilities and resources where available, including space, equipment and promotional support

I would also look for opportunities to leverage provincial and federal grants, sponsorships and private-sector contributions rather than relying solely on municipal funding. The City should establish clear eligibility criteria, maintain public access and ownership, and require basic reporting so residents can see what their investment is achieving. This is consistent with my approach to municipal government: remove unnecessary barriers, empower people who are already doing good work in our community, and use taxpayer dollars strategically to multiply—not replace—community investment. **What specific barrier would you address first and how would that enable more community led activation?** The first barrier I would address is the complexity and cost of navigating City requirements. For a small community organization or volunteer group, permits, fees, insurance, facility costs and multiple approval processes can be enough to stop a good idea before it gets started. I would create a simple “one-stop” community partnership process with a designated City staff contact who can help organizations understand what is required, coordinate approvals and identify opportunities to reduce or waive reasonable fees for projects that provide a clear public benefit. I would also establish standard agreements and clear criteria for community-led use of selected City spaces, rather than requiring organizations to navigate a different process for every project. This could turn an idea from “we’d love to do this, but we don’t know where to start” into a clear path to implementation. Whether it is a neighbourhood event, community garden, public art, recreational activity, beautification project or seasonal activation, the City should be making it easier for residents to contribute—not putting up unnecessary roadblocks. The goal is to unlock the creativity, volunteerism and investment already present in our community while maintaining appropriate safety, insurance, accessibility and public-access standards.

CHRIS PETTIT

Depends on the organization and the circumstances. What resources, financial, staff or otherwise, should the City make available to support these partnerships? The resources provided should depend on the organization, the proposed partnership and the public benefit it provides. The City should provide reasonable staff and administrative support to help qualified organizations navigate the process, but financial contributions should be considered on a case-by-case basis. Any City financial or staff resources should have a clear purpose, measurable public benefit and appropriate accountability. With significant demands already on the municipal budget, these partnerships should primarily be about leveraging community and private-sector resources, rather than creating another ongoing financial obligation for taxpayers.

ANDREW STOKLEY

Yes. What resources, financial, staff or otherwise, should the City make available to support these partnerships? Establishing a formal partnership framework to activate City owned public spaces is a smart, forward thinking strategy, provided it is anchored by strict risk mitigation, total cost recovery, and non negotiable public access guarantees. Cities like Vancouver, Toronto, and Calgary have shown that enabling non-profits and community organizations to steward public spaces drives civic engagement, improves programming, and maximizes space utilization. However, municipal taxpayers must never bear the burden of financial default or privatization. To protect municipal taxpayers moving forward, the capital role and operating risks must be strictly controlled. While I support the City holding loans to secure accessible financing, 100% of these funds must be paid back after the initial funding. To mitigate operating risks and revenue shortfalls, repayment must be driven entirely by the facility itself, specifically through added user fees on association memberships and dedicated tournament surcharges for hosted events. Furthermore, to maintain full asset security, the loan must be contingent on the City of Sarnia retaining full ownership of the land, building, and all amenities until the loan has been completely reimbursed. Finally, until the loan is paid off, the City must enforce a strong, legally binding public access agreement. Taxpayer support must never be used to fund a private club facility with a municipal invoice. Because these sites will be utilized by multiple sports associations and diverse groups, the City must mandate guaranteed, low-barrier public access as a non-negotiable condition of its financial backing. **What specific barrier would you address first and how would that enable more community led activation?** To unlock immediate community led activation, the first specific barrier I would address is the administrative complexity and high upfront cost of municipal permitting, site approval, and insurance compliance for non profit and community groups.

7

What do you believe is currently the biggest municipal barrier to hosting more large-scale festivals, concerts, sporting events and tourism events in Sarnia and what specific change would you make to address it?

MAYOR

MIKE BRADLEY

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CARRIE MCEACHRAN

I believe the biggest municipal barrier is the cost and complexity of the requirements for hosting large-scale events in Sarnia. I would undertake a review of the City's event framework, including insurance requirements, fees, noise exemptions, permitting and approval timelines, with direct input from event organizers and promoters. The goal would be to remove unnecessary barriers while maintaining appropriate protections for the City and surrounding neighbourhoods. Sarnia has demonstrated that it can host major events. I want us to create the conditions that encourage organizers and promoters to bring major events here again.

SCOTT MOLSON

I believe one of our biggest barriers is the absence of a clear, coordinated, business-minded approach to attracting and supporting major events. Sarnia has tremendous assets: our waterfront, beaches, parks, arenas, sports facilities, proximity to the U.S. border and a community with a history of supporting major events. We should be using those assets much more aggressively. I would establish a one-window major-event process so organizers aren't bounced between departments. The City would provide one lead contact to coordinate permits, facilities, policing, fire, transit, road closures and other municipal requirements. I also believe the Mayor should be one of Sarnia's strongest salespeople. We should actively pursue festivals, tournaments, concerts and tourism opportunities rather than waiting for organizers to come to us.

The goal is not simply spending taxpayers' money on events. It is creating an environment where private investment, sponsorships and community partnerships can bring people to Sarnia, fill our hotels and restaurants, support local businesses and showcase our city. Fix the Basics and Build the Future.

CITY & COUNTY COUNCILLOR

PATRICK COUTU

There is a perception that the city is difficult to work with. That needs to be changed so the public understands that we want to be a fun and attractive community.

ADAM KILNER

Standardization. Develop a standard application that promoters and organizers can complete that is automated, with staff reviewing the file to make sure the permit is in order. I imagine that this would quicken approvals and cut red tape.

I think it's also important to note that automation isn't meant to replace staff, but to lighten workloads, while also making sure that a human actually reviews applications.

MARK LAMORE

A complete and total lack of urgency.

CHRISSY MCROBERTS

I believe one of the biggest barriers is red tape and the cost and complexity of dealing with multiple City departments and requirements. If we want more large-scale festivals, concerts, sporting events and tourism events, we need to make Sarnia easier to do business in — including for event organizers. I would create one clear point of contact at the City for major events, with staff helping coordinate permits, roads, parks, transit, emergency services and other requirements. I would also commit to reviewing our event fees and charges to ensure the City isn't pricing out the very events we want to attract. If an event brings visitors, supports local businesses and creates a measurable economic benefit, our fee structure should reflect that. Large events aren't just about the event itself. They put heads in hotel beds, fill restaurants, support local shops and showcase Sarnia to visitors who may come back again. Tourism is an economic driver, and we should be actively using our waterfront, parks, sports facilities and community spaces to attract people to our city. We have the assets. Let's make it easier and more affordable to bring people here, keep them here longer and give them a reason to come back — without putting the bill for that growth on taxpayers.

CHARMAINE MURRAY

I don't know that I could identify the biggest municipal barrier without first speaking to people who have actually organized large events in Sarnia and finding out what challenges they faced. If City fees are making these events too expensive, I would want to look at whether those fees are reasonable. If the permitting process is unnecessarily difficult, I would want to look at ways to make it easier. At the same time, I recognize that large events can create additional costs for the City, such as cleanup and other services, and those costs need to be considered as well. I would like to see more festivals, concerts and other events in Sarnia. They bring people into our city, support our local economy and, just as importantly, give families and residents opportunities to get out, spend time together and build a stronger sense of community.

JOHN RICHARDSON

The biggest barrier is not a bylaw or a fee schedule, it is civic pride and participation. Nearly every large event in this city runs on volunteers, and the honest thing I have noticed this year is that participation is fading. Volunteering as much as I could this year gave me a much deeper appreciation for how much of Sarnia's event culture has been carried for decades by a small number of service clubs, and how much those clubs need new generations to step up and help build the kind of city they actually want to live in. It reminds me of the story of the Little Red Hen, except with a better ending. These clubs are not the hen at the end of the story refusing to share with everyone who declined to help plant, harvest, or bake. They are the opposite, genuinely glad to welcome anyone willing to pitch in, even late, because the actual goal was never to gatekeep the reward, it was to get the thing built. The specific change I would make is treating volunteer recruitment and service club support as a real municipal priority, not an afterthought, whether that means the city actively promoting these clubs and events to younger residents, or removing friction so a first-time volunteer can show up and contribute without a steep learning curve. A city that inspires people to believe they can build these things themselves will host more events than one that waits for city hall to do it for them.

MIKE STARK

I believe Council is open to large-scale events as long as the taxpayer is not expected to bear any costs that should be borne by the private sector promoters. The City is not and should not be in the entertainment and special event business. This is the private sectors responsibility particularly as it relates to risk management.

GEORGE VANDENBERG

Noise ByLaws.

PAUL WIERSMA

I believe that the biggest municipal barrier to hosting large-scale events in Sarnia is insufficient permanent infrastructure paired with strict site operational constraints. Key venues like Centennial Park lack turnkey high-capacity power, potable water, and wastewater hookups, forcing organizers to rent expensive temporary generators, washroom trailers, and staging. Furthermore, rigid noise by-laws and complex approval processes add high administrative overhead. The Solution: Establish "Festival-Ready" Event Hubs

To solve this, Sarnia should make a targeted policy and capital shift:

- Install Permanent Utilities: Upgrade primary sites (e.g., Centennial Park, Germain Park) with built-in electrical panels, water connections, and concrete staging pads to drastically lower organizer expenses.
- Streamline Event Zoning & Noise Rules: Create pre-approved "Tourism & Event Zones" with modernized noise and vendor guidelines, eliminating the need for piecemeal Council exemptions.
- Single-Desk Concierge: Bundle permitting, safety reviews, and city equipment access under one fast-tracked municipal contact.

CITY COUNCILLOR

TERRY BURRELL

The City provides a very good level of service, but some people always want something new. We are not going to satisfy everyone. Many want big city services, but we are a small city.

LO-ANNE CHAN

While Sarnia has had a great track record of events (Bayfest, Artwalk, First Fridays, and more), the City has a limited operational role, relying almost entirely on community volunteers while the City acts as a permitting body rather than a strategic partner. I would strengthen Invest Sarnia and Parks & Recreation so they can offer community-event grants and form formal partnerships with festival organizers, similar to London's support for SunFest and Rock the Park. This model encourages long-term stability - multi-year planning can be supported by the city instead of relying on fluctuating volunteer capacity. The City can also partner with Tourism Sarnia-Lambton, leveraging their experience in creating signature programs like the Cheers to the Coast digital passport program, which connects visitors to local craft producers and rural destinations. A formal City-TSL partnership could integrate major Sarnia events into regional tourism campaigns, boosting attendance, visitor spending and economic impact.

NATHAN COLQUHOUN

Costs to the organizers. There should be grants to help them run these events.

RICHARD C (DICK) FELTON

I would take the same approach as the previous question. A trial to start and then should that organization or group prove to be reliable, then their approval and subsequent events should be easier and more reliable to approve

DAVID GHOBIL

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ANNE MARIE GILLIS

Sarnia has always had great success hosting large events . A dedicated team that knows how to manage the logistics of the event itself. What are the back up plans if the original site cannot be used.

CLARA JAMES

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TAMMY MATHIESON

I believe one of the biggest barriers is the difficulty and uncertainty involved in organizing a major event: from permits and facility requirements to costs, timelines and coordination between City departments. For organizers, particularly those bringing a new event to Sarnia, that can be discouraging. I would support creating a coordinated major-events process with one City contact who can guide organizers from the initial proposal through approvals. Requirements, fees and timelines should be transparent and available upfront. Sarnia has tremendous assets, our waterfront, parks, sporting facilities and location, and events can support local businesses, tourism and community pride. We should maintain appropriate safety and accountability standards while making Sarnia a city where responsible event organizers actively want to bring their events.

CHRISTOPHER ORAM

The failure to generate interest. Establishing a sustainable yearly event should be a front and center goal. Examples: Goderich Celtic Roots Festival, London Comedy Festival, Kingston Buskers Rendezvous to name a few. It takes community collaboration to not only start them, but to make them a regular annual event

MICHELLE PARKS

I believe one of Sarnia's biggest municipal barriers is that we don't make it easy enough for event organizers to navigate City processes and bring their events here. Sarnia has incredible assets—the St. Clair River and waterfront, Canatara Park, our beaches, downtown, sports facilities and proximity to the U.S.—but we need to make better use of them. If an organizer wants to bring a large concert, festival, sporting tournament or tourism event to Sarnia, they shouldn't have to navigate multiple City departments, permits, road closures, fees and approvals without a clear point of contact. I would create a Sarnia Major Events "one-stop" process, with a dedicated City staff contact who works with organizers from the initial proposal through to the event. They would coordinate with the appropriate City departments and provide a clear roadmap of requirements, timelines, costs and approvals. I would also review our event-related fees and processes to identify unnecessary barriers, particularly for events that bring visitors, support local businesses and generate significant economic activity. Sarnia needs to stop thinking of tourism and major events simply as things that happen in our community. They are economic development opportunities. I want the City actively working with organizers, local businesses, tourism partners and community organizations to attract more events and make Sarnia a destination—not just a place people drive through. We have the assets. Now we need to make it easier and more attractive to use them.

CHRIS PETTIT

Sarnia has proven that we can attract major performers. Bayfest brought acts such as Rush, The Tragically Hip and Aerosmith to our community and relied heavily on community volunteers. The challenge isn't attracting major acts; it's making the economics sustainable. Major performers can play to 25,000–35,000+ people at other tour stops, while Sarnia's available venues have considerably less capacity. Performer, production and security costs don't decrease proportionately with a smaller audience. Bayfest ultimately cited high debt, rising costs and stagnant sponsorships when it went on hiatus. I would review the City's processes and remove unnecessary municipal barriers. I would also explore a regional approach, including suitable private land in Lambton County for temporary large-scale events. A major event should not be viewed as solely a City of Sarnia or County responsibility. Sarnia, Point Edward and Lambton County all have a role to play in supporting the hotels, restaurants, transportation and other businesses that would benefit from thousands of visitors. Rather than taxpayers building or subsidizing a permanent venue, I would look at how the entire region could work together to make large events possible when the private sector determines the economics are viable.

ANDREW STOKLEY

Helping organize Bayfest I know the the primary municipal barrier to hosting any festivals, concerts, and sporting events in Sarnia is the fragmented, multi-departmental approval process and rigid operational restrictions a close second is cost and someone willing to invest in doing it. Event organizers frequently face complex administrative hurdles. For major touring acts, multiple day tournaments, or regional festivals, this red tape adds significant friction, financial risk, and time delays. To fix this, Sarnia should implement a "One-Stop" concierge to streamline the event framework anchored by a single point of contact within City Administration. Replace siloed departmental reviews with a centralized, digital intake portal. A dedicated Municipal Event Concierge would coordinate All internal stakeholders (fire, police, transit, parks, public works, and licensing) in a single joint review table, turning a multiple month, fragmented approval process into a predictable turnaround in under a month. Delegate authority to staff to issue noise permits and site modifications within designated major event hub areas. Introduce a standardized, transparent fee schedule for municipal cost-recovery (police, waste management, road closures) paired with scalable subsidies for community driven events, removing upfront cost uncertainty for event planners.



FROM NUSARNIA'S COMMUNITY SURVEY

More than half of Sarnia residents, 55%, spend time in the city's public spaces at least weekly, according to nuSarnia's Community Survey. Residents who use public space more often also tend to report more frequent contact with neighbours, though that specific pattern did not hold up under the survey's statistical testing. This question asks what investment a candidate would prioritize next.

8

What is one specific investment you would make to help Sarnia's public spaces, main streets and neighbourhoods become more vibrant destinations for residents and visitors—and what evidence would you use to determine whether that investment was successful?

MAYOR

MIKE BRADLEY

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CARRIE MCEACHRAN

One specific investment I would prioritize is moving forward with a high-impact phase of the Waterfront Master Plan, focused on creating more active public spaces and strengthening the connection between our waterfront and downtown. Success needs to be measured. I would look at increased use of the waterfront and public spaces, the number of events and activities being held, new business openings, private investment and growth in the tax base from new development in the surrounding area, as well as feedback from residents and visitors. Our waterfront is one of Sarnia's greatest assets. Investment there should not only improve the public space, it should help bring more people downtown, support local businesses and create a destination for residents and visitors.

SCOTT MOLSON

I would make a targeted investment in revitalizing Sarnia's downtown and waterfront as one connected destination—but I would do it responsibly and only after our core infrastructure needs are properly prioritized. That means improving the basics first: clean and safe public spaces, sidewalks, lighting, accessibility, landscaping, washrooms, parking and better connections between downtown, Centennial Park and the waterfront. I would also work with local businesses and community organizations to create more opportunities for markets, festivals, live music, patios and family-friendly activities that bring people downtown and keep them there longer. Most importantly, I would measure the results. Success should not be based on whether a project looks good in a report. I would track pedestrian traffic, downtown vacancy rates, new businesses opening, private investment, event attendance, tourism activity and feedback from residents and downtown businesses. We should establish a baseline before spending the money and publicly report the results afterward. Every investment should have a purpose and measurable results. If taxpayers are investing in revitalization, they deserve to know whether it is actually creating economic activity and improving their community. Fix the Basics and Build the Future.

CITY & COUNTY COUNCILLOR

PATRICK COUTU

This is not an investment so to speak. I would suggest that all business districts create BIA. Each BIA would invigorate the destinations for visitors and residents. It is a very efficient way to achieve this goal.

ADAM KILNER

I would specifically continue the focus on active transportation. In my neighbourhood - Sherwood Village - a paved sidewalk along Confederation St. has transformed the number of walkers, cyclists, rollerbladers, etc. going past my backyard. Where maybe one or two people might go by a day prior, I now often see dozens go by on a summer day. This sidewalk has completed a non-vehicle route for those going about through Sherwood. The dramatic increase in non-vehicle traffic feeds into the Active Transportation Master Plan.

MARK LAMORE

It is hard to answer, the city is simply so far behind from where it should be. Again it is a long list that needs to be prioritized. If successful you will see people not afraid to look at drug addicts in the streets.

CHRISSY MCROBERTS

One specific investment I would make is creating a stronger year-round program of events and activities in our public spaces and main streets, using the assets we already have rather than building something expensive and new. I would work with business collectives, community groups, tourism organizations, local businesses and event organizers to create a coordinated calendar of festivals, concerts, markets, sporting events and family activities that bring people downtown, to our waterfront and into our neighbourhoods. I would measure success by actual results: increased attendance, hotel occupancy, restaurant and retail activity, participation from local businesses, visitor spending, repeat events and feedback from residents and visitors. I don't want to measure success by how much money we spend. I want to measure it by how many people we bring into our public spaces, how much business we generate for local businesses and whether people are proud to spend time in Sarnia.

CHARMAINE MURRAY

One thing I would like to see us do is deal with abandoned and neglected properties in our neighbourhoods. If the City owns a property, I believe we should either find another use for it or remove it rather than letting it sit and deteriorate. If it is privately owned, I would want to know whether our current bylaws are enough to make sure owners are looking after their properties, and whether those bylaws are actually being enforced. These properties can sometimes also provide opportunities for redevelopment and new housing. I would consider it successful if we started seeing fewer neglected properties, more properties being cleaned up or used again, and some of those properties being turned into something useful for the community.

JOHN RICHARDSON

The specific investment is not a brand new program, it is making Sarnia's existing Downtown and Mitton Village CIP actually work as intended. Right now those grants sit underused because too many property owners simply do not know they exist. I would prioritize two things: actively promoting the CIP incentives so property owners know the money is there, and expanding the eligible criteria so a facade or storefront improvement grant can include a mural or public art component, not just masonry and lighting repairs. That unlocks funding that already exists for a use it currently does not cover, rather than waiting on a brand new budget line. Public art is one of the most inexpensive, highest-visibility ways to make a street feel alive and a neighbourhood feel vibrant. For evidence of success, I would track grant uptake before and after the change, foot traffic near the improved storefronts and murals, and whether nearby vacancies fill and stay filled, not just whether people said they liked how it looked.

MIKE STARK

I would construct multi-coloured kiosks along the walkway on Sarnia's waterfront. These kiosks could be rented to Downtown, Mitton Street and Northgate merchants to showcase their merchandise as well as advertising their other locations. Larger kiosks could be constructed where space is available for restaurant's to offer taxis style cuisine often found along waterfront developments in Europe. (I.e. Alicante in Spain)

GEORGE VANDENBERG

Clean up and make it look attractive.

PAUL WIERSMA

A transformative investment for Sarnia is a strategic streetscape and active mobility framework. Upgrading corridors like Downtown Front Street and Mitton Village with wider sidewalks, flexible patio zones, decorative lighting, and protected multi-use pathways creates accessible links between neighborhoods, business districts, and the waterfront. Evidence to Measure Success:

- Economic Growth: Increased daily foot traffic, reduced commercial vacancy rates along main streets, and higher sales reported by local BIA businesses.
- Public Engagement: Longer visitor dwell times, increased usage of bike lanes and multi-use pathways, and a higher frequency of community events and pop-up markets.
- Safety & Perception: Improved public survey ratings for neighborhood vibrancy, alongside lower vehicle speeds and fewer pedestrian traffic conflicts.

CITY COUNCILLOR

TERRY BURRELL

There are always a lot of people who want to spend the City's money. We have over 1,000 acres of parkland. We have our River and our beaches. Te fun you have, you make yourself.

LO-ANNE CHAN

I would invest in converting select low-traffic downtown streets into shared streets that prioritize pedestrians and function as flexible gathering spaces. Temporary, low-cost pilot treatments would allow the city to test how people use these spaces before major capital work begins. Streets that dead-end at the waterfront are ideal, as they can strengthen pedestrian links and elevate the visibility of downtown's waterfront connections while the Waterfront Master Plan is still in early stages. In Mitton Village, I would reinforce the recommendations of the Mitton Village Community Development Advisory Committee, whose work reflects strong grassroots leadership. The 2024 collaboration agreement with Neighbourhood Connects, coordinating activation of the Mitton Village parkette, shows how community-driven approaches can make neighbourhood spaces more vibrant. Success would be measured through increased pedestrian activity, business indicators, public-space usage, event participation, resident feedback, and reduced storefront vacancy.

NATHAN COLQUHOUN

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RICHARD C (DICK) FELTON

Vibrant, colourful, and informative signage installed. Measure would be a survey and or people count of who visits the areas it is done in.

DAVID GHOBIL

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ANNE MARIE GILLIS

Put Tourism for Sarnia under the control of the City. Feedback from the citizens of the city and the overall users is the best way. If the users enjoy coming to Sarnia , for events and they are willing to spend their Tourism Dollars in Sarnia that is a good indicator that it is worth the investment.

CLARA JAMES

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TAMMY MATHIESON

One investment I would prioritize is improving the safety, accessibility and usability of Sarnia's existing public spaces, particularly our waterfront, parks and key community areas. This could include better lighting, accessible pathways and sidewalks, seating, washroom facilities, landscaping and other practical improvements that encourage people to stay, gather and support nearby businesses. I would favour improving and maintaining assets we already own before committing taxpayers to costly new projects, while also pursuing grants, sponsorships and partnerships to stretch municipal dollars further. Success should be measured, not assumed. I would look at increased use of the spaces, attendance at events, feedback from residents and nearby businesses, tourism activity, safety concerns and whether the improvements are helping attract people to surrounding shops and restaurants. If we invest public money, residents should be able to see what was accomplished and whether that investment delivered value.

CHRISTOPHER ORAM

Make sure facilities are up to date and available for use

MICHELLE PARKS

One specific investment I would make is a phased Sarnia Public Spaces and Waterfront Activation Fund, focused initially on connecting and activating our waterfront, downtown and key neighbourhood public spaces. I would prioritize practical improvements that make people want to stay longer and come back—better public seating and gathering spaces, lighting, landscaping, pedestrian connections, seasonal programming, public art and opportunities for local businesses and community organizations to activate public spaces. This would build on Sarnia's greatest assets, including our waterfront, downtown, parks and trails, rather than creating entirely new infrastructure. I would also look for partnerships with local businesses, community organizations and tourism operators to stretch the City's investment further. Success should be measured by results, not ribbon cuttings. I would look at:

- Increased pedestrian activity and use of public spaces;
- Attendance at events and community programming;
- Increased tourism and visitor activity;
- Business participation and economic activity in surrounding areas;
- Feedback from residents, businesses and visitors; and
- Whether spaces are being used more consistently throughout the year.

I would establish a baseline before investing and report publicly on these measures afterward. My goal is to make Sarnia's waterfront, downtown and neighbourhoods places where people want to gather, businesses want to invest, and visitors want to return. That supports my platform's focus on economic growth, tourism, community investment and making better use of the assets we already have.

CHRIS PETTIT

I would prioritize investing in public spaces and streetscapes when they can be combined with necessary infrastructure work, rather than treating them as separate projects. For example, when a road, sewer or water project is already being undertaken, I would look at opportunities to improve sidewalks, lighting, trees, pedestrian connections, cycling infrastructure and public gathering spaces at the same time. This allows the City to improve the public realm without unnecessarily duplicating construction costs. I would measure success by looking at increased pedestrian and visitor activity, business investment, property improvements, event and public-space usage, and whether the investment is helping attract additional private investment. With Sarnia's infrastructure needs, we have to be strategic about public-space investments. The goal should be to get more community and economic benefit from the infrastructure dollars we are already spending.

ANDREW STOKLEY

I would investigate the possibility of a small business recruitment taskforce. While the Sarnia Lambton Economic Partnership (SLEP) successfully markets the broader region to large scale enterprises, independent entrepreneurs are falling through the cracks, revealing a clear need for a localized task force dedicated exclusively to Sarnia. To lower commercial vacancy rates and drive local job creation, this initiative would focus on grassroots economic development by compiling a comprehensive registry of available commercial properties and directly engaging landlords to negotiate tenant incentive packages. Armed with a portfolio of offers, the task force would actively pitch Sarnia to successful out of town businesses by visiting other communities and connecting with regional Chambers of Commerce. Fiscal responsibility must remain central to this effort, requiring City Council to establish hard, time-bound targets for new business attraction. Whether this initiative is structured as a task force or a dedicated municipal role, its continued funding must be strictly evaluated against concrete performance metrics to ensure taxpayer dollars are being optimized.

SAFE AND CONNECTED MOBILITY

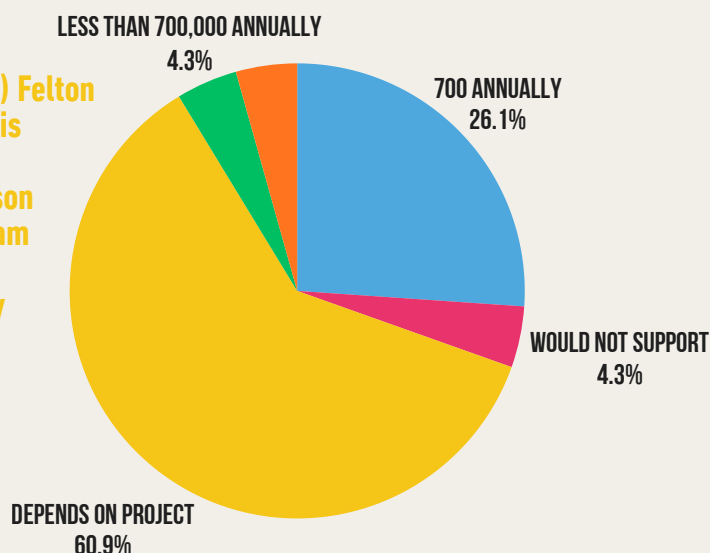
9 Sarnia's Active Transportation Master Plan identifies investments needed to make walking and cycling safer and more practical throughout the City. A \$700,000 annual capital allocation had been previously identified for implementation, but funding has been reduced or deferred through previous budget decisions. What level of annual funding would you support for implementation of the plan during the next Council term? (Approximately \$700,000 annually / More than \$700,000 annually / Less than \$700,000 annually / I would not support a dedicated annual allocation / Depends on the projects proposed)

AT A GLANCE

Mike Bradley
Patrick Coutu
Charmaine Murray
Mike Stark
George Vandenberg
Terry Burrell
Lo-Anne Chan

Chrissy McRoberts

Richard C (Dick) Felton
Anne Marie Gillis
Clara James
Tammy Mathieson
Christopher Oram
Chris Pettit
Andrew Stokley



Nathan Colquhoun

Carrie McEachran
Adam Kilner
John Richardson
Paul Wiersma
David Ghobril
Michelle Parks

Scott Molson

MAYOR

MIKE BRADLEY

Depends on the projects proposed. Support active transportation balanced by other needs in the City

CARRIE MCEACHRAN

Approximately \$700,000 annually. I would support restoring an annual allocation of approximately \$700,000 to implement the Active Transportation Master Plan. Council has already approved the plan, and residents participated in developing it. If we are serious about making walking and cycling safer and creating better connections between neighbourhoods, parks, schools, businesses and other destinations, we need to consistently fund its implementation. I would prioritize projects based on safety, connectivity and community benefit, and look for opportunities to leverage the City's investment through grants, development and other available funding sources.

SCOTT MOLSON

I would not support a dedicated annual allocation. Depends on the projects proposed. I support safe walking and cycling infrastructure, but I would not automatically commit taxpayers to a fixed annual amount without reviewing the specific projects, costs and benefits. Active transportation improvements should be prioritized where they address demonstrated safety concerns, improve connectivity and can be coordinated with road, sewer and water reconstruction. With significant demands on Sarnia's core infrastructure, every capital project should be evaluated on need, affordability and value to taxpayers.

CITY & COUNTY COUNCILLOR

PATRICK COUTU

Depends on the projects proposed. I am a big supporter of walking and cycling promotion in the city. I think we can not use a blanket plan for the entire city. We have to implement plans on a case by case basis for different areas.

ADAM KILNER

Approximately \$700,000 annually. The proposed amount gives opportunity to continue to work on challenges. One of the ongoing things I'm thinking about include seniors who are trying to use sidewalks. I have sometimes discovered that sidewalks in certain locations do not have the ramp configuration, but rather the curb. Better active transportation means more accessible sidewalks. That's simply one example.

MARK LAMORE

Depends on the projects proposed. I don't think people understand the challenges the next council is going to have in prioritizing anything. Unless we build a taxbase both residentially and commercially then there is little money to play with for anybody.

CHRISSY MCROBERTS

Less than \$700,000 annually. I would support restoring a portion of the previous amount, closer to \$250,000 annual capital allocation for Active Transportation, provided it is tied to a clear, prioritized plan and the funding can be sustained within a responsible budget for the 2027 Budget. Safe sidewalks, cycling routes and connections between neighbourhoods are important infrastructure, not extras. But I also believe we need to be responsible with taxpayers' money. I would prioritize projects that address safety concerns, connect existing routes and provide the greatest benefit to residents. I would also aggressively pursue provincial and federal funding so that taxpayers aren't carrying the entire cost. I support investing in active transportation, but I want to see a plan, priorities and measurable results — not just a line in the budget.

CHARMAINE MURRAY

Depends on the projects proposed. I support investing in safer sidewalks and cycling throughout Sarnia, particularly where accessibility and safety are concerns. However, I would want to know which projects are being proposed, what they will cost and what the proposed funding would actually accomplish before deciding whether \$700,000 annually is the right amount. I believe these improvements are important, but I also believe we need to understand what we are getting for the money before deciding how much should be allocated.

JOHN RICHARDSON

Approximately \$700,000 annually. Approximately \$700,000 annually, and I would start there. But the bigger issue is how this gets talked about. Right now it shows up in the budget as a standalone line item that is easy to critique in isolation, without any of the context for what it actually saves the city down the road.

A meaningful share of that money reduces future road maintenance and replacement costs. Repurposing a lane for active transportation is not just an added expense, it can lower the long-term cost of maintaining that stretch of road compared to keeping it as full vehicle capacity. That case needs to be made explicitly, with clear numbers from staff on the actual maintenance and replacement savings, not just the upfront cost. Right now the public only sees the bill, not the offset, and that is exactly why this keeps getting treated as an easy cut instead of what it actually is, a cost-reducing investment.

MIKE STARK

Depends on the projects proposed.

GEORGE VANDENBERG

Depends on the projects proposed. Again we need to increase our tax base.

PAUL WIERSMA

Approximately \$700,000 annually. I am open to increased funding, but I would like to understand the projects being proposed and how the goals of the Active Transportation Master Plan are being met. Considerations include safety and collision reduction, leveraging external grants, coordination with road resurfacing, balancing initial costs with long term maintenance costs, and health and tourism benefits.

CITY COUNCILLOR

TERRY BURRELL

Depends on the projects proposed. Being a border city with an international storm brewing, Sarnia needs to stay away from wild spending.

LO-ANNE CHAN

Depends on the projects proposed. I would seek to sustain the original commitment, and encourage exploring use of the city's strong credit rating to ensure progress on improving city infrastructure. This helps to also improve the city's capital/physical assets, which goes to strengthen its ability to attract investment.

NATHAN COLQUHOUN

More than \$700,000 annually.

RICHARD C (DICK) FELTON

Depends on the projects proposed. I think we need to install as much active transportation as we can, because there is always a payback in safety and the health of our citizens. I would direct staff to find as many grants as possible plus we should revisit the funding multiple times a year to see if funds are available to do more. Please know that I am not opposed to setting an annual; however, without a deep dive into finances, I can not commit in this write up

DAVID GHOBIL

Approximately \$700,000 annually. I support restoring the approximately \$700,000 annual allocation. Maintaining and improving public infrastructure costs money, and it is unrealistic to promise additional services with no tax increases. Taxes will have to rise enough to protect essential services and existing assets, but every increase must be clearly justified. The long-term solution is to expand Sarnia's industrial and commercial tax base so the cost is shared more broadly and residential taxpayers are not expected to carry the entire burden.

ANNE MARIE GILLIS

Depends on the projects proposed. The ATMP is being implemented not as a stand alone but is integrated into the projects that are assigned each year that directly impact transportation . The Michigan Avenue rebuild is one such project . The multi purpose side walk that is being created at Confederation and HWY 40 is another . That is the most cost effective and denotes good long term planning and the overall good use of taxpayers money

CLARA JAMES

Depends on projects proposed. I would need to review the plans in place more thoroughly and I have other priorities that would go before active transportation.

TAMMY MATHIESON

Depends on the projects proposed. I support making walking and cycling safer and more practical in Sarnia, but I would not commit taxpayers to an arbitrary annual amount without considering the specific projects being proposed, their demonstrated need, cost and expected benefit. I would prioritize projects that address genuine safety concerns, fill important gaps in existing networks and can be incorporated efficiently into planned road or infrastructure work. I would also consider how proposed changes affect motorists, parking, businesses and surrounding neighbourhoods. Where projects provide clear value, I would support pursuing provincial and federal grants and other funding opportunities to maximize what Sarnia can accomplish with municipal dollars. Active transportation is important, but every investment should be evaluated on its merits and balanced against other infrastructure priorities. My goal would be safer transportation options for everyone while ensuring taxpayers receive good value for their money.

CHRISTOPHER ORAM

Depends on the projects proposed. I need to do more study to see if \$700,000 is adequate funding, and get back on track with implementing what has been promised

MICHELLE PARKS

Approximately \$700,000 annually. I would support restoring the \$700,000 annual capital allocation identified in Sarnia's Active Transportation Master Plan. I believe walking and cycling infrastructure needs to be treated as core infrastructure—not something we fund only when there is money left over. Safe sidewalks, crossings, cycling connections and accessible routes benefit everyone, including children, seniors, people with disabilities and residents who rely on walking or cycling as their primary means of transportation. That said, I would expect accountability for that \$700,000. We should have a clear annual implementation plan identifying which projects will be completed, what they will cost, and how they fit into the broader transportation network. I would prioritize projects that address documented safety concerns and connect existing neighbourhoods, schools, parks, commercial areas and waterfront destinations. Given the City's current financial pressures, I would not support simply adding \$700,000 to the budget without looking at the entire capital plan. We need to find efficiencies, prioritize projects and pursue provincial and federal funding wherever possible. My position is that \$700,000 a year should be the baseline—not a wish list. If we have a plan, we need to fund it and follow through. By the end of the four-year term, I would want residents to see measurable progress in creating a connected, safer and more accessible active transportation network across Sarnia.

CHRIS PETTIT

Depends on the projects proposed. I support safe walking and cycling infrastructure, but I would not commit to a fixed \$700,000 annual expenditure simply because that amount was identified in a previous plan. Sarnia has significant competing infrastructure needs, and every capital dollar needs to be prioritized based on safety, condition, necessity and value to taxpayers. I would prioritize projects that address genuine safety concerns and that can be coordinated with planned road and infrastructure work. I would also expect the City to measure whether existing active transportation projects are actually improving safety and usage.

If a design creates safety problems, unnecessary traffic conflicts or poor value for taxpayers, Council should be willing to change or remove it. Active transportation has a place in Sarnia, but it must be implemented responsibly and based on evidence—not ideology.

ANDREW STOKLEY

Depends on the projects proposed. Funding for the City of Sarnia's Active Transportation Master Plan during the next Council term should be determined on a project-by-project basis rather than committing to a fixed, blanket annual allocation. While long range planning gives municipal staff a roadmap for expanding walking and cycling infrastructure, a "depends on the projects proposed" approach ensures fiscal responsibility and maximizes the impact of municipal dollars. We must evaluate on merit and priority. Funding decisions should prioritize high impact proposals as dollars are scarce. We should do all work in coordination with road work. Active transportation improvements are most cost-effective when bundled into scheduled road resurfacing, sewer separation, or watermain replacements. Aligning ATMP projects with broader capital works reduces overall construction costs and disruption.

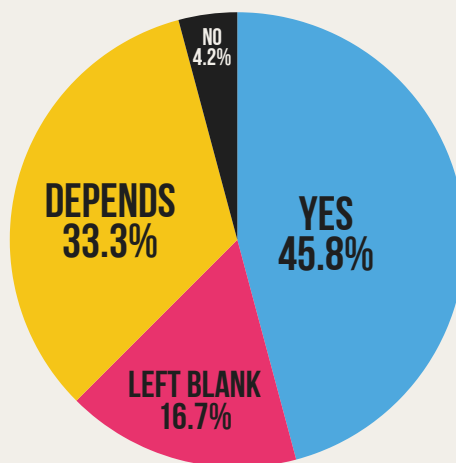
10

Will you support prioritizing completion of a connected citywide walking and cycling network—even when doing so requires reallocating some existing road space or changing how streets are currently used? (Yes / No / Depends on the project)

AT A GLANCE

Patrick Coutu
Charmaine Murray
Paul Wiersma
David Ghobril
Anne Marie Gillis
Tammy Mathieson
Chris Pettit
Andrew Stokley

Mike Bradley
Chrissy McRoberts
Mike Stark
Terry Burrell



Clara James

Carrie McEachran
Scott Molson
Adam Kilner
Mark Lamore
John Richardson
George Vandenberg
Lo-Anne Chan
Nathan Colquhoun
Richard C (Dick) Felton
Christopher Oram
Michelle Parks

MAYOR

MIKE BRADLEY

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CARRIE MCEACHRAN

Yes. Council should start with safety and consider how each street is actually used and who needs to use it. Decisions should reflect traffic volumes, pedestrian and cycling needs, transit, accessibility, surrounding businesses and neighbourhoods, connectivity to the broader network, and cost. Not every street needs to serve every purpose in the same way. The goal should be a transportation network that is safe, practical and connected, while making the best use of the road space and resources we have.

SCOTT MOLSON

Yes. I support building a safer, better-connected walking and cycling network across Sarnia. The City's Active Transportation Master Plan already calls for a seamless, interconnected network, and recent projects have combined active transportation improvements with necessary road, water and sewer reconstruction. However, I would not support removing vehicle lanes or parking simply to meet a plan on paper. Any reallocation of existing road space should be evaluated individually based on safety, traffic volumes, emergency access, accessibility, businesses and residents, cost, and actual community need. Whenever possible, I want active transportation improvements coordinated with road and underground infrastructure projects that already need to be completed. That gives taxpayers better value and avoids tearing up the same street twice. My principle is straightforward: safe choices for pedestrians and cyclists, functional roads for drivers and businesses, and responsible spending for taxpayers.

CITY & COUNTY COUNCILLOR

PATRICK COUTU

Depends on the project. We should not inhibit current and future needed vehicle patterns. We can be creative and find ways to integrate amazing walking and cycling paths throughout the city.

ADAM KILNER

Yes. A multi-modal hierarchy that focuses on the safety of all – including cyclists and pedestrians – can make roadways safer. The compact size of Sarnia should be considered. Fewer lanes to improve safety has a minimal impact on arrival times if one is in a car, but also slows traffic, while also making roadways and crosswalks safer for cyclists and pedestrians.

MARK LAMORE

Yes. Council needs to look at both current and future trends and make decisions that do not only fix today but leave flexibility down the road..

CHRISSY MCROBERTS

Council should start with safety and the actual needs of the community, not with the assumption that every street should be designed the same way. We need to look at traffic volumes, pedestrian and cycling safety, transit needs, accessibility, parking, businesses and how the street is actually being used. A major transportation route is different from a neighbourhood street or a downtown gathering space. I support making walking and cycling safer and improving connections, but we also have to recognize that cars are still essential for many residents and businesses. We shouldn't create congestion or hurt local businesses in an effort to achieve a particular transportation model. And affordability matters. Every change needs to be considered against the cost to taxpayers and the value it provides. The principle should be simple: use our road space safely, practically and efficiently, based on the needs of each neighbourhood – and make decisions that work for Sarnia, not simply because another city is doing it.

CHARMAINE MURRAY

Depends on the project. I would first want to identify where the greatest need actually is by looking at ridership and listening to the people who use transit. Are there people who can't get to work because buses don't run early or late enough? Are students or seniors having difficulty getting where they need to go? Are there routes where frequency is the bigger problem? We have already made significant investments in our transit fleet, including adding new buses. I would want to make sure we are getting the best use out of that investment by putting additional service where it is actually needed. For funding, I would first look at the existing transit budget and continue pursuing provincial and federal transit funding before looking at increasing fares. If people rely on transit to get to work, school and appointments, I don't want to make that service less affordable for the very people who need it.

JOHN RICHARDSON

Yes. The single most important principle is public buy-in, and that starts with traffic studies that are actually completed and communicated, not just filed away. When a lane is proposed for reallocation, residents need to see the real data: how underused that lane actually is, and what it costs to maintain and eventually replace if it stays as is. Michigan Avenue is proof this works. It went from four lanes to two travel lanes with a centre turn lane and bike lanes on each side, and traffic actually moves better now because vehicles are no longer stuck behind cars stopped to turn left. Three lanes carry the same traffic more smoothly while also enabling active transportation. Where a lane genuinely cannot be sacrificed, the answer is not to give up on active transportation there, it is to look at multi-use paths that make use of underused sidewalks and boulevards instead, paired with proper directional layout and signage so road crossings stay safe.

MIKE STARK

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GEORGE VANDENBERG

Yes. The way it is done in the Netherlands is an excellent example.

PAUL WIERSMA

Depends on the project.

- Design corridors for all users including pedestrians, cyclists, transit riders, and motorists giving consideration for the type of road (e.g. arterial corridor, industrial, commercial, residential, parkland, etc.)
- Ensure that emergency vehicles and public transportation can access spaces.
- Maximize sidewalk and patio space on main streets like Front Street or Mitton Village.
- Design corridors for pedestrian and cyclist safety.
- Connect residential neighbourhoods to parks, schools, public institutions, and the waterfront.
- Optimize financial resources by coordinating road improvements with scheduled maintenance.

CITY COUNCILLOR

TERRY BURRELL

Like every service, it should be based on demand. I see no purpose in narrowing a roadway that handles 10 thousand car trips a day, in order to handle 50 bicycle trips.

LO-ANNE CHAN

Yes. Council should seek the perspectives of urban planners & subject-matter experts to understand existing best-practices at other municipalities to help develop the plans for Sarnia.

NATHAN COLQUHOUN

Yes. Walkable cities every time.

RICHARD C (DICK) FELTON

Yes. The city knows the traffic density already on most streets. Bike Lanes actually save maintenance costs by keeping cars away from the cement curbs and asphalt road. Protected bike lanes also need to be a goal.

DAVID GHOBIL

Depends on the project. Major arterials, residential streets and downtown main streets should not be treated alike. Walking and cycling investments should create connected routes while preserving reasonable vehicle, delivery and emergency access. Again we need more tax base.

ANNE MARIE GILLIS

Depends on the project. I would defer to engineering for the exact information . Including stats that have been compiled ie. , who is currently using the roads , is it being used as a parking lot rather than for transportation . Are more sidewalks needed to accommodate users , or have they become irrelevant in some neighbourhoods. Do folks use their parks, if not ,how can they be improved to be more relevant to the users.

CLARA JAMES

No. They should look at the needs of the city and also look at the potential impacts of cutting down space for cars and transit.

TAMMY MATHIESON

Depends on the project. Council should allocate road space based on safety, demonstrated need, actual usage and the function of each street. There is no one-size-fits-all solution. Decisions should consider traffic volumes, pedestrian and cycling activity, transit, accessibility, emergency access, parking, businesses and the needs of surrounding neighbourhoods. I support safe options for walking, cycling and transit, but improvements should not automatically come at the expense of efficient vehicle movement. Before reallocating road space, Council should consider the evidence, consult the people affected and determine whether the change will genuinely improve safety and mobility. Our streets should work effectively for everyone who uses them.

CHRISTOPHER ORAM

Yes. Council should allocate road space based on safety, efficiency, equity, and long-term community benefit. That means prioritizing designs that reduce collisions, move people reliably, support local businesses, and make streets usable for all ages and abilities, not just one mode of travel. Decisions should be evidence-based, cost-effective, and aligned with provincial standards and local goals for growth, health, and economic vitality.

MICHELLE PARKS

Yes. Yes. I support completing a connected citywide walking and cycling network, including reallocating road space when it is the safest and most practical way to do so. Sarnia has already invested in planning for active transportation. The challenge now is implementation. I believe walking and cycling infrastructure should improve safety, accessibility, quality of life and connections between our neighbourhoods, schools, parks, businesses, transit and waterfront. That said, I would not support removing road space simply to add bike lanes. Every street should be evaluated based on safety, traffic volumes, connectivity, accessibility and the needs of the surrounding neighbourhood. When deciding how our streets are used, Council should follow five principles:

- Safety first — protect vulnerable road users and create streets that work safely for everyone.
- Connectivity — prioritize projects that complete gaps and create a connected network rather than isolated pieces.
- Right solution for the location — some streets may need protected cycling facilities, while others may be better suited to multi-use paths, sidewalks or traffic calming.
- All users matter — cars remain essential for many residents, including commuters, workers and people with mobility challenges. Pedestrians, cyclists and transit users also deserve safe, practical options.
- Value for taxpayers — coordinate active transportation improvements with road reconstruction, sewer work and other planned infrastructure, and pursue provincial and federal funding wherever possible.

I also believe a vibrant, walkable core and welcoming public spaces are important to Sarnia's economic and community future. The goal isn't to make Sarnia less accessible to cars. It's to make Sarnia more accessible to everyone. We can create safer choices for getting around while being responsible with limited taxpayer dollars.

CHRIS PETTIT

Depends on the project. Council should base road-space decisions on the actual needs and characteristics of each street and the people who use it. The principles should include safety, traffic volumes, actual usage, accessibility, emergency services, business impacts, cost and the availability of practical alternatives. Sarnia is part of a larger regional community. Many residents drive to work, including shift workers, tradespeople and people commuting from surrounding municipalities. Cycling or transit will not be a practical option for everyone, and Council should not design our transportation system around the assumption that it will be. Where walking, cycling or transit improvements can safely and practically be incorporated, they should be considered. But changes should be based on evidence and local conditions, not ideology. If a change creates congestion, safety problems or unintended consequences, Council should be willing to reconsider it.

ANDREW STOKLEY

Depends on the project. Expanding walking and cycling networks across Sarnia must be evaluated on a case-by-case basis, weighing genuine safety benefits against the practical needs of drivers, businesses and emergency services. While a connected network is a good long-term goal, reallocating road space should only happen when there is clear evidence it will improve safety without creating significant new problems elsewhere.



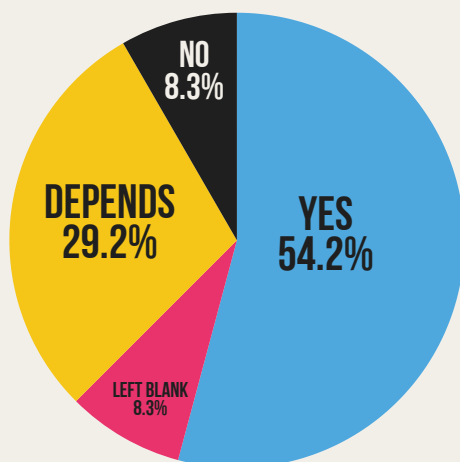
FROM NUSARNIA'S COMMUNITY SURVEY

52% of Sarnia residents feel safe getting around their own neighbourhood, while 43% feel unsafe, per nuSarnia's Community Survey. Downtown reported the lowest observed safety score of any area (44%), and Mitton Village named crime and public safety as its top city priority (22%), the highest single-issue score recorded anywhere in the survey. This question asks candidates directly about investing in traffic calming.

11

Will you support increasing investment in traffic calming on residential streets where speeding and vehicle volumes make residents feel unsafe? (Yes / No / Depends on the location)

AT A GLANCE



Mike Bradley
Mike Stark

Scott Molson
Patrick Coutu
Mark Lamore
Terry Burrell
David Ghobril
Tammy Mathieson
Chris Pettit

Clara James
Andrew Stokley

Carrie McEachran
Adam Kilner
Chrissy McRoberts
Charmaine Murray
John Richardson
George Vandenberg
Paul Wiersma
Lo-Anne Chan
Nathan Colquhoun
Richard C (Dick) Felton
Anne Marie Gillis
Christopher Oram
Michelle Parks

MAYOR

MIKE BRADLEY

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CARRIE MCEACHRAN

Yes. Traffic calming should receive a meaningful priority within the City's capital program where there is a demonstrated safety need. Projects should be prioritized using evidence such as traffic speeds and volumes, collision history, pedestrian activity and proximity to schools, parks and other high-use areas. Our capital dollars are limited, so investment should be directed first to locations where traffic calming can deliver the greatest and most immediate improvement in public safety.

SCOTT MOLSON

Depends on the location. Traffic calming should be a targeted priority based on demonstrated safety concerns, not a blanket spending program across the City. Where traffic data shows excessive speeds, high vehicle volumes, collision concerns, or particular risks around schools, parks and residential neighbourhoods, I support practical measures that improve safety. Sarnia already has a process that considers traffic volumes, speed data, collision history and neighbourhood support before proceeding. At the same time, we have significant demands on our roads, water, sewer and stormwater infrastructure. Those essential assets must remain at the top of our capital priorities. Traffic-calming improvements should therefore be coordinated with scheduled road reconstruction wherever possible, rather than repeatedly tearing up the same street or creating unnecessary additional costs. I would favour cost-effective, evidence-based solutions, with residents consulted before significant changes are made. Safety matters, but every project also has to be weighed against emergency access, traffic flow, maintenance requirements and affordability for taxpayers. My approach is simple: fix the basics first, address proven safety problems, coordinate the work intelligently, and make every taxpayer dollar count.

CITY & COUNTY COUNCILLOR

PATRICK COUTU

Depends on the location. Not a big priority for traffic calming.

ADAM KILNER

Yes. Given the size of the city, I think it should be a medium to high priority.

MARK LAMORE

Depends on the location. What has been done so far has been short sighted , ineffective and even residents have been unhappy...Again, the decisions that council make have to a) make better sense but have a longer term vision.

CHRISSY MCROBERTS

Yes. Traffic calming should be a priority where there is a demonstrated safety issue, especially around schools, parks, pedestrian crossings and neighbourhoods where speeding or cut-through traffic is a problem. But our capital budget is going to be tight, so I don't support spending money on traffic calming everywhere just because it's requested. We need to look at the data, the cost and the actual safety benefit. Where traffic calming can be incorporated into road reconstruction or other planned projects, that makes sense and can be a much more cost-effective approach. My priority is simple: fix the areas where there is a real safety problem, use practical and affordable solutions, and make sure taxpayers are getting value for the money.

CHARMAINE MURRAY

Yes. High Priority.

JOHN RICHARDSON

Yes. The way this gets talked about matters. Traffic calming is not just a safety expense, it is also an investment that reduces the wear and long-term maintenance cost of the roads it goes on, and that case needs to be made just as loudly as the safety case. Michigan Avenue is the clearest proof I have. Before the road diet, driving that stretch felt like Mario Kart, unpredictable lane changes, cars weaving around anyone stopped to turn left, engines revving to beat a gap that was not really there. Now traffic moves predictably, people are not illegally gunning it to speed through, and pedestrians can actually cross at will along a stretch that does not have many controlled crossings to begin with. Traffic calming should be a standing consideration in every budget planning session, not a line item that only comes up once a street gets loud enough about it. A city that takes long-term maintenance costs as seriously as upfront expense treats this the same way it should treat active transportation funding, an investment where both the safety case and the maintenance savings get communicated every time capital priorities are set.

MIKE STARK

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GEORGE VANDENBERG

Yes. It needs to be a top priority.

PAUL WIERSMA

Yes. I would give higher priority to

- Residential streets directly adjacent to schools, parks, senior facilities, and key active transportation trail crossings.
- Locations with a history of speeding or speed-related collision.
- Projects that integrate traffic calming into scheduled road resurfacing to minimize standalone capital costs.
- Residential collector streets experiencing heavy non-local bypass traffic avoiding primary arterial roads.
- Requests meeting technical warrants and passing resident petition/survey thresholds.
- Corridors suitable for low-cost, high-impact seasonal features (e.g., speed cushions or bollards).

CITY COUNCILLOR

TERRY BURRELL

Depends on the location.

LO-ANNE CHAN

Yes. Much like the improvements made at Indian/Cathcart with the roundabout, the City should review traffic data for usage volume and safety risk (e.g. how many traffic incidents have there been at a location) to help with prioritization on the capital program.

NATHAN COLQUHOUN

Yes.

RICHARD C (DICK) FELTON

Yes. Again, we need to define where it will be installed. Cost it out and then allocate so much a year to reach what ever goal is set. Once that process is done the question of priority and capital can be set. I am in full favour of slowing cars down on side / residential streets for safety reasons.

DAVID GHOBRI

Depends on the location. Traffic calming should receive a high but targeted priority, particularly near schools, parks, senior residences. Whenever possible, improvements should be incorporated into already scheduled road reconstruction to reduce costs. Expanding the City's tax base remains essential if we expect to address these safety needs without neglecting other infrastructure.

ANNE MARIE GILLIS

Yes. It depends where it has been identified as a a problem . Are residents or police concerned that the area is unsafe. That would determine where traffic calming should be introduced

CLARA JAMES

No. This is not a main priority of mine at currently.

TAMMY MATHIESON

Depends on the location. Traffic calming should be a targeted priority where there is demonstrated evidence of a safety problem. I would prioritize locations using objective information such as documented speeds, traffic volumes, collision history, pedestrian activity and proximity to schools, parks and other areas used by children and families.

Funding should go first to locations with the greatest demonstrated safety need, and proposed solutions should be cost-effective and appropriate for the specific street. I would also want measures evaluated after implementation to ensure they actually improve safety without simply shifting traffic or speeding to neighbouring streets.

Road safety is important, but capital decisions should be evidence-based and balanced with the City's other infrastructure needs.

CHRISTOPHER ORAM

Yes. It should be a high priority for some areas

MICHELLE PARKS

Yes. Yes. I support increasing investment in traffic calming on residential streets where speeding, traffic volumes or unsafe driving are creating legitimate safety concerns for residents. I would consider traffic calming a high priority within the City's capital program, particularly where there is a demonstrated safety issue and where improvements can protect pedestrians, cyclists, children, seniors and other vulnerable road users. However, I would take a targeted, evidence-based approach. We need to identify the streets with the greatest need using traffic data, collision history, speed studies, resident concerns and proximity to schools, parks, trails and other community facilities. Traffic calming can include measures such as improved signage, speed reduction measures, traffic circles, curb extensions, raised crossings, pedestrian improvements and other appropriate designs. The solution should fit the street rather than applying a one-size-fits-all approach. I would also look for opportunities to incorporate traffic-calming measures when roads are already scheduled for reconstruction or other infrastructure work. This can improve safety while making better use of money we are already spending. Residents should feel safe on the streets in front of their homes. We need to balance the needs of drivers with the safety and quality of life of the people who live on these streets. My priority would be to address the highest-risk locations first, measure the results and continue investing where the improvements are making a meaningful difference.

CHRIS PETTIT

Depends on the location. Traffic calming should receive a moderate priority in the City's capital program. Addressing genuine safety concerns on residential streets is important, but it must be balanced against essential infrastructure needs and the City's existing infrastructure backlog. Projects should be prioritized using objective measures such as speeding data, collision history, traffic volumes and demonstrated safety risks. Where a traffic-calming project is justified, the City should select measures that are effective and provide good value for taxpayers.

ANDREW STOKLEY

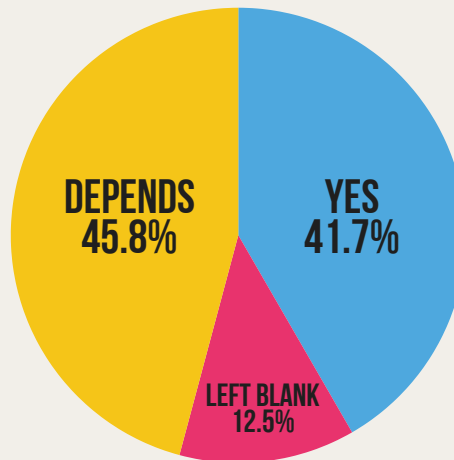
No. While speeding is explicitly against the law. Our well funded police force can and should coordinate targeted enforcement blitzes if there are areas of concern. Traffic calming measures can be built into road reconstruction.

12

Sarnia Transit is an essential service for residents who do not drive, yet route coverage, service frequency and evening/weekend service can limit its usefulness for work, school, appointments and recreation. Will you support increasing Sarnia Transit's service frequency and/or expanding evening and weekend service during your term? (Yes / No / Depends on cost)

AT A GLANCE

Scott Molson
Mark Lamore
Chrissy McRoberts
Paul Wiersma
Richard C (Dick) Felton
David Ghobril
Clara James
Tammy Mathieson
Christopher Oram
Chris Pettit
Andrew Stokley



Carrie McEachran
Patrick Coutu
Adam Kilner
Charmaine Murray
John Richardson
George Vandenberg
Lo-Anne Chan
Nathan Colquhoun
Anne Marie Gillis
Michelle Parks

Mike Bradley
Mike Stark
Terry Burrell

MAYOR

MIKE BRADLEY

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CARRIE MCEACHRAN

Yes. Transit needs to be available when people need it, particularly for residents who rely on it to get to work, school, appointments and participate in our community. I would work with the Province to pursue available transit funding and use growth in our tax base to help support improved service. As Sarnia grows, our transit system needs to grow with it. Increased frequency and expanded evening and weekend service should be targeted where ridership and community need demonstrate they will have the greatest impact. Growing our economy, increasing our tax base and improving the services residents rely on are all connected.

SCOTT MOLSON

Depends on cost. My first priority would be improving Sarnia Transit where it has the greatest impact on people who depend on it for work, school, medical appointments and essential services. That could include better frequency on high-demand routes and targeted evening or weekend service where ridership demonstrates a real need. Before expanding the system across the board, I would require a full operational and route review—looking at ridership by route and time, scheduling, operating costs, fare revenue and opportunities to redesign underused routes. Any expansion should have measurable targets and a clear cost. I would first look for efficiencies within the existing transit budget and available provincial/federal transit funding rather than automatically increasing property taxes. Better service and fiscal responsibility are not mutually exclusive. My goal would be a transit system that is reliable, accessible and financially sustainable.

CITY & COUNTY COUNCILLOR

PATRICK COUTU

Yes. Thinking into the future I would like to see Sarnia transit integrate with VIA rail routes and programs such as the ones being implemented at the airport to allow visitors and residents to have access to surrounding communities.

ADAM KILNER

Yes. How we optimize connection from Bright's Grove to the rest of the city is an ongoing issue. The issue has come up time and again. This is an issue of increasing ridership and routes that flow between the core of the city and Bright's Grove. An efficiency review of route optimization could certainly clarify routes underperforming, while also identify places in the city that are underserved.

MARK LAMORE

Depends on cost. Look at spending the money smarter instead of spending the money to make it look like things are going on. The specific improvement is to not do the things this council did to waste money. Make sure the money is spent better..

CHRISSE MCROBERTS

Depends on cost. Yes, I would support improving transit service, but we have to look at what we can actually afford. My first priority would be evening and weekend service, especially for people who rely on transit to get to and from work, school, appointments and other essential services. Before adding a lot of new routes, I would want to look at our current routes and ridership and make sure we are getting the most out of what we already have. Our next budget is going to be extremely tight. So I would be looking for efficiencies, grants and other funding opportunities before asking taxpayers to pay significantly more. Transit is an essential service for many people, and we need to make it reliable and useful—but we also have to be responsible with the money we have.

CHARMAINE MURRAY

Yes. I would first want to identify where the greatest need actually is by looking at ridership and listening to the people who use transit. Are there people who can't get to work because buses don't run early or late enough? Are students or seniors having difficulty getting where they need to go? Are there routes where frequency is the bigger problem? We have already made significant investments in our transit fleet, including adding new buses. I would want to make sure we are getting the best use out of that investment by putting additional service where it is actually needed. For funding, I would first look at the existing transit budget and continue pursuing provincial and federal transit funding before looking at increasing fares. If people rely on transit to get to work, school and appointments, I don't want to make that service less affordable for the very people who need it.

JOHN RICHARDSON

Yes. The only way to reduce Sarnia Transit's dependency on the tax base is higher ridership, and the only way to get higher ridership is better service. Right now the system slows dramatically around six in the evening, and sixty-five percent of riders do not have a car as another option. Service that ends before most people's day is even fully done is not going to build the ridership base that eventually pays for itself. The first improvement I would prioritize is extending service later into the evening, at minimum past when major retail and entertainment venues close, since that is where the current gap actually costs riders their ability to get to work, appointments, or home safely. Second, I would look at aligning route frequency to cut down overall trip times and transfer delays, since a rider losing time to poorly timed connections faces the same practical barrier as one losing service entirely. On funding, if the city gets density and permissive zoning right, Sarnia becomes a more competitive applicant for federal and provincial grant programs aimed at exactly this kind of transit growing pain, the cost of scaling up frequency and hours before ridership has grown enough to cover it on its own. Getting the zoning right is not a separate track from funding transit, it is part of how transit actually gets funded.

MIKE STARK

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GEORGE VANDENBERG

Yes. Call out comes to mind.

PAUL WIERSMA

Depends on cost. I believe that Sarnia should first prioritize completing missing multi-use pathways and protected cycling links that connect residential neighborhoods directly to transit corridors, schools, and major parks (e.g., Canatara and Germain Parks). Physically separating active transportation from heavy traffic eliminates the primary safety barrier for residents while supporting transit use. Funding Strategy:

- Re-establish a dedicated annual Active Transportation Master Plan (ATMP) budget allocation to serve as local seed funding.
- Leverage municipal funds to secure up to 60% matching grants through federal (Active Transportation Fund) and provincial (Ontario Community Infrastructure Funding) programs.
- Utilize cash-in-lieu of parkland and mandate developer-built trail links during subdivision approvals.
- Build pathways simultaneously with scheduled road resurfacing to drastically lower construction overhead.

CITY COUNCILLOR

TERRY BURRELL

All services should adapt to demand.

LO-ANNE CHAN

Yes. service frequency - people need access throughout the day to get to their appointments, jobs, or commitments. There are select routes that don't run at all in the mid afternoon, and resume during peak hours. Increasing funding to encourage an improved transit system that addresses the people's needs could also improve ridership, which in turn generates more revenue to offset the expenses of the service.

NATHAN COLQUHOUN

Yes.

RICHARD C (DICK) FELTON

Depends on cost. Bus routes and service have been up and down like a toilet seat. Sarnia use to have service then it was cut back. I believe that smaller busses more frequently may be the answer to this problem. I sat on the Transit Committee a number of years ago. On that committee, we discussed smaller electric busses. it will be interesting to see what the operating costs are for that new bus finally in operation in 2026!. My honest feeling is that the bus service should be operated by the city for free. Is that possible – Right now, I do not know

DAVID GHOBIL

Depends on cost. I would first pilot expanded evening and Sunday service on the busiest routes connecting residents to employment, Lambton College, medical services and major shopping areas. The pilot should be funded through fares, available provincial or federal transit funding and a clearly identified municipal tax contribution where necessary. After one year, Council should review ridership, cost per passenger and reliability before expanding it. Longer term, a larger industrial and commercial tax base is needed to sustain better transit and other essential services.

ANNE MARIE GILLIS

Yes. Currently , there is a motion that has passed in the penultimate meeting of Council seeking a staff report on this very issue . I voted “ yes” .

CLARA JAMES

Depends on cost. I would like to see a bit more coverage on weekend but I also need to See the cost Of that and the feasibility .

TAMMY MATHIESON

Depends on cost. My first priority would be reviewing existing routes, schedules and ridership data to identify where service gaps are having the greatest impact on residents, particularly those relying on transit for work, school, medical appointments and essential services. I would then target improvements where there is demonstrated demand rather than simply expanding service across the board. Before adding significant ongoing costs, I would also review whether existing routes and schedules can be made more efficient and whether underused service can be redirected to times and locations where it is needed more. Any expansion would need to be financially sustainable. I would pursue available provincial and federal transit funding and look for efficiencies within the existing system before asking municipal taxpayers to absorb substantial new operating costs. The goal should be a transit system that better serves the people who depend on it while ensuring every additional investment provides measurable value.

CHRISTOPHER ORAM

Depends on cost. an assessment of different areas of the city and the needs of transit is needed. i.e. night courses at Lambton College, is transist service to areas like Chemical Valley appropriate, etc.

MICHELLE PARKS

Yes. Sarnia Transit is an essential service, particularly for residents who do not drive, and reliable transit is also important to our local economy. People need to be able to get to work, school, appointments and community activities—not just during traditional business hours. My first priority would be to increase evening and weekend service on the routes with the greatest demonstrated need, rather than immediately expanding every route or adding service without understanding demand. I would use ridership data, route performance, rider feedback and employment and school schedules to identify where additional service would make the greatest difference. I would also look at better connections between major employment areas, the college, hospital, shopping areas and residential neighbourhoods.

Funding should come from a combination of better prioritization within the existing transit budget, provincial and federal transit funding opportunities, and reviewing routes and service levels to ensure resources are being used where they provide the greatest benefit. I would also support coordinating transit improvements with economic development and housing initiatives. Increasing service should be measurable and accountable. We should establish clear targets for ridership, reliability and accessibility and report back to residents on whether the additional investment is delivering results. My goal is not simply to spend more on transit. It is to make Sarnia Transit more reliable, practical and useful for the people who depend on it, while making responsible decisions with taxpayers' dollars.

CHRIS PETTIT

Depends on cost. I would request a route-by-route study of Sarnia Transit to identify actual ridership, peak and off-peak demand, and where service gaps exist, particularly during evenings and weekends. I would look at whether existing routes and schedules can be optimized before adding new service. If additional service is justified by the data, I would prioritize the routes where the need is greatest. The cost of any expansion would need to be weighed against ridership and the City's other financial obligations. I would pursue provincial and federal funding opportunities and determine whether improvements can be made within the existing transit budget before committing significant additional taxpayer funding.

ANDREW STOKLEY

Depends on cost. To ensure Sarnia Transit remains a reliable, accessible lifesaver for residents who depend on it every day. Using public transit over the past year more than ever I can say it has dramatically improved. As we look ahead, we could consider introducing a specialized schedule during the winter months when heavy snowfall, icy conditions, and freezing temperatures make walking or biking significantly harder, ensuring riders aren't left stranded in harsh weather when public transit is needed most. Improving transit is about connecting people to employment, education, essential appointments, and recreation seamlessly year round, and optimizing our routes to adapt dynamically to winter conditions is a practical step toward building a more responsive municipal service.

ECONOMY & LOCAL BUSINESS

13

What specific type of new employment or economic activity do you believe Sarnia should be actively pursuing over the next four years, and what specific action would you take as a Councillor to help attract it?

MAYOR

MIKE BRADLEY

A leader on the Northern Shield pipeline. Need diversification which the Research Park, SLEP and College are leading along with entrepreneurship and investing in community districts like downtown and Mitton Village

CARRIE MCEACHRAN

I believe Sarnia should actively pursue new investment in advanced manufacturing, energy and emerging technologies that build on the infrastructure, skilled workforce and industrial expertise we already have, while diversifying our economy and creating well-paying jobs. My specific action will be to establish a clear, solutions-focused investment process at City Hall. My immediate action will be to identify and remove existing barriers and implement an accountability matrix with clear timelines and KPIs, with regular reporting to Council. When a major employer is considering investing or expanding in Sarnia, I will personally meet with them, make the necessary introductions across City Hall so they are not passed from one department to another, and ensure they know their interest and potential investment in our city are valued. We already have significant competitive advantages. My focus will be on turning those advantages into investment, jobs and growth in our tax base.

SCOTT MOLSON

I would pursue technology and advanced manufacturing, including microchip and semiconductor-related industries, data centres, clean-energy technology, and other high-value manufacturing. Sarnia already has major advantages: industrial infrastructure, skilled trades, energy expertise, available employment lands, and access to major transportation corridors. As Mayor, I would take a much more aggressive approach to economic development. I believe the Mayor should be one of Sarnia's chief salespeople—actively approaching companies, senior governments and investors instead of waiting for opportunities to come to us. I would work with industry, Lambton College and economic-development partners to identify what companies need, ensure employment lands are investment-ready, streamline municipal approvals, and pursue infrastructure and government funding that helps attract private investment. We should protect and build on our existing industrial base while diversifying it. My goal is simple: bring good-paying, long-term jobs to Sarnia so our young people can build their careers and their lives right here at home.

CITY & COUNTY COUNCILLOR

PATRICK COUTU

We have big opportunities in the industrial sector. There are new and old technologies that we are primed to capitalize on. Additionally tourism is an obvious sector for us to start concentrating on. I also believe that Lambton College had some great momentum that I would like to see picked back up. I will actively be using my contacts and experience to reach out and bring new business to Sarnia.

ADAM KILNER

Pursuing expansion in areas like clean energy tech, value-added agriculture, sustainable chemistry are part of our local economy. Alongside partners like Lambton College and the Sarnia-Lambton Economic Partnership we can further the footprint of businesses and economic activity in our community. Making sure that our frameworks for municipal planning in commercial and industrial lands are business-ready is critical.

MARK LAMORE

Sarnia needs to be made itself attractive for investment again. We have too many things to offer people to be doing less development than towns 1/10th our size.

CHRISSY MCROBERTS

I think we need to come back to the basics. Before we can attract new businesses and investment, we need to repair the reputation of our community. We need to be a community that people want to live in, work in and invest in. That starts with healthy neighbourhoods, safe streets, clean public spaces and residents who are involved in their community. It means encouraging volunteering, supporting our local organizations and, most importantly, spending our money in Sarnia and supporting Sarnia first. As a Councillor, I would actively support local businesses, remove unnecessary barriers to doing business here and promote Sarnia as a community that is open for business and proud of what we have to offer. Economic development isn't just about bringing someone new to town. It's about strengthening what we already have, supporting local businesses so they can grow and hire local people, and creating a community that attracts new investment.

CHARMAINE MURRAY

I believe we should look for opportunities where an investment can meet a need in our community while also creating employment and supporting our local economy. Supportive and affordable housing is one example. We urgently need housing, but building it can also create work for contractors and trades, and operating it creates ongoing employment for support staff and other services. The benefit doesn't necessarily stop there. People who are employed earn money that can be spent in our community, and the people living in those homes need groceries, furniture and everyday necessities that can be purchased from local businesses. I believe a strong community supports the people and businesses already here while continuing to look for new opportunities and investment. As a councillor, I would look at decisions with that bigger picture in mind — not only what we are spending, but how an investment can meet community needs, create employment and strengthen our local economy at the same time.

JOHN RICHARDSON

The single most significant economic opportunity for this county is a nuclear project moving forward in Lambton County. It is not just a stand-alone project, it is the anchor that would let our existing petrochemical and industrial base decarbonize and future-proof itself instead of facing an existential cost down the road, and it opens the door to emerging markets like clean hydrogen that Sarnia is genuinely positioned to compete for given the industrial base and workforce already here. The specific action I would take is direct, public engagement and education on the opportunity, to head off speculation about an adverse effect on our heritage industries. This county's identity needs to understand this as a genuine opportunity, not a threat to what already exists here. That work sits alongside sustained advocacy with all levels of government to keep the project moving, and supporting Indigenous consultation every step of the way, not as a formality but because it is both a constitutional obligation and a real economic asset for a project this size. Real, durable economic opportunity like this is also what buys the city runway to retain more of its youth, and to actually foster the creativity and entrepreneurship that leaves when the only visible future here is decline.

MIKE STARK

I believe a more hands on approach to industrial and commercial economic development is needed. As a community we should be championing our participation in federal and provincial trade missions with outreach across Canada and the world. We have a first class industrial construction contractor segment that needs international exposure and hype. Our world class, highly trained workforce can compete with anyone in the world and needs to be highlighted as a great asset. I believe as municipal elected officials we need to bring this message to provincial and federal ministers. I have suggested this during my past terms of Council but have met resistance from heads of Council who insist upon protocols that recognize chains of command within each Council. I believe in a results order of command and if you can't produce results, make room for those who have a track record of success. I have had a direct impact on securing the extension of the 7.2 kilometre extension of Hwy. #40 between Lambton College and Indian Road. I led a delegation meeting with then Ontario Transportation Minister Caroline Mulroney that led to the inclusion of this project into the Ontario budget.

GEORGE VANDENBERG

We need to diversify. We should look at Strathroy as a specific example.

PAUL WIERSMA

I believe that Sarnia could actively pursue low-carbon hydrogen production, clean chemistry, and industrial decarbonization technologies. Capitalizing on its position as "Ontario's Hydrogen Hub", the city can leverage its existing pipeline networks, underground cavern storage, and specialized skilled workforce to transition from traditional petrochemicals into green hydrogen, carbon capture, and bio-based manufacturing. I believe that Sarnia should establish shovel-ready, pre-serviced industrial land parcels with streamlined environmental and zoning approvals at the Western Sarnia-Lambton Research Park and local industrial zones. Providing pre-permitted sites equipped with direct heavy utility hookups (water, power, and gaseous fuel networks) drastically reduces development timelines and capital risk for clean-tech and energy investors choosing between regional sites.

CITY COUNCILLOR

TERRY BURRELL

Provide good municipal services to facilitate business.

LO-ANNE CHAN

1. Grow the Invest Sarnia team and its partner organizations so we can better champion local innovation, entrepreneurship and industry attraction. Diversification of business & industry helps to weather industry sector downturns, increase employment opportunities for trade unions with construction of new facilities, and reduce job reliance on seasonal maintenance shutdowns at the petrochemical plants. 2. Support the development of a framework to attract agribusiness and food processing to Sarnia. Local farmers who I've talked to have highlighted the need for more infrastructure to process foods locally and improve regional distribution. I want to advocate for our local agri-business strategy, identify opportunities that align with the federal & provincial priorities around food production, and supports our area's capability as the 2nd-largest agricultural region in Ontario. 3. Identify and support job retraining opportunities for energy industry workers, such as electrification, clean tech (Aluma Power like companies), and robotics. We can work to attract R&D-driven companies to the area, encourage tenancy at the Research Park, and deepening partnerships with Lambton College to build our region's research capacity. With strengthening departments like Invest Sarnia & organizations like Sarnia-Lambton Economic Partnership (SLEP) or Community Futures Lambton (CFL), we can help innovative individuals access funding to grow R&D and contribute to the applied sciences to help diversify our industry sectors in Sarnia.

NATHAN COLQUHOUN

Waterfront development and event support.

RICHARD C (DICK) FELTON

Sarnia pays the major portion of the Sarnia Lambton Economic Partnership's 1.5 Million dollar yearly operating cost. Sarnia needs to sit down and find out why they are not as effective as they could be. I met with SLEP and they told me that one of the reasons they have not been successful is that Sarnia does not have any green field space ready to rent or sell. The person they bring to the table always has to be told - we will build it for you. That company then goes to Strathroy who has invested and has a space ready where they say "Do you want to move in tomorrow?" Guess who gets that industry. We need to work closer with SLEP to get the best bang for our buck. Sarnia also has the Sarnia Lambton Economic Alliance of companies. I believe that this is also an existing resource we can ask to help us attract the right industries to Sarnia. The SLIA leaders know who to contact in Government and Business. Sarnia also has to be more active talking to our upper tier governments - provincial and Federal. They are our bankers and advisors.

DAVID GHOBIL

Sarnia should actively pursue industrial manufacturing and processing companies that create permanent, well-paying jobs and expand the commercial and industrial tax base. Our existing industrial infrastructure, skilled workforce and location make this the most realistic area for growth. As a Councillor, I would lead a targeted direct-mail campaign to corporate executives and site-selection decision-makers. Rather than sending generic promotional material, each letter would explain why that particular company's requirements fit Sarnia and identify suitable land, infrastructure and workforce advantages. Every letter would be followed by direct contact, and interested companies would receive a coordinated and timely response from the City. The number of companies contacted, responses received, site visits arranged and investments secured should be publicly reported.

ANNE MARIE GILLIS

We need more good paying jobs in Sarnia for a wide variety of good paying jobs. Councillors as a collective can get behind major projects that are being announced, currently , support existing business that find them selves under threat and strengthen the Sarnia Lambton Economic Partnership working with the City's economic officer to show that we are open for business.

CLARA JAMES

I would frequently meet with the industries and businesses we have been able to attract , and see if there are any realistic ways to diversify what they offer here in Sarnia. I would also frequent Troy speak with out provincial and federal representatives to see how we can best advocate for policies that impact our local economy and work together to ensure Sarnia is getting the best deal possible.

TAMMY MATHIESON

Sarnia should actively pursue economic diversification while building on the strengths we already have. I would like to see growth in skilled trades and advanced manufacturing, clean and emerging technologies, health-related employment, tourism and locally owned small businesses. These sectors can provide a broader range of good-paying jobs and help create opportunities that allow young people and families to build their futures here. As a Councillor, one specific action I would support is making Sarnia more investment-ready by identifying and addressing municipal barriers that can delay responsible development. Businesses considering Sarnia should have clear information about available employment lands, infrastructure, zoning, approvals and incentives, along with a coordinated point of contact to help them navigate City processes. I would also work with our economic development partners, local industry, educational institutions and other levels of government to actively promote Sarnia's advantages and pursue outside investment and funding. Economic development should not simply be about attracting any development. We should pursue responsible investment that creates sustainable jobs, strengthens our tax base and provides real long-term benefits to Sarnia residents.

CHRISTOPHER ORAM

I am a big advocate of lobbying the federal government for consideration with the 2026 Military Industrial Policy. From uniforms to drones, there will be a big demand for new production/testing sites. This would help diversify our economy and engage in commerce not heavily impacted by the current tariff wars.

MICHELLE PARKS

I believe Sarnia should focus on attracting clean-energy and nuclear related industries, advanced manufacturing & skilled-trades employment, while also making tourism a much stronger part of our economic strategy. Sarnia already has significant advantages: a skilled workforce, established industrial infrastructure, engineering and trades expertise, transportation links, our international border crossing and generations of experience in energy & manufacturing. We should build on these strengths rather than trying to become something we are not. The potential for a new nuclear facility at the former Lambton Generating Station site is a major opportunity. As a Councillor, I would advocate for Sarnia to position itself to capture the long-term economic benefits—not just construction jobs, but opportunities in the nuclear supply chain, engineering, fabrication, maintenance, training and related technologies. I also believe tourism is economic development. Our waterfront, beaches, Canatara Park, St. Clair River, parks, festivals, arts, culture and recreation are significant economic assets. Completing key elements of the Waterfront and Germain Park Master Plans should be part of a broader strategy to attract visitors, encourage overnight stays and increase spending at local businesses. My specific action would be to push for a coordinated City-County investment and tourism strategy with measurable targets. We need to identify the industries, businesses and tourism opportunities we want, determine what they need to succeed here, remove municipal barriers where possible and actively pursue those opportunities. Over four years, I would expect to see measurable results: new investment, new businesses and good-paying jobs, increased tourism and greater economic activity generated by the assets we already have. Sarnia has the people, infrastructure and natural assets to succeed. We need to be proactive, strategic and accountable in turning those advantages into opportunity.

CHRIS PETTIT

Sarnia should actively pursue new advanced manufacturing and industrial investment, particularly businesses that can build on our existing petrochemical, chemical, energy, skilled-trades and transportation strengths while diversifying our economy. As a Councillor, I would push the City to develop a current inventory of available industrial and commercial properties, identify infrastructure constraints and market Sarnia's advantages directly to companies looking for a location in Southwestern Ontario. I would also advocate for a dedicated industrial recruitment strategy with measurable targets, rather than relying primarily on companies finding Sarnia on their own. That means working with the County, local industry, Lambton College, the Province and economic-development organizations to identify specific sectors and companies to pursue. The objective is to attract new assessment, investment and higher-paying employment, while making use of the infrastructure, skilled workforce and transportation assets we already have.

ANDREW STOKLEY

When addressing major industrial investments that bring massive temporary construction booms but low ongoing operational headcount, the focus must shift from direct long term operational headcount to indirect, multiplier, and community-level economic retainment. I think due to what we have resource wide we need to look at new channels of industry. Cross-Border Logistics, Warehousing & Trade Services, Advanced Agri-Food & Bio-Agtech and Low-Carbon Energy & Clean Tech. There are lots of companies in this space that would be willing to open up shop here if the conditions were right. We can't hope and wait on a pipeline as we don't have a guarantee or firm timeline. Need to have shovel ready land and a tax reduction policy based on the number of jobs the company brings with it.

What do you believe is the single biggest municipal barrier facing small businesses and entrepreneurs in Sarnia today—such as permitting, zoning, fees, parking, taxes, regulations or access to commercial space—and what specific change would you support to reduce that barrier?

MAYOR

MIKE BRADLEY

Sarnia continues to reduce barriers like development charges. Most of the big barriers are provincial and federal policies and red tape.

CARRIE MCEACHRAN

I believe the biggest municipal barrier for small businesses and entrepreneurs is navigating City Hall. Permitting, zoning, licensing and other requirements can be complex, costly and time-consuming, particularly for a small business that does not have the resources of a large developer or corporation. I will establish a clear, streamlined process with a single point of contact to help businesses understand what is required, identify potential issues early and coordinate with the appropriate departments. We also need clear timelines and accountability for applications so businesses know where they stand and what comes next. Small businesses are investing their own money and taking risks to create jobs and contribute to our community. City Hall should help them succeed, not make it harder to get started or grow.

SCOTT MOLSON

The biggest municipal barrier facing small businesses and entrepreneurs in Sarnia is the cost, complexity and time it can take to get from an idea to an open door. As a small-business owner for nearly 30 years, I understand what it means to invest your own money, make payroll, pay taxes and work through government regulations. Every unnecessary fee, delay or layer of paperwork costs a business money and can discourage investment. I would support creating a Small Business Fast-Track at City Hall: one point of contact to help entrepreneurs navigate zoning, permits, planning, inspections and other municipal requirements from beginning to end. Businesses should receive clear requirements upfront, reasonable and predictable timelines, and the ability to track where their application stands. I would also review municipal business, planning, permit and development fees to ensure they reflect the actual cost of providing the service and are competitive with surrounding municipalities. This does not mean compromising building codes, public safety or responsible planning. It means removing unnecessary red tape wherever the City has the authority to do so. I also believe City Hall should publicly measure approval times. If an application is sitting somewhere, the applicant should know why, what is outstanding and when they can expect an answer. Small businesses create jobs, fill storefronts and keep money circulating locally. City Hall should be a partner in responsible investment—not an unnecessary obstacle to it. My goal is simple: clear rules, fair fees, faster decisions and accountability—making Sarnia one of the easiest places in Southwestern Ontario to start and grow a business.

CITY & COUNTY COUNCILLOR

PATRICK COUTU

I believe the question mentions some of the barriers. In short removing "red tape" will be a giant help to small business.

ADAM KILNER

Rising costs. For food producers I would look to partnering with community halls and religious organizations to work toward creating a network of commercial kitchens that can be rented for businesses not large enough to rent bricks and mortar facilities because of the expense.

MARK LAMORE

Fees/Taxes...The municipal government need to start treating small business as a irritant and more so as a partner. They take all the risk and provide jobs for many people. I have never seen a council against small business.

CHRISSY MCROBERTS

I think our biggest barrier is that we aren't working together enough. Sarnia businesses aren't in competition with each other. When one local business succeeds, it can help the business next door succeed too. We need to work together to increase tourism, promote Sarnia and drive people into our local businesses. Government, businesses and residents all have a role to play in that. As a Councillor, I would support bringing our business community together, listening to what they actually need from the City and finding ways to make it easier for them to work together and promote Sarnia. We need to stop thinking about individual businesses and start thinking about Sarnia as a whole. If we work together, we grow stronger, smarter and more successful.

CHARMAINE MURRAY

I believe the biggest municipal barrier for some businesses is permitting. When a permit takes too long or the process isn't clear, that can hold up a project and cost money. I would support looking at what is causing those delays and seeing where the process can be made clearer and more timely, while still following the rules.

JOHN RICHARDSON

I can speak to this directly. I looked into running a mobile food cart, and the permit structure made it functionally impossible to make enough money to justify it. The park permit only allowed for two months of operation, there is simply no way to earn a return in that short a window once you account for the cost of getting set up. The application and approval timeline made it worse. It opened too close to the season itself, which meant only people who already owned a vehicle or had an outlet ready to go could realistically apply in time. Anyone who would need to invest in equipment first was already locked out before the season even started. Sarnia says it wants creative new options like this, but the only way people actually take that risk is if they know in advance that they can do it, with enough runway and enough season to make the investment worth it. The specific change is straightforward: open the application window earlier relative to the season, and extend the permitted operating period so a genuine return is actually possible. I know this runs through the whole city with planning and zoning as well. So one of my promises is to motion to establish a committee to review all our bylaws for rules that obstruct. I would like it to consist of two councillors, business people and community groups. Ideally getting through the existing bylaws in this term.

MIKE STARK

I believe the largest impediment for real estate development in Sarnia is the municipally owned commercial property along the waterfront. As a City we should not own and thus deny development on property such as two parking facilities currently occupying waterfront exposure. Prime real estate should not be reserved for preferential parking at the expense of potential tax generating possibilities.

GEORGE VANDENBERG

The lack of a speedy decision.

PAUL WIERSMA

The single biggest municipal barrier facing Sarnia small businesses is outdated zoning regulations paired with slow, multi-department approval processes. Rigid permitted-use rules, strict parking minimums, and separate sign-offs across Planning, Building, Fire, and Licensing create unpredictable delays. For startups on thin margins, waiting weeks for minor variances or site-plan reviews inflates holding costs and stalls launch dates. I believe that this could be resolved through the following actions:

- Update commercial zoning in corridors like Downtown and Mitton Village to automatically permit a wider array of retail, artisan, and mixed-use businesses. Eliminate mandatory parking minimums in commercial cores so entrepreneurs can easily adapt existing footprints.
- Establish a single point of contact within City Hall to guide applicants through zoning, licensing, and building permits simultaneously, backed by a fast-tracked 14-day approval target for standard tenancy changes.

CITY COUNCILLOR

TERRY BURRELL

We provide good services at a reasonable cost.

LO-ANNE CHAN

The single biggest barrier facing small businesses and entrepreneurs in Sarnia is the lack of sufficient human resources at City Hall to support them. Our small business community is ambitious and creative, but too often they're left navigating permitting, zoning, and incentive programs on their own. I want to grow the Invest Sarnia team, which already has strong staff and a helpful website, but needs more capacity to meet the demand. With a larger department, the City could work more closely with entrepreneurs to explain existing incentives (such as areas eligible for reduced permit fees) and guide new business owners toward priority growth areas like Mitton Village and Downtown, where additional funding supports are available. Increasing staff capacity would make the City a more proactive partner, helping small businesses understand their options, access resources more easily, and feel supported from their first idea through opening day.

NATHAN COLQUHOUN

Red tape and permitting

RICHARD C (DICK) FELTON

ALL OF THE ABOVE. Sarnia needs to review those parameters ; preferably with a business involved and find out what can be changed. Sarnia needs to be a welcoming community to all business want to establish here. ALSO the Sarnia Council needs to get along together. The past antics from staff harassment to council infighting scares business away.

DAVID GHOBRIEL

I do not see small business as a substitute for attracting major employers and industrial investment, but it does provide local services, occupy storefronts and contribute to vibrant commercial areas. The biggest municipal barrier is uncertainty and delay in permitting, zoning and inspections. A business can plan for a known cost; it cannot plan around changing requirements or months without a decision. I would support a one-stop approval process with one City contact, a complete written checklist, published fees and firm response timelines. The goal should not be subsidies, but clear rules, reasonable costs and timely decisions.

ANNE MARIE GILLIS

there has been a lot of work done to cut the red tape , but more can be done . A welcoming attitude , is the first way of enticing business, some incentives are another. But your council must work together and they must be informed of the interest of new business so as a collective we can pit out the red carpet

CLARA JAMES

I would say permitting and zoning requirements they are very strict and can be a huge barrier to utilizing affordable spaces for businesses. I also Believe the \$\$\$ being received from these businesses need to be better invested to benefit them and assist them in their daily operations.

TAMMY MATHIESON

I believe one of the biggest municipal barriers for small businesses and entrepreneurs is navigating complex and sometimes time-consuming City processes. For a small business, delays involving permits, zoning, approvals or unclear requirements can mean significant additional costs and can discourage investment. I would support creating a more streamlined, business-friendly process with clear requirements, predictable timelines and a single point of contact who can help entrepreneurs navigate municipal departments and approvals. I would also support regularly reviewing fees and regulations to ensure they are necessary, reasonable and not creating unintended barriers to small businesses. This does not mean eliminating important safety, accessibility or planning standards. It means making the process clearer, faster and more efficient. Small businesses create jobs, strengthen our neighbourhoods and contribute to Sarnia's tax base. City Hall should be a partner in responsible economic growth, not an unnecessary obstacle to it.

CHRISTOPHER ORAM

Sarnia is known as a "red tape heavy" city for these things. Streamlining approvals, licensing, permits etc. is a must.

MICHELLE PARKS

I believe the single biggest municipal barrier facing small businesses and entrepreneurs in Sarnia is the complexity and unpredictability of navigating City processes—particularly permitting, zoning and approvals. For a small business owner, time is money. Delays, unclear requirements, having to navigate multiple departments and uncertainty about how long an approval will take can make a project more expensive and, in some cases, discourage investment altogether. I would support creating a "Business One-Stop" process at City Hall, where entrepreneurs can get clear information about the approvals, permits, fees and timelines required for their project, with one point of contact to help them navigate the process. I would also support establishing clear service timelines and accountability for municipal approvals, while looking for opportunities to simplify or eliminate unnecessary steps and duplication. This isn't about lowering standards or bypassing important regulations. It is about making the process more efficient, transparent and predictable. As a Councillor, I would also want regular reporting on approval timelines and outstanding applications so Council can identify where bottlenecks are occurring and address them. Small businesses create jobs, fill our storefronts and contribute to the character of our community. We should be making it easier for people to invest, open a business and grow in Sarnia—not creating unnecessary hurdles. My goal would be simple: if someone has a good business idea and wants to invest in Sarnia, they should know exactly what is required, what it will cost and how long the process should take.

CHRIS PETTIT

I believe one of the biggest municipal barriers is the complexity and time involved in navigating City approvals, permitting and regulations. For a small business or entrepreneur, delays can mean carrying lease, financing and other costs without being able to open or expand. I would support creating a more streamlined single-point-of-contact process for small businesses, with clear requirements, timelines and accountability for applications moving through the various City departments. This should not mean eliminating legitimate safety, building or planning requirements. It means making the process more predictable, transparent and efficient. Small businesses should spend their time building their business and creating jobs—not trying to figure out how to navigate City Hall.

CHRIS PETTIT

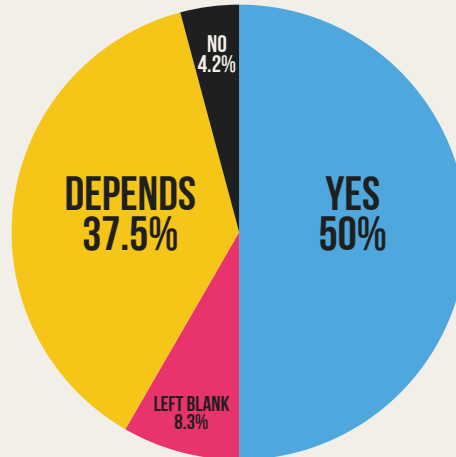
The single biggest municipal barrier facing small businesses and entrepreneurs in Sarnia today is restrictive zoning and the slow, complex commercial site plan approval process. Outdated commercial zoning classifications limit where new businesses can set up shop, while lengthy processing times for minor variances, change of use permits, and site plan approvals create costly delays and uncertainty for owners trying to launch or expand. To directly remove this barrier, Sarnia should expand "pre-zoning" for flexible commercial and mixed uses along core corridors and introduce a streamlined, standardized fast track permitting process with strict turnaround guarantees. By reducing administrative red tape, eliminating unnecessary public hearings for minor site modifications, and expanding pre-approved commercial land uses, the city can significantly lower startup friction, lower overhead costs, and foster a far more agile local economy.

Sarnia is developing an Economic Development Community Improvement Plan that could provide financial incentives to support business retention, redevelopment and tourism development. Do you support using municipal financial incentives to attract and retain businesses? (Yes / No / Depends on the program)

AT A GLANCE

Charmaine Murray
Mike Stark
Nathan Colquhoun
Richard C (Dick) Felton
David Ghobril
Clara James
Tammy Mathieson
Christopher Oram
Chris Pettit

Terry Burrell



Mike Bradley
Carrie McEachran
Patrick Coutu
Adam Kilner
Mark Lamore
Chrissy McRoberts
John Richardson
Paul Wiersma
Lo-Anne Chan
Anne Marie Gillis
Michelle Parks
Andrew Stokley

Scott Molson
George Vandenberg

MAYOR

MIKE BRADLEY

Yes. Jobs and sustainability

CARRIE MCEACHRAN

Yes. Businesses receiving municipal incentives should be required to demonstrate a clear and measurable return to the community, such as new or retained jobs, private investment, redevelopment of underused properties, increased assessment and growth in the tax base, or increased tourism activity. Businesses receiving municipal incentives should be required to demonstrate a clear and measurable return to the community, such as new or retained jobs, private investment, redevelopment of underused properties, increased assessment and growth in the tax base, or increased tourism activity. Before an incentive is approved, the agreement should clearly identify what the business has committed to deliver and by when, with measurable milestones for investment, job creation, construction or other agreed outcomes. Progress should be reported annually, with a final assessment of whether the commitments were met. Where appropriate, incentives should be tied to achieving those milestones rather than provided entirely upfront. If public dollars are being invested, residents should be able to see what that investment delivered.

SCOTT MOLSON

Left blank.

CITY & COUNTY COUNCILLOR

PATRICK COUTU

Yes. One of the main outcomes is that any incentives stay local. Programs should not be available for people or corporations that are not completely invested in Sarnia Lambton.

ADAM KILNER

Yes. There should be an expectation of return-on-investment for taxpayers ensuring public funds are used appropriately, demonstrate a net benefit to the community. We should also be looking at other expectations, such as job creation, wage level expectations, impact on the environment, etc.

MARK LAMORE

Yes. Employing local people and showing how it is a positive participant in the community.

CHRISSY MCROBERTS

Yes, I support using municipal incentives when they make sense, but there needs to be accountability. If we're giving a business an incentive, I want to know what Sarnia is getting in return. Businesses receiving incentives should demonstrate things like creating or retaining local jobs, investing in their property or business, increasing tourism, filling vacant spaces, or bringing new economic activity to our community. There should be clear goals and timelines attached to the incentive, and we should be measuring whether those goals were actually met. I'm not interested in giving money away just to say we attracted a business. If taxpayers are investing, there needs to be a clear benefit coming back to Sarnia.

CHARMAIN MURRAY

Depends on the program. I believe the outcome should reflect the reason the incentive was provided. If an incentive is intended to support tourism, for example, the business should be able to demonstrate that it is attracting people to Sarnia and creating some benefit for the surrounding community, such as visitors also supporting local restaurants, shops or other attractions. Whatever the purpose of the incentive is, there should be a reasonable way to show that it achieved what it was intended to do and provided a broader benefit to the community.

JOHN RICHARDSON

Yes. Incentives can work, but only when the return is something the city can actually measure and hold a business to, not just a projection used to justify. Businesses receiving municipal incentives should be required to demonstrate long-term, measured growth in assessment value and contribution to the tax base, in addition to whatever economic or job forecasts justified the incentive going in. A forecast is not a result. I would also support using the Municipal Accommodation Tax as a lever to help incentivize development specifically downtown and along the waterfront, directing tourism-driven revenue back into the areas that generate it, ideally driving more hotel growth that grows the city's MAT intake in the process in the deal.

MIKE STARK

Depends on the program. There needs to be a commitment to construct and remain over a specific time frame depending on the type and financial cost of such incentives. Direct financial incentives are illegal in the Province of Ontario and therefore an innovative approach to incentives would be required. An educational subsidy may be considered as in the case of attracting doctors and then requiring a time commitment after graduation.

GEORGE VANDENBERG

Left blank. Local ownership, local employees.

PAUL WIERSMA

Yes. Businesses should be required to demonstrate measurable outcomes through binding performance agreements:

- Achieving specific full-time job creation or retention targets within Sarnia.
- Demonstrating a minimum ratio of private capital spent per municipal dollar granted (e.g., \$5 to \$10 of private capital for every \$1 of municipal incentive).
- Adhering to strict completion milestones to prevent land speculation.
- Delivering verifiable facade restorations, brownfield remediation, or accessibility upgrades that improve commercial corridors.
- Tracking increased overnight hotel stays, event capacity, or foot traffic for tourism projects.
- Utilizing local Lambton County contractors and suppliers during construction and operations.
- Demonstrating an increase in overall assessed property value (MPAC) to grow the future tax base.
- Agreeing to repay incentives if performance benchmarks or operational commitments are not maintained over a set period.

CITY COUNCILLOR

TERRY BURRELL

No.

LO-ANNE CHAN

Yes. I support initiatives like the Mitton Village and Downtown Community Improvement Plan grants to better support the people who actually live and work in these neighbourhoods. The Mitton Village Citizens Collective has done excellent grassroots work, and bring concerns and ideas through the Mitton Village Community Development Advisory Committee. Those insights shape how CIP dollars are structured and deployed. They know the barriers, the opportunities, and the realities of the area better than anyone. Similar frameworks should be considered for other CIP opportunities in Sarnia. A strong CIP should incentivize active storefront use, support small-scale tenants rather than only property owners, and reward landlords who lease affordably and maintain their buildings. At minimum, incentives should discourage long-term vacancy and abandoned storefronts. Communities thrive when residents and small businesses are empowered. Incentive programs must deliver tangible neighbourhood improvements and invest where people actually need support - not top-down branding exercises that overlook local realities.

NATHAN COLQUHOUN

Depends on the program. I'm for municipal government getting out of the way.

RICHARD C (DICK) FELTON

Depends on the program. Number of employees. The number of tourists. growth affect on the city

DAVID GHOBIL

Depends on the program. A business receiving municipal incentives should demonstrate a measurable public return: substantial new assessment, well-paying permanent jobs, redevelopment of underused property. Incentives should expand the tax base—not merely subsidize activity that would have happened anyway.

ANNE MARIE GILLIS

Yes. Measurable results that can be used as to determine if it was a good investment or a waste of money. I see more foot traffic in the area , more high value jobs being added that bring more folks to our area. Home buyers are on the upside . Schools have higher enrolments , and the stores are doing well or expanding .

CLARA JAMES

Depends on the program. Depends on the program I don't want to set a standard before seeing the proposal.

TAMMY MATHIESON

Depends on the program. Municipal incentives should produce a clear and measurable benefit for Sarnia taxpayers. Depending on the program, I would expect businesses receiving incentives to demonstrate outcomes such as creating or retaining local jobs, making significant private investment, redeveloping vacant or underused properties, increasing economic activity, supporting tourism or contributing to long-term growth in the municipal tax base. Any incentive program should have clear eligibility criteria, measurable targets, reporting requirements and appropriate safeguards if commitments are not fulfilled. I would also want Council to periodically evaluate whether the program is actually producing the results it was designed to achieve. I support using incentives strategically when the long-term community and economic benefit justifies the public investment. They should not simply subsidize activity that would have occurred without municipal assistance. Taxpayers deserve to know what they are receiving in return for their investment.

CHRISTOPHER ORAM

Depends on the program. Sustainable local employment

MICHELLE PARKS

Yes. Businesses receiving municipal incentives should be required to demonstrate a clear and measurable return for the community. The specific outcomes should depend on the purpose of the incentive, but I would look for things such as: Job creation or retention, particularly good-paying, sustainable local jobs. Private-sector investment that significantly exceeds the municipal contribution. New or increased property assessment where applicable. Redevelopment of vacant, derelict or underused properties. Increased tourism activity, overnight stays or visitor spending for tourism-related projects. Business retention and expansion, particularly where an existing employer is considering leaving or reducing its Sarnia operation. Increased economic activity that benefits surrounding businesses and the broader community. I would also require businesses to provide progress reports against agreed-upon targets, with Council and the public able to see what was promised, what was delivered and what the incentive ultimately cost taxpayers. There also needs to be protection for taxpayers. Incentives should have clearly defined terms and conditions, and where appropriate, provisions to recover some or all of the incentive if the agreed-upon commitments are not met. I don't believe every successful business needs a municipal incentive, and I don't support incentives simply to attract investment that would have happened anyway. The test should be simple: What are taxpayers getting in return? If a municipal incentive leverages significant private investment, creates jobs, revitalizes a property or generates meaningful tourism and economic activity, it can be a worthwhile investment. But we should be able to demonstrate that benefit—not just assume it.

CHRIS PETTIT

Depends on the program. Businesses receiving municipal incentives should be required to demonstrate measurable outcomes that were clearly established when the incentive was approved. Depending on the program, these could include new jobs created, private investment made, increased assessment or tax-base growth, new commercial or industrial space developed, increased business activity, or measurable tourism benefits. There should also be a clear timeline for achieving those outcomes, with reporting and accountability. If a business does not meet the agreed-upon requirements, the City should have appropriate provisions to review, modify or recover the incentive where applicable. The fundamental question should be: what measurable benefit did Sarnia receive in return for the public investment?

ANDREW STOKLEY

Yes. Municipal financial incentives can be a powerful tool for economic growth when structured strategically rather than given out as passive subsidies. Targeted mechanisms like Tax Increment Grants or fee reductions can help. However, public funds should never subsidize basic business overhead or fund development that would have occurred naturally. Ensuring that taxpayer dollars generate a clear return through sustained economic vitality, downtown revitalization, or enhanced local infrastructure is the key to a well designed CIP. To maintain public accountability, any business benefiting from these programs must be bound to strict, measurable performance outcomes. First, recipients must demonstrate Net Direct Job Creation, ensuring new, permanent fulltime jobs meet designated local wage benchmarks. Second, they must deliver verified Capital Investment and Tax Assessment Growth, proving that private expenditures on site improvements or construction will permanently expand the municipal property tax base. Finally, the business must show direct Community Benefit and Strategic Alignment.

COMMUNITY CONNECTION & PROJECTS



FROM NUSARNIA'S COMMUNITY SURVEY

Of everything nuSarnia's Community Survey tested, one relationship held up under full statistical review: residents who feel they can influence neighbourhood decisions are far more likely to report strong belonging, 71% compared with 38% among those who disagree. A dedicated grants program for resident-led projects is one concrete way that sense of influence could be put into practice.

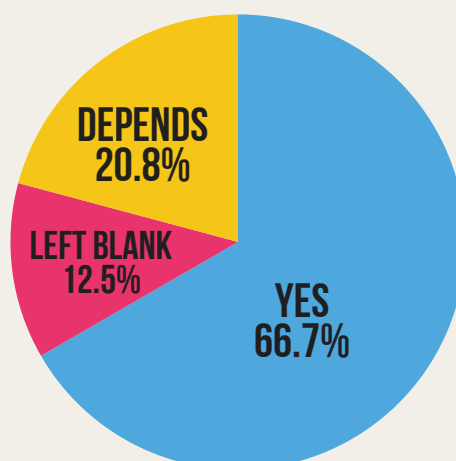
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Would you support the City establishing a dedicated program or funding mechanism that provides small grants, clear guidance and municipal support for residents and neighbourhood groups to initiate and complete community-led projects? (Yes / No / Unsure)

AT A GLANCE

Charmaine Murray
David Gholbril
Clara James
Christopher Oram
Chris Pettit

Mike Bradley
Chrissy McRoberts
Terry Burrell



Carrie McEachran
Scott Molson
Patrick Coutu
Adam Kilner
Mark Lamore
John Richardson
Mike Stark
George Vandenberg

Paul Wiersma
Lo-Anne Chan
Nathan Colquhoun
Richard C (Dick) Felton
Anne Marie Gillis
Tammy Mathieson
Michelle Parks
Andrew Stokley

MAYOR

MIKE BRADLEY

Left blank.

CARRIE MCEACHRAN

Yes. The City should make it easier for qualified community organizations and partners to bring good ideas forward. That can include a clear point of contact at City Hall, streamlined approvals, reasonable fees and insurance requirements, access to existing facilities and public spaces, and assistance navigating permits and available grants. Where a partnership makes better use of existing City infrastructure, there can be a clear benefit to both the community and the taxpayer. Where financial support or new infrastructure is proposed, we need to understand the full capital and long-term operating costs, the contribution being made by the partner, and the benefit to the community before making a commitment. The goal should be to remove unnecessary municipal barriers and help strong community-led initiatives succeed, while ensuring public resources are used responsibly.

SCOTT MOLSON

Yes. I support community partnerships, but they should be structured so taxpayers, public ownership and public access are protected. The City's role should be to enable community initiative, not create another layer of bureaucracy. I would establish a single point of contact at City Hall to help qualified non-profits, service clubs, neighbourhood groups and businesses navigate permits, insurance, facility use and approvals. Where there is a demonstrated public benefit, I would consider reduced or waived municipal fees, reasonable access to City facilities and equipment, and limited staff assistance. Financial support should be based on clear criteria, measurable community benefit and affordability—not simply handing out taxpayer dollars. Wherever possible, I would favour partnerships that leverage volunteer labour, donations, sponsorships and private investment. Sarnia already has programs such as Adopt-A-Park and community playground partnerships, so we don't need to reinvent everything; we can build a broader, simpler framework from what already works.

CITY & COUNTY COUNCILLOR

PATRICK COUTU

Yes. Economic development staff can be tasked with identifying viable projects to partner with.

ADAM KILNER

Yes. One way to address this is to standardize a framework for community groups. Rather than asking staff to take on more work, we might do well to introduce automated forms of permitting. Software that is able to standardize forms that outline plans and guarantee standards can be completed on the front-line, while also making sure staff are the ultimate green light after they personally review files on this.

MARK LAMORE

Yes. Set staff up in position for them to be able to help these people..Because finances are going to be limited.

CHRISSY MCROBERTS

Left blank. I don't think the answer is creating a large new department or adding significant costs to taxpayers. We already have talented staff and incredible community organizations in Sarnia. We need to make it easier for them to work together. The City should provide a clear point of contact, a simple application and approval process, reasonable permit and facility fees, access to existing City spaces and equipment where appropriate, and help organizations navigate insurance, permits and other requirements. Where possible, I would also look at small grants or in-kind support for projects that clearly benefit the community.

We should actively pursue provincial and federal funding and look for sponsorship and private-sector partnerships as well. The City's role should be to open the door, remove unnecessary barriers and help good community ideas become reality — not to take over the work that our community is already capable of doing.

CHARMAINE MURRAY

Depends on the organization and the circumstances. I believe the City should provide whatever resources and staff support are reasonably available to help these partnerships succeed. However, if additional financial costs are involved, I would want to consider each situation individually and look at what other funding options may be available before committing additional taxpayer dollars. These partnerships can benefit our community, and I believe the City should do what it reasonably can to support them.

JOHN RICHARDSON

Yes. This is the same problem I have raised throughout this campaign, the city says yes to something in principle and then buries it in fees, insurance requirements, arbitrary rules, and administrative steps that make the yes meaningless in practice. That pattern shows up with housing, and it shows up here too. Groups I have spoken to consistently point to city liability concerns as the actual sticking point, and note that other municipalities have found ways to move past the same concern. I want to understand that gap better, why other cities have managed it and Sarnia has not, and use that to streamline our own process rather than assume our situation is unique. Whatever framework comes out of this needs a real requirement for meaningful public access built in, not just public ownership on paper. Without that, this risks becoming an amenity that only well-resourced groups can actually use, which defeats the purpose.

MIKE STARK

Yes. Will need to be studied and co-ordinated with the originators of the concept. Certainly staff participation will be and should be involved. That does not mean the concept needs to be driven by staff but rather a collaborative approach would be best.

GEORGE VANDENBURG

Yes. Have the CAO attend those meetings.

PAUL WIERSMA

Yes. Sarnia can support community partners and streamline park activations through the following initiatives:

- Financial & Insurance Support: Waive fees for permits and equipment rentals, offer small capital matching grants to unlock external funding, absorb baseline utility costs, and provide low-cost insurance coverage.
- Administrative Simplification: Assign a dedicated Parks and Recreation staff contact, implement a 14-day fast-track event approval pathway, and offer pre-approved legal templates (MOUs).
- Infrastructure & Maintenance: Grant access to city-owned event equipment (stages, seating, barricades) and establish a clear maintenance divide where the City handles structural upkeep while partners manage light daily operations.
- Marketing & Recognition: Promote partner-led events on official municipal channels and install co-branded site signage to highlight community contributions.

CITY COUNCILLOR

TERRY BURRELL

Left blank. It depends on the activity. Usually adult groups pay the full cost, but activities for minors are supported.

LO-ANNE CHAN

Yes. The City has already taken steps through Invest Sarnia, which helps residents and businesses navigate permits, insurance, and other requirements. I would advocate for City Hall to build on this work by translating these experiences into a clear, consistent partnership framework that streamlines workflows and reduces administrative friction. To make this successful, the City should continue fostering the growth of Invest Sarnia, enhance Parks & Recreation, and ensure these departments are accessible and well-resourced to support partnerships. We've already seen how effective this can be: the 2024 collaboration between Invest Sarnia and Mitton Village Neighbourhood Connects transformed a City-owned space into the Mitton Village parkette – a vibrant neighbourhood gathering place that now hosts neighbourhood events and strengthens community identity. By expanding staff capacity and improving administrative support, the City can empower qualified partners to bring creativity, programming, and stewardship to public spaces while maintaining public ownership and access.

NATHAN COLQUHOUN

Yes.

RICHARD C (DICK) FELTON

Yes. I really can not answer this question right now; however I like the concept and I would be in favour of investigating this further. Perhaps a trial of a particular space

DAVID GHOBIL

Depends on the organization and the circumstances. The City should streamline partnerships through a single contact, standard agreements, timely approvals, practical guidance, and in-kind support such as reduced fees and access to facilities.

ANNE MARIE GILLIS

Yes. Money to support to create the framework. It would have to be developed utilizing the legal department and Park and Rec to determine how it will work . It is an exciting proposal and it's success relies on a good plan ,how it is financed , who will be responsible for maintaining it, so that a good idea doesn't become a burden.

CLARA JAMES

Depends on the organization and the circumstances. Whatever is reasonable and necessary to be successful mutually beneficial to the community, partnership and most importantly taxpayers.

TAMMY MATHIESON

Yes. I would support a practical partnership model that makes it easier for qualified community organizations, non-profits and businesses to contribute to our public spaces while ensuring those spaces remain publicly owned, accessible and accountable to residents. The City's first contribution does not always need to be additional taxpayer dollars. We can start by reducing unnecessary administrative barriers, simplifying application and approval processes, providing a clear City contact to help organizations navigate requirements, and reviewing fees or facility costs where there is a demonstrated community benefit. Where financial support is appropriate, I would favour leveraging grants, sponsorships, donations and other levels of government before creating new pressures on municipal taxpayers. Any partnership should have clear expectations regarding safety, accessibility, maintenance, financial accountability and continued public access. Sarnia has many community organizations and residents willing to contribute their time, expertise and resources. City Hall should make it easier, not harder, for responsible partners to help improve our community.

CHRISTOPHER ORAM

Depends on the organization and the circumstances. Again, depends on the situation and organization

MICHELLE PARKS

Yes. I support providing targeted City resources to make these partnerships practical, while ensuring we are leveraging community investment and volunteer capacity rather than simply shifting costs onto taxpayers. The City should provide: A dedicated staff contact or partnership coordinator to help organizations navigate permits, insurance, approvals and City requirements. A simple application and agreement process with clear expectations, timelines and responsibilities. Small grants or a community partnership fund for eligible projects that demonstrate a clear public benefit. Funding could support programming, accessibility improvements, beautification, equipment or activation costs. Reasonable reductions or waivers of municipal fees where appropriate, particularly for non-profits and community-led projects that provide free or low-cost public programming. Access to existing City facilities and resources where available, including space, equipment and promotional support. I would also look for opportunities to leverage provincial and federal grants, sponsorships and private-sector contributions rather than relying solely on municipal funding. The City should establish clear eligibility criteria, maintain public access and ownership, and require basic reporting so residents can see what their investment is achieving. This is consistent with my approach to municipal government: remove unnecessary barriers, empower people who are already doing good work in our community, and use taxpayer dollars strategically to multiply—not replace—community investment.

CHRIS PETTIT

Depends on the organization and the circumstances. The resources provided should depend on the organization, the proposed partnership and the public benefit it provides. The City should provide reasonable staff and administrative support to help qualified organizations navigate the process, but financial contributions should be considered on a case-by-case basis. Any City financial or staff resources should have a clear purpose, measurable public benefit and appropriate accountability. With significant demands already on the municipal budget, these partnerships should primarily be about leveraging community and private-sector resources, rather than creating another ongoing financial obligation for taxpayers.

ANDREW STOKLEY

Yes. Establishing a formal partnership framework to activate City owned public spaces is a smart, forward thinking strategy, provided it is anchored by strict risk mitigation, total cost recovery, and non negotiable public access guarantees. Cities like Vancouver, Toronto, and Calgary have shown that enabling non-profits and community organizations to steward public spaces drives civic engagement, improves programming, and maximizes space utilization. However, municipal taxpayers must never bear the burden of financial default or privatization. To protect municipal taxpayers moving forward, the capital role and operating risks must be strictly controlled. While I support the City holding loans to secure accessible financing, 100% of these funds must be paid back after the initial funding. To mitigate operating risks and revenue shortfalls, repayment must be driven entirely by the facility itself, specifically through added user fees on association memberships and dedicated tournament surcharges for hosted events. Furthermore, to maintain full asset security, the loan must be contingent on the City of Sarnia retaining full ownership of the land, building, and all amenities until the loan has been completely reimbursed. Finally, until the loan is paid off, the City must enforce a strong, legally binding public access agreement. Taxpayer support must never be used to fund a private club facility with a municipal invoice. Because these sites will be utilized by multiple sports associations and diverse groups, the City must mandate guaranteed, low-barrier public access as a non-negotiable condition of its financial backing.



FROM NUSARNIA'S COMMUNITY SURVEY

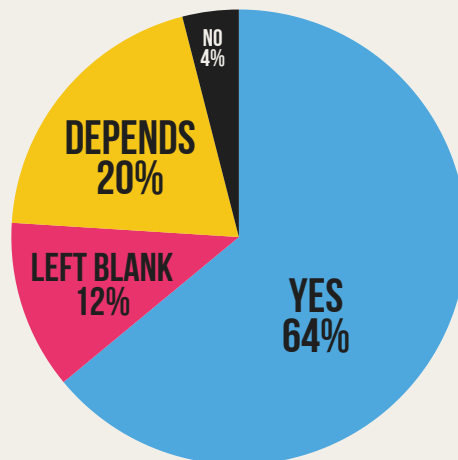
Almost half of Sarnia residents, 49%, describe their sense of belonging to the local community as strong, while 45% describe it as weak. Contact tells a similar story: 42% of residents have face-to-face contact with neighbours often or very often in a typical week, while 27% rarely or never do. This question asks each candidate directly whether the City has a responsibility to help residents build that kind of connection.

17

Loneliness and social isolation are increasingly recognized as community issues. Do you believe the City of Sarnia has a responsibility to create places, programs and policies that helps residents feel a stronger sense of belonging and connection to their community? (Yes / No / Limited role)

AT A GLANCE

Patrick Coutu
Mark Lamore
Chrissy McRoberts
Terry Burrell
Richard C (Dick) Felton
Clara James
Chris Pettit
Andrew Stokley
David Ghobril



Mike Bradley
Scott Molson
Adam Kilner
Charmaine Murray
John Richardson
Mike Stark
George Vandenberg

Paul Wiersma
Lo-Anne Chan
Nathan Colquhoun
Anne Marie Gillis
Tammy Mathieson
Christopher Oram
Michelle Parks

Carrie McEachran

MAYOR

MIKE BRADLEY

Yes. Neighbourhood inclusion and investment

CARRIE MCEACHRAN

Left blank. I would bring together community organizations, neighbourhood groups and service providers to identify where residents are experiencing barriers to participation and connection, and what the City can do to help address them. One practical action would be making it easier for these organizations and residents to use City-owned parks, facilities and public spaces for activities that bring people together, by reducing unnecessary administrative and financial barriers and creating a clear process for accessing these spaces. The City does not need to deliver every program itself. Our role should also be to bring people together, remove barriers and support the organizations and residents already working to create stronger, more connected communities.

SCOTT MOLSON

Yes. I support creating a Community Connection Initiative that makes better use of the parks, community spaces and facilities Sarnia already owns, while partnering with local service clubs, charities, neighbourhood groups, seniors' organizations and youth organizations to provide more accessible social activities and community events. Sarnia already has significant public assets—95 parks, more than 40 km of trails, and recreation programming through facilities such as the Strangway Community Centre. My priority would be to use what we already have more effectively before spending taxpayers' money on new facilities or another layer of bureaucracy. The City cannot solve loneliness by itself, but it can help create the conditions where neighbours meet neighbours, seniors stay connected, young people have positive places to belong, and volunteers and community organizations can do what they do best. Build connections. Use our existing assets. Support the people already doing the work.

CITY & COUNTY COUNCILLOR

PATRICK COUTU

Limited role.

ADAM KILNER

Yes. I will continue to support variations of the community hub models we have been focusing on in recent years – the BACE, Bright's Grove Library, Clearwater Arena, etc. I will also look to religious organizations and community halls for partnerships in city-supported programming that will help people remain active and connected

MARK LAMORE

Limited role.

CHRISSY MCROBERTS

Limited role. Yes, I believe the City has a role to play, but I don't think government can create community on its own. We need to get back to the basics of healthy neighbourhoods and people looking out for each other. The City can help by making sure we have accessible community spaces, parks, recreation programs and events where people can actually come together. I would support working with our community groups, service clubs, businesses and volunteers to create more opportunities for residents to get involved, especially seniors, youth and people who may feel disconnected. I would also like to see the City make better use of the community spaces and programs we already have before spending money creating something new. The City can provide the places and opportunities, but it's our residents who create the community. I want to encourage people to get involved, volunteer, support each other and be proud of where we live.

CHARMAINE MURRAY

Yes. I would support ensuring that seniors have practical ways to get to existing community programs. For example, supporting transportation options so people can reach places like the Strangway Centre or access services like Meals on Wheels more easily.

JOHN RICHARDSON

Yes. This needs to be understood as a public health issue that connects three things people often treat separately: loneliness, addiction, and mental health. Isolation is one of the clearest risk factors for both, and connection is consistently one of the strongest protective factors in recovery, not to mention one of the biggest predictors of human survival for millennia. A city that takes loneliness seriously is also doing real, if indirect, work on its addiction and mental health outcomes.

The most actionable thing I can do extends beyond the council chamber: making sure events already happening in this community are actually well promoted and easy to find, as well as supporting groups trying to do exactly that with my vote in chamber. There is a real disconnect between people wanting something to do and actual participation, not because nothing is happening, but because people do not know it is happening. One thing that struck me while campaigning is how many events I could attend on any given week, more than I actually have time for. That tells me the supply of connection opportunities is not the problem, awareness is.

MIKE STARK

Yes. The focusing of enhanced senior activity program through the Strangway Centre.

GEORGE VANDENBERG

Yes. Plant more trees and gardens. Allow people to have gardens in the parks.

PAUL WIERSMA

Yes. Sarnia can establish a Community Hub and Public Realm Activation Strategy focused on transforming existing neighbourhood assets into accessible social gathering points. The City can convert underutilized spaces within existing parks and municipal facilities (such as Germain Park or neighbourhood community centres) into multi-use intergenerational hubs. Add low-barrier, high-connection park amenities such as covered seating clusters, community gardens, accessible walking loops, outdoor game tables, and flexible spaces for pop-up events. Partner with local non-profits, service clubs, and senior/youth organizations to deliver free, regularly scheduled micro-programs (e.g., guided neighbourhood walks, outdoor fitness, community dinners, or shared skill workshops). Streamline park usage permits and offer small matching grants (\$500–\$1,000) for residents to host street parties, porch concerts, or community garden projects. By providing both the physical space and municipal support, Sarnia lowers the barrier for residents of all ages to meet, interact, and build lasting local networks.

CITY COUNCILLOR

TERRY BURRELL

Limited role.

LO-ANNE CHAN

Yes. Citizen well-being should be on the radar for city hall. Increasing accessibility for programs and places to gather would enable more opportunity for citizens to connect, and also find social groups to bond over activities & interests. Strangway Community Center is a great place; however, it currently only opens 8:30 am to 4:30 pm. These hours of operation are not accessible for families with children or individuals who are unable to access the center during day hours. By increasing funding in Parks & Recreation to encourage longer hours of operation at Strangway, this would enable programming into the evening, which would open up opportunities to gather for families, children, or individuals with availability in the evening.

NATHAN COLQUHOUN

Yes. Supporting and funding BACE

RICHARD C (DICK) FELTON

Limited role. Encouraging the different neighbourhood areas of Sarnia to have events. Mitton Village and Brights Grove do this now. Other areas could take part as well

DAVID GHOBIL

No.

ANNE MARIE GILLIS

Yes. Healthy neighbourhoods .

CLARA JAMES

Limited role. I do recognize the need and get we can support organizations that focus on this and we can do a better job of hosting events that foster community relations and socialization. I don't think we play a major role as individuals may have specific social needs and trying to accommodate them all would be hard to accomplish.

TAMMY MATHIESON

Yes. I would support making better use of existing City facilities and public spaces to create more opportunities for affordable, community-led activities that bring residents of different ages together. This could be done in partnership with existing community organizations, volunteers and local groups rather than unnecessarily duplicating programs or creating new layers of municipal administration..

CHRISTOPHER ORAM

Yes. I would support creating a permanent "Neighbourhood Mini Grants Program" that gives small, simple grants to residents, neighbourhood groups, and local organizations to run low-cost community-building activities. Things like block gatherings, cultural nights, seniors' social hours, neighbourhood clean-ups, porch concerts, or youth-led events. Loneliness and social isolation are best addressed at the neighbourhood level, where people actually meet each other. A mini-grant program empowers residents directly, removes barriers to organizing small events, and helps build belonging in every part of the city. Mitton Village, the North End, Heritage Park, Bright's Grove, and beyond. It's a cost-effective municipal action that strengthens connection, supports inclusion, and encourages residents to take pride in their community.

MICHELLE PARKS

Yes. I believe the City has a responsibility to help create the conditions where residents can connect, participate and feel that they belong. We cannot legislate away loneliness, but we can make sure people have accessible, welcoming places and opportunities to connect with others. One specific action I would support is creating a "Community Connection" initiative that makes better use of existing City facilities, parks, libraries and community spaces for low-cost or free social programs and activities. This could include drop-in programs, intergenerational activities, seniors' programs, youth activities, community meals, recreation, arts and cultural programming, and opportunities for newcomers and residents who may otherwise feel disconnected. I would also look at partnerships with community organizations, service clubs, Indigenous partners and local businesses rather than expecting the City to provide everything itself. The goal would be simple: make it easier for people to get out of their homes, meet their neighbours, participate in their community and build meaningful connections. We already have many of the physical spaces and community organizations needed. I believe the City can do a better job of connecting those resources, reducing barriers to participation and ensuring that residents know what opportunities are available. A strong community isn't just about roads, buildings and infrastructure. It's about people feeling connected to the place they call home.

CHRIS PETTIT

Limited role.

ANDREW STOKLEY

Limited role.



FROM NUSARNIA'S COMMUNITY SURVEY

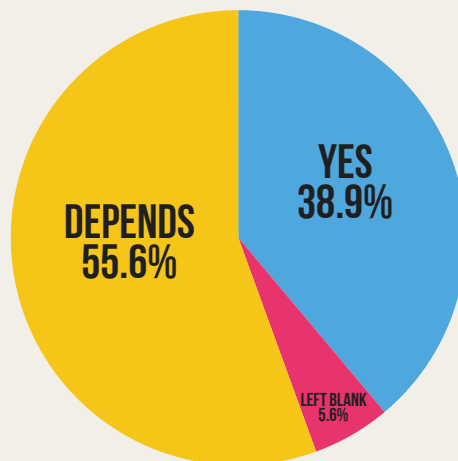
Of everything nuSarnia's Community Survey tested, one relationship held up under full statistical review: residents who feel they can influence neighbourhood decisions are far more likely to report strong belonging, 71% compared with 38% among those who disagree. A dedicated grants program for resident-led projects is one concrete way that sense of influence could be put into practice.

18

Would you support the City establishing a dedicated program or funding mechanism that provides small grants, clear guidance and municipal support for residents and neighbourhood groups to initiate and complete community-led projects? (Yes / No / Unsure)

AT A GLANCE

Patrick Coutu
Mark Lamore
Chrissy McRoberts
Mike Stark
Terry Burrell
Nathan Colquhoun
David Ghobril
Clara James
Tammy Mathieson
Andrew Stokley



Mike Bradley
Scott Molson
Adam Kilner
Charmaine Murray
John Richardson
George Vandenberg
Paul Wiersma

Lo-Anne Chan
Richard C (Dick) Felton
Anne Marie Gillis
Chris Oram
Michelle Parks
Chris Pettit

Carrie McEachran

MAYOR

MIKE BRADLEY

Yes. Na

CARRIE MCEACHRAN

Left blank. I would establish an annual funding allocation based on the demand for the program and the City's ability to leverage community investment. I would favour a model where municipal funding can be combined with fundraising, sponsorships, donations, volunteer contributions and other sources of funding.

The level of City support should also reflect the scale of the project and the broader community benefit. We already have residents and organizations willing to invest their time, expertise and resources into improving our community. The City's role should be to help leverage that commitment and make good projects possible, while ensuring there is accountability for how public dollars are used.

SCOTT MOLSON

Yes. Up to \$100,000 annually, subject to the City's financial position and annual budget approval, with priority given to projects that leverage volunteer labour, community partnerships and matching contributions. The program should be funded through savings or reallocation within the existing budget—not through an additional tax increase.” That supports community-led projects while keeping the commitment tied to fiscal responsibility and measurable value for taxpayers.

CITY & COUNTY COUNCILLOR

PATRICK COUTU

Unsure. I believe the city can provide a clear path for private enterprise to take on such roles rather than direct funding.

ADAM KILNER

Yes. I think a pilot project would help clarify appropriate future funding

MARK LAMORE

Unsure. Unsure..money is going to be an issue in this community.

CHRISSY MCROBERTS

Unsure. Yes, absolutely—but let's keep it simple. I believe community starts with the people who live here. We have so many residents, volunteers, service clubs and neighbourhood groups who already want to make Sarnia better. We need to support them, not make it difficult. I would support a small grant program that gives neighbourhoods some financial help to get projects done, with a simple application and clear accountability. But I also want to see people putting some skin in the game—whether that's volunteer hours, fundraising, donations or partnerships. We don't always need to spend a lot of taxpayers' money to make a difference. Sometimes we just need to give people a little support and get out of their way. I want to see Sarnia First. Neighbours helping neighbours, businesses supporting our community, and residents taking pride in where they live. That's how we build a stronger community.

CHARMAINE MURRAY

Yes. I would want to know both the demand for the program and the types of projects being proposed before setting a specific annual amount. Some community-led projects may require very little funding and simply need supplies, meeting space or other municipal support, while other projects may require more resources. I strongly support helping residents who are willing to work together to improve their community, but I would want the annual funding to reflect the actual projects being proposed, what support they need and what the City can reasonably afford.

JOHN RICHARDSON

Yes. The important caveat is that the city also has to be permissive and timely in approving these initiatives. A grant program does nothing if the approval process on the other side is slow or discretionary enough to discourage people from applying in the first place, that would just move the friction rather than remove it. I would be genuinely glad to see this used to encourage placemaking in Sarnia's many underutilized park spaces, turning them into something people actually use instead of just maintain. Using the St. Catharines model as a reference, roughly twenty projects a year at up to \$1,500 each would put this in the neighbourhood of \$30,000 annually, small enough to defend on its own merits, but real enough to actually move a neighbourhood group to act.

MIKE STARK

Unsure. Depends on the ask.

GEORGE VANDENBERG

Yes. Not sure but something small at first.

PAUL WIERSMA

Yes. I would support annual funding of \$25 000 to \$35 000. This type of program has a high return on investment as the funding would generally go to supplies and capital while people would volunteer their time. Micro-grants (\$250-\$1000) could go to block parties, porch concerts, street clean-ups, or temporary pop-up parklets. Capital matching grants (\$1000-\$3000) could go to permanent physical additions like community garden beds, outdoor chess tables, or boulevard beautification.

CITY COUNCILLOR

TERRY BURRELL

Unsure.

LO-ANNE CHAN

Yes. The City could start by establishing a \$100,000 pilot fund as a community-innovation seeding program. Based on past experience with the Mitton Village Parkette, this level of funding would support three to four community-led pilot projects (enough to demonstrate impact and build the case for further municipal investment.) Sarnia is currently debt-free and has access to more than \$304 million in credit (Sarnia Journal, Feb. 2026), which gives the City flexibility to scale up successful pilots once results are clear. The Mitton Village Parkette is a strong example: it began with a \$30,000 pilot, and after proving its value, the City proceeded with a \$500,000 full upgrade (Windsor News Today, June 2022). A structured pilot fund would empower neighbourhood groups, test ideas quickly, and help the City identify which projects deliver the strongest community return before committing larger capital dollars.

NATHAN COLQUHOUN

Unsure.

RICHARD C (DICK) FELTON

Yes. Sorry, but I have no idea. How many areas and how many events per year would need to be defined. One for Spring and one for fall? it needs more investigation; but overall a great idea to keep our city together and mentally healthy

DAVID GHOBRI

Unsure.

ANNE MARIE GILLIS

Yes. It depends on the project, and we have had such grants in the past

CLARA JAMES

Unsure. Depends the question is a bit unclear. Also depends on the capital of the total project needed and if it wouldn't overlap and double dip into funding already available on city budget lines.

TAMMY MATHIESON

Unsure. I would not commit to a predetermined annual amount without first reviewing the need, existing City programs and available funding. I would prefer to explore whether existing resources, partnerships, sponsorships or external grants could support community-led projects before creating a new ongoing cost for municipal taxpayers. If a program were proposed, I would consider it based on demonstrated community benefit, affordability and measurable results.

CHRISTOPHER ORAM

Yes. See above, The level of funding depends on the scope of the event. The intent is not to fund the entire event, but to promote it.

MICHELLE PARKS

Yes. I would support establishing a dedicated community-led projects fund, with approximately \$100,000 in annual funding. I believe residents and neighbourhood groups often know what their communities need better than City Hall does. A relatively small municipal investment can make a meaningful difference when it helps residents turn a good idea into a completed project. The program could provide small grants for initiatives such as neighbourhood beautification, community gardens, local events, accessibility improvements, public art, recreation opportunities, gathering spaces or other projects that strengthen neighbourhood connections. The key would be keeping the program simple and accessible, with clear eligibility requirements, straightforward applications and municipal staff available to help community groups navigate permits and approvals. We should not create a complicated bureaucracy that discourages the very people we are trying to support. I would also require basic accountability—clear criteria, a maximum grant amount, defined timelines and a simple report showing what was accomplished. \$100,000 annually is enough to create meaningful opportunities without creating a significant burden on taxpayers. If the program demonstrates strong participation and measurable community benefit, Council could review the funding level as part of the regular budget process. I believe this is a good example of how municipal government can enable residents rather than always doing everything itself. When we give people the tools and modest resources to improve their own neighbourhoods, we strengthen both our communities and our sense of belonging.

CHRIS PETTIT

Yes. would support a modest, clearly defined annual fund, with the amount reviewed after the first year based on participation, results and value to taxpayers. Funding should be sufficient to support worthwhile small projects without creating a significant ongoing municipal obligation.

ANDREW STOKLEY

Unsure. Case by Case Basis

BUDGET, CHALLENGES & ENGAGEMENT

19

What do you believe will be Sarnia's single biggest challenge over the next four years, and what is one difficult decision Council will need to make to address it?

MAYOR

MIKE BRADLEY

Trump's Tariffs and the cross border relationship which has and will continue to do so. Affordability for citizens will continue to grow as an issue

CARRIE MCEACHRAN

I believe Sarnia's biggest challenge over the next four years will be balancing affordability with the need to maintain the infrastructure and services residents rely on, while still investing in our city's future. We did not get here overnight, and we will not get out of it overnight. Years of infrastructure needs, deferred projects and increasing costs cannot be addressed through one budget or by continually asking existing taxpayers to pay more. We need a serious and concerted effort to grow Sarnia's tax base by attracting new investment, supporting development and helping existing businesses grow. A stronger tax base gives us greater capacity to maintain infrastructure, improve services and invest in our community without placing the entire burden on existing taxpayers. The difficult decision for Council will be setting priorities while we build that capacity. We cannot fund every project, expand every service and address every infrastructure need at the same time. Council will have to determine what we need now, what we can afford, what can wait and where we can leverage other sources of funding. There will be times when Council has to say no or not yet to worthwhile projects. Those decisions should be based on clear priorities, evidence and long-term financial planning, with residents understanding why those decisions are being made and how they fit into a longer-term plan.

SCOTT MOLSON

I believe Sarnia's biggest challenge over the next four years will be restoring financial sustainability while dealing with aging infrastructure and maintaining the services residents depend on. That starts with transparency and accountability. Residents deserve to know where their tax dollars are going, what results they are getting, and whether there are overlapping positions, duplicated services, unnecessary consulting costs or spending that can be reduced. The difficult decision will be restructuring where necessary and putting needs ahead of wants. That means reviewing every department and expenditure, eliminating duplication and waste, and being prepared to delay projects that are not essential so we can prioritize roads, water, sewer, flood mitigation and other core infrastructure. Sarnia's own 2026 budget shows the pressure: the City reduced transfers to reserves and deferred some capital spending to limit tax increases, while continuing significant infrastructure investment. My approach is simple: open the books, establish clear priorities, fix the basics first, and build a financially sustainable future for Sarnia.

CITY & COUNTY COUNCILLOR

PATRICK COUTU

The biggest challenge will be what fun and prosperous project to do first. Seriously we have so much untapped potential that any challenges are dwarfed if you focus on what we can accomplish.

ADAM KILNER

While there are a number of concerns, I think one of the biggest challenges is actually external, but impacts our community. The trade challenges between Canada and the USA not only impacts border crossings at the Bluewater Bridge, but also the strategic location of Sarnia for cross-border economic activity. While commercial traffic at the Bluewater Bridge has outpaced the Ambassador Bridge in recent months, the ability to attract investment is likely impacted. Additionally, County of Lambton Council recently endorsed the Northern Shield Energy Corridor pipeline project from Hardisty, Alberta to Sarnia. There are certainly conversations that need to happen among 3 Premiers and the Prime Minister, as well as First Nations. The difficult decision will be to make sure Indigenous nations are part of the conversation, and not an afterthought.

MARK LAMORE

Increasing a tax base that continues to shrink while still providing services at a level that will not cause people to rip the hair out of their head. Figure out how to keep the plates spinning.

CHRISSY MCROBERTS

I think Sarnia's biggest challenge over the next four years is going to be affordability. Our residents are already feeling the pressure, and the City can't keep asking taxpayers for more money without looking at how we are spending what we already have. The difficult decision Council is going to have to make is what we can afford to do and what we can't. We are going to have to prioritize. We can't promise everything to everyone. That means looking at our departments, our operating costs, our capital projects and the services we provide and asking some tough questions. I'm not afraid of making difficult decisions. I would rather be honest with residents about what we can afford than keep kicking the problem down the road. We need to get back to the basics, protect essential services, find efficiencies and make Sarnia affordable again.

CHARMAINE MURRAY

I believe Sarnia's biggest challenge over the next four years will be housing and homelessness. We need to find suitable supportive and affordable housing for people who are already homeless, while also helping people who are struggling now so they don't become homeless. One of the difficult decisions Council will have to make is where and how that housing is developed. We need to look at the whole picture, including the needs of the people who will live there and the residents and businesses in the surrounding community. Those affected need to be part of the conversation, and we need to find solutions that provide people with the housing and supports they need while working with the community.

JOHN RICHARDSON

The single biggest challenge is building the housing this city actually needs to succeed while accommodating neighbourhoods that are genuinely apprehensive about change. We already know what we have been doing does not work, and we cannot afford to keep resisting what other Ontario cities making real gains on this issue are already doing. The difficult decision is accepting that we are not insulated from the cost of resisting change. We cannot keep being frustrated by outcomes like rising rents, stalled projects, and a thinning tax base while refusing the policy changes that would actually fix them. Council's job is not to avoid that tension, it is to do what is genuinely best for the city while still listening, leading, and being honest about the whole picture, the revenue, the costs, and the long-term opportunity that gets lost every year this gets deferred.

MIKE STARK

Capital spending when very little capital reserves exist. We still have a \$380 Million dollar Asset Management deficit that needs to be tackled with little reserves left to work with. Often times matching funds from the municipality are required to secure senior levels of government grants. We need to be less fearful about using our debt capacity to provide matching senior grants in order to tackle capital projects which actually are outstanding debts. Let's put people to work and bring the Infrastructure back into sustainable shape.

MIKE STARK

Capital spending when very little capital reserves exist. We still have a \$380 Million dollar Asset Management deficit that needs to be tackled with little reserves left to work with. Often times matching funds from the municipality are required to secure senior levels of government grants. We need to be less fearful about using our debt capacity to provide matching senior grants in order to tackle capital projects which actually are outstanding debts. Let's put people to work and bring the Infrastructure back into sustainable shape.

GEORGE VANDENBERG

Growth.

PAUL WIERSMA

Sarnia's biggest challenge will be managing severe fiscal strain from depleted reserves and mounting capital demands. With multi-million-dollar funding gaps, Council cannot simply rely on steep tax hikes or deep service cuts. Fortunately, being debt-free gives Sarnia the capacity to leverage "good debt"—borrowing strategically for long-life capital projects that serve residents for decades. To move forward, the new Council must closely review all spending to ensure alignment with core priorities. Simultaneously, Sarnia must invest in sustainable growth—attracting industry, local businesses, and housing development. Expanding the municipal tax base and creating good jobs will generate the revenue needed to fund essential capital priorities responsibly.

CITY COUNCILLOR

TERRY BURRELL

Over spending in prior years causing tax increases.

LO-ANNE CHAN

Economic diversification is Sarnia's biggest single challenge over the next four years. It is City Council's responsibility to take the long view on infrastructure and economic development, make sure we seize the opportunities being announced by provincial and federal governments, and innovate to introduce new industry sectors into the city. This isn't abstract – it's about protecting our workers. They already have the skills; we need to attract the kinds of industries that allow them to keep working here, instead of relying on whether the petrochemical sector chooses to stay. I will advocate and negotiate for community benefit commitments that support economic diversification and strengthen our ability to weather petrochemical downturns. Our city was home to the country's first and oldest petrochemical research facility, which announced its closure in May 2024. This is an example that petrochemical industry self-divestment may already be happening. We need to be proactive. By starting and attracting new opportunities now, we can ensure workers have stable jobs, and our community can adapt and thrive in a changing economic landscape.

NATHAN COLQUHOUN

Affordable housing – build build build.

RICHARD C (DICK) FELTON

Attraction of businesses and people to grow our tax base is the biggest challenge. Borrowing money to invest in this will be the most difficult decision to make, because it will increase taxes in the short term to allow the City to grow.

DAVID GHOBIL

Sarnia's biggest challenge will be meeting rising infrastructure and service costs with an insufficient tax base. Residential taxpayers cannot continue carrying an ever-growing burden. Council's difficult decision will be to defer lower-priority projects and control administrative growth while accepting that some tax increases may still be necessary. At the same time, attracting major industrial and commercial investment must become a central priority so future costs are shared across a larger tax base.

ANNE MARIE GILLIS

Attracting good paying jobs for a diverse workforce

CLARA JAMES

I believe Sarnia positions it takes on public drug use, supportive housing and homelessness. We need to have a stronger voice to discourage this from happening and we need to stop enabling and build meaningful road to Recovery.

TAMMY MATHIESON

I believe Sarnia's biggest challenge over the next four years will be balancing the growing needs of our community with what residents can realistically afford. We have aging infrastructure and facilities, increasing service demands and important investments that need to be made, while many families, seniors and businesses are already facing significant financial pressures. The difficult decision for Council will be determining what must be funded now, what can be improved more efficiently, and what may need to wait. I believe Council must prioritize core services, public safety and essential infrastructure, carefully review spending and pursue partnerships and other levels of government for funding before asking taxpayers to carry additional costs. We cannot do everything at once, so decisions need to be based on need, value and long-term benefit to Sarnia.

CHRISTOPHER ORAM

Given how infrastructure has been chronically delayed and underfunded and years of draining reserves to soften tax hikes, decisions will have to be made about tax increases and strategic borrowing. The hard pills we swallow in the future are the result of bad policy and planning in the past.

MICHELLE PARKS

I believe Sarnia's single biggest challenge over the next four years will be getting our municipal finances back on a sustainable footing while continuing to provide the services and infrastructure residents depend on. We are facing difficult choices. The cost of maintaining infrastructure is rising, capital needs are significant, and residents are already feeling the pressure of the overall cost of living. We cannot continue to respond by simply deferring projects, increasing taxes or adding new spending without asking whether we can afford it. The difficult decision Council will have to make is to establish clear priorities and decide what we can realistically afford to do—and what may have to be delayed, redesigned or stopped. That means looking at every major expenditure through the lens of need, value and long-term sustainability. It means protecting core services and essential infrastructure while being prepared to make unpopular decisions about lower-priority projects and spending. But fiscal responsibility cannot mean simply cutting our way forward. We also need to grow our assessment base, attract investment, pursue outside funding and make strategic investments in economic development, tourism, housing and infrastructure that strengthen Sarnia's future. I would also insist on greater transparency around capital planning. Residents should understand what projects are being considered, what they will cost, what is being deferred and why. The hardest responsibility of a Councillor is not saying yes—it is having the courage to say no when something is not financially sustainable. My goal would be to leave Sarnia in a stronger financial position at the end of four years, with a realistic capital plan, sustainable services and the ability to invest in the future rather than continually reacting to the next financial crisis.

CHRIS PETTIT

Sarnia's biggest challenge over the next four years will be managing the growing cost of municipal services while addressing our significant infrastructure needs. Police costs are an important part of that challenge. The police operating budget has seen several years of significant increases and is now approaching \$41 million annually. At the same time, Sarnia has major infrastructure needs and limited financial capacity. We cannot continue adding costs faster than our tax base can support them. The difficult decision Council will have to make is what gets priority and what doesn't. Council will need to scrutinize every major expenditure, including policing, infrastructure, services and new initiatives, while recognizing that Council's authority over the police budget is different from its control over most municipal departments. We need to find efficiencies, pursue outside funding, grow the commercial and industrial tax base and make difficult choices about what can realistically be afforded. Good governance means being honest with residents about the choices in front of us. We cannot promise everything to everyone and expect taxpayers to continually absorb the cost.

ANDREW STOKLEY

Sarnia's single biggest challenge over the next four years will be navigating a severe fiscal structural deficit caused by depleted reserves, an ongoing infrastructure funding gap, and mounting pressure from major capital projects such as the proposed repairs to police facility. Current council has elected to draw down capital reserve funds to artificially suppress annual tax rate hikes, the city faces an unsustainable cliff where future operational and maintenance costs can no longer be offset by emergency savings. To solve this, Council must commit to a clear, binding Strategic Plan that establishes rigid criteria for spending borrowed money and tax revenue. The difficult decision Council will need to make is choosing to reject appealing non essential projects and instead institute a dedicated asset management levy while directing debt exclusively toward revenue-generating or infrastructure projects. We need to protect residents from sudden double-digit tax hikes down the road.

20

Council will inevitably face decisions where a significant portion of residents disagree with the eventual outcome. How will you determine when public opposition should change your position—and when you would vote against the wishes of residents because you believe the decision is in the City's long-term interest?

MAYOR

MIKE BRADLEY

I do not make decisions based on the issue being un popular or popular. I have voted repeatedly on affordable housing and development proposals with strong opposition. We are elected to lead.

CARRIE MCEACHRAN

Listening to residents is fundamental to good decision-making, but listening does not mean that every decision will be based on which position has the loudest or largest group of supporters. Public opposition should cause me to reconsider my position when residents bring forward information, impacts or alternatives that have not been adequately considered. I will listen, ask questions and be prepared to change my position when the evidence supports doing so. There will also be times when I may vote for a decision that is unpopular because I believe it is necessary for Sarnia's long-term interests. In those situations, I have a responsibility to consider the evidence, financial implications, impact on the entire community and consequences of both acting and not acting. If I make a decision that residents disagree with, they deserve to know why. I will explain the information I relied on, the alternatives I considered and the reasons for my decision. Leadership requires listening and being willing to change your mind, but it also requires being prepared to make difficult decisions and be accountable for them.

SCOTT MOLSON

Public opposition should always matter. As Mayor, I would never treat public consultation as a box to check after a decision has already been made. Residents deserve to know what Council is considering, what it will cost, what alternatives exist, and why a decision is being recommended. I would look at four things: how widespread the opposition is, the reasons behind it, whether residents have been given complete and accurate information, and whether there is a reasonable alternative that achieves the same objective. If new information or legitimate concerns show that Council is heading in the wrong direction, I would change my position. There is nothing wrong with changing your mind when the facts change. There may also be difficult occasions when I believe the long-term interests of Sarnia require a decision that is unpopular. Essential infrastructure is a good example. Replacing failing water and sewer systems may be expensive and disruptive, but continually postponing necessary work can ultimately cost taxpayers more. In those situations, I would not simply say, "Council knows best." I would explain the facts, costs, alternatives and consequences publicly and be accountable for my vote. My approach is simple: listen first, get the facts, be transparent, and make decisions based on Sarnia's long-term interests—not politics or personal agendas.

CITY & COUNTY COUNCILLOR

PATRICK COUTU

I would like to be elected based on my track record of integrity and economic success. If I was in a position where I had to vote against the wishes of a portion of the public, it would be done with the utmost integrity and an assurance it was being done for the good of the community as a whole.

ADAM KILNER

Every Councillor needs to have a sense of their obligation to the public and a sense of their own moral/ethical core.

MARK LAMORE

If I can be convinced it is in the best interest of the community my mind can be changed. I am doing this for the city of Sarnia I have zero plans to go into business for myself.

CHRISSY MCROBERTS

I don't believe a Councillor should just vote based on which way the crowd is going. I will listen. I will continue to make myself available to speak with residents and businesses. If I hear information or concerns that I hadn't considered, I am absolutely willing to change my position. But sometimes Council has to make a difficult decision that isn't popular. If I believe something is in Sarnia's long-term best interest, I will vote that way—even if some residents disagree with me. I'm not afraid to listen, and I'm not afraid to disagree. My job isn't to make everyone happy. My job is to make the best decision I can for Sarnia, based on the facts, the finances and the long-term future of our community.

CHARMAINE MURRAY

I believe my job as a councillor is to work for and represent the people. If there is a clear majority of residents telling me they do not support something, then I believe my vote should reflect that, even if my personal opinion is different. The same is true if the clear majority supports it. Before that vote, I have a responsibility to make sure people have the information I have, explain why I may see the issue differently, and listen to their concerns. I may be able to change their minds, but I also have to be open to the possibility that they may change mine. When there isn't a clear direction from residents, that is when I have to use my own judgment, do my homework and make the best decision I can based on the information available. That is also why I believe elections, candidate questionnaires and conversations with residents are important. They give people an opportunity to understand how a candidate thinks and decide whether that is someone they trust to represent them.

JOHN RICHARDSON

My five principles are the actual framework I use for this, not just campaign language. Equitable Growth comes first. A vocal group opposing something is not the same as the whole community's interest, and growth that only works for the people loudest or best financed is not the growth this city actually needs. Opportunity Driven means weighing this against the cost of another generation losing ground while a decision sits stalled, not just the discomfort of the moment. Direct Honesty is how I handle it either way. Whether I vote with the opposition or against it, residents get the real numbers and the real reasoning, in plain language, and I report publicly afterward on what influenced my final decision. People First is the actual test I apply to the opposition itself. I will research any topic as deep as I can and look at real examples from other communities if need be. Genuine, demonstrated harm changes my position. A claim of possible harm on its own does not. Principled Math settles it when the first four still leave room for judgment. The cost of inaction is real, even when it is invisible on election day, an infrastructure deficit, a housing shortage, or a foregone grant does not stop accruing just because a decision was unpopular in the room.

MIKE STARK

I believe less in a politician whose main goal is re-election. We are elected to make tough decisions in the best interest of the community at large. If you can't stand up for the majority of citizens, you really don't have their best interests at heart. Strong leadership requires conviction and perservance.

GEORGE VANDENBERG

The decision has to be well reasoned.

PAUL WIERSMA

I believe that a Councillor balances two roles: a delegate reflecting constituent wishes and a trustee exercising judgment for Sarnia's long-term good. I would believe that grounds for changing my mind include 1. residents reveal impacts missed in staff reports, 2. a policy is proportionately impacts one neighbourhood without mitigation, 3. feedback identifies lower-impact solutions that still meet city goals, 4. consultation was inadequate, requiring a pause to rebuild trust. Alternately, I believe that a Councillor can maintain an unpopular stance for 1. Strategic priorities like affordable housing, industrial growth, or transit, 2. Long-term fiscal and infrastructure health, 3. Legal and safety obligations. I believe that it is important to communicate effectively and consult meaningfully in these situations so that there is an understanding of the trade-offs.

CITY COUNCILLOR

TERRY BURRELL

Each decision is determined on a case by case basis.

LO-ANNE CHAN

I would approach each situation individually. That means taking the time to understand the full context, the scope of the decision, and the short- and long-term impacts. I would review what subject-matter experts are recommending, listen to the people directly affected, and assess how the decision fits within our broader goals for the city. A key part of this process is ensuring alignment with the City's Master Plan. The Master Plan reflects the long-term vision our community has already agreed on, so grounding decisions in that framework helps maintain consistency, transparency, and accountability. By balancing expert input, community perspectives, and strategic alignment with the Master Plan, I can make decisions that reflect both immediate needs and what I believe will serve Sarnia best in the long run.

NATHAN COLQUHOUN

I make evidence based decisions regardless of public opinion.

RICHARD C (DICK) FELTON

There are 9 people in the mix making a decision. It will always be a collaborative effort. I really do not have to change my mind – except when a majority decision is made, I will be onboard to help make what ever decision I did not agree with right. That is the way a Board of Directors for a Corporation works. The public elected us and yes we listen and make the best decision possible, even "IF" it is in opposition to some of the residents

DAVID GHOBIL

Public opposition should change my position when residents identify facts, consequences or better alternatives that I had not adequately considered. I would also consider whether the opposition is broadly representative or primarily coming from a small but vocal group. Council is elected to listen, but also to exercise judgment. Like the captain of a ship, Council must ultimately protect the welfare of the whole community. I would vote against popular opinion when the evidence clearly showed that doing so was necessary for Sarnia's long-term financial stability, safety or prosperity—and I would explain that decision openly.

ANNE MARIE GILLIS

I have faced such decisions. You cannot please everyone and ultimately you must do your homework , listen to those who the decision will affect , positively or negatively , and have a good discussion around the Council table while leaving your ego at the door.

CLARA JAMES

I would only do that after I consulted a wide variety of voices. I also am seeking a council spot to be their voice so if they don't want something I'd not vote for it.

TAMMY MATHIESON

I believe elected officials have a responsibility to listen carefully to residents, particularly when there is significant and widespread concern about a decision. Public opposition would cause me to take another look at the issue, ask questions and determine whether concerns have been adequately addressed. I am always willing to reconsider my position when residents bring forward information or perspectives that I may not have considered. At the same time, Council sometimes has to make difficult decisions based on public safety, legal obligations, financial realities and the long-term interests of the entire community. I would only vote against significant public opposition when I was convinced, after reviewing the evidence and alternatives, that doing so was necessary for Sarnia's long-term well-being. Regardless of my vote, residents deserve to know why I made the decision. I believe in being accessible, explaining my reasoning openly and remaining accountable to the people I represent.

CHRISTOPHER ORAM

If I believe a position is unequivocally the best one to take in my mind, public opinion will not sway me. That said, I am not afraid to change my mind if the case is made for a better alternative.

MICHELLE PARKS

I believe public opposition should always be heard, but it should not automatically determine my vote. Residents elect Councillors to listen to them, understand their concerns and then use their best judgment to make decisions on behalf of the entire community. If there is significant public opposition to a proposal, I would first want to understand why. Is there new information I haven't considered? Are there legitimate financial, safety, environmental or neighbourhood concerns? Has the City failed to communicate the proposal properly? If the public raises facts or concerns that materially change my understanding of the issue, I am absolutely willing to change my position.

However, there will be times when the responsible decision is not the most popular one. I would be prepared to vote against public opposition when, after listening and reviewing the evidence, I believe the decision is necessary for Sarnia's long-term financial sustainability, safety, infrastructure needs or overall well-being. That doesn't mean dismissing residents or assuming Council knows best. It means being honest about the reasons for my decision and being willing to explain it publicly. I also believe meaningful engagement has to happen before a decision is made—not simply after Council has already decided what it wants to do. Residents should have access to the facts, understand the options and have a genuine opportunity to influence the outcome. My commitment would be to listen first, investigate thoroughly, remain open to changing my mind, and then have the courage to make the decision I believe is right—even when it isn't the easiest political choice. Ultimately, I don't want to be a Councillor who simply votes for whatever is most popular. I want to be a Councillor residents can trust to listen to them, respect their concerns and make responsible decisions for Sarnia's future.

CHRIS PETTIT

I would listen to residents, but I would not automatically follow the majority. I would change my position if public feedback identifies new facts, legitimate concerns, significant costs, safety issues, or unintended consequences that change my understanding of the issue. However, there will be times when Council must make difficult decisions that are unpopular but necessary for Sarnia's long-term financial sustainability, infrastructure, safety or economic future. In those cases, I would vote based on the evidence and what I believe is in the City's long-term interest, and clearly explain that decision to residents. Listening to residents means considering their concerns—not simply agreeing with them.

ANDREW STOKLEY

When evaluating controversial municipal issues, determining whether to shift stance or proceed against public opposition comes down to balancing community input with rigorous evidence based decision making. Public opposition requires changing course when local feedback highlights unexamined impacts, unintended community consequences, or flaws in the initial proposal. However, when thorough research, economic data, and expert consultation consistently demonstrate that a policy serves the municipality well it becomes essential. Elected leadership inherently carries the responsibility to look past immediate political friction trusting that the public delegated you the authority to make informed, well researched choices on their behalf.



FROM NUSARNIA'S COMMUNITY SURVEY

When nuSarnia asked residents what City Hall should prioritize, the top five answers all landed within 2 percentage points of each other, no single issue dominated. The survey also found that residents with strong community belonging and residents with weak belonging named largely the same top priorities. Compare that citywide list against what each candidate says they would protect in the budget below.

21

Sarnia has numerous adopted master plans outlining long-term investments, as well as conflicting asset management and maintenance priorities, while Council also faces pressure to limit tax increases and maintain affordability. If elected, what are the THREE municipal priorities you would be willing to protect in the budget—even when doing so requires Council to delay, reduce or reconsider other spending?

MAYOR

MIKE BRADLEY

Left blank.

CARRIE MCEACHRAN

1. Protecting infrastructure and essential services: I will establish a consistent annual asset-renewal program that prioritizes infrastructure based on condition, risk and community need. We need to stop allowing necessary maintenance to become tomorrow's more expensive emergency. 2. Growing our economy and tax base: I will undertake an immediate review of why City-owned employment lands, including our investment-ready 402 Business Park, have not attracted the level of development we should expect. I want to understand what is preventing investment, whether it is marketing, permitted uses, servicing, development processes, market conditions or other barriers, and then act on what we find. We already own valuable employment lands. My priority is turning those assets into investment, jobs and new assessment. 3. Responsible long-term capital planning: I will bring the City's master plans, asset-management requirements and major capital commitments together into one long-term capital and implementation roadmap. It will identify priorities, costs, funding sources and realistic timelines, with regular reporting to Council and residents on our progress. I would be willing to delay or phase lower-priority enhancements identified within our existing master plans when necessary to protect critical infrastructure, essential services and investments that support economic growth. Our master plans contain many worthwhile projects, but adopting a master plan does not mean every component has to be completed at once. Safety, accessibility, necessary asset renewal and projects that leverage significant outside funding should take priority over enhancements that can reasonably be delivered later. This is why I believe we need one clear long-term capital roadmap. It will allow Council and residents to see the choices we are making, what we are protecting, what we are phasing and why.

SCOTT MOLSON

Infrastructure: Establish a long-term, prioritized infrastructure renewal plan that puts water, sewer, stormwater and roads first, based on condition, risk and lifecycle—not politics. Sarnia's own asset-management framework calls for decisions based on replacement value, age, condition, risk and service levels. Fiscal Responsibility & Transparency: Implement a public financial dashboard showing residents, in plain language, where tax dollars are collected and spent, major contracts, capital-project costs and progress. I would also undertake a comprehensive review of City spending to identify waste, duplication and opportunities for savings. Economic Development: Create a Small Business Fast Track for permits and approvals, with clear timelines and one point of contact, while aggressively pursuing new industrial, advanced-manufacturing and energy investment. Sarnia's Economic Development Master Plan already identifies business support, City-owned assets and leveraging Sarnia's competitive advantages as priorities. Housing & Development: Speed up approvals for responsible housing development and redevelopment of vacant or underused properties while maintaining appropriate safety and planning standards. Sarnia already has tools such as its Affordable Housing CIP that can be evaluated for effectiveness and expanded or adjusted where warranted. Community Wellbeing: Establish a Citizens Coalition bringing community organizations, charities, service providers, businesses and residents together to coordinate efforts on homelessness, mental health, addiction, youth and vulnerable residents—while respecting the responsibilities of the City, County and Province. My approach is straightforward: fix the basics first, measure results, spend within our means and make investments that leave Sarnia stronger for the next generation. Fix the Basics and Build the Future. I would be willing to delay, reduce or eliminate non-essential capital projects, discretionary spending and projects that are primarily "wants" rather than immediate needs. Sarnia's own 2026 capital review identified roughly \$129 million in unfunded capital requests, while warning that the current level of capital investment is not sustainable without adequate reserve contributions. My priority would be protecting the services residents depend on every day: water and sewer systems, roads, flood mitigation, emergency services and the maintenance of the assets we already own. I would not support allowing critical infrastructure to deteriorate while committing taxpayers to major new amenities we cannot currently afford. That means large recreational expansions, beautification projects, portions of master plans, unnecessary consulting work and other discretionary projects could be phased, scaled back or postponed until our finances are stronger.

Master plans are valuable roadmaps, but they should not automatically become spending commitments. For example, the Waterfront Master Plan was originally envisioned as a long-term, approximately \$55-million program. I would also review operating expenses before simply cutting services or raising taxes. Every department and outside agency receiving municipal dollars should be able to demonstrate value, measurable results and accountability. I am not against investing in Sarnia's future. I want us to make those investments responsibly and in the right order. Maintain what we own, fix the infrastructure beneath our feet, rebuild our financial capacity, pursue grants and partnerships, and then move forward with major quality-of-life projects when taxpayers can reasonably afford them. Fix the Basics and Build the Future.

CITY & COUNTY COUNCILLOR

PATRICK COUTU

Strategically sell city assets to fund more projects creating a snowball effect for economic growth. 2. Make sure policing and supportive services have appropriate budgets to make sure we have a safe community. 3. Deploy resources to make sure our roads and other infrastructure is top notch. I will be willing to put off reducing debt in the short term.

ADAM KILNER

Affordable housing as core infrastructure alongside water, natural gas, electricity, etc. It's less expensive to house people - corollary effects of not addressing this include exposure to elements (for example, chronic illnesses that impact the ER) Creating spaces in walkable areas for food hubs that allow for the purchase of basic healthy foods like corn, potatoes, beans, rice, poultry at below market cost - creating opportunity for full-time workers to buy healthy basics rather than accessing the food bank. Continuing the momentum for active transportation to improve safety and happiness that you don't need a car to access your basic needs. There are safe routes you can travel to go on a bike ride or a walk with your kids

MARK LAMORE

Some of these are hard to predict, without a significant change in direction of how Council looks to being business into the community there will not be much to do here for anyone. Council will have to look at delaying any project that simply is a want and not a need. We are so far behind in our infrastructure I will likely be dead and buried before we ever catch up.

CHRISSY MCROBERTS

My three priorities are essential services, maintaining what we already own, and economic growth. 1. Essential services — Public safety. I would prioritize making sure our police, fire and emergency services have the facilities, equipment and resources they need to do their jobs safely and effectively. That doesn't mean automatically building new facilities—we need to look at the most practical and affordable solution. 2. Infrastructure — Fix what we already own. I would push for a stronger maintenance program for our roads, sidewalks, municipal buildings and other assets, so we stop putting off maintenance until something becomes a major—and much more expensive—problem. 3. Economic growth — Support local first. I would push for a stronger local economic development strategy focused on helping our existing businesses grow, filling vacant commercial spaces, increasing tourism and attracting new investment. We have thousands of businesses here already. If we help them grow and hire locally, that's a great place to start. At the end of the day, we need to get back to the basics: take care of what we have, protect essential services and grow our local economy. I would be willing to delay or reduce projects that are not essential right now. We have to be honest about what we can afford. I would look at discretionary spending, projects that can be phased in, and areas where we can find grants or community partners before putting the full cost on taxpayers. I'm not interested in cutting important services just to make a budget look good. I want to find efficiencies first, maintain the assets we already own, and invest in projects that actually move Sarnia forward. We need to stop doing things simply because they've always been done that way. We need to prioritize, make tough choices, and spend taxpayers' money like it's our own.

CHARMAINE MURRAY

For public safety, I would protect adequate staffing for police and fire services so residents can continue to rely on timely emergency response. For roads and infrastructure, I would prioritize preventative maintenance and necessary repairs so smaller problems don't become larger and more expensive ones. For public transit, I would protect core transit service and make sure it remains reliable and accessible for the residents who depend on it. I would be willing to delay or reduce spending on new or non-essential projects before cutting essential services or neglecting the infrastructure we already have. I would want to look at each project individually, including its urgency, cost and long-term benefit, before deciding what should be delayed or reduced.

JOHN RICHARDSON

The first specific action is less about money and more about political will: committing, as a full council, to actually study the long-term impact of investment rather than reacting project by project. Concretely, that means approving the new zoning reform enabling triplex as-of-right for at least 80 percent of lots, with 100 percent as the actual goal if we are serious about letting the market work. On infrastructure, I would evaluate \$10 million a year in structured loans, contingent on staff identifying specific projects backed by real cost-benefit analysis, including construction inflation and cost-mitigation forecasts like the return on investment from flood mitigation work. That should include the waterfront: if the Development Charge Reduction Program grant does not come through for Sarnia, I would commit council to a concrete spending plan of our own to get the master plan moving regardless. It has been collecting dust for years, and downtown is bearing the real cost of that inaction. For economic development, the specific action is forcing an actual decision: either commit to acquiring and de-risking greenfield land for industrial use, or build a solid economic growth plan centred on commercial and tourism instead. If we do not have the political will to acquire and de-risk land, we cannot keep being frustrated that we are not landing the kind of projects Strathroy does. They started building that industrial base decades ago. If this is genuinely part of Sarnia's future, we need to start now, not keep deferring the decision. The honest answer is that I need to see the actual budget proposal this November before I can point to specific dollar figures. What I am committed to now is not commissioning any new master plans until the ones we already have are actually funded, and getting police operating spending indexed back in line with the rest of the general levy increase instead of growing faster than it every year, a position I have taken elsewhere in this process as well. Beyond specific line items, the real answer is structural. Most of what this city needs is not more spending, it is enabling growth that pays for itself through an efficient tax-per-acre ratio, so we are not constantly choosing between one priority and another out of scarcity. Greenfield development requires debt almost by definition. What Sarnia actually needs is a strategy to build a city that can cover its own costs, so this question stops being a zero-sum trade-off every budget cycle.

MIKE STARK

1) Local government participation in senior government trade missions 2) Expedited sewer separation projects 3) Community led senior programming planning designed for and delivered with senior participation. 1) Capital improvements to arenas other than those that are absolutely necessary. 2) City led programming and management of a multi-use recreation facility. 3) Funding of the Sarnia-Lambton Tourism entity.

GEORGE VANDENBERG

We need to maintain our Parks, roads and building infrastructure. Maybe borrow some money against our assets.

PAUL WIERSMA

1. Essential Underground Infrastructure Action: Execute the Johnston Street Combined Sewer Separation Project. Install dedicated sanitary and stormwater lines to eliminate sewage overflows into the St. Clair River, prevent basement flooding, and pair underground upgrades directly with surface road reconstruction. 2. Active Transportation & Transit Connectivity Action: Construct the Confederation Line Multi-Use Pathway Link. Build a dedicated active transportation corridor from Murphy Road to Upper Canada Drive.

This closes a critical safety gap connecting neighborhoods to commercial zones, aligns with the Active Transportation Master Plan, and leverages matching grant funding. 3. Housing & Economic Growth-Enabling Assets Action: Service Phase 2 lands in the Sarnia Business & Research Park. Extend water, sewer, and road infrastructure into unserviced sections of this city-owned land. This unlocks shovel-ready industrial lots, attracts commercial investment, creates high-value jobs, and expands Sarnia's long-term tax base. To fund high-priority long-term investments, Council can defer or adjust lower-priority spending across three areas: 1. Capital & Infrastructure: o Replace full-depth road reconstructions with low-cost preventative maintenance (micro-surfacing, patch work) on streets without subterranean utility needs. o Delay non-essential fleet expansions by extending existing vehicle lifespans. 2. Operations & Discretionary Projects: o Scale back operational subsidies for non-core programs overlapping with local non-profits or senior government services. o Cut external consulting fees by utilizing in-house expertise for routine planning studies. 3. Planning & Asset Execution: o Shift from calendar-based asset replacement schedules to strict condition-based assessments, deferring functional assets that do not yet require renewal.

CITY COUNCILLOR

TERRY BURRELL

Keep tax increases to a minimum. Avoid new commitments. Live within our means without borrowings. I would delay "wants" and "nice to haves" in favour of balancing the budget.

LO-ANNE CHAN

water infrastructure spend: for a city to be safe and run effectively, you need to maintain good infrastructure. I will protect funding for sewer separation, flood-mitigation projects, and watermain replacements. Residents in the Tree Streets shouldn't live with constant anxiety every time it rains, wondering if their sump pumps will hold or if another basement flood will lead to higher insurance premiums—or no coverage at all. Safe, modern water infrastructure is a core responsibility of the City.

2BACE project: any funding committed for the community activity/athletics center needs to be preserved. Sarnia already removed the sports complex from its priorities after the 2022 election; preserving this private-public partnership is the next best thing, and needs to be seen to the finish line.

3Transit & Active Transportation: I will protect investments in transit and road diet measure to improve pedestrian/non-motorized vehicle safety. Reliable full-day and evening transit access is essential for residents to move through the city and reach the places they need. 1. Propose exploring the need accessing the \$304M credit availability to the city to expedite water infrastructure improvements for flood-prone areas. A debt-free city with annual flooded citizens is worse than a city with sustainable debt servicing that has eliminated perennial flooding for its citizens. 2. Sustain or increase stake in partnership with BACE to ensure completion of project and on-time opening for citizens to begin accessing this amenity. 3. Sustain investments into improving bike lanes to enhance cyclist safety. Sustain investments into improving Sarnia Transit to improve value offer to its citizens. I would be willing to delay the Canatara Park Master Plan. It is the most recently adopted plan, and while Canatara is a beloved community asset, the projects identified in that plan are not as urgent as the long-term investments needed to keep residents safe, support economic growth, and maintain essential infrastructure. Given the number of competing priorities and the pressure to limit tax increases, Council needs to focus on what is most critical for the city's long-term stability. Delaying the Canatara Park Master Plan would allow the City to redirect resources toward higher-impact investments that address immediate community needs and support Sarnia's long-term resilience.

NATHAN COLQUHOUN

Waterfront, Housing and Event Support.

RICHARD C (DICK) FELTON

Infrastructure needs to be address; however it does not have to all be done at once. Again, we need to set goals that are within our financial ability over the next four years

2The monies set aside for the BACE to get started. This project will give Sarnia returns in many ways over many years. Multiple times the money invested.

3An investment to get a greenfield space ready to sell or rent to a potential industry. This is an absolute necessity in order that Sarnia can attract industry and jobs.

Infrastructure – Council MUST set the goals necessary to complete certain areas every year. we need to communicate our progress to the Citizens of Sarnia. BACE – quit stalling and set in place an agreement with BACE which will set out free community space / memberships Work with SLEP to determine the best area and placement of an industrial site which can be capitalized on immediately.I am not sure that is necessary, at least on my list right now, because we will borrow to make sure the three things above get done. There is a payback to the BACE and Industrial site. Infrastructure money mostly comes from grants , not tax base

DAVID GHOBRI

The three priorities I would protect are:

2Maintenance of essential infrastructure—including roads, water, sewers and existing public facilities—because deferring necessary work usually costs taxpayers more later.

3Frontline services that protect health, safety and basic mobility, including emergency services, snow removal and essential transit. For infrastructure, I would fund a ranked, multi-year repair program based on safety, condition and the cost of further delay. For frontline services, I would protect existing service levels and fund a targeted evening and Sunday transit pilot on the busiest routes. For economic development, I would have Council actively contact targeted industrial employers while ensuring serviced land, approvals and incentives are ready for serious investors. I would delay the proposed \$90-million police headquarters, non-essential master-plan projects and new administrative positions. Existing facilities should be repaired and used effectively before taxpayers are asked to fund major new buildings. Safety, essential infrastructure and investments capable of expanding the tax base must come first.

ANNE MARIE GILLIS

Emergency Services such as Police and Fire

2Water and Wastewater Management

3Infrastructure

Create a Capital budget to replace Failing infrastructure at the Police Station Fire replace the fire station on Telfer Roas Finish the rebuilds in coronation park subdivision and the streets that feed off of Cathgart . To name a few. Eliminate Tourism Sarnia Lambton to bring Tourism under the responsibility of Sarnia.

CLARA JAMES

I'm not sure. I'd have to look over the master plans in detail.

TAMMY MATHIESON

The three priorities I would protect are public safety and essential emergency services; core infrastructure such as roads, water and sewer systems; and parks, recreation and community facilities that directly serve residents and families.

2These are fundamental municipal responsibilities and directly affect residents' safety, quality of life and the long-term health of our city. Protecting them does not mean every proposed project or expenditure within those areas should automatically proceed. I would still expect Council to examine costs, priorities and whether existing resources can be used more effectively.

When difficult budget decisions are required, I would rather reconsider lower-priority spending, delay projects that are not immediately necessary and look for efficiencies, partnerships and outside funding before reducing essential services or placing additional financial pressure on taxpayers. Affordability has to remain part of every budget decision.

CHRISTOPHER ORAM

We have to aggressively catch up on backlogged infrastructure maintenance. 2) We must consider expanding infrastructure to potential sites to attract new business with shovel ready sites. 3) We must alter our financial outlook and do what other cities like London, Strathroy and Windsor (which are all outpacing us in terms of growth) and consider adopting their funding models, which includes borrowing funds to stimulate growth. Also, we must strive for more federal/provincial grants. Already answered above. We need to grow. To grow we need to attract new investment/industry. We have no readily available serviced land to pique the interest of investors. Therefore, it's time to identify some lands (locations on the SLEP website) and proactively make them "shovel ready" for new business/industrial ventures. That will lead to a growth in our tax base. The proposed police station: That represents over one year's worth of property taxes.

MICHELLE PARKS

If elected, the 3 priorities I would protect in the budget are core infrastructure, community investment, & economic growth that strengthens Sarnia's future.

2roads and essential infrastructure. We cannot keep deferring maintenance & passing larger bills on to future taxpayers. Responsible investment in roads, water, wastewater & other core infrastructure has to come before lower-priority spending. I would prioritize maintaining what we already own & addressing projects based on safety, condition and long-term value.

3our parks, waterfront & community spaces. My platform commits to bringing the Waterfront, Germain and Canatara Master Plans to fruition, and I believe we need to move from planning to implementation. These spaces are important to residents' quality of life, but they are also economic assets that support tourism & attract people & investment to Sarnia. I would protect funding for high-priority, phased projects while being realistic about what can be completed each year.

1. Core infrastructure — road & infrastructure renewal. I would protect funding for a multi-year road rehabilitation program that prioritizes roads based on condition, safety and lifecycle cost—not simply which neighbourhood is making the most noise. I would coordinate road work with water and wastewater projects so we are not repeatedly digging up the same streets. The goal is to maintain what we own, address the worst infrastructure first and reduce the much higher costs of continued deferral. 2. Parks, waterfront & community spaces — implement our Master Plans. I would want Council to identify and fund specific, high-priority projects from the Waterfront, Germain and Canatara Master Plans each year, moving from planning to implementation. I would prioritize projects that improve public access, recreation, gathering spaces and tourism potential, while pursuing provincial and federal grants and community partnerships to stretch municipal dollars. 3. Economic growth — coordinated economic development & tourism. I would want the City to take a more active role in attracting investment, supporting local businesses and developing tourism around our waterfront, parks, events and recreational assets. This includes pursuing opportunities in nuclear, clean energy, advanced manufacturing and skilled trades, while working with Lambton College and local employers on workforce development. I would also reduce municipal barriers that make it harder to invest and create jobs. These priorities are connected: maintaining what we own, investing in what makes Sarnia attractive, and growing our economic and assessment base. Protecting these priorities means making difficult choices elsewhere. I would be prepared to delay or reconsider lower-priority spending that does not provide comparable value to taxpayers. I would be willing to delay, reduce or eliminate projects and initiatives that are lower priority, poorly timed or cannot demonstrate sufficient value to taxpayers in order to fund higher-priority long-term investments. For example, if the choice is between an enhancement or new initiative and repairing deteriorating roads, water or wastewater infrastructure, I would prioritize the infrastructure. If a discretionary capital project can be deferred without creating greater costs or safety risks, I would consider delaying it to protect essential services and infrastructure. I would also look closely at administrative spending, duplication and programs that are not achieving their intended outcomes. Before asking taxpayers for more money, Council should be asking whether we are getting the best possible value from the money we already collect.

That does not mean cutting important community services or making arbitrary across-the-board cuts. It means establishing clear priorities and making difficult choices. Sarnia cannot afford to fund everything simply because it is desirable. We need to distinguish between what we want, what we need and what we can realistically afford. I would prioritize investments that protect what we already own, improve quality of life and strengthen Sarnia's long-term economic and assessment base. I am prepared to say "not now" or "not this way" to lower-priority spending when doing so allows us to make a more important investment for Sarnia's future.

CHRIS PETTIT

The three priorities I would protect are critical infrastructure, core municipal services and community safety, and economic growth that expands Sarnia's tax base.

2We have to maintain the infrastructure residents depend on every day and address the most critical asset-management needs first. Core services and community safety must also be maintained, but Council should continually look for efficiencies and ensure spending is sustainable.

3Finally, I would protect strategic economic-development investments that can grow our industrial and commercial tax base. A stronger tax base gives Sarnia more capacity to fund the services and infrastructure we already have.

1. Critical infrastructure: I would want Council to develop and follow a prioritized, multi-year infrastructure renewal plan that puts the most critical and highest-risk assets first. We have too many infrastructure needs to pretend we can do everything at once, so projects would have to be prioritized based on condition, risk, public need and available funding. 2. Core services and community safety: I would want Council to conduct a thorough review of major operating costs, including policing and other significant municipal services, to identify efficiencies and make sure increases are sustainable. Protecting core services doesn't mean accepting every cost increase without scrutiny. 3. Economic and tax-base growth: I would want Council to pursue a targeted industrial and commercial recruitment strategy. That means knowing what properties are available, understanding their infrastructure limitations, identifying the types of investment that fit Sarnia, and actively marketing the community to those businesses. Growing the tax base is important because it gives us more financial capacity to deal with the infrastructure and services we already have. I would be willing to delay or reduce discretionary work when a higher-priority long-term investment requires it. Throughout my previous career in supervision, work was separated by its level of priority. Emergency and urgent work had to be dealt with immediately, while discretionary work was subject to additional review and approval based on its scope, timing, cost and overall need. I believe the City could apply a similar principle to its capital planning. Not every project has the same urgency, and not everything in a master plan should automatically move forward simply because it has been identified as a future project. Discretionary projects should be screened and approved based on their need, scope, cost, timing, available funding and benefit to the community. If a critical infrastructure project or other higher-priority need comes forward, I would be prepared to delay, reduce or reconsider discretionary spending to make room for it. This isn't about eliminating projects people want. It's about making sure we do the things we need to do first, and that discretionary spending receives the appropriate level of scrutiny before it is committed.

ANDREW STOKLEY

Economic Development & Local Growth Initiatives

2Explore SARNIA BACE to continue to find a way to get it done

3Address Core Infrastructure Gaps (Underground & Surface Capital)

1) Budget action: Guard targeted investments that facilitate local job creation and local supply chain engagement, allowing the city to grow out of fiscal pressure rather than relying solely on residential rate hikes. 2) Budget action: Work with them to secure funding and build repayment schedule. 3) Budget action: Protect capital allocations for critical asset renewal—such as sewer separation, water main replacements, and core road resurfacing—while deferring expansionary or non-essential capital builds. New Police Station. We need to find a way to work with what we have for now.



FROM NUSARNIA'S COMMUNITY SURVEY

Feeling heard is the strongest finding in nuSarnia's Community Survey: residents who strongly agree they can influence neighbourhood decisions report strong belonging at 71%, compared with 38% among those who strongly disagree, a relationship that held even after adjusting for age, gender, neighbourhood and other factors. Right now, 44% of residents agree they have real influence over decisions in their neighbourhood, while 41% disagree. This is the question where candidates address that gap directly.

22

What specific change would you make to Sarnia's public engagement process so residents can meaningfully participate and feel their input genuinely shapes decisions that affect their own neighbourhood?

MAYOR

MIKE BRADLEY

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CARRIE MCEACHRAN

I will require a clear public feedback report following significant neighbourhood consultations that explains what we heard, what changed as a result of resident input, what did not change and why. Too often, residents are asked to attend a meeting, complete a survey or provide comments and then have little visibility into what happened with that input. Meaningful engagement needs to happen early enough that residents can actually influence the outcome, not after the major decisions have already been made. For projects that directly affect a neighbourhood, I also want engagement brought into that neighbourhood wherever practical, rather than expecting residents to always come to City Hall. Residents may not always get the outcome they wanted, but they should be able to see that their input was heard, considered and reflected in the decision-making process.

SCOTT MOLSON

I would move public engagement to the beginning of the decision-making process, not the end. Too often residents feel they are being consulted after most of the work has already been done. Sarnia already uses tools such as Speak Up Sarnia, written submissions, public meetings and electronic participation. I would build on those tools by introducing a Neighbourhood First approach. For significant projects that directly affect a neighbourhood, residents should be notified early and given clear information about what is being proposed, the estimated cost, alternatives being considered and what decisions have—or have not—already been made. There should be an accessible neighbourhood meeting before a recommendation reaches Council, with both in-person and online ways to participate. Most importantly, consultation needs a feedback loop. After residents provide input, the City should publish a plain-language summary showing what residents said, what changes were made because of that input, what suggestions were not adopted, and why. Sarnia's Official Plan already recognizes the importance of early consultation and lists neighbourhood meetings, surveys, workshops and other methods of participation. I want that philosophy applied consistently across major City decisions. Public engagement shouldn't be a box the City checks. If we're asking people to participate, we owe them an explanation of how their participation affected the final decision.

CITY & COUNTY COUNCILLOR

PATRICK COUTU

Personally I will make myself available to citizens to get answers. I think that policy should be adopted by all council members.

MARK LAMORE

Change the times of Council meetings from early in the to day to early evening so more people can attend the meeting if they so choose.

CHRISSY MCROBERTS

I would introduce a monthly Town Hall where residents can hear directly from Council and staff about upcoming projects, plans and decisions that will affect Sarnia. These would be organized, informative events, with presentations on what is being proposed and an opportunity for residents to submit and ask questions in a respectful manner. This would not be a complaint session. It would be about giving people the information they need to understand what is happening and have meaningful input before decisions are made. I think people are much more likely to feel heard when they understand the process, know what Council is considering, and can see how their feedback was taken into account. Engagement should be about communication both ways—not Council talking at residents or residents talking at Council.

CHARMAINE MURRAY

I would introduce neighborhood town halls when Council is considering a significant decision that will directly affect a particular area of the city. Residents should be given information about what is being proposed in clear, understandable language and have an opportunity to ask questions, raise concerns and offer suggestions before Council makes its decision. If we genuinely want residents' input, we need to involve them early enough that what they tell us can actually help shape the outcome.

JOHN RICHARDSON

The information behind Sarnia's unfunded commitments, the Waterfront Master Plan, the Climate Change Action Plan, affordable housing targets, the infrastructure backlog, is technically public, but it is buried across hundreds of disconnected PDFs that no working person has time to assemble into a picture. Residents who cannot connect today's tax bill to the decisions that caused it cannot hold anyone accountable. The specific change: file a motion for an interactive public financial dashboard that links city finances and decisions across years, so residents can see trends and ask informed questions instead of reading a decade of budget PDFs. Alongside that, I would push to load council minutes, bylaws, and supporting materials into a focused tool the public can actually query, since the documents already exist, they are just scattered across disparate silos nobody has time to search. I would also report monthly through short video, since that is a format people have seemed to resonate with throughout my campaign, and it will stay an ongoing tool for me in office. I would also like to see regular town halls with rotating councillors, an idea fellow candidate Chrissy proposed, so residents get a consistent, predictable chance to hear what is up beyond the debates and reports.

MIKE STARK

Quarterly, rotating on-site meetings with different neighborhoods in local community centres. Outreach meetings that are meaningful, accountable and realistic as it relates to strategies that come out of these forums. No more pie in the sky platitudes.

GEORGE VANDENBERG

Get rid of Speak Up Sarnia and replace it with something easier.

PAUL WIERSMA

To ensure residents meaningfully shape local decisions, Sarnia should transition from passive, late-stage consultation to an Institutionalized Neighbourhood Co-Design Process. Currently, engagement often presents residents with near-final designs via surveys or formal council meetings, creating frustration that decisions are pre-determined. The Core Change: Mandate interactive, on-site co-design workshops at the project-scoping phase—before staff draft formal plans:

- Early On-Site Workshops: For neighbourhood projects (park renewals, street calming, infill, sewer rebuilds), staff host pop-up sessions in the affected area.
- Collaborative Mapping: Residents use local knowledge to identify specific hazards, drainage issues, or usage patterns before technical specs are written.
- Input Traceability Matrix: Final staff reports to Council must include a clear matrix detailing:
 - 1. What feedback was received.
 - 2. How it directly altered design options.
 - 3. Plain-language rationales for suggestions that could not be incorporated.
- Involving residents early and proving how their input shaped outcomes transforms engagement into genuine co-building.

CITY COUNCILLOR

TERRY BURRELL

We are pretty open as is.

LO-ANNE CHAN

I would improve public engagement by making it easier for residents to participate meaningfully and feel heard. First, I would encourage holding consultations directly within the neighbourhoods affected by the decision. Using nearby community centres, churches, or local gathering spaces makes meetings more accessible and increases attendance from the people who live there. I would also advocate for stronger hybrid and virtual participation tools so residents can join from home. This is essential for families with young children, seniors, people with mobility challenges, and anyone without reliable transportation. Finally, the City needs to do a much better job informing residents when consultations or surveys are happening. Right now, notices are limited to social media and the Speak Up Sarnia website, and even for someone actively looking, they're easy to miss. Improving outreach through direct emails, neighbourhood mailers, and clearer communication would help ensure residents know when their input is needed and valued.

RICHARD C (DICK) FELTON

I want to put in place a better way to communicate with the public. A real discourse on why council decisions are made. Waterloo has a newsletter – maybe one for Sarnia would be good. I personally plan, once elected to go to different neighbourhoods to take the temperature to see if our direction is right. I will ask other councilors to get with me and or write up a report of what I find in different areas

DAVID GHOBRI

Are we independent or are we a city is the question? We are neighbourhoods, but we are also one city. Residents directly affected by a proposal deserve early notice and a meaningful opportunity to identify problems and suggest improvements, but no neighbourhood should have an automatic veto over a decision serving the broader public interest. I would require every major proposal to include a public response report showing what residents raised, what was changed as a result and why other suggestions were not adopted. Consultation should demonstrate influence, not merely check a box.

ANNE MARIE GILLIS

More Town Halls

CLARA JAMES

I would motion to bring back ward systems for the next election, I would encourage council meetings to rotate the times they occur so that those working could attend later in the day, and I would hold meeting for the public to attend outside of those to voice concerns and speak to representatives.

TAMMY MATHIESON

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CHRISTOPHER ORAM

I have nothing to add here, as I have had good access at city hall. I am amenable to making any changes that arise with public concern.

MICHELLE PARKS

The specific change I would make is to establish neighbourhood-level engagement early in the decision-making process—not after a proposal is essentially finalized. I would commit to regular community town halls throughout Sarnia, particularly when a decision directly affects a specific neighbourhood or area. Residents should receive clear, plain-language information about what is being proposed, why it is being considered, the options available and the potential impacts before Council makes its decision. Most importantly, the City needs to close the feedback loop. After consultation, residents should be told what we heard, what changes were made as a result, and, if their input was not adopted, why. I would also expand opportunities to participate through a combination of in-person meetings, online engagement and accessible surveys, recognizing that not everyone can attend a Council meeting. Public engagement should not simply be a box the City checks because a meeting was held. Residents should be able to see how their input influenced the decision. This directly aligns with my commitment to transparent decision-making, open communication and regular community town halls. I want residents to know that when they take the time to participate, their voices are heard, considered and respected—even when Council ultimately has to make a different decision.

CHRIS PETTIT

I would make the process more meaningful by getting residents involved earlier, while there is still an opportunity to make changes. If a project is going to have a direct impact on a neighbourhood, residents should be given clear information about what is being proposed, what it will cost, and what the impacts could be before Council is asked to make the final decision. Just as important, the City should report back on what it heard. If residents raise legitimate concerns or suggest changes, they should be able to see whether those concerns resulted in changes to the proposal, and if not, why. I don't think public engagement should be about checking a box and saying residents were consulted. If we're asking people for their input, there needs to be a genuine opportunity for that input to influence the decision.

ANDREW STOKLEY

We need to let people know how they can currently interact with council. Residents can share feedback with Sarnia City Council by completing online surveys or comment forms on the "Speak Up Sarnia" digital portal, submitting written comments to the City Clerk, or requesting to speak directly to council members as a formal delegation. To transform this process into one where community members see their input directly reflected in municipal decisions, Sarnia should establish localized, neighbourhood town halls on major decision and participatory budgeting workshops prior to major council votes. Instead of relying primarily on digital surveys or rigid 10 minute council presentations.