

2026 SAUGEEN SHORES MUNICIPAL CANDIDATE SURVEY

Section 2: Partnership with the BIA

BIAs are local boards of Council. A productive relationship between the BIA, Council and municipal staff can help identify challenges, develop solutions and ensure municipal decisions reflect the needs of the business community.

QUESTION 4

How would you strengthen the relationship and partnership between Council, municipal staff and the BIA's?

Brian Putman (Not Putnam)

Mayor

The Municipality will be undertaking a review of its Strategic Plan in coming months. I would strongly encourage the BIAs to be actively involved in this process.

Jeffrey J James

Mayor

I would be happy to strengthen the relationship by ensuring BIA representatives are included early in the planning process and not just consulted at the end. Their front line knowledge would help shape decisions from the start.

Luke Charbonneau

Mayor

I think we have a very strong relationship between Council, staff and the BIAs. The relationship with Council is grounded in the efforts of the Council members who serve on the BIA Boards of Management. I will ensure that Council continues to appoint interested members to serve on the BIAs. As Mayor, I will continue to consult routinely with those members on BIA issues and ensure that Council is responding appropriately to any emerging issues. The staff relationship is led by the Community Development Officer with support from the Clerk's department and the municipal Treasury. I will work to ensure that the municipality continues to resource those positions adequately so that they are able to support the needs of the BIAs.

Diane Huber

Deputy Mayor

A Council rep is appointed to sit on the BIA Board. It's important that this rep attend meetings, show up at events and share information when they can. It would be good for the BIA Boards to expect active Council rep participation and if it's not forthcoming to let the Mayor know so consideration can be given to appointing someone else to serve. On the staff side, cultivating solid relationships with key Town staffers, particularly on the economic development team, will be a win-win as both sides have an interest in ensuring a sustainable downtown core and the potential of year round tourism. I'd want the town staff members to be considered adjunct Board members so that they always receive meeting agendas and are aware of planning and events/promotions.

Odette Bartnicki

Deputy Mayor

I would begin by asking BIA leaders, Town staff and Council representatives what is working, where communication breaks down and what each needs from the others. Regular joint meetings, clearly defined roles and shared priorities would strengthen accountability and cooperation.

Residents and customers should also be consulted about what encourages or prevents them from shopping locally. Council should build on successful initiatives, remove unnecessary barriers, and respond promptly to the pressures businesses face amid current economic uncertainty and trade instability. The overall success and sustainability of Saugeen Shores depends on the success of both BIAs.

Don Matheson

Vice Deputy Mayor

I would strengthen the relationship through open communication, early consultation and a clear understanding of everyone's responsibilities.

Each BIA has a Council representative who can serve as an important link among the BIA, municipal staff and Council. That representative should listen to the BIA's concerns, share relevant information and ensure its priorities are clearly communicated to Council.

Jordan MacKinnon

Port Elgin

Communication is key to everything. A strong relationship is one that stays on the same page. To that end, encouraging regular meetings between BIAs, council reps and appropriate municipal staff can help make sure issues are solved quickly and each entity knows what the others are doing and how they can support.

Patricia Corrigan-Frank

Councillor Port Elgin Ward

My understanding is that the Port Elgin BIA has "begun a conversation with Amanda Monaghan, the Town of Saugeen Shores Community Development Office, to create a Memorandum of Understanding with the Town outlining our expectations of each other moving forward." I support this 100%.

Rachel Stack

Port Elgin Ward Councillor

The simplest way to strengthen the relationship and partnership with Council, staff and the BIAs is to have active and engaged Councillors sit on the boards of each BIA as Council representatives. In so doing, Councillors can work as a conduit between staff and the BIA, which includes supporting BIAs navigate municipal regulation, bringing to Council for consideration new ideas and initiatives of the BIAs, and acting as a strong advocate for local business.

Tamara McDonald

Councilor- Port Elgin Ward

I think we need a relationship where communication happens regularly. The BIAs need to feel that their concerns are being heard, and council needs to make sure those concerns are being followed up on and not simply acknowledged and forgotten. I believe in respectful relationships, but I also believe in accountability. We can respect the role of municipal staff while still asking questions, expecting follow through and making sure council understands what is happening.

For me, it isn't about everyone agreeing all the time, but we have to be willing to have honest conversations and work together towards solutions. Ultimately, we are all working towards the same goal of having a strong and vibrant community.

Eric Tolton

Saugeen Ward Councillor

I support regular two-way communication among the BIA's, Council and Town staff --- not just when a problem arises. I would also consider a more formal partnership framework establishing expectations for consultation, communication and collaboration.

Neil Sarginson

Saugeen Ward Councillor

A councillor for each ward that has a BIA should attend regular BIA meetings. Any court matters between any member of the BIA and the Town should be settled quickly and amicably, if there is not an obvious solution that cannot be achieved without costly legal bills, then both parties should agree to settle quickly. Perhaps both sides admitting the initiative was a mistake, accepting losses and restarting.

Brenda Reeves

Southampton Ward councillor

I would encourage regular respectful, communication – not just when problems arise -through scheduled meetings, clear points of contact, early consultation and follow through on commitments. As counsellor, I would listen, bring BIA concerns forward and ensure that Port Elgin and Southampton have a fair voice in decisions affecting their main streets.

Cathe McIntosh

Councillor, Southampton Ward

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Cheryl Grace

Southampton ward councillor

Having Council reps on BIA Boards who keep BIA members informed about Council policies, events, etc is essential. Those members should also bring BIA news back to Council. Clear and thorough communication is crucial, going in both directions. Something we've never done since I've been on Council may be a joint meeting of Council, the BIA Board and senior staff to specifically discuss some of the questions you ask in this questionnaire. Also, make sure BIA Board members are invited to regional meetings on economic development, housing, etc.

Harry Mazmanian

Southampton Ward

It appears to me that this relationship is solid as it stands now. Having said this, all relationships are built on trust. We need to ensure there are no false or misleading advertisements or publications that could comprise the integrity of council or the BIA of each community.

John Divinski

Councillor, Southampton Ward

More communication with planned monthly or quarterly meeting between the participants.

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