

# 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 8

**What environmental or sustainability initiatives would you prioritize that could also strengthen Southampton and Port Elgins business areas, and how could the BIAs be involved?**

#### **Brian Putman (Not Putnam)**

Mayor

As you may know, I am an active supporter of maintaining environmental integrity. Our shoreline, our wooded areas and farms not only are pleasant to enjoy, they are economic drivers; drawing visitors and tourists to our Town. This has been the case for decades. I intend to maintain and improve the environmental security of this town for future generations. I would also encourage the inclusion of design guidelines, as negotiated with all rights holders groups to ensure that our business streetscapes maintain the charm and heritage that we currently enjoy.

#### **Jeffrey J James**

Mayor

I really want to work with the SVCA and SON and Ministry of Environment to clean up the Saugeen River and mitigate the beach closures.

#### **Luke Charbonneau**

Mayor

I think that the water based tourism strategy that we are developing with the Saugeen First Nation has exciting potential to combine environmental stewardship with economic development. I am also excited about our plan to plant 10,000 trees in our community and about continuing to advance the recommendations of our Urban Tree Canopy Plan. Through these initiatives, we will plant and preserve many trees within our downtowns and business districts. These environmental initiatives will improve the quality of life in our community while also promoting economic growth in support of our business community.

#### **Diane Huber**

Deputy Mayor

Street trees or other vegetative installations that provide shade and atmosphere are a priority. As is effective stormwater management and regular inspections of underground and above ground installed infrastructure. The BIA might be able to come up with an environmental awareness program (that the Town supports in-kind or financially) that encourages recycling and environmentally friendly construction methods for beautification projects. BIA promotion of storefront greenery/planters would be great too. As sidewalks have maintenance or replacement opportunities there may be ways to make some of the hard surfaces downtown be more appropriately permeable if that's possible. Ultimately whatever we plant downtown we must do the planting and watering properly to give these elements the best chance at survival.

## **Odette Bartnicki**

Deputy Mayor

The BIA should be involved in determining all priorities in their respective areas. From my perspective, establishing a healthy tree canopy, priority #1, is essential for aesthetics and for drawing and keeping people in the area longer, but these trees also provide shade, help control groundwater runoff, absorb carbon from vehicle exhaust, and increase property values. I would also look at new developments such as the Port Elgin Food Basics complex. I believe that live-work units should have been included in the development phase to accommodate workers, many of whom do not earn enough to cover rents and transportation costs for places farther away. Live-work units already exist in the historic areas of Port Elgin and Southampton, and this model is being implemented in many other Towns. Oakville, for example, has transformed the main street by building live-work establishments. Investment relief or offsets from federal and provincial housing programs may be applicable to reduce investment costs. The BIAs face staffing challenges for a variety of reasons, including a lack of affordable housing, and could propose/champion live-work designs in future expansion and development, especially when the Official Plan is reviewed and revised.

## **Don Matheson**

Vice Deputy Mayor

I think sustainability is really part of everyday life.

It's looking after our trees and green spaces, keeping our downtowns clean, making it easier to walk or bike, and taking care of what we already have.

Those things also make our downtowns nicer places to visit, shop and spend time.

I would listen to our BIAs and businesses about what would work best in their areas and where we can make improvements together.

It doesn't always have to be a big project. Sometimes it's just about making good choices today that will still make sense years from now.

## **Jordan MacKinnon**

Port Elgin

I would love to see more people get out of their cars. Green space, pedestrian comfort makes downtowns more comfortable, walkable and encourage people to stick around.

While it may be difficult to implement, I would love to see the municipality work with the BIAs to encourage more waste diversion, including recycling.

## **Patricia Corrigan-Frank**

Councillor Port Elgin Ward

Continue to expand the tree canopy via the BIA "Buy-a-Tree" program. Support the proposed commercial Organics/Green-bin Program. Focus on the Transportation Master Plan to improve walkability and active transportation. Add pollinator gardens to our streetscape on underused spaces.

## **Rachel Stack**

Port Elgin Ward Councillor

Informing people of the means by which they can use active transportation to get to our BIAs is an environmentally sustainable and achievable initiative that could draw people down to the BIAs for longer durations - instead of driving downtown to go to one shop, active transport users are more likely to meander down the street and through shops.

## **Tamara McDonald**

Councilor- Port Elgin Ward

As we grow, I would prioritize reducing light pollution. Saugeen Shores already has dark-sky requirements for new development, and I think we need to make sure they are being applied consistently and look at whether they need to be strengthened. I'd love to see us take inspiration from places like Sedona, Arizona and make protecting our dark skies part of what makes Saugeen Shores special.

The BIAs could work with the town to identify problem areas and encourage businesses to use lighting that reduces glare and light spill. Better nighttime environments can encourage people to walk around, visit shops and restaurants, and spend more time downtown.

## **Eric Tolton**

Saugeen Ward Councillor

I would prioritize practical initiatives such as healthy tree canopies, attractive landscaping, pedestrian and cycling connections, waste reduction and protection of our waterfront and natural environment. BIA's should help ensure initiatives are both environmentally beneficial and practical for businesses.

## **Neil Sarginson**

Saugeen Ward Councillor

Both the Southampton BIA and Downtown Port Elgin BIA have committed to the Sustainable Tourism 2030 Pledge. Capitalizing on this pledge helps main streets reduce waste sent to local landfills while appealing to eco-conscious travelers. Actions should include: Establish a town-wide "Single-Use Plastics Reduction" program for downtown restaurants, cafes, and retailers (transitioning to compostable takeout containers, reusables, or strawless lids). Expand recycling stations along High Street and Goderich Street, alongside public water-refill stations to cut down on plastic water bottle waste. The BIA should promote eco-friendly packaging and reusable shopping bags to offer BIA members discounted rates. Businesses implementing these initiatives could display a window decal advertising their investment in the environment.

## **Brenda Reeves**

Southampton Ward councillor

I would prioritize practical projects that make our downtown greener and more inviting – shade trees, and native planting, better recycling and waste reduction, energy efficient lighting, bike parking and safe walking connections. BIAs should help set priorities, involve local businesses, and partner with the municipality on grants and pilot projects. These initiatives protect our environments while creating main streets where people want to visit, shop and spend time.

## **Cathe McIntosh**

Councillor, Southampton Ward

In researching both BIAs, I see that both have pledged to the Sustainable Tourism 2030 Pledge. Small business success and environmental sustainability can coexist. I would support green initiatives and waste reduction practices that the BIA members are working on. I also support strongly incorporating greenery and native landscaping into our commercial areas, along with good foot traffic connections and bicycle parking where appropriate. The BIAs should be active partners in identifying where sustainability initiatives make sense while balancing the need for businesses to thrive.

## **Cheryl Grace**

Southampton ward councillor

Planting and maintaining healthy street trees in our downtowns is an extremely important initiative, but we need to make sure we plant the right kinds of trees that are appropriate for the location and that create a cool, inviting streetscape while still allowing lots of room for pedestrians and shoppers. One of the recommendations of our 2021 and 2024 Environmental Ad Hoc Committees was to promote environmental sustainability by recognizing residents and businesses who are leaders in this field. We haven't implemented that recommendation yet, but we should. Look at how businesses have promoted environmental sustainability in the last 5-10 years by shaping customer expectations and vice versa: paper boxes for take-out at restaurants, bring your own bags to shop, paper straws. I remember asking Pier and Jeff Carver years ago what they were doing in their restaurants to promote environmental causes and they were both way ahead of the curve in using paper carry-out items, etc.

## **Harry Mazmanian**

Southampton Ward

First, don't sign 50 year leases that leave the Port Elgin beach in the present condition, costing taxpayers thousands of dollars in legal costs. Without sounding facetious, isn't the BIA continuously integrated with respect to any project in the downtown cores? If sustainability is to be achieved, the BIA, residents and any other stakeholders need to determine what they would like their downtown areas to look like before moving on. One Southampton business owner spoke at the council meeting in July to speak against the CPPS, and to state that she prefers the architectural heritage of the Southampton downtown core be protected because, she said, her business relies on this. So if you want sustainability as it relates to visitors, we need one vision.

**John Divinski**

Councillor, Southampton Ward

More recycling initiatives in the core areas, perhaps organics collection along with the obvious blue box and general refuse collection.

Sustainable "shoulder season" promotions after the summer season slows down.

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