

2026 SAUGEEN SHORES MUNICIPAL CANDIDATE SURVEY

Section 3: Safe, Healthy & Welcoming Business Districts

QUESTION 14

How will you ensure Council considers potential economic impacts on local businesses before municipal policies, by-laws or major projects are finalized?

Brian Putman (Not Putnam)

Mayor

Communication, consultation, analysis and education.

Jeffrey J James

Mayor

As a business owner here myself I take this seriously. Certainly we need plan around peak business times and seasons a little better. Perhaps building in stick and carrot incentives to the parties involved to meet those time requirements. I am sure we can do better.

Luke Charbonneau

Mayor

The BIAs and Chamber of Commerce give Council very strong links to the local business community. One of the best ways for Council to ensure that its decisions support a vibrant local business community is to remain closely connected to those organizations. As noted before, I will ensure that Council continues to appoint representatives to sit on our BIA Boards of Management. I am also committed to continuing to have a Council representative on the Chamber of Commerce, so long as that continues to be supported by the Chamber. In addition, I think its important to support the work of our economic development team (both Town and County) as they collect data on the state of the local economy. This work helps us to understand the impact of our decisions on the business community. I speak to business owners and business leaders routinely on a range of topics and remain committed to considering any issues they might raise with respect to municipal decisions.

Diane Huber

Deputy Mayor

I'll try to stay up-to-date on conditions and planning within our region. I'll count on Town staff working in key areas to get reports before Council concerning relevant issues, challenges and opportunities. An annual or bi-annual local business town hall or workshop with the economic development team will help these staff members know what needs to be before Council for consideration.

Odette Bartnicki

Deputy Mayor

Council reports should include a consistent checklist assessment of how the proposal impacts:

- Strategic priorities (given there is a ten-year plan in place)
- Environmental impacts
- Financial impacts
- Departments and organizations consulted
- Public engagement
- BIA impacts (differentiated between Port Elgin and Southampton)
- Supporting attachments

For all proposals with significant economic consequences, businesses and BIAs should be consulted early enough to influence the decision—not after it has been finalized. These lenses would support more transparent, balanced and informed decisions.

To see an example of a report to another municipal Council about a reconstruction project that examined how proposed parking changes could affect downtown businesses and see how this type of checklist (on pages 11 and 12) would work, go to: <https://www.thebluemountains.ca/sites/default/files/2024-10/CSOPS-24-075-Thornbury-West-Phase-1B-Reconsideration.pdf>

If staff are expected to consult with and include the BIA(s) if they are impacted by a decision, this section would inform members of Council that this has been done.

Don Matheson

Vice Deputy Mayor

I think it starts with listening to the businesses that are going to be affected.

They've invested in our community, they employ people here, and they understand their businesses better than we do.

Before Council makes a major decision, we need to ask how it's going to affect them and listen to what they have to say.

We may not always agree, but at least we've asked the questions and understand the impact before we make the decision.

Jordan MacKinnon

Port Elgin

The economic impact of any decision should be a key part of any councillor's decision-making process. While that doesn't mean business interests should come ahead of any other community interest, economics should and must be part of the equation.

Consultation needs to happen early in any project or report if it has potential to impact the BIAs or business community. That consultation should be part of forming a recommendation or final report, not just gathering feedback or something done to say it was done.

Patricia Corrigan-Frank

Councillor Port Elgin Ward

BIA members must first give their input prior to policies, by-laws, or major projects are finalized. A summary of the business impact assessment for each will help decide whether a project should move forward. Effects of economic effects on local businesses should be weighed before approval.

Rachel Stack

Port Elgin Ward Councillor

I will work to ensure BIAs are consulted on matters of significance to our business community and encourage business owners and the BIA to make their views and interests known through open forums and delegations. To date, the BIAs of Port Elgin and Southampton have a strong record of attending Council meetings and expressing concerns, opinions, and constructive feedback. This engagement by the BIAs should be encouraged and supported going forward.

Tamara McDonald

Councilor- Port Elgin Ward

I think before voting on any new bylaw, permit change, or major project Council should be asking, "How does this directly affect the daily operations and bottom line of a local shopkeeper or service provider?" If staff haven't looked at the practical business impact, then the policy isn't ready for a vote. I believe there needs to be early consultation, that Town staff should be talking to local business owners while plans are still being drafted so that timing, detour routes or whatever other concern can be adjusted before they cause damage. Major infrastructure projects are necessary, but they shouldn't cripple a business. Municipal policy should support local enterprise, not create more hurdles for people. ,

Eric Tolton

Saugeen Ward Councillor

For significant policies, bylaws and projects affecting commercial areas, Council should understand the potential economic impacts before making decisions. That means consulting affected businesses and BIA's before recommendations are finalized. Good Council decisions consider economic, financial, social, environmental and community consequences together.

Neil Sarginson

Saugeen Ward Councillor

To ensure Council consistently evaluates potential economic impacts on local businesses before finalizing policies, bylaws, or major capital projects, I would advocate assigning a staff member to act as a single point of contact, ensuring all pertinent information is shared and discussed with the BIA.

Brenda Reeves

Southampton Ward councillor

I would advocate for a clear business impact review before major policies, bylaws, or projects are approved. Affected businesses and both BIAs should be consulted early and public staff reports should identify impacts on costs, park parking access, deliveries and construction disruptions along with ways to reduce them. I would ask the tough questions, monitor the results and support adjustments if unintended problems arise

Cathe McIntosh

Councillor, Southampton Ward

The Council representative on the BIA has a role to support communication that reduces businesses being the last in line to be considered when major projects, etc., are underway. As a prior business owner, I recognize that business owners can find themselves in a position where voicing their opinions in a public setting may impact their foot traffic. I have heard from business owners who don't always speak up given that they need to consider their customer base; thus, while Council may hear loud and clear from residents, Council needs to remember a business owners voice may be missed. Thus, the role of the BIA representative is to be the conduit between the BIAs and Council and speak for them when needed. from the BIAS to Council and vice versa. should help ensure this happens consistently. The role also requires that the representative bring potential municipal issues to the BIA's attention to ensure that the BIA's concerns and economic perspectives are brought back to Council before decisions are finalized. No individual Councillor will understand the day-to-day realities a business owner faces unless we listen. Steady and consistent dialogue between the Council, the BIA representative and the BIAs is key.

Cheryl Grace

Southampton ward councillor

Again, communication is key here. Council relies on staff and Council BIA reps for a lot of that two-way communication. As a Council member, though, I should be asking questions to ensure that local businesses should be included as important stakeholders in any major upcoming projects that involve public consultation. Our Economic development staff could also provide a heads up to BIA leadership on any upcoming agenda items that are likely to affect local businesses.

Harry Mazmanian

Southampton Ward

Recorded consultation involving any and all stake holders. Listen to all proposals and determine the consensus of all stake holders before move forward. This is why we also need a Citizens Advisory Committee created by council that has the same status as the BIA.

John Divinski

Councillor, Southampton Ward

I, John Divinski, have been doing exactly that for the past term as a member of the Southampton BIA and a Councillor and I will continue to do so. It's the only way our downtowns will thrive and prosper. It's imperative to study the issues and follow through on them so the initiatives and goals of the BIA's are achieved.

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