

2026 SAUGEEN SHORES MUNICIPAL CANDIDATE SURVEY

Section 5: One Last Question

QUESTION 18

At the end of the next Council term, what is one change or accomplishment you would like the BIAs business communities to be able to point to and say, “Council helped make this happen”?

Brian Putman (Not Putnam)

Mayor

Open communication to get projects completed on time, on budget and to the satisfaction of all rights holders groups. "We moved forward together". "We respected each other". "We knew what we wanted, we expressed our wishes and we reached consensus in a true democratic fashion".

Jeffrey J James

Mayor

I would like them to say, "It was obvious from the start that council had direct experience and investment in the needs of the business community especially small business, they acted as a partner and facilitator in helping business thrive. They recognized the growing opportunity in year round tourism and maintained a high level of service year round for the local population. They followed through on a commitment to time development and maintenance around peak times and seasons."

Luke Charbonneau

Mayor

I want us to have secured Bruce C for our region.

I want us to have the plan in place that will support that new nuclear development in a way that secures our local economy into the 22nd century.

In connection to that, I would like us to have a Community Benefits Agreement with Bruce Power and the province that will provide sustainable funding to enhance our recreation facilities, infrastructure and business districts into the future.

Diane Huber

Deputy Mayor

Accessibility improvements within the public realm that enable both ease of access and access period to BIA member locations and throughout the downtown areas with marked, maintained and known accessible routes to business locations further out, public amenity spaces (parks) and trail/active transportation corridors. (Attention to, and significant improvement to the safety within, active transportation routes (pedestrian and- bikes) especially-within the core and along the highway but throughout Saugeen Shores is a close second.)

Odette Bartnicki

Deputy Mayor

I would like our BIAs to say that Council helped create vibrant, distinctive and active downtowns throughout the year. Success would mean fewer vacant storefronts, more new and expanding businesses, well-used public spaces and stronger attendance at local events—achieved through genuine collaboration among Council, the BIAs and community partners.

Don Matheson

Vice Deputy Mayor

At the end of four years, I'd like our businesses to be able to say our downtowns are stronger.

Are more people coming downtown? Are they going into our shops and restaurants? Are businesses staying, growing and investing?

And if not, let's ask why. Is there something the Town can do better? Something the BIA can do? Or something the business itself might try?

We all have a role to play.

If our downtowns are busy, our businesses are doing well and people want to invest here, then I think we've accomplished something together

Jordan MacKinnon

Port Elgin

The answer to the question "Are our downtowns in a better place now than they were four years ago?" has to be yes. It is not one councillor who makes that happen, but the dedication of the BIAs, municipality, and other stakeholders all working together for a common goal.

It's a group effort.

Patricia Corrigan-Frank

Councillor Port Elgin Ward

I want to be able to say, we worked on and completed a MOU with the BIAs that shows our support for the business community. Together with fibre optic installation, it has made our downtowns more vibrant and competitive and welcoming to all our residents and visitors.

Rachel Stack

Port Elgin Ward Councillor

At least 1 new event in the Port Elgin BIA that draws strong public support and can be replicated annually.

Tamara McDonald

Councillor- Port Elgin Ward

By the end of the next term, I want our business owners to feel like Council had their backs and worked with them, not around them. I think it comes down to simple genuine collaboration. Whether that's opening up clear communication before big decisions are made, cutting through unnecessary red tape, or making sure municipal policies help our main streets thrive rather than getting in the way. Council should be a partner you can count on. When local business succeed, our whole community benefits.

Eric Tolton

Saugeen Ward Councillor

I would like business owners to be able to say that Saugeen Shores became an easier place to invest, operate and grow a business — and that we accomplished that without sacrificing the qualities that make Southampton and Port Elgin distinctive places where people want to live and visit.

I would also like businesses, residents and community organizations to be able to say that Council became better at bringing people together early, solving problems collaboratively and turning inevitable differences into better decisions rather than unnecessary divisions.

A healthy local economy and a healthy community should reinforce each other. If we can look back in four years and say we strengthened both, I would consider that a significant accomplishment.

Neil Sarginson

Saugeen Ward Councillor

I would like to play an integral part utilizing my Procurement, Contracting and Negotiating skills as a former Procurement Executive to bring to a close the current Beach Development proposal. Currently the issue is costing the town and the proponent money and reputational harm and I'm certain the BIA will also be taking a hit. Ideally, culminating in a new deal that would see sympathetic Beach development that is mutually agreeable to the public, the town and the businesses involved.

Brenda Reeves

Southampton Ward councillor

At the end of the term, I would like both BIA business communities to say "Council listened, partnered with us and helped bring under-used downtown spaces back to life." I would hope that means fewer vacancies, more year-round, activity, and welcoming public spaces- achieved through responsible investment that respects the distinct character of Southampton and of Port Elgin.

Cathe McIntosh

Councillor, Southampton Ward

On a personal note, I would like the BIAs to say: "Cathe showed up, listened, took our concerns and ideas seriously, and advocated for our needs at the Council table when it was appropriate to do so". For the BIA business community, since we are going to experience some rapid change over the next four years, I would like the business community to feel they were heard and that they felt they were an active and valuable partner with Council. Too many Canadian downtowns are sitting empty or have disappeared completely; it is VERY important to me that that does not happen in Saugeen Shores. I am committed to working with the BIAs to ensure we have healthy and vibrant downtown cores as we grow as a municipality.

Cheryl Grace

Southampton ward councillor

Since I was first elected in 2014, preserving and maintaining the character of our towns has been a priority for me. Built heritage is a very significant part of that character. Businesses and residents move to and invest in our Town because they see the appeal that character has, in attracting businesses, new residents, and visitors who eat in our restaurants and shop in our stores. With preservation of our built heritage under attack by provincial legislation, it is increasingly important for Saugeen Shores Council to do what it can to protect built heritage and the character of our Town. One of the most important steps the new Council can take is to include detailed, specific definitions of our character in our Official Plan. A draft of that language exists - I presented it to Council a year ago, but it needs to be presented to the public through a consultation process. We need to follow through with that process. I'd like our next Council to preserve built heritage by supporting financial incentives for the restoration of heritage properties; the current Municipal Heritage Committee has recommended that staff explore such a program, and hopefully that will be included in our 2027 Business Plan. While the next Council is considering the deferred CPPS, look at the possibility of a heritage-focused CPPS for our downtowns so design guidelines based on character definitions within our Official Plan can be used to preserve the small-town character which attracts business and residential investment.

Harry Mazmanian

Southampton Ward

A defined architectural heritage plan for Southampton and Port Elgin which defines a single theme for the appearance of our downtown cores.

John Divinski

Councillor, Southampton Ward

A more open form of dialogue. It sounds obvious but it's not and it's so important. Without that the downtowns don't move ahead, no matter how much the businesses are charged to maintain the BIA. We must be careful this obvious, simple feature is not lost. It doesn't take much to talk to each other.

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