

*Hello City of Peterborough council candidates,*

*We are inviting you to fill out this questionnaire. The Peterborough and the Kawarthas Chamber of Commerce and our membership would like to know your vision, plans, and stance on issues that will affect how our region grows and thrives for years to come.*

1. What is your overall vision for the City of Peterborough?

My vision is a community that creates a new strategic coherence in order to permit business to thrive; to attract new enterprise, and to improve our economic performance in a climate that is socially, environmentally and culturally progressive. The most pressing issue in Peterborough is the need to create the culture that permits all city councillors to flourish in a civil and cooperative working environment in order to improve our services to all residents and businesses.

2. What is your plan to build a strong local workforce?

The success of the workforce is dependent on our ability to create a welcoming economic climate. That means improved efficiencies at city hall and the careful limiting of tax increases. I will also promote and support workplace incentives from the provincial government in relation to the trades as well as the work of Trent University and Fleming College.

3. Housing has become less affordable and accessible, especially for first-time home buyers. What is your plan to address housing needs in our community?

I am the founder of Homegrown Homes, an innovative, award winning not for profit housing corporation; the driving force behind the Warming Room; and Council's co-chair on housing. I support the current housing and homelessness plan, but it requires substantially more determination and resources:

- Move forward with the new municipal services corporation to increase the supply of many new units of affordable housing;
- Create new efficiencies to speed up the planning and development process for housing, including affordable housing;
- Increase the city's promotion of secondary suites such as basement apartments, granny flats and tiny homes;
- Take it as my personal responsibility to advocate for additional funding from the provincial and federal governments;
- I will also urge that new city resources be focussed on the efficient processing of private sector housing applications.

4. A lack of serviced employment lands is an ongoing issue. The emphasis for a long time was on negotiating agreements with bordering townships, but the draft Official Plan calls for those lands to be found within current city boundaries. What is your plan to increase access to serviced employment lands?

The availability of employment lands within city boundaries is limited. The long-term answer lies in securing employment lands with the cooperation of neighbouring townships. This should not have become such a difficult matter; the answer lies in a return to civil and cooperative relationship building; a determination to improve the frequency and quality of our communication with the county and townships; and a new level of respect for township needs and interests.

5. The draft Official Plan calls for greater consultation and increased dialogue with neighbouring First Nations communities. What involvement and relationships do you plan to pursue with First Nations communities to move our region forward on our path to reconciliation?

This is primarily a matter of creating a cultural and political landscape that is founded on the approach to indigenous communities as equals. My Quaker, government and military experience have provided me with the skills to bring people together in pursuit of common goals, and I intend to better formalize our relations with First Nations and indigenous communities, and to advance a relationship that has listening as its primary characteristic.

6. Our community is dealing with an addictions crisis that is now more visible than ever. What is your plan to address this crisis?
  - Urge the provincial government to strengthen its actions on the root cause of addiction, including poverty reduction;
  - Continue to support the Consumption and Treatment Services site;
  - Provide greater attention to the provision of Naloxone and the training of its administrators;
  - Implement a further expansion of the crisis intervention team;
  - Create dedicated attention to needle recovery and disposal;
  - Improve our emergency communication of spikes in overdoses and the presence of tainted drugs;
  - National action to stem the production and importation of non-prescription opioids;
  - Urge the funding of a treatment centre to help get people become free from illegal drugs.

7. The efficient movement of people and goods is important to business competitiveness. What is your plan to address our transportation challenges?

Our road system requires improvement in the functioning of arterial roads, particularly in relation to the development of new residential communities in the north end.

The standard of road conditions is a persistent complaint; I will review ways to increase the resources available for road improvements.

I support a reassessment of the Covid-related routing changes made to our public transit system:

- Return to routes that improve convenience and the efficiency of connections for all passengers;
- Maintain a better balance between the specific needs of Trent and Fleming students on one hand, and all other passengers on the other.
- Maintain an affordable fare system as a means of maintaining and improving ridership.

8. Crime is an increasing concern within the local business community, from vandalism to shoplifting to after-hours break-ins. What will you do as a member of council to ensure businesses feel protected and supported?

There is a growing concern that crime typically focussed on the downtown has expanded to other portions of the city, much of which is related to issues of addiction and poverty.

- I support the hiring of ten new police officers and support staff;
- I will work with the Police Services Board to increase our response to criminal activity generated from locations outside of the city;
- I will advance a community culture that urges people to be vigilant in support of their neighbours and neighbourhoods.

9. How should the city engage local business to help meet climate change goals and move toward net-zero emissions?

I view the entire business community as partners in, and beneficiaries of, a more rigorous approach to climate change management:

In terms of the built form of the city, I will support reasonable increases in urban densities through new development and infilling, particularly in the downtown, in order to create new efficiencies. I will also support a substantial increase in the number of people living downtown.

I will recommit my support for the City's 2019 Climate Emergency Declaration, and actively promote decision-making to achieve a 45 percent reduction in greenhouse gases by 2030.

In terms of transportation, I will continue to advance active transportation. I will support technologies that optimize traffic flows and reduce idling time.

I will also promote a more urgent plan for the electrification of city transit buses and all city fleet.

I will recommend an increase in the number of electric vehicle charging stations and explore ways to compel new charging stations in new buildings.

I will seek a report on free parking for all electric vehicles and bikes.

As I have done for many years, I will promote increased funding for the planting of trees, both by the city and by citizens and businesses, and I will call for a review of the city's urban forest policies to ensure their continued environmental effectiveness.

I will request that staff and councillors consider the adoption of a carbon reduction program for building construction. For example, a program in Douro-Dummer Township provides a 40 per cent permit fee rebate on all approved projects that meet greenhouse gas reduction targets, or an 80 per cent permit fee rebate combined with net-zero ready construction.

I will seek consultation and promote a policy requiring that all new city-owned buildings be operated with net zero emissions.

In 2019, city council directed that staff report on incorporating a climate lens into all city actions and policies. I will be urging staff and councillors to consider a requirement that all city staff reports include a specific section on the climate change impact of the report recommendations.

Finally, I will promote a public education program focused on the costs of environmental inaction; the savings from responsible environmental behaviour; and the positive cumulative effect of environmental progress.

10. What three things would you like to see council implement that will make local businesses more competitive?

First, an improvement in procedures that speed up the processing of development and all approvals at city hall.

Second, an effort to create a more effective culture of customer service, including more frequent and formalized relations with the business community.

Third, a determination to constrain tax increases.

Councillor Henry Clarke  
Mayoralty Candidate, City of Peterborough