

Sarnia & District Labour Council — Candidate Questionnaire

2026 Municipal Election

Candidate Identification

Candidate name: Mario Fazio

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Why are you running? (75 words or fewer)

I am running to help bring more jobs and growth to our area, and to better control our increasing tax burden. Sarnia has some of the highest real estate taxes in the province, and our commercial and industrial tax rates are not competitive. This is one of the reasons more industries and businesses choose to locate just outside our city and county borders rather than here. As a hopeful member of Sarnia and Sarnia-County council, I will bring experience to the table at every meeting and decision.

A. Labour & Decent Work

1. Do you support keeping municipal services public and in-house rather than contracting them out or entering public-private partnerships?

Yes.

We should keep all our services in-house and public. We currently have quality staff we can call on, so we don't need to use private consultants. We should only contract out when there is a need that can't be filled locally.

2. How will you ensure municipal jobs — and jobs funded by the municipality — remain stable, fairly paid, and unionized?

Current agreements will be honoured. I will start by helping to grow the town's population; this growth will help ensure existing jobs remain and allow us to add new ones. Temporary or contract work should only be used when local workers and expertise are not available to do the required job.

3. Will you support Community Benefits Agreements, fair-wage schedules, and local-hiring requirements on major municipal infrastructure and construction projects?

Yes.

All bidders on major infrastructure projects should have mandatory local-labour requirements. Wage rates and schedules are already mandated by provincial agreements.

4. Do you support a living-wage policy covering all municipal workers, contractors, and subcontractors, tied to the City's procurement policies?

Undecided.

I'm not sure how you would manage this kind of policy — it would be too broad. The city negotiates with the various unions and associations for its own workers, and contractors and subcontractors are negotiated with differently.

5. Sarnia's economy depends on turnaround and maintenance work in Chemical Valley. How will you use municipal levers to prioritize local, unionized skilled-trades labour?

All current municipal levers that prioritize local, unionized skilled trades will be clearly identified. I will add new levers where needed, and some could come from the new provincial and federal jobs programs being offered.

6. Will you commit to meeting regularly with the Sarnia & District Labour Council and its affiliates, and to consulting workers before decisions that affect them, if elected?

Yes.

I am advocating for more regular meetings throughout our community to discuss current issues and concerns — this includes residents, labour, and industry. I currently sit on the Arlanxeo Public Advisory Board and would welcome any invitation to sit on local labour boards.

B. Housing & Homelessness

7. Lambton County's By-Name List identifies roughly 390 people experiencing homelessness in Sarnia-Lambton, including about 190 who are chronically homeless. What concrete actions will you take on homelessness and supportive housing?

I have been involved in building all forms of housing since the mid-1970s — this is second nature to me. I could move quickly to introduce more ways of creating all housing types, including lower-cost affordable and supportive housing.

8. A County report warned that prematurely closing the Out of the Cold overflow shelter could more than double the unsheltered population. Do you support maintaining overflow and low-barrier shelter options while permanent supportive housing is built?

Yes.

I support maintaining overflow and low-barrier shelter options at proper locations, as long as we put a plan in place for more permanent solutions. Choosing shovel-ready locations for building will be a priority.

9. Will you support zoning and parking reforms that make supportive and affordable housing easier to approve — rather than changes that stall projects like Indwell's proposed 353 George Street development in Mitton Village?

No.

I support an Indwell project, just not on this particular small site. There are plenty of larger, good sites available in Sarnia-Lambton that don't need this level of relief on zoning, height restrictions, setbacks, green space, and parking. 353 George is too small a site and requires too much relief — putting people in small spaces forces them to spill out into the streets.

10. With more than 900 households on the social-housing waitlist and demand for roughly 2,500 additional affordable units, how will you increase the supply of affordable and non-market housing?

I will introduce public-private partnerships and pursue senior-government funding for affordable and co-op housing programs, as we did in the past. A lot of local housing has been built this way, and it still provides housing to this day.

11. Do you support a humane, housing-focused Encampment Response Protocol that connects people to services and housing rather than relying primarily on displacement or policing?

Yes.

Yes, but we have to do a better job of connecting people to services and quickly transitioning them into temporary and then permanent housing. We need to get people out of danger from the weather, especially the winter cold.

C. Jobs, Commerce & Industry

12. Major industrial investment (such as the proposed Northern Shield Energy Corridor pipeline) may add capacity while creating relatively few permanent jobs. How will you ensure new industrial investment translates into good, lasting local jobs?

I want to help bring industrial real estate taxes down to just below regional levels, making us more competitive for companies looking for sites. I also want to help clear municipal hurdles to building new buildings and infrastructure.

13. The closure of INEOS Styrolution affects local workers. What role should the City play in supporting displaced workers and ensuring a fair transition and retraining?

First, the city should have been meeting with all groups involved to try to work out a solution that kept the plant open and its workers employed. The mindset at the time was anti-company; we live in an industrial area alongside these companies for the long term. As a new councillor, I am for protecting jobs and working closely with all companies and residents on environmentally responsible operations. The city's role is limited to supporting and retraining people.

14. How will you attract and retain diversified jobs, commerce, and investment beyond petrochemicals — for example downtown, the port and waterfront, clean technology, and small business?

I will work on developing the waterfront — it is a natural advantage we have over most other areas. We should have more businesses and housing types close to the water; people will settle here from all over if we are an attractive place to live or retire. I will work on improving our infrastructure to attract more companies to our area, given our proximity to the U.S. consumer market — location is always a plus, and we are within an eight-hour drive of 150,000,000 U.S. consumers. We already have groups working on clean technology at the Research Park.

15. Will you support apprenticeships, Red Seal skilled-trades training, and youth and local hiring through municipal projects and procurement — and if so, how?

Yes.

Many new provincial and federal programs for education and retraining are coming as a result of trade issues with the U.S. I will push our MP and MPP to bring more accountability and programs here. Both sit in governments with real power, and they should meet regularly with local councils and report on their efforts on our behalf.

16. How will you support revitalization of downtown Sarnia and Mitton Village and strengthen local small businesses?

I would introduce more business-friendly options, like special tax and investment zones, to give new and existing businesses a reason to operate and locate here. We need more residential towers downtown to support commerce. Sarnia has vacant land sitting empty for years — I would sever off a large water-strip corridor for the general public and build on the rest. I will also explore the possibility of a large civic parking structure to meet our parking needs.

D. Environment & Public Health

17. Aamjiwnaang First Nation and nearby Sarnia neighbourhoods face benzene and cumulative air-pollution exposure. What actions within municipal jurisdiction will you take to protect residents' health?

Provincial and federal policy cover these areas. As a city-county councillor, I will work to ensure that all groups are always talking to each other and sitting at the table to discuss concerns and possible solutions.

18. Will you advocate to provincial and federal governments for cumulative-effects air-pollution assessment and stronger monitoring and enforcement in Chemical Valley?

Undecided.

I need to see what we already have in place for monitoring air quality. From talking to local industry leaders — who also live here and raise families here — I understand we have some of the best systems in place. Some of the poorer

air quality originates from south of our border, which we can't control. Some people want our heavy industries shut down altogether; I believe there is a safe balance of air quality that most people accept, and that is currently being met.

19. What specific actions will you take to implement and accelerate Sarnia's climate and emissions-reduction plans?

Municipal governments can only do so much beyond wastewater separation, recycling programs, composting, and garbage collection. We are doing as good a job as most. Most of the bigger work on climate and emissions falls to the provincial and federal governments.

20. How will you protect and expand access to affordable public transit and safe active transportation?

I will review the entire system — I have experience in the transportation sector. Better routes and correctly sized buses are the most important components for a city our size.

E. Governance, Services & Reconciliation

21. Which public services (water and wastewater, waste, transit, libraries, recreation, emergency services) do you believe must always remain publicly delivered, and how will you strengthen them?

All of them. Increasing the tax base ensures money for the proper operation of each of these services. Growing our population gives us the opportunity to strengthen them all.

22. How will you advance meaningful reconciliation with Aamjiwnaang First Nation and the broader Indigenous community at the municipal level?

I'm not sure where we currently stand with this process. I must first review and study what we can do, and where things stand, at the municipal level.

23. How will you ensure transparency, accessibility, and meaningful public engagement in municipal decision-making — and how will residents know whether you are delivering on your commitments?

I will introduce an existing system that other Ontario cities use, which tracks all motions and votes by the mayor and councillors at the county and city level. This will better enable citizens to monitor the voting records of individual councillors. I want to have fewer in-camera meetings and more town-hall-style neighbourhood meetings, held annually.

24. What is one decision you would make that may be unpopular in the short term but necessary for the long-term well-being of working people in Sarnia?

I will only make decisions that help working people, such as better management and distribution of tax money.