

Candidate Questionnaire

2026 Municipal Election • Working People. Strong Communities.

Your voice. Our community. Stronger together.

Thank you for running to serve the people of Sarnia. The Sarnia & District Labour Council represents thousands of working people across our community. Your responses will help our Executive Committee review candidates and make endorsement recommendations to our members and affiliates. Please answer each question in the space provided; feel free to attach additional pages if you need more room.

Please return your completed questionnaire within 2 weeks of receiving it to Candace Young at candace.d.parsons@gmail.com, or by mail to 1086 Modeland Rd, Suite 249, Sarnia, ON N7S 6L2. This form is fillable — you may type your answers directly, save, and email it back.

ID CANDIDATE IDENTIFICATION

Candidate name:	Mike Stark
Office sought:	City/County Councillor
Ward (if any):	
Email:	starkmikec@gmail.com
Phone:	519-383-4611
Past elected office:	Sarnia City Alderman 1985 - 1988 Town of Clearwater Reeve 1988-1990 City of S
Date:	
In 75 words or fewer, tell us why you are running:	

I believe Sarnia City Council needs experienced, practical and accountable leadership - people who listen to residents, respect taxpayers, ask tough questions, and make decisions with the long-term interests of the community in mind. I want to bring my experience as a business owner, community volunteer, and former municipal representative back to the council table to help build a strong, affordable, well-managed Sarnia for today's residents and future generations.

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? Identify any services you would protect or consider contracting out, and explain your reasoning.

☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ Undecided

Please explain:

My preference is to always utilize in-house expertise. Should that expertise not be available in-house, such as planning issues, contract garbage collection and recycling programs, I would seek a competitive bidding process to secure best possible alternatives for the City.

2. How will you ensure municipal jobs — and jobs funded by the municipality — remain stable, fairly paid, and unionized? Include your position on temporary/contract labour and subcontracting.

I believe the unionized workforce within the current City's structure is paramount. A move away from this principle would not be in the City's best interest nor in the employees best interest. A strong unionized, engaged workforce is one that promotes good moral and a sense of unified team work. Temporary/contract work should only be utilized on a specific, well defined need basis. It should have identifiable goals and time frames before being secured. The union should have input into the criteria for these positions.

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

☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ Undecided

Please explain:

I believe all Agreements should have a goal of providing overall benefits to the Community with fair-wage schedules ss part of all agreements. I do support local-hiring requirements on all our major infrastructure and construction projects up to and including full employment of local trades people. Once full employment is attained, I would accept outside, well trained tradespeople to ensure deadlines for projects are realized.

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

☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ Undecided

Please explain:

A living wage policy is fundamental to a negotiation based labour system and should be tied to the City's procurement policy.

5. Sarnia's economy depends on turnaround and maintenance work in Chemical Valley. How will you use municipal levers (procurement, permitting, training partnerships with local contractors) to prioritize local, unionized skilled-trades labour?

While the City cannot become involved with labour negotiations for non-City entities, it can and should be prepared to state it's desire for fair and amicable relations with all parties operating in the City.

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 ☐ No ☐ Undecided

Please explain:

Dialogue during periods other than elections is something that can be organized and scheduled to ensure regular exchanges of ideas. Economic expansion does not need to be found only in management board rooms. Ideas from the workplace are often the best source of "Best Practices".

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 support the models that are being used in London, Ontario and St. Thomas, Ontario which have strategies for both "get out of the cold" temporary solutions employed by London south of the Hwy. #401 and the longer term housing solutions employed in St. Thomas with permanent, smaller dwellings that allow for dignified living. The first answer to solving dependency issues is to provide a dignified home.

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 ☐ No ☐ Undecided

Please explain:

I recognize that the County has a primary role in providing temporary housing to allow people to survive ever increasingly cold winters.

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?

☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ Undecided

Please explain:

I believe projects like Indwell that are operating in St. Thomas as well as many other communities can and will work in Sarnia. The public will support such projects when provided multiple locations which establish that no one area is being focused on for all the solutions. Potential locations throughout all parts of Sarnia should be considered and secured as multiple possibilities.

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?

Progress on affordable housing is being made with the Indigenous Apartment complex on Confederation Street now completed, the affordable housing units on London Road now operational and the new Kathleen Avenue project nearing completion. These are examples of success stories for the County and I was proud to be part of their approval process. The problem is the length of time to go from approval to completion is far too long and needs to be expedited.

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 ☐ No ☐ Undecided

Please explain:

I believe an expansion of the HART program that is currently in use where teams of health care specialists are accompanying police service members to calls is needed.

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?

While the federal government has interjected themselves into pipeline construction, I believe this is an area where the private sector needs to step up and take the lead in promoting the economic development opportunities that lead to more full-time employment opportunities.

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?

The City can encourage re-training of displaced workers through meeting with Lambton College to initiate new training designed to address future job opportunities, Retraining needs to be designed to address what future labour needs are going to be presented.

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?

In 2021 I delivered a speech to Seaway Kiwanis wherein I stated my positions on waterfront enhancements that would see satellite facilities located along the walking routes along the river and offered for rent to Downtown, Mitton Village and Northgate merchants to expand their retail operations down to the waterfront. Additionally, the Oversized Load Corridor dock is drastically under-utilized. We need to secure more opportunities for world-wide commerce by attaching our industrial and contracting firms with international trade missions that currently travel

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 ☐ No ☐ Undecided

Please explain:

In the same way that I support greater trade mission participation, one of our key selling points is a well trained labour force and the Red Seal designation is a good example of this benefit.

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

I mentioned my ideas in this area in question #14.

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?

Insist upon stronger enforcement of existing health and safety regulations at the provincial and federal levels of government.

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

☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ Undecided

Please explain:

An ongoing and regular report card on these environmental issues is necessary, by both levels of higher government.

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

As the former President of the St. Clair Region Conservation Authority it is our mandate to protect the water, land and the environment in all aspects. It is unfortunate that the Province is centralizing the responsibilities for this area into seven from thirty eight Authorities which will reduce local input. As a municipality, we should be lobbying the Province to re-instate regional jurisdiction in these areas. A closer monitoring of these issues is necessary.

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

Bike paths and trails are an integral part of our changing transportation network and should be expanded as part of a renewed commitment to an active lifestyle

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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?

I believe all of the listed services are integral to any mid-sized City and should all remain publicly delivered.

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

This is an area that I believe is vitally important. I would suggest convening quarterly or semi-annual fully involved meetings with set agendas and follow-up report cards on tasks to be accomplished and completed.

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?

As I have during my previous terms on Council, I will require adherence to the in-camera restrictions and when I see deviations, I will insist on public disclosures of topics that should not be in-camera.

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?

During my last term on Council, at the end of the first budget session in 2019, I made a motion to add \$1 Million Dollars to the Infrastructure Reserve Account. We all agreed the \$450 Million Infrastructure Deficit was a priority and I felt we needed to begin addressing it. My motion was lost 6 - 2. It was apparent that the main priority of my Council colleagues was to look good in the public's eye with the lowest possible tax increase. Not popular but necessary.

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ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

I felt this process was extremely thought provoking and useful. I would suggest a report card follow up (annually) for all successful candidates to monitor their truthfulness.

Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire and for your commitment to building a stronger community for working people in Sarnia.