

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:	Paul Wiersma
Office sought:	City/County Councillor
Ward (if any):	
Email:	paulw4council@gmail.com
Phone:	519-383-5690
Past elected office:	
Date:	September 3, 2026
In 75 words or fewer, tell us why you are running:	

I have served our community as a teacher/principal for 32 years, Bluewater Health Board director/chair for 10 years, Sarnia Police Service Board member/chair for 7 years, and Sarnia Concert Association Board member/President for 6 years. I believe that I have the skills, knowledge, and experience to be on a municipal council, to listen to the concerns of the community, and work together to build a community that can be enjoyed by all.

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:

I am open to learning more about this issue. At this point, I support maintaining the current public municipal services as public. I support the current arrangement of contracting out waste and recycling collection and infrastructure and capital projects. I support having public-private partnerships such as the Sarnia-Lambton Economic Partnership (SLEP), Community Improvement Plans, and the Sarnia BACE (Bluewater Active Connect

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 that employers should bargain in good faith and achieve win-win outcomes. I believe that a positive workplace culture and employee wellness are important priorities that will optimize the productivity of the organization. I understand and support the role of the union to ensure that collective agreements are honoured. A positive relationship between management and the union can contribute to the organization's effectiveness. I would support temporary/contract labour and subcontracting if there was a short-term project that required

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:

The evaluation criteria for companies bidding on projects should be broader than the lowest price. How the company can benefit the community (i.e. Community Benefits Agreements) should also be assessed. Fair wage schedules and local hiring requirements will reduce the risk of a labour interruption or project delay.

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:

I understand that the living wage in Sarnia is \$21.50 per hour. I understand that there is a Fair Wage Policy that applies to external contractors and subcontractors. I believe that municipal employees have positions that are paid above minimum wage. I am open to learning more on this issue.

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?

I am open to learning more about this subject. I like the idea of using Community Benefits Agreements, fair wages, safety programs, and training.

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:

I support consultation and discussion with community organizations as a way to increase my knowledge and understanding of issues and inform my positions on issues.

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 work of the county Community Outreach Teams as well as the Sarnia Police Service IMPACT (Integrated Mobile Police and Community Team) to support the homeless with providing for their immediate needs and connects them with community supports. I support a Housing First philosophy to get people into housing and provide support services. We need more affordable and geared-to-income housing where there is little vacancy at this level. I support infill housing development that allows for additional residential units, property

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:

Not only is it the right thing to do to provide an option for people who are homeless, there is an economic argument to be made. Meeting people's basic needs will reduce the number of people that experience mental health and addictions and who resort to crime to survive.

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:

It has been demonstrated that such projects don't require as much parking as has historically been allocated. We need to engage in meaningful consultation with the community and provide evidence that supportive housing does not create a zone of substance abuse and crime. People have more success in living a life of a contributing citizen if their basic needs are addressed.

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?

Offer financial incentives for building qualifying affordable and rental projects and additional residential units. Reduce parking requirements to reduce costs and save space. Streamline approvals to lessen the the project completion time. Allow for greater density for multi-residential infill.

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:

My understanding is that the current Sarnia Encampment Protocol has the by-law department working alongside county social services to provide options for shelter and support services. Forcibly removing people from one property does not solve the issue of homelessness. It simply transfers the issue to another part of the community.

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?

Use Community Benefit Agreements to commit to local hiring quotas and use local procurement. Use local training through the trades unions and Lambton College. My understanding is that Sarnia is not as competitive as it could be in terms of attracting industrial investment. We need to have investment ready property available.

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?

I think that the Sarnia could have done more to work with INEOS Styrolution and Aamjiwnaang to try to find a solution and avoid the closure in the first place. To support displaced workers, Sarnia can support people with accessing Employment Ontario programs, micro-credentials at Lambton College, and the trades unions. Sarnia can use the research of the Sarnia Lambton Workplace Development Board to support labour market planning.

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?

Invest Sarnia and the Sarnia-Lambton Economic Partnership (SLEP) are doing good work to market Sarnia and Sarnia-Lambton for investment. Sarnia needs to seriously consider their recommendations to provide investment ready property and financial incentives to attract business. Sarnia has tremendous potential being on Lake Huron, on the St. Clair River, having an airport, rail, and harbour. It would be great to have a viewing platform on the beach at Canatara Park and have a nice restaurant with outdoor seating. The riverfront could

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:

Awarding contracts should be based on criteria that is broader than the lowest price. It should consider Community Benefit Agreements that require the hiring of local workers and requiring quotas for the percentage of workers that are registered apprentices in Red Seal trades.

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

I support the use of municipal incentive programs such as community improvement plans that support improving public spaces and private properties, and reducing planning application and building permit fees. Invest Sarnia and SLEP can provide training and resources to small businesses. I support creating gathering spaces where people can socialize and participate in festivals. European cities have the concept of the city square where people can gather.

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?

The Ministry of the Environment needs to enforce emission standards. As well, there needs to be adequate and objective monitoring of emissions. Through land use planning and zoning the city can ensure that there are buffer zones to ensure that residents don't live next to industry. I support real-time alerts, evacuation and shelter protocols, and air filtration in public buildings. The city can enact by-laws pertaining to odours, noise, light pollution, etc. Lambton Public Health can conduct health impact assessments and issue public health

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:

Progress has taken place over the last 50 years in terms of air pollution. As awareness and understanding grows and newer technologies emerge, we need to continue to hold expectations for air quality. This needs to be followed up with effective monitoring and enforcement.

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

Through its procurement process, Sarnia can select lower carbon building materials. Incentives can be used to promote carbon capture, utilization, and storage (CCUS) technologies. Municipal buildings can be retrofitted with green technologies and renovated to be more energy efficient. Municipally owned vehicles, including transit, can be replaced with electric models. Public EV charging infrastructure can be expanded. Recycling efforts including organic waste diversion should be promoted. There should be incentives to increase native tree

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

As vehicles are expensive to own and operate, a strong public transit system can provide a good alternative provided it is affordable, reliable, and convenient. Transit routes should regularly be updated to ensure that the system is responsive to the evolving needs of people in Sarnia. I support safe walkways and bikeways as means to encourage people to be more active.

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?

I support the current public services as ones that ought to remain publicly delivered. I believe that they need to adapt to evolving technologies. For example, a public library looks (and ought to look) very differently then it did 50 years ago prior to the Internet. I am open to the concept of community partnerships (e.g. fundraising for the Bright's Grove library renovation, Sarnia BACE).

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

Sarnia's relationship with Aamjiwnaang should be viewed as being nation to nation. Both Sarnia and Aamjiwnaang have strengths and can learn from each other. Reconciliation can occur when there is mutual respect. Sarnia can implement the principles of the 94 calls to action from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC). This includes training for municipal employees and city council and meaningful consultation with Aamjiwnaang.

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 have fully dedicated myself to my work and community involvement. I have high expectations for myself and work hard to deliver good results. I stand behind my decisions, and when I err, I accept responsibility and make amends. Having worked as a principal for 20+ years, I have experience managing complex human challenges and strive for win-win outcomes. I believe that I am a reasonable person that can work with people with diverse opinions to build consensus that will result in decisions that are good for Sarnia.

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?

Sarnia's 2027 municipal budget faces a preliminary increase of 16% over the previous year. Past budget increases have been mitigated through the use of reserves, which have been spent. Infrastructure spending has been underspent by \$20+ million dollars annually. The next city council is going to have to deal with these fiscal realities. Spending will need to be scrutinized and evaluated to ensure that the municipal tax increase is affordable.

+

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to this questionnaire. I hope that I have given a good sense of my priorities. I thank the people of Sarnia for considering me to serve as one of their city/county councillors.

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