

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:	Tammy Mathieson
Office sought:	City councillor
Ward (if any):	
Email:	tammymathieson4sarnia@gmail.com
Phone:	
Past elected office:	N/A
Date:	
In 75 words or fewer, tell us why you are running:	

I'm running for Sarnia City Council because I care deeply about our community and want Sarnia to be a safe, affordable and prosperous place for everyone - from children and families to seniors. I want to bring practical, balanced decision-making to Council, strengthen community safety, improve infrastructure, support local jobs and businesses, invest responsibly in recreation and essential services, and ensure taxpayers receive value for their money. Most importantly, I want residents to feel heard, respected and represented.

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 believe core municipal services should remain publicly delivered wherever that provides residents with reliable, accountable and cost-effective service. Contracting out should not be an automatic solution. Any proposal to outsource a service should demonstrate clear benefits to taxpayers and consider service quality, accountability, existing employees and long-term costs before a decision is made.

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 support stable, fairly compensated municipal employment and respectful collective bargaining. I would expect the City to plan its workforce responsibly, limit unnecessary reliance on precarious employment, and ensure that decisions about contracting or subcontracting consider the impact on workers, service quality and taxpayers. Good municipal services depend on skilled and experienced employees.

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 support fair-wage standards and efforts to maximize opportunities for qualified local workers, apprentices and businesses on major municipal projects. Sarnia already has a Fair Wage Policy for City construction contracts, which I support. Community-benefit and local-hiring provisions should be considered where they are legally permissible, practical and provide value to the community.

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 strongly support fair compensation for workers, but before adopting a new living-wage requirement covering every municipal contractor and subcontractor, I would want to understand its financial and procurement implications. I support the City's existing Fair Wage Policy and would be open to reviewing whether additional measures could improve wages without creating unintended consequences for services, small local contractors or taxpayers.

5. Sarnia's economy depends on tarsands 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?

Sarnia's skilled trades are one of our greatest economic strengths. I would support procurement practices that give qualified local workers and businesses a fair opportunity, strengthen partnerships with local colleges, unions and training organizations, and encourage apprenticeships and skilled-trades training. When major projects come to Sarnia, we should work to ensure that the economic benefits and employment opportunities remain in our community whenever possible.

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:

Yes. Good decisions require listening to the people affected by them. I would be willing to meet with the Labour Council, workers, employers and other community stakeholders and believe consultation should take place early enough that it can genuinely inform decision-making. As a past union president, I truly understand the importance of this.

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?

Homelessness requires cooperation between the City, County, provincial and federal governments, health and social-service agencies and community partners. I support increasing affordable and supportive housing, pursuing available provincial and federal funding, removing unnecessary municipal barriers to appropriately located housing development, and connecting people with mental-health, addiction, employment and other supports. We need measurable outcomes, accountability for public spending and solutions that improve both individual well-being and community safety.

Our County Report warned that prematurely closing the door on the Coldwater 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:

Yes, as an interim emergency measure when sufficient permanent options are unavailable. No one benefits when vulnerable people are simply pushed from one location to another. At the same time, emergency shelters cannot become our permanent housing strategy. We need appropriate housing and supports that help people move toward stability, while ensuring shelters are responsibly located and managed and that the safety and well-being of surrounding neighbourhoods are protected.

Or 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 support finding responsible ways to increase affordable housing in Sarnia, including reviewing unnecessary barriers to appropriate development. However, I do not support the proposed Indwell development at 353 George Street. Affordable and supportive housing projects must be evaluated individually, with careful consideration given to location, neighbourhood impacts, safety, servicing, accountability and the concerns of surrounding residents. Supporting affordable housing does not require supporting every proposed development.

Let's move more than 1000 residences on the social housing market and demand for roughly 2,000 additional affordable units, how will you increase the supply of affordable and non-market housing?

We need more housing across the spectrum. I support encouraging a greater mix of housing types, reducing unnecessary municipal barriers and delays, and identifying appropriate locations for new housing and redevelopment. I would also pursue provincial, federal, private and non-profit partnerships to increase supply. New developments must be thoughtfully planned, appropriately located and consider the safety and well-being of surrounding neighbourhoods. The City cannot solve the housing shortage alone, and we should leverage outside investment rather than place the entire financial burden on municipal taxpayers.

Will 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 support connecting people experiencing homelessness with appropriate shelter, housing, mental-health, addiction and other necessary services, but I do not support allowing encampments to remain in our public parks and spaces while those supports are arranged. Sarnia's experience with Rainbow Park demonstrated the serious consequences that an entrenched encampment can have on surrounding residents, families and the ability of the public to safely use community spaces. I support compassionate outreach and access to services, while also enforcing our bylaws and maintaining safe, clean and accessible public spaces. Helping vulnerable people and protecting community safety must happen at the same time.

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?

Industrial investment should create broader benefits for Sarnia than simply expanding infrastructure. I would advocate for local hiring and apprenticeship opportunities, partnerships with local training institutions and skilled trades, and policies that encourage companies to establish operations, suppliers and supporting businesses here. We should measure economic development not only by dollars invested, but by sustainable jobs and opportunities created for Sarnia residents.

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 loss of a major industrial employer affects workers, families and the broader community. The City's role should include working with employers, unions, Lambton College, employment agencies and other levels of government to connect displaced workers with retraining, certification and new employment opportunities. At the same time, we need an economic-development strategy focused on attracting new employers that can make use of Sarnia-Lambton's highly skilled industrial workforce.

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?

Chemical Valley remains critically important to Sarnia, but economic diversification makes our community more resilient. I support attracting investment in clean technology, advanced manufacturing, energy innovation, the port and waterfront, tourism and small business. We should also make downtown Sarnia a stronger destination for residents and visitors and make it easier for entrepreneurs to invest and grow here.

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:

Yes. Skilled trades provide excellent career opportunities and are essential to Sarnia's economy. I support partnerships with unions, employers, schools and Lambton College that expand apprenticeships and expose young people to skilled-trades careers. Municipal procurement should encourage apprenticeship and local employment opportunities where practical and legally permissible.

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

I support revitalization that brings people, businesses and investment back into these areas. That means maintaining safe, clean and attractive public spaces, improving infrastructure, encouraging redevelopment of vacant or underused properties, supporting events and tourism, and working directly with local businesses to identify barriers to growth. Revitalization should be driven by sustainable economic activity rather than short-term cosmetic fixes.

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?

Protecting public health must be a priority. Within municipal jurisdiction, I would support transparent communication of environmental information, strong emergency preparedness, continued cooperation with Aamjiwnaang First Nation and advocacy for rigorous monitoring and enforcement by the provincial and federal governments. Municipal government should also ensure land-use and emergency-planning decisions properly consider industrial and environmental risks.

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:

Yes. Sarnia's industrial sector is extremely important to our economy, and strong environmental standards and a successful industrial economy are not mutually exclusive. Residents, workers and neighbouring Aamjiwnaang First Nation deserve reliable monitoring, transparent information and appropriate enforcement. I would advocate to the provincial and federal governments where action falls outside municipal jurisdiction.

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

I would focus on practical, measurable actions already identified through Sarnia's climate planning: improving energy efficiency in municipal buildings, protecting and expanding our urban forest and natural areas, strengthening stormwater and flood resilience, improving waste diversion and supporting practical transportation alternatives. Environmental improvements should be incorporated into normal infrastructure planning so we achieve measurable results while remaining financially responsible.

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

I support an efficient and balanced transportation network that works for everyone - including drivers, transit users, pedestrians and cyclists. I support affordable and reliable public transit and safe, practical active-transportation connections where they are needed and will be used. I also believe we should regularly evaluate existing transportation measures to determine whether they are actually improving safety, accessibility and traffic flow. If infrastructure or traffic changes are proven to be ineffective, underused or creating unnecessary problems, we should be willing to modify or reconsider them. At the same time, we must continue investing in our roads and intersections and ensure that vehicle lanes remain safe, well-maintained and efficient for the many residents who rely on their vehicles every day. Transportation decisions should be based on evidence, demonstrated need, safety and value for taxpayers.

believe must always remain publicly delivered, and how will you strengthen them?

Core services involving public safety, essential infrastructure and direct public accountability — including water and wastewater, emergency services and core municipal operations — require strong public oversight. I also strongly value public libraries, recreation and transit. I would evaluate service-delivery decisions based on reliability, accountability, quality and value for taxpayers rather than assuming either public or private delivery is automatically better in every circumstance.

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

Meaningful reconciliation begins with respectful relationships and listening. I would support regular dialogue with Aamjiwnaang First Nation and Indigenous community members, particularly on decisions involving the environment, land use, economic development and matters directly affecting their community. Reconciliation should be reflected in ongoing municipal relationships and actions, not simply ceremonial acknowledgements.

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 believe residents deserve to understand not only what Council decides, but why. I would communicate regularly with residents, make myself accessible, support clear and understandable public reporting, encourage meaningful consultation before major decisions and explain my votes. I would also report publicly on progress toward the commitments I make during this campaign. Accountability should continue after election day.

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 would be prepared to postpone or reconsider a major capital project if the evidence showed that proceeding would place an unreasonable financial burden on residents while more urgent infrastructure needs remained unfunded. Fiscal responsibility sometimes means saying “not yet” to a popular project. Protecting taxpayers today while maintaining the infrastructure and services working families depend on is essential to Sarnia’s long-term well-being.

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ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

As a union member for more than 30 years and a former local union president, I understand firsthand the importance of fair representation, collective bargaining, safe working conditions and ensuring workers have a meaningful voice. My years in union leadership taught me the importance of listening, working collaboratively, balancing competing priorities and advocating for people while making fair and responsible decisions. As a lifelong Sarnia resident, educator and community volunteer, I also recognize that working families are taxpayers who are facing significant affordability pressures. If elected, I will work to protect essential public services, support good local jobs, invest responsibly in our community and pursue economic growth while remaining accountable for how taxpayers’ dollars are spent. I will bring an independent and balanced voice to Council. I will listen to workers, residents, businesses and community organizations, examine the evidence and make decisions based on what I believe is in the best long-term interest of Sarnia and the people who call it home.