



Thunder Bay  
Chamber  
of Commerce

# SAVES

City of Opportunity

*The 2018 Municipal Election Platform  
of the Thunder Bay Chamber of Commerce*

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Thunder Bay Chamber of Commerce is a not-for-profit organization which represents more than 800 community stakeholders including large and small business, other not-for-profit organizations and charities and their 22,000 employees. Our mission is to support a stronger business community through advocacy work, by engaging our Members with one another and the community, and by providing tools for Member empowerment.

Thunder Bay is a great place to live and work but the foundation of our prosperity is shifting. As old opportunities fade it is up to us to prepare ourselves to greet – and create – new ways for our city to grow and thrive.

Through consultation with our Members and the broader community, the Thunder Bay Chamber of Commerce has identified several factors limiting our city’s ability to provide opportunity for its citizens. To become a City of Opportunity for everyone, Thunder Bay needs our elected leaders to support a “culture of yes.” They can begin by saying yes to a series of recommendations for action developed in consultation with our Members and supported by current research.

The City of Opportunity platform reflects three pillars of a strong, resilient community:

1. Visionary Leadership
2. Economic Opportunity
3. Quality of Life

Within these three pillars the Chamber has developed ten actions designed to support the development of opportunities for everyone in the community of Thunder Bay.



PILLAR	ACTIONS
<b>1. Visionary Leadership</b> 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. foster community outreach, consultation and collaboration</li><li>2. provide fiscal transparency and a costing analysis of individual City services</li><li>3. enact financial goals and accountability</li><li>4. develop a road-map for Thunder Bay</li></ol>
<b>2. Economic Opportunity</b> 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. reduce red tape and modernize planning</li><li>2. develop service standards</li><li>3. develop a long-term plan</li></ol>
<b>3. Quality of Life</b> 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. work with stakeholder groups to develop long-term strategies for addressing homelessness, addiction, mental illness and crime neighbourhoods</li><li>2. reform by-laws in support of sustainable neighbourhoods</li><li>3. build a culture of respect and diversity</li></ol>

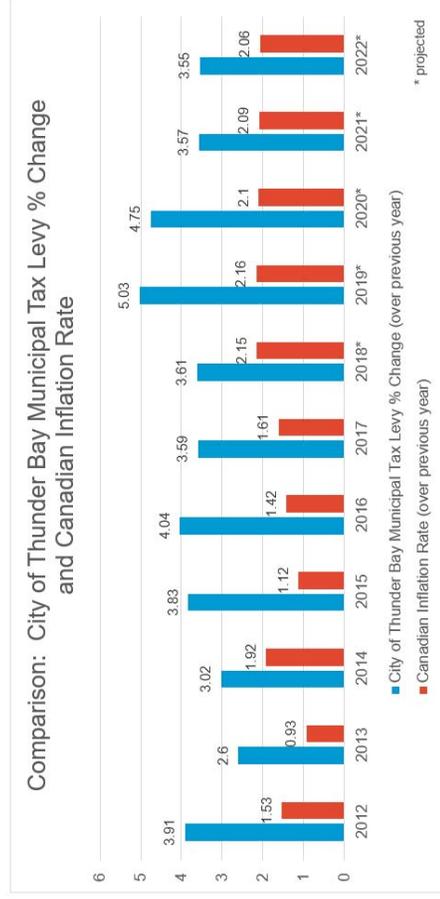
# SAY YES

# INTRODUCTION

The 2018 Municipal Election in the City of Thunder Bay comes at an opportune time for change. Located in the centre of Canada, our vibrant community is ideally placed to capitalize on opportunities arising from a renewed national interest in shipping by rail and sea, maturing local information and health sectors and the increasing significance of mining developments like the Ring of Fire.

Despite our natural advantages and long history as a centre of trade, however, our ability to meet the future faces serious challenges which are currently manifesting through symptoms of neighbourhood decay, perpetually rising tax levies, youth out-migration and shortages of skilled labour.

Over the past decade, Thunder Bay tax levies have increased by an average of 3.36% every year. Over the next five years, they are projected to increase an average of 4.08%.\* We offer Canadian inflation numbers over the same time period for comparison and question the impact this trend will have on the average taxpayer's budget and our ability to attract new investment to the city.



(\* Sources: "Long Term Financial Overview - 2018 and Beyond" as presented to the Committee of the Whole, January 9, 2018; International Monetary Fund <http://www.imf.org/external/datamapper/PCPIPCH@WEO/OEMDC/CAN>)

Interestingly, although rising taxes are a concern of our Members', over 50% of our survey respondents say they would be happy with the current rate if they could see better value for their tax dollars. Along with this, many of them express a desire to see staff in the City's public-facing departments better empowered to work with them towards positive outcomes.

The majority of our focus group and survey participants told us that the issue they were most concerned about is neighbourhood decay - characterized most visibly by increasing poverty, homelessness and crime. Our social and economic fabric is fraying, showing us that our current way of doing things isn't working for everyone.

Although it wasn't the largest concern overall, in our focus groups we heard consistently that our Members have difficulty hiring skilled labour. Our firms and our city are competing with firms in other cities to attract both talent and youth to Thunder Bay - and we are not winning often enough. This is a strong indicator that Thunder Bay is considered a less-desirable place to live by the new and potential residents we're hoping to attract. Over 93% of businesses declared that they'd like to see the next City Council take risks in trying innovative and new solutions to City issues.

The actions in the City of Opportunity platform can serve as a way of assessing candidates in the 2018 City of Thunder Bay Election. Candidates who say yes to these actions are saying yes to a challenging leadership role and making a commitment to creating a "culture of yes" at the City of Thunder Bay and in our community.



# PILLAR 1: VISIONARY LEADERSHIP



**Say yes to partnership.** Thunder Bay is looking for leaders who will collaborate and consult with the community and leverage our assets and strengths in the service of a vision of the future that benefits everyone. As entrepreneurs and business owners, we understand that making change and moving forward involve aspects of risk. We're looking for leaders who will accept those risks and who will look to the expertise and experience of the community to help surmount them.

## CANDIDATE COMMITMENT:

**I commit to the development of a corporate culture at the City of Thunder Bay that encourages community outreach, consultation and collaboration as we build a city of opportunity.**



**Say yes to the big picture.** Thunder Bay is looking for leaders who are committed to a long-term plan that aims to make Thunder Bay a city of opportunity for everyone. As strategic planners with responsibilities to others, we know how important it is – for ourselves, for our employees and for our stakeholders – to know where we're going and how we're getting there. Thunder Bay needs leaders who will work with the community to develop a road-map for Thunder Bay's future.

## CANDIDATE COMMITMENT:

**I commit to the development and support of a visionary road-map for the City of Thunder Bay that makes Thunder Bay a city of opportunity for everyone.**



**Say yes to openness.** Thunder Bay is looking for leaders who are committed to fiscal transparency and accountability. As decision-makers with fiscal responsibilities of our own, we believe that a solid understanding of the real costs of City services will empower Council's decision-making and increase taxpayer buy-in when hard choices must be made. As managers, we also know that accountability is key to a productive, efficient operation. We need our leaders to both empower Municipal staff to effect change and hold them accountable for reaching the goals that will move us forward as a city.

## CANDIDATE COMMITMENT:

**I commit to fiscal transparency with my constituents and will support the implementation of a services and spending analysis for the City of Thunder Bay.**

## CANDIDATE COMMITMENT:

**I commit to hold Council and City administration accountable to the people of Thunder Bay and be accountable to my election platform and promises to constituents.**



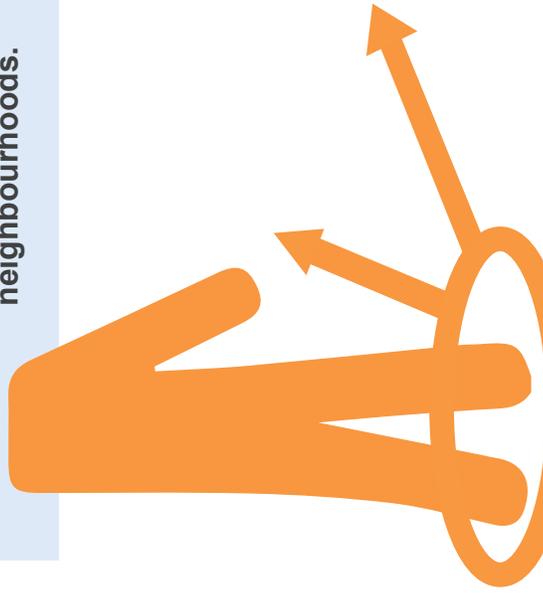
# PILLAR 2: ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY



**Say yes to less red tape.** Chamber Members are asking Thunder Bay's leaders to take a proactive approach to reducing red tape by implementing changes in policy that would make it easier to do business in Thunder Bay. As regular clients of the City, we hope to see a change to zoning restrictions that would modernize planning, allowing for more varied and flexible use of space and the creation of diverse neighbourhoods. We also recommend a reform to Planning Services policies that would streamline the application process and empower City staff to focus on achieving client goals within the shared vision for the community.

## CANDIDATE COMMITMENT:

**I commit to making changes in policy designed to reduce red tape, modernize planning and streamline processes, creating more opportunities for development and the creation of diverse neighbourhoods.**



**Say yes to customer service standards.** As managers, we know that setting service standards lets us both manage our customers' expectations and improve our quality of work. As customers of City services, we recommend the development of customer service standards for each public-facing division of the organization. These standards should be transparent to the public, set realistic expectations and emphasize collaboration in pursuit of positive outcomes for clients. As well, feedback and critique mechanisms should be established so management can receive input directly from the public on the interactions between City staff and their clients.

## CANDIDATE COMMITMENT:

**I commit to the development of service standards for the City of Thunder Bay which focus on positive outcomes for clients.**



**Say yes to long-term thinking.** As business leaders, we know the importance of looking past quarterly results to the long-term future of our businesses. We ask the same of our city leaders. We need a council that evaluates the long-term costs and benefits of their decisions, not just for this election cycle but for the next generation of citizens. Our city is currently on an unsustainable path – financially, socially and environmentally - and needs reform so that our children can do business in a thriving and healthy city.

## CANDIDATE COMMITMENT:

**I commit to enacting long-term and forward-thinking changes to put Thunder Bay on the path to sustainability – financially, socially and environmentally.**

# PILLAR 3: QUALITY OF LIFE



**Say yes to safe streets.** As property owners we know it's important to make our locations welcoming, safe and comfortable for our customers. We're looking to our leaders to make our city safe and our streets walkable. Safety is a concern for us all and we need a city council that will proactively seek to address the social problems we face. This is not only an issue for the police but for all of our emergency and social services.

## CANDIDATE COMMITMENT:

**I commit to proactively engaging community groups, city agencies and social organizations to develop long term strategies to battle homelessness, addiction, mental illness and crime based on principles of harm reduction.**



**Say yes to great neighbourhoods.** As team leaders, we know the importance of connection between our people. Walkable, mixed-use, mixed-income neighbourhoods not only make for interesting and exciting places to live and work, they lead to increased connections between residents, more physically active residents, safer streets and a greater sense of pride and identity. We need to develop sustainable neighbourhoods that include both businesses and residents.

## CANDIDATE COMMITMENT:

**I commit to reforming city by-laws and policies to build sustainable neighbourhoods based on mixed-use, mixed-income areas that allow people to live, work and play in a walkable space.**



**Say yes to diversity and respect.** As businesses, we know the importance of treating our customers with dignity and respect. As well, a diverse workforce brings many advantages as one can harness the unique abilities and attributes of a wide range of people to achieve common goals. Although tremendous steps have been taken, the City of Thunder Bay has a long way to go to ensure that all of its citizens are treated well and not subject to racism, discrimination or systemic abuse. City officials should work hard to enable marginalized populations such as Indigenous people, the LGBTQ community and new immigrants to realize their goals.

## CANDIDATE COMMITMENT:

**I commit to continuing the work of building a culture of respect and diversity and directing the necessary resources to ensure that no one is subject to racism, discrimination or abuse in our community.**



## CONCLUSION

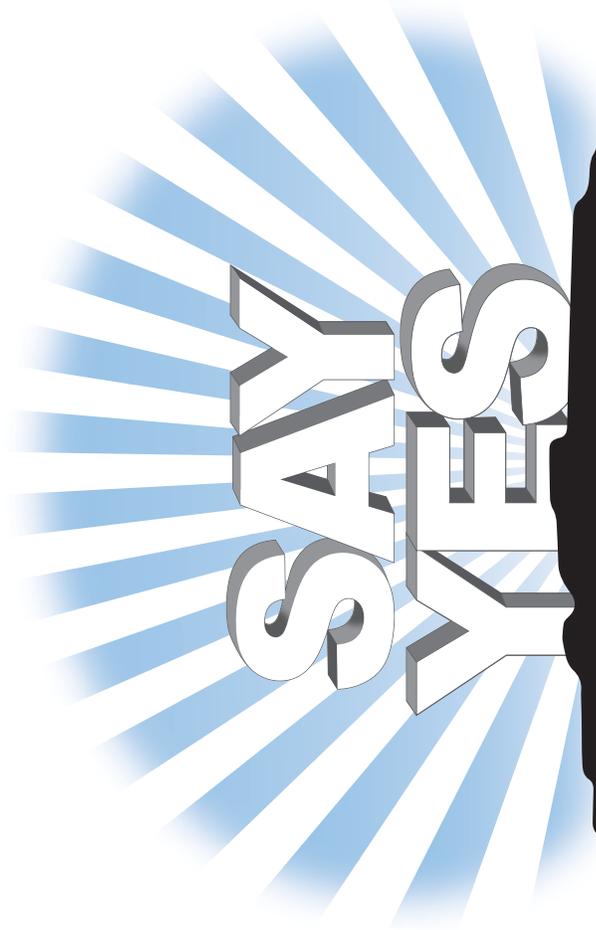
This platform has been crafted not just for the use of the business community but for the community of Thunder Bay overall. We invite everyone who finds value in our recommendations to use them as tools for discussion with candidates, friends, family and colleagues.

### Want to support us?

- Ask your candidates to support the Chamber's City of Opportunity platform.
- Endorse the platform as an individual or an organization.
- Join the conversation on social media.

### Contact Us:

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