

CITY OF OPPORTUNITY



The 2026 Municipal Election Platform of the Thunder Bay Chamber Of Commerce



**Getting Things
Done**



**Safe & Vibrant
Communities**



Competitive Growth

tbchamber.ca/cityofopportunity



**City of
Opportunity**

INTRODUCTION

Thunder Bay has the people, the natural advantages, the industries, and the ambition to become one of Canada's most competitive and livable mid-sized cities. The opportunity before us is not to reinvent Thunder Bay but to unlock its full potential.

A City of Opportunity is one where businesses have the confidence to invest, entrepreneurs can grow with fewer barriers, families choose to build their futures with access to affordable housing and childcare, and young people see a reason to stay. It is a city where residents feel safe in their neighbourhoods, where essential services are reliable, and where local government delivers on its commitments with transparency, accountability, and purpose.

Our Members believe Thunder Bay's greatest challenge is not a lack of vision, ideas, or opportunity. It is our ability to turn plans into action. This platform is built on a simple belief: when City Hall works effectively, opportunity grows. Businesses invest, jobs are created, neighbourhoods thrive, and our community becomes stronger and more resilient.

To build that future, the Chamber urges candidates for City Council to commit to: getting things done, creating a safe and vibrant community, and fostering a competitive environment for growth. With a united and focused Council that prioritizes the execution of the Smart Growth Action Plan, Thunder Bay can become a city that attracts investment, retains talent, supports business success, and offers everyone the opportunity to prosper.



GETTING THINGS DONE



Governance That Delivers Results

The most consistent message from the Member Survey is that the City must improve its ability to execute decisions effectively. Businesses emphasized that delays, reversals, and inconsistency in decision-making create uncertainty that discourages investment and erodes confidence in the City's commitment to getting things done.

There is clear support for establishing measurable performance targets and stronger oversight mechanisms to improve transparency and accountability. The Smart Growth Action Plan provides a roadmap for measurable performance, public reporting, and accountability - turning plans into action and restoring confidence in City Hall.

Candidate Commitment: I commit to making the Smart Growth Action Plan the City's roadmap for growth by establishing annual implementation priorities, publicly reporting progress, and holding Council and Administration accountable for delivering measurable results.



Infrastructure That Enables Growth

Growth depends on reliable infrastructure. Businesses depend on well-maintained roads, reliable water and wastewater systems, dependable transit, and responsive municipal services to move goods, support employees, and provide customers with safe and efficient access.

The Member Survey identified growing concern about the reliability of core municipal services and the widening infrastructure gap. Aging assets, deferred maintenance, and inconsistent service delivery increase costs, reduce confidence, and limit future growth.

The Smart Growth Action Plan provides a clear framework for strengthening infrastructure readiness and improving service delivery. By prioritizing strategic investments, maintaining core assets, and aligning infrastructure planning with growth, Council can create the reliable foundation that businesses, residents, and investors expect.

Candidate Commitment: I commit to reducing the City's infrastructure gap by maintaining reliable core services, prioritizing investments that support growth, and publicly reporting each year on infrastructure performance, capital project delivery, and progress toward closing the gap.



GETTING THINGS DONE



Responsible Financial Stewardship

Confidence begins with responsible financial stewardship. Businesses expect City Council to manage public finances responsibly by delivering high-quality services, investing strategically in community priorities, and ensuring taxpayers receive value for every dollar spent. Members emphasized that predictable, sustainable taxation and transparent financial decision-making are essential to maintaining confidence in local government.

The Member Survey also identified business tax competitiveness as a significant concern. Commercial and industrial tax rates remain well above the provincial average, increasing the cost of doing business and affecting Thunder Bay's ability to attract investment and support economic growth. Improving efficiency, aligning spending with community priorities, and pursuing a more competitive tax environment will strengthen the City's long-term financial sustainability and competitiveness.

Candidate Commitment: I commit to managing public finances responsibly by delivering value for every tax dollar, improving spending efficiency, and working toward more competitive commercial and industrial tax rates.



SAFE AND VIBRANT COMMUNITIES



Safe Streets Support Growth

Safe, welcoming neighbourhoods and vibrant commercial districts are fundamental to a City of Opportunity. Residents, businesses, employees, and visitors all benefit from communities where people feel safe, public spaces are well cared for, and local businesses can thrive.

The Member Survey identified community safety and well-being as one of the most pressing issues affecting Thunder Bay. Businesses reported that persistent social issues in commercial areas reduce foot traffic, discourage tourism, impact employee and customer confidence, and weaken the city's reputation as a place to live, work, and invest.

Members recognize that these are complex, interconnected challenges that require coordinated, evidence-based solutions addressing both immediate public safety concerns and the underlying social factors that contribute to them including homelessness, mental health, addictions, and poverty. The Smart Growth Action Plan identifies implementation of the Community Safety and Well-Being Plan as a key priority. Delivering on that commitment through collaboration, accountability, and measurable outcomes will strengthen community confidence and support long-term economic growth.

Candidate Commitment: I commit to implementing the Community Safety and Well-Being Plan by investing in coordinated, evidence-based solutions, strengthening community partnerships, and publicly reporting on progress and outcomes each year.



Livable Communities Attract People and Investment

Local businesses, in particular small businesses, recognize the clear connection between safety and broader community livability. A city that feels safe and stable is more likely to attract and retain residents. This has direct implications for workforce availability, business growth, and long-term economic sustainability.

Members identified the importance of overall livability, including affordability, cleanliness, infrastructure, and community cohesion. These factors influence whether people choose to live, work, and invest in Thunder Bay.



SAFE AND VIBRANT COMMUNITIES

The Smart Growth Action Plan provides a roadmap to strengthen quality of life, improve the city's image, and foster a more welcoming and inclusive community. Consistent implementation of these priorities will help position Thunder Bay as a city where people and businesses can thrive.

Candidate Commitment: I commit to implement the Smart Growth Action Plan priorities by supporting housing affordability, revitalizing downtown areas, promoting walkable, mixed income & mixed use neighbourhoods, and investing in community amenities that attract and retain residents and businesses.



Reconciliation Strengthens Our Future

Reconciliation is both a shared responsibility and a foundation for Thunder Bay's long-term prosperity. Indigenous peoples and organizations make significant contributions to our economy, workforce, entrepreneurship, culture, and community. Building respectful partnerships and expanding economic opportunities will strengthen our ability to attract investment, address workforce challenges, and support sustainable growth.

The Smart Growth Action Plan recognizes Indigenous partnerships as essential to building an inclusive, competitive, and prosperous Thunder Bay.

Candidate Commitment: I commit to strengthening partnerships with Indigenous leaders, actively support Indigenous entrepreneurs and workers, and position Thunder Bay as a national leader in Indigenous economic opportunity.



COMPETITIVE GROWTH



Break Down Barriers

A competitive city makes it easy to invest, build, and grow. Our Member Survey identified slow, inconsistent, and complex municipal processes as one of the biggest barriers to business investment. Permitting, approvals, zoning, and site plan control were frequently cited as time consuming, costly, and difficult to navigate, creating unnecessary delays and missed opportunities.

Creating a more competitive business environment requires predictable processes, clear requirements, and better coordination across City departments. The Smart Growth Action Plan identifies practical actions to improve Thunder Bay's investment readiness, including reviewing site plan control practices, modernizing the zoning by-law, and updating municipal by-laws that create unnecessary barriers to development. Implementing these actions will make it easier to invest, build, and grow in Thunder Bay.

Candidate Commitment: I commit to implementing the Smart Growth Action Plan's development readiness priorities including reviewing site plan control practices, modernizing the zoning by-law and municipal by-laws, streamlining development approvals, and publicly reporting on progress.



Choose TBay First

Every thriving economy begins with thriving local businesses. They create jobs, pay local taxes, support community organizations, and invest in the vitality of our neighbourhoods. When the City purchases locally, those dollars circulate through the local economy, creating additional jobs, investment, and economic activity.

Where permitted by trade agreements and procurement legislation, municipal purchasing policies should recognize the broader economic value of local suppliers.

A "Choose TBay First" approach can strengthen local businesses, increase economic resilience, and maximize the return on public spending while maintaining fairness, transparency, and value for taxpayers.

Candidate Commitment: I commit to adopting a "Choose TBay First" procurement approach by reviewing municipal purchasing policies, maximizing opportunities for local businesses where permitted, and reporting annually on local procurement outcomes.



COMPETITIVE GROWTH



Ready For Growth

Thunder Bay has significant opportunities for business investment, industrial expansion, and population growth. To realize that potential, the City must be ready to respond quickly and confidently when opportunities arise.

The Member Survey identified concerns about the City's readiness to support future growth. Businesses emphasized the need for more development-ready commercial and industrial land, coordinated infrastructure planning, and a municipal culture that demonstrates Thunder Bay is truly open for business.

The Smart Growth Action Plan identifies practical actions to improve growth readiness, including expanding the supply of development-ready land and strengthening the City's capacity to support investment. Delivering these priorities will help close the confidence gap and position Thunder Bay as a competitive destination for business and talent.

Candidate Commitment: I commit to making Thunder Bay investment-ready by advancing the Smart Growth Action Plan's growth readiness actions, expanding development-ready employment lands, and demonstrating through measurable results that our city is open for business.

CONCLUSION

BUILDING A CITY OF OPPORTUNITY

Thunder Bay has the people, the potential, and the plan to build a stronger future. What is needed now is leadership that delivers results.

Getting things done, creating safe and livable communities, and building a competitive environment for growth are not separate priorities - they are the foundation of a City of Opportunity. Together, they will strengthen confidence, attract investment, support local businesses, and improve quality of life for all.

The Smart Growth Action Plan provides the roadmap. We encourage every candidate to commit to its implementation through measurable actions, transparent reporting, and accountable leadership.

The opportunity is here. The roadmap is clear. Now it's time to deliver.

A stylized illustration at the bottom of the page. On the right, a lighthouse sits atop a dark blue hill. The lighthouse has a square base with three windows, a smaller square section above it, and a lantern room at the top with four radiating lines. To the left of the lighthouse, numerous light blue rays emanate from behind it, fanning out across the page. Overlaid on these rays is the text 'CITY OF OPPORTUNITY' in a large, bold, blue sans-serif font.

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