

Chamber of Commerce Mayoral Candidate Forum

September 29, 2026

Transcript of responses sorted by individual candidate

Note: Minor transcription errors have been cleaned up for readability while preserving the substance of individual remarks

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Maureen (Moe) Comuzzi

Why are you running for Mayor?

I'm running for mayor because I believe Thunder Bay's best days are ahead of us and we need strong leadership that turns opportunity into possibility.

We have enormous potential in mining and energy, transportation, technology and small business.

I'm ready to bring people together, build relationships and get things done.

I'm looking forward to where Thunder Bay can go next. Stronger, safer, more connected.

I'm Maureen Comuzzi and I'm applying to be your mayor.

Q1: City Hall Effectiveness and Accountability

Businesses tell us that delays and inconsistency in decision-making, erodes confidence in the City's commitment to get things done.

As Mayor, what specific changes would you champion to make City Hall more effective and accountable for delivering measurable results?

City Hall, we need to work together. Council is our team and a good mayor leads council and mentors.

All decisions can be made at the council table.

In order to run an efficient City Hall, we need to capture all our resources together with all the people that do the hard work behind the scenes and lean on the experts.

So there's opportunity out there for us to grow and a very, very forward-moving City Hall, and being bold is the way to go.

We can make those decisions together and a good team is the way this city is going to move forward.

And I believe we can do that together because we're stronger together

Q2: Infrastructure

Thunder Bay faces a growing infrastructure gap, while businesses and residents rely on well-maintained roads, water and wastewater systems, transit and other core municipal services.

As Mayor, how would you work with Council and Administration to prioritize infrastructure investments, address the infrastructure gap, and ensure that major projects and City commitments are delivered on time, on budget and with measurable results?

Recognizing that we have an asset management plan that sets the infrastructure priority, we have to think about our home.

We don't let our roof and our windows fall apart. We repair them before it gets ahead of us and our infrastructure is no different.

So we have to aggressively pursue the provincial and federal government for the funding that we so deserve to address these issues.

Again, everything that we do in our infrastructure is like our home. Our city is our home.

If we take a little bit at a time and start addressing it, we can attract new investment and opportunity.

If our roof is falling off and our home is falling apart, our city needs to address that.

So we have to attract new investment and opportunity in order to grow the tax base

Q3: Financial Stewardship

Businesses and residents expect the City to deliver quality services and infrastructure while ensuring taxpayers receive value for every dollar spent.

As Mayor, what specific actions would you champion to improve spending efficiency, maintain sustainable and predictable taxation, and make Thunder Bay's commercial and industrial tax rates more competitive?

I'd be really cautious on simply offering 0% for anything as a tax increase. It's not realistic.

We also need to grow our tax base and more housing, business opportunities, development and investment means more taxpayers sharing the cost burden.

Fiscal responsibility doesn't mean cutting.

Neglecting roads, water systems and infrastructure today can create a much bigger bill for tomorrow.

So my approach is disciplined spending, responsible investment, long-term planning and accountability.

Keep taxes affordable and predictable as possible, protect the services people depend on, and make every dollar work harder for taxpayers

Q4: Safe and Vibrant Communities

Businesses continue to identify community safety and social challenges as significant concerns across the city. If employees don't feel safe coming to work and customers don't feel comfortable visiting a business area, our economy suffers too.

As Mayor, what actions would you prioritize to improve community safety and address the social challenges of homelessness, addictions, and mental health?

As mayor, I'll take my seat on the Police Services Board very seriously.

We need to make sure that our police, mental health professionals, addiction treatment providers and community organizations have what they need to do their job and their work.

We need to be a champion to ensure we're getting our fair share from the federal and provincial government.

I embrace the ten-part plan as a coordinated approach, but it must be a living plan.

We have to go back and look at it and measure it and make sure it works.

If it's not working, then we're going to sit down and decide what we need to do to fix it.

Compassion and accountability can exist together.

Safe communities and strong economies can go hand in hand.

Q5: Housing Affordability

Submitted the Thunder Bay Real Estate Board

Housing affordability is a key issue across the province and here in Thunder Bay. Research conducted by Abacus Data on behalf of the Ontario Real Estate Association has found that 88% of Ontarians consider improving housing affordability a high priority for their municipal government

Affordability typically relates to the purchase price of a home or monthly rent costs, but it is also affected by ongoing housing costs, such as financing options and property tax increases.

What does “affordable” mean to you? And What will you do about the municipal costs on housing to make housing more affordable in our municipality?

I deal with this every day.

I believe in a housing continuum. It's not one fit for everyone.

Our seniors, our young families all need homes. Our new business folks coming to town with our industry and investment need homes.

If a senior has a more attractive, affordable home to go to, that frees up a house for a young family to move into.

We need more rental construction and that can relieve the pressure on our rental costs.

So more supply, more choice, more affordability and thoughtful growth.

It's important and we need to start now for our future and to attract new investment opportunity because we have nowhere to put all these great folks and opportunity that's coming to this town.

So we need to build more.

Q6: Indigenous Procurement

Submitted by Anishnawbe Business Professionals Association

The Indigenous economy represents \$1.55 billion in regional output and offers a sustainable path from reactive crisis management to proactive economic growth. Peer Canadian cities like Saskatoon have successfully established a 5% Indigenous procurement target to boost local business.

As Mayor, will you commit to updating Thunder Bay's procurement policies to set a 5% Indigenous spend goal by 2027 and integrate Indigenous Procurement into municipal contracts?

There is a party of twelve people and myself and I think it's a worthwhile discussion and I would like to have that discussion.

I know that our Indigenous investment in this community is significant and they need to be part of the conversations and part of the relationship.

We need to move forward together because we're stronger together.

It's our oldest partner and neighbour, Fort William First Nation, and our community needs to respect each other and we need to work together.

So we need to look at the best overall value, not simply the lowest price.

Our procurement rules allow consideration of things like life-cycle cost, service, reliability, maintenance and other legitimate value factors.

It means making sure Thunder Bay businesses have a fair opportunity to compete with Thunder Bay businesses and we all are stronger together.

Q7: Strong Mayor Powers

For the first time, Thunder Bay residents are electing a Mayor who will have Strong Mayor powers. Given the significance of these powers, voters require a clear answer on the following questions: If elected, which of these powers, if any, would you use, and what principles or circumstances would guide your decision to execute them?

Twelve people are elected, and me. If you can't build a good team around you and make good decisions together, I don't agree with them. It's an erosion of democracy.

It's not the way that I manage or that I lead. I believe in building teams. I believe that we can answer the questions at the council table.

They're difficult questions, but everybody's going to have an opinion and we're going to listen and we're going to come to a consensus.

It's collaboration. It's building a team and that's what we need.

Strong mayor powers are an erosion of democracy and I don't agree with them.

Q8: Leadership

Community leadership often requires making difficult decisions when there are strongly differing views about the best path forward.

How would you approach those situations as Mayor, and what principles would guide how you build consensus while still ensuring that timely decisions are made and action is taken and not delayed?

It's important that we all work together as a team. It's important that we listen to council.

I believe in partnerships. I believe in working together to come to a consensus. It's simple.

When Thunder Bay needs an advocate, I'm there. I'm there to get decisions done, get the money that we so deserve from the federal government and provincial government.

But I do believe decisions need to be made quickly. I think with a good council, a good strong council and mayor, I think we can accomplish that together.

And with our business community and all our partnerships, I believe that can happen.

Closing Statement

"Thunder Bay is at an important moment.

We can spend the next four years talking about what we did wrong or we can move forward and talk about what we can build together.

We have challenges: homelessness, mental health, addictions, aging infrastructure and affordability. But we must face these with honesty, compassion and determination.

Investment is happening. Mining and critical minerals are growing. Costco, Alstom and Pool 6. Our businesses are investing. Our young people are able to see a future here and call our community home again. It's time to look toward the horizon.

I believe in Thunder Bay. I believe in our people and I believe our best days are ahead of us.

I am optimistic and I am applying for this job as mayor.

Let's be bold enough to build this future together.

We're stronger together.

Peter Diedrich

Why Are You Running for Mayor?

Thunder Bay, 20 years, 20 long years, zero population growth, flatline economic growth and change can't wait.

Thunder Bay deserves leadership that listens, decides and gets it done.

For too long, urgent problems have not gotten done.

I call Thunder Bay my home and I won't be a spectator anymore.

Q1: Governance

Businesses tell us that delays and inconsistency in decision-making, erodes confidence in the City's commitment to get things done.

As Mayor, what specific changes would you champion to make City Hall more effective and accountable for delivering measurable results?

It's the Corporation of the City of Thunder Bay. As a corporation, we have clients and I think we've lost focus on what the clients need and want. City Hall and its management need to be redesigned with the client in mind. The property developer, the residential taxpayer, the new business coming to town, all of those folks and many others represent clients.

If we actually start with the client in mind and design it backwards into our processes, automate where we need to, and talk about it and be transparent about what we're doing, City Hall will change its way of doing business. It will be an easier place for people to do business. It'll be a better place for us to live.

To my mind, I commit to a quarterly town hall with the mayor every single quarter to talk about the changes and how we're doing.

Q2: Getting Things Done – Infrastructure

Thunder Bay faces a growing infrastructure gap, while businesses and residents rely on well-maintained roads, water and wastewater systems, transit and other core municipal services.

As Mayor, how would you work with Council and Administration to prioritize infrastructure investments, address the infrastructure gap, and ensure that major projects and City commitments are delivered on time, on budget and with measurable results?

First of all, I think we need to take an inventory of the infrastructure. What do we have? How is it rated? And what are the priorities by ward?

There have been reports that most of our infrastructure is actually poor or very poor. Infrastructure doesn't just include water pipes and roads. It also includes golf courses, libraries, transit and accessible transit. I look forward to working with the new faces on council to set priorities that haven't been set already.

Second of all, how do we close the gap? Thirty million dollars a year, right? In my platform, I've actually asked for two of the most important assets the city has to improve and increase their dividend. Twenty years ago the Tbaytel dividend was \$20 million. This year it's going to be around \$20 million, but that's not accounting for inflation. It would be closer to \$35 million. Similarly for Synergy North. We need to get creative about using our assets to solve that problem.

Q3: Getting Things Done - Financial Stewardship

Businesses and residents expect the City to deliver quality services and infrastructure while ensuring taxpayers receive value for every dollar spent.

As Mayor, what specific actions would you champion to improve spending efficiency, maintain sustainable and predictable taxation, and make Thunder Bay's commercial and industrial tax rates more competitive?

Let's talk about what that means: efficiency and effectiveness. Effectiveness is doing the right things. Efficiency is doing things right.

I think we have to, like infrastructure, take inventory of what services we decide as a city to deliver given our circumstances and our budget.

Number one, and we do that efficiently and we do it effectively.

Second, we have to choose what not to do. That's a hard decision. Part of that will be coming back to the electorate and asking them if that is acceptable.

Finally, I believe that we need a forcing mechanism which we've never had before. We need to force ourselves to be efficient. That's why I'm advocating for a 0% tax increase. We have the highest tax rate in Ontario, 1.86%. Let's not take it any higher.

Q4: Safe and Vibrant Communities

Businesses continue to identify community safety and social challenges as significant concerns across the city. If employees don't feel safe coming to work and customers don't feel comfortable visiting a business area, our economy suffers too.

As Mayor, what actions would you prioritize to improve community safety and address the social challenges of homelessness, addictions, and mental health?

There are two questions there. I'm going to go with the first one first. Safety.

I went to the Chief's briefing at the 55 Plus Centre about 15 days ago. The budget they were asking for last year was a 16% increase and they got 9%. They're not asking for nice-to-haves. I heard Aldo down the table say permanent satellite police offices in downtown cores. I will go further and put them in the new neighbourhoods as well. Create them as destinations people feel safe to go to.

When it comes to addictions and homelessness, we need to think about it as a process. A process where humans enter and humans depart. There are a lot of institutions involved in that process. We have to think about it as a concept of 'streets to stability.' Former Councillor Angus actually published a very good report from the District Social Services Administration Board

yesterday. That is exactly my platform: to get people from streets to stability through coordination.

Q5: Housing Affordability

Submitted the Thunder Bay Real Estate Board

Housing affordability is a key issue across the province and here in Thunder Bay. Research conducted by Abacus Data on behalf of the Ontario Real Estate Association has found that 88% of Ontarians consider improving housing affordability a high priority for their municipal government

Affordability typically relates to the purchase price of a home or monthly rent costs, but it is also affected by ongoing housing costs, such as financing options and property tax increases.

What does “affordable” mean to you? And What will you do about the municipal costs on housing to make housing more affordable in our municipality?

First of all, I'm extremely happy to be called unrealistic, to be honest. These are big, hairy, audacious goals that we have to achieve and I'm up for it.

Housing affordability has to be looked at in the life cycle of an individual. Not only individuals who are doing well, but those who need accessible housing as well. We only have to go down the road to Marathon and see that there is a tiny house development happening right now. Why aren't we doing it here? Thinking outside the box, yes we should.

When it comes to affordability and infrastructure, we need to build where the infrastructure already exists, in the downtown cores, not where we have to build new infrastructure. We need density. We need solutions for rental as well as ownership.

I talked to a woman yesterday and you've got to enter the housing market at your own set of economic circumstances, and it's up to us to provide those solutions.

Q6: Indigenous Procurement

Submitted by Anishnawbe Business Professionals Association

The Indigenous economy represents \$1.55 billion in regional output and offers a sustainable path from reactive crisis management to proactive economic growth. Peer Canadian cities like Saskatoon have successfully established a 5% Indigenous procurement target to boost local business.

As Mayor, will you commit to updating Thunder Bay's procurement policies to set a 5% Indigenous spend goal by 2027 and integrate Indigenous Procurement into municipal contracts?

I have a question. Why 5%? And why just there? What if the right number is 10%? We need to find that out.

I encourage all local businesses to be valid and capable procurement partners for the City of Thunder Bay. But why stop at procurement?

There are organizations out there that can create businesses that we can co-create businesses with. You see equity participation in new power transmission lines with Wataynikaneyap Power and the East-West Tie. When we think about accessing sources of capital, we can actually partner with First Nations on that inside the city limits. So let's expand the thought of building a better economy for us all.

I'm thinking about things that are right outside of the box and not limiting ourselves to random numbers.

Q7: Strong Mayor Powers

For the first time, Thunder Bay residents are electing a Mayor who will have Strong Mayor powers. Given the significance of these powers, voters require a clear answer on the following questions: If elected, which of these powers, if any, would you use, and what principles or circumstances would guide your decision to execute them?

First of all, I'd like to show everybody the list. Here's the list of strong mayor powers. It's a whole page long. It's important to be informed about what they are. I'm on record as saying no, I won't use them.

But I'm also on record as saying I think it's the job of a mayor to propose a budget. Not to say, 'Here it is, do it.' To say, 'Here's a champion budget that's come from city administration and here's a challenger budget that's coming from someone who has a point of view.'

It is not an erosion of democracy to have good debate, particularly in a situation where we have fiscal responsibility and fiscal challenges.

So will I use them? No. But I will propose a budget because I think that's the most important thing. A mayor has to have a point of view on how resource allocation relates to the strategy of the city.

Q8: Leadership

Community leadership often requires making difficult decisions when there are strongly differing views about the best path forward.

How would you approach those situations as Mayor, and what principles would guide how you build consensus while still ensuring that timely decisions are made and action is taken and not delayed?

At the end of the day on October 27th, there will be 13 new councillors and a mayor. Everyone will have been elected on a mandate that they proposed.

The most important thing to think about in terms of how we move to a collaborative agenda is this: Think about mayor and council as the chair and board of directors. Think of management as management.

The chair and board of directors will set that agenda based on looking for shared interests across all of our mandates. And in the best interests of the people of Thunder Bay because that's what everybody's running to be elected to do, build a better Thunder Bay.

My goal as the de facto chair of that discussion, and it could be a long working session, is in fact to look for those shared interests, document them and bring them to council with motions that could be acted on immediately.

Closing Statement

I'm going to go back to what I said at the very beginning today. We've had 20 years of no population growth and 20 years of a flat to declining economy. It's unacceptable.

That is not the experience we need to lead the city forward.

I am asking you to think about big goals. Ambitious goals. To be more ambitious than we ever have been. Think about developing the supply chain for the Ring of Fire. If we're not ready, someone else will be.

Think about Build Canada. We haven't incorporated any of that into our growth plans.

We have a port. We have institutions here that can generate incredible companies. We have great frequency. We can do it.

It requires collaboration. It requires thinking outside of the box. I've laid out the why, I've laid out the what and I've laid out the how. And I'm asking you to elect me to lead that.

Trevor Giertuga

Why are you running for Mayor?

I want to be mayor because I believe Thunder Bay is actually at a real turning point and I want to lead our city forward.

After 25 years on council, I know our community. I know and understand the challenges we face and I understand how municipal government works. I want to bring people together around a plan, smart growth, stronger infrastructure and safer streets.

I love Thunder Bay and its people. I'm not running to make promises. I'm running to bring results to the city.

Q1: Governance

Businesses tell us that delays and inconsistency in decision-making, erodes confidence in the City's commitment to get things done.

As Mayor, what specific changes would you champion to make City Hall more effective and accountable for delivering measurable results?

Well, we have 13 people there with 13 different ideas always.

We have taken steps. We've changed our governance model that we use at council to make our meetings more efficient. So we don't have a lot of flip-flops on issues.

It's a collaborative approach. Simply, the mayor is responsible for leading the team in the right direction.

Within our committees, we have our Quality of Life Committee and our Growth Committee.

Growth will move us forward.

Q2: Infrastructure

Thunder Bay faces a growing infrastructure gap, while businesses and residents rely on well-maintained roads, water and wastewater systems, transit and other core municipal services.

As Mayor, how would you work with Council and Administration to prioritize infrastructure investments, address the infrastructure gap, and ensure that major projects and City commitments are delivered on time, on budget and with measurable results?

First off, council has committed a 5% increase in capital contributions out of the budget into infrastructure, trying to address the infrastructure gap. This resulted from many years before I got to council. Eight or nine years we had a 0% tax increase. You can't sustain that. Now we're trying to catch up.

We're doing things like a three-year transformation of our transit system to improve infrastructure. We have our asset management plan that we didn't have before. It's all about smart spending and smart growth in our community. We have to build smart, but we also have to plan smart.

Q3: Financial Stewardship

Businesses and residents expect the City to deliver quality services and infrastructure while ensuring taxpayers receive value for every dollar spent.

As Mayor, what specific actions would you champion to improve spending efficiency, maintain sustainable and predictable taxation, and make Thunder Bay's commercial and industrial tax rates more competitive?

First off, again, I wouldn't sit here and champion a 0% tax increase either.

The question we have to ask ourselves is how do we pay for it? And what services do we have to cut to do that?

As far as commercial and industrial tax rates, the city over the years has adjusted our tax ratio to try to get under the provincial average and we've been reducing those tax rates over the years.

As far as growth, growth is our biggest thing. The more people we have paying taxes, the more we spread it across. For example, Central Avenue. We're opening up city-owned lands for over 1,200 homes. Those 1,200 homes will ease the pressure on existing taxpayers, existing businesses and existing industry.

If we continue that growth, smart growth, again planning properly like we're doing and opening up city-owned land, then we continue moving forward.

Q4: Safe and Vibrant Communities

Businesses continue to identify community safety and social challenges as significant concerns across the city. If employees don't feel safe coming to work and customers don't feel comfortable visiting a business area, our economy suffers too.

As Mayor, what actions would you prioritize to improve community safety and address the social challenges of homelessness, addictions, and mental health?

Well, certainly we can't instruct the police service what to do, but as mayor you do sit on the board.

I'd like to see us come back to our neighbourhood policing model that we had previously, where police officers are visible to children in the community and they are looked upon as friends.

Some of our statistics:

We pay 20% more than our southern counterparts for policing.

Our police budget has gone up 24% in the last five years.

Our crime level went up 18% last year while the federal average went down 2%.

A lot of this is from external pressures from outside our community.

Fifty-six percent of organized crime activity, using a five-year rolling average, has been from outside the community.

Sixty percent of people identified in the point-in-time homeless count were from outside the community.

We need to lobby the provincial and federal governments to bring more table money to Thunder Bay as a provincial service hub.

Q5: Housing Affordability

Submitted the Thunder Bay Real Estate Board

Housing affordability is a key issue across the province and here in Thunder Bay. Research conducted by Abacus Data on behalf of the Ontario Real Estate Association has found that 88% of Ontarians consider improving housing affordability a high priority for their municipal government

Affordability typically relates to the purchase price of a home or monthly rent costs, but it is also affected by ongoing housing costs, such as financing options and property tax increases.

What does “affordable” mean to you? And What will you do about the municipal costs on housing to make housing more affordable in our municipality?

What affordable means to me means a lot different things to many different people.

First, we need to celebrate our accomplishments. In 2024 we had 262 housing starts and in 2025 we had 243. We exceeded 143% of our provincial targets. We have our Mayor's Task Force on Housing.

For an example, of 1,000 units council just approved, 10% of those are going to be affordable housing. So 100 units of affordable housing, including two-bedroom units for people at approximately \$1,100 per month. That's important and that's what council has approved.

We've also approved a 1.1 tax ratio for new construction on apartment buildings. The multi-residential rate is about two right now and for new builds we dropped it to 1.1, the same as residential, to incentivize people to build housing and affordable housing.

Q6: Indigenous Procurement

Submitted by Anishnawbe Business Professionals Association

The Indigenous economy represents \$1.55 billion in regional output and offers a sustainable path from reactive crisis management to proactive economic growth. Peer Canadian cities like Saskatoon have successfully established a 5% Indigenous procurement target to boost local business.

As Mayor, will you commit to updating Thunder Bay's procurement policies (By-law 359-2024) to set a 5% Indigenous spend goal by 2027 and integrate Indigenous Procurement into municipal contracts?

Looking at our procurement policies, I'm not going to commit to a certain percentage. But I also commit to looking at local content within our policy, not just for Indigenous organizations but for local community businesses and investors.

We need to work jointly with First Nations when we approach federal and provincial governments. We do that through the Intergovernmental Affairs Committee, which I chair. Just in August we were in Ottawa talking to ministers about the LPH property. There are 140 acres there and the potential for 2,000 homes if we can secure the right of first refusal. Part of our initial proposal was a partnership with Indigenous organizations and an Indigenous education centre on that property. It's a collaborative approach and collaborative proposal.

Q7: Strong Mayor Powers

For the first time, Thunder Bay residents are electing a Mayor who will have Strong Mayor powers. Given the significance of these powers, voters require a clear answer on the following questions: If elected, which of these powers, if any, would you use, and what principles or circumstances would guide your decision to execute them?

First off, it's important that experience matters.

There is a resolution on the books right now that Mayor Boshcoff has designated certain strong mayor powers back to the city manager and council as it relates to city management and senior administration. First, you would need to rescind that resolution and notify the province that you're going to accept those powers back.

We can talk about scenarios, but if those scenarios were to come to light, all 13 council members would deal with the issue.

I don't intend to use strong mayor powers. Like Mayor Boshcoff, I intend to give them back to council. Leadership isn't about having all the power. It's about getting people to work together toward a common goal. That's what I'll be doing. I don't intend to use strong mayor powers at all.

Q8: Leadership

Community leadership often requires making difficult decisions when there are strongly differing views about the best path forward.

How would you approach those situations as Mayor, and what principles would guide how you build consensus while still ensuring that timely decisions are made and action is taken and not delayed?

My career is as a registered nurse and with that I've learned compassion, listening to people and how to make difficult decisions. I've carried that on to senior leadership roles within the provincial government and within St. Joseph's Care Group.

I'm prepared to have difficult conversations in the community. I believe we need to have difficult conversations to find solutions to those problems.

I've collaborated and I plan to work collaboratively with council. Like I said before, being mayor is not about having power. It's about leading that ship in the right direction and getting those oars all heading in the right direction. We do that through our growth plan.

We've received \$20 million from the provincial government toward Central Avenue. That will support approximately 1,200 homes and spread costs across our tax base.

Again, it's all about collaboration and working together as a team and that's what I'll do.

Closing Statement

Well, we heard a lot of promises today. We heard about freezing taxes. We heard about getting more money from Tbaytel. We heard talk about investment services and attracting investment. But the question is simple: how do we pay for it?

Plans without implementation are just promises. My plan is smart growth. You'll hear people talk about Costco, Pool 6 and other developments, but those are things this council has actually done. I'm going to continue doing what we've been doing successfully.

No mayor can do this alone. The mayor's role is to bring council, administration, business and the community together and implement a plan. After 25 years on city council, I understand City Hall and municipal government. I'm not asking you to give me two years to learn the job.

I won't bring empty promises. I'll bring a plan, experience, accountability and leadership.

Volker Kromm

Why are you running for Mayor?

I came to Thunder Bay to attend Lakehead University. I have five children. I love my ten grandchildren.

This is where my beginning was. I became immersed in the community. I was a change leader for industry and then I became the Executive Director of the RFDA. I took the organization from a basement operation to a regional leader in food security.

Now I want change because I feel I can build a team

Q1: Getting Things Done - Governance

Businesses tell us that delays and inconsistency in decision-making, erodes confidence in the City's commitment to get things done.

As Mayor, what specific changes would you champion to make City Hall more effective and accountable for delivering measurable results?

It does come down to team building and council has to work and operate under consensus. We have to have that very smooth, streamlined organization around the table. But we also have to work collaboratively with the administration. There are a lot of talented people up there that have spent a great deal of time putting processes in place to be able to interact with the community.

But I do agree that we do need to have some more interaction with the community. There has to be more working tables. I've been talking to a lot of organizations around the city. They say we need to have our voices heard. I think we can change or modify things and have administration design processes that the community can interact with.

City council needs to work together. Consensus building is really important. It's a team and I look forward to seeing who the electorate brings to the table.

Q2: Getting Things Done – Infrastructure

Thunder Bay faces a growing infrastructure gap, while businesses and residents rely on well-maintained roads, water and wastewater systems, transit and other core municipal services.

As Mayor, how would you work with Council and Administration to prioritize infrastructure investments, address the infrastructure gap, and ensure that major projects and City commitments are delivered on time, on budget and with measurable results?

Yes, we have to get around the table. We do have to review and we have to do the inventory. I'm sure administration has a really good handle on the priorities and the funding that has been set.

But the issue here is we have to look for opportunities. Are there better ways? Chatting with engineers, they said we could do this better, we could do that better. There are improvement opportunities that we can take a look at.

Do we have to advocate, like the rest of Canada, with the federal government and provincial government? Absolutely.

I look at filling the gap by also bringing in brand new industries. I've been chatting with a lot of groups and there are a lot of opportunities out there. They're looking to invest in Thunder Bay. To me, that means tax base. We can take a look at that and see how all these new industries can fit in. We can close that gap real quick.

Q3: Financial Stewardship

Businesses and residents expect the City to deliver quality services and infrastructure while ensuring taxpayers receive value for every dollar spent.

As Mayor, what specific actions would you champion to improve spending efficiency, maintain sustainable and predictable taxation, and make Thunder Bay's commercial and industrial tax rates more competitive?

A lot of those answers already exist within the community. I've listened to small contractors that would like to be able to offer services, but through planning and through bylaws there are impediments. In order to grow the community, we should be having an internal review, maybe an audit, to improve our efficiencies and improve the way we deliver our programs. That is part of it.

But I also believe in growing our city and bringing in new investments. Again, it is about making things possible.

I have no problem asking the provincial government and the federal government to get involved.

But that is where we need to internally take a look at where we're going as a city and prioritize some of these services.

There are a lot of things people are asking for, but we also have to make tough decisions.

Q4: Safe and Vibrant Communities

Businesses continue to identify community safety and social challenges as significant concerns across the city. If employees don't feel safe coming to work and customers don't feel comfortable visiting a business area, our economy suffers too.

As Mayor, what actions would you prioritize to improve community safety and address the social challenges of homelessness, addictions, and mental health?

It is a multifaceted problem. It is the safety side and it is the healthcare side. I think we have to take a look at it from both ends.

It is increasing neighbourhood safety. You have special officers, you have people in buildings, and we already do a lot of these things. But it's also engaging the people who live there.

It's neighbourhood watch programs. In my own neighbourhood we have our own little neighbourhood watch to help take care of that safety aspect.

I am sure that the police have their hands full. But if we can find ways to partner with the OPP, if we can partner with the RCMP and other special enforcement groups to bring those resources, because crime doesn't necessarily come from within Thunder Bay, it often comes from outside.

It's a matter of bringing everyone into the conversation, both neighbourhoods and the enforcement side.

Q5: Housing Affordability

Submitted the Thunder Bay Real Estate Board

Housing affordability is a key issue across the province and here in Thunder Bay. Research conducted by Abacus Data on behalf of the Ontario Real Estate Association has found that 88% of Ontarians consider improving housing affordability a high priority for their municipal government

Affordability typically relates to the purchase price of a home or monthly rent costs, but it is also affected by ongoing housing costs, such as financing options and property tax increases.

What does “affordable” mean to you? And What will you do about the municipal costs on housing to make housing more affordable in our municipality?

This is one of those situations where we have to understand and do an inventory of what's available to developers and to the city. There are places in Thunder Bay where we could develop.

I was chatting with an architect yesterday about developing what would be the first multi-generational, multi-income, carless neighbourhood. Can you imagine? We could solve a lot of social issues and bring people together.

We should also think about developing neighbourhoods for young families and for seniors that need to downsize. Not everybody wants to go into a large complex. But if we take a look at these concepts that already exist around the world, we can probably open up a lot of family units.

Q6: Indigenous Procurement

Submitted by Anishnawbe Business Professionals Association

The Indigenous economy represents \$1.55 billion in regional output and offers a sustainable path from reactive crisis management to proactive economic growth. Peer Canadian cities like Saskatoon have successfully established a 5% Indigenous procurement target to boost local business.

As Mayor, will you commit to updating Thunder Bay's procurement policies to set a 5% Indigenous spend goal by 2027 and integrate Indigenous Procurement into municipal contracts?

I agree that we should be thinking slightly in a different direction. I'm working with a group and we're having conversations with investors, policy analysts and Indigenous leaders from three provinces plus the territories. We're looking at new ideas.

I don't think there should be limits in terms of what the procurement should be.

We're looking at a hydrogen pyrolysis plant. We're looking at a food distribution site. Airships are coming, that's why we need the hydrogen. There are a lot of projects being driven by Indigenous populations who want to take a greater role in our economy. Plus we have investors. I want to bring them all to the table.

There are a lot of ideas out there. The LPH property is one of those opportunities.

Q7: Strong Mayor Powers

For the first time, Thunder Bay residents are electing a Mayor who will have Strong Mayor powers. Given the significance of these powers, voters require a clear answer on the following questions: If elected, which of these powers, if any, would you use, and what principles or circumstances would guide your decision to execute them?

Consensus is what this city council needs to be built on and building a team is really critical. That is my role as potential mayor. Would I use strong mayor powers? As I've always said, they are a last resort.

Is it something in your toolbox? Yes. There are a whole bunch of things that strong mayor powers involve, so you can't simply wash them away and say they can't be used. If you run into a logjam and you have to break the logjam because the city is in a stalemate, then maybe something has to be done.

Would I use them? That would only be in consultation with others because otherwise we're operating much in the same way as the folks south of the border.

Q8: Leadership

Community leadership often requires making difficult decisions when there are strongly differing views about the best path forward.

How would you approach those situations as Mayor, and what principles would guide how you build consensus while still ensuring that timely decisions are made and action is taken and not delayed?

Consensus building is not easy. When I watch televised debates at city council, I realize that when the complexity of issues comes forward, not everybody around that table has the background, the skill sets or the experience to be able to make wise decisions.

If I was a coach, I would bring in resources and training. People need to be educated. I never knew much about addiction and I didn't know much about property management, but there are people in our community that can be brought forward to train us.

Administration does a good job of teaching councillors about process. But I think what we need is more background information. We need people who can inform, advise and educate councillors so that we can make wise decisions. Bring people in and educate them.

Closing Statement

This is an opportunity for me. I have been in this community for a very long time and I've had the experience of building, growing and seeing this city. We've had four paper machines, paper mills and three sawmills. We've lost many of those things and it's time to reverse that.

Building the community is really important. My work with the RDA was a learning experience. It was about working with people, working with teams, working with governments and First Nations. Those individuals bring a lot of resources to the table.

I want to be a team builder.

I want to be a coach for the new council.

I want to help keep this community changing and moving forward.

Aldo Ruberto

Why are you running for mayor?

"Why I'm running for mayor. Very simple. I live here, my family lives here, my kids. I have children. I invested in this community not just by putting my name forward for councillor, etc., but also with my money. I bought businesses. I believe in this city and I believe that Thunder Bay has a lot to offer.

Q1: Governance

Businesses tell us that delays and inconsistency in decision-making, erodes confidence in the City's commitment to get things done.

As Mayor, what specific changes would you champion to make City Hall more effective and accountable for delivering measurable results?

First of all, the mayor has to be visible, present and accessible. We have to have a smoother process for development and building. There can't be any obstruction. We need councillors to be accessible to respond to calls, to respond to emails and they should be the ambassadors for people coming to the city. They should also be the navigators to help businesses and anybody else that's coming here to help them navigate any type of issue.

So I want them more active and obviously they are more active. Buy local. Gotta start buying local as much as possible and supporting the local economy.

When it comes to safety and security, I'd like to see some police presence in the core areas. Satellite presences permanently infilling. You talk about infilling. The core areas need to be infilled. There should be more incentives driven so that we develop the downtown cores. Right now, incentives allow development anywhere in the city.

Q2: Infrastructure

Thunder Bay faces a growing infrastructure gap, while businesses and residents rely on well-maintained roads, water and wastewater systems, transit and other core municipal services.

As Mayor, how would you work with Council and Administration to prioritize infrastructure investments, address the infrastructure gap, and ensure that major projects and City commitments are delivered on time, on budget and with measurable results?

First of all, you have to have the right information. Thirty-five percent of our roads are in good shape or very good shape. Thirty-five percent are in bad or very bad shape. Sewer is about 60% in rough shape.

So getting the right information is important. Second, you have to have better quality control and what I mean by that is you have to have inspectors on site evaluating, looking, watching the projects. It has to be developed and making sure it's been done properly.

Standards - our road standards right now are not as good as the highway. We have to increase the standards of our main roads so we don't have to repair them every second year, every third year and fourth year.

The highway has more traffic than we do and they're not repaired as much as we are.

Frontline - recruiting the right people. We need mechanics, we need people that can fix the machinery and know how to operate the machinery. In order to do that we have to recruit. And how do we recruit? By making Thunder Bay one of the best places to come live, work and bring up a family.

We also have to pay the correct price. We can't pay high-skilled people very little.

Q3: Financial Stewardship

Businesses and residents expect the City to deliver quality services and infrastructure while ensuring taxpayers receive value for every dollar spent.

As Mayor, what specific actions would you champion to improve spending efficiency, maintain sustainable and predictable taxation, and make Thunder Bay's commercial and industrial tax rates more competitive?

You can't keep raising taxes or cutting service. That's not going to work anymore. What you have to do is think outside the box and start bringing new ideas here.

Quick example, we have a methane plant at the landfill. The wells aren't working. Let's get that working. Build a greenhouse beside it. Use the gas from the landfill to get the greenhouse going. Hire people from Ontario Works, etc.

You need people and you are going to attract them here. You got to attract businesses. How do you do that? Quality of life. Number one issue all the time. People can work and play anywhere. We've got to make this the best possible place.

Grants. You want business to survive and expand and grow. Let's look at them accessing grants and what I mean by that is hire specialists that work with them. So that businesses can grow, can expand, can build.

Look at the world. See what the rest of the world is doing. We don't have to reinvent the wheel.

Finally ask businesses what they need. Ask them what we can do to help them.

Q4: Safe and Vibrant Communities

Businesses continue to identify community safety and social challenges as significant concerns across the city. If employees don't feel safe coming to work and customers don't feel comfortable visiting a business area, our economy suffers too.

As Mayor, what actions would you prioritize to improve community safety and address the social challenges of homelessness, addictions, and mental health?

First of all, the majority of crime and homelessness is because of addictions.

So one of the things that we have to do is get a plan, a complete plan. We have parts of the plan. We need housing, we need addiction rehabilitation centres, we need training and education, we need follow up. You have to lobby the government to give us the funding.

We are a regional centre. We're not a city, we're a regional centre. We take care of all Northern Ontario, so we need the funding to do this. They did it with the jail. They gave us \$1.3 billion to

deal with a jail. Why don't they give us \$1.3 billion to deal with the addiction problem so we can help everyone?

Once you deal with that, crime will go substantially down.

Other things you can do, lobby the government for tougher laws and make it easier for the police to prosecute people.

Satellite stations, we need that.

We have to work with the hospital to relieve those five police cars that are there all the time.

Zero tolerance is very important to me.

Q5: Housing Affordability

Submitted the Thunder Bay Real Estate Board

Housing affordability is a key issue across the province and here in Thunder Bay. Research conducted by Abacus Data on behalf of the Ontario Real Estate Association has found that 88% of Ontarians consider improving housing affordability a high priority for their municipal government

Affordability typically relates to the purchase price of a home or monthly rent costs, but it is also affected by ongoing housing costs, such as financing options and property tax increases.

What does “affordable” mean to you? And What will you do about the municipal costs on housing to make housing more affordable in our municipality?

First of all, it's very difficult for the city to control what the private sector does. The private sector dictates what the cost is of housing, materials, etc.

So what we could do is sell surplus land that the city has at a reasonable cost, or no cost, to people that are looking at developing low-income housing or housing for people that can't afford their own personal house.

We could look at creating a community improvement area. I'll give you an example. There was an empty lot that got developed on the waterfront. They did not have to pay taxes for ten years. They had a ten-year tax break. Can we still do that? We did that years ago.

Look at cooperatives. Cooperatives are a great way for people to get into housing because they pay according to their income over a period of time. It's a very nice way to get people into the market.

Q6: Indigenous Procurement

Submitted by Anishnawbe Business Professionals Association

The Indigenous economy represents \$1.55 billion in regional output and offers a sustainable path from reactive crisis management to proactive economic growth. Peer Canadian cities like Saskatoon have successfully established a 5% Indigenous procurement target to boost local business.

As Mayor, will you commit to updating Thunder Bay's procurement policies to set a 5% Indigenous spend goal by 2027 and integrate Indigenous Procurement into municipal contracts?

First of all, if you're the mayor, you're not going to be able to do that by yourself. You need a council to vote with you.

I don't think I can commit to that because I want to commit to the community. Indigenous people are part of our community. They're not separate. They're already contributing \$1.5 billion to us. They're already contributing hundreds of millions in terms of our economy. So we should treat everybody the same and make the same opportunity.

What we can commit to is making the city better for all businesses. If we're going to do anything for procurement, it's for everybody and give everybody the same opportunities. Indigenous people are good people. They're working hard, they're doing good, they're opening businesses.

Q7: Strong Mayor Powers

For the first time, Thunder Bay residents are electing a Mayor who will have Strong Mayor powers. Given the significance of these powers, voters require a clear answer on the following questions: If elected, which of these powers, if any, would you use, and what principles or circumstances would guide your decision to execute them?

First of all, strong mayor powers are just another tool in the toolbox to be used when necessary, usually in a critical situation.

Give an example. The CEO hires a good friend to be director of a department and let's say that person's not doing a good job. He's not going to fire that person because they're friends. The mayor has to step in. But he wouldn't make a decision without collaboratively talking to whoever needs to be talked to, whether it's other councillors or administrators.

Strong mayor powers are there as a tool to be used if necessary, but critical situations are the only times when it should be used.

Q8: Leadership

Community leadership often requires making difficult decisions when there are strongly differing views about the best path forward.

How would you approach those situations as Mayor, and what principles would guide how you build consensus while still ensuring that timely decisions are made and action is taken and not delayed?

After 16 years in politics, 35 years in business and 37 years in property development, I've accumulated numerous decisions.

You make decisions by getting information, all the information from everywhere possible.

You need consensus by listening to people, asking the right questions and then making the decision.

A lot of people get all the information. It takes forever to make a decision. In business, etc, you have to pivot on a dime if you have to.

There's one overriding question that I always put in my head when I was making a decision: What's best for all? Not for this person, not for that person. What's best for the city as a whole?

Closing Statement

I mentioned I had 16 years of politics on various boards and committees. I learned to work with people and learned to solve problems. I learned to put my heart and soul into the city. I just didn't sit on these committees and boards. I was active and that's important and it built up relationships in the city. And I know that if I was elected mayor, I can go to these people and ask them for help and they will help.

I lived in Germany for two years and I lived in Toronto for a couple of years. I know what it's like to live somewhere else. I know what that has to offer us. I choose Thunder Bay to live here. I choose from Thunder Bay to invest in. I love this city and I love its people. That's one of the biggest things we have here is our human capital. We have the most volunteers. We have the best donators. We have some of the best coaches in the country living here. I want to live here, I want to die here and I want to die with a smile on my face.

Wolfgang Shoor

Why Are You Running for Mayor?

The reason I'm running, we've seen changes here in Thunder Bay for over 38 years.

It was a very vibrant city. It slipped into a place where there is a lot of crime and rude behaviour out in the street. You can barely go anywhere. (time expired)

Q1: Governance

Businesses tell us that delays and inconsistency in decision-making, erodes confidence in the City's commitment to get things done.

As Mayor, what specific changes would you champion to make City Hall more effective and accountable for delivering measurable results?

The first thing that I do, the mayor must have the authority to be accountable. That is the first thing.

The next thing you need to do is review, restore and reform if necessary. You need to restore authority over the city manager because the powers of the mayor have been redirected through the city manager and that should be restored through the strategic organizational authority of the mayor.

Take responsibility for the budget.

Q2: Infrastructure

Thunder Bay faces a growing infrastructure gap, while businesses and residents rely on well-maintained roads, water and wastewater systems, transit and other core municipal services.

As Mayor, how would you work with Council and Administration to prioritize infrastructure investments, address the infrastructure gap, and ensure that major projects and City commitments are delivered on time, on budget and with measurable results?

To me it is very elementary. You crunch numbers. Somebody designs it. You take a look at how they build it.

What will it cost? How do you maintain it? How do you make it safer? How do you improve the quality if necessary? And how do you complete the project on time? Very simple.

Because I have a construction background, I have the discipline to take a look at large jobs. Nothing to it. You just fix it. That's the way it will be done.

My education and my experience match what I just told you

Q3: Financial Stewardship

Businesses and residents expect the City to deliver quality services and infrastructure while ensuring taxpayers receive value for every dollar spent.

As Mayor, what specific actions would you champion to improve spending efficiency, maintain sustainable and predictable taxation, and make Thunder Bay's commercial and industrial tax rates more competitive?

The first thing that needs to happen is to select the team, an efficient team. If they are local, they'll have their parents here who have coached them along. Keep our children at home.

My son, for example, has gone to Winnipeg, he's in Calgary, he's all over the place. I have worked everywhere in Canada to apply the talents and education that I have. Let's keep it here. Massage the young generation to stay home.

So now you have continuation of a family business. Like Tom Jones and Sons, I remember it was my first carpenter's job.

Keep our children at home and nourish the talent that they have that comes from the family and from within.

Q4: Safe and Vibrant Communities

Businesses continue to identify community safety and social challenges as significant concerns across the city. If employees don't feel safe coming to work and customers don't feel comfortable visiting a business area, our economy suffers too.

As Mayor, what actions would you prioritize to improve community safety and address the social challenges of homelessness, addictions, and mental health?

Many of you don't know I have done what is called human factors engineering, amongst many of the other talents I have.

I have engaged in a 30-year research project establishing why people become addicted to drugs and how they become homeless. It's on my website. I have published in 51 countries.

What has to happen is that we have a lot of passion for people that are addicted. However, the passion should not overlook the responsibilities that people have as citizens. Yes, they have rights, but also obligations. We need to apply the law. I think that would be the key.

Q5: Housing Affordability

Submitted the Thunder Bay Real Estate Board

Housing affordability is a key issue across the province and here in Thunder Bay. Research conducted by Abacus Data on behalf of the Ontario Real Estate Association has found that 88% of Ontarians consider improving housing affordability a high priority for their municipal government

Affordability typically relates to the purchase price of a home or monthly rent costs, but it is also affected by ongoing housing costs, such as financing options and property tax increases.

What does “affordable” mean to you? And What will you do about the municipal costs on housing to make housing more affordable in our municipality?

That's a real good question. Some years ago when I studied regional planning at the University of Waterloo, the word was create a village vision. Build communities and start with that.

And then when you have that, the house doesn't have to be 6,000 square feet. Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation standards indicate that an 896-square-foot, two-bedroom house can be beautiful. You don't need 1,600 square feet or three times that.

Build houses that are affordable and, of course, they will be matched with the earnings of people. Affordability comes by increasing the earning threshold of the people that live within the community. That in itself will create affordability.

Q6: Indigenous Procurement

Submitted by Anishnawbe Business Professionals Association

The Indigenous economy represents \$1.55 billion in regional output and offers a sustainable path from reactive crisis management to proactive economic growth. Peer Canadian cities like Saskatoon have successfully established a 5% Indigenous procurement target to boost local business.

As Mayor, will you commit to updating Thunder Bay's procurement policies to set a 5% Indigenous spend goal by 2027 and integrate Indigenous Procurement into municipal contracts?

That's a real good question and it will affect everybody here in the city.

One of my studies was Indigenous Studies. They're part of the world. They're part of us. So why not help wherever you can? If it is 5%, it may not be enough. You may need more. Do an evaluation. Do a critical factor cost analysis and see where that will take you. It may be more.

My son is starting a job in Winnipeg. He's building a \$65 million casino funded by Indigenous people. We can do all that right here in Thunder Bay. We have a lot of Indigenous people here. We need to work together. Together we make it better for all of us, for everybody.

Q7: Strong Mayor Powers

For the first time, Thunder Bay residents are electing a Mayor who will have Strong Mayor powers. Given the significance of these powers, voters require a clear answer on the following questions: If elected, which of these powers, if any, would you use, and what principles or circumstances would guide your decision to execute them?

In relationship to the strong mayor powers, Trevor mentioned already that somewhere they were ceded. However, the first thing to do is get those back so that you start with a clean slate. You want to control and restore the power that the mayor has.

However, it's not a breakdown of the democratic process. Under the strong mayor powers the mayor has the ability to veto. However, if council, which is elected, doesn't like the veto, providing two-thirds of councillors agree, they can reverse that. So it's not a forever thing.

Q8: Leadership

Community leadership often requires making difficult decisions when there are strongly differing views about the best path forward.

How would you approach those situations as Mayor, and what principles would guide how you build consensus while still ensuring that timely decisions are made and action is taken and not delayed?

Collaboration is a good question. The complexities of society as it is today, the multiculturalism, all the different backgrounds that we have.

As a human factors engineer, for example, I studied this at university. What you would do is let the law of probability prevail.

You already know pathways through negotiations where the bottlenecks are, and you work on those early on. You work on those very early on. Assuming that everybody has the best interest of the project or of the community at heart, consensus will be self-perpetuating. It will build itself.

Closing Statement

It has gone well and I'm well educated. I studied at the University of Waterloo, the University of Guelph and Lakehead University. I studied law. I studied engineering, architecture, biomechanics and ergonomics.

From an international perspective, I am very well developed and still developing every day.

In terms of experience, I was involved in building somewhere around a thousand houses over the years. I've built commercial buildings, institutional buildings and worked on mines. All that information is stored not only in my head. That's why you have computers and notes.

I think I will be excellent.

Doug Vincent

Why Are You Running for Mayor?

Because I'm a leader who believes in change. Change for the better. Transformative change and not a return to the status quo.

Because I'm a leader who has demonstrated 40 years of public service work, including informing ten councils.

I'm a proven leader with the knowledge and skills to build the strongest, cohesive council. Our future matters.

Q1: Governance

Businesses tell us that delays and inconsistency in decision-making, erodes confidence in the City's commitment to get things done.

As Mayor, what specific changes would you champion to make City Hall more effective and accountable for delivering measurable results?

I would make sure that we have a very streamlined process at one point of contact to start things rolling. You don't need to be bounced from department to department.

I know lots of work has been done in this regard, but it needs to involve the people in this room and outside that want to pursue something with the city. Have meaningful consultations once and not five different times.

Q2: Infrastructure

Thunder Bay faces a growing infrastructure gap, while businesses and residents rely on well-maintained roads, water and wastewater systems, transit and other core municipal services.

As Mayor, how would you work with Council and Administration to prioritize infrastructure investments, address the infrastructure gap, and ensure that major projects and City commitments are delivered on time, on budget and with measurable results?

First, we need to manage our money and direct certain funds into investment to help support infrastructure growth.

We need to plan and execute, not just plan. We need to execute and start a reliable annual stream of improvements and replacements. Marry those with development proposals that are in an area so that we can accomplish development and infrastructure replacement together.

We can look at subdivisions that want to give us a fifty-year price of taking over investments and infrastructure and perhaps have them start to look at replacing existing infrastructure as a no net loss.

Finally, we need to lobby the provincial and federal government. This is a long-standing problem that is nationwide.

Q3: Financial Stewardship

Businesses and residents expect the City to deliver quality services and infrastructure while ensuring taxpayers receive value for every dollar spent.

As Mayor, what specific actions would you champion to improve spending efficiency, maintain sustainable and predictable taxation, and make Thunder Bay's commercial and industrial tax rates more competitive?

First, we need to grow the city. We need to attract business. Taxation rates will even out if we have more businesses in the city.

I'd love to attract businesses through sections of the Municipal Act that allow for bonusing to a greater degree for affordable housing, but also sections that permit bonusing outside of the legal requirements that allow us to have businesses invest and take control of a for-profit enterprise if the municipality is also involved.

A good example would be Waterfront Parkade. If we allowed the company to build rental housing or any kind of housing on top of that while maintaining our parking underneath, we would have greater investment and we would have greater taxation.

Q4: Safe and Vibrant Communities

Businesses continue to identify community safety and social challenges as significant concerns across the city. If employees don't feel safe coming to work and customers don't feel comfortable visiting a business area, our economy suffers too.

As Mayor, what actions would you prioritize to improve community safety and address the social challenges of homelessness, addictions, and mental health?

Everybody needs to feel safe in their community and people don't here.

We need to support the police. I'm not an expert on policing, but I think they need more bodies on the street and I would support that however that happens.

I've proven when I was in municipal enforcement that a restructuring review of everything, to make things efficient citywide, would probably provide the funding to expand the new project with the special constables. I'd like to see the police in the downtown cores, whether that's a return to an old model or establishing something new.

I'd like to see camera systems expanded and expanded foot patrols.

I'd also like to see the police get support from the province and the federal government by way of prosecutions. The homeless and addiction problem is great. We need to lobby upstream governments for that.

Q5: Housing Affordability

Submitted the Thunder Bay Real Estate Board

Housing affordability is a key issue across the province and here in Thunder Bay. Research conducted by Abacus Data on behalf of the Ontario Real Estate Association has found that 88% of Ontarians consider improving housing affordability a high priority for their municipal government

Affordability typically relates to the purchase price of a home or monthly rent costs, but it is also affected by ongoing housing costs, such as financing options and property tax increases.

What does “affordable” mean to you? And What will you do about the municipal costs on housing to make housing more affordable in our municipality?

We need to think outside the box. We have a lot of unused properties here. We have tax sale properties that could be immediately turned over to affordable housing. Those don't need to be converted to pay off an \$8,000 tax bill or whatever it is.

The Province of Ontario has many escheated properties here, ones where there's no ownership and they fall into provincial hands. I've experienced that in the past. There are large structures that could be turned over to the city and then made available.

We could also use the bonusing provisions to attract not-for-profit and for-profit development, with council approval. There are tax rulings and court cases that have allowed us a lot more freedom to look at other options. We need to think outside the box.

Q6: Indigenous Procurement

Submitted by Anishnawbe Business Professionals Association

The Indigenous economy represents \$1.55 billion in regional output and offers a sustainable path from reactive crisis management to proactive economic growth. Peer Canadian cities like Saskatoon have successfully established a 5% Indigenous procurement target to boost local business.

As Mayor, will you commit to updating Thunder Bay's procurement policies to set a 5% Indigenous spend goal by 2027 and integrate Indigenous Procurement into municipal contracts?

I would certainly review any policy that sets limits or ranges for this. I think it's actually more of a token gesture. I think true reconciliation means we need to do more for Indigenous people.

The LPH site, the province has said they don't have any use for it. We've said we want to buy it. Why don't we suggest that the province just give it back to the people who originally owned it and let them develop it? They have pools of money.

Missanabie Cree, for example, are about to open an evacuation centre for Indigenous people to use during summer evacuations. Something very similar could be created here.

We need to look outside the box. We need to get things done. Indigenous people are core to our future.

Q7: Strong Mayor Powers

For the first time, Thunder Bay residents are electing a Mayor who will have Strong Mayor powers. Given the significance of these powers, voters require a clear answer on the following questions: If elected, which of these powers, if any, would you use, and what principles or circumstances would guide your decision to execute them?

Forty years as an enforcement officer. I was given lots of power. I was given tools to use. It didn't mean I had to use them.

Strong mayor powers were given to municipalities for a purpose: to assist in achieving the province's goal of growth. That's it.

We have at least five new council members going to sit on this council. We have no idea how council will congeal, how they'll get along, and how you can reach consensus. My job would be to find consensus at all times for all things.

But there may be occasions where we need quick decisions and we have a holdout. Someone's not going to make a decision or there's a small issue that's going to stall things for the city. The city needs to move forward. It needs strong leadership to make decisions. And I'm sure that we can make decisions with council.

Q8: Leadership

Community leadership often requires making difficult decisions when there are strongly differing views about the best path forward.

How would you approach those situations as Mayor, and what principles would guide how you build consensus while still ensuring that timely decisions are made and action is taken and not delayed?

To get consensus, you need to identify the issues. You hear input from everyone. You openly explore options. You have discussion. You encourage healthy debate. And you set a deadline when a decision has to be made. Find consensus or make that decision.

It has to be timely. That's part of a leadership role, to make decisions.

When all else fails, go to the end. Do what you have to do. Make sure everybody has had their input and their discussions and then you make a decision.

Closing Statement

Thunder Bay is poised to be the central star of the new Canadian economy.

The days of a forestry-based economy have faded. Many of the towns have gone quiet. The silver lining is coming. Mining activity is ramping up. The Ring of Fire is active.

We need meaningful engagement and inclusion of the Indigenous stewards of the land to move that forward. I'm comfortable that's going to happen with strong leadership.

All Canadians are about to witness the transformation of energy sectors, all needing distribution coast to coast to coast. Thunder Bay needs to grow exponentially, grow intelligently and with fiscal prudence as we get ready for our role at the centre of it all.

The city needs intuitive leadership, new ideas, new energy and a clear can-do focus to get things done.

It's imperative that we champion homelessness, support those suffering from addiction and other challenges, expand affordable housing and demand that other levels of government come to our assistance.