



GREEN ORILLIA 2026 ALL-CANDIDATES QUESTIONNAIRE

This questionnaire was created by a group of local community organizers with [Green Orillia](#), with questions contributed by 12 local community organizations. We also crowdsourced question ideas through multiple call-outs to the broader community. It is intended to bring together a broad range of local perspectives and give Orillia residents a clearer picture of where candidates stand on issues that will shape the community over the next four years and beyond.

This is the second municipal election questionnaire produced by Green Orillia. During the 2022 Municipal Election, Green Orillia crowdsourced 32 questions with contributions from approximately a dozen local organizations and put them to all 30 registered candidates. All candidates were given one month to respond, and the completed responses were published publicly, giving residents a month to review candidates' answers before Election Day. 15 of the 30 candidates completed the questionnaire, including seven of the nine candidates who were ultimately elected ([see here](#)).

Candidates will have one month, from August 26 to September 26, 2026, to review and respond to this questionnaire. All submitted responses will then be published unedited and in their entirety on the Green Orillia website, social media platforms and email newsletter, which reaches nearly 1,000 engaged local subscribers. The community organizations that contributed questions will also be encouraged to share the completed questionnaire with their networks, which we estimate could collectively reach more than 5,000 community members. This will give residents approximately one month to review candidates' responses before Election Day on October 26, 2026.

This questionnaire covers a range of topics, many of which are ongoing Council items, and all are likely to arise during the next term of Council. In the interest of transparency and accountability, constituents must know where their candidates and future mayor and councillors stand on the given issues before they are elected. Despite there being 32 questions in this questionnaire, there are still many issues left unaddressed and questions we did not include for brevity. At the end, candidates have an opportunity to add additional thoughts.

Green Orillia will not edit, grade, judge or offer commentary on individual candidate responses. Candidates' responses—or lack thereof—will speak for themselves.

QUESTIONS

1. Please introduce yourself and why you believe you are qualified to serve on council:

My name is David Campbell. I am just completing my second term as a Councillor in Ward 1. During my two terms on Council (and before in some cases), I have served on the Economic Recovery Task Force as well as the following Committees: Orillia Food, Farmer's Market, Recreation, Transit, Active Transportation, Grants, Selection, Sustainable Orillia Board of Directors and Downtown Orillia BIA Board of Directors. I was born and raised in Orillia. I live in Ward 1 with my Wife Nancy (who works at OSMH). Our daughter Emily recently completed her master's in biomedical engineering at McGill University and now resides in Montreal. I can often be found walking or cycling in Ward 1 and throughout the City. I work for a neighbouring Municipality, so I have a very good understanding of how a Municipality operates. Before first being elected, I took a course from the Association of Municipalities of Ontario in Municipal Government to ensure I was ready for the job. I take this job very seriously. It's not a political game to me. In fact, I often say the worst thing about being a politician is the politics.

2. AI DECLARATION: Please state whether you have used AI to answer this questionnaire and for your campaign - in what ways and why? Describe your relationship to AI and its role in municipal government.

I have not and will not use AI to answer questions during this campaign. As an I.T. professional, I can certainly see the value in AI as a tool. However, I have also seen firsthand that it can be less than accurate and still has a lot of maturing to do. Having said that, I also feel that it is very important for Government to put safeguards in place for the use of AI in general.

3. Food affects everyone in Orillia. It influences whether families can afford groceries, children have access to healthy food, local businesses can thrive, and residents can easily reach food programs, markets, and how we care for the land, water, and natural resources that support food production. The [Orillia & Area Food Strategy](#), endorsed by Council in 2026, provides a community-developed roadmap for strengthening food access, local food production, food literacy, food infrastructure, and the local economy. If elected, what is one specific action you would champion during your first term to help advance the Orillia & Area Food Strategy, and how would you measure success? *Question submitted by [OA Food Strategy](#)*

ORILLIA AND AREA

Food Strategy

I feel very strongly that education is the first step in addressing this issue. When I was young, every other house on my street had a backyard vegetable garden. That just doesn't seem to be the case anymore. So younger people aren't learning the skills necessary to grow their own food. A community greenhouse would be an ideal place to not only teach these skills but to grow food that then could be donated to those in need throughout the City.

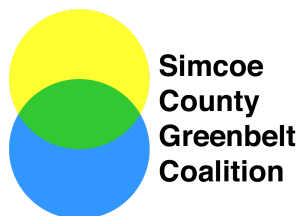
4. Ontario's Strong Mayor legislation gives the Mayor powers that differ significantly from those of other members of Council, including the ability to propose certain by-laws that can pass with the support of more than one-third of Council, veto certain Council-approved by-laws, and propose and veto amendments to the municipal budget. Do you support these expanded powers? If elected, what safeguards or changes would you push to ensure they do not undermine the Council's role, public participation, or democratic accountability?

During this term of Council, the democratic process in Orillia (and across the Province) took a major hit with the implementation of Strong Mayor Powers. It used to be that Orillians selected 9 members of Council who each had an equal say at the Council table with one vote each. SMPs have changed that equation dramatically. It is important to note that, as per the Municipal Act, Council does not run the City. The CAO runs the City. Council sets policy and it's the job of the CAO to ensure staff follows that policy. Traditionally, the CAO reported to Council and was held to account by Council. SMPs also changed this dramatically. As the CAO now reports only to the Mayor (as the Mayor is the only one with the power to hire/fire that position). This can create a situation where the CAO only needs to ensure that the Mayor is happy in order to keep their job. That can result in the Mayor, in effect, running the City. So when issues are brought to the CAO by Ward Councillors, ultimately it could be the Mayor who decides if those issues are dealt with. If, for example, that Ward Councillor hasn't been voting the way the Mayor would like. It is possible that any issues they bring up might not be dealt with. If re-elected, I will continue to fight against SMPs and continue to do this job with dignity and respect. Strong Mayor Powers are entirely undemocratic and simply should not exist. I will also strongly suggest that our next Mayor reject the use of them and delegate decision making powers to where they traditionally have been.

5. What is your position on the proposed transfer of the Lakehead University lands for the new Orillia Soldiers' Memorial Hospital? Do you support the City proceeding with the land transfer and related agreements? If elected, what would you do to ensure that the deal protects the public interest, provides appropriate value and accountability for publicly owned assets, and supports timely delivery of a new hospital and university expansion?

The property in question was donated to Lakehead University by the City of Orillia. Lakehead, in turn, has made a deal with OSMH that would not only provide a site for a new hospital, but needed funds to Lakehead to allow for their expansion IN ORILLIA. Basic safeguards that need to be in place to protect the City are that the land can ONLY be used for a new hospital and that the money from the sale can ONLY be used at the Lakehead campus IN ORILLIA. Of course there are many other details that need to be included, but those are the most important principles.

6. Complete communities are an urban and rural planning concept that aims to meet the basic needs of residents through integrated land-use planning, transportation planning and community design. As Orillia [implements its new Official Plan and plans for growth through its boundary expansion](#), how would you support the development of complete communities while accommodating appropriate intensification, a range of housing types and densities, and efficient use of existing and new infrastructure? What ideas do you have to ensure that growth in both the existing urban area and newly added lands creates complete, connected and sustainable communities? *Question supported by [Simcoe County Greenbelt Coalition](#), [Stop Sprawl Orillia Campaign](#), and [Lakehead University Student Union](#)*



Planning is one of the most important and, often times, most frustrating part of my job as a Councillor. Our local Official Plan has to conform to the Provincial Policy Statement. Therefore, a lot of these decisions are made at the Provincial level and it is up to us as a Municipality to work within those regulations and, certainly, express concerns loudly to the Province when we don't agree with those policies. However, what we can do at the Municipal level, is try to find a balance between intensification and not completely disrupting the character of existing neighbourhoods. One way of achieving that is through our new Official Plan. By setting out specific densification goals as well as maximum height restrictions.

7. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada issued [94 Calls to Action](#) to address the legacy of residential schools and advance reconciliation with Indigenous peoples. What specific actions would you take as a municipal councillor to advance reconciliation in Orillia? Please identify at least three Calls to Action that you believe the City can meaningfully advance, and explain what you would do to work toward their implementation.

Though the majority of the 94 Calls to Action fall outside of Municipal jurisdiction, there are still meaningful ways that Orillia can contribute to reconciliation. I believe we should start with education. All members of the new term of Council should be required to take part in Truth and Reconciliation training. That is just a starting point. Ensuring the new Council knows the facts. Then, through organizations such as the Orillia Museum of Art and History, the City can offer educational opportunities for all of it's residents. Further, as a City, we should highlight our true Indigenous history. That history should include the many accomplishments of our Indigenous neighbours (in sport, business and academia, for example). And, although some of it is difficult to acknowledge, it should also include the real history of this land that we call Orillia. During my two terms on Council I have found that there is much to learn about and from our Indigenous friends.

8. The future of Orillia's Champlain Monument has become a highly contentious issue, raising questions about colonialism, Indigenous representation, reconciliation, heritage and the role of public monuments. What is your position on the future of the Champlain Monument? The dispute has also [significantly strained the City's relationship with the Chippewas of Rama First Nation](#). What specific actions would you take to acknowledge the harm caused, rebuild trust, and establish a respectful Nation-to-Nation relationship with Rama First Nation going forward?

When the Mayor made the unfortunate decision to have the statue of Champlain installed at Couchiching Beach Park, I was mortified. I immediately reached out to Chief Williams to explain that this decision went against the will of Council and that I did not support it. I had always felt that there was a way to display the pieces with a proper explanation of the history of the time. However, the Mayor's actions have made any possibility of that happening much more difficult. Still, I believe that there may be a way to work together to reach a solution. During these discussions at the table, we often heard from people for or against the return of the monument saying that they represented 'the majority' of Orillians. I felt that the best way to find out how the 'actual majority' would like Council to proceed would have been to place the question on this fall's election ballot. Unfortunately,

the timing of when the report came to the table meant that the deadline was missed. So, I thought the next best thing was to ask all candidates to ask the question while campaigning and then, if elected, bring those views to the table. It is my hope that the newly elected Council has a clear understanding as to where the majority of Orillians stand on the issue and can then work toward that goal.

9. There are four City-supported Community Gardens in Orillia (York Street; Hillcrest Garden; High Street; and Lakehead Community Garden), among numerous other community gardens tended to by church groups, schools and non-profits. Despite this, there is reportedly a waiting list for residents to access garden plots. Meanwhile, food prices continue to rise, worsening local food security. Are you committed to supporting both city-sponsored and community-based community gardens and expanding growing opportunities for people in Orillia? Would you support exploring the creation of a community farm or other larger-scale municipal growing initiative? What would you do to ensure that nobody in Orillia is waitlisted to access a place to grow food for their families?

I have been a supporter of Community Gardens since I first learned about them. Though we have made some progress in expanding them, there is much more that can be done. Working alongside the Orillia Good Access and Sustainability Working Group and staff, I would like to see further expansion included in our 10 year capital plan.

10. What actions would you recommend in order to educate residents about diversity and inclusivity in Orillia; and how should the City celebrate that diversity in an ongoing manner? *Question submitted by [Inclusive Orillia](#)*



Every person who lives or visits Orillia should feel safe and supported. Though not City run, there are many events that take place throughout Orillia each year that celebrate our diversity. Perhaps the City could partner more with these organizations to help spread the word about the events and get more people involved. These events are wonderful opportunities for us to learn more about one and other. The City could also, through the media, highlight progress being made in this area.

11. ARTS:

- a. What role do you believe arts, culture and heritage should play in the future of a small-to-mid-sized community like Orillia? In your response, please address the value of arts and culture as a contributor to local economic development and tourism, community wellbeing and quality of life, and inclusion and accessibility. How should the City support and prioritize arts, culture and heritage alongside other municipal priorities?

Question submitted by [Orillia Museum of Art and History](#)



For many, arts and culture are what define a City's character. We are incredibly fortunate in Orillia to have so many talented artists call our City home. In the Downtown Core, OMAH is the anchor of the Arts District. However, I feel that Arts and Culture is not viewed as a 'core City value' to some. To me, it is not just about the dollars it brings into the City (though they are significant), but also about how it enriches the lives of those who live here. I feel the City could work more closely with the DOBIA to ensure the Arts are supported during events and that this unique area is promoted more.

- b. How do you see the City of Orillia partnering with arts organizations to help ensure the successful delivery of financially accessible Youth programs in the Arts? *Question submitted by [Arts Orillia](#)*

ARTS
ORILLIA

Creativity | Culture | Community

Creative expression is a vital part of who we are as humans. Helping young people to learn how to express their creativity is an easy way to foster that creativity. The City could work with local arts organizations to offer low-cost workshops for learning these skills. Perhaps offering them at the Library or by partnering with OMAH.

12. Orillia faces significant challenges related to mental health, substance use, addiction and toxic drug poisoning. What specific actions would you take as a municipal councillor to help address these issues, including improving access to supports, reducing harm and preventing deaths? What role should the City play alongside community organizations and other levels of government?

My hope is that the recently opened Community Connection Hub will go a long way to help these folks to get the help they need. This is a very serious societal

issue that will certainly not be solved solely at a Municipal level. All levels of government along with local organizations need to work together. I also strongly believe that pharmaceutical manufacturers should share some of the blame in having created this crisis and, therefore, share part of the financial responsibility to address it.

13. What specific actions would you support to prevent and reduce homelessness in Orillia, expand access to emergency shelter and supportive housing, and help people experiencing homelessness move into stable housing? What role should the City play, and how would you work with community organizations and other levels of government?

Let's be completely honest here, the City of Orillia does not have the funding to tackle this issue alone. In my opinion, the primary issue was created when the federal government discontinued supportive housing and made it a Provincial responsibility. The Province, in turn, made it a Municipal responsibility. These upper-level governments were somehow convinced that the private sector would keep up the supply of affordable housing. Of course, as there is less profit in offering that, it hasn't happened. All Municipalities in the Province need to be loud in demanding action from the Province and the Federal government to address this issue. As a municipality, we need to be very vocal in demanding support from both the Province and the Federal Government.

14. Orillia adopted its [2023 Affordable Housing Action Plan](#) to address the local housing affordability crisis, and the City has an [Affordable Housing Working Group](#) that advises Council on affordable housing policies and development proposals. What specific actions would you take to advance the goals of the Action Plan and increase the supply of affordable housing, including deeply affordable, non-market, supportive and purpose-built rental housing?

I recently attended an event featuring a Professor of Planning from the University of Waterloo. The film he presented talked not only about the history of affordable housing in Canada, but about solutions that different Municipalities throughout the Country have implemented to great success. I think that, as part of the orientation of the new Council, that film should be presented and during the term, some of those concepts should be seriously looked at. Of course, this issue will not be solved by the Municipality alone. We need to work with all levels of Government. Locally, when the City offers financial support to any developer for affordable housing, that should be in perpetuity. Not just 10 or 20 years.

15. What specific actions would you take to support renters, prevent renovictions, address unsafe or poorly maintained rental housing, and protect Orillia's long-term rental stock?

Renters are voters and, indirectly, taxpayers in the City. As such, they deserve representation like any other resident. Though many issues can't be dealt with at the Municipal level, the City can certainly enforce property standards and look at ways to strengthen those property standards by-laws to ensure they are effective.

16. Crime affects the safety, health and well-being of our community. What is your crime reduction strategy for Orillia?

Orillia, like most Municipalities in the Province of Ontario, pays a significant amount of money to the O.P.P. for policing services. Unfortunately, due to Provincial regulations, we have no means of negotiating our contract with them. We basically have to pay what the Province says we do and to be frank, double-digit annual increases are simply not sustainable. At some point in the very near future, Municipalities will have to tell the Province that they simply can no longer afford to pay for policing. Some Municipalities have looked at a return to Municipal Forces, but have found the costs prohibitive. Until things change, through the Couchiching Police Services Board, we can hold the force to account and ensure that we are receiving the services that we are paying for. I would like to see the formation of a Community Safety Working Group (or a Committee of Council) that could focus on this issue and bring the improvements needed. While discussing policing, I would also mention that I strongly feel that, regardless of your situation in life, no one is above the law and anyone who breaks the law should be charged.

17. In 2022, Orillia City Council adopted the [Age-Friendly Orillia Community Action Plan](#) to help create a more inclusive, accessible, and age-friendly community. If elected, what specific steps would you take to advance the municipal recommendations in the Action Plan, and how would you apply an age-friendly lens to future City of Orillia practices and policies? *Question submitted by [Age-Friendly Orillia](#)*

I suppose it is fair to say that I would apply an age-friendly lense to my job as Councillor simply because of my age. I am approaching retirement and seeing things from a different perspective at times. I feel that the best way that Council could advance the recommendations would be to 'connect' this group with other community and Council working groups/committees to ensure representation.



18. In light of the climate and biodiversity crises facing our community and the broader region, how do you intend to lead the City of Orillia toward a more sustainable future, including through proven nature-based climate solutions? How would you ensure that the City's commitments to its Natural Heritage System and natural heritage mapping are maintained and meaningfully integrated into municipal planning and decision-making, particularly where they may conflict with provincial directives, or with development proposals and private development interests?

Question submitted by [The Couchiching Conservancy](#)



Without a doubt, we need to protect our natural heritage system. That starts by ensuring our mapping is accurate and up to date. Then, where possible, we need to establish no build zones and make it very clear to the Province that these areas will be protected. Once these areas are lost, there is no getting them back, so we need to do everything we can to protect them. A great example of a way to do this can be found at Scout Valley, where the 'control' of the land has been taken out of politicians' hands and placed in the care of a third party. I am very happy to see that more tree planting is occurring throughout the city thanks to groups like Sustainable Orillia and OMAH, as well as the City itself (especially after the number lost after the ice storm). We are also seeing more permeable and semi-permeable materials used in development to try and handle water and flooding issues, though I feel we could promote this solution more often to developers.

19. According to a [2024 article](#), the Orillia landfill has an estimated life span of 40 years remaining, at the present rate of use. What is your plan to improve waste diversion in Orillia to achieve Zero Waste?

Education is the key! People place their garbage at the curb, it is picked up and they don't give it another thought. We need to do a much better job of explaining the true financial costs of dealing with our waste. I absolutely feel that the majority of Orillians do a great job of recycling and composting. The clear

garbage bag policy that we adopted during my previous term of Council, though very unpopular at the time, has resulted in a nearly 40% reduction in non-garbage going into the waste diversion site! Every opportunity that we have to prevent something from going into waste that does not belong there increases the life span of that site! I also feel I need to make it very clear that I do NOT support a full user pay system. That was misreported in Orillia Matters. People pay for garbage collection through their taxes and expect a certain amount of waste disposal to be included in that. I feel that is fair.

20. What is your plan to improve public transit (the bus system) and active transportation (such as walking and cycling) in Orillia? Additionally, what would you do to improve regional and inter-city transit connections, including coordination with services such as Simcoe County LINX and GO Transit, so that residents can more easily travel between Orillia and surrounding communities and major regional centres?

I started my involvement in public service as a member of the Active Transportation Committee (also acted as Chair) and through that role learned a lot about what is required to promote active transportation. In my opinion, the key is creating an infrastructure where people feel safe. Bike lanes, recreation paths and trails, bicycle parking, if this infrastructure exists, people will use it. As for connecting with other transportation in our region, the upcoming Orillia Transit Hub should provide the site for those connections. I would certainly support advocating for Go transit to run a bus from our Transit Hub to Barrie's rail system. That could help to create the connection needed.

21. The City of Orillia has endorsed the Rescue Lake Simcoe Coalition's [Protect Our Plan: From Good Goals to Practical Progress](#), which identifies practical actions needed to strengthen protection of Lake Simcoe, including reducing phosphorus pollution, protecting natural heritage, improving stormwater management, and ensuring growth does not come at the expense of the lake. If elected, how will you support implementing these recommendations through local planning and infrastructure decisions and advocate to the provincial government for the actions needed to better protect Lake Simcoe? *Question submitted by [Rescue Lake Simcoe Coalition](#)*



Our City planning regulations certainly address many of these concerns of the Rescue Lake Simcoe Coalition, through setbacks etc. I feel it's important that City staff work with this group to ensure those protections are maintained and, if necessary, improved upon. We certainly need to be very vocal with the Province regarding the importance of the health of Lake Simcoe (that connects directly to Lake Couchiching).

22. Orillia has a history of formal youth engagement, including the Orillia Youth Opportunities Committee and, more recently, the Sunshine Youth Senate. In 2024, Council dissolved the Sunshine Youth Senate after concluding that a formal committee structure and meeting schedule were not effectively engaging young people, and that less-structured, activity-based opportunities were more successful ([see here](#), p. 21). Given this history, how would you ensure that young people are meaningfully represented and have a real voice in municipal decision-making? What role, if any, should a formal youth council or advisory body play, and how would you ensure it is accessible, representative and responsive to the diverse experiences of young people in Orillia?

I would suggest working with local school councils to ensure that young people are heard at Orillia's Council table. If they would be willing to be the 'link' between the schools and Council, it could create an easy, but effective way to ensure their voices are heard.

23. On June 29, 2026, [council adopted Option 1](#) of report CS-26-30-A and committed to paying all full-time and permanent part-time employees a living wage of \$24.60 per hour, covering 291 full-time staff and 15 permanent part-time staff at a cost of about \$15,000 a year. Council did not adopt Option 2, which would have extended the living wage to the roughly 500 part-time, casual and seasonal staff the City employs, or Option 3, which would have added the 1,008 contractors and vendors providing services to the City. Those were costed at \$1.45 million and more. As a result, Orillia is not a certified living wage employer at any level. Would you support extending the living wage to the City's casual and seasonal employees and requiring living-wage provisions in City service contracts and procurement?

The living wage rate is recalculated annually in November; would you support automatically adjusting the City's living-wage commitment when the rate changes?

This was a difficult decision at the table. Initially I thought 'of course Orillia should be a living wage employer and that it probably already is'. However, after reading the report from staff, I saw this entirely differently. Based on the information provided at that time, I felt that Option 1 made the most sense but I would certainly be open to revisiting this next term (if re-elected) and would request a more detailed analysis.

24. How is [Orillia's Climate Change Action Plan](#) incorporated into your platform? If elected, what specific actions would you initiate or support to revitalize and implement the plan? *Question submitted by [Sustainable Orillia](#)*



**Sustainable
Orillia**

I was the Council representative on Sustainable Orillia for about 6 years and, to be completely honest, I learned a LOT. It was during this time that I helped the City adopt it's Climate Action Plan. During the last term of Council, I felt a lot of headway was made toward the goals of that plan. However, during this term, I feel that there has been much less work done in this area. With the restructuring of City departments, there is less staff time available to work on these issues. Two of our most experienced staff in this area left the City, perhaps unhappy with the direction they could see unfolding. I feel we need to return to taking this issue much more seriously. Of course, as in all matters, we need to be practical in our approach, but there are many initiatives that could be taken that could actually save the city money in the long run.

25. Downtown Orillia is at a [crossroads](#), with the Downtown Tomorrow project reduced from \$50 million to \$18 million and ongoing questions about the timing of underground infrastructure replacement. What is your vision for a vibrant, successful downtown Orillia, and how would you balance investment in streetscape improvements, infrastructure renewal, fiscal responsibility, and the needs of downtown businesses and property owners?

This has been a very frustrating thing to be a part of. During last term, Council was told that all underground infrastructure needed to be replaced. Then, at the start of this term, Council was told that a full inspection was necessary to truly

evaluate the condition of the underground infrastructure. Then, after the working group was formed, Council was told the infrastructure was good for another 25 – 30 years. Ultimately, I had to argue at the Council table to spend the money to do a proper inspection so that we KNOW the true condition of the infrastructure and can then make an informed decision on how to move forward. The best way towards a more vibrant and successful downtown is for all parties to work together towards that common goal. There is too much of a history of the businesses vs the BIA Board vs the City. All three want the same thing, so let's work together and make it happen! I asked to be the Council representative on the BIA Board for this very reason. I wanted to mend those relationships and felt that we were heading in the right direction until some setbacks during this term. Let's get back on track together!

26. Orillia's Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC) is a provincially mandated committee that advises Council on the identification, removal and prevention of barriers for people with disabilities. The City also has a [2023–2028 Accessibility Plan](#), developed and reviewed by the AAC, to guide the City's work on preventing and removing accessibility barriers. What specific actions would you take as a councillor to advance the City's accessibility commitments? How would you ensure that Council meaningfully considers and acts on the advice of the AAC?

While Steve Clarke was Mayor, he got in a wheelchair and headed downtown to experience those barriers firsthand. I think that is a very practical way to understand the challenges faced and what needs to be done to improve things. Obviously, one can't truly appreciate all of the challenges faced, so it is very important that suggestions from the AAC be taken seriously and that connections be made between that group and other working groups/committees.

27. Orillia continues to face significant needs for road and sidewalk maintenance. In 2026, [Council voted](#) 5-4 to add \$700,000 to the budget for roads and sidewalk repairs, which would have resulted in a 1% tax increase (the decision was subsequently vetoed by the Mayor using the City's new strong-mayor powers, and Council was unable to override the veto). What is your approach to funding the City's roads and sidewalks over the next four years? How would you determine what should be repaired or replaced now versus deferred, and what level of tax increase, reserves, or other funding would you consider appropriate to ensure Orillia's infrastructure does not fall further behind?

Each year, all roads and sidewalks in the City are evaluated based on industry standard criteria and assigned a grade. Then, in the order of those grades, they are placed in the budget cycle for resurfacing or reconstruction. There are two general ways to fund major projects such as road reconstruction. One way is to

put money into reserves each year in order to cover those costs over a 10 year period (for example). Then, that money in reserves can be invested and earn interest so that, in the long run, less money is needed from the taxpayer. The other way is to not contribute what is necessary to reserves and then, when a project needs to be done, borrow the money to do it. Of course this results in interest charges and ends up increasing the amount of money needed from the taxpayer. Many politicians believe that borrowing results in lower tax increases and, therefore gives them a better chance of being re-elected. As I've often said, the worst thing about being a politician is the politics. The fact is, sooner or later, you have to pay for those projects through taxation. As a City taxpayer myself, I would much rather pay smaller tax increases over several years than have small tax increases now, much larger ones later and then end up paying even more for all of the projects.

28. During the last two winters, Orillia has received record amounts of snowfall, leading to significant challenges in maintaining safe and accessible roads, sidewalks, parking lots and driveways. What is your plan to improve winter snow removal to ensure safety and affordability?

I live in this City too (just off of Shannon St.), so I experience these issues as well every winter. To be fair, the last couple of winters have been extraordinary. However, with the effects of climate change, I feel we may experience these issues more frequently. The issue seems to be that we get large snowfalls more often and I don't think our winter control policy has adapted well to those changes. What I have experienced during my two terms on Council is that, when this is discussed at the Council table, we are told 'if you want better snow removal, it will cost many more dollars'. However, I feel that the policy could adapt better to what we are experiencing, rather than just throw more money at the issue.

29. What specifically should the City of Orillia do to strengthen the local economy?
I think our Economic Development department should provide Council with frequent updates (monthly perhaps) as to activity regarding not only attracting new businesses but retaining the ones we have. Of course, I'm not suggesting that staff aren't doing a good job, only that Council needs to be more in tuned with what is happening. Also, perhaps a working group/committee of Council could be formed that would include our ED staff as well as representation from the Chamber of Commerce, the Downtown Orillia BIA and other interested parties throughout the City.

30. What is your plan to increase public participation in decision-making processes in the City and strengthen local democracy?

I recently had a conversation with a resident who was very angry about their water/wastewater bill. Once I explained why the fees had increased and what those funds were being used for he responded with 'well why didn't the City tell me that in the first place'. That really struck me. I thought that, with the help of our communications department, we were doing a pretty good job. But this really showed me that there is always room for improvement. As an example, perhaps during the budget process, along with having a pie chart showing how your taxes are spent, we could show the average cost to each taxpayer for each service (snowplowing cost x dollars for example). Then, when discussing something like improvements to winter control, it would be easier for people to understand what the actual cost to them would be for those improvements.

31. How do you plan to promote fiscal responsibility while on City Council to ensure our limited resources are spent effectively? Are there areas where you would prioritize reducing or increasing municipal spending?

During this term of Council, we were asked to think about what our 'legacy project' would be. I have absolutely no interest in having a 'legacy project' was my reply. I don't do this job to have my name appear on a building. I do it to try and make Orillia a better place to live. To make Orillia the kind of City that people are proud to say they come from. In my opinion, the most basic and cost-effective way that we can achieve that is by looking after what we have. By ensuring that weeds are cleaned up in our parks, on our roadways and sidewalks. That our buildings and infrastructure is maintained properly. That we create a work environment at the City that allows staff to take pride in the job that they do.

32. Finally, is there anything else you'd like to add about your policy priorities and what you hope to accomplish?

If re-elected, I will continue to approach decisions with logic and will continue to listen to all opinions and ideas and ensure they are considered when making decisions. That is true democracy and simply the way things should be.