



Thunder Bay
Chamber
of Commerce

**SAY
YES**

City of Opportunity

*The 2022 Municipal Election Platform
of the Thunder Bay Chamber of Commerce*

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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

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

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

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

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

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

PILLAR	WE’RE ASKING CANDIDATES TO SAY YES TO...
<p>1. Visionary Leadership</p> 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. leading by example 2. partnerships 3. openness 4. prudent spending
<p>2. Economic Opportunity</p> 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. less red tape 2. customer service standards 3. long-term thinking
<p>3. Quality of Life</p> 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. great neighbourhoods 2. safe streets 3. diversity and inclusion



City of Opportunity

INTRODUCTION

Our initial City of Opportunity platform was developed for the 2018 Municipal Election in the City of Thunder Bay. It outlined 3 pillars of Visionary Leadership, Economic Opportunity and Quality of Life, and was endorsed by all elected Councillors.

It was instrumental in driving results, including:

- a program and service review
- the Rethink zoning by-law
- improved citizen engagement processes and policies
- reduction of 10-year average annual tax levy increase from 3.36% to 2.95%
- development of a digital services strategy (in progress)

Our 2022 City of Opportunity platform builds on the work that has been done over the past 4 years.

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

Although rising taxes remain an ongoing concern of our Members', 49% of our survey respondents said they would be happy with the current rate if they could see better value for their tax dollars. Along with this, many of them expressed a desire to see staff in the City's public-facing departments better empowered to work with them towards positive outcomes.

We've also heard consistent feedback from Members regarding the cohesion of Council itself, as well as its ability overall to work collaboratively and effectively with City Administration.

Remote meetings and increasingly polarizing viewpoints in our society are making it incredibly challenging to build trusting relationships, which are needed more than ever to foster cooperation and collaboration among decision-makers. Successful, strong policy-making is supported by Councilors dedicated to serving the citizens of Thunder Bay together.

The actions in the Thunder Bay Chamber of Commerce' 2022 City of Opportunity platform can serve as a way of assessing candidates in the 2022 City of Thunder Bay Election.

Candidates who say yes to these actions are saying yes to a challenging leadership role and making a commitment to creating a “culture of yes” at City Hall and within our community.



**SAY
YES**

PILLAR 1: VISIONARY LEADERSHIP



Say yes to leading by example. Thunder Bay needs elected leaders who build trust by acting with respect, humility and integrity. As leaders of our own teams, Chamber Members understand the importance of preparing for meetings, listening to the views of others, and building strong internal and external relationships.

CANDIDATE COMMITMENT: I commit to fostering trusting relationships among Council members and between Council and Administration by being prepared for meetings, listening respectfully to diverse views and seeking common ground.



Say yes to partnership. Thunder Bay is looking for leaders who will collaborate and consult with the community and leverage our collective assets and strengths to build a future that benefits everyone. As business owners we understand that making change involves risk. We're looking for leaders who will seek out the expertise and experience of stakeholders and partners to help overcome those risks.

A recent example of a successful City partnership is the new accessible playground at Boulevard Lake, 75% of which was funded by the Canadian Tire Jumpstart Program.

CANDIDATE COMMITMENT: I commit to the development of a corporate culture within City Council and Administration that encourages community outreach, consultation and partnerships.



Say yes to openness. Chamber Members consider fiscal transparency and accountability to be fundamental to the work of City Council. Understanding the real costs of City services enables effective decision making and increases taxpayer buy-in when hard choices must be made. We need our leaders to provide clear objectives that empower municipal staff to effect change while holding them accountable for reaching the goals that will move us forward as a city.

The completion of the 2020 Program & Services Review is an important example of openness and transparency.

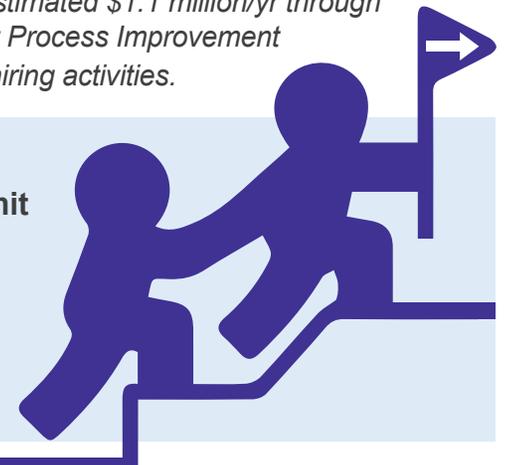
CANDIDATE COMMITMENT: I commit to fiscal transparency and accountability to the people of Thunder Bay.



Say yes to prudent spending. As custodians of our stakeholders' investments as well as employers of our fellow citizens, Chamber Members recognize the need to balance spending with developing efficiencies. We're looking for leaders who will look for ways to invest in solutions that will reduce costs or add value in the long-term.

Recent examples of prudent spending include the new Fire Rescue Master Plan which will save an estimated \$1.1 million/yr through staff attrition and the Recruitment Process Improvement Project focused on streamlining hiring activities.

CANDIDATE COMMITMENT: I commit to keeping costs low and increasing operational efficiencies to reduce the burden on business and residential taxpayers.



PILLAR 2: ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY



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

The City has successfully reduced red tape by assisting restaurants and retailers with creative ways to establish outdoor patios, waiving related municipal fees and certain zoning enforcement and expediting the processes for the 2020, 2021 and 2022 summer seasons.

CANDIDATE COMMITMENT: I commit to making changes to policies and procedures that reduce red tape, streamline processes and adopt technology to create more opportunities for development and economic growth.



Say yes to customer service standards. As managers, we know that setting service standards lets us both manage our customers' expectations and improve our quality of work. As customers of City services, we recommend the development of customer service standards for each public-facing division of the organization. These standards should be transparent to the public, set realistic expectations and emphasize collaboration in pursuit of positive outcomes for clients.

As well, feedback and critique mechanisms should be established so management can receive input directly from the public on the interactions between City staff and their clients.

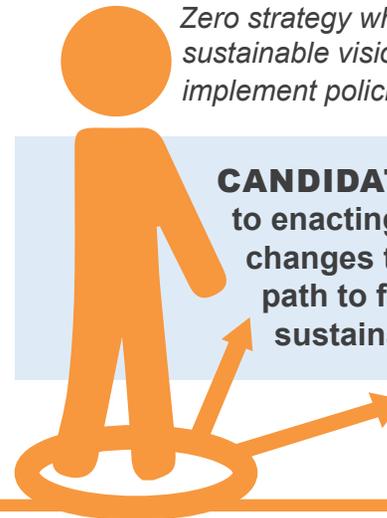
Some examples of service standards which could be implemented include the addition of clearly-stated time-lines on building applications that set expectations for response times, notification and consultation with affected business in advance of road construction and closures, and standardized refund and cancellation policies for children's activities.

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



Say yes to long-term thinking. As business leaders, we know the importance of looking past quarterly results to the long-term future of our businesses. We ask the same of our city leaders. We need a Council that evaluates the long-term costs and benefits of their decisions, not just for this election cycle but for the next generation of citizens. Thunder Bay needs leaders who will work with the community to develop and follow through on a financially, socially and environmentally sustainable road-map for Thunder Bay's future.

Here's an example: Thunder Bay has developed a Net Zero strategy which describes an environmentally sustainable vision. Work is needed to design and implement policies that support its goals.



CANDIDATE COMMITMENT: I commit to enacting long-term and forward-thinking changes that will put Thunder Bay on the path to financial, social and environmental sustainability.

PILLAR 3: QUALITY OF LIFE



Say yes to great neighbourhoods. We need to develop sustainable neighbourhoods that include both businesses and residents. Walkable, mixed-use, mixed-income neighbourhoods create interesting places to live and work and lead to more connections between businesses and customers and among residents. They also contribute to more physically active lifestyles, safer streets and a greater sense of pride and identity.

The Rethink Zoning by-law is a recent example of policy that supports great neighbourhoods.

CANDIDATE COMMITMENT: I commit to reforming city policies and processes to encourage sustainable neighbourhoods based on walkable, mixed-use, mixed-income spaces in which residents can live, work and play.



Say yes to safe streets. Safety is a concern for us all and we need Council to proactively address our social issues of homelessness, addiction, mental illness and crime. These issues affect everyone, and all stakeholders need to work together to address them.

The Community Safety & Well-being Council is an example of a proactive effort to use an evidence-based, social development approach to address risk factors at the root of crime. Its members represent many sectors, including social services, education, enforcement, child welfare, justice, mental health, substance use, Indigenous services, victim services and youth services.

CANDIDATE COMMITMENT: I commit to proactively engaging community groups, city agencies and social organizations to develop and invest in long term strategies that focus on community safety and well-being.



Say yes to diversity and inclusion. As businesses, we know the importance of treating our customers with dignity and respect. A diverse population brings many advantages and offers opportunities to harness the unique abilities and attributes of a wide range of people to achieve common goals. Although tremendous steps have been taken, the City of Thunder Bay has a long way to go to ensure that all of its citizens are treated well and not subject to racism, discrimination or systemic abuse. City officials should work hard to enable marginalized populations such as Indigenous people, the 2SLGBTIQ+ community and new immigrants to realize their goals.

The Indigenous Relations and Inclusion Strategy is an example of a City initiative that supports diversity and inclusion. Guided by the City of Thunder Bay Anishinaabe Elders Council and local Indigenous community, it supports the City's enhancement of its relationship with Indigenous partners and communities, while advancing Indigenous Peoples' inclusion in the City's opportunities and growth.

CANDIDATE COMMITMENT: I commit to continuing the work of building a community culture of diversity and inclusion and directing the necessary resources to ensure that no one is subject to racism, discrimination or abuse.



CONCLUSION

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

Want to support us?

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

Contact Us:

- Tel: (807) 624-2620
- Email: chamber@tbchamber.ca
-     @tbchamber
- www.tbchamber.ca



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