



1. If someone came to you with a proposal to build a new piece of public infrastructure in our city, how would you evaluate whether the project was worth implementing?

There are many criteria that would ultimately determine this, from ecological footprint, to geographic size, to expected employment opportunities, to overall improvement of the quality of life of area residents. Does this project fit into our strategic plans? Does it corner a market that we are hoping to explore? Is the project self-sustaining, and if not how could it be with minimal interim support? Does the architectural design coexist effectively with its neighbors? And what are the short term and long term servicing and maintenance costs? Does the developer have a reputation for completing projects on time and on budget?

Truthfully, I'm not looking to inundate developers or community idealists and champions with unnecessary red tape for the sake of stalling progress or standing in the way of opportunity. That said, we have effective examples of what does and does not make for responsible development. We know through firsthand experience how with poor strategic planning that development proposals could end up becoming costly projects with some never seeing completion.

2. Brockville needs to get on track financially while at the same time needs to move strategically to improve its offer to its citizens and tourists. What experience do you bring to the table that demonstrates your leadership in fiscal responsibility as well as strategic success?

I may never have supervised a staff of 20 to 40 people, nor managed a Fortune 500 company, but I do know what it's like to feed my family for a week on forty dollars. Coming from poverty has meant being inventive. It means learning to balance resources, look for efficiencies, and maintaining a broad perspective. I have worked with people who have struggled and done everything in my power to help them get back on their feet financially, and explore their potential. These are basic expectations of community leaders, and a community leader needs to do more than simply balance a budget.

3. How do we attract and retain Young Professional in Brockville?

The answer to this question is very much the same for young professionals as it is for other sub-sections of our local economy. The best way to attract and retain anyone is to have a diversified local economy that serves as a launching pad for vibrancy, individualism, and financial independence.

If our community includes a strong institutional base, a strong service economy, and a multitude of employment options, among other alternatives, what this creates is opportunities for young families and young professionals to explore their individual strengths and goals.

What Brockville already has are natural amenities, a steadily building campus of activities and facilities, a cost of living that is largely affordable to those moving or commuting from larger urban centers, easily attainable educational options, rail and highway corridor access, and a tremendously generous philanthropic backbone that already makes us attractive well beyond our borders.

Brockville being a tremendously inviting place to retire is more a symptom of a national demographic circumstance than a lack of investment in our youth. And as long as we encourage our young people to lead by example, while unilaterally encouraging a warm and welcoming modern community, we are in a significant position to exploit our investment in those amenities for the greater good of our citizenry and tax base.

4. What are your 3 main priorities for Economic development and what key steps will you take to bring your vision to a reality.

We need to remain open to investment opportunities, even if that means those investment opportunities exist outside of our 27.5 square kilometer footprint. I for one think there is a tremendous irony in our local riding having 13 layers of municipal governance while we as a province are fixated on a provincial bill slashing municipal councilors in the largest municipal economy in Canada by half. While each of our joint services partners are represented with more legislative support at the table, we are still guilty of a not-in-my-backyard disconnect from our closest municipal partners. A new distribution center development in Johnstown is good for Brockville. A thriving tourism season in Rockport provides economic potential for our community if we can offer something complimentary to their services or products. In other words, let's cooperate without providing continued excuses not to.

We need to focus on taking advantage of federal and provincial spending programs that ease the burden of new investments. As many of you know, I love to talk about nonprofit and affordable housing. Well, as it happens right now we have a significant investment in front of us through the National Housing Strategy that could benefit projects like the Junick Property or the Brockville Shopping Centre by providing federal and provincial financial support resources to develop modest residential housing units that would put carpenters and homebuilders to work while also serving a greater social need. Every dollar spent on housing is worth approximately \$1.43 in Gross Domestic Product return on investment. This is a program that warrants exploration and an area I am already passionate about and believe I could assist with.

And we need to focus on further developing micro-tourism initiatives in what is generally considered our off season in the fall and winter months. Right now, I am working with a financial agency and having been lobbying to see them move their small weekend professional conference to our beautiful city in fall 2019. This type of initiative alone will not create any permanent jobs or economic growth on its own, but it could be one piece of a puzzle that could snowball into further destination marketing opportunities. Enough of these types of events utilizing our conference centers and state of the art facilities, and we could begin to see not only more permanent jobs in the hospitality sector in what are generally considered slower months, but we could also continue to develop and tout our own resume' as an established destination on an ongoing basis. Further to that, each of these types of micro-tourism events helps us to create traffic from nearby destinations that may choose to invest their time and money here should their experiences be positive.

5. What actions would you take to improve public safety in Brockville?

The challenge with this question is the slightly ambiguous nature of this concept. What makes a safer city? Is it an active transportation study, so that we can ensure that we are only encouraging bicycle traffic in areas where it is deemed to be both desirable and spaciouly safe? Is it maintaining strong public transit with easy access to afterhour's service, so that we can encourage and ensure a safe space for riders who participate in after school activities, shift work, local commerce or community events, so that they may commute home safely? Is a safer city merely a well-lit city with a vibrant nightlife so that the isolation impact is minimal? Because all of these are concepts I can easily get behind.

If your version of a safer city is something more severe, I would argue that we have already empowered our local law enforcement and emergency services to a comfortable level, and as a Councillor I would not feel comfortable encouraging any rash actions in response to certain recent peculiar tragedies. We need to make responsible decisions that include reminding people of their rights and liberties, and encouraging them to make responsible choices.

If you're curious what steps I would advocate for personally, I would start with challenging our provincial counterparts on funding for needle exchange prevention programs which are currently on the chopping block. I would start with a community bred response to our opioid crisis by working hand in hand with our police services board to develop a more comprehensive strategy then we currently have through our health unit (recognizing the valuable blueprint that they have helped us to create and explore up to this point). And I would also encourage business owners and community agencies to start carrying Naloxone.

There are a variety of steps that we can take ahead of time to encourage a safer community, and not all of those steps have to do with punishing crime. Some of it is about effective rehabilitation services, open lines of communication, working with mental health experts, and lifting people out of desperation and poverty before they become would-be criminals in the first place.

6. Currently the city doesn't have a Communication Policy – what are your thoughts to ensure there is an effective external and internal communication policy in place.

As technology changes and steadily evolves, and as our communication needs evolve with it, this is prudent, and can be accomplished through a simplistic process of borrowing best practices from other communities.

This should not be a complicated fix, but the key is to examine how the current standard practices that our corporation already uses can be adjusted to be more effective, as opposed to deciding that the current practices are flawed. The key to any effective strategy is consultation and not attempting to reinvent the wheel.

7. What projects / policies would you champion to help small businesses grow?

I have been working closely with a financial services agency that I fundamentally believe already offers a tremendous potential for motivated individuals to become effective entrepreneurs and build their portfolios. I am currently one voice on a committee that is exploring and chipping away at the provincial Youth Friendly Community Designation application which will open up grant application opportunities that we are not currently eligible for while also building an effective catalogue of youth related investments and services that we could then use to attract more young families and their tourism dollars. I am heavily involved with my local performing arts community, as well as a variety of social justice causes that all feed together to make our community welcoming and diverse. All of these small strides come together to help us nurture a culture of inclusivity and possibility.

Small business is the backbone of our local economy, and any time we consult openly, create and nurture dialogue, and include current vendors and merchants in building, maintaining and expanding a vibrant city, while also serving the greater good WE ALL WIN!

Thanks again for asking these questions. I hope my answers are complete enough.

Leigh