

There are two types of public infrastructure that a Municipality is responsible for, one relates to the delivery of mandated services, and the other relates to the delivery of discretionary services. In each case the role of a councilor is to evaluate whether the proposed project delivers best value to the taxpayer, but in the latter case the discretionary service must first be prioritized alongside any competing projects. At this point in Brockville's history we need to be exceptionally careful when contemplating new investments, considering the shrinking industrial base, the declining population, the lower than (regional) average income level of City taxpayers, the pre-existing commitments and the parlous state of our discretionary reserves.

Fiscal responsibility and strategic decision making have been the cornerstones of my near 40 years of experience with three area manufacturing businesses. At the first of these three, I lead the team which steered the organization through a major growth period, and won for itself Canada's highest business award, the Gold Award for Business Excellence, in the process. For fifteen years I co-owned a small niche manufacturing business in the camping food industry, having purchased it out of bankruptcy. Satisfying the tastes of customers ranging from the giant Mountain Equipment Coop all the way to individual on-line weekend campers was challenging. The importance of customer service, fiscal responsibility and having a clear sales and marketing strategy were the keys to its post-bankruptcy success. Over the last ten years, I have helped another local manufacturing company shift its over 140 year focus on Canada only sales, to a mostly export focused current and future strategy, and in the process more than doubled its sales and employment growth.

But beyond this private sector experience, I also bring decades of budgetary and strategic governance experience to the table as a former councilor and as a volunteer board member with a host of local not-for-profits and provincial agencies such as the Aquatarium, the YMCA, Saint Lawrence College, Saint Vincent de Paul Hospital – subsequently Providence Care, Film Brockville, various Provincial and National Senior Games, the Chamber of Commerce, the Health Unit, the Brockville Arts Centre, and the Lanark, Leeds and Grenville Family and Children's Services. Every single one of these tables is/was fiscally challenged, and every single one required their boards to develop and execute strategic plans.

Such is the depth of the experience in these areas that I am hoping to bring (back) to City council.

To attract and retain young professionals in Brockville, we must first of all stop thinking that Brockville exists in a silo, but that instead we all exist in a region, and that attracting jobs to anywhere in the region will assist Brockville. This is what the Corridor initiative is all about, and I fully support this initiative and regret that it took at least a decade for it to become a reality. Neither of our children, raised in Brockville, came back to work here after college, so my wife and I are regular 401 travelers to larger cities east and west of here to visit them and the grandchildren. Attracting jobs of the 21<sup>st</sup> century to this area is the only way to reverse that trend. Brockville's role, aside from supporting the regional

initiatives underway, is to present itself in the very best possible municipal light to those who seek to locate or relocate 21<sup>st</sup> century jobs here. We do this by ensuring we have state-of-the-art customer service attitudes and processes in place in all departments of City Hall, such that every interaction with a customer, taxpayer or “perhaps” taxpayer, is overwhelmingly positive – period! This is the only way private sector businesses differentiate themselves in competitive markets, and the Municipality of Brockville is no different. Exceptional customer service and continuous improvement are key, and hiring a new City Manager who will both model and champion these traits to and through the entire organization, in my view, is a very early and very critical job for the next council.

My three main priorities for economic development are:

1. Move towards certification as a “total quality community” in order to send the loudest signals possible to potential investors, that Brockville is the best place in Canada to do business. We already have the infrastructure, the location and the workforce ready, willing and able, we just need to prove that we deserve the investment.
2. Demonstrate that we understand the importance of fiscal responsibility by pro-actively working to reverse our reputation for having rapidly declining fiscal performance over the last ten to twelve years in most of the Provincial financial performance indicators, relative to our like-sized, or regional peers.
3. Support and if possible expand the regional service delivery models in place in order to extract the maximum value for every single taxpayer dollar spent.

In order to achieve these objectives, I developed some time ago a “top ten” list of things to do, and am happy to share them here:

Keeping the Brockville public safe is the number one priority of the Brockville Police, and as a councilor I would ensure that the Police Service Board is working, like all other departments of the City, to embed continuous improvement techniques into all aspects of local policing. This means ensuring public concerns are always being heard, always being addressed, and the results always being communicated back to the public. This means that emerging policing trends and emerging technologies are always being monitored and considered for implementation in Brockville. This means that staff training needs, staff morale, and staff suggestions within the policing team are permanently being reviewed by management and results and comments are permanently fed back to all staff. This means that local police are always seeking to improve co-operation and communication with other local and regional community partners. No matter the specific problem, be it crystal meth, opioids, domestic violence, mental health concerns, or the speed of traffic, only the reliable application of transparent, best policing practices will serve the Brockville public best, and council’s role in that, through the Police Services Board, is to demand nothing less.

I have been a major critic of council’s poor communication practices over the last while, with particular reference to its handling of its relationships with the Aquatarium and certain property developers. A brand new council and a brand new City Manager are

great starting points for a brand new approach to internal and external communication strategies. In my campaign literature, I contend “Job 1” for the new council is the very early adoption of a four year plan, a term “mandate” if you will, which sets out the new council’s fiscal and operating vision for the term. Communication of this plan to all stakeholders, and the, at least quarterly, reporting of progress against this plan, and any revisions thereto, will be the start of a whole new era of transparency at City Hall. Beyond that, most if not all councilors, will find themselves representing tax payers on many other local Boards and Agencies (Aquarium, Health Unit, Joint Services, Conservation Authority, Police Services, Tourism Advisory, DBIA, Brock Trail, Biking, Accessibility, Youth Advisory etc. etc. etc.) Establishing a simple repository whereby all taxpayers can access meeting minutes, financial and strategic plans, and learn about the activities of all these groups would be another step in the right direction for communications. Finally, I would promote a recommendation that I first made 15 years ago, to live stream council and committee meetings – in 2018, this is a much simpler and less expensive challenge than it was 15 years ago, but no less important in the fight for accountability and transparency through open communications.

The best projects to promote to help small businesses grow are those that small businesses themselves believe to be the best. By definition, if they work, business growth will be demonstrable, thereby providing taxpayers with a return on whatever investment is required up-front. Personally, I don’t know today what projects within the Municipal realm, they would be, but my faith in small business owners, and my experience as one, leads me to believe that ideas and suggestions will flow freely. A councilor’s job, on behalf of the taxpayer is to identify and prioritize, based on projected return on investment, those projects which merit support, as well as to ensure the project investments are monitored and reported throughout the life of the project.