

Amelia Bray Ward 1 Candidate

What is your vision for Port Hope at the end of the next four-year Council term?

- I want to see user-pay revenue streams attached to activities visitors already come to do in Port Hope - ie. paid waterfront parking, boat launch fees, seasonal concession and tour operator permits
- Port Hope has an extremely low vacancy rate for rentals, this destabilizes market rent and makes housing unaffordable. In the next four years I want to see a stabilization in rental prices through a clear plan for ARUs
- Foster accountability through a public "What We're Getting Done" online dashboard to let residents know how long building applications are taking, tax spending vs. budget, development applications, construction projects/road closure timelines, etc

What do you believe are the greatest opportunities and challenges facing Port Hope's economy?

Opportunity: Port Hope has assets that many communities spend millions trying to create: a distinctive downtown, waterfront, historic character, natural assets, arts and culture, agriculture, tourism, and proximity to major employment and transportation corridors. There is an opportunity to turn those assets into a stronger year-round economy.

Challenge: We need to grow without letting growth outpace infrastructure, housing, services or the community's ability to absorb it. Businesses need people to work and people need affordable places to live. I see housing, infrastructure and economic development as interconnected, rather than three separate issues.

What role should the Municipality play in supporting existing businesses and attracting new investment?

The municipality shouldn't try to pick winners in the private sector, our job is to create an environment for business to succeed. We need to create serviced lands in appropriate locations ready for manufacturing development. We need a modernized approval process and updated bylaws to support this.

How should Port Hope accommodate growth while preserving the qualities that make the community distinctive?

Smart growth means being intentional about *where* and *how* we grow. I support more variety in housing choices and appropriate, higher density housing and commercial development where it can make use of existing infrastructure and support walkable neighbourhoods. At the same time, we should protect the things that make Port Hope recognizable: our historic downtown, natural spaces, waterfront, rural character and community life.

What municipal services, infrastructure or policies are most important to a healthy business environment?

For me, the basics matter enormously: roads, sidewalks, stormwater, water and wastewater capacity, parking, high speed internet, transportation/parking and reliable municipal services. Businesses need to know that the infrastructure will be there before they arrive, not years afterward. I'd also like Council to look at current municipal processes from the perspective of a small business owner. If someone wants to open a business, expand, renovate or build, they shouldn't have to become an expert in navigating municipal bureaucracy just to understand what is expected of them.

How would you ensure that the needs of businesses across the entire municipality, including the downtown, rural area and home-based businesses, are considered in Council decisions?

I'd make a point of not treating “business” as synonymous with downtown business. Downtown shops and restaurants have different needs from rural agricultural businesses, manufacturers, tradespeople, professional services and people operating businesses from their homes. Council should regularly hear from all of them, and economic-development decisions should consider geography, business size and type. I'd also like to see more proactive communication with businesses through formal assembly and informal listening circles rather than waiting for people to come to Council when something is already a problem.

What changes, if any, would you support to make Port Hope’s planning, building and development processes more efficient and predictable?

I would support making the process more efficient and predictable, without lowering standards.

- Clear, commonsense customer service
- Standardized checklists for the public
- Better communication about application status
- Defined timelines and accountability
- reducing unnecessary duplication between departments
- and using technology to make applications and information easier to access

If someone knows what the rules are, what is expected of them and approximately how long the process will take, they can make informed investment decisions.