

Angela Grogan
Candidate for Mayor

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

My vision is for Port Hope to be a municipality that is financially responsible, economically stronger, easier to do business with, and more connected to the people it serves.

At the end of four years, I want residents and businesses to be able to see measurable results. That means responsible management of taxpayer dollars, more predictable municipal processes, improved infrastructure, stronger support for existing businesses, and thoughtful economic development that creates opportunities locally.

I also want Port Hope to be a community where growth does not come at the expense of our identity. Our historic downtown, rural community, agricultural lands, waterfront, neighbourhoods and small-town character are assets. They should be protected while we create room for new housing, employment and investment.

Success should not simply be measured by how many plans Council approves. It should be measured by what was actually accomplished and whether residents and businesses are better off because of it.

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

Port Hope has significant opportunities.

Our location along Highway 401, our proximity to the GTA, our historic downtown, waterfront, rural lands, tourism potential, local entrepreneurs and future industrial opportunities all give us a strong foundation.

We also have the potential for significant economic activity connected to OPG and the Wesleyville lands. However, I do not believe Port Hope should build its entire economic strategy around one project or one employer. We need a diversified economy that supports small businesses, agriculture, tourism, professional services, home-based businesses, trades, manufacturing and responsible new investment.

One of our greatest challenges is ensuring that economic activity translates into local economic benefit.

Bringing visitors into Port Hope is important, but we should also ask whether those visitors are staying longer, shopping in our stores, eating in our restaurants, using local services and returning.

The same principle applies to film activity, major projects and municipal events. Whenever possible, economic activity should create opportunities for local restaurants, accommodations, contractors, trades, retailers and service providers.

Other challenges include affordability, rising operating costs, taxation, infrastructure capacity, parking, transportation and municipal processes that can sometimes be difficult for businesses to navigate.

Economic development should ultimately be judged by results.

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

The Municipality should create the conditions in which businesses can succeed. That does not mean government choosing winners and losers. It means ensuring that municipal policies, infrastructure and services do not create unnecessary barriers to doing business.

Existing businesses should not become an afterthought while we pursue new investment. They are already employing people, paying taxes, supporting community organizations and contributing to Port Hope's economy.

I would support regular engagement with businesses across the municipality, including businesses that may not belong to a formal organization. I would also support conversations with businesses that are opening, expanding, leaving or closing so that the Municipality can better understand what is working and what is not.

When attracting new investment, Port Hope should be able to clearly communicate what we offer, what lands and infrastructure are available, what municipal processes are required and how long those processes can reasonably be expected to take.

Investment should also fit within our infrastructure capacity and long-term community objectives.

I would like the Municipality to report publicly on measurable economic outcomes rather than relying primarily on promotional activity as evidence of success.

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

Growth is necessary, but it must be thoughtful.

Port Hope's character is part of its economic value. Our heritage buildings, downtown, waterfront, neighbourhoods, agricultural lands and rural landscape are among the reasons people choose to live here, visit here and invest here.

We should therefore avoid treating growth and preservation as opposing ideas. Good planning can accommodate new housing, employment and investment while respecting existing neighbourhoods, protecting important agricultural and natural areas and ensuring that infrastructure can support development.

I would also want Council to look carefully at how municipal lands and buildings are being used before assuming that every future need requires acquiring additional property.

Growth should be supported by the services that make communities function: roads, water and wastewater capacity, transportation, recreation, emergency services and appropriate community infrastructure.

Most importantly, residents and businesses should be brought into discussions early enough that consultation can actually influence decisions rather than simply occur after the direction has effectively been determined.

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

Businesses need the Municipality to get the fundamentals right.

Roads, sidewalks, parking, signage, transportation, water and wastewater capacity, snow removal, reliable municipal services and well-maintained public spaces are not separate from economic development. They are part of our economic infrastructure.

The Walton Street reconstruction demonstrated how major infrastructure projects can significantly affect businesses. Necessary construction will sometimes be disruptive, but the Municipality should plan for business continuity before work begins.

That means early communication, realistic schedules, clear signage, continued customer access wherever possible and ongoing conversations with affected businesses throughout the project.

Municipal policies also matter. Businesses need understandable rules, reasonable timelines and consistency in how those rules are applied.

I would also support examining unnecessary administrative barriers that cost businesses time and money without producing a corresponding public benefit.

A healthy business environment is created when businesses know what is expected, municipal decisions are predictable and the basic infrastructure around them works.

6. 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?

One of my priorities would be broadening the municipal business conversation.

The downtown is extremely important to Port Hope, but our local economy does not stop at the boundaries of the downtown.

We have businesses along Toronto Road and elsewhere in Ward 1, businesses and farms throughout Ward 2, contractors, professionals, entrepreneurs and people operating businesses from their homes.

Their experiences are not necessarily the same.

I would support different methods of engagement rather than expecting every business owner to attend the same meeting or belong to the same organization.

That could include business roundtables, direct outreach, surveys, visits and opportunities for businesses to identify issues before municipal policies are adopted.

I would also support a regular business-health snapshot so Council and the public can better understand what is happening across the municipality, including openings, closures, vacancies, major concerns and emerging opportunities.

My approach would be simple: if a municipal decision affects businesses, the people who will experience that impact should have a meaningful opportunity to be heard.

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

Efficiency does not mean eliminating proper planning, public consultation or professional review. It means making the process clear, consistent and understandable.

Applicants should know what information is required, who is responsible for each stage, what issues need to be resolved and what reasonable timelines they can expect.

I would support reviewing the planning, building and development process from the perspective of the person actually trying to navigate it.

Where are applications becoming delayed? Where are applicants receiving conflicting information? Are multiple departments asking for similar information? Can requirements be communicated earlier? Are there steps that no longer provide sufficient public value to justify the delay or cost they create?

I would also support greater transparency around application status and municipal timelines. Predictability is important to investment. A business or developer may be prepared to meet rigorous requirements, but uncertainty itself can become a significant cost.

The Municipality's responsibility is therefore twofold: protect the public interest while providing a professional, transparent and reasonably efficient development process.

My goal would not be to weaken standards. It would be to make good standards easier to understand and navigate.

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Municipality of Port Hope