

Todd Attridge
Mayoral Candidate

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

My goal is to build a broader tax base, more flexible housing options, and the same Port Hope we love. I believe Port Hope can grow without losing what makes Port Hope special. By the end of the next term, I want to see clear advances towards a stronger and more diverse tax base, existing businesses investing and expanding here, more housing choices for our workforce and our families, and infrastructure being managed responsibly for the long term.

I will work to make our employment lands investment-ready, so existing businesses can grow in Port Hope. I will focus on expanding our agricultural, manufacturing and tourism industries by putting new growth where services and infrastructure can support it; and publicly measure whether that growth is creating jobs, private investment and new commercial and industrial assessment.

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

I believe our biggest opportunity is to build on the industries and businesses that are already here while getting ready for the possibility of new nuclear at Wesleyville. That means investing in manufacturing, agriculture and agri-food, downtown and small business, tourism, and emerging supply chains.

Port Hope just launched a Business Retention and Expansion and supply-chain readiness initiative focused on manufacturing and energy, which gives the next Council an opportunity to turn direct business feedback into action. The challenges are: investment-ready employment land is limited, major infrastructure is expensive, businesses need workers and workers need housing, and uncertainty or delay in municipal processes costs businesses money.

My priority would be to turn opportunity into an economic plan rather than a collection of individual projects. That means helping existing employers expand, preparing the best employment lands for investment, developing more of the agricultural value chain locally, and building a stronger year-round visitor economy.

At the same time, we have to be disciplined about infrastructure spending. I will not spend millions of dollars servicing land simply hoping someone comes; significant public investment should be supported by a business case showing the private investment, employment and tax assessment it is expected to unlock.

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

I believe our first economic-development question should be: “What would it take for your next investment to happen in Port Hope?” Before chasing the next company, we need to make sure the businesses that already employ people, own property and invest here can grow here.

My focus will be to strengthen Business Retention and Expansion so we regularly identify barriers facing manufacturers, farmers, tourism operators, entrepreneurs and other employers. Where the problem is municipal (i.e. zoning, infrastructure, approvals or local policy) I will work with Council and staff to address it. Where another government, utility or agency controls the issue, I will direct staff to help businesses navigate the system and generate creative solutions. And for new investment, I will advocate to provide certainty about land, servicing, zoning, transportation, costs and timelines.

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

I don't believe growth and preservation are opposites. Good planning tells us where growth belongs and the community tells us what needs protection. I want most new housing growth directed toward the already serviced Town, where we can make better use of existing roads, water, wastewater and community services.

Employment growth should be directed toward appropriate employment lands. Our prime farmland needs to remain productive, and our heritage needs to be treated as an economic asset rather than an obstacle.

I will use the next Official Plan and zoning work to establish clearer approaches that distinguish the unique needs and opportunities among the Town, Hamlets and Countryside. In the Town, enable appropriate housing, mixed-use development, adaptive reuse and business investment where infrastructure already supports it. In the Hamlets, allow sensible local businesses, home-based businesses and modest growth where environmental conditions permit. In the Countryside, make legitimate agriculture, agri-food, agri-tourism and appropriate on-farm businesses easier while protecting agricultural land and natural systems.

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

I believe reliable roads, water and wastewater capacity, drainage, broadband connectivity, well-maintained public spaces and dependable municipal services matter just as much as economic-development marketing.

Along with reliable infrastructure, we also need clear zoning bylaws, predictable approval processes and easy access to information. I will work to connect economic development to asset management and capital planning so we know where infrastructure can support growth and where investment is required.

Port Hope's current asset-management framework already calls for infrastructure decisions to be tied to budgeting, long-range financial planning, growth and risk management. I will also work to make it easier for businesses to navigate the system: clear requirements, published service standards, better digital access to permits and information, and a clear municipal contact when a project crosses several departments.

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 believe one municipality does not mean one set of circumstances - a downtown storefront, a manufacturer, a farm and a home-based business operate in very different environments. Fair municipal policy means understanding the real conditions in which they operate and adjusting appropriately.

I will push to separate Town, Hamlet and Countryside needs when Council reviews major by-laws, policies and services. Before adopting a rule, we need to ask whether it genuinely works exactly the same way everywhere. I will also make business engagement routine rather than something we do only when there is a crisis: working with the Chamber, HBIA, agricultural community, manufacturers, tourism operators, entrepreneurs and home-based businesses to understand what is working and what is getting in their way. Economic development should deliberately reach businesses that do not normally show up at Town Hall.

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

I believe faster approvals and good planning can happen at the same time. Faster should never mean ignoring the Building Code, heritage, environmental protection, public safety or infrastructure capacity. Straightforward applications should move quickly, requirements are identified early, and applicants are not repeatedly surprised by changing expectations.

I believe routine applications should move quickly; normal applications should receive standard professional review; and complex projects involving major heritage, environmental, engineering, agricultural or infrastructure issues should receive deeper review.