

Trent Hills

Trent Hills Council Candidate



Municipal Elections

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What specific, concrete steps are you prepared to take to support your position on the Alto High Speed Rail project as it relates to Trent Hills?

I have an in-depth response on my website but in summary, based on the information available today, I do NOT support the proposed corridor coming through Trent Hills. Although I always remain open to hear additional information on every issue, I cannot imagine there would be information that would influence my current stand.

I didn't come to that position without doing my homework. I have spent a lot of time reviewing the information available and I still have too many concerns and unanswered questions. Those include the impact on homes, farms, waterways, environmentally sensitive areas, local roads and emergency access, as well as what could happen to property owners who find themselves in the eventual corridor.

No final route has been selected, and Trent Hills Council has already raised serious concerns about the potential impact on Campbellford, Hastings, rural lands and natural areas.

If elected, I would support Council continuing to make its position known to Alto and the federal government, keep asking for detailed information and expect that information to be shared publicly. I would also support working with Northumberland County and neighbouring municipalities because I believe there is strength in affected communities speaking together.

Most importantly, the residents and property owners who may be affected need to know their municipality is paying attention and advocating for them.

Sometimes, after you have done the research and considered the consequences, the answer simply has to be no. A financial benefit or compensation doesn't automatically make a project a good project.

If significant new information comes forward, I will read it and consider it. That's what making an informed decision requires. But based on what I know today, my position is no.

Where do you stand on the proposed new bridge in Campbellford and what practical actions will you take to support your position? Explain.

I support a second Trent River crossing in Campbellford. The need for one has been verified but I don't think that's all the questions answered, and concerns addressed. People are asking about the planned roundabouts, the demolition of historical homes, and more.

This project has been discussed for many years and has moved well beyond the idea stage. Utility relocation began in 2025, and the County's project planning has advanced to detailed design and construction preparation.

That doesn't mean Council stops asking questions. While out doing my ward walking, residents and business owners alike, are still asking questions. This tells me that either there are still more answers to get or the answers haven't been reviewed by all. There are certain times a year where the municipality does a mail-out to all taxpayers, this is a great opportunity to add in the information about this and other major projects. We can't make people check on the municipal website for the answers, but this may be another way of providing them the information for those who do not access the internet for some reason.

As a councillor and resident, I would want regular information on the cost, financing, timelines, traffic implications and impacts on residents and businesses during construction. Having managed businesses on Bridge Street, I understand that access, parking and traffic flow can have a very real impact on whether customers can or will get to a business. Not to mention, the practical issues with first responder delays to a call.

We also need to look beyond the bridge itself. What does it do to traffic patterns in the future? What roads and intersections will be affected? What does it mean for emergency access? Are there additional costs coming as a result? What are the consequences of today's decisions, for the years to come?

I support the bridge, but supporting a project doesn't mean giving it a blank cheque or stopping the questions.

What role should the municipality play in the proposal to build a new hospital?

I strongly support a new Campbellford Memorial Hospital and Campus of Care. Again, the need has been well established.

Campbellford Memorial Hospital (CMH) has invited all candidates to attend a virtual technical briefing on Wednesday, September 30 at 6:00 p.m. focused on CMH's redevelopment and new hospital project.

The briefing will provide candidates with an overview of the project, including where planning currently stands, the vision for the Campus of Care, the role municipalities can play in helping make the project possible, and the work that lies ahead.

There will also be an opportunity to ask questions and learn more about what the redevelopment will mean for the communities CMH serves. I encourage you to send me your questions via FB, email or on through my website. I'll get you answers to your questions and follow up.

While the Municipality doesn't build or operate the hospital, it still has an important role through planning, land-use decisions, municipal servicing, roads and infrastructure, and advocacy.

The project is now in the provincial capital-planning process, and the hospital is working on projected patient volumes, community growth trends and future services. The current plan calls for a minimum of 50 acute-care beds, compared with 38 in the existing hospital.

Fifty beds is one area where I would continue asking questions. What population projections is that based on? What will our aging population look like 10, 20 or 30 years from now? What population does Campbellford Memorial Hospital serve beyond Trent Hills?

These are decisions where Trent Hills still has an opportunity to speak, and I believe we should.

Residents are questioning if 50 beds are sufficient, And, if the evidence ultimately demonstrates that 50 beds will meet the projected need, then I am prepared to accept the evidence. But I want to see the evidence and understand it first.

This hospital is being built for generations, not just for the population we have today.

Name one or more specific actions you would take to address voter's concerns related to community safety?

One specific action I would take is to ask Council to explore bringing back a volunteer Community Policing Committee, or a similar community-based model that would work within today's policing structure.

I am not suggesting Trent Hills leave the OPP and establish its own municipal police force. Based on what I understand today, I believe the costs of doing so would outweigh the benefits. What I am talking about is restoring a stronger local connection between residents, our municipality and the police who serve our communities.

While speaking with residents in Ward 3, I am hearing concerns about community safety, including property crime, drugs, speeding and traffic, as well as a desire for greater police visibility and better communication. Trent Hills previously had a volunteer Community Policing Committee, and I believe it is worth looking at whether a similar model could once again assist with crime prevention, public education, community awareness and bringing local concerns forward.

I have previously served four years on the Alnwick/Haldimand Police Services Board, one year on the Trent Hills Police Services Board, as well as on the Peterborough Northumberland Crime Stoppers Board. That experience taught me the value of communication between police, municipalities and the communities they serve.

Our policing governance structure has changed, with the former local Police Services Boards replaced by the Northumberland OPP Detachment Board. I would work with our Council representative, the Detachment Board and the OPP to make sure Trent Hills concerns continue to be heard and to determine whether a volunteer community policing initiative could strengthen that local connection.

Community safety also has to be considered alongside the cost of providing policing. We have just learned that municipalities are being told to prepare for OPP policing cost increases of up to 11% again in 2027. For Trent Hills, where policing already represents a significant municipal expense, that is a serious concern for local taxpayers.

I agree with the concerns expressed by the current Trent Hills Council and particularly with the suggestion that municipalities join forces to address this collectively with the Province. The Province makes decisions that affect OPP costs, while municipalities and ultimately local property taxpayers are required to pay the resulting bills. I believe municipalities should have a meaningful voice in decisions that have such a significant impact on their budgets.

Community safety is not the responsibility of police alone. It requires communication and cooperation among residents, police, Council, municipal staff, businesses and community organizations. My approach would be to listen to what residents are experiencing, strengthen the local connection between our community and policing, advocate collectively when provincial decisions affect our taxpayers, and look for practical ways to improve both prevention and community safety.

How would you address the creation of affordable housing, giving three specific items you would introduce during your term on council? How many units would you want to see created by the end of your term?

Affordable housing also isn't one thing. We need different housing options for seniors who want to downsize, young people who want to remain in Trent Hills, families of different sizes, people looking for rental housing and those who require more supportive forms of housing.

Three specific actions I would bring forward for Council's consideration are:

1. Determine what housing Trent Hills actually needs and actively pursue the right development partners.

Rather than simply waiting for development proposals to come to us, I would like Trent Hills to clearly identify the types of housing we need, where that housing can realistically be accommodated and then actively engage developers, non-profit housing providers and other potential partners whose projects align with those needs.

If we determine, for example, that we need more smaller units for seniors, rental apartments, attainable starter homes or other forms of housing, I believe we should be able to say to the development community: this is what Trent Hills needs, this is where opportunities exist, and we are interested in talking to people who can help us achieve it.

That doesn't mean approving every proposal. Any development still has to make sense for Trent Hills, meet planning requirements and consider infrastructure, servicing, the environment and the surrounding community. But I don't think we always have to wait for the right developer to find us.

2. Review municipally owned land and potential partnerships.

I would ask for a review of municipally owned land to determine whether there is suitable property that could contribute to the right housing project. Municipal land belongs to the residents, so I would not give it away simply to encourage development. But if a property is appropriate and using it as part of a carefully structured partnership could help produce housing that Trent Hills has identified as a priority, I believe Council should consider it.

That could also make Trent Hills more attractive to the kinds of developers or non-profit partners we want to approach.

3. Identify and address the barriers preventing appropriate housing from being built.

I would support a time-limited review, potentially through an ad hoc housing committee with a very clear mandate, to determine what is actually preventing housing from moving forward. Is it available land? Water and wastewater capacity? Planning requirements? Development charges? Financing? Construction costs? Approval timelines? Or something else?

I would want Council, appropriate staff, people with housing and development knowledge, residents with lived experience and other relevant participants involved. Give them specific questions to answer and a deadline to report back to Council with practical recommendations. I don't want another committee simply for the sake of having a committee.

Trent Hills already has some tools available. Our Official Plan encourages different forms and densities of housing, including rental housing, and our development-charge framework includes exemptions for certain forms of housing. We need to understand whether the tools we already have are working and what additional measures are realistically within municipal control.

As for the number of units, once we have established our existing pipeline, available land, servicing capacity and actual housing needs, I would support Council setting a realistic and measurable four-year housing target and publicly tracking our progress toward it.

I'd rather give residents a number based on evidence and then be accountable for working toward it than give them a campaign number today that I cannot substantiate or guarantee

How would you implement the More Homes Built Faster Act locally. giving two examples?

First, this is provincial legislation. Trent Hills has to work within it whether individual members of Council agree with every part of it or not. The Act made changes affecting municipal planning and development, including development-related charges and housing.

Two areas I would concentrate on are:

First, understand where our own development process is unnecessarily slowing appropriate housing. If there is duplication, unnecessary delay or a municipal process that can reasonably be improved, let's fix it. But faster shouldn't mean ignoring drainage, roads, environmental impacts, servicing capacity or the effect on neighbouring properties.

Second, make sure we understand the long-term municipal cost of growth. I believe growth should pay as much of the cost of growth as is legally and reasonably possible. Development charges already help recover growth-related capital costs for services such as roads, parks and servicing infrastructure.

No matter how attractive a development may initially appear, once the subdivision is completed Trent Hills inherits municipal infrastructure that has to be maintained.

I want more housing. I also want responsible growth.

What are your views on Strong Mayor powers and their use?

I believe in democratic Council decision-making.

Strong Mayor powers have applied in Trent Hills since May 1, 2025. They include significant responsibilities involving the municipal budget and certain other decisions. Trent Hills also reports that some powers involving organizational structure and committees have been delegated.

I understand why the Province created the legislation, but my preference is for significant municipal decisions to involve Council discussion wherever the legislation allows it.

I've sat on Council before and I now work supporting an elected Council. I believe there is value in having different people around the table asking different questions. I also tend to listen first and speak later in a group discussion and that's for a specific reason. There have absolutely been times when I've changed my mind because somebody provided information or a perspective I hadn't considered. I'm grateful when that happens because it means I had the opportunity to make a better-informed decision.

To answer, when and where Strong Mayor powers are used, I believe residents should clearly understand what was done and why. As always, communication and transparency are the priority.

What specific steps would you take to support local business?

I've managed two businesses on Bridge Street in Campbellford — Career Edge and The Salvation Army Thrift Store — and I've operated businesses of my own, including a horse and carriage business and a cleaning service. I've also worked closely with local employers and businesses through community initiatives such as the Salvation Army Kettle Campaign and have spoken with the Campbellford business community about challenges such as finding and retaining employees.

That experience has taught me that supporting local business isn't only about grants or economic-development programs. It is also about understanding the day-to-day realities facing business owners and the people they employ.

There are several specific steps I would take.

First, establish regular communication with our existing businesses. During this campaign, I have reached out directly to businesses and have heard concerns about parking enforcement, snowbank removal, municipal taxes and costs. I don't think Council should wait until there is a problem to ask businesses how municipal decisions affect them.

Before major road work, bridge construction, parking changes, by-law decisions or other municipal projects that could significantly affect businesses, I would want communication to happen early. Our relationship with the Trent Hills Chamber of Commerce, along with our other local business organizations, provides an opportunity to seek that input before decisions are made whenever possible.

Second, look at the barriers that prevent businesses from finding and keeping employees. Through my previous work with employers, I've seen situations where a business can find someone who wants to work, but that person cannot find affordable housing or reliable transportation to get to the job. Housing and transportation are business issues too.

Trent Hills previously had a bus service that was discontinued because ridership did not support its continuation. I would like us to investigate whether there is now a practical and financially sustainable transportation model that could better connect Campbellford, Hastings and Warkworth. That doesn't necessarily mean recreating the former service. It means looking at current demand, potential partnerships, costs and other transportation models to determine whether there is a solution that could help residents get to work, appointments, shopping and services while also supporting businesses throughout Trent Hills.

Third, actively pursue the kinds of new businesses and industrial development that Trent Hills needs. Just as I believe we should identify the kinds of housing we need and seek appropriate development partners, I believe we should be strategic about economic development.

What types of businesses and industries fit Trent Hills? What employment lands and infrastructure do we have available? What sectors could provide good local jobs, complement businesses already here and broaden our commercial and industrial tax base?

Once we answer those questions, I don't believe we should simply wait for investment to find us. I would support actively marketing Trent Hills and reaching out to businesses and industries that fit the community and our long-term plans.

Broadening the commercial and industrial tax base can create employment and help distribute the cost of municipal services across a broader assessment base rather than continually placing additional pressure on residential taxpayers.

Finally, while attracting new investment is important, I don't want us to become so focused on attracting the next business that we forget the businesses already here.

Supporting local business means listening to them, removing barriers where the municipality reasonably can, communicating before municipal decisions affect them, helping create the conditions they need to find employees and grow, and actively pursuing new investment that makes sense for Trent Hills.

What are your plans to support recreational facilities and parks?

I support continuing to improve recreation in Trent Hills. Tight budgets shouldn't automatically mean we stop looking at new opportunities.

But every new facility comes with more than the cost of building it.

Before supporting something such as a splash pad, outdoor rink, park improvement or another recreational facility, I want to know: Is there a demonstrated need? What will it cost? Are grants available? Can service clubs, volunteers, sponsors or community partners help? And what will it cost us to operate, maintain and eventually replace?

Trent Hills already has a Parks and Recreation Master Plan, which should be part of setting priorities.

A grant can make a project possible, but a grant isn't necessarily free money. If it builds something that taxpayers then have to operate and maintain indefinitely, we need to understand that before saying yes.

I grew up skating on ponds and I've spent many years watching my grandsons participate in sports. I believe recreation and outdoor spaces matter. They create memories, support health and give young people and families things to do together.

I'd want to hear from the community, what do they want and are they prepared to support the organizing and planning? I want us to build what we can afford to look after.

What is a reasonable municipal tax rate or increase? How would you achieve this, giving specific budget areas or line items?

I would like to keep annual municipal tax increases as close to the cost of living as reasonably possible. I see that as a goal and a benchmark, not an arbitrary ceiling.

I am practical when it comes to budgeting. We have to recognize that our needs sometimes outweigh our wants, and we have to build a municipal budget that considers the ability of people across all income levels to pay it. We cannot have champagne tastes on a beer budget.

At the same time, I will not promise a specific tax percentage before seeing the complete budget. Having sat at a Council table before, I know that isn't responsible. Some expenses have to be paid. We cannot allow roads and infrastructure to deteriorate, compromise emergency services or stop building appropriate reserves simply to produce a lower number for one year.

My starting point would be to look for opportunities to reduce spending and find efficiencies before asking taxpayers for more.

I would examine the budget line by line and ask: Is this necessary? Is there a less expensive way to accomplish it? Can it wait? Can it be phased? Can we share the cost? Can we purchase or provide it jointly with another municipality?

I would particularly pursue greater cooperation with neighbouring municipalities. There may be opportunities to jointly purchase equipment, share specialized equipment that is only used periodically, coordinate infrastructure projects, combine purchasing power or jointly procure certain services. We should not assume that every municipality needs to own every piece of equipment or provide every service independently. I've seen this done; it can work.

I would also scrutinize spending on consultants and outside professional services, procurement and contracts, discretionary spending and new initiatives. A good idea can still be something we cannot afford right now.

Capital projects require the same discipline. Necessary road, bridge, water and wastewater work cannot simply be postponed because neglecting infrastructure today can cost taxpayers much more tomorrow. But we should ask whether projects can be phased, coordinated with other work or completed through partnerships that reduce costs.

I also believe affordability needs to include residents who have very limited ability to absorb annual increases. I would be interested in examining what additional targeted property-tax relief may be available or feasible for low-income seniors and others living on limited or fixed incomes, including opportunities that may require cooperation with Northumberland County. I would want to understand the cost, eligibility and impact before proposing a specific program.

We also need to broaden our tax base. Attracting appropriate commercial and industrial development, supporting existing businesses and encouraging responsible growth can help spread the cost of municipal services across a broader assessment base rather than continually placing additional pressure on existing residential taxpayers.

I would look to the Province and other levels of government for appropriate funding opportunities as well, but I don't believe every grant is automatically a good deal. If a grant helps us build something that Trent Hills does not actually need or leaves future taxpayers responsible for decades of operating, maintenance and replacement costs, we need to consider the full cost before accepting it.

A grant may help pay to build something. It doesn't necessarily pay to operate, maintain and eventually replace it.

The recently announced OPP costs are an example of another challenge. Trent Hills is being told to prepare for another increase of up to 11% in OPP policing costs for 2027. I agree with the current Council's position that municipalities should work together to advocate to the Province when provincial decisions result in significant costs that local taxpayers are ultimately expected to pay.

I would also be cautious about using reserves simply to make one year's tax increase appear lower. Reserves have an important purpose, but using them to cover an ongoing operating pressure does not make that expense disappear the following year.

I have seen what happens when municipalities keep taxes artificially low year after year. Eventually reality catches up and taxpayers can face a much larger increase. I believe it is more transparent and responsible to make reasonable, predictable adjustments when they are required and explain honestly why they are necessary.

My approach would be practical: reduce spending where we reasonably can, distinguish needs from wants, share costs and services where it makes sense, pursue funding carefully, protect the infrastructure and services we need, broaden our tax base and always remember that the people paying the bill have household budgets of their own.

What is a reasonable increase to the OPP budget? Give specific services or line items you would adjust to reach this goal?

I don't think this question can fairly be answered by choosing a percentage.

Trent Hills does not prepare the OPP budget in the same way it prepares the budget for one of its own municipal departments. For 2026, Trent Hills' adjusted OPP billing increased from approximately \$2.553 million to \$2.834 million—about \$281,000—and the municipal budget used \$173,000 from reserve to reduce the immediate impact of the increase.

My police services board experience taught me to first understand what we are paying for and what we are receiving.

I would want information on calls for service, response, traffic enforcement, recurring community concerns and the policing presence residents are actually seeing.

I would continue advocating for volunteer community policing because I believe we have lost something important there.

But I won't tell residents I can simply cut an OPP line item that Council doesn't control. If policing costs rise significantly and we cannot change those contractual costs, then Council has to look honestly at the rest of the budget and at the policing advocacy tools that are available to us. This is exactly the subject matter where all municipalities need to advocate together.

Name four new initiatives you plan to implement over your term to improve the quality of life for everyone in the municipality?

I need to qualify the wording of this question slightly. One Councillor cannot personally "implement" four initiatives. I can bring an idea to Council, make a motion, advocate for it and vote for it. Ultimately, Council decides.

Four things I would bring forward for discussion are:

1. Time-limited ad hoc committees for significant issues.

Housing and community safety are two possible examples. Bring the right people to the table, not necessarily the same people who always sit on committee. Give them a clear mandate, a defined timeframe and require findings and recommendations back to Council. A committee should have a purpose and an outcome.

2. Regular informal Council/community sessions.

I would like residents to have opportunities to speak with members of Council outside formal Council meetings. Too often elected people seem to disappear after an election and reappear four years later when they're campaigning again. Some residents couldn't name four of their seven Council members. That's not good.

3. A focused review of by-law service and response.

Residents and businesses have raised concerns with me. I want to know where the problem is, policy, staffing, communication, resources, enforcement or performance, and then deal with the actual problem.

4. A focused economic-development discussion on broadening the industrial and commercial tax base.

This isn't just about tax revenue. It is about creating more local employment and reducing the pressure that continually falls on the residential tax base.

I would also continue the Community Q&A approach I started during this campaign. Listening shouldn't end on Election Day.

How are you uniquely qualified to be elected to council that no one else can provide, but also giving at least one guilty pleasure?

I have served as an elected municipal Councillor before, within Northumberland County. That experience is probably the most important qualification I bring because I already understand that serving on Council is very different from observing the process from the outside.

I understand the distinction between Council and staff. Council governs; staff administer and operate. Councillors shouldn't micromanage staff, but that doesn't mean sitting quietly. Council has a responsibility to ask questions, challenge assumptions when necessary and make informed decisions.

If I don't understand something, I will keep asking questions until I understand it well enough to cast my vote. I will also bring residents' concerns to the Council table and make sure they are heard, even when the issue is difficult or the answer may not be popular.

Since my previous Council experience, I have continued to build my governance knowledge through training and my work supporting the Chief and Council of Alderville First Nation. I work regularly with Council processes, administration, budgets, policies and community concerns.

I also bring business, frontline community, and policing governance experience. I have managed businesses in Campbellford and operated businesses of my own. My work at Career Edge and The Salvation Army gave me first-hand experience working with people facing employment, housing, food insecurity and other barriers. I have also served on Police Services Boards, the Peterborough Northumberland Crime Stoppers Board and numerous other committees and boards.

My connection to this community goes back nearly 40 years, when my young family moved to Warkworth. I have lived, worked, raised my family and volunteered here for decades, including approximately 23 years of volunteering directly in Trent Hills. My adult children returned here and my grandsons are now growing up calling Trent Hills home too. That history has given me the opportunity to know this community from many different perspectives.

I tend to listen first and speak later. I have changed my mind after hearing new information, and I'm grateful when that happens. Listening doesn't mean much if you've already decided what you're going to do.

Having served on Council before, I also know you don't always win the vote. I can advocate strongly based on the information before me, but ultimately I respect the democratic decision of Council. If I believe an issue needs another look, I can do more homework and, where municipal rules and procedures permit, seek to have it brought back for further discussion.

Some decisions made around a Council table can affect a community for generations. I think they deserve to be approached that way.

I've been reviewing past Trent Hills Council meetings and I'm ready to hit the ground running for you.

At the end of four years, I would consider it a successful term if we could look back and know that we did our jobs well and left the next Council with a good running start to continue and build on the work we had done.

And my guilty pleasure?

I'm probably far too proud of my Fair ribbons. I won first place for strawberry jam at the Warkworth Fair many years ago and first place for peanut butter cookies at the Campbellford Fair in 2022. I still manage to work those accomplishments into conversations whenever I get the opportunity.

And ice cream is a very close second.

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