

Elaine Tully (Ward 4 Candidate)

1. What is your vision for the future of the County of Brant in the next 25 years?

For the next 25 years, change in Brant County will be steadier and more deliberate than the explosive growth of the past generation. St. George's new units enabled by the expanded water plant, along with Paris' approved but, to date, unbuilt homes, represent planned growth rather than unchecked expansion. One key priority is developing a strategy that allows the County to make its own decisions without being overridden by the Province. Strengthening business and industry will increase tax revenue more effectively than additional residential development, helping protect viable farmland and keeping growth inside established settlement areas. Broader participation from residents and business owners will ensure diverse perspectives guide decision-making. Council members must meet people where they are—ward by ward—to make engagement convenient and meaningful. We are one County, and our future depends on working together.

2. Recognizing health care services are primarily the responsibility of the Province, what role should Brant have in this regard and what are your related priorities?

Brant's role in health care must be focused, responsible, and collaborative. The Province funds 90% of hospital construction for our new hospital, but our community must provide the remaining 10% along with all equipment and furnishings. To achieve Brant's share, it is essential to continue the dedicated levy and closely monitor its progress, adjusting as needed to meet our required contribution. Beyond funding, Brant must work to attract more primary-care physicians, supporting existing corporate and strategic initiatives that bring medical professionals to our region. Collaboration with all communities that rely on Brant's health-care facilities is critical to ensuring every partner carries a fair share of the responsibility. By combining disciplined financial planning with strong regional cooperation, Brant can help build a modern, sustainable health-care system that meets the needs of all residents.

3. How would you improve transportation within the County of Brant and to/from the County?

Improving transportation in the County of Brant requires a coordinated, modernized approach that strengthens connections among Paris, Burford, Scotland, St. George, rural areas, and Brantford. The existing Brant Rides program is a strong foundation, but it needs upgrades to meet growing demand. Introducing Uber-style technology for booking and real-time ride tracking would make the service more reliable and

user-friendly. Collaboration with neighbouring counties—Oxford, Haldimand, and Norfolk—would help identify successful rural transit models that could be adapted locally. Finally, ongoing user and non-user surveys through the County website would ensure the system evolves with community needs. Together, these steps would create a more accessible, efficient, and responsive transportation network for all residents.

4. The County of Brant has a unique rural/urban character - how would you balance and/or manage this feature going forward?

The County of Brant's blend of rural and urban communities is one of its greatest strengths, and managing it well means recognizing how each area benefits from the other. Our rural landscape provides productive farmland, local food, and a connection to the land that helps residents understand where their food comes from and why agricultural stewardship matters. At the same time, our urban centres offer services, business opportunities, and visitor-friendly amenities that support the wider community.

Protecting farmland and preventing urban sprawl must remain a priority so growth does not erode the rural character that defines Brant. The mix of villages, farms, and vibrant commercial areas also creates a unique draw for visitors, offering everything from shopping and dining to farm tours, markets, and scenic experiences. By continuing to support and expand tourism programs, the County can highlight this diversity and strengthen both sectors.

Balancing rural and urban interests means planning carefully, preserving what makes each area distinct, and ensuring they continue to thrive together as one community.

5. Recognizing new economic reality of world trade and investment, what are your priorities to support and/or enhance the local economy (e.g, for small businesses, tourism, commerce, agri business etc)

Recognizing today's changing economic landscape, my priority is to strengthen Ward 4's local economy by working directly with businesses in communities such as Burford and Scotland. I would begin by listening to their current realities and exploring how they can collaborate to build a stronger, more visible commercial presence. Encouraging new businesses to choose our villages—and helping develop a clear visitor profile—would support tourism and attract new customers. I would also research comparable rural communities that have successfully built vibrant business centres, sharing those insights with local entrepreneurs to identify practical strategies for growth. Finally, I would support industries that use local raw materials, especially in agriculture and food processing, to create value-added opportunities that reinforce our rural economy.

6. What are your priorities for the natural heritage system and environment?

Protecting Brant's natural heritage system is a core priority. The County already has strong preservation and conservation measures in place, and it is essential

that we strictly abide by them. These policies exist to safeguard wetlands, woodlands, wildlife corridors, and sensitive ecosystems that cannot be replaced once lost.

I would firmly resist zoning amendment requests that reduce natural heritage areas. Development pressures will continue as the County grows, but environmental protection must remain a non-negotiable foundation of our planning decisions.

Every new development proposal should be viewed through an environmental lens. That means carefully assessing noise impacts, light pollution, water and air effects, and any by-products entering the environment. New industries must comply fully with County environmental guidelines to ensure growth does not come at the expense of long-term ecological health.

Our natural heritage is a shared responsibility — and protecting it protects our future.

7. What are your top 3 community-building projects and why are they important?

Community building is absolutely essential as our County continues to grow. When people feel they truly **belong**, the benefits ripple across the entire community — stronger relationships, safer neighbourhoods, and a more supportive, connected society. My top three community-building priorities focus on creating those connections in practical, meaningful ways.

First, I would champion the creation of **intergenerational co-ops** within towns and neighbourhoods. These programs allow children and youth to assist seniors who request help, while seniors share skills, stories, and life experience in return. The exchange is mutually beneficial — offering material support, social connection, and the rich value of personal interaction across generations.

Second, I would encourage residents to join **local non-profit, charitable, and service organizations**. The County's Community Partnership already helps match people with groups that align with their interests. Participation builds a more generous, outward-looking population that naturally cares for neighbours and strengthens community bonds.

Third, I would support expanding **community gardens**. These shared spaces bring people together to plant, tend, and harvest food while learning the basics of growing it. Working side-by-side fosters cooperation, pride, and a sense of contributing to the common good.

Together, these initiatives help build a County where every resident feels connected, valued, and engaged.

8. What do you think are the major challenges and major opportunities facing the organization of the Corporation? For example issues such as staffing/training, asset management, financial reserves, shared services, non-tax revenues.

The Corporation of the County of Brant faces both significant challenges and meaningful opportunities as it continues to grow. Remaining fiscally prudent is essential to meeting the commitments outlined in the Long-Term Financial Plan. Careful stewardship of reserves, assets, and spending ensures we can maintain services while planning responsibly for future needs.

One of our greatest assets is our human resources. In some departments, retaining excellent staff is difficult as employees pursue opportunities elsewhere. Hiring and training new staff is costly, so it is worth exploring ways to retain high-performing employees — including improved remuneration or a structured bonus system. We should also consider allowing staff to cycle through positions, both upward and downward, to preserve institutional knowledge, support professional development, and reduce burnout.

Shared services present another opportunity. We currently partner with Brantford, but exploring collaboration with **North Dumfries** could provide efficiencies with a municipality similar in size and character.

Finally, we must think **outside the box** to develop new non-tax revenue streams. Diversifying income strengthens financial stability and reduces pressure on residents.

Together, these strategies can help Brant remain resilient, efficient, and forward-looking.

9. What are your views on Strong Mayor Powers? Yes or no - why or why not.

I do **not** support Strong Mayor Powers. Removing decision-making authority from council effectively removes power from residents, because council is the body elected to represent every ward and every voice. My job is to bring the views of Ward 4 residents to the council table. If a mayor can simply override that input, then council is no longer functioning as it is meant to — as a collaborative, representative body. This is not democracy.

Every individual counts. Your wishes may not be met in every case, but they will **always** be heard, considered, and brought forward. Strong Mayor Powers undermine that commitment by concentrating authority in one office rather than ensuring broad, democratic participation. Local decisions should reflect the voices of all residents, not the unilateral direction of a single leader.

10. In the last 4 years, the County of Brant approved property tax changes as follows: +5.8% in 2023;

+8.7% in 2024; +6.3% in 2025 and +5.0% in 2026. The Municipality is forecasting +5.3% in 2027 and +6.5% in 2028. Please provide your comments on these changes.

Managing property tax rates is one of the most challenging responsibilities council faces. Each year we must balance inflation, mandatory infrastructure upgrades, and the rising cost of delivering essential services. These pressures are real, and they affect every municipality in Ontario. That's why it is important to compare Brant County's tax position to our neighbours. According to the County's 2025 tax rate comparison, Brant has the **second-lowest** rate among twelve surrounding municipalities — a reminder that context matters when evaluating annual increases.

I will always listen closely to Ward 4 residents as we set priorities. Reducing taxes may sound appealing, but it inevitably means reducing services. Roads, emergency response, parks, libraries, and community programs all depend on stable funding. Council must make thoughtful choices, recognizing that one person's needs or wants may differ from another's.

My commitment is to ensure every voice is heard as we navigate these difficult decisions together.

11. How would you enhance accountability and transparency for municipal elected officials in Brant?

Enhancing accountability and transparency in Brant begins with empowering residents. **Knowledge is power**, and residents have many ways they can monitor the work of their elected officials. Public perception often leans toward assuming council or staff are untrustworthy, so it is essential to actively counter that by broadening access to information and participation.

I would strongly promote the opportunities available through **Engage Brant**, where residents can follow projects, provide input, and stay informed about County decisions. I also encourage everyone to tune in to current and/or past council and committee meetings through the County of Brant YouTube page to see councillors at work directly.

Most importantly, every resident has direct access to their elected representatives. Contact information for all councillors and the mayor is publicly available, and I will continue urging residents to reach out, ask questions, share ideas, and stay engaged.