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## 2022 Municipal Election Candidate Questionnaire

Candidate Name:

Municipality

Date:

Ute Schmid-Jones

Midland, Ontario

August 30, 2022

Please return the completed questionnaire to the sender as soon as possible, but no later than September 15, 2022. The answers will then be posted on the AWARE Simcoe website.

**N.B: As this is a Word document, you can take as much space as you wish to respond.**

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1. AWARE Simcoe considers the preservation of farmland, the protection of water resources and natural heritage, and providing transparency and accountability in government decision making to be the primary issues of this election.

Our goal is to elect representatives who support those objectives. Do you agree with this?

ANSWER:

Climate Change IS the greatest existential crisis of our lifetimes. Though the issues you outline in this point are incredibly high in my values as a municipal candidate, I believe that we have an even greater threat to our ability to contribute as individuals, workers and business leaders in this municipal election and that is poverty and homelessness. People who live in constant fear of food insecurity or lack of access to adequate protection from severe weather conditions because of economic insecurity will and do find it incredibly difficult to metabolize their roles in the mitigation of Climate Change.

Not only does Simcoe County and the municipalities included therein have a severe lack of available housing inventory at this present time, we also have a complete lack of sustainable housing inventory.

Realistically, we know that our need to shelter human beings in our region will most certainly increase as the Climate Crisis broadens in scope globally. Realistically, many of us through lived perceived experience have concluded that even building standards of “affordable” housing previously defined by our housing authorities, may not actually encompass the inventory need of sustainable units that we need now, not tomorrow or next year.

How we responsibly address the incredibly important concerns you outline in your point; of protecting our land for food security and protecting our water so essential to our livelihoods, (so that it remains clean and accessible to all in our communities) merges when we address the creation of sustainable housing development throughout our two tiered municipalities inclusively.

There must be a sustainable housing plan for Simcoe County that translates on an urban and rural level to each independent Municipality within Simcoe County.

In Midland, that will most certainly mean in-filling within the current municipal boundaries, rather than building subdivisions outside of them. It means building low rise residential developments within walking, cycling and public transit corridors to service sector locations. These residential units need not be large in size, encompassing a bed/sitting/kitchenette and bathroom all in a space of a few hundred square feet. There would be no parking facilities at any of these developments, ensuring that we house people instead of parking lots. People who walk and cycle or navigate with assisted mobility devices in our communities will use local services and shops and work in our communities as well. Working from home has changed our commuter mentality forever and many urban professionals in large Canadian Cities realize that they are risking their lives every day for careers that allow them little time to recreate in nature or engage in community development activities. Deciding to move to and settle in any municipality in Simcoe County should be an exercise in the improvement of their personal well being.

Urban municipalities in Simcoe County use leading edge technologies to manage water and waste water recovery. Over time, it makes sense that these management technologies will improve and be activated: as we learn better we WILL do better.

Teaching food security in urban parkland settings, like sectioning off a portion of a municipality's downtown core to foot and cycling traffic only and replacing it with a public green house for residents to recreate to during the winter months and/or volunteer for throughout the year will foster relationships between plants and people that could begin in the downtown core and expand to every playground and schoolyard within the region over time.

Access to electric vehicles to visit our conservation areas and provincial parks will not be limited only to those who can afford to own such vehicles themselves. Vehicle rental companies will offer electric vehicle rentals to residents who wish to "stay-cation" in our region monthly, not just annually!

I think it's essential that we do not rule out the learning and value that has come out of the encampment movement that has taken root in our urban municipalities. Working with professional individuals that have lived experience with encampments and/or years of lived experience in refugee camps before immigrating successfully to Canada will be an

important tool in the development of sustainable and safe transitional housing for those neighbours in our communities that are not at “ease” with traditional housing constructs that we’ve developed for decades in North America. Respecting the nomadic lifestyle that has been a part of human evolution for thousands of years and respectfully (de-stigmatizing) integrating the presence of different ways of living in our communities in the future will most certainly be the work of influencers, including elected political representatives.

These are just some of my thoughts on your question. I hope that the dialogue builds momentum and continues as a visionary project that includes many public engagement opportunities throughout Simcoe County.

2. Do you feel there is a need to protect water, wetlands and recharge areas from development, aggregate extraction and other intrusive activities in your municipality? If so, how will you achieve this?

ANSWER:

Absolutely.

Building partnerships with science led not-for-profit and entrepreneurs, businesses and service industries that support this important work. It will take the efforts of us all, workers, volunteers and residents to be the change we want to see in our world.

Recognition of the value of groups like the SSEA, Wye Marsh, Provincial Parks, Conservation Areas from the council as a whole publicly, but also through recognition of these organizations from each council member as an individual through their social media presence and postings. Building partnerships with federal and provincial grants to support the economic development of these groups and more.

I’ve been a public and private advocate for a Universal Basic Income for almost two decades. When people have access to a federal income system that protects them from homelessness and food insecurity, they can choose to engage in professional pursuits that enhance their values and choose to work for and volunteer for businesses and non-profits that function in respect to the environment.

I think we lost a valuable resource when the federal government ended the Katimavik program for example. This wonderful program invited young people, ready to make the leap from secondary school to a non-structured non-classroom educational experience

that lasted anywhere from 1 ½ to 3 years. Students would live in more than one community for several months, volunteering in those communities for local non profits while boarding with local families. This initiative was government funded and the students were only required to make financial compensation if they didn't complete their years of commitment. Hybrid models of this program could be re-examined to include no-interest government loans for students wishing to participate in this kind of educational experience (similar to college and university loans) with business recognized certifications upon completion (just like degrees and diplomas) that would lead to next steps through employment in the future. I think progressive minded tax payers would be delighted to see their employment tax dollars going into a program like this!

3. Ancient deposits under the Simcoe Uplands in Simcoe County's Tiny, Springwater, Oro-Medonte and Tay townships contain pristine groundwater.

This water is the purest water known to science, and is the gold standard for water worldwide, a national and global treasure.

Ongoing gravel pit extractions on French's Hill, the water recharge area, now threaten to destroy this precious water. Will you work to protect this important local resource?

ANSWER:

**Absolutely. Yes**

4. Do you support/oppose expansion of the Greenbelt into Simcoe County? In either case, please explain why.

ANSWER:

I support the premise of extending environmental protections available to the Ontario Greenbelt to this vital local resource, but would be reluctant to remove them from Simcoe County owned lands or responsibilities. Protections for Greenbelt lands are important, but I am unsure we can count on provincial governments to responsibly manage these lands in a way that is truly respectful of our environment at this time. As such, I would hope Simcoe County can continue to play an active role in responsible stewardship of these lands.

During my time in Hamilton, the region's Public Land Trust movement encouraged private citizens to work together and leverage their resources to better conserve undeveloped

lands for environmental benefit and community use. I would be proud to explore the building of wider coalitions of trust to collectively manage these complex negotiations, which would best begin with extensive opportunities for public engagement.

5. What are your plans to combat climate change in your municipality?

ANSWER:

I'm starting the process from my campaign for mayor by refusing to create plastic signs to market myself. I'm choosing to rely instead on my digital, not plastic or print footprint to engage with my fellow constituents.

I've outlined above housing initiatives that would enhance and increase capacity for residential growth in my municipality. Eventually houses that currently shelter one single adult can be developed from SFD's to residences that sustainably house multiple families. A four-bedroom home for example that currently houses one single aging adult (perhaps their partner has died) may eventually be sold to developers or realtors who can tap into legal agreements that turn that four bedroom SFD into a unit that can be jointly owned by four or more potentially unrelated adults who legally own a PORTION of the building and property it's on.

When a residence is torn down in a municipality, it should be replaced with a duplex or even four plex instead of a single SFD.

Educating property owners and renters that green bins are only one way to compost organic waste and incentivizing the use of composters across the housing spectrum.

Ensuring that my municipality's shopping districts have not just waste receptacles but recycling and organic composting receptacles as well.

Ensuring that all public festivals and public events have strict guidelines for vendors to use only compostable and/or recyclable packaging. If possible having volunteer waste management sites at the festival where attendees dispose of their items with the support of these volunteers in the appropriate manner.

Working with BIA's to ensure that bricks and mortar businesses and services use packaging that is either recyclable or compostable. This will take time!

Learning to become digital document more and paper document less.

Ensuring that there is access to community tap water at public events and festivals in communities.

Adding compostable bathroom facilities in our downtown core.

Educating and Incentivizing through provincial and federal grants conversion from conventional fossil fuel residential heating and cooling systems, to renewables.

Inviting the local media to regularly feature climate change and environmental conservation success stories on their platforms.

Inviting EV dealers to set up shop in my municipality. Not only the sale but the regular maintenance of E-cars, E-scooters, E-bicycles, E-boards, etc.

Inviting residents who currently live in rural areas of Simcoe County to consider moving to more urban centres where they can use/tap into public transit systems more often.

Supporting and promoting initiatives in my municipality that reward and incentivize people when they choose lower carbon choices

Reminding people that when they choose to walk, cycle, or take public transportation to get to their workplace, they are not only investing in climate resilience, they also save on their monthly vehicle insurance payments and reduce the amount of opportunities in which they could get into a vehicular accident.

6. Every municipality in Ontario is faced with row-on-row sprawl-style development, and surrounding farmland is being destructively gobbled up with little regard for future agricultural needs. Ontario is losing 319 acres of farmland every day, it needs to be protected before it's too late. We need to ensure we have the land to grow food for today and future generations. Once it's paved over, it's gone forever!

How will you protect agricultural lands within your municipality?

ANSWER:

I have addressed how to mitigate the growing need for housing in Simcoe County with infilling in a previous question.



Land will most certainly not be the only way that we grow food in the future. Multi-level green house installations will also be necessary in order to support the growing food needs of our region. As our climate in Southern Ontario becomes even more humid and wet, we have a responsibility for acknowledging that we may very well become the fruit, vegetable and plant-based protein nutrition-basket for our province

I think we have an even greater need to address why we keep electing governments willing to sell valuable farm land to developers. Federally and provincially, these are issues that could be changed dramatically simply by introducing a voting system that uses proportional representation over the current first past the post. Even municipalities that recognized the need for change in their voting systems and sought to introduce ranked ballot in 2018 (London, Ontario), were forbidden by the provincial government from using them again.

If we keep electing candidates who have no respect for climate change and resilience, food insecurity, and perceive housing as an ever escalating economic commodity rather than a basic human right, we will continue to see our provincial farm land be whittled away, piece by precious piece.

Municipally, where party partisanship politics is regarded as neutral, we may begin to implement a growing change. Urban farming, front yard vegetable gardens, and even food forests in our shopping districts in urban municipalities within the greater Simcoe County Umbrella could become normalized. Many municipalities are implementing community Refrigerators and Pantries for food sharing purposes in high traffic residential areas. Food Farm Eco-Tourism in Simcoe County's more rural municipalities could further enhance public perceptions and affect their voting behaviours (ie. Farm Crawl Festival in Hamilton & Niagara). Education and Public Engagement will be key tools in preventing farm land loss. Demonstrating in cities and towns that we CAN de-pave large portions of already developed areas and plant low maintenance food forests instead is definitely seeing a rise in public interest.

I would love to be a part of the public engagement opportunities that promote and invite professional consultation to this important issue. Being ready to listen to ALL input, regardless of whether the orientation of a speaker is climate change aware or not will be essential. We all come to this path as we see the need. I look forward to being a publicly and democratically elected official who respects all voices that wish to engage, so that more of us can move forward together.

7. Simcoe County Council chose a county forest in Springwater Twp – zoned Agricultural, as the site for a (much needed) waste handling facility, the Environmental Resource Recovery Centre (ERRC). Many residents in Simcoe County objected to this location, pointing out that this is an industrial use and there are suitable properties zoned Industrial where the facility should be built. What is your view?

ANSWER:

I would certainly have to hear or read all of the delegations brought forward during this application process in order to understand the reasoning for choosing one zone of land over another.

My concern rests not only on the environmental impact of building an ERRC in a county forest, but the cost, environmental and otherwise, of bringing services needed to such a facility where there currently are none present. It makes sense to build Industrial businesses where access to water and electricity services are already present and the distance between those facilities and the businesses who need them is minimized. It makes sense to build industrial work places that will require large numbers of employees on public transit corridors.

Forward thinking places are increasingly seeing that effective waste diversion facilities are actually resource recovery facilities. I would like to see Simcoe County's approach to providing these vital services remain aware of potential negative impacts on local ecosystems. Simcoe County must also explore innovation designed to reduce waste output overall, diverting what would otherwise be seen as waste into productive re-use wherever possible.

8. If elected, what are your top three priorities?

ANSWER

1. Sustainable (which must also be affordable) Housing Development:

A) Transitional Stage – Safe Encampments with Basic Services like Compostable Toilets and Clean Water Stations for Cleaning



- B) Low Carbon, Low Rise, urban and rural density that fills in the gaps
- C) Working with Insurance Companies to fill housing spaces that are currently or periodically vacant: House Sitting could become mandatory for Snowbirds and could provide transitional housing for many
- D) Working with Property Developers to build Tiny Houses and/or Secondary Suites on existing Residential Properties that could be leased by renters and maintained by either home owner OR Property Developer
- E) Working with Provincial and Federal governments to turn single story motel housing unit complexes into two or three level bachelor suite style housing units, increasing the independent living density potential of these already developed housing lands.
- F) Using brown fields to support Tiny home communities.
- G) Reminding people that Simcoe County provides low interest loans of up to \$30,000 to build secondary rental suites on their residential property. We can house Climate refugees instead of election signs in our garage spaces!
- H) Taking the downtown free municipal parking lots in Midland and turning them into low rise, low carbon residential suites for urban dwellers who don't own cars. Creating feeder parking lots on the perimeter of the town that utilize transit/shuttle services directly into the downtown shopping and service provider areas.

## 2. Climate Resilience:

- A) Attracting businesses and non-profits that respect sound environmental practices
- B) Developing an Active First Response Plan to address process for inevitable Climate Emergencies that could arise in our region
- C) Developing mental health support systems in our region that are more accessible; people need tools to cope with trauma so that they can still navigate through life
- D) Education about how a more plant based diet is better for the environment and for our health, particularly important as we move through a transition phase where we may not be able to get professional medical attention as quickly or as frequently as we did in the past.
- E) Inviting new immigrants to move into our region.
- F) Acknowledging the damage done by colonization to our Indigenous Population and participating in educational opportunities that heal and educate how we can best preserve and add this culture into our own daily lives so that it doesn't become extinct.
- G) Addressing Food Insecurity with accessible Urban Food Forests.
- H) Supporting Arts and Culture opportunities that magnify and question our politics
- I) Supporting Arts and Culture opportunities that can be engaged in by all residents of all

economic means.

3. Resident Security and Safety:

A) Housing

B) Food and Water

C) Economic

D) Setting up a Task Force to address mitigation of Safe Community Spaces as incidences of Gun Violence increase in North America

Links to my Social Media Profiles:

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/search/top?q=ute%20schmid-jones%20mayor%20for%20environmental%20and%20economic...>

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/UteSchmid>

Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/uteschmidjones/>

YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC1B4BlpjVbcrn2p9kEqBcfQ>

Tik Tok: <https://www.tiktok.com/@uteschmidjones>

Linked In: <https://www.linkedin.com/in/ute-schmid-jones-740144b4/>

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Thank you for completing the AWARE Simcoe candidate questionnaire.

[Ute Schmid Jones responses to AWARE Municipal Questionnaire 2022.](#)