All Candidates Response Form

District of Kent

Instructions

1. Complete the Candidate Information below, then answer all questions, including the Lightning Round. These questions apply to all Council candidates.
2. Type your answer in the response box under each question. Responses may be given in any order.
3. Each response must be no more than 500 words. Lightning Round answers are YES or NO.
4. Your file MUST be saved in PDF format and titled with your name, for example: Stephanie_Gallamore.pdf
5. Word documents will NOT be converted to PDF for the website. Files that are not PDFs cannot be posted.
6. Open this form in Adobe Acrobat Reader (free) so your answers are saved, then use File > Save As and name the file with your name. Return the completed PDF as directed by the event organizers.

Candidate Information

Candidate name: Desigan (Desi) Naidoo

File name to save as: PDF

Text boxes scroll if your response is longer than the visible space.

Question 1

There is almost no growth in the commercial sector in Agassiz. What specifically would you do to attract new businesses, retain existing ones, and increase pedestrian activity and economic activity downtown?

Your response (maximum 500 words):

Question 2

How should the District capitalize on visitors travelling through to Harrison Hot Springs and Sasquatch Resort to generate more economic activity for Agassiz businesses?

Your response (maximum 500 words):

Question 3

Is there a need and opportunity to attract additional grocery or retail options to Agassiz?

Your response (maximum 500 words):

Question 4

With increasing pressure for housing and commercial development, will you commit to keeping development off Agricultural Land Reserve land? If not on ALR, where should future growth in the District occur?

Your response (maximum 500 words):

Question 5

Infrastructure maintenance on rural and side roads is an ongoing concern for many residents. How would you prioritize this within the District's overall budget?

Your response (maximum 500 words):

Question 6

What concerns do you have about youth in this community, and what do you plan to do to support young people through their teenage years?

Your response (maximum 500 words):

Question 7

What do you believe is the most important issue(s) facing the District of Kent over the next four years, and why?

Your response (maximum 500 words):

Question 8

What do you see as Agassiz's greatest untapped tourism opportunity?

Your response (maximum 500 words):

LIGHTNING ROUND (YES / NO)

All Council candidates: check YES or NO for each question

Lightning Question 1

Do you support the District exploring shared services with the Village of Harrison Hot Springs to reduce costs?

☑ YES ☐ NO

Lightning Question 2

Have you volunteered with a local organization in the last three years?

☐ YES ☑ NO

Lightning Question 3

Do you believe it is the municipality's role to attract new investors (such as grocery/retail) to the area

☑ YES ☐ NO

Lightning Question 4

Do we have enough affordable housing in Agassiz?

☐ YES ☑ NO

Lightning Question 5

Do you support increasing the municipal budget for tourism marketing such as the Agassiz Harrison Museum, municipal events and Agricultural businesses.

☑ YES ☐ NO

Lightning Question 6

Do you support housing density in the town core?

☑ YES ☐ NO

Question 1

There is almost no growth in the commercial sector in Agassiz. What specifically would you do to attract new businesses, retain existing ones, and increase pedestrian activity and economic activity downtown?

To spark commercial growth and revitalize downtown Agassiz, I will champion the creation of a "District 1881"-inspired walkable cultural and shopping hub filled with independent shops, restaurants, affordable residences, and office space. This vision brings in vital new income streams and local jobs while keeping our rural vibe intact. Crucially, this hub will be deeply rooted in both Indigenous and Agassiz heritage themes, honoring our shared history and creating a distinct regional tourism destination. To further enrich the community's cultural options, we can include a live arts theater that draws visitors from across the Fraser Valley. To attract and retain businesses, I will cut red tape, streamline municipal permitting, and keep municipal operating costs low. Furthermore, by expanding commercial revenue, we can actively take the heavy property tax burden off local residents while making our downtown a vibrant, pedestrian-friendly destination that draws both locals and visitors alike.

Question 2

How should the district capitalize on visitors travelling through to Harrison Hot Springs and Sasquatch Resort to generate more economic activity for Agassiz businesses?

Agassiz sits dead center in the middle of top-tier regional tourism spots that we cannot directly compete with. We can, however, build our own unique tourist attraction to force travelers to stop and visit us. By developing a walkable, heritage-themed cultural hub right in the town core, we create a compelling destination that demands a stop. Furthermore, we will capitalize heavily on agricultural tourism during the summer season—showcasing our farm-gate stands, local markets, and agricultural heritage. This strategy turns transient traffic into lasting customers, driving sustained economic activity for our local small businesses.

Question 3

Is there a need and opportunity to attract additional grocery or retail options to Agassiz?

Yes. Agassiz is growing, and families frequently face limited choices for daily essentials, driving spending out of the community. Beyond daily conveniences, we urgently need to increase our commercial tax base to alleviate the heavy tax burden currently placed on local residents. Attracting additional grocery and retail options is vital to keeping our hard-earned dollars local, cutting down on travel costs for residents, and creating true economic self-sufficiency. By expanding our commercial footprint, we will provide local jobs and make the district more desirable for workers, families, and the elderly to set down permanent roots. As a town councillor, I will work proactively to welcome new retail partners into our designated commercial zones—ensuring that growth is well-planned, serves neighborhood needs, and supports a thriving, competitive local marketplace

Question 4

With increasing pressure for housing and commercial development, will you commit to keeping development off Agricultural Land Reserve land? If not on ALR, where should future growth in the District occur?

With a vast portion of the District of Kent comprised of agricultural land, expansion space in central Agassiz is extremely limited. We must fiercely protect our agricultural land and food security as long as properties fulfill their full agricultural potential. However, practical governance means looking at reality: if certain agricultural parcels are entirely unutilized or abandoned, the district could look to carefully evaluate a very small, strategic portion of them for growth. Otherwise, development must be intelligently directed inward through infill development and non-market affordable housing focused right within the existing town core. By optimizing underutilized spaces in the center of Agassiz while respecting true agricultural productivity, we build a sustainable community without reckless sprawl.

Question 5

Infrastructure maintenance on rural and side roads is an ongoing concern for many residents. How would you prioritize this within the District's overall budget?

Rural and side road maintenance is a core safety issue that directly impacts our residents, agricultural transporters, and emergency response times. Fiscal responsibility means prioritizing essential community safety over administrative bloat. I propose funding critical road and infrastructure maintenance by reallocating internal operational efficiencies, optimizing interest on our municipal reserves, and aggressively targeting federal and provincial infrastructure grants. By keeping projects cost-effective and stopping expensive outside privatization leaks, we can ensure our roads are safe and well-maintained without hitting homeowners with compounding property tax hikes.

Question 6 : What concerns do you have about youth in this community, and what do you plan to do to support young people through their teenage years?

Families in the District of Kent are struggling with affordability. To properly support our kids and teenagers, we need to expand our commercial tax revenue so the municipality can fund proper recreational facilities and safe spaces for them. New commercial investments will also provide vital opportunities for teenagers to gain hands-on work experience right here at home. Furthermore, expanding public, more frequent, and free bus service opens up entirely new doors of independence, giving teens reliable mobility to get to school, work, and community programs. By pairing economic growth with accessible transit, we give our youth every reason to stay and build their futures here.

Question 7: What do you believe is the most important issue(s) facing the District of Kent over the next four years, and why?

The most critical issues facing the District of Kent over the next four years are the compounding affordability crisis and our urgent infrastructure deficit. Working families, seniors, and fixed-income residents are being squeezed by rising tax rates while bearing 55% of the tax base. Over the next four years, we must tackle this by implementing an immediate two-year property tax pause funded through internal savings and commercial revenue growth. To further alleviate household financial pressure, we will introduce a publicly owned municipal waste program to replace expensive private subscription fees. Simultaneously, we must secure our region's future by fiercely advocating for our four core infrastructure priorities: a new four-lane Agassiz-Rosedale Bridge, a 16–20 bed community hospital, a walkable cultural hub, and reliable 7-day public transit.

Question 8

What do you see as Agassiz's greatest untapped tourism opportunity?

Agassiz sits dead center in the middle of top-tier regional tourism spots that we cannot directly compete with. We can, however, build our own unique tourist attraction to force travelers to stop and visit us. By developing a walkable, heritage-themed cultural hub right in the town core, we create a compelling destination that demands a stop. This vibrant center will celebrate and expand upon our rich agricultural heritage combined with deep, authentic Indigenous cultural tourism. Visitors are increasingly looking for genuine, place-based experiences—from farm-gate tours and local artisan markets to cultural storytelling rooted in our region's history. Furthermore, we will capitalize heavily on agricultural tourism during the summer season—showcasing our farm-gate stands, local markets, and agricultural heritage. This strategy turns transient traffic into lasting customers, driving sustained economic activity for our local small businesses.