

**How has your experience in working with local businesses influenced your view of the business community and economic environment in Waconia?
Describe your perceptions and understanding of the business community and economic environment in Waconia?**

Jacob Coleman* - Candidate: Waconia City Council

My experience working with local businesses in Waconia has given me a deep appreciation for the dedication and resilience that our business community embodies. I've seen firsthand how our local businesses are not just economic drivers but also key contributors to the character and culture of our town. The collaborative spirit among business owners, their commitment to providing quality services and products, and their ability to adapt to changing circumstances all underscore the strength of our local economy. I understand that the business community in Waconia thrives on supportive local policies, a strong customer base, and a shared vision for sustainable growth. However, challenges such as rising costs, competition, and the need for infrastructure improvements must be addressed to ensure continued success. My perception of Waconia's economic environment is one of potential; with thoughtful planning and a focus on creating a business-friendly atmosphere, we can foster even greater economic vitality while preserving the unique charm that makes Waconia special.

Jim Lohan - Candidate: Waconia City Council

The entrepreneurial spirit is alive and well in Waconia and residents do their best to support local businesses. My perception is that there is significant concern that the cost of improvements required to grow Waconia will overwhelm the pioneering small business owners we support.

I am optimistic. I believe there is a great opportunity available to the City Council. We can support the local business pioneers and our community, while at the same time welcoming larger investment. Waconia can leverage incoming large investors for infrastructure and community improvements incremental to those funded by current taxation. This has worked in other communities and can deliver improvements without significant incremental cost to current business owners.

In addition to growth measures, we can optimize the return on our tax dollars by not wasting time, talent, or treasure implementing misguided state, county and federal government programs.

Bottom line., we can stimulate the local economy and grow without dismantling the Waconia charm and skyline.

Simon Malinski - Candidate: Waconia City Council

Being active in our community has given me the opportunity to talk directly to small business owners as well as the people they employ. I believe small businesses need our support and our family buys local whenever possible. My family and my wife's family come from small business ownership. I experienced first hand the challenges and rewards of business ownership.

I believe the economic environment in Waconia is strong and we need to support our local businesses to help them achieve their goals.

I have a favorable perception of the business community in Waconia. I truly believe local businesses have spe-

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cific needs which differ from other businesses. Acquiring and maintaining talent to help ensure our local businesses thrive is very important to a strong local economy. I believe the economic environment changes as our city grows and ages.

Derek Siddons - Candidate: Waconia City Council

My wife and I own a small business in town and as part of the business community it's both challenging and rewarding. The business owners in Waconia are some of the best we've ever experienced—supportive, creative, dedicated and have a passion to succeed. The economic environment is thriving, yet the opportunity for more is here. More marketing support, collaborative planning, transparency in goals and established metrics are all needed.

Tim Litfin - Candidate: Waconia Mayor

I have worked closely with business leaders for years. I have years of experience working with chambers of commerce. I have worked in both the private and public sector in my professional career. I have collaborated and worked with business leaders regularly for 20 years in my current position as Executive Director of Community Education in Minnetonka. I did the same excellent work when I held a similar position in Waconia from 1993 to 2004. In Waconia, I was on the Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors for 11 years.

I also worked in a small business with my father's construction company during and after college. I know firsthand of the 60-hour work week that it takes to be a successful business owner or manager. I have seen and heard the struggles they face daily, due to rising supply costs, staff shortages, high taxes in Minnesota and more. I know our business community is made up of great people, great community people, who are trying to make a difference and make a living. Most want less red tape in their lives, yet they understand and support common-sense regulation. As a city, we need to listen to their needs, and dive deep into relationships to support them and not make their jobs any more challenging than they already are.

I support business owners and business leaders. Small business owners in Waconia take huge risks by following their passions to serve, create and sell. Small businesspeople are proud owners. They are the backbone of any community including Waconia. Waconia is fortunate to have an expanding base of restaurants, retail, legal services, health services, grocery and industrial.

One need in Waconia is, like most cities, to increase the industrial tax base which would lessen the tax impact on small business and area residents. However, we are out of land in our industrial park, and our commercial property on highway 5 is almost full. To grow our industrial tax base, Waconia needs to work on acquiring land and on getting our next industrial park online. This industrial park is in our comp plan and we need to work at making it a reality.

My perception of the economic environment for business in Waconia is that it is strong. Many businesses want to come here. Residents want to live here. High State of MN taxes make it challenging for any business. Therefore, as a city, we need to continue to explore and create pathways for businesses to locate here and stay here. We need to collaborate with businesses to make Waconia attractive for their investment in this community.

TIF, tax increment financing, has been used successfully in many communities, including Waconia. City directed incentive grants are not always possible but nice. A city driven revolving loan fund should also be inves-

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tigated to see what support that could provide for our willing downtown businesses. Any idea is worth exploring. Other great ideas may already exist within our business community, all we need to do is ask and listen.

My philosophy as a school administrator has been one of dedication, innovation, ownership, partnership, and hard work. This philosophy has garnered support for what I do professionally from the business community, as well as from school board members, superintendents, city council members, mayors, Rotarians, school staff and more.

Mayor Nicole Waldron*- Candidate: Waconia Mayor

Aside from working for several local businesses in my past, I have served on the City Council for almost six years, with four years as the Liaison to the Chamber. I see a strong and vibrant business community in Waconia, full of passionate business owners and a successful Chamber of Commerce. We have experienced growth and the addition of several new businesses which also speaks to the positive economic environment.

CONTACT THE CANDIDATES

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How Can I Vote in Waconia?

City of Waconia residents have multiple options for voting:

1. Vote by mail.
2. Vote at City Hall, 201 South Vine Street (City of Waconia Residents Only).
3. Go to the Taxpayer Services Department at Carver County Government Center, 600 E. 4th Street, Chaska, (ALL Carver County Residents).
4. Vote in person on Election Day on November 5, 2024.



Early and Absentee Voting at City Hall (Waconia residents only)

Early and absentee voting starts September 20 and goes through November 4. Waconia residents can vote at City Hall Monday - Thursday from 7:30 am - 4:30 pm, and Fridays from 7:30 am - 11:30 am. Extended hours include:

- Saturday, October 26 - 9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.
- Tuesday, October 29 - 7:30 a.m. - 7:00 p.m.
- Saturday, November 2 - 9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.
- Sunday, November 3 - 9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.
- Monday, November 4 - 7:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

If you are not a City of Waconia resident (but reside in Carver County) you can absentee vote at the Carver County Government Center in Chaska. Their hours are different than the hours listed above.

How Do I Vote by Mail?

To request a mail ballot, please visit the [Secretary of State's Website](#) or www.waconia.org/votebymail.

City of Waconia Polling Locations

The City of Waconia is no longer part of a Ward Boundary System. Your polling place may have changed in 2022. The City of Waconia is divided into three precincts, please view the polling places listed below. If you are unsure of the precinct in which you reside, please consult the [City of Waconia Precinct map](#) (link). www.waconia.org/DocumentCenter/View/3042/WaconiaPrecincts

Precinct 1

Faith Lutheran Church
800 Waconia Parkway North
Waconia, MN 55387

Precinct 2

Trinity Lutheran Church
601 E. 2nd St.
Waconia, MN 55387

Precinct 3

Waconia Ice Arena
1250 Oak Avenue
Waconia, MN 55387

Questions? Call City Hall at 952-442-2184

Current Elected Officials

For a full listing of current city, county, state, and federal elected officials, visit www.DestinationWaconia.org/live/#government.

