

**As Waconia continues to grow, attracting new commercial businesses and industrial growth is crucial for economic development and job creation. What specific strategies would you implement to attract and retain diverse commercial business and industry in our city? Additionally, how do you plan to address the availability of commercial property, and what steps would you take to ensure there is adequate space for future business growth while maintaining the character of our community?**

Jacob Coleman\* - Candidate: Waconia City Council

Attracting and retaining diverse commercial businesses and fostering industrial growth in Waconia is essential for sustained economic development and job creation. Here are the specific strategies I would implement:

### 1. **Targeted Business Recruitment:**

I would work with economic development experts to identify key industries that align with Waconia's strengths and community values, such as healthcare, technology, light manufacturing, and retail. By creating targeted recruitment campaigns, we can attract businesses that complement our existing economic base and fill market gaps. This could include engaging with site selectors and showcasing Waconia's unique assets, such as its high quality of life, skilled workforce, and strategic location.

### 2. **Incentives and Support Programs:**

I would support programs that help small businesses and startups thrive, including business incubators, mentorship programs, and partnerships with local educational institutions for workforce training. By offering a supportive environment we can help businesses grow and succeed in Waconia.

### 3. **Enhancing Commercial Property Availability:**

Ensuring that Waconia has adequate commercial property for growth is crucial. I would work with city planners to identify underutilized or vacant properties that could be repurposed for commercial use. Additionally, I would explore opportunities for land acquisition and zoning adjustments to create new commercial and industrial zones that meet current and future demand. Collaborating with developers to design mixed-use developments can also help maximize land use efficiency while integrating commercial space with residential and recreational areas.

### 4. **Maintaining Community Character:**

Growth should not come at the expense of Waconia's small-town charm and character. I would advocate for development guidelines that promote architectural consistency, green spaces, and pedestrian-friendly designs. By prioritizing smart growth principles, we can ensure that new commercial and industrial developments complement our community's aesthetics and values. This includes balancing large-scale developments with support for locally-owned businesses that contribute to Waconia's unique identity.

### 5. **Infrastructure Investment:**

To support business growth, I would prioritize investments in infrastructure, such as transportation, utilities, and broadband. Ensuring that our roads, utilities, and digital infrastructure can handle increased commercial activity is key to attracting businesses. I would also explore opportunities to enhance public transportation options to improve connectivity between commercial areas and residential neighborhoods, making it easier for workers and customers to access businesses.

### 6. **Fostering a Collaborative Business Environment:** I would establish a business advisory council composed of local business owners, industry experts, and community leaders to provide input on economic devel-

opment strategies and address challenges facing the business community. Regular communication and collaboration with business owners can help the city stay responsive to their needs and adapt to changing market conditions.

### ### 7. **\*\*Long-Term Planning for Business Growth:\*\***

To ensure there is adequate space for future business growth while maintaining our community's character, I would:

- **\*\*Develop a comprehensive economic development plan\*\*** that outlines short- and long-term goals for attracting and retaining businesses.
- **\*\*Implement zoning and land use policies\*\*** that provide flexibility for growth while protecting residential areas and green spaces.
- **\*\*Encourage mixed-use developments\*\*** that integrate commercial, residential, and recreational spaces, creating vibrant, walkable areas that enhance quality of life.

By implementing these strategies, Waconia can attract and retain a diverse range of businesses, create jobs, and foster economic growth, all while preserving the qualities that make our community special.

### **Jim Lohan - Candidate: Waconia City Council**

As mentioned in my overall policy statements [See question 7: Financing Community Development] we must grow, gentrify, and redevelop. These efforts will add workforce and businesses. Our value proposition to commercial industrial business has to be robust. We are competing not only with Minnesota but with surrounding states. This is an area I have significant expertise in.

### **Simon Malinski - Candidate: Waconia City Council**

I believe Waconia is a great community to have a business. From small businesses to large manufacturing, Waconia has a responsibility to attract and retain these businesses. Ways to attract businesses can range from tax breaks to incentives when hiring. If we have a strong commercial and industrial base we have a strong workforce which benefits other businesses and increases tax revenues for the city.

### **Derek Siddons - Candidate: Waconia City Council**

The planned, healthy annexation of parts of Laketown Township and Waconia Township allow for industrial parks and other retail businesses to add to our tax base. As stated earlier, tax incentives for certain types of businesses and land management initiatives are core to attracting the right mix of businesses to enhance overall employment opportunities & solidify needed business metrics. These types of business deals are very common as communities look to grow and expand their tax base. We must be methodic and strategic about making we sure balance what's good financially for the city and managing the pace of growth in our community.

### **Tim Litfin - Candidate: Waconia Mayor**

Priorities. First, we need to maintain this quality city and improve where we can so that we are in an acceptable position to work with businesses and industry when they are looking to expand. We are not there now. One reason is that we do not have land or infrastructure in place beyond the current Highway 5 development area which only has a few properties available.

The hard work and important work for any city is meeting citizens' needs today, while also visualizing success long term. What long term success is, can differ from citizen to citizen and business to business. What is true is that most people want the right to live their own lives and have the opportunity to be successful.

## Waconia City Council & Mayor - Candidate Questionnaire

The comp plan for the city creates a vision to follow which is necessary. I encourage all citizens to check out the future of Waconia in the comp plan. The city administration is well versed in our comp plan, and we should feel particularly good with leaders like Shane Fineran at the helm.

What makes up a quality community so that we can attract and retain businesses and industries? Number one – have an outstanding community. There are many key features that make up a quality community.

- ⇒ Marketing this great community is extremely important and necessary and it is not just the job of the Chamber of Commerce.
- ⇒ Good schools are necessary, and we are fortunate to have excellent private schools and a great public school in Waconia. As well as a nearby college. All have excellent reputations.
- ⇒ Waconia has thriving neighborhoods and apartment buildings where people can live.
- ⇒ We have multiple healthcare facilities that are the envy of every community around us.
- ⇒ Recreational opportunities abound with Lake Waconia, Carver Parks, Three Rivers Parks, and the nearby Dakota Trail.
- ⇒ Religions of many faiths exist in Waconia to serve this community.
- ⇒ Businesses of almost any kind are in Waconia waiting to serve you.
- ⇒ Our banking and legal services offer support to people near and far.
- ⇒ We have a thriving bar and restaurant community.
- ⇒ Farms and rural life are at our community's doorstep allowing us the joy of seeing and experiencing rural life within a stone's throw of town.
- ⇒ City and County parks offer people of all ages a chance to explore and discover.
- ⇒ Events that are either in Waconia or that come through Waconia offer residents the opportunity to connect and be part of something bigger than themselves.

There is no denying the fact that Waconia has a lot to offer businesses and families who are looking to grow or move. It is our job to continue to tell the good story of Waconia and make it better by the day. I want to serve you and will proudly represent you as the next Mayor of Waconia.

### **Mayor Nicole Waldron\*- Candidate: Waconia Mayor**

The plans that are in place and the studies that are being conducted are the best resources and tools to move this city in the direction of commercial and industrial growth. With the East Area Feasibility Study, we will be able to guide our best and most economical options to get the city connected to the future industrial park. It lays out capital investment and the financial forecast to plan for them.

## 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](http://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](http://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](http://www.DestinationWaconia.org/live/#government).

