

Candidate Information Session

May 20, 2026



Land Acknowledgement

We embrace our shared responsibility with the First nations people, to take care of this Earth and its creatures; we can only do so by walking the path as partners stewarding this land as we have been given the duty together to live in balance and harmony with all living things.

We acknowledge and respect the Anishinaabe, Chonnonton and Haudenosuanees peoples who came before us and who we live amongst. By honouring this truth of past and present may we come to true reconciliation through listening, reflecting and learning.

Agenda

1. Welcome and Introductions
2. Overview of Session and Format
3. Key Election Dates
4. Overview of Principles of Elections Act and Clerks Powers
5. Local Government in a Nutshell
6. Voting Preparations
7. Qualifications and Thinking of Filing
8. I Want to Run, Now What?
9. Election Signs
10. Withdrawing a Nomination or Changing Office
11. Third Party Advertisers
12. Campaigning
13. Voters
14. Planning an Accessible Election
15. Financials and Ending a Campaign
16. Final Thoughts
17. Question and Answer Period

Key Election Dates

Date	Milestone
May 1	First date on which Candidate and Third- Party Advertisers may file with the Clerk
June 1	Last day voters can change their School Support through MPAC, after June 1 st they must do so with the municipality
August 14	Preliminary List of Electors delivered to all municipalities
August 21	Last Day on which Candidates may file OR withdraw their nomination (9 a.m. – 2 p.m.)
August 24	Clerk to examine certify all candidate nominations by no later than 4 p.m.
September 1	Voters List will be provided to all Candidates
September 26	First advance voting day
September 30	Updated Voters' List to be provided to all Candidates (with changes)
October 23	Last day for Third-Party Advertisers to file with the Clerk
October 26	Voting Day
November 17	Inaugural Council Meeting

7 Principles of the Municipal Elections Act, 1996

1. The secrecy and confidentiality of the voting process is paramount
2. The election shall be fair and non-biased
3. The election shall be accessible to the electors
4. The integrity of the voting process shall be maintained throughout the election
5. There is to be certainty that the results of the election reflect the votes cast
6. Electors and candidates shall be treated fairly and consistently within a municipality; and
7. The proper majority vote governs by ensuring that valid votes be counted, and that invalid votes be rejected so far as is reasonably possible.

Clerk's Powers under the Municipal Elections Act

The Clerk is the **sole authority** and **Returning Officer** for the Election:

- Selection of voting locations and determining hours of voting
- Creating any necessary procedures, policies and forms
- Communicating to voters
- Educating and managing candidates and third-party advertisers
- Overseeing candidate financial disclosure
- Managing the voters list, including updates
- Creating any election related policies and procedures
- Coordinating and overseeing logic and accuracy testing of all voting counting equipment
- Organizing and preparing all supplies, equipment and staff resources needed for the election

NOTE: Any complaints about staff, support, another candidate, voting issues or general running of the of election **must come to Clerk**. The City Manager is **NOT** someone who can receive complaints about the election and will refer any complaints he does receive back to the Clerk

Local Government in a Nutshell



Municipal Government 101

Municipal Government – 2 Tier System		Provincial Government	Federal Government
City of Cambridge (Lower Tier)	Region of Waterloo (Upper Tier)		
Recreation Programming	Policing & Paramedic Services	Education	Immigration and Citizenship
Parks and Trails	Social Services and Child Care	Hospitals	Criminal Law
Water and Wastewater	Public Health	Prisons	Foreign Money
Fire Services	Garbage Collection	Civil Rights	Money & Banking
Roads and Sidewalks	Public Transit	Provincial Highways	Regulation of Commerce
Economic Development	Housing and Shelter	Hospitals & Health Care	Global Affairs
Forestry	Provincial Offences	Natural Resources	Canda Post
By-law Compliance	Airport	Social Assistance	Canada Revenue Agency
Land Use Planning	Long Term Care	Legislation Changes*	Coast Guard, RCMP and Military

Municipal Government 101

Two-Tier System of Government

- Ontario has a two-tier system in place in some areas, including Waterloo Region
- This structure is designed to provide cost-effective services across a wider area, while keeping local decision-making close to residents
- Lower-tier municipality (City of Cambridge) are cities, towns, villages, or townships that form part of a larger county or regional government (Region of Waterloo)
 - Responsible for local roads and sidewalks, fire services, recreation programs, etc.
- Upper-tier municipalities (Region of Waterloo) are formed by two or more lower-tier municipalities and act as a federation of local municipalities, focusing on higher level services that are managed more efficiently for a larger population (paramedic services, policing, transit, public health, etc.)

Municipal Government 101

Can Cambridge City Council make decisions about Regional matters?

- No. the Mayor and Council of Cambridge do not have any authority over Regional issues.
- Council's authority is limited to those items noted in the previous table.
- There are issues that happen at the Regional level that you won't not have a say over or ability to influence as a member of Cambridge City Council, i.e. LRT
- The only action that City Council as a whole can take on non-jurisdictional matters is to send a letter in support or opposition to the Region
- The same applies to matters at the Provincial or Federal level

Municipal Government 101

Do Members of Council represent political parties?

- No. there is no party system in place in municipal government.
- While a mayor or councillors may be part of a political party or share similar views as a party, they do not represent those parties in their roles as members of City Council.
- Municipality elected positions are elected through a first-past-the-post system, meaning the candidate with the most votes is elected to office.

Role of Council and Staff

Role of Council (Elected Officials)

- Representation
- Policy & Strategy
- Financial Stewardship
- Accountability
- Decision Making

Role of Staff (Municipal Employees)

- Implementation
- Advice & Research
- Day-to-Day Operations
- Administration

Mayor Responsibilities

Mayor - Job Description and Legislated Role

- Elected by residents city-wide to serve as Head of Council and Chief Executive Officer of the municipality (Municipal Act)
- Provides leadership to Council, represents the interests of the community, and guides the City's strategic vision and priorities
- Helps shape municipal policies, organizational direction and transparent and accountable governance
- Exercises legislated mayoral powers including Strong Mayor powers*
- Is the **ONLY** designated official spokesperson for the City, Councillors should not speak to media unless related to a Ward specific matter
- Provides a corporate lens to matters, while Councillors bring a constituent lens.
- Mayor leads the municipality, council supports

Mayor Responsibilities

Mayor - Compensation

- Annual **City salary** of \$137,607 plus benefits and allowances
- Full-time position with a regular presence at City Hall and at various City events
- Mayor is automatically a member of Regional Council in capacity as Mayor of Cambridge and member of Grandbridge Energy Board of Directors
- Receives an additional salary from the Region and Grandbridge
- Total annual **combined salary** is ~\$160,000

Legislated Powers of Mayor

What are the Legislated Powers of a Mayor and what do they relate to?

- Legislative authorities to accelerate housing and infrastructure development
- Authorities permit Mayors to propose budgets, veto by-laws, and restructure departments to advance provincial priorities
- Primary goal of authorities to speed up development and streamline planning rules to reach provincial target of building 1.5 million homes by 2031
- Every decision made using Strong Mayor powers must be excised in writing and posted publicly

Budget Process

- For each budget, Mayor provides direction to staff to prepare budget
- Once the draft budget is prepared, the Mayor proposes the budget to Council
- Council then takes the budget forward and makes any changes

Councillor Responsibilities

Ward Councillor

- 8 Ward Councillors are elected by residents of Cambridge
- Annual salary of \$59,827 (effective Jan 1, 2027)
- Represent the residents of their ward and the city as a whole
- Role is to make informed, responsible decisions as part of Council, and to consider the best interests and overall well-being of Cambridge
- Actively contribute to shaping and reviewing municipal policies and programs, ensuring they reflect the needs and priorities of residents
- Participate in advisory committees, task forces, and local board meetings
- Assist constituents by responding to phone calls, e-mails and meeting requests
- Attend committee events, as able
- Communicates with constituents through newsletters, social media and other channels

Voting Preparations



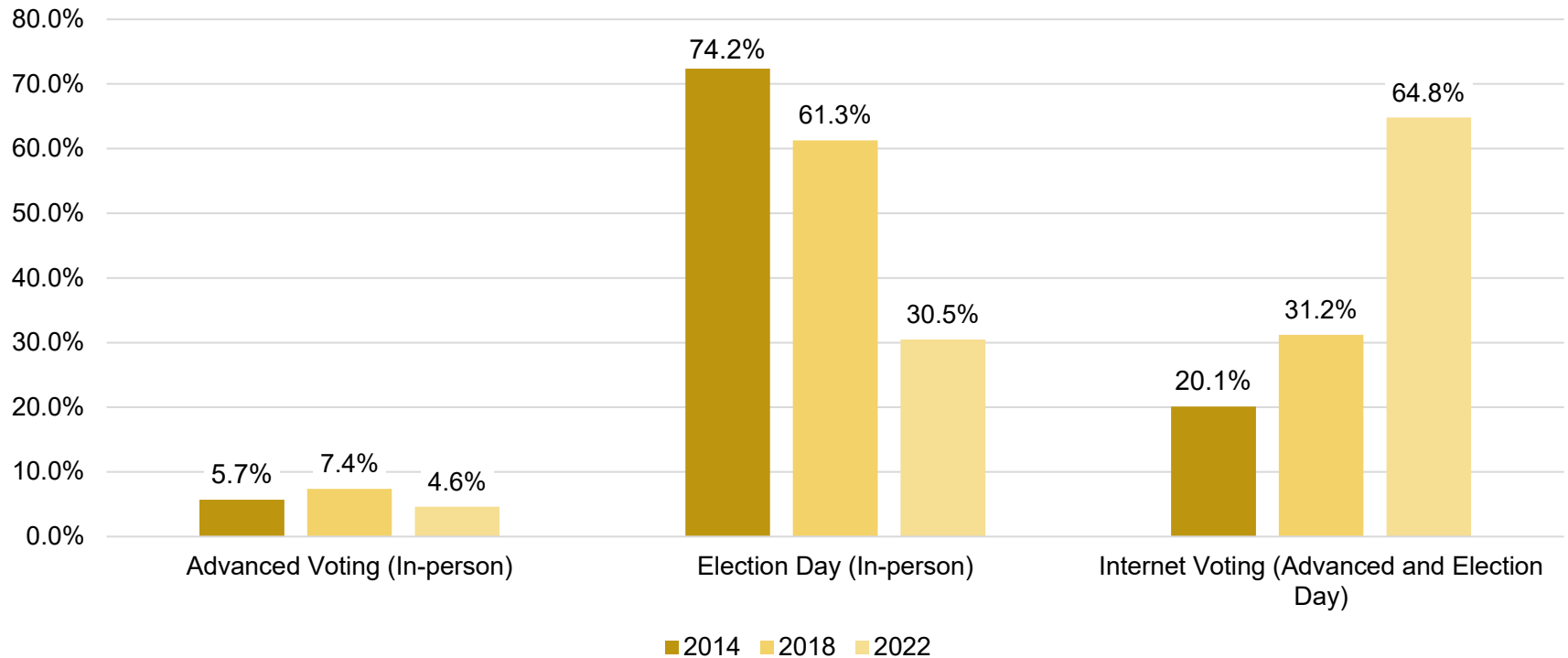
Voting Methods

How will voters be able to cast their ballot in this election?

- Voter's will have the option cast their ballot either online or in-person at a designated polling location within their ward
- Assistive voting technology to be available within each Ward for accessible voting options
- At-Home voting available upon request for those that cannot leave their home
- Voting in Hospitals, Retirement Homes and Long-Term Care Facilities will occur before Voting Day

Cambridge Voting Trends

Cambridge Voting Trends for 2014, 2018 and 2022 Elections



Security Considerations

What steps is the City taking to ensure the security of the Election and voting methods to be used?

- The City has **not** experienced internet voting glitches since it began using the hybrid model (internet voting) in 2014
- Online voting has been a concept for 30 years in Canada
- Remains the most accessible, reliable and widely used method among Cambridge voters.
- Each voting method has inherent risks associated with it.
- Subject to thorough testing and audits by third parties.
- Voter fraud is a matter for the police and is a punishable offence under the Municipal Elections Act.
- All materials for the election – Voter Notification Letter, Ballots and logistic and accuracy testing will be subject to a third-party review

Voting Dates and Times

What are the voting dates and locations for the 2026 Election?

Type of Voting	Voting Dates	Voting Locations
Advanced	September 26	Preston Auditorium
	October 6-10	City Hall
	October 17	Hespeler Memorial Arena
At-Home Voting Program	Available Upon Request	Various
Long Term Care Facilities / Retirement Homes and Hospitals	TBD	Various
Voting Day	October 26	Various 3 Polls per Ward
Online Voting	September 26 at 10 a.m. through to October 26 at 8 p.m.	N/A

Voter Notification Letters

When will voters receive their voter notification letters and what information will they include?

- Letters will be sent to all eligible voters in early-mid September
- Will include the dates, times and locations of in-person voting and information on how to vote online
- How to request At-Home Voting
- Where feasible, candidate information will be included on the letters along with links to websites and any other information provided

Preparing for the Vote

Will candidates (or scrutineers) be able to review ballots before they are printed? What precautions are taken to ensure the ballots are correct?

- Candidates and scrutineers are **not permitted** to view the ballots before they are printed
- Ballots must remain confidential until voting starts to ensure there is no possibility of ballots being reproduced in any manner
- The integrity of the voting process shall be maintained throughout the election
- A third party will be used to review and verify the correctness of all ballots before they are printed

Testing of Vote Equipment

Will candidates (or scrutineers) be able to participate in or view the pre-voting testing that is done on the online voting and

- Yes. Candidates and/or their scrutineers will be invited to attend the Logic and Accuracy testing process for both the online voting platform and vote tabulator equipment
- Details will be shared with all candidates over the summer
- Testing will occur at City Hall with the equipment vendors
- Each candidate (or one scrutineer per candidate) will be permitted to attend to view the testing and results

Scrutineers

What is a scrutineer and what are the rules around scrutineers during the voting process?

- Candidates may (in writing on the prescribed form) assign individuals to be scrutineers on their behalf during the voting
- There is no limit on the number of scrutineers that a candidate may have
- A candidate (or one of their scrutineers) may attend the voting equipment testing, a voting location to view the opening and closing of the poll and the processing of electors
- Scrutineers must provide their appointment form upon arrival at a polling location and remain within the designated area
- Scrutineers are not permitted to sit with or talk to election staff while they do their work, talk to voters or use electronic devices while in the poll
- If a scrutineer's candidate arrives, the scrutineer must leave

Qualifications and Thinking about Filing as a Candidate



Qualifications to Run

What are the requirements to run in a Municipal Election in Ontario?

- Canadian Citizen
- Be at least 18 years old on Voting Day
- A resident of Cambridge, or an owner or tenant of land in Cambridge (or their spouse)

Disqualifications

What disqualifies someone from running in a Municipal Election in Ontario?

You are not eligible to run, if:

- You are an employee of the municipality (unless you take an unpaid leave and resign if elected)
- You are a Judge, member of Parliament or Senate (unless you resign)
- You are prohibited by law from voting
- You failed to file required financial statements from a previous election.
- You are already running for office in another municipality or

Ward System

Do I need to live in a Ward to run for Councillor in that Ward?

- The City of Cambridge is divided into eight wards
- You do not need to live in a particular ward to run for Councillor in that ward
- You may run in any ward, regardless of your place of residence within the city
- Having a campaign office or business in a ward does not give you elector eligibility in that ward

Running for School Board

How are School Board Trustees elected and which Board can I run for?

School board trustees are elected during the municipal election to represent the interests of electors in their school board. In Cambridge, voters may be eligible for one of four boards:

English Public – Waterloo Region District School Board (WRDSB)

English Catholic – Waterloo Catholic District School Board (WCDSB)

French Public – Conseil scolaire Viamonde (**City of London**)

French Catholic – Conseil scolaire catholique MonAvenir (**City of Kitchener**)

To run for school board trustee, you must meet general eligibility requirements, and in some cases, additional requirements depending on the board, i.e. Roman Catholic, French, etc.

What can I do before I file?

- Attend events and forums geared towards those who are interested in running for office (AMO Education Workshops)
- Book a meeting with our Election Team to ask questions and go through the general requirements of running for office
- Talk to people who have sat on Council before to get a sense of the work involved and their experience
- Read council agendas and minutes
- Watch Council meetings and Statutory Public Meetings
- Where possible, attend Council appointed advisory committee meetings to **observe only**
- If you want to speak to a matter on an agenda, you cannot identify yourself as a candidate in the election
- Attend City hosted events **as a citizen**

Pre-Filing Restrictions

What are some things I am not permitted to do before I file my nomination?

- Spend money relating to a potential campaign, i.e. website creation, ads, etc.
- Announce on Social Media or in other forums that you are running
- Collect financial contributions, both money and in-kind
- Put up any signage, posters, pamphlets etc.

****Leave any campaigning until you have filed.**

I Want to Run, Now What?



Filing for Office

What should I do once I know I want to run?

- Visit the City's Election page www.cambridge.ca/election
- Pick up a copy of the Candidate Nomination Package
- Start collecting endorsements – Form 2
- Book an appointment to file

Filing for Office

What do I need to bring with me to my appointment to file for office?

- Candidate Package
- Nomination Paper – Form 1 (unsigned)
- Completed Endorsements – Form 2 (minimum of 25)
- Required ID to file:
 - Proof of residency (Driver's License, Ontario Photo Card, a bill) **AND**
 - Proof of Citizenship (Birth Certificate, Passport, Status Card, etc.)
- Payment
 - \$200 Mayor
 - \$100 Councillor or School Board

Filing for Office

What happens during my filing appointment?

- Review of ID*
- Sign off all other required forms:
 - Nomination - Form 1
 - Declaration of eligibility
 - Spelling of name on paper ballot and audio ballot pronunciation
 - Proper use of Voters' List
 - Endorsement submission, etc.
- Review of endorsements to ensure completeness
- Walk through Candidate Package and key documents:
 - Letter from Clerk and spending limits
 - Use of Corporate Resources Policy and campaign do's and don'ts
- Election signs, timing and placement parameters
- Process for election questions and complaints
- Payment processed

Once You've Filed – Do's

What can I do once I've filed to run?

- Name added a filed Candidate on City's website
- Begin campaigning and distributing materials to voters
- Launch any websites or social media pages
- Attend city events
- Put up signs
- Open a campaign bank account
- Start accepting campaign contributions
- Take a picture with the Cambridge sign (if on sidewalk or road only)
- Participate in candidate debates
- Talk to local media / radio hosts about campaign
- Rent City facilities for campaign events

NOTE: Home address and personal information will not be posted but is subject to inspection under the Municipal Elections Act

Once You've Filed – Don'ts

What am I not permitted to do once I've filed to run?

- Campaign on City property (parks and trails)
- Take pictures or videos while in/on City parks and trails
- Use City staff to help with displaying campaign materials at City facilities
- Use City staff to help with campaign work (incumbents)
- Display Campaign materials (car wraps included) on City property
- Put signs in non permitted areas

Financial Considerations

What are the financial matters I need to be aware of as I start my campaign?

- Candidates are required to open a separate bank account for their Campaign and any expenses to be incurred:
 - Form 1 and letter from the Clerk
- Required to keep thorough records of any money spent on campaign, contributions (including in-kind).
- Nomination filing fee is not considered a campaign expense and will be refunded once financials are filed with the Clerk:
 - \$200 (Mayor)
 - \$100 (Councillor or School Board)

Information Requests

What is the process for asking questions or requesting City information that is not online or otherwise available?

- Candidates may submit questions or requests for information about City services through the Election website.
- Please do not contact individual staff or Departments directly.
- Election office will reach out to the service areas that the question relates to request the information and will share the answer and any documents with all candidates.
- Some information may not be able to be shared due to confidentiality, solicitor-client privilege, etc.

Complaints Procedure

How will election related complaints be handled by the City?

- Refer to briefing note from me in front of your Candidate Nomination Package.
- All complaints will be treated in a fair and consistent manner.
- Complaints should not be directed to anyone other than the City Clerk / Returning Officer.
- Any complaints will be addressed by the City Clerk but not reported back to complainants.
- Same courtesy will be extended to candidates who are the subject of a complaint.
- Complaints should be directed to election@cambridge.ca.

Voters List

When can I expect to receive the Voters' List and how can I use it?

- Voters' List will be available on September 1st
- Updated list to be provided September 30th with any changes included.
- School Board Candidates need to connect with N. Dumfries Clerk to obtain N. Dumfries Voters' List as well.
- Voters' list may be used for campaign purposes **ONLY**.
- Any copies must be destroyed by **December 31, 2026**.
- Candidates required to have anyone they share the Voters' List with for campaign purposes to sign off on proper use and destruction by December 31, 2026 and retain this sign off until **November 15, 2030**.
- **Refer to Ministry Guide for more detail on Voters' List requirements and use of Personal Information.**

Use of Corporate Resources

What do I need to know about the City's Use of Corporate Resources Policy During an Election

- Candidates must follow the City of Cambridge's Use of Corporate Resources During an Election Policy.
- Policy ensures that municipal property, staff, facilities, equipment, technology, and communication channels are not used for campaign purposes.
- Violations will be addressed and may range from requirement to remove materials to room bookings being cancelled.

Use of Corporate Resources

What are the restrictions under the Use of Corporate Resources Policy?

- Municipal resources cannot be used to support or oppose a campaign
- City staff must remain politically neutral
- City logos, photos, branding, and social media content cannot appear in campaign materials
- Campaigning is not permitted on municipal property except where allowed under the Election Sign By-law, including in parks, on trails, in City parking lots and facilities
- Campaign activity is not permitted during City events, i.e. Canada Day parade, Open Houses, etc.

Use of Corporate Resources

Does the city's Use of Corporate Resources Policy apply to Cambridge Public Libraries?

- Yes; however, the Cambridge Public Library also has it's own Use of Corporate Resources Policy.
- Restrictions around use of meeting rooms and equipment, etc. for election purposes.
- Copy of policy available to anyone that would like it.

City and Ward Maps

Will I receive a City or Ward Map for my campaign?

- City and Ward Maps are available on the City's website and can be downloaded and printed from the website.
- 1 hard copy per candidate can be requested (if needed) through election@cambridge.ca.
- If hardcopies are requested Mayoral and School Board Candidates will receive City maps and Ward Councillor candidates will only receive Ward maps.

Candidate Debates

Will the City be hosting candidate debates?

- No. The Municipal Elections Act does not require debates to be held, and the municipal clerk does not organize debates or forums.
- Debates may be organized by:
 - Community groups
 - Media outlets
 - Schools or neighbourhood organizations
 - Individual candidates or campaign teams
 - Any other interested parties
- Candidate participation is optional, and candidates are responsible for monitoring local debate opportunities.

Election Signs



Election Signs

Important information about Election Signs



General Restrictions

Max sign area = 1.5 m² per side Max height = 1.5 m

Signs cannot interfere with or obstruct:

- visibility of vehicles or pedestrians
- a roadway, shoulder, median or planting bed

Election Sign Placement

0.5 m from a sidewalk



3 m from the edge of a road with no shoulder or sidewalk



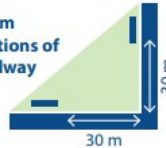
0.5 m from the edge of the shoulder (no sidewalk)



3 m from a fire hydrant



30 m from intersections of any roadway



Important Dates

Signs may be placed after nomination papers are submitted, starting May 1, 2026.

All signs must be removed by November 1 (or as required by the City Clerk for operational or public safety)

Remember! Signs cannot be placed:

- On or within any road allowance adjacent any city building
- On any utility pole, official sign or official sign structure
- On any tree or fence on city property
- In any city cemetery, war memorial or park
- At any location where the election sign constitutes a safety hazard to the general public
- On regional roads - more info: regionofwaterloo.ca/by-law-enforcement

Election signs should be accessible and professional in design and messaging, clearly indicate the candidate's name, office they are running for and how voters can reach you.

Messaging that rises to the level of libel or hate speech is regulated by the Criminal Code and enforced by the Waterloo Region Police Service.

Election Signs

When can election signs be put up?

- Election signs may be installed as early as May 1st with removal to occur no later than November 1st of an election year (or 45 days after voting day in a by-election).
- Only **registered candidates** may put of signs.
- Signs of non-registered candidates will be removed.

Election Signs

What are the rules around election sign placement?

- Max sign area of **1.5 square metres per side** and **max height of 1.5 metres**
- **Cannot interfere with or obstruct:**
 - Visibility of vehicles or pedestrians
 - A roadway, shoulder, median or planning bed
- **Must be:**
 - 0.5 metres away from any sidewalk
 - 3 metres from the edge of a road with no shoulder or sidewalk
 - 0.5 metres from the edge of the shoulder (if no sidewalk)
 - 3 metres from a fire hydrant
 - 30 metres from intersections or any roadway

Election Signs

Can I put up election signs on private property?

Yes. Registered candidates and third party advertisers may place election signs on private property, provided that:

- The property owner or occupant consents to the placement of the sign
- The sign is planted in the ground.
- The sign does not interfere with the safe operation of vehicular traffic or impair the safety of pedestrians.
- The sign does not obstruct fire escapes, fire exits, doors, windows, air intake or exhaust.
- The sign does not prevent or impede the access of emergency personnel to any part of a building, including water connections and fire hydrants.
- Signs that are moved by private property owners or occupant onto city property are subject to removal by the city.

Election Signs

Where am I not permitted to place my election signs?

- On or within any road allowance adjacent to a city building
- On any utility pole, official sign or official sign structure
- On any tree or fence on city property
- In any city cemetery, war memorial or park
- At any location where the election sign constitutes a safety hazard to the general public
- On regional roads

Election Signs

Are there any design or content restrictions on election signs?

- Cannot be designed or constructed in a way that distracts, confuses or misleads vehicular traffic or impairs the safety of drivers or pedestrians.
- Examples include:
 - Signs that are illuminated
 - Signs that have flashing lights, reflectors, or rotating parts
 - Signs that simulate any traffic sign, traffic signal, or other sign that directs the movement of traffic
 - Signs that use words such as “stop”, “look”, “one-way”, “danger”, or any similar phrases, symbols, lights, or characters.

Election Signs

What should I do if I believe another candidate's sign has violated the election sign rules?

- Please **Do not** touch or remove the sign yourself.
- Contact the Election Team at election@cambridge.ca or 519-513-6415.

Election Sign Changes

The City used to only allow election signs to be put up 45 days prior to Voting Day, why did this change?

- Sign By-law amended by Council on April 14 stemming from Ontario Superior Court Decision *Armstrong v. Township of Russell*.
- Court struck down the Township's bylaw which prohibited temporary election signs more than 30 days before an election.
- The Court based its reasoning on a violation of freedom of speech, under Section 2(b) of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.
- Amendment to the City's Sign By-law aligns with Charter principles while maintaining necessary operational and safety considerations, i.e. winter snow removal.

Withdrawing a Nomination or Changing Office



Withdrawing a Nomination

Can I withdraw my nomination if I decide I no longer want to run after I have filed with the Clerk?

Yes. You may withdraw your nomination, provided it is done before 2:00 p.m. on Nomination Day (August 21).

To withdraw, you must:

- File a written withdrawal with the City Clerk (form available in the nomination package).
- Appear in person with valid identification to submit the withdrawal.
- Ensure the Clerk receives the withdrawal before the legislated deadline.
- **Withdrawals submitted after 2:00 p.m. on Nomination Day cannot be accepted under any circumstances.**

Changing Offices

Can I change the office I'm running for after I file my nomination with the Clerk?

Yes; however, several important rules apply:

- Your first nomination will be automatically withdrawn as soon as you file a new nomination for a different office.
- Each campaign must remain completely separate
 - Must keep separate campaign records, bank accounts (if applicable), contributions, expenses, and financial documentation for each campaign period.
- You will likely need to pay a new nomination filing fee for the new office.

Changing Offices (Cont'd)

- You may need to formally withdraw your nomination in the original municipality or school board if you are switching to:
 - A different municipality,
 - A different school board, or
 - A different jurisdiction that does not share the same Clerk.
- You may need new endorsement signatures, especially if the new office is filed in a municipality with more than 4,000 electors (including Cambridge).
- You will be required to file a separate financial statement for each campaign, even if the campaigns were only active for a short time.

Third Party Advertisers



Third Party Advertisers

What is a third party advertiser and can I work with a third party advertiser to help achieve my campaign goals?

- Third party advertisers are individuals, corporations, or trade unions that register to conduct advertising that promotes, supports, or opposes a candidate
- While candidates and third party advertisers may share similar campaign goals, they operate independently under the Municipal Elections Act
- Candidates cannot direct a third party advertiser's activities, and third party advertisers must not coordinate their advertising with a candidate's campaign
- Any advertising that appears to work jointly with a candidate may be considered a violation of the Municipal Elections Act
- A third party advertiser is **not a candidate** and chooses to participate in a municipal election by **paying for advertisements** that support, promote, or oppose a candidate or a position on a ballot

Third Party Advertisers

What are some examples of third-party advertisers?

A third-party advertiser could be:

- A resident of Cambridge who purchases Facebook ads supporting a candidate for council
- A corporation placing newspaper ads opposing a “yes” vote on a ballot question
- A trade union printing and distributing brochures encouraging voters to support a school board trustee candidate

Third Party Advertisers

Why do third party advertisers need to register with the City?

- Third-party advertisers must register before paying for any advertisements so voters can see:
 - who is speaking, and
 - who is funding the message
- Registration ensures transparency and fairness during elections
- Third party advertisers are required to follow spending limits, maintain a campaign bank account, and file financial statements

Campaigning



Engaging with Voters

What are some things I can do to get word out to voters that I'm running?

- Social Media and Websites
- Connect with local media to do a bio
- Radio ads, interviews and billboards
- Door-to-door (preferred by voters, especially older voters)
- Attend non-city hosted events
- Participate in Candidate debates
- Book event space for Campaign rally (Use of Corp Resources Policy)
- Meet people where they are at (with permission)

Talking to Voters

What information can I share with voters as I am talking to them?

- Campaign materials and how to find you (websites, social media, etc. e-mail, phone number, etc.)
- Voting dates, times and location
- How voters will be able to cast their vote
- Encourage voters to make sure they are on the Voters' List
- Share your platform and what you want to achieve as a Member of Council - focus on topics you will have the power to do something about
- Acknowledge issues and concerns but avoid topics that are outside of the City's jurisdiction, i.e. encampments, health care, policing, carbon tax, etc.
- Be careful not to overcommit to voters

Incivility During an Election

What should I do if I encounter angry voters while campaigning or on social media?

- Stay calm and professional
- Do not get swept up in the incivility yourself
- Treat all voters with respect and dignity but ensure your personal safety and mental health
- **You may not be able to solve everyone's problems!**
- Act as though you are already in office, when campaigning (either in person or on social media) you are interviewing for a job in public office

Safe Campaigning

What are some things I can do to ensure my own safety and the safety of my campaign team while going door-to-door?

- Do NOT go into people's houses - knock and take two steps back approach
- If someone wants to meet to chat further, offer a neutral and public space where you can meet with them (not on City property)
- Bring others with you when you go door-to-door
- Send volunteers in pairs so never alone
- Be mindful of your surroundings and the areas that you are in at all times
- If you have any immediate safety concerns, contact WRPS
- Do not go into apartment buildings alone
- Disengage if a voter is being difficult or combative
- Make sure someone knows where you are and consider sharing your location on your phone or with a family member
- Carry a charged phone and list of emergency contacts
- Respect No Soliciting Signs
- Take breaks and go out on rotations, especially during hot weather
- Be mindful of weather conditions including heat and air-quality advisories
- Trust your instincts and leave immediately if something feels unsafe
- Take water and snacks along with you

Safe Campaigning (Cont.d)

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Information for Voters



Voter Eligibility

Who can vote in Municipal Elections?

- Canadian Citizens
- At least 18 years old on Voting Day
- A resident of Cambridge or an owner or tenant of land in Cambridge, or their spouse
- Not otherwise prohibited from voting by law, i.e.
 - Serving a sentence of imprisonment
 - A Corporation
 - A person convicted of corrupt practices under the Municipal Elections Act

Checking the Voters' List

How can Voters' check to ensure they are on the Voters' List?

- Elections Ontario is responsible for the Voters' List
- Voters can visit Election Ontario's self-help Portal to check, update, add or remove self to Voters' List
- Visit www.registertovoteon.ca or call 1-866-242-3025
- **After August 12, Voters will have to contact elections@cambridge.ca to check or change their information**

The screenshot shows the 'Register to Vote' website. At the top left is a yellow checkmark icon and the text 'Register to Vote'. At the top right are links for 'About Registration', 'FAQ', and 'Français'. Below the navigation is a 'Home' breadcrumb. The main heading is 'Voter Registration', followed by a paragraph explaining the application's purpose. A question asks if the user is checking, updating, adding, or removing information. Below this are four buttons: 'Check' (with a checkmark icon), 'Update' (with a refresh icon), 'Add' (with a plus icon), and 'Remove' (with a minus icon). At the bottom, there is a note about eligibility for absentee voters and future voters.

Register to Vote

About Registration • FAQ • Français

Home

Voter Registration

Use this application to get on the voters list for municipal, district social services administration board, school board and provincial elections in Ontario. Alternatively, you can complete a [paper application form](#).

Are you checking, updating, adding or removing your personal information and/or property from the voters list?

Check Update Add Remove

If you're temporarily living outside of Ontario, you may be eligible to add yourself to the [Register of Absentee Voters](#).
If you're 16 or 17 and reside in Ontario, you can add yourself to the [Ontario Register of Future Voters](#).

Security of the Voters' List

What protections are in place to ensure ineligible voters are not able to add themselves to the Voters' List?

- Elections Ontario's process for individuals to add themselves to the Voters' List through their online portal includes statements around voter fraud.
- IP addresses are verified to ensure that the registered individual is an eligible voter.

Disclosure:

- Elections Ontario is committed to respecting your privacy and protecting your personal information (PI) in accordance with our [Privacy Policy](#). The PI on this form is collected under the authority of the [Election Act](#), [Election Finances Act](#), [Employment Standards Act, 2000](#) and/or other legislation. Personal information on the voters list is used for electoral purposes only. To find out more about the collection, use and disclosure of your information, please visit [our privacy and security of personal information page](#).
- As a security measure, we capture the IP address of computers used to access voter registration to enable follow-up and verification.
- This service is for personal use only. It is illegal under the [Election Act](#) to make false statements about voter registration. Those convicted face penalties.
- Should you have any questions about the collection, use and/or disclosure of your personal information, please email us at priv@elections.on.ca.

Next

[Start over](#)

Preventing Voter Fraud

What does the city do to prevent voter fraud?

- Online Voting:
 - System does not permit the same user to vote more than once and strike off is immediate
 - IP addresses are logged by system
 - System includes an oath of eligibility / declaration of identity
- In Person at Poll:
 - The City requires individuals to make a declaration of their eligibility when completing an Application to Amend the Voter's List
 - Signage is displayed regarding ID requirements (Ont. Reg. 304/14) and eligibility requirements to vote
 - Notices are placed at the polling location to advise voters of penalties associated with voter fraud
- At the end of the day, voter fraud is a **punishable offence** under the Municipal Elections Act and a matter for Police

Pre Voting Responsibilities

What should voters be doing to prepare for the vote?

- Learn what local government is and how it impacts each of us in our day to day lives.
- Talk to Candidates, keep up with local news sources and social media, attend candidate events
- Visit www.cambridge.ca/election to view election information, learn about upcoming events or information sessions and access Candidate information.
- Engage with our Elections Team at Events
- **Get out and vote!**

Student Electors

Will there be opportunities for students to vote who are usually away at college or university?

Yes

- Voting dates and methods have been selected to ensure that students have an opportunity to vote when they are home from school
- Students living in the City of Cambridge while attending school who consider another municipality to be permanent home are eligible to vote in both the City of Cambridge and the municipality, they normally live or attend school in

Requirements to Vote

What do voters need to bring with them to vote?

- Their Voter Notification Letter (if one was received)
- A voters' identification must show both their name and qualifying address, as required under the Municipal Elections Act.
- A Voter Notification Letter is not an acceptable form of identification
- Acceptable forms of identification are outlined in Schedule 1 of Ontario Regulation 304/13 and are posted on the Voter Information section on the City's Election webpage.

Voter Identification

What is acceptable identification to vote?

- An Ontario driver's licence
- An Ontario Health Card (photo card)
- An Ontario Photo Card
- An Ontario motor vehicle permit (vehicle portion)
- A cancelled personalized cheque
- A mortgage statement, lease or rental agreement relating to Ontario property
- An insurance policy or insurance statement
- A loan agreement or other financial agreement with a financial institution.
- A document issued or certified by a court in Ontario
- A document from a Band Council in Ontario under the Indian Act
- An income tax assessment notice
- A Child Tax Benefit Statement
- A Statement of Employment Insurance Benefits Paid
- A Statement of Old Age Security
- A Statement of Canada Pension Plan Benefits

Voter Identification (Cont.d)

- A Canada Pension Plan Statement of Contribution
- A Statement of Direct Deposit for Ontario Works
- A Statement of Direct Deposit for Ontario Disability Support Program
- A Workplace Safety and Insurance Board Statement of Benefits
- A property tax assessment
- A credit card statement, bank account statement, or RRSP, RRIF, RHOSP or T5 statement
- A CNIB Card or a card from another registered charitable organization that provides services to persons with disabilities
- A hospital card or record
- A document showing campus residence, issued by a post-secondary institution
- A document showing residence at a long-term care home
- A utility bill for hydro, water, gas, telephone or cable TV
- A cheque stub, T4 statement or pay receipt issued by an employer
- A transcript or report card from a post-secondary school

No Acceptable Identification

What if a voter doesn't have any of the acceptable forms of identification (unhoused persons) but wants to vote?

- Those who do not have acceptable identification to vote may take a Declaration of Identity and an oath
- Unhoused persons can use their most frequently visited location (including intersections) as their address, i.e. Main Street and Dundas Street
- In taking an oath, the onus is on the voter to be truthful about their eligibility
- **Those who make false statement are committing voter fraud, a punishable offence under the Municipal Elections Act**

Voting in Multiple Places

Can voters vote in more than one municipality and under what circumstances?

- Yes
- Some voters may qualify to vote in more than one municipality
- Qualifying voters are permitted to vote in each of those elections
- A resident elector in one municipality who is a non-resident elector in several others may vote in all of them.
 - Typically, landlords who own multiple properties
- Exception for upper-tier elections: If two or more of the municipalities where a voter qualifies are lower-tier municipalities within the same upper tier municipality (i.e., the Region of Waterloo), they may vote only once for any office elected at the regional level.

Voter Engagement

What is the Election Team doing to engage voters and raise awareness around the election?

- Attending multiple community events throughout 2025 and 2026
- Comprehensive Communication Plan:
 - New branding
 - Social Media Posts
 - Newspaper (print and online) advertising
 - Posters
 - Billboard ads
 - Tax inserts
 - Videos
 - Etc.
- Sharing resources and information with neighbourhood groups
- Working with Cambridge Public Library to share candidate information and help with voting

Planning for an Accessible Election



Accessibility Plan Highlights

What is the City doing to ensure this is an accessible election?

- Municipal Elections Act requires each municipality to develop an Accessibility Plan for their election
- Pre audits of every voting location to ensure a barrier free voting experience throughout the City
- Fully accessible advance voting period (Accessible voting equipment at each advanced voting location)
- 1 designated poll per Ward featuring an accessible tabulator
- At-Home Voting program (upon request)
- Accessible voting equipment to be used at all retirement and Long-Term Care facilities
- All communications and information related to voters to be accessible and in plain-language
- Education and resources for candidates on how to have an accessible campaign
- In-depth accessibility training for all election officials
- Open forum for accessibility questions and avenues to request additional support

Accessibility Considerations

Before publishing or hosting anything, ask:

- **Can people read it?**
(large font, clear contrast, no dense text)
- **Can people hear or access the content?**
(captions, transcripts, good audio)
- **Can people understand it quickly?**
(plain language, clear message)
- **Can people enter and participate?**
(accessible venue, no physical barriers)
- **Can people request accommodation easily?**
(clear contact info + accessibility statement)
- **Is key information available in multiple formats?**
(not only images, not only video, not only print)
- **Have we included people with disabilities in planning?**

Accessible = fewer barriers + more & different people included + better participation

Accessibility Considerations

What do I need to be aware of as a candidate to ensure an accessible campaign?

- Ensure your campaign materials are created in accessible formats – clear, easy to understand:
 - Large print for individuals with low vision
 - Digital formats that support assistive technology users
 - Alternative formats available on request
 - Online content complies with WCAG 2.0 Level AA accessibility standards
- Use outreach strategies that reach diverse communities and individuals - meet people where they are at, everyone is a prospective voter
- Let voters know what options are available to them to ensure they can vote: i.e. online voting, at-home voting program, accessible voting equipment at poll, election staff who can assist at poll
- Ensure voters know that their Ontario Photo Card can be used as ID to vote in place of a Driver's License
- See AMCTO's Guide to Accessible Elections (for candidates)

More on Financials and Ending Your Campaign



Financial Statements and Filing

What are the financial considerations that I need to be aware of as a candidate?

- Candidates should be balancing their contributions and expenses throughout their campaign to ensure there is no deficit or surplus at the end.
- Financial filing must be completed by **December 31, 2026** to avoid being default.
- Candidates that are not Certified or who withdraw their nomination are also required to file their financials.
- Financials are posted publicly for inspection upon filing.
- Candidates who do not file their financial statements will be considered to be in default and will not be permitted to file as a candidate in the 2030 election.

Ending Your Campaign

What do I need to know about ending my election campaign?

After voting day in Cambridge:

- all advertisements, including online ads, must be removed
- all campaign signs must be taken down
- campaign bank accounts must remain open until all financial activity has ended
- Campaigns typically end on **December 31** of the election year.
- If the campaign has a deficit, you may extend it by notifying the Clerk in writing.
- Any campaign surpluses are required to be paid to the Clerk once you have paid back yourself for any personal contributions.

What is a Municipal Election Compliance Audit Committee (MECAC)?

- An independent, statutory body established under the Municipal Elections Act, 1996 (MEA)
- Reviews and decides on potential violations of campaign finance rules by candidates or third-party advertisers.
- Authority includes granting audits, appointing auditors, and deciding whether to initiate legal proceedings.
- Cambridge is part of a Joint MECAC with the other Regional municipalities and the City of Guelph

MECAC

What are the authorities and responsibilities of a Municipal Election Compliance Audit Committee (MECAC)?

- Reviews applications to determine if there are reasonable grounds for an audit of a candidate's or third-party advertiser's campaign finances.
- Appointment of qualified, independent auditor to conduct a review of the campaign finances.
- Receives and reviews the report produced by the auditor to decide if any violation of the Municipal Election Act has occurred.
- If the auditor's report (or a report from the City Clerk regarding contributions) indicates an "apparent contravention" of the MEA, the committee has the authority to initiate legal action against the candidate or third-party advertiser.
- May determine whether to recover the costs of the compliance audit from the applicant if the report finds no contravention and the application lacked reasonable grounds.

What are the limits of a Municipal Election Compliance Audit Committee (MECAC)?

- Cannot set penalties - only a court can determine if a violation actually occurred and determine the penalty.
- Authority is strictly limited to issues related to campaign finances as prescribed by the Municipal Elections Act, not general election complaints.
- Decisions made by the committee can be appealed to the Ontario Superior Court of Justice within 15 days.
- Cannot remove a elected Member of Council from Office – only the Courts may do this.

Final Thoughts



Election Code of Conduct

- All candidates, agents, third-party advertisers, and scrutineers are required to treat City staff and the Election Team with **respect and professionalism at all times**.
- Election staff are bound to impartiality — every candidate will receive equal and unbiased treatment throughout the process.
- All information, resources, and complaint resolution measures will be applied consistently and equitably across every candidate.
- Our team is here to support and guide you — we expect the same mutual respect and professionalism in return.
- Yelling, threats, insults, harassment (including via email), and defamatory conduct are strictly prohibited under provincial labour laws and related workplace policies:
 - Respectful Culture Program
 - Harassment, Discrimination Prevention and Response
 - Workplace Violence Prevention and Response
- Any social media posts or public statements that mention or defame election staff will be formally addressed.
- You are responsible for ensuring that anyone acting on your behalf is fully aware of and adheres to this Code of Conduct.
- Candidates are required to sign off on a Code of Conduct and have anyone working for you also sign off on one.

Questions?



**CAMBRIDGE
VOTES**

2026
Municipal
Election

Web: www.cambridge.ca/election

Email: election@cambridge.ca