

HAVE YOUR SAY!

Why voting in municipal elections is important



Canadians' lives are greatly affected by the policies of, and decisions made by, our governments. Fortunately, we live in a country where we can express our views at all levels – by voting.

The upcoming municipal elections across Ontario offer an opportunity to influence local outcomes, and many feel, as I do, that voting is both a privilege and a responsibility. Municipal councils are elected to make decisions that affect us directly. Among these are the delivery of important services such as water, sewage treatment, waste

collection, public transit, land use planning, emergency services, economic development, libraries, parks design – all of which have a lasting impact on our communities.

At Geranium, we see the effects of municipal election outcomes firsthand. Over 20 per cent of the cost of a new home is comprised of government fees and charges, which are set by elected officials.

A 2018 study by the Altus Group found that average government charges for a single-detached home in the GTA amount to \$186,300, representing 21.7 per cent of the cost. Since 2004, development charges have increased across the GTA between 236 and 878 per cent. Of course, this is affecting the affordability of new homes.

Elected officials are also responsible for approving official plans, which provide guidance on where and what type of homes can be built. They approve zoning bylaws that control the standards for new home construction.

These cover elements such as how far from the street a dwelling should be set back, how much of the lot can be covered by buildings and the spacing between houses.

The length of the process for these approvals affects the time to deliver new homes to the market. Local governments have an opportunity to streamline approvals, remove duplication and waste to facilitate timely home construction. They can also work with the building and development industry to meet the variety of needs in the community: people renting, first-time homebuyers, and those ready to scale down, to name a few. Ensuring there is an adequate supply of serviced land for the construction of new homes is an important role played by municipal councils. The complex development process requires careful planning and timely processing to ensure homes can be built in response to market need.

Local councils are also responsible for approving official plans that guide change in our neighbourhoods. They may identify new greenfield areas for development that require the extension of municipal services. They determine density targets to achieve intensification goals and earmark locations for intensification and redevelopment that can utilize existing infrastructure. They also set locations of parks and schools.

Whether or not you are in the market for a home, decisions are being made that may affect you now, or in the future. Each year, the building, development and professional renovation industry creates thousands of jobs and contributes billions of dollars to our local, provincial and national economy. Find more information at BuildForGrowth.ca. Take time to research the candidates running for election to find out whose values you share. Voting is a way of having a direct say about the future of our communities.



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Geranium. Celebrating over 40 years in business Geranium has created master-planned communities including more than 8,000 homes in Ontario.

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