



A TURNING POINT  
FOR WOMEN

# **A Guide to Participating in the 2010 Municipal Elections**

## **Focus: Waterloo Region**

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# Introduction

## ***Why should I care about the municipal election?***

In Canada, there are several orders or levels of government, each with different responsibilities. The federal level of government is often referred to as the highest level, with the other, lower levels of government receiving their authority by legal acts at the federal level. Similarly, provincial is a higher level of government than municipal, which is sometimes referred to as the lowest level, because acts of the provincial government determine the jurisdictions of municipal governments. 'Municipality' is the term used to refer to many kinds of local governments, including but not limited to regions, counties, cities, towns, villages, townships, hamlets and parishes.

Although municipal is considered the lowest level of government in Canada, that doesn't mean that it's the least important! Municipal government is created by the provinces to provide various services that can be most effectively planned and delivered under local control. In most cases, it is those local services that have the most impact on our everyday lives.

Some municipal governments in Ontario are simple, 'single tiered' organizations, while others, like Waterloo Region, are more complex 'two tiered' organizations. There are seven local municipalities in Waterloo

Region: the cities of Cambridge, Kitchener and Waterloo, and the townships of Wellesley, Wilmot, Woolwich and North Dumfries. Each has its own government comprised of a mayor and councillors, and together form the lower tiers of our municipal government. In addition, the Region of Waterloo is itself a municipality, with its own elected chair and councillors, and the mayors of the seven local municipalities also serving as members of the regional council. This is the highest tier of our municipal government.

Some of the main areas of responsibility or jurisdictions of the government of the Region of Waterloo are:

- Policing;
- Emergency medical services;
- Public health;
- Social services including employment, income support and child care;
- Social housing;
- Public transit and specialized transit;
- Regional roads and traffic signs;
- Emergency preparedness and management;
- The Waterloo Region International Airport;
- Operation of heritage sites;
- Operation of the rural library system;
- Provincial Offences Court administration;
- Water supply and waste water operations;
- Waste management;
- By-law enforcement;
- Regional licensing;
- Overall planning and development.

Some of the services delegated by the province to municipalities are mandatory and others are optional. Therefore, not all municipalities provide exactly the same kinds of services. However the responsibilities

of the cities and townships within the Region of Waterloo typically include:

- Fire protection;
- Public utilities and works;
- Culture, parks and recreation;
- Libraries;
- Economic development;
- Animal control;
- Secondary streets;
- Land use planning.

Just as the province of Ontario has delegated responsibility for certain local services to municipalities, so has it delegated authority over some aspects of primary and secondary education to local school boards. Like municipalities, school boards are governed by elected representatives called 'trustees'.

There are two kinds of school boards in Ontario: public school boards and separate school boards. In Waterloo Region the two public school boards are the Waterloo District School Board and the French language school board, Conseil Scolaire de District du Centre-Sud-Ouest. The separate school board is the Waterloo Catholic District School Board. The responsibilities of the school boards include:

- Personnel matters including recruiting and supervising the Director of Education;
- Policy planning and development;
- Provision of school facilities;
- Allocation of school resources and supplies;
- Student achievement.

When we understand types of services municipal governments and school boards provide to our communities, families, and ourselves, it is easy to

understand why municipal and school board elections might be the most important of all!

### ***How does a municipal election work?***

Municipal elections in Canada fall within the jurisdictions of the various provinces and territories, thus occurring on different dates, depending on their province. Usually municipalities in the same province will have their elections on the same day. Most municipalities hold their elections on a fixed date that is selected and announced years in advance. Ontario holds its municipal and school board elections every four years, on the fourth Monday in October. The next municipal election in Ontario will be held on October 25, 2010.

Municipal governments and school boards operate using the same basic principles of representative democracy that the provincial and federal governments use. That means that voters select the individuals who will be empowered to make decisions on their behalf, based on who the voters believe will best represent them and their values and interests.

The cities and townships operate on a ward system, where they are divided into smaller areas called 'wards.' Residents of each ward elect one representative to be their councillor. School boards don't operate on a ward system. Instead, the municipalities or regions have a specified number of representatives on each school board, and the voters from those municipalities elect their representatives. The voters of Kitchener elect four trustees to the Waterloo Region District School Board and four to the Waterloo Catholic District School Board. The voters of Waterloo and Wilmot elect three trustees to the Waterloo Region District School Board and two to the Waterloo Catholic District School Board. The voters of Cambridge and North Dumfries elect three trustees to the Waterloo Region District School Board and three to the Waterloo Catholic District School Board. The voters of Wellesley-Woolwich elect one trustee to the Waterloo Region District School Board. Eligible voters

in south-western Ontario elect one trustee to each of the French public and French Catholic school boards.

Unlike in a provincial or federal election, in which voters choose one candidate or party to represent them, voters have many choices to make in Waterloo Region's municipal elections. Depending on the city or township and ward in which they reside, voters choose their mayor, councillor for their ward, regional chair, regional councillor, and school board trustee.

There are 16 members of Regional Council to be elected: the chair, three councillors from Cambridge, five from Kitchener, three from Waterloo, and one each from North Dumfries, Wellesley, Wilmot and Woolwich townships. Kitchener Council has 11 members: the mayor, and ten councillors representing ten wards. Cambridge Council has nine members: the mayor, and eight councillors representing eight wards. Waterloo's Council has eight members: the mayor, and seven councillors representing seven wards. Woolwich Council has five members: the mayor and four councillors representing three wards. North Dumfries Council, Wellesley Council and Wilmot Council each have five members: each has a mayor and each has four councillors representing four wards.

There are 11 trustees on the Waterloo District School Board to be elected and 10 on the Waterloo Catholic District School Board. Eligible Waterloo Region voters elect one representative to the Conseil Scolaire de District du Centre-Sud-Ouest.

### ***How can I vote in the municipal election?***

Anyone who is not disqualified from voting can vote in a municipal election providing that he or she, on the day of the election, is:

- 18 years of age or older;
- A Canadian citizen;

- Either a resident of the municipality or a property owner or tenant or the spouse or same-sex partner of an owner or tenant in the municipality during a specified time prior to the election;
- Named on the list of eligible voters.

Voters on the Voters' List should receive a voter notification by mail in advance of Election Day. Voters should bring this notification with them to the poll where they will vote, along with valid identification showing their qualifying address and their signature.

While Election Day is Monday October 25<sup>th</sup>, all eligible voters may vote at an advance poll. If, for any reason, voters are unable to vote at any of the polls, they may complete an application for Appointment of Voting Proxy and appoint a proxy to vote for them.

In order to be eligible to vote for a trustee for the Waterloo District School Board, in addition to the above, a voter must not have directed the school portion of his or her property taxes to the French language school board or the separate school board. To be eligible to vote for a separate school board trustee, the voter must be Roman Catholic and have directed the school portion of their property taxes to the separate school board. In order to be eligible to vote for a trustee of Conseil Scolaire de District du Centre-Sud-Ouest, the voter must be a French language rights holder of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms and have directed the school portion of their property taxes to the French language school board.

### ***For which candidate should I vote?***

In Ontario, municipal councils and school boards are non-partisan, meaning that they do not represent specific political parties. Since you won't be able to find out about the candidates' political orientations and approaches by simply reading their parties' policies, you'll have to do a little more work to get to know them as individuals. You can begin by finding out the names and contact information of the candidates from

your municipality's website. This information is also listed in the Resources section of this guide.

Almost all candidates will do door-to-door canvassing, but they can't possibly make it to every home in their ward or municipality, so you can't rely on them to come to you. Some candidates will try to let you know about their ideas by distributing flyers and placing advertisements on television or radio or in the newspaper. However, that kind of advertising is expensive and not all candidates will have the funds to afford to do that kind of campaigning. Most candidates will have websites or Facebook pages which are a great way for you to learn about them, and ask questions about issues that are important to you.

Most candidates will also attend community meetings called All Candidates' Debates. These are good places for you to ask your questions, and hear the candidates respond to other people's questions.

This guide provides some sample questions on some of the main issues in the next municipal election. Feel free to ask them, or use them as templates to create your own questions.

# Cambridge

## **Culture, Parks and Recreation: Drayton Theatre**

The Drayton theatre is part of a registered, not-for-profit charitable organization, and is one of Canada's most successful professional theatre companies. Drayton Entertainment, founded on volunteerism and community involvement, is said to produce the finest in live theatre at the six venues it currently operates.

The current plan is for a new city-owned Drayton Theatre to open in downtown Cambridge in 2011. Estimates indicate that the new Cambridge site could attract around 75,000 people per year to local shows. Some politicians and supporters of the new theatre say that this theatre would create approximately 60-70 full-time jobs and 300 seasonal jobs in Cambridge. Local businesses such as hotels, restaurants and retail stores would likely also benefit due to the influx of people to the area.

To date, both Queen's Park and Ottawa have pledged \$6 million each toward the project. Another \$6 million has been approved by Cambridge City Council towards the \$18 million project. City council recently approved the spending of \$900,000 to design the facility.

This recent project has created much debate within the community and between city councillors. Some are concerned about how the City of Cambridge will be able to fund such an expensive project while also maintaining other city operated services and facilities. For example, consultants have recommended that at least two neighbourhood arenas be slotted for replacement and that extensive and costly repairs be considered for existing arenas. However, with the funding allocation to the Drayton Theatre, it is unclear as to how these issues will be addressed and whether or not there will be implications for the funding of other recreational services in the City of Cambridge.

Questions for City of Cambridge candidates:

1. What is your stance on the Drayton Theatre project in Cambridge?

2. How will you ensure that recreational services and facilities are maintained and enhanced in the City of Cambridge considering this project?

### **Culture, Parks and Recreation: THEMUSEUM**

THEMUSEUM, originally named the Waterloo Regional Children's Museum, is a private not-for-profit corporation. It opened in 2003 and was built primarily with private donations and grants from the City of Kitchener. Since then, THEMUSEUM has received just over \$100,000 in annual operating funds from the Region of Waterloo and the cities of Waterloo and Cambridge, and a further \$100,000 of annual support from the City of Kitchener. This funding has not been sufficient to cover THEMUSEUM's operating expenses, however, and it has appealed to the Region and to the three cities for more money. In 2010, THEMUSEUM announced that it requires a \$600,000 per year commitment from the municipalities or it will not be able to afford to continue to deliver the same kinds of exhibits and programs it has provided in recent years.

THEMUSEUM received some additional funding for 2010, primarily from the City of Kitchener and the Region of Waterloo, but not the full amount requested. And it did not receive a commitment for ongoing annual funding. The Councils of Cambridge and Waterloo stated that they did not have sufficient funds available in their arts and culture budgets to provide more support to THEMUSEUM without depriving other worthwhile organizations. Kitchener's Council stated that the fact that THEMUSEUM is located in downtown Kitchener should not make it the City of Kitchener's financial responsibility, as residents and school groups from throughout the Region use it.

Many people believe that well supported arts and cultural organizations are important to communities because they enhance quality of life for citizens and attract visitors and generate revenues. Waterloo Region

spends less per capita on arts and culture than many other similarly sized communities.

Questions for all candidates:

1. Do you believe that municipal governments currently support local arts and culture at an adequate level?
2. Do you believe that the City of Cambridge or Waterloo should fund a publicly accessible arts and culture organization located in Kitchener?

## **Parking**

In March 2009, the City of Cambridge released its “Core Areas Parking Master Plan”. The main objective of the study was to look at existing parking needs and issues and to propose strategies to deal with existing and future parking requirements. The study makes 13 recommendations related to core area parking. One of the recommendations is to “implement on-street parking pricing to optimize use”. The City would eliminate the two-hour free on-street parking and implement on-street parking pricing using “pay and display” technology in all three core areas. The maximum time limit will also be increased from two to three hours. Further, the report recommends that the two hour free parking in paid parking lots be eliminated. One of the key findings of the study related to the financial sustainability of the parking system. The study found that the current parking system operation does not generate enough income to cover expenses and requires a taxpayer subsidy of approximately \$440,000 per year.

Questions for City of Cambridge candidates:

1. Do you support the recommendations to eliminate free parking in the core areas of Cambridge?
2. Do you believe there is another solution to the question of financial sustainability of the parking system?

# **Kitchener**

## **Social Housing: Cedar Hill Bylaw**

In 2005, the City of Kitchener passed a bylaw that banned new social housing and social services from a downtown neighbourhood called Cedar Hill. The ban was in response to years of complaints by Cedar Hill residents about neglected properties, street crime and other social problems in their neighbourhood. The residents believed they were caused in part by tenants of existing social housing projects and by users of existing social services. The bylaw was a very controversial one, and was immediately challenged by tenant advocacy groups including the Advocacy Centre for Tenants Ontario, which took the City of Kitchener to the Ontario Municipal Board in an attempt to have the bylaw struck down.

In 2010, the Ontario Municipal Board decided that the bylaw violates the rights of poor and disabled people, and ordered the City of Kitchener to change it. The Board gave the City of Kitchener until April 2011 to develop policies to provide positive supports for the location of social housing and social services in other neighbourhoods.

Questions for City of Kitchener candidates:

1. Will you ensure that poor and disabled people have the same rights to live and gather throughout the City of Kitchener that everyone else enjoys?
2. What policies will you put in place to support the development of social housing and social services throughout the City of Kitchener?

## **Culture, Parks and Recreation: Seniors' Community Centres**

Rockway Community Centre is one of three seniors' centres serving the City of Kitchener. At each of these centres, seniors have access to senior-

specific programming in the Region of Waterloo including 55+ *Employment Services* and *SHARE* (Seniors Helping/Aiding Retirees through Encouragement), health and financial services such as nutrition courses and income tax clinics, and various leisure activities. However, Rockway is the only one of the three, including Breithaupt and the Downtown Community Centre, which is solely serving seniors.

A 2009 council recommendation had proposed the centre's closure in January 2011 with the argument that both the building and the region's senior programming needed an overhaul. While the building itself requires repairs, the centre's membership has seen a drop of over 25 percent in the last five years. Closing the centre would save the city an estimated \$250,000 in operating costs by moving programming to the new Kingsdale Community Centre and 14 surrounding neighbourhood associations. The recommendation was part of the *Older Adult Strategy* being developed by the city to better respond to the growing number of seniors of the boomer age, coined "Zoomers" (Boomers with "zip") who want to maintain an active lifestyle and are less interested in traditional seniors' activities.

The proposal to close Rockway was met with significant protest from Rockway members and the general public, who argued that the city commit to ensuring stability for the area's existing seniors. Many emphasized the social value provided by the centre, in addition to its programming, which may not be found in multi-service centres. In February 2010, council voted unanimously to terminate any plans to close Rockway.

Questions for City of Kitchener candidates:

1. How do you see the City of Kitchener responding to the needs of existing seniors *and* soon-to-be seniors of the boomer age?
2. Do you still see a place for a seniors-only centre?

# Waterloo

## **Public Health: Drinking Water Fluoridation**

If you live in the City of Waterloo, or in certain areas of Kitchener, Woolwich or Wilmot, in addition to choosing your elected representatives, you'll be asked to respond to a ballot question (a 'referendum'), about water fluoridation when you vote in the 2010 municipal election.

Referendums are quite unusual in Canadian politics. Our representative system of democracy assumes that when voters elect a representative, they empower that representative to make decisions on their behalf. But sometimes controversial matters must be decided that are of great public interest and giving the public a direct say in the decision, in the form of a referendum, is seen as a good means of ensuring that the majority's will is done. (Referendums are also seen as a way for politicians to avoid having to make unpopular decisions.)

Since you will have the opportunity and the power to make the drinking water fluoridation decision yourself, you don't have to ask the candidates about their opinions. But you should make sure that your own opinion is an educated one!

Currently, the City of Waterloo adds fluoride to the drinking water that is distributed through the city and its immediate surrounding areas. However this practice has been the focus of some local debate in recent months. Supporters of water fluoridation, including the Region of Waterloo's public health department, maintain that water fluoridation is effective in reducing tooth decay and cavities. But opponents believe that the practice may cause more health problems than it solves. This is not a new controversy. In fact, it has been going on since the 1940s! So there's lots of information available online to help you to educate yourself about the issue. The local media will also be covering both sides of the debate, so pay attention so that your vote will be the right one.

## **Culture, Parks and Recreation: Skateboarding Facilities**

There has been a lot of debate since the last municipal election concerning the use of public parks and recreation areas by skateboarders. Currently, the city does not have a single, permanent designated site for what is estimated to be 10,000 potential users of it. But plans to build an action sports park, for skateboarders, BMX riders, and inline skaters, are already in the works and in January 2010, a location was chosen. The future site, where development will begin in 2011, is directly across from the Waterloo Recreation Complex, on Father David Bauer Drive. It was selected for its proximity to the city's core, low impact on existing vegetation, ability to accommodate large capacities, visibility from exterior and interior paths, and accessibility to walking and transit routes.

The Action Sports Park is one of a number of slated developments proposed in the Waterloo Park Master Plan. This plan contains an extensive list of changes to be made to the park's existing structures, pathways, and play spaces, and includes an environmental management plan to direct these changes. Only a small portion of the funding for these proposals has been endorsed; so far, it is estimated that it will cost the city over one million from now until 2017.

Questions for City of Waterloo candidates:

1. Do you consider the Action Sports Park as a viable investment for the City of Waterloo?
2. How will you ensure that the developments of the Waterloo Park Master Plan enhance the park's ecological integrity?

## **Overall Planning and Development: Inclusion and Accessibility**

Under the Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001 (ODA) and the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA), the

Region of Waterloo has established an accessibility advisory committee serving the City of Waterloo, City of Kitchener, and townships of Woolwich, Wellesley, and North Dumfries, and publishes an annual Accessibility Plan outlining developments in the area of inclusion services. Some of the services that have been introduced or augmented include the implementation of TextNet TTY Answering Program on the municipal phone system; the design, with disabilities in mind, of the Public Square; and an adjustment to larger font sizes on arterial road signs.

While there have been many successes to date, the City of Waterloo still lags behind the City of Cambridge and other municipalities in regards to inclusion services. There is only one staff member operating services for both the City of Waterloo and Kitchener. Notable gaps are in the development of resource-sharing among social service agencies, training of city staff in *Accessible Customer Service* principals, and the adoption of accessibility design standards. Currently, the city's website does not provide an equivalent to Access Cambridge, the accessibility newsletter of the City of Cambridge, in terms of providing sufficient and up-to-date information on special needs' services.

Questions for City of Waterloo candidates:

1. How do you propose that the city moves forward on the development and enhancement of inclusion services, particularly in the areas of employment and built environmental standards?
2. What do you see is the role of the advisory committee in these developments?

# Region of Waterloo

## **Transportation: Rapid Transit**

In 2009, Regional Council approved a \$790 million rapid transit plan – now expected to cost at least \$800 million – that will see a combination of electric trains and high speed buses linking Waterloo, Kitchener and Cambridge starting as soon as 2011. The province of Ontario has committed to paying \$300 million of that cost, and the federal government will pay \$265 million. Property taxes on homes and businesses in Waterloo Region will have to increase between eight and ten percent to pay for the rest. You can find more information on the Region’s rapid transit plan at <http://rapidtransit.region.waterloo.on.ca>.

While praised by supporters as a good way to encourage residential and business development in the downtown areas, the plan has many detractors. Critics say that \$790 million is too much to spend for a system that will not significantly expand transit routes and access and that is unlikely to increase public transit use substantially. They argue that buses are much cheaper and more flexible than electric trains, and could therefore serve more riders. The mayor of the City of Cambridge opposes the plan because Cambridge won’t get the electric trains in the initial phase – just the high speed buses.

Question for mayoral and Region of Waterloo candidates:

1. If elected, will you support the current light rail transit plan as it currently exists? What changes would you implement?

## **Fire Protection: Boundaries**

In late 2009, an elderly Wilmot Township couple died in a house fire. It took the volunteer firefighters 20 minutes to arrive at the scene. Quick, considering that they had to get out of their beds, make their way from their homes to the Baden fire hall, board the fire trucks and then drive 18

kilometres to the fire. The couple lived on the Wilmot Township side of the boundary line between the township and the City of Waterloo. Had they lived just across the road, the full-time firefighters from the city's fire hall just six kilometres away would have responded to the call, almost certainly in a fraction of the time it took the volunteers.

Each municipality within the Region of Waterloo is responsible for its own fire protection. However some of the small townships purchase fire services from their city neighbours, which allows those cities' fire departments to cross boundaries to respond to fires when they can respond faster. North Dumfries has such an agreement with Cambridge, but Wilmot Township does not have any agreement with the City of Waterloo.

Wilmot Township is reviewing its fire services, and the option of 'first response deals' with other municipalities will be examined. However these agreements aren't free. Township residents will have to pay for them in the form of increased taxes or an annual fee, and sometimes taxpayers and politicians choose money over safety.

Questions for Wilmot Township candidates:

1. Do you support entering into purchase of service agreements with other municipalities that will allow them to cross the Wilmot Township boundary to respond to emergency calls when they are closer?
2. Do you believe that this service agreement should be paid for through a general property tax increase or through fees charged to certain neighbourhoods?

## **Food Inspection**

Inspection of Food Premises is a responsibility of the Region of Waterloo. Public Health Inspectors (PHI) have the authority to inspect all food premises in the Region of Waterloo. The purpose of the inspections is to

improve health by reducing the incidence of food-borne illness. PHI's are required to inspect food premises where food is stored, prepared and served to the public. All food premises are assigned a risk category:

- a) High risk - includes full menu restaurants, cafeterias, nursing homes and larger grocery stores that also prepare hot food for the public. High risk premises are inspected three times per year.
- b) Medium risk - includes fast food restaurants, pizzerias, bake shops and smaller grocery stores. Medium risk premises are inspected twice per year.
- c) Low risk - includes convenience stores, hot dog carts and refreshment stands. Low risk premises are inspected once per year.

Food premises are not notified when an inspection will take place. PHIs investigate and look for any conditions that are in violation of the regulations. If any violations are observed the inspector will document them. Most violations are corrected at the time of the inspection and no re-inspections are required. For critical items that cannot be corrected at the time of the inspection the inspector will conduct a re-inspection within 24 to 48 hours to ensure that repairs have been made. PHIs have the authority to issue an order to close a food premise if there are reasonable and probable grounds that a health hazard exists.

Questions to ask Region of Waterloo candidates:

1. Do you support the current system where violations, even small infractions, are posted on the Region of Waterloo website?
2. Do you think that anyone working in a food premise should be required to obtain a Safe Food Handling certificate?

## Child Care

On January 1, 2000, the Region of Waterloo assumed responsibility from the Province of Ontario for the management, funding and planning of our local child care system. As such, the Region is responsible for the management and/or funding of wage subsidy, pay equity, purchase of service program, special needs resourcing programs and one-time health and safety or minor capital funding. Children's Services, a department of the Region of Waterloo, also provides leadership for the planning of the child care service system and produces an annual Child Care Service Plan.

Children's Services also provides early learning and child care programs through direct operation of children's centres, an infant and child development program and a home child care program. In addition, Children's Services is responsible for determining eligibility and funding the child care subsidy program. In effect, Children's Services purchases child care spaces on behalf of families that are eligible for subsidized child care from community-based child care centres and home child care programs across the Region.

In August 2010, the Region of Waterloo announced that beginning August 23, waiting lists would be established for those families needing subsidized child care. Further, that the waiting lists would continue until the number of subsidized children returned to 2700 (currently there are approximately 2900 children receiving subsidized care). The waiting list will be problematic for many families as child care can be one of the biggest barriers to employment and education for parents.

Questions for candidates:

1. In your opinion what is the most effective way of dealing with the issue of waiting lists for subsidized child care to minimize the hardship on families?
2. Do you believe the Government of Ontario has a role to play in dealing with the issues the Region is facing regarding child care subsidy? If so, what should that role be?

## **Social Housing: Non-Smoking Policy**

Effective April 1<sup>st</sup>, 2010, the Region of Waterloo banned smoking in all Region-owned multi-unit social housing. While tenants who signed leases prior to April 2010 will still be allowed to smoke in their apartments, townhouses, or semi-detached rental units, new tenants will not be allowed to smoke within five metres of their buildings, and may be evicted if they do so. Since April, the Region of Waterloo has encouraged other non-profit social housing providers to adopt no-smoking clauses in their leases and several have already done so.

The policy was a controversial one. Before implementing it, the Region of Waterloo conducted a survey of its 2,700 tenant households, and found that 52% favoured a smoking ban. Supporters of the ban felt that people who can afford to own homes can protect themselves from second-hand smoke, so tenants in social housing should be able to protect themselves, too. However, opponents of the ban felt that people who can afford to own homes can choose whether or not to smoke in their homes, and tenants in social housing should be able to choose, too.

Questions for Region of Waterloo candidates:

1. About 19% of regional residents smoke, and research shows that low income people are more likely to smoke than are people with higher incomes. Smoking is a serious addiction and difficult to quit. Given those facts, do you support banning smoking in all social housing buildings?

## **Amalgamation**

The government of Ontario determines the jurisdictions of the municipal governments within the province. It also has the authority to determine the composition and boundaries of those municipalities. Ontario's *Savings and Restructuring Act* gives the province the ability to combine - or amalgamate - two or more municipalities to form one unit of municipal

government. The purpose of such amalgamation is, according to the province, “to achieve fiscal savings and promote economic prosperity through public sector restructuring, streamlining and efficiency and to implement other aspects of the government’s economic agenda.”

Since 1995, the province of Ontario has ordered the amalgamation of a number of municipalities in which smaller towns were absorbed into larger cities including Sudbury, Ottawa, Toronto and Hamilton. Although the province has not ordered the amalgamation of the cities and townships of Waterloo Region, it is a possibility that has been debated locally over the years, with supporters of amalgamation pushing our local governments to consider combining.

Those who are in favour of amalgamation believe that it would expand the potential for provincial and national funding, attract investment, and create efficiencies in areas such as libraries, water and emergency services, saving all taxpayers money. But those who are against it say that it would reduce citizens’ participation in local democracy and create one-size-fits-all services that don’t meet the unique needs of the different communities. Some fear that Kitchener, as the largest municipality, will dominate and that its citizens needs will take precedence over others.

The City of Cambridge has been resolutely opposed to the idea, but the cities of Kitchener and Waterloo have been somewhat more open to the discussion. In 2010, a group composed of 60 business and community leaders asked the Councils of Kitchener and Waterloo to ask the province for permission to add this question to the 2010 ballot: *Would you support members of Council engaging in a dialogue about the merits of merging the cities of Kitchener and Waterloo? Yes or No?* Kitchener City Council voted in favour of the group’s request, and will add that question to all Kitchener ballots, however Waterloo City Council voted against it, so the matter is off the table...for now.

Questions for all candidates for Councils:

1. Would you support your Council engaging in a dialogue about the merits of merging the cities and townships of Waterloo Region?
2. Would you support the inclusion of a referendum question about municipal amalgamation on the 2014 ballot?

## **Waterloo District School Board and Waterloo District Catholic School Board**

### **Policy Planning and Development: Full Day Kindergarten**

Ontario's much anticipated early learning program will be launched in 600 schools across the province in September 2010. Twenty-one Waterloo Region schools will begin offering full-day junior and senior kindergarten, with extended day care available for a fee. By 2015, all Ontario schools will be required to provide full-day kindergarten and before and after-school care for four and five year olds, and will have the authority to provide before and after-school care for all elementary school students.

Questions for school board candidates:

1. What benefits/disadvantages do you see for students who attend the full day model?
2. Can you describe any potential problems with the full day kindergarten model?
3. Do you support partnerships with third-party daycare providers for extended childcare for four and five year olds?

### **Policy, Planning and Development: Anti-bullying Measures in Schools**

In recent months, several Waterloo Region parents have launched lawsuits against their children's schools, alleging that the schools did not

adequately protect their children from bullying by classmates, and school boards are asking the Ontario Attorney General to take action to block such legal action.

Studies indicate that one third of students will experience bullying at school, yet research has also confirmed that students are more academically successful when they feel safe and included in their school communities.

Questions for school board candidates:

1. What initiatives do you feel will contribute to safer more inclusive schools and learning environments?

### **Student Achievement: Standardized Testing**

In 1996, Ontario's provincial government created the Education Quality and Accountability Office, which was charged with developing and implementing standardized tests to measure students' skills in reading, writing and mathematics. All public and Catholic school students in Ontario must take standardized tests in grades three, six, nine and 10. Students must pass the grade 10 literacy test in order to receive their secondary school diplomas. Schools' results are publicized.

After more than ten years, debate continues about the value of standardized testing. Supporters believe that it helps school boards, schools and teachers to assess and improve their teaching strategies; that it helps parents to understand how their children are really progressing; and that it helps parents to choose the best schools for their children.

Opponents argue that standardized testing:

- pushes teachers to 'teach to the tests' and to neglect other arguably more important topics
- pushes school boards and schools to focus their resources on improving test scores and to neglect more enjoyable and engaging school activities

- creates unnecessary stress for students and teachers alike; and that it doesn't take into account the linguistic and cultural diversity of Ontario's students and punishes schools and teachers with more diverse student bodies.

Questions for school board candidates:

1. Standardized testing has been in effect in Ontario's schools for 10 years. What have we learned from these tests and how do they impact the way we deliver public education?

## **Resources**

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- v. Food Inspection Website
- vi. Water Fluoridation Facts
- vii. Useful Websites

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Jack Hone  
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## **Where to Vote**

All registered voters will receive a Voter Notification Letter (VNL) that will give you information on where and when the voting for your ward will take place. You should take your VNL with you to the polling station, as well as a piece of personal identification.

## **Acceptable Forms of Identification**

One of these items (it **MUST** show your name, qualifying address and signature):

1. An Ontario driver's licence;
2. An Ontario Health Card (photo card);
3. An Ontario motor vehicle permit (plate portion);
4. A cancelled personalized cheque;
5. A mortgage, lease or rental agreement;
6. An insurance policy;
7. A loan or financial agreement with a financial institution;
8. A document issued or certified by a court in Ontario;
9. Any other document from the government of Canada Ontario or a municipality in Ontario or from an agency of such a government that shows your name, qualifying address and signature;
10. Any document from a Band Council in Ontario established under the *Indian Act* (Canada).

If you do not have any of those, you can also bring in one item from **EACH** of the following two lists.

Acceptable documents showing name and signature:

1. An Ontario driver's licence;
2. An Ontario Health Card;
3. An Ontario motor vehicle permit (plate portion);
4. A Canadian passport;

5. A Certificate of Canadian Citizenship;
6. A Certificate of Indian Status;
7. A Veterans Affairs Canada Health Card;
8. A social insurance number card;
9. An Old Age Security Card;
10. A credit card;
11. A debit card;
12. An employee identification card;
13. A student identification card issued by a post-secondary Institution;
14. A union identification card or a professional licence card;
15. A cancelled personalized cheque;
16. A mortgage, lease or rental agreement for property in Ontario;
17. An insurance policy;
18. A document issued or certified by a court in Ontario;
19. Any other document from the government of Canada Ontario or a municipality in Ontario or from an agency of such a government;
20. Any document from a Band Council in Ontario established under the *Indian Act* (Canada).

Acceptable documents showing name and address:

1. An Ontario motor vehicle permit (vehicle portion);
2. An income tax assessment notice;
3. A Child Tax Benefit Statement;
4. A Statement of Employment Insurance Benefits Paid T4E;
5. A Statement of Old Age Security T4A (OAS);
6. A Statement of Canada Pension Plan Benefits T4A (P);
7. A Canada Pension Plan Statement of Contributions;
8. A Statement of Direct Deposit for Ontario Works;
9. A Statement of Direct Deposit for Ontario Disability Support Program;
10. A Workplace Safety and Insurance Board Statement of Benefits T5007;
11. A property tax assessment;
12. An insurance statement;

13. A mortgage, lease or rental statement for property in Ontario;
14. A credit card, bank account, RRSP, RRIF, RHOSP or T5 Statement;
15. A CNIB Card or a card from another registered charitable organization which provides services to persons with disabilities;
16. A hospital card or record;
17. A document showing campus residence issued by the office or officials responsible for student residence at a post-secondary institution;
18. A utility bill for hydro, water, gas, telephone or cable TV or a bill from a public utilities commission;
19. A cheque stub, T4 statement or pay receipt issued by an Employer;
20. A transcript or report card from a post-secondary school;
21. A document issued or certified by a court in Ontario;
22. Any other document from the government of Canada, Ontario or a municipality in Ontario or from an agency of such a government;
23. Any document from a Band Council in Ontario established under the *Indian Act* (Canada).

## **How to Vote**

Upon showing your identifying document(s), you will receive your ballot and secrecy folder.

To vote, simply place an 'x' in the blank square to the right of the candidate(s) of your choice, using the special pen provided in the booth.

After voting, insert the ballot into the secrecy folder and take it to the DRO Manager. It will then insert the ballot into the tabulator, read and then dropped into the ballot box.

## **Voter Eligibility**

To be eligible to vote in the 2010 Municipal Election, you must meet the following criteria:

- a. resides in the local municipality or is the owner or tenant of land there, or the spouse of such owner or tenant;
- b. is a Canadian citizen;
- c. is at least 18 years old; and
- d. is not prohibited from voting as stated hereunder or otherwise by law.

Meeting any of the following criteria will prohibit you from voting:

- a. A person who is serving a sentence of imprisonment in a penal or correctional institution;
- b. A corporation;
- c. A person acting as executor or trustee or in any other representative capacity, except as a voting proxy;
- d. A person who was convicted of the corrupt practice described in Subsection 90 (2) & (3) of the Municipal Elections Act, 1996, as amended, if voting day in the current election is less than 4 years after voting day in the election in respect of which he or she was convicted.

## **Homeless Voters**

Voters who do not currently have a permanent address or identification can still vote provided they have returned to sleep or to eat at a place (eg. hostel, shelter, drop-in centre) located in Kitchener for a period of at least 5 weeks.

Some examples of agencies working with the homeless in Kitchener:

- Reaching Our Outdoor Friends (ROOF)
- House of Friendship
- St. John's Soup Kitchen
- Mary's Place

To register an individual to vote:

- between September 7 to October 25, 2010, contact the Office of the City Clerk to find out where to vote;

- Fill out and sign an Affidavit of Residence indicating the place where they have slept or eaten in the past 5 weeks (if presented, an identification letter from the agency can make the process of completing the form easier for the individual) at their voting location.

## **Waterloo Region Food Inspection Website**

Inspection results can be found on the Region's website here:

<http://www.region.waterloo.on.ca/web/foodinspection.nsf/aaGlossary?OpenAgent#twelvth>

## **Water Fluoridation Information**

*From The Globe & Mail, April 16, 2010*

MARTIN MITTELSTAEDT

When it comes to fluoridating drinking water, Ontario and Quebec couldn't be further apart. Ontario has the country's highest rate of adding the tooth-enamel-strengthening chemical into municipal supplies, while Quebec has one of the lowest, with practically no one drinking fluoridated water.

But surprisingly, the two provinces have very little difference in tooth-decay rates, a finding that is likely to intensify the ongoing controversy over the practice of adding fluoride to water as a public health measure. Quebeckers have more cavities than people in Ontario, but the difference is slight. Among children 6 to 19, considered the most decay-prone part of the population, the rate in Ontario was lower by less than half a cavity per child.

In the 6-11 age group, Ontario kids have 3.5 per cent fewer cavities than those in Quebec: 1.7 cavities compared to 1.76 in Quebec.

In the 12-19 age group, Ontario youths have 15.8 per cent fewer cavities than those in Quebec: 2.35 cavities compared to 2.79.

Details of the cavity rates in the two provinces have been compiled by Statistics Canada in a study it conducted recently into the health status of Canadians. Experts peered into the mouths of more than 5,000 Canadians from 2007 to 2009, tallying the number of cavities and teeth with fillings, to try to get an idea of the state of oral health of the nation. After a request from The Globe and Mail for a breakdown of the cavity rates by province, Statistics Canada tabulated the figures for Ontario and Quebec, where it said it had a sufficient number of people to be a representative sample.

Statscan said it couldn't compile meaningful data for British Columbia and Alberta, which are in a similar situation. British Columbia has practically no one drinking fluoridated water, while nearly three-quarters of Albertans rely on municipal supplies where the chemical is added.

The paper sought the information to see what light it would shed on the effectiveness of fluoridation, which has been touted by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention as one of the top 10 great public health achievements of the 20th century, and is endorsed by all dental associations in the country and by Health Canada.

But the results showed that if fluoridation is the only major difference between the two provinces, the chemical is preventing fewer than half a cavity per child in Ontario.

Health Canada down played the significance of the findings.

“While accurate,” the data on the children are “an incomplete picture of the tooth decay situation.... [and] cannot be used to form conclusions regarding the efficacy of fluoride use in water,” Health Canada said.

The federal department said firm conclusions can't be drawn from the Statscan survey because it didn't collect assessments on individual intakes of the chemical. To make a proper assessment, Health Canada said it would need detailed information on whether people in the two provinces differ in their intake fluoride supplements, drink tap water or bottled water, and use fluoridated toothpaste.

But fluoridation is one major and obvious difference between the provinces. More than three-quarters of Ontario residents live in areas where municipal water supplies contain the chemical. In Quebec, 94 per cent have water free of the additive, according to figures published by Health Canada in 2007.

Since then, Quebec City has voted to stop fluoridating, indicating that the difference between the two provinces is currently even more pronounced. Some critics of fluoridation say the survey does raise questions about the practice.

“Fluoridation is no longer effective,” contends Hardy Limeback, head of the preventive dentistry program at the University of Toronto, who says adding the chemical to water is “more harmful than beneficial.” Although fluoridation is touted as an unalloyed benefit by public health agencies, which estimate it cuts cavity rates by 20 per cent to 40 per cent, many community groups have sprung up across Canada lobbying to stop the practice, which is subject to repeal by local referendums. Some health professionals are worried fluoridation may have under-appreciated risks.

While fluoride toughens the outside of teeth to make them more resistant to bacteria-causing decay, a number of medical journal studies have linked exposure to altered thyroid function, and to reduced IQ levels in children, although the intellectual impairments were found at levels of the chemical in water well above those used for municipal supplies.

The most worrisome study, by Harvard researchers, appeared in 2006 in the journal *Cancer Causes and Control* and found that boys aged 7 exposed to high levels of fluoridated water were about four times more likely to develop childhood osteosarcoma. It's a rare bone cancer that felled Canadian icon Terry Fox and almost always leads to amputations. There has also been a worldwide reduction in cavity rates, regardless of whether countries use the chemical, suggesting factors other than adding it to water supplies are at work.

One theory is that most people are already getting adequate exposure to fluoride through toothpastes, so the amounts in water aren't making much difference in tooth decay rates.

“The parallel reduction in caries [cavities] incidents in countries with a lot of fluoridation and countries with not much fluoridation is quite dramatic,” says Warren Bell, former head of the Canadian Association of Physicians for the Environment, a group that questions the practice.

Dr. Limeback said factors that might be preventing caries include increased exposure to vitamin D, better oral hygiene, less sugar consumption, and even antibiotics.

When fluoridation started 60 years ago, doctors thought swallowing the chemical was beneficial by strengthening teeth from the inside out. Dr. Limeback said more recent research shows that if there is a benefit, it is from the topical application of fluoride to the surface of teeth, which suggests that brushing with a toothpaste is more effective than drinking water containing the chemical.

*From Waterloo Region Public Health, February 2007:*

Fluoride occurs naturally and is often found in water sources. Since the 1930s, researchers have noticed that people who drink naturally fluoridated water had less tooth decay than those who didn't. As a result, many communities in Canada have added fluoride to their drinking water. In Ontario, 70 per cent of the population, or about 8.7 million people, receive fluoridated drinking water.

The natural level of fluoride in drinking water varies throughout the Region. For the City of Waterloo, the natural fluoride level is too low to be therapeutic for the prevention of decay. Two referenda have been held and both have supported the addition of fluoride to the water supply. Today, the fluoride content is between 0.5 to 0.8 parts per million (ppm) which is the optimal range for the prevention of tooth decay as recommended by the Ontario Ministry of Environment. Fluoride levels in drinking water, both naturally occurring and added, are monitored regularly by the Region of Waterloo Water Services to ensure recommended levels are not exceeded. Reports are regularly submitted to ROW Public Health.

Fluoride prevents tooth decay by making the outer layer of teeth stronger, which protects the tooth against acids that cause decay. Studies have shown that fluoridated drinking water greatly reduces the number of cavities in children's teeth.

Fluoridation is also cost-effective as it only costs about 60 cents per person per year, and prevents cavities that would potentially cost hundreds of dollars to treat. However, many factors affect the prevalence of tooth decay. The presence or absence of optimally fluoridated water is only one of these factors.

Other forms of fluoride can be used to prevent disease (e.g., toothpastes, rinses, supplements). However, these forms depend on individual action whereas water fluoridation does not.

Problems may result if too much fluoride is consumed. Dental fluorosis occurs in people who swallow too much fluoride during the important years of tooth formation (0-6 years). In its mild form, dental fluorosis appears as white flecks on the tooth surface. In the more severe forms, brown staining and/or pitting occur on the tooth surface. Dental fluorosis is most often mild and primarily a cosmetic concern. Dental fluorosis affects people who live in communities with or without fluoride in their water supply. The most common source of too much fluoride is from swallowing toothpaste, not from drinking water. Health risks occur only when fluoride content in water is above recommended levels.

Like many substances, fluoride can be harmful if taken in excessive amounts, but toxic levels cannot be reached by drinking optimally fluoridated water. Systematic reviews of evidence have found there is no compelling evidence from well-conducted studies to indicate that fluoridation of water supplies at recommended levels is associated with adverse health effects.

The research in this area is ongoing.

Organizations that support water fluoridation include: Health Canada; both the Canadian Medical and Dental Associations; Canadian Public

Health Association; the US Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC); and the World Health Organization. The CDC selected water fluoridation as one of the ten most important public health initiatives of the 20th century and “recommends community water fluoridation as a safe, effective, and inexpensive way to prevent tooth decay among populations living in areas with adequate community water supply systems.”

The fluoridation of water supplies does have its opponents. From time to time, individuals or groups will voice their opposition to water fluoridation and ask that their concerns be addressed. There is a specific process which is followed for fluoridation of drinking water in Ontario which is outlined in the Fluoride Act and ensures a majority of support by voters.

**For more information on Water Fluoridation, visit the Waterloo Region Public Health website at**

**<http://chd.region.waterloo.on.ca/web/health.nsf/fmFrontPage?OpenForm>**

## Useful Sites

For more election information, including ward maps, check out the website of your city or township, and the Region of Waterloo.

*Kitchener*

[www.kitchener.ca](http://www.kitchener.ca)

*Cambridge*

[www.cambridge.ca](http://www.cambridge.ca)

*Waterloo*

[www.waterloo.ca](http://www.waterloo.ca)

*Woolwich Township*

[www.woolwich.ca](http://www.woolwich.ca)

*Wilmot Township*

[www.wilmot.ca](http://www.wilmot.ca)

*Wellesley Township*

[www.township.wellesley.on.ca](http://www.township.wellesley.on.ca)

*North Dumfries*

[www.township.northdumfries.on.ca](http://www.township.northdumfries.on.ca)

*Waterloo Region*

[www.region.waterloo.on.ca](http://www.region.waterloo.on.ca)