THE GREEN LINE

CHECKLIST TO LOOK INTO A 2026 TORONTO ELECTION CANDIDATE'S TRACK RECORD

- ☐ Check the candidate's campaign website. You can find the information of all candidates running for mayor, councillor or trustee on the City of Toronto's official list. Many candidates include their campaign websites. If you don't find it on this list, it doesn't mean it doesn't exist, so it's worth looking it up.

- ☐ Contact the candidate or their campaign office.
    - ☐ You can call or text. This number may be available on the candidate's personal website; it may also be on a flyer dropped off at your door by the candidate's campaign.
    - ☐ You can send a message to the candidate and/or campaign via their social media accounts.
    - ☐ You can also email. You can typically find a candidate's email on their personal website or sometimes listed on the City of Toronto's complete candidate list.

- ☐ Talk to a candidate or volunteer if they knock on your door. Candidates typically canvass in the lead-up to elections, and this old-school campaign strategy can be a useful opportunity to speak to a candidate face-to-face.

- ☐ Consider asking them about their campaign priorities, what challenges they intend to address if elected, their previous political or community-service experience and local issues impacting your community.
- ☐ The conversation can also go both ways, tell them what issues you care about and ask them how they would commit to solving them.
- ☐ A pro tip from Ahsen Bhatti, a community organizer in Moss Park: ask them for the specifics. “They should understand the policies, they should understand the budget, they should understand how they're going to make the things that they want to do happen, and they should be able to explain all of those things to you in a few simple sentences.”

☐ Check if a candidate has a local office. If so, stop by to chat to the candidate or a campaign volunteer.

☐ Attend campaign events. Whether it’s a launch party, community gathering or a political debate, use this opportunity to ask candidates or volunteers questions about their campaign. You’ll usually find the information about upcoming events on their socials and websites.

☐ Scroll through a candidate’s social media pages — whether that’s an Instagram or X account, a Facebook feed or a Linkedin page — to get a feel for their values and proposed initiatives.

☐ Look up a candidate in a search engine, such as Google News.

    - [ ] Local publications often publish interviews or profiles of candidates. Read or watch these to get a feel for a candidate's platform.
    - [ ] You don't have to stick to election-related coverage. If the candidate has been active for a while, you might find articles about issues they've spoken up about or initiatives they've led in the community.

- [ ] Crowdsource neighbourhood commentary. Check your local community Facebook posts for what people are saying about a candidate — but take it with a grain of salt, the internet can be polarizing.

- [ ] Corroborate a candidate's endorsements. Some candidates have endorsements — people who publicly support their campaign — listed on their personal websites. Look up these individuals to gain a more holistic view of who is supporting a specific candidate and why.

- [ ] If you're comfortable with it, you can try doing some research using LLMs. Use specific prompts to pull up articles or City Council meetings that mention the person you're looking into and the topics you're interested in. Be critical of the results and double check them yourself: check that the references are real and skim through them to confirm the stance the candidate took.

- [ ] Look for non-partisan pledges that align with your values and check if a candidate has signed them. We've compiled some examples below.
    - [ ] Review the Community-led Planning Pledge to see which municipal candidates are committed to funding community-led planning and centering community voices in Toronto.

- ☐ Check out the TTCriders Transit Pledge to see which candidates are committed to making the TTC more affordable, reliable and accessible.
- ☐ If you're a cyclist or care about safe infrastructure for cyclists in the city, you can sign Cycle Toronto's Municipal Election Pledge, which means you commit to vote for candidates who will make Toronto more bike-friendly. Once you sign it, the organization will keep you up to date on where candidates stand before election day.
- ☐ Check out Elect Respect, a pledge to build a political culture free from harassment, abuse, personal attacks, threats or intimidation. While this pledge isn't Toronto-specific (it applies to all Canadian elected officials, candidates and members of the public), you can click on the tab "Signatories" to see which candidates for Toronto's municipal election have signed it.

Incumbent candidates:

- ☐ Check to see if a candidate has previously run in the municipal election or held office.

- ☐ If they have, comb through their personal website to see what they have achieved in their past term(s). Most councillor websites have a page dedicated to local projects and/or news updates related to their work in the ward.

- ☐ You can also check what their campaign previously promised to see if they have been consistent in their messaging.

- [ ] Check how a candidate voted in past Toronto City Council legislative meetings with the City of Toronto's vote record dataset. You can download the 2022-2026 voting record for members of City Council as a CVS file to see a detailed breakdown of the motions they voted on and when.

- [ ] If you want the information summarized for you, check out the City Hall Watcher newsletter on Substack. Written by Matt Elliot, a Toronto-based professor of journalism and journalist who writes for publications like the *Toronto Star* and *CBC*, this weekly newsletter breaks down what's happening in Toronto's City Council. It provides a complete voting record of each current Council member and analyzes things like the Council's agenda and budget. It's paid, but you can access it with a free seven-day trial. Students who meet specific criteria are eligible for a free subscription.
    - [ ] Take a look at City Hall Watcher Live, a companion tool to the City Hall Watcher newsletter. If you want to really dig into the voting habits of current Toronto City Council members, scroll through this website for live coverage of Council meetings. You can also find archived coverage of nearly 15 years of Council meetings.

- [ ] Check out WardWatch, a digital, non-partisan informational site that provides a profile of each candidate, as well as a record of previous councillors' voting history. Largely powered by AI, the site was made by PoliAlerts, a Canadian political intelligence software company founded by Ray Ahmed, who's worked as a policy advisor with the Ontario Minister of Finance and the

Minister of Labour between 2011 and 2015. *The Green Line* tested the database at random and found it accurate.