

From Rumours to Reality

Clarington's
Bold Strategy
to Combat
Misinformation



Kaitlin Keefer

Communications Officer
Municipality of Clarington

Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives:

Almost **2.5 million Canadians** live in a postal code with either **one or zero local news outlets**.

A devastating loss:

Credible journalists understand the nuances of local government and offer fact-checked truths for the public to draw their own conclusions.



Social media: the main informant

When speculation fills in the gaps,
distrust in the institutions that are meant to protect people festers.

The Request

**“Kaitlin, Council wants
more residents to
subscribe to Clarington
news and alerts...”**

...Can you put together a little comms plan?”

**Without local media:
We are the newsroom**

**First line of defense against misinformation:
More subscribers = more people informed**

**To get noticed:
Calculated risks are necessary**

**WHAT'S HAPPENING
IN OUR COMMUNITY?!**

**WE'VE GOT THE
MUNICIPALI-"TEA"**

Clarington

Get the facts by visiting:
www.clarington.net/Subscribe



ALEX MISSED OUT ON
FREE YOGA BECAUSE
SHE WASN'T SUBSCRIBED
TO CLARINGTON
COMMUNITY NEWS.
DON'T BE LIKE ALEX.

Clarington





A **NEW POOL** COMING TO SOUTH
BOWMANVILLE RECREATION CENTRE...



PROPOSED DEVELOPMENTS
IN YOUR COMMUNITY...



NEW CELL TOWERS
IN CLARINGTON...

Be the first to know about
the things that matter to you.

Get the facts straight from the source:
www.clarington.net/Subscribe



01

Hello, neighbour!

Are you curious about what's happening in our community?
We've got the scoop.

We are the staff at the Municipality of Clarington, and we are also your neighbours (who love this community as much as you do)! We work hard to keep residents informed - and we want you to get the facts straight from the source.

Be the first to know about local park openings, events, development proposals, service disruptions, construction notices and more by signing up for email alerts at www.clarington.net/Subscribe.

Sincerely,

#TeamClarington

Clarington
Municipality of Clarington
40 Temperance Street
Bowmanville, Ontario
905-623-3379



We work hard to keep you informed - stay in the know at clarington.net/Subscribe

Follow us!





“Did you hear they’re...?!”

(Insert wild, weird and wacky rumour here)



Just an update on Burger Delight, if you didn't already hear, their lease has been terminated and the locks changed. On that note, what kind of food place would you like to see in there?? I don't think it's big enough for a Taco Bell.

👍🤔🤔 37

👍 Like

💬 Comment

📄 Send

159 comments



It's no Taco Bell... but possibly a step in the right direction? 🤔

Freshco on Longworth

Can someone please open up a Taco Bell in this town? Pls & thank you

👍🤔❤️ Tasha Merrett, Michael Alexander Porringa and 279 others

154 comments

👍 Like

💬 Comment

📄 Send

Looks like something is finally happening at the old Bakers Dozen building!! They started to gut the inside yesterday... Now the parking lot has been fenced off. Hoping it's going to be a Taco Bell!!

🤔🤔🤔

👍🤔 112

211 comments

👍 Like

💬 Comment

📄 Send

Soooo... besides taco bell...what do we think is going into the home hardware building in bowmanville?

🤔👍 32

156 comments

👍 Like

💬 Comment

📄 Send

It's so windy I just saw a Taco Bell sign blow by

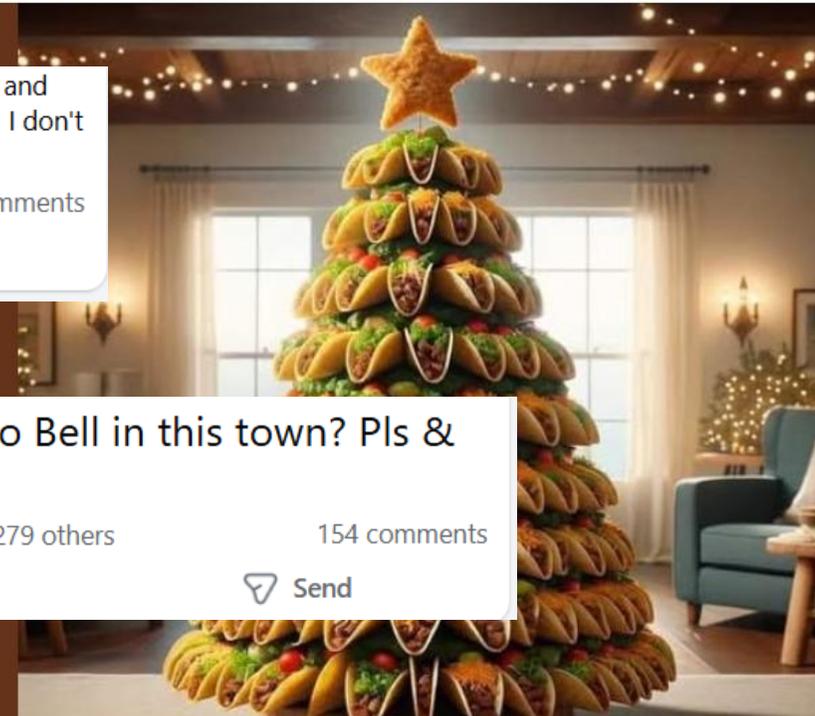
🤔👍 Melissa Westover and 205 others

32 comments

👍 Like

💬 Comment

📄 Send



BOWMANVILLE CHRISTMAS TREE
BROUGHT TO YOU BY TACO BELL !!



DID YOU HEAR
THEY'RE PUTTING
A **TACO BELL** IN
TOWN HALL?*



* It's tricky to know what's real (this is not).
Get the facts at www.clarington.net/Subscribe.

A calculated risk... that broke the barrier of invisibility

We're listening – more than people think!

Made you look!

3,600 new subscribers earned (baseline: 1,000)

Thank you!



Kaitlin Keefer

Communications Officer
Municipality of Clarington

kkeefer@clarington.net

 Find me on LinkedIn!

Find Clarington on social:

   @ClaringtonConnected



MUNICIPALITY OF

PORT HOPE

January 19, 2026

Getting Accurate Information to Residents

PORT HOPE
— **WALTON STREET** —
RECONSTRUCTION

Kate Ingram

Manager,
Communications

**Municipality of
Port Hope**

porthope.ca



Beautiful Downtown Port Hope



The Project

Walton Street Reconstruction Project: 2023-2025

- 100-year-old infrastructure replacement - sewer, water, storm systems
- Upgrades to street scape and pedestrian accessibility
- Three-Phase Project
 - Phase 1 - residential only
 - Phase 2 - Commercial area (some residential)
 - Phase 3 - Transition (mixed residential and commercial)



The Challenges



Two phases
turned into three



Tender delay and
tight timelines



Major Film
Production



Surprise By-
Election



On the heels of
COVID pandemic



Distrust in
Municipality

Priorities



**Build the
audience**

Gain trust

**Support
community
resilience**

**Be the trusted
source for
accurate info**



Our Strategies

**Empathy with a dash of
humour**

Consistency - Always

Listen and Learn

TACTICS



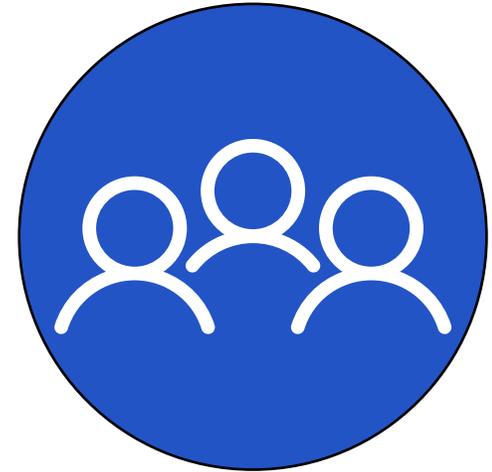
Digital

Dedicated webpage, social media, radio, earned media, e-newsletters



Print

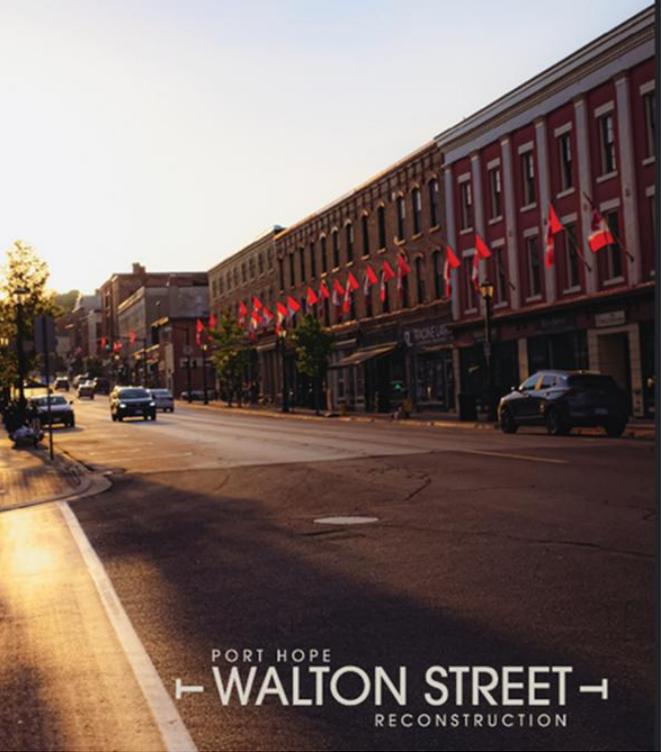
Signage, direct mail, print newsletters, hand-delivered notices, business cards



In-Person

Summer students, main street office, regular business check-ins, Walton St. meetings, community collaborations

GIVEAWAY!



PORT HOPE
← WALTON STREET →
RECONSTRUCTION



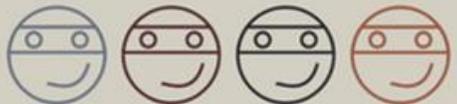
Businesses taking Port Hope construction in stride

Global
NEWS



DIGITAL

**SORRY
SPLINTER,
THIS SEWER
IS OFF
LIMITS.**



Project Information, Important Dates and Timelines
Construction updates will be provided throughout the project to keep the community informed of construction timelines and the work being completed.

- Construction Schedules +
- Construction News Releases +
- Project Background +
- Project Leads +

Resident and Business Continuity Intake Forms

We are building a Phase 3 Walton Street Reconstruction Continuity Plan. Please complete the appropriate form to help us build out the data for these plans.

- Resident Intake Form +
- Business Intake Form +

For updates not social with us



Walton Street Reconstruction Groundbreaking Ceremony

On Wednesday, we came together for the official Walton Street Reconstruction groundbreaking ceremony, a milestone that marks a significant step forward for our downtown area.

It was heartwarming to see many of you join us on Queen Street to celebrate this project's commencement. As your Mayor, I was honoured to speak about our shared vision for this vibrant neighborhood. Alongside our Chief Administrative Officer, Candice White, and our dedicated staff, I emphasized that this project is not just about renewing our infrastructure—it's about building a more connected, welcoming, and accessible community for all of us.

During my speech, I highlighted our commitment to supporting residents and local

**IT'S GOING
TO GET MESSY.
BUT SO
ARE TACOS,
AND WE STILL
LOVE THEM.**

PORT HOPE
WALTON STREET
RECONSTRUCTION

WALTON STREET BUSINESSES OPEN

VISIT
downtownporthope.com



CAVAN STREET TO BROWN STREET

– BUALAI TASTE OF THAI

– RESURGENCE HEALTH & FITNESS,
NICOLE BOTRIE STYLIST

– MANN McCracken & Associates

– THE NOOK REALTY

– THE MEN'S ROOM BARBER SHOP

– NATASHA NAILS & SPA

– BROWN STREET TO PINE STREET

– PICCINI ARCHITECT

– WALTON & PINE SALON & CLINIC

porthope.ca/walton



PROJECT OFFICE

a: 90 Walton Street

p: 905-376-1481

Monday to Friday

8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.



@porthopedigswalton

URGENT (AFTER HOURS): 1-855-961-7019

porthope.ca/report-an-issue

“All About Walton Street”

PRINT



TRASH TALK: YOUR GUIDE TO GARBAGE ON WALTON

GARBAGE BAGS



If you prefer not to use bins, residents of Walton Street (within the project boundary) have been given special permission to use clear plastic bags instead. Recycling must be sorted per Northumberland County rules.

PICKUP



Garbage and recycling is to be placed at the curb as usual by 7 am. The contractor will collect the waste and move it to a designated pick up location.

GARBAGE BINS



All bins must be marked with your address so they can be returned to the correct location. If you lose your bin, please fill out our Report an Issue Form.

QUESTIONS OR CONCERNS



If you have any questions or concerns please visit our website porthope.ca/walton or visit our social media @porthopedigswalton. Report an Issue: porthope.ca/report-an-issue

PORT HOPE
WALTON STREET
RECONSTRUCTION

WHY ARE WE DOING THIS?

Trust us, we know - Walton Street is one of the most beautifully preserved main streets in Ontario. But, with this esteemed heritage comes old and aging infrastructure below the beauty. The infrastructure replacement and upgrades are urgent and necessary. **The sanitary sewer lines that run in this area serve nearly 1/3 of the population of Urban Port Hope.** That is a lot of responsibility for a pipe that is nearly 100 years old!

START
APRIL 22, 2024

FINISH
NOVEMBER, 2024



Things are going to get messy around here. Hang in there with us. In the end there will be cake.



FOR REGULAR
UPDATES



DOWNTOWN BUSINESSES

TOPEN



SUPPORT LOCAL



IN-PERSON



Our Results



 **Top contributor**
Follow the page and watch the progress updates. They have been great in informing the town all the way along.

 **Top contributor**
Port Hope Digs Walton is official update page

 **Sharon W.**
I applaud your great communications on this project. 🍌. Every project should be this good. Transparent, clear, concise. Well done!

 **[Redacted]**
I appreciate how well we have been updated throughout this process. Thank you for your transparency! We can't wait to check out the finished product.

 **Christopher [Redacted]**
Great communications from start to finish!

Post-project interviews with businesses:

- The majority of businesses reported **feeling supported by the municipality** during the project.
- All interviewed businesses reported a **negligible impact** from construction.
- 79% perceived the brand as useful.
- 80% perceived social media useful.
- 80% perceived the website as useful.
- 80% perceived on-site staff as useful.
- **6 businesses opened** and only 1 closed (noted COVID).
- **Council Members reported minimal complaints** received.

Our Celebrations



2025 Community Relations Campaign of the Year



A wrap party we never expected, courtesy of:



A Holiday Street Party



Thank You

Kate Ingram

Manager,
Communications

**Municipality of
Port Hope**

porthope.ca

A Local Election Strategy

How *The Local* fights
misinformation with service

journalism during Toronto elections

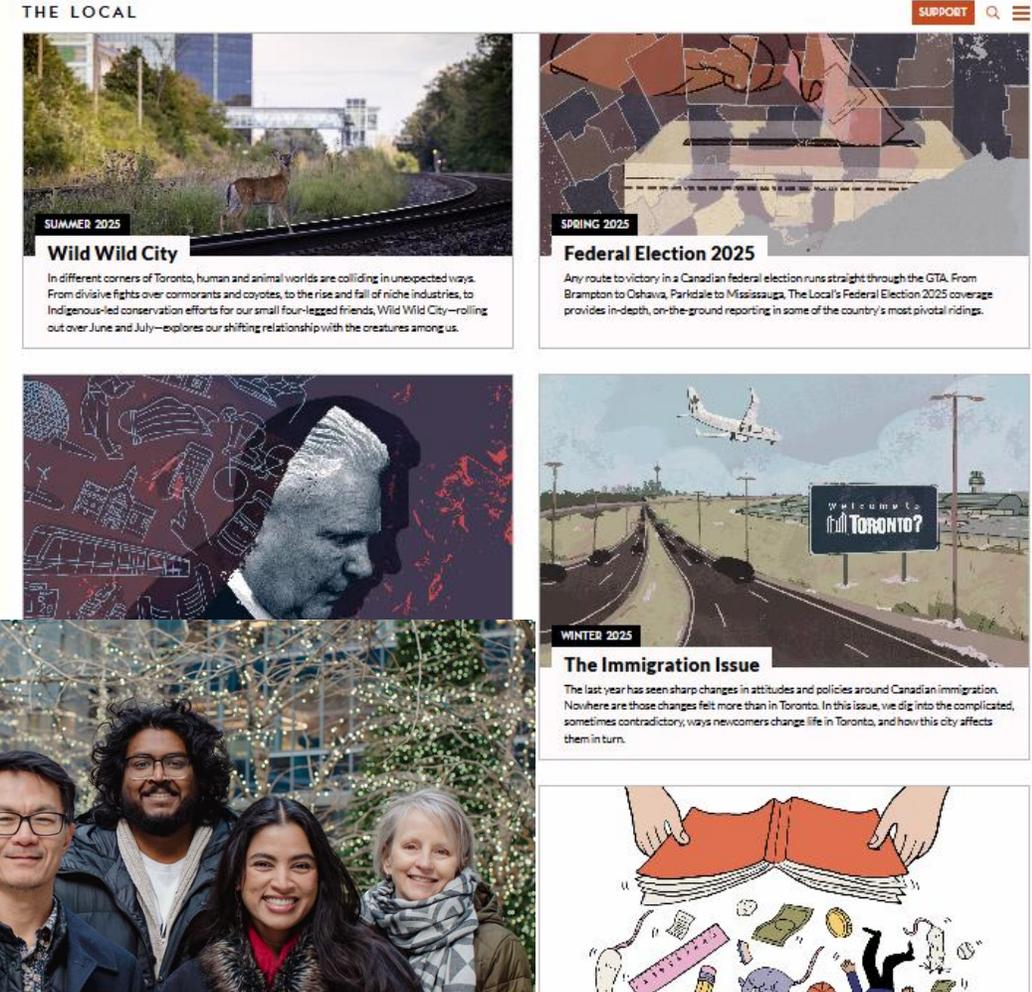
Inori Roy
Associate Editor, *The Local*

inori@thelocal.to

THE LOCAL

Who we are

- The Local magazine: An award-winning online publication focused on magazine journalism telling untold stories in Toronto and the GTA
- Health, education, housing, justice, environment, municipal politics, and more
- Equity-driven storytelling
- Commitment to community outreach



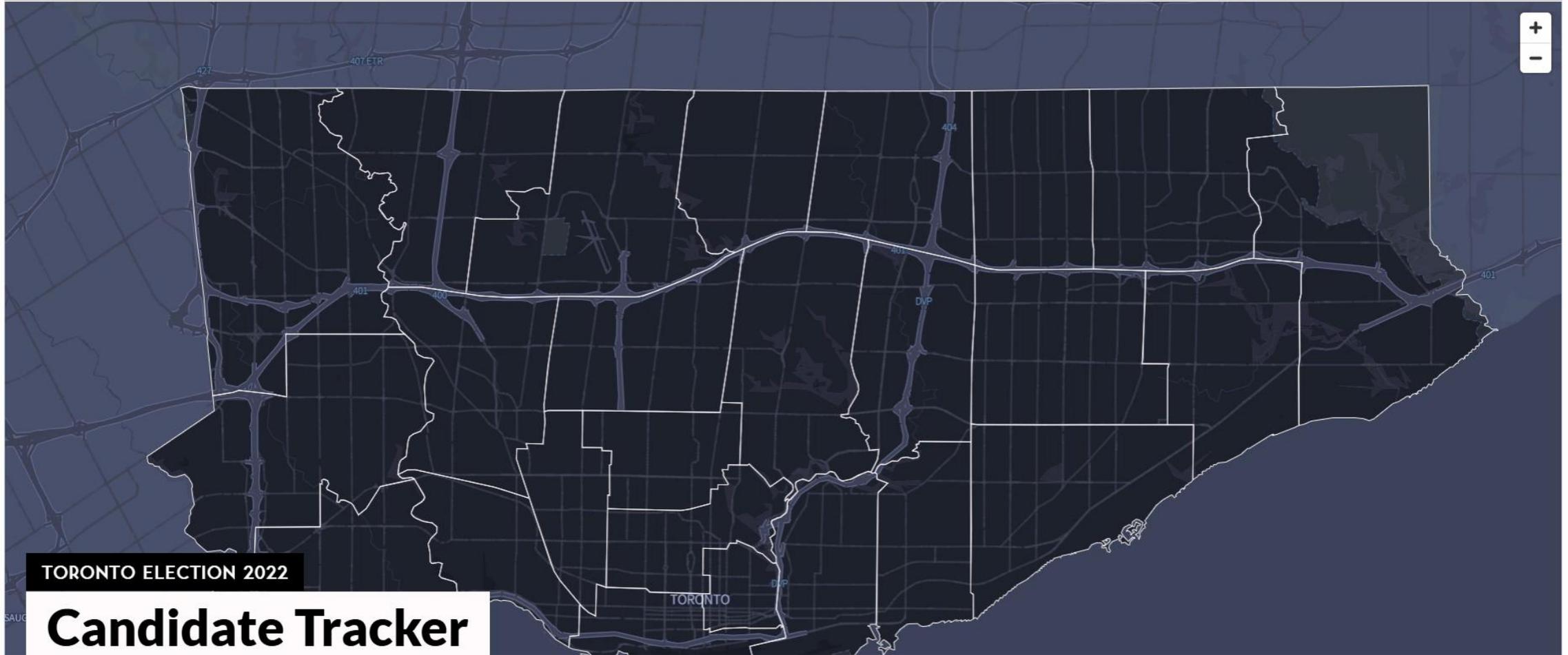
Why Candidate Tracker?

- Lack of critical and robust reporting on local Toronto elections
- What's missing? How can we address it? And how do we get readers to engage with us?

2022: General Municipal Election

THE LOCAL

SUPPORT



TORONTO ELECTION 2022

Candidate Tracker

2023: Mayoral By-election

THE LOCAL

SUPPORT



MAYOR'S RACE

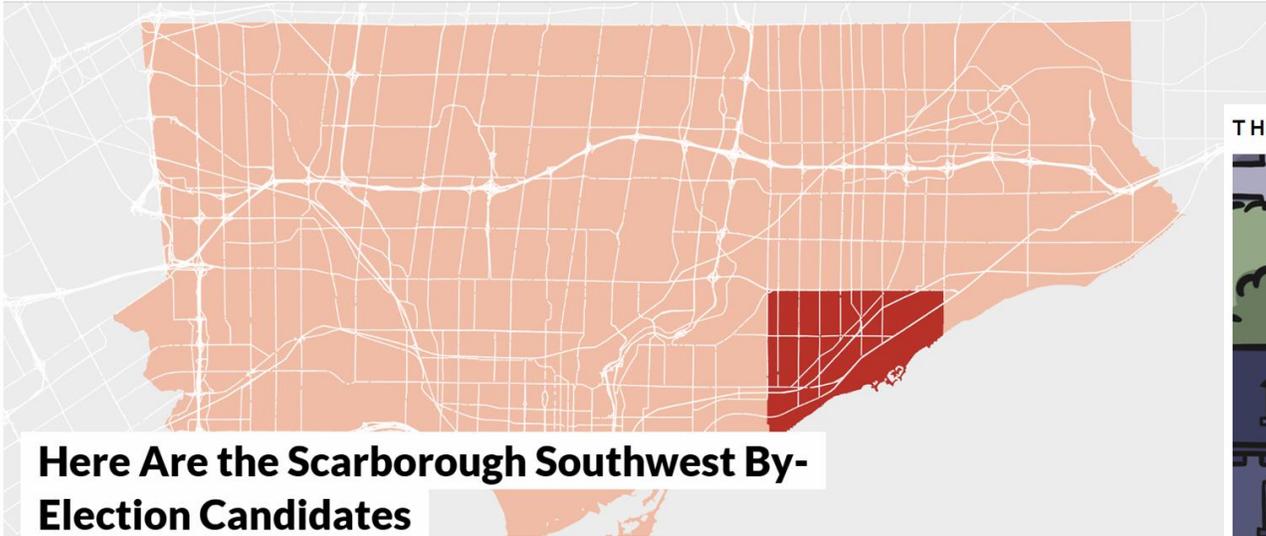
Candidate Tracker 2023



Ward By-elections

THE LOCAL

SUPPORT  



Here Are the Scarborough Southwest By-Election Candidates

THE LOCAL

SUPPORT  



Here Are the Don Valley West By-Election Candidates

THE LOCAL

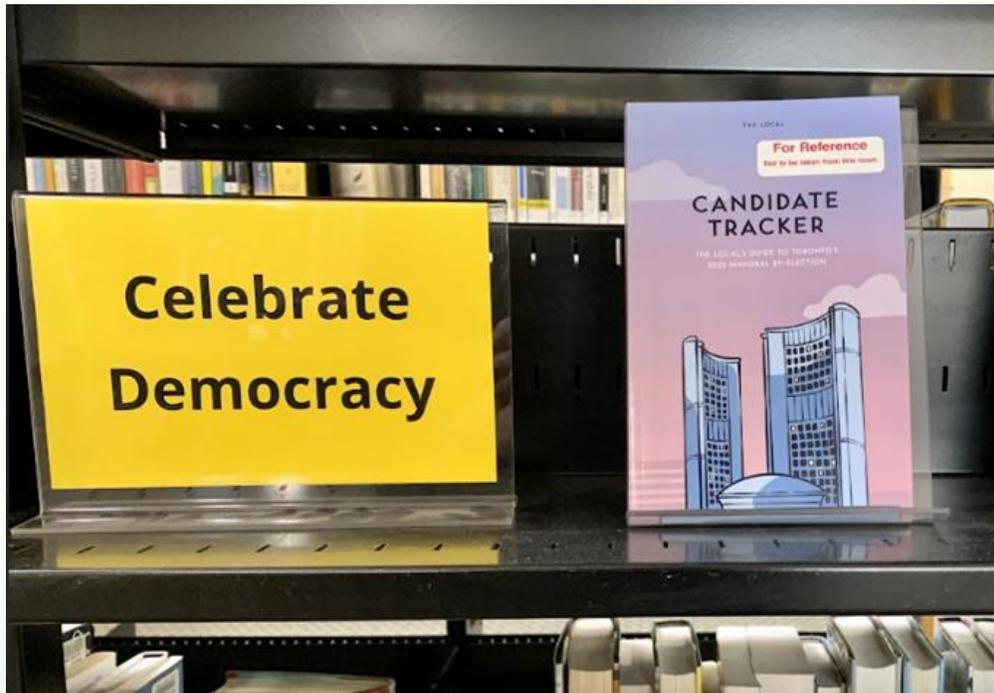
SUPPORT  



Here Are the Scarborough-Rouge Park By-Election Candidates

Community Outreach with TPL

2023



2024

**WHO'S RUNNING
IN THE DON VALLEY WEST BY-ELECTION?**

Fact-checked biographies and platform summaries for all candidates

Prepared by journalists at The Local Magazine

ELECTION DAY:
NOVEMBER 4, 2024

ADVANCE VOTING: OCTOBER 26/27

[THELOCAL.TO/DVW2024](https://thelocal.to/dvw2024)

THE LOCAL

2025



What we're up to in 2026

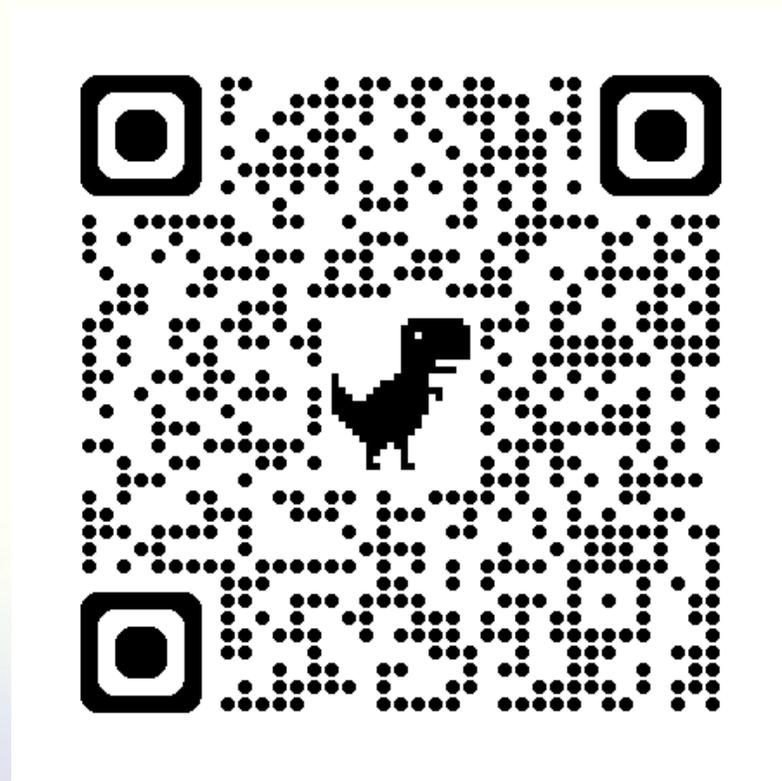
- More researchers, reporters, and fact-checkers - through more funding
- More community engagement - debates, events, and tabling
- More regions! Addressing the news desert in Peel region

Presentation

<https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1AdCd5mABdaD1YRSLzGJLY3YSBySWshRuSjMeBXL7U/edit?usp=sharing>



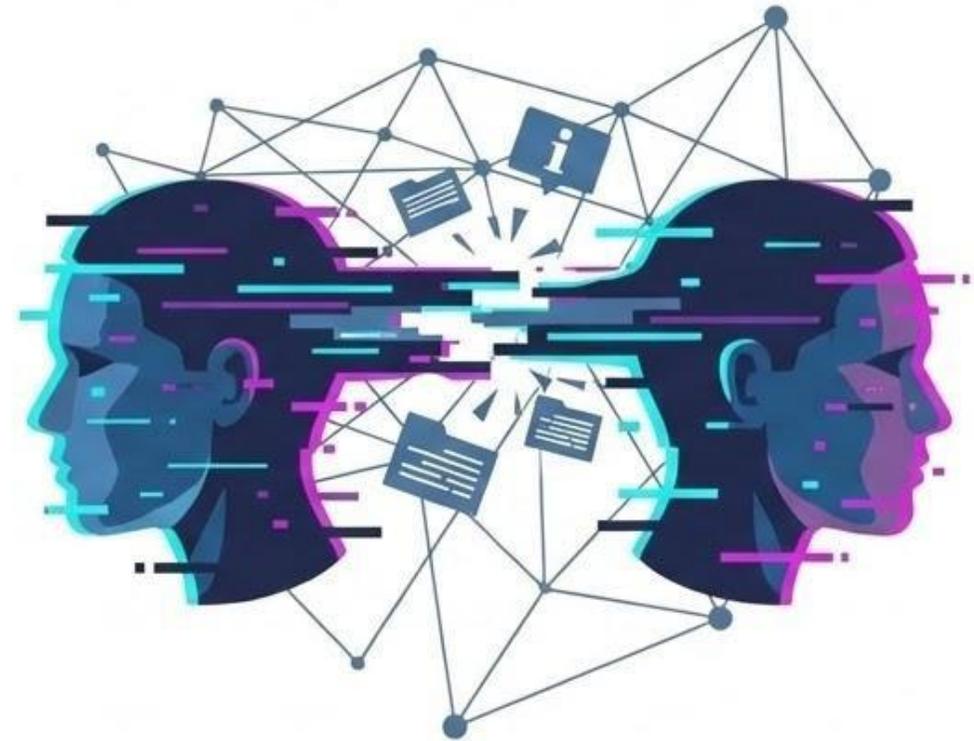
The Local
thelocal.to



The Community Operating System

Polarization and misinformation aren't communication problems. They're trust problems.

- Trust in public institutions- and in each other- is low.
- When trust is low, every step between decision and outcome degrades.
- Curiosity and compassion fade, people stop looking upstream at causes and focus downstream on blame, and information is judged by who says it rather than whether it's true.



Inauthenticity has overtaken toxicity as the biggest online threat... with the biggest real world impact.

- A decline in social capital- who you know and whether you trust each other enough to act together- leads to isolation, mistrust, and weaker collective problem-solving.
- A reduced sense of agency leads to apathy, cynicism, and withdrawal from civic life.



How Do You Make a Community Stronger?

You rebuild Trust, Social Capital, and Agency — together.



When Trust, Social Capital, and Agency Grow, Communities See:



Higher participation & volunteerism



Better civic decision-making



Stronger relationships with media & government



More inclusive, resilient communities



Economic growth and stability

A community operating system – fueled by the community it serves.

Civic Intelligence: the power of public thinking

Diverse perspectives improve decision quality, reduce blind spots, and lower the long-term cost of mistakes.



Community Conversations and Assemblies turn bad participation into good participation

BAD PARTICIPATION
(online trolling, violence, threats)



GOOD PARTICIPATION
(deliberation, collective reasoning, recommendations)



Public polling

Poll results:

In your view, what is the most pressing issue facing Greater Sudbury right now?

2927 total votes Added Oct 23, 2025 10:20 AM

Affordability of groceries, utilities, transportation 397 votes 13.56%

Affordability and availability of housing, including rental housing 515 votes 17.59%

Homelessness (services for and impact on the community of) 500 votes 17.08%

Addictions and mental health crises 454 votes 15.51%

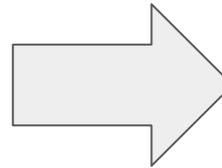
Local jobs and unemployment 105 votes 3.59%

State of local infrastructure (roads, bridges etc) 566 votes 19.34%

Environmental concerns (such as pollution, air and water quality) 22 votes 0.75%

Local government representation (is local government working well and being responsive; taxation) 283 votes 9.67%

Other (please tell us in the comments) 85 votes 2.90%



Public Invitation



Apply to participate in the community conversation

We're inviting members of the community to apply to participate in our upcoming **Community Conversation**: a two-day, in-depth discussion about the issues facing our community.

Participants who are selected and accept the invitation will receive a **\$300 honorarium** for their time and insights. To receive the honorarium, you must attend **both full-day sessions downtown**:

- Thursday, December 11 (9:00 AM – 4:00 PM)
- Friday, December 12 (9:00 AM – 4:00 PM)

Community Conversation Report: A Mandate for Action on Housing, Infrastructure, and Affordability in Sudbury

December 11 & 12, 2025
Collège Boréal, Sudbury

Facilitated by: David Turkstra
Village Media Co-Facilitator: Abbas Homayed
Community Co-Facilitator: Rahim Dharamsi



Community Panelists: Christina Carmichael, Dan Watson, Jean-Yves Bujold, Karen Makela, Karen Marcotte, Narasim Katarry, Pat Dubreuil, Rahim Dharamsi, Shruti Garg, Tim James, Will Caron, William Morin

Acknowledgements: Community Conversations are conceived, organized, and executed by Village Media as part of their ongoing commitment to evolving the role of local media to positively impact the communities it serves. It should be noted that the feedback and recommendations listed below were entirely based on the opinions of the community panelists. Editorial staff from Sudbury.com was not present during the proceedings. This Community Conversation was made possible through the generous support of **Collège Boréal** and **Coop Boréal**.

1. Purpose & Methodology

On December 11 and 12, 2025, Village Media convened a Community Conversation in Sudbury to surface citizen-driven priorities and solutions on the most pressing challenges facing the community.

The panel's methodology followed a four-step deliberative process:

- **Public Polling:** Over 3,000 residents responded, identifying Sudbury's three most urgent challenges: Housing, Infrastructure, and Affordability.
- **Open Public Invitation:** An open call and outreach resulted in over 100 applications to participate in a Community Conversation for the purposes of deliberating on the identified issues.
- **Representative Selection:** A group of 12 participants came together, reflecting diverse backgrounds, work experience, and perspectives.
- **Deliberative Process:** Participants met over two full days to focus on shared values, understand the issues, and build consensus on collective solutions, emphasizing listening and collaboration, not debate.

VIDEO: Penalties for impaired driving just got tougher — will it make any difference? 40

First candidate emerges to fill Halton Hills regional council seat

Georgetown man facing impaired charge following crash

Georgetown goalie dealt to the OHL's Erie Otters

Georgetown woman, 19, charged after shooting near GO station (UPDATED)

After two decades, Burger King is back in Georgetown

Cartoon of the Day: Spray Tan

UPDATE: Police locate 15-year-old last seen in Oakville

LOCAL NEWS YOU MAY HAVE MISSED >



Ontario has a new blue bin program, and here's what you can and can't recycle

ICYMI: You can make over \$30 an hour as a census worker. Here's how to apply

This is the last weekend to visit these Ontario spots for free with the Canada Strong Pass

MORE VILLAGE LIFE >

spaces

Upcoming events

IN THINGS TO DO



Come Melt Something

RSVP Feb 7 7:30 PM

Town Pages



goldmine local specials & promotions

- Wine**
- PARTY PAK 5 bottles WINE \$25 Ready in 10 days.**
- Expand Your Networking Through the Chamber**
- Dozens Enjoyed First Rotary Dinner**

TOWN OF HALTON HILLS INFORMATION



Public Notice: Proposed 2026 Budget and Business Plan

Notice of Public Information Centre #2: Municipal Class Environmental Assessment Study - Mid-Halton Wastewater Treatment Plant Expansion

COMMUNITY POLL

Participate in our next community poll. **What best describes your view of Pierre Poilievre?**

- Very favourable
- Somewhat favourable
- Indifferent
- Somewhat unfavourable
- Very unfavourable

[Vote](#) [Results >](#) [Archives >](#)



TOWN INFORMATION

The information in this section is produced by the Town of Halton Hills and is not subject to editorial oversight by HaltonHillsToday.ca. This information is provided as-is for the benefit of Halton Hills residents.

RELATED SERVICES

PUBLIC NOTICES AND TENDERS
Public Notices and Tenders



Public Notice: Proposed 2026 Budget and Business Plan

Residents can register to speak at one of the meetings, or comments may be submitted by email

Nov 21, 2025 2:14 PM Read more >

WINTER PARKING RESTRICTIONS

November 15, 2025 to April 15, 2026

[LEARN MORE](#)

Public Notice of Winter Parking Restrictions

Like Visit Website Share



Residents are reminded that winter parking restrictions come into effect soon. This means no street parking between 2 a.m. and 6 a.m. from October 15, 2025, until April 15, 2026.

Boulevard parking is permitted but please keep sidewalks safe and accessible!

Please avoid parking on streets during snowstorms to assist Public Works staff with winter On-street parking hinders snow clearing and other road maintenance operations. Parking exemptions remain valid except during winter storm events, when all vehicles must be off the roads.

The overnight parking restriction applies to all streets under the jurisdiction of the Town of Hills, unless authorized signs indicating otherwise are specifically posted.

Motorists are reminded that By-law No. 84-1 also prohibits the parking of a vehicle on all To Regional Roads for longer than six consecutive hours at any single location, unless otherwise

YOUR VOTE MATTERS

Participate in our next community poll. **What party would you vote for if a federal election was held today?**

- Conservative
- Green
- Liberal