

# Love Your City Own Your Vote

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A Guide for Residents on  
Municipal Governance and Civic Elections



Canada's Tournament Capital

Your local government affects your daily life more than any other level of government in Canada.





# Involvement Matters

Local governments work best when residents are engaged and understand who does what, how decisions are made, and where to bring questions or concerns.

# The next General Local Election in Kamloops is October 17, 2026

One of the most powerful actions you can take as a resident of Kamloops is to vote.

To use that power wisely, you need to know:

- What Council has the power to do
- Which of those things matter to you and why
- Who the candidates are and how they plan to govern
- Who will best address the issues that matter to you
- The logistics of voting
- How to stay involved post-election



# Why Vote?

Councillors and mayors are elected to reflect community priorities.

Voting is how residents show what matters to them and whom they trust to make those decisions. Low voter turnout can mean a small, unrepresentative slice of the population ends up having an outsized influence.



# What am I voting for?

1

Mayor

8

Councillors

5

School Board  
Trustees



Elected at the same time as municipal councils to make voting more efficient and encourage higher participation

The **Mayor** leads Council, chairs meetings, and proposes measures supporting good governance. They represent the municipality publicly, communicating and reflecting Council's will.

A **City Councillor** considers community interests, helps shape and review policies, and participates in decision making through Council and committee meetings.

# Who Does What?

## City Council and City Staff

A strong local government depends on a clear distinction between roles.

Mayor and Council decide *what* should be done, and City Staff lead by the Chief Administrative Officer decide *how* to do it and manage the work. Understanding this separation helps residents know where to bring questions, concerns, and ideas.

### Council:

- makes decisions about policies and bylaws (the “rules” for the community)
- establishes service levels (e.g. how frequently fields get mowed)
- sets the budget and priorities (what gets funded and why)
- represents the public’s interests
- provides overall leadership and vision

### Chief Administrative Officer:

- implements the decisions made by Council
- manages daily operations and executes service delivery (roads, water, parks, permits, etc.)
- provides professional advice and recommendations to Council
- oversees staff and municipal departments

# Who Does What?

## The City and Other Levels of Government

The City of Kamloops has official authority and responsibility to make decisions, enforce laws, and act on many issues that affect residents' quality of life. However, not all local services fall under the City's jurisdiction.

MUNICIPAL CITY OF KAMLOOPS	REGIONAL TNRD	PROVINCIAL BRITISH COLUMBIA	FEDERAL CANADA
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Building Inspection</li> <li>• Business Licensing</li> <li>• Community Planning and Development</li> <li>• Community Services (Bylaws)</li> <li>• Emergency Management and Emergency Support Services</li> <li>• Kamloops Fire Rescue</li> <li>• Parks, Trails, and Playgrounds</li> <li>• Recreation Facilities (e.g. Tournament Capital Centre)</li> <li>• Recreation and Fitness Programming</li> <li>• Road Maintenance and Transit</li> <li>• Snow Clearing</li> <li>• Solid Waste Collection</li> <li>• Water Supply and Waste Water Management</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Building Inspection</li> <li>• Emergency Management</li> <li>• Film Commission</li> <li>• Invasive Plants</li> <li>• Libraries</li> <li>• Regional Fire Departments</li> <li>• Regional Hospital</li> <li>• Regional Parks and Recreation</li> <li>• Regional Wastewater</li> <li>• Regional Water Systems</li> <li>• Rural Area Planning and Development</li> <li>• Solid Waste</li> <li>• Thompson River Buoy System</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• BC Assessment</li> <li>• Health Care Services</li> <li>• Housing</li> <li>• Justice (Court System)</li> <li>• Education</li> <li>• Provincial Parks, Campgrounds, and Recreation Sites</li> <li>• Public Land Resource Management</li> <li>• Highways, Rural Roads, and Forest Service Roads Maintenance</li> <li>• Social Services</li> <li>• Transit</li> <li>• Wildfire Response Service</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Banking</li> <li>• Child Benefit</li> <li>• Criminal Law</li> <li>• Employment Insurance</li> <li>• Foreign Affairs</li> <li>• International Travel</li> <li>• Military</li> <li>• National Parks</li> <li>• Student Loans</li> </ul>

# What Council Can and Can't Do

## Through a Consensus Vote

- ✓ **Pass local laws** (bylaws)
- ✓ **Adopt policies** and procedures to govern how Council and staff operate
- ✓ **Adopt budgets** and financial plans to determine how the City prioritizes services and community growth, what level of debt we are willing to incur, and where we will land with tax requirements
- ✓ **Set service levels** to determine the standards by which services will be delivered
- ✓ **Partner and advocate** for policy change, action, or investment from the provincial or federal governments

# What Council Can and Can't Do

- × **Govern alone** - All decisions are made by majority vote. Even the Mayor only has one vote on Council.
- × **Hire and fire City staff** - With few exceptions, Council is not involved in staffing decisions. The only staff member who reports directly to Council is the Chief Administrative Officer.
- × **Run an operating deficit** - Municipalities cannot carry a deficit like other levels of government. Council must balance the operating budget each year. They also need to get a mandate from residents for any long-term borrowing.

# What Council Can and Can't Do

- × **Prescribe how staff accomplishes Council directives** - City staff manage City work and decide how to accomplish the goals set out by Council
- × **Enforce laws other than City bylaws** - The City has no authority even if infractions are taking place within city limits.
- × **Act outside their jurisdiction** - Housing, health care, education, and maintenance of highways are common areas where residents want to see action, but Council doesn't have authority over them.
- × **Act outside the purview of governing legislation** - There are lots of rules outlining the scope of Council's power...

# The Rules

## Community Charter

Provincial legislation that defines municipal purposes and powers, including authority over services, bylaws, property taxation, financial management, and emergency powers, while emphasizing accountability, transparency, and cooperation with the Province.

## Local Government Act

Provincial legislation that sets the legal framework for municipal and regional governance not covered by the *Community Charter*, including elections, land use planning, zoning, development controls, and voter approval processes.

## Council Procedure Bylaw

A municipal bylaw that ensures Council meetings are consistent, transparent, and fair, and that decisions are made in an orderly, legally compliant way. It works alongside provincial legislation, which sets broader requirements for how municipalities must operate.

## Council Code of Conduct

A municipal bylaw that sets expectations for how the Mayor and Councillors should behave in their roles, including avoiding conflicts of interest and improper use of influence and maintaining confidentiality where required. The Province has also proposed legislation to enable a mandatory province-wide code of conduct.

# The Life of a Council Member



## Building Understanding

Council members spend significant time reviewing staff reports, researching, and participating in Council meetings by listening, learning and debating to make informed decisions on a vast array of issues.



## Building Consensus

When decisions are made, the vote of each Council member counts equally, including the Mayor's vote. No member of Council has the power to make decisions without majority support.



## Building Influence

Advocacy to other levels of government is critical to Council's work. When issues affecting Kamloops fall outside municipal jurisdiction, Council pushes for policy change, action, or investment from the provincial or federal government.



## Building Community

Council members also act as connectors. They link residents with City staff, non-profits, and local businesses, helping turn ideas into action. Council members show up and bring people together around shared goals.

# Who Can Vote in the Upcoming Election?

There are two groups of people who can vote in general local elections:

**Resident electors** - These are people who live within Kamloops' municipal boundaries.

You must:

- be 18 years old (or turning 18 on voting day)
- be a Canadian citizen
- have lived in British Columbia for at least six months
- be allowed by law to vote (not disqualified)

Resident electors DO NOT need to own property to vote.

**Non-resident property electors** - These are people who live elsewhere in British Columbia but own property within Kamloops' municipal boundaries.

You must:

- be 18 years old (or turning 18 on voting day)
- be a Canadian citizen
- have lived in British Columbia for at least six months
- have owned property\*\* within Kamloops' municipal boundaries for at least 30 days
- be allowed by law to vote (not disqualified)

\*\*Non-resident property electors can vote only once, regardless of how many properties they own. There is also only one non-resident vote per property, regardless of how many non-resident owners there are.

# Voting Made Easy

Did you know there are several accessibility options when it comes to voting?

- **Advanced voting**

October 7, 10, and 14 at two polling places (Heritage House and McArthur Island).

- **Mail-in ballot**

Online application required. Can be used by any eligible voter. Must be received by 8:00 pm on October 17.

- **Special voting opportunities**

Unique on-location voting opportunities targeted to high-need population groups at the hospital, in seniors' homes, and on the Thompson Rivers University campus.

- **Curbside voting on election day**

For those with mobility issues entering polling places. Park, call, and have a ballot brought out to you by a polling place attendant on October 17, with designated curbside voting spots available at all 16 polling places.

# What You Need to Vote

1. Make sure you're eligible.
2. Choose the voting method that works best for you.
3. Know what identification you need and be ready to provide it.
4. Vote within the designated time frame. For mail-in ballots, make sure they are ***received, not mailed***, by the deadline.

## **At a voting place, you can expect to:**

- ✓ Check in with election staff.
- ✓ Have your name recorded and identification verified.
- ✓ Receive a ballot.
- ✓ Mark your choices privately.
- ✓ Choose up to one candidate for Mayor and up to eight candidates for Council.
- ✓ Submit your ballot.



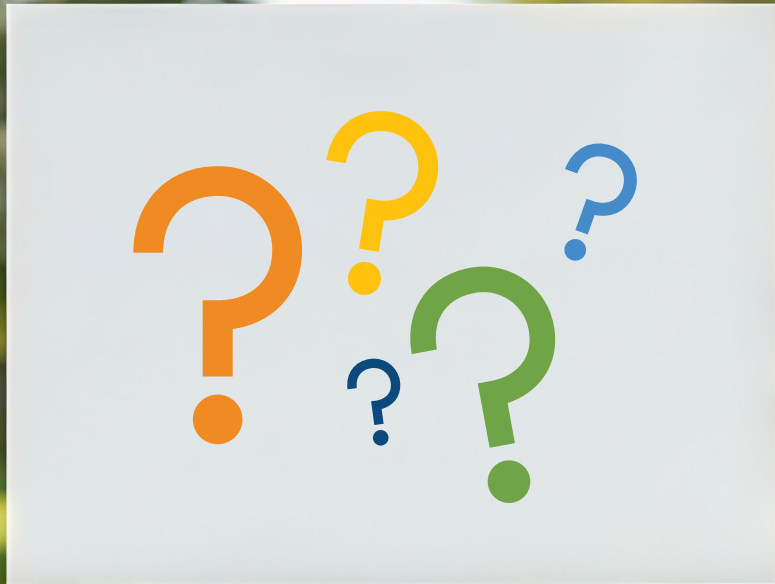
# Should I run for City Council?

Running for municipal office isn't glamorous, and it rarely comes with big salaries or recognition—but that's exactly why it can matter so much.

Local government is where decisions affect people's daily lives most directly, shaping their experiences every day through community planning, transit, road maintenance, parks, water systems and more.

Anyone considering running for Mayor or City Councillor should have a basic understanding of what the roles entail.

Did you know that candidates do not have to be Kamloops residents and are not required to have any specific credentials?



# Eligibility to Run:

- ✓ 18 years of age or older on general voting day
- ✓ Canadian citizenship
- ✓ Lived in British Columbia for at least six months immediately before filing nomination documents
- ✓ Be allowed by law to vote/be nominated (not disqualified)

Prospective candidates for City Council do not need to live in or own property in Kamloops, but they **must be nominated by at least 10 eligible voters who live in Kamloops** (or live in British Columbia and own property within Kamloops' municipal boundaries). A candidate cannot run for both Mayor and Councillor in the same election.



# Campaign Considerations

In addition to understanding local governance and the roles and responsibilities of elected officials, prospective candidates will need to understand several aspects related to campaigning, including, but not limited to:

- Filing paperwork
- Campaign finances
- Campaign advertising and identification
- Sign regulations
- Transparency, honesty, and accountability

There will be several resources listed on the City website to support candidates through the candidate process.



Canada's Tournament Capital

For more information, visit [Kamloops.ca](https://www.kamloops.ca).

Stay Connected @CityofKamloops       



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