



Vote for the SDGs

A Municipal Election
Advocacy Guide
for the Sustainable
Development
Goals



SDG Cities is a collaborative, community-driven project that supports local action for the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Through community conversations, place-based research and focused training, SDG Cities is developing and testing tools for local SDG implementation.

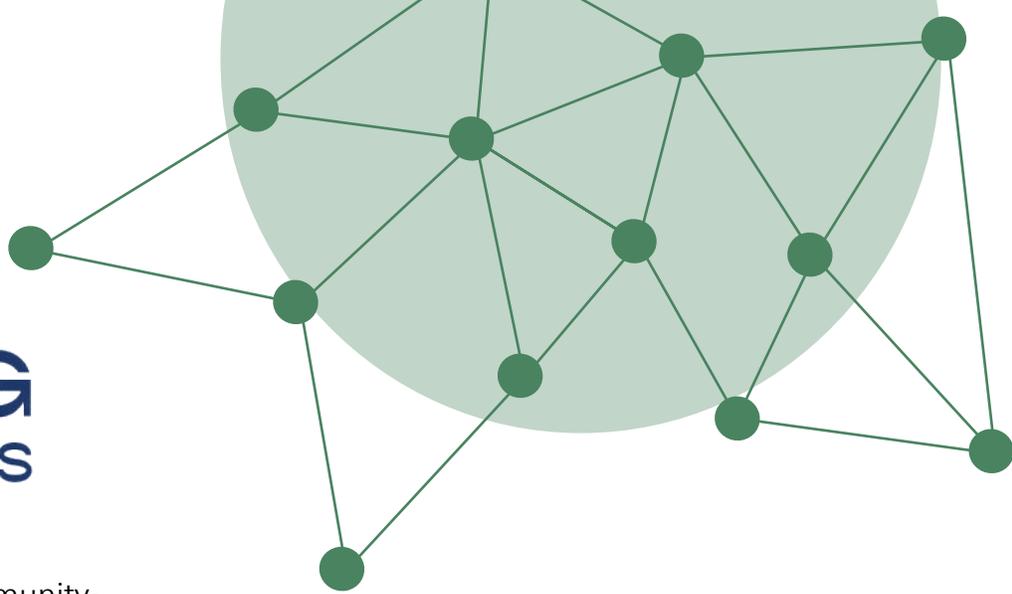
SDG Cities engages across sectors to build strong partnerships for the SDGs. Through a collaborative approach, SDG Cities is testing partnerships, practices and methods for SDG localization in Guelph, London and beyond.

sdgcities.ca



Canada

SDG Cities is being developed and delivered locally by [10C Shared Space](#) in Guelph and [Pillar Nonprofit Network](#) in London and is funded by the Government of Canada's Sustainable Development Goals Program.



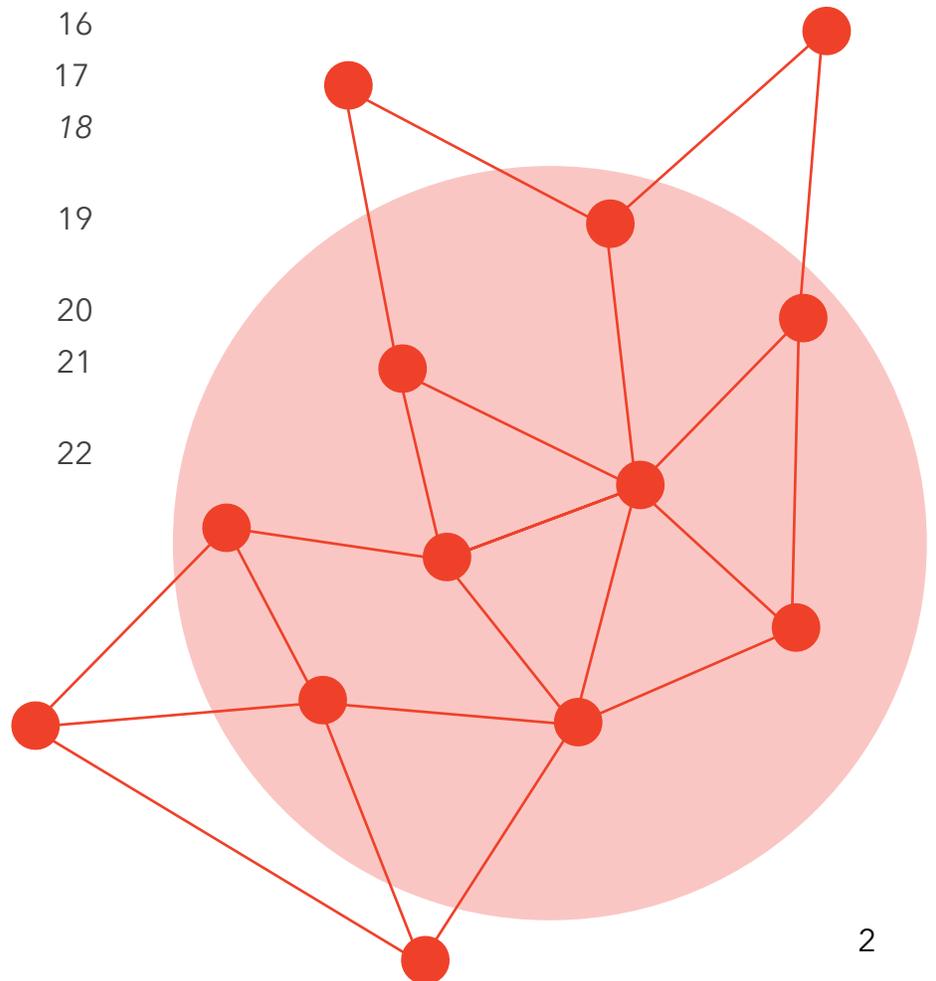
[10C Shared Space](#) is the hub for community change-makers in Guelph. As a nonprofit - social enterprise, 10C helps create opportunities for those working across sectors and collaborating benefit our community. People work, meet, eat, create and brainstorm together at 10C.



[Pillar Nonprofit Network](#) strengthens individuals, organizations and enterprises invested in positive community impact. Pillar supports nonprofits, social enterprises and social innovators to share resources, exchange knowledge and create meaningful connections across three pillars of nonprofit, business and government.

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Introduction

Municipal governments are directly responsible for regulating and implementing many of the required solutions to achieve the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The SDGs are a universal call to action to address the world's most pressing challenges. In 2015, all 193 UN member states committed unanimously to achieving the SDGs. The 17 global goals form the core of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development named for the 15 year timeline set to achieve the goals.

All of the SDGs have targets directly related to the roles of municipal governments.

Cutting across social, ecological and environmental domains, the SDGs are made actionable through specific targets and indicators that are used to measure progress.

The SDGs are a shared language describing a common vision for the future.

Canada has a national SDG Action Plan that outlines core objectives, strategies, and funding priorities. Referencing the SDGs in the context of municipal election advocacy connects local work and policy priorities to national and international change efforts.

The goals and targets of the SDGs are **interconnected and indivisible**, meaning that no one goal can be achieved in isolation. The SDGs are also **aspirational**, serving as a vision statement for what we must accomplish and challenging us to move past a business as usual thinking and seek innovative and transformative solutions.

The SDGs provide clear objectives that can help us put issues on the table, hold elected officials accountable and measure progress. The **universal** nature of the SDGs also provides a **shared language** and a tangible link between global challenges and local action - in other words the SDGs help us to **think globally and act locally**.



The 17 SDGs. [Learn more about the goals, targets and indicators.](#)

MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENTS & THE SDGs

Without commitments at the local level and action from municipal governments and communities, progress on the SDGs is not possible. The SDGs provide a useful framework for the development of local policies, programs and initiatives that support sustainable development. Municipal governments also play an active role in localizing the SDGs, which is the process of adapting the global goals to local context ([source](#)).

To advance the SDGs, there are many things municipal governments can do, such as developing policies and plans, budgeting, data collection and partnership development.

LOCAL LEVEL POLICIES & PLANS

Municipal governments can create policies and plans to address issues connected to the SDGs.

- [Winnipeg \(MB\)](#) is addressing systemic inequities through equity policies at the municipal level (**SDG 10**).
- [Medicine Hat \(AB\)](#) has developed a plan with community service organizations to end chronic homelessness (**SDG 1, SDG11**).
- The [Squamish Lillooet Regional District \(BC\)](#) has an agricultural plan to build a resilient, equitable food system (**SDG 2, SDG 13**).
- [Toronto \(ON\)](#) has an action plan for addressing anti-Black racism considering poverty, health equity and economic inclusion (**SDG 1, SDG 3, SDG 10**).

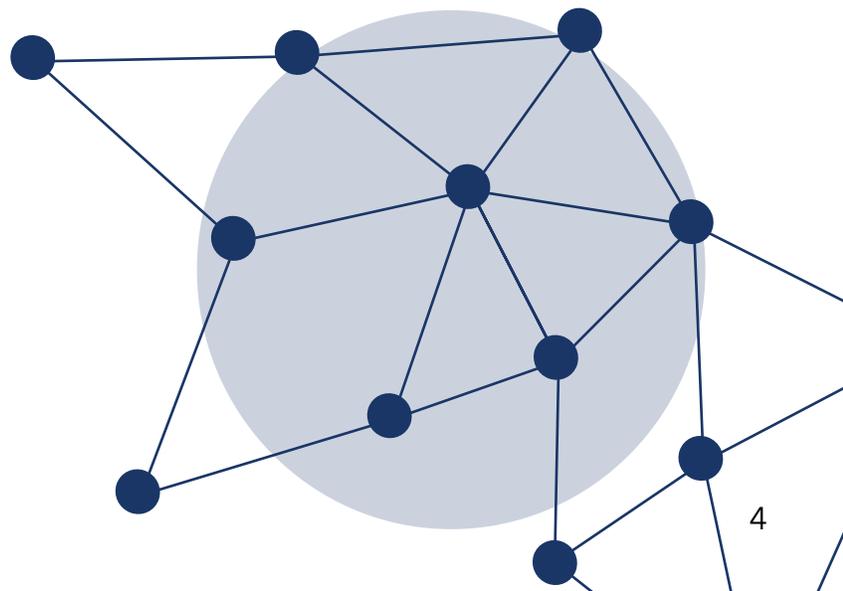
Municipal governments may also make commitments, though dedicated plans and policies, specifically about advancing the SDGs.

- [Kitchener, Ontario](#)
- [Waterloo, Ontario](#)
- [Peterborough, Ontario](#)
- [Winnipeg, Manitoba](#)
- [Kelowna, British Columbia](#)
- [Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania](#)
- [Bristol, UK](#)

BUDGETING & RESOURCE ALLOCATION

One of the most powerful tools municipal governments have is their budgets. Municipalities collect revenue through taxes and other fees that can be reinvested into the community to support local initiatives that are aligned to the SDGs.

The [City of Malmö, Sweden](#) was one of the first municipalities to consider the SDGs in local budgeting processes by linking the local spending directly to actions that advance the SDGs. [Strasbourg, France](#) aligned their budget to the SDGs by clearly communicating how local investment will advance the SDGs.



DATA COLLECTION & PROGRESS MONITORING

Municipal governments are uniquely positioned to collect, aggregate and share local data and therefore play an important role in local work to advance the SDGs. There are a variety of ways municipal governments can collect and manage local data to support SDG implementation. Voluntary Local Reviews (VLRs), which are data-driven assessments of SDG progress conducted locally and submitted to the UN, are one example.

Kelowna, BC was the first municipality in Canada to conduct a VLR, with a second one conducted in Winnipeg shortly after. An accompanying interactive data hub called MyPEG collects, and displays local data aligned to the SDGs as a way to monitor local progress.

DEVELOPING PARTNERSHIPS

Achieving the SDGs at the local level requires coordinated action across sectors. Municipal governments can play an important role supporting the development of multi-sector partnerships and encouraging collaboration between public, private and community groups. In these partnerships, municipal governments can play a coordinating role, helping to articulate goals, build networks, share and allocate resources and disseminate knowledge and data between groups (source). Collaborative planning work, led by municipalities, also can also be a key strategy for advancing the SDGs (source).



Municipal Election Advocacy for the SDGs

WHY USE THE SDGS FOR ELECTION ADVOCACY?

The SDGs can be used to help you engage candidates and voters in discussion about the issues that matter most in your community. Representing a broad range of interconnected issues such as climate change, inequality, poverty, housing, transportation and economic development, the SDGs are connected and highly relevant locally. Using the SDGs to frame your local election advocacy and discussions can help to:

INCREASE AWARENESS OF LOCAL ISSUES

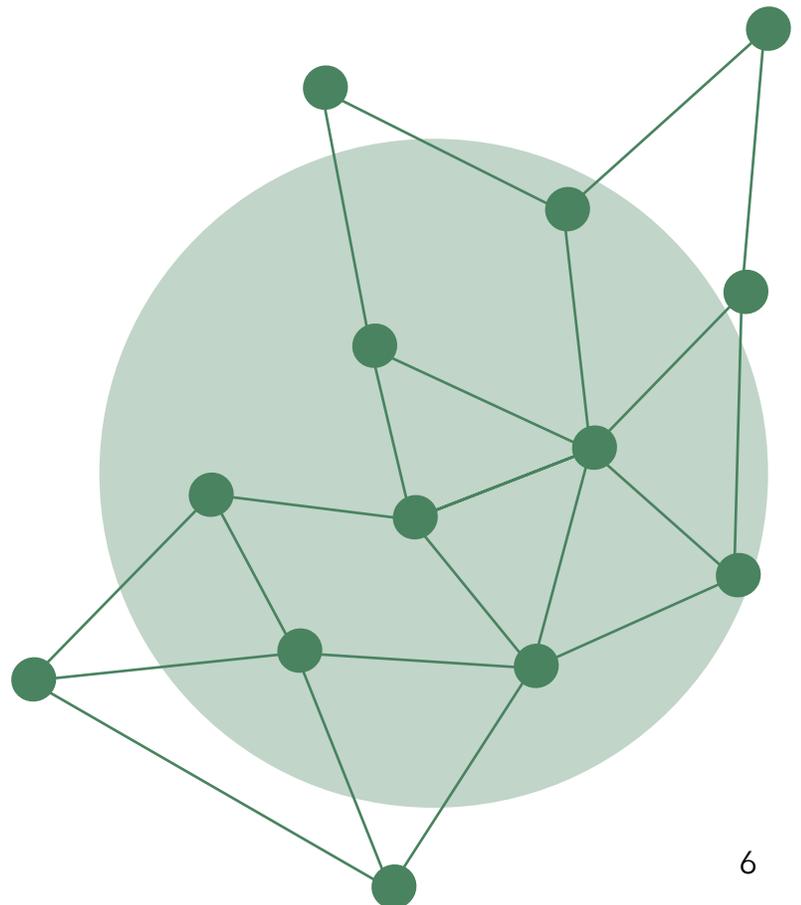
Local level advocacy is important for achieving the SDGs. While advocacy can be a long-term commitment that involves research, relationship building and community outreach, elections can provide opportunities to gain traction on particular issues and make change happen.

CREATE AND STRENGTHEN CONNECTIONS BETWEEN GOVERNMENTS AND COMMUNITY

Non-partisan advocacy primarily aims to achieve public benefit by addressing issues of concern in communities. Through this work, your organization, coalition or community group can act as a bridge between municipal government policy and the lives and experiences of those in your community.

BRING DIFFERENT VOICES TO THE POLICY MAKING TABLE

A key principle of the SDGs is to leave no one behind. This promise recognizes that policies and societal systems have and continue to fail and harm vulnerable and marginalized group. Advocacy efforts that bring diverse community voices to the policy making table can help to increase the positive outcomes experienced across diverse communities ([source](#)).



PRINCIPLES FOR SDG ELECTION ADVOCACY

Using the shared language of the SDGs in your election advocacy can be an effective way to engage with your community and explore the connection between local and global issues. Keep these principles in mind as you develop your advocacy campaign and communications:

UNDERSTANDING LITERACY & FAMILIARITY WITH THE SDGS

While the SDGs are a shared language shared around the world, literacy and familiarity with the SDGs in our communities is often varied. There is often less awareness of the SDGs and how they can be used locally amongst both candidates and voters. Understanding how familiar your community and local candidates are with the SDGs can be an important first step when thinking about how you will conduct advocacy.

MAINTAIN A FOCUS ON LONG-TERM GOALS

When conducting issue focused advocacy, understanding and clearly communicating your specific long-term goal is important ([source](#)). Long term goals could be those that might be achieved 5, 10, 15 or even 20 years from now. While the horizon may be longer term, **action is required today** to make sure the long-term outcomes can be realized. Goals like eradicating poverty, shifting to clean and renewable energy and inclusive economic development, require a clear focus on the long-term outcomes and an understanding of the actionable steps to be taken along the way.

BRING LOCAL EVIDENCE TO THE TABLE

Local data and evidence can be a very effective tool for advocacy. Organizations working on the ground, in communities have access to information, stories and data that give context to an issue locally. Sharing this data through your advocacy efforts can be an effective tool for communicating with candidates and local elected officials.

Factsheets, like those created by the [Colour of Poverty-Colour of Change](#) to highlight the data of racialized poverty in Canada, can be an effective way to share information and highlight local realities. These factsheets can combine qualitative and quantitative data, graphics and written content to convey details about a challenge. When creating these, be sure to clearly source data whether it is from your own research or a third party.

KEEP POLITICAL TIMELINES IN MIND

When communicating with candidates and elected officials it is important to keep political timelines in mind. **At the municipal level, elections happen every 4 years**, so think about what candidates might be able to do within this time frame. Encourage, when possible, practical discussions about what can be done right away or commitments that can be made during their term in office.

Municipal budgets are approved annually, but often contain funding commitments at the local level over several years. If you have a specific issue or area of focus try to find out what resources, if any, have been allocated to addressing it as a part of the budget. You can also ask candidates about their top budget priorities and what plans they have to allocate resources towards the issues of concern to you.



BUILD COALITIONS

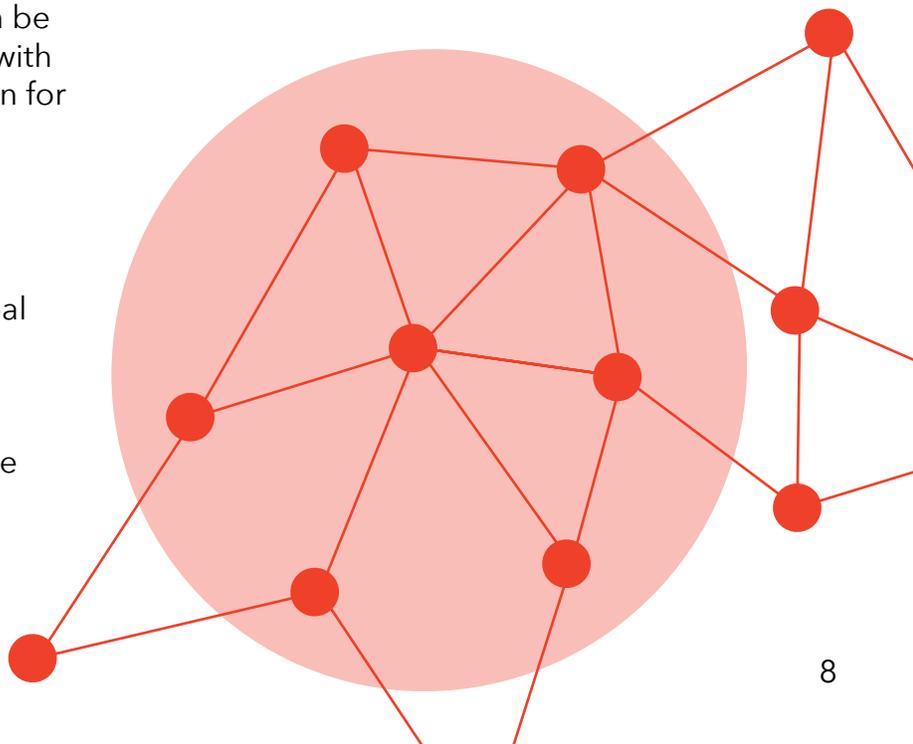
Coalitions of individuals and organizations can help bring diverse voices, skills sets, and other resources together ([source](#)). When thinking about the long-term change you want to see, do your research and find out if there are others working towards the same outcomes. The shared SDG language can be useful as you work to build relationships with others who share your priorities and vision for the future.

You may also align your advocacy efforts with existing coalitions, beyond your community, to amplify your voice locally. For example, [Cities Race to Zero](#) is a global coalition of municipalities committed to local climate action. This group provides cities with evidence based targets and recommendations to support local climate action.

FOLLOW THE LEAD OF COMMUNITY MEMBERS

Prioritizing and centering community voices in your advocacy can bring important context and diverse perspectives to your work. Everyone experiences life in unique ways and creating formal opportunities to meaningfully engage people with diverse lived experience can help to build stronger communities. [We All Live Here](#), an advocacy campaign from Bruce Grey Poverty Task Force, highlighted how people with lived experience can be included in local decision-making for poverty elimination.

[Fair Calgary Community Voices](#) creates opportunities for community members to share their stories about why a sustainable, affordable and accessible transportation system is important. These stories can be shared with the broader public or directly with decision makers giving the issue local context and showing how change will directly impact people in the community.



Using the Shared Language of the SDGs

This section provides curated information and resources to help you create and share your SDG messaging with candidates and your community. The information is organized by each of the 17 SDGs.



WHAT MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENTS CAN DO

A list of actions provides an overview of what municipal governments can do to help make progress on the SDGs locally. This is not an exhaustive list. However, you can think about these actions when framing your ask and questions to candidates.



RESOURCES

A curated list of resources for each goal provides background information, policy recommendations and examples of municipal actions around the world. These resources could be helpful if you want to deepen your understanding of an issues and learn more about how municipal governments can contribute to the SDGs.



QUESTIONS FOR CANDIDATES

A sample of questions for candidates is provided for each SDG. These questions are included to help you get started. Remember adding local data and examples to help candidates understand why this issue is important locally.

For example, if people in your community have been suffering due to extreme heat waves you might frame your question by providing data, if available, about the number of local hospitalizations during a recent heat wave, then ask ***“How will you ensure that vulnerable people in our community are protected during increasingly frequent extreme weather events including extreme cold and heat events?”***

You can also add personal stories or local anecdotes to help give context to your questions. For example, you could share stories about how rising housing costs in your community are impacting low income families who are being forced to choose between meeting their housing, food and health care needs, then ask ***“What will you do to increase the quality and supply of, and access to, affordable housing in our community?”***



SDG 1: NO POVERTY

Poverty is complex. Locally it is closely connected to issues such as inequality, employment, mental health and addictions, gender equality, food security and housing issues.

SDG 1 includes targets to help eradicate poverty everywhere. This requires raising the incomes of those living in poverty, ensuring equitable access to basic services, ending chronic homelessness and protecting everyone from human-caused and natural disasters. While there are clear roles for municipalities, eradicating poverty requires coordinated approaches across all levels of government.



[Click here for resources related to SDG 1](#)



WHAT MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENTS CAN DO

- Target resources and services on the ground for people experiencing poverty
- Support to social service organizations directly serving vulnerable people
- Engage in local economic development strategies to create jobs and raise incomes
- Use tools (e.g. zoning) to encourage permanent supportive housing
- Develop and improve emergency response plans ensuring the safety of vulnerable community members
- Engage people experiencing poverty in local decision-making



QUESTIONS FOR CANDIDATES

- What will you do to address chronic homelessness in our community?
- What will you do to ensure permanent supportive housing is built, including addressing public opposition to these projects?
- How will you ensure that vulnerable people are protected during increasingly frequent extreme weather events (e.g. extreme cold or heat)?
- How will you, in partnership with higher levels of government, ensure that adequate, affordable childcare is available?
- How will you support the immediate and long-term housing needs of newcomers?

2 ZERO HUNGER



SDG 2: ZERO HUNGER

SDG 2 is about more than eliminating hunger. It includes targets focused on transforming our food systems so they are sustainable and healthy for all. In Canada, one in eight households experience food insecurity ([source](#)). Rates of food insecurity are higher amongst children, racialized communities and Indigenous populations.

Making change means working with individuals across the food system to find innovative and place-based solutions to a wide range of interconnected challenges.



[Click here for resources related to SDG 2](#)



WHAT MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENTS CAN DO

- Create and maintain urban boundaries to protect agricultural land
- Create bylaws and policies to encourage urban agriculture on private land
- Plan neighbourhoods to ensure equitable access to fresh, healthy food
- Create space for urban agriculture in all neighbourhoods
- Create opportunities for local food storage, distribution and retailing in the community
- Support local initiatives to strengthen Indigenous food sovereignty
- Conduct food security assessments with communities



QUESTIONS FOR CANDIDATES

- How will you help to protect land and water for agriculture in and around our community?
- What will you do to encourage and support urban agriculture?
- What role do you think the municipal government can play in addressing the root causes of food insecurity in our community such as poverty, low incomes, high housing costs and systemic racism?

HOW DO MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENTS WORK?

Municipal governments provide citizens with services and governance at a local level. The responsibilities of municipal governments are determined at the provincial level, which means that what they do and how they work may vary between provinces. This section provides a brief overview of the key roles and responsibilities of municipal governments.

HEAD OF COUNCIL

The head of council is often called the mayor or reeve. Mayors are elected via 'at large' elections while candidates for municipal council run and are elected in individual wards. The head of a county or regional council, composed of representatives from member communities, are often not publicly elected but instead elected by members of the council itself ([source](#)).

Most Canadian communities have what is known as a 'weak mayor' system. This means that the mayor, or head of council holds only one vote, like all other members of council ([source](#)). As a result, the mayor doesn't necessarily have the power to sway or veto decisions. However, given their position of influence, they can set and advance priorities, bring attention to issues, and mobilize support for major projects.

MUNICIPAL COUNCIL

The activities of a municipal council may vary by jurisdiction, generally council is responsible for:

- setting community goals and priorities;
- developing and approving policies, bylaws and major projects;
- guiding the development of programs and services;
- setting tax rates and approving the municipal budgets;
- directing municipal staff to conduct research and assessments and develop plans and policy proposals;
- advocating to higher levels of government on behalf of the communities they represent.

In Canada, municipal council candidates run as independent candidates. There are a few exceptions. In Vancouver and Montreal, most candidates for municipal council are aligned to local political parties.

COUNCIL COMMITTEES

Council committees are usually made up of elected councillors, local leaders and interested community members. Standing committees are set up by topic such as finance, planning and economic development to advise and review key decisions. Other committees may be created to address specific issues or guide a process like the development or revision of a community plan.

Council committees engage in focused work and discussion about a specific topic or area of council responsibility. They usually hold regular meetings and report back to the council with recommendations.



SDG 3: GOOD HEALTH & WELLBEING

Health and well-being are important for ensuring sustainable and prosperous communities. Achieving [SDG 3](#) requires coordinated local action to improve physical and mental health outcomes for all. This is increasingly important in the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic which took a toll on our health care systems and those who provide care.



[Click here for resources related to SDG 3](#)



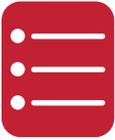
WHAT MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENTS CAN DO

- Design cities and communities to support healthy living and [health equity](#)
- Ensure all citizens have equitable access to recreation activities and facilities
- Invest in arts, culture and community events that are accessible to all
- Initiate public education campaigns to reduce stigma around mental health
- Invest in [permanent supportive housing](#) and [housing first](#) policies
- Regulate and control pollutants and ensure clean air, water and soil
- Improve roads and road safety



QUESTIONS FOR CANDIDATES

- How will you work with other levels of government to ensure all community members can access affordable mental health care?
- How will you ensure our community is a healthy place to age?
- Will you support the development of permanent supportive housing? If so, how?
- How will you regulate pollutants to ensure all community members have access to healthy environments?
- How will you support investment in the arts and culture and make arts programming and events accessible to all?
- What will you do to address road and pedestrian safety?



WHAT MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENTS CAN DO

- Ensure anti-oppression and anti-racism policies and practices are integrated into local schools and curriculum
- Directly contribute to education about local Indigenous history for public servants, newcomers and all others community members
- Improve and ensure equitable access to public libraries, museums and other cultural assets
- Help young people learn about municipal government



QUESTIONS FOR CANDIDATES

- How will you work to improve the implementation and accountability of anti-oppression and anti-racism practices and policies in schools?
- How will you help to ensure that Black, Indigenous and racialized students have equal access to quality education?
- What will you do to ensure extra support is available for students with disabilities, neurodivergence and other special needs?
- What will you do to help ensure all families have access to quality early childhood education?
- What will you do to ensure that there are recognized skills, technology and language training programs available to those who need it in our community?



SDG 4: QUALITY EDUCATION

During municipal elections, school board trustees are also elected. Trustees are directly responsible for governance and decision-making within the public school system having a significant impact on education outcomes locally.

Achieving SDG 4 means ensuring that education supports the needs of learners and is accessible to all. Outside of the school system, quality education can be advanced by ensuring that a broad range of training programs exist to help people find jobs, upgrade their skills and participate in public life.



[Click here for resources related to SDG 4](#)



WHAT MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENTS CAN DO

- Develop equitable employment practices within the municipality
- Encourage women, especially racialized women, to run for elected office
- Ensure public spaces that are safe and inclusive for people of all genders
- Provide resources and services for women experiencing domestic and gender-based violence
- Provide access to affordable childcare to those who need it
- Create employment opportunities for women - particularly Black, and Indigenous women, newcomers and youth
- Encourage conversations about trans rights and 2SLGBTQIA+ issues locally

SDG 5: GENDER EQUALITY

SDG 5 is all about reducing the barriers women face and as well as addressing gender-based discrimination and violence ([source](#)). It is also important to recognize that gendered issues disproportionately impact racialized and Indigenous women, trans women and non-binary people.

Bringing the diverse perspectives of women and gender diverse people to the decision-making table will be critical for addressing inequalities.



[Click here for resources related to SDG 5](#)



QUESTIONS FOR CANDIDATES

- What steps will you take to ensure gender parity and diversity within municipal leadership?
- How will you work to understand the experiences of vulnerable women in our community, and work to improve their lives?
- What do you know about [Gender-Based Analysis Plus \(GBA+\)](#) and how will you ensure this lens is applied to municipal policies and programs?
- How will you work with cultural communities to better understand how gender parity can be established while still respecting culture and tradition?

5 GENDER EQUALITY



SDG 6: CLEAN WATER & SANITATION

Access to clean water and sanitation services are critical for overall health and wellbeing. [SDG 6](#) is all about ensuring access to clean water and sanitation services for all. Sanitation services, including wastewater management are also a key responsibility of municipalities.

Water has special cultural importance for Indigenous people. Ongoing boil water advisories in Indigenous communities across Canada, highlight the inequalities facing Indigenous people living on reserves without access to clean drinking water ([source](#)).



[Click here for resources related to SDG 6](#)



QUESTIONS FOR CANDIDATES

- What will you do to ensure that our community has and continues to have access to clean drinking water?
- How will you work with other municipalities to manage and protect our watershed?
- What measures will you take to address floods, drought and/or water shortages impacting our communities?
- How can we ensure vulnerable community members can access the water and sanitation services they need?
- What will you do to address known sources of water pollution?



WHAT MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENTS CAN DO

- Protecting natural water bodies, watersheds and municipal water resources
- Improve and manage water infrastructure for wastewater and water treatment
- Invest in, develop and maintain [green infrastructure](#)
- Ensure equitable access to public water and sanitation infrastructure - including washrooms and water fountains
- Conduct water quality and watershed monitoring
- Regulate irrigation and water use in agricultural areas



SDG 7: AFFORDABLE & CLEAN ENERGY

Affordable and clean energy is required in order to achieve many of the other SDGs, from running health care facilities, and providing access to education to building sustainable cities and taking action on climate change ([source](#)).

SDG 7 is focused on supporting a shift to renewable energy and increasing energy efficiency to help meet the energy needs of communities and ensure that we can meet global climate targets, such as the [Paris Climate Agreement](#).



[Click here for resources related to SDG 7](#)



QUESTIONS FOR CANDIDATES

- How will you support individual households to transition from fossil-fuel based forms of energy (e.g. propane, natural gas, oil) to more renewable options such as wind, solar and hydro-electric?
- How will you support low income households to increase energy efficiency, reduce energy costs and lower their carbon footprint?
- What types of building improvements will you prioritize to increase the energy efficiency in publicly owned buildings?
- What kind of incentives will the municipality offer to encourage local businesses to improve energy efficiency and adopt renewable energy?



WHAT MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENTS CAN DO

- Help homeowners and renters increase the energy efficiency of their homes
- Engage in public awareness campaigns about energy conservation and efficiency
- Meet or exceed energy standards for newly built municipal buildings
- Pilot and demonstrate the effectiveness of renewable energy technologies
- Make local investments to improve energy efficiency of public buildings, and public transit
- Incentivizing or implementing community wide actions towards [grid decarbonisation](#)

ENGAGING VOTERS DURING ELECTIONS

Encouraging people to vote is a non-partisan activity. In Canada, turnout among eligible voters has been on the decline with the lowest voter turnout at the municipal level. In the last Canadian federal election 62% of eligible voters cast a ballot ([source](#)). During municipal elections held in 2018, average voter turnout across Ontario was only 38% ([source](#)).

Low voter turnout can be due to lack of interest in politics, challenges and concerns related to the Covid 19 pandemic or busy lives and competing priorities.

Framing election advocacy using the SDGs can be an opportunity to communicate the importance of voting and share information about civic engagement more broadly. As a part of your advocacy, consider sharing information about where and how people can vote including options to vote early and by mail if possible. Be sure to share these details early and often as you engage the public and talk about issues.

ENGAGING YOUNG VOTERS

Engaging young voters, especially first-time voters, is important. When young people are encouraged to vote when they become eligible, they are more likely to continue to vote and become engaged in civic life. Many of the issues outlined in the SDGs are important to young people, so creating opportunities for them to be a part of the discussion can be very valuable both for the conversations themselves, and to inspire engagement on local issues amongst young people. Even young people who are not yet eligible to vote can, and should be engaged in discussions.

CONNECTING WITH MARGINALIZED COMMUNITIES

At all levels of government, historically marginalized communities face barriers to voting. In Canada, groups like [Operation Black Vote](#) and [Canadian Muslim-Vote](#) have had success in engaging their communities to vote despite barriers such as language, lack of representation, and forms of social and economic exclusion. In addition to voter engagement, these groups have been working for more diverse candidate representation.

Consider how you might reach out to groups that face high barriers to participation during elections including Indigenous voters, youth, persons with disabilities, racialized people and new immigrants. Connecting with these communities and better understanding the barriers they face to voting can be a good way to learn about how you can provide support and encourage civic engagement.

The SDGs represent a range of issues that disproportionately impact marginalized communities. Engaging diverse communities in your advocacy can also help give context to local discussions and provide solutions rooted in context and driven by communities who are the most impacted. For example, a discussion about what municipalities should do to address the issue of chronic homelessness can be more impactful if it includes the voices of those experiencing precarity in housing.

8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH



WHAT MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENTS CAN DO

- Partner with higher levels of government to ensure there is equitable access to childcare
- Engage in local economic development, creating opportunities for entrepreneurs and small businesses
- Support the development of the green economy
- Support and provide employment services for youth, new immigrants and people re-entering the workforce
- Encourage citizens to actively participate in the local economy and support local businesses
- Help close educational and training gaps between Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities



QUESTIONS FOR CANDIDATES

- How will you work to support small businesses in our community as they recover from the Covid-19 pandemic?
- How will you work to ensure access to affordable childcare in our community?
- What will you do to create local training opportunities including skills upgrading, micro-credentials and language training?
- How will you help community members find meaningful work locally?
- How will you encourage growth of the green economy?

SDG 8: DECENT WORK & ECONOMIC GROWTH

Sustainable and inclusive economic growth should be anchored in communities and driven by local businesses, jobs and innovation (source).

SDG 8 focuses on building local economies in ways that mitigate climate change, address economic inequality and create opportunities for communities who have been economically marginalized including Black and Indigenous people and people of colour.



[Click here for resources related to SDG 8](#)

SDG 9: INDUSTRY, INNOVATION & INFRASTRUCTURE

Both globally and locally, technology and innovation are driving forces for change. **SDG 9** is all about ensuring that these tools and resources help to build societies that are more connected, inclusive and resilient.

Equitable access to basic infrastructure, such as energy, wastewater systems, and transportation infrastructure is a key part of this goal. Access to connective technology, like high speed Internet, and **social infrastructure** is also a focus to create opportunities for all.



[Click here for resources related to SDG 9](#)



QUESTIONS FOR CANDIDATES

- How will you create the conditions for local innovation and green technology development?
- How will you ensure that everyone in our community has access to fast and reliable Internet?
- How will you encourage the growth of local businesses and industries that are sustainable?
- How will you support investment locally in critical social infrastructure such as community-based healthcare, education, community centres etc.?



WHAT MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENTS CAN DO

- Work to encourage the development of sustainable infrastructure and technologies
- Offer free Internet access in public spaces and buildings
- Develop community benefit agreements and social procurement policies to enhance social, cultural, environmental, and economic outcomes for the community
- Invest in and support the development of social infrastructure including the spaces, services and programs



SDG 10: REDUCED INEQUALITIES

SDG 10 calls for addressing income inequality as well as the social, political and economic exclusion of racialized people, Indigenous people, members of the 2SLGBTQIA+ community, people with disabilities and other marginalized people.

The SDGs are grounded in the principle of leave no one behind, which highlights that progress towards sustainable development must include all people - with a specific focus on those furthest behind.



[Click here for resources related to SDG 10](#)



WHAT MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENTS CAN DO

- Develop and implement municipal anti-racism and anti-oppression policies and action plans
- Adopt equity, diversity and inclusion policies within municipal operations (e.g. human resources, procurement etc.)
- Encourage diverse participation in municipal decision-making and leadership
- Ensure all municipal employees receive anti-racism and anti-oppression training



QUESTIONS FOR CANDIDATES

- How will you ensure that all citizens, especially those from marginalized or systematically oppressed communities are included in public life and decision-making?
- How will you advance anti-racism and anti-oppression policies and practices at the municipal level?
- How will you work towards closing financial and social disparity gaps in our community?
- What will you do to recognize and celebrate different cultural traditions across our community?
- How do you plan to take action at the municipal level on addressing racism and discrimination?

SDG 11: SUSTAINABLE CITIES & COMMUNITIES

SDG 11 is all about how cities are designed, planned and managed. Urban areas are growing quickly. The decisions we make in cities will have a big impact on sustainable development in the future. This goal addresses affordable housing, sustainable and affordable transportation, inclusive public space, urban resilience and civic engagement.



[Click here for resources related to SDG 11](#)



QUESTIONS FOR CANDIDATES

- What will you do to increase the quality and supply of, and access to, affordable housing in our community?
- How will you ensure universal design principles are incorporated into public spaces and buildings?
- How will you encourage active transportation in all neighbourhoods?
- What will you do to ensure our public transit system is affordable, safe and accessible to all?
- How will you ensure access to public amenities and services is accessible to all?



WHAT MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENTS CAN DO

- Use zoning and other policies to encourage compact and walkable neighbourhoods
- Allow tiny houses, laneway homes and infill development
- Develop and maintain inclusive public space in all neighbourhoods
- Expedite the process for approving affordable rental housing developments
- Ensure public spaces and buildings are inclusive and accessible to all
- Create policies that allow and incentivize urban agriculture in all neighbourhoods
- Meaningfully engage citizens in local policy development and decision making
- Implement a safe, convenient and reliable cycling network
- Develop housing regulations to encourage local ownership and discourage speculation
- Invest in sustainable and affordable public transit



SDG 12: SUSTAINABLE PRODUCTION & CONSUMPTION

The way we consume and manage waste has an impact on economies, societies and the planet. **SDG 12** is all about reducing our impact on the planet by producing and consuming goods in a sustainable way. This goal is directly related to the circular economy and promotes innovative recycling and reuse of materials that would otherwise be considered waste.



[Click here for resources related to SDG 12](#)



WHAT MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENTS CAN DO

- Provide residential waste collection and management
- Promote locally and sustainably made products
- Develop sustainable public procurement policies
- Adopt Zero Waste hierarchy for planning and internal processes prioritizing: rethinking, reduce and reuse.
- Develop and support zero waste programs within municipal buildings and facilities
- Promote resource sharing and the right to repair
- Develop zero waste and circular economy plans at the local level
- Support and maintain local and regional composting facilities



QUESTIONS FOR CANDIDATES

- What steps can our community take to move towards zero waste, how would you support these efforts?
- How will you support all community members to learn about and practice responsible consumption in daily life?
- Will you introduce public policy measures to eliminate single-use plastics, packaging, and other forms of waste?

RULES & REGULATIONS FOR NONPROFIT ADVOCACY

Nonprofits and registered charities are subject to rules and regulations at federal and local levels when engaging in direct political advocacy. While rules are in place, don't be intimidated or discouraged. Instead get informed and plan for effective non-partisan engagement.

DOS FOR NONPROFIT ELECTION ADVOCACY:

- Engage in issues focused advocacy aligned to your organization's purpose
- Host events and distribute questionnaires allowing all candidates equal opportunity to present their views and positions
- Be conscious of spending on political advertising - even issues-based content. Nonprofits spending **\$500 or more on political advertising** in the regulated non-election period and/or in the election period must follow specific financial and governance requirements ([source](#)). Additional requirements are in place for nonprofits **spending over \$5,000**
- Track donations for political advertising and your advocacy activities

DON'TS FOR NONPROFIT ELECTION ADVOCACY:

- Focus on, promote or oppose a specific political candidate or party
- Transfer resources (ex. financial, human, or physical resources) to support or oppose a political party or candidate directly or through a third party
- Refer to or identify a specific candidate or party that supports or opposes an issue of interest

Registered charities are subject to additional restrictions related to their public policy dialogue and development activities (PPPDA). Previous restrictions on the amount of resources registered charities could direct to political activities, which included policy discussions, were lifted in 2018. According to these [new regulations](#) registered charities can:

- Communicate about policy issues
- Inform the public of the policy positions of political parties and candidates in a neutral fashion
- Host an all candidates forum, provided that all candidates are invited to participate.
- Publish or distribute impartial information about public policy positions of all parties of candidates

Find additional resources and tips for engaging non-partisan advocacy from:

- [The Ontario Nonprofit Network](#)
- [Calgary Chamber of Voluntary Organizations - Empowering Nonprofits](#)
- [Canada Revenue Agency](#)

SDG 13: CLIMATE ACTION

Climate change is one of the most pressing global issues. [SDG 13](#) recognizes that climate change is an emergency and urgent action is needed to address ongoing consequences and mitigate the negative impacts.

In Canada, cities are responsible for 50% of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions ([source](#)). Addressing climate change locally means taking steps to simultaneously reduce greenhouse gas emissions and build resilience of individuals and communities to climate change impacts.



[Click here for resources related to SDG 13](#)



WHAT MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENTS CAN DO

- Develop and implement a [climate emergency action plan](#)
- Allocate funding to climate action projects within the multi-year budget
- Build critical infrastructure necessary to adapt to the effects of climate change including increasing frequency and severity of flooding, drought, wildfires and extreme weather
- Set local targets for GHG emissions reduction locally - and create policies to make it happen



QUESTIONS FOR CANDIDATES

- How will you build awareness in the community about the urgency of climate change action?
- Would you support a motion to declare a climate emergency in our community?
- What local actions do you plan to implement to start mitigating negative impacts on a community level?
- How will you monitor the efficacy and ensure long-term application/ adaptability of these actions?

13 CLIMATE ACTION





SDG 14: LIFE BELOW WATER

Many of the activities we do on land, from farming to building homes and communities impact the health of rivers, lakes and oceans. [SDG 14](#) promotes the conservation and sustainable use of water and aquatic ecosystems. Achieving this goal is all about reducing water pollutants from land based sources, managing wastewater effectively and protecting sensitive marine and aquatic ecosystems.



[Click here for resources related to SDG 14](#)



WHAT MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENTS CAN DO

- Work with other municipal governments, advocacy groups and Indigenous communities to protect watersheds and water systems (i.e. rivers, lakes, streams and coastlines)
- Monitor water quality and aquatic ecosystem health in and around the community
- Manage and regulate water use with sustainability in mind
- Support clean up efforts on coastlines, rivers, streams and lakes
- Control and prevent the use of pesticides and synthetic fertilizers
- Restrict the use of single use plastics



QUESTIONS FOR CANDIDATES

- How will you work with Indigenous communities to protect water and promote sustainable use?
- What will you do to reduce or eliminate the use of pesticides and other pollutants?
- What will you do to rescue or eliminate single use plastics?
- How will you raise awareness amongst community members about sustainable water use?



15 LIFE ON LAND

SDG 15: LIFE ON LAND

Human activities dramatically alter natural ecosystems and impact biodiversity. SDG 15 focuses on protecting, restoring and promoting sustainable use of land-based ecosystems such as forests, grasslands, and other natural areas. This goal also aims to stop the loss of biodiversity and protect habitats.

Globally, Indigenous people are responsible for stewardship of 80% of the world's biodiversity ([source](#)). Self-determination and Indigenous sovereignty are necessary to protect biodiversity worldwide. At the local level, conservation partnerships with Indigenous communities that recognize the value of traditional knowledge and ecological stewardship are also important.



[Click here for resources related to SDG 15](#)



WHAT MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENTS CAN DO

- Partner with governments, businesses and Indigenous communities to protect natural resources
- Plant trees and maintain the health of urban forests and biodiversity
- Create and maintain local parks, green space and conservation areas
- Develop biodiversity strategies to protect habitats and increase biodiversity



QUESTIONS FOR CANDIDATES

- How will you encourage the development of [green infrastructure](#)?
- How will you protect and promote biodiversity protection in our local parks and green spaces?
- How will you support and advance Indigenous-led conservation initiatives?

SDG 16: PEACE, JUSTICE & STRONG INSTITUTIONS

Protecting fundamental human rights for all people is central to [SDG 16](#). This goal is focused on keeping people safe, making sure that governments and other institutions are accountable to people and that they function effectively and fairly.



[Click here for resources related to SDG 16](#)



WHAT MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENTS CAN DO

- Take action on locally relevant [Truth and Reconciliation Commission \(TRC\) Calls to Action](#) (e.g. #43, #44, #57, #75, #77)
- Provide education for public servants about Indigenous history, the legacy of residential schools, the [United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples \(UNDRIP\)](#), and local treaties
- Provide training to public servants, including police officers, in [intercultural competency](#), cultural bias and anti-racism
- Create anti-racism policies and plans in partnership with communities
- Engage in campaigns to end hate crimes
- Support [community-driven crime prevention](#), youth programming and access to social services
- Manage police budgets



QUESTIONS FOR CANDIDATES

- How will you address the fact that many residents still cannot comfortably meet basic living needs - food, water, shelter, safety, health (physical and mental) ?
- What will you do to address hate crimes and violence committed in our community?
- How do you plan to address violence and crime that disproportionately impacts communities that are low income, racialized and marginalized communities?
- How will you help our community to actively engage in reconciliation and positive relationship-building with Indigenous communities?
- How will you end systemic racial injustice and police violence in our community?
- What sort of training and mentorship options exist for women, youth and people of colour who want to consider running for political office?



SDG 17: PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS

The targets of SDG 17 are focus on developing partnerships between countries and encouraging global cooperation to advance sustainable development. Local partnerships are equally important to advancing the goals of the SDGs.

Multi-sector partnerships, which include partners from different sectors - including government, businesses, nonprofits, academia, and other organizations - are beneficial bringing expertise and resources together from different sectors to solve problems.



[Click here for resources related to SDG 17](#)



QUESTIONS FOR CANDIDATES

- How do you intend to support the sharing of knowledge and data between the different stakeholder groups in the city to support collaboration, evidence-based goals and long-term actions?
- Is there a plan to provide financial, physical, informational/educational, administrative resources to support SDG related partnerships and collaborative initiatives?



WHAT MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENTS CAN DO

- Support the development of multi-sector partnerships for the SDGs locally
- Providing funding and administrative support to existing and new local partnerships
- Provide and contribute to open data platforms that can support policy development and monitoring
- Connect with other municipal governments working towards the SDGs to learn, share resources and build coalitions

After the Election

Advocacy and engagement does not end when the polls close. In fact, this is when the real work begins.

Once candidates are elected you can continue to connect and communicate about important issues. Your post election advocacy could focus on building relationships, pushing for policy change, aligning data collection efforts and holding elected officials accountable.

ENGAGE IN FORMAL DECISION MAKING PROCESSES

Engaging in the formal processes of municipal decision making is important because this is often where critical decisions are made. Some ways to stay engaged include:

- **Attending regular council or committee meetings:** You can find the schedule for regular council meetings on your municipality's website. Regular council meetings are open to all and many council meetings are recorded or streamed live.
- **Register to delegate or submit feedback to council:** If an issue you are interested in appears on council's agenda you may want to register to delegate or submit written feedback. There are usually official procedures to follow - like submitting your request in advance to the Clerk. Make sure you are aware of all the important deadlines so you don't miss your opportunity.
- **Join a committee:** Keep an eye out for these opportunities to join committees and consider engaging if there is an opportunity to advance the issue you are working on.

COMMUNITY-LED MONITORING & DATA SHARING

Community organizations have important local data that can help us to understand issues and track changes over time. Community-led monitoring processes allow communities themselves to collect data and report on how decisions directly impact communities. Data can be shared through topic specific [factsheets](#), social media campaigns and other reports.

The [People's Scorecard](#) was developed as a tool to help civil society organizations track national progress towards the SDGs. While this tool is designed for national level accountability, many of the same principles can be applied at the local level. The scorecard itself can help communities to evaluate progress towards the SDGs.

ACCOUNTABILITY FOR MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENTS

Accountability is a process whereby elected officials and governments answer to the public based on actions and their policy promises. Being clear about what actions you want governments to take can make it easier to monitor their actions and seek greater accountability for the community.

The SDGs themselves can be a tool supporting local level accountability. With long-term goals, targets and indicators, the SDGs can help municipal governments and communities set clear objectives, and track progress. The common language of the SDGs can be a bridge between communities and decision makers, helping move towards a common understanding of challenges and what can be done to address them.

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