



Thinking of Running for Council...Now What?

A Reflection Guide for Prospective Municipal Candidates

Serving on municipal Council is a meaningful way to contribute to your community — but it is also a serious commitment. Before deciding whether to run, take time to reflect on the realities of the role and how they align with your life, values, and capacity.

This handout is designed to help you think critically and intentionally about that decision.

Why Do You Want to Run?

Ask yourself:

- What motivates me to consider public office?
- Is there a specific issue, experience, or value driving this decision?
- Am I seeking change, influence, service, or representation — and why?
- How will I feel if progress is slow or decisions don't go my way?

▶ ***Strong Councillors are guided by purpose, not impulse.***

Understanding the Role

Consider whether you are comfortable with:

- Making decisions collectively, even when you personally disagree
- Governing at a policy and strategic level (not managing day-to-day operations)
- Working respectfully with staff, other Council members, and the public
- Following legislation, procedure, and Codes of Conduct at all times

▶ ***Council is about governance, accountability, and collaboration.***

Time & Energy Commitment

Reflect honestly:

- Can I realistically attend meetings, prepare in advance, and participate fully?
- Am I available for committee work, community events, and constituent concerns?
- How will this role affect my work, family, and personal time?
- Do I have the energy to stay engaged for the full term?

▶ ***Council service often takes more time than people expect.***

Personal & Family Impact

Ask yourself:

- Do my family and close supports understand what this role involves?
- Am I prepared for public scrutiny and criticism?
- How will I handle stress, conflict, and pressure in a public setting?
- Am I comfortable having my decisions and actions examined publicly?

▶ ***Running for Council affects more than just the candidate.***

Campaign & Financial Considerations

Think about:

- Am I prepared for the time and cost of running a campaign?
- Do I understand fundraising, spending limits, and financial reporting requirements?
- Can I comply with election rules and deadlines?
- Do I have the organizational skills to run a compliant campaign?

▶ ***Campaigns require planning, discipline, and transparency.***

Skills & Readiness

Be honest with yourself:

- Am I a good listener?
- Can I work respectfully with people who hold different views?
- Am I comfortable making difficult decisions with incomplete information?
- Am I willing to learn, ask questions, and accept guidance?

▶ ***There is no single “type” of Councillor — but readiness matters.***

Final Reflection

Before deciding to run, ask:

- If elected, am I prepared to serve the entire term responsibly?
 - Does this role align with my values, capacity, and goals at this stage of my life?
 - Am I entering this decision informed, intentional, and realistic?
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A Thought to Leave With

Serving on Council is both a privilege and a responsibility. Taking time to reflect before running helps ensure strong leadership, healthy governance, and better outcomes for the community — whether you decide to run or not.