TORONTO PUBLIC LIBRARY

Know Your Vote T.O.

Information Package

Revised: September 12, 2018

Contents

Project Contact Information

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If you are a member of the media or are interested in speaking directly with the Project Spokesperson, please contact Pam Ryan, Director of Service Development & Innovation, at pryan@torontopubliclibrary.ca.

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1. Know Your Vote T.O. Project Overview

The Library's mission is to preserve and promote universal access to a broad range of human knowledge, experience, information, and ideas in a welcoming and supportive environment. Access to information and the healthy exchange of ideas are fundamental to our democracy, which is why the Toronto Public Library is expanding the ways in which we support engaged citizenship in our city. We are developing *Know Your Vote T.O.* as a new way to improve access to information about candidates running for municipal elected office.

Know Your Vote T.O. is a website where voters can learn about the candidates running to represent their neighbourhood at City Council, learn how candidates think Toronto should tackle big issues facing our city, and learn more about the city they call home.

The goals of *Know Your Vote T.O.* are to:

- Help Torontonians find out who is running to represent their neighbourhood at City Council;
- Provide a way for Torontonians to learn about their ward candidates' views on important municipal issues;
- Offer a single website where all council candidates have a fair opportunity to share with voters their perspectives on several important issues; and
- Provide introductory learning materials about city issues and city government.

TPL will promote the *Know Your Vote T.O.* website by:

- Creating a bookmark that will be distributed at Library check-out stations;
- Creating a poster that will be displayed in Library branches and other locations around the city;
- Sharing promotional materials on the Library's webpage, newsletter, and social media accounts;
- Coordinating the spread of promotional materials through a broad range of civic groups working throughout the city; and
- Hosting four public events in different parts of the city where residents will come together to learn about and discuss city issues.

The *Know Your Vote T.O.* website will launch on September 17, 2018.

We are undertaking this exciting project thanks to donations made to the Toronto Public Library Foundation.

2. Frequently Asked Questions

Why is the Library developing Know Your Vote T.O.?

The Library's mission is to preserve and promote universal access to a broad range of human knowledge, experience, information, and ideas in a welcoming and supportive environment. Access to information and the healthy exchange of ideas are fundamental to our democracy, which is why the Toronto Public Library is expanding the ways in which we support engaged citizenship in our city. We are developing *Know Your Vote T.O.* as a new way to improve access to information about candidates running for elected office. We have also recently launched the 'On Civil Society' series – an exploration of the issues shaping 21st century democracy and civic dialogue around the world. We look forward to sharing other new initiatives with you soon.

Why is Know Your Vote T.O. focused only on Councillor candidates?

In 2018, *Know Your Vote T.O.* will focus exclusively on Councillor candidates in order to confirm the value of this website within Toronto's civic landscape. Toronto City Council makes important decisions that affect the lives of every Torontonian; yet it is often difficult for residents to find information about council candidates running in their ward. If the 2018 edition is successful and resources are available, we may undertake future expanded editions that include mayoral and school board trustee candidates.

How is the Library making sure this website treats candidates fairly?

The Library is committed to ensuring that no candidate is provided with an unfair advantage through the *Know Your Vote T.O.* project. An independent external advisory committee is reviewing all policies and practices to ensure we achieve this commitment. Our policies and practices are designed so that fair and reasonable steps are taken to contact and remind all Councillor candidates about the opportunity to submit content to *Know Your Vote T.O.*; that questions posed to candidates, as well as other materials posted on *Know Your Vote T.O.,* are fair and balanced; and that content inclusion policies are appropriate. All Councillor candidates' names will be posted on the *Know Your Vote T.O.* website, even if they do not provide responses for publication. Candidates' names will be listed on the appropriate ward page in alphabetical order based on their surnames and, in the case of identical surnames, their forenames. This project is being undertaken in accordance with the *Use of Library Resources During an Election Period Policy*, which can be found here: https://www.torontopubliclibrary.ca/terms-of-use/library-policies/use-of-library-resources-during-an-election.jsp

How were the five questions developed?

The *Know Your Vote T.O.* Project Team worked with the advisory committee to develop a set of five questions that met a series of criteria. The questions were designed to: be politically neutral in their framing; be easy to understand for both candidates and readers; allow candidates to highlight their priorities; relate to issues that are among the most important to Torontonians based on recent polling data; relate to issues that Toronto's City Council, or Councillors individually, have significant power to address; and elicit answers that are relatively easy and quick for readers to review.

Are there any limits on what Council candidates can submit?

Each question has a 525-character response limit. In addition to these five 525-character responses, candidates are allowed to share links to their campaign website and to their Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn accounts. No other web links are permitted, and any additional web links included within the candidates' responses to questions will be removed. In order to preserve a welcoming and supportive environment, the Library reserves the right to not post a response if the Library reasonably believes that the response promotes discrimination or hatred, or contains language that is violent, threatening, abusive, or harassing. More information is available in the *Content Inclusion Policy*, which is included below.

What about the change to Ward boundaries? (Updated September 12)

Past and potential upcoming changes to ward boundaries have led us, after seeking the input of our advisory committee, to delay the launch of Know Your Vote T.O. The launch date for the *Know Your Vote T.O*. website will now be September 26, 2018, rather than the originally planned launch date of September 4. This will help ensure that the Know Your Vote T.O website provides accurate information about which candidates are running in which ward. When a ward change occurs, candidates who have already submitted responses are contacted to confirm that the content of their submissions still reflects the Ward in which they are running.

Will candidate responses be available in different languages?

Know Your Vote T.O. will use Google's Website Translator Plug-in to allow users to view automatically translated versions of all content posted on *Know Your Vote T.O*. in over 100 languages. This automatic translation may produce errors, and the Library does not take responsibility for the accuracy of the translations.

I'm a Council candidate and I haven't heard about this opportunity — what should I do?

The *Know Your Vote T.O.* Team is making considerable efforts to reach all Councillor candidates, while ensuring that only verified candidates submit responses for inclusion on *Know Your Vote T.O*. We are using contact information candidates provided on their Councillor candidate nomination forms, which are publically viewable at Toronto City Hall. This publically available contact information is being used to email, call, or mail out information to councillor candidates about how they can submit responses in a verified manner. More information on our outreach processes is included in the *Candidate Outreach & Content Collection Policy*, included below. If you have yet to receive any information about this opportunity, it may be due to an error with the contact information on your nomination form. Please reach out to the project team using the contact information included below.

What's the deadline for candidates to respond? What if I miss the deadline? (Updated September 12)

Past and potential upcoming changes to ward boundaries have led us, after seeking the input of our advisory committee, to delay the launch of Know Your Vote T.O. The launch date for the *Know Your Vote T.O*. website will now be September 26, 2018. To have your responses posted when the website launches on September 26, 2018, candidates must submit their content by 11:59 p.m. on Wednesday, September 19, 2018. If a candidate misses this deadline, their responses will still be uploaded to the website after the launch, but this upload will occur five business days after the submission is received.

I'm a Councillor candidate — what happens once I've submitted my responses?

After Councillor candidates submit their responses, they will receive an automated confirmation email that includes a copy of their responses. Candidates have three business days to review their responses closely for any errors and notify the *Know Your Vote T.O.* Team, as the Library will not be editing or adjusting responses in any way, unless they do not accord with the *Content Inclusion Policy*. If we do not hear from you within three business days, we will deem the content finalized and prepare it for publication. Once content is deemed final, no further changes will be permitted, though candidates are still allowed to ask that some or all of their responses be removed from the website. A ward change is the only exception to this policy, at which point candidates will have the option to re-submit their responses. See *Candidate Outreach & Content Collection Policy*, which is included below, for additional information.

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How is Know Your Vote T.O. being funded?

We are undertaking this exciting project thanks to donations made to the Toronto Public Library Foundation.

Who is helping the Library develop Know Your Vote T.O.?

Our Independent External Advisory Committee is made up of five notable Torontonians who represent diverse sectors, communities, and viewpoints. Our Committee is helping to ensure that no candidate is provided with an unfair advantage through the *Know Your Vote T.O.* project. The members are: Brittany Andrew-Amofah, Senior Policy and Research Analyst, Broadbent Institute; Farah Nasser, Anchor, Global News Toronto; Gillian Smith, former Ontario PC Party candidate for Provincial Parliament; Jodie Rawn, Managing Director, CivicAction Leadership Foundation; and Professor Matti Siemiatycki, Interim Director, University of Toronto School of Cities. Project support is being provided by the Toronto-based firm, MASS LBP.

I have other questions about Know Your Vote T.O. — who should I contact?

If you have questions about how the *Know Your Vote T.O.* website will work or if you encounter any issues in submitting your candidate responses, you can reach our Project staff via email at knowyourvote@torontopubliclibrary.ca; via telephone at (647) 749-7262; or via mail at *Know Your Vote T.O.,* 3A Gilead Place, Toronto, ON, M5A 3C8. If you are a member of the media or are interested in speaking directly with the Project spokesperson, please contact Pam Ryan, Director of Service Development & Innovation, at pryan@torontopubliclibrary.ca.

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3. Candidate Outreach & Content Collection Policy

Principles

The *Know Your Vote T.O.* project will work to ensure that:

- Fair and reasonable steps are taken to contact and remind all Councillor candidates in the 2018 municipal election about the opportunity to submit their content to *Know Your Vote T.O.*;
- Councillor candidates have a reasonable amount of time to submit their content in advance of website launch, as well as a fair opportunity to submit their content for publication after the website launch;
- Councillor candidates have a fair chance to review the content they submitted to ensure it is accurate;
- Fair and appropriate steps are taken to ensure content is submitted by Councillor candidates or their authorized representatives; and
- Candidates retain the power to remove content they submitted from the website once it is published.

Candidate Contact Information Collection

- Councillor Candidates nomination are publicly accessible by visiting City Hall. All available contact information will be collected by the *Know Your Vote T.O.* Team beginning on August 8 and will continue every two weeks until October 3, 2018.
- Though candidates are required to provide a valid mailing address, telephone number, and email address on their nomination forms, some candidates do not provide complete information. This policy is therefore designed to ensure that those who provide only one piece of contact information still have reasonable notice about this opportunity.

Outreach Process and Timeline

1. On **August 10**, registered Councillor candidates with email addresses on their nomination forms will be contacted by email, while those without email addresses will be sent a letter in the mail. Any candidate who has neither email nor a mailing address will receive a phone call. Any candidate from whom we receive email bounce-backs will

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receive a phone call confirming their email address. The email (or letter) to candidates will include:

- An invitation message, including an explanation of the project;
- A request to confirm receipt;
- Instructions on how to submit their responses;
- Deadlines for submitting in advance of, and after, website launch;
- Contact information for the project team (phone line, email address, postal address); and
- The *Know Your Vote T.O.* Content Inclusion Policy.

2. The list of Councillor candidates will be updated four additional times and invitations will be sent to any new Councillor candidates, using the method described above, on:

- August 22
- September 5
- September 19
- October 3

3. Candidates will be asked to submit content using an online form. Candidates access the online form using a secure unique keycode (emailed or mailed to them) to submit responses. This ensures a high level of candidate verification. Alternative methods of verification and submission will be offered, if requested.

4. Beginning on **August 15**, weekly follow-up reminders to Councillor candidates who have not confirmed receipt of the invitation will be sent via email (if email address is available) or via phone call (if no email address is available). Mailed letters will be used for those without either email or phone numbers.

5. All candidates who have not yet responded or confirmed receipt of the invitation within seven business days of it being sent will receive phone calls to ensure they are aware of the opportunity to submit content. The *Know Your Vote T.O.* team will phone candidates Ward by Ward, starting with Ward 1 and progressing in numerical order.

6. After making a submission, candidates will receive a confirmation email which includes the content of their submission. They will have three business days to notify the *Know Your Vote T.O.* team of any needed changes to their content (e.g., typos, errors, omissions), at which point we will deem their content finalized and then prepare it for publication.

7. Once content is finalized, no further changes will be allowed, unless the candidate changes wards — candidates can only ask for the removal of any or all of their responses from Know Your Vote T.O.

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8. If ward boundaries are changed, or if the candidate changes wards, they will be allowed to re-submit content. If they do not re-submit content, previously submitted content will be published to correspond to the ward in which they are actually running.

9. The deadline to submit content in order for it to be included when the website launches has been changed to **Wednesday, September 19, 11:59 p.m.** Content submitted by the deadline that is in accordance with the *Know your Vote T.O. Content Inclusion Policy* will go online when the site launches, on September 26, 2018. (Updated September 12)

10. The Know Your Vote T.O. team will use the information available at app.toronto.ca/vote/candidateListAll.do to determine which Ward each candidate is registered to run in. If we receive a submission from a councillor candidate not listed on app.toronto.ca/vote/candidateListAll.do, we will wait for that information to appear there before the candidate's name and submission are posted on the Know Your Vote T.O. website. (Updated August 22)

11. Candidates who have not yet submitted content for publication on Know Your Vote T.O. will still have their names listed as running for a particular Ward's council seat, based on the information available at app.toronto.ca/vote/candidateListAll.do.

12. Councillor candidates will be listed on the appropriate Ward page of the Know Your Vote T.O. website in alphabetical order based on their surnames and, in the case of identical surnames, their forenames.

13. Content submitted by candidates **after September 19** will (if it is in accordance with the *Content Inclusion Policy*) go online five business days after it is received by the *Know Your Vote T.O.* team. (Updated September 12)

14. The website launch date has been changed to **September 26, 2018**. (Updated September 12)

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4. Content Inclusion Policy

Principles

- The Library is committed to preserving and promoting universal access to a broad range of human knowledge, experience, information, and ideas — including access to information about candidates for elected office — in a welcoming and supportive environment. The Library therefore seeks to ensure that those who access *Know Your Vote T.O.* are free from experiencing violent, threatening, abusive, discriminatory, hateful, or harassing language.

- The *Know Your Vote T.O.* website is one of many methods available to candidates to share their views with Torontonians.

- The *Know Your Vote T.O.* website will provide sufficient opportunity for Councillor candidates to share content with voters about their beliefs and positions, while the amount of content allowed will be limited to ensure user experience is reasonably consistent, welcoming, and straightforward.

Content Policies

1. Candidates are allowed to provide as many of the following as they choose:
   - 525-character responses to each of the following five questions:
     - If elected, what would be your top priority as a City Councillor? Why?
     - What local issues in your ward deserve more attention? Why?
     - What should the next City Council do about housing in Toronto? Why?
     - What should the next City Council do about transportation and how we get around Toronto? Why?
     - Should the next City Council change anything about municipal taxes or city services? Why?
   - A link to their campaign website
   - Links to the following social media profiles: Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn
   - An email address

2. Candidates will not be permitted to submit responses that exceed the 525-character limit. In the event that candidates submit responses that exceed the limit, the response will be cut off at the word limit.

3. Candidates who submit content for some but not all prompts will have those prompts to which they do not respond left blank.

4. The Library is not responsible for copy-editing or proofreading any responses submitted by candidates. Responses posted online will be a copy of the candidates' submissions, unless it otherwise contravenes the *Content Inclusion Policy*.

5. Hyperlinks to external sites will not be published, unless they are to the candidate's campaign website or Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, or LinkedIn pages. Any hyperlinks included outside of these prompts will be removed from responses.

6. The Library reserves the right to not post a response if the Library reasonably believes that the response promotes discrimination against or hatred of any individual or group of people on the basis of race, ethnic origin, place of origin, citizenship, colour, ancestry, creed (religion), age, sex, gender identity, gender expression, marital status, family status, sexual orientation, disability, political affiliation, membership in a union or staff association, receipt of public assistance, level of literacy, or any other similar factor.

7. The Library reserves the right to not post a response if it reasonably believes that it contains language that is violent, threatening, abusive, or harassing.

8. To ensure that responses are not in contravention of the Project policy, two project team members will review all responses submitted by candidates and flag any responses that might contain discriminatory, hateful, violent, threatening, abusive, or harassing content.

9. A committee consisting of three Toronto Public Library managers will review all flagged content and issue a decision about whether or not the response will be published on the *Know Your Vote T.O.* website.

10. Members of the public can submit requests to have content reviewed again once the website is public.

11. Any candidate whose response is rejected will receive a message from the project team that indicates: what response(s) is being excluded; a brief explanation of why the response is being excluded; a deadline to re-submit allowable content; and information on how to request a review by the City Librarian.

12. Candidates whose responses are excluded from the website may, upon written request, have the decision reviewed by the City Librarian, whose decision shall be final.

13. Any response that is excluded for failing to meet the *Content Inclusion Policy* will be left blank.