

A POLICY AND PRACTICE PAPER

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## **The Municipal Franchise and Social Inclusion in Toronto: Policy and Practice**

*By Myer Siemiatycki*

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## **Disclaimer**

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## Introduction

Would extending the right to vote in civic elections – for municipal council and local school board positions – significantly advance democracy, civic participation and the prospects for more responsive public policy in Toronto? The answer from an ambitious research project that studied the state of social inclusion in Canadian cities, was a resounding ‘yes’. In its 2005 study, *Inclusive Cities Canada – Toronto* argues that the municipal franchise (right to vote) should be broadened in two directions. It advocates lowering the voting eligibility age from 18 to 16, and extending the vote to “all residents regardless of national citizenship status” (Report of the Toronto Civic Panel 2005: 43, [hereafter cited as Report 2005]). Would Toronto be a better place if all permanent residents in the City, 16 years of age and older, could vote in civic elections?

**Today, still more voices are calling for the right to vote in western societies to be made more ‘universal’. Concerns are raised over the consequence of leaving some in our midst without the franchise.**

In liberal democratic states, great weight is placed on the right to vote. Much about our values and self definition as a society is embedded in the right to vote. This import was expressed thirty years ago, when the most comprehensive public study of how Toronto is governed was undertaken by the 1977 Report of the Royal Commission on Metropolitan Toronto. In its final report, the Commission declared: “An effective electoral system is vital to democratic government ... Voting is, and should remain, the most direct and universal form of citizen participation in the governmental process” (Royal Commission on Metropolitan Toronto 1977: 63). Today, still more voices are calling for the right to vote in western societies to be made more ‘universal’.

Concerns are raised over the consequence of leaving some in our midst without the franchise. As American legal scholar Joaquin Avila has written: “A society’s interests are not furthered when a substantial number of its inhabitants are excluded from the body politic and have no meaningful way to petition for redress of grievances through the electoral process” (Avila 2003: 1). Today, the call is spreading – in Canada and abroad – to expand the definition of who is a citizen worthy of electoral participation rights.

This paper explores the link between broadened municipal voting rights and enriched experiences of civic engagement and social inclusion. It contends, perhaps contentiously, that there is no automatic carry-over from expanded voting rights to deeper civic democracy. While the case for extending the municipal franchise is strong, there is a need to identify the conditions under which this enlargement of ‘urban citizenship’ could deliver the results its proponents wish would follow. This paper proposes therefore, that a broadened municipal franchise is a necessary – though not sufficient – condition for more equitable political inclusion.

In addressing these questions, this paper ranges across a variety of terrains and topics. First, we review the social inclusion discourse and specific study from which proposals for an extended municipal franchise arose. Next, we examine the evolution and current state of municipal voting rights in Canada and other liberal democracies. Thereafter we present data on how existing voting rights are actually exercised in Toronto, revealing dramatic disparities associated with race, immigrant status, income and geography. This leads us to consider the conditions under which extended voting rights could deepen civic engagement and wider social influence over government policy.

## Toronto's Social Inclusion Challenge

Few analytical concepts can match the ambitious reach of 'social inclusion'. Over recent years, the discourse of social inclusion has fostered wide-ranging attempts both to explain and to transform fundamental relations and conditions of life. Analytically, the 'social inclusion lens' has inspired a vast research and publication output (see among many others: Levitas 2005, Richmond and Saloojee 2005, Atkinson et al 2002, Hills et al 2002, Askonas and Stewart 2000, Gordon 2000, Percy-Smith 2000, Byrne 1999, Rodgers et al 1995).

Even more impressive has been the official adoption of social inclusion perspectives by governments as guideposts for state policy agendas. In the forefront has been the European Union (EU) and its member states. In 1989, the preamble to the EU's Social Charter declared that "in the spirit of solidarity it is important to combat social exclusion". Subsequent seminal EU agreements such as the Maastricht Treaty of 1992 and the 1997 Treaty of Amsterdam identified the eradication of social exclusion as a chief EU objective (Vleminckx and Berghman 2001: 28-9). This goal has now been sharpened by the European Council's Lisbon agreement of 2000 requiring all member states to produce action plans for overcoming social exclusion by the year 2010. Individual EU member states too, have officially embraced the cause. Since 1997, Britain's government of Tony Blair has operated with an interdepartmental Social Exclusion Unit attached to Cabinet Office.

Canadian academics, community advocates and government officials have been slower to adopt a social inclusion agenda. Operating under a differing intellectual and political climate than Europe, alternate conceptual, organizational and policy considerations held sway here in the waning years of the 20th century (Siemiatycki 2005: 27-8). More recently however, the concept and cause of social inclusion have gained momentum in Canada. Institutional leadership in this regard has come primarily from two directions.

First is the Toronto-based Laidlaw Foundation, self-described as "a private, public interest foundation that uses its human and financial resources in innovative ways to strengthen civic engagement and social cohesion". In 2002, the Foundation commissioned a series of working papers exploring the theme: "Perspectives on Social Inclusion". A recently published book brings together these, and additionally commissioned papers (Richmond and Saloojee 2005). The second significant promoter of social inclusion research and policy development has been the federal Department of Social Development Canada (now called Human Resources and Social Development Canada). The Department has described its mandate as building "a Canada where the capacities of individuals, children, families and communities are strengthened in order to promote social inclusion, participation and well-being" (Social Development Canada 2004-2005). The Department has been particularly active in promoting research and discussion on developing a social inclusion policy agenda.

In 2003, the Laidlaw Foundation and Social Development Canada joined forces to fund an ambitious effort to operationalize a social inclusion diagnosis of life in Canada. The resulting initiative -- Inclusive Cities Canada: A Cross-Canada Civic Initiative (ICC) -- was designed to identify patterns of exclusion and

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pathways to inclusion for Canadians in 5 urban areas across the country. Separate case study reports were produced in 2005 analyzing the state of social inclusion in:

- Saint John, New Brunswick
- Toronto, Ontario
- Burlington, Ontario
- Edmonton, Alberta
- Vancouver/North Vancouver, British Columbia

**As process, social inclusion requires the broadest possible public participation in influencing decision-making affecting their lives and community.**

In each urban area, local or regional social planning councils collaborated with local politicians and community agencies to engage local residents in identifying experiences and prescriptions for social inclusion. Inclusive Cities Canada accurately described itself as “a unique, participatory research initiative that uses a social inclusion framework to build people-friendly cities, promote good urban governance and develop strategies for supporting urban diversity” (ICC 2005: Media Release March 2005). The project’s ‘social inclusion framework’ may be described as grounded in a shared communitarian responsibility that none in society are left out or left behind. Each report on the five different urban case studies begins with the same definition:

“Social inclusion is the capacity and willingness of our society to keep all groups within reach of what we expect as a society – the social commitment and investments necessary to ensure that all people are close to (within reach of) our common aspirations, common life and its common wealth” (Report 2005: 1).

The emphasis here is to secure for all, what society upholds as its common standard of a good life. Importantly too, ICC “recognizes social inclusion as both a process and an outcome” (Report 2005: 4). As process, social inclusion requires the broadest possible public participation in influencing decision-making affecting their lives and community. As outcome, social inclusion requires that the tangible conditions of life for all are at a standard that most in society would regard as acceptable for themselves.

Inclusive Cities Canada developed a comprehensive framework to operationalize its analysis of social inclusion in Canadian cities. The studies of all 5 case study cities applied the same template, emphasizing 5 key dimensions of inclusion and applying them to selected areas of inquiry for local civic action. These are:

1. Institutional recognition of diversity – related to local governance, public education, policing and the justice system;
2. Opportunities for human development – related to early childhood education, public, and recreation/arts/culture;

3. Quality of civic engagement – related to local governance, public spaces, and community capacities;
4. Cohesiveness of living conditions – related to income and employment; housing, and community safety;
5. Adequacy of community services – related to health care, crisis services, and transportation/mobility (Report 2005: 12).

Each dimension and its related realms are regarded as a necessary hallmark of an inclusive society. Impressively too, the methodology of the ICC studies was inclusive. Under the leadership of local civic panels that reflected the diversity, knowledge and life experiences of the partner cities, the research involved focus groups and local soundings with over 1,250 people from a wide range of communities and circumstances.

Across all five partner cities, a number of recurring patterns of exclusion and deprivation were identified. The most dire related to living conditions, according to the cross-Canada report that analyzed and synthesized the local findings and issues that cut across the five cities. Meeting the Civic Challenges of Social Inclusion: Cross-Canada Findings and Priorities for Action (Clutterbuck, Freiler & Novick, 2005) also found that problems of unemployment, under-employment, poverty and sub-standard housing were widespread. Community services gaps stood out as a second systemic deficiency in all five case studies. And again in all five cities, particular social groups were found to be particularly vulnerable to exclusion. First Nations, racial minorities, immigrants, women, lesbians and gays, the disabled, children, youth and seniors disproportionately reported exclusionary experiences. In Toronto's case, a host of studies in recent years have raised concern over intensifying indicators of these groups' social exclusion related to conditions such as income disparities, barriers to labour market access, residential neighbourhood segregation and strain, and adverse experiences in education, housing and policing (Ornstein 2000, Alboim 2002, Schellenberg 2004, PROMPT 2004, Picot 2004, Hou 2004, United Way 2004, Wortley and Tanner 2004, Teelucksingh and Galabuzi 2005, Galabuzi 2005, Ornstein 2006).

From their local findings, each city's report in the Inclusive Cities Canada project presented recommendations to serve as a pathway from civic exclusion to inclusion. In the Toronto report, it is significant that the first priority measure recommended to achieve social inclusion in the City was strengthening 'civic democracy'. The problematic being addressed here is the detachment and alienation many city residents experience in relation to local decision-making processes. Symptoms of the malaise include: low rates of voter participation in elections, the lack of voting rights for many permanent residents of the city, and a serious disconnect between who lives in Toronto and who holds positions of political leadership in Toronto (for evidence of the latter, see Siemiatycki and Saloojee 2003). In each case, marginalized communities bear the brunt of these uneven patterns. Recent immigrants, visible minorities and the poor are least likely to be eligible to vote, to actually vote, or to hold elected and appointed positions in government.

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Deeper civic democracy would promote social inclusion in two ways. Wider political participation would itself promote inclusion, belonging and a sense of attachment. Equally important, it would strengthen the voice and influence of marginalized communities in the political process. Extending civic democracy is thus also a means of building momentum for an inclusion-positive agenda of government. As Angus Stewart has written: “Preparation for democratic citizenship must be recognized as the essential foundation for an inclusive society” (Stewart 2000). As Toronto’s Inclusive Cities Canada report emphasizes, Toronto requires a stronger democratic platform on which to build an inclusive society. As noted, calls to extend the municipal franchise are key proposals set out in the report.

## The Municipal Franchise, Urban Citizenship and Social Inclusion

Our cities have a checkered past – and present -- when it comes to municipal voting rights. Ontario’s history of elected local school boards and local councils dates back to the early 19th century. At every point since then, one could identify many urban residents who were denied voting rights, as well as others enjoying privileged electoral rights.

During the 19th century the municipal franchise in Toronto was severely restricted based on age, gender and property ownership. Voting eligibility was reserved for men, aged 21 and older, who owned sufficient real estate to meet the property qualification. It was well into the 20th century before these municipal franchise limitations were loosened. After the First World War, the vote was extended to women on the same age and property terms as men. But it was not until the 1960s that the final vestige of property ownership was eliminated as a condition of voting. So it is less than 50 years since all tenants became eligible to vote in Toronto municipal elections. Lowering the voting age from 21 to 18 occurred even more recently – first introduced in Canada’s federal election of 1972 (CPRN 2005).

One lesson to be drawn from this record of voter eligibility is that the rules in place at any time are probably too restrictive. Indeed, they may reflect prevailing social prejudices about who is ‘fit’ to have a say in municipal decision-making. The fact that for decades and decades, urban regimes presumed it was appropriate to bar women or non-wealthy males from voting should not make us today feel smug or superior. Rather it should lead us to ask: are we excluding anyone? Are we privileging anyone? The answers are discomfiting and unacceptable for an inclusive society.

Today in Ontario the municipal franchise is extended to persons who are:

- 18 years of age and older;
- A Canadian citizen;
- And either;
- A permanent resident of the municipality, or
- A non-resident owner or tenant of property in the municipality, and the spouse or same-sex partner of such a non-resident.

It should be noted that these eligibility rules are not established by municipalities themselves. Under Canada's constitution, municipalities are 'creatures of the province'. This means that provinces create (or abolish) municipalities, and determine their role, structure and decision-making processes. Municipal voter eligibility provisions are set out by provincial statute – the Municipal Elections Act. From a social inclusion perspective, three significant problems arise from the Act's municipal voter eligibility rules, cited above. The Toronto ICC report challenges the age and citizenship provisions. Before discussing these, the current non-resident municipal right to vote also merits attention.

## Revoking Non-Resident Municipal Voting Rights

Local government is the only political jurisdiction in Canada where certain non-residents hold the right to vote. This certainly establishes the precedent that municipalities can operate under different voter eligibility rules than provincial or federal governments. As we have seen, the municipal franchise extends to non-residents (plus spouse/partner) who own or rent real estate in a municipality in which they do not live.

Typically we regard voting rights as a hallmark of citizenship. The non-resident voting right in Ontario today implies that municipally, property conveys urban citizenship rights. There are several reasons why the link between property possession and political rights has persisted at the municipal level. Municipalities were institutionally established as 'corporations', a formal designation they continue to hold. This has spawned a legacy of regarding municipalities as accountable to the 'shareholders'. And since municipalities continue to collect most of their revenue from property taxes, there has been a sustained notion that property holders who contribute municipal revenue should have the right to vote.

But this is a 21st century nod to 19th century principles of political rights. It equates the franchise with property and wealth. There are several arguments for eliminating the property-based non-resident municipal franchise. Some have to do with its inconsistency. Ontario does not permit residents of other provinces who own or rent property here, or contribute significantly to its provincial sales tax revenue, the right to vote in Ontario elections. Nor does Ontario extend the municipal franchise to non-residents who may contribute significantly to local revenue through means other than the property tax. For instance, the non City of Toronto resident who purchases a monthly Toronto Transit Commission (TTC) Metropass is contributing over \$1000 annually to City revenues. To be consistent why should such non-resident transit riders not hold the right to vote?

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Additionally, it should be noted that the non-resident municipal franchise unnecessarily and unhelpfully pads the municipal voters' list. The vast majority of non-residents do not exercise their franchise – they do not vote. The inflated voters' list therefore has the effect of artificially lowering the 'real' voter turn-out rate in local elections. The recurring message that only 1 in 3

eligible voters typically bothers to cast a ballot in local elections itself undermines interest and engagement in civic elections. One reason the property-based municipal franchise has persisted so long is that proponents of democratic governance have oddly overlooked its inequitable elitism. The Inclusive Cities Canada project emphasizes urban residency as the basis of civic voting rights. A corollary is eliminating, non-resident voting rights.

## Lowering the Municipal Voting Age

When does a person become an adult? Government laws and regulations in Canada provide no consistent answer to this question. What is evident, however, is that determining the 'tipping point' from childhood into adulthood is a matter of value judgment rather than biology or tradition. In many spheres of law and life, the state is called upon to determine the age at which a person may be deemed sufficiently mature to acquire the rights and obligations of adulthood. Interestingly, current laws establish different ages as the transition point for different entitlements or responsibilities. Consider that,

- At age 14, a person may consent to sexual activity and be transferred to adult court for prosecution of a criminal offence.
- At age 16, a person is considered an adult under the Provincial Offences Act and the Mental Health Act, can drive a motor vehicle, can voluntarily withdraw from parental control, can leave school, can refuse emergency medical treatment and can join the Canadian Forces Reserves.
- At age 18, a person is deemed to have reached age of majority and ceases to be a minor, is eligible to vote, may marry without parental permission, and may change their name.
- Only at age 19, may a person legally purchase tobacco and consume alcohol (Justice for Children and Youth website).

This listing reminds us that there is no single and simple equivalence between age and adulthood. In order to promote responsible personal behaviour, for instance, youths may be tried in adult court at age 14; they may drive a car at 16; and they are restricted from purchasing tobacco or consuming alcohol until age 19. This suggests that determining age of eligibility is really an assertion of social values, apprehensions and expectations.

As we have seen, it is less than 40 years since the voting age in Ontario was lowered from 21 to 18. It had been fixed at 21 for over a century. Many would argue that age 18 is as low as the voting age should go. Opponents of a younger voting age contend: that youth under 18 lack the maturity and considered wisdom to vote; that youth may be unduly swayed in how to vote by parents, teachers or other adults; and that they show little interest in wanting to vote, as evidenced in low voter turn-out rates among 18-24 year olds.

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Advocates of a lower voting age base their claim on other arguments. They note for instance: that sentation should

accompany taxation; that this is an information-savvy age cohort with distinct policy interests needing to be voiced. However the most frequently cited claim for lowering the voting age is somewhat counter-intuitive. It argues that the best way to engage potentially alienated, disinterested youth in our political system is to invite them into the ballot booth at a younger age. The contention is that society needs to affirm its commitment to youth engagement, and since most 16 and 17 year-olds are still in public school, voting rights should coincide with a reinvigorated civics education in the classroom. Advocates believe that promoting voting among high school students will reinforce citizens' lifelong commitment to voting. A recent study from the Canadian Policy Research Network (CPRN) noted that youth disengagement seems now to be a recurring and deepening dilemma. Beginning with the baby boom cohort, each new generation of Canadians has recorded lower voter turn-out rates than its preceding generation. "There is a risk", the study concludes, "that the population will become increasingly disconnected from the government and the business of government will become less democratic" (CPRN 2005).

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Liberal democratic states across the world are showing renewed interest in a lowered voting age. To be sure, the vast majority of countries now hold to 18 as the age of voter eligibility. Exceptions include Croatia where working 15 year-olds may vote, Austria and Germany where some states have given the vote to 16 year olds in municipal elections, and Israel which sets the municipal franchise at 17. It is therefore not unusual for municipalities to have a lower voting age than prevails at the national level of their country. At least one American city has voted to go the same route. In 2002 the city council of Cambridge, Mass. voted to extend the civic vote to 17 year olds. The state legislature however, has yet to ratify the request (Frank 2004).

Yet the campaign to lower the voting age seems to be broadening. Everywhere, it is prompted by a desire to have youth more engaged in the political process. Britain has a national campaign underway, titled Votes at 16, to achieve this goal. A major recent national task force established to renew democratic life in Britain, has recommended lowering the voting age to 16 (Rowntree Charitable Trust 2005: 23). In the United States, the National Youth Rights Association is leading a national campaign to lower the voting age. More locally, in Florida there is a state-wide initiative to hold a plebiscite on lowering the voting age to 16. A uniquely different spin has been proposed in California, where a Bill before the state legislature would give youths under 18 an under-weighted vote. Bearing the clever, though patronizing title 'Training Wheels For Democracy', the proposal is for 14 and 15 year olds to cast a ballot that would be 'counted' as a 1/4 the weight of an adult vote; and 16 and 17 year olds would have their votes count for 1/2 the adult value of those 18 and older (Goodman 2004).

In Canada too there are many organizations and campaigns aimed at bringing younger people into the electoral process. Most promising perhaps is the grass-roots, youth-led organization Student Vote which since 2003 has organized simulated voting in high schools across Canada for federal and provincial elections. At the 2006 federal election 468,000 students at 2500



schools across the country cast ballots for the federal party of their choice (Student Vote 2006). More restrictive has been the verdict of Canadian courts and Parliament. A court challenge by two Alberta teenagers in 2004 contended that voting eligibility at 18 years of age violated their Charter-protected democratic rights. The Alberta Court of Appeal ruled against them. Also in 2004, MP Mark Holland introduced a private member's bill in Parliament to extend the right to vote to 16 and 17 year-olds. The objective, Holland declared, was "so that young people could learn to be active electors while they are still in school" (CPRN 2005). However in June 2005 Holland's Bill was defeated in a parliamentary vote.

Such setbacks however are unlikely to close the campaign to lower the voting age. From a social inclusion perspective, lowering the voting age has its appeal. Youth disengagement from the political system comes at a cost. Youth issues fail to receive adequate attention, youth lose confidence in the political system, and the legitimacy of civic institutions is undermined. Additionally of course, the enthusiasm and ideas of youth are diluted from our political life. There are no quick fixes to raising voting rates among Canada's youth. However promoting it, teaching it – and doing it – while in high school might well bring more youth to the polls. As of the 2001 census, the City of Toronto was home to 57,000 sixteen and seventeen year olds. This is a sizable cohort whose final years of high school could be training in political participation.

## Extending Municipal Voting Rights for Non-Canadian Urban Residents

The Toronto ICC civic panel's report advocates civic voting rights for all residents of Toronto regardless of their citizenship status. This recommendation allies Toronto with 26 countries which currently extend voting rights to non-citizens. In Toronto's case, the large number of non-citizen residents makes this a particularly pressing issue. By way of statistical context: in 2001, 49% of the City of Toronto's 2.45 million residents were foreign-born, and fully 21% of the City's population had migrated to Canada during the previous decade alone. Non-citizen residents of Toronto may be classified in 3 categories.

1. Those eligible for citizenship who have not naturalized. Canada's 2001 census revealed that 84% of all immigrants eligible for citizenship (having fulfilled the 3 year residency requirement) had indeed become Canadian. The remaining 16% may not have claimed Canadian citizenship for any number of reasons, including: uncertainty over whether to stay permanently in Canada, loss of homeland citizenship if that state does not permit dual citizenship, continued emotional ties to homeland, lack of attachment to Canada, aversion to the cost and effort required of naturalization.
2. Those recent immigrants not yet eligible for citizenship. Each year Toronto typically welcomes over 50,000 immigrants. Until they have lived in the country for 3 years they are not eligible for citizenship.
3. Non-status migrants ineligible for citizenship. Estimates of their numbers in Canada run as high as 200,000, with half residing in the Toronto area (Wright 2004).

Based on these statistics, a conservative extrapolation suggests that there are 263,000 permanent residents of the City of Toronto aged 18 or older who are denied the right to vote because they are not Canadian citizens<sup>1</sup>. By virtue of owning or renting their homes, they all pay property taxes. Many work and contribute to the city's economic well-being. Many have children in the school system and use a host of municipal services. And yet they are barred from voting at any level of government. A surprisingly large number of countries currently handle non-citizen voting rights very differently.

Today, at least 26 countries in the world (including Canada!) provide for some measure of non-citizen voting rights. Of the countries currently permitting non-citizens the right to vote, 15 are in Europe (Austria, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and the United Kingdom); 5 are in South America (Bolivia, Chile, Columbia, Uruguay and Venezuela); 2 are in the Caribbean (Barbados and Belize); 2 are in North America (Canada and the United States); 1 in Australasia (New Zealand), and 1 in the Middle East (Israel).

As David Earnest notes in a fine review article on the subject, there is no common formula across these 26 states for the rules under which non-citizen voting rights are exercised (Earnest 2003). The scope and scale of such rights vary in different countries. Scope refers to which non-citizens are eligible to vote: all or only a carefully prescribed sub-set? The majority of countries extend the franchise to all resident non-citizens, without privileging or excluding particular countries or identities of origin. Scale refers to the level of government election at which the non-citizens may vote. In the vast majority of cases, this right is limited to local/municipal elections – and not extended to the national election arena. As Earnest concludes: “The most common form of resident-alien voting rights today is a nondiscriminatory right to vote in local elections only” (Earnest 2003: 11).

Clearly, therefore, many precedents exist for countries to have differing voting eligibility principles municipally than at other levels. In some countries it is individual municipalities which take the lead in extending their franchise. Examples include Austria, where Vienna has recently extended the vote to all resident non-citizens, and the United States. There, resident aliens in New York and Chicago with children in public schools can vote for school board elections,

**Extending voting rights to non-citizens is one way of signaling recognition and belonging to newcomers.**

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<sup>1</sup> This figure is derived as follows. The City of Toronto receives approximately 50,000 newcomers per year. With a three year residency requirement for citizenship, this means 150,000 residents are not Canadian. Then, from the City's total of 1,214,000 foreign-born residents as of the year 2001, subtract the 150,000 just counted as arriving within the prior three years. This leaves a total of 1,064,000 foreign born who have been in the City for more than three years and thus are eligible for citizenship. Of this total 194,000 (16% as cited earlier) had not claimed Canadian citizenship. Finally, accepting the estimate of 200,000 non-status migrants in Canada, half of whom are in the Toronto city-region, assume (conservatively) that half the GTA non-status population resides in the City of Toronto. This yields 50,000 non-status permanent residents in the City. Therefore, the total number of non-Canadian permanent residents in Toronto in 2001 was 394,000 – 16% of the City population, or almost 1 in every 6 residents. Of course, since many of these non-Canadian residents are under the age of 18, they would not have the right to vote even if they were citizens. According to the 2001 census, 66.8% of all immigrants in the City of Toronto were 18 years or older. This percentage of our 394,000 total yields our projection of 263,000 permanent residents of the City of Toronto currently denied the right to vote because they are non-citizens.



and at least 6 towns in the State of Maryland have given resident aliens the right to vote in any civic election (Earnest 2003: 6-7). More typically for the 26 countries identified earlier, it is the

national government which authorizes all non-citizens to vote in every municipality -- but not at the national level. Most of the European countries cited above conform to this model.

...two provinces continue to permit non-Canadian British subjects to vote in provincial elections. Saskatchewan made grand-parenting provisions for lifelong voting rights for all non-Canadian British subjects living in the province who held the vote back in 1971. More significant is the case of Nova Scotia, where non-Canadian British subjects from 54 different countries continue to have the vote in provincial elections.

Several factors explain this pattern of a broadened municipal franchise for non-citizens. Countries typically now have more migrants than ever, and immigrants overwhelmingly settle in urban areas. Acquiring citizenship through naturalization is easy in some countries, difficult in others. All immigrant-receiving countries strive to achieve successful/productive integration of newcomers into their society. Extending voting rights to non-citizens is one way of signaling recognition and belonging to newcomers. Confining this right to the municipal level safely avoids the perceived problematic of competing national loyalties on the part of non-citizen voters.

Still, some countries today go considerably further in extending non-citizen voting rights to elections at all

levels of government. The current world leader in this regard is New Zealand, which since 1975 has given all immigrants (whether New Zealand citizens or not!) the right to vote in municipal and national elections after one year of residency in the country. Is New Zealand the wave of the future? Certainly, it is in the forefront of honouring an important past international undertaking. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948 (drafted by a Canadian, signed by Canada, and recognized by an annual Human Rights Day) emphasized the significance of universalized political rights. Article 21 of the Declaration states: "Everyone has the right to take part in the government of his country, directly or through freely chosen representatives." Significantly this right is intended not only for 'citizens', but for 'everyone'. Clearly, the spirit and letter of international law and human rights would support wider voting rights.

Canada's own record on the matter is interesting. Canadian citizenship formally came into existence 80 years after Confederation, in 1947. Before then, persons born in Canada were considered British subjects. Canada's colonial roots left a surprisingly long legacy of non-citizen voting rights in this country. First, as noted, there was no such thing as Canadian citizenship until 1947. Since voting rights in the Dominion of Canada were held by British subjects, Canadian residents born in Britain or other parts of the Empire automatically held voting rights here. (For much of our history, discriminatory immigration admission policies assured that very few non-white British subjects could enter Canada and exercise the franchise.) It was only in 1970 that Canada's election law was revised to reserve the right to vote for Canadian citizens. British subjects already in the country could retain the vote until 1975, at which time they must have become Canadian or must forfeit the franchise.

Meanwhile the provinces of Canada retained control over voter eligibility in their own jurisdiction – including all municipalities. Some provinces bucked the federal trend and retained voting rights for citizens of Commonwealth countries. This became problematic after Canada's Charter of Rights and Freedoms was passed in 1982. Section 15 of the Charter guarantees equality under the law, and prohibits discrimination based on a person's national origin. This led Ontario in

1985 to revoke the voting rights of non-Canadian British subjects in provincial and municipal elections (Hansard 1985). Interestingly, however, two provinces continue to permit non-Canadian British subjects to vote in provincial elections. Saskatchewan made grand-parenting provisions for lifelong voting rights for all non-Canadian British subjects living in the province who held the vote back in 1971. More significant is the case of Nova Scotia, where non-Canadian British subjects from 54 different countries continue to have the vote in provincial elections.

Nowhere in Canada however is there a municipality operating with a more permissive non-citizen voting regime than its province. This is now out of touch with key realities of urban life in Canada. Few countries in the world are as 'hyper-urbanized' as Canada, and few countries are so dependent on immigration for recent urban growth. Fully 33% of the country's total population lives in just three urban regions – Toronto, Montreal and Vancouver. Such overwhelming demographic concentration in just a few cities is rare, and it is significantly driven by immigrant settlement patterns. Between 1991 and 2001, (Canada's largest sustained decade of newcomer arrivals), these 3 city regions attracted 73% of all immigrants to Canada. The Toronto area alone attracted 43% of all immigrants to Canada in this period.

Yet Canadian municipalities lack fundamental rights of self-rule. Not even our largest cities can set their own electoral eligibility rules. It is time they did so. Our governments should follow the lead of over two dozen countries and extend voting rights to other non-citizen residents. There are several compelling reasons to do so. These include:

- Giving a political voice and rights to hundreds of thousands of disenfranchised current residents and taxpayers.
- Making local government more accountable to its residents.
- Promoting the integration and attachment of newcomers into Toronto.
- Preventing the marginalization and isolation of newcomers from civic institutions.
- Promoting the importance of issues affecting newcomers – e.g. credential recognition, ESL learning opportunities, regularization of citizenship, etc.
- Promoting respect and recognition for immigrants in Toronto. This point was well expressed to The Toronto Star by Mayor Michael Conaghan of Dublin, Ireland as he described how immigrants there feel about being able to vote in the city's election before they become citizens: "They like the idea of being asked for their vote. They feel a part of the city, and I think that's important because some of them will become citizens. And even if they don't, they're going to be living here. I suppose they feel they're not being dismissed" (Young 2005).

Some might counter that immigrants should earn the right to vote by first becoming Canadian citizens. This implies demonstrating sufficient patriotism and loyalty to Canada, before rights can be conferred. While there is a logic behind this position, it is an argument from the past that less and less serves the interests of either Toronto, Canada or newcomers themselves.

- Many permanent residents will never become Canadian citizens – either because it will compromise their homeland citizenship or because under present rules they are non-status residents who cannot become citizens.

- At any given time many residents are not yet eligible for citizenship because they have not fulfilled the requisite residency requirement.
- Globalization, migration, trans-nationalism and diasporic dispersion are re-defining voting rights around the world. Many countries now extend the vote to their own citizens living abroad, even if they also hold another citizenship and vote in that country. With dual citizenship, countries no longer have a monopoly on the 'membership' of their citizens. And as we have seen, a growing number of countries allow non-citizen residents in their own country to vote. This stretches de facto citizenship to those living in the city and contributing to its daily life.
- 'Urban citizenship' should be recognized as a distinct and important aspect of immigrant attachment to their new society. By extending civic voting rights to non-citizen residents, the host society signals a desire to welcome and integrate newcomers. For many newcomers this extension of 'fast-track' belonging rights will nurture commitment to Canada.
- As cities increasingly become home to the world's migrants, economic and social advantage will go to cities able to fully harness the talent and dedication of immigrants. Canadian cities face a choice. They can continue to accept political participation rules based on their own residents' national citizenship. This will continue to disenfranchise many urban residents – even when they declare a strong desire to participate. A compelling recent example involved a request by a Mississauga, Ontario resident – a longtime non-citizen, permanent resident – to serve on a municipal committee of council. The council refused because the applicant had chosen not to become a Canadian citizen. As Mississauga mayor Hazel McCallion complained: "The citizenship of your former country is more precious to you than the one you're living in. That really bothers me." Another member of Mississauga Council, Councillor Nando Iannicca rejected the resident's request, complaining it was wrong for immigrants to treat Canada as a "buffet table, taking all the rights and privileges and good things" (Funston 2006: A19). This approach is one option available to cities. The other option is to recognize non-citizen residents as municipal taxpayers and as members of the civic community. Their global experience, knowledge and networks can contribute to the municipality's success. Extending political participation rights to them will strengthen their attachment to Canada and their Canadian hometown. Ironically, the time has come to go 'back to the future'. The western concept of citizenship began as a municipal attachment to the city-state, in ancient Greece. Now, with global migration increasingly creating a world of 'transnational urbanism', the momentum is growing to re-define cities as sites of citizenship in their own right.

## Making the Extended Municipal Franchise Work

There is a paradoxical challenge to making an extended municipal franchise work. The Inclusive Cities Canada report and this study advocate expanded voting rights for youth and immigrants. Yet evidence clearly shows that voter participation among these groups already lags badly behind the average election turn-out rate. In other words, youths and immigrants

who presently do hold the right to vote are far less likely to exercise their franchise than older, Canadian-born voters. Some suggest therefore that further extending the franchise to even younger voters, and to non-citizen migrants, would only result in the overall voter turn-out at elections plummeting even further.

This is a serious critique of the extended franchise. Would broadening the franchise result in greater cynicism and disinterest regarding elections as ever greater percentages of eligible voters stayed away from the polls? Much would depend, this section of the paper argues, on the conditions under which the right to vote was expanded. Before addressing this, let us review the current state of voter participation among youth and immigrants.

Across western states – including Canada – voter participation among youth has been in a protracted decline since the mid-1980s. In Canada, a study determined that 25% of youth aged 18-24 had voted in the 2000 federal election. This compared with 61% turn-out for all eligible voters. Yet interestingly, youth turn-out rose dramatically to 38% in the subsequent 2004 election (Galloway 2004). A variety of interventions aimed at boosting youth turn-out at the 2004 election proved effective. These included: effective media ads targeted at youth, direct personal mailings from Elections Canada to all youth who had turned 18 since the previous election, and perhaps the successful impact of the Student Vote campaign to raise electoral participation among high school students, discussed earlier.

**...the exercise of the municipal franchise is highly polarized based on such criteria as immigrant and visible minority status, mother tongue, income and geography.**

The implication in all this is that voter turn-out rates are not static. They can drop sharply – and they can bounce back, if the interventions and prompts are right. If done properly, lowering the voting age to 16 has the potential to sustain dramatic increases in voter participation. Nesting the right to vote in senior years of high school would allow electoral participation to be promoted through such means as: civics curriculum, all-candidates meetings in schools, and – most important – election day polling stations in high schools. Toronto and Canada need to invest in a public culture that promotes political participation and voting. Political participation can be a learned experience. Lowering the voting age and developing a series of high-school-based initiatives to promote political awareness and participation could stimulate and seed civic engagement to last a lifetime.

Turning now to patterns of immigrant voter turn-out in Toronto, there is compelling and troubling quantitative evidence of immigrant disengagement from the city's electoral system.

Grounded in qualitative research, the Toronto ICC report identified a 'key weakness' of civic engagement in the City to be "[l]ow voter turnouts reported in municipal elections from lower income and less advantaged groups" (Report: 22). The data we now present depicts a systemic pattern of disparities in voter participation in Toronto rooted in the identity and neighbourhood of City residents.

Traditionally, barely one third of eligible voters cast their ballot in Toronto municipal elections. There are many reasons for this low participation rate. As we noted earlier, part of the problem

is an 'inflated' voters list, padded with non-resident voters who will rarely cast a ballot. An additional deterrent to voting may well be a public perception of the relative unimportance of municipal government. Finally too, it must be noted that the municipal election system itself can be baffling: the lack of political parties makes candidate identification difficult, few voters can be expected to know the track record or background of candidates for office, and the municipal ballot itself can be intimidating with its multiple positions and candidates. Clearly, there must be a variety of factors at play for municipal voter turn-out to be 'stuck' at such a low threshold election after election.

Yet as the tables and map below demonstrate, the exercise of the municipal franchise is highly polarized based on such criteria as immigrant and visible minority status, mother tongue, income and geography. Our findings are drawn from matching two data sets for Toronto's neighbourhoods. For planning and service delivery purposes, the City of Toronto has formally divided its population and its territory into 140 neighbourhoods. Detailed demographic information on all neighbourhoods is available from the 2001 census. In the last municipal election in 2003, Toronto conducted balloting at some 1500 polling stations across the City. By overlaying the location of polling districts onto neighbourhoods, we were able to establish both voter turn-out percentages and key demographic characteristics for each neighbourhood.<sup>2</sup>

Neighbourhoods are the smallest geographic scale at which voter participation and voter demographics may be correlated. Our findings convey two important messages. First, that within the same municipality voter participation varies enormously by neighbourhood. And second, that factors such as immigrant and visible minority status, mother tongue and income correlate dramatically with rates of voter participation. Simply stated, our results show that the higher a neighbourhood's immigrant and visible minority population, the higher its non-English mother tongue population, the higher its low-income population, the lower its voter turn-out at elections will be. And the scale of disparities based on these factors is large!

In 2003, voter turn-out in Toronto's civic election (excluding advance poll ballots), was 38.3%. Tables 4 and 5 at the end of this paper list respectively the lowest and highest 20 Toronto neighbourhoods by % voter turnout. The participation range across all 140 city neighbourhoods ranged from a low of 24.2% in Mount Olive-Silverstone-Jamestown to a high of 54.1% in Kingsway South. Interestingly, both are located in the Etobicoke area of Toronto. The lowest 20 neighborhoods in Toronto averaged a turnout rate of 28.3%. The top 20 neighbourhoods averaged a 46.7% turn-out rate. To put these percentages into perspective, had the turn-out in the 20 lowest participating neighbourhoods matched the rate of the top 20 neighbourhoods, more than 66,000 additional ballots would have been cast. Immigrants, visible minorities and lower income persons constitute most of these 'missing voters'. This is evident from a comparison of the population characteristics of the top and lowest voter participation neighbourhoods, in Table I on the next page.

Table I reveals how identity, class and geography intersect with voter turnout in Toronto. Neighbourhoods with the highest voter turn-out have: relatively few immigrants, few visible minorities, few non-citizens, few hi-rise apartment dwellers, few non-English Mother Tongue speakers and their residents earn well above average incomes. Conversely, neighbourhoods with the lowest voter turnout are characterized by: large numbers of immigrants, visible minorities and non-citizens, many residents without English as a Mother Tongue, many residents living in hi-rise apartments and many low income households. Indeed it is striking how few of the neighbour-

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<sup>2</sup> I am grateful to the City of Toronto for providing data on neighbourhoods, polling districts and voter turn-out on which Tables and the Map in this paper are based.



hoods in Toronto defy these generalizations. Thus of the 20 top voter turn-out neighbourhoods, not one has more immigrants or visible minorities than the city's average. Conversely, only 2 of the bottom 20 neighbourhoods by turn-out had fewer immigrants or visible minorities than the city's average. One in particular merits comment – the Bay Street Corridor which ranked 134th out of 140 neighbourhoods with a 28.15% voter turn-out. Here the low voter turn-out among non-resident property holders is the chief factor at play. This downtown central business district neighbourhood has by far the highest proportion of non-resident voters of any neighbourhood because all its office/retail units confer a vote their owners or tenants and spouses. This serves 'artificially' to drive down the voter turn-out percentage.

**Table 1. Neighbourhood and Demographic Characteristics of Voter Turn-out in Toronto's 2003 Municipal Election**

Neighbourhood Characteristics	Top 20 Neighbourhoods	Lowest 20 Neighbourhoods	City Average
Average % Voter Turn-Out	46.7%	28.3%	38.3%
Average % Immigrants	29.9%	61.3%	49.4%
Average % Recent Immigrants 1991-2001	7.5%	29.2%	21%
Average % Visible Minority	32.2%	63.9%	42.8%
Average % Non-Citizens	7.4%	21%	16%
Average % Non-Official Mother Tongue	24.4%	55.2%	46.8%
Median % Residents in Hi-Rise 5 Floors or More	27.9%	44.9%	34.7
Average Household Income	\$103,757	\$51,762	\$71,415

Toronto's disparities in electoral participation also display striking geographic polarization. Table 2 below shows the location of the City's highest and lowest voting neighbourhoods based on their pre-amalgamation municipality. The former central city of Toronto had half (10) of the top 20 voting neighbourhoods in 2003. Etobicoke also stands out with 4 neighbourhoods in the top 20 list. At the low end of voting participation, North York led with 6 neighbourhoods, the former Toronto had 5, Scarborough had 4 and despite its modest total population, York had 3.

The geographic disparity which emerges is that the former Toronto and Etobicoke had twice as many neighbourhoods at the high end of voting than at the low end. Conversely, North York and York had three times as many low end to high end neighbourhoods, and Scarborough twice the low to high end. These geographic polarizations are captured in Map I at the end of this paper,

**Table 2. Location of Top & Lowest Voter Turn-Out Neighbourhoods, by Pre-Amalgamation Area**

Voter Turn-Out	Toronto	North York	Scarborough	Etobicoke	York	East York
Top 20 Neighbourhoods	10	2	2	4	1	1
Lowest 20 Neighbourhoods	5	6	4	2	3	0

which shows voter turnout across the current amalgamated City of Toronto. In Toronto, voting turn-out patterns mirror the mapping of immigrant, visible minority and income distribution.

Similar patterns reveal themselves at two other scales we have studied – the municipal ward level at municipal elections and the provincial constituency level at Ontario elections. Toronto's 140 neighbourhoods are located within 44 City wards for municipal election purposes, and within 22 constituencies for provincial election purposes. Table 3 below identifies voter turnout in the 2003 Toronto civic election in the 5 wards with the highest and lowest percentage of immigrants. Again we see the striking pattern that the rate of voter turnout is consistently and significantly lower in wards with greater proportions of immigrants. In the extreme case of wards 16 and 42, the differential is more than 20%, meaning the low immigrant ward will send 2 more voters to the polls for every 10 eligible electors.

A regression analysis of factors influencing voter turnout across all 44 City wards in the 2003 election confirmed identity as the most powerful determining variable. Voter participation rates were compared for all 44 wards, with reference to a variety of ward characteristics such as household income and the proportion of residents who were tenants, held university degrees, belonged to visible minority groups and were immigrants. By far the strongest correlations were immigrant and visible minority status, functioning inversely so that turnout declined as these identity characteristics increased.

Nor are these patterns confined to municipal elections. One month before Torontonians voted in their 2003 local elections, they were called to vote in the October 2003 Ontario provincial election. Table 6 at the end of this paper ranks all 103 Ontario electoral constituencies in order of their voter turnout in 2003. The table also provides key geographic, demographic and socio-economic characteristics for each constituency drawn from the 2001 census. And at the provincial scale as well we see immigrant status loom large as a determinant of electoral participation. Predictably, the City of Toronto's 22 provincial constituencies cluster at the high end of the continuum of immigrant concentration among Ontario's 103 ridings. These 22 City constituencies rank from number 1 to number 31 in order of immigrant concentration across all Ontario ridings. And when it comes to voter turnout, Toronto's constituencies cluster more at the low than high end. As Table 6 shows, in the 2003 Ontario election, among the 30 constituencies with the highest rate of voter turn-out, only 1 was located in the City of Toronto. Conversely, 11 of the 30 constituencies with the lowest voter turn-out were located in the City. Given far higher rates of immigrant settlement in Toronto than in the rest of Ontario, the implication is clear. The voice of newcomers and minorities – and therefore the voice of Toronto – is muted in the critical realm of provincial decision-making.

A regression analysis of factors correlating with voter turnout in all 103 ridings found that provincially, voter identity trumped all other variables. The higher a constituency's immigrant, visible minority and non-English mother tongue population, the lower its voter turnout tended to be. Interestingly, other variables long presumed to correlate with electoral participation – income, university education or total size of constituency had minimal bearing on voter turnout. Overall, then, our findings demonstrate that Toronto has a serious problem of voter dis-engagement by those who currently do hold the municipal franchise. This is especially prevalent among our citizens who hold overlapping identities of immigrant status, visible minority status and non-English mother tongue. What then are the prospects of non-citizen permanent residents actually exercising the franchise if it were extended to them? To be sure, many of these non-citizen residents would likely be 'at risk voters': all are immigrants, many are visible minority, many are lower income earners, and many live in neighbourhoods where voting is especially low. In the absence of pro-active voter engagement strategies by civic and community institutions, the effect of extending the franchise to non-citizen residents would likely be to lower the city's overall voter turn-out rate even further. More positively however, the adoption of voting promotion measures for this group would have a beneficial impact on all under-voting groups, by engendering a more participatory civic culture.

**Table 3: Voter Turn-out, Toronto Municipal Election 2003, By Wards With Highest and Lowest % Immigrants**

Ward Number and Location by Pre-Amalgamation Area	Percentage of Immigrants In Ward	Percentage Voter Turnout
<b>Five Wards With Highest % Immigrants</b>		
41 Scarborough	69.4%	30.8%
39 Scarborough	68.3%	33%
33 North York	65.1	35.9%
8 North York	62.7	29.9%
42 Scarborough	62.2%	29.5%*
<b>Five Wards With Lowest % Immigrants</b>		
16 Toronto	25.9%	50.9%**
32 Toronto	26.3%	44.9%
22 Toronto	30.9%	45.9%
25 North York	34.7%	47.1%
27 Toronto	36.2	39.1%
CITY-WIDE	49.4	38.3%

\* Lowest % Voter Turn-Out in City    \*\* Highest % Voter Turn-Out in City

Source: Statistics Canada, 2001 Census; City Clerk, City of Toronto, Number of Spoiled Ballots in the 2003 Election and an Automatic Recount Mechanism, June 14, 2004.



## Getting From Here to There

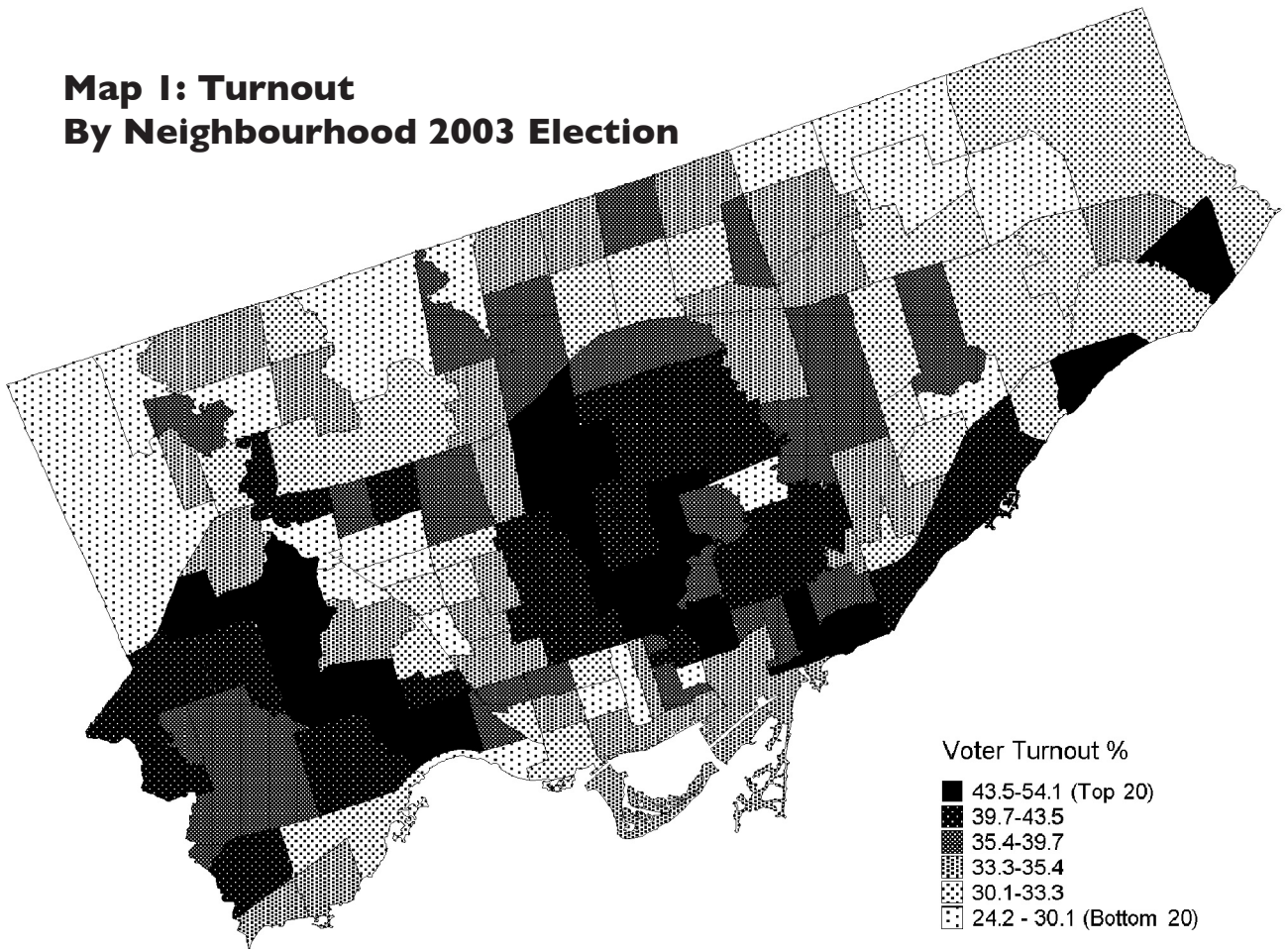
Actions to promote voter participation include:

- An active neighbourhood-based campaign, through local libraries and community centres, to promote awareness of municipal government institutions and issues. Multi-lingual materials should be distributed.
- A multi-lingual promotional campaign to encourage voting in the year leading up to municipal election day. This could take advantage of information distribution through community organizations, ads and posters in various municipal facilities and communications media.
- A tangible neighbourhood incentive to boost voter turn-out. The city should commit bonus funds for the 10 neighbourhoods which register the highest voter turn-out each election, and the 10 which register the greatest increase over the previous election. This would take the form of bonus funds to be spent on local libraries or parks.
- City council must declare current voter participation rates unacceptably low, and then set targets and strategies for achieving higher turnout.
- The city should investigate introducing electronic voting from home or work.
- The lack of candidates from diverse communities for elected office may be a factor in minimizing voter participation. Diverse communities and their organizations should move to support more candidates for public office.
- Perhaps most important, immigrant and visible minority communities need a political set of policies and goals to vote for. Toronto's diverse communities should organize a "New Voices" assembly charged with establishing a policy platform addressing issues of particular concern to newcomers and racialized minorities in Toronto. Discussions would also address the wider range of 'political' mobilization – beyond voting --available to achieve desired results. These would include lobbying, protesting, forming organizations, etc.
- Elections can be ritualistic and detached from the real concerns of everyday life. The greatest challenge Toronto faces in maximizing the power of the municipal franchise is not the unavailability of the vote – but its under-utilization by those who do possess it. If they had something to vote for, they would come.

The City of Toronto is poised for new municipal powers. A new City of Toronto Act has now been enacted by the Province of Ontario, providing greater autonomy and powers for the City in governing its own affairs. In both its spirit and letter, the new statute creates latitude for the City to broaden the right to vote municipally. The Act "provides that the City's powers are to be interpreted broadly", and further enables the City to "provide any service or thing that the City considers necessary or desirable for the public" (City of Toronto Act 2005: i) The Act further declares: "The City is authorized to make changes to its governance structure" (City of Toronto Act 2005: ii) And perhaps most significantly, the Act states in Clause 125 (1), that the City of Toronto will retain its status as a corporation "that is composed of the inhabitants of its geographic area" (City of Toronto Act 2005: 73).

In the City of Toronto Act, the people who 'compose' Toronto are not defined by their age nor by their national citizenship. Rather, they are defined by residency within the City's boundaries. What an interesting experiment of civic engagement and inclusion we will have when Toronto City Council extends the municipal franchise to all permanent residents 16 years and older – including non-Canadian citizens.

**Map I: Turnout  
By Neighbourhood 2003 Election**



**Table 4. Lowest 20 Neighbourhoods by % Voter Turnout, 2003 Toronto Municipal Election**

Turn-out Rank	Neighbourhood	Former City	Total		% Immigrant	% Recent Immigrant	% Visible Minority	% Non-citizen	%		Mean HH Income \$							
			Eligible Voters	% Voted					Non-official MT	% Highrise Dwellings								
140	Mount Olive-Silverstone-Jamestown	Et	20941	24.22	62.72	14	35.70	9	77.14	6	26.17	8	52.21	42	61.0	21	47935	119
139	Mount Dennis	Yk	10369	25.61	56.31	39	26.63	33	60.31	29	21.91	22	45.79	63	49.9	33	46368	127
138	Malvern	Sc	30331	27.55	61.67	17	27.96	32	81.59	3	16.03	66	42.69	76	23.5	93	63282	62
137	York University Heights	NY	16317	27.96	61.54	54	29.43	23	57.74	77	26.11	9	55.25	33	29.7	69	52365	104
136	Agincourt North	Sc	16134	27.97	69.55	4	34.01	14	82.49	2	15.84	68	67.87	4	18.6	104	68731	43
135	Beechborough-Greenbrook	Yk	13332	28.02	52.54	61	20.44	58	49.31	46	17.26	53	43.15	73	27.7	74	43438	134
134	Bay Street Corridor	To	19912	28.15	44.45	87	21.30	53	43.98	57	21.10	26	39.62	87	96.6	2	68702	44
133	Kensington-Chinatown	To	14296	28.36	54.57	51	24.77	40	64.49	18	21.05	28	58.35	27	48.2	38	48263	117
132	Milliken	NY	18997	28.50	73.57	1	37.84	8	90.73	1	15.42	70	72.12	2	25.4	84	64453	57
131	Westminster-Branson	NY	14754	28.51	69.19	71	41.18	6	21.97	47	29.58	5	35.88	100	60.7	22	45545	130
130	West Humber-Clairville	Et	20787	28.83	57.39	5	22.17	48	70.23	10	16.68	59	65.65	6	78.2	8	52696	100
129	Humbermede	NY	17182	28.96	57.33	32	25.33	38	59.42	28	20.04	38	57.64	29	35.2	63	48876	116
128	Flemington Park	NY	7223	29.02	71.33	3	41.88	4	76.14	7	28.78	6	68.33	3	80.9	6	47121	123
127	South Parkdale	To	16540	29.03	55.48	47	29.28	24	55.52	40	25.22	11	53.21	39	62.4	15	35815	137
126	Weston	Yk	10176	29.05	47.34	44	22.13	49	46.95	62	18.08	47	61.82	14	14.1	111	47042	124
125	Weston-Pellam Park	To	6861	29.40	55.52	77	16.22	83	37.26	61	27.91	7	39.06	92	18.7	103	59076	80
124	Brookhaven-Amesbury	NY	8815	29.64	56.14	40	25.87	37	59.88	26	23.05	16	51.91	47	58.0	24	45874	128
123	Eglinton East	Sc	14302	29.85	57.19	33	29.80	21	62.13	20	19.89	39	45.04	67	63.1	13	49764	115
122	Regent Park	To	8117	29.88	58.45	26	37.94	7	79.42	5	21.17	25	62.48	10	54.9	30	30151	140
121	Steeles	Sc	18156	30.08	72.30	2	33.04	15	81.16	4	14.94	77	73.67	1	35.0	64	69749	40
Total Bottom 20			303542	28.26	61.31		29.15		63.87		21.00		55.15		44.9		51762	
Toronto			38.33	49.4			21.00		42.80		16.0		46.8		34.7		71415	

**Table 5: Top 20 Neighbourhoods by %Voter Turnout, 2003 Toronto Municipal Election**

Turn-out Rank	Neighbourhood	Former City	% Voted	Total Eligible Voters	% Immigrant	% Recent Immigrant	% Visible Minority	% Non-citizen	% Non-official MT	% Highrise Dwellings	Mean HH Income \$					
1	Kingsway South	Et	54.06	4369	21.29	137	2.29	140	3.34	140	21.49	129	8.4	124	159192	5
2	Leaside-Bennington	EY	53.57	8842	19.00	138	2.79	139	4.14	139	11.56	138	8.4	125	118657	11
3	Lawrence Park North	To	53.14	12472	22.14	136	4.11	135	5.30	136	14.64	136	3.1	134	130184	9
4	Lawrence Park South	To	51.27	4519	18.99	139	3.65	138	5.11	137	11.01	139	10.4	120	182989	3
5	Runnymede-Bloor West Village	T/Y	48.67	7754	32.36	120	4.14	134	5.36	134	34.35	101	0.1	138	78762	31
6	Guildwood	Sc	48.37	8116	32.60	119	5.23	132	5.62	133	18.52	132	27.9	72	76440	33
7	North Riverdale	To	47.23	10374	31.56	123	7.22	124	8.41	119	29.91	113	13.0	113	80314	28
8	Lambton-Baby Point	Yk	46.79	7515	36.27	109	9.51	114	6.45	128	32.72	107	23.3	94	89280	23
9	High Park-Swansea	To	46.71	17774	34.41	114	7.31	123	6.55	127	33.06	105	20.4	99	80028	29
10	Yonge-St. Clair	To	46.57	10796	28.19	18	7.89	121	8.80	115	56.24	31	55.4	28	47436	121
11	Willowridge-Martingrove-Westview	Et	46.27	13948	48.42	38	18.54	66	15.02	74	47.43	57	47.3	41	53459	97
12	Yonge-Eglinton	To	45.81	11062	22.81	128	6.03	128	5.30	135	16.75	134	58.1	23	104987	16
13	The Beaches	To	45.42	22582	18.51	140	3.82	136	6.21	130	8.70	140	2.5	135	96645	18
14	Edenbridge-Humber Valley	Et	45.34	12659	39.17	101	12.85	98	10.97	104	40.79	83	30.9	67	116200	13
15	Bedford Park-Nortown	NY	44.94	18851	29.30	127	7.61	122	7.26	122	23.25	124	24.1	87	124568	10
16	Rosedale-Moore Park	To	44.76	10419	25.77	132	5.40	131	6.99	124	14.25	137	41.9	53	236029	2
17	Humber Heights	Et	44.52	10858	45.47	78	12.38	101	8.64	116	46.52	61	49.2	37	61642	66
18	Playter Estates-Danforth	To	43.96	10480	31.92	122	8.21	118	9.00	113	26.31	120	26.3	81	78374	32
19	Centennial Scarborough	Sc	43.79	9867	31.94	121	6.23	127	6.03	132	21.85	128	0.0	140	105019	15
20	Woodbine Corridor	To	43.48	7958	27.58	110	8.52	117	8.17	120	32.23	108	19.4	102	54937	96
Total Top 20			46.73	221215	29.91	747	7.47	32.19	7.39		24.43		27.9		103757	
Toronto			38.33		49.4	21.00	42.80	16.0	46.8		34.7				71415	

**Table 6: Ontario Electoral Constituencies in Rank Order of Voter Turnout, 2003 Ontario Election**

Geography	Voter Turnout		Total population		Registered/Population		Visible Minorities		Immigrant Population		Non-Official Mother Tongue		Pop. With Univ. Education		Average household income		Rented Dwellings	
	%	Rank	Pop.	Rank	%	Rank	%	Rank	%	Rank	%	Rank	%	Rank	\$	Rank	%	Rank
Huron - Bruce	66.46	1	93,460	90	70.23	55	1.11	96	8.91	87	7.37	85	9.54	88	56,671	68	21.64	77
Renfrew - Nipissing - Pembroke	63.97	2	96,415	87	71.19	49	1.58	87	5.66	98	5.10	91	10.05	85	50,591	94	25.32	60
Ancaster - Dundas - Flamborough - Aldershot	63.56	3	104,765	64	73.29	34	4.89	64	17.58	58	12.53	63	24.30	26	85,689	14	15.77	93
Ottawa South	63.39	4	118,475	28	67.17	77	27.69	27	29.19	36	27.72	34	30.24	13	68,554	34	44.73	21
Haliburton - Victoria - Brock	63.18	5	109,580	50	74.41	23	0.93	98	8.71	90	4.11	98	9.08	93	52,943	87	16.34	91
Bruce - Grey - Owen Sound	62.90	6	98,525	81	72.68	41	1.27	93	7.52	93	5.28	90	10.56	82	51,016	92	22.72	70
Peterborough	62.76	7	112,110	44	78.57	5	2.59	75	8.75	89	4.89	93	13.68	60	53,357	84	27.20	55
Nipissing	62.60	8	74,910	99	77.40	8	1.22	95	4.78	100	3.39	102	12.28	67	51,450	90	33.46	36
Etobicoke - Lakeshore	62.50	9	113,915	38	63.31	90	19.09	36	39.32	27	38.16	24	27.28	22	70,944	30	43.74	22
Oakville	62.31	10	104,105	66	69.88	60	10.39	51	27.53	38	18.86	47	29.87	15	104,431	2	23.27	67
Nepean - Carleton	62.23	11	126,630	14	74.66	22	10.31	52	15.69	60	12.53	62	28.29	18	93,944	7	12.98	97
Ottawa Centre	62.13	12	114,040	37	69.78	61	18.50	37	24.36	43	22.00	43	42.43	4	65,733	41	61.61	4
Leeds - Grenville	62.11	13	96,605	86	73.74	28	1.50	88	7.77	92	4.05	99	11.60	71	56,164	72	22.90	69
Stoney Creek	62.01	14	109,970	49	74.67	21	5.72	61	25.24	40	24.59	38	12.64	64	66,914	37	21.78	74
Nickel Belt	61.82	15	79,665	94	72.75	40	0.92	99	4.14	101	4.51	95	9.49	89	60,274	54	17.77	88
Burlington	61.51	16	101,990	76	74.73	20	7.01	57	21.20	49	12.04	64	21.66	38	77,916	26	28.54	51
Lanark - Carleton	61.42	17	138,400	9	71.45	46	7.85	56	13.10	72	9.35	79	22.70	35	80,278	20	17.23	90
Timiskaming - Cochrane †	61.15	18	69,900	103	73.20	36	0.89	100	3.43	103	2.46	103	7.18	102	45,801	102	25.87	58
Sault Ste. Marie †	61.10	19	74,565	100	77.59	7	1.27	92	11.75	76	11.79	65	13.07	63	51,038	91	29.88	48
Simcoe - Grey	60.85	20	123,785	18	67.66	74	1.93	84	11.42	78	6.93	88	11.56	73	64,209	44	18.58	85
Erie - Lincoln	60.85	21	98,310	82	70.56	52	2.26	79	14.01	67	10.03	77	9.88	86	55,436	78	20.31	79

Geography	Voter Turnout	Total population	Registered/Population	Visible Minorities	Immigrant Population	Non-Official Mother Tongue	Pop. With Univ. Education	Average household income	Rented Dwellings
Whitby - Ajax Suburban	60.40 22	128,165 12	73.23 35	12.70 43	19.67 55	10.93 70	16.93 47	79,966 21	18.95 84
Elgin - Middlesex - London Rural	60.32 23	103,690 68	69.89 59	2.31 78	14.43 64	13.60 60	9.45 91	60,205 55	22.92 68
Northumberland Rural	60.31 24	102,430 75	73.61 29	1.77 86	9.47 85	4.19 97	9.29 92	54,626 81	24.46 61
Simcoe North Rural	60.30 25	112,090 45	75.48 18	1.78 85	9.76 83	6.05 89	10.82 80	55,574 77	21.74 75
Niagara Centre Small City	60.25 26	104,140 65	75.32 19	3.76 70	14.76 63	12.59 61	13.86 58	57,102 64	24.08 62
Oxford Rural/Small City	60.22 27	99,270 79	71.35 48	2.09 80	11.05 79	10.08 76	8.75 96	59,196 57	26.21 57
Guelph - Wellington Small City	60.08 28	122,600 22	76.39 12	10.44 50	19.60 56	16.38 53	23.92 31	68,046 35	30.83 41
Parry Sound - Muskoka † Rural	60.03 29	85,375 93	75.80 16	0.73 103	7.94 91	4.78 94	11.28 77	49,444 97	19.46 81
London North Centre Inner City	60.02 30	107,685 57	77.38 9	11.48 47	20.69 50	17.98 48	24.19 27	54,546 82	50.33 12
Don Valley West Suburban	59.84 31	115,540 34	64.97 85	39.44 16	45.18 20	39.32 21	43.06 3	110,393 1	49.12 13
Lambton - Kent - Middlesex † Rural	59.75 32	98,875 80	70.10 57	1.49 89	10.30 81	8.57 82	7.56 101	55,930 76	19.72 80
Halton Suburban	59.73 33	154,030 5	76.17 14	8.98 54	19.73 54	13.93 59	24.05 29	96,303 6	12.43 100
Perth - Middlesex Rural/Small City	59.70 34	97,215 85	69.09 67	1.97 82	9.13 86	8.87 81	11.28 76	63,713 47	23.31 66
Pickering - Ajax - Uxbridge Suburban	59.62 35	137,515 10	66.87 79	25.49 29	27.20 39	14.22 57	18.11 46	90,280 9	11.72 101
Etobicoke North Suburban	59.52 36	118,585 27	63.48 89	60.79 5	55.67 7	47.84 12	15.09 51	57,369 62	41.82 25
Haldimand - Norfolk - Brant † Rural	59.38 37	101,565 78	72.81 38	1.39 91	11.57 77	10.77 72	8.56 98	58,602 58	18.49 86
Sarnia - Lambton Small City	59.34 38	88,330 92	73.43 31	2.89 74	12.73 74	7.75 84	11.39 75	58,046 60	27.71 54
Scarborough - Rouge River Suburban	59.21 39	126,375 15	56.92 98	82.74 1	66.01 1	57.42 3	21.86 37	66,666 39	25.86 59
Kitchener Centre Small City	59.06 40	112,505 42	84.17 1	10.45 49	24.95 42	23.45 40	14.84 52	56,495 70	40.45 29
Hamilton Mountain Suburban	58.96 41	111,330 46	69.67 62	13.06 41	25.00 41	22.44 42	10.58 81	56,991 65	28.51 52
Ottawa - Vanier Inner City	58.77 42	106,185 61	76.86 11	19.94 33	22.32 48	19.32 46	31.45 11	59,915 56	61.07 5



Geography	Voter Turnout	Total population	Registered/Population	Visible Minorities	Immigrant Population	Non-Official Mother Tongue	Pop. With Univ. Education	Average household income	Rented Dwellings
Hastings - Frontenac - Lennox and Addington	58.68 43	98,155 83	72.52 43	1.23 94	6.96 94	3.52 101	8.95 94	50,362 95	17.26 89
Dufferin - Peel - Wellington – Grey	58.50 44	127,675 13	69.37 64	3.63 71	14.85 62	11.47 68	14.43 57	79,844 22	14.76 94
Durham	58.40 45	122,100 23	71.45 47	4.17 69	12.80 73	7.32 86	11.99 70	73,948 27	14.68 96
York North	58.33 46	132,040 11	67.93 72	6.76 58	15.74 59	10.78 71	15.47 50	79,419 24	18.35 87
Vaughan - King - Aurora	58.20 47	164,590 3	69.32 65	11.93 46	32.67 33	39.02 22	20.47 42	98,705 4	8.84 103
St. Paul's	58.04 48	108,700 53	72.54 42	19.12 35	34.28 31	26.59 37	49.99 1	96,970 5	63.61 2
Eglinton - Lawrence	57.90 49	111,230 47	65.35 83	24.30 30	41.07 26	35.99 27	33.77 9	87,067 13	47.67 16
Algoma - Manitoulin †	57.83 50	73,400 101	70.80 51	1.06 97	6.41 96	7.01 87	8.55 99	46,175 101	23.99 63
Thornhill	57.78 51	116,840 32	68.08 71	28.88 26	46.41 15	41.86 19	35.58 8	101,175 3	14.70 95
Glengarry - Prescott - Russell	57.60 52	103,920 67	73.96 27	1.41 90	5.03 99	3.72 100	12.24 68	60,630 52	22.04 73
Niagara Falls	57.40 53	95,725 88	74.08 25	4.87 65	20.17 52	16.71 51	11.41 74	56,199 71	26.59 56
Timmins - James Bay †	57.30 54	71,645 102	73.61 30	0.89 101	3.56 102	8.18 83	8.38 100	53,180 85	31.48 40
Prince Edward - Hastings †	57.20 55	92,930 91	75.59 17	2.45 76	8.79 88	4.94 92	11.03 79	53,162 86	30.24 44
Mississauga South	56.89 56	101,635 77	68.35 70	18.27 38	33.49 32	28.40 33	23.65 32	84,742 15	32.96 38
Scarborough - Agincourt	56.60 57	114,410 56	65.10 84	68.92 2	63.81 2	59.70 2	23.95 30	60,476 53	36.77 32
London - Fanshawe	56.44 58	107,305 58	77.34 10	12.67 44	22.74 47	20.74 45	10.15 84	53,771 83	30.79 42
St. Catharines	56.43 59	103,680 69	75.80 15	6.35 59	20.68 51	16.59 52	13.42 61	52,588 88	33.24 37
Brant	56.14 60	109,015 52	73.06 37	4.52 68	13.24 69	10.50 74	10.24 83	55,935 75	29.97 46
Barrie - Simcoe - Bradford	56.03 61	154,945 4	70.48 53	4.66 66	13.18 70	9.10 80	11.19 78	64,774 43	23.36 65

Geography		Voter Turnout	Total population	Registered/Population	Visible Minorities	Immigrant Population	Non-Official Mother Tongue	Pop. With Univ. Education	Average household income	Rented Dwellings
		%	Pop.	%	%	%	%	%	\$	%
		Rank	Rank	Rank	Rank	Rank	Rank	Rank	Rank	Rank
Sudbury	Small City/ Northern	55.95 62	79,340 95	81.05 4	3.08 73	9.81 82	10.67 73	14.47 56	49,931 96	47.11 18
Toronto Centre - Rosedale	416 Inner City	55.86 63	122,900 20	56.83 99	41.57 15	42.96 22	36.71 26	44.91 2	84,340 17	71.69 1
Stormont - Dundas - Charlottenburgh †	Rural	55.78 64	94,270 89	73.30 33	2.37 77	6.42 95	4.48 96	8.65 97	50,714 93	30.08 45
Willowdale	416 Suburban	55.73 65	118,370 29	70.89 50	48.96 10	56.80 6	55.33 6	38.53 6	73,691 28	37.48 30
Chatham - Kent Essex	Rural/Small City	55.64 66	106,145 62	66.24 81	5.04 63	14.27 65	15.85 55	9.84 87	56,554 69	29.19 49
Beaches - East York	416 Inner City	55.63 67	112,965 40	66.40 80	28.94 25	35.22 30	28.77 32	28.58 17	64,010 45	46.73 19
Ottawa - Orléans	Suburban	55.63 68	108,375 55	82.59 3	12.88 42	14.18 66	11.55 67	27.63 20	88,118 12	12.74 98
Thunder Bay - Superior North †	Small City/ Northern	55.61 69	75,230 98	72.77 39	1.94 83	10.58 80	14.09 58	14.58 55	56,134 73	29.02 50
Thunder Bay - Atikokan	Small City/ Northern	55.61 70	76,015 97	72.45 44	1.98 81	9.55 84	11.75 66	12.01 69	57,449 61	22.70 71
Don Valley East	416 Suburban	55.32 71	116,960 31	58.51 97	54.52 6	59.49 4	53.70 7	32.45 10	61,441 51	55.95 8
Waterloo - Wellington	Suburban	55.28 72	119,470 26	70.12 56	4.54 67	13.13 71	17.81 49	12.33 66	69,564 31	19.06 83
Hamilton West	Inner City	55.28 73	102,445 74	69.41 63	18.19 39	29.93 34	29.83 30	21.22 40	47,281 100	55.61 9
Parkdale - High Park	416 Inner City	54.94 74	107,975 56	67.71 73	27.21 28	42.79 23	41.42 20	36.44 7	61,451 50	62.02 3
Electoral District (2001)	Geography	Voter Turnout %	Total population Pop.	Registered/Population %	Visible Minorities %	Immigrant Population %	Non-Official Mother Tongue %	Pop. With Univ. Education %	Average household income \$	Rented Dwellings %
		Rank	Rank	Rank	Rank	Rank	Rank	Rank	Rank	Rank
Scarborough Centre	416 Suburban	54.88 75	123,090 19	55.65 101	52.30 7	52.44 13	43.35 15	18.24 45	56,025 74	42.39 24
Mississauga West	905 Suburban	54.67 76	150,765 6	67.07 78	33.74 21	38.43 28	31.00 29	26.62 23	88,154 11	19.41 82
Kingston and the Islands	Small City	54.29 77	112,870 41	78.53 6	5.69 62	13.73 68	9.86 78	22.69 36	56,977 66	41.74 26
Oak Ridges	905 Suburban	54.15 78	173,380 2	73.99 26	38.43 17	45.14 21	44.29 14	30.13 14	89,850 10	16.21 92



Geography	Voter Turnout	Total population	Registered/ Population	Visible Minorities	Immigrant Population	Non-Official Mother Tongue	Pop. With Univ. Education	Average household income	Rented Dwellings
Markham 905 Suburban	53.89 79	142,410 8	69.03 68	61.79 4	54.70 9	50.85 9	26.30 24	91,420 8	10.16 102
Cambridge Suburban	53.79 80	125,950 17	69.94 58	8.40 55	19.80 53	16.12 54	11.59 72	66,725 38	28.13 53
Essex Rural/Small City	53.36 81	121,750 24	70.42 54	3.38 72	12.07 75	11.27 69	13.27 62	78,584 25	12.74 99
Kitchener - Waterloo Small City	53.24 82	126,145 16	64.51 87	13.92 40	23.57 46	21.67 44	25.52 25	70,921 31	34.94 35
Toronto - Danforth 416 Inner City	53.13 83	103,155 73	83.34 2	35.71 19	42.39 24	42.08 17	29.58 16	62,205 49	47.66 17
Scarborough East 416 Suburban	52.88 84	115,800 33	61.98 93	48.09 11	45.71 18	31.27 28	20.62 41	69,412 33	32.53 39
London West Suburban	52.45 85	110,990 48	67.21 76	9.11 53	19.04 57	14.80 56	24.17 28	62,438 48	41.08 27
Trinity - Spadina 416 Inner City	52.05 86	103,360 72	76.23 13	34.01 20	45.33 19	46.96 13	39.17 5	64,899 42	59.91 6
Oshawa 905 Suburban	51.46 87	107,005 60	71.47 45	5.93 60	15.28 61	10.41 75	8.91 95	57,340 63	36.18 33
Mississauga East 905 Suburban	51.38 88	108,460 54	61.96 94	37.96 18	54.03 10	51.48 8	22.89 34	66,635 40	40.63 28
Mississauga Centre 905 Suburban	50.89 89	122,870 21	62.74 91	47.91 12	52.77 12	49.02 11	27.59 21	82,620 18	30.57 43
Brampton West - Mississauga 905 Suburban	50.84 90	189,940 1	65.45 82	50.78 8	48.05 14	43.11 16	21.61 39	79,508 23	20.48 78
Ottawa West - Nepean 905 Suburban	50.80 91	112,240 43	73.39 32	23.56 31	29.27 35	27.25 35	30.40 12	66,986 36	47.99 15
York South - Weston 416 Inner City	50.74 92	114,635 35	56.34 100	47.58 13	53.82 11	50.15 10	12.42 65	47,367 99	52.84 11
Brampton Centre 905 Suburban	50.25 93	119,970 25	64.01 88	32.07 22	35.51 29	26.77 36	14.60 54	81,270 19	23.93 64
Bramalea - Gore - Malton - Springdale 905 Suburban	49.82 94	144,715 7	59.45 96	50.73 9	46.35 16	38.47 23	14.74 53	73,085 29	22.21 72
York Centre 416 Suburban	49.59 95	107,055 59	60.36 95	31.27 24	57.20 5	55.78 4	22.92 33	58,253 59	54.05 10
Davenport 416 Inner City	49.06 96	103,620 70	52.91 102	31.83 23	55.32 8	61.37 1	15.61 49	52,330 89	46.19 20
Kenora - Rainy River † Northern	48.57 97	78,755 96	68.54 69	0.89 102	6.05 97	17.63 50	9.45 90	55,111 79	21.66 76

Geography	Voter Turnout	Total population	Registered/ Population	Visible Minorities	Immigrant Population	Non-Official Mother Tongue	Pop. With Univ. Education	Average household income	Rented Dwellings
Scarborough Southwest	48.09	113,615	69.28	45.93	45.77	36.99	19.29	55,026	48.33
Etobicoke Centre	47.91	105,620	62.04	22.58	42.23	41.89	27.81	84,364	35.84
Windsor West	47.81	117,045	64.61	19.92	28.19	29.09	18.41	56,946	36.95
Hamilton East	46.73	98,155	67.60	10.48	23.96	23.91	6.47	42,522	42.95
York West	43.95	103,615	51.59	64.01	61.11	55.73	13.75	47,435	57.97
Windsor – St. Clair	43.87	109,045	74.21	12.24	23.65	23.01	16.37	63,965	29.88
PROVINCE	60.26	58,390	69.79	5.87	19.89	16.39	19.62	36,450	32.03

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