

# Hosting Conversations about Issues

This election comes at an important time in the City.

Most candidates have described this as a critical moment when the City is struggling with very challenging issues. But it's hard to do everything, and the candidate who becomes mayor will have to set priorities.

It's important that candidates hear from all parts of the City about the priorities people have.

We'd like to hear from your community about the issues that matter most.

Here are three approaches you can take to get a conversation going in your programs.

## **Poll-led**

What you'll need: Flip chart or chalk board

Open the discussion with the introductory sentence. Ask participants to work in pairs for 5 minutes and then report back to the group on question 1.

Work in the group as a whole for all other questions. Write down a summary of all responses on the board or flip chart as they are provided.

Introductory statement:

*"Polls tell us the top issues in this election are housing, inflation, safety, services and transit."*

Introductory questions for participants to discuss in pairs for 3-5 minutes, and report back to the group:

*Do you agree that these are the most important issues?  
Which ones would change? Which ones would you add?"*

During the report back, note the 5 issues from the polls and any that are added on the board/flip chart.

Group discussion questions:

*"Which issue do you think is most important"*

Allow a brief group discussion on the priorities and then ask for a show of hands to choose the number one issue.

Ask questions to explore the issue including:

*Why is that issue important?*

*What would you want to City to do about that issue?*

*United Way, TMU and the Toronto Star are going to be holding a mayoral debate and want your ideas about what to ask the candidates. What would you ask the candidates about that if they were here now?*

Move on to the second most important issue using the same process. Continue to 3<sup>rd</sup> or 4<sup>th</sup> most important depending on the time.

After the session, use the template at [bit.ly/TOvoteReportingTemplate](https://bit.ly/TOvoteReportingTemplate) or our online form at [bit.ly/TOvoteFeedback](https://bit.ly/TOvoteFeedback) to send us the feedback from the group, or just photograph the flip chart or chalk board and email the images to [info@ontarioforall.ca](mailto:info@ontarioforall.ca).



## Self-guided

What you'll need: Flip chart or chalk board

Break the room up into pairs or threes – give everyone 5 minutes to talk amongst themselves about the election. Ask each group what they think is the biggest issue in the election on the issue and why it matters.

Ask each group to report back.

Write their comments on a flip chart or chalk board.

Poll the room, asking people to raise their hands for which item they think is the most important.

For the top issue, ask the group:

*What matters to you most about this issue – why is it important to you?*

*What would you want to City to do about that issue – what solutions would you propose?*

*United Way, TMU and the Toronto Star are going to be holding a mayoral debate and want your ideas about what to ask. What would you ask the candidates about that issue if they were here now?*

Write their comments on the flip chart or chalk board.

Repeat the discussion for the second and third highest scoring issues.

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## Deeper dive:

What you'll need: Flip chart or chalk board, Newspaper articles on key issues

Print up media stories or fact sheets on the issues. Some can be found on the Social Planning Toronto website at [www.socialplanningtoronto.org/municipal\\_election\\_resources](http://www.socialplanningtoronto.org/municipal_election_resources)

Let the group choose any one issue and read aloud the content of the description.

Ask participants to give their feedback, and note their comments on flip charts or a chalkboard. Ask participants:

- What aspects of the material did they agree with?
- What aspects did they disagree with?
- what do they think the material should have included that it missed?
- Are there other aspects of this issue that you think are important?
- What should City Hall be doing to address this issue?
- United Way, TMU and the Toronto Star are going to be holding a mayoral debate and want your ideas about what to ask. Ask what questions they would ask if the candidates were here right now.

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