

LONDON ELECTION 2026: WHAT AREN'T THE CANDIDATES TALKING ABOUT?

As we approach the October 26 municipal election, I've been reviewing the platforms of candidates running for mayor and city council.

There's a great deal of discussion about property taxes, housing, homelessness, policing, infrastructure and economic development. These are important issues, and voters deserve thoughtful, realistic proposals.

But I've also been thinking about what *isn't* being discussed.

Where are the conversations about arts and culture? About libraries, heritage, creativity, community organizations and the role these institutions play in making London a vibrant, inclusive and economically resilient city?

London is a UNESCO City of Music. We have an extraordinary network of artists, musicians, cultural organizations, festivals and creative entrepreneurs. These are not simply amenities or entertainment. They contribute to our economy, our identity, our quality of life and our ability to attract and retain people.

Yet arts and culture are not always prominent in municipal election platforms.

Of course, the absence of a position doesn't necessarily mean a candidate opposes something. Campaign platforms are selective, and candidates cannot address every issue in equal detail.

But what candidates choose not to address deserves questions, too.

Are candidates presenting a comprehensive vision for London's future, or concentrating primarily on the issues they believe will attract the greatest electoral support?

And how do we distinguish between a carefully considered policy position and a campaign promise designed to appeal to a particular audience?

I would like to see every candidate for mayor and council answer a few straightforward questions:

- What role do arts, culture and the creative industries play in London's economic and social development?

- How should the City support cultural infrastructure, libraries, festivals, heritage and community arts organizations?
- How can we ensure that cultural opportunities are accessible to people across neighbourhoods, ages and income levels?
- How should we measure the value of these investments, beyond immediate financial returns?

These questions are not about asking candidates to promise more spending. They are about understanding their priorities, their grasp of municipal responsibilities and their vision for the city.

A city is more than its roads, buildings and tax rates. It is also the culture, creativity and sense of belonging that give those things meaning.

The candidates are applying for the job. We are the interviewers.

And we should be asking about the whole job.

#LondonOntario #LondonElection2026 #ArtsAndCulture #MunicipalElection
#CivicEngagement