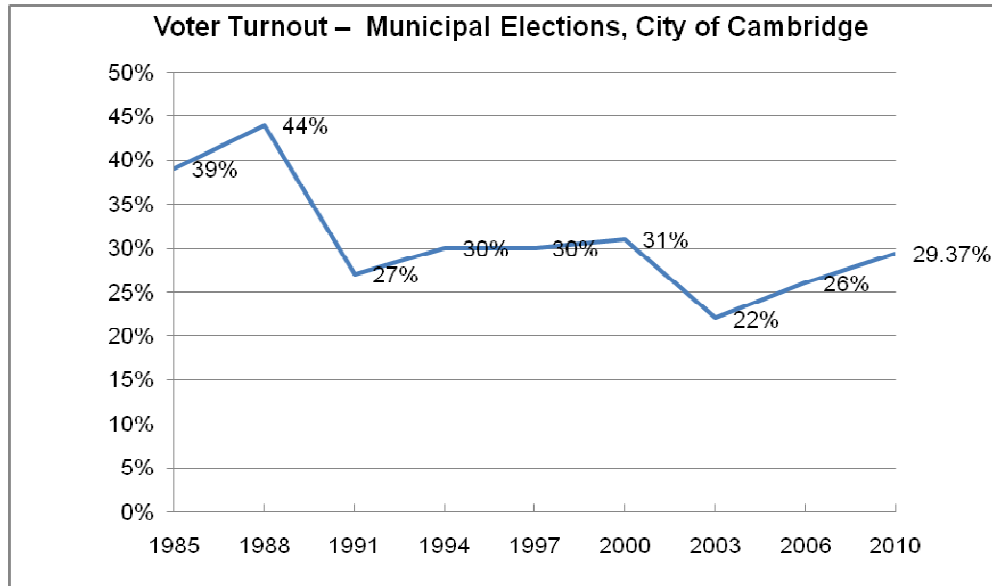




Voter turnout – 2010 Municipal Election

Voter turnout is the percentage of eligible voters who cast a ballot in an election. In Canada, recent elections have seen voter turnout decline, with municipal elections historically having the lowest turnout rate compared to provincial and federal elections. Municipal turnout is an important indicator of citizen engagement in the democratic process locally.



Source: City of Cambridge

Turnout by Ward

In the most recent municipal election in 2010, voter turnout in the city of Cambridge was 29.37%. Since 1985, voter turnout has fluctuated from year to year, but has decreased overall 9.63%. However, in the most recent three elections, there has been an increase each year from a low point of 22% in 2003.

	Number of Electors	Number of Ballots Counted	Voter Turnout
Ward 1	9,666	2,810	29.07%
Ward 2	12,375	3,293	26.61%
Ward 3	8,201	2,848	34.73%
Ward 4	9,484	2,736	28.85%
Ward 5	9,344	3,370	36.06%
Ward 6	12,807	3,729	29.12%
Ward 7	7,189	2,063	28.70%
Ward 8	12,386	3,075	24.83%
TOTAL	81,452	23,924	29.37%

Voter turnout in each of the eight wards varied from a low of 24.83% in ward 8 to the highest rate of 36.06% in ward 5. Several factors influence voter turnout, which may account for some of the differences in voter turnout between wards in Cambridge.

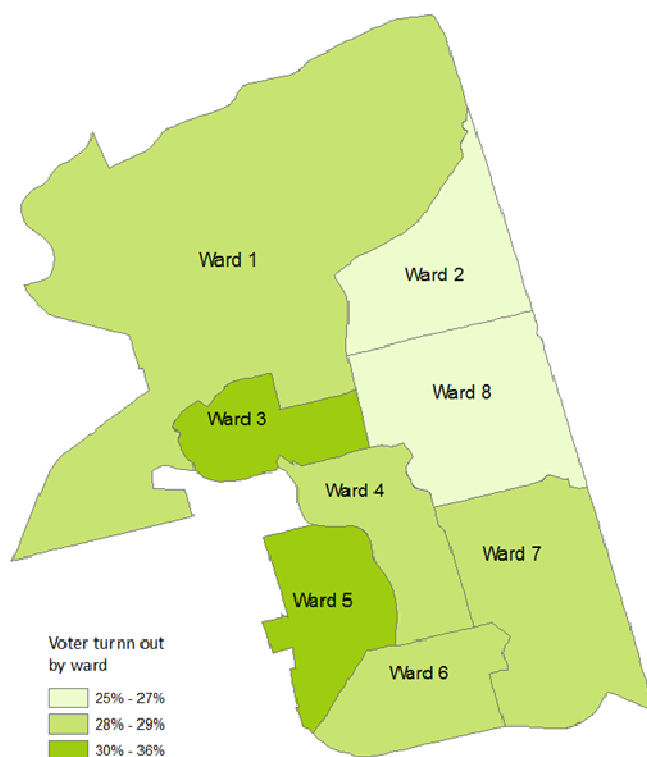
Age: Studies show that the likelihood of an individual voting increases with age. Therefore, areas with older median ages have often shown higher turnout rates. In addition, longer-term residents (who are generally older), tend to vote more frequently than new residents to an area.

Income: A person's income is another factor that affects likelihood to vote. Areas with higher incomes often show higher turnout rates than areas with a higher concentration of people with low incomes.

Foreign-born residents: Where there is a higher proportion of foreign born residents, voter turnout is often lower as newcomers may not yet be legally permitted to vote depending on their citizenship status.

These factors appear to have played a role in the 2010 election turnout. As a whole, the older, higher income areas of Cambridge had higher levels of turnout than more recently-developed areas and those with lower average incomes and a higher number of foreign-born residents.

Voter Turnout, 2010 Municipal Election
City of Cambridge



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North Dumfries

In the Township of North Dumfries, voter turnout reached 46% in the 2010 municipal election, the highest rate of any municipality in Waterloo Region. This is an increase of 21.83% from the previous election in 2006. A total of 3441 people voted in the 2011 election, of 7075 eligible voters.


Regional Context

The rates of voter turnout in other municipalities in the Region varied considerably. The below chart below details turnout rates for each of the cities and townships in Waterloo Region.

Municipality	Electors	Ballots Counted	Turnout
Cambridge	81,452	23,924	29.37%
Kitchener	145,070	39,760	27.41%
Waterloo	66,206	27,253	41.16%
North Dumfries	7075	3441	48.64%
Wellesley	7365	846	11.49%
Wilmot	14,384	6782	47.15%
Woolwich	16,794	6089	36.26%
TOTAL	340,223	108,095	31.26%

Source: Region of Waterloo

For more information about this paper or related research, please contact:
Social Planning Council of Cambridge and North Dumfries
 55 Dickson Street, Cambridge ON N1R 7A5
 519-623-1713 linda@socialplanningcouncil-cnd.org
www.socialplanningcouncil-cnd.org



Social Planning Council
of Cambridge and North Dumfries