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Candidate Details

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Prakash Venkataraman

Regional Councillor

What is your motivation for running for election?

Cambridge has been my community for more than 26 years. My children were born here, my family grew here, and I have spent thousands of hours volunteering and working alongside people and organizations across our community.

I am not a career politician. I come from business, engineering, international leadership and community service. After working across more than 100 countries, I believe I can bring that experience, along with what I have learned locally, to Regional Council.

Through my Listening Tour, I keep hearing the same concerns: affordability, taxes, infrastructure, water capacity, public safety, homelessness, transportation and whether Cambridge is getting its fair share.

I am running because I believe public service should be about serving people - not political parties, ideology or planning your next election.

I will ask difficult questions, follow the money and work respectfully with anyone who can help move Cambridge and Waterloo Region forward.

I want to be a strong, independent voice for Cambridge.

Cambridge First. People Always. A Cambridge for Everyone."

What are your top three priority issues you want to address at Regional Council?

Affordability, housing and homelessness — increasing housing options while addressing homelessness, mental health and addiction with measurable solutions. Infrastructure, water capacity and transportation — ensuring responsible growth is supported by water, wastewater, roads, transit and stronger regional connectivity. Accountability, public safety and value for taxpayers — following the money, measuring results and ensuring Cambridge receives its fair share of Regional investment.

What is your vision for each of the issues you identified above?

My vision is a Region where people can afford to live, work and raise their families; where growth does not outpace infrastructure; and where residents receive measurable value for every tax dollar.

Housing must include ownership, rental, supportive and affordable options. Infrastructure decisions must anticipate future growth rather than constantly reacting to it. Regional government must also be transparent, accountable and focused on outcomes.

For Cambridge, that means having a strong voice at Regional Council while working collaboratively with Kitchener, Waterloo and the townships."

What tangible steps would you take to increase the supply of affordable housing across the Region?

I would support faster approvals for appropriate housing, responsible intensification, greater use of surplus public lands, partnerships with nonprofit and private housing providers, and incentives that produce genuinely affordable units.

I would also push for stronger coordination among municipal, provincial and federal governments to fund supportive and affordable housing.

Most importantly, we must track results: how much money was invested, how many units were created, how quickly they were delivered and whether they are truly affordable to the people who need them."

What is your plan to expand access to affordable, high-quality child care and create additional child care spaces?

Child care is both a family issue and an economic-development issue. Parents cannot fully participate in the workforce if dependable child care is unavailable.

I would advocate for additional spaces in areas experiencing population growth, support partnerships with qualified nonprofit and private providers, address workforce recruitment and retention, and make better use of schools and community facilities where appropriate.

Regional planning should identify where shortages exist and direct investments to communities with the greatest need."

What is your position on the Provincial government's efforts to increase private sector involvement in drinking water and wastewater services?

Water is an essential public service, and public ownership, accountability, safety and affordability must remain protected.

I am open to using private-sector expertise for construction, technology or specialized services when it provides taxpayers with demonstrable value. However, I would not support transferring control of our drinking water or wastewater systems in a way that compromises public ownership, transparency, environmental protection or accountability.

Some services are simply too important to lose public oversight."

What role should the Region play in protecting publicly owned water services?

"The Region must be a strong steward of our water resources and infrastructure.

That means maintaining public ownership and accountability, protecting groundwater and source water, investing responsibly in capacity and infrastructure, maintaining rigorous safety standards and planning decades ahead for population and economic growth.

Any major change to the governance or delivery of water services should be transparent, supported by evidence and clearly demonstrate how it benefits residents. Water security should never be treated simply as a financial transaction."

What forms of inequity do you believe are the most significant challenges in our community? How would you address them?

"Economic inequality, housing insecurity, barriers faced by people with disabilities, seniors, newcomers and marginalized communities, and unequal access to transportation, health, employment and community services remain significant challenges.

My approach is simple: listen directly to affected communities, remove unnecessary barriers, make services accessible and measure whether programs are actually improving people's lives.

I believe strongly that everyone deserves dignity and opportunity. Discrimination at any level should never be encouraged or tolerated."

What organizations, initiatives, or movements have you supported that work to address systemic discrimination or oppression? Please describe your involvement.

For more than 26 years, I have volunteered alongside organizations and community groups serving people from diverse cultural, economic and social backgrounds, including Rotary International, the Cambridge Food Bank, Langs, The Bridges, KidsAbility, community and faith organizations, seniors' organizations and multicultural initiatives.

My involvement has included leadership, governance, fundraising, advocacy, volunteering and, most importantly, listening directly to people experiencing barriers.

Throughout my community service, I have consistently supported inclusion and the principle that people should be judged by their character, not their race, religion, background, disability, income or circumstance."

Can you commit to publicly speaking up in favour of these demands, including at Council meetings?

Yes