



# 2026 IMLA in Canada

Vaughan, Ontario - May 7, 2026

**Thursday – May 7, 2026**

Time	Session	Speaker(s)
8:30 AM – 9:00 AM	Continental Breakfast – included in registration.	
9:00 AM - 9:10 AM	Opening Remarks	Diana Soos & Amanda Karras
9:15 AM – 10:15 AM	<p><b>Cross Country Checkup on Municipal Elections</b></p> <p>This panel discussion will focus on municipal elections from across Canada, and will specifically review recent legislative changes, recounts that have been conducted, the municipal campaign finance process, third-party advertising enforcement complications, and review recent case law of interest.</p>	<p>Cory Lynch (Toronto), Eric Davis (SmithValeriot Law Firm LLP) &amp; Maggie Burlington (Calgary)</p> <p><b>Moderator:</b> Wendy Walberg (Toronto)</p>
10:15 AM – 10:30 AM	Coffee Break	
10:30 AM – 11:30 AM	<p><b>New Public Procurement in Light of Buy Canadian and How That Impacts Municipalities</b></p> <p>Renewed trade tensions with the United States have reignited calls across Canada to better protect domestic companies, industries, and workers. In response, federal and provincial governments have signalled a greater willingness to use public procurement as an economic policy lever, introducing a range of “buy Canadian” initiatives such as the federal Buy Canadian policy and provincial measures like the Buy Ontario Act. Local governments are also facing increasing political and public pressure to adjust their procurement policies and purchasing decisions in similar ways.</p> <p>This panel will examine the growing push for local preference in public purchasing, the legal framework governing municipal procurement, and the constraints imposed by domestic trade rules and international treaty obligations. It will explore how buy local initiatives intersect with municipal procurement responsibilities, clarify where municipalities have flexibility to favour Canadian or local suppliers, and identify the legal risks and limitations associated with doing so.</p>	<p>Zella Phillips (Toronto), Colin Taylor (Halifax) &amp; Ajay Gajaria (Aird &amp; Berlis LLP)</p> <p><b>Moderator:</b> David Boghosian (Boghosian + Allen LLP)</p>
11:35 AM – 12:35 PM	<p><b>Environmental Law - What Can Local Governments Do to Regulate Climate Change?</b></p> <p>Even when faced with global scale issues, Municipalities are limited by the specific powers granted to them in provincial legislation. This creates different barriers and opportunities for municipalities across Canada in addressing both the causes and effects of climate change. This presentation will map out some of these jurisdictional complexities that arise when working to address climate change at the local level. Using examples from cities including Edmonton and Toronto among others, this presentation will highlight real opportunities for municipalities to act and the legal powers successfully used.</p>	<p>Scott Pasternack (Toronto), Christina Hodgson-Mousseau (Edmonton) &amp; Rodney Northey (Gowling WLG)</p> <p><b>Moderator:</b> Rebecca Hall-McGuire (Vaughan)</p>
12:35 PM – 1:35 PM	Lunch – included in registration.	
1:35 PM – 2:35 PM	<p><b>Up in Smoke! – Update on Firefighting Liability</b></p> <p>This session will cover issues in firefighting liability, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Variable standards of care</li> <li>• Dispatch (delayed response)</li> </ul>	<p>David Boghosian (Boghosian + Allen LLP) &amp; Nada Nicola-Howorth (Lerners)</p> <p><b>Moderator:</b> Jeremy McLeish (Vaughan)</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Special rules of the road</li> <li>• Equipment</li> <li>• Water supply</li> <li>• Rekindle</li> <li>• Inspection and Enforcement</li> </ul>	
2:40 PM – 3:40 PM	<p><b>Community Courts</b></p> <p>This presentation will discuss the Calgary Community Court, which was developed for people experiencing vulnerabilities charged with bylaw offences and unable to pay tickets. It started in June of 2024 as a pilot by City municipal prosecutors and defence counsel at Calgary Legal Guidance (CLG). The program provides access to social services to help address root causes of issues that lead people to engage in problematic behaviour resulting in bylaw charges. Community Court is a partnership between the province, community organizations and the City, and provides a holistic, one-stop-shop for people experiencing vulnerabilities to get connected to social supports while simultaneously addressing a variety of legal issues they are faced with. Referrals to community agencies and social supports are completed via care plans. Care plans are developed, monitored, and adapted by Calgary Legal Guidance and Municipal Prosecutions. Graduation from the Community Court program requires participants to complete their care plans. Tickets are stayed and then set aside upon completion.</p>	<p>Ben Leung (Calgary)</p> <p><b>Moderator:</b> Brian Loewen (Lethbridge)</p>
3:40 PM – 3:55 PM	Coffee Break	
3:55 PM – 4:55 PM	<p><b>Ontario's Overhaul of the Municipal Accountability Regime and its Implications</b></p> <p>This session will examine potential (and significant!) reforms to Ontario's municipal accountability regime proposed under Bill 9, the Municipal Accountability Act, 2025. Bill 9 has been proffered as "strengthening" local government accountability because it will possibly allow egregiously bad councillors to be removed from office. A host of other changes are also proposed. But will the proposed regime work? By focusing on the existing integrity framework, Laura Dean and John Mascarin will outline how Bill 9 would reshape municipal ethics oversight through standardized codes of conduct, a uniform investigative process, enhanced training and reporting requirements for Integrity Commissioners, and the involvement of the provincial Integrity Commissioners. Attendees will gain a clear understanding of what these proposed legislative changes would mean in practice for councils, staff, accountability officers, and the broader municipal governance landscape in Ontario.</p>	<p>John Mascarin (Aird &amp; Berlis LLP) &amp; Laura Dean (Aird &amp; Berlis LLP)</p> <p><b>Moderator:</b> Diana Soos (Vaughan)</p>
5:00PM – 7:00 PM	<p><b>Networking Reception</b></p> <p>Join fellow attendees for a reception once sessions conclude. It will take place at City Hall and is being generously sponsored by Lerner's LLP.</p>	<h1>LERNERS</h1>

Last Updated: 04/28/26. Please note the agenda is tentative and subject to change.