# Executive Summary: Voting for a Council Candidate Who Does Not Live in Thorold?

October 8, 2026 | Commentary

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Source notes, verification limits, disclaimer and sign-off excluded.

I favour councillors who live in Thorold and share residents' daily experience. Ontario nevertheless permits eligible non-resident owners, tenants and their spouses to vote and run. Legal eligibility is the starting point; voters can still prefer resident representation. [3, 4]

## Residence and the basis of eligibility

McCollum's published NDP biography identifies her as a Welland resident. In my discussions with City staff, I was told she does not live in Thorold but meets the criteria to run. I understand her qualification involves a corporation-owned Front Street property and a tenancy held by her husband at that address. These are my accounts of verbal explanations, not independently documented findings. [2]

Was the lease an arm's-length transaction, and how did the City assess it? A family tenancy alone does not establish ineligibility. My concern is whether someone living elsewhere offers the community knowledge, accessibility and shared interests voters expect.

## Longo offers a personal comparison

Anthony Longo placed first in 2018 with 2,326 votes and fourth in 2022 with 1,900. He is completing his third term. In our private conversation, he told me he had moved to Welland. When I raised qualifying through another connection, I recall his words: “I don’t think it’s right.” That quotation is my recollection, without a recording or written confirmation. [5, 6, 11]

My understanding is that first-term councillor Mike De Divitiis also lives outside Thorold; I have not independently confirmed that. Residents' concerns reported to me are anecdotal, not a survey or election forecast. The same residence standard should apply to everyone.

## Plans, independence and professional interests

McCollum's website states priorities but leaves voters needing costs, timelines and ranked commitments. Her previous NDP candidacy and stated labour-council endorsement warrant questions about independence; neither automatically establishes a legal conflict. [1, 9]

Her legal qualifications can be useful. If her clients include developers or builders with City business, how would she identify and manage overlapping duties? Confidential client information could complicate participation. I have not established that she has such clients or conflicts. Voters deserve a credible process for disclosure, independent advice and recusals where required. Confidentiality does not remove applicable municipal duties. [7, 10, 12]

I welcome her answers and the opposing case: sustained local service, competence and accessibility can make a non-resident valuable. She should show why those connections make her the best choice for Thorold.

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## Sources and verification limits

This executive summary reflects the full article's sources reviewed October 9, 2026. City staff explanations, the property and tenancy account, the recalled Longo quotation and residents' views are attributed to Nicholas Bozza. No title, lease, written City determination or recording was supplied. Mike De Divitiis' current residence was not independently confirmed.

Disclaimer: This is opinion and election commentary, not an allegation of unlawful candidacy, professional misconduct or concealed conflicts. Developer or builder clients and confidential-information dilemmas are hypothetical risks, not established facts about McCollum's practice. Corrections and responses are welcome at nbozza@go2cai.ca.

[1] Chantal McCollum municipal campaign: priorities and labour endorsement.
https://www.chantalforthorold.com/

[2] Published NDP biography: Welland residence and Thorold law practice.
https://chantalmccollum.ndp.ca/

[3] Ontario, 2026 voters' guide: eligibility to vote, including non-resident electors.
Ontario voters' guide - eligibility to vote

[4] Ontario, 2026 candidates' guide: eligibility to run.
Ontario candidates' guide - eligibility to run

[5] ThoroldToday, September 8, 2022: Longo finishing his second term.
Meet your candidate: Councillor wants to get the little things right

[6] City of Thorold: 2022 official poll-by-poll results, Longo fourth, 1,900 votes.
2022 Municipal & School Board Election results

[7] McCollum professional biography: qualifications, experience and services.
https://www.mccollumlawyer.com/about

[8] Ontario municipal councillor's guide, section 7: appropriate legal advice.
Councillors as lawmakers

[9] Elections Canada, Niagara South, 2025 official results.
Niagara South - 2025 poll-by-poll results

[10] Ontario, Municipal Conflict of Interest Act, especially sections 2-5.2.
https://www.ontario.ca/laws/statute/90m50

[11] ThoroldToday, January 10, 2019: 2018 results, Longo first with 2,326 votes.
Year in review: Part 12

[12] Law Society of Ontario, Rules of Professional Conduct, sections 3.3 (confidentiality), 3.4 (conflicts) and 7.4 (public office).
Rules of Professional Conduct - Chapter 3