

Ward 2 Councillor Gilliland will not seek third Council term



Serving Aurora has been one of the greatest honours of Ward 2 Councillor Rachel Gilliland's life, she says, but her time at the Council table is coming to an end.

Gilliland, who was first elected to Aurora Council in 2018, and was re-elected to represent Ward 2 in 2022, announced Saturday she would not seek a third term.

The decision to not seek re-election was "one of the most difficult and emotional decisions of my life," she said.

"For nearly three decades, Aurora has been where my husband and I built our lives, raised our family, and formed lifelong friendships and created countless memories. But our connection to this community reaches back even further," said Councillor Gilliland. "My family's roots in Aurora date back to the 1950s. My great-grandmother lived here for a period of time, my husband attended school here, and my mother-in-law proudly operated a local restaurant that served residents for many years. Aurora has been part of our family's story across generations. That history is what makes this decision so difficult.

"Hanging up my Aurora Council coat is one thing. Stepping away from a community that has shaped so much of my life is something entirely different. Aurora is where our children grew up, where friendships were built, and where so many people placed their trust in me to represent them at the Council table. Those are things I will never take for granted."

The global pandemic brought "unexpected changes" to her life and career, she noted, and, during that time, "new paths I never anticipated began to unfold."

"Over the past few years, I embarked on a new career that has taken me throughout Simcoe, York and Grey Counties, working closely with businesses, organizations, and community leaders across the Region," she continued. "What began as a professional opportunity gradually became a significant part of my day-to-day life. As my work responsibilities expanded, so too did the amount of time I spent on the road. Sometimes life has a way of leading you in a certain direction you never expected. After considerable

reflection, I came to realize that my personal and professional commitments have evolved to a point where seeking another term on Aurora Council no longer makes practical sense.

?While I know this is the right decision, that does not make it an easy one. In truth, a part of me will always struggle with saying goodbye to a community that has meant so much to me and my family. The truth is, public service has become part of who I am. It has challenged me, inspired me, and connected me with extraordinary people. It has taught me the importance of listening, of finding common ground, and of never losing sight of the people behind every decision. While this decision marks the end of one chapter, it certainly does not mark the end of my desire to serve and contribute wherever I can to make a positive difference.

?Once you have had the privilege of serving your community, that sense of purpose never truly leaves you. I look forward to seeing where the next chapter leads and continuing to give back in meaningful ways. To every resident who supported me, challenged me, encouraged me, or simply stopped to share a conversation or debate over the years, thank you! Serving Aurora has been one of the greatest honours of my life. Aurora will always hold a special place in my heart, and I will forever be grateful for the opportunity to call it home.?

Gilliland's decision means there will be at least three new faces at the Council table following the October 25 municipal election. Ward 3 Councillor Wendy Gaertner announced her decision not to seek re-election earlier this spring after serving for 23 consecutive years, and Ward 5 Councillor John Gallo is challenging Mayor Tom Mrakas to Aurora's top job.

Residents have until August 21 to register as a candidate in the 2026 Municipal Election.

By Brock WeirEditorLocal Journalism Initiative Reporter