City of Mississauga

Corporate Report



Date: September 12, 2023

To: Chair and Members of General Committee

From: Raj Sheth, P.Eng, Commissioner of Corporate Services

Meeting date: October 4, 2023

Subject

2022 City of Mississauga Municipal Election Information

Recommendation

That the Corporate Report, dated September 12, 2023 from Raj Sheth, Commissioner, Corporate Services, entitled 2022 City of Mississauga Municipal Election Information be received.

Executive Summary

- The 2022 Mississauga Municipal Election took place on October 24, 2022
- Advance Poll Days were held on October 7, 8 and 9 at the Civic Centre and on October 13, 14, 15 and 16 at 22 locations throughout the City
- Voter turnout was 21.84% down from 26.49% in 2018
- As per direction from Council, this Report has been compiled to provide an overview of the 2022 Municipal Election and outlines election practices in other municipalities
- This Report also includes the responses to the 2022 Candidate Survey

Background

Following the 2022 Municipal Election, a review was conducted and a summary has been provided in this Report. This Report has been compiled with input from the Information Technology Division (I.T.), the Strategic Communications and Initiatives Division, and the Elections Office.

The Association of Municipal Managers, Clerks and Treasurers of Ontario (AMCTO) is working on compiling various statistics pertaining to election practices across other municipalities in Ontario. This information will provide more details of elections and the election technology used across the Province, however, the information is not available yet. Staff have instead included

some information provided by the Association of Municipalities Ontario (AMO) and the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing (the Ministry). When the information from the AMCTO becomes available, it will be circulated.

Comments

General Election Information and Statistics for the City of Mississauga's last three municipal elections

	2014	2018	2022
Number of Advance	13	4	7
Poll Days Number of total voting hours*	101	34	60
Number of voting locations on Advance Poll Days	-Civic Centre on September 29 to October 11 -22 locations on October 4, 5, 6, 7, and 8; voters could cast a ballot at any of these locations	-Civic Centre on October 5 and 6 -22 locations on October 13 and 14; voters could cast a ballot at any of these locations	-Civic Centre on October 7, 8 and 9 -22 locations on October 13, 14, 15, and 16; voters could cast a ballot at any of these locations
Number of voting locations on Election Day**	163	166	162
Number of candidates	159	154	131
Number of candidate information sessions	0	1	2
Voting technologies used	-Online voters' list piloted on Advance Poll Days -Vote tabulators -AutoMARK Voter Assist Terminals -Results reported via fax line transmission	-Online Voters' List was used to accommodate Vote Anywhere throughout the City on Advance Poll Days and Vote Anywhere in your Ward on Election Day -Vote tabulators -AutoMARK Voter Assist Terminals -Results reported via fax line transmission	- Online Voters' List was used to accommodate Vote Anywhere throughout the City on Advance Poll Days and Vote Anywhere in your Ward on Election Day -Vote tabulators -ExpressVote and ballot on demand printers on Advance Poll Days -Wireless transmission

	of results

^{*}This includes Election Day

Voter Turnout

The voter turnout for the 2022 Mississauga Municipal Election was 21.84% compared to 26.49% in 2018. Most municipalities also experienced a decrease in voter turnout for the 2022 Municipal Election. For comparison, voter turnout in other municipalities is listed below, sorted by the greatest percentage of voter turnout change:

Municipality	Voter Turnout 2018	Voter Turnout 2022	% Change
London	39.40%	25.50%	-13.90%
Burlington	39.79%	27.60%	-12.19%
Toronto	41%	29%	-12%
Brampton	34.50%	24.56%	-9.94%
Guelph	37.16%	27.84%	-9.32%
Oakville	37.08%	28.30%	-8.78%
Milton	37%	28.98%	-8.02%
Kitchener	28.22%	20.26%	-7.96%
Waterloo	34.22%	27%	-7.22%
Cambridge	34.22%	28.87%	-5.35%
Mississauga	26.49%	21.84%	-4.65%
Hamilton	38.36%	35.38	-2.98%
Caledon	32.28%	31.73%	-0.55%
Ottawa	42.55%	43.78%	1.23%
Wilmot	37.80%	40.35%	2.55%
Woolwich	31.30%	34.70%	3.40%

AMO reports that based on information from 385 Ontario municipalities, the average voter turnout in 2022 was 36.30%, down from 38.30% in 2018. The reason for the decrease is difficult to determine however, anecdotally, many candidates noted that while door knocking they found that voters seemed disengaged and were tired of voting. With this in mind, it is reasonable to suggest that one possibility for the decline could include "voter fatigue". In the years between 2018 and 2022, the following elections were held:

- June 2018 Provincial Election
- October 2018 Municipal Election
- October 2019 Federal Election
- September 2021 Federal Election
- June 2022 Provincial Election
- October 2022 Municipal Election

^{**}This includes long-term care facilities and hospitals

This means Mississauga voters were called to the polls five times in five years. One helpful adjustment to the election calendar could be to separate Provincial and Municipal elections by a year, however, Municipal Election days are specified in the *Municipal Elections Act*, 1996 and cannot be changed by the Clerk.

There was also a concern that Election Day coincided with Diwali which could impact voter turnout. While the Clerk could not move Election Day, seven advance voting days were established to provide alternative voting opportunities. Additionally, specific communications were used to let voters know that Election Day fell on Diwali and encouraged voters to vote on Advance Poll Days.

Similar to the turnout during municipal elections, the 2022 Provincial Election saw the lowest voter turnout on record for an Ontario election with an approximate turnout of 44%. The next lowest Ontario voter turnout was in 2011 with a turnout of approximately 48%. https://results.elections.on.ca/en/graphics-charts

A decrease in voter turnout was also observed during the September 2021 Federal Election. Statistics Canada reports:

Quebec was the lone province where voter turnout was higher in 2021 than in the 2019 federal election, rising 1 percentage point to 77%.

Compared with 2019, the proportion of eligible Canadians who reported voting in 2021 fell in Nova Scotia (-5 percentage points to 73%), Alberta (-4 percentage points to 76%), Saskatchewan (-4 percentage points to 77%), New Brunswick (-4 percentage points to 76%), Newfoundland and Labrador (-3 percentage points to 65%), and Ontario (-2 percentage points to 75%).

Voter turnout in 2021 was little changed from 2019 in Prince Edward Island, Manitoba and British Columbia." (Reasons for not voting in the federal election September 20, 2021. Statistics Canada. February 2022. https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/daily-quotidien/220216/dq220216d-eng.htm)

Election Workers

Over 1,700 individual election workers, of which 372 were City staff, were hired to work at the polls. To ensure the workers were best prepared for their responsibilities, extensive training and training materials were provided including:

- Virtual instructor led training (these videos were posted online so election workers could go back and re-watch if they wished)
- An online training module for election workers that were required to use laptops and the online voters' list

 In-person drop in sessions for election workers that were required to use election technology and wanted hands on training

- Election worker manuals
- Election worker quick reference guides for Deputy Returning Officers

In addition to these training methods, a call centre was established so that Location Mangers and Vote Anywhere Supervisors could easily reach Election Office and I.T. staff when they needed help or direction.

Voting Locations

On Election Day, there were 162 voting locations across the City. Of the 162 locations, 101 were schools. For the first time, the school boards agreed to schedule a Professional Activity Day on Election Day so there were no students in the school buildings. This eliminated safety concerns for students and reduced vehicle traffic. It is highly recommended that the school boards continue this practice for the 2026 Municipal Election.

On Advance Poll Days, Vote Anywhere provided voters with the option of voting at one of 22 voting locations across the City on October 13, 14, 15 and 16. Of the approximately 26,000 people who voted on these days, just under 22% voted outside of the Ward in which they live. This demonstrates that voters are using the flexibility provided by Vote Anywhere.

On Election Day, the following locations in each Ward had the highest voter turnout:

Ward	Location with highest turnout	Location with second highest turnout
1	Mississauga Seniors Centre (1,064)	Lakeview Golf Course (849)
2	Clarkson Community Centre (1,799)	Lorne Park Secondary School (1,071)
3	Burnhamthorpe Library (982)	St. Martha and Mary Catholic School (872)
4	Mississauga Valley Community Centre (1,003)	St. Matthew Catholic School (850)
5	Frank McKechnie Community Centre (1,215)	Champlain Trail Public School (960)
6	River Grove Community Centre (1,141)	Edenrose Public School (1,013)
7	Father Daniel Zanon Catholic School (1,051)	Huron Park Community Centre (1,047)
8	South Common Community Centre (1,096)	St. Mark Separate School (812)
9	Meadowvale Community Centre (1,555)	Castlebridge Public School (909)
10	Churchill Meadows Branch Library (1,526)	St. Edith Stein Catholic School (869)
11	David Leeder Public School (761)	Levi Creek Public School (759)

Of the 11 locations with the highest voter turnout, 9 were City facilities.

Communications

Communication about the 2022 Municipal Election was focused on awareness, education, and information. The aim was to ensure Mississauga voters understood how to participate in the election, which included awareness about the importance of municipal government; the importance of voting; when, where and how to vote; as well as showcasing the opportunity and requirements to run as a candidate.

The communication campaign was developed using extensive research and implemented in phases that aligned to major election milestones. It leveraged Mississauga residents' increased adoption and reliance on digital and social media (gained during the COVID-19 response and recovery), while still providing access for those who prefer print media and other traditional channels for information. All information about the election was available on the Mississaugavotes.ca website.

Communications were tailed according the election cycle and implemented in the following phases:

- Phase I: Raising awareness for the upcoming Municipal Election
- Phase II: Candidate awareness and nominations
- Phase III: Recruitment of elections staff (internally and externally)
- Phase IV: Voter awareness
- Phase V: Advanced Polls and Election Day

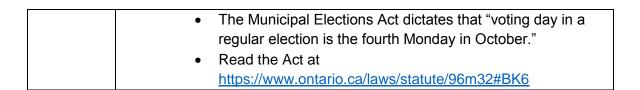
Specific messaging was developed to align with each of the noted phases with the messaging and phases often overlapping:

Your vote matters

- Learn more about how you can be more involved in local decision making, how to make your voice heard, make a difference in your community, be part of creating a great Mississauga.
- > The election is your opportunity to shape how your government is run and to make your voice heard.
 - The election happens every four years, and is your opportunity to elect the people you want representing you as Mayor, Ward Councillor and School Board Trustee.
 - Your vote helps select the people you feel are best qualified to make decisions about the future of our community
 - Voting is a way to help shape your community you can vote for someone who best represents your values and interests
- Municipal elections influence the matters close to home.
 - Your vote helps select a City Council who will make decisions

	about service levels, budget, taxes, land use and other	
	important things that directly impact our community	
	Your vote helps select School Trustees who will make	
	decisions on curriculum, facilities, staff and financial resources	
	for our local school boards.	
Voting is	Checking to make sure you are on the voters' list is an important step	
easy and	towards voting. It will make your voting experience easier. Save time	
convenient	at the polling station.	
	Learn more about what your municipal government does for you.	
	Your participation is what makes our city great.	
	Make your voice heard.	
	Finding out when, where and how to vote in the election is easy.	
	 Go online to <u>mississaugavotes.ca</u>; Mississauga's Elections 	
	website has all the information you need about when, where	
	and how to vote.	
	Check the mail! Your Voter Notification Card is mailed in early	
	September and includes information about voting	
	requirements and voting station locations!	
	 Connect with us! Call ###, email ### or drop by the Civic 	
	Centre Monday to Friday between 8:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m.	
	➤ If you won't be able to vote on October 24, you have other options:	
	 Vote early at Advance Vote locations October 7-9 or 13-16. 	
	i. October 7-9: Vote at the Civic Centre (300 Civic Centre	
	Drive)	
	ii. October 13-16: Vote at any voting location across the	
	city.	
	iii. Times, dates and locations are available online at	
	mississaugavotes.ca.	
	If you cannot vote during Advance Voting or on Election Day,	
	you can appoint someone to vote for you. This is called a vote	
	by proxy.	
	i. To vote by proxy, you appoint a person to vote on your	
	behalf by completing an Appointment for Voting Proxy	
	form.	
	Find the form online at MississaugaVotes.ca.	
	ii. Your form must be certified by the City Clerk's office	
Voters list	 Check the voters list – ensure your information is up to date. 	
1 21212 1100	If you have changed your name or address in the past few	
	years, your information on the voter's list is likely outdated.	
	 Visit <u>www.mississaugavotes.ca</u> to check to see if you're 	
	registered to vote in the 2022 Election.	
	Register online to make voting quick and simple.	

	Registering online saves you from filling out forms at the
	voting station.
	You can still vote if you're not registered, but it will take a bit longer.
	If you aren't registered to vote, you will have to review and
	sign a declaration at the voting station.
- · "	Save time, register online.
For staff	> We need you.
and	We're looking for City staff to fill leadership roles at Voting
<u>external</u>	Locations.
<u>recruitment</u>	Consider applying for Location Manager or Vote Anywhere
	Supervisor positions.
	Details available on Inside Mississauga Details available on City staffor during the Floation
	➤ Be mindful of your role as a City staffer during the Election.
	Even as a private resident, you always represent the City of Missianayana
	Mississauga.
	 Use careful consideration to what you say, whether posting online or in casual conversation.
	Elections are a complicated; if someone asks questions about the
	election, send them straight to the source.
	All the information residents need is available online at
	mississaugavotes.ca.
	If people have questions about municipal elections in
	Mississauga, they can call 905-615-VOTE (8683) or email
	elections.info@mississauga.ca.
	Support one of our most important community initiatives by working in
	the Election.
	The Election is a vital part of making our city work.
	Apply to be part of the democratic process.
<u>Vote</u>	Vote at the place most convenient to you.
<u>anywhere</u>	 On Election Day, vote at any voting location within your ward.
	 During Advance Voting, vote at any open voting location:
	 October 7-9, vote at the Civic Centre downtown.
	ii. October 13-16, vote at any voting station across the
	city.
	Find out where to vote at MississaugaVotes.ca
Diwali &	Election Day is October 24, which is also Diwali.
Election	Mississaugans celebrating Diwali are encouraged to
<u>Day</u>	participate in Advance Voting opportunities.
	Find an Advance Voting Location near you at
	mississaugavotes.ca.
	The date of Election Day is legislated and cannot be changed by the
	City of Mississauga.



Throughout each phase, a variety of tactics and outreach methods were used aimed at reaching a broad, diverse audience across the city which included:

- News releases and media relations
- Updates to the Mississauga Votes website
- Social Media (organic and paid)
- eNewsletter and eBlasts (33,000+ subscribers)
- Voter Notification Cards
- Outreach through community groups
- Railway and highway digital billboards
- Mississauga Celebration Square digital screens
- Community Centre digital screens
- Print advertising in multicultural publications through the Diverse Communities Promotion Program
- Printed Stay Connected newsletter
- Column in local print media
- Mobile Road Signs
- 311 Knowledge Base (KB) updates
- Outreach through faith organization
- Internal messages on Inside Mississauga and through leader emails

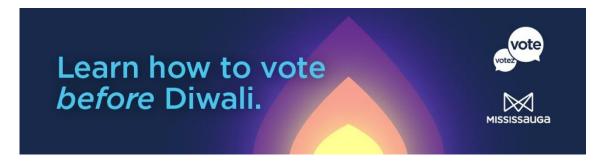
Visual elements were also developed for use throughout the campaign, some of which are highlighted below. The design aimed to ensure all Mississauga voters felt they were included. In addition, extra efforts were made to target those celebrating Diwali, as the 2022 Election Day coincided with Diwali (date selected by the provincial government). Extra efforts were made to share information regarding advance poll opportunities through the website, social media, print media and paid advertising as well as being sent directly to places of worship.













Results

Evaluation of communication efforts noted the following:

- 330,000 impressions (the amount the content was displayed) for organic tactics like
 posts to the City social media channels, eNews readers (electronic newsletter) and City
 media releases.
- The Mississauga Votes webpage was visited more than 330,000 times by over 257,000 unique viewers.
- Approximately, 93 per cent of media articles (online and print) included desired key
 messages about the election and more than 60 per cent of those provided direct links
 back to the Mississauga Votes website as an official source of information.
- Paid advertising efforts resulted in over 11 million impressions, which drove people to the Mississauga Votes website.

Overall, communications efforts and tactics used were effective in reaching desired audiences and delivering desired messages.

Candidate Financial System

For the second time, candidates were provided with the option of using the Candidate Financial System (CFS), which was housed within the Candidate Information Hub. CFS allowed candidates to input, manage and create their Financial Statements. 50% of all candidates used the system to generate a Financial Statement.

Benefits of the system included:

 Candidates were able to generate electronic rebate receipts for the Election Campaign Contribution Rebate Program as per Council's direction following the 2018 Municipal Election

- Candidates could track campaign finances and were informed if there were contraventions to the campaign finance rules; for example, candidates could not enter contributions that exceeded \$1,500 by mistake, allowing the candidate to take corrective action
- In addition to allowing candidates to track their campaign finances and generate their Financial Statement in CFS, the Candidate Information Hub also housed key election documents which provided valuable information about election rules and allowed candidates to access the Voters' List.

Of the total number of candidates who ran in the 2022 municipal election:

- 81% candidates logged into CFS
- 71% candidates created contribution records
- 74% candidates downloaded elections documents
- 75% candidates downloaded the Voters' List

Information was also provided in hard copy for candidates who did not have access to a computer or the internet or for those that preferred hard copies.

2022 Election Campaign Contribution Rebate Program

In 2021, Council approved a new Election Campaign Contribution Rebate Program (Rebate Program) by-law and formula, attached as Appendix 1. This meant that eligible individuals who contributed a minimum of \$100 to candidates running for a seat on Council could receive a rebate between \$75 and \$1,500 depending on the total contribution amount.

For the 2022 Election, electronic rebate receipts were introduced for candidates participating in the Rebate Program. Electronic receipts gave candidates the option to enter contribution information into CFS and issue a rebate receipt electronically to the contributor. Hard copy receipts were also available.

Of the 68 candidates running for a seat on council, 49 participated in the Rebate Program. To date, a total of approximately \$711,000 in rebates has been paid to contributors. In 2018, just under \$36,000 in rebates was paid out. The increase in rebate payouts is because:

- The Rebate Program was expanded to include all eligible contributors in Ontario, not just Mississauga residents as it was in 2018
- The maximum rebate a contributor could receive was increased from \$150 in 2018 to \$1,500 in 2022

The formula to calculate a rebate was changed to allow a contributor to receive a rebate
of up to 75% of their contribution whereas in 2018 contributors could only receive a
rebate of 25% for their contribution

Use of Election Technology

ExpressVote Devices:

The ExpressVote Universal Voting System (ExpressVote) was used for the first time as an alternative to the AutoMARK Voter Assist Terminal. The ExpressVote device was intended to facilitate marking ballots on Advance Poll days. The ExpressVote was an electronic ballot marking machine and the system worked as follows:

- Voters would show their identification to the ballot issuing election workers
- Ballot issuing election workers would vet the voter's eligibility and if the voter met all requirements they would be struck off of the Voter's List
- The election worker would print the appropriate ballot for the voter
- The voter would insert the blank ballot into the ExpressVote machine and would use a touch screen to mark their selections
- They would then have the opportunity to review their candidate choices and if satisfied, the voter would print the ballot
- The voter could then review the printed ballot and make sure they were satisfied with their choices
- Once printed, ballots were inserted into the DS200 vote tabulator

The ExpressVote is not a tabulator; it does not record results nor was there a connection between it and the DS200 vote tabulator.

The majority of voters cast their ballot on Advanced Poll Days used the ExpressVote system. Benefits included:

- That election workers did not have to manage 55 hard copy ballot types and instead could print ballots on demand based on what Ward the voter lived in and their school support
- The ExpressVote offered a variety of accessibility features and allowed all voters to vote
 in a similar manner unless the voter requested a hard copy traditional ballot which were
 available upon request

General feedback from both election workers and voters was positive saying the system was easy to use.

Wireless Transmission of Results:

Wireless (mobile) transmission of results was implemented to:

 Reduce the risk of system failure due to expired and/or expiring components in the Election results architecture. Most components of the previous system were replaced.
 Vote tabulators were fitted with modems and sim cards to facilitate mobile transmission

- · Reduce the steps and challenges for election workers when transmitting results
- Allow results to be transmitted and compiled in less time; and
- To increase efficiencies in the process through alignment with current technologies

With the use of wireless results transmission at the close of polls on Election Day, 75% of results were received by 8:30pm and complete unofficial results were published by 10:03pm. Real-time updates were available on the City's Mississaugavotes.ca website from the time of poll close and refreshed every five minutes.

<u>Alternative Voting Methods used by other municipalities:</u>

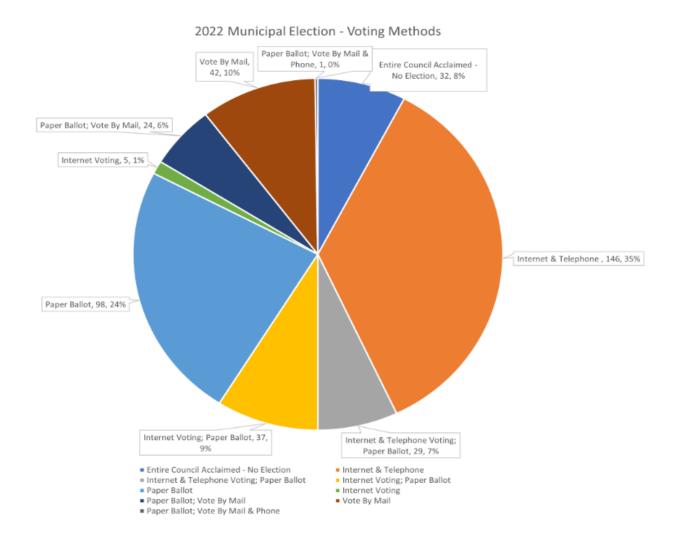
According to the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing, of the 382 municipalities that provided information to them:

- 181 used traditional paper ballots
- 221 municipalities used internet based voting
- 69 municipalities used mail in ballots

It should be noted that some municipalities used one or more of the above noted voting methods.

The Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO) also gathered statistics on voting methods. Although the information differs slightly from the Ministry's statistics, which may be related to the number of municipalities polled, AMO reports that 42 additional municipalities used internet/phone voting compared to the 2018 election. They also report that the use of mail-in ballots for the 2022 election remained the same at 71 municipalities. The diagram below from AMO indicates the breakdown of voting methods across Ontario municipalities for the 2022 Municipal Election stemming from the results of their survey. Again, municipalities may have used one or any combination of the methods noted below.

As noted previously, AMCTO (Association of Municipal Clerks and Treasurers of Ontario) is also conducting a detailed survey and review of the 2022 election. Once this report is shared it will be provided to Council for information.



Due to security and privacy concerns the City of Toronto opted not to use online voting and the City of Guelph did not use it this time around. Additionally, City of Hamilton, due to the cost of implementation, internet availability and risk of performance issues in rural areas did not pursue online voting.

A Corporate Report entitled Internet Voting Information Update previously presented to General Committee on September 9, 2020, attached as Appendix 2, provided information regarding online voting. It identified security and performance considerations related to the technology. I.T. has noted that the risks presented in the report related to the authentication of voters' remain the same.

Candidate Survey

Following the 2022 Municipal Election, Council directed staff to circulate a candidate survey to all candidates. The intention was to gather information that could improve the election experience. 30 of 131 candidates responded to the survey. The full survey questions and responses are attached as Appendix 3 and the Appendix 4. Highlights of the responses were:

- 40% of respondents "strongly agreed" that the Vote Anywhere model was effective and 26.67% "agreed" that it was effective
- 73.33% of respondents felt there were a sufficient number of polling locations on Advance Poll Days
- 90% of respondents felt that there were a sufficient number of voting locations on Election Day
- Many candidates expressed concerns related to election signs. However, 60% of respondents did not support election sign restrictions such as the City of Brampton's restrictions where election signs were only permissible in windows or windows in doors
- When asked about the voter turnout in Mississauga, 8 candidates referenced voter apathy or a lack of voter engagement as being factors contributing to lower turnout and 3 noted a lack of media attention being a factor

Financial Impact

The cost of the 2022 Municipal Election was approximately \$2,800,000, which was funded through the Elections reserve. This does not include the amount related to Election Campaign Contribution Rebate Program payouts, which totaled approximately \$711,000. There is no financial impact associated with this Report.

Conclusion

The 2022 Municipal Election was a success and resulted in four new members of Council and six new school board trustees. Access to the voting process was ensured by providing many locations for voting on both advance and election days to try to provide a variety of opportunities to cast a ballot. Although turnout decreased, the decrease was less than most municipalities and results were published in record time.

Attachments

Appendix 1: A by-law to authorize the implementation of a City of Mississauga Municipal Election Campaign Contribution Rebate Program for the 2022-2026 Term of Council

Appendix 2: Internet Voting Information Update Corporate Report

Appendix 3: 2022 Mississauga Municipal Election Candidate Survey – Full Questions

Appendix 4: Election 2022 Candidate Survey Responses

17 Stoth

Raj Sheth, P.Eng, Commissioner of Corporate Services

Prepared by: Laura Wilson, Manager, Elections and Vital Statistics