

# City of Mississauga Corporate Report



Date: 1/13/2020

To: Chair and Members of Governance Committee

From: Diana Rusnov, Director, Legislative Services and City Clerk

Originator's files:

Meeting date:  
1/28/2020

## Subject

**2018 City of Mississauga Municipal Election Information Overview**

## Recommendation

That the Corporate Report dated January 13, 2019, from the Director of Legislative Services and City Clerk, titled *2018 City of Mississauga Municipal Election Information Overview* be received.

## Report Highlights

- At the January 30, 2019 General Committee meeting, committee members made comments in relation to the 2018 and upcoming 2022 municipal elections. This report is provides information in response to those comments.
- Results of the 2018 candidate survey are included as an attachment.
- With the introduction of Vote Anywhere 26% of voters voted outside their ward on advanced polling days and 30% of voters voted at a different location other than the one they would have voted at during the 2014 Municipal Election.

## Background

The Corporate Report dated January 15, 2019 from the Commissioner of Corporate Services and Chief Financial Officer titled *"The 2018 City of Mississauga Election – New Initiatives and Election Summary"* was included on the January 30, 2019 General Committee Agenda (Appendix 1). Committee members provided comments in relation to the report and the 2018 and upcoming 2022 Municipal Elections. This report is in response to those comments. At the January 30, 2019 meeting, staff were requested to develop a survey for candidates who ran in the 2018 election. The survey was intended to gather information on possible improvements to election administrative processes. The results are included as Appendix 2.

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Although General Committee members discussed election signs at the January 30, 2019 meeting, information with respect to the Sign By-law is not included in this report. Sign By-law information will be provided by the Planning and Building Department. In addition, staff were requested to report to Governance Committee regarding internet voting. However, due to the complexity of implementation, staff will report back at a later date.

## Comments

### Voters List

General Committee raised concerns about the accuracy of the Voters' List. Staff recognize that the inaccuracies are frustrating for candidates and voters. In addition, staff is aware that when voters have to correct Voters' List information, completing an Application for Revision to the Voters' List can slow down the voting process.

In 2018 there were approximately 20,000 revisions made to the Voters' List. As the Municipal Property Assessment Corporation (MPAC) manages the Voters' List for all municipalities across Ontario, individual municipalities have little control over the quality of the data. The Provincial Government has proposed that Elections Ontario manage municipal Voters' Lists instead of MPAC. In a News Release dated October 25, 2019 from the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing the Province states:

*Our government is proposing to eliminate duplication by combining the provincial and municipal voters lists, giving Elections Ontario the responsibility of managing the updated list and taking the burden off of municipalities.*

Due to the passing of Bill 5 which reduced the City of Toronto's Wards from 47 to 25, Toronto's City Clerk entered into a data sharing agreement with Elections Ontario's Chief Electoral Officer. This allowed the City of Toronto to use the Province of Ontario's Voters' List information. In their 2018 Municipal Election Report, Toronto notes:

*Access to the Provincial voters' list added 150,000 additional eligible electors and reduced the number of revisions by 45% compared to 2014 (219,897 in 2014 to 119,611 in 2018).*

With these statistics in mind, staff are hopeful that if the municipal Voters' List is managed by Elections Ontario, the quality of the list will improve.

**Voter Turnout**

General Committee raised concerns with respect to voter turnout for the 2018 Municipal Election. The information provided below shows the voter turnout in Mississauga dating back to 1997:

<b>Historical City of Mississauga Voter Turnout</b>			
<b>Year</b>	<b>Eligible Voters</b>	<b>Ballots Cast</b>	<b>Voter Turnout Percentage</b>
1997	347,271	72,996	20.9%
2000	384,350	98,397	25.6%
2003	416,456	83,241	19.99%
2006	445,964	110,248	24.72%
2010	417,919	143,501	34.34%
2011*	42,704	11,536	27.01%
2014	444,755	162,655	36.57%
2015**	42,786	8,995	21.02%
2018	451,333	119,567	26.49%

*\*2011 Ward 5 By-election*

*\*\*2015 Ward 4 By-election*

The average Voter Turnout is 26.29%. Spikes in voter turnout could have a variety of reasons, for example, the higher turnout in 2014 may be due in part to the long standing Mayor retiring and a new Mayor being voted in.

The information below shows a comparison of voter turnout in municipalities throughout the GTA and beyond. The average voter turnout amongst these municipalities over the last three general elections is 37.95%.

<b>Voter Turnout Comparison</b>			
<b>Municipality</b>	<b>2010 Voter Turnout</b>	<b>2014 Voter Turnout</b>	<b>2018 Voter Turnout</b>
Brampton	33.13%	36.2%	34.5%
Burlington	37.6%	25.3%	39.79%
Caledon	43.26%	34.9%	32.29%
Hamilton	40.45%	34.02%	38.36%
London	42.93%	43.2%	39.46%
Milton	32.62%	33.35%	37%
Mississauga	34.34%	36.57%	26.49%
Oakville	40%	33%	37%
Ottawa	44%	39.92%	42.55%
Toronto	50.55%	54.7%	40.9%

The City of Mississauga falls under the average voter turnout amongst the above municipalities, and with this in mind a communications plan is developed before every election.

Communications completed a comprehensive, multi-channel, year-long campaign to ensure all audiences received timely, consistent and relevant information. The approach to communicating with voters and candidates align with the approach of other municipalities.

Paid advertising for the 2018 election was included in/on:

- MiWay Buses
- MiWay Bus Shelters
- Mobile street signs
- City of Mississauga owned assets
- The Mississauga News
- InSauga
- The Peel Weekly News
- Active+
- Modern Mississauga

In addition, advertising was translated and placed in 10 multicultural outlets through the Diverse Communities Promotions Program. The City of Mississauga also issued 11 media releases/advisories and Communications staff attended five community events throughout the

summer of 2018. Community groups were also provided with an elections toolkit that included printable posters, key information, a Frequently Asked Questions document and digital assets to engage voters.

Social media was also utilized to help promote the election. The following chart shows how social media platforms were used:

Platform	Posts	Impressions*	Engagements**
Twitter	36	178,040	6,295
Facebook	22	63,224	39,593
LinkedIn	4	14,729	361

*\*Impression refers to the number of times the post was displayed*

*\*\*Engagements refers to the number of times the post was clicked on*

For context, analytics show that the 2018 municipal election received significant media coverage. This included 312 articles that had a potential circulation/reach of 38,000,000.

Elections and Communications staff will continue to partner to communicate to voters. Elections staff will also continue to review ways to make the voting process easy for voters while protecting the security and integrity of the vote.

### Vote Anywhere

From a customer service perspective the Vote Anywhere (VA) model is positive in that it provides voters with more options for where they vote. Below is a comparison chart showing the increase in voting location options for voters between the 2014 and 2018 Municipal Elections:

	2014 Voting Location Options for Voters	2018 Voting Location Options for Voters
<b>Advance Poll Days</b>	1	22 throughout the municipality
<b>Election Day</b>	1	10 on average

Analysis conducted by the City of Mississauga's Geospatial Analysis and Visualization team shows that approximately 26% of voters voted outside of their Ward on Advance Poll Days. On Election Day, approximately 30% of voters voted at a location that was different from where they would have been required to vote if VA was not implemented and voters were restricted to a polling subdivision. These statistics demonstrate that voters are taking advantage of the flexibility provided through VA.

In addition to providing more voting location options, VA allows any voter to be served by any Deputy Returning Officer (DRO) which can help reduce wait times. This is because voters are not restricted to one polling subdivision and can be served by the next available DRO, similar to a lineup at a bank.

As an example, during the last Federal Election, City of Mississauga staff observed that because VA was not implemented and voters were restricted to one DRO, a lineup would occur in front of one DRO, while other DROs did not have any voters to serve. The Vote Anywhere (VA) model helps address this problem because any DRO can serve any voter.

In addition to the above, VA helps keep the City of Mississauga up to date with current trends. The table below shows the municipalities in the surrounding area that used a VA model in 2018.

Municipality	Advance Poll Days		Election Day	
	Vote Anywhere in the City	Vote Anywhere in your Ward	Vote Anywhere in the City	Vote Anywhere in your Ward
Ajax	Yes		Yes	
Brampton	Yes			Yes
Burlington	Yes			Yes
London	Yes		Not offered	
Markham	Yes		Yes	
Milton	Yes		Not offered	
Mississauga	Yes			Yes
Oakville	Yes			Yes
Ottawa	Yes		Not offered	
Toronto* see note	Yes		Not Offered	
Vaughan	Yes		Not offered	
Whitby	Yes		Yes	

*\*On Advance Poll Days Toronto had a voting location at City Hall at which any voter could vote. In addition, on Advance Poll Days, 2 locations in each Ward were available.*

As voting technology evolves, Elections staff are committed to researching and identifying the technology that will be most beneficial for voters while ensuring the security and integrity of the vote.

### **Voter Notification Letters**

Concerns were raised by General Committee regarding the use of letters to notify electors about their voting options rather than more traditional Voter Notification Cards. The challenge to using the more traditional card is fitting the many voting location options (in some cases up to 37 locations were available over Advance Poll and Election Days), the multiple voting dates and differing voting times etc. into a limited space and in a design that meets accessibility

requirements. The information below shows what other municipalities used to communicate election information:

<b>Municipality</b>	<b>Communication Type</b>
Ajax	Voter Notification Letters – provides security required for information related to internet voting
Brampton	Voter Notification Cards & a cover letter - sent to each household; cards were two to a page and attached by a perforation that could be detached when voters went to vote
Burlington	Voter Notification Letters – allowed room for information related to internet voting
Caledon*	Voter Notification Cards – cards were sent to each elector
Hamilton*	Voter Notification Cards with up to five voters listed on each card – cards were sent per household
London	Voter Notification Cards – cards were bundled and sent per household attached by a perforation that could be detached when voters went to vote
Markham	Voter Notification Letters – letters were sent to each individual voter which kept each voter's PIN used for online voting, private
Milton*	Voter Notification Cards – cards were bundled and sent per household
Mississauga	Voter Notification Letters to each household
Oakville	Voter Notification Cards & a cover letter sent to each household
Ottawa	Voter Notification Letters sent to each voter
Toronto**	Voter Notification Cards
Vaughan	Voter notifications are bundled and sent per household with two Voter Notification Cards per sheet; cards can be separated along a perforated edge
Whitby	Voter Notification Cards sent to each voter

*\*These municipalities did not offer Vote Anywhere*

*\*\*Offered Vote Anywhere on Advance Poll days only*

Staff are committed to working with the Communications Divisions and Print and Mail Services to find a solution that will be easily identifiable to voters. Options include designing an envelope that closely resembles a traditional Voter Notification Card (VNC), or designing a VNC that folds out.

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### **Mandatory Location Process**

General Committee raised questions about communication to long term care facilities and hospitals. Under section 45(7) of the *Municipal Elections Act, 1996*, the Clerk is required to provide voting locations at various institutions. Staff communicate with these locations about voting and voting times. However, the Elections Office will work with the Communications Division to increase awareness within these facilities.

### **Using Schools as Polling Locations**

Having a Professional Activity Day (PA) so that students are not in school on Election Day would eliminate security concerns related to the safety of students. In addition, a PA day would address issues related to traffic in the school area and parking on school grounds potentially making it easier, in some instances, for voters to access the voting location. Elections staff have requested that the School Boards consider scheduling a PA day on Election Day, but so far, this request has not been fulfilled. Following the January 30, 2019 General Committee meeting, a letter was sent by the Mayor on behalf of Council making a similar request that a PA day be scheduled for Election Day. So far no response has been received with respect to this request.

### **Candidate Survey**

General Committee requested that staff create a Candidate Survey for those that ran in the 2018 municipal election, requesting feedback about key election administration processes. The survey included questions related to:

- effective ways to communicate information
- additional information candidates require
- the candidate information session
- common questions candidates received from voters
- the Voters' List
- Vote Anywhere
- when voters are saying they are most likely to vote
- the Campaign Contribution Rebate Program
- election Sign rules
- the Financial Filing System

The survey results are attached as Appendix 2 of this Corporate Report. Staff will consider the information provided through the survey when planning for the 2022 Municipal Election.

### **Financial Impact**

As staff plan for the 2022 municipal election, Business Cases and Budget Requests will be submitted if funding is required.



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## Conclusion

This report is intended to provide information in response to questions and concerns raised at the January 30, 2018 General Committee regarding the 2018 Municipal Election. It is very early in the planning process for the 2022 Municipal Election, but elections staff will continue to work closely with stakeholders and partners such as the Information Technology and Communication Divisions to ensure a fair election that upholds the principles in the *Municipal Elections Act, 1996*.

## Attachments

Appendix 1: The 2018 City of Mississauga Election – New Initiatives and Election Summary

Appendix 2: Report – 2018 Municipal Election Candidate Survey



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Diana Rusnov, Director, Legislative Services and City Clerk

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