

CITY OF VAUGHAN

EXTRACT FROM COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES OF MAY 19, 2015

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Purpose

The purpose of this report is to summarize key findings from the 2014 Municipal Elections and to make preliminary recommendations pertaining to preparations for the 2018 Municipal Elections. This report may be read in conjunction with the 2014 General Elections Accessibility Report [Committee of the Whole, Item 9, Report No. 2, adopted by Council January 20, 2015].

Background – Analysis and Options

Synopsis:

This report summarizes the key findings from the 2014 Municipal Elections to provide a basis for preliminary recommendations pertaining to preparations for the 2018 Municipal Elections.

The report provides an overview of:

- *The Legislative Context for Elections;*
- *Key Facts and Figures from the 2014 Municipal Elections; and*
- *Notable Initiatives and Events in the 2014 Municipal Elections, including an assessment of overall implementation and opportunities for improvement.*

The report concludes that the lessons learned from the administration of the 2014 Municipal Elections will be integral to the planning effort for the 2018 events and that given the scope and magnitude of the election administration preparations for the 2018 Municipal Election will commence immediately.

The initiation of an RFQ/RFP process for voting equipment is recommended to replace the expired contract or other such technology necessary for the 2018 and possibly the 2022 Municipal Elections, including consideration of internet voting as an optional service. The other recommendation is that the Director of Human Resources develop a plan to provide for maximization of City staff available to work the 2018 Municipal Elections.

Legislative Framework

The City Clerk has the statutory responsibility to run regular elections every four years, as well as by-elections when required.

The general election of municipal and school board candidates for the four-year term commencing December 1, 2014 was held on October 27, 2014.

Pursuant to section 11 of the *Municipal Elections Act, 1996* (the Act) in Ontario the Clerks of local municipalities are responsible for conducting the municipal and school board elections within their municipalities. This includes responsibility for:

- (a) preparing for the election;
- (b) preparing for and conducting a recount in the election; and
- (c) maintaining peace and order in connection with the election.

The general powers of the Clerk to administer elections are to be contrasted with the limited powers of municipal councils.

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Some of the general powers of the Clerk are set out in Section 12 of the Act:

12. (1) A clerk who is responsible for conducting an election may provide for any matter or procedure that,

- (a) is not otherwise provided for in an Act or regulation; and
- (b) in the clerk's opinion, is necessary or desirable for conducting the election.

(2) The power conferred by subsection (1) includes power to establish forms, including forms of oaths and statutory declarations, and power to require their use.

(3) The power conferred by subsection (1) includes power to require a person, as a condition of doing anything or having an election official do anything under this Act, to furnish proof that is satisfactory to the election official of the person's identity or qualifications, including citizenship or residency, or of any other matter. 1996,

13.(1) Any notice or other information that this Act requires the clerk to give shall be given in a form and manner and at a time that the clerk considers adequate to give reasonable notice or to convey the information, as the case may be. 1996,

(2) The clerk shall provide electors, candidates and persons who are eligible to be electors with information to enable them to exercise their rights under this Act. 1996,

18.(1) On or before each date fixed by the Minister of Finance under section 15 of the *Assessment Act*, the clerk of each local municipality may divide the local municipality into voting subdivisions.1996,

45.(1) The clerk shall establish the number and location of voting places for an election as he or she considers most convenient for the electors.1996.

With the exception of a few other matters, the Act limits Council's authority to pass the following election and by-election by-laws:

- establishing the dates and hours for an advance vote (section 43(1));
- deciding whether voting places will be open on Voting Day before the legislated time (section 46(2));
- deciding whether to reduce hours of voting in institutions and retirement homes (section 46(3));
- submit proposed by-laws and questions to electors (section 8(1));
- pass by-laws allowing the use of languages other than English in notices, forms and other information provided under the MEA (section 9(2));
- pass by-laws authorizing the use of vote-counting equipment or authorizing electors to use an alternative voting method (section 42(1));
- pass by-laws providing that specified voting places shall be open before 10 am (section 42(2));
- pass a resolution requiring a recount (section 57(1));
- fix a day for by-election vote on questions related to the *Liquor Licence Act* (section 65(5));
- pass by-laws authorizing electronic filing of candidates' financial statements and auditors' reports (section 78(7)); and
- pass a by-law to provide for the payment of rebates for campaign contributions (section 82(1)).

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The conduct of elections is governed by fundamental principles which have been developed over time.

Broad powers are of course constrained by the specific provisions of the Act. They are similarly informed by election principles which have been developed over time:

1. The integrity of the process should be maintained throughout the election;
2. The secrecy and confidentiality of the individual votes is paramount;
3. The election should be fair and non-biased;
4. The election should be accessible to the voters;
5. There be certainty that the results of the election reflect the votes cast;
6. Voters and candidates should be treated fairly and consistently within a municipality; and
7. A proper majority vote decides the election by ensuring, so far as reasonably possible, that valid votes are counted and invalid votes be rejected.

Within this framework established by the legislation and the election principles, planning activities began in 2011 for the 2014 Municipal Elections.

Facts and Figures

Table 1 provides a summary of some of the key numbers from the 2014 Municipal Elections.

Table 1 – Key Numbers from the 2014 Municipal Elections

	2010	2014
Number of Eligible Voters	175,470	190,724
Number of Candidates	60	60
Number of Ballots Cast	71,145	57,749
Voter Turnout	40.55%	30.28%
Number of Polling Subdivisions	496	527
Number of Voting Locations	107	79
Number of Vote Tabulators Used	105	107
Number of Election Officials Recruited	867	653
Number of City Staff Recruited	125	213
Number of Advance Vote Days	9	10
Number of Advance Vote Locations	8	8
Number of Ballots Cast at Advance Vote	4,658	8,226

A total of 60 candidates were on the ballots for Council and School Board trustee positions, the same number as in 2010.

The names of the participating candidates and the persons ultimately certified as elected candidates and those who withdrew are set out at Appendix 1. A total of 60 candidates (plus two withdrawals and two changes of office) were processed for the Municipal Elections.

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The Preliminary List of Electors for the City of Vaughan, showed 190,724 eligible voters, an increase of nearly 9% over 2010

The number of voting subdivisions (or polls) increased in 2014 due to population growth, resulting in an average poll size of 362 voters. An exercise was undertaken to combine polls to make the size of the subdivisions reporting to a single Deputy Returning Officer more balanced. Prior to the readjustment, some subdivisions contained less than 200 voters and some close to 1,000 voters.

Voting Technology was extensively applied for the administration of the elections

The technology employed for the 2014 election included:

- 135 Image Cast Vote Tabulators provided by Dominion Voting Systems Inc. (107 used on Voting Day, 8 used during Advance Vote, and 20 spares);
- 4 Accessible Voting appliances and associated hardware, for use during the advance voting period;
- 50 laptops and bar code scanners rented for electronic voters' list management with internet hubs purchased for public internet access;
- Voters' List management tools including the provision of real-time applications to support the City's Advance Vote 'vote anywhere' initiative and the 5 vote centre locations on Voting Day; and
- 1 Dedicated website managed internally.

Notable Initiatives and Events in the 2014 Municipal Elections

The plan for the 2014 Municipal Elections included consideration of lessons learned from past elections and a focus on continuous improvement. With this in mind, the 2014 Municipal Elections included several new initiatives designed to improve the election process. These initiatives and events were met with varying degrees of success. The following section describes each initiative or event, assesses the overall implementation (positive, negative or neutral) and identifies opportunities for improvement for future Municipal Elections. The information is provided in roughly the chronological order that election administration follows.

1. The English Catholic and Public School Boards designated a Professional Activity (PA) Day for Voting Day, allowing easier access to schools as voting locations.

Description:

Early in 2014, the City Clerk, along with the City Clerk of the City of Markham, met with the Public and English Catholic School Boards to discuss the use of schools in York Region as voting locations for the 2014 Municipal Elections. As in previous years, a request was made for the Boards to consider designating Voting Day a Professional Activity (PA) Day to enable easier access to the schools and mitigate concerns with respect to parking and security. Both school boards subsequently agreed to the request and designated Voting Day as a PA day.

Implementation: positive

Securing agreement from the School Boards to designate Voting Day as a PA Day was a major breakthrough for election administration. Generally speaking, the schools used as voting

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locations in 2014 were much better than in 2010, both from an accessibility and manageability standpoint. Access to school permits and parking was easier, and there were fewer security issues.

Opportunities for Improvement:

Difficulties sometimes arise with on-site administrators on Voting Day but the School Boards' decision to designate the day, as well as their corporate commitment to support election administration needs, helped minimize such conflicts. The involvement of French School Boards in declaring a province-wide PA Day would improve access to those school facilities.

2. The practice of appointment-based, "sit-down" nomination meetings introduced in 2010 was continued in 2014.

Description:

Candidates filing nomination papers were required to book meetings with the City Clerk or City Clerk's designate to review the requirements of being a candidate. Candidates were presented with a detailed nomination kit, including a 24 point checklist of matters and documents to be reviewed.

Implementation: positive

Twenty-three of the sixty candidates who filed nomination papers filed within the month of September, with September 12 being Nomination Day. The nomination meetings, though time consuming, were productive and well-received by the candidates.

Opportunities for Improvement:

The checklist will be reviewed and additional emphasis will be applied to issues that generated questions and concerns later in the election year.

3. An active recruitment campaign resulted in an increase in the number of City staff hired for Advance Vote and Voting Day field duties.

Description:

The effective recruitment and training of election staff is integral to the success of the election process. Recruiting and training up to 653 staff for what is essentially a one day position is an ongoing challenge. Municipal Clerks across York Region and beyond consistently report similar problems with respect to the capacity of members of the public participating as election staff to comprehend or carry out instructions.

To help mitigate some of the staffing challenges, a main focus of the 2014 election staffing strategy was to increase the number of City staff working on Voting Day. By training City staff for the roles of Ward Manager, Supervisor, Managing Deputy Returning Officer and Tabulator Deputy Returning Officer, the goal was to provide more highly trained and skilled workers for key voting place management and technical roles. To support this goal, following the 2010 Municipal Election, Council adopted a recommendation from the City Clerk and Returning Officer for a "skeleton staff" policy to maximize participation by City staff on Voting Day duties.

In 2010, only 125 internal staff volunteered to work the elections. In 2014, a vigorous campaign was undertaken to increase the number of City staff working on Voting Day. This campaign

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included a recruitment open house held at City Hall and the JOC, an information booth at the Employee Appreciation Barbecue, the creation of a recruitment pamphlet and presentations to the Senior Management Team and departmental teams. The outreach effort was broadened to include Library Board and PowerStream employees. As a result of this recruitment effort, the City Clerk's Office was able to recruit 213 staff, including staff from the Library Board and PowerStream.

Implementation: neutral

While the increase in staff participation was encouraging, the number of City staff participating still represents less than 25% of the total work force. In addition, challenges were experienced in filling key positions in the days leading up to Voting Day, including dealing with last minute staffing cancellations.

Opportunities for improvement:

It is recommended that the Director of Human Resources be directed to prepare a formal plan to identify those staff not otherwise required for City duties on Voting Day, so that City staff resources can truly be maximized. Identification of staff early will enable full training prior to Voting Day.

4. Staffing needs not met by internal staff were met by a public recruitment effort.

Description:

In an effort to increase the quality of external applicants for election positions, applicants were required to pass a test ensuring at least a minimal level of comprehension of the election process before being invited to hands-on training and allocated a position. The test and basic election materials were posted in advance and applicants were requested to submit to testing through an internet portal. The test and materials were also available in hard copy format for those who did not wish to complete the test on line.

Implementation: neutral

Despite the basic nature of the test, test scores were in many cases quite poor disqualifying those applicants. Further, as is experienced by election administrators across the Province, election staff hired from the public were in many cases substandard performers. On the positive side, anecdotal assessments showed a marginally better public roster than in previous elections.

Opportunities for Improvement:

Given the challenges outlined above, it is anticipated that recruitment will continue to be challenging for the bulk of election positions. A much higher participation rate by City staff will be required to ensure adequate operational integrity.

5. The training strategy for the 2014 Municipal Elections included several significant changes from 2010.

Description:

All training manuals and aids were re-written and updated with a view to making them more user-friendly. The training sessions were module-based, with specialized training by position. Each training session began with a plenary session which provided an overview of the election process and principles, legislative requirements such as the identification policy, accessibility training, and

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customer service. Following the plenary session, participants were divided into smaller groups of up to 20 and received hands-on training in the unique requirements of their position.

Implementation: mostly positive

The quality and readability of training materials was improved over 2010 and the smaller breakout training sessions allowed trainers to focus on participants and identify any potential performance issues at an early stage.

The limited amount of training time and the sheer volume of material to be taught make it challenging to provide the optimal amount of hands-on training. The timing of election training and its' impact on staff resource requirements also proved challenging this election. The bulk of the training was conducted as close as possible to Voting Day to allow maximum retention of training information, however, this conflicted with some of the Advance Vote dates. As a result, key election personnel involved in training and Advance Vote management were severely impacted in trying to cover both responsibilities.

Opportunities for Improvement:

Identification of City staff well in advance of Voting Day would provide the opportunity to train early, often and well.

6. The 2014 Advance Vote program was designed to encourage more voters to take advantage of advance vote opportunities and reduce line-ups on Voting Day. Unfortunately, a cultural shift has not happened and the bulk of voters continue to vote on Voting Day between 5 p.m. and 8 p.m.

Description:

In the City Clerk's post-2010 Election report to Council, it was noted that the holding of the advance vote so far in advance of Voting Day may have discouraged turnout and that consideration would be given in 2014 to spreading the advance vote out, with opportunities to be provided as close to Voting Day as possible. Another recommendation following the 2010 Municipal Elections was that the advance voting hours at Community Centres should be lengthened to more closely align with the Community Centres' operating hours.

For the 2014 Municipal Elections, a concerted effort was made to encourage voters to take advantage of Advance Vote opportunities. Advance Voting was held over ten straight days at City Hall and a total of six days at Community Centres covering two weekends. Advance voting was conducted through the use of an electronic Voters' List, with voters' struck off or added to the list appearing in real-time on a master list accessible from every voting location ("Vote Anywhere"). The Vote Anywhere approach created the ability to provide campaign offices with updated Voters' Lists throughout the advance vote period, and facilitated the production of paper lists for Voting Day.

Four advance vote locations were outfitted with an accessible voting appliance which enabled disabled voters, who could not otherwise mark a ballot without assistance, to vote independently. Voters would listen to instructions and the names of candidates through a set of headphones, and by manipulating a keypad, or a set of paddles, or a sip-and-puff device, could cause a ballot to be printed which would then be read by the vote tabulator in the same way that all other ballots in the election would be processed.

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Implementation: neutral

Advance voting turnout numbers were improved over 2010, but the increase in Advance Vote numbers did not translate into a significant reduction in the number of voters on Voting Day. Table 2 provides a breakdown of advance vote turnout by location for 2010 and 2014.

Table 2 – Advance Vote Statistics

Advance Vote Statistics		
Location	2010	2014
City Hall	575	1,690
Father Ermanno C.C.	721	1,115
Vellore Village C.C.	620	1,269
North Thornhill C.C.	173	547
Dufferin Clark C.C.	602	1,375
Promenade Shopping Centre	1,051	1,498
Vaughan Mills Shopping Centre	681	691
York University	235	48
Total	4,658	8,233

Advance voting at the Promenade Shopping Centre and Vaughan Mills provided additional convenient locations for voters, and enabled them to vote even though that may not have been their main intention in attending the location. Cooperation from both shopping centres was excellent. Advance vote turnout at York University was very low and did not attract young voters as hoped. Advance Voting at City Hall and the Community Centres offered convenient voting opportunities and produced a steady turnout of voters. Despite offering the accessible voting devices at four locations over the entire Advance Vote period, only one voter requested to vote in that manner.

Opportunities for Improvement:

The timing of the Advance Vote period, ending on the Tuesday prior to Voting Day, negatively impacted election preparation activities and training. This timing will be reviewed for 2018 and it will be recommended that the Advance Vote period be moved further back from Voting Day. With respect to the accessible voting devices, consideration may be given to more focused service provisions, whereby the devices would be offered at City Hall only, but on a continuous basis with free transportation provided. Staff will also be exploring non-traditional opportunities to make voting accessible and convenient, including the feasibility of instituting mobile polls.

7. A process to have Condominium Corporations commit to important Voting Day considerations improved administration at many locations, but the failure of some condominiums to respond to the City’s enquiries resulted in disappointment by some residents, and numerous complaints.

Description:

Significant issues were experienced at some of the condominium poll locations in the 2010 Municipal Elections. Examples included: election staff not being able to gain timely access to the location or access to on-site washrooms, space being too small or not being provided as agreed to, and last minute changes to room locations.

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To address these issues, a new process was implemented in 2014 whereby condominium management was requested to sign a contract confirming that they would adhere to important Voting Day considerations such as access and adequate space. Early in 2014, a letter was sent to the condominium management offices for condominiums where polls were held in 2010 advising them of the requirements necessary to hold a poll in a condominium for residents. Thirty-one letters were mailed but nine locations failed to respond. Those nine locations were contacted by telephone and/or email with an extension offered for compliance with the agreement. After repeated attempts, any condominium that failed to respond was removed as a voting location, not only because an agreement could not be obtained on critical Voting Day considerations but because a lack of a response indicated lack of responsible management presence, a predictor for problems on Voting Day.

Implementation: neutral

Securing an agreement in advance of Voting Day provided assurances that condominium management understood the requirements and expectations for having a voting location at the condominium. This greatly reduced the number of problems experienced in these condominium locations on Voting Day.

Notwithstanding the above, 9 out of the 31 locations failed to respond to the invitation for a polling place in their building. In many cases, voters only became aware of location changes when voter information cards were mailed. Offers to accommodate such residents through coordinated visits at Advance Vote locations were refused.

Opportunities for Improvement:

For the 2018 Municipal Elections, staff will continue the practice of seeking letters of commitment from Condominium Corporations for locations previously used as voting locations. Staff will review the timing of sending letters to condominium management and the potential for additional onsite follow up should a response not be received after repeated attempts.

8. Online “provisional” voter registration was available for the first time in Vaughan.

Description:

A new online service was added to provide voters who did not find their name on the Voters' List the ability to add their voter details and be added to the Voters' list prior to Voting Day. When the voter arrived at the voting location, they were required to produce identification and sign a short declaration before receiving a ballot from the Deputy Returning Officer (DRO). This service eliminated the step of the voter first having to see the Revision Officer to complete a revision form before receiving a ballot.

Implementation: positive

While only 257 voters took advantage of this time saving service, it represented a positive step forward in providing convenient options for the voter to add their name to the Voters' List prior to Voting Day.

Opportunities for Improvement:

In retrospect, it would have been beneficial to add a simple tool to the website so that persons completing the provisional revision form could also search to find their voting location. This would have reduced the volume of enquiries on Voting Day. This tool, along with continued promotion of provisional voter registration, will be implemented for 2018.

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9. A mobile phone app for elections was introduced.

Description:

A mobile phone election app was developed in conjunction with the eSolutions Group, a Waterloo-based company. Titled PingStreet, the app was used by 13 other municipalities as their municipal mobile app and was provided in three versions – iOS (Apple), BlackBerry and Android.

A major benefit of the app was that it provided relevant location-based information to residents. Users were able to review advance vote opportunities, their voting location on Voting Day, and the list of candidates they could vote for, all customized for their location as entered by the user. Users were also able to check if they were on the Voters List, follow the Clerk's Twitter feed and sign-up for alerts/reminders.

Implementation: positive

As of October 29th, 2014, the app had 144 users and a total of 2169 "hits". Voting Day, not surprisingly, had the most single-day hits with 208. The most popular operating system for accessing the PingStreet app was iOS, followed by BlackBerry and then Android, based on the hits received by the app.

Opportunities for Improvement:

For 2018, staff will explore additional options including the development of a more mobile friendly website instead of a mobile app. Statistics provided by Information and Technology Services (ITS) showed that on Voting Day, people accessing the City's website switched from predominantly desktop computers to mobile devices at around 5 p.m. A mobile friendly site would better serve website users. New advances in website design (HTML5) means a mobile friendly site can be developed that will work equally well on any device. There might also be an opportunity to piggyback on a City app, should one be developed, by simply adding an "Election" section to the app during the election period. Whatever method is chosen should be accompanied by better promotion of the app on the election webpage, voter notification cards and election advertising.

10. One Vote Centre location was piloted in each of the City's five wards using an electronic voters' list and internet hubs for added efficiency.

Description:

As previously reported to Council following the 2010 Municipal Elections in the report titled 'Potential Programs and Technologies for the 2014 Municipal and School Board Elections' [Committee of the Whole (Working Session), Item 2, Report No. 8 adopted by Council on February 19, 2013], the Vote Centre model offers the potential to be an innovative and unique approach to municipal elections. A Vote Centre is different from a traditional polling location in that it is designed to accommodate many more voters at any given time and utilize a network of computers to access an Electronic Voters List. Voters attending a Vote Centre location have the option of being served by any one of several DRO's within the location. The model is intended to offer more streamlined voting through balanced voter registration lines, additional tabulation equipment and dedicated areas for adding voters to the voters' list.

The 2013 report also noted potential risks with the Vote Centre model. These risks included the potential of a surge of voters late on Voting Day, leading to line-ups and parking issues. The report noted that Vote Centres must be adequately sized to handle large numbers of voters and that a minimum of 19 Vote Centres would be required to adequately serve Vaughan's entire

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population. Many of the available locations in the City of Vaughan are too small to adequately handle a large or surging turnout were it to occur on Voting Day. For these reasons, Vote

Centres were not recommended for city-wide implementation in 2014, but it was noted that the concept would be piloted where possible.

For the 2014 Municipal Elections, it was decided that Vote Centres would be piloted on a limited basis with one vote centre location in each ward so that proof of concept could be undertaken on a more manageable scale. The pilot also enabled the reallocation of vote tabulators within the existing vote tabulator contract to increase the number of vote tabulators at busy locations, something that Council had requested after the 2010 Municipal Elections in order to ease congestion and streamline the voting process.

The Vote Centre locations were selected based on geographic location, capacity to accommodate voters, and internet connectivity within each facility. In particular, the facilities were chosen to eliminate voting locations identified in 2010 as “problem locations” i.e. long lineups due to layout/ size of a location. The ideal location for connectivity within each facility was determined with the assistance of ITM staff. Depending on the size of the facility fifteen to twenty-six polls reported to one location.

The assignment of voting place staff was determined based on 2010 voter turnout and current voter population. In addition, the “industry standard” of 300-350 voters per Deputy Returning Officer was used to determine the number of Deputy Returning Officers required at a Vote Centre location.

Internet hubs allowed internet connection of up to 5 laptops to run from one hub. ITM staff attended each location and tested to ensure the designated location within the facility was the most efficient from an internet accessibility perspective.

Implementation: On balance, negative

Long line ups and delays in processing electors were experienced at some Vote Centres, particularly during peak voting periods. Three major factors contributed to the line ups: the surge of voters between 5:00 p.m. and the close of polls, slow internet connectivity in some locations, and the quality of the voters’ list resulting in hundreds of voters’ list revisions and extra time taken to process revisions at the voting place on Voting Day.

On Voting Day the Vote Centres processed a total of 10,214 voters. As Table 3 shows, between 5:00 p.m. and the close of polls, the vote centres processed 5,160 voters. This represents 50.5% of all the voters processed on Voting Day, arriving during the final 3 hours of Voting Day.

Some Vote Centres also reported slow internet speeds. The ITM election team could not determine if the situation was due to an internet connectivity issue, the software application or whether it was a load capacity issue.

The quality of the Voters’ List continues to be a problem and the impact of this was particularly felt in Vote Centre locations. Over 1,000 revisions were processed at the Vote Centre locations on Voting Day, the majority of which were additions to the list. Although these revisions were inputted electronically and therefore immediately processed, they still involved the completion of forms and review of voter identification, which added to the time taken to process voters.

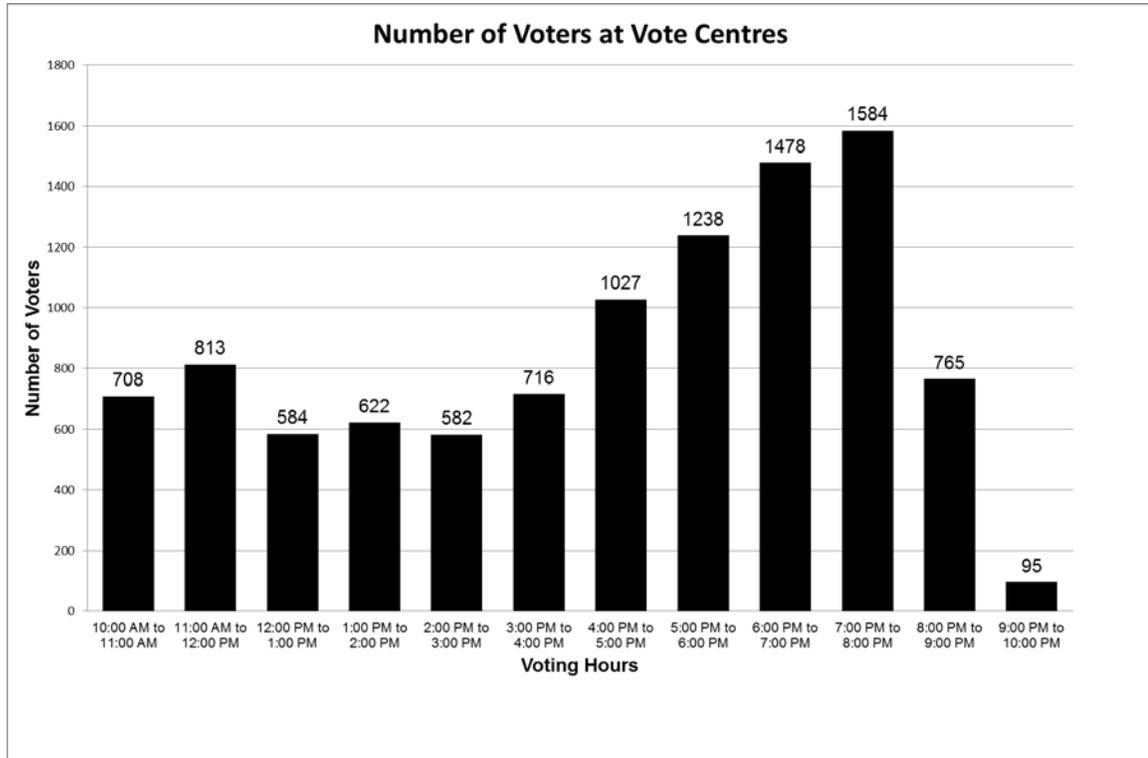
Though intended to streamline voting, designating separate staff to process list additions and changes, coupled with the poor quality of the Voters’ List, meant that many voters had to line up twice to be processed: once to amend the Voters’ List, and then to obtain a ballot and vote.

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Table 3 – Number of Voters at Vote Centres



Opportunities for Improvement:

This pilot showed that the expectations and voting patterns of voters requires that Vote Centres be sized and staffed to handle large numbers of voters during peak voting periods. While some line ups are to be expected during these times, a more flexible staffing model is required to better handle the peaks and valleys during the day. This may involve, for example, placing extra City staff in Vote Centre locations at the opening of the poll and late in the day to assist with customer service and poll management. Other configurations of poll layouts and poll management will be investigated to possibly reduce line-ups.

In light of the technical issues experienced in some Vote Centre locations, a full technical review will be undertaken to determine optimal hub configuration to deal with the technical issues, including the use of the City’s internal network to process voters.

Coping with a large number of revisions at the poll on Voting Day will continue to be a challenge until such time as the quality of the Voters’ List improves and more people take advantage of opportunities prior to Voting Day to add or revise their information on the Voters’ List. Staff will continue exploring and promoting convenient options for voters to update their voter information before Voting Day with the goal of reducing the number of revisions required at the poll.

There is also the potential that the quality of the Voters’ List will in fact be improved for 2018. A Province-wide effort by municipalities and their associations to encourage fundamental changes in how Voters’ Lists are managed (or indeed where there should be a list at all) is anticipated.

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11. An enhanced field management and Election Central model was implemented to manage election issues in the field.

Description:

This model was designed to provide enhanced management oversight and first line response to issues in the field, and to allow timely escalation of issues to Election Central where required.

Each ward was overseen by a Ward Manager located in a Ward Centre office within the assigned ward, assisted by an Assistant Ward Manager and support staff person. The Ward Manager was further supported by a team of Supervisors, each of whom was assigned several voting locations to supervise. Standby election staff were also located at the Ward Centre for easy dispatching to voting locations. This system allowed the Ward Manager and Assistant Ward Manager to effectively manage issues in the field and escalate to Election Central as necessary. Ward Managers had a direct line of contact with Election Central.

Access Vaughan was an active partner in the 2010 Municipal Elections, but their role was greatly expanded in 2014. Field staff were able to use 905-303-VOTE as a central Election Inquiry number, with Access Vaughan as the first point of contact. In addition to handling calls in the months leading up to Voting Day, Access Vaughan was open extended hours on Voting Day, fielding calls not only from the public but from voting place staff. Access Vaughan staff were trained to answer questions ranging from employment inquiries to who can vote, and when necessary routed calls to subject matter experts in Election Central.

Implementation: positive

The field management and Election Central model worked well. The model was flexible enough, for example, for supervisory and standby staff to be moved from one ward to another to respond to needs as they arose. Access Vaughan did an excellent job of providing timely first line response to the majority of public election inquiries, and escalating calls where needed to the election management team.

Opportunities for Improvement:

The model was well received by Ward Managers and their teams and will be used for 2018 with some minor modifications.

12. The vote tabulators worked well and unofficial elections results were available by 10:00 p.m.

Description:

For 2014, polling subdivisions were combined at most voting locations for greater efficiency. Deputy Returning Officers were processing a maximum of 300 - 350 voters instead of 150 – 200 voters or less as in previous elections. This strategy allowed the assignment of more qualified and experience staff to key election positions and resulted in a significant cost savings. It also allowed the deployment of additional vote tabulators to some voting locations to assist in processing voters.

Implementation: mostly positive

Polls opened on time, and the tabulator technology worked according to specification, with only a few tabulators being replaced. Great care was taken to ensure that voters who intended to vote were not disenfranchised, and election processes and systems operated with the utmost integrity.

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On two occasions vote tabulators reported a critical error not seen before which required the installation of new memory cards and the re-processing of voted ballots. On both occasions, the City Clerk attended to polling locations to process ballots in full view of those present (but without allowing for the ballots to be seen).

At some Voting Day locations, voter turnout was strong and came late in the day generating long lines. Polls were kept open until all voters in line to vote at 8:00 p.m. were able to cast their ballots. The processing of vote results in the Council Chamber in the City Hall was delayed so that all voters would be inside their voting places when the first results were announced. Notwithstanding the delay, tabulators were delivered to the City Hall tallying location in a timely manner and the final unofficial vote results were announced at approximately 10:00 p.m.

Opportunities for Improvement:

A new contract for vote counting will be required for the 2018 elections due to the expiration of the Dominion Voting contract. Internet voting was not used in the 2014 Municipal Elections but will be examined to see if it is suitable for deployment in a future City of Vaughan election. Based on previous discussions with the City of Markham, their recommendation for budgeting for internet voting during the Advance Vote period alone would be an additional \$400,000 including staff and vendor costs. Any competitive bid issued for voting technology will include an option for pricing the 2022 elections in addition to 2018, in order to achieve maximum cash flow flexibility.

13. The City of Vaughan, along with the other York Region municipalities, participated in a unique civic engagement initiative.

Description:

The Local Immigration Partnership of the Regional Municipality of York in partnership with the Maytree Foundation, undertook a civic engagement initiative that included the development of a 'Civics 101' guide to promote the civic engagement of newcomer communities and their understanding and participation in municipal government and the elections process in York Region. The Civics 101 guide included tailored information for each of the nine municipalities along with information about the Region on the following areas:

- How local governments work (structure of council, committees, decision making, resident involvement);
- How to vote in municipal elections (voting eligibility, process, timelines);
- Volunteer opportunities on regional and municipal agencies, boards, commissions and committees, as well as the governing bodies of non-profit organizations (descriptions of mandates and functions, how to volunteer, training).

Implementation: positive

The Civics 101 guide was a comprehensive document which provided information specific to each of the nine area municipalities in York Region as well as information on how local governments work.

Opportunities for Improvement:

Moving forward, it will be important to keep the information in the 'Civics 101' guide current and to provide links to the guide on the City's web site. Staff will work with the Local Immigration

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Partnership to ensure that the guide is updated for the 2018 Municipal Elections.

14. The “This is Your Space” branding campaign continued to be well received, demonstrating a professional approach to election delivery and supporting a positive public perception.

Description:

Effective and authentic communication was a key strategy of the “This is Your Space” campaign and included the following:

- Access Vaughan election support and activities, including: automated messages, a Knowledge Tool (KT) resource for Access Vaughan agents to handle inbound telephone inquiries on the election, the use of on-line voter look-up Access Vaughan agents to assist callers (and the mailing of applications to amend the voters’ list to persons found not to be on the list), and general advance vote and Voting Day promotion to general callers to the Access Vaughan inquiry line;
- Newspaper ads in the Vaughan Weekly, Vaughan Today, Vaughan Citizen, Lo Specchio, Ming Pao, Sing Tao, Canadian Jewish News, and the Jewish Tribune;
- Joint Advertising with the York Region area Clerks, including statutory advertising in print and banner advertising with Metroland on YorkRegion.com which received a .19% hit rate (above the industry standard of .03 - .07%);
- Voter information cards containing extensive information on identification requirements and advance vote dates and times;
- E-mail communiqués to candidates;
- Registered mail and ordinary direct mail;
- A dedicated election website as part of Vaughan On-line, featuring
 - 119,624 visits to the City’s election webpages from January to December 2014
 - 124,056 page views on Voting Day (average day is 26,385 page views);
- Four blog posts with a total of 419 views;
- A monthly story in the City Update eNewsletter from December 2013 to October 2014;
- A story in the summer edition of the Economic Development Business Link;
- Three Public Service Announcements, one news release and one statement issued by Corporate Communications;
- A full page ad on the back page of the Fall and Winter Recreation guide;
- Ad placement on the interim tax bill;
- Changeable message signs;
- Brochure

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- A promotional banner on Vaughan TV during advance voting;
- Event listing on the York University website and a story in Y-file;
- Event listing on the Vaughan Mills and Promenade Mall websites;
- The “This is Your Space” video, which received more than 700 views’ ; and
- A large election advertisement banner on the City Clerk’s Office Mail truck, used in the months leading up to the election, which visited 20 locations per day.

Implementation: positive

Opportunities for Improvement:

Voter apathy in municipal elections is a serious concern and every effort will be made to expand and extend election messaging. The 2018 “This is Your Space” campaign will also include increased emphasis on Advance Vote opportunities and options for voters to add their name to the Voters’ List prior to Voting Day.

15. The City Clerk’s Office continues to manage the receipt of candidate’s financial statements as required by the Act, and the administration of the Contribution Rebate Program.

Description:

Sections 66 to 81 of the Municipal Elections Act, 1996 (the Act) is binding on all candidates running for a City Council seat or a School Board Trustee seat in the municipal elections. Candidates are responsible for understanding and adhering with the legislation which sets out obligations with respect to:

- Restrictions on who may contribute to a campaign
- Limits on campaign contributions
- Recording of campaign expenses
- Reporting campaign contributions and expenses and surpluses (including surpluses from earlier campaigns)
- Payment of campaign finances and surpluses to the City
- Offences and Penalties for non-compliance

Every candidate is required to file a Financial Statement – Auditor’s Report Form 4 as prescribed by the Forms Regulation. If a candidate withdraws their nomination they are still required to file a financial statement. It should be noted that the auditor’s report is necessary if a candidate receives contributions or incurs expenses in excess of \$10,000. In addition, all council candidates who participate in the Contribution Rebate Program are required file an Auditor’s Report.

This was the second municipal election for the contribution rebate program. In 2010, following a recommendation from the Task Force on Democratic Participation and Renewal, the City of Vaughan instituted a contribution rebate program for candidates for City Council. Under the program, rebates are payable to individuals in the City of Vaughan who are on the Voters’ List as of voting day, and are paid at a rate of 75% of contributions over fifty dollars, subject to an overall cap of \$150 regardless of the amount or number of campaigns contributed to. It should be noted that a candidate’s failure to file an audited financial statement denies their contributors the opportunity to receive a rebate. In addition, any candidate who filed a Form 6 to extend their

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campaign due to a deficit, their contributors' application for a rebate are not processed until after they submit their supplementary Form 4 filing.

Candidate's Financial Statements were due on or before 2 p.m. on Friday, March 27, 2015 unless due to a deficit they requested an extension to the campaign period.

Compliance Audit applications may be submitted within 90 days of the March 27, 2015 deadline (June 25, 2015) or in the case of the Form 6 extensions, 90 days from the date of their supplementary submission, the latest being December 24, 2015. There were 4 compliance audit applications submitted in 2011. Council pays all costs in relation to the committee's operation and activities. In addition, the municipality pays the auditors costs unless the report indicates no apparent contravention and no reasonable grounds for the compliance audit application, Council is entitled to recover the auditor's costs from the applicant.

Implementation: ongoing

Three candidates filed the necessary Form 6 to extend campaigns to June 30, 2015. Campaigns in respect of the October general election ended on December 31, 2014 unless extended in accordance with the Act because of a deficit. It is important to note that the extension of a campaign (Form 6) does not affect the deadline for filing Form 4, the candidate's Financial Statement and Auditor's Report (aside from creating an additional filing date for the extension period).

Opportunities for Improvement:

Four Council candidates and three school board candidates out of the 60 nominations processed for the October general election failed to file by the appointed time and were therefore noted in default. Candidates who fail to file the required financial statement by the statutory deadline are not eligible to be elected or appointed to any office to which the Act applies up to and including the 2018 elections.

Relationship to Vaughan Vision 2020/Strategic Plan

This report is consistent with the priorities previously set by Council as set out in Vaughan Vision 2020, particularly:

SERVICE EXCELLENCE –
Demonstrate excellence in Service Delivery

ORGANIZATIONAL EXCELLENCE -
Ensure a High Performing Organization and ensure Financial Sustainability

STAFF EXCELLENCE –
Demonstrate Effective Leadership, Value and encourage a Highly Motivated and Engaged Workforce, Attract, Retain and Promote Skilled Staff.

Regional Implications

The City administers the election of members to Regional Council.

Conclusion

The lessons learned from the administration of the 2014 Municipal Elections will be integral to the planning effort for the 2018 events. Given the scope and magnitude of election administration,

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preparations for the 2018 Municipal Elections will commence immediately so that all the required elements of the election can be implemented in a timely and professional manner.

Attachments

Appendix 1 List of Candidates and Elected Officials

Report prepared by:

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(A copy of the attachments referred to in the foregoing have been forwarded to each Member of Council and a copy thereof is also on file in the office of the City Clerk.)