

Committee of the Whole Meeting Agenda

Monday, April 1, 2019 – 2:00 p.m.
Council Chambers, Guelph City Hall, 1 Carden Street

Please turn off or place on non-audible all electronic devices during the meeting.

Please note that an electronic version of this agenda is available on
guelph.ca/agendas.

Guelph City Council and Committee of the Whole meetings are streamed live on
guelph.ca/live.

Call to Order – Councillor Hofland

Disclosure of Pecuniary Interest and General Nature Thereof

Staff Recognitions:

1. 2019 Parks and Recreation Award of Excellence – Limitless Guelph
Lynne Briggs, Manager, Recreation Services
Adam Rutherford, Program Manager, Programs and Community Development
Eric Pool, Supervisor, Programs and Community Development
 2. Economic Developers Council of Ontario 2018 Awards of Excellence
Promotional Award – City of Guelph Tourism's "Sounds of Guelph"
Caitlin Crete, Tourism Promotions and Digital Development Coordinator
 3. Canadian Public Relations Society – 2 Gold Pinnacle Awards
 - a) Media Relations Campaign of the Year
Michelle Rickard, Communications Officer
Heather Flaherty, General Manager, Parks and Recreation
 - b) Community Relations Campaign of the Year
Katie Burt, Communications Officer
David Wiedrick, Manager, By-law Compliance, Security and Licensing
-

Items for Discussion – Public Services

The following items have been extracted from Consent Agenda and will be considered separately. These items have been extracted either at the request of a member of Council or because they include a presentation and/or delegations.

Presentation:

Local Immigration Partnership Annual Presentation and Strategic Plan

Sandra Cocco, Executive Director, Immigrant Services Guelph-Wellington

Trish McComb, Children's Early Years Division, County of Wellington

Service Area Chair and Staff Announcements

Please provide any announcements, to the Chair in writing, by 12 noon on the day of the Council meeting.

Ten-Minute Break for Service Area Change

Consent Agenda – Corporate Services

Chair – Councillor Mackinnon

The following resolutions have been prepared to facilitate Council's consideration of various matters and are suggested for consideration. If Council wishes to address a specific report in isolation of the Consent Agenda, please identify the item. It will be extracted and dealt with separately as part of the Items for Discussion.

CS-2019-09 2019 Property Tax Policies

Recommendation:

That the 2019 City of Guelph Property Tax Policy set out in ATT-1 to report CS-2019-09 entitled 2019 Property Tax Policy Report dated April 1, 2019 be approved and incorporated into tax ratio, tax rate and capping parameter by-laws.

CS-2019-40 2020 Budget Plan and Multi-year Budget Update

Recommendation:

1. That the 2020 budget plan be approved.
2. That the revised phased-in multi-year budget process for both the operating and the capital budgets commencing with a three-year budget in 2021 and a subsequent four-year budget in 2024 be adopted in principle.

Items for Discussion – Corporate Services

The following items have been extracted from Consent Agenda and will be considered separately. These items have been extracted either at the request of a member of Council or because they include a presentation and/or delegations.

Presentation:

Stephen O'Brien, General Manager, City Clerk's Office/City Clerk

Jennifer Slater, Manager, Information, Privacy and Elections/Deputy Clerk

Recommendation:

That the report number CS-2019-27, titled 2018 Municipal and School Board Election Report, be received.

Service Area Chair and Staff Announcements

Please provide any announcements, to the Chair in writing, by 12 noon on the day of the Council meeting.

Adjournment

Staff Report



To	Committee of the Whole
Service Area	Corporate Services
Date	Monday, April 1, 2019
Subject	2019 Property Tax Policy Report
Report Number	CS-2019-09

Recommendation

That the 2019 City of Guelph Property Tax Policy set out in ATT-1 to report CS-2019-09 entitled 2019 Property Tax Policy Report dated April 1, 2019 be approved and incorporated into tax ratio, tax rate and capping parameter by-laws.

Executive Summary

Purpose of Report

To recommend that the 2019 Property Tax Policy (Tax Policy), included as ATT-1, be approved and incorporated into tax rates, tax ratios and capping parameter by-laws for the April 23, 2019 Council meeting. This provides sufficient time to prepare the final tax bills for meeting the legislative mailing date for the June 28, 2019 tax installment.

Key Findings

Municipal Councils are required to make a number of tax policy decisions and pass the related by-laws annually.

In 2017, Council provided direction for setting tax ratios for the 2017-2020 assessment cycle. Tax rates have been calculated based on this direction. The Tax Policy included in ATT-1 and calculated rates are an administration consolidation of all applicable previous Council decisions.

In 2019, the average residential taxpayer with a property assessed at \$370,153 will be levied \$3,625.73 in City taxes for an overall property tax increase of \$110.52. This increase is the combined effect of the reassessment phase-in (0.34 per cent), the 2019 approved budget levy increase (2.63 per cent), and the approved direction for tax ratios (0.17 per cent) for an overall impact of 3.14 per cent over 2018.

For 2019, Council must also adopt the capping parameters to be used for the commercial classes as mandated by the Province. As in previous years, the overall principle for the City's Tax Policy is to promote and adopt positions that shorten the timeframe to achieve full Current Value Assessment (CVA) taxation and thus simplify the tax system. By utilizing all available tools to move capped classes closer to CVA taxation, the City has previously exited tax capping in the multi-residential and industrial property classes. In 2019, the City is in a position to exit tax capping in the commercial property class thus ending the practice of tax capping in Guelph. This is a great accomplishment to ensure fairness and equity in property taxes in Guelph.

Staff is therefore recommending that Council utilize the option to exit tax capping immediately in the commercial property class. As such, all properties in the same tax class with the same CVA will pay the same tax.

Fair tax policies and a balanced tax ratio form an integral part of the City's strategic goals.

Financial Implications

There are no financial implications related directly with tax policy. Tax ratios and subsequent tax rates only allocate the approved tax supported operating budget over the different tax classes.

Annually the cost of the mandatory charity rebate program is roughly \$105,000.

There are no financial implications relating to tax capping.

Report

Municipal Councils are required to make a number of tax policy decisions annually. The Municipal Act sets out the parameters to be followed by municipalities when setting property tax policies. These parameters include establishing tax ratios and discounts; use of graduated taxation and optional classes; capping options on multi-residential, commercial and industrial properties; and various tax mitigation measures. Annual tax policy decisions determine how the property tax levy, approved in the annual budget, will be distributed across the various classes of properties.

On March 5, 2019 Council approved the 2019 budget of \$244,126,832 to be raised from taxation and payments-in-lieu of taxation.

The attached 2019 Property Tax Policy (ATT-1) is broken down into the following sections:

- Staff recommendation by policy area;
- Overview/description of the policy; and

- Policy considerations: factors such as economic impact, equity/fairness and administrative impact.

The following summarizes the 2019 Tax Policy to be approved in this report:

- Establishing 2019 tax ratios, subclass discounts and tax rates;
- Setting the 2019 capping parameters to exit tax capping for the commercial property class;
- Continuing the low-income seniors and low-income disabled tax relief program;
- Continuing the current charitable tax rebate program, of which the City annually accrues funds for; and
- No recommendations for graduated commercial/industrial tax rates or additional optional property classes or municipal tax reduction.

The by-laws for approval resulting from the 2019 Tax Policy are scheduled for the April 23, 2019 Council meeting to allow sufficient time to prepare and mail the final property tax bills within the legislative timeframe for the June 29, 2019 instalment.

Tax Ratios and Subclass Discounts

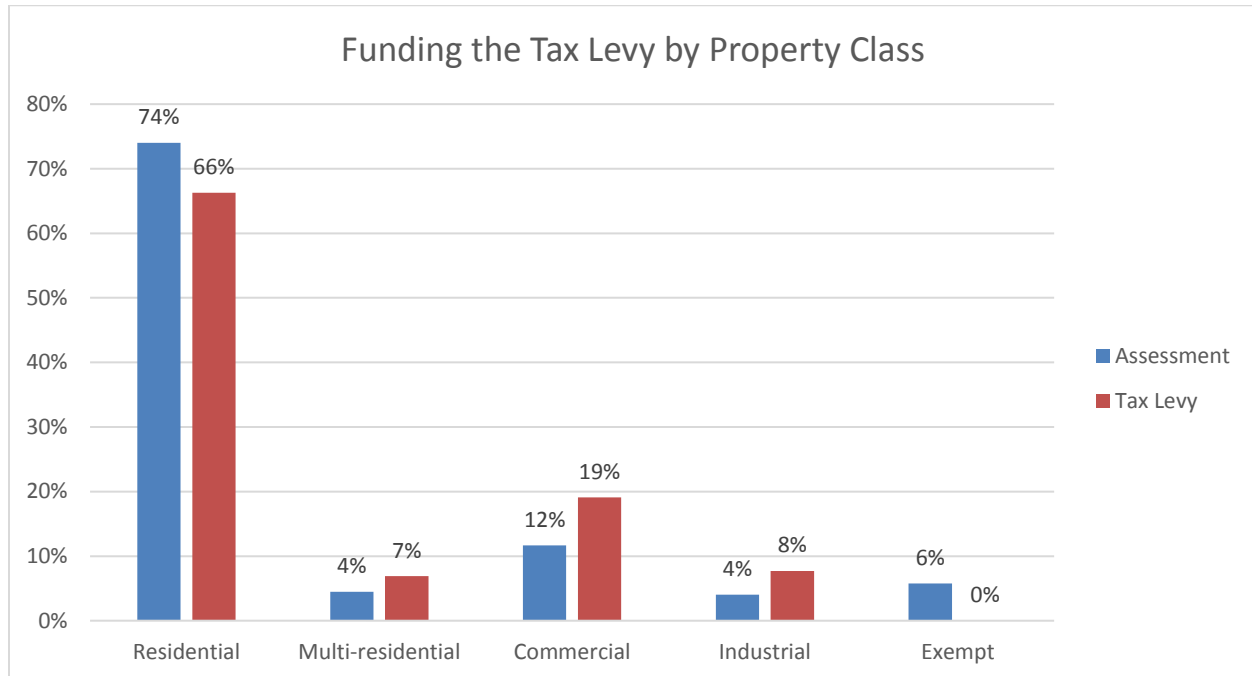
On April 24, 2017, Council adopted the recommendations in report [CS-2017-02, entitled Tax Ratios 2017-2020 Assessment Cycle](#), which provided direction for setting tax ratios for the reassessment cycle 2017 through 2020. This direction was that all ratios remain at their start ratio, except for the multi-residential ratio, which would remain revenue neutral on an annual basis.

As outlined in report CS-2017-66, entitled Changes to the Vacant Unit Tax Rebate Program and Vacant and Excess Land Property Tax Subclass Discounts, municipalities are now able to propose changes to their subclass discounts up to and including eliminating them altogether. Staff continue to research options on phasing-out the commercial and industrial subclasses and await outcomes of municipalities whom have chosen to adopt this approach. Staff will report to Council as part of the 2020 Tax Policy Report after consulting affected stakeholders, analyzing tax shift impacts and researching the direction of comparable municipalities.

This space left intentionally blank.

Funding the Tax Levy by Property Class

The tax levy is funded primarily through four broad property tax classes; residential, multi-residential, commercial and industrial. The split between total assessment and total tax levy is shown below:



The residential tax class makes up 74 per cent of the City's total assessment base and funds 66 per cent of the tax levy. The assessment and tax levy split amongst all classes is consistent with prior years.

Impact on the Average Residential Taxpayer

The impact on the average residential taxpayer with an average property assessment of \$370,153 is as follows:

	\$ Change	% Change
City of Guelph Portion		
Reassessment Phase-in /		
Average Residential Property	\$11.92	0.34%
Budget Impact	\$92.51	2.63%
Multi-residential Ratio Change Impact	\$6.09	0.17%
Total Change In City Portion	\$110.52	3.14%

In 2019, the average residential taxpayer with a property assessed at \$370,153 will be levied \$3,625.73 in City taxes for an overall increase in property taxes of \$110.52. This increase is the combined effect of reassessment phase-in (0.34 per

cent), the 2019 approved budget levy increase (3.63 per cent), and the approved direction for tax ratios (0.17 per cent) for an overall impact of 3.14 per cent.

The impact of the reassessment phase-in is the only item not driven by 2019 budget and tax policy decisions. This impact is solely driven by the assessment phase-in and associated tax shifting, along with what an average residential property assessment in Guelph looks like. Naturally, as residential properties increase in value, the average assessment will increase each year due to the phase-in process. Additionally, on an annual basis the average residential property continues to be bigger and of a higher quality as new larger, higher value homes are being constructed. This further increase in the average residential property provides for upward pressure when comparing an average year-over-year.

Mandatory Capping Parameters

Provincially there was a mandatory tax capping program introduced in 1998 to mitigate assessment-related property tax changes on multi-residential, commercial and industrial properties. This program required that Council limit the assessment-related tax increases by a mandatory cap of up to 10 per cent of the previous year's CVA taxes. CVA tax is transparent, equitable and easier to explain to business owners.

The overall principle for the City's Tax Policy is to promote and adopt positions that shorten the timeframe to achieve full CVA taxation and thus simplify the tax system. In 2016, the Province introduced new options to allow municipalities greater flexibility in moving to CVA taxation sooner. Fair tax policies and a balanced tax ratio form an integral part of the City's strategic goals.

The multi-residential and industrial property classes have already exited capping and all properties in these classes are taxed at CVA taxation. By implementing all available options in 2019, the commercial class will be able to exit tax capping immediately.

Council must pass a by-law indicating the parameters they wish to implement to exit from capping on the commercial tax class.

Infrastructure and Capital Funding

In 2019 the Dedicated Infrastructure Levy will no longer be shown separately on the final tax bill. The discussion of funding for infrastructure and capital has matured to a point where this tax bill presentation no longer is relevant and in fact could be considered misinformation. The City levy as a whole will be shown as the municipal levy. An information sheet in the form of a tax bill insert, included with each final tax bill will illustrate detailed information regarding infrastructure funding and total capital contributions from the tax supported operating budget.

Financial Implications

There are no financial implications related directly with the tax policy. Tax ratios and subsequent rates only allocate the set budget over the different tax classes.

Annually the cost of the mandatory charity rebate program is roughly \$105,000.

There are no financial implications related to tax capping.

Communications

Once adopted by by-law, tax rates will be posted on the City's website.

Corporate Administrative Plan

Overarching Goals

Financial Stability

Service Area Operational Work Plans

Our Resources - A solid foundation for a growing city

Attachments

ATT-1 2019 Property Tax Policy

Departmental Approval

James Krauter, Deputy Treasurer / Manager of Taxation and Revenue

Report Author

Greg Bedard, Supervisor, Property Tax



Approved By

Tara Baker, CPA, CA
GM Finance/ City Treasurer
Corporate Services
519-822-1260 Ext. 2084
tara.baker@guelph.ca



Recommended By

Trevor Lee
Deputy CAO,
Corporate Services
519-822-1260 Ext. 2281
trevor.lee@guelph.ca



CORPORATION OF THE CITY OF GUELPH

2019 PROPERTY TAX POLICY

**Prepared by
Corporate Services
Finance
Taxation and Revenue**

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	3
SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS.....	4
POLICY TOOLS	
TAX RATIOS, CLASS DISCOUNTS AND TAX RATES	5
OPTIONAL PROPERTY CLASSES	7
MITIGATION TOOLS	
MANDATORY CAPPING/OPTIONS	8
TAX RELIEF FOR LOW-INCOME SENIORS AND LOW-INCOME PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES	10
TAX REBATES FOR CHARITIES	12
APPENDIX	
1. 2019 CITY OF GUELPH - TAX RATIOS, DISCOUNTS AND RATES.....	14
2. BY-LAW (2015) – 19988 – “LOW-INCOME SENIORS AND LOW-INCOME PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES”	15
3. BY-LAW (2002) – 16851 and BY-LAW (2003) – 17152 – “CHARITIES TAX RELIEF”	17

INTRODUCTION

The Municipal Act sets out the parameters to be followed by municipalities when setting property tax policies. These parameters include: establishing tax ratios and discounts; graduated taxation and optional classes; capping options on multi-residential, commercial and industrial properties; levy restrictions which prevent municipalities from passing on levy increases to capped classes which have tax ratios in excess of provincial averages.

Annual tax policy decisions establish the level of taxation for the various property classes. This policy provides an overview of the tax policy decisions by Guelph City Council for the 2019 taxation year.

Each policy area is broken down into the following sections:

- Policy direction
- Overview/description of the policy
- Analysis and/or additional background information
- Policy considerations: In order to provide a basis for evaluating each policy decision, staff has considered factors such as economic impact, equity/fairness, and administrative impact

In accordance with Section 308(4) of the Municipal Act, 2001, tax ratios must be established each year. A by-law must be passed in the year to establish the municipality's tax ratios for that year.

**2019 CITY OF GUELPH PROPERTY TAX POLICIES
SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS**

POLICY	DIRECTION
Tax Ratios, Class Discounts and Tax Rates	<p>THAT the 2019 City tax rates corresponding to tax ratios, and subclass discounts be approved as set out in Appendix 1; and</p> <p>THAT staff be directed to prepare the necessary tax ratio and tax rating by-laws.</p>
Optional Property Classes	<p>That the City of Guelph adopt no new optional property tax classes in 2019.</p>
Mandatory Capping and Clawback	<p>THAT the following parameters be established for the purposes of calculating the 2019 capping and clawback rates in accordance with the revisions to Municipal Act:</p> <p>THAT the commercial property class exit tax capping immediately.</p> <p>THAT staff be directed to prepare the necessary by-law.</p>
Tax relief for low-income seniors and low-income persons with disabilities	<p>THAT the tax relief program for low-income seniors and low-income persons with disabilities be continued for 2019 as adopted by By-law (2015)-19988. Refer to Appendix 2.</p>
Tax relief for charities and other similar organizations	<p>THAT the current tax relief program for charities be continued for the 2019 taxation year in accordance with By-law (2002)-16851 and (2003)-17152. Refer to Appendix 3.</p>

TAX RATIOS, CLASS DISCOUNTS AND TAX RATES

DIRECTION:

THAT the 2019 City tax rates corresponding to tax ratios and subclass discounts be approved as set out in Appendix 1; and

THAT staff be directed to prepare the necessary tax ratio and tax rating by-laws.

OVERVIEW / DESCRIPTION

- Legislative reference: Municipal Act 2001, Section 308.
- Most significant tax policy decision is that of tax ratios.
- Tax ratios show how the tax rate for a property class compares with the residential rate. If a property class has a ratio of two, then it is taxed at twice the rate of the residential class.
- Municipalities can set different tax ratios for different classes of property.
- Transition ratios were calculated initially in 1998 by the Province and reflected the level of taxation by class at that time.
- Tax ratios must be approved annually by City Council. 2017 – 2020 reassessment - all ratios remain at their start ratio, except for the multi-residential ratio, which would remain revenue neutral on an annual basis.
- Changing ratios shift the relative burden of property taxes between property classes
- The City's ability to adjust tax ratios and redistribute the tax burden between property classes is limited by the range of fairness established by the Province (see Appendix 1 attached) which help protect property classes that are taxed at higher rates.
- If the ratio for a property class is outside the "range of fairness", a municipality can either maintain the existing ratio or move towards the "range of fairness" but may not move further from the fairness range unless revenue neutral ratios are adopted.
- If a tax ratio is above the Provincial threshold average, a levy increase cannot be passed on to that class. However, since 2004 the Province has allowed municipalities to pass along up to 50 per cent of a levy increase to those restricted classes (classes which have ratios in excess of the threshold).
- The City of Guelph ratios are currently below the provincial threshold and therefore are not levy restricted.
- Setting the industrial and commercial and subclass discounts both to 30 per cent.
- The Municipal Act also sets out the provisions for taxing farmland pending development which are as follows:
 1. On registration of the plan of subdivision, property assessment changes from being based on farm use to zoned use and a tax rate of between 25 and 75 per cent of the relevant rate will apply. Guelph is currently at the maximum of 75 per cent.
 2. When a building permit is issued the tax rate may change from 25 to 100 per cent of the rate that would apply to the property's zoned use. Guelph currently charges the maximum of 100 per cent.

POLICY CONSIDERATIONS

Economic impact:

- Any adjustment to the tax ratios involves shifting the tax burden to the other property classes. A tax ratio change would result in a shift of taxation onto the residential class and increase the municipal taxes paid by the residential taxpayer.
- The range of fairness and levy restriction rules are a clear indication that the Province wishes to see taxes on commercial, industrial and multi-residential properties reduced and that portion shifted onto residential properties. The fact that the low end of the fairness ranges for commercial/industrial classes is below the residential tax ratio indicates the former government felt the property taxes for businesses should be less than property taxes for residential properties.
- Decreasing the commercial or industrial subclass discounts will result in tax shift where the discounted subclasses face an increased tax burden while all other classes see a decreased tax burden.
- The farmland awaiting development properties are taxed at the maximum allowable rate with discounts of 25 per cent for subclass 1 and 0 per cent for subclass 2.

Equity/fairness:

- Higher tax ratios could be perceived as discriminatory by multi-residential, commercial and industrial property owners who may feel that they are overtaxed relative to residential properties.
- The disparity between the commercial and industrial tax ratios is difficult to justify.
- Non-residential and multi-residential properties have historically been taxed at higher rates in most municipalities across the Province.
- Multi-residential properties are assessed on a different basis than residential properties and most often will attract a lesser amount of assessment per unit.
- Non-residential properties pay property taxes using pre-tax income which is not the case for residential property owners and therefore supports the concept of differential tax rates.
- With the elimination of the vacant unit tax rebate which mirrored the current commercial and industrial subclass discounts, properties in discounted subclasses now benefit from a reduction in taxes not available to any other tax class. This reduction in taxes is funded by all other tax classes.

Administrative impact: None

OPTIONAL PROPERTY CLASSES

DIRECTION:

THAT the City of Guelph adopt no new optional property tax classes in 2019.

OVERVIEW / DESCRIPTION

- Legislative reference: Municipal Act 2001 Section 308 and O.Reg 282/98.
- Council may, by by-law, establish new property classes for shopping centers, office buildings, parking lots, and large industrial properties.

Details:

1. Shopping centers: rentable area of a shopping centre (at least three units) that exceeds 25,000 square feet – the first 25,000 square feet remains in the commercial class;
2. Office buildings: rental area of an office building that exceeds 25,000 square feet – the first 25,000 square feet remains in the commercial class;
3. Parking lots: entire assessment of such properties is included in this class; and
4. Large industrial properties: buildings in excess of 125,000 square feet.

POLICY CONSIDERATIONS

Economic impact:

- Establishing separate classes of commercial and industrial property will result in some properties subsidizing others, as the tax rates for these classes would be different from the main class. For example, establishing a separate class for shopping centers would result in a different tax rate for shopping centers than for all other commercial properties.
- The new multi-residential tax class is no longer an optional tax class. All municipalities have the new multi-residential tax class which became mandatory in 2018.

Equity/fairness:

- Use of separate classes could be seen as discriminatory and moving away from fairness, and contrary to the basic premise of market value assessment.

Administrative impact:

- Adopting an optional class requires a by-law to be prepared and notification to the Municipal Property Assessment Corporation (MPAC).
- Minimal staff time and costs.
- Entire assessment is included in this class.

MANDATORY CAPPING/OPTIONS

DIRECTION:

THAT the following parameters be established for the purposes of calculating the 2019 capping and clawback rates in accordance with the revision to the Municipal Act:

THAT the commercial property class exit tax capping immediately.

THAT staff be directed to prepare the necessary by-law.

OVERVIEW / DESCRIPTION

- Legislative reference: Municipal Act 2001 Part IX.
- Council must limit the assessment-related tax increases on multi-residential, commercial and industrial properties.
- Council must decide how to finance the funding shortfall from limiting tax increases, or cap, which can be done by capping decreases as well as, by using general revenues or reserves, or a combination of the two.
- Shortfalls cannot be shared with the school boards.
- The Province provided increased flexibility for municipalities commencing in 2016, with the following options available:
 - Increasing the cap to 10 per cent, or selecting 10 per cent of Current Value Assessment (CVA) tax whichever is higher;
 - If an increasing/decreasing property is within \$500 of CVA taxation, then it may be billed the full amount;
 - Allowing an exit or phase-out of the capping program;
 - Excluding reassessment increases;
 - Exclude properties previously at CVA tax or exclude properties that cross CVA tax. If significant reassessment increases occur on a property this option will eliminate the capping protection amount which would otherwise be subsidized by all properties within that class experiencing a reassessment decrease (clawback); and,
 - New construction is taxed at 100 per cent of CVA tax.
- Multi-residential and industrial tax classes already at CVA tax and have exited from this program.
- All properties in the commercial property class reached full CVA tax in 2018 and therefore this class is eligible to exit tax capping immediately in 2019.

2019 CAPPING PARAMETERS	MULTI- RESIDENTIAL	COMMERCIAL	INDUSTRIAL
ANNUALIZED TAX LIMIT	N/A	N/A	N/A
PRIOR YEAR CVA TAX LIMIT	N/A	N/A	N/A
CVA TAX THRESHOLD – INCREASERS	N/A	N/A	N/A
CVA TAX THRESHOLD – DECREASERS	N/A	N/A	N/A
EXCLUDE PROPERTIES PREVIOUSLY AT CVA TAX	N/A	N/A	N/A
EXCLUDE REASSESSMENT INCREASE	N/A	N/A	N/A
EXCLUDE PROPERTIES THAT GO FROM CAPPED TO CLAWED BACK	N/A	N/A	N/A
EXCLUDE PROPERTIES THAT GO FROM CLAWED BACK TO CAPPED	N/A	N/A	N/A
EXIT CAPPING INDEFINATELY	Already	Yes	Already Exited
CAPPING PHASE-OUT	N/A	N/A	N/A

POLICY CONSIDERATIONS

Economic impact:

- Shortfalls cannot be shared with school boards; therefore, it is 100 per cent of the responsibility of the Municipality.
- Capping options enable the City to move capped classes closer to CVA taxation more quickly resulting in greater stability and predictability in property taxation.
- Having properties at or close to their CVA taxes can reduce the tax capping impacts resulting from reassessment.
- The best method to avoid capping shortfalls requires the use of the highest allowable percentage for capped tax increases.

Equity/fairness:

- Adopting these capping options is perceived to be fair and equitable to taxpayers because properties in the same class with the same CVA should pay the same tax.

Administrative Impact:

- Considerable staff time, software provided provincially through OPTA.
- Now that the City of Guelph will be fully exited for 2019 no additional staffing time will be attributed to this program.

TAX RELIEF FOR LOW-INCOME SENIORS AND LOW-INCOME PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

DIRECTION:

THAT the tax relief program for low-income seniors and low-income persons with disabilities be continued for 2019 as adopted by By-law (2015)-19988. Refer to Appendix 2.

OVERVIEW / DESCRIPTION

- Legislative reference: Municipal Act 2001 Section 319.
- Upper-tier and single-tier municipalities must provide a program of tax relief for the purposes of “relieving financial hardship” caused by tax increases related to reassessment.
- Relief can be in the form of a deferral or cancellation of tax increases.
- The tax increase to be deferred or cancelled is calculated as the difference between the current year’s taxes levied and the previous year’s taxes levied on a property (subject to provincial regulation).
- The by-law also applies to tax increases for education purposes.
- The amount deferred or cancelled is withheld from amounts levied for school board purposes.
- A tax certificate must show any deferrals and the priority lien status of real property taxes in accordance with Section 349 of the Municipal Act.
- The intent of this policy is to provide a mechanism to assist those least able to pay a significant increase in taxes.
- The program was updated after review in 2015.

POLICY CONSIDERATIONS

Economic impact:

- Taxes are deferred and recovered when the property is sold or the eligible applicant ceases to be eligible.
- Interest may not be charged on deferred taxes.
- Each year the potential deferral must be paid for by other taxpayers. This results in a levy increase to fund the shortfall.

Equity/fairness:

- Cancellation of taxes does result in some minor taxpayer subsidization, and effectively reduces the Province’s obligation under the Property Tax Credit program.

Administrative impact:

- Additional staff time to administer the rebates.

CURRENT TAX RELIEF FOR LOW-INCOME SENIORS AND LOW-INCOME PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

GENERAL PARAMETERS

- Tax relief is in the form of a deferral of taxes.
- The amount eligible for deferral is the total increase given that the increase is assessment related and greater than or equal to \$200 annually. No tax relief applies if the amount of the tax increase is less than \$200.
- Eligibility is as set out below.

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA (for receipt of property tax relief):

A) LOW-INCOME SENIORS

- Means a person who on December 31 of the year of application has attained the age of 65 years and is in receipt of benefits under Guaranteed Income supplement (GIS) program or has attained the age of 65 years and is in receipt of benefits under the Guaranteed Annual Income System (GAINS) program for Ontario senior citizens.

B) LOW-INCOME PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

- Means a person who is in receipt of benefits under the Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP) or in receipt of benefits under GAINS for the Disabled and be eligible to claim a disability amount as defined under the Income Tax Act.

OTHER PROVISIONS

- To qualify for tax assistance, applicants must have been owners of real property within the City for a period of one (or more) year(s) preceding the application.
- Tax assistance is only allowed on one principal residence of the qualified individual or the qualifying spouse.
- Application for tax deferral must be made annually to the City to establish eligibility or continued eligibility. Applications must include documentation in support thereof to establish that the applicant is an eligible person and that the property for which the application is made, is eligible property. Applications must be submitted to the City on or before the last day of December in the year for which the application applies, on a form prescribed by the City for this purpose.
- Tax relief applies to current taxes only, and is only deferred after payment in full is received for any current or past-year amounts payable.
- Applicant is responsible to refund any overpayment of a tax rebate granted if property assessment is reduced by the Assessment Review Board or MPAC.
- For properties that are jointly held or co-owned by persons other than spouses, both or all co-owners must qualify under applicable eligibility criteria in order to receive tax relief.
- Tax relief begins in the month in which the low income senior attains the age of 65 or in which the low income disabled person becomes disabled.

TAX REBATES FOR CHARITIES

DIRECTION:

THAT the current tax relief program for charities be continued for the 2019 taxation year in accordance with By-law (2002)-16851 and By-law (2003)-17152. Refer to Appendix 3.

OVERVIEW / DESCRIPTION

- Legislative reference: Municipal Act 2001 Section 361.
- The original intent of the program was to address certain tax impacts relating to the elimination of the Business Occupancy Tax (BOT) – registered charities that previously did not pay the BOT on leased commercial/industrial properties were put in a position of paying a higher (blended) rate on such properties.
- All municipalities must have a rebate program in place.
- An eligible charity is a registered charity as defined in subsection 248(1) of the Income Tax Act (Canada) that has a registration number issued by the Canada Revenue Agency.
- A property is eligible if it is in one of the commercial or industrial property classes within the meaning of subsection 308(1) of the Municipal Act.

Program requirements include:

- The amount of rebate must be at least 40 per cent of tax paid.
- One half of the rebate must be paid within 60 days of receipt of the application and the balance paid within 120 days of receipt of the application.
- Applications for a rebate must be made between January 1st of the taxation year and the last day of February of the following taxation year.
- The program must permit the eligible charity to make application based on an estimate of the taxes payable.
- The program must provide for final adjustments to be made after the taxes have been set.

Program options include:

- Other similar organizations may also be provided with rebates.
- Rebates may be provided to properties in classes other than the commercial and industrial classes.
- The rebate can vary for different charities or other similar organizations and can be up to 100 per cent of taxes paid.
- Cost of the rebate is shared between the City and school boards.
- The organization receiving the rebate shall also be provided with a written statement showing the proportion of costs shared by the school boards.
- Any overpayment of rebated amount is to be refunded by the Charity if property assessment is reduced by the Assessment Review Board (ARB) or MPAC.

POLICY CONSIDERATIONS

Economic impact:

- This by-law provides relief for organizations which were previously exempt from paying the BOT; results in similar tax treatment before and after reform.

Equity/fairness:

- The cost of rebates is budgeted annually in the City budget.

Administrative impact:

- Results in some additional staff time to administer the rebates.

CURRENT TAX RELIEF PROVISIONS FOR REGISTERED CHARITIES

The City's by-law includes all mandated provisions as well as the following optional provisions:

- Rebates set at 40 per cent of taxes paid for Registered Charitable organizations, such as but not limited to Canadian Mental Health Association, Waterloo Wellington Branch, Second Chance Employment Counselling (Wellington) Inc., Habitat for Humanity Wellington Dufferin Guelph, etc.
- Rebate set at 100 per cent for those properties that are used and occupied as a memorial home, clubhouse or athletic grounds by those organizations whose persons served in the armed forces of Her Majesty or Her Majesty's allies in any war.
- In 2018 the City processed approximately 38 applications for a total dollar amount of \$171,301.77 of which the City's share was \$102,267.69.

Appendix 1

2019 CITY OF GUELPH - TAX RATIOS, DISCOUNTS AND RATES

PROPERTY CLASS	2019 TAX RATIOS	2019 TAX RATE REDUCTION	2019 GENERAL LEVY TAX RATES
Residential	1.000000		0.979523%
Residential - Farmland 1	1.000000	25%	0.734642%
Residential - Farmland 4	1.000000		0.979523%
 New Multi-residential	1.000000		0.979523%
Multi-residential	1.825401		1.788022%
Multi-residential - Farmland 1	1.000000	25%	0.734642%
Multi-residential - Farmland 4	1.825401		1.788022%
 Commercial	1.840000		1.802322%
Commercial - Farmland 1	1.000000	25%	0.734642%
Commercial - Farmland 4	1.840000		1.802322%
Commercial - Excess Land	1.840000	30%	1.261626%
Commercial - Vacant Land	1.840000	30%	1.261626%
Commercial - New Construction Full	1.840000		1.802322%
Commercial - New Construction - Excess	1.840000	30%	1.261626%
 Industrial	2.204800		2.159652%
Industrial - Farmland 1	1.000000	25%	0.734642%
Industrial - Farmland 4	2.204800		2.159652%
Industrial - Excess Land	2.204800	30%	1.511757%
Industrial - Vacant Land	2.204800	30%	1.511757%
Industrial - New Construction Full	2.204800		2.159652%
Industrial - New Construction Excess	2.204800	30%	1.511757%
 Pipelines	1.917500		1.878235%
 Farmlands	0.250000		0.244881%
 Managed Forests	0.250000		0.244881%
 BIA Tax Rates			
Occupied - 0.3377310%			
Vacant – 0.2364120%			

Appendix 2

THE CORPORATION OF THE CITY OF GUELPH

By-law Number (2015) – 19988

A by-law to provide for deferrals of tax increases on property in the residential property class for low-income seniors and low-income persons with disabilities and to repeal By-law Number (2005)-17727.

WHEREAS the Council of the Corporation of the City of Guelph, pursuant to Section 319 of the *Municipal Act, 2001, S.O.2001, c.25*, as amended, shall pass a by-law providing for deferrals or cancellation of, or other relief in respect of, all or part of a tax increase on property in the residential property class for low-income seniors and low-income persons with disabilities;

AND WHEREAS By-law Number (2005)-17727 was passed May 2nd, 2005 being a by-law to provide for deferrals of tax increases on property in the residential property class for low-income seniors and low-income persons with disabilities;

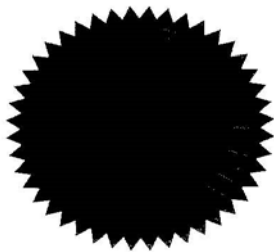
AND WHEREAS Council deems it necessary and expedient to pass the subject by-law to provide for deferrals of tax increases on property in the residential property class for low-income seniors and low-income persons with disabilities and to repeal By-law Number (2005)-17727;

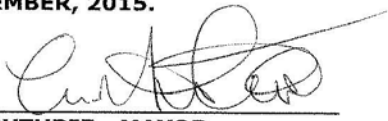
NOW THEREFORE THE COUNCIL OF THE CORPORATION OF THE CITY OF GUELPH ENACTS AS FOLLOWS:

1. In this by-law:
 - a) "*Eligible amount*" means the total tax increase related to assessment increase over the previous year which is equal to or greater than \$200 annually.
 - b) "*Eligible person*" means a low-income person with disabilities or a low-income senior or the spouse of such eligible person.
 - c) "*Low-income person with disabilities*" means a person who is in receipt of benefits under the *Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP)* or in receipt of benefits under the *Guaranteed Annual Income System (GAINS)* for the Disabled and be eligible to claim a disability amount as defined under the *Income Tax Act*.
 - d) "*Low-income senior*" means a person who on December 31st of the year of application has attained the age of 65 years and is in receipt of benefits under the *Guaranteed Income Supplement (GIS)* program or has attained the age of 65 years and is in receipt of benefits under the *Guaranteed Annual Income System (GAINS)* program for Ontario Senior Citizens.
2. Tax Relief granted pursuant to this by-law shall be in the form of a deferral of the annual eligible amount provided that:
 - a) Either the owner or spouse of the owner has been assessed as the owner of, and has occupied the property for a period of one or more years preceding the date of application.

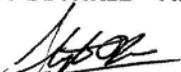
- b) For properties which are jointly held or co-owned by a person other than spouses, all co-owners must qualify under applicable eligibility criteria in order to receive tax relief.
- c) Both the owner and the owners spouse must be an Eligible Person.
3. Deferred amounts shall continue until the property is sold or until the eligible applicant ceases to be eligible, at which time the total deferred amounts become a debt payable to the Corporation of the City of Guelph.
 4. Tax relief amounts provided pursuant to this by-law are not transferable to the estates of deceased owners.
 5. The amount of tax relief granted pursuant to this by-law shall represent a lien against the property. The cost to register the lien may also be deferred under this program.
 6. Tax relief is only allowed on one principal residence of the qualified individual or the qualifying spouse.
 7. Application for tax relief must be made annually to the City to establish eligibility or continued eligibility. Applications must include documentation in support thereof to establish that the applicant is an eligible person and that the property with respect which the application is made is eligible property. Applications must be submitted to the City on or before the last day December in the year for which the application applies, on a form prescribed by the City for this purpose.
 8. Tax relief applies to current taxes only and are only deferred after payment in full is received for any current or past year amounts payable.
 9. That By-law Number (2005)-17727 is hereby repealed.
 10. This by-law shall come into force and take place immediately.

PASSED this TWENTY-THIRD day of NOVEMBER, 2015.





CAM GUTHRIE - MAYOR



STEPHEN O'BRIEN - CITY CLERK

Appendix 3

THE CORPORATION OF THE CITY OF GUELPH

By-law Number (2002) - 16851

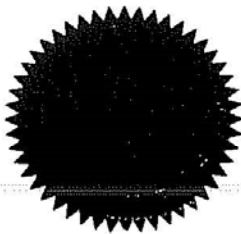
A By-law to provide for relief from taxes for charitable organizations and to repeal by-law number (1998)-15834.

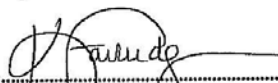
WHEREAS Section 442.1 of the *Municipal Act* as amended provides that every municipality shall have a tax rebate program for eligible charities for the purpose of giving them relief from taxes on eligible property they occupy;

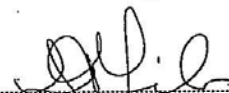
THEREFORE THE CORPORATION OF THE CITY OF GUELPH ENACTS AS FOLLOWS:

1. In this by-law, eligible charity means a registered charity as defined in subsection 248(1) of the *Income Tax Act (Canada)* that has a registered number issued by the Canada Customs and Revenue Agency.
2. A property is eligible if it is in one of the commercial classes or industrial classes, within the meaning of subsection 363(20) of the *Municipal Act* as amended.
3. A property is eligible if it is actually used and occupied as a memorial home, clubhouse or athletic grounds by those organizations whose persons served in the armed forces of *Her Majesty* or *Her Majesty's* allies in any war.
4. The rebate shall be 40% of the taxes payable by the eligible charity on the eligible property it occupies for those properties in one of the commercial or industrial classes.
5. The rebate shall be 100% of the taxes payable by those organizations whose persons served in the armed forces on the eligible property it occupies.
6. An eligible charity shall make application to the municipality each year for which a rebate of taxes is requested, such application to be made on the prescribed form after January 1 of the year and no later than the last day of February of the following year.
7. This By-law shall come into force and take effect immediately.
8. By-law Number (1998) -15834 is hereby repealed.

PASSED this 6th day of May, 2002.




KAREN PARBRIDGE-MAYOR


LOIS A GILES-CITY CLERK

THE CORPORATION OF THE CITY OF GUELPH

By-law Number (2003) - 17152

A By-law to amend By-Law Number (2002)-16851 being a by-law to provide for relief from taxes for charitable organizations.

WHEREAS By-Law Number (2002)-16851 provides for relief from taxes for charitable organizations and;

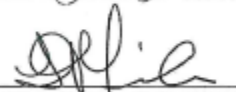
THEREFORE THE CORPORATION OF THE CITY OF GUELPH
ENACTS AS FOLLOWS:

1. That paragraph one of By-law(2002)-16851 be amended by deleting the words "Section 442.1" and inserting the words "Section 361" pursuant to the *Municipal Act, 2001, S.O. 2001, c.25*, as amended;
2. That Section 2 of By-law(2002)-16851 be amended by deleting the words "subsection 363(20)" and inserting the words "subsection 308(1) pursuant to the *Municipal Act, 2001, S.O. 2001, c.25*, as amended.

PASSED this SECOND day of JUNE, 2003.




KAREN FARBRIDGE - MAYOR


LOIS A. GILES - CITY CLERK

Staff Report



To	Committee of the Whole
Service Area	Corporate Services
Date	Monday, April 1, 2019
Subject	2020 Budget Plan and Multi-year Budget Update
Report Number	CS-2019-40

Recommendation

1. That the 2020 budget plan be approved.
2. That the revised phased-in multi-year budget process for both the operating and the capital budgets commencing with a three-year budget in 2021 and a subsequent four-year budget in 2024 be adopted in principle.

Executive Summary

Purpose of Report

To provide information related to the 2020 budget timelines and process as well as an update on the transition to multi-year budgeting.

Key Findings

Staff recommend remaining with a single-year budget approval for 2020 before transitioning to a three-year budget approval in 2021 then followed by a four-year budget approval in 2024. This will enable Finance staff to complete the needed planning, process flow updates and engagement with both Council and staff in order for this initiative to be successful.

The 2020 budget will be a shortened status quo budget as Council works through the endorsement of the Community Plan and sets a City long-term strategic direction.

This change will also mean that all future budgets, including 2020, will be approved by Council in the October through December timeframe preceding the budgeted fiscal year. This timing is critical to ensuring the City is first-to-market in the procurement process, ensures non-tax rates are approved in time to implement by January 1 billings and supports good governance practices with setting a budget before the year begins.

Financial Implications

There are no direct financial implications resulting from this report. Overall, a strategic and efficient budget process results in efficient use of staff and Council resources.

Report

Multi-year budget update

Staff had previously planned to move to multi-year budgeting beginning with the 2020 budget. A key piece of work to inform the four-year budget is the Community Plan and Council's strategic plan. Based on current timing, staff is recommending approving an annual budget in 2020 and moving to multi-year budgeting in 2021. This will provide staff and Council sufficient time to complete this important strategy work.

Further, an important aspect of this initiative is the engagement of both Council and staff through this budget change process. Workshops will be held with Council and staff in the spring/summer 2019 to ensure the multi-year budget process is clearly defined and understood so there are no surprises throughout the multi-year budget approval and confirmation process. These workshops will inform the final draft multi-year budgeting policies to be brought to Council for approval in early 2020.

Below are two graphics which depict what Council can expect to see over this term of Council and the next term. Each of the budget approvals and annual budget confirmations will be approved by Council in the October to December timeframe preceding the fiscal year budget.

ELECTION YEAR				
2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Approved 1-year budget (Jan 2019)	Approved 1-year budget (Dec 2019)	Approved 3-year budget (2021-2023)	Confirm annual budget (Dec 2021)	Confirm annual budget (Jan 2023)

ELECTION YEAR			
2024	2025	2026	2027
Approved 4-year budget (2024-2027)	Confirm annual budget (Dec 2024)	Confirm annual budget (Dec 2025)	Confirm annual budget (Jan 2027)

2020 budget process

Staff recommend that the 2020 budget be a status quo budget to allow Council sufficient time to do the important strategic work without having to rush to inform the budget process. A status quo budget would mean business as usual throughout the City with service enhancement considerations being deferred to the multi-year budget process unless specifically requested by Council or recommended through a past service review.

Staff will begin working on the 2020 budget in April 2019.

The operating budget will be developed within the following guidelines:

- salary increases as outlined in collective agreements
- contract related cost increases (examples waste haulage, software maintenance, health and dental benefits)
- inflationary increases for fuel, natural gas, hydro, water, capital transfers
- operating impacts approved as part of the 2019 capital budget
- in-year Council decisions and decisions from 2019 operating budget approval
- continuation of funding strategies for capital and Community Improvement Plans
- user fee and rate increases where possible
- minimal service enhancements and growth budget requests
- leverage reserve funding for one-time expenditures

The capital budget will be developed within the following guidelines:

- amended capital funding parameters as approved by Council in the 2019 budget
- operating impacts will be identified for the 2021 operating budget including increased life-cycle requirements for growth and city building projects
- alignment of growth projects to match timing of development charge revenue collection
- incorporation of newly announced Provincial/Federal grant program

Table 1 below provides estimated timing for the 2020 City budget along with start times of budget meetings.

Table 1. Draft Budget Calendar

October 2019	Start Time
Presentation and Public Delegations for Non-tax Supported Operating Budget	6:00 p.m.
Presentation and Public Delegations for Capital Budget	6:00 p.m.
November 2019	
Council Deliberations and Approval of Non-tax Supported Operating Budget	4:00 p.m.
Council Deliberations and Approval of Capital Budget	4:00 p.m.
Presentation of Tax Supported Operating Budget	4:00 p.m.
Presentation of Local Boards and Shared Services Budgets	4:00 p.m.

Public Delegations for Tax Supported Operating Budget and Local Boards and Shared Services Budgets	6:00 p.m.
December 2019	
Council Deliberations and Approval of Tax Supported Operating Budget	2:00 p.m.

Financial Implications

There are no direct financial implications resulting from this report. Overall, a strategic and efficient budget process results in efficient use of staff and Council resources.

Consultations

Feedback received throughout the 2019 budget process as well as timing related to the approval of the Community Plan was considered in preparing the 2020 budget process.

Corporate Administrative Plan

Overarching Goals

Financial Stability

Innovation

Service Area Operational Work Plans

Our Services - Municipal services that make lives

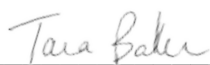
better Our Resources - A solid foundation for a growing city

Attachments

None

Report Author

Karen Newland



Approved By

Tara Baker, CPA, CA
GM Finance/City Treasurer
Corporate Services
519-822-1260 Ext. 2084
tara.baker@guelph.ca



Recommended By

Trevor Lee
Deputy CAO,
Corporate Services
519-822-1260 Ext. 2281
trevor.lee@guelph.ca

Staff Report



To	Committee of the Whole
Service Area	Corporate Services
Date	Monday, April 1, 2019
Subject	2018 Municipal and School Board Election Report
Report Number	CS-2019-37

Recommendation

That the report number CS-2019-37, titled 2018 Municipal and School Board Election Report, be received.

Executive Summary

Purpose of Report

To provide Council with an overview of the administration and delivery of the 2018 City of Guelph Municipal and School Board Election, as well as to provide considerations for continued improvement for future elections.

Key Findings

The 2018 municipal and school board election was held on October 22, 2018. The City Clerk is responsible for election administration, including establishing voting places, establishing policies and procedures, and, hiring and training election staff under the authority of the Municipal Elections Act, 1996 (MEA).

The 2018 election was a success. Official results were declared on October 23, 2018 with all offices filled. A statistically significant public phone survey indicates that 90 per cent of respondents were satisfied with the overall voting experience.

A summary of election activities is provided with key highlights and considerations for the future. Looking forward, an overview of key initiatives and reports that will be coming to Council over the next couple of years has been provided.

Financial Implications

The annual election reserve contribution was increased from \$131,000 to \$151,000 through the 2019 budget process. There are no further financial implications at this time.

Report

The City of Guelph 2018 municipal and school board election was held on October 22, 2018 to elect one mayor, twelve city councillors and eleven school board trustees.

The election was administered in accordance with the requirements of the MEA and relevant City by-laws and policies. The principles of the MEA guide the work of the City Clerk's Office when conducting an election. These principles state that:

- the secrecy and confidentiality of the voting process is paramount
- the election shall be fair and non-biased
- the election shall be accessible to the voters
- the integrity of the voting process shall be maintained throughout the election
- there is to be certainty that the results of the election reflect the votes cast
- voters and candidates shall be treated fairly and consistently
- the proper majority vote governs by ensuring that valid votes be counted and invalid votes be rejected so far as reasonably possible

This report is broken into the following sections:

- early planning and changes in legislation
- voting methods
- nominations and registrations
- voters' list
- recruitment and training
- engagement and communications
- voting days and locations
- technology and results
- election budget
- ranked ballot elections
- looking forward

Each section will provide key highlights with metrics and outline considerations for future municipal and school board elections.

Early planning and changes in legislation

The City's Election Team, with members from the City Clerk's Office, Information Technology and Corporate Communications and Customer Service, began planning for the 2018 municipal and school board election in 2016. Throughout the planning process, there was a focus on making it easy and removing barriers. Easy for candidates to file their nominations, for third parties to register and ultimately for voters to cast a ballot.

Early planning focused on the recent updates to the MEA brought forward by the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing through Bill 181, the Municipal Elections Modernization Act, 2016 (MEMA).

MEMA was the most significant update to the MEA and the conduct of municipal elections in Ontario within the last 20 years. Key updates included:

- changes to the election calendar and timelines
- greater independence and discretion of the Clerk
- the option to opt-in to a ranked ballot election for the first time
- a new third party advertising framework
- broader election advertising requirements
- financial filing and reporting changes

An overview of these legislative changes was presented in a September 6, 2016 report titled [Municipal Election Modernization, Service Expansion and Ranked Ballot Election](#).

Highlights

- September 8, 2016 was the kick-off meeting for the City's Election Team
- 168 election meetings from September 2016 to December 2018
- 102 election meetings in 2018

Considerations

- **Further legislative updates** – It is unknown whether the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing will consider further updates to the MEA following this election. The City Clerk's Office will provide any requested feedback and monitor future amendments to election legislation and will report back to Council on such changes on an as-needed basis.

Voting methods

The MEA requires that Council pass a by-law authorizing the use of vote counting equipment and any alternative voting methods. The City Clerk's Office brought forward [a report and a draft by-law on April 3, 2017](#) for Councils' consideration. Council approved the use of vote tabulators but amended the by-law to remove internet voting and in-person-paperless voting options. By-law (2017)-20163 passed on April 25, 2017.

The City Clerk's Office received public feedback regarding voting methods throughout the election planning process. A statistically relevant phone survey was conducted in March 2017, which indicated how likely respondents would be to vote using the following methods:

In-person paper ballots	Unlikely – 17 per cent
	Neutral – 4 per cent
	Likely – 79 per cent
	Don't know – 0 per cent
In person touch screens	Unlikely – 24 per cent
	Neutral – 4 per cent
	Likely – 68 per cent
	Don't know – 4 per cent
Internet voting	Unlikely – 31 per cent
	Neutral – 5 per cent
	Likely – 63 per cent
	Don't know – 1 per cent

Once the report and by-law were presented to Council, the subject of alternative voting methods generated significant public interest. 16 delegations and 290 pieces of correspondence were received on this agenda item.

A number of voters submitted complaints regarding the use of in-person voting options only and identified this as a barrier to their ability to vote. These complaints came from voters who were out of the City for personal or business reasons, as well as voters who, for accessibility reasons, were unable to get to or enter a voting location. Alternatively, feedback was received that the decision to only offer in-person voting was appropriate from an electoral security perspective. The City Clerk's Office is aware of perspectives in favour of remote voting methods, as well as, those in favour of more traditional in-person voting methods. Balancing these considerations in the lead up to future municipal and school board election events will be important and staff will work to ensure that Council has timely and relevant information in order to make decisions that are in the best interest of the community. Ultimately and as the legislation is currently written, the decision on alternative voting methods rests with Council.

Following the election, another statistically significant phone survey was conducted in December 2018. 1.4 per cent of respondents stated that they did not vote due to no electronic voting/other voting method options. Voters indicated how likely they would be to vote using the following methods:

In person at a voting location with a paper ballot	Likely – 75 per cent
	Unlikely – 14 per cent
	Unsure - 11 per cent
In person at a voting location with a digital ballot on a tablet or laptop	Likely – 59 per cent
	Unlikely – 27 per cent
	Unsure - 14 per cent
Remotely with online voting	Likely – 57 per cent
	Unlikely – 31 per cent
	Unsure - 12 per cent
	Likely – 35 per cent
	Unlikely – 44 per cent

Remotely with telephone voting	Unsure - 20 per cent
--------------------------------	----------------------

*Note: minor variance is due rounding

Highlights

- 16 delegations for agenda item COW-CS-2017.04 2018 Municipal Election: Methods of Voting at the [April 24 Council meeting](#)
- 290 pieces of correspondence submitted for agenda item COW-CS-2017.04 2018 Municipal Election: Methods of Voting at the [April 24 Council meeting](#)

Considerations

- **Community engagement** – Additional engagement on voting methods will be conducted prior to the 2022 municipal and school board elections and will inform future reports to Council.
- **Remote voting method** – The City Clerk's Office will include recommendations for remote voting methods for Council consideration well before the May 1, 2021 statutory deadline.

Nominations and registrations

The MEA establishes qualifications for candidates interested in running for office and defines the campaign period. Nominations could be filed from May 1, 2018 until nomination day on July 27, 2018 at 2:00pm. 65 nominations were filed for offices on City Council, the Upper Grand District School Board and the Wellington Catholic District School Board. Nominations for the Conseil scolaire Viamonde were filed with the City of London and for Conseil scolaire catholique MonAvenir were filed with the City of Brampton as the returning offices for those boards. All nominations filed with the City Clerk's Office were certified. With 67 nominations in 2014 and 65 received in 2018, the number of filings remained consistent with a minor decrease.

The third party advertising framework was in place for the first time in 2018. The MEA also sets out criteria for who qualifies as a third party advertiser, the requirement to register with the municipality and the campaign period in which advertising can take place. Registrations could be filed by eligible third party advertisers from May 1, 2018 until October 19, 2018. Two registrations were filed, one by an individual and one by a corporation. All registrations filed with the City Clerk's Office were certified.

Highlights

- 65 candidate nominations filed and certified
- 2 candidate withdrawals
- 1 candidate re-filed for a different office
- 0 acclimations
- 2 third party registrations filed and certified

Considerations

- **Minimum spending amount to qualify as a third party advertiser**
 - A legislative review has not been announced, however, the City Clerk's Office will be active with municipal counterparts and stakeholders in recommending the Ministry consider implementing a minimum spending amount to qualify as a third party advertiser. There is currently no minimum amount in place, which provides for an enforcement challenge.

Voters' list

An accurate voters' list is essential to the integrity and legitimacy of the election. In order to vote in the municipal election, a person must be a Canadian citizen, 18 years of age as of Election Day and:

- a resident of Guelph; or
- an owner or tenant of property in Guelph; or
- the spouse of an owner or tenant of property in Guelph.

In order to vote, a person's name must also appear on the voters' list and an eligible voter can be added until the close of voting on Election Day.

The municipal voters' list is the responsibility of the Municipal Property Assessment Corporation (MPAC) and the City Clerk. MPAC is legislatively responsible for the initial enumeration and collection of voter information. This information is derived from MPAC's database of municipal property owners and tenants, as well as those added to the voters' list in the previous municipal and school board election. Eligible voters are able to add and update their information on file with MPAC through MPAC's voterlookup.ca online tool. The combination of these data gathering and enumeration activities is then delivered to the City Clerk in the form of the Preliminary List of Electors (PLE) which is broken down into wards and voting subdivisions in July or August in the year of the election.

After receiving the list, the City Clerk has roughly a month to correct obvious errors, such as duplicate electors, caused most often when people have moved since the last election, or mailing address issues. Once these corrections are made, the PLE becomes the voters' list and it can be made available to candidates. At this point, eligible voters can make revisions by submitting a paper or digital Application to Amend the Voters' List form to the City Clerk's Office. The digital form was available on the City's election website up until the Sunday before Election Day. This form added registrations to an interim list until acceptable identification was shown at a voting location. 1,695 digital registrations were received, however, despite significant communication efforts highlighting the voterlookup.ca MPAC tool and the City of Guelph online form, the majority of changes were made by voters at advanced and Election Day voting locations. This made line-ups longer and increased the time to cast a ballot.

If voters were unable to vote in person during the three advanced voting days or on Election Day, the MEA allows for the appointment of a proxy voter to cast a ballot on their behalf. Both the appointing voter and the proxy voter must be eligible to vote and must be on the voters' list for the City of Guelph. A proxy form could be requested in person, by email or regular mail but the proxy voter is required to come in to City Hall and show identification before the form can be certified. The City Clerk's Office certified 42 proxy forms in 2018, a significant increase from previous years.

In 2018, the City Clerk's Office took the following steps to improve the quality of the voters' list:

- Partnering with MPAC and promoting their voterlookup.ca online tool.
- Offering online tools to help voters check if they were on the list, correct information or add themselves to an interim list starting in early September.
- Partnering with community events, such as the Farmers' Market and Movies in the Square, and organizations such as the Guelph & Wellington Task Force for Poverty Elimination and Immigrant Services Guelph-Wellington, to encourage residents to check if they were on the list and add themselves if they were not.
- Partnering with the University of Guelph to encourage students, staff and faculty to check if they were on the list and add themselves if they were not.
- Providing email and call support to assist voters check if they were on the list and assist them in completing paper or digital Applications to Amend the Voter's list if additions or changes were necessary.

Despite these efforts, the quality and accuracy of the information available from MPAC remains one of the most significant challenges in administering the election. MPAC derives its information primarily from property ownership information. While this captures many eligible voters, the integrity of the data and information is less accurate when it comes to capturing tenant information, capturing recent moves, property developments or for institution enumeration. This significantly impacts the quality and accuracy of the list for the City of Guelph, which has a high tenant and boarder population, has significant property developments underway and large institutions like the University of Guelph and long-term care homes, which require additional enumeration by the City Clerk's Office.

Some new developments, particularly the Metalworks Condominium at 53 Arthur Street South, were not enumerated by MPAC, which resulted in eligible voters not being on the list and not receiving voter notification cards. The City Clerk's Office also faced more challenges when trying to work with several seniors' residential and long-term care homes to enumerate and add the residents to the voters' list than in past years. In two cases, facilities did not provide the information needed to add residents to the voters' list because of concerns over the privacy of their residents' personal information. Despite assurances and multiple attempts to share with the facilities that the City of Guelph has strict obligations to protect personal information in accordance with the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, these two facilities did not share resident information, which led to

confusion for voters on Election Day. As residents in long-term care are often unable to provide identification at the polls, this led to difficulties in providing election services to these voters.

Highlights

- 93,650 eligible electors on the voters' list
- 42 proxy voter applications received
- 1,695 digital Applications to Amend the Voters' List processed
- 18,287 total voters' list amendments

Considerations

- **Accuracy of voters' list** – Increased quality or accuracy of the voters' list is unlikely by 2022 without legislative change or more formal agreements between MPAC and other enumeration organizations like Elections Ontario or Elections Canada. [A recent motion from the February 25, 2019 Council meeting](#) focused on the topic of maintaining the voters' list for municipal elections. This motion reflected support for the re-establishment of a multi-stakeholder Voter's List Working Group and requested updates on transformational solutions. If alternative solutions are not implemented by the next election, the City Clerk's Office will look to address some of the above challenges by focusing on:
 - increased communications to encourage eligible voters to check and update their information on the voters' list;
 - checking the PLE for major new residential developments to verify if they have been enumerated; and
 - working with seniors' residential home and long-term care home administrators early on to clarify their responsibilities under the MEA and the impacts if resident information is not provided.
- **Proxy voting** – The increase of proxy voters in 2018 can be linked to the voting method available and the timing of advanced voting days. In-person voting was the only approved voting method and advanced voting days were centralized over one Friday, Saturday and Sunday. For 2022, the City Clerk's Office will include an analysis of various remote voting methods in their report to Council for consideration and advanced voting days will be reviewed based on the approved voting methods and community feedback received.
- **Engagement and awareness** – The City Clerk's Office and Corporate Communications and Customer Service will continue current communications and engagement tactics, as well as, look for new opportunities to connect with voters, community groups and institutions to encourage people to check if they are on the voters' list and make updates before arriving at the polls.

Recruitment and training

Having enough trained election staff to manage voting locations is one of the most important aspects of successful election administration and likely the biggest

challenge faced in the administration of the 2018 municipal and school board election. 70 election staff were needed across four voting locations during three advanced voting days and 349 were needed on Election Day. Election Day begins at 9:00am and ends 12 to 13 hours later after polls close and when all equipment is re-packed and returned to City Hall.

Recruitment was conducted through an online application process, which helped streamline the review of applications and communication with applicants. Response to the call for election workers was strong with 584 applications received from the public. Interviews were conducted over five days with five interviewers. This amounted to 22 hours spent on this step of the process to consider candidates for employment.

A call for election workers was also put out to City employees to encourage participation in this important community initiative. City employees could work at any poll individually or 'Adopt-A-Poll', a new pilot program, which allowed a department or team to staff an entire poll and work as a team on Election Day. The call for City employees to work the election was successful with 104 positions filled by City employees during advanced polls and on Election Day with six polls adopted.

Thorough training is important to ensure that legislative requirements are followed, staff are comfortable working with the technology at the polls and a high level of customer service is provided to voters. All staff were required to take an online training module on accessible customer service in compliance with the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA). Specialized training was provided for Managing Officer, Ballot Officer, Revision Officer, Tabulator Officer and Greeter positions. Managing Officers attended training for all positions to ensure they were comfortable and prepared to support all staff at a voting location. In total eight trainers from the City Clerk's Office delivered 26 scheduled training sessions over 52 hours leading up to the election. This training program took three months to prepare and was delivered in three weeks.

Highlights

- 584 external applications received
- 22 hours spent interviewing applicants
- 401 election workers hired and trained for advanced voting days and Election Day
- 6 polls adopted by City departments or City staff teams
- 52 hours spent training applicants
- 10 per cent staff turnover between interviews and Election Day

Considerations

- **Changing skill requirements for election staff** – Changes to procedures and the introduction of new technology at polls over recent elections have made computer literacy skills a requirement for many election positions. This makes recruitment of qualified election staff more challenging. As the election process continues to modernize so

too will the election recruitment process and the skills required of election workers. The skill set required was difficult to recruit for in 2018 and it is estimated that many of those individuals with these skill sets are not able to dedicate the time required to apply, attend training and make themselves available to work during the advance voting period or on Election Day.

- **Retention of election staff** – Approximately 38 election staff hired quit within the weeks and even days before the election. This high turnover is not new but does pose a significant challenge as recruitment and training continued up until the day before the election and posed a significant stress on the ability to ensure there were enough prepared election staff to cover voting locations across the City. Roles, responsibilities and pay scales will be reviewed prior to 2022 to attract and retain qualified election workers. The amount of additional or spare positions hired and trained early in the process will also be increased.

Engagement and communications

The MEA requires that the City Clerk provide eligible voters, candidates and third party advertisers with information to enable them to exercise their rights. A new design and communications plan was developed to reach voters, candidates and third party advertisers with the “your Guelph, your vote” call to action.

Communications tools and collateral were delivered in a range of mediums, from newspaper and radio ads to digital screens at City facilities, social media posts, community group and business newsletters. The City’s election website was the central place for election information and was continuously updated from the call for nominations to the presentation of final results and into 2019.

One of the most important communications tools to share voting information is the voter notification card, sent to every voter on the voters’ list in early September. 89,566 cards were mailed out to voters to provide information on where and when they could cast their ballot. These cards are not required in order to vote and cannot be used as acceptable identification at the voting location, but are the most direct way of sending information to voters. Voter notification cards are the largest communications expense in the election budget with the cost of production at \$10,500 and postage just over \$78,000.

Three candidate information sessions were held, two sessions prior to the opening of nominations focused on everything a new candidate would need to consider before filing their nomination and one session in August focused topics such as election signs, financial contributions and filing requirements.

Voter outreach was also done at community events, such as the weekly Farmers’ Market, Movies in the Square and at the University of Guelph. The City Clerk’s Office identified community groups with traditionally lower rates of voter engagement and worked with community partners, including the University of Guelph, the Guelph & Wellington Task Force for Poverty Elimination and Immigrant

Services Guelph-Wellington to provide information and remove barriers to voting. A co-operative education position from the University of Guelph was leveraged whose role, in part, was focused on voter engagement and developing partnerships with community organizations.

The statistically significant phone survey, conducted in December 2018, evaluated the effectiveness in reaching a wide community audience with the current communication methods used. Respondents indicated the following:

The top three methods for receiving election information	Voter notification cards – 24 per cent
	City's election website – 22 per cent
	Social media – 11 per cent
The top three other ways of communicating to consider for the next election	Emails – 14 per cent
	Social media – 13 per cent
	Newspapers – 9 per cent

Highlights

- 3 candidate information sessions held
- 5 community events and voter information sessions attended between August and October 2018
- 89,566 voter notification cards mailed
- 232,519 social media impressions on Facebook and Twitter
- 299,576 total and 175,683 unique election website page views from May 1 to November 18, 2018

Considerations

- **Continue evolving election communications** – Election communications need to reach all eligible voters, candidates and third party advertisers. Communications planning for 2022 will incorporate feedback received. Communications will need to continue online and social media tools along with more traditional communications methods like voter notification cards, newspaper and radio advertisements.

Voting days and locations

Under the MEA, the City Clerk is required to establish voting locations that are both convenient and accessible for all voters and candidates, including those with disabilities. Advanced voting was held over three days from Friday, October 12 to Sunday, October 14, 2018 at four locations. Voting on Election Day was offered at 48 locations across the City, including long-term care homes.

When establishing voting locations the Election Team considers many different factors, including how central or convenient the location is for voters, whether the building or facility meets accessibility requirements under the AODA, the availability of wireless connectivity needed for equipment, distances from bus routes, and the amount of parking available.

The City Clerk's Office is committed to providing accessible and barrier free election services. All voting locations must meet established accessibility standards. This limits the use of facilities that may be available but do not meet requirements. Accessibility audits are conducted to thoroughly assess each facility and an Accessibility Plan is made available to the public before Election Day. The Accessibility Advisory Committee was consulted and engaged in the development of this Plan. Following the election, the City Clerk's Office must make an Accessibility Report publicly available as well. Both documents can be found on the election website guelph.ca/vote.

Schools are often chosen as voting locations as they generally are accessible facilities distributed throughout the community. In addition, schools are facilities that must be provided free of charge by school boards for the purpose of elections. Despite the availability and accessibility of schools, there are some concerns with respect to the use of schools in relation to scheduling and security. The City Clerk's Office met with both the Upper Grand District School Board (UGDSB) and the Wellington Catholic School Board (WCDSB) in March and April of 2017 to discuss the potential of a Professional Activity (PA) day on Election Day to alleviate these issues. Other municipalities, including all municipalities within York Region, have successfully worked with their school boards to implement a PA day on Election Day in 2014 and 2018; however, this was not implemented for the UGDSB and WCDSB 2018-2019 school year calendars. The City Clerk and other municipal clerks across the province believe strongly that the implementation of a PA day on Election Day would significantly improve the voting process while providing for improved student safety.

Community feedback on voting locations and approach was provided through the statistically relevant phone survey conducted in December 2018. Respondents provided the following feedback:

Satisfaction with the number of advanced voting days	Satisfied – 73 per cent
	Dissatisfied – 12 per cent
	Unsure – 15 per cent
Satisfaction with the advanced voting locations	Satisfied – 75 per cent
	Dissatisfied – 9 per cent
	Unsure – 16 per cent
Satisfaction with the number of Election Day voting locations	Satisfied – 81 per cent
	Dissatisfied – 11 per cent
	Unsure – 8 per cent
Satisfaction with the location or distribution of Election Day voting locations	Satisfied – 78 per cent
	Dissatisfied – 12 per cent
	Unsure – 11 per cent
Satisfaction with the location where you voted	Satisfied – 94 per cent
	Dissatisfied – 6 per cent
	Yes – 62 per cent
	No – 29 per cent

Does vote anywhere make it easier for you to vote in person?	Unsure – 9 per cent
--------------------------------------------------------------	---------------------

*Note: minor variance is due rounding

Highlights

- 4 advanced voting locations
- 48 election day voting locations

Considerations

- **PA day** – The City Clerk's Office will continue to work with the UGDSB and the WCDSB to discuss the potential of a PA day for the 2022 municipal election. The City Clerk's Office will also consider advocating through various municipal and school board associations.
- **Monitoring new facilities** – New schools and facilities built across the City will be monitored as potential future voting locations.
- **Evaluation of voting days and locations** – Community feedback indicated an overall satisfaction with the number of voting days and locations offered in 2018. Suggestions for alternative locations and improvements will be used in voting location planning for 2022.

Technology and results

A range of election equipment is deployed at voting locations including laptops and bar code scanners used to search and strike voters off a digital voters' list, tabulators that scan and record cast votes, and audio tactile devices that assist voters with disabilities to cast a ballot.

Technologies used in the election are held to strict security and integrity requirements. All tabulators and accessibility equipment undergo thorough logic and accuracy testing to ensure the integrity of the election. Prior to voting day, tabulators are tested to ensure that they will accurately count the votes for all candidates. Logic and accuracy testing was conducted over three days by eight City Clerk's Office employees over a total of 27 hours. Any technology used to process or tabulate votes is isolated from other applications or programs to prevent remote access to the system or device and ensure security and integrity of the election. Tabulators are not connected to any network either wirelessly or by hardwire.

Results are stored on memory cards in each tabulator. Results tapes cannot be run until after the close of voting on Election Day at 8:00pm. Tabulators and ballots used during the advanced voting period are securely stored until then. Once voting closed on October 22, 2018, the City Clerk began to upload results by removing memory cards from advanced tabulators followed by Election Day tabulators as they returned to City Hall. Unofficial results were declared by 10:40pm on election night with final results declared the following day on October 23, 2018.

Highlights

- 68 tabulators logic and accuracy tested over three days
- 100 per cent accuracy of results delivered by tabulators
- 10:40pm declaration of unofficial results on Election Day

Considerations

- **Evolving technology** – Election technology may change over the next four years and any changes and improvements will be monitored. Technology needed to efficiently tally results will be planned closely with voting system considerations for 2022.
- **Maintaining security** – Local, national and international concerns around the integrity of elections have raised the need for high security standards to maintain the integrity of elections and public confidence in results. Technologies involved in vote counting in 2022 will carefully evaluate security impacts and recommendations will be made based on the need to balance security with modernizing election technology and community expectations.

Election budget

The overall expenditure of the 2018 election was approximately \$449,000, which increased from 2014 by roughly 25 per cent. In-person voting using tabulators was the only approved voting method and, as a result, this required an increase in voting locations, staffing and equipment. The choice of voting method is not the only reason for this increase but was a strong contributing factor to this increase.

The annual election reserve allocation of \$131,000 per year gave a total budget of \$524,000 for the 2018 municipal election. A portion of the reserve must be held and be available in the event of certain post election activities, such as a recount or compliance audit requests and committee processes. The legislated timeline for a recount has now passed; however, the remaining funds in the reserve are in place for compliance audit committee meetings and associated costs. In addition, a portion of the reserve must be maintained in order to account for any mid-term by-election events, which may be required.

Ranked ballot

A [Municipal Election Modernization, Service Expansion and Ranked Ballot Election report](#) was brought forward to Council for consideration in September 2016. The most recent updates to the MEA gives municipal councils in Ontario the option to pass a by-law to implement ranked ballot elections starting in 2018. The decision to move to a ranked ballot system can be made prior to each election. At the time of that report, Council maintained the first-past-the-post system for the City of Guelph but directed staff to monitor ranked ballot elections in Ontario and report back after the 2018 election. The information below provides current information available.

Two Ontario municipalities put a referendum question on the ballot related to ranked ballot voting. The City of Cambridge asked, "Are you in favour of the City of

Cambridge using a ranked ballot system for the 2022 municipal election?" The results of the referendum in Cambridge were 13,488 votes in favour of implementing a ranked ballot system and 10,499 in opposition. With a total voter turnout of 32.24 percent, only 27.27 per cent of eligible voters voted on the ranked ballot question. The City of Kingston asked, "Are you in favour of using Ranked Ballot Voting to elect Mayor and District Councillors in the City of Kingston?" 20,642 voted in favour while 12,161 voted in opposition. With a total voter turnout of 34,529, only 39.23 per cent of eligible voters voted on the question. To be binding, at least 50 per cent of all eligible voters must vote on the question. Councils may take the results under advisement when considering the municipal voting system for 2022; however, results in Cambridge and Kingston were not binding.

One municipality passed a by-law to implement ranked choice voting, also known as ranked ballot voting. The City of London was the first and only municipality in Ontario to use this new system. There were significant impacts on election administration in terms of planning, communications, voting location staffing, results reporting timelines and budget. Early estimates provided by London indicated that moving to a ranked ballot system would increase the costs of administering their election by as much as \$322,500. The City of London is currently completing their election report to their Council and the report was not publicly available at the time of the authoring of this report. Once this information is available it will be used to inform a more fulsome report on ranked ballot voting that will be brought forward to Council in 2021.

Respondents to the statistically significant election phone survey indicated the following:

Familiarity with ranked voting	Not familiar – 43 per cent
	Somewhat familiar – 33 per cent
	Very familiar – 14 per cent
	Don't know – 10 per cent
Support or opposition to the City implementing ranked voting in the 2022 election	Oppose – 38 per cent
	Support – 37 per cent
	Unsure – 25 per cent

Highlights

- 1 municipality used a ranked ballot system in 2018
- 2 questions on the ballot regarding ranked ballot voting occurred in other Ontario municipalities
- 0 binding ranked ballot referendum results to date

Considerations

- **Limited municipal opt-in** – London was the only municipality to move to a ranked ballot system in 2018. Lessons learned from the London experience will be valuable but a wider municipal perspective is not yet available.
- **Community engagement** – Community awareness and interest in moving to a ranked ballot voting system will be considered in early

planning for the 2022 municipal and school board elections. The MEA requires further engagement prior to considering a by-law on ranked ballot voting and additional engagement information will be provided at that time.

- **Technology impacts** – Moving to a ranked ballot election requires consideration of the technology used to tabulate results. With a more complex process of calculating results, it is essential to have technology in place to allow for efficient and timely calculation of results.

Looking forward

Preparations and planning for the next municipal and school board election in 2022 are already underway. The Election Team will focus on balancing considerations on modernizations that make it easy for voters to cast a ballot and meeting community expectations with maintaining the integrity of the election within the election budget envelope provided for by Council.

Council should be aware of the following initiatives and timelines leading up to the next election:

- **A Council Composition, Employment Status and Ward Boundary Review** - The employment status and composition of Council has remained largely unchanged since 1930. In 2013 City Council directed that a third party subject matter expert be engaged to conduct a Council Composition and Employment Status and Ward Boundary Review with the intent that any proposed changes take effect for the 2018–2022 term of Council. The costs associated with this review, however, were not approved as part of the 2016 budget. A budget request will be included again in the 2020 budget. If the budget is approved, the project will be completed over three phases starting in Q1 of 2020 with completion anticipated for Q1 2021. This work will need to be completed in this timeline in order to be in effect for the 2022 election. The decision to carry out this work and make any related changes rests solely with Council.
- **Voting system and methods** – A by-law with respect to ranked ballot elections and a by-law regarding vote counting equipment and alternative voting methods must both be passed on or before May 1 in the year before the election in accordance with the MEA. The City Clerk's Office will bring reports and by-laws on these matters forward to Council earlier in Q1 of 2021 to ensure Council has adequate time to consider recommendations and alternatives.

Financial Implications

The annual election reserve allocation was increased from \$131,000 to \$151,000 through the 2019 budget process. This will raise the available funds to cover election costs from \$524,000 to \$604,000 for future elections.

This increase will help meet election service and voting experience expectations of a growing City and also to fund potential considerations relating to voting locations, equipment and staffing at polls.

There are no further financial implications at this time. The above increase may not address increased costs associated with future Council considerations related to ranked ballot voting systems or voting methods. Financial considerations for these items will be addressed when future reports are brought forward to Council.

Consultations

Information Technology Services
Corporate Communications and Customer Service

Corporate Administrative Plan

Overarching Goals

Service Excellence

Service Area Operational Work Plans

Our Services - Municipal services that make lives better

Attachments

ATT-1 March 2014 voting methods survey report
ATT-2 December 2018 voter satisfaction survey report

Report Author

Jennifer Slater

Manager Information, Privacy and Elections/Deputy City Clerk



Approved By

Stephen O'Brien
GM City Clerk's Office/City Clerk
Corporate Services
519-822-1260 ext. 5644
stephen.obrien@guelph.ca



Recommended By

Trevor Lee
Deputy CAO,
Corporate Services
519-822-1260 ext. 2281
trevor.lee@guelph.ca



Voting Methods Survey Report



March 2014

Table of Contents

METHODOLOGY & LOGISTICS.....	3
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY.....	4
<i>Past Voting – 2014 Municipal Election</i>	4
<i>Voting Methods – Likelihood of Using</i>	7
<i>Online Voting & Security</i>	8
<i>Ranked Balloting</i>	10
RESULTS BY QUESTION.....	13

Methodology & Logistics

Background

- This report provides the research findings from a telephone survey of Guelph residents 18 years of age or older conducted by Oraclepoll Research Limited for the City of Guelph.
- The intent of the survey was to gauge the opinions of voting age residents on issues related to casting ballots in future Municipal Elections.

Study Sample

- A total of 800 interviews were conducted using person to person telephone interviewing by Oraclepoll's call research staff. The following is the sample distribution by Ward.

		N	%
	Ward 1	133	16.6
	Ward 2	134	16.8
	Ward 3	133	16.6
	Ward 4	133	16.6
	Ward 5	134	16.8
	Ward 6	133	16.6
	Total	800	100.0

- The margin of error for the total N=800 sample is +/- 3.5%, 19/20 times.

Survey Method

- The survey was conducted using computer-assisted techniques of telephone interviewing (CATI) and random number selection. The random database was inclusive of new numbers, private numbers and cell phone only households.
- All surveys were conducted by telephone using live operators at the Oraclepoll call centre facility.

Logistics

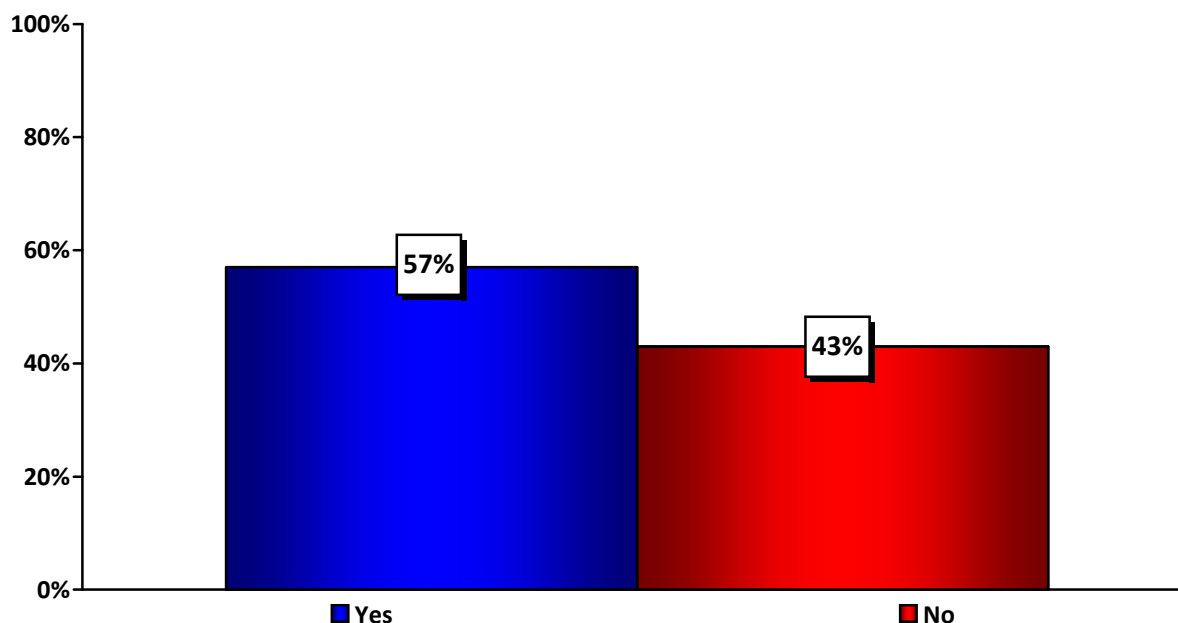
- Interviews were completed between the days of March 10th and March 17th 2017.
- Initial calls were made between the hours of 6:00 p.m. and 9:00 p.m. Subsequent call-backs of no-answers and busy numbers were made up to 5 times (from 10:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m.) until contact was made. In addition, telephone interview appointments were attempted with those respondents unable to complete the survey at the time of contact. If no contact was made at a number after the fifth attempt, the number was discarded and a new one was used.
- A total of 20% of all interviews were monitored and the management of Oraclepoll Research Limited supervised 100%.

Executive Summary

Past Voting – 2014 Municipal Election

All respondents were first asked if they voted in the 2014 Guelph Municipal Election.

Q1. "Did you vote in the 2014 Guelph Municipal Election?"

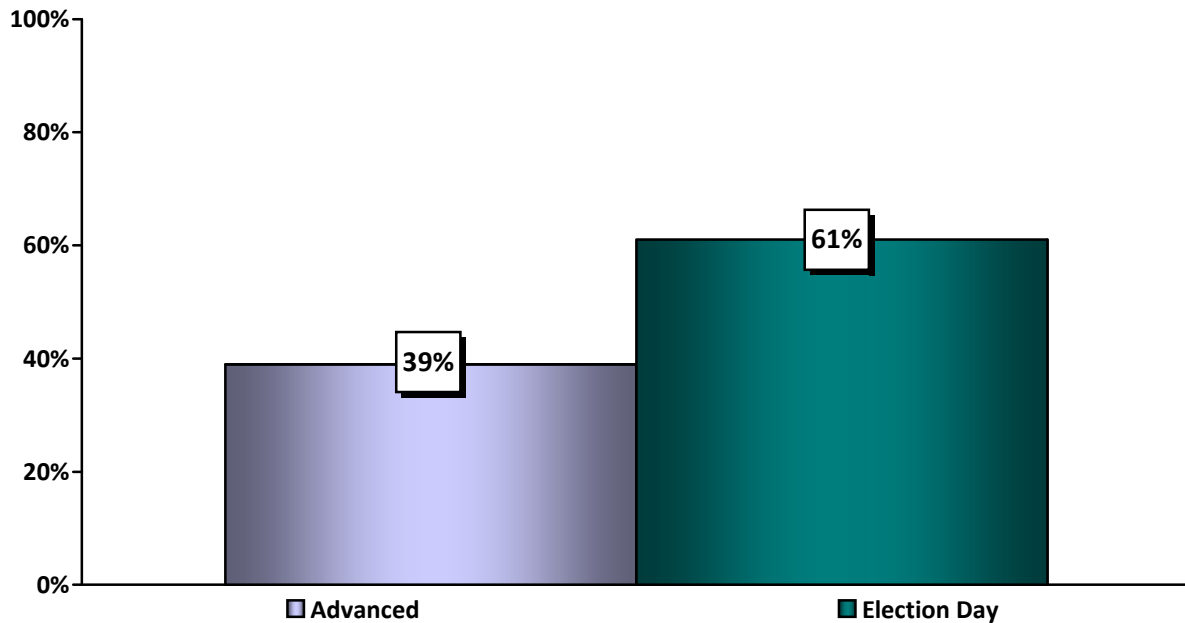


In total, 57% (N=459) of those surveyed claimed that they voted in the last Municipal Election. While results may be higher than the actual voter turnout, these findings are expected and may be attributed to two main factors the first of which is confusion with voting in Elections at other levels. More importantly can be related to voters not wanting to appear to be electoral free riders by not casting a ballot.

Despite this, results do indicate consistent patterns with respect to voting as a function of demographics, especially age. Least likely to have voted were those 18-24 (41%) and 25-34 (51%), while results were higher for those 35-44 (57%) as well as 45-54 (59%), while the oldest residents 55-64 (73%) and 65+ (66%) were most inclined to have voted. In addition, those with lower incomes (under \$35,000 – 47% & \$35,000 to \$49,999 – 46%) had a lower incidence of voting in relation to higher earners (\$50,000 to \$74,999 – 56%, \$75,000 to \$99,999 – 63% & \$100,000 or more – 65%). More females (60%) compared to males (55%) also said that they voted in 2014.

The N=459 that claimed to have voted in the 2014 Guelph Municipal Election were then asked if they voted during the advanced period or on Election Day.

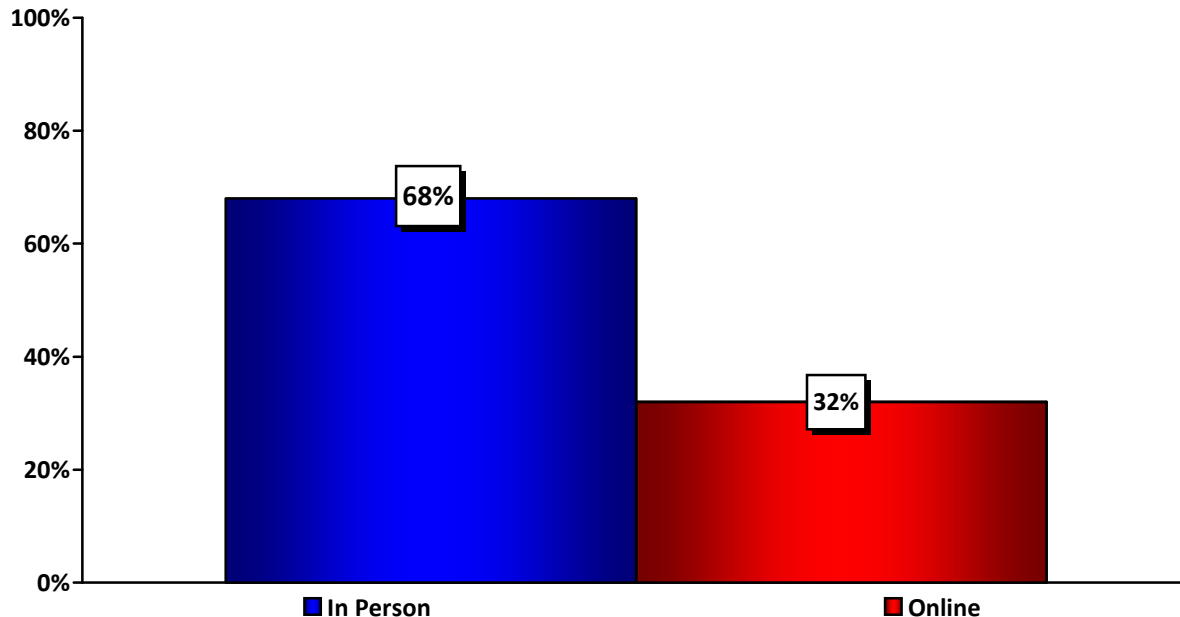
Q2. “During that election, did you vote during the advanced voting period (October 7-24) or on Election Day (October 27)?”



Almost four in ten or 39% said that they voted in an advanced poll, while 61% stated that they cast a ballot on Election Day. Those most likely to have voted in an advanced poll were those 35-44 (51%) and more females (42%) in relation to males (35%).

Next, the N=459 of those that said they voted in the 2014 Election were questioned about their method of voting.

Q3. “What method did you use to vote in the 2014 Municipal Election?”



A total of 32% of all voters cast a ballot online and 68% in person, but among those taking advantage of the advanced poll dates (Q2), 83% used the digital method and 17% the traditional paper form. Those under the age of 55 were most likely to have voted online (34 to 44 – 48%, 25 to 34 – 40%, 18 to 24 – 37% & 45 to 54 – 35%) in relation to those 55+ (55 to 64 – 21% & 65 or older – 14%). Females also tended to vote online (36%) in higher numbers than males (27%).

In a final question related to the 2014 Election, those that voted (N=459) were asked in a follow-up to Q3 **about the main reason that they voted using that method (Q4)**. Convenience, or being more efficient or quicker was most cited by 28%, followed by comfort, habit or tradition by 26% and ease or simplicity by 19%. Other mentions included the level of security or not trusting online voting (9%), that a polling station was close by (3%), not being aware of the online option (2%) and not having internet access (1%).

Voting Methods – Likelihood of Using

All N=800 respondents were read three different methods of voting and were asked about their likelihood of using each one using a five-point scale from 1-very unlikely to 5-very likely. The table below combines the total likely responses (4 & 5) as well as the total unlikely answers (1 & 2).

Q5. “If the City offers different ways to vote, how likely are you to use the following methods.”

	(1 & 2) Total Unlikely	(3) Neutral (neither likely nor unlikely)	(4 & 5) Total likely	Don't know
In-person paper ballots	17%	4%	79%	-
In-person touch screens	24%	4%	68%	4%
Internet	31%	5%	63%	1%

Almost eight in ten or 79% (19% likely & 60% very likely) stated that they would be likely to vote using in-person paper ballots, 17% would be unlikely and 4% had a neutral opinion of neither likely nor unlikely. Respondents most unlikely (responses of 1 & 2) to use paper balloting were 18-24 year old's (28%), those that did not vote in 2014 (28%) and conversely residents that voted in 2014 in an advanced online poll (31%).

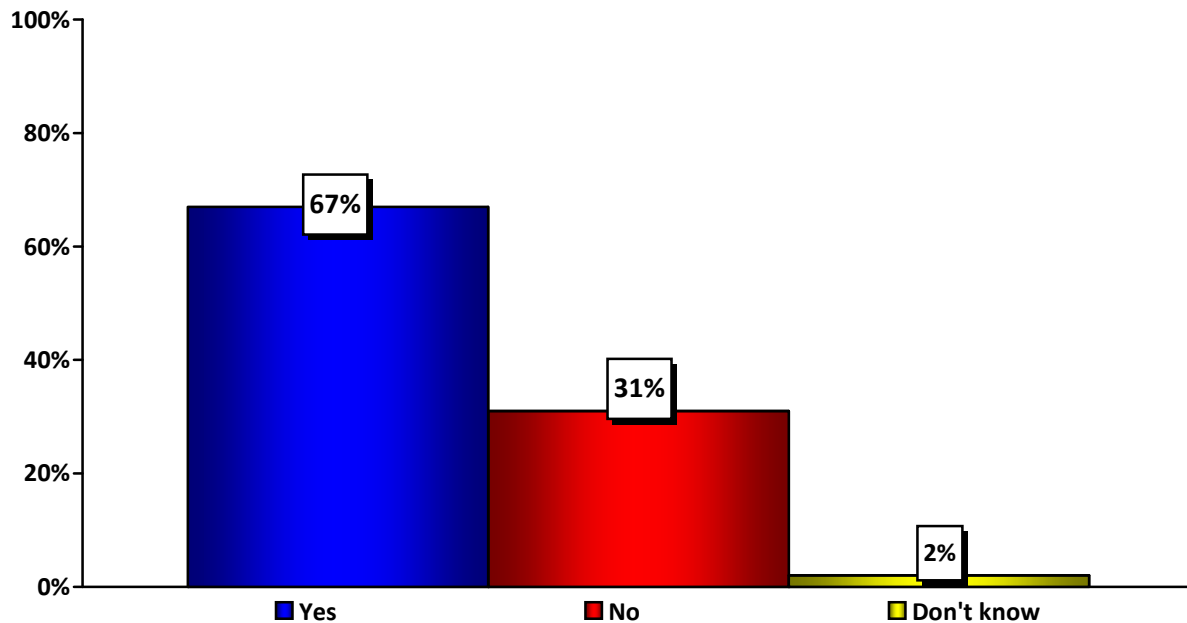
A total of 68% claimed that they would be likely (24%) or very likely (44%) to use an in-person touch screen after being read a short description of this method. Slightly less than a quarter or 24% would be unlikely, 4% neither likely not unlikely and 4% were unsure. Touch screens were most popular among 18-24 year old's (88%) and those 25-34 (81%) as well as all of those that voted online in an advanced ballot (100%). Those least likely to use it (responses of 1 & 2) were older or aged 55-64 (40%) and 65+ (50%) as were a higher number of those casting a traditional paper ballot in 2014 (31%) and non-voters in that Election (27%).

With respect to internet voting, 63% said that they are likely (18%) or very likely (45%) to vote in this manner, 31% are not likely, while 5% are neither likely nor unlikely and 1% did not know. A very high 86% of 18-24 year old's and 75% of those 25-34 are likely to vote online, as are all of those (100%) that used online advanced poll voting in 2014. Among those that did not vote in 2014, 64% did claim that they would be likely to internet vote in the future. Those most unlikely (responses of 1 & 2) to vote over the internet are 65 years of age or older (53%) and residents that voted using a paper ballot in 2014 (45%).

Online Voting & Security

All N=800 respondents were next asked specific questions around internet online voting. First, they were questioned if they would consider voting using the online method in 2018.

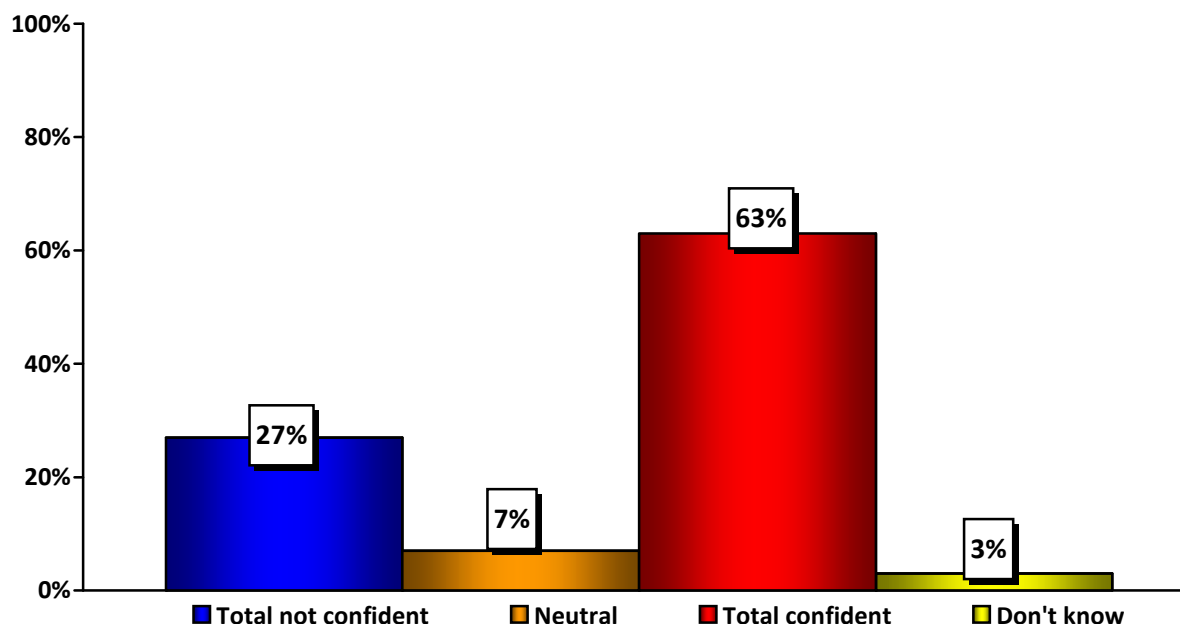
Q6. "Would you consider voting online in the 2018 election?"



There are 67% of residents that would consider voting online in the next Municipal Election of 2018, while 31% would not and 2% remain undecided. Potential online voters include all of those that voted this way in 2014 (100%), 52% of those that cast a paper ballot and even 67% of those that did not vote in the last Election. Younger residents 18 to 24 (87%) and 25 to 34 (78%) are the most inclined to consider online voting, while those 65+ (43%) and the lowest earners of under \$35,000 (62%) are less motivated.

The following online security question was then asked. The following graph combines the total confident responses (4 & 5) as well as the total not confident or unconfident ones (1 & 2).

Q7. "How confident are you in the security surrounding the Internet voting process? Please use the scale of 1-Not at all confident to 5-Very confident."



A 63% majority of residents surveyed are confident (15%) or very confident (48%) of the security around online voting compared to 27% that are not confident (11%) or not at all confident (16%), while 7% had a neutral or neither confident nor unconfident opinion and 3% were unsure. Confidence (4 & 5) was highest among 18 to 24 (81%) and 25 to 34 (74%) year old's and those that voted using online balloting in 2014 (100%). Those most unconfident (1 & 2) were older 65+ (47%), lower income earning (37%) and who voted by paper ballot on Election Day (42%).

Respondents that stated in Q7 that they were not confident (1 & 2) as well as neutral (3) neither confident nor unconfident (N=272) about internet voting security were then asked **if they would consider online voting in future Elections after 2018 if security were to improve (Q8)**. When presented with this scenario 25% said that they would consider this type of voting, 72% would not and 3% remained unsure. Those most inclined to now consider it were 18 to 24 (41%), 25 to 34 (39%) and 35 to 44 (38%), compared to a lower number of those 45-54 (26%), 55 to 64 (18%) and especially 65+ (9%).

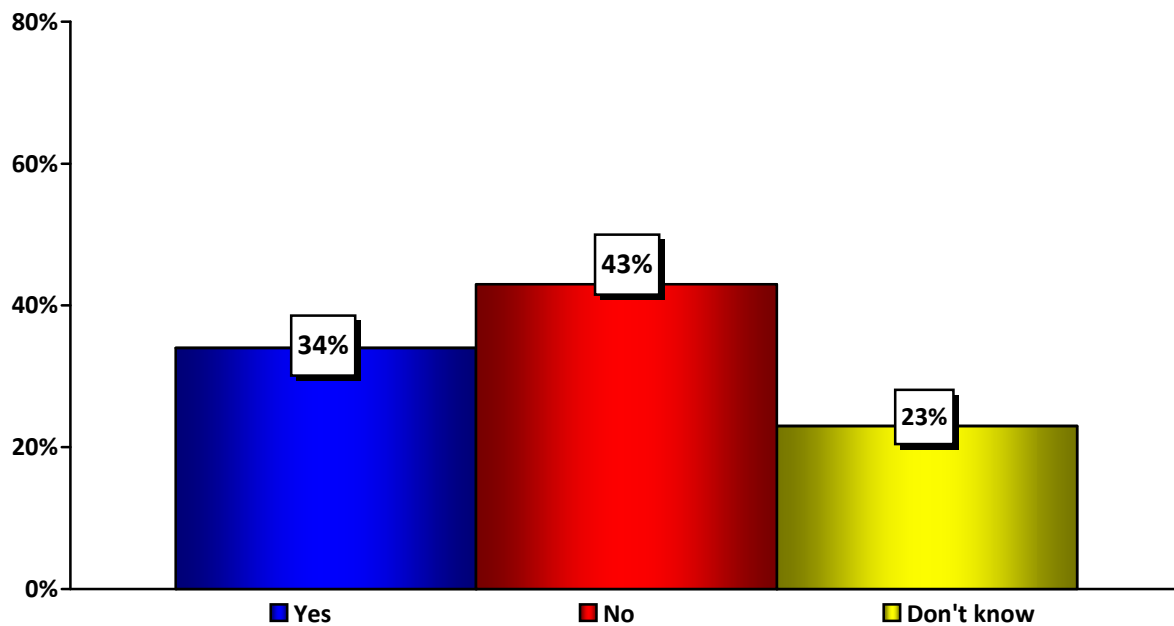
Ranked Balloting

The following pre-amble was read to all respondents that described the current first past the post voting model and the proposed ranked ballot system. They were then asked a series of question starting with their perception of the fairness of the ranked ballot method.

“Currently, the City of Guelph uses a first past the post electoral method to determine City Council members. In this system, the voter votes for one person for Mayor and two people for ward Councillor. The candidate or candidates with the highest number of vote is elected.”

“ A ranked ballot election uses a voting system in which voters are able to rank candidates by order of preference (i.e. first choice candidate, second choice candidate, third choice candidate). Votes are distributed to candidates based on these rankings and the counting of the votes is carried out in rounds where at least one candidate will be elected or eliminated in each round. If your ranked candidate is eliminated, your vote is then redistributed to your next ranked candidate by a prescribed formula. The City is not considering ranked balloting for the 2018 election. However, your responses to the following questions will be used to inform future recommendations around this option.”

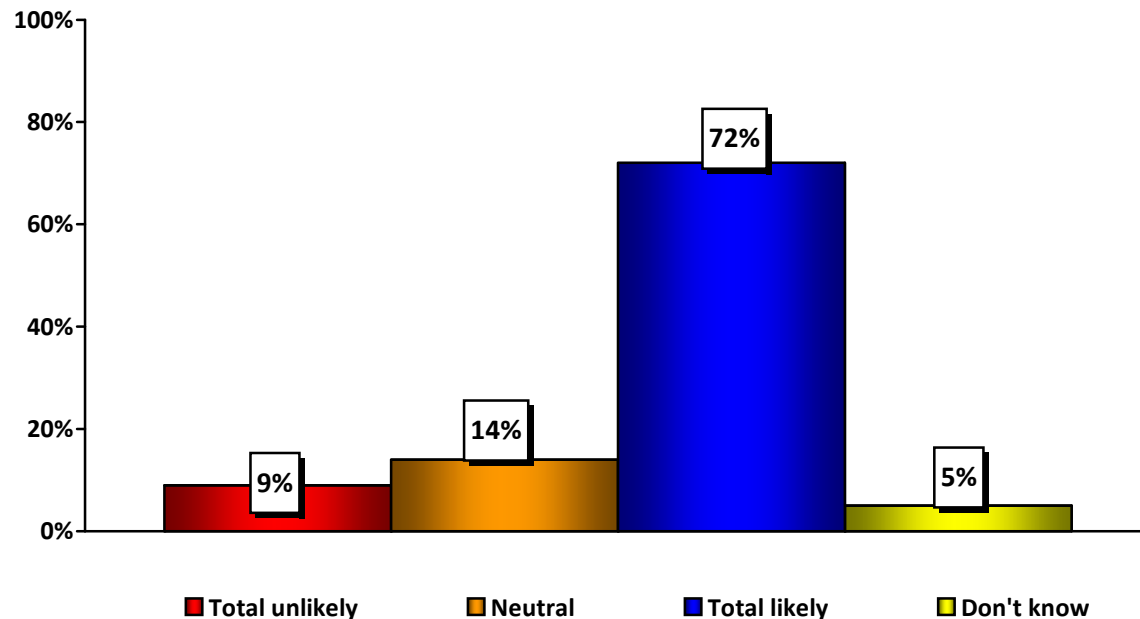
Q9. “From your knowledge, do you think a ranked ballot system is a fairer way to determine who sits on Guelph's City Council?”



Slightly more than a third or 34% stated that a ranked ballot is a more equitable voting system, while 43% do not, but almost a quarter or 23% said that they do not know enough about this method to answer. Those 18-24 were most likely to say it is fairer (47%), compared to older residents 55 to 64 (22%) and 65+ (19%). A higher number of those that did not vote in 2014 (46%) also said it is more fair in relation to those that did vote (26%).

Respondents were then questioned about the likelihood of them voting in future Elections if a ranked balloting system were to be used.

Q10. "If the City were to use ranked balloting for a future election, how likely would you be to vote?"

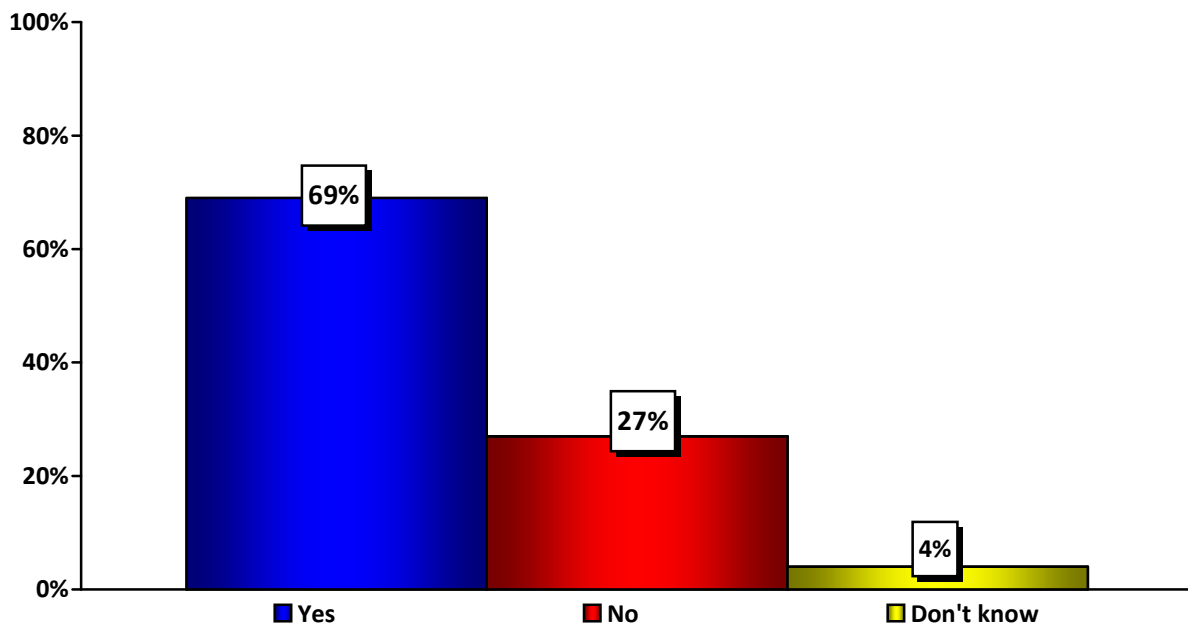


A combined total of 72% would be very likely (42%) or likely (30%) to vote if a ranked ballot was used, while 9% would be unlikely (3%) or very unlikely (6%) and 5% did not know. Those that voted in 2014 (76%) would be most likely to vote in this new system compared to those that did not (67%)

In a final question, all residents were asked about voting under a ranked ballot system and their likelihood of using digital technology such as the internet or a touch screen to cast their vote.

“If ranked balloting was to be used in a future election, the use of technology such as Internet voting and/or in-person touch screens (no paper) may be recommended to aid in the calculation of determining final results.”

Q11. “Would you vote in a ranked ballot election, if your only options were to use Internet voting and/or in-person touch screens?”



Almost seven in ten or 69% said that they would vote using this new system, 27% would not and 4% were unsure. Vote intent under this scenario is largely determined as a function of age with younger residents 18 to 24 (83%) and 25 to 34 (78%), followed by those 35 to 44 (74%) and 45 to 54 (70%) being most expected to vote this way in relation to a lesser number of 55 to 64 year old's (65%) and especially those 65+ (45%). More of those that voted online in 2014 (86%) compared to those that voted by paper ballot (60%) would be open to this new approach.

Results by Question

Q1. Did you vote in the 2014 Guelph

Municipal Election?

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	459	57.4
No	341	42.6
Total	800	100.0

IF YES ASK Q2 / IF NO SKIP TO Q5

**Q2. During that election, did you vote during the
advanced voting period (October 7-24) or on**

Election Day (October 27)?

	Frequency	Percent
Advanced	177	38.6
Election day	282	61.4
Total	459	100.0

Q3. What method did you use to vote in the 2014

municipal election?

	Frequency	Percent
Online	146	31.8
In person	313	68.2
Total	459	100.0

Q4. Why did you choose to vote this way?

	Frequency	Percent
Convenience	130	28.3
Comfort level (Always have / habit / traditional)	117	25.5
Easier / simpler	88	19.2
Don't know	57	12.4
Level of security (Don't like / trust online)	43	9.4
Polling station is close by	12	2.6
Wasn't aware of the online option	7	1.5
I don't have Internet	5	1.1
Total	459	100.0

Q5. If the City offers different ways to vote, how likely are you to use the following methods?

Q5a. In-person paper ballots

	Frequency	Percent
1-Not at all likely	93	11.6
2-Unlikely	46	5.8
3-Neither likely nor unlikely	29	3.6
4-Likely	149	18.6
5-Very likely	483	60.4
Total	800	100.0

Q5b. In-person touch screens. Like paper ballots you would go a physical voting location but rather than be given a paper ballot to mark, you would use a touch screen to make your selection. Your ballot would be captured electronically and counted.

	Frequency	Percent
1-Not at all likely	133	16.6
2-Unlikely	57	7.1
3-Neither likely nor unlikely	29	3.6
4-Likely	191	23.9
5-Very likely	355	44.4
Don't know	35	4.4
Total	800	100.0

Q5c. Internet

	Frequency	Percent
1-Not at all likely	174	21.8
2-Unlikely	70	8.8
3-Neither likely nor unlikely	42	5.3
4-Likely	142	17.8
5-Very likely	362	45.3
Don't know	10	1.3
Total	800	100.0

Q6. Would you consider voting online in the 2018 election?

	Frequency	Valid Percent
Yes	537	67.1
No	248	31.0
Don't know	15	1.9
Total	800	100.0

Q7. How confident are you in the security surrounding the Internet voting process? Please use the scale of 1-not at all confident to 5-very confident.

	Frequency	Percent
1-Not at all confident	128	16.0
2-Not confident	91	11.4
3-Neither confident nor not confident	53	6.6
4-Confident	120	15.0
5-Very confident	383	47.9
Don't know	25	3.1
Total	800	100.0

IF RESPONDED 1 – 3 ASK Q8 / OTHERS SKIP TO Q9

Q8. If security around Internet voting was to improve, would you consider voting online in future elections, meaning beyond 2018?

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	68	25.0
No	195	71.7
Don't know	9	3.3
Total	272	100.0

“Currently, the City of Guelph uses a first past the post electoral method to determine City Council members. In this system, the voter votes for one person for Mayor and two people for ward Councillor. The candidate or candidates with the highest number of vote is elected. A ranked ballot election uses a voting system in which voters are able to rank candidates by order of preference (i.e. first choice candidate, second choice candidate, third choice candidate). Votes are distributed to candidates based on these rankings and the counting of the votes is carried out in rounds where at least one candidate will be elected or eliminated in each round. If your ranked candidate is eliminated, your vote is then redistributed to your next ranked candidate by a prescribed formula. The City is not considering ranked balloting for the 2018 election. However, your responses to the following questions will be used to inform future recommendations around this option.”

Q9. From your knowledge, do you think a ranked ballot system is a fairer way to determine who sits on Guelph's City Council?

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	272	34.0
No	344	43.0
I don't know enough about this method to answer at this time	184	23.0
Total	800	100.0

Q10. If the City were to use ranked balloting for a future election, how likely would you be to vote?

	Frequency	Percent
1-Not at all likely	44	5.5
2-Unlikely	28	3.5
3-Neither likely nor unlikely	113	14.1
4-Likely	241	30.1
5-Very likely	332	41.5
Don't know	42	5.3
Total	800	100.0

Q11. If ranked balloting was to be used in a future election, the use of technology such as Internet voting and/or in-person touch screens (no paper) may be recommended to aid in the calculation of determining final results. Would you vote in a ranked ballot Election, if your only options were to use Internet voting and / or in-person touch screens?

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	556	69.5
No	215	26.9
Don't know	29	3.6
Total	800	100.0

We are nearing the end of our survey and we would just like to remind you that all personal information will remain confidential and will be used for statistical purposes only.

**D1. Which of the following age groups may I place
you in?**

	Frequency	Percent
18-24	128	16.0
25-34	142	17.8
35-44	139	17.4
45-54	150	18.8
55-64	112	14.0
65 and over	129	16.1
Total	800	100.0

D2. What is your combined family income?

	Frequency	Percent
Under \$35,000	93	11.6
Under \$50,000	112	14.0
Under \$75,000	155	19.4
Under \$100,000	130	16.3
Over \$100,000	157	19.6
Don't know / I rather not say	153	19.1
Total	800	100.0

D3. Do not ask but record gender

	Frequency	Percent
Male	387	48.4
Female	413	51.6
Total	800	100.0



2018 Municipal Election Voter Satisfaction Survey Report



December 2018

Table of Contents

Methodology & Logistics	2
Voting in October	3
Non-Voters	4
Information	6
Voting Methods	8
Advanced Voting – Days	10
Advanced Voting – Locations	11
Election Day Voting – Locations	12
Voter Satisfaction	14
Future Elections	16
Ranked Choice Voting	17
Summary	19

Methodology & Logistics

Background & Overview:

The following represents the findings from a December 2018 public opinion telephone survey of City of Guelph residents (18 years of age or older) conducted by Oraclepoll Research Limited for The City of Guelph. The purpose of the research was to gather opinions from residents on issues related to the 2018 Municipal Election. In total, N=600 respondents were surveyed.

Study Sample:

A total of N=600 interviews were completed, with N=100 surveys conducted in each of the six (6) Wards. Gender and age samples were also monitored to ensure they reflected the demographic characteristics of the community.

Survey Method:

All surveys were conducted by telephone using live operators at the Oraclepoll call center facility. A total of 20% of all interviews were monitored and the management of Oraclepoll Research Limited supervised 100%.

The survey was conducted using computer-assisted techniques of telephone interviewing (CATI) and random number selection (RDD). A dual sample frame random database was used that was inclusive of landline and cellular telephone numbers.

Logistics:

Surveys were conducted by telephone at the Oraclepoll call center using person to person live operators from the days of December 10th and December 16th, 2018.

Initial calls were made between the hours of 6:00 p.m. and 9:00 p.m. Subsequent call-backs of no-answers and busy numbers were made on a (staggered) daily rotating basis up to 5 times (from 10:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m.) until contact was made. In addition, telephone interview appointments were attempted with those respondents unable to complete the survey at the time of contact. If no contact was made at a number after the fifth attempt, the number was discarded and a new one supplanted it.

Confidence:

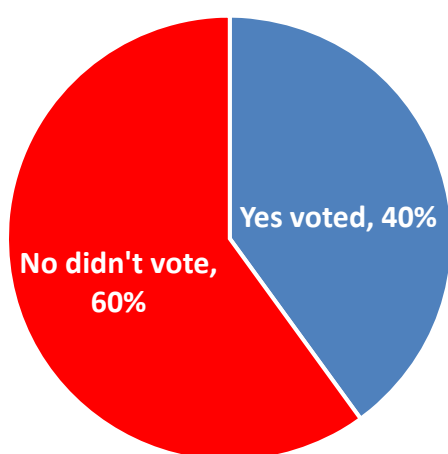
The margin of error for the total N=600 sample is $\pm 4.0\%$ at 95% (19/20) confidence. Error rates for sub-groups of the population vary and are higher. (e.g. $\pm 10\%$ for each N=100 Ward)

Voting in October

All respondents were screened to ensure that they were residents of the City of Guelph that were 18 years of age or older and eligible to vote in the 2018 Municipal Election.

An introductory question was asked to respondents asking them if they voted in the 2018 Municipal Election on October 22nd. Among the sample, 40% (37% actual turnout & within $\pm 4.0\%$ error rate) said they voted in the Election and 60% claimed they did not.

Q1. "Did you vote in the recent municipal and school board Election this past October?"



Those most likely to have cast a ballot were in age cohorts over age 50 including 69% of respondents 80 or older, 68% of 70-79-year old's, followed by 57% of residents aged 60-69 and 55% of citizen 50-59. This compares to a lower 34% of 40-49-year old's that said they voted and only 25% of those in the 30-39 cohort and only slightly more than two in ten (21%) of respondents 18-29. The gender breakdown was 42% female and 38% male.

Non-Voters

The 60% or N=358 of non-voter respondents were then asked in an open-ended or unaided question about why they did not vote in the recent Election.

“What were the reasons why you did not vote?”



Most named by **23% was a dislike of the candidates**, or that no one in the field motivated them to cast a ballot. This issue was most named by those non-voters 40-49 (33%), 50-59 (37%) and 60-69 (37%) years of age.



Apathy or having no interest in voting in Municipal Elections was next most named by 22%. Younger respondents under age 40 tended to cite a lack of interest – especially those 18-29 (40%) and then 30-39 (31%).



A lack of time was the reason provided by 15%. 18-29- year old's (26%) most mentioned time, followed by residents 40-49 (17%) and then 30-39 (13%). More males (21%) compared to females (9%) named time.



Thirteen **(13%) percent answered do not know** or had no reason.



Seven percent **(7%) did not vote because they did not get a voter registration card** in the mail or misplaced it. This was named by a higher number of 50-59 (16%) and 40-49-year old's (11%).



Long line-ups or perceived **wait times at voting stations was named by 6%**, with older residents most recalling it (13% – 60 to 69, 9% – 80 or older & 8% – 70 to 79) as well as those in Ward 4 (20%).



Not having a polling station close or nearby was also named by 6%, including 18% of seniors 80+.



Not having enough information about the Election or the candidates was mentioned by 3%.



There were **2% that cited illness, age or mobility issues.** Results were elevated among those 70-79 (31%) and 80+ (36%).

NOTHING
CHANGES











The belief that **nothing changes, or the candidates are all the same** was said by **2%.**



There were **1% that cited a lack of voting options such as the ability to cast a ballot online.**

Information

In an open or unprompted question allowing for multiple responses, all N=600 respondents were asked to name how they received information from the City about the municipal Election. Below are the results from the N=884 combined mentions provided.

Q3. "How did you get information about the municipal Election from the City?"		
	 Voter notification card	24%
	 The City's election website	22%
	 Don't know / did not / didn't pay attention	15%
	 Social media	11%
	 Radio advertisements	8%
	 Bus advertisements	7%
	 Word of mouth	6%
	 Newspaper / Mercury Tribune	5%
	 Screens or posters	3%

The most named source were voter information cards at 24%, which was primarily recalled by those 50-59 (54%), 60-69 (65%) and 70-79 (73%). The City website closely followed at 22% (50 to 59-year old's – 54%, 40 to 49 – 46% & 30 to 39 – 35%) and social media at 11% – mostly by those aged 18-29 (37%) and 30-39 (22%).










Lesser named were radio advertisements at 8% (28% of those 80+), bus ads at 7%, word of mouth by 6%, newspapers by 5% (15% of 70-79 & 36% of residents 80+) and screens and posters by 3%.

There were 15% that answered do not know, that they did not get information or were not paying attention. Thirty-five percent (35%) of those that did not vote in the Election provided this response in relation to only 3% that cast a ballot. In addition, respondents under age 40 most answered don't know, including 43% of those in the 18-29 and 38% in the 30-39 cohort.

In the next unaided or open-ended follow-up question, all N=600 respondents were asked if there were other methods of communication, they felt the City should consider for the 2022 Election. One answer was accepted from each respondent.

Q4. "Are there other ways of communicating with you that the City should consider for the next Election?"



 Don't know	34%
 E-mails	14%
 Social media	13%
 No / none / all worked well	10%
 Newspapers	9%
 Inserts in municipal / utility bills	8%
 Online websites	6%
 Pamphlets / brochures in mail	5%
 More advertising in general (unspecified)	1%

There were 34% of respondents that answered do not know and another 10% that felt no additional methods of communication were needed. Among those with an opinion, 14% stated emails, 13% social media, 9% newspapers and 8% inserts in utility or municipal bills. Online websites were recalled by 6%, mailings by 5%, while 1% said more advertising in general. In total, one-third cited electronic vehicles (social media, emails & websites).

Emails were most named by 18-29 (23%), 30-39 (20%) and 40-49 (19%) year old's and social media by those 18-29 (37%) and 30-39 (21%). Newspapers were favored by older residents 80+ (40%), 70-79 (20%) and 60-69 (17%) as were inserts (11% – 60 to 69 & 10% – 70 to 79). Websites had the highest response from respondents 40 to 49 years of age at 13%.

Voting Methods

Next, respondents were asked about their likelihood to vote using four options that were read to them. This question was not intended to be a definitive indication of one's intent to vote, but rather of their preference for the options in future Elections.

"In 2018, voters could cast ballots in person at voting locations. How likely would you be to vote using each of the following voting methods if they were offered in future Elections? For each method please respond using a scale of not at all likely, not likely, likely or very likely."




Q5. "In person at voting locations with a paper ballot"

75% Total Likely

14% Total Unlikely

Very Likely	Likely	Not Likely	Not at all Likely	Unsure
49%	26%	11%	3%	11%

 Three-quarters of residents said they would be likely or very likely to vote using the in-person paper ballot method. Almost all of those that voted in the recent October Election or 97% said they would be likely or very likely, compared to 60% of non-voters – 22% of non-voters answered unlikely and 17% do not know. Younger respondents were more inclined to provide an unlikely response (23% – 18 to 29 & 22% – 30 to 39), while 18 to 29-year old's had the highest mention of do not know or unsure (24%).




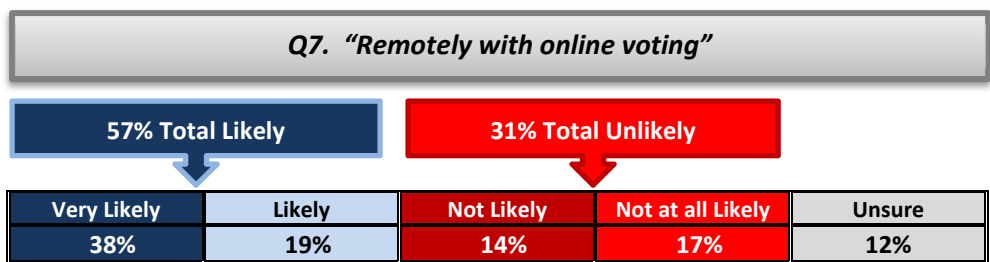
Q6. "In person at voting locations with a digital ballot on a tablet or laptop"


59% Total Likely

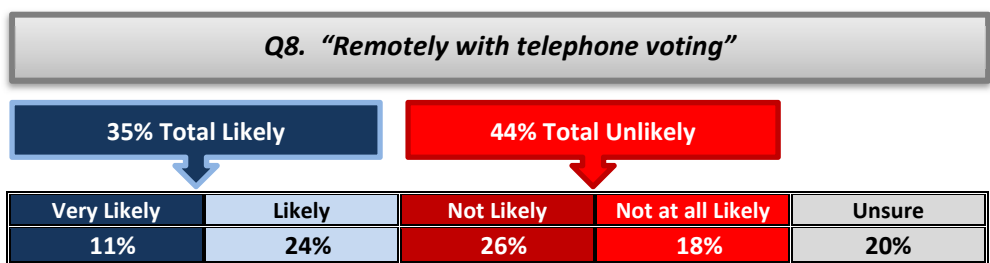
27% Total Unlikely


Very Likely	Likely	Not Likely	Not at all Likely	Unsure
31%	28%	16%	11%	14%

 Almost six in ten or 59% claimed they would be likely to vote in-person using a digital ballot (72% of October voters & 50% of non-voters). Those more likely to say they would vote this way were in the 18-29 (65%), 30-39 (72%), 40-49 (71%) and 50-59 (60%) cohorts, while unlikely responses were strongest among 60-69 (54%), 70-79 (60%) and 80+ (61%) year old's. More males (69%) in relation to females (48%) were likely.



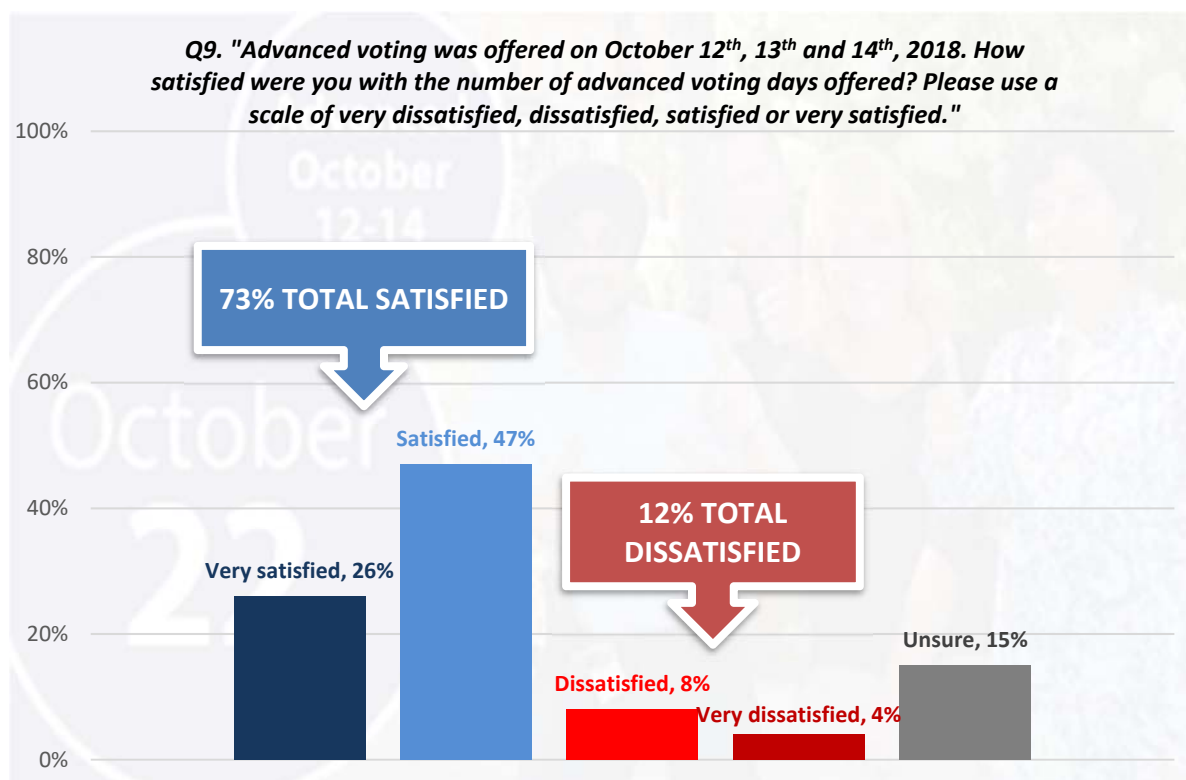
 Fifty-seven percent of respondents would be likely to vote online with a similar number of those that cast a ballot in October (59%) and those that did not (56%) preferring this option. Online appeals strongly to younger residents 18-29 (86%) and 30-39 (79%), followed by 40-49 (69%). It drops off with 50-59-year old's at 49%, while has a low resonance with those over age 60 (23% – 60 to 69, 22% – 70 to 79 & 3% – 80 or older. Remote digital balloting has a stronger appeal among males (67%) compared to females (48%).



 Remote telephone voting was the option least favored with only 35% likely to use it and 44% unlikely – two in ten being unsure. Results were stronger among resident aged 30-39 (58%), 19-29 (48%) and 40-49 (45%).

Advanced Voting – Days

All N=600 respondents were told of the advanced voting period and were then asked to rate their satisfaction with the number of advanced voting days provided.



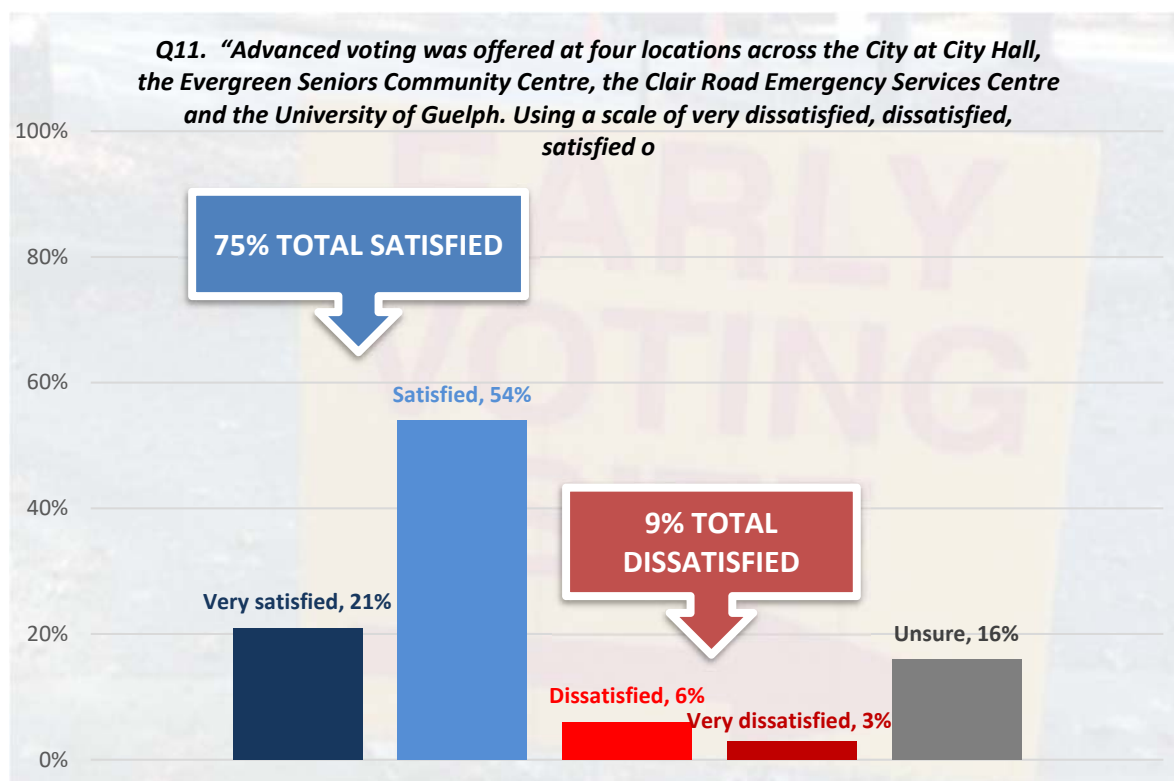
Seventy-three percent were satisfied (47%) or very satisfied (26%) with the number of advanced voting days offered, compared to only 12% dissatisfied (8%) or very dissatisfied (4%), while 15% were unsure or had no opinion.

Eighty-nine percent of those that cast a ballot in October were satisfied, compared to 62% that did not – while a high 25% of non-voters answered do not know in relation to only 2% of voters. Those 18-29 (27%) and 30-39 (28%) were also most likely to respond do not know.

In a follow-up question **(Q10) respondents were asked how many voting days they would recommend for future Elections.** Most or 73% (N=437) said they are good now, while 18% (N=112) did not know or were unsure. Among those with an opinion 5% (n=27) answered one week, 3% (N=16) one or two day / a couple more and 1% (N=8) 1-2 weeks longer.

Advanced Voting – Locations

Next, all N=600 respondents were advised of the advanced voting locations across the City, after which they were asked to rate their satisfaction with the locations available.

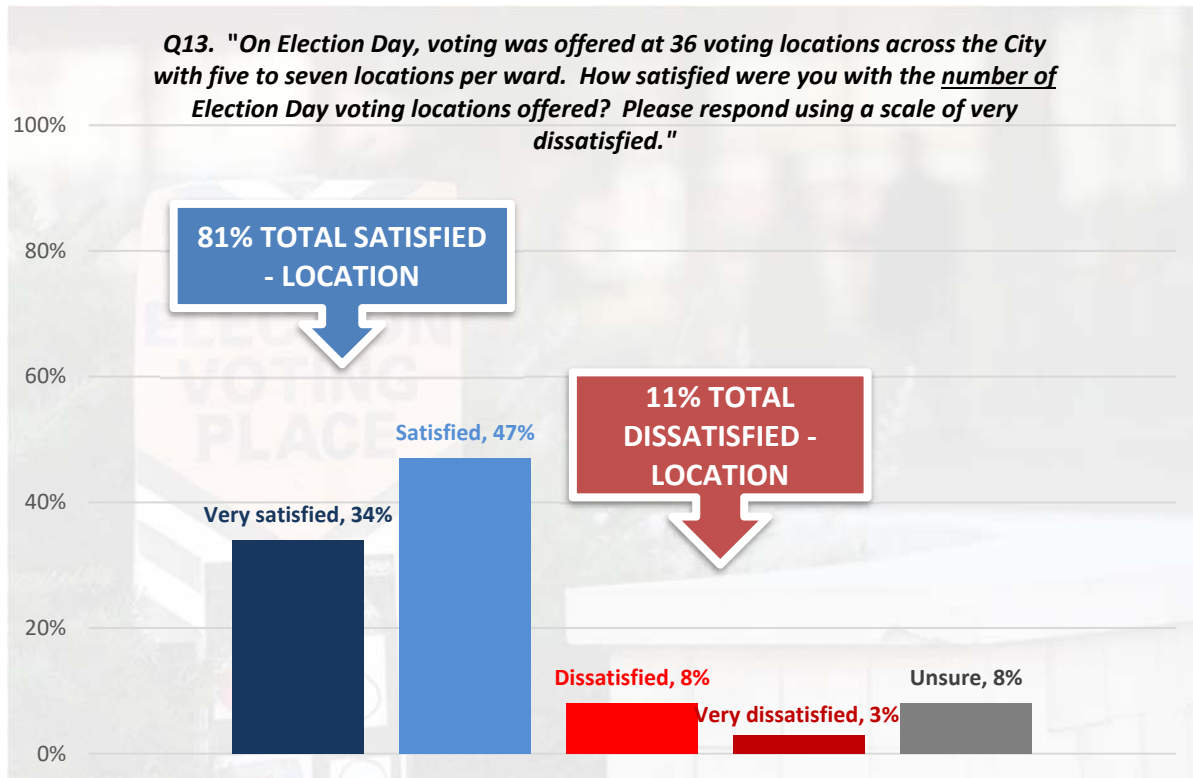


Three-quarters or 75% answered they were satisfied (54%) or very satisfied (21%) with the number of advanced voting locations. A low 9% expressed dissatisfaction (6% – dissatisfied & 3% – very dissatisfied) and 16% were unsure or had no opinion. October voters were more satisfied (89%) than non-voters (65%), while higher dissatisfaction scores were provided by older residents 60-69 (14%), 70-79 (18%) and 80+ (14%).

In a follow-up question **(Q12) respondents were asked if they felt there were additional advanced voting locations they would recommend**. A majority or 80% said there are enough (65%, N=391) or answered do not know (25%, N=152). The location most mentioned by those with an opinion was the West-end Community / Rec Centre by 4% (N=21), while 3% (N=15) just said more throughout the City, 1% (N=7) said to have it online, 1% (N=6) more in the downtown and 1% (N=5) any east or west end locations. There were single mentions for the Victoria Road Rec Centre, more in Ward Six and a more accessible location than the University.

Election Day Voting – Locations

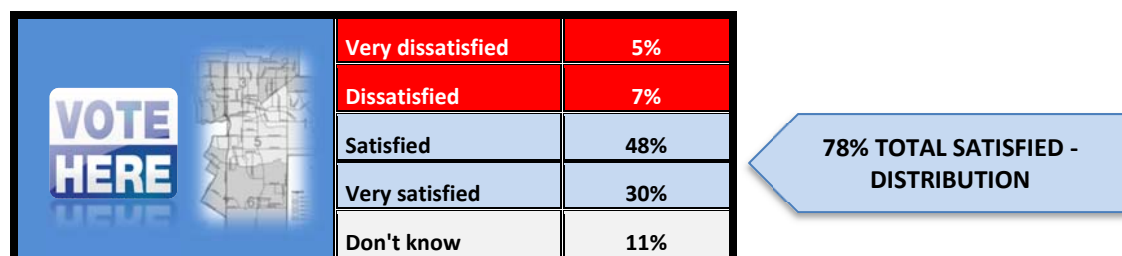
The questioning then moved on to the issue of Election Day voting locations. All N=600 were first asked the following about their satisfaction with the number of voting locations.



More than eight in ten or 81% of Guelph residents claimed to be satisfied (47%) or very satisfied (34%) with the 36 voting locations provided across the City. Only 11% expressed dissatisfaction and 8% answered do not know. Dissatisfaction while low, was higher among those 30-39 (17%), non-voters in the October Election (17%) and residents of Ward 4 (18%).

Respondents then rated their satisfaction with the distribution of the voting stations.

Q14. "Using the same scale of very dissatisfied, dissatisfied, satisfied or very satisfied, how satisfied were you with the location or distribution of Election Day polling stations?"



A majority of 78% claimed they were satisfied (30%) or very satisfied (48%) with the location of Election Day polling locations, 12% were dissatisfied and 11% were unsure or had no opinion.

Respondents were then asked if they felt there were additional voting locations in the City, they would recommend in Q15. There were 60% (N=358) that claimed there are enough and 31% (N=184) that answered don't know. Five-percent (N=27) said have more locations in general, 2% (N=2) at more schools, 1% (N=8) more west-end locations, 1% (N=5) more downtown and 1% (N=5) online voting. Other single mentions included Victoria & Speedvale, the Ecole Arbour Vista Public School and Paisley Road.

All respondents were next questioned about the ability to vote at multiple locations and its perceived ease of them casting a ballot.

Q16. "During advanced voting, you can vote at any advanced polling location across the City. On Election Day, voters can cast a ballot at any location in their Ward. Does offering the ability to vote anywhere make it easier for you to vote in person?"

	Yes- It does make it easier to have a choice of locations	62%
	No- I would be just as likely to vote at a designated location	29%
	Don't know	9%


Sixty-two percent felt it makes it easier having a choice of locations, with Ward 4 residents most holding this opinion (72%) and Ward 1 least so (47%). Those who did not vote in October were more likely to say yes (70%) than those that voted (48%). As well. Older residents most answered yes than those younger (79% – 80+, 88% – 70 to 79, 80% – 60 to 69, 70% – 50 to 59, 55% – 40 to 49, 53% – 30 to 39 & 43% – 18 to 29).

Voter Satisfaction

The 40% of voters (identified in Q1) or N=242 were asked a series of questions about their voting experience. They were first asked to rate their satisfaction with the location where they voted.

Q17. "How would you rate your satisfaction with The voting location where you cast a ballot?"	Very dissatisfied	2%
	Dissatisfied	4%
	Satisfied	54%
	Very satisfied	40%

94% TOTAL SATISFIED - LOCATION


 A very strong 94% of voters rated the location as good (54%) or very good (40%) where they cast a ballot. Most did not have improvement comments when asked in Q18 (56% – don't know & 35% – no improvements needed), but below are the ones provided:

- *Line-ups were long, reduce wait times* N=7
- *Free parking / need more parking* N=6
- *Need better accessibility / easier to access* N=4
- *More / more knowledgeable staff* N=4
- *Too crowded* N=2

The N=242 or 40% of voters were asked to rate their satisfaction with staff at the voting location.

Q19. "How satisfied were you with the knowledge and capability of voting location staff?"	Very dissatisfied	1%
	Dissatisfied	5%
	Satisfied	51%
	Very satisfied	37%
	Don't know	5%

88% TOTAL SATISFIED - STAFF


 Ratings for staff knowledge and capability was high as evidenced by the 88% that accorded a satisfied (51%) or very satisfied (37%) mark. When asked in Q20 why they provided their rating 48% said there were no issues, staff was good, knowledgeable or professional, while 46% had no comments to add or did not know. Listed below were the improvement comments provided.

- *Time / took too long* N=5
- *Need more staff* N=4
- *Did not help / not helpful* N=4
- *No reason / none / no comment* N=1
- *Disorganized* N=1

In a final question asked to the N=242 or 40% of those that cast a ballot in October, they rated their overall voting experience.

Q21. "How satisfied were you with your voting experience overall?"	Very dissatisfied	2%
	Dissatisfied	4%
	Satisfied	49%
	Very satisfied	41%
	Don't know	4%

90% TOTAL SATISFIED – OVERALL VOTING

















 Nine in ten voters provided a satisfied (49%) or very satisfied (41%) score for their overall experience – this compared to only 6% dissatisfied, while 4% were unsure. When asked for comments in Q22, 43% answered that they had no issues or problems, while 43% had no further mentions to provided or didn't know. Nine percent said their experience was fast and efficient, while lesser named citations are listed as follows:

- *Slow / long waits* N=3
- *Room for improvement* N=3
- *Good location* N=2
- *Disorganized* N=2
- *Parking only issue* N=1
- *Staff not helpful* N=1
- *No information from City provided* N=1

Future Elections

All N=600 respondents were asked in an open-ended or unaided question to comment on what they felt the City should consider for future Elections.

Q23. "Is there anything else you would like the City of Guelph to consider for future elections?"

 Don't know	48%
 Offer online voting option	8%
 Have online voting and paper ballots	7%
 Attract young people to vote	7%
 No changes needed	5%
 Better communication / more awareness / advertising	5%
 Less line-ups / reduce wait times	4%
 Improve accessibility (seniors, disabilities etc.)	3%
 Do not offer online / dislike online option	3%
 Offer transportation to the polls	2%
 Candidates need to do better engaging people	2%
 Better quality of candidates	2%
 Better municipal government engagement with voters	2%
 Needs to be an important issue to get people out and vote	1%
 Have everyone on the voters list / get their voters card	1%
 More options / alternatives to vote (unspecified)	1%

When asked to provide feedback about future Elections more than half either had no comment / didn't know (48%) or said no changes are needed (5%). Those that provided feedback mentions tended to cite the need for alternative voting options – such as the 16% that said online voting, a hybrid of online with paper and more options in general. Only 3% specifically said they do not want to see a digital voting option.

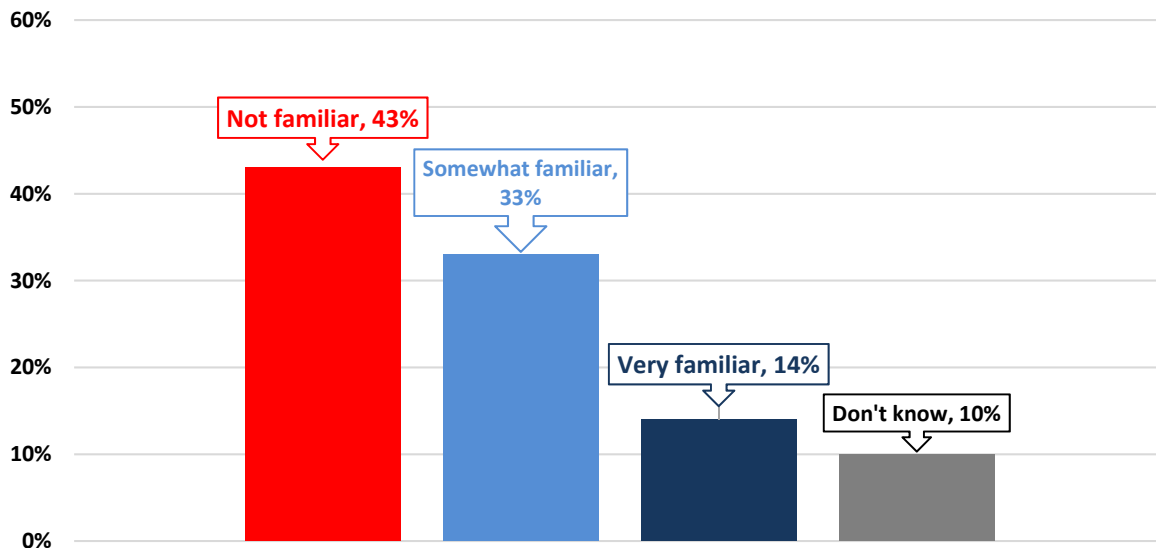
Other comments varied but included the need to have more public engagement through communications, this especially to attract younger voters to the polls. There were also citizens that would like improved accessibility by reducing wait times and helping people get to voting stations.

Ranked Choice Voting

All N=600 respondents were first read the following short description about the current municipal electoral method (first past the post) and then an outline of ranked choice system. Two questions were then asked, with the first related to awareness of ranked balloting.

“The City of Guelph uses a first-past-the-post electoral system. This means voters indicate on a ballot the candidate of their choice, and the candidate who receives the most votes wins. City Council will have an opportunity to vote on whether to move to a ranked choice electoral system for the 2022 election. In a ranked choice system, voters have the option to select up to three candidates and can rank them by preference (first choice, second choice, third choice). The candidate who receives 50% plus one vote will be elected.”

Q24. “How familiar/aware are you with ranked choice voting? Would you say you are not familiar, somewhat familiar or very familiar?”



There is a split in awareness as 43% are unfamiliar with ranked choice balloting and 47% have some degree of familiarity – with only 14% being very familiar and 33% somewhat familiar. Ten percent responded do not know.

Those who voted in October were more aware (58%) than non-voters (40%) as were more males (51%) in relation to females (43%). Younger respondents under age 60 tended to be more aware with a 50% average among those cohorts and with 30-39-year old's having the highest response of very familiar (27%).

In the final survey question, all N=600 respondents were asked if they support or oppose having ranked choice voting in the next 2022 municipal Election in Guelph.

Q25. "Would you support or oppose having the City implementing ranked choice voting in the next 2022 Election?"

**38%
OPPOSE**

**37%
SUPPORT**

**25%
UNSURE**

 **1 Ranked
2 Choice
3 Voting**

The electorate is divided on the issue with 38% being opposed and 37% backing implementing the new model. A significant one-quarter are undecided. Support is highest among younger voters 18-29 (50%), 30-39 (45%) and 40-49 (36%). Conversely, opposition is in majority territory among those over age 50 (60% – 50 to 59, 59% – 60 to 69, 55% – 70 to 79 & 56% – 80 or older. A high 66% of those not familiar with this system were opposed to its implementation.

Summary

Results reveal that it is older voters over age 50 that tended to vote in the October Election and younger residents 18 to 29 were most inclined not cast a ballot. The main reasons for sitting the Election out related to the candidates not being inspiring or no issue motivating them, general apathy or never voting locally (especially those under age 30) and a lack of time.

Residents that said they received Election information from the City cited voter information cards, the City website and social media – with younger residents most naming digital sources. Those that did not get information or did not know (15%) tended to be non-voters or those that did not cast a ballot in October, as well as citizens under age 40. The cohorts not reached in the lead up to the 2018 Election mostly want to be reached by electronic mediums (e.g. emails & social media).

When asked about voting methods or options, in person paper balloting was favored by most or three-quarters, followed by nearly six in ten that named in-person digital voting and online voting. Digital voting and especially online voting were of interest to younger residents and those that did not vote in October – especially 18-29-year old's, followed by 30-39 and 40-49. Remote telephone voting scored lowest with just over one-third saying they would be likely to vote using that method.

There was strong satisfaction among about three-quarters for the number of days provided for advanced polls and their locations. Those who voted had much higher rates of satisfaction in relation to those that did not vote. Results for Election Day polling locations and their distribution were higher in the eight in ten satisfaction range – once again with numbers stronger among October voters.

More than six in ten said that by offering the ability to vote anywhere makes it easier for them to vote in person, with more non-voters holding this opinion (70%) than voters (47%).

Among the 40% of October voters surveyed, there was a very high level of satisfaction with their overall voting experience (90%), the poll locations (94%) and for staff being helpful and knowledgeable (88%). Feedback comments from those with opinions relayed the need for future Elections to have alternative voting options such as online, a hybrid of online and paper and more options in general.

On awareness of ranked choice balloting, there a split with 43% being unfamiliar and 47% have some degree of familiarity – however only 14% claimed to be very familiar with the process. With respect to having the City implement ranked choice voting in the next 2022 Election there was no clear public response with an almost equal number opposing (38%) and supporting (37%) the initiative. A significant one-quarter of residents were undecided or did not know if they would support or oppose it. There is a correlation between awareness and support as among residents unfamiliar with the voting system 66% oppose its implementation and 30% are unsure.

The background image shows a city street scene with a large, dark blue text overlay. The text reads "YOUR GUELPH YOUR VOTE" in a bold, sans-serif font. The word "VOTE" is significantly larger than the others. The background features a curved road, a large building with a glass facade, and a body of water reflecting the sky and buildings. The sky is blue with white clouds.

YOUR GUELPH YOUR VOTE

2018 MUNICIPAL ELECTION

Agenda

- Introducing the Election Team
- Election statistics
- Voters' list challenge
- Staffing challenge
- Voting locations challenge
- Looking forward

Introducing the Election Team



Election statistics

- 168 election team meetings
- 65 candidate nominations
- 2 third party advertisers registered
- 401 election workers hired and trained
- 6 polls adopted by City departments
- 89, 566 voter notification cards mailed
- 6 per cent turnout during advanced polls
- 30 per cent turnout on Election Day
- 36 per cent turnout overall
- 90 per cent satisfied with election experience

Voters' list challenge

An accurate voters' list is essential to the integrity and legitimacy of the election

- Challenges
 - High tenant and boarder population
 - Newer developments not enumerated
 - Institutions and long-term care facilities
- Emerging discussions with Elections Ontario
- City Clerk seeking to join AMCTO voters' list working group

Staffing challenge

Recruitment and training ensure quality customer service and good voter experience

- Challenges
 - Changing skill requirements
 - High turnover
 - 30 distinct ballot faces, up to 3 separate contests with up to 18 names on the ballot
- Can be addressed by
 - Broader pool of applicants
 - Extended internal and adopt-a-poll opportunities
 - Additional stand-by positions

Voting locations challenge

Locations must be accessible and convenient for voters and candidates

- Challenges
 - Finding suitable locations
 - Knowing where people will go to vote
 - Balancing costs and benefits
- Can be addressed by
 - Additional advanced locations across the City
 - Identifying new locations as they're built
 - Remote voting options

Looking forward

- Council Composition, Employment Status and Ward Boundary Review
- Voting system
- Voting methods



Questions?