



## ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT

Report Date: June 8, 2015  
Contact: Janice MacKenzie  
Contact No.: 604.871.6146  
RTS No.: 10848  
VanRIMS No.: 08-2000-20  
Meeting Date: July 21, 2015

TO: Vancouver City Council  
FROM: Chief Election Officer  
SUBJECT: 2014 Municipal Election Review

### ***RECOMMENDATION***

THAT Council receive this report for information.

### ***REPORT SUMMARY***

A General Local Election was held in the city of Vancouver on November 15, 2014. This report is a review of the 2014 Municipal Election.

### ***COUNCIL AUTHORITY/PREVIOUS DECISIONS***

There is no applicable Council Authority or previous decisions relevant to this report.

### ***CITY MANAGER'S/GENERAL MANAGER'S COMMENTS***

The City Manager recommends receipt of this report.

### ***REPORT***

#### ***Background/Context***

At the Planning, Transportation, and Environment Standing Committee on January 21, 2015, Council passed a motion regarding the planning and delivery of the 2014 municipal election. In that motion, staff were directed to report back on the 2014 municipal election - including

the role of Elections BC in municipal elections, the processes in place for the 2014 municipal election, and the public inquiries submitted to the City.

In response, staff have prepared the attached 2014 Municipal Election Review (see Appendix A).

### *CONCLUSION*

The attached report is a review of the 2014 Municipal Election held in Vancouver in November 2014.

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# 2014 Municipal Election Review

Chief Election Officer

July 14, 2015



**VANCOUVER**  
**VOTES**

**Introduction**

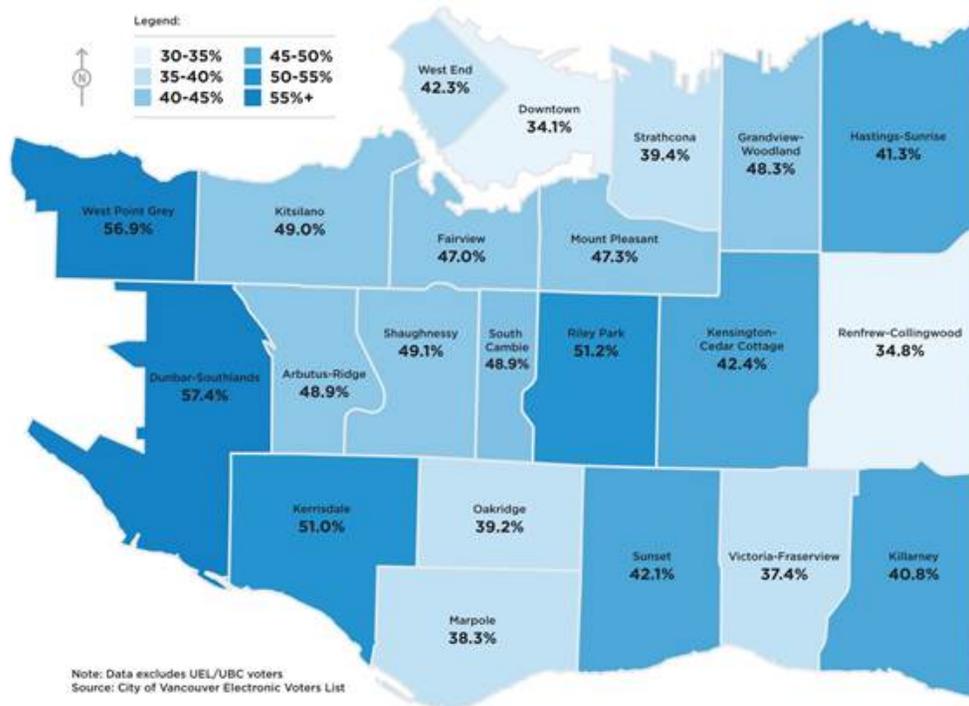
Local elections held within the City of Vancouver are governed by the Vancouver Charter, the City’s Election By-Law and, beginning in 2014, the *Local Elections Campaign Financing Act* (LECFA), which set out new financial reporting and other responsibilities for candidates and electoral organizations as well as a new role for Elections BC.

The Chief Election Officer is responsible for ensuring that all elections and by-elections are conducted in accordance with the Vancouver Charter and Election By-law. The Chief Election Officer has a statutory responsibility to impartially fulfill the duties of the position and protect the integrity of the election.

It is always a goal of the Chief Election Officer that eligible voters exercise their democratic right to vote. By most measures, it appears that the efforts undertaken by staff to encourage voters to actually get out and vote during the 2014 election were very successful. Overall voter turnout grew from 34.6% in 2011 to 43.4% in 2014. This was a 25.4% increase in turnout. While staff cannot say with certainty what specifically led to the significant increase in voter turnout, staff did implement several strategies and initiatives aimed at increasing voter engagement and voter turnout.

In terms of voter turnout by local area, turnout increased across Vancouver with Dunbar-Southlands achieving the highest voter turnout at 57.4%. The lowest voter turnout was the Downtown area with 34.1% voter turnout (see Figure 1). In 2011, the voter turnout in these two areas was 37.5% and 24.2%.

**Figure 1 - 2014 Voter Turnout by Local Area**



What follows is a detailing of the:

- legislative changes implemented by the Province immediately prior to the 2014 election;
- innovative strategies implemented in the 2014 election;
- successes of the 2014 municipal election; and
- feedback received from members of the public.

This is the first time staff have reported on a municipal election in such a comprehensive manner to Council and the public.

## Legislative Changes instituted by the Provincial Government

Local government elections in British Columbia are governed by the *Local Government Act* and the parallel provisions in the Vancouver Charter. Under the Vancouver Charter and *School Act*, these rules also apply to the Vancouver Park Board and School Board elections. This means that the rules for conducting municipal elections are dictated by the Province. These rules are extensive and cover areas such as:

- when elections are held, how they are conducted, and who can vote;
- the qualifications for holding office and how the nomination process is conducted;
- the endorsement of candidates by elector organizations, and appointment of candidate representatives;
- opportunities for voting and arrangements for voting;
- the conduct of voting proceedings, voting, and counting the vote;
- election offences; and,
- rules governing assent voting.

Vancouver City Council, like other local governments in BC, only have election-related powers in those areas where the Province has explicitly given them power. For example, under the Vancouver Charter, Council may, by by-law, use the Provincial list of voters as the City's list of registered voters. Under the legislation, the City must provide two advance voting opportunities - the date of one opportunity is dictated by the Province while the second voting opportunity can be set by the City by by-law. In 2014, the City provided eight advance voting opportunities - six more than required by legislation.

In May 2010, the Local Government Election Task Force, which was a partnership between the Province and the Union of BC Municipalities, put forward over 30 recommended changes to local elections legislation. In June 2014, the Province implemented new legislation (i.e. *Local Elections Campaign Financing Act (LECFA)*). This legislation represented Phase 1 of campaign finance reform in BC local elections. The changes were significant and focused was on improving accountability, transparency, compliance, and enforcement. As a result of LECFA, many sections of the Vancouver Charter and *Local Government Act* were amended and many other sections were repealed. The *Local Elections Campaign Financing Act* now governs in the place of those repealed sections. Under LECFA, Elections BC was assigned a new compliance and enforcement role.

In its new role, Elections BC administers local election campaign financing and advertising rules under the *Local Elections Campaign Financing Act*. Its responsibilities include:

- accepting, reviewing and publishing disclosure statements and supplementary reports;
- registering third party sponsors during elections;
- registering assent voting advertising sponsors outside of an election;
- undertaking investigations and audits;
- recommending prosecutions for offences under *LECFA*;
- ensuring specific information about candidates, elector organizations, third party sponsors and assent voting advertising sponsors is publicly available; and
- maintaining and publishing lists of disqualified candidates, elector organizations, third party sponsors and assent voting advertising sponsors

## 2014 Election Goals and Strategies

Planning for the 2014 municipal election began in April 2013 - approximately 20 months prior to general voting day. An election working group was established to ensure that all aspects of the 2014 municipal election were planned in detail. This team was led by the Chief Election Officer and consisted of staff from various City departments.

Through much of 2013, staff undertook the following actions:

- Closely reviewed the approach, products and strategies used in the 2011 election;
- attended conferences where election administrators from other levels of government and democracy scholars detailed some of the latest research and successes in election engagement and participation;
- investigated election-related technology and digital advances with a view to capitalize on the latest developments;
- met with other municipalities on several occasions to collect information, past practices and best practices;
- reviewed the Engaged City Task Force report to ensure task force recommendations were considered and/or incorporated into election planning; and,
- investigated state-of-the-art communications and social media practices as a means to enhance voter turnout and to ensure 2014 election strategies were innovative, contemporary, flexible and appealing to the city's diverse demographic.

This detailed and thorough piece of work informed the City's thinking and approach to increasing voter turnout. The approach involved:

- 1) Removing as many barriers as possible and creating an easy and convenient voting experience that would improve voter engagement and participation in democracy; and
- 2) Engaging youth and young people to develop a voting culture by providing opportunities for youth to experience democracy and see the importance of using their right to vote.

Staff embarked on a path that explored diverse options, challenged past practice and envisioned possibilities. As a result, many new and innovative strategies were developed and implemented to increase voter turnout and citizen engagement for the 2014 Election. The strategies included:

- a) *Making voting convenient and easy* for voters by introducing a “Vote Anywhere” model that allows voters to vote at the most convenient voting location;
- b) *Increasing voting opportunities* by providing more advance voting hours and locations and providing conveniently located voting places on election day;
- c) *Enhancing access* for persons with disabilities and seniors;
- d) *Engaging voters* by providing easy to access election information and online tools to assist in voting as well as implementing innovative communication and social media strategies; and
- e) *Strengthening the delivery of the election* by enhancing the election official recruitment process, increasing the focus on youth recruitment, and through state-of-the-art technology and equipment.

Measuring the success of any one given strategy, however, is extremely challenging as many variables influence voting. For example, research has shown that such factors as who is running for office, how easy it is to vote, whether voters have the information they need to vote, voter demographics (age, education, religion, ethnicity, income, etc.), whether voters are fatigued and/or apathetic, whether voters are registered, the tone of the election campaign, and the weather, all influence voter turnout.

The goal of staff was to increase voter turnout by reducing any obstacles within the control of the City.

## Voter Engagement Strategies and New Processes

### A. Make Voting Convenient and Easy For Voters

#### A1. Implement “Vote Anywhere”

Prior to 2014, Vancouver voters were assigned to a voting division and were required to vote at a designated voting place on Election Day. While there were over 130 voting places open on Election Day, voters had no choice in where to vote - they could only cast their vote at their assigned location. Anywhere from 2,000 - 4,000 voters were assigned to each voting place depending on the anticipated voter turnout. Voter turnout at voting places historically ranged from 400 to about 1,500 voters.

This “assigned voting division” model was used by the City for many years because it was the only way for the Chief Election Officer to be confident that each voter only voted once - one voter, one vote. Under this model, when a voter presented themselves at their assigned voting place, the voter was manually struck off the Voters List for that division by an election official. The assignment of voters to a specific voting division allowed for the easy management of election resources, as the maximum number of voters who could turn up to one voting place was set. However, this model was not citizen-centric and was viewed by many voters as being an obstacle to voter access.

With increasing voter convenience and access in mind, staff sought to move towards a more citizen-centric model for managing the voting process. Beginning in 2011, many municipalities began using a “Vote Anywhere” model. Under this model, eligible voters can vote at any voting location set up in the municipality. Vote Anywhere is made possible through the use of real-time electronic voters list strike off technology.

The real-time strike-off technology was used by Surrey, Burnaby, Coquitlam, Langley, and Abbotsford as well as other BC municipalities such as Victoria and Saanich in 2011 and 2014. The City of Vancouver piloted the use of this technology during the advance voting opportunities in 2011. DataFix - the vendor that supplied this technology to BC municipalities is a major supplier of this technology with an estimated 300 Canadian clients (2014). Of these, approximately 240 used real-time strike off technology. This included the Regional Municipality of Halifax in Nova Scotia, and the cities of Toronto, Hamilton, London, and Brampton in Ontario.

For the 2014 municipal election, City election officials in each voting place across the city were equipped with a number of laptop computers that operated on a secure network that met the requirements set out in the contractual agreement between the City of Vancouver and DataFix. A local copy of the voters list resided on each computer. The computers required user-ID/password authentication to access the computer and a unique userID/password to access the Voters List data via the Datafix software.

Once an elector completed the written declaration as required by law, stating that they were entitled to vote and have not voted in the election, the person’s name was electronically struck off the local copy of the Voters List as having received a ballot. As a person’s name was electronically struck off that local copy of the Voters List, an encrypted numeric identifier was sent on the secure network to the master Voters List that resided on a secure server.

The master Voters List, in turn, sent the encrypted unique numeric identifier to the computers located in all other voting places. In this way, a person’s name that was struck off in one voting location was simultaneously struck off the Voters List in all other voting locations. It is important to note that when data was being transferred, private and personal information is not transmitted. Rather, it was an encrypted number that did not reveal the identity of the person that was struck off the voter’s list.

In the unlikely event the same elector attempted to vote at another location, when an election official entered the name of the person into the computer, the person’s name would already be struck off and show as having voted.

Staff recognized it would be challenging to predict the extent to which the Vote Anywhere model would be embraced and, therefore, which voting places could face either heavy or light voter traffic. In anticipation of this possibility, staff did the following:

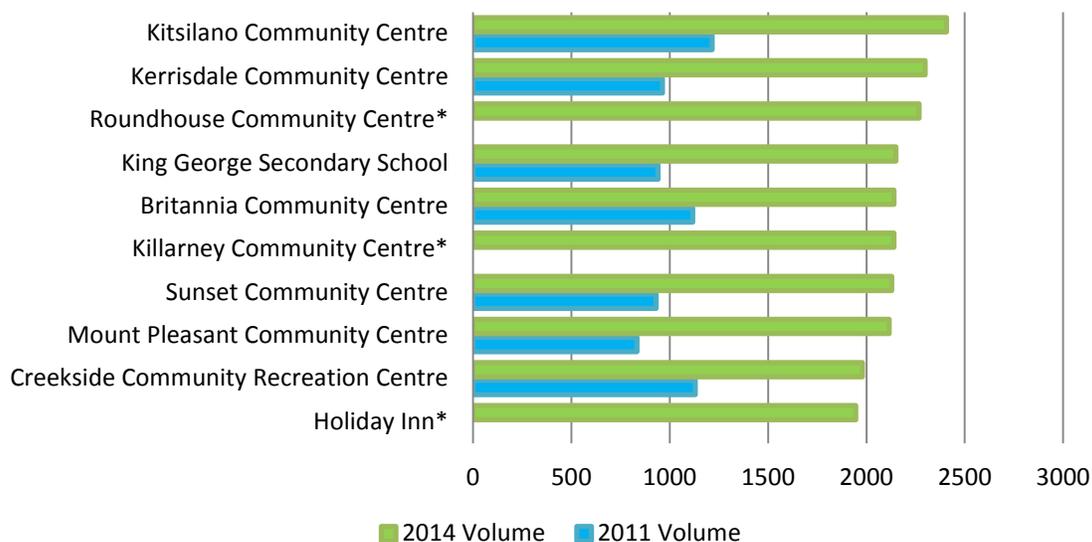
- Reviewed historical voting volume data and resources assigned with a view to assign additional resources to voting places where i) voter volume had been high in past elections or ii) staff anticipated would have a high voter volume (e.g. The voter was likely to be participating in regular weekend activities nearby or the voting place was close to a major transit hub.)
- Allocated ballots to each voting place based on historical and anticipated turnout. Each location was allotted either 1,000 or 1,500 ballots initially with instructions to

each Presiding Election Officer (PEO) to call for additional ballots when 300 unused ballots remained.

- Established a stand-by pool of election officials (65 staff in total), who were ready to be deployed if needed.
- Informed election officials that they may be transferred to an alternate voting place in the event that additional resources were required at another location. PEOs were instructed to call the Election Office for additional resources if needed.
- Established a large fleet of drivers who were available to relocate election officials from one voting place to another as needed and deliver additional ballots as required.
- The Election Office staff regularly communicated with the PEO at each voting place to inform them of low and high traffic voting places in order to redirect voters if line ups formed. Social media and the City’s website were also used extensively to inform to the public of voting place traffic throughout Election Day.

In reviewing the voter turnout data for each voting place, staff are of the view that voters took advantage of Vote Anywhere. Of the top ten busiest voting places, eight locations had over 2,000 voters on Election Day in 2014. Over twice as many voters voted at those locations when comparing 2014 to 2011 turnout (see Figure 2).

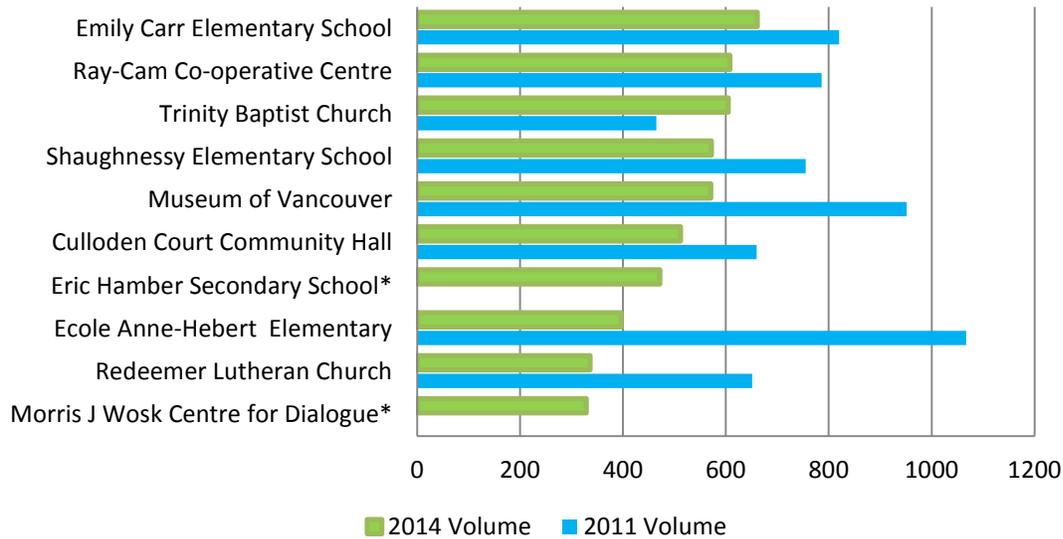
**Figure 2 - Top 10 Voting Places with Highest Number of Voters on Election Day**



*Note\*: No comparable volume available for 2011 as locations with an asterisk were not voting places in 2011*

At the other end of the spectrum, of the ten voting places with the lowest number of voters, eight of the locations had been used in past elections. At seven of the eight locations, voter turnout was down significantly when compared to 2011 (see Figure 3), strongly suggesting that voters took advantage of the Vote Anywhere model and voted at more convenient locations.

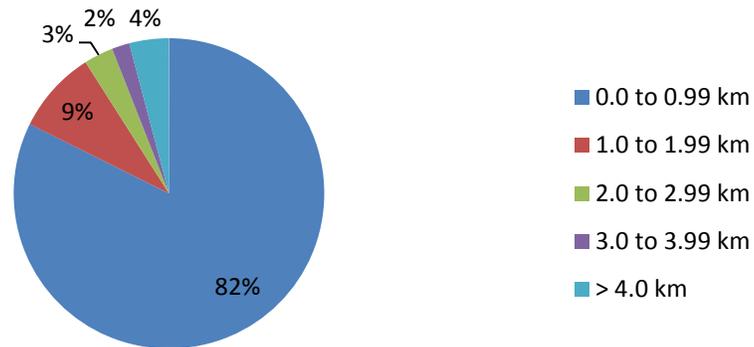
Figure 3 - 10 Voting Places with Lowest Number of Voters on Election Day



Note\*: No comparable volume available for 2011 as locations with an asterisk were not voting places in 2011

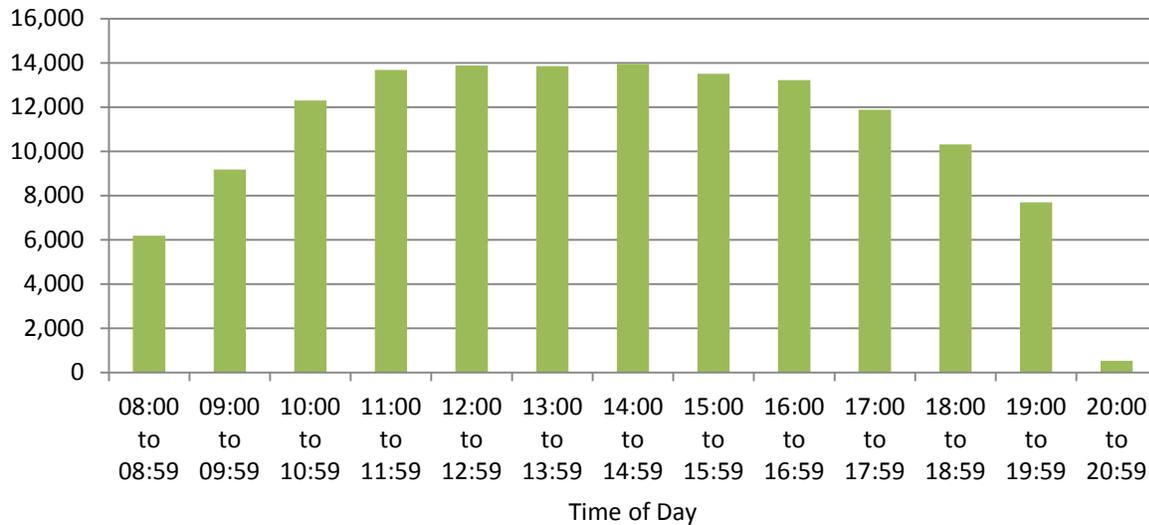
Interestingly, even though voters appeared to have embraced the Vote Anywhere model, the vast majority of voters (91%) voted at a voting location less than 2 km from their place of residence on Election Day (see Figure 4).

Figure 4 - Election Day: Average Distance Travelled by Voters on Election Day



The peak voting volume period was between noon to 3 pm. See Figure 5. Voting traffic subsided after that period.

Figure 5 - Election Day: Average Voting Volumes by Hour



As indicated earlier, 2014 voter turnout was 43.4%, or 25.4% higher than the 2011 turnout. The heaviest turnout continues to be adults ages 45 - 54 and 55 - 64 years. The age group 65 - 74 has the highest voter turnout at 58.4%. Young adults 18 - 24 and 25 - 34 years cast 37,271 ballots. Their voter turnout was 36.5% and 31.0%, respectively.

The high voter turnout when combined with the voter uptake of the Vote Anywhere model resulted in a handful of voting places that were particularly busy (see Figure 2). Lineups formed at these locations. Additional resources were deployed and the PEOs at those locations redirected voters to lower traffic voting places.

However, based on reports received from the Presiding Election Officers at these voting places voters were reluctant to go to an alternate voting location. Staff received several reports that the atmosphere at the busy locations was positive with no significant concern by the public with the wait to vote.

On Election Day, beginning around mid-afternoon staff became aware that some locations were running short of ballots. Five voting places temporarily ran out of ballots: Killarney Community Centre, Britannia Community Centre, Oakridge Centre, Hastings Elementary, and Renfrew Community Centre. Protocol in place for the PEO to follow should have prevented this, as the Election Office was to be notified when the residual ballot number dropped below 300 at any poll. However, likely due to the large numbers of voters, in this small number of polls (4% of total polls) this did not happen and there was a temporary pause in voting due to an absence of ballots.

The Vancouver Charter anticipates a situation such as this, and in conformance with sections 20 and 84 of the Vancouver Charter, the voting times were extended by the Chief Election Officer beyond the regular closing time (8pm) at those five locations.

The voting volume data collected in 2014 will greatly assist staff in planning for future municipal elections - ensuring that appropriate resources are made available to each voting place.

Apart from making Vote Anywhere possible, the use of an electronic voters list resulted in the following additional benefits:

- *Faster processing of voters.* Each registered voter received a Voter Information Card that included a unique barcode identifier. The use of the barcode allowed Election Officials to quickly locate registered voters on the voters list thus reducing processing time.
- *Reduction in the amount of printing and paper used.* Prior to 2014, each voting place was provided with several hardcopies of the voters list. With an electronic voters list, hardcopy lists were not needed resulting in savings of over 300,000 pieces of paper.
- *Voting trend data.* The electronic voters list technology provides staff with access to aggregate voter information that will assist staff in planning for future elections.

## ***A2. Establish convenient and accessible voting locations for Election Day***

In preparation for the 2014 Election, staff reviewed voting place facility evaluations prepared by the Presiding Election Officials following the 2011 municipal election. In addition, as part of the election planning process, staff developed criteria and conducted site visits of the voting places.

Voting locations were selected on the basis of convenience, accessibility and the availability of established infrastructure requirements. Voting locations were at community centres, neighbourhood houses, churches, and schools in centralized neighbourhood locations, close to transit, accessible for all electors, with plenty of space, good lighting, and ample parking whenever possible.

For the first time ever, voting locations were set up in high-traffic locations such as the, Oakridge Centre, International Village Mall, and Vancouver Art Gallery. Voter turnout at Oakridge Centre and International Village Mall was very high suggesting that voters took advantage of incorporating voting in to their Saturday activities.

Community centres turned out to be some of the city's most popular voting facilities, likely due to voters' familiarity with the facility and accessibility (located on or near major transit routes or in community hubs).

## **B. Increase Advance Voting Opportunities**

Under provincial legislation, municipalities are required to provide two days of advance voting at one location from 8 am - 8 pm. The legislation specifies the timing of one of the advance voting days but allows the municipality - by way of a bylaw - to establish the second day.

Prior to the 2011 election, the City of Vancouver held advance voting on four days in five locations. In 2011, the Election team expanded advance voting opportunities to eight days; on four of those days advance voting was offered at five locations and on the remaining four days it was offered at one advance voting location.

In total, there was 272 hours of advance voting in 2011 which represented a 32 hour increase over the 2008 advance voting hours. The increased advance voting in 2011 resulted in over 19,000 voters taking advantage of the advance voting opportunities in 2011. This represented a 27% increase over 2008 advance voting.

In light of the success of advance voting in 2011, a key strategy was to further expand advance voting in 2014 to eight full days in eight locations from 8 am to 8 pm between November 4 - 10, and November 12. Eligible voters were provided with 768 hours of advance voting in 2014 - a 280% increase over the 2011 election and a 320% increase over 2008 (see Table 1).

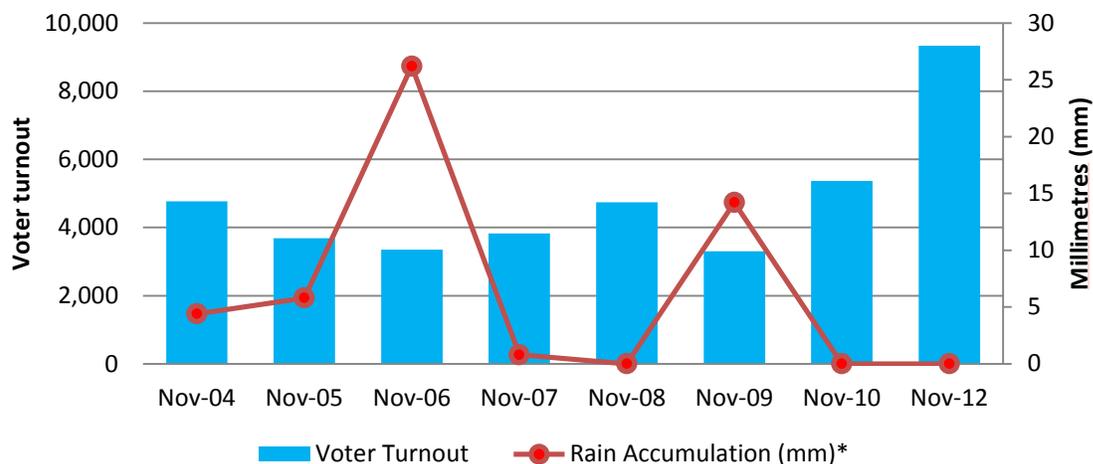
Table 1 - Comparison of Advance Voting 2008 - 2014

Advance Voting Opportunities	2008	2011	2014
Number of voting days	4	8	8
Number of voting hours	240	272	768
Number of ballots cast	15,172	19,484	38,556

The increased availability of advance voting opportunities was well received by voters, with over 38,556 ballots cast during the advance period, a 98% increase over 2011's advance voting period.

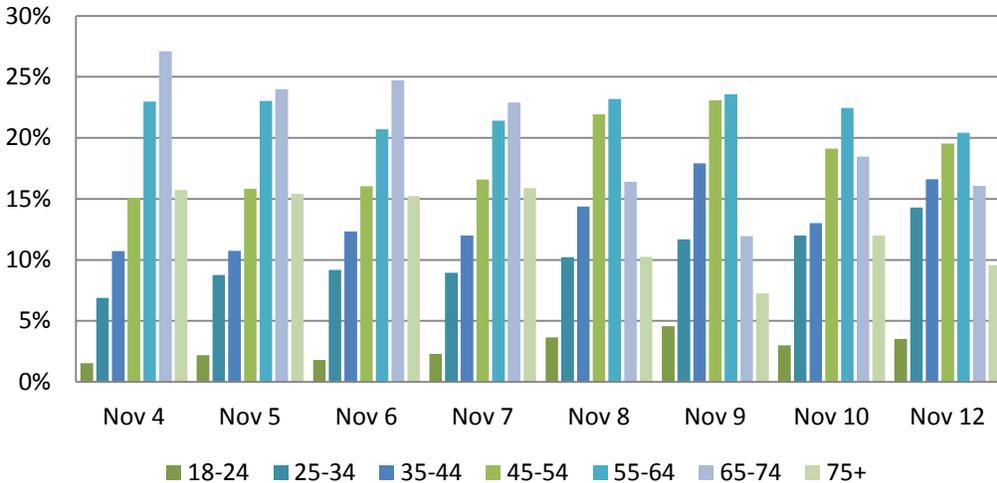
Voter turnout varied by day, with the first (November 4) and last two days (November 10 and 12) being the busiest days. Interestingly, when plotting daily voter turnout against rainfall for that day, rainfall - particularly heavy rainfall - appears to have an impact on turnout (See Figure 6).

Figure 6 - Advance Voting: Voter Turnout vs Rainfall by Day



In terms of who votes during the advance voting period, it appears that older voters (65+) are more likely to vote early in the advance voting period whereas the voters under 35 years appear to take advantage of the later advance voting dates. See Figure 7. Voters 35 - 64 years - as a percentage of the daily advance voting turnout - were relatively consistent in their uptake of advance voting.

Figure 7 - Age Breakdown by Date of Advance Voting



### C. Enhance Access for Persons with Disabilities and Seniors

In an effort to reach out to persons with disabilities and seniors and encourage both to vote, the City piloted the use of accessible voting machines at all advance voting places. The Voters using the equipment could either: a) use the sip and puff system to complete their ballot, b) use the audio system through which the ballot was read to the user through a headset; or c) use the magnification system which made the ballot easier to read.

This technology was a first for the City. The accessible voting machines allowed persons with disabilities and seniors to mark their ballots independently - without relying on assistance from another person.

While the uptake on the use of the accessible voting machines was low (i.e. 10 recorded uses), the benefit of being able to offer this segment of the population independence and privacy when it comes to marking a ballot over conventional methods (having an Election Official or friend/relative assist the voter) is significant.



In addition to accessible voting machines, the City offered the following accessible opportunities for voters:

- a) **Ballot Marking Assistance.** If a voter required assistance in marking a ballot due to physical disability, the voter could request the assistance of an Election Official, or, another individual provided the individual took an oath of secrecy prior to assisting the voter.
- b) **Curbside voting.** For voters who were unable to enter a voting place due to physical disability or illness, curbside voting was available. Curbside voting enabled a voter to vote outside of the voting place - usually in a parked vehicle.
- c) **Vote by Mail.** The City also provided a "vote by mail" option for voters who were not able to get out to vote during the advance voting period or on election day. The vote by mail option was available for the 18-day period leading up to the municipal election - ending on Election Day at 8 pm. Prior to 2014, mail ballots were only available for a 12 day period.
- d) **Special Voting Opportunities.** During the two week period prior to Election Day, the City provided special voting opportunities for voters in hospital or medical facilities who:
  - o had a physical disability, illness, or injury that affected their ability to vote at another voting opportunity; and
  - o were patients in an acute care hospital or residents of a personal care home, long term care facility, or special residential care facility registered under the BC Community Care Facility Act. The facilities must be situated in the city and provide accommodation for 50 or more persons who qualify as electors but who are otherwise unable to vote at another voting opportunity.

In 2014, the Election team visited over 50 care homes and hospital facilities over a two week period.

- e) **Interpretation Assistance.** Interpretation services were available for voters requiring language assistance in reading the ballot. This service was provided through three means. First, over 85% of the election officials spoke Mandarin, Cantonese, or Punjabi either fluently or at a conversational level. These officials wore prominent buttons indicating their ability to speak a second language. Second, voters were able to bring another individual with them to the voting booth to assist in reading the ballot provided that an oath of secrecy was signed prior to assisting. Third, a language line was available to voters. This service provided interpretation in over 150 languages.

In all instances, the voter's privacy and the secrecy of their ballot are paramount. Making voting as accessible as possible for voters continues to be an important focus for the Election staff. Staff will continue to look for opportunities to increase accessibility.

## D. Engage Voters through Election Information and Tools

Providing clear, timely and accurate information to voters was a key priority for the Election Team. Voters were able to access election-related information through a number of service channels, including mail, phone, in-person, social media, printed materials, and most commonly, through the City's website.

### D1. Election Website

The election website was a critical tool in providing voters with information, such as candidate profiles, voter eligibility requirements and voting locations and dates.

From October 1 to November 17, 2014, 21% of persons visiting the City's website viewed the election webpages. The City's website also received almost 135,000 visits on Election Day, making November 15 the most visited day in City website history since 2012.



In addition to information, the election website offered a number of interactive tools that were designed to make voting easy and seamless for voters.

These tools included:

- **Voter registration.** Making voter registration easy and convenient was a priority for the Election Team. To ensure that voters had the opportunity to register on the voters' list until the list closed to new registrations (as required by the Vancouver Charter), the City embedded Elections BC's online voter registration form onto the City's website.

For those voters who were not yet registered after this point, the City provided access to a provisional registration tool, allowing voters to pre-complete the voter registration form prior to arriving at the voting place. When they arrived at the voting place, they were processed quickly as their information was already in the electronic voters list system. An Election Official would then just need to verify the voter's identity, through identification documents and signature, prior to the voter being officially added to the list of registered electors.

- **The Voter 'Am I Registered?' Look-up Tool.** To ensure that voters brought the correct documents to the voting place, voters were able to confirm whether or not they were on the voters list by inputting their name and address into this tool.

- **'Plan Your Vote' Tool.** Staff developed a "Plan Your Vote" tool on the City website. It gave users the chance to review the photo and profile of candidates who submitted them and then select candidates of interest along with a voting date and location. The voter had the ability to print the selections or send it to an email address. Voters could also research convenient voting places using a web-site address and mapping tool.
- **The Voting Place 'Where Do I Vote?' Look-up Tool.** As voters no longer had a designated voting place, this tool enabled voters to find the nearest voting location from a specific address or, using a mobile device; voters could obtain directions from their current location to a particular voting place.

Over the two month period leading up to the election, the tools were well used by the public with:

- 2,377 new provisional registrations, of which almost half (1,015) ended up going to the voting place to vote where they were officially added to the list; and
- 13,688 'Am I Registered?' look-ups;
- 5,973 saved vote plans;
- 35,585 voting place 'Where Do I Vote' look-ups

Although a significant number of voters used the website to access information, there continue to be electors who do not have access to the internet or who require additional assistance for more complex inquiries or service requests. These voters were assisted through the 3-1-1 Contact Centre, which provided exceptional customer service to voters leading up to and including Election Day.

## ***D2. The 3-1-1 Contact Centre***

3-1-1- was an important partner and a strong contributor to the success of the 2014 election. Election and 3-1-1 staff began meeting in late 2013 to map out milestone dates, plan communication materials that agents would need to respond to the anticipated large number of calls and ensure the City's go-to information service had everything they required to provide exceptional customer service throughout the election period.

3-1-1 received 6,400 election-related inquiries during the two-month period of October - November 2014. About 30% of calls were voters seeking information on voting locations.

The other most requested information from 3-1-1 was:

- general election inquiries (12%)
- vote by mail (12%)
- voter registration (9%)
- voting dates (6%)
- voter eligibility (6%)

Data on the types and volumes of election calls into 3-1-1 was used strategically on a daily basis by other City communication channels (web and social media) to direct the content being added to these channels as the City responded to in-the-moment and common citizen inquiries. This integrated, data driven communication strategy ensured consistent, cohesive and timely information to voters.

In addition to the above inquiries, 3-1-1 also received complaints from the public on a number of election-related matters. In total, 258 such calls and/or emails were received - most of which came through 3-1-1. Some individuals made inquiries or complained directly to the Mayor and Council (via the Correspondence Group) and/or to the Chief Election Officer.

### ***D3. Communications and Outreach***

To ensure eligible voters were well informed, staff from Corporate Communications, Digital Services and the Election Office worked together to produce visually appealing and informative materials to connect with the public and engage them in the democratic process.

In early fall, election materials were distributed to agencies and distribution points throughout the city. In the last days of October 2014, registered voters received their Voter Information Card (approximately 410,000) around the same time a Municipal Voter Guide arrived in their mail boxes. The mailing of these two major information products was scheduled to provide a high-impact delivery to voters and encourage and remind them about the election and voting opportunities beginning in early November.

Concurrently, just over 300,000 copies of the Voter Guide were delivered to Canada Post for distribution to households while another 10,000 copies were distributed to libraries, community centres, businesses, partner agencies and City offices with public counters.

Beginning November 4, all residential addresses in the City (about 265,000) started to receive a Voter Location Card identifying three voting locations near the residential addresses on the card, the ability to vote at any voting location in the city as well as ways to be in touch with the City for additional election information.

Meanwhile, across the city, a variety of colourful, targeted elections posters were displayed in high-traffic locations, ads were placed in transit shelters, on outdoor billboards, on specific radio stations and in local newspapers. Staff also distributed post cards, Voter Guides, office and workplace posters as well as small business cards with voting dates and information.

The following products were developed and produced:

- Social media strategy
- Posters, post cards, statutory and non-statutory advertising, computer monitor tags, buttons, and related informational materials
- Voter Information Card
- Municipal Election Voter Guide
- Voting Location Card
- Outreach program

### a) Social Media Strategy

Social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter and Instagram were used to inform and engage voters, using dynamic strategies such as trivia contests, Twibbon, Facebook ads, "I voted" sticker selfies, #vanelxn hash-tag and real-time updates that provided in the moment information, particularly on Election Day, and directed voters to the website as needed.



There were a number of successes related to the use of social media:

- 12% of traffic to website was referred from social media
- 1,042 re-tweets of election-related tweets
- 3,605 posts on Facebook were liked

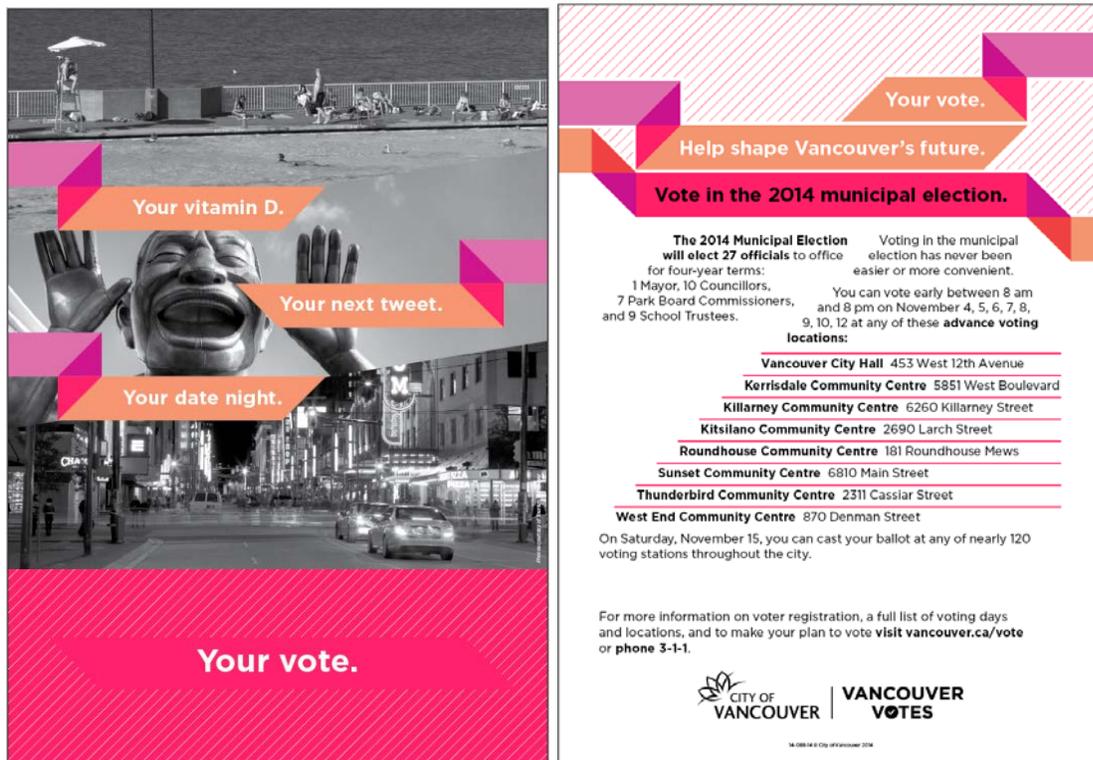
### b) Visual appeal

Key for these showcase information products as well as the thousands of posters, buttons, postcards, computer tags, business cards and T-shirts was the presentation of creative graphics, clear information and use of the neon salmon colour. This eye-catching, very bright colour was selected for its high visibility and it being well away from any colours used by candidates and political organizations.

Figure 8 - Vancouver Votes - Poster Example



Figure 9 - 2014 Vancouver Votes Postcard - Example of Front and Back



Vancouver Public Library was also an important election partner and installed just over 600 attractive tags on the corners of all the library computer monitors to provide computer users with information on advance voter registration as well as general election information.

### c) Voter Information Card

As indicated above, a Voter Information Card (VIC) was mailed to all registered electors whose names were on the Voters List received from Elections BC. This product served to provide the registered voters with information on the:

- Advance voting opportunities (i.e. dates, voting hours, and locations);
- Vote anywhere option;
- How to register to vote;
- Voting requirements;
- Number of positions to be voted on;
- Plan Your Vote tool;
- Accessibility aids and language assistance; and,
- How to obtain more information on the election.

The VIC included a unique bar code and voters were encouraged to bring the card with them to the voting location. The bar code enabled fast processing of voters. The success of the communication regarding the VIC was evident by the number of voters who brought their cards with them to the voting place, which totalled 79% of all voters who voted at the voting place.

#### d) Municipal Election Voter Guide

A Municipal Election Voter Guide was developed to provide households and businesses with important information on the 2014 municipal election. In 2014, staff updated the previous magazine-style format to a colourful, large fold-out format.

The Guide included key information on the 2014 municipal election including:

- The offices to be elected and what they do;
- Advance voting dates and locations;
- Election Day voting - date and locations;
- Vote anywhere;
- Plan your vote and how to obtain candidate information;
- How to register;
- Who can vote and identification requirements;
- How to vote as a non-resident property elector;
- Accessibility aids, language assistance, and curbside voting;
- Vote by mail; and,
- How to obtain more information on the election.

The guide also contained a large, fold-out map showing all of the advance and Election Day voting locations, their addresses and proximity to major transit hubs.

#### e) Voting Location Card

A Voting Location Card was mailed to all Vancouver residential addresses just prior to general voting day to provide voters with:

- another reminder about voting on November 15;
- the ability to vote anywhere;
- three voting locations near the residential address on the card; and,
- ways the resident could get more information from the City via its website or 3-1-1 service.



## f) Outreach

The Outreach strategy took staff to 33 events, celebrations and activities around the city as well as scheduled Pop-Up City Hall locations in neighbourhoods and community locations. Using youthful and culturally diverse city staff, the Outreach workers engaged with everyone they could at community events, farmers markets, homeless action week, neighbourhood house activities, university campus events, libraries and community centres and around transit hubs to share the importance of democracy and voting. More than 400 voter registrations were received during these outreach events.



The City's communication efforts resulted in citizens having over 1.1 million election-related interactions with the City of Vancouver through the City's major citizen service channels. Over 99 per cent of the interactions involved individuals looking for information on the City's website or through 3-1-1. Only 0.02% (258) of the interactions were actual complaints received from individuals regarding some aspect of the municipal election.

## E. Strengthening the delivery of the election

### *Staffing*

In 2014, the hiring process for election officials underwent a major review that resulted in significant changes to the hiring process. The review was driven by two key factors:

- 1) Technology - The introduction of Vote Anywhere required the use of new voting technology (i.e. electronic Voters List software, laptops, and card scanners). Historically, the voter strike off process was largely paper-based. The increased use of technology it was important to ensure that election officials possessed the necessary skills to operate the equipment.
- 2) Developing a youth voting culture - Election research indicates that voting habits are developed at a young age. When youth is involved in the election process and sees the importance of voting, they are more apt to vote. A key strategy in the 2014 election was to develop a youth voting culture through various means - including targeting youth to work the election.

Historically, the Presiding Election Official (PEO) for each voting place was hired by election staff. Each PEO, in turn, assembled the team for their voting place based on their network of contacts. No formal hiring process was in place.

In 2014, with the introduction of the electronic Voters List technology, staff recognized the importance of implementing a rigorous hiring process for all election official positions - over 1,200 in total. As a first step, job descriptions were developed for each type of election official, namely:

- Presiding Election Official (PEO) - manage voting place staff and operations;
- Alternate Presiding Election Official (APEO) - assist the PEO with management of the voting place;
- Registration Official (RO) - register and strike-off voters, update voter records; and
- Voting Coordinator (VC) - greet voters; provide assistance in placing voters' ballots through the vote tabulation machine.

All positions were advertised on the City's website and a standard online application process was established. Candidates were shortlisted based on their successful completion of the following process:

1. Online application - all applicants were required to apply online and were evaluated based on experience, technical skills, customer service skills, language qualifications, etc.
2. Online testing - all applicants were tested on their computer skills, ability to understand and follow policy, customer service skills, and election knowledge. The tests were scored and candidates were ranked accordingly.
3. Interviews - Shortlisted candidates for the PEO and APEO positions were interviewed by senior election staff and selected on the basis of testing and the interview. Over 300 in-person interviews were conducted for the PEO and APEO positions.
4. Training - All selected PEOs, APEOs, and Registration Officials were required to undergo practical classroom training and to work on a specified number of advance voting days.

During recruitment, election staff worked with Vancouver School Board and other youth organizations to let youth know of the election work opportunities. The goal was to attract young people to work on Election Day in order to engage them in the democratic process. To facilitate more youth applying for Election work, the minimum age to apply for two of the Election worker positions (i.e. the Registration Official and Voting Coordinator) was reduced to 15 years of age from the previous minimum age requirement of 18 years.

In addition, by using the online recruitment and testing process, election staff were able to ensure that voting places in those Vancouver neighbourhoods<sup>1</sup> where English is not the language spoken at home, had election officials on hand that spoke the language(s) of those residing within those neighbourhoods. Approximately half of the voting places had two or more election officials who spoke the language of that community.

The new election official recruitment process was very beneficial in many ways:

- For applicants - The process was transparent and fair. Applicants knew the position requirements, steps in the recruitment process, and were provided with hands on practical training. The application and testing processes were online and could be completed at the convenience of the applicant within election staff deadlines. All

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<sup>1</sup> 2011 Census, Statistics Canada. Detailed language spoken most often at home. Provided by the City of Vancouver Planning Department.

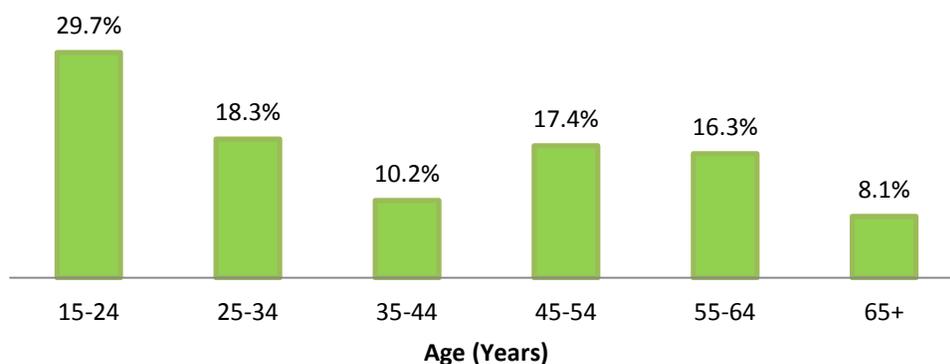
communication between the applicants and the election staff was made as convenient as possible through the use of worker portals and email.

- For election management - The process helped to ensure that the best candidates were hired and fully trained to do the job. The process enabled more targeted recruitment (e.g. youth, multi-lingual communities, experienced workers). The process was more efficient and effective (e.g. optimized use of digital tools such as worker portals, emails, etc.) than the past method of recruitment which resulted on PEO team selection and use of manual processes.

The following successes can be attributed to the new recruiting process introduced for the 2014 Municipal Election:

- 48% of election workers in 2014 were between the ages of 15-34. See Figure 10. Although comparative data was not collected in previous elections, staff estimate that less than 25% of election workers were under 35 based on observation. This is largely the result of a) the recruitment age being lowered to 15 years in 2014 (from 18 years in 2011) and b) the recruitment process being widely communicated through the internet, social media, and outreach to secondary and post-secondary institutions.

Figure 10 - Election Workers - % by Age



- 86% of all election workers hired spoke a second language at either a conversational or fluent level.
- Over 65% of the election workers had previous election experience.

Having highly skilled, competent workers played an integral role in maintaining the integrity of the election and in ensuring that voters' experience in the voting place is citizen-centric, positive and timely.

### *Training*

New technology and new skill requirements for election workers meant that the training program needed to be updated as well this election. In 2014, the Election Team:

- Doubled the number of election workers that were trained in-person by the election staff relative to 2011, with almost 1,000 workers being trained over a four-week

period (October) in 39 training sessions. In 2011, approximately 500 workers were trained.

- Increased the amount of training received by PEOs/APEOs and Registration Officials to four and three hours respectively.
- Developed new training materials, learning aids, and quick reference guides to ensure workers were well prepared for Advance Voting and Election Day.
- Provided election officials with hands on training in the use of laptops, scanners, ballot tabulators and accessible voting machines.
- Provided drop-in workshops for workers who wanted more time to practice using the equipment.
- Created and provided dynamic online training for the approximate 200 election officials working as Voting Coordinators.
- Used advance voting as an opportunity for further development by providing over 500 shifts for election officials to work a day in a voting place in advance of Election Day.

The training sessions received excellent feedback from attendees.

The training provided staff with the foundation that they needed to provide a high level of service on Election Day. Future election training will focus on further developing the online training component to provide staff with supplementary exercises and training material as needed.

### *Ballot Tabulating Machines*

Ballot tabulating machines count ballot selections by optically scanning ballots as they are placed through the machine into the secure ballot box. These selections are tallied by the machine to generate election results, which were posted to the City's website after 8 pm on election night.

New ballot tabulating machines were leased in 2014, which replaced aging machines that were purchased by the City in 1996.



The technology of the new leased machines was the same as the old machines. However, the new machines had some additional functionality, such as large screens for voters to indicate ballot acceptance or rejection and an option to provide screen messaging in other languages.

The new ballot tabulators were put through extensive logic and accuracy testing both before and after the election. The machines were securely stored leading up to

the election. Staff were very satisfied with the performance of the leased machines as only a small number of operator-related issues (e.g. jammed ballots) arose on Election Day.

## Public Feedback and Concerns

Of the over 1.1 million election-related interactions that citizens had with the City of Vancouver through the City's major citizen service channels, over 99 per cent of the interactions involved individuals looking for information on the City's website or through 3-1-1.

Table 2 - Election-Related Interactions through City Communication Channels

Communication Channels	Interactions <sup>2</sup>	% of Interactions
Vancouver.ca	1,101,739	98.51 %
3-1-1	6,264	0.57 %
Social Media (Facebook, Twitter)	10,198	0.91 %
Complaints	258	0.02 %
Total Interactions	1,118,459	100.00 %

A small percentage - 0.02% (258) - of the interactions were complaints received from individuals regarding some aspect of the municipal election. Communications raising concerns were largely received by phone, email, or mail, usually directly to the Mayor and Council and/or to the Chief Election Officer.

The most frequent complaints (number of complaints) were as follows:

- Location of election signs on public property (52)
- Lack of advance voting locations in the Downtown Eastside and East Vancouver (41)
- Locations election signs near voting places on voting days (21)
- Communication materials - confusion about voting dates (13)
- Communications materials - confusion about the voting locations (13)
- Eligibility and Identification Requirements - disagree with requirements re citizenship, Vancouver resident, and identification (13)
- Wait times/lack of ballots in some locations (13)
- Vote by mail procedures - various concerns including length of voting period and mailing of vote-by-mail ballots abroad (10)
- Communications materials - no candidate profiles in the Voters Guide (9)
- Lack of French on signage and voting materials (9)
- Website - assorted re use of browser, vote planning tool, general content (9)

The above complaints (203) accounted for 79% of the total complaints received. The remaining 21% (i.e. 55) of the complaints received ranged widely in their subject matter with each subject receiving 1 - 3 complaints. This included such matters as the use of the secrecy sleeves by election officials, use of an electronic voters list, concern about the functioning of the vote tabulators and over-voted ballots, content of the candidate nomination forms, desire to have online voting, and the Voters' List omission of Musqueam Lands registered voters.

<sup>2</sup> *Interactions*: includes i) number of times content viewed on Vancouver.ca; ii) 3-1-1 enquiries; iii) number of likes and re-tweets on social media; and iv) complaints received through 3-1-1, City correspondence; and Election Office.

The following is an overview of some of the concerns:

## **1. Election Signage Complaints**

As is the case in every municipal election, the City receives complaints from the public regarding election signage. In total, the City received 73 complaints in 2014. This total is consistent with past elections. The majority of the complaints (52) related to the alleged placement of election signs on public property.

With respect to the placement of election signs on public property, the placement election/political signage on streets and sidewalks is regulated through the Street & Traffic By-law which is enforced by Engineering Services. The by-law states that signage is not permitted on City streets without the explicit permission of the City Engineer. The approach over many years has been to try and make it possible and practical for elector organizations and candidates to place signage on private property but visible to passersby. The City's enforcement approach has been to allow election signage to be placed between the back of a sidewalk and the adjoining private property. Some of these signs may be on City property, but given that the property line is very difficult to identify without a survey, the City allows this encroachment. This information was shared with elector organizations and candidates in September and October 2014.

Engineering Services impounded a total of 48 signs (20 NPA, 22 Vision, 4 COPE, and 2 Green).

The remaining complaints (21) related to the placement of election signs within 100 metres of a voting place - largely on Election Day. This is consistent with past elections. When receiving a complaint, Election staff contacted the relevant candidates and/or elector organization directly and instructed them to remove the offending signage.

## **2. Advance voting concerns**

In late October 2014, 41 complaints were received from a combination of members of the public (27), neighbourhood associations (10), and candidate/political organizations (4) about the location of the advance voting places. Many of them requested that an advance voting location be added to the Downtown Eastside and/or in the Grandview Woodlands and Mount Pleasant areas.

The requests were extensively considered but could not be accommodated. The voting places were secured through a comprehensive process in October 2013, more than a year prior to the Election. This timeframe, in part, was to allow time for the host location's normal programming activities to be planned around reduced space during the eight day advance voting period in November. To the extent possible, the advance voting places were selected on the basis of geographic location (reasonable geographic spread across the city), number of eligible voters, accessibility, size of facility, parking, and hydro access.

However, in an effort to address concerns raised in regard to vulnerable people in the DTES, staff worked closely with the Union Gospel Mission and other organizations servicing the DTES community to facilitate transportation arrangements to the closest advanced poll at the Roundhouse. The Union Gospel Mission was able to provide transportation services to the Roundhouse Community Centre for area residents wishing to vote during the advance voting period. Twenty-four individuals took advantage of this free service.

Staff will take the feedback received and conduct further evaluation of optimal locations to maximize voter turnout for the 2018 election.

### **3. Communications Materials - Complaints**

Concerns in relation to printed materials ranged from confusion about advance voting dates, confusion about the voting locations, and the fact that the 2014 Voters Guides did not contain profiles on each candidate, as for the first time they were posted on line.

#### **a. Advance voting dates**

Some individuals expressed confusion about the advance voting dates. Advance voting was held on eight days - November 4 to 10 and November 12 - at the eight voting locations - one of which was City Hall. Election Day was November 15.

Many of the distributed materials included a caption of "Vote from November 4 to 15, 2014". Although the caption was followed by "For more information and a full list of voting days and locations visit [vancouver.ca/vote](http://vancouver.ca/vote) or phone 3-1-1", some members of the public assumed advance voting would occur daily from November 4 through to November 15.

Staff have noted this unfortunate misunderstanding and will be guided by it when preparing future election materials to ensure voting dates and voting locations on those dates are clearer.

#### **b. Voting Location Information**

The Voting Locations Cards were mailed to all Vancouver residential addresses (approximately 265,000 in total) prior to Election Day. These cards informed residents of three Election Day voting locations near their place of residence. The cards also indicated that voters could vote at any of the nearly 120 locations throughout the city.

The Voting Location Cards were prepared using proprietary mapping software to determine voting locations near the residential address on the card. The word "near" was used deliberately to recognize that, in some circumstances, there may be locations slightly closer to the address than those identified on the Voting Location card.

The concern expressed by four members of the public was that the cards sent to some residents did not list the three closest voting locations for the recipient.

The card clearly indicated that voters could vote at any voting place which was convenient for them and was explicit that it was not necessary for anyone to vote at the nearest voting place. Finally, the whole strategy was to ensure that voting was convenient and not restricted as to location across the city.

Throughout the election timeframe, the City provided voters with multiple opportunities and information channels for voters to find the most convenient voting location. The channels included:

- the City website with its detailed mapping webpage and the Plan Your Vote interactive service;
- 3-1-1; and
- the Municipal Election Voter Guide which contained a city map with all eight advance voting locations and nearly 120 Election Day locations.

Staff believe the Voting Location Card was a useful product and plan to use them in future elections under a Vote Anywhere model. Staff will work with the service provider to refine the accuracy of the software in determining the three voting locations that are the absolute closest to each place of residence. Staff will also work with communications to ensure that the message on the cards is even more effectively communicated - i.e. that there are many location options for their convenience over the advance voting days and the actual Election Day.

### c. Access to Candidate Profiles

In previous elections, the City produced and mailed a full-colour 41-page booklet to every Vancouver address to provide readers with information about the election and a photo and profile of each candidate. This was a very costly and labour-intensive undertaking that resulted in large numbers of booklets being placed in apartment and household waste bins. This magazine-style publication cost approximately \$160,000 to produce and mail.

For 2014, the move was made to more environmentally and economically responsible information options. Candidates were asked to submit a 150-word profile via an online form and supply their own photo or have one taken by City staff.

When a number of people (9) contacted the City regarding the absence of published candidate profiles, the City prepared about 1,000 print copies of the profiles which were mailed out on request, provided at voting places and left on the reception counters of many City buildings. A link to the document was also placed on the City website.

In addition, the City also developed the first ever "Plan Your Vote" tool on the City website. It gave users the chance to review the photo and profile of candidates who submitted them and then select candidates of interest along with a voting date and location. The voter had the ability to print the selections or send it to an email address. Voters could also research convenient voting places using a web-site address and mapping tool.

The "Plan Your Vote" was a planning tool and not an online ballot. It was managed by the City's Digital Services team in a manner that ensured no information was tracked or kept. While standard traffic analytics were measured on the service to count the number of website visits, the time visitors spent on the site, and whether an individual used the service, no IP addresses were logged and no candidate selections were recorded or saved.

#### 4. Voter Identification Requirements

During the voting period, a number of concerns were expressed regarding voter identification requirements. It appears that some members of the public, including scrutineers representing the political parties who were attending each voting place, were unaware or unfamiliar with the regulations related to voting identification requirements set out under provincial legislation.

The voter identification and registration requirements for municipal elections are governed by the Vancouver Charter (including sections 25, 26, 30, 30.1, 32, 87 and 128) and the Local Government Elections Regulation BC Regulation 380/93 (Section 3). Under the Vancouver Charter, in order to register as a resident elector at the time of voting, an individual must be a Canadian citizen 18 years or older who has resided in the Province for at least six months and the city for at least 30 days prior to the date of registration. The applicant must produce at least two documents that provide evidence of the applicant's identity, place of residence, and signature. The identification documents are set out in the Elections Regulation (Section 3) and may include a solemn declaration as to the applicant's place of residence.

Those resident electors whose names appear on the city excerpt of the Provincial Voters List are not required to produce voter identification when voting in the municipal election. This is clearly set out in the above mentioned sections of the Vancouver Charter. The same rules are also set out in the Local Government Act that governs elections for all other municipalities in the Province. As such, it is a contravention of the provincial legislation to require a voter to produce identification if they are on the register of resident electors (i.e. voters list) for the city. A change in this legislation would be required if Council wished to make voter identification a requirement in future municipal elections for those individuals listed on the register of resident electors.

Under Section 32 of the Vancouver Charter, the City uses the most up-to-date and available Provincial list of voters as the City's list of registered voters. For the 2014 local general election, the Provincial list of voters (i.e. Vancouver excerpt) became the City's list of registered voters on September 23.

#### 5. Wait Times & Ballot Shortages

With the implementation of Vote Anywhere model, some voting locations experienced longer wait times and ballot shortages.

##### a. Wait Times

General voting day on November 15 was exceptionally busy - particularly from noon to 3 pm. As noted in the report, the 2014 voter turnout was 43.4% which represented a 25.4% increase over 2011 and as illustrated in figure 5 in the report, the number of voters peaked in midday and the early part of the afternoon.

With the implementation of the Vote Anywhere model for the first time across the city, it was challenging to anticipate where voters would vote. As indicated in the attached 2014 City of Vancouver Election Report, several measures were taken to ensure flexibility and responsiveness on Election Day.

It appears that voters embraced Vote Anywhere. There were eight locations that had over 2,000 voters. Turnout across these locations was basically double the turnout in 2011 and in some polling stations the turnout in 2014 more than doubled. The eight busiest locations included the following:

**Table 3 - 2014 Busiest Voting Place Turnout - Comparison to 2011 Turnout**

Voting Place	2014 Turnout	2011 Turnout
King George Secondary School	2149	940
Roundhouse Community Centre	2268	*
Britannia Community Centre	2140	1117
Killarney Community Centre	2139	*
Sunset Community Centre	2129	930
Mount Pleasant Community Centre	2115	833
Kerrisdale Community Centre	2298	963
Kitsilano Community Centre	2407	1215

\*Roundhouse and Killarney Community Centres were not voting locations in 2011

The experience gained from delivering a very busy election using the Vote Anywhere model has allowed staff to collect key data which will allow us to better predict when and where voters will vote in a subsequent election and to better put in place mitigation steps to ensure that there is no chance for any period of time where the poll is short of ballots.

**b. Ballot Shortages**

The allocation of ballots is tightly controlled and the process for allocating and reconciling is set out in the Election By-law. It is critical that all ballots can be accurately accounted for in order to ensure the integrity of the election.

As noted above, some locations were far busier than anticipated.

On general voting day, beginning around mid-afternoon staff became aware that some locations were running short of ballots. Five voting places temporarily ran out of ballots: Killarney Community Centre, Britannia Community Centre, Oakridge Centre, Hastings Elementary, and Renfrew Community Centre. Protocol in place for the PEO to follow should have prevented this, as the Election Office was to be notified when the residual ballot number dropped below 300 at any poll. However, likely due to the large numbers of voters, in this small number of polls (4% of total polls) this did not happen and there was a temporary pause in voting due to an absence of ballots.

The Vancouver Charter anticipates a situation such as this, and in conformance with sections 20 and 84 of the Vancouver Charter, the voting times were extended by the Chief Election Officer beyond the regular closing time (8pm) at those five locations.

It is also worth noting that voters in the voting line at any of the voting places across the city at 8 pm were entitled to vote, even though they may not have received the ballot prior to 8 pm. As such, there were many locations where voters cast their ballot after 8 pm. In total, 538 voters received and cast their ballots after 8 pm. Of those, a total of 39 voted at the five locations where voting had been extended. The remaining

499 voters who voted after 8 pm did so at the other locations across the city that did not have their voting time extended.

To mitigate this issue arising in a future election, staff will adjust the minimum number of ballots to be onsite and will track voting patterns more carefully through the Elections Office call centre to ensure that busy polls anticipate the delivery of ballots before there is any risk of running short.

## **6. Electronic Voters List concerns**

In September 2014, three individuals (including the media) expressed concern around privacy and voting integrity when using an electronic voters list. As indicated previously, an electronic voters list and the related real-time strike off are required to ensure voting integrity under a Vote Anywhere model.

In selecting the proponent, the City followed the standard procurement process used when issuing an RFP. The requirements were clearly set out in the RFP and City staff established evaluation criteria based on the requirements. The evaluation criteria were used in evaluating the proposals received.

Under sections 86 and 87 of the Charter, a voter may only vote once and in order to receive a ballot to vote, they must first sign a written declaration that they are entitled to vote in the election and they have not voted in the same election. Upon completion of this, the election official strikes off the person's name on the Voters List as having received a ballot. The election official then gives a ballot to the elector.

## **7. Voters List - Missing Areas (Musqueam Lands)**

The City was informed on November 12, 2014 - three days prior to Election Day (November 15<sup>th</sup>) - by a Musqueam Lands resident that his name was not on the Voters List. Investigation took place immediately by the election team and Elections BC. It was determined that Elections BC provided the City with a list of registered voters that excluded the registered voters living on the Musqueam lands.

As a result of this omission, the names of 1,069 resident electors whose names should have been on the Voters List were not on the list. The City's Voters List was supplemented with the 1,069 registered voters by Elections BC immediately.

Several actions were taken to ensure that the integrity of the election process was preserved. These actions included:

- distributing all election-related materials to the 1,069 registered voters in the Musqueam Lands that had been distributed to all other registered voters. This was completed within 24 hours of the matter coming to the attention of City election officials;
- speaking with the Chief of the Musqueam Band and the CAO to apprise him of this issue and the steps taken to address it;
- making the Supplemental Voters List available for public inspection alongside the Voters List originally received from Elections BC;
- providing the Supplemental List of the omitted voters' names to all candidates;
- making a statement to the public; and

- using the complete Voters List (including the Supplemental List) on general voting day, November 15, 2014.

These actions were shared with the Minister of Community, Sport, and Cultural Development on November 13. In a response from the Minister, she was supportive of the actions taken by the City and agreed that as a result of these actions the integrity and validity of the election would not be impacted.

## 8. Vote Tabulators

Following the election, one blogger expressed concern about the a) functioning of the vote tabulators for the 2014 Municipal Election and b) the number of over-voted ballots recorded by the tabulators.

### a. Vote Tabulator - Functioning

The City leased new vote tabulators through its standard procurement process. The new vote tabulators use the same technology as the previous tabulators (purchased in 1996) but have a number of features that were not available then.

The vote tabulators underwent extensive logic and accuracy testing both before and after the election. At the advance voting opportunities and on general election day, the tabulators were fully functioning and no technical issues were reported apart from minor issues such as ballot jams due to human operating error.

### b. Over-voted Ballots Concerns

Following the election, in December 2014, an active City Hall watcher and blogger expressed concern about the number of over-voted ballots for the Council race. Specifically, the individual noted the increase in 2014 in over-voted ballots when compared to 2011 and 2008.

In the 2014 municipal election there were 5,930 “over-votes” in the councillor race. This translates into 593 ballots as an over-vote of 10 was recorded for each over-voted council race. In 2011, there were 159 over-voted ballots for the council race. In 2008, the comparable figure was 134 over-voted ballots.

Over-voting is a common mistake made by voters. It occurs when the voter selects more candidates than positions available. For example, in Vancouver electors may select up to 10 councillors for office. If they mark more than 10 councillors - say eleven or twelve - that race is considered to be over-voted.

Often times, a voter is not aware that they have over-voted for a particular race. When the ballot containing an over-voted race is inserted into the vote tabulator for counting, the ballot is returned with an error message informing the voter that they have over-voted in a race. The election official informs the voter of the situation and asks the voter if they would like a replacement ballot. If the voter takes a replacement ballot (only the Presiding Election Officer may provide a replacement ballot), the original ballot is taken from the voter and marked as being spoiled. The voter then returns to a voting booth to complete the replacement ballot.

Some voters opt not to receive a replacement ballot. The voter is given the option by the election official to press an over-ride button on the vote tabulator. The original over-voted ballot is then read by the vote tabulator. All races on that ballot that are not over-voted are counted. However, the over-voted race is not counted as it would be impossible to ascertain which of the selected candidates should be assigned the vote.

It is difficult to say with accuracy why a voter over-votes and why they choose not to receive a replacement ballot to correct their error. One reason is that the ballot for the 2014 municipal election was long and detailed. In 2014, there were 119 candidates for 27 positions in four races plus three capital plan questions. In 2011 there were 93 candidates. It is possible that a voter would choose not to complete a replacement ballot when alerted to having over-voted due to the length of the ballot.

As the election staff prepare for the 2018 election, staff will be researching ways in which we can hopefully reduce the possibility of over-voting.

## **9. Voting Assistance for Seniors and Persons with Disabilities**

The Chief Election Officer received two complaints about the services provided to seniors and persons with disabilities during the 2014 Municipal Election. One complainant expressed dissatisfaction with the assistance provided in using the assistive device for voting. One other was concerned about accessible parking at a voting location.

During advance voting, for the first time ever, the City offered accessibility aids to assist persons with disabilities (including seniors) to mark their ballots. The devices included a sip and puff mechanism, audio system with headphones to read the ballot and a magnification unit to enlarge the print on the ballot. This information was communicated to our partners and agencies in that community who also provided their expertise on standards and guidelines.

In addition to the use of assistive devices, voters were able to either bring an individual to provide voting assistance or request for curbside voting. Curbside voting enabled less mobile voters to vote from their vehicle. In all instances, the voter's privacy and the secrecy of their ballot were paramount. Seniors and persons with disabilities were also able to take advantage of the vote-by-mail option.

As well, under the Election By-law, the City operated special voting opportunities at over 50 personal care homes, long term care facilities, special residential care facilities, and acute care hospitals registered under provincial legislation that have 50 or more persons who qualify as electors. While the voter turnout at these facilities has been historically very low (760 votes in 2014), it does provide a valuable service to those that would likely not have the opportunity to vote in the municipal election. The election team worked with facility administrators to encourage the vote-by-mail option for eligible residents at facilities that were not provided with a special voting opportunity.

Staff will conduct an assessment to identify specific needs and areas for improvement to increase participation for 2018.

### *Summary*

For the 2014 Vancouver Municipal Election, staff were committed to making a difference in reversing the trend of declining voter participation. As a result of much research and planning, staff developed an approach that involved:

- Removing as many barriers as possible and creating an easy and convenient voting experience that would improve voter engagement and participation in democracy; and
- Engaging youth and young people to develop a voting culture by providing opportunities for youth to experience democracy and see the importance of using their right to vote.

Staff explored diverse options, challenged past practice and envisioned possibilities. As a result, many new and innovative strategies were developed and implemented to increase voter turnout and citizen engagement for the 2014 Election. The strategies included:

- Making voting convenient and easy for voters by introducing a “Vote Anywhere” model that allows voters to vote at the most convenient voting location;
- Increasing voting opportunities by providing more advance voting hours and locations and providing conveniently located voting places on election day;
- Enhancing access for persons with disabilities and seniors;
- Engaging voters by providing easy to access election information and online tools to assist in voting as well as implementing innovative communication and social media strategies; and
- Strengthening the delivery of the election by enhancing the election official recruitment process, increasing the focus on youth recruitment, and through state-of-the art technology and equipment.

By most measures, it appears that the efforts undertaken by staff to encourage voters to actually get out and vote during the 2014 election were very successful. Overall voter turnout grew from 34.6% in 2011 to 43.4% in 2014. This was a 25.4% increase in turnout. While staff cannot say with certainty what specifically led to the significant increase in voter turnout, staff are confident that the strategies and initiatives implemented for the 2014 Vancouver Municipal Election contributed to the increase in voter turnout.

In terms of planning for the 2018 Vancouver Municipal Election, the successes and challenges experienced by staff in the 2014 election - as well as the 2014 voting metrics collected - will inform the election planning for 2018. Staff will continue to work towards a further increase in voter turnout and citizen engagement. Planning for the 2018 Municipal Election is currently underway.