



ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT

Report Date: May 26, 2017
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Meeting Date: June 28, 2017

TO: Standing Committee on Policy and Strategic Priorities
FROM: City Clerk
SUBJECT: Independent Election Task Force Report - Report Back

RECOMMENDATION

THAT Council receive this report for information.

REPORT SUMMARY

At its Regular Council meeting on January 24, 2017, the Independent Election Task Force presented their recommendations to Council. Staff were directed to review the report recommendations and report back to Council with an assessment by July 2017. This report is in response to this direction.

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 concurs with the foregoing.

REPORT

Background/Context

At its Regular Council meeting on January 20, 2016, Council approved the creation of an Independent Election Task Force with a broad mandate to:

- I. Survey candidates and parties as to their experience in the election;

- II. Review whether the allocation of resources from Council are sufficient to meet expectations in an election; and
- III. Create a plan for advancing previous Council directives to Staff regarding electoral procedures including:
 - a) Request to the Province for the ability to implement campaign finance reforms including limits to contributions and a ban on corporate and union donations;
 - b) Request to Province for ability to use proportional voting systems;
 - c) Request to Province to make anonymous balloting data available in open data format after an election;
 - d) Request to Province to conduct an online voting pilot; and
 - e) The priority actions from the Engaged City Task Force and the Healthy City Strategy including increasing voter engagement and turnout, targeting voter registration, possibly extending voting rights to permanent residents, and taking action on campaign finance reform.

On January 24, 2017, the Independent Election Task Force (IETF) presented their final report to Council (see [the IETF Final Report](#)). At that time, Council directed staff to report back with their assessment of the Independent Election Task Force's recommendations no later than July 2017.

Strategic Analysis

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 one advance voting opportunity although the Province allows the City to determine the second required advance voting opportunity by by-law, in the City's Election By-law No. 9070. In 2014, eight advance voting days were provided to voters.

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.

A. LEGISLATIVE CHANGES INSTITUTED BY THE PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT

In May 2010, the Local Government Elections Task Force provided the Province of BC and the Union of BC Municipalities (UBCM) with 31 recommendations for improvements to local elections to: ensure accountability; enhance transparency; strengthen compliance and enforcement; increase accessibility; and expand education and advice.

Most of the Task Force's recommendations were implemented through the *Local Elections Campaign Financing Act* (LECFA) passed by the Legislative Assembly in May 2014. Given the significant changes introduced for the 2014 local elections, government decided not to implement expense limits for 2014 but for the next local elections in 2018.

In October 2014, the Legislative Assembly of British Columbia appointed an all-party Special Committee on Local Elections Expense Limits. The Committee was tasked with providing recommendations to support the development of legislation and regulations necessary to implement expense limits for local elections in 2018. In June 2015, the Committee tabled its *Final Report* with recommendations to the Legislative Assembly on expense limits.

B. 2018 VANCOUVER CIVIC ELECTION - STATUS

Staff began planning for the 2018 election in mid-2016. The planning phase has intensified and is expected to be completed by October 2017. In November 2017, staff expect to begin implementing the election plan developed for the 2018 municipal election.

In order to ensure that changes to delivery of the 2018 municipal election are appropriately planned and addressed by City staff, it is important that all changes to the governing provincial legislation become law by November 2017. This is particularly important if the Province were to agree to allow municipalities to use a proportional voting system and/or allow the City of Vancouver to conduct an online voting pilot.

C. STAFF REVIEW OF INDEPENDENT ELECTION TASK FORCE RECOMMENDATIONS

The Independent Election Task Force made 14 recommendations to Council regarding the City of Vancouver municipal election. The recommendations were in relation to the following key areas:

- Voter Engagement and Turnout
- Proportional Voting System
- Campaign Financing
- Anonymous Balloting Data
- Online Voting

See Appendix A for a complete listing of the recommendations. What follows is a review, by staff, of each recommendation and an assessment of the feasibility of implementing the recommendation prior to the next general local election on October 20, 2018.

1. Voter Engagement and Turnout

It is always a goal of the Chief Election Officer that eligible voters exercise their democratic right to vote. For the 2014 election, staff made several efforts to encourage voters to actually

get out and vote. 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. 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.

For the 2018 election, staff will be expanding upon the strategies employed in 2014. In brief, the following enhancements are under development:

- **Enhance Vote Anywhere** - In 2014, Vote Anywhere was introduced for the first time allowing voters to vote at any location across the City. In 2018, staff will continue to offer Vote Anywhere, while using voting trends and learnings from 2014 to improve service delivery for voters at the voting place through improved communications between election headquarters and voting places.
- **Increasing outreach activities.** A dedicated election outreach lead has been hired to develop a comprehensive outreach strategy and to work closely with local community groups and non-profits to engage Vancouver residents. The focus of the campaign will be to inform all potential voters about the role of local government and the many opportunities to vote, as well as, engage with traditionally low voting communities in Vancouver.
- **Increasing voting opportunities.** In 2014, voters were provided with 768 hours of advance voting - a 280% increase over the 2011 election and a 320% increase over 2008. For 2018, staff are seeking to increase voting opportunities, while addressing concerns received in 2014 regarding a lack of advance voting opportunities in the Downtown Eastside, Grandview Woodlands and Mount Pleasant area.
- **Enhancing access** - In 2014, new online tools, such as the Plan Your Vote Tool, which enabled voters to create a voting plan (when, where and how they will vote) that could be brought to the voting place with them, were introduced. For 2018, staff will continue to focus on improving online election services and information for citizens, while optimizing the use of new digital and social media tools.
- **Increasing intelligence** - Staff are planning to implement voter surveys to gain a better understanding of the voter experience and barriers that voters may face in voting. Staff are also reviewing options to capture and release anonymous voting data post-election to develop a better understanding of voting trends and practices.

- **Engaging voters** - City Engagement staff, as presented in their report to Council on May 3, 2017, Public Engagement and Engaged City Task Force - 2016 Report Back and 2017 Work Plan, will be creating a Civic Academy - City Hall 101 as part of their engagement strategy to engage and educate citizens about the role, responsibilities and services of local government for more informed participation by citizens. A pilot Civic Academy program focussing on newcomer youth is anticipated to be implemented in 2018 with an objective of increasing civic participation among those who have experienced barriers to participation and to foster a civic culture of welcome.

IETF Recommendations

The Task Force acknowledged and supported the strategies undertaken by the City for the 2014 election. They found the strategies aligned with current literature surrounding the effective use of positive voting cues and best practices. The recommendations proposed by the Task Force are meant to complement the strategies employed by the City in 2014.

Their recommendations include the following actions to increase voter turnout:

- Increase the number of Vancouver residents who are eligible and are registered to vote by targeting voter registration and extending voter rights to permanent residents.
- Increase the number of registered voters who turn out to vote by increasing positive voting cues and employing best practices from other jurisdictions.

To facilitate much of the above, the Task Force recommends i) investing in additional elections outreach resources to develop partnerships and align strategies to deploy the Plan Your Vote tool with civic groups throughout the city, ii) implementing post-election polling to better understand the effectiveness of the different voter engagement tactics and tools, iii) increasing positive voting cues by equipping non-partisan civic groups to use their existing networks to augment overall positive voting cues throughout the City.

In addition, the Task Force recommends that the City pursue some changes to the voter registration rules and extending voter rights to permanent residents by requesting that the Province make the necessary changes to the *Vancouver Charter*. They further suggest that this action be undertaken through public consultation and working collaboratively with the Province to draft the proposed legislative changes.

Staff Response

As indicated previously, election staff are committed to the goal of eligible voters exercising their right to vote. In support of this goal, the City will endeavour to increase voter turnout and engagement through all fiscally responsible means. The Chief Election Officer is supportive of the recommendations put forward by the IETF and intends to continue with the enhancements implemented in 2014. Staff will be implementing the following recommendations as proposed by the Task Force:

- Expanding elections outreach resources for the reasons stated by the IETF. A dedicated staff member is focused on developing partnerships, aligning strategies, and increasing positive voting cues.

- Implementing election surveying (post-election and possible pre-election) to enhance staff's understanding of the various voter engagement tactics.

With respect to the Task Force's recommendation to modify the voter registration rules and extend voter rights to permanent residents, staff acknowledge that such a change requires provincial approval. Should Council wish to proceed with the public consultation and provincial collaboration as outlined by the IETF, staff recommend that this work be undertaken following the 2018 municipal election in order that the necessary staff resources can be dedicated to this work. As noted earlier in this report, in order to incorporate legislative changes into the 2018 election planning, it is important that the legislative changes be passed in 2017.

2. Proportional Voting

The City's current electoral system is referred to as a first past the post electoral system where voters vote at-large rather than by ward or constituency. The rules governing this system are set out in the *Vancouver Charter*. The rules governing other B.C. municipalities are set out in the Local Government Act.

The first past the post system is, by far, the predominant electoral system used in Canada - federally, provincially, and municipally. However, this was not always the case. Beginning in roughly 1910, several municipalities (e.g. Calgary, Edmonton, Regina, Winnipeg, Vancouver, and others) used a form of proportional representation called single transferable vote (STV) to elect Councillors. In fact, STV remained in use in Calgary until 1974. This system was also used to elect provincial legislators in Winnipeg, Edmonton and Calgary from roughly 1930 - 1950s.

In simple terms the first past the post system can be described as follows. A ballot lists the names of the candidates and the voter marks an X beside the name of a candidate. The winner is the candidate with the most Xs. Because the City of Vancouver has an at-large system, the candidates with the most Xs for each race (i.e. 1 Mayor, 10 Councillors, 7 Park Board Commissioners, and 9 School Board Trustees) are the winners. Under the existing first past the post system, candidates do not require a majority of votes - winning is simply a matter of which candidate receives the most votes.

There are many variations of the proportional electoral system - most notably, the Single Transferable Vote (STV) system, which is often used when electing multiple candidates to office. In this electoral system, voters rank candidates 1, 2, 3 and so on in order of preference. To be elected, a candidate must receive a certain quota which is the number of votes required to win and is calculated using the number of votes cast in the voting area and the number of seats to be won there. Excess votes beyond that quota are transferred to the next choice on voters' ballots. If no candidate has reached the quota, the last-place candidate is eliminated, and their votes are transferred to remaining candidates. Counting continues in this way through subsequent rounds until each seat is filled. This process can take many rounds to complete and cannot begin until all votes are counted. Therefore the results may not be known for some time after voting closes.

Under this system, victory goes to the candidate(s) who can assemble a broad base of support as it is unlikely that a candidate will reach the quota with voters' first choices. That means

candidates are motivated to reach out to the supporters of other candidates for their second- and third-choices.

Over the past several years, there has been a growing electoral reform movement calling for proportional representation. In 2003, the BC provincial government formed the BC Citizens' Assembly on Electoral Reform and tasked members with reviewing and recommending a model of proportional voting for BC that would be later be voted on in a referendum. In their final report, Making Every Vote Count, the Assembly recommended that a STV model be used in provincial elections. In 2005 and 2009, a referendum was held regarding the STV model. On both occasions, there was insufficient support for the model.

IETF Recommendations

The Task Force believe that the current at-large first past the post system in place at the local level does not embody the key democratic principle that all voters should be treated equally and are equally deserving of effective representation. They pointed to research that shows this system contributes to a lack of citizen engagement and public confidence in the electoral process.

They encourage the City of Vancouver to adopt a proportional representation voting system. Specifically, they are recommending the following:

- That the City move to adopt a proportional representation (PR) system by using a deliberative participatory process to produce a recommendation for a model of proportional representation voting optimally suited for use in municipal elections. The Task Force particularly recommends that the City establish a Citizens' Assembly for this purpose.
- That the City request that the provincial government allow the City to adopt the PR model that the Citizens' Assembly has recommended.

Staff Response

Staff are supportive of the need to carefully review all options for improving the existing electoral system. There is a significant body of research available and electoral reform is beginning to take hold in Canada as evidenced by the recent changes the Province of Ontario has made to allow municipalities in that province to elect councillors using ranked ballots. London, Ontario, which operates on a ward system, is expected to implement proportional voting in the upcoming local general elections in October 2018, with more Ontario municipalities likely to implement change in time for the 2022 local general election. Their experience could greatly inform any future decisions and actions taken in British Columbia.

Establishing a Citizen's Assembly will require significant staff time and financial resources to establish and manage the Assembly, including the design of the process as there are many different voting models that will need to be clearly and carefully communicated in an impartial way manner, selecting members, facilitating meetings and discussions, and managing the Assembly over the suggested year and a half timeframe to produce a final report.

As indicated earlier in this report, the staff that would support such an initiative are fully engaged in the planning and delivery of the 2018 municipal election. Toward that end, the

Chief Election Officer is focused on ensuring that this election is conducted in accordance with existing legislation and that the integrity of the election is uncompromised.

Therefore, should Council wish to pursue the work of a Citizens Assembly prior to the Province moving forward on possible electoral reform, staff recommend that Council establish a Proportional Representation Citizens' Assembly upon completion of the 2018 local general election.

3. Reform Campaign Financing

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 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

As indicated earlier in this report, given the significant changes introduced for the 2014 local elections, the Province decided not to implement expense limits for 2014 but for the next local elections in 2018.

In October 2014, the Legislative Assembly of British Columbia appointed an all-party Special Committee on Local Elections Expense Limits. The Committee was tasked with providing recommendations to support the development of legislation and regulations necessary to implement expense limits for local elections in 2018. In June 2015, the Committee tabled its Final Report with recommendations to the Legislative Assembly on expense limits and these recommendations were used to inform the development of legislation.

In February 2017, the Province adopted new regulations under Part 5.1 of LECFA that will be applied to the 2018 election that place limits on campaign expenses for elected officials. Formulas for how expense limits will be calculated are included in the regulation; however,

specific limits for each municipality will be established by the Province and communicated to the public by May 2018.

Staff would like to point out that in a letter to the Ministry of Community, Sport, and Cultural Development dated April 22, 2015, staff voiced their support for campaign contribution limits and bans on certain campaign contributions in addition to the then proposed campaign expenditure limits. This support was based on best practices as identified by the Organization of American States (OAS) and International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA), support the implementation of well-defined contribution and expenditure limits. The OAS and IDEA further recommend prohibiting contributions from anonymous donors, foreign donors, corporate, and media entities, as well as other legal entities such as unions. Staff believe it is important that both contributions and expenditures be regulated in order to ensure that the conduct of elections is truly transparent and equitable.

Various City Council resolutions have also recommended campaign contribution limits, and bans on certain campaign donations, including union and corporate donations.

IETF Recommendations

The Task Force members believe that there is a perceived conflict of interest that undermines public confidence in the electoral system when elected officials make decisions after receiving contributions directly or indirectly from those benefitting from the decisions - particularly in relation to decisions on developments. They pointed to various surveys that have found that a significant number of voters say they believe campaign contributions have an undue influence over elected candidates and the perceived links to contributors distort spending priorities of City Council.

The Task Force recognizes that currently there are no provisions limiting corporate and union contributions and that changes to campaign financing laws fall within provincial jurisdiction. Therefore, in the absence of current limitations, the Task Force recommended the following:

- Reinvigorate efforts to have *Vancouver Charter* amended by adding a question on local election financing to the 2018 Vancouver municipal ballot.
- Amend the City's Code of Conduct to require that any elected official withdraw from decision-making on any matters submitted to Council where the decision involves a corporation, union, non-profit society, or association that has directly or indirectly contributed to the elected official's election campaign.

Staff Response

Although limits have been put in place relating to campaign expenses, staff believe that it is important that campaign expenditures also be regulated in order to ensure that the conduct of elections is truly transparent and equitable. Staff are supportive of campaign financing reform and look forward to the Province implementing further campaign financing limits.

With respect to the recommendations put forward by the Task Force, staff do not believe that amending the City's Code of Conduct to prohibit the acceptance of election contributions is an effective solution. Staff would like to note numerous anticipated challenges with this approach.

First, the Code of Conduct is a City policy adopted for the purposes of good governance but it is not enforceable in court and the City Clerk has no legal authority under the *Vancouver Charter* to enforce the Code of Conduct policy. Political donations to candidates are also not considered to create a conflict of interest under the detailed regulations regarding conflict of interest already found in the *Vancouver Charter*.

Second, the Code applies to only Council members. It does not apply to Park Board Commissioners or School Board Trustees - all of whom are elected officials who make decisions and are the recipients of direct or indirect campaign contributions. Further, the Code does not apply to candidates running in a local election.

Third, there may be scenarios when minimum Council voting requirements would be lost if a majority of Councillors have a conflict of interest over a particular submission or matter. This could lead to the inability of Council to make decisions, affecting day-to-day City operation. Examples include grant requests, leasing agreements, real estate sales/purchases, procurement of goods/services, rezoning applications, advisory committee appointments, etc.

Fourth, staff have concerns about how effective the proposed restrictions would be in limiting corporate and union donations as there is a possibility corporations and unions may attempt to circumvent these restrictions by making donations through third-party intermediaries.

Based on the above reasons, staff are not supportive of any attempt to impose such limits through the Code of Conduct or any other City policy. To be effective, the limits must be enforceable and the rules must apply to all candidates - both currently elected and those seeking office, as well as the elector organizations.

With respect to the recommendation that a question concerning campaign financing limits be added to the 2018 Vancouver election ballot, it is Council's prerogative to seek the opinion of electors on such questions under section 184 of the *Vancouver Charter*. Voting is governed by the *Vancouver Charter*. In order to implement this recommendation for the 2018 election, staff believe that there would be a cost associated with educating voters prior to the election regarding any questions added to the ballot.

4. Anonymous Balloting Data

In past elections, the Chief Election Officer has reported on the total number of votes received by each candidate. The information is also available of voting location. Reporting on a ballot-by-ballot basis has not been available. In large part this was due to the fact that the City owned the vote tabulators that provide the accumulated data and these machines were purchased in approximately 1995. At that time, technology did not allow for reporting on a ballot-by-ballot basis. However, beginning in 2014, the City moved to leasing all of its voting equipment, including the ballot tabulators. Technology has advanced and a ballot-by-ballot information is now available.

IETF Recommendations

The Task Force points to the value in reporting on detailed per-ballot voting. They believe the information would help all involved in Vancouver elections to better understand voter

patterns and could possibly motivate reform to the existing voting system. The Task Force is proposing the following:

- All ballot machines leased for the 2018 election have the ability to store complete (anonymous) ballot data.
- Council direct staff to make anonymous balloting data available in an open format after the 2018 election.

Staff Response

Staff are largely supportive of this recommendation. However, it is imperative that the Chief Election Officer maintain the integrity of the election - which includes amongst other things, ensuring voter anonymity. Voter anonymity requires that it not be possible for an individual to reasonably associate a ballot with a voter. The more ballots counted by a voting machine, the less likely there is a concern for voter anonymity. However, if ballot-by-ballot data is available and the reporting of that data is in chronological order then it becomes easier to associate a voter with a ballot and, therefore, there is a loss of voter anonymity. With this in mind, staff are considering how anonymous balloting data can be provided in an open data format for the 2018 Vancouver election as recommended by the IETF without raising voter anonymity concerns.

It should be noted that there is a small pool of vendors that provide voting machines and there are a large number of municipalities in British Columbia and Ontario that will be leasing these machines in October 2018. The City has prepared a request for proposal (RFP) that sets out the City's required technical and service requirements. All vendors will be evaluated against the criteria to ensure that the City obtains the best product and service available in a fiscally responsible manner while ensuring election integrity. The RFP does set out the City's desire to lease equipment with the ability to produce anonymous balloting data in an appropriate format. While this ability is considered desirable and every attempt will be made to procure equipment with this ability, it is not a requirement for a successful bid.

5. Online Voting

In May 2011, Council approved in principle, pending approval of the Minister of Community, Sport and Cultural Development, the use of internet voting, on a pilot basis, for an advance voting period for the upcoming municipal general election in November 2011. Later that month, the B.C. government rejected the City's proposal. The Minister indicated that while the province is supportive of the concept of internet voting, significant legislative change would be required to establish internet voting in local government elections. The Minister further indicated that the *Vancouver Charter* does not allow for the extensive change to legislated election rules that would be required to establish an internet voting bylaw.

In 2012, the provincial government directed the creation of an independent panel (Independent Panel on Internet Voting) to review the potential of online voting in local and provincial elections. The Independent Panel submitted their final report to the Legislative Assembly of BC in February 2014. The report did not recommend against implementing universal internet voting in B.C; however, they did recommend that if online voting were to be implemented, the Province establish an independent technical committee as an oversight group and that the system of online voting be measured against principles established by the committee. The Province has not proceeded with this committee.

IETF Recommendations

The Task Force accurately indicates that online voting has been implemented in 97 of 414 municipalities in Ontario and 24 municipalities in Nova Scotia, including Halifax. They have pointed out that there is reasonable evidence that online voting can increase accessibility and convenience to voters and has some potential to decrease costs. They further pointed out that studies, to date, have not found that online voting leads to increased voter turnout and that there are some inherent risks with online voting related to internet security. The Task Force acknowledged that the City cannot proceed with online voting without approval from the Province via an amendment to the *Vancouver Charter*. Therefore, the Task Force made the following recommendations:

- That Council urge the Province to establish an independent technical committee, as recommended by the Independent Panel on Internet Voting.
- That Council advocate and support Union of British Columbia Municipalities (UBCM) resolutions and requests to the Province to authorize online voting.

Staff Response

Staff remain committed to implementing online voting as an additional channel for advance voting in future municipal elections. We support the recommendations put forward by the Task Force.

Implications/Related Issues/Risk

Financial

There are no financial implications at this time.

CONCLUSION

At its Regular Council meeting on January 24, 2017, the Independent Election Task Force presented their recommendations to Council. Staff were directed to review the report recommendations and report back to Council with an assessment by July 2017. This report is in response to this direction.

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INDEPENDENT ELECTION TASK FORCE PRIORITIZED LIST OF RECOMMENDATIONS

A. ADOPT A PROPORTIONAL VOTING SYSTEM

1. Move to adopt a proportional representation (PR) system by using a deliberative participatory process to produce a recommendation for a model of PR voting optimally suited for use in municipal elections. The Task Force particularly recommends that the City establish a Citizens' Assembly for this purpose.
2. Request that the provincial government allow the City to adopt the PR model that the Citizens' Assembly has recommended.

B. REFORM CAMPAIGN FINANCING

1. Re-invigorate efforts to advocate for *Vancouver Charter* amendments that would allow Vancouver to create its own rules for municipal election campaign financing.
2. Include a question on local election financing on the October 2018 municipal ballot.
3. Amend the City of Vancouver Code of Conduct for Council officials requiring elected officials to withdraw from the decision-making process in matters submitted to City Council from corporations, unions, non-profit societies, and associations that contribute directly or indirectly to their campaigns.

C. INCREASE VOTER TURNOUT

1. Employ best practices from other jurisdictions
 - i. Invest in additional election outreach staff resources, increase outreach, align strategies with civic group work, fund a designated elections social media team, expand reach of the 'Plan Your Vote' tool.*
 - ii. Create and implement post-election polling to be administered after each of the next three municipal elections.*
2. Extend voter rights to permanent residents
 - i. Request provincial government for changes in Vancouver Charter to allow permanent residents of Vancouver to vote in municipal elections.*
3. Target registration practices
 - i. Request legislation for Elections BC to adopt new voter registration practices by December 2018.*
4. Increase positive cues
 - i. Create citizen academies to increase political knowledge.*
 - ii. Create and administer grants for civic groups to hold voter education campaigns, registration campaigns, Get Out The Vote campaigns, and celebration events.*

**D. REQUEST TO THE PROVINCE TO MAKE ANONYMOUS BALLOTING
DATA AVAILABLE IN OPEN DATA FORMAT AFTER AN ELECTION**

1. Require that ballot scanning machines leased for all future elections have the ability to store complete ballot data.
2. Direct staff to make anonymous balloting data available in open data format after an election.

E. CONDUCT AN ONLINE VOTING PILOT

1. Urge the Province to establish an independent technical committee, as recommended by the Independent Panel on Internet Voting.
2. Advocate and support Union of British Columbia Municipalities (UBCM) resolutions and requests to the Province to authorize online voting.
3. Monitor online voting experiences in other Canadian municipalities.