

## COUNCIL MEMBERS' MOTION

### 5. Accessible Voting Options for Municipal Elections

Submitted by: Councillor Wiebe

#### WHEREAS

1. The City of Vancouver positions itself as one of the most accessible and inclusive cities in Canada and will be holding its Municipal election on October 15, 2022;
2. Voting is an inherent right and duty of all citizens, regardless of race, religion, gender, sexual preference, age or ability, and must therefore be accessible and inclusive to all, including for advance polling;
3. Elections BC has committed to improved accessibility of the electoral process for all eligible B.C. voters (<https://elections.bc.ca/voting/what-you-need-to-vote/voting-accessibility/>). Elections B.C. conducted a successful trial of telephone voting in May 2017 and subsequently implemented this initiative in the Provincial election of October 2020;
4. Section 71 of the *Vancouver Charter* authorizes City Council to make bylaws to create special voting opportunities to assist those who cannot vote;
5. The minutes for Persons with Disabilities Advisory Committee (PDAC) meeting held on February 1, 2018, state that, City of Vancouver elections staff "... Commented that due to time constraints, resources available, and current by-laws, telephone voting will not be in place for the 2018 election, but is on the list for the 2022 election" (<https://vancouver.ca/docs/council/pdad20180201min.pdf>);
6. Telephone voting will increase accessibility for people who are blind/visually impaired, homebound, and people who cannot mark the ballot independently;
7. On February 1, 2018, PDAC passed a motion on elections with several recommendations including telephone voting; and
8. Provincial legislation states that people may not cast a ballot in a local election via the internet or over the telephone.

#### THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED

- A. THAT Council directs staff to request that the Province amend the *Vancouver Charter* to provide the required authority for the City to

authorize telephone, mail-in and/or online voting in preparation for the 2022 municipal election understanding that telephone voting is a critical need.

- B. THAT Council request that the elections staff team present to the Persons with Disabilities Advisory Committee and the Seniors Advisory Committee on the status of accessible voting options for the citizens of Vancouver.
- C. THAT Council direct staff to request that the Province provide the City with the ability to validate voters' personal information, such as a personal health number, Vancouver Public Library card or other forms of authentication.

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