



COUNCIL REPORT

Report Date: April 6, 2026
Contact: Jason Twa
Contact No.: 604.873.7998
RTS No.: 18455
VanRIMS No.: 08-2000-20
Meeting Date: June 2, 2026
[Submit comments to Council](#)

TO: Vancouver City Council
FROM: Chief Election Officer
SUBJECT: Proposed Amendments to the Election By-law

Recommendations

- A. THAT Council approve, in principle, the proposed amendments to the Election By-law, generally as set out in Appendix A of this report.
- B. THAT the Director of Legal Services be instructed to bring forward for enactment an amending by-law substantially in the form of the by-law attached as Appendix A.

Purpose and Executive Summary

The report seeks Council approval for proposed amendments to the Election By-law, to align with the Province's recent amendments to the Vancouver Charter ("VC"). Staff are also proposing a by-law amendment to enable election staff to review and process mail ballot applications as they are received, while maintaining the requirement that ballots are issued only after the ballot form is finalized. Finally, staff are also proposing additional Special Voting Opportunities to permit voters that require the use of an assisted voting device to cast their ballot at the Election Office. If approved these amendments would be incorporated into the 2026 municipal election.

Council Authority/Previous Decisions

The authority for conducting an election in the City of Vancouver is set out in the [Vancouver Charter](#) and the Election By-law. The Province regulates campaign financing through the [Local Elections Campaign Financing Act](#).

Past Council-approved amendments to the Election By-law:

- April 12, 2022, [Report to amend By-law 9070 re: mail ballots and special voting](#)
- June 6, 2018, [Report to amend By-law 9070 re: the order of names on the ballot](#)
- April 18, 2018, [Report to amend By-law 9070 re: special voting & housekeeping](#)

City Manager's Comments

The City Manager concurs with the foregoing recommendations.

Context and Background

The [Miscellaneous Statutes Amendments Act \(Bill 13\)](#), enacted by the Province in May 2025, included various amendments to the VC related to local elections. Some amendments came into effect after approval, and others went into effect at the beginning of this year. This report concerns the changes that impact the Election By-law. For an overview of the sections of Miscellaneous Statutes Amendments Act (Bill 13) that relate to general local elections in B.C., but do not directly impact the Election By-law, see Appendix C.

Staff are also proposing two amendments to section 4.3A of the Election By-law. The first will correct the title from “Chief Election Official” to “Chief Election Officer”, and the other will enable review and processing of mail ballot applications received prior to the 18th day before general voting day. The second change is intended to improve administrative efficiency and operational planning by allowing election officials to confirm voter eligibility earlier in the process. The amendment does not alter the requirement that mail ballots may only be issued once the form of ballot has been finalized, in accordance with the VC. This amendment maintains the integrity of the voting process while enabling more timely and effective preparation for mail ballot issuance.

Staff are also proposing an amendment to section 3.5 of the Election By-law to permit voters who require the use of an assisted voting device to cast their ballot at the Election Office. Centralizing the assisted ballot marking device ensures that trained staff are available to support its use and provide a quiet, accessible environment for voters. Given the infrequent historical use of assisted voting devices, locating the equipment at the Election Office allows staff to maintain proficiency, reduce operational risks, and ensure more effective use of a specialized and costly resource. Assisted voting devices support voter independence through features such as audio ballots with headphones for voters who are visually impaired, and paddles or sip-and-puff devices for voters with dexterity impairments.

Staff are also proposing a housekeeping amendment to section 7.2 (b) of the Election By-law to reflect that the City Clerk may post disclosure statements on the city's website or provide a link to the information on the Elections B.C. website.

Discussion

Enacting the proposed amendments will bring the Election By-law into alignment with the VC and the changes initiated by the Province and will also implement local administrative improvements intended to enhance accessibility and operational effectiveness. Failure to approve the amendments will result in a misalignment with the VC. In addition, not approving the discretionary amendments would limit the City's ability to implement operational improvements that support accessible voting and efficient election administration.

Financial Implications

There are no financial implications.

Legal Implications

If the Recommendations in this report are adopted by Council, the Election By-law will be amended to better reflect recent amendments to the VC, as set out in in Appendix A.

* * * * *

APPENDIX A**BY-LAW NO. XXXX****A By-law to amend Election By-law No. 9070**

THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF VANCOUVER, in a public meeting, enacts as follows:

1. This By-law amends or adds the indicated provisions of the Election By-law.
2. Council amends section 1.2,
 - (a) by adding the following definition in correct alphabetical order:

““authorized drop-off location” means a location specified by the chief election officer;”
 - (b) by repealing the definition of “secrecy sleeve” and replacing with the following:

““secrecy enclosure” means a secrecy envelope, secrecy sleeve or other means of keeping a ballot secret;”
3. Council amends subsection 3.5 (b) by striking “, or” and replacing it with “; or”.
4. Council amends subsection 3.5 (c) by striking the “.” and replacing it with “; or”.
5. Council inserts new subsections 3.5 (d) and (e) as follows:

“(d) have a disability, illness or injury that significantly affects their ability to mark their ballot independently and require the assistance of a ballot marking device, or

(e) have had their personal information obscured or omitted from the voters lists in accordance with subsection 35 (10) of the Vancouver Charter.”.
6. Council strikes section 4.3A and substitutes the following:

“4.3A If the chief election officer authorizes applications for mail ballots to be submitted prior to the 18th day before general voting day in accordance with section 4.2, all applications received prior to the 18th day may be processed, but no mail ballot is to be issued until the form of ballot has been finally determined in accordance with this By-law and the Vancouver Charter.”.
7. Council amends subsection 4.5 (d) by inserting the words “or an authorized drop-off location” after the words “address specified”.
8. Council strikes section 7.1 and substitutes the following:

“Availability of nomination documents

7.1 From the time of the delivery of any nomination documents to the chief election officer until 30 days after the declaration of the election results, the City Clerk is to:

- (a) make all or part of the nomination documents available for public inspection at City Hall during regular office hours on request by any person;
 - (b) post all or part of the nomination documents on the public website, except that the place of residence, e-mail address and other personal information on the nomination documents may be redacted; and
 - (c) ensure that before inspecting nomination documents available under subsection 7.1(a), a person other than a city officer or employee acting in the course of duties must sign a statement that the person will not use the information included in them except as permitted under the *Vancouver Charter*.”
9. Council amends subsection 7.2 (b) by inserting the words “post documents on the public website or” before the words “ensure a link”.
10. A decision by a court that any part of this By-law is illegal, void, or unenforceable severs that part from this By-law, and is not to affect the balance of this By-law.
11. This By-law is to come into force and take effect on the date of its enactment.

ENACTED by Council this _____ day of _____, 2026

Mayor

City Clerk

APPENDIX B

Redline Version of Proposed Amendments to Election By-law No. 9070

Definitions

1.2 In this By-law:

"authorized drop-off location" means a location specified by the chief election officer;

~~"secrecy sleeve" means a device into which a person may place a ballot so as to conceal the names of candidates and marks made by the elector;~~

"secrecy enclosure" means a secrecy envelope, secrecy sleeve or other means of keeping a ballot secret;

Voting at special voting opportunities

3.5 Electors may only vote at a special voting opportunity if they:

- (a) have a disability, illness or injury that significantly affects their ability to vote at another voting opportunity, or the elector is largely confined to their residence, or the elector is a resident caregiver to such an elector; or
- (b) are users of an emergency shelter or social service centre; or
- (c) are residents or patients of a hospital, care facility or similar facility or institution located in the City that has beds for 30 or more persons who qualify as electors; or
- (d) have a disability, illness or injury that significantly affects their ability to mark their ballot independently and require the assistance of a ballot marking device, or**
- (e) have had their personal information obscured or omitted from the voters lists in accordance with subsection 35 (10) of the Vancouver Charter.**

Early mail ballot package

~~4.3A—If the chief election official authorizes applications for mail ballots to be submitted prior to the 18th day before general voting day in accordance with section 4.2, all applications received prior to the 18th day are not to be processed in accordance with section 4.3 until the form of ballot has been finally determined in accordance with this By-law and the Vancouver Charter.~~

4.3A If the chief election officer authorizes applications for mail ballots to be submitted prior to the 18th day before general voting day in accordance with section 4.2, all applications received prior to the 18th day may be processed, but no mail ballot is to be issued until the form of ballot has been finally determined in accordance with this By-law and the Vancouver Charter.

Sealing and delivering mail ballot

4.5 After marking the ballot, the elector must:

- (a) place the ballot in the secrecy envelope provided, and then seal the secrecy envelope;
- (b) place the secrecy envelope in the certification envelope, complete and sign the certification printed on such envelope, and then seal the certification envelope;
- (c) place the certification envelope, together with a completed elector registration application, if required, in the outer envelope, and then seal the outer envelope; and
- (d) mail or deliver the outer envelope and its contents to the chief election officer at the address specified **or an authorized drop-off location** so that the chief election officer receives it no later than the close of voting on general voting day.

Availability of nomination documents

~~7.1 — From the time of the delivery of any nomination documents to the chief election officer until 30 days after the declaration of the election results, the City Clerk is to:~~

- ~~(a) — make nomination documents available for public inspection at City Hall during regular office hours on request by any person; and~~
- ~~(b) — post nomination documents on the public website, except that the place of residence, e-mail address and other personal information on the nomination documents may be redacted.~~

7.1 From the time of the delivery of any nomination documents to the chief election officer until 30 days after the declaration of the election results, the City Clerk is to:

- (a) make **all or part of the** nomination documents available for public inspection at City Hall during regular office hours on request by any person;
- (b) post **all or part of the** nomination documents on the public website, except that the place of residence, e-mail address and other personal information on the nomination documents may be redacted; and
- (c) **ensure that before inspecting nomination documents available under subsection 7.1(a), a person other than a city officer or employee acting in the course of duties must sign a statement that the person will not use the information included in them except as permitted under the Vancouver Charter.**

7.2 From the time any information in a disclosure statement related to the City of Vancouver is made available on the Elections BC authorized internet site pursuant to section 58 (1) (a) of the *Local Elections Campaign Financing Act*, the City Clerk shall:

- (a) make that information available for public inspection at City Hall during regular office hours on request; and
- (b) **post documents on the public website or** ensure a link is created on the City of Vancouver website to connect to the information related to the City of Vancouver provided on the Elections BC authorized internet site.

APPENDIX C

**Circular from Ministry of Housing and Municipal Affairs – Miscellaneous Statutes
Amendments Act (Bill 13) related to Local Elections**



Ministry of Housing and
Municipal Affairs

Local Government Division
PO Box 9838 Stn Prov Govt
800 Johnson St, 6th Floor
Victoria BC V8W 9T1

CIRCULAR

May 30, 2025

CLIFF: 186662

To: All Local Government Chief Administrative Officers and Corporate Officers

Re: [Miscellaneous Statutes Amendments Act \(Bill 13\)](#)

As you may be aware, on May 13, 2025, Bill 13 was passed in the Legislature. The Bill amends various sections in the *Local Government Act*, *Vancouver Charter*, and *Local Elections Campaign Financing Act*, with consequential amendments to the *Islands Trust Act* and *School Act*, as those acts relate to local elections. The Bill also amends the *Wildfire Act*, *Greater Vancouver Sewerage and Drainage District Act*, *Housing Supply Act*, *Professional Governance Act*, and the *Wildlife Act*.

The purpose of this circular is to provide an overview of the changes made to legislation regarding local government elections. **These amendments will not come into effect until the 2026 general local elections.** This means any by-elections or assent votes that occur prior to the 2026 general local elections will not be affected.

We encourage local governments to review the amendments and consider how they will incorporate the changes into local government business and general local election planning for 2026.

Submitting Nomination Documents

Candidates will now be allowed to submit their nomination documents to the Chief Election Officer in-person, by mail, by fax, or by email, as long as it is received by the end of the nomination period. As part of this amendment, the requirement for an “original” copy is repealed.

Candidate Endorsement Documents

As a means to streamline the candidate endorsement process, elector organizations will no longer be required to submit separate candidate endorsement documents. Instead, candidate endorsement will be included with the candidate nomination documents and will require signed consent statements for the endorsement by the candidate and the authorized principal officer on behalf of the elector organization.

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Endorsement documents received by local governments from elector organizations and candidates prior to the 2026 general local elections must be retained by the local government for five years. For example, endorsement documents received in the 2022 general local elections must still be retained until 2027.

Name of Elector Organization on the Ballot

Prior to changing an elector organization's name on a ballot to a shorter name, abbreviation or acronym than what is on register of elector organizations, the Chief Election Officer must first consult with both the authorized principal official of the elector organization and the BC chief electoral officer (Elections BC).

The elector organization must also file a notice of the Chief Election Officer's use of the shorter name, abbreviation, or acronym with Elections BC as soon as practicable. If an elector organization fails to provide this notice to Elections BC within 60 days of the change, the elector organization may be suspended as per the rules under the *Local Elections Campaign Financing Act*.

Candidate Privacy

Several changes have been made to election publishing requirements to better protect candidates' personal information, such as their telephone number or address, including a requirement to redact this information in public notices and nomination documents published online. The name of the jurisdiction where the candidate resides will be included in public notices and in online nomination documents.

As a result of changes to the *Local Elections Campaign Financing Act*, Elections BC will also be required to redact or delete candidate personal information when making candidate financial disclosure statements and related supplementary reports available to the public both online and in person. The personal telephone numbers, mailing addresses, and residential addresses of candidates will no longer be publicly disclosed by Elections BC.

Electors may view unredacted nomination documents at the local government office, however, an elector must sign a declaration that they will not use the information included in them except for purposes of the *Local Government Act*, *Vancouver Charter*, or *Local Elections Campaign Financing Act*.

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Mail Ballot Voting

There have been several amendments to the rules regarding mail ballot voting, including:

- Mail ballot voting packages can now include secrecy sleeves or other types of secrecy enclosures, rather than just secrecy envelopes, for more efficient processing and counting after the close of voting. The type of secrecy enclosure is at the discretion of the Chief Election Officer.
- Chief Election Officers may now specify authorized drop-off locations where electors may return mail ballots, as another option to having an elector return the ballot via mail to the Chief Election Officer at the local government office. If a Chief Election Officer decides to use this authority, they must include the location and office hours for each authorized drop-off location in the notice of an opportunity to vote by mail.
- An outdated reference to “entitled to vote by mail” was removed as it is no longer applicable as a result of legislative changes made in 2021.

Marking the Ballot

Electors can now mark the ballot to clearly indicate the candidate or candidates for whom they wish to vote for, in accordance with the instructions provided for the voting opportunity. This means election officials will no longer be required to evaluate whether the mark used to indicate the voter’s choice is a “cross” or a “tick” and placed in a particular location on the ballot when assessing the ballot for acceptance. Ballots that clearly indicate a choice for a candidate or candidates must now be accepted.

Municipal Appointments Due to Insufficient Candidates

Amendments to section 100 of the *Local Government Act* have clarified that appointments made due to insufficient candidates only apply to municipal councils and neighbourhood constituencies. The requirement that an appointee must be a resident of the municipality or neighbourhood constituency has also been expanded to include neighbouring jurisdictions (i.e., jurisdictions that border the municipality, including electoral areas, other municipalities, treaty lands, or other neighbourhood constituencies within a municipality, as applicable).

As was already set out in legislation, where there are insufficient candidates for a regional district electoral area or Islands Trust local trust area, the term of office of the incumbent continues. The incumbent may resign if they do not want to continue holding office, which would trigger a by-election.

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Representation Continuity for Electoral Areas and Local Trust Areas After an Invalid Election

New sections have been added to the *Local Government Act* that will provide regional district boards the authority to temporarily appoint an acting electoral area director in the event that:

- the court declares an office vacant due to an invalid election or because the elected candidate is not qualified to hold office; or
- the elected candidate affected by an application to challenge the validity of the election or their qualifications to hold office renounces their claim to the office.

The declaration of vacancy triggers a by-election under section 54 of the *Local Government Act*. The temporary appointment option allows for continued representation of an electoral area from the time when the vacancy occurs until the successor takes office following the by-election.

As part of these new provisions, an acting electoral area director will also be required to appoint an acting alternate director within 50 days, who will hold the office of the alternate director until the electoral area director successor takes office.

This amendment also applies to the *Islands Trust Act* and provides the Islands Trust Council with the same power to temporarily appoint up to two acting local trustees. For clarity, these new provisions do not create an alternate local trustee office.

Other administrative changes

- Boards of education will be required to pass a bylaw to identify the places that are to be public notice posting places. This ensures they can fulfill the applicable public notice requirements for trustee elections.
- More explicit language was added to the Minister's order- and regulation-making authority to clarify that the Minister may make orders related to an irregularity or procedural error in the administration or conduct of an election or assent voting, and that both orders and regulations can have retroactive effect.
- The status of an elected candidate impacted by a court application regarding the validity of the person's election has been clarified under section 157 of the *Local Government Act* and section 119 of the *Vancouver Charter*.
- It has been clarified that an alternate director ceases to hold office if their appointing electoral area director ceases to hold office due to a court declaration of an invalid election or that the candidate was not qualified to hold office, another candidate is declared elected, or the electoral area director renounces their claim to office under section 153 of the *Local Government Act*.

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If you have questions regarding the amendments related to local elections legislation, please contact our Governance and Structure Branch by phone at: 250-387-4020 or by email at: LGGovernance@gov.bc.ca.

This circular is provided for information only and should not be considered legal advice or a substitute for legal advice.

Updated resources will be available on our [website](#) closer to the 2026 general local elections.

Yours truly,



Tara Faganello
Assistant Deputy Minister
Local Government Division
Ministry of Housing and Municipal Affairs