

THE CORPORATION OF THE
CITY OF WHITE ROCK
CORPORATE REPORT



DATE: November 21, 2022
TO: Mayor and Council
FROM: Tracey Arthur, Director, Corporate Administration
SUBJECT: 2022 Local Government Election

RECOMMENDATION

That Council receive the November 21, 2022, corporate report from the Director of Corporate Administration, titled "2022 Local Government Election" as required under the *Local Government Act*.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In accordance with the *Local Government Act* this corporate report is presented to submit the official election results and the ballot account pertaining to the 2022 Local Government Election.

There were 5,339 eligible voters who voted in the 2022 Local Government Election for a Mayor and six (6) Councillors including the Advance Voting Opportunities, Special (Mobile) Voting and Mail Ballots. The official results are attached to and form part of this corporate report as Appendix A and Appendix B.

ANALYSIS

There were three (3) voting locations on general voting day: Centennial Arena, White Rock Community Centre and the Kent Street Activity Centre. Advance voting was held at the White Rock Community Centre, October 5, 6 and 11 and all voting locations were open from 8:00 a.m. until 8:00 p.m.

A Special Voting Opportunity (Mobile Vote) was held October 12, 2022 at the Evergreen Baptist Care Home from 9:00 a.m. until 12:00 p.m. (noon).

In accordance with the City's Election Bylaw No. 2426 the Provincial Voter's list was utilized for the election. A total of 5,339 voters out of 17,378 eligible voters (those included on the Provincial Voter's list plus new registrations) cast their ballot which represents a voter turnout resulting at 31%. There were 372 new registrations processed compared to the 2018 election where there were 340.

City of White Rock Election Voter Turnout Statistics

	2002	2005	2008	2011	2014	2018	2022
% Voter Turnout	48%	39%	37%	30%	33%	38%	31%
Votes on General Voting Day	5,637	5,387	4,667	3,747	3,556	4,502	3,472
Votes at the Special Vote (Mobile Vote) *	112	55	93	54	91	85	8
Votes at the Advanced Poll	421	649	735	740	1,340	1,549	1,717
Mail-In Ballots	N/A	N/A	26	100	98	140	142

Advanced voting this election year was again higher by 168 votes (209 votes in 2018). The turnout statistics reveal that voters took advantage of all the voting opportunities, with the exception of the mobile vote, which was down to only eight (8) votes. This should be a consideration for upcoming elections where utilization of mail ballots instead for the entire Evergreen facility could be considered due to the drastic drop in mobile voting at this site. Staff worked with the Evergreen Heights Assisted Living staff and there were 41 mail ballot applications dropped off and 31 of those ballots were returned.

Snapshot of 2018/2022 Voter Turnout in Surrounding Municipalities

Municipality	% Voter Turn Out		Increase/Decrease from 2018 to 2022
	2018	2022	
Delta	43%	30%	13% Decrease
Langley City	25%	18%	7 % Decrease
Langley Township	30%	27%	3% Decrease
Port Coquitlam	28%	18%	10% Decrease
Port Moody	37%	36%	1 % Decrease
North Vancouver City	34%	23%	11% Increase
Surrey	33%	35%	2% Increase

Mail Ballots

Voters were also given the option of using a mail-in ballot.

There were 222 eligible voters who requested to receive a mail ballot. 157 ballot packages were returned to City Hall prior to the close of election, fifteen (15) of those returned packages were not accepted (due to incomplete forms, incorrectly or not filling out certification envelope etc.). 142 ballots from this process were cast. The Chief Election Officer began mailing these ballots on September 27, 2022 using Canada Post at an approximate cost of \$225. In accordance with past practice contact was also made with the Peace Arch Hospital, White Rock Seniors Village and Evergreen Heights Assisted Living where staff dropped off mail in ballot application forms and worked with the facility staff for those wanting to vote. Once the ballot packages were complete, staff were contacted to pick them up.

Non-Resident Property Electors

The city mailed 2,203 letters to potential Non-Resident Property Electors, reminding them of their right to vote (a single vote per property in this circumstance). The letter informed them of the process and gave them the necessary forms to be completed.

Election Advertising

There were 11,426 voter information postcards mailed to City of White Rock residents during the last week of September. Information on the postcard included voting dates, mail in ballot opportunity, registration information, contact information and a link for the city website.

From the postcard design, posters and seven (7) large posters/ads were created (bus shelters and city owned kiosks). The posters were placed at city facilities and at dozens of businesses along Marine Drive, Five Corners and up Johnston Road from September 22 onward. Bus shelter posters were posted September 19 – October 14. There were also social media “boosted” posts completed October 3, 4, 5 12, 14 and 15. Additional advertising was done in the Peace Arch News (in addition to the legislated election notice requirements) with ¼ page advertising placed in the October 6 and 13 editions.

Election Results

The preliminary election results were completed by 9:35 p.m. This timing did take a bit longer than the previous election due to a difficulty in the program to read the memory cards but once it was up and running the results were tabulated quickly. A significant advantage of using automated vote tabulators is that the machine detects over-voted ballots or ballots that were mismarked and thereby provide the voter with the opportunity to check their ballot and obtain a replacement if they had inadvertently spoiled it. With the previous manual count system after the close of voting, inadvertently spoiled ballots were rejected and had to be set aside. Those voters were never given the opportunity to correct their error and were unaware their ballots could not be counted.

The official election results were declared on Wednesday, October 19, 2022 at 3:00 p.m. The results including ballot account information were placed on the city website directly following the declaration.

Chief Election Officer

The City hired a consultant as the Chief Election Officers (CEO) to perform the duties of the election. This added an additional cost of \$21,000 (including expenses such as a required cell phone) however it is a legitimate way to keep the election process at arms-length from the city’s Administration Department. The many inquiries from the public and candidates themselves were handled through the appointed CEO.

Election Staff

There were forty eight (48) staff hired to help carry out the election. Training sessions were mandatory for all election staff and were done to ensure that everyone working at the election understood their responsibilities and role for the day. Due to the uncertainty of potential increase in illnesses related to COVID-19, included in this number are ten (10) additional staff that undertook the training in order to be prepared to work should they be needed.

Campaign Signage

Campaign signage posed some confusion and added additional work for the city’s Bylaw Enforcement staff. In October 2021, the City had amended the sign bylaw to help address previous concerns regarding campaign signage regarding road ends and clarification on the permitted size of signage. Further consideration of this bylaw is suggested regarding road ends. Appendix D proposes an amendment to the City’s Sign Bylaw to include clarification of public

right of ways as suggested by the City's Bylaw Enforcement staff. There was also confusion in regard to sight lines. The bylaw currently contains the following wording in this regard as follows:

Any Political Sign which obstructs access or visibility for traffic or is placed on public property other than provided for in this section will be removed by the City.

Many of the signs of issue in this circumstance were the larger signs. It is believed that the utilization of the larger signs had increased from past elections. It is suggested for the next election that Bylaw Enforcement staff be invited to speak at the candidate session, due to their experience in this area, as they can inform candidates on signage and address questions at that time to reduce signage issues that arise during the campaign.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The 2022 election was slightly over budget at \$81,475.88 (over by \$1,475.88). This included the hire of the consultant, rental of the vote tabulation machine equipment, supplies and staffing (there were additional staff trained to address any impact from potential illness from COVID-19). In addition more funds were spent in some election advertising including a new design of election branding (Appendix C).

Included in the original budget were funds to be paid by the Surrey School District in the amount of \$5,000 in order for the City of White Rock to conduct the additional portion of the election for one (1) School Trustee to represent White Rock. As this was done by acclamation the amount collected was at a reduced rate of \$3,500. These funds were still required as the City spent funds for initial election advertising of voter registration and nomination period and time and materials for the preparation of nomination packages for the School Trustee position.

Staff have anticipated rising costs for the election process and have included an increase of 8% (2% annually) to the overall election budget in preparation for the next scheduled election to be held in 2026. Additional funds will be placed in the budget over the next four years to accommodate rising costs.

CONCLUSION

In accordance with the requirements of the *Local Government Act*, the official results of the City of White Rock 2022 General Local Election are hereby submitted to the City of White Rock Council.

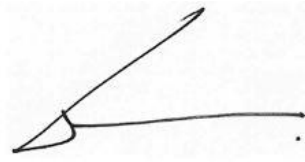
Respectfully submitted,



Tracey Arthur
Director of Corporate Administration

Comments from the Chief Administrative Officer

This corporate report is prepared in accordance with the *Local Government Act*.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Guillermo Ferrero', is written over a light gray grid background.

Guillermo Ferrero
Chief Administrative Officer

- Appendix A: 2022 Determination of Official Results including Ballot Account
- Appendix B: 2022 Declaration Notice of City of White Rock Municipal Election Results
- Appendix C: Election Branding, Advertising Examples
- Appendix D: White Rock Sign Bylaw, 2010, No. 1923, Amendment No. 5, Bylaw, 2022, No. 2449