

2010 Election Community Engagement Program

Date:	November 16, 2009
To:	Executive Committee
From:	City Clerk's Office
Wards:	All
Reference Number:	

SUMMARY

This report provides an overview of the 2010 Election Community Engagement Program with an emphasis on improving the voters' list, initiatives to engage eligible electors with special focus on tenants and the implications of Bill 212 (*Good Government Act, 2009*).

This initiative is being led by the City Clerk's Office in partnership with many internal and external groups, stakeholders, and community organizations. In addition, the City Clerk's Office is working jointly with Municipal Property and Assessment Corporation (MPAC) to ensure more tenants are included on the voters' list.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The City Clerk recommends that City Council receive this report for information.

Financial Impact

The funds for the Community Engagement Program are included in the 2010 election event budget, which forms part of the City Clerk's 2010 Recommended Operating Budget. Should Council direct staff to undertake additional activities, there may be supplementary costs associated with additional programming.

The Deputy City Manager and Chief Financial Officer has reviewed this report and agrees with the financial impact information.

ISSUE BACKGROUND

During the 2006 municipal election, even though more individuals filed nominations and participated as candidates than ever before, there were 102,000 fewer electors who voted than in the previous election.

Preparation of the 2006 voters' list presented an onerous challenge as, for the first time MPAC (the agency responsible for preparation of the list) identified any individual in its database whose citizenship or age could not be confirmed. For the City of Toronto, this meant that 276,682 individuals (16 percent) on the preliminary list of electors may not have been eligible electors. The City Clerk implemented a comprehensive "Unconfirmed Voter Strategy" to contact these individuals to confirm their qualifications. The response rate of the campaign was only 13 percent (30,170 returned forms). To ensure the integrity of the election, the remaining 246,000 names were removed from the list.

After the 2006 municipal election the City Clerk made the following recommendations to transform and expand the outreach program:

- change the focus from a communications program to a community engagement program;
- explore options for delivering key election messages (e.g. social media avenues and additional "direct marketing" strategies); and
- engage community, cultural, youth and tenant groups to participate fully in the election.

COMMENTS

1. Community Engagement Program

The Community Engagement Program strategy will focus on:

- increasing the accuracy and currency of the voters' list;
- communicating the legislative changes introduced in Bill 212 (*Good Government Act, 2009*); and
- engaging individuals and communities in the electoral process by broadening their commitment and understanding to democracy, improving accessibility, as well as offering opportunities to participate.

The objectives of the program are to:

- increase public awareness of how to get on the voters' list and the importance of doing so, especially for the tenant population;
- inform eligible voters on new identification requirements and the new date for the 2010 election set out in Bill 212;
- develop internal and external partnerships that focus on providing awareness, encouraging participation and increasing accessibility to groups such as tenants, persons with disabilities, shelter users, seniors, youth, new voters and new Canadian citizens; and
- apply traditional and non-traditional marketing and communications methodologies as well as personal connections and face-to face dialogue in order

to create awareness among City of Toronto residents, eligible electors, potential candidates, voting place staff, the media and other audiences.

Appendix 'A' gives an overview of the various initiatives and partnerships.

2. Voters' List Strategy

One of the key elements providing legitimacy to an election is an accurate, current and reliable voters' list. This is an issue that all election administrators face.

Under the *Municipal Elections Act, 1996 (MEA)*, MPAC is responsible for enumerating and providing the Clerk with the Preliminary List of Electors (PLE) containing the names of eligible electors. Once the PLE has been delivered to the Clerk, section 22 of the *MEA* requires the Clerk to correct any "obvious errors" in the PLE (checking for missing streets, multi-residential buildings and voting subdivisions). Once the Clerk corrects the PLE for obvious errors it becomes the voters' list for the City's elections.

There are unique and demanding challenges in correcting errors in the PLE and ensuring the accuracy of the voters' list in large urban municipalities, some of which are:

- 17% of elector information changes yearly;
- data collection yields low response rates to requests for information (approximately 20% from tenants compared to 40-50% from homeowners);
- an increasing number of people reluctant to have their name on a public list; and
- MPAC has not had full access to birth and death information (Bill 212 goes some way to altering that).

Compounding these challenges are the tight timelines set out in the legislation for the preparation and production of the voters' list. Appendix 'B' identifies the process and timelines involved.

If enacted, Bill 212 will give MPAC access to vital statistics records in preparation of the preliminary list of electors. In addition, the Clerk will be able to access a wide range of databases for use in correcting obvious errors on the preliminary list. Both of these amendments are intended to improve the accuracy of the list.

While MPAC has the primary responsibility for the enumeration process and compilation of the list, the City Clerk's Office has made it a priority to work closely with them to engage electors long before the PLE is delivered to the City. Staff have met with MPAC staff several times to collaborate and advocate for an improved list and will continue to work closely on joint strategies.

3. MPAC Initiatives

The City Clerk's Office is working with MPAC on activities to increase the availability of MPAC's occupancy questionnaire in City facilities and to educate on the importance of completing this form.

MPAC intends to undertake a broader education campaign in 2010 than was the case in past elections. For example, it is looking to provide additional translated materials on its web site and has agreed to participate in the City's candidate information sessions for the 2010 election.

A partnership has been developed between Elections Canada, Elections Ontario and MPAC in the form of data-sharing agreement; the agreement will help improve data accuracy, eliminate duplicate names and improve the overall quality of the voters' list.

Between April and June, MPAC mails Municipal Enumeration Forms directly to those individuals for whom it has incomplete or inaccurate information.

In addition, as part of its ongoing daily activities, MPAC mails occupancy questionnaires to new homeowners and occupants of new addresses in the City.

MPAC's Tenant Information Program (TIP) requires every multi-residential property owner to provide a list of their tenants to MPAC by July 31st each year. MPAC mails an occupancy questionnaire to any new tenant.

MPAC has confirmed its dedication to its business improvements in the following areas:

- no individuals with "unconfirmed" citizenship will appear on the PLE for the 2010 election;
- working with Elections Canada on citizenship confirmation;
- implementing measurement tools, such as coverage and currency, to measure the degree of accuracy of its database in comparison to Elections Canada and Elections Ontario; and
- continuing its discussions with the Ontario Registrar General to obtain access to birth and death information.

4. City Tenant Initiatives

The City is committed to engaging eligible electors to inform them of their right to vote and to ensure they know how to get their name on the voters' list for the 2010 election. To do this, staff have partnered with the Federation of Metro Tenants' Association, Toronto Community Housing, Settlement.org., landlord and tenant associations, along with other organizations to create a series of special edition newsletters, as well as special notices in their regular newsletters, that will include election information. These and other organizations will continue to educate tenants regarding the election through prominent features on their website.

Staff are also working with Toronto Community Housing (TCH) community representatives to promote the 2010 Election and encourage tenants to ensure they are on the voters' list. This "one on one" interaction amongst tenants is an effective way to engage the community.

City staff have also negotiated to have the MPAC occupancy questionnaire given to new tenants at the time they sign their lease agreement and assistance with filling out the form.

Similarly staff will be partnering with the Rental and Housing Advisory Committee, which includes the GTA Apartment Association, the Tenant Advocacy Group and the Landlords Self Help Centre. Along with providing 2010 election information, the City Clerk's Office is in negotiations to have these organizations distribute MPAC occupancy questionnaires at the time of lease signing.

5. Other Initiatives

(a) Electors with Disabilities

If enacted, Bill 212 will require the Clerk to take into consideration the needs of electors and candidates with disabilities and make voting places accessible. The City is committed to removing barriers and ensuring electoral participation by all.

For those with visual disabilities, a communication strategy will be promoted through the Canadian National Institute for the Blind (CNIB) newsletter, website, and email alert to network organizations and at onsite CNIB locations. Balance for Blind Adults has also agreed to assist in this capacity and staff are similarly partnering with the Alliance for Equality of Blind Canadians (AEBC).

Individuals with hearing disabilities who access the Election Call Centre will be linked immediately with the City's TTY services. To ensure electors in this community are engaged in the democratic process, staff are working with the Canadian Hearing Society and the Bob Rumball Centre for the Deaf along with other community partners.

Strategies for physically disabled groups will be developed through upcoming meetings between staff and various associations identified in Appendix 'A'.

Demonstrations will be coordinated with our community partners to introduce the City's new technology which will allow electors with disabilities to vote independently. This technology will be available at all proposed 44 weekend advance vote locations.

(b) New Canadian Citizens, Diverse and Multilingual Electors

Ensuring the accessibility of Toronto's elections for all electors includes engaging the City's new citizens and diverse communities. If approved by Council, 2010 election communication materials will be printed in twenty-two languages, five more than in the 2006 election. Based on 2006 census data and the 2% per ward criteria that was used for the 2006 election, the new languages are: Gujarati, Somali, Serbian, Bengali and Romanian.

The Ontario Council of Associations Servicing Immigrants (OCASI) and Settlement.org have agreed to include election information as well as election employment opportunities for their members in their bi-weekly electronic newsletters.

Staff are working with Citizenship Canada to explore the possibility of providing Torontonians receiving their citizenship with information on their right to vote and how to get their name on the voters' list.

(c) Seniors and electors in long-term care facilities

To engage Toronto's seniors and electors in long-term care facilities, we will work with the Ontario Seniors' Secretariat which has agreed to promote the 2010 election to their membership on their website; similarly, the Seniors Forum will provide election related information to their membership.

We will continue to work with Social Development, Finance & Administration and Long Term Care to ensure residents at long-term care facilities are able to vote in privacy and continue to locate voting locations at long term care facilities.

(d) Shelter Users/Homeless

The MEA provides for the homeless to exercise their right as electors and take part in the democratic process.

Voting locations once again will be situated in various shelters across the city and communication materials and posters will be distributed to housing and shelter facilities. "Transition to Work" personnel, along with their supervisors, will work on Election Day as staff at voting locations used by the homeless.

(e) Youth

Special attention will also be given to engage pre-voting age and new electors in the 2010 election. We are again partnering with the Toronto Youth Cabinet to create a Youth Outreach Strategy and Post Secondary Strategy that will include print materials, a website, and a viral campaign including Facebook, Youtube, Flickr, Campus Radio, MySpace and LinkedIn. The campaign will focus on interactive engagement, including video and poster competitions along with an aggressive street campaign.

In partnership with the Civic Education Network, an online resource manual for teachers is being created to assist in educating students about democracy and municipal elections.

The highly successful Student Connect program will continue. This program provides an opportunity to inform, educate and engage our youth by involving high school students as active participants in the electoral process. Students will participate in the election by working at voting locations.

6. Communications

With potential changes introduced in the province's *Good Government Act, 2009*, the election communications campaign in 2010 has the additional challenge of communicating the proposed new date and identification requirements. While it will be important to continue to focus on communications to target groups, such as tenants and

new voters, it will be critical that the campaign continue to build overall awareness around these key issues in 2010.

Broad communication activities will be implemented to raise awareness of key messages and themes of the election. These messages will emphasize the importance of the municipal election, the new election date, getting on the voters' list, identification requirements, where to vote, advance vote dates and other key messages related to the election.

Special emphasis will be placed on encouraging eligible electors, including tenants and new voters, to add their names to the voters' list. A broad campaign will serve to supplement targeted initiatives, specifically as it relates to tenants. This campaign will include the *Our Toronto* publication and election tabloid (delivered to every household in the city), as well as transit shelter advertising and various social media.

Conclusion

With the creation of the Election Community Engagement Program, the City Clerk's Office strives to increase awareness about the 2010 municipal election. The various strategies outlined in this report will ensure that all eligible electors, are aware of their rights. New partnerships with various community groups and stakeholders will assist the elections staff with reaching as many electors as possible through open, personal and interactive dialogue, new technologies as well as traditional mediums. The focus in 2010 will be on community engagement and education rather than simply communications.

The current outreach program builds upon past foundations established not only in the civic engagement process, but also in community-based efforts to educate and encourage all electors, regardless of background, to exercise their right to vote in municipal elections.

CONTACT

Bonita Pietrangelo, Director, Elections and Registry Services
Tel – 416-392-8019; Fax – 416-395-1300
E-mail: bpietran@toronto.ca

SIGNATURE

Ulli S. Watkiss
City Clerk

ATTACHMENTS

Appendix 'A' – Overview of Initiatives and Partnerships
Appendix 'B' – Voters' List Timelines

Appendix 'A'

Overview of Initiatives and Partnerships

Target	Organizations	Actions
Diverse & Multicultural Electors	OCASI Settlement Org.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide voters' list information on their websites including employment opportunities for individuals with a second language to work in voting locations • Provide voters' information on their newsletters • They will provide MPAC information.
New Canadian Citizens	Citizenship & Immigration Canada	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussions to start providing election materials as part of the package received at citizenship ceremonies as well as including importance of voting in judge's scripts at ceremonies • Information will be provided in twenty-two languages
Electors with Disabilities	Canadian National Institute for the Blind Balance for Blind Adults Alliance for Equality of Blind Canadians Canadian Hearing Society The Bob Rumball Centre for the Deaf Canadian Mental Health Association (Toronto) Canadian Paraplegic Association – Ontario Epilepsy Toronto Learning Disabilities Association of Toronto Multiple Sclerosis Society of Canada (Toronto)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City will be providing greater opportunities for disabled electors to vote independently through new technologies like the Automark • Working with various organizations to inform disabled electors of opportunities to register and vote independently • Provide voters' list and election • Information on their websites

Target	Organizations	Actions
	Ontario Federation of Cerebral Palsy Ontario March of Dimes Variety Village	
Seniors & Electors in Long Term Care	Ontario Seniors' Secretariat Seniors' Forum Social Development, Finance & Administration and Long Term Care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide voters' list and election information on their website • Encourage registration and participation in election through posters, pamphlets and other materials at various locations • Invited to speak at various meetings
Tenants	Toronto Community Housing Federation of Metro Tenants Association Greater Toronto Apartment Association Tenant Advocacy Group COSTI (Centro Organizzativo Scuole Tecniche Italiane) East York East Toronto RENT (Resources Exist for Networking and Training) Advocacy Centre for Tenants Association Landlords Self Help Centre Centre for Equality Rights in Accommodation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have all landlord provide MPAC occupancy questionnaire at time of signing new lease • Have MPAC occupancy questionnaire available at all rental offices • Include election key messaging in all newsletters and publications • Presence on their websites that include key election messaging and links to the City's official election site • Provide election information through information hotlines and help centres • Work with Toronto Community Housing representatives that will engage their fellow tenants in the importance of getting on the voters' list and participating in the 2010 election

Target	Organizations	Actions
Homeless Electors	Shelter Support & Housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promoting voters' list registration at shelters and housing services • identifying shelters to be used as voting locations • employing individuals from "Transition to Work" to work in voting locations
Youth & Young Voters	Toronto Youth Cabinet School Boards – Student Connect Program Toronto Public Library Civic Education Network	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working with Youth Cabinet to develop youth campaign to engage youth in electoral process (poster & video campaign, use of social media, etc.) • Student Connect Program - employ high school students to work in voting locations • Working with Toronto Public Library to promote our youth campaign, link to their 2000 youth volunteer ambassadors to get the message out to youth as well as investigating other ways to promote 2010 election • Working with Civic Education Network to develop on line resource manual to be used by teachers and community groups to promote understanding of municipal elections

Appendix ‘B’

Voters’ List Timelines

Timelines*	Action Item
April – June	MPAC mails out Municipal Enumeration Forms
July 31	Landlords provide MPAC with tenant list Clerk receives Preliminary List of Electors (PLE) from MPAC
August	MPAC mails out Occupancy Questionnaires to tenants – names included in September Supplementary List
August 1 - 31	Elections staff correct PLE for obvious errors
September 1	Clerk posts and provides voters’ list to candidates
September 1	Clerk receives supplementary list of electors from MPAC
September 7 – 10	Individuals may apply to remove another elector’s name from list
September 7 - October 25	Revision period - Eligible electors may request to be added to, deleted from, or corrected on the voters’ list
September 20	Clerk provides Interim List of Changes to the Voters’ List to candidates
October 4 - 20	Clerk prints various voters’ lists for the advance votes and election day
December 8	Clerk submits changes to voters’ list to MPAC

* Based on the proposed dates in Bill 212 (*Good Government Act, 2009*)