

# VOTE

Re: EX16.8

## 2022 Election Preparation Activities: The Impact of COVID-19 and The Ward Structure

Presentation to Executive Committee September 23, 2020

## Overview

- Procurement of New Vote Counting Equipment
- Ranked Ballot Elections
- Changes to How Electors Vote are Expected for the 2022 Election
- Ward Structure

# New Vote Counting Equipment

- Toronto Elections has been working with PMMD on a negotiated Request for Proposal (nRFP) to lease or buy vote counting equipment.
- Subject matter experts have been retained to assist with the development of the nRFP including:
  - Fairness monitor
  - Cyber-security professionals (specialized in voting equipment)
  - Accessibility expert to evaluate adherence to the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA)
- The City has indicated its intention to release an nRFP early October, and is currently in a blackout period.

## Risks to Procurement Process

- Intention is that the contract will be awarded in spring 2021 and equipment will be delivered by end of 2021.
- COVID-19 may introduce risks to the procurement of new vote counting equipment, such as to the supply chain and manufacturing which could lead to delays.
- These unforeseen risks introduce some uncertainty into the plan to replace the City's vote counting equipment in time for the 2022 election so staff are developing contingency plans.

# Meeting the Pre-Conditions for Ranked Ballot Elections

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- Pre-conditions:
  - Public education on how a ranked ballot election would be conducted and the voting equipment being considered.
  - A requirement that the City hold at least one public meeting and one open house.
- To ensure the neutrality of the Clerk, it was staff's intention to retain an external consulting firm to undertake broad based outreach and consultation and an external marketing firm to develop public educational materials such as videos, flyers and advertisements.
- The public consultation firm was to begin work in April 2020 with broad education and outreach initiatives through spring and summer to ensure meaningful engagement and in-person public consultation meetings held throughout the city in September.

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# Impacts of COVID-19 on Ranked Ballot Elections

- Pandemic impacted the Ranked Ballot Election Progress:
  - Declaration of a Public Emergency
  - Delay in procurement process for vote counting equipment
  - Staff redeployed to emergency services
  - City facilities closed and bookings cancelled
  - Public gatherings suspended
  - Public engagement and consultations cancelled
  - Limited access to community organizations and partners
- Difficult to plan and implement broad public outreach and consultation given the uncertainty with the pandemic over the next number of months

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# Rethinking Voting Practices

- Significant planning is underway to rethink the concept of voting in the context of the pandemic.
- Public health protocols will need to be in place including social distancing, reducing touchpoints in voting places, PPE and other materials to protect staff and electors.
- Currently researching alternative voting methods – many jurisdictions are shifting to mail-in voting as the primary alternative to in-person voting or in addition to some in-person polls.

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# Ward Structure

- The Supreme Court of Canada granted the City leave to appeal Bill 5, the Better Local Government Act.
- Decision is not anticipated until late 2021.
- Requires planning for the 2022 election to be based on both a 47 and 25 ward model.