

Comparison of Campaign Spending Limits in Ontario Municipal, Provincial and Federal Elections

Date: June 18, 2021
To: Executive Committee
From: City Clerk
Wards: All

SUMMARY

This report provides a comparison of campaign spending limits in Toronto-area wards/electoral districts across City of Toronto municipal elections, Ontario provincial elections, and Canada federal elections.

It also examines the use of the Elections Ontario's voter's list in the 2018 City of Toronto general election and concludes that small increases in candidate spending limits resulted from the increased accuracy of the voter's list.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The City Clerk recommends that:

1. The Executive Committee receive this report for information.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

There are no financial implications associated with the recommendation outlined in this report.

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

DECISION HISTORY

At its meeting on September 30, 2020, City Council requested the City Clerk to report back on several matters relating to Toronto Municipal elections, including measures that

can be undertaken to increase municipal election spending limits in areas of the city with historically low elector numbers and low voter number.

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2020.EX16.8>

At its meeting on June 8, 2021, City Council requested the City Clerk to conduct an analysis of election-related spending limits for candidates seeking Provincial or Federal office and whether making use of the Provincial voters list will impact spending limits per ward and to report those findings to the Executive Committee.

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2021.EX24.2>

COMMENTS

1. Municipal Spending Limits

All municipal candidates in Ontario are subject to the same spending limit formula set by the Municipal Elections Act, 1996. The formula combines a base amount with an additional dollar amount for each eligible elector within the ward.

Pursuant to Ontario Regulation 101/97, the maximum spending limit formula for a candidate is as follows:

- \$7,500 for the office of Mayor, plus 85 cents per elector entitled to vote for that office
- \$5,000 for the offices of Councillor and School Board Trustee, plus 85 cents per elector entitled to vote for that office

The number of electors used in the formula is based on whichever is higher: the number of electors in the ward based on the voters' list from the previous regular election, or the number of electors determined from the voters' list for the current election, as it exists on September 15 in the year of the current election.

There is a separate spending limit for parties and other expressions of appreciation after the close of voting, which is calculated as 10% of a candidate's general spending limit. Certain campaign expenses are also not subject to the general spending limit, and it is a candidate's responsibility to review the rules in place and seek advice at the time of the election.

Any changes to spending limits at the municipal level would require the Province to amend the formula set out in Ontario Regulation 101/97.

2. Provincial Spending Limits

Ontario's Election Finances Act sets a combined limit on the amount that both a provincial candidate's campaign and their constituency association can spend during an election campaign. This limit covers expenses incurred by a registered candidate's campaign, its registered constituency association, and anyone acting on behalf of the candidate's campaign or constituency association during a campaign period.

The formula used by Elections Ontario for campaign spending limits is as follows:

- \$1.36, multiplied by the number of electors in the candidate's electoral district

The number of electors used in the formula is set by whichever is higher: the number of electors shown on the preliminary list of electors, or the number of electors entitled to vote as determined by Elections Ontario after polling day.

Please note that, in the most recent provincial election, the formula described above used a dollar amount of \$1.30. This has since been increased to \$1.36, as noted above.

3. Federal Spending Limits

The Canada Elections Act imposes spending limits on federal candidates which apply to all election expenses, whether paid, unpaid, or accepted as non-monetary contributions or transfers.

The formula used by Elections Canada is as follows:

- \$2.1735 for each of the first 15,000 electors,
- \$1.092 for each of the next 10,000 electors, and
- \$0.546 for each of the remaining electors.

The number of electors used in the formula is set by whichever is higher: the number of names appearing on the preliminary list of electors or on the revised list of electors for the electoral district.

The Canada Elections Act also contains a provision to even out disparities in the number of electors between different electoral districts across the country. If the number of electors on the preliminary list of electors for an electoral district is less than the average number of electors on *all* preliminary lists of electors in a general election (i.e., the national average), then, for the purposes of calculating spending limits, the number of electors is deemed to be halfway between the number on the preliminary list of electors for that electoral district and the average number of all districts.

4. Spending Limit Comparison

Appendix 1 contains a table comparing spending limits in Toronto wards/electoral districts at all three levels of government, as implemented in their most recent general elections. Spending limits for the federal and provincial electoral districts in the most recent general elections were obtained from information reported by Elections Ontario and Elections Canada.

Averaging all Toronto wards/electoral districts, spending limits at the provincial level were 54% higher when compared to the municipal level, while federal spending limits were 60% higher. In the last City of Toronto general election, there was a \$30,362.00 difference between wards with the highest and lowest spending limits, representing a 43% difference. In the last provincial election, the difference between the highest and

lowest limits was \$46,038.20 (a 42% difference), and this difference was \$23,853.37 (21%) at the federal level (see Appendix 1).

5. Using Elections Ontario's Voters' List

The Municipal Elections Act, 1996 sets out that the voters' list for municipal elections is a shared responsibility between the Municipal Property Assessment Corporation and the Clerk of each municipality. Toronto's City Clerk has worked closely with the Municipal Property Assessment Corporation for many years to improve voters' list accuracy.

In 2018, the City Clerk produced an initial voters' list based on the 47 ward model. When the Province introduced Bill 5, Better Local Government Act to implement a 25 ward model, the shortened revision period led to the Clerk seeking additional data quality options. Accordingly, the Clerk entered into a Data Sharing Agreement with Elections Ontario to leverage data and information, including the Elections Ontario voters' list that had been recently updated for the June 2018 provincial election.

Access to this voters' list added 150,000 eligible electors, and reduced the number of revisions by 45% compared to the 2014 election. Combining data provided by both the Municipal Property Assessment Corporation and Elections Ontario led to a more accurate City of Toronto voters' list that included more electors and more recent address information. Given that the spending limit formula for municipal elections is based, in part, on the number of eligible electors in a ward, having access to Elections Ontario's voters' list led to small increases in spending limits across Toronto wards.

The City Clerk will again pursue a Data Sharing Agreement with Elections Ontario to leverage their voters' list information for the 2022 municipal election. The Province of Ontario also recently passed legislation that will create a single register of electors for municipal and provincial elections, to be managed by Elections Ontario, which will come into effect beginning in 2024.

CONTACT

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SIGNATURE

John D. Elvidge
City Clerk

ATTACHMENTS

Appendix 1 - Toronto-Area Spending Limits in the Most Recent Municipal, Provincial and Federal Elections

**Appendix 1
Toronto-Area Spending Limits in the Most Recent Municipal, Provincial and
Federal Elections**

Ward #	Ward Name	City of Toronto Spending Limit (October 2018)	Elections Ontario Spending Limit (June 2018)	Elections Canada Spending Limit (October 2019)
1	Etobicoke North	\$65,313.45	\$94,354.00	\$105,014.47
2	Etobicoke Centre	\$80,128.10	\$120,529.50	\$116,775.92
3	Etobicoke-Lakeshore	\$86,364.55	\$132,087.80	\$125,602.19
4	Parkdale-High Park	\$73,031.45	\$114,570.30	\$109,329.82
5	York South-Weston	\$67,588.90	\$99,803.60	\$106,574.26
6	York Centre	\$60,554.30	\$91,676.00	\$103,493.00
7	Humber River-Black Creek	\$60,522.85	\$86,175.70	\$102,499.98
8	Eglinton-Lawrence	\$71,304.25	\$108,162.60	\$109,431.20
9	Davenport	\$70,387.95	\$107,801.20	\$107,297.47
10	Spadina-Fort York	\$75,199.80	\$121,708.60	\$115,100.39
11	University-Rosedale	\$70,608.10	\$114,526.10	\$107,401.25
12	Toronto-St Paul's	\$72,857.20	\$113,380.80	\$110,434.60
13	Toronto Centre	\$64,576.50	\$106,657.20	\$107,308.65
14	Toronto-Danforth	\$70,971.05	\$109,293.60	\$108,205.88
15	Don Valley West	\$62,518.65	\$98,008.30	\$104,815.71
16	Don Valley East	\$56,002.55	\$86,049.60	\$101,748.82
17	Don Valley North	\$61,713.70	\$99,074.30	\$105,652.28
18	Willowdale	\$62,308.70	\$105,706.90	\$106,962.21
19	Beaches-East York	\$69,710.50	\$107,101.80	\$107,968.00
20	Scarborough Southwest	\$66,254.40	\$101,827.70	\$106,731.51
21	Scarborough Centre	\$63,490.20	\$98,140.90	\$105,631.52
22	Scarborough-Agincourt	\$61,207.95	\$94,325.40	\$103,987.12
23	Scarborough North	\$57,591.20	\$88,107.50	\$101,851.80
24	Scarborough-Guildwood	\$58,282.25	\$89,260.60	\$102,512.75
25	Scarborough-Rouge Park	\$67,268.45	\$99,206.90	\$105,939.65
Overall Average		\$67,030.28	\$103,501.48	\$107,530.82