

# 2020 Local Government Election – Hours of Voting

## ISSUE

*The Local Government Election Act, 2015* stipulates that polls must be open for voting between 9:00 a.m. and 8:00 p.m. on Election Day, and that the Returning Officer may open polls earlier than 9:00 a.m.

## BACKGROUND

Updates to *The Local Government Election Act, 2015* and *The Local Government Election Act Regulations, 2015* came into effect January 2020. In accordance with the legislation, a number of decisions are required by City Council and by the Returning Officer, related to the holding of a municipal election. This report presents the hours for polls to be open on Election Day.

## CURRENT STATUS

Historically, polls on Election Day have been open from 8:00 a.m. and 8:00 p.m. These hours will be established for the 2020 civic election.

## DISCUSSION/ANALYSIS

Election officials must be at the poll at least 30 minutes before opening the poll and are required to stay after closing the poll in order to complete their legislated duties. As such, election officials work a long day; therefore, it is proposed that polls open no earlier than 8:00 a.m.

## IMPLICATIONS

Opening polls at 8 a.m. allows some voters to vote prior to going to work and allows for parents dropping off children at school the opportunity to vote. Of the 66 polling locations, 54 are schools (82%). Opening polls at 9:00 a.m. reduces voting opportunity.

## NEXT STEPS

A comprehensive communication plan for all aspects of the 2020 municipal and school board elections is being developed with the Communications & Public Engagement division.

## Report Approval

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