Append 1- 2020 Local Government Election Review Report.docx

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Introduction

Elections are the foundation of a local democracy. They allow eligible residents to exercise their franchise in electing leaders who can best represent their interests. Fundamental to this is openness and accountability; however, the act of providing opportunity for eligible voters to access a ballot privately is an important exception.

Until 2020, civic elections in Saskatchewan were held on the fourth Wednesday of October. With a change in legislation, civic elections for Saskatchewan municipalities now occur on the second Wednesday of November. Due to Remembrance Day falling on the Wednesday, the 2020 election was scheduled for Monday, November 9, 2020.

The civic election elects one mayor for the entire city as well as one councillor for each of the 10 wards. In addition, one trustee is elected for each of the 10 wards for the Saskatoon Public School board and seven trustees are elected, at large, for the Greater Saskatoon Catholic School board.

In 2020 several events occurred that had not been experienced before, which presented challenges that needed to be addressed. While there was time to address some of the challenges, regulations and directives shifted leading up to the election. This caused a need to adjust plans. Situations that presented new challenges are listed below:

- The Saskatchewan provincial election and Saskatoon civic election were held two weeks apart (election overlap) when they are typically in different election years (until 2016).
- The election was planned and executed during a global pandemic; COVID-19 positive cases were on the rise leading up to the civic election, with restrictions on capacity at polling places in effect.
- There was a significant increase in mail-in ballot applications over the 2016 civic election.
- A significant snowstorm blanketed the City of Saskatoon and other Saskatchewan municipalities days before the election.

Engagement Process

This election review report outlines the challenges experienced leading up to and during the 2020 Saskatoon civic election and provides discussion questions for opportunities to improve the electoral system for future elections in Saskatoon.

Public feedback can be submitted to city.clerks@saskatoon.ca.

For additional election information, visit www.saskatoon.ca/elections.

Background and Current State

The 2020 Saskatchewan provincial election was held two weeks before the Saskatoon civic election. The overlap of these two elections created challenges for both election bodies and resulted in voter confusion. To add further to the election landscape the United States presidential election was in the middle of the provincial and municipal elections.

Planning an election in a city the size of Saskatoon is a large undertaking, with planning for the event beginning immediately following the preceding election, four years earlier. The COVID-19 pandemic, present during the majority of 2020 when election implementation occurred, created unique election planning challenges for all municipalities, with little precedent to go by or reference material to help navigate. To add complexity to the situation, over the November 7-8 weekend a record amount of snow blanketed the City, preventing a number of polling places from opening on time and limiting voters from accessing the polls. This resulted in an eventual postponement of the November 9 election day to November 13, after the Minister of Government Relations, the morning of the election after polls had opened, issued an Order permitting returning officers in the province of Saskatchewan the ability to postpone municipal elections due to bad weather.

The situations experienced with the 2020 election have highlighted that enhancements can be made to ensure future success and meet post pandemic expectations.

The next general election is currently legislated for November 13, 2024. The post-electoral period is the time to analyze data and information before transitioning into the pre-electoral period where process redesign and preliminary planning can occur. In order to make significant improvements to the electoral system certain conversations need to be had and decisions made. In some cases, provincial electoral legislative changes may be required, which takes significant time and must be identified early in the process. In this review report, following each issue item are questions to be asked in relation to improving the electoral system for future elections.

The experience voters, candidates, and election administrators had leading up to and during the election can be improved upon. Operational adjustments will need to be made at the administrative level, and legislative changes at the provincial level, which require planned consultation, direction, dedicated staff, and potentially lobbying.

Feedback received post-election that access to a ballot was reduced must be addressed. While a variety of voting options were provided, the goal for 2024 is to expand upon this, and utilize as many options and technologies as possible to ensure a positive experience for all voters. In implementing new registration and voting methods it is important to be aware of limitations municipalities have, as they must adhere to the constraints of governing provincial legislation.

Key Areas for Review

This section provides an overview of five main election activity areas that generated the most attention from voters, candidates, and election administrators in the 2020 civic election:

- Election dates
- Mail-in ballots
- Advanced polls
- Legislative flexibility
- Candidate behaviour

ISSUE 1: Election Dates and Overlapping Provincial and Municipal Election Periods:

(a) Overlapping Provincial and Municipal Election Periods and Election Dates

In 2019, the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan made changes to *The Election Act, 1996* which set the date of the 2020 provincial election for October 26, and amendments to *The Local Government Election Act, 2015* (LGEA), setting the date for municipal elections two weeks later on November 9. Prior to this amendment, municipal elections in Saskatchewan were held on the fourth Monday in October. Saskatchewan had similar overlapping election periods in 1991 and 2003.

For future elections, Saskatchewan's *Election Act* establishes the provincial election date as the last Monday of October. According to the LGEA, future municipal elections in Saskatchewan are scheduled to occur on the second Wednesday of November. For clarity, and based on existing legislation, Table 1 lists the scheduled provincial and municipal election dates for the next five elections.

Year	Provincial Election Day	Local Election Day
2024	Mon, Oct 28	Wed, Nov 13
2028	Mon, Oct 30	Wed, Nov 8
2032	Mon, Oct 25	Wed, Nov 10
2036	Mon, Oct 27	Wed, Nov 13
2040	Mon, Oct 29	Wed, Nov 14

Table 1. Provincial and local election dates, 2024-240.

Despite the overlapping election periods, provincial and local elections are operated separately and governed by different pieces of legislation. Elections Saskatchewan manages the provincial election under *The Election Act, 1996*, while each municipality is responsible to run its election under the LGEA. This election framework may confuse voters as rules and processes between provincial and local elections differ.

The following provides some examples of challenges experienced as a result of the provincial and local elections being held two weeks apart in 2020:

- The provincial election office in Saskatoon received mail-in ballot applications for the municipal election and the municipal election office received mail-in ballot applications for the provincial election.
- Significant volume of voters called and emailed the municipal election office to ask questions about the provincial election and vice-versa.

- Both election bodies had to secure hundreds of workers for their respective elections in an already limited pool of workers and in a pandemic where many were not comfortable leaving their homes. Elections Saskatchewan asked Saskatoon's returning officer to delay the municipal election recruitment plan by two weeks to avoid overlapping advertising.
- Overlapping election periods resulted in both provincial and municipal election signs being erected at the same time across the city and perhaps leading to voter confusion of which candidate was running in which election.

Legislation governing provincial and municipal elections is different, and the two respective acts prescribe different rules and processes for conducting elections. The general public is often not aware of these differences and that led to confusion as to why processes varied. For example, there are different voter registration processes. Saskatoon's elections have historically required voters to register at the polls, while Saskatchewan's provincial election uses a voters list, where registration is typically done in advance of the election and in most cases before attending the poll.

(b) Election Dates

Another risk with holding elections later in the year is that weather conditions can play a factor, both for candidates campaigning, as well as on election day. This proved to be a major challenge in the 2020 local election in many jurisdictions, including Saskatoon. A significant amount of snow fell on the City of Saskatoon over the two days before the 2020 municipal election making it difficult for voters, workers, and candidates to access polling places.

Weather is unpredictable at all times; however, the later into the year an election is held the greater risk of Saskatchewan winter temperatures occurring and the potential for snow. With unpredictability of weather being a factor, plans must be made for inclement events, so that decisive decisions are made and communicated. These communications must be consistent with city-wide communications regarding travel.

Table 2 illustrates historical high and low temperatures for the fourth Wednesday of October (when municipal elections were held prior to 2020) and the second Wednesday of November (when municipal elections are currently legislated going forward) on seven different years. An asterisk indicates a general election year.

Year	Fourth Wed of Oct		Second Wed of Nov	
	High (°C)	Low (°C)	High (°C)	Low (°C)
2020*	+2	-6	-11	-21
2019	+4	-6	-3	-17
2018	+18	-2	0	-7
2017	+8	-1	-9	-21
2016*	+8	-1	+18	+4
2012*	0	-2	+1	-12
2009*	+3	-4	+8	-7

Table 2: High / low temps on election days (2009-2020)
Source: Past weather in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan: www.timeanddate.com

Saskatchewan, Prince Edward Island (PEI), and Quebec are the only three Canadian provinces/territories with municipal elections currently legislated in November.[1] Of these three provinces, Saskatchewan's municipal elections fall latest on the second Wednesday of November. PEI's are the first Monday of November and Quebec's are the first Sunday of November. New Brunswick's municipal elections are the second Monday of May, and all other provinces or territories hold their municipal elections in September (exceptions include some hamlets, resort villages, community governments, and chartered communities).

Holding municipal elections in Saskatchewan in November is not preferred. Not only is there potential for poor weather conditions, but the municipal election will continue to overlap with the provincial election. Consideration of a change of season for municipal elections would allow for separation between the provincial and municipal elections and help to alleviate winter weather concerns.

ISSUE 2: Growing Use of Mail-in Ballots:

The City's election bylaw permits any eligible voter to apply for a mail-in ballot, allowing for voters to complete their ballot remotely and in advance of election day. Due to the pandemic, mail-in ballots proved to be a preferred voting option for voters in both the provincial and municipal elections. This change in behaviour was consistent across North America for all levels of elections. At the municipal level Saskatoon saw more than a 4,500% increase in mail-in ballots over the 2016 election, with mail-in ballot voting allowing individuals to vote safely in the midst of a pandemic without having to leave their home.

Prior to the 2020 election, applications for mail-in ballots were required to be made in-person at the election office in order to facilitate establishing a voter's identity and residence. For the 2020 civic election, *The Election Bylaw, 2012* was amended to permit applications to be made electronically. The application process to apply for a mail-in ballot was supported through an online platform accessed through the election website. Applications could also be made in person. Mailed in applications were accepted but this process required manual entry of information into the online application form by an election administrator. This process was extremely time-consuming and labour intensive and was further complicated by the fact that applicants did not provide contact information in all cases. If an application was incomplete it was difficult, and in some cases impossible to contact the applicant. Staffing this program was also a challenge due to physical distancing requirements in the election office and the availability of staff.

Issues were also encountered with the online application form. The online application form did not populate information based on the voter's name or address, resulting in data entry errors including incorrect neighbourhoods and wards. Rejected applications were abundant due to being incomplete or incorrect. A rejected application often resulted in a voter reapplying, in one case as many as seven times, causing application review time to be significantly increased, belabouring the already manual process. The

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[1] The timing of municipal elections in Canada is illustrated in the chart on the Muniscope website
https://www.muniscope.ca/research/municipal_facts/Elections

experience for voters that applied for mail-in ballots was poor, along with that of staff processing applications.

The application process used for the 2020 mail-in ballot program could be improved in various ways. An application on the election website could be made which would use various data attributes to populate the value of other attributes. For example, entering a voter's name and address could populate the voter's neighbourhood, ward, and postal code. This would be possible if the data exists in a pre-existing database that is accessible for election purposes. Uploading identification would still be required in order to establish voter identity and residence in accordance with legislation. The 2020 mail-in ballot application also required a witness declaration form, which created another step in the application process. Regardless of changes, election administrators would still need to review each application to ensure eligibility compliance with applicable legislation. Administration intends to pursue these changes to ensure a more effective mail-in ballot experience in 2024.

Mail-in ballot voting may continue to be popular in future elections. To support increased demand and an improved voter experience, the process could be better managed through a system that specifically handles voting by mail. Technology solutions exist that can support mail-in ballot voting. Solutions are being researched to understand their capabilities, associated cost, and the benefits and disadvantages to using them.

Table 3 shows the previous election's mail-in ballot numbers compared to the most recent election numbers. Granted the increase in 2020 elections was as a result of COVID-19; however now that voters have experienced voting by mail it may be a desired voting method in future elections. It also has the advantage of reducing congestion and wait times at in-person polling stations.

Jurisdiction/election	Previous year/count	Most current year/count
Saskatoon civic election	2016: 196 (mailed)	2020: 8,600 (mailed)
Regina civic election	2016: approx. 150 (mailed)	2020: 5,645 (mailed)
SK provincial election	2016: 4,420 (counted) [2]	2020: 56,547 (counted) [3]
BC provincial election**	2017: 6,517 (considered) [4]	2020: 596,287 (considered) [5]

Table 3. BC and SK provincial elections and Saskatoon municipal elections mail-in ballot numbers.
**BC provincial election chosen due to proximity to SK provincial election (Oct 24 and Oct 26).

ISSUE 3: Advanced Poll Locations and Dates:

Advance polls for the municipal election, as per the LGEA, must be open at least three days but not more than 15 days before election day. Advance polls have traditionally been scheduled in four shopping centres, at City Hall, and at the University of Saskatchewan. A similar schedule was created for the 2020 civic election along with additional locations that were added at the request of City Council due to COVID-19 concerns. The University of Saskatchewan location was not available due to campus

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[2] From the Chief Electoral Officer of Saskatchewan's Statement of Votes report 2016 Statement of Votes Volume 1.pdf (elections.sk.ca)
[3] From 2020 General Election Results on the Saskatchewan Provincial Election webpage 2020 Elections Saskatchewan
[4] From a November 20, 2020 news release issued by Elections BC Voter Turnout Estimate Updated; Interim Statement of Votes Available | Elections BC
[5] From Election BC's 2020 Provincial General Election total mail-in ballots webpage at Total Mail-in Ballots Considered (elections.bc.ca)

being closed. The 2020 advance poll schedule followed suit with previous elections, spanning various days of the week with various start/end times depending on the day. This variance in schedule resulted in voter confusion as to which day a particular location was open and what time it closed.

The 2020 advance poll schedule has been reviewed and is intended to be reformed for future elections. The reason for this is so that the days, open/close times, and locations are clear and consistent for voters, candidates, election workers, and the media. The schedule is intended to provide efficient utilization of staffing and to optimize logistics.

In 2020, with the provincial election being two weeks prior to the municipal election, advance polls for the municipal election could have started one day before the provincial election date (see Table 4). It was decided to provide a short reprieve between the provincial election date and the city's first advance poll. In 2024, advance polls for the municipal election can –under current legislation– start one day after the provincial election. This is another reason moving the date of the municipal election is desired.

Sun, Oct 25	Oct 26	Oct 27	Oct 28	Oct 29	Oct 30	Sat, Oct 31
First permitted day of advance polls (AP)	SK provincial election day	*No polls held*	*No polls held*	*No polls held*	Advance polls held	Advance polls held
Sun, Nov 1	**Nov 2**	**Nov 3**	**Nov 4**	**Nov 5**	**Nov 6**	**Sat, Nov 7**
Advance polls held	Advance polls held	Advance polls held	Advance polls held	Advance polls held	*AP not permitted*	*AP not permitted*
Sun, Nov 8	**Nov 9**					
AP not permitted	Saskatoon municipal election day					

Table 4. 2020 municipal election advance polls as permitted under the LGEA.

Advance poll turnout has steadily increased election over election, since 2009. This is important to note as the number of locations and advance poll hours may need to increase over time (i.e. more locations or more days). Due to the proximity of provincial and election dates as currently legislated, this increase in hours may be difficult. Table 5 indicates advance poll turnout over the last four elections and the percent increase seen.

Election Year	AP Turnout	% Increase	Locations
2009	7,580	-	Six locations over 7 days
2012	9,928	30.97	Six locations over 7 days
2016	14,772	48.79	Six locations over 7 days
2020	19,666	33.67	Ten locations over 7 days

Table 5. Advance poll turnout, Saskatoon general elections 2009-2020.

ISSUE 4: Legislation Modernization

The Local Government Election Act, 2015 and *The Local Government Regulations, 2015*, the two pieces of provincial legislation governing municipal elections in Saskatchewan, are prescriptive and leave little flexibility to returning officers to address issues and challenges as they arise.

The City encountered issues in terms of flexibility concerning election day and hours of voting in light of the blizzard in the days leading up to election day. More flexibility and

discretion for a municipality in such emergency situations are required to respond appropriately considering the size and circumstances of the municipality.

Similarly, the LGEA does not contemplate modern processes and systems now available to aid the provision of an efficient and effective election process. The City of Saskatoon has used automated vote counting equipment since 1997; however, the LGEA is challenging in accommodating use of this equipment. For example, the LGEA permits a candidate or agent to be present for the counting of votes. With automated vote counting equipment ballots are fed into the machine with each voter casting a ballot; therefore, the "counting" of ballots on election night is simply pressing a series of buttons on each of the vote tabulators to generate a register tape for all ballots that had been fed into the machine.

The City also used ballot on demand (BOD) printers for mail-in ballots for the 2020 election. The City of Regina and City of Edmonton have used BOD printers in previous elections and extended their use to advance polls. While not specifically contemplated or prohibited by the LGEA, provisions of the LGEA reflect ballots are pre-printed. Similarly, the advance poll rules contemplate a candidate or agent having the right to request the counting of ballots to be used at the advance poll.

Further, the legislation needs to allow municipalities to contemplate additional voting opportunities, such as online or electronic voting. Election planning and preparation is not only about the last election and next election but also elections 10+ years in the future. The LGEA does not currently permit electronic/online voting.

ISSUE 5: Candidate Behaviour

At its Regular Business Meeting on November 30, 2020, Councillor Hill inquired about the potential for an ethics commissioner or similar process where candidates or constituents could address candidate concerns. In consultation with the City of London, the City of Toronto, the City of Brampton, and the City of Calgary it was shared that they direct matters of concern to the appropriate avenue for addressing candidate concerns. For example, if the issue is theft of signage or one candidate threatening another, candidates are directed to contact the police. The City of Saskatoon's practice is the same as what other jurisdictions do.

The LGEA does provide for prohibitions, offences, and penalties. Several complaints about poor candidate behaviour were received leading up to the 2020 civic election. Some of those complaints engaged sections contained in the LGEA, but others did not. For those complaints addressed or potentially addressed by provisions of the LGEA, election officials merely made candidates/complainants aware of the LGEA provisions and directed complainants to the relevant provincial ministries to pursue complaints. There is, however, no mechanism to deal with complaints falling outside those issues addressed in the LGEA, i.e. aggressive behaviour between candidates while campaigning. Apart from police involvement where safety is concerned there is no mechanism to report or have poor candidate behaviour addressed by election administrators.

Election legislation governing municipal elections in Saskatchewan and other provinces is limited or absent in providing any enforcement powers relating to candidate behaviour or issues to the city clerk and/or returning officer.

Other Issues

The conversation about creating a voters list for Saskatoon's municipal elections has surfaced repeatedly since a voters list was last used in 1988. This section provides background and context around the voters list since that time.

Voters list: Voters lists were prepared for elections held in the City between 1973 and 1988. In 1991, City Council decided that a voters list would not be prepared for the 1991 election, and since then a voters list has not been used.

The absence of a voters list requires voters to register at the poll by completing a voter registration form and presenting documentation to establish identity and residence. This process requires training election officials to understand the registration form and process and to be familiar with all types of identification that can be produced. Not using a voters list requires excessive printing to ensure there are more than enough poll books for every polling place as each voter registers on-site. The 2016 election had over 80,000 voters, the 2020 election over 58,000 voters.

A 2016 report from administration to Governance and Priorities Committee indicated that door-to-door voter enumeration would cost between $380,000 and $500,000.[6] To address the issue, recognizing resourcing challenges, the returning officer is exploring the possibility of sharing election-related voter information from provincial and federal sources to create a voters list without enumeration.

A voters list would provide a level of convenience to voters and make the voting process more efficient. The list in itself does not prevent multiple votes by individuals at different polling stations without corresponding software to update the list as individuals have voted. However, this is not different than the risk associated with the current process. To address this issue a voters list can be used with an election management system with capabilities to integrate the voters list. This would result in a more manageable approach compared to an electronic document. The right system can indicate if a voter has "checked in" at a polling place (or applied for a mail-in ballot, for example) and "remove them" from the voters list. If the same person attempts to "check in" again at a polling place the system will indicate the person has already voted and a ballot is not issued.

Using a voters list along with an election management system would require resources between the pre-electoral period and electoral period (Appendix 2: four-year election cycle) in order to validate and update voter information. More research is required to understand resourcing requirements and what validating and updating voter information might look like, along with the benefits and disadvantages of using election software.

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[6] From a report to GPC titled "Enumeration/Voters List/Voter Registry" https://pub-saskatoon.escribemeetings.com/FileStream.ashx?DocumentId=35210

As per the LGEA, at least 55 days before election day council may resolve for the preparation of a voters list. A further report will be forthcoming with more information and seeking direction.

Election Management System: Research is being conducted to look at the investment, implementation, and utilization of an election management system (EMS). An EMS would shift tasks and therefore costs from human capital resources to technology, leveraging the technology to take care of manual tasks otherwise completed by election administrators. An EMS streamlines election planning and execution. Further reporting on how to successfully leverage technology solutions is anticipated.

An election management system is used to some extent by cities such as Regina, Victoria, Vancouver, Edmonton, Calgary, Winnipeg, and Toronto. Depending on the scope, an EMS can support various planning and execution facets of an election.

Systems are capable of the following:
- polling place location management
- election worker management (i.e. recruitment, assignment, training, etc.)
- voter management (i.e. registration through electronic means)
- candidate management (i.e. dedicated portal access)
- maintaining/utilizing a voters list
- election inventory management
- mail-in ballot management
- call centre management
- election day statistics and reporting

Election Process Successes

Despite the challenges listed above, actual access to the ballot for the 2020 election was never greater. The following bullet points outline the positive changes made over previous years:

- Ten advance polls spanned seven days, including establishing the first-ever drive thru polling place. This was an increase of three locations and 51 hours over 2016.
- An online mail-in ballot option, although challenging for some to use, supported over a 4,500% increase in mail-in ballot applications over 2016.
- Sixty-five polling places on November 9, one in every neighbourhood as was reasonably practicable, was provided.
- Seven polling places were provided on the postponed November 13 election day.

The 2020 civic election saw thirty-eight candidates in the races for mayor and council positions in all wards except ward 4 (acclaimed). All voting options traditionally offered, including advance polls, mail-in ballots, special polls, and election day polls were offered for the 2020 civic election. The exception of homebound voting due to the pandemic is noted.

As seen in Table 6, voter turnout for the 2020 civic election was 27.4%, down from 40.9% for the 2016 election. This may be attributed to factors such as COVID-19, voter fatigue and voter confusion with the overlap of provincial and civic elections only two weeks apart, and the

snowstorm. Voter turnout, in general, for elections held in Saskatchewan in the fall of 2020 was below average. [7] [8]

General election year	Voter Turnout (%)
2020	27.4
2016	40.1
2012	36.9
2009	27.3
2006	37.1
2003	52.3*

Table 6. Voter turnout, general elections (2003-2020)
* Vote on the resolution to approve a casino to be located at 22nd Street and Pacific Avenue

In addition to ballot access, it is important to mention other enhancements and additions that were implemented for the 2020 civic election:

- For the first time ever, the voter guide was developed with different languages appearing throughout, making it more reflective and inclusive of Saskatoon's diverse community. The guide was distributed to approximately 140,000 mailing addresses, with additional copies dropped off at retail locations and city facilities.
- A dedicated, external election office was established, with plenty of office and warehouse space, removing the function from City Hall which was particularly helpful during the pandemic.
- A dedicated returning officer position was created, focusing on making enhancements to the election cycle and responsible for election preparedness. This position was supported by a designated associate returning officer during the election year.
- A new election logo and branding were created.
- Engagement with the Indigenous Technical Advisory Group was undertaken.
- New vote counting equipment was leased to replace the no-longer-supported equipment purchased in 1997.
- The election worker recruitment strategy included a diversity and equity focus. This resulted in a call-for-workers campaign focused on attracting indigenous youth, with Cree messages on social media and digital billboards downtown. Additionally, people that spoke more than one language were encouraged to become election officials.
- Dedicated communication and social media support was provided.

Summary and Conclusion

This report is intended to accomplish three objectives:

1) to offer an analysis of the 2020 election process.
2) following publishing of this report, for the City to obtain feedback from the public on how future elections can be conducted in order to remove unnecessary barriers and to provide voters with a more transparent and accessible voting experience.

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[7] Historical provincial voter turnout figures are provided in the "2020 Saskatchewan Election: Voter Turnout" paper that can be accessed at www.schoolofpublicpolicy.sk.ca/research/publications/2020-sk-election-e-book/2020-saskatchewan-election-voter-turnout.php
[8] 2020 municipal election voter turnout for select municipalities is provided in "Voter turnout in Sask. in municipal elections remains low": https://thestarphoenix.com/news/local-news/voter-turnout-across-sask-in-municipal-elections-remains-low

3) to propose potential actions on how best to address identified issues, with future action reports to be brought forward to Council for consideration.

There is no question that technology will become a major component in future elections. Paramount to this, however, is ensuring that the voting process is safe, secure, and accessible. As a result, the returning officer is exploring how to best incorporate new technologies to better support future elections.

Actions

The following chart summarizes a list of tasks and intended outcomes. Administration will bring forward action items requiring Council direction and/or approval during the lead-up to the next election in order to achieve goals.

Task	Desired Outcome
Lobby for legislative changes	To allow for greater flexibility and therefore to improve the electoral system.
	To change the date of the municipal election so it does not overlap with the provincial and/or federal election.
	To support election technology and the anticipation for emerging voting opportunities.
	To grant the returning officer with appropriate authority and decision making, i.e. leading up to and during inclement weather events.
Pursue the creation of a voters list	To ensure only eligible, registered voters vote, and vote only once.
	To expedite the voting process, i.e. register in advance.
	To better account for eligible voters, i.e. more accurate data to potentially send voter information.
Pursue acquisition of an election management system	To leverage technology throughout the election lifecycle and rely on digital capabilities to streamline processes.
Revamp polling locations	To best configure polling areas based on voter turnout data, neighbourhood population, neighbourhood growth, facility size, and other important factors.
Revamp advance poll schedule	To ensure consistency and clarity for when polls are open and closed.
	To optimize staffing and logistics.
Add to communications plan for inclement weather	To ensure consistent messaging between the City and election staff.
	To allow for decisiveness and effective communication during the election.
Consultation and engagement with other jurisdictions	To learn what cities are doing to evolve election programs and processes in their respective jurisdictions.
	To understand how cities outside of Saskatchewan are planning for elections this fall while during pandemic.