

Date: 2023-08-01

Subject: **2022 Municipal and School Board Election – Post-Election Report**

Contact: Shawnica Hans, Program Manager, Elections, City Clerk’s Office, Legislative Services

Report Number: Legislative Services-2023-376

Recommendations:

That the report from Shawnica Hans, Program Manager, Elections, City Clerk’s Office, Legislative Services, dated August 1, 2023, to the Committee of Council Meeting of September 6, 2023, re: **2022 Municipal and School Board Trustee Election – Post-Election Report**, be received.

Overview:

- **The 2022 Municipal and School Board Election for the City of Brampton was held on Monday, October 24, 2022, with 24.56% voter turnout.**
- **This report provides details of voting activity for the 2022 Municipal and School Board Election, including new initiatives that were undertaken.**

Background:

2022 Municipal and School Board Election

The last municipal election was held on Monday, October 24, 2022. In the City of Brampton, 24.56%¹ of eligible voters voted, with 87,155 ballots cast.

This election saw a significant decrease in voter turnout from 2018, where 34.50% of eligible voters voted. Before the 2018 election, voter turnout had seen an increase between elections – 36.20% in 2014, compared with 33.13% in 2010.

¹ Voter turnout is based on the number of eligible voters prior to Voting Day.

A decline in voter turnout was seen in many municipalities across the Greater Toronto Area.

It is important to note that Voting Day occurred on the same day as Diwali and Bandi Chhor Divas in 2022.

Current Situation:

2022 Municipal and School Board Election Statistics

Number of Voters

The following provides an overview of voting activity in the 2022 Municipal and School Board Election (“2022 election”), as compared to 2018.

	2022	2018
Number of eligible voters on Voters’ List prior to Voting Day	354,884	313,273
Number of eligible voters on Voters’ List after Voting Day	359,687	327,095
Total number of voters who voted	87,155	108,070
Total number of voters who voted during Advance Voting	19,274	14,473

Voter Demographics

The following figure demonstrates the number of voters by ward:

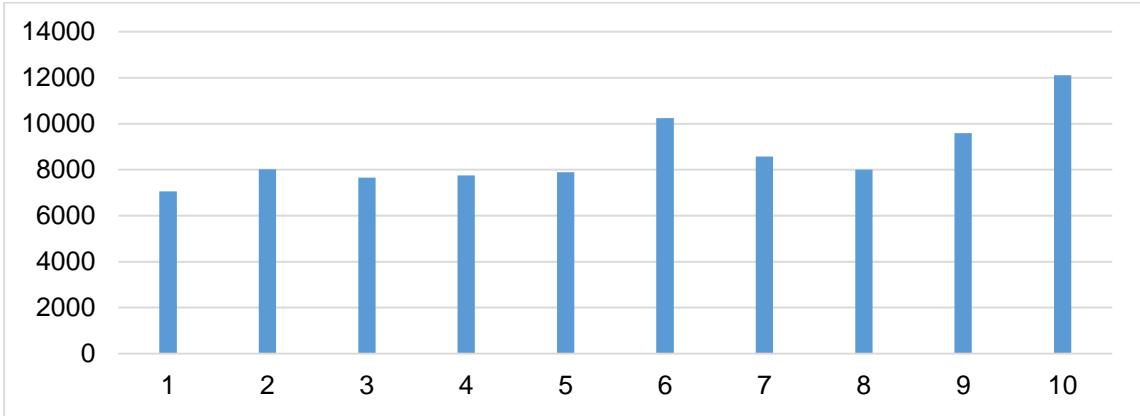


Figure 1: Voters by Ward

The following figure demonstrates voter demographics by age:

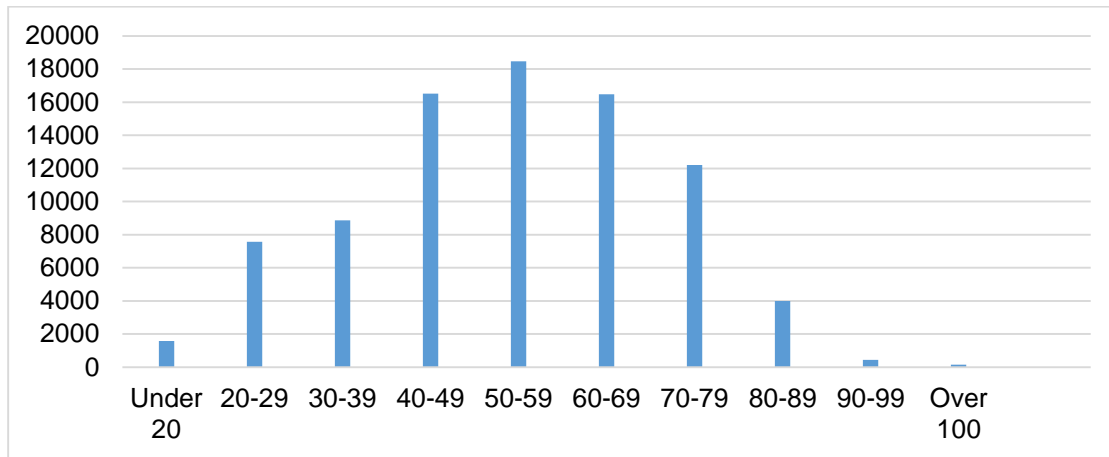


Figure 2: Voter Demographics by Age

In previous elections, staff reported on gender demographics of voters – the percentage of male, female and unknown gender voters. This election, gender was not tracked or recorded in the City’s Voters’ List management system. In 2018, staff removed the gender category from *Application to Amend the Voters’ List (E2215)* forms, to promote inclusivity for all Brampton voters. Similarly, in 2022, the Municipal Property Assessment Corporation (MPAC) removed the gender category from Voters’ List information so that there was no longer any requirement to record the gender of voters.

Revisions

Revisions to the Voters’ List were made through the *Application to Amend the Voters’ List (E2215)* form at the voting location or at the City Clerk’s Office. Throughout the election period, 7,175 voters were added to the Voters’ List. In 2018, 19,398 voters were added to the list.

Over 13,900 voters updated their information on the Voters’ List. These revisions would have included voters moving addresses within Brampton, and other voter information updates such as changes to school support status and correcting their information on the Voters’ List.

Staff implemented an online voter registration system where residents were able to check online to see if they were on the Voters’ List, and if their name was not found, had the additional option to request to be added to the Voters’ List by entering their information online. The online voter registration service was used by over 1,100 voters. The service created efficiency in voter processing at the voting location, for these residents.

Advance Voting

In 2022, staff held a number of Advance Voting opportunities in order to provide greater accessibility to voters. These opportunities included:

Advance Voting Opportunity	Date	Location
Advance Voting kick-off	October 7	City Hall
Advance Voting weekend 1 – Thanksgiving weekend	October 8-9	City Hall West-end of city: Cassie Campbell Community Centre East-end of city: Gore Meadows Community Centre
Home Voting Service	October 11-13	Upon request
Advance Voting weekend 2	October 14-15	Ward 1: Century Gardens Recreation Centre Ward 2: Jim Archdekin Recreation Centre Ward 3: City Hall Ward 4: Susan Fennell Sportsplex Ward 5: St. Jacinta Marto Catholic Elementary School Ward 6: Cassie Campbell Community Centre Ward 7: Earnscliffe Recreation Centre Ward 8: Greenbriar Recreation Centre Ward 9: Save Max Sports Centre Ward 10: Gore Meadows Community Centre

Establishing Advance Voting locations over two weekends in October provided greater flexibility and accessibility to the voter population. This election was the first time that voting was held on a Sunday (Thanksgiving day) in order to provide more opportunities for voting.

The number of voters choosing to vote during the Advance Voting period has increased between elections:

- 2022: 22.1%
- 2018: 13.39%
- 2014: 10.7%
- 2010: 9.69%

The larger increase for 2022 could in part be attributed to Voting Day taking place on the same day as Diwali and Bandi Chhor Divas.

Voter Outreach and Communications

Staff participated in several outreach initiatives to inform residents about the 2022 election. At various events, residents had the opportunity to find out which ward they live in, apply to work the election, and check if they are on the Voters' List.

Staff established information booths at the following:

- Bramalea City Centre (2)
- Brampton Celebrates Pride
- Canada Day
- City-wide Recreation Centre pop-ups (6)
- Emancipation Day
- Farmers' Market (4)
- Transit Customer Appreciation (4)

In addition, staff provided information to be shared at the following events:

- Visual media display at Movie Nights across the City (27)
- Postcard distribution at:
 - Nurturing Neighbourhoods events (2)
 - BAO (formerly ACCIDA) Artist Market
 - Recreation Job Fair

The following is an overview of the various communications tactics implemented to inform and engage voters, staff and other public stakeholders about the election:

- 9 media releases and 4 service information updates
- 115 pieces of creative collateral produced, such as social media tiles, posters, transit ads, digital tiles, bookmarks, videos, postcards, etc. (used for various campaigns)
- 286 social media posts with 22,652 social media video views
- 4 articles in City Matters resident newsletter
- 12 Spotlight announcements, plus emails and videos issued by senior management to keep staff informed and engaged
- 18 videos (information for candidates, third party advertisers and voters, election worker recruitment and election worker training, and Commissioner's Challenge)
- Paid advertising opportunities through local media outlets, on Transit buses, shelters, and digital advertisements (ads)
 - 40 Transit shelter ads and 40 bus ads
 - 5 Brampton Guardian print ads
 - 3 digital ads placed in local media outlets and Spotify

- 56 multicultural media ads (newspaper and digital, radio, social and TV) in Brampton's top 10 languages, plus French
- 2 Brampton Transit Read and Ride articles
- Information shared on brampton.ca/bramptonvotes viewed by over 100,000 users

In addition, over 1,600 election-related enquiry calls were answered by Service Brampton over the past year (this does not include the number of calls answered by the Election Office directly). Further, staff responded to over 10,000 election-related enquiries submitted to the Election Office via email and the Election Contact Us page on the City's website.

With Voting Day falling on the same day as Diwali and Bandi Chhor Divas in 2022, staff increased efforts to promote Advance Voting for members of the community who may have been unable to attend a voting location on Voting Day due to festival celebrations:

- Advance Voting advertisements were translated into multiple languages, and included reminders about Voting Day, Diwali and Bandi Chhor Divas falling on the same day.
- Informational posters were sent to relevant places of worship in Brampton with a request to place them on message boards/high-visibility areas within the institutions.
- For the first time at the City, social media posts regarding Advance Voting were created with Punjabi and Hindi language audio – these posts were shared on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram and received over 1,300 views.

Additional new initiatives were implemented in the 2022 election:

- Use of transit bus destination signage – Advance Voting signage, and pre-Voting Day signage was placed on transit buses across the city
- Partnership with Brampton Arts Organization (BAO) (formerly ACCIDA) to commission a local artist to design "I Voted!" stickers
- Use of short-form videos (e.g. Tik Tok, Instagram Reels) to reach and engage more youth
- First-ever Commissioner's Challenge to support internal, cross-departmental election recruitment

Candidates and Third Party Advertisers

Legislation was changed ahead of the 2018 election to shorten the candidate nomination period to three (3) months. For the 2022 election, legislation was changed again, to lengthen the nomination period slightly to three and a half months. Although the nomination period was longer this election, there were less candidates than in 2018. In 2018, there were 129 certified candidates, whereas in 2022, there were 127 – 75 candidates for Council and 52 School Board Trustee candidates, as well as three (3) candidates who withdrew their nomination.

The nomination process resulted in an acclamation for the French Public School Board Trustee, and as a result there were 20 offices to be elected, with 36 different ballot types produced.

This election, five (5) third party advertisers (four corporations and one individual) registered with the City of Brampton, a decrease from nine (9) in 2018.

During the period for placing election lawn signs, over 4,900 election sign infractions were documented. This election, invoices for election sign infractions were issued to candidates.

Voting Locations

The number of Voting Day locations was 146; compared with 147 in 2018 (both numbers included 15 nursing home/retirement facilities). Despite an increase in the number of eligible voters, some previous voting locations were not available for use in 2022, for example, Chris Gibson Recreation Centre was offline due to construction, as well as some schools being unavailable for use.

On Voting Day in 2022, 110 voting locations were established in schools. When establishing voting locations in schools, safety of the students is a primary concern for both the school boards and staff, particularly post-pandemic. With the COVID-19 pandemic in mind, the City was successful in advocating to the English language school boards for a Professional Activity (PA) Day on Voting Day. The Association of Municipal Managers, Clerks and Treasurers of Ontario (AMCTO) also advocated to the Province of Ontario on behalf of Ontario municipalities to establish a PA Day on Voting Day.

This election is the first time the school boards have been able to accommodate a PA Day on Voting Day for the three Region of Peel municipalities. The French language school boards also provided a Professional Activity (PA) Day on Voting Day.

Having a PA Day on Voting Day has many advantages and creates efficiencies in the administration of voting. Staff recommends that a PA Day continue to be established on Voting Day for future elections.

Other locations included nineteen (19) City facilities and two (2) churches.

Accessibility

The MEA requires that municipalities create an accessibility plan ahead of an election, outlining how the Clerk plans to address accessibility needs for voters and candidates. The City's Election Accessibility Plan, along with a demonstration of the accessible voting equipment was presented to the Accessibility Advisory Committee.

After an election, the municipality must create a report outlining how the Clerk addressed accessibility needs throughout the election. The City's Election Accessibility Report is posted on www.brampton.ca/bramptonvotes and was presented to the Accessibility Advisory Committee on March 7, 2023.

Both the plan and report are attached as Appendix 1 and 2.

The following new accessibility initiatives were implemented in the 2022 election:

- **Home Voting Service** – the program was first piloted in the 2014 election, but was not implemented in the 2018 election. In an accessibility initiative for 2022, the Clerk recommended establishing the Home Voting Service as an alternative voting method for voters who were unable to leave their homes to vote, due to illness, injury or disability. The service was delivered to 51 voters, through 39 home visits over three days of Advance Voting. A team of two election officials attended the voter's home to issue a ballot. Similar to a voting location, election officials carried tools to assist with communicating with the elector, or to address accessibility requirements. Completed ballots were deposited into a secure ballot box, and votes were tabulated after the close of voting on Voting Day.
- **New accessible voting technology** – newer models of the City's accessible voting units were leased for the 2022 election. The accessible voting units were available at every Advance Voting location, and at a designated location within each ward on Voting Day. The accessible voting units are equipped with accessibility tools such as headphones (audio ballot), high contrast viewing, Braille keypad, Rocker Paddle and Sip-N-Puff. Accessibility tools provide an opportunity for voters with accessibility needs to mark their ballot independently.

Voter Administration – Vote Anywhere

Building on the success of the Vote Anywhere pilot in 2018, voters once again had the opportunity to vote at any location within their ward on Voting Day. Voters could vote anywhere across the city during Advance Voting days. Voter notices provided a list of locations that voters could choose from to vote at their convenience.

Excluding nursing/retirement homes, the average number of Voting Day locations per ward was 13.

As expected, recreation centres were the busiest voting locations. Recreation and community centres are natural gathering places in the community and hubs of community activity – they are known to residents and many voters are more familiar with recreation centres than local schools.

During the Vote Anywhere program, it was found that 35% of voters chose to vote at a location that was different from what would be considered their designated location, if the City had implemented designated voting locations. This means that 35% of voters chose to travel to a voting location that was likely further in distance than their closest location. This data shows that the Vote Anywhere program has continued to be a convenient and accessible method for voters to cast their ballot. Staff recommends continuing the Vote Anywhere program in the next election, and will be reviewing the number of locations per ward, due to some being very well attended, while others being poorly attended.

Staffing the Election

The City hired over 1,700 individuals to work the election, including 424 City of Brampton employees. Staff administered 74 training sessions leading up to Voting Day to ensure a consistent approach to voter administration across the city. As with each election, staff saw a number of individuals resign from their election work assignment leading up to the election, creating a need to refill election worker positions up until the morning of Voting Day. The election worker resignation/no-show rate was 24.5% for the 2022 election, similar to previous elections. Contingencies were implemented within the voting location footprint, where additional staff members were placed at each location.

Staff continued the “Adopt a Voting Location” project, where City teams each adopted a voting location and were responsible for staffing the location from within their division. This election, 16 teams participated in the program. The “Adopt a Voting Location” project provided staff with a unique opportunity to serve the community and meet residents, and also proved to be a great team building experience for the teams involved.

Staff supports the involvement of City employees in the election, and will aim to increase City staff participation in 2026. Increased staff participation may help to reduce some of the election worker turnover experienced leading up to Voting Day. Staff members also bring the necessary leadership experience and technical skills required for various election worker positions. Some municipalities require designated non-essential staff to participate in their municipal elections.

Voting Methods

The Council-approved voting method for the 2022 election was paper ballots with the use of vote tabulators, and accessible voting units.

Prior to the 2022 election, alternate voting methods were presented to Council, but were not approved:

- Online voting as an option for the Advance Voting period
- Mail-in voting as an alternative voting method in response to the COVID-19 pandemic

During the election period, staff received a handful of public enquiries and requests regarding these voting methods. As vote-by-mail was offered in the preceding federal and provincial elections, some voters assumed this voting method was also available municipally.

Pandemic Considerations and Challenges

The COVID-19 pandemic presented some challenges in election administration in 2022. Throughout the election period, guidelines changed multiple times, which required staff to pivot and adjust policies and procedures.

For example, staff updated the voting location footprint to provide more distance between election workers, and implemented PPE throughout the voting location to provide a sense of safety for both election workers and voters (e.g. hand sanitizer, disinfectant wipes, masks and gloves available, portable protective barriers placed at all ballot issuing stations). Each nursing/retirement home also had individual pandemic protocols in place, which were adhered to by election workers.

Costs Associated with the Election

All costs associated with the 2022 Brampton Municipal and School Board Election were funded by Election Reserve #25. A capital project, which was also funded from the Reserve, was established for paper ballot tabulation.

The following table provides an overview of the operating expenditures of the Election Cost Centre for the 2022 election:

Operating Expenditures	Total
Budget	\$ 3,080,021
Actuals	\$ 2,403,041
Surplus/(Deficit)	\$ 676,980
Contribution from Election Reserve #25	\$ 2,396,676
Other Revenue Contributions	\$ 6,365
Net Operating Impact	\$ -

Looking Ahead to the 2026 Municipal and School Board Election

Election Administration and Resourcing

As Brampton's population grows, so does the complexity of municipal election administration. Leading up to the 2026 election, staff will be reviewing policies and procedures, as well as staffing requirements, and sharing lessons learned and best practices with other municipalities. Staff recently supported the City of Toronto By-election for Mayor, the largest by-election in Canada's history – this was a great training opportunity to learn best practices from another municipality, while leveraging the City's skills and experience to serve a neighbouring community.

Leading up to the 2026 election, staff will also be evaluating its space requirements to effectively administer the election. Staff has leased a unit in a private building for the last three municipal elections, but the space is no longer sufficient to deliver all projects related to the election. Additional space will be required for the 2026 election.

Staff is also participating in an AMCTO-led review of the *Municipal Elections Act, 1996*, (MEA), in an effort to modernize the legislation and aid in the interpretation of various provisions.

Election Technology

Staff was satisfied with the leased election technology equipment used in the 2022 election. Vote tabulators were accurate, efficient and easy to administer. The accessible voting units provided various tools for voters with accessibility needs to aid in voting independently.

By-law 265-2021 provides that vote tabulating equipment and accessible voting machines may be used for Brampton municipal elections. For the 2026 election, staff plans to continue leasing equipment. The City's existing contract with its voting

equipment vendor has expired, which will require staff to conduct a procurement process for new vote tabulation equipment. Staff anticipates initiating research on voting technology in Q4 of 2023, which will be followed by a formal Request for Proposal (RFP) process.

Ward Boundary Review

Council has stated its intent to conduct a ward boundary review ahead of the 2026 election. Staff reported to Council on April 5, 2023 regarding initiating a ward boundary and council composition review. To date, the ward boundary review has not been initiated due to various factors, including the decision on the future of regional governance, as well as requirements for updated population projection forecasts related to Bill 23. Staff anticipates that updated population projection forecasts will be made available by the Region of Peel in Q4 of 2023. It is expected that these forecasts will contain Bill 23 projections as well as updated population data from the 2021 Federal Census.

Staff will require direction from Council in regards to: (i) Council composition as a precursor to initiating the ward boundary review, and (ii) undertaking the review internally or through the use of an external consultant.

After the ward boundary review has been completed, staff will work with Elections Ontario to update Voters' List information based on any ward boundary changes. Elections Ontario will be responsible for the delivery of the Voters' List in the 2026 election.

Contribution Rebate Program

A municipality may pass a by-law to provide rebates to individuals who contributed to a Council candidate's election campaign. Ahead of the 2018 election, staff reported to Council regarding implementing a contribution rebate program in the City of Brampton; however, Council ultimately decided not to implement the program. Similarly, Council did not provide direction regarding establishing a contribution rebate program for the 2022 election. Ahead of the 2026 election, Council may choose to pass a by-law in favour of implementing a contribution rebate program.

Estimated Election Budget

Looking ahead to the 2026 election, initial estimates suggest the 2026 election will cost approximately \$3.8 million (plus capital projects and estimates), to be funded from the City reserves. This compares with the total 2022 election budget of almost \$3.1 million (plus capital projects) funded from the City reserve.

Corporate Implications:

Financial Implications:

There are no immediate financial implications as a result of this information report.

Any costs associated with the 2026 election will be included in a future report to Council.

Other Implications:

There are no other direct implications from this report.

Strategic Focus Area:

This report fulfills the strategic focus area of Government and Leadership by demonstrating how the municipal and school board election was conducted with service excellence in mind, while facilitating a fair and transparent election process for candidates, third party advertisers, electors, and City staff, in accordance with the MEA.

Conclusion:

This report provides an overview of the administration of the 2022 Brampton Municipal and School Board Election, including aspects that are legislated under the MEA. All departments across the City supported the City Clerk’s Office in administering a fair, transparent and successful election.

Authored by:

Reviewed by:

Shawnica Hans, Program Manager,
Elections, City Clerk’s Office

Peter Fay, City Clerk

Approved by:

Submitted by:

Paul Morrison, Acting Commissioner,
Legislative Services

Marlon Kallideen, Chief Administrative
Officer

Attachments:

- Appendix 1: 2022 Municipal Election Accessibility Plan
- Appendix 2: 2022 Municipal Election Accessibility Report