
TO: CITY MANAGER **DATE:** 2014 October 07

FROM: CITY CLERK

SUBJECT: **2014 BURNABY ELECTION VOTER ENGAGEMENT**

PURPOSE: To provide information outlining voter engagement and experience initiatives being implemented for the upcoming Local Government Election in Burnaby.

RECOMMENDATION:

1. **THAT** this report be received for information.

REPORT

1.1 BACKGROUND

Burnaby City Council, at its Open meeting held on 2012 June 29, approved a report from the Executive Committee of Council *2011 Local Government Election Review and Future Recommendations*. The report focused on providing a more efficient and sustainable election, improving the overall elector experience and potentially increase voter turnout. Through the vision of the *Social Sustainability Strategy*, with consideration for the 23.29% voter turn-out in 2011, initiatives have been undertaken to enhance voter engagement and create a positive elector experience for the upcoming Local Government Election.

1.2 2014 LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTION

Local Government and School District Elections will be held on Saturday, 2014 November 15, across British Columbia. In Burnaby, eligible voters will cast their ballot where they live, work, play or learn, at any one of the 35 convenient voting locations on November 15.

Voters will elect one (1) Mayor, eight (8) Councillors, seven (7) School Trustees, and give Community Opinion on the dedication of five (5) park areas.

1.3 VOTER EXPERIENCE

The *Social Sustainability Strategy* identified ways to increase voter participation in local elections as one of its priorities. As voter turnout has been on a steady decline over the last decade, the recommendations made in the *2011 Local Government Review and Future Recommendations* report focused on increasing voter participation. This will be done by making it more convenient for electors to cast their ballots and creating a positive voter experience.

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1.4 VOTE ANYWHERE!

In past elections, Burnaby electors cast their ballot at designated voting locations, a system that restricted voters and often led to confusion and inconvenience. With the implementation of an electronic voter strike-off system, new or returning City of Burnaby voters will vote where they live, work, play or learn, at any one of the 35 convenient voting locations (Appendix 1 for Voting Locations).

1.5 CONVENIENT LOCATIONS AND ADVANCE VOTING OPPORTUNITIES

By providing voting opportunities at three city centre malls, 29 Burnaby schools and three community centres, voters will have the opportunity to cast their ballot at locations that are walkable from home, convenient to transit, on the way to work, or next door to their favourite shops. Advance Voting Opportunities will be available on November 1, 5 or 8 to all eligible voters, at five convenient locations. Voters can find the location closest to them by visiting the [online map](http://burnaby.ca/elections) at burnaby.ca/elections.

2.0 VOTER ENGAGEMENT

2.1 ELECTION CHAMPIONS

The Election Office has engaged and partnered with Burnaby Public Libraries, Parks facilities, the Planning and Clerks Departments, and Burnaby community organizations to help spread the details of the election to new and returning Burnaby voters. Some of these efforts include the distribution of collateral material, election education sessions, website/social media communications and other unique initiatives. Through this work the Election Office is reaching youth, new Canadians and senior populations, as well as returning Burnaby voters.

2.2 MEDIA

Legislated paid advertising will be distributed to Burnaby households via the Burnaby NOW and Burnaby Newsleader, in both September and October. Shaw TV and Shaw Multicultural channels will run the ‘My Vote Counts!’ Video for free from October 14 to November 15. Fairchild Radio will run an informational interview, translated into Chinese, with the Chief Election Officer in October, created for Burnaby residents who speak English as a second language. Other interviews will continue to be taken by the Chief Election Officer leading up to November 15, to help engage and educate Burnaby voters.

2.3 HOUSEHOLD DISTRIBUTION

In the last week of October, all Burnaby residents (94,000 households) will receive a Voter Guide (Appendix 2 for sample Voter Guide) and InfoBurnaby, outlining the who/what/where/when/why of voting in Burnaby. At the same time, registered Burnaby voters (141,454 citizens) will receive a Voter Card (Appendix 3 for sample Voter Card), which will act as their ID when they come to vote.

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2.4 WEB

The Election Office has focused a large portion of its communication and engagement efforts through the web, social media and online connections, in accordance with the direction from the *2011 Local Government Election Review and Future Recommendations* report. Information is geared towards ‘Voters’, ‘Candidates’ and ‘Staff’. New details are continually released on www.burnaby.ca/elections, and positive feedback has been received. English-as-a-second-language materials (Chinese, Filipino, Italian, Korean, and Punjabi) were made available online in late August, and will continue to be promoted (Appendix 4 for ESL sample). The website also hosts the ‘My Vote Counts!’ video which is an engaging tool used to share election details in less than a minute.

2.5 RESULTS

For the first time in Burnaby, at the close of voting, preliminary election results will be submitted electronically from each voting location for upload to the City website. At the close of voting on Saturday, November 15 at 8:00 pm, Presiding Election Officials at each voting location will run tapes totalling the automated vote counting machines, and these results will be received both electronically and manually by the Election Headquarters, 7282 Kingsway as soon as possible. Voting location results will be read by tally equipment and results will be displayed at Election Headquarters and posted on the City’s website. Results available on Election night will be considered preliminary results only.

Once the review is complete and the Chief Election Officer is satisfied as to the accuracy of the results, the final election results will be declared on or before Wednesday, November 19.

2.6 CONCLUSION

The information provided in this report outlines the voter engagement and experience initiatives being implemented for the upcoming Local Government Election in Burnaby. These efforts are in line with the City’s *Social Sustainability Strategy* and recommendations from the *2011 Local Government Election Review and Future Recommendations* report. Measurement of the voter engagement and experience focus will be reviewed in the *2014 Local Government Election Review and Future Recommendations* report.

Dennis Back
CITY CLERK

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Copied to: Deputy City Manager (C. Turpin)
Chief Election Officer