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Date: 3/26/2018 2:55:55 PM
Subject: 2017 Municipal By-election Review Report
Attachments: 2017 By-Election Review Report - final.pdf

Greetings Mayor and Council,

I am attaching the 2017 Municipal By-Election Review report that was requested by Council following the by-election in October.

Best,
Sadhu

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2017 Municipal By-election Review

Janice MacKenzie, Chief Election Officer
March 23, 2018



VANCOUVER
VOTES

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Executive Summary

As a result of a Councillor resignation, Council appointed the City Clerk as the Chief Election Officer on July 26, 2017. As required under the Vancouver Charter, the general voting day was set to take place on a Saturday no later than 80 days after the date the chief election officer was appointed. General voting day for the local by-election was set as being Saturday, October 14, 2017.

Shortly thereafter, the Province of British Columbia ordered that a by-election be held for School District No. 39 due to a vacancy. The Vancouver School Board informed City Council that the vacancy comprised the entire nine member board of School District No. 39. General voting day was set to coincide with the by-election to fill the Council vacancy.

The 2017 by-election was an unanticipated expense for the City as by-elections are a relatively rare occurrence in Vancouver. In fact, the last by-election held in Vancouver took place in 1992. The estimated budget for the 2017 by-election was estimated to be \$1.535 million. Actual spending on the by-election was less than budgeted.

In delivering the by-election, staff provided the following:

- Vote Anywhere - eligible voters could vote at any voting location set up in the municipality. The model is designed to make voting convenient and easy for voters to vote. It is made possible through the use of real-time electronic voters' list strike off technology.
- Election Day voting places - There would be 51 voting places on general voting day.
- Advance Voting - Advance voting took place at City Hall on two days as required by the Vancouver Charter.
- Vote-by-Mail - Voters unable to vote on voting day or at the advance voting opportunities were able to vote by mail.
- Communications and digital strategy - To maximize the benefits of the strategy, staff produced a robust promotional campaign to gain the attention of Vancouver voters across multiple channels and demographics, while ensuring the by-election process was seen as transparent and fair.

While the efforts undertaken by staff to encourage voters to actually get out and vote during the 2017 by-election were significant, the overall voter turnout for the by-election was 10.99%. The turnout was less than the 20% turnout as hoped for by-election staff. However, a review of other municipal by-elections, including the Vancouver by-election held in 1992, indicate that a 10% turnout is typical for a by-election.

Staff will continue to work towards further increasing voter turnout and citizen engagement in the upcoming 2018 municipal election. The approach by staff will involve removing as many barriers as possible and continuing to create an easy and convenient voting experience that will improve voter engagement and participation in democracy.

Purpose

At a Regular Council meeting following the 2017 by-election, Council requested that staff prepare a summary review of the 2017 by-election - similar to the document that had been prepared for the 2014 local general election. This document is meant to fulfill this request.

Introduction

On July 4, 2017 Councillor Geoff Meggs submitted a letter to the City Clerk in which he resigned from office. Under the Vancouver Charter, an election must be held to fill a vacancy in the Council if the person holding the office resigns and the resulting vacancy occurs prior to January 1 in the year of a general local election. At the July 26, 2017 Council meeting, Council appointed the City Clerk as the Chief Election Officer. As required under the Vancouver Charter, the general voting day was set to take place on a Saturday no later than 80 days after the date the chief election officer was appointed. General voting day for the local by-election was set as being Saturday, October 14, 2017.

On August 3, 2017 the Province of British Columbia ordered that a by-election be held for School District No. 39 due to a vacancy. The following day, the Vancouver School Board informed City Council that the vacancy comprised the entire nine member board of School District No. 39. At a Special Meeting of Council held on August 4th, Council appointed the City Clerk as the Chief Election Officer to conduct a by-election to fill the nine school trustee vacancies. General voting day was set to coincide with the by-election to fill the Council vacancy (i.e. October 14, 2017).

Local elections, including by-elections, held within the City of Vancouver are governed by the Vancouver Charter, the City's Election By-Law and the *Local Elections Campaign Financing Act* (LECFA), which set out financial reporting and other responsibilities for candidates and electoral organizations as well as the role of Elections BC.

The Chief Election Officer (CEO) is responsible for ensuring that all elections and by-elections are conducted in accordance with the Vancouver Charter and Election By-law. The CEO has a statutory responsibility to impartially fulfill the duties of their position and protect the integrity of the election. This includes maintaining the integrity of the voting process, ensuring voter anonymity, and encouraging voter participation. This is balanced against a need for fiscal responsibility.

By-Election Budget and Timeline

The 2017 by-election was an unanticipated expense for the City as by-elections are a relatively rare occurrence in Vancouver. In fact, the last by-election held in Vancouver took place in 1992. Prior to that, one was held in 1985.

The estimated budget for the 2017 by-election was \$1.535 million. This estimate was based on the following:

- The "Vote Anywhere" model that was originally implemented for the 2014 local general election would be used for the by-election. Under the Vote Anywhere model, eligible voters can vote at any voting location set up in the municipality. The model is designed to make voting convenient and easy for voters to vote. It is made possible through the use of real-time electronic voters' list strike off technology.
- There would be 51 voting places on general voting day - 50 voting places located in Vancouver and 1 voting place located in the UBC/UEL area.
- Advance voting would take place at City Hall on two days as required by the Vancouver Charter.
- There would be a need to recruit and train approximately 700 election workers.

- Due to the tight timeline of the by-election being called and actual voting, the communications and digital campaign would be limited and focused. The budget included each household in the voting area being sent a Voter Information Guide as unaddressed mail through Canada Post. The Guide contained all pertinent information related to the by-election. Notably, election materials are not considered junk mail and, therefore, all households received the Guide.
- The estimate also included a contingency of \$140,000.

Based on the actual amounts, the 2017 by-election carried a cost of \$1.2 million. The savings were in large part due to: i) the cost of the voting equipment and technology being less than anticipated; and ii) not requiring the use of the amount budgeted as a contingency.

By way of comparison, the 2014 municipal election had a budget of almost \$3 million. The by-election budget was approximately 1/2 of the municipal election budget.

The breakdown of the local by-election budget and actual spending is as follows:

Category	Budget	Actual
Election Office	\$255,839	\$250,715
Voting Places		
Election Workers	\$221,426	\$217,243
Locations	\$1,000	\$2,000
Supplies	\$43,150	\$32,471
Training - Election Workers	\$67,035	\$31,008
Communications & Digital	\$120,800	\$104,844
Voting Equipment/Technology	\$686,000	\$562,233
Contingency	\$140,000	-
Total	\$1,535,250	\$1,200,514

The funding source for the local by-election was the City's Election Reserve Fund. As part of the City's annual operating budget process, \$1 million is allocated to this reserve fund each year. As of July 2017, the reserve fund had a balance of \$4,105,736. Prior to the 2018 General Local Election, a further allocation of \$1 million will be made to the Election Reserve Fund.

As indicated previously to Council, under sections 37 - 38 of the School Act of BC, the City of Vancouver was required to conduct the School Trustees by-election for the Vancouver School Board. Further, the School Board must reimburse the City for the incremental cost of conducting the school trustees by-elections. Initially, staff anticipated the incremental cost could be over \$25,000. However, based on actual spending, the incremental cost is \$10,000. The City has requested reimbursement for this amount.

The general election requirements as set out in Part I of the Vancouver Charter apply to the holding of a by-election. In addition, the requirements set out in the Local Elections Campaign Financing Act, which is administered by Elections BC, also apply. On July 26, 2017 Council appointed the Chief Election Officer. Based on the Charter requirement, general voting day was set to take place on Saturday, October 14. This provided staff with 80 days in which to plan and deliver the by-election. The timeline for delivering a by-election was as follows:

By-election Event	Date
Candidate information packages available	August 8
Voters List - Public inspection period begins	August 29
Candidate Nomination period	August 29 - September 8
Declaration of candidates	September 8
Declaration of election by voting	September 18
Mail ballot packages available	September 26
Advance voting days at City Hall (8 am - 8 pm) - statutory requirement	October 4 and 10
General voting day (8 am - 8 pm)	October 14
Elected candidate takes oath of office	October 31

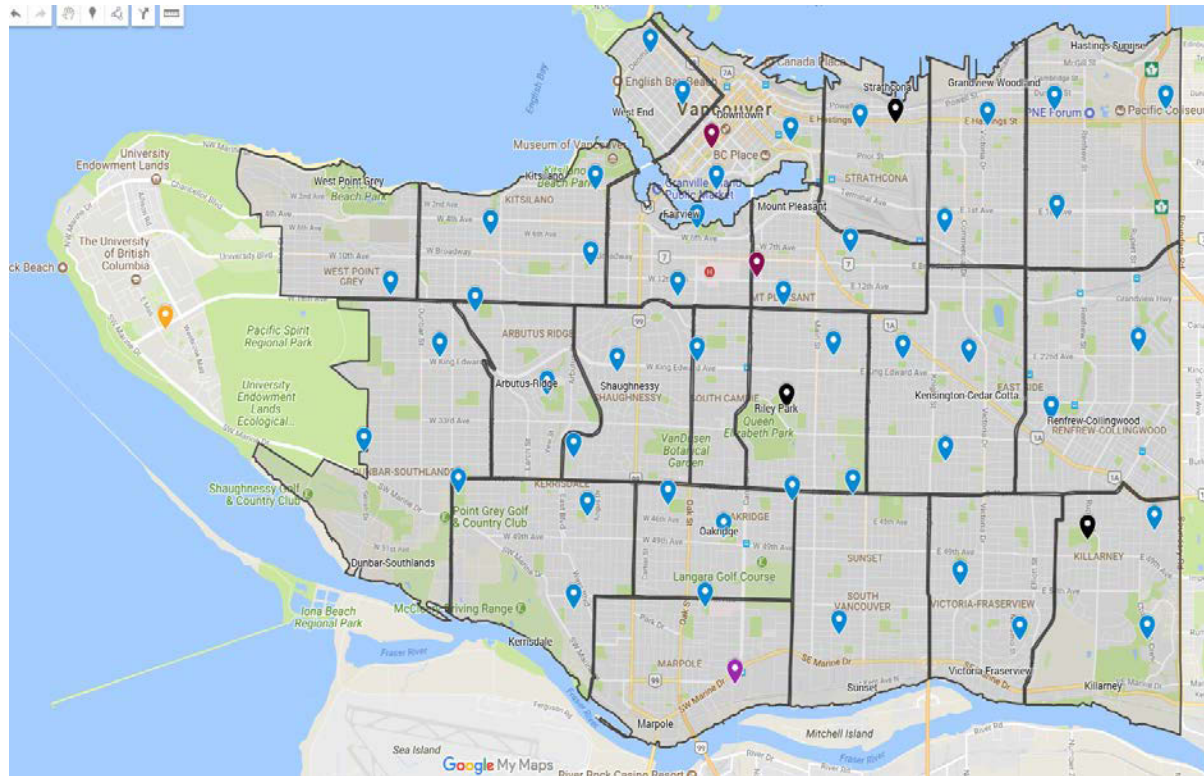
Voting Locations and Turnout

Election staff established 50 voting places for general voting day. The locations were dispersed throughout the city and were situated in 44 public schools, three community centres, two City facilities, and one church. A voting place was also located in the UBC/UEL area. Voters in Vancouver were able to vote at any voting place location on general voting day. Voters in the UBC/UEL area were able to vote at the voting place located in their area. See map below for voting place locations.

Voters were also able to take advantage of voting in advance. Advance voting was held at City Hall from 8 am - 8 pm on October 4 and October 10, 2017.

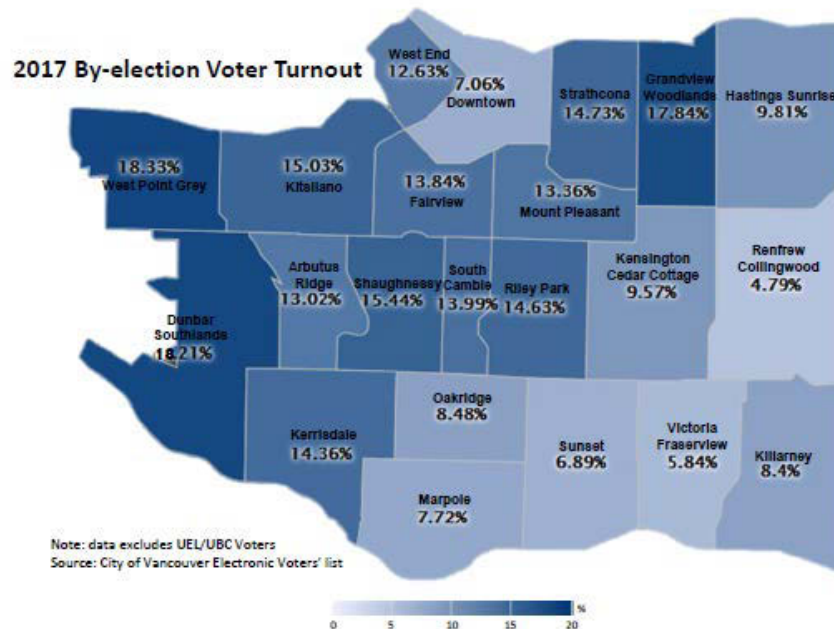
Mail ballot voting was also available for the by-election.

Vancouver voters were able to cast a ballot for one Councillor and nine School Trustees. UBC/UEL voters do not reside in Vancouver and, therefore, were only eligible to vote for nine School Trustees.



There were total of 442,792 individuals that were eligible to vote in the 2017 by-election. Of this total, 48,645 actually voted. This represents a voter turnout of 10.99%. The turnout was notably less than the 20% turnout as hoped for by-election staff. However, a review of other municipal by-elections, including the Vancouver by-election held in 1992, indicate that a 10% turnout is typical for a by-election. The breakdown of ballots cast is as follows:

Voting Opportunity	Ballots
Advance Voting	4,174
Mail Voting	330
Voting Day	44,141
Total	48,645



It is worth noting that the 2014 municipal general election voter turnout was 43.4%. This turnout was over 25% higher than the 2011 municipal general election turnout. While staff cannot say with certainty what specifically led to the significant increase in voter turnout, staff did implement several strategies and initiatives aimed at increasing voter turnout. Many of those strategies were implemented for the 2017 municipal by-election.

Communications Strategies

As indicated previously, the planning and delivery time for a by-election is less than 80 days - which is much less than the time provided for during a general election. The communications budget for the by-election was \$121,000. To maximize the benefits of the strategy, staff produced a robust promotional campaign to gain the attention of Vancouver voters across multiple channels and demographics, while ensuring the by-election process was seen as transparent and fair. Staff translated this campaign to usable, accessible digital tools and information. It incorporated direct mail, newspaper and radio advertising, digital and social media advertising, and translated advertising for citizens with English as a second language.

Through the 80 days in advance of voting day on October 14, key messaging moved from recruitment, to candidate nominations, to key information sharing, and finally to advance voting and general voting. The striking 2014 election brand was used and served to anchor the look for all by-election collateral. The use of digital tools was expanded. They included a look up application for citizens to see if they were registered to vote; a tool to locate five nearby voting places based on existing location; and other resources such as Van Connect app, live chat, and a reminder widget.

Beginning with the 2014 local general election, the City implemented the use of a voter information guide which was mailed to each registered elector through Canada Post. Prior to 2014, the City delivered a voter information card to each registered elector. The cost to deliver the guide is approximately \$500,000 given the weight of the package and that it is delivered as addressed mail. In 2014 there were approximately 410,000 registered voters.

There were 443,000 registered voters for the 2017 by-election. As such, to deliver an addressed voter information guide to each registered voter would carry a cost of over \$500,000. Staff were concerned about the mailing cost of the voter information package relative to the overall by-election budget - particularly given that the material is not an election statutory requirement. As a result, staff opted to distribute the voter information package to Vancouver households as unaddressed mail at a cost of \$55,000. Because the material was election-related, all households received the information package regardless of whether the household is on the Canada Post list as not accepting junk mail.

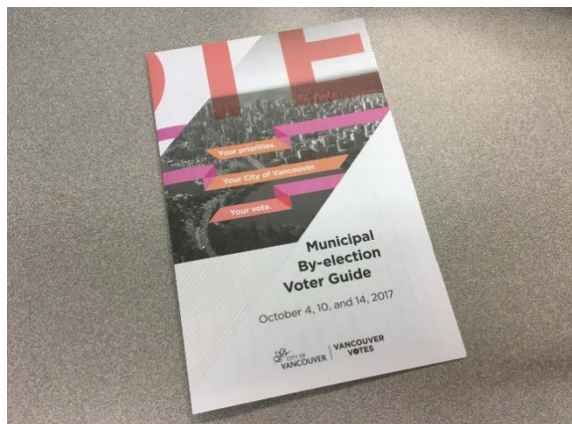
The following is a table highlighting the communications materials shared with the public to inform them of the by-election:

Tactic	Purpose	Detail
Print voter information guide delivered to 280,000+ households via Canada Post (unaddressed mail)	Core outreach effort to ensure all households received material about the election	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Contained key information on how to vote and a map of voting locations. ✓ Extra fee was paid to ensure Canada Post delivered to recipients even if they had declared they did not want junk mail ✓ 5,000 additional copies distributed to community centres and libraries ✓ All community centres prominently displayed the voting location map on their doors in the last week of the by-election
Postcard dropped at 7,000 households in University Endowment Lands and UBC Lands	Core outreach effort to ensure UEL/UBC Lands voters received material about their special voting info	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Contained special information for UEL/UBC voters on how to vote and their voting location
Posters	Effort to reach citizens on the ground at high-visibility locations around the City	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ 1,500 posters put up on cylinders in Vancouver every Wednesday from September 27 through October 12 ✓ Posters sent to all libraries, community centres, and schools ✓ Large series of posters at Cambie & Broadway, visible to high number of pedestrians ✓ Posters posted in all eligible City locations: City Hall, Development Services, Revenue Services, Woodward's, Engineering Services
Newspaper ads (Statutory)	Three public notices required by the Vancouver Charter to notify electorate of key elections milestones	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Three large ads in Vancouver Courier in August and September

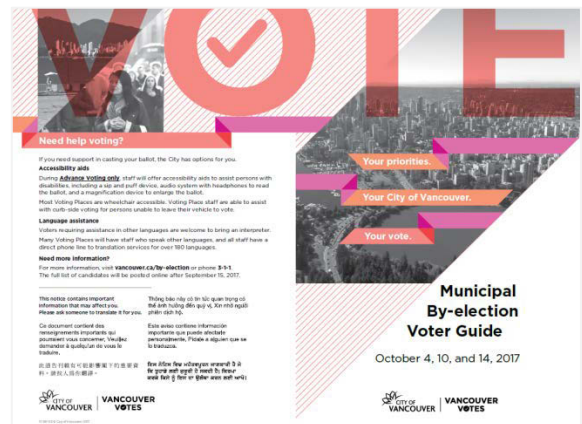
Newspaper advertising (English language)	Advertising to reach readers of large Vancouver-focused publications	✓ Advertising in Metro, Georgia Straight, Indo-Canadian Voice, Link, Westender
Media releases and interviews	Media is key channel to reach the public with by-election info	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ 11 news releases sent to media at every major milestone of the by-election ✓ 18 interviews carried out by the Chief Election Officer and additional info provided to answer 14 other media inquiries ✓ Roughly 41 articles written on the election in 3 months
Candidate biographies booklet	Paper candidate booklet produced with all candidate biographies to reach citizens without access to website	✓ 3,100 copies distributed to all community centres and libraries, 400 copies distributed by VSB to all schools
Vancouver.ca website and VanConnect app fully set up with key by-election information	The City's website and app were leveraged to provide robust information and notifications for voters and candidates	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Vancouver.ca by-election website set up and promoted on site homepage. 100,000+ users viewed the content over 1.5 months (40% were new users who had never visited vancouver.ca) and 40,000+ users on Oct 14 peaking at 5,870 users at 9pm ✓ 7,750 used the online voter registration look-up ✓ 16,725 used online voting place look-up - 8/10 top searched voting places were among the top 10 busiest voting places ✓ 'Get a vote reminder' tool set up on site, providing opt-in text, email, and phone reminders ✓ VanConnect app (which has 38,000+ users) prominently featured links to where to vote, candidate profiles, and vote reminders ✓ VanConnect push message sent Oct 14 reminding users to vote ✓ Live chat enabled on vancouver.ca on Oct 14, 12-8:30pm, and received 61 voter questions
Digital and social media marketing	Digital and social tactics were employed to reach the high number of Vancouverites who find their information online and/or engage on social networks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Facebook and Instagram advertising - reached 390,000+ ✓ Twibbon, Facebook frame, and selfie campaigns to encourage citizens to promote their participation in the by-election ✓ Spotify streaming radio ads were verifiably broadcast to by Vancouver listeners more than 114,000 times ✓ Gmail ads received 15,101 impressions and generated a click through rate of 6.59% (banner ad industry standard click through is 0.08%)

Communications in other languages	Communications to reach Vancouver citizens who do not have English as a first language	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Chinese-language social media outreach on Weibo, WeChat, and through outreach to Chinese-language influencers ✓ Large ads in Ming Pao and Sing Tao ✓ Facebook ads targeted at Vancouver residents using Facebook in Traditional and Simplified Chinese, Punjabi, and French ✓ Radio ads: Fairchild Mandarin and Red FM radio spots
Vancouver School Board distribution of materials at schools	Partnership with VSB to reach out to their school network	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ By-election details and website link sent to all parents at start of school year ✓ Posters and candidate biographies booklet distributed to all schools

Examples of some of the outreach materials are highlighted below.



Physical voter guide



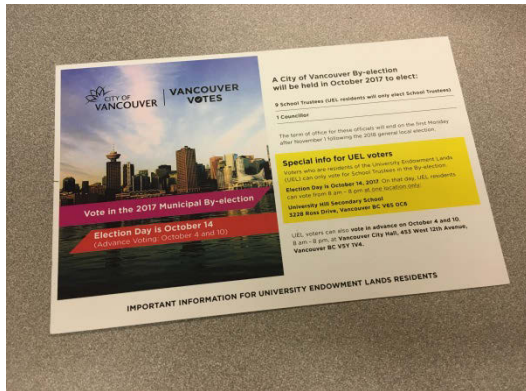
Voter guide exterior



Voter guide side 2



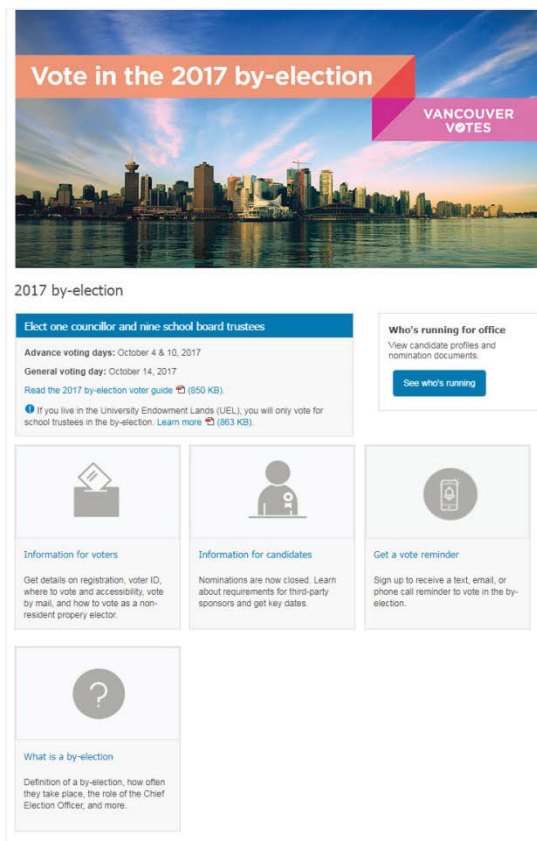
Voter guide interior map



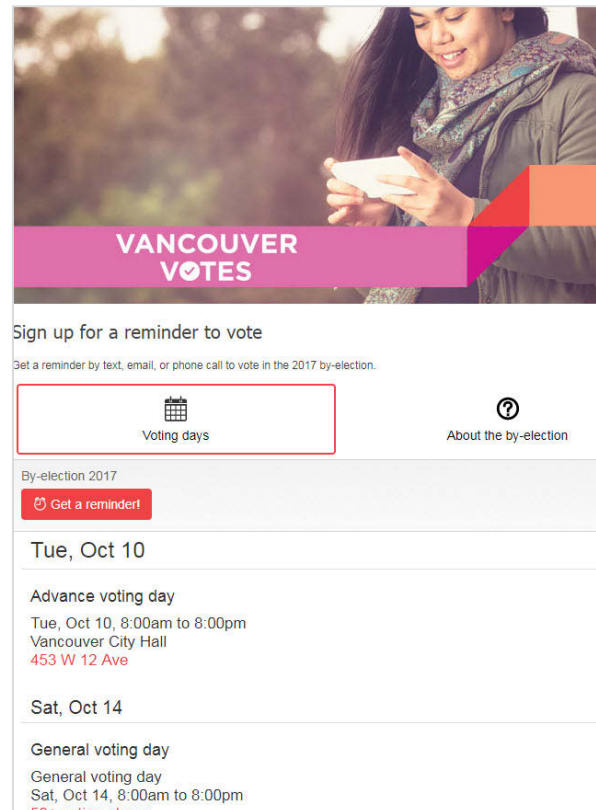
Physical UEL postcard



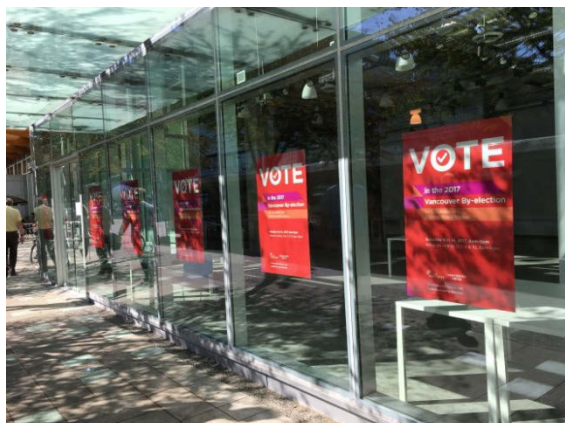
Postcard front



Top of by-election landing page on vancouver.ca



'Get a vote reminder' tool



Large posters at Cambie & Broadway



Large posters at 450 West Broadway



Poster campaign around Vancouver

Are you registered to vote? Find out now

Before you can vote, you must be registered. Enter your legal name and address below to find out if you are registered.

Please enter information in all fields, and follow these formats when you enter your street name:

- 24th Ave W
- Broadway W
- Willow St

Your name

First name:

Last name:

Your residential address

Street number:

Street name:

Unit number (optional):

Reset

Submit

Online registered voter look-up

What voting places are closest to you?

Voting Dates:

Wednesday, October 04 ▾

Address:

Enter your address

Reset

Submit

Do you live in the University Endowment Lands (UEL)?

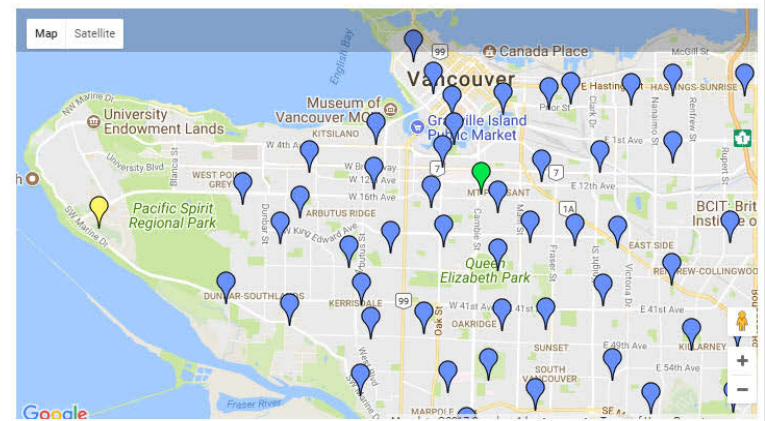
You will only vote for school trustees in the by-election. Your voting place is:

- Vancouver City Hall – advance voting October 4 and 10
- University Hill Secondary School – general voting October 14

View a map of all voting places

Legend

- Advance and general voting place: Oct 4, 10, and 14: 8:00am – 8:00pm
- General voting place: Oct 14, 8:00am – 8:00pm
- University Endowment Lands voting place: Oct 14, 8:00am – 8:00pm



Online voting place look-up



Georgia Straight ad



Examples of Facebook and Instagram ads in French & Punjabi

WESTERNER

ARTS & CULTURE
THEATRE

1 Hour Photo captures painful picture of the past

**Timoteo Zingales and
Juliana Hargrove of
The New Smith in Arts
Center have**

video created

The popular dance ensemble has been around since 1976 and has been a staple of the local arts scene. But in 2008, the group was forced to close its doors due to financial difficulties. The group's founder, Timoteo Zingales, and his wife, Juliana Hargrove, have since created a video that captures the painful picture of the past.

The video, titled "1 Hour Photo," is a collection of 100 black and white photographs that were taken over the course of a year. The photos show the group's members in various poses, some of which are quite provocative. The video is a powerful statement about the group's history and the challenges they have faced.

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Timoteo Zingales and Juliana Hargrove of The New Smith in Arts Center are shown in a video frame, standing behind a table with various items on it.

VOTE

In the 2017

Vancouver by-election

for 1 Councillor and
9 School Board Trustees

Saturday Oct. 14, 2017, 8am-8pm
Advance voting: Oct. 4 & 10, 8am-8pm

CITY OF
VANCOUVER

VANCOUVER
VOTES

vancouver.ca/by-election

ACE DENTAL CENTERS

• DENTISTRY
• ORTHODONTICS
• PERIODONTICS
• ENDODONTICS
• COSMETIC DENTISTRY
• DENTAL IMPLANTS
• DENTAL X-RAYS

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AND YOUR FAMILY

Keep your Smile forever young

To book your appointment, contact our call center

(604) 544-0404

Or call us at 1-800-762-2222, ext. 1000

Or visit our website: www.ace-dental.com

Or visit our website: www.ace-dental.com

ACE DENTAL CENTERS, VANCOUVER (Dental and Periodontics)

ACE DENTAL CENTERS, VANCOUVER (Dental and Periodontics)

October 14, 2017

Indo-Canadian Voice ad

Westender ad

A screenshot of an Instagram post from the account 'cityofvancouver'. The post features a blurred background image of a crowd at a podium with a microphone. Overlaid on the image is a white banner at the top with the text 'Run for office in the 2017 By-election' and 'Nomination period: Aug 29 - Sept 6'. A purple banner on the right side of the image says 'VANCOUVER VOTES'. Below the image, the text 'Learn More' is visible with a right-pointing arrow. At the bottom, there are three icons (heart, comment, share) and a bookmark icon. The caption reads: 'cityofvancouver Run for office in the 2017 Vancouver by-election! Vancouver will elect one councillor and nine ... more'.

**City of Vancouver - Local Government**
September 21

Cast your vote in advance for the 2017 by-election! Vancouver will elect one councillor and nine school trustees this October.

Advance voting takes place October 4 and 10 at Vancouver City Hall, 8am to 8pm. You can also vote at one of 50 voting places in Vancouver on Saturday, October 14.

Visit our website to learn about the candidates and more about how to vote.



Advance voting Oct 4 & 10


VANCOUVER VOTES

Advance voting for the 2017 Vancouver by-election


Find out about the Vancouver by-election, including candidate bios, information for voters, and more.

[Vancouver.ca/by-election](#)

[Learn More](#)




City of Vancouver - Local Government
Sponsored by

 Like Page

What are you up to today? Wherever you are, don't forget to vote!

In the 2017 Vancouver by-election, voters will elect one councillor and nine school trustees. You can vote at any of 50 voting places in the city on Saturday October 14, 8am-8pm.

Check out our website to learn more about the candidates and find a voting place convenient for you!



Vote in the 2017 by-election

**VANCOUVER
VOTES**

Vote in the 2017 Vancouver by-election

Find out where to vote in Vancouver and other key details about the Vancouver by-election.

[Learn More](#)

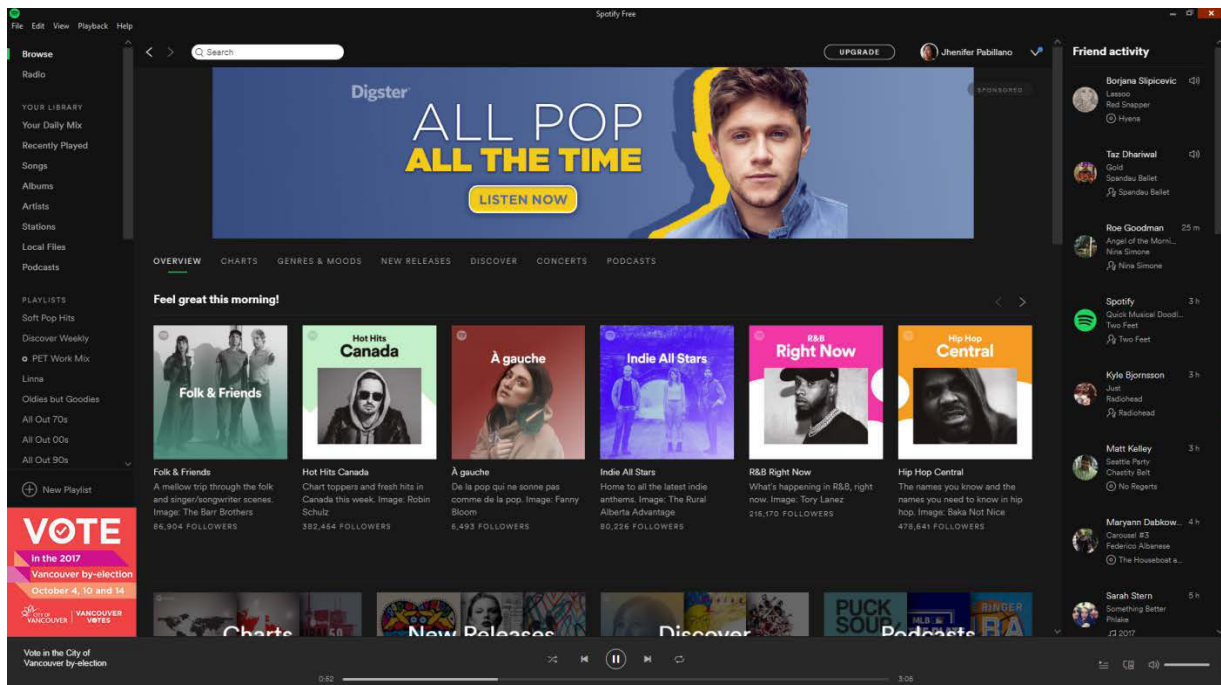
Examples of Facebook and Instagram ads in English

By-election Weibo Articles

COV's 1st By-election Article
earned **11,000 views, 1 shares, and 1 like**



COV's 2nd By-election Article
earned **9,998 views, and 2 shares**



Mockup of Spotify ad shown while audio ad played

Public Feedback and Concerns

Of the 200,063 by-election related interactions that citizens had with the City of Vancouver through the City's major citizen channels, over 97% percent of the interactions involved individuals looking for information on the City's website or through 3-1-1.

A small percentage (0.04% or 86) of the interactions were complaints received from individuals regarding some aspect of the municipal by-election. Communications raising concerns were largely received by email, phone, or mail.

Communication Channels	Interactions*	% of Interactions
Vancouver.ca	194,210	97.08%
3-1-1	1,668	0.83%
Social Media (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram)	4099	2.05%
Complaints	86	0.04%
Total Interactions	200,063	100.00%

A small percentage - 0.04% or 86 complaints - of the interactions were complaints received from individuals regarding some aspect of the by-election. The most frequent complaints (number of complaints) related to the following:

- Voter 'Am I Registered?' look up tool (13)
- Information on by-election (11)
- Voter information guide (7)
- Special voting opportunities (6)
- Robocalls (3)

The following is an overview of some of the concerns:

1. Voter 'Am I Registered?' look up tool

This tool has been used in past local general elections. The tool allows citizens to input their name and address to find out if they are on the list of registered voters. This list is provided by Elections BC. The Election Office did receive a handful of complaints that the tool incorrectly indicated they were not on the list of registered voters even though these individuals had voted in previous elections and, therefore, should be on the list. To address this concern, a pop up message was added to the tool to advise citizens to call the Election Office or 3-1-1 if unsure of the results of the look up tool. Staff will be using this tool for the 2018 local general election and will ensure that the tool is more robust to address complaints received.

2. Information on by-election

A few citizens expressed concerns that they were not aware a by-election was taking place and there was a lack of advertising and information available to the public. As indicated previously, the planning and delivery time for a by-election is less than 80 days - which is much less than the time provided for during a general election. Further, the communications budget for the by-election was \$121,000. To maximize the benefits of the communications

strategy, staff produced a robust promotional campaign to gain the attention of Vancouver voters across multiple channels and demographics, while ensuring the by-election process was seen as transparent and fair. Staff translated this campaign to usable, accessible digital tools and information. It incorporated direct mail, newspaper and radio advertising, digital and social media advertising, and translated advertising for citizens with English as a second language.

Enabling citizens to vote in civic elections is a key priority and a strong and robust communications plan has been prepared for the 2018 Election.

3. Voter information guide

A few citizens were concerned the City did not mail voter information cards (VIC) to each registered voter.

Beginning with the 2014 local general election, the City implemented the use of a voter information package which was mailed to each registered elector through Canada Post. Prior to 2014, the City delivered a voter information card to each registered elector. The cost to deliver the package is approximately \$500,000 given its weight and that it is delivered as addressed mail. In 2014 there were approximately 410,000 registered voters.

There were 443,000 registered voters for the 2017 by-election. As such, to deliver an addressed voter information guide to each registered voter would carry a cost of over \$500,000. Staff were concerned about the mailing cost of the voter information package relative to the overall by-election budget - particularly given that the material is not an election statutory requirement. As a result, staff opted to distribute the voter information guide to Vancouver households (over 280,000) as unaddressed mail at a cost of \$55,000. Because the material was election-related, all households received the information guide regardless of whether the household is on the Canada Post list as not accepting junk mail.

As was the case for past local general elections, staff will be sending voter information guides to all registered voters through addressed mail for the 2018 local general election.

4. Special voting opportunities

In past local general elections, individuals residing in certain personal care homes, long term care facilities, special residential care facilities, and acute care hospitals were able to cast their ballot through special voting opportunities in which 3 - 4 mobile teams of elected officials set up voting places at the facilities for specific dates and times. These voting places as well as the dates and times are typically arranged with each facility administrative coordinator over a period of several months in the lead up to the local general election. Approximately 750 residents take advantage of these special voting opportunities.

In light of the very tight timeframe for delivering the 2017 by-election, staff found they could not plan and deliver the special voting opportunities program at these facilities. Instead, staff worked with the facility administrators to encourage the vote-by-mail option for eligible residents at these facilities. However, more could have been done in advance to ensure that the facility administrators were aware that the special voting opportunity program would not be available for the by-election and that the option available for the care facility residents was vote-by-mail.

In advance of the 2018 local general election, staff will be seeking Council's approval on a by-law amendment to expand the special voting opportunity program to include more types of facilities. In addition, staff will be seeking assistance from advisory Committee members in mobilizing the updated special voting opportunities program.

5. Robocalls

Some citizens phoned to complain about receiving robocalls from the political parties and candidates running in the 2017 by-election. These citizens were advised by 3-1-1 staff to register the robocall phone numbers with the Do Not Call List of the Canadian Radio-television Telecommunications Commission as such calls fall under Federal jurisdiction. Municipal governments are unable to regulate such calls.

Summary

As a result of a Councillor resignation, Council appointed the City Clerk as the Chief Election Officer on July 26, 2017. As required under the Vancouver Charter, the general voting day was set to take place on a Saturday no later than 80 days after the date the chief election officer was appointed. General voting day for the local by-election was set as being Saturday, October 14, 2017.

Shortly thereafter, the Province of British Columbia ordered that a by-election be held for School District No. 39 due to a vacancy. The Vancouver School Board informed City Council that the vacancy comprised the entire nine member board of School District No. 39. General voting day was set to coincide with the by-election to fill the Council vacancy.

The Chief Election Officer (CEO) is responsible for ensuring that all elections and by-elections are conducted in accordance with the Vancouver Charter and Election By-law. The CEO has a statutory responsibility to impartially fulfill the duties of their position and protect the integrity of the election. This includes maintaining the integrity of the voting process, ensuring voter anonymity, and encouraging voter participation. This is balanced against a need for fiscal responsibility.

The 2017 by-election was an unanticipated expense for the City as by-elections are a relatively rare occurrence in Vancouver. In fact, the last by-election held in Vancouver took place in 1992. The estimated budget for the 2017 by-election was estimated to be \$1.535 million. Actual spending on the by-election was less than budgeted.

While the efforts undertaken by staff to encourage voters to actually get out and vote during the 2017 by-election were significant, the overall voter turnout for the by-election was 10.99%. The turnout was notably less than the 20% turnout as hoped for by-election staff. However, a review of other municipal by-elections, including the Vancouver by-election held in 1992, indicate that a 10% turnout is typical for a by-election.

Staff will continue to work towards further increasing voter turnout and citizen engagement in the upcoming 2018 municipal election. The approach by staff will involve removing as many barriers as possible and continuing to create an easy and convenient voting experience that will improve voter engagement and participation in democracy.