Greetings Mayor and Council

I was asked at Council yesterday about an article on the West End Participatory Budget Project (https://www.thewestendjournal.ca/blog/2020/2/1/the-talk-of-the-town) and the potential for "bot" activity.

In the spirit of creating a low-barrier voting process, the Impact Team decided against collecting mandatory background information (email, name, address) and based it on a honour-system. They understood there was a risk for multiple entries. Our team monitored the online results throughout the process and scanned the results for voting anomalies. One way we can flag auto-generated online responses is with the time stamp/completion times on the votes submitted, and we did not observe large numbers of votes coming in at the same time. In terms of other voting anomalies, we also had some voters who did not complete the entire ballot i.e. only voted for one project, which could mean they had already voted and decided to put in an extra ballot for their favourite project or that they just did not complete the ballot.

If someone did manage to auto-generate 200 votes that would not have changed the end results of the vote. If multiple people had done that, it would be a different story but we have no indication that happened.

This is part of the learnings for the next time we do this.

Best

Sadhu


**Sadhu Aufochs Johnston** | City Manager
Office of the City Manager | City of Vancouver
sadhu.johnston@vancouver.ca
604.873.7627

CITY OF
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*The City of Vancouver acknowledges that it is situated on the unceded traditional territories of the Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh peoples.*