
MEMORANDUM

May 11, 2026

TO: Mayor and Council

CC: Donny van Dyk, City Manager
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FROM: Katrina Leckovic, City Clerk & Chief Election Officer

SUBJECT: Report Back – 2026 Election Readiness Update

RTS #: 18019

This memorandum provides a readiness update for the upcoming 2026 General Local Election, taking into consideration [Council's recommendations](#) including key operational changes and budget considerations. The Election Office has prioritized improvements to voter access, geographic distribution of voting places, wait times, staffing, accessibility, multilingual services, communications, and operational resilience. While these priorities help inform planning, the Chief Election Officer retains independent statutory authority to administer the election impartially and ensure the integrity of the electoral process.

1. Voting Opportunities

A. Election Day

To ensure broad and equitable access to in-person voting on General Voting Day (October 17), the number of voting places will increase from 82 in 2022 to 87 for 2026 (6% expansion) with supercentres expanding from 68 to 83 (22% expansion) to better accommodate higher turnout. Supercentres are larger, well-equipped voting places that feature spacious rooms, more staff, and enhanced voting technology to better accommodate higher voter turnout.

B. Advance Voting

Advance voting continues to play a key role in providing voters with options to improve voter access and ease Election Day congestion. In recent years, participation in advance voting has steadily increased across all levels of government, which is a trend expected to continue in 2026.

For 2026, advance voting will take place over four days on October 3, 7, 10 and 13. In 2022, five advance voting days were offered. While there will be one fewer advance voting day, the number of voting places per advance voting day will increase significantly from 22 to 60 (173% increase over 2022), including the introduction of advance voting supercentres. Total advance voting hours will increase from 1,320 to 2,856 (over 116% increase than 2022). This model will ensure voting places are closer to home for many more Vancouver voters and reflects historical data which indicates that approximately 84% of voters cast ballots within one kilometre of their home. Schools and private facilities will also be used for the first time during advance voting to improve geographic distribution.

C. Vote by Mail

Vote by mail will continue to be available to all eligible voters, with application improvements underway to enhance usability and access. Applications will open in early September. To further improve access and convenience and in addition to the option to mail in a ballot, the number of ballot drop boxes across the city will increase from 7 to 12.

D. Special Voting Opportunities

As in previous elections, between September 28 and October 14, mobile voting teams will support eligible voters to cast their ballots at social service centres, shelters, hospitals, and care facilities that can accommodate 30 or more people.

E. Vote-at-Home

First piloted in 2022 and previously known as Homebound Voting, the Vote-at-Home program will continue, enabling eligible voters who cannot leave their homes due to illness, injury, or mobility challenges to vote. A team of two election workers will visit the voter's home to facilitate voting while maintaining privacy and ballot confidentiality. This ensures equitable access to the democratic process regardless of health or mobility.

F. Vote at the Election Office

Following accessibility upgrades at the Election Office and pending by-law approval, the Election Office will offer in-person voting with an assistive ballot marking device between October 3 and 17 for voters with a disability, illness, or injury that makes it difficult to mark a ballot independently, and for obscured voters who prefer not to vote at a voting place due to privacy and safety concerns. This option is pending Council's approval of amendments to the City's Election By-law in June.

2. Election Workers

The Election Office plans to hire over 2,200 election workers for voting places across the city, which is an increase of nearly 78% from 1,240 in the 2022 election. This growth is driven primarily by the increased number of advance voting places. In past elections, workers hired for Election Day also covered advance voting shifts; however, with advance voting now approaching 70% of the number of Election Day locations, a larger workforce is required to ensure all shifts are filled.

Enhancing the voter experience is a top priority. Additional staff will be assigned to support accessibility, manage crowds, and provide multilingual assistance. Extra staff will also be scheduled during peak hours at high-volume voting places to maintain service levels and ensure adequate break coverage. A new training module on accessibility and inclusion has been added to election worker training. This module has been reviewed by members of the City's Accessibility Committee to ensure election workers are better prepared to support voters with accessibility needs at voting places.

3. Security

For the first time, security personnel will be deployed at all voting places to assist with line management, enforce campaign-related rules, and respond to incidents.

4. Technology

Technology investments will support faster processing and improved voter flow. The total number of registration laptops will increase from 890 to 1,546 (74% over 2022), and tabulators from 213 to 381 (79% over 2022). In addition, new tabulators will process ballots twice as fast as in previous elections, leading to improved efficiency.

5. Accessibility at Voting Places

Accessibility at voting places remains a priority for the 2026 election. Site audits have been completed at all voting locations to assess accessibility features, and the findings have been used to update the City's election webpage.

The webpage will provide details such as the most accessible entrances, curbside voting availability and locations, and parking information. The information will also be expanded to include transit directions and bike rack availability to help voters better plan their visit.

On-site communication will be improved through clearer signage identifying priority access lines. On-demand interpretation services in more than 240 languages, including ASL, will be available at all voting locations. Curbside voting for voters who are unable to exit their vehicle due to disability or health concerns will continue to be offered at most voting places.

These enhancements are intended to provide clearer information and a more accessible voting experience for all voters.

6. Communications & Outreach

The communications strategy focuses on multilingual, culturally relevant outreach delivered through trusted channels. Campaigns will include targeted digital advertising, including

platforms such as WeChat, and materials translated into top spoken languages in alignment with the City's Language Access Policy, including French.

Voting opportunities, including advance, vote by mail and Election Day, will be promoted through paid and organic social media content, out of home print and digital advertisements, radio and Spotify advertisements, on digital and print election information materials and via community partner outreach.

While Braille ballots are not currently feasible, election information will be translated into Braille, and targeted outreach directly to blind residents in Vancouver who are over 18 will be conducted in partnership with the Canadian National Institute for the Blind.

The Election Office will continue to provide non-partisan information, while candidates remain responsible for campaign promotion. The Election Office will support candidates by hosting a webpage with candidate contact information including relevant social media channels and webpages, guidance on election rules, and access to key resources.

7. Budget

The 2026 election will be funded through the City's Election Reserve. The estimated budget is \$9.4 million plus contingency. The increase in the 2026 election budget is primarily driven by the implementation of Council-recommended enhancements to improve voter access, service delivery, and operational resilience. A key cost driver is the significant expansion of advance voting, with voting places increasing from 22 over 5 days in 2022 to 60 over 4 days in 2026. Additional pressures include increased staffing levels to support both advance and Election Day operations, and the deployment of security personnel at all voting places. Further investments in technology, including expanded use of registration laptops and tabulators have also contributed to the higher budget. Collectively, these changes reflect a scaled-up election model designed to accommodate increased voter participation and provide more equitable and convenient voting opportunities across the city. This approach is consistent with recent election delivery models; for context, Elections BC reported spending of approximately \$10 million to administer provincial election operations across ridings within Vancouver in the most recent provincial election.

8. Summary

The 2026 General Local Election has been planned with a focus on improving the voter experience while maintaining the integrity, accessibility, and reliability of the electoral process. In response to Council's recommendations, the Election Office has implemented targeted enhancements across voting opportunities, staffing, security, technology, communications, and accessibility. These improvements are designed to reduce barriers to participation, improve service delivery, and ensure a range of accessible and convenient voting options across the city. Operational capacity has also been scaled to support anticipated demand and a wide range of turnout scenarios.

A comprehensive post-election report will be provided to Council following the election.