



City of Richmond

Report to Committee

To: General Purposes Committee

Date: November 3, 2017

From: David Weber
Director, City Clerk's Office

File: 12-8125-80-01/Vol 01

Re: Election Reserve and Advance Planning for the 2018 Election

Staff Recommendation

- 1) That a divisional-voting approach to the 2018 election, which is consistent with the current Civic Election Administration and Procedure Bylaw, and as generally described in the staff report dated November 3, 2017 from the Director, City Clerk's Office, be approved.
- 2) That the following additional level requests be considered as part of the 2018 budget process:
 - a) A one-time additional level request in the amount of \$130,000 for the 2018 election, and
 - b) An ongoing additional level request in the amount of \$45,000 to increase the annual Election Reserve transfer for the 2018 election and for future elections.

David Weber
Director, City Clerk's Office
(604-276-4098)

Att. 2

REPORT CONCURRENCE	
CONCURRENCE OF GENERAL MANAGER	
REVIEWED BY STAFF REPORT / AGENDA REVIEW SUBCOMMITTEE	INITIALS:
APPROVED BY CAO	

Staff Report

Origin

With the General Local and School Election in Richmond less than a year away, it is appropriate to bring forward a report that provides a general overview of the proposed election program for the 2018 election as well as to review aspects of the previous election. In this regard, the report responds to the following Council referral given after the last election (December 8, 2014):

“That staff report back on the election program generally.”

This report supports Council’s 2014-2018 Term Goal #9 A Well-Informed Citizenry:

Continue to develop and provide programs and services that ensure the Richmond community is well-informed and engaged on City business and decision making.

- 9.1. Understandable, timely, easily accessible public communication.*
- 9.2. Effective engagement strategies and tools.*

Findings of Fact

The next General Local and School Elections will be held in all local jurisdictions across BC on October 20, 2018. The General Local and School Election in Richmond is coordinated and administered through the City Clerk’s Office in accordance with the requirements of the *Local Government Act*, the *Community Charter* and the City’s Bylaws.

The election is funded through an Election Reserve to which an annual transfer of \$117,000 is made. These annual transfers are set aside and kept in the Reserve for use during the election year. In addition to the funding made available through the Election Reserve, costs for some new or enhanced election initiatives introduced for past elections have been provided through Council-approved one-time additional level requests. The election is also supported through existing budgets through the allocation of staff resources to election-related work, most significantly from the City Clerk’s Office and Information Technology.

Analysis

As with the last election in 2014, it is proposed that the 2018 General Local and School Election be based on Voting Divisions, meaning that voting places are located within designated neighbourhoods and that residents are required to vote at their designated neighbourhood voting place. This approach is consistent with the current Civic Election Administration and Procedure Bylaw.

The City has utilized the same 34 Voting Divisions for all previous divisionally-based elections. However, for 2018, staff will be looking at the possibility of establishing several new divisions in areas that have experienced population growth and where voter turnout has been very strong. In these areas, there have been some challenges in managing the volume of voters coming through the voting place, which suggests that it may be time to consider establishing a few additional divisions and voting places in order to provide a better experience for the electorate

and a more manageable election operation. If one or more new divisions are warranted, recommendations for such would be brought back to Council for consideration since voting divisions and their boundaries must be established by bylaw.

In addition to the voting opportunities on General Voting Day, opportunities to vote in advance and by mail-in ballot will also be available and residents of many local care facilities will be able to take advantage of special voting opportunities held at their residential care homes. In 2014, the City held 9 advance voting opportunities over 5 days and voting opportunities were provided at 8 local care facilities. A comparable level of service will also be provided in 2018.

A re-assessment of the Election Reserve and the election budget is presented in order to (a) provide ongoing funding for various election program elements which were introduced for past elections but only funded as one-time additional levels; (b) reflect and more fully fund the true staffing costs of the election; and (c) provide for a general increase to the budget where appropriate to cover rising election costs due to growth and inflation.

What follows below is a general description of the main components of the election program. The main components of the election program in terms of the budget can be described under the following categories: (1) Staffing; (2) Advertising, Public Awareness & Engagement; (3) Equipment & Technology; (4) Supplies, Printing, Postage, and Miscellaneous.

Staffing

Staffing is one of the main cost centres for the election. Staffing levels at voting places and staff training programs are established with a view to providing a positive, orderly and efficient experience for the voting public. Voting place staff (those that work at the polling places at the time of voting) are also supported by a staff team in the Election Office in order to deliver a well-organized and legislatively-compliant election.

In 2014, approximately 375 temporary voting place staff were hired and trained to work at the 34 voting places on General Voting Day, at the 9 advance voting opportunities and at various special voting opportunities at local care facilities. In addition to the staff who work at the voting places, a team is assembled and hired to work in the Election Office on a temporary basis in the months leading up to the election. The Election Office positions are often filled by regular City staff whose regular positions are subsequently backfilled by auxiliary or temporary staff. Assignments vary from approximately 4 to 10 months in duration. The work undertaken by the Election Office staff team is further supplemented and supported by the Clerk's Office and IT staff who are assigned to support the election in addition to their usual duties.

Summary of primary activities and program components

Election Office Staff Team

- Recruit approximately 375 temporary voting place staff
- Plan and conduct training for voting place staff using a combination of in-person sessions and workshops, printed training materials and online video resources
- Respond to inquiries and requests from the public, the media and candidates
- Coordinate and prepare all forms of public communication materials, both printed and electronic

- Manage and update the Voters List
- Coordinate ballot production and prepare vote counting machines
- Administer special voting opportunities at care facilities and manage the distribution of mail-in ballots
- Make arrangements for voting place locations and source, organize and deliver all necessary supplies, equipment, signage, instructional materials, voters lists, voting booths, ballot boxes, ballots, etc. required at the various voting places

Voting Place Staff

- Interact directly with the voting public on General Election Day, at advance voting and at special voting opportunities at care facilities
- Set-up the voting places in the morning, administer the vote for the full 12 hours, take down the voting place and report out on the results of the vote
- Ensure that all aspects of the voting process are conducted in strict adherence with legislative requirements

Advertising, Public Awareness and Engagement

A number of well-established public communication elements and newer initiatives make up this category of the election program. At the core is the statutory election advertising that is required to appear in local newspapers and the Voter Cards which are mailed to registered electors to advise them about voting locations, dates and times relative to their neighbourhood voting place.

In addition to these core advertising initiatives, public awareness of the election has also been enhanced during previous election years through a variety of print, electronic and social media communications. For the 2014 election, a temporary Communications employee worked as part of the Election Team to coordinate and manage the advertising and online content, to engage the public through social media, and to liaise with members of the media.

In conjunction with the 2018 local elections in BC, the lower mainland local election officers planning group has been approached by the non-profit organization CIVIX to partner, sponsor and promote the Student Vote program. The Student Vote program is a learning opportunity that has been provided to students in conjunction with 5 federal, 21 provincial and 6 municipal elections since 2003. The program provides participating schools with resource materials, along with posters and election supplies to create an authentic voting experience in the class room that parallels the election that is being held in the broader community. The goals of the program are to teach students about government and the electoral process and to have them engage with the relevant campaigns with the ultimate goal of creating future voters and better understanding of the electoral process amongst youth.

In Richmond, classes in 25 elementary schools and 9 secondary schools participated in the Student Vote program that was offered in conjunction with the May 2017 provincial election.¹ In 2018, Student Vote is planning to develop for the first time, a full program in relation to the local level elections in BC in partnership with local governments and local government election

¹ Further information about Student Vote can be found at www.studentvote.ca . Additional videos are available on Youtube by searching "Student Vote BC 2017"

officers, many of whom have already indicated their support for this and other youth engagement programming.

Summary of primary activities and program components

- Prepare and coordinate legislatively-compliant advertising
- Manage the preparation and distribution of Voter Cards to registered voters
- Prepare all content for the Voters Guide, including candidate profiles, and arrange for printing and distribution of the Guide to all Richmond households
- Prepare content and (along with IT) coordinate upgrade of the Richmond Election “app”
- Manage the social media campaign
- Prepare and update website content relating to the election as the process unfolds
- Liaise with members of the media; prepare and issue news releases as appropriate
- Coordinate all other forms of advertising and public awareness (for example, bus shelter ads, poster campaign, and inter-municipal regional radio campaign).

Equipment and Technology

Automated vote counting machines have been in use locally for approximately 25 years. For 2018, staff will be re-evaluating and likely replacing the now 25-year old vote counting equipment with newer model leased vote-counting equipment. In addition, Richmond will continue to utilize a voters list software system and will look to further develop the popular Richmond Election “app,” a downloadable smartphone application that includes candidate profiles, broadcasts real-time election results, provides voting place location look-ups and general election-related information.

Summary of primary activities and program components

- Prepare and coordinate vote counting machines and electronic tabulation of results
- Update, refresh and launch the Richmond Election “app”
- Manage the Voters List using electronic voters list software system
- Engage the public through social media and website content, including tools such as voters registration confirmation look-up, and “find my voting place” look-up

Supplies, Printing, Postage, and Miscellaneous

The last grouping of components of the election budget covers various miscellaneous administrative and hard-costs associated with staging the election, including ballot production and printing, postage, office supplies and equipment, moving and deliveries, general printing, etc.

Summary of program components and costs

- Postage (for Voter Cards, Voters Guides, and general mailings)
- Ballot printing and general printing (forms, brochures, training materials, signage)
- Voting place supplies, office supplies, courier, moving and delivery expenses
- Inaugural meeting expenses

Update to Election Dates

As a result of Provincial legislative amendments, the date for General Voting Day for civic elections has been changed from the third Saturday in November to the third Saturday in October. All other significant dates, such as the Nomination period dates, are also adjusted accordingly as follows:

- October 20, 2018 – General Voting Day
- September 4, 2018 to September 14, 2018 – Nomination Period

Other election-related dates, such as advance voting days will be determined in due course.

Next Steps

Additional level budget requests relating to the election would be considered by Council as part of the 2018 budget process. If additional level requests are not approved through the budget, then the scope of the election program would be reduced accordingly.

Some consequential matters will require further Council approval in due course – such as the consideration of possible changes to voting division boundaries, the appointment of election officers, and other necessary housekeeping amendments to bylaws resulting from the change in election dates. Other updates on the progress of the election program will be provided over the course of the next year.

Financial Impact

The Election Reserve is the main funding source for the general civic election. The purpose behind the reserve is to spread out the cost and budget impact of the election evenly over the Council term. Currently, the reserve receives an annual transfer of \$117,000, for an accumulated total of \$468,000 in 2018.

The recommended budget for the 2018 civic election is \$643,000. This budget is based on (1) a same-level-of-service approach using the 2014 election as a base, and (2) the addition of two new program enhancements for 2018, namely, participation in the Student Vote initiative (\$15,000) and the increase in the number of voting places on General Voting Day (\$15,000).

The difference between the projected budget and the amount that will be available in the election reserve in 2018 is \$175,000. This amount is recommended to be put forward for consideration as part of the 2018 budget process in the form of a \$130,000 one-time additional level request “top-up” along with a \$45,000 ongoing additional level request to increase the annual transfer to the election reserve. By increasing the annual transfer to the election reserve by \$45,000 starting in 2018 (an increase from \$117,000 annually to \$162,000 annually), the amount that will be accumulated through the election reserve will better correspond to the cost of future elections.

Outlined below is a breakdown of the key components of the 2014 Election program along with their costs in 2014 and the proposed budget for the 2018 election.

Election Budget

	2014 Budget	2014 Actuals	2018 Budget Same-Level of Service
--	-------------	--------------	---

Staffing

Voting Place Staff (approx. 375)	\$ 125,500	\$ 142,260	\$ 143,000
Election Office Staff	\$ 120,000	\$ 145,526	\$ 148,000

Advertising, Public Awareness and Engagement

Advertising	\$ 25,000	\$ 19,302	\$ 20,000
Voters Guide	\$ 22,000	\$ 22,235	\$ 25,000
Voter Cards	\$ 20,000	\$ 22,646	\$ 25,000
Election "App", Social media	\$ 18,000	\$ 19,375	\$ 20,000

Equipment and Technology

Automated vote-counting machines	\$ 37,000	\$ 37,495	\$ 55,000
Electronic Voters List software	\$ 55,000	\$ 58,850	\$ 65,000
Miscellaneous equipment, services	\$ 10,000	\$ 2,264	\$ 3,000

Supplies, Printing, Postage, and Miscellaneous

Postage	\$ 50,000	\$ 56,791	\$ 60,000
Ballots	\$ 24,000	\$ 24,246	\$ 25,000
General printing	\$ 10,000	\$ 11,683	\$ 12,000
Supplies	\$ 10,000	\$ 8,174	\$ 9,000
Inaugural Meeting	\$ 3,000	\$ 2,980	\$ 3,000

2018 Same-Level of Service Sub-Total			\$ 613,000
---	--	--	-------------------

Proposed Initiatives / Enhancements for 2018

Additional Voting Places (up to 3)		\$ 15,000
Support for Student Vote / youth programming		\$ 15,000

TOTALS	\$ 529,500	\$ 573,827	\$ 643,000
---------------	-------------------	-------------------	-------------------

Election Funding

	2014 Funding	2018 Funding
Funding available in Election Reserve*	\$ 351,000	\$ 468,000
One-time allocation in 2014	\$ 182,500	
One-time request (for same level of service in 2018)		\$ 100,000
One-time request (for proposed initiatives in 2018)		\$ 30,000
On-going additional level request to Election Reserve (to provide consistent funding for 2018 and future elections)		\$ 45,000
Total	\$ 533,500	\$ 643,000

*Note: \$117,000 is transferred to the Election Reserve each year between elections

Conclusion

The 2018 election program is outlined generally herein and is proposed to be conducted on a divisional voting basis as currently outlined in the Civic Election Administration and Procedure Bylaw and as was conducted in 2014. The election budget is based on delivering the same-level-of-service as was delivered in 2014, which would include new initiatives added in 2014 but funded at that time on a one-time basis.

For 2018, 2 program enhancements are proposed, namely participation in the Student Vote program and the potential increase in the number of voting divisions.

The election budget additional level requests, which are recommended to be considered as part of the overall budget process, are structured to provide funding for the proposed 2018 election program and to adjust the annual transfer to the Election Reserve so that future elections are more fully funded through the reserve.



David Weber
Director, City Clerk's Office
(604-276-4098)

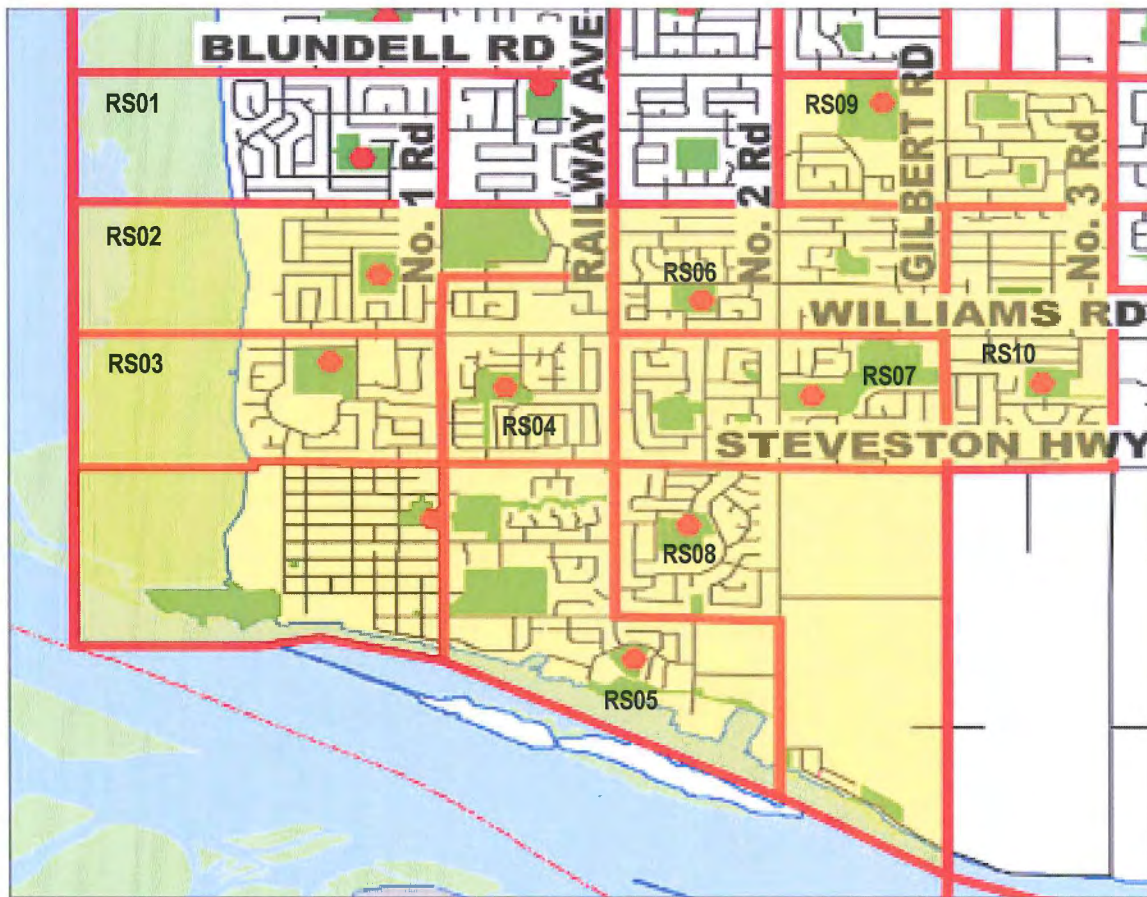
- Att. 1: Current Richmond Voting Divisions (from Civic Election Administration and Procedure Bylaw)
- 2: Voter Turnout and Ballots Cast – 2008, 2011, 2014 Elections

Current Richmond Voting Divisions Richmond – Centre Area



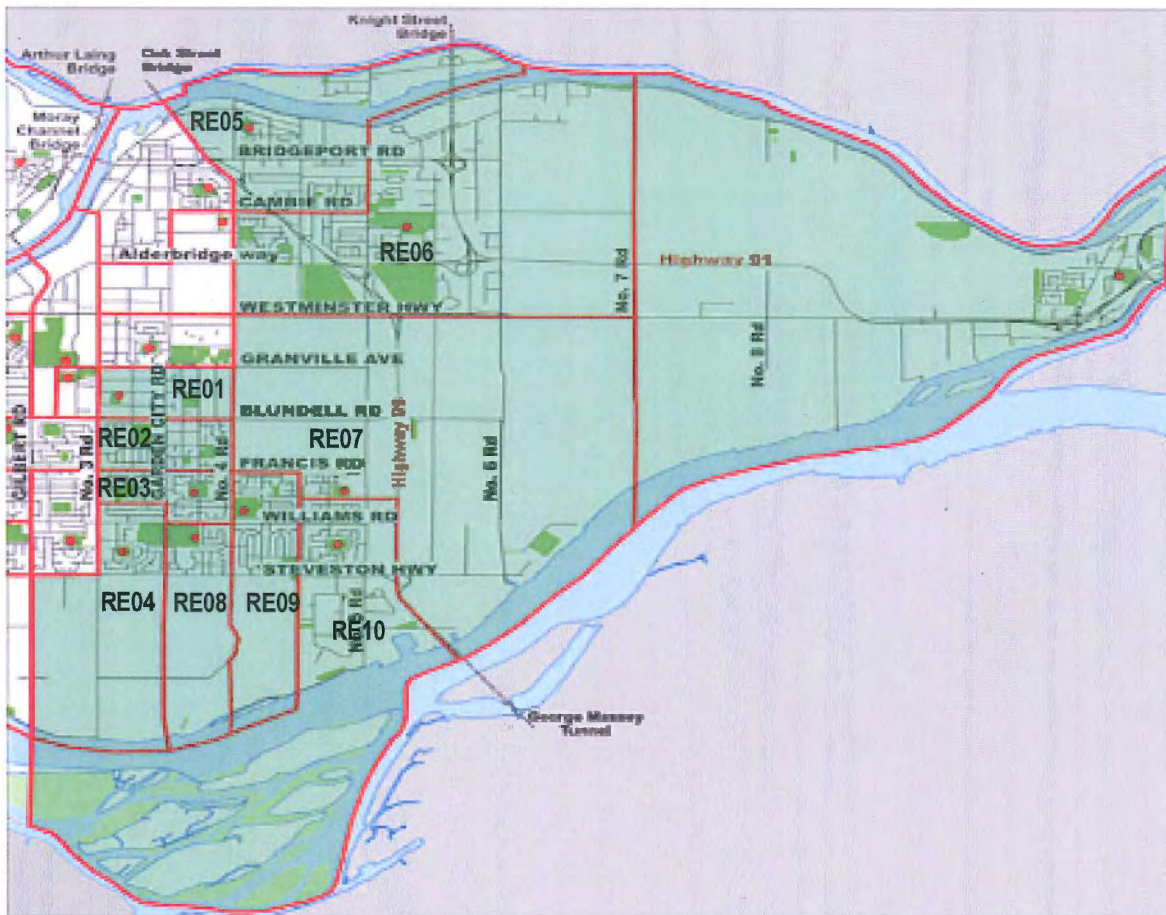
- RC01 [Thompson Elementary School](#)
- RC02 [Quilchena Elementary School](#)
- RC03 [Gilmore Elementary School](#)
- RC04 [Grauer Elementary School](#)
- RC05 [Blair Elementary School](#)
- RC06 [McKay Elementary School](#)
- RC07 [Brighthouse Elementary School](#)
- RC08 [Minoru Place Seniors Centre](#)
- RC09 [Richmond Secondary School](#)
- RC10 [Talmey Elementary School](#)
- RC11 [Tomsett Elementary School](#)
- RC12 [Cook Elementary School](#)
- RC13 [Sea Island Elementary School](#)

Current Richmond Voting Divisions Richmond – Steveston Area



- RS01 [Dixon Elementary School](#)
- RS02 [Manoah Steves Elementary School](#)
- RS03 [Lord Byng Elementary School](#)
- RS04 [Diefenbaker Elementary School](#)
- RS05 [Homma Elementary School](#)
- RS06 [Wowk Elementary School](#)
- RS07 [Steveston-London Secondary School](#)
- RS08 [Westwind Elementary School](#)
- RS09 [Blundell Elementary School](#)
- RS10 [Maple Lane Elementary School](#)

Current Richmond Voting Divisions Richmond – East Area



- RE01 [General Currie Elementary School](#)
- RE02 [Palmer Secondary School](#)
- RE03 [Walter Lee Elementary School](#)
- RE04 [Bridge Elementary School](#)
- RE05 [Tait Elementary School](#)
- RE06 [McNeely Elementary School](#)
- RE07 [Kingswood Elementary School](#)
- RE08 [Whiteside Elementary School](#)
- RE09 [McNair Secondary School](#)
- RE10 [Woodward Elementary School](#)
- RE11 [Hamilton Elementary School](#)

Voter Turnout and Ballots Cast 2008, 2011, 2014 Elections

