



City of Richmond

Report to Committee

To: General Purposes Committee

Date: Febraury 9, 2011

From: David Weber
Director, City Clerk's Office

File: 12-8125-01/2010-Vol
01

Re: Voter Turnout in Richmond

Staff Recommendation

That the staff report entitled "Voter Turnout in Richmond" dated February 9, 2011 from the Director, City Clerk's Office, be received for information.

David Weber
Director, City Clerk's Office and
Chief Election Officer for Richmond
(604-276-4098)

Att. 4

FOR ORIGINATING DEPARTMENT USE ONLY		
CONCURRENCE OF GENERAL MANAGER		
REVIEWED BY TAG	YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	NO <input type="checkbox"/>
REVIEWED BY CAO	YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	NO <input type="checkbox"/>

Staff Report

Origin

Following the General Local and School Election in 2008, Council made the following staff referral:

That staff analyze and comment on the low voter turnout, including: (i) efforts made by other cities; (ii) voters from other cultures; (iii) the situation with new residents to Richmond.

This report responds to the referral on low voter turnout and proposes several strategies that could improve voter turnout for the 2011 civic election.

Findings of Fact

The factors impacting voter turnout are often the subject of speculation and comment, especially in the aftermath of an election. Although it is very difficult to determine with any degree of certainty the actual reasons for a low voter turnout, by drawing on general research into the subject and by examining known statistical information from other jurisdictions, the factors leading to low voter turnouts generally may become better understood.

Most would agree that citizens in democratic societies should exercise their right to vote and that a strong voter turnout is a hallmark of a healthy democratic environment. However, it can be said with certainty that Richmond's voter turnout over the last number of elections has been declining. Of the more than 125,000 registered electors in Richmond, only 27,709 actually came out to vote in the local government elections in 2008, a 22.1% voter turnout. In other words, over 97,000 people in Richmond who were registered to vote for the local government election did not cast a ballot. In 2005, the voter turnout was 25.71% and in 2002, 33.65%. (See **Attachment 1** for further statistics and an illustration of voter turnout in Richmond from 1970 to 2008).

While these figures are concerning for Richmond, a general comparison regionally, provincially, federally and internationally reveals that Richmond is not alone when it comes to low and declining voter participation rates. Within the region in 2008, voter turnout in Richmond fell within an average to low range when compared to other larger Metro Vancouver municipalities, which as a group only saw participation rates from a high of 36.4% to a low of 16.71 % (see **Table 1** below). Voter turnout in the last provincial general election in 2009 was 55.14%, the lowest recorded turnout in BC since election statistics were first recorded in this province starting in 1928. Voter turnout for the last federal election in 2008 was 42%, the lowest federal turnout in 40 years.

**Table 1: Richmond 2008 Voter Turnout Compared to Other Metro Vancouver Cities,
By Percentage of Voter Turnout (Highest to Lowest)**

Jurisdiction	Registered Voters	Ballots Cast	% Turnout
White Rock	15,169	5,522	36.40%
West Vancouver	31,737	10,144	31.96%
Delta	68,280	21,174	31.01%
Vancouver	404,000	124,285	30.76%
Port Coquitlam	36,291	10,695	29.47%
Maple Ridge	48,034	13,954	29.05%
Surrey	252,561	61,965	24.53%
New Westminster	41,551	10,092	24.29%
Burnaby	139,340	32,727	23.49%
Pitt Meadows	11,220	2,615	23.32%
Port Moody	19,470	4,364	22.41%
Chilliwack	56,884	12,633	22.21%
Richmond	125,378	27,709	22.10%
Langley (Township)	66,547	14,430	21.68%
Coquitlam	78,755	16,898	21.46%
Langley (City)	17,419	3,558	20.43%
North Vancouver (City)	30,890	5,540	17.93%
North Vancouver (Dist)	59,673	9,973	16.71%

Analysis

Demographic Indicators and Voting Behaviour

Due to the near complete absence of any in-depth data in relation to Richmond's electorate, it is not possible to accurately analyse the motivations or voting behaviours of those who vote and those who do not vote in local government elections in Richmond. The only regularly collected data specific to Richmond voters that exists is information such as the general turnout and the number of voters who voted at specific voting places. This information is very basic and does not address the underlying motivations of voters and consistent non-voters.

However, in contrast, after the 2009 BC General Provincial Election, BC Stats conducted an extensive survey of BC provincial voters and non-voters in partnership with Elections BC. The goal of the survey was to:

1. measure voter satisfaction with the electoral process;
2. discover why non-voters chose not to vote; and
3. identify any barriers to voting that may have hindered participation.

While the resulting report¹ does not provide any specific data or analysis relating to Richmond voters, it does provide very detailed statistics and insights into the BC electorate as a whole.

In conjunction with the satisfaction survey, BC Stats and Elections BC also conducted a companion voter demographic study² which determined the key socio-economic factors that affect voter turnout at provincial elections. The demographic study demonstrated that in BC neighbourhoods where people were more likely to vote provincially, the neighbourhoods had the following characteristics:

- higher median income,
- larger proportions of older people,
- a greater proportion of people who had university educations, and
- an election campaign with a “close race.”

In areas where people were less likely to vote provincially, the neighbourhoods had the following characteristics:

- higher proportions of people who were new to that neighbourhood, having recently moved to the area from other parts of BC or Canada,
- greater proportions of recent immigrants to Canada,
- higher rates of unemployment, and
- a larger portion of people who were not in the workforce and had children at home.

One of the conclusions of the demographic study highlighted that overall, age was one of the most important factors that determined voting behaviour. Specifically, the study showed that 74% of provincially registered voters aged 70-74 cast a ballot in the 2009 provincial election and that with each successively younger age group, the rate of voter participation declined. In addition, older individuals were more likely to be consistent voters who voted in every election. This is consistent with the general view that voting among youth everywhere is on the decline. This is explained in the report by the observations drawn from many social and psychological studies which conclude that people in their forties and older have a heightened sense of altruism and caring about the greater community and that voting is one of the ways that this greater sense of community caring is expressed.

By analysing the only readily-available voter demographic data in relation to Richmond voters³, the same voting behaviour and pattern is observed locally as was observed provincially in terms of age being a key determining factor (See **Attachment 2**).

Aside from identifying the socio-economic and age-related factors that affect voter turnout, the studies also detail a number of significant findings from the voter satisfaction survey. The

¹ Province of British Columbia, BC Statistics, *Motivations and Barriers: Exploring Voting Behaviour in British Columbia* (BC Statistics, January 2010).

² Province of British Columbia, BC Statistics, *Who Heads to the Poll? Exploring the Demographics of Voters in British Columbia* (BC Statistics, March 2010).

³ During the 2005 General Local Election, Richmond ran a pilot project at 3 local voting places (Minoru Seniors Centre, Diefenbaker School, and Kate McNeely School) to test the potential for an centralized electronic voter's list. The residual statistical data relating to the voters at those 3 Richmond voting places in 2005 provides enough information for comparison to the province-wide demographic statistics relating to age of voter.

responses to the question “what was the main reason why you voted [or] why you did not vote during the May 12th, 2009 provincial election,” provide some of the most telling information in the studies. (The attached diagrams from the studies (**Attachments 3 and 4**) illustrate the main responses cited by consistent voters and consistent non-voters to the above questions).

Among consistent non-voters, the following was cited as their main reasons for not voting in the 2009 BC provincial election:

- **Engagement:** A large number of consistent non-voters cited “[dis]engagement” (41%) as their main reasons for choosing not to vote. Specifically, these individuals indicated that they weren’t interested in the election, had a general dislike or scepticism of politics, didn’t like any of the parties or candidates, or were not concerned about the campaign issues.
- **Pessimism:** A number of consistent non-voters cited “pessimism” (9%) as their main reasons for choosing not to vote. Specifically, these individuals indicated that they felt that their vote didn’t matter or count for anything, or that there was already a clear winner or loser, so there was no point in voting.
- **Personal circumstances:** A significant number of consistent non-voters (21%) cited “personal circumstances” as their main reason for not voting. Specifically, these individuals indicated that they were too busy to vote, were out of town, ill, or physically unable to vote.
- **Knowledge and Accessibility:** A number of consistent non-voters cited lack of “knowledge” (17%) and “accessibility” (2%) as their main reasons for not voting. Approximately half of the people in this category felt that they did not have enough knowledge about the parties or the various election platforms in order to make an informed choice. The other individuals in this category indicated that they didn’t vote because they didn’t have enough knowledge about the process, for example, they didn’t know where to vote, didn’t receive a voter card, didn’t know how to register, didn’t have proper ID, were uncomfortable with the process, didn’t feel that the voting place was conveniently located, and so on.

Among consistent voters, the following was cited as their main reasons why they voted in the 2009 BC provincial election:

- **The Issues:** Among consistent voters, a significant number (36%) cited “issue-based” reasons for voting. Specifically, these voters participated in the process because they were concerned with a specific issue, they cared about the outcome of the election or they wished to support or oppose a specific party or candidate.
- **Sense of Responsibility / Duty to Democracy:** A large number of consistent voters cited “democracy-based” reasons (29%) and “responsibility-based” reasons (another 29%) as their main reasons for voting. Specifically, these voters referred to their right to

vote, having their voice heard, protecting and exercising democratic rights and viewing voting as an important civic duty.

In summary, the recent provincial studies, if they can be taken as reasonably reflective of local trends, indeed speak to the factors alluded to in the Council referral. Specifically, the provincial studies showed that neighbourhoods with higher proportions of new immigrants to Canada and higher proportions of new residents from elsewhere in the province and the country tended to have lower turnout. In addition, the statistics also show that the younger a person is, the less likely they are to vote. The studies also revealed a range of reasons most often cited by those for voting and not voting. With this information, the overall issue of low voter turnout can be addressed from a more informed position.

Strategies to Improve Voter Turnout

Campaign participants (meaning candidates, elector organizations and third party advertisers) and election administrators (meaning chief election officers and election staff) both have an interest in addressing the issue of low voter turnout. However, the motivations and general approach of each is fundamentally different. Whereas campaign participants are active in the political realm and primarily seek to increase voter turnout among their respective supporters, election administrators must maintain a strictly unbiased position and seek only to educate the public generally about the election process, to remove barriers to voting, and to encourage greater participation by all citizens irrespective of politics.

This fundamental distinction is important to bear in mind in relation to the various factors identified as affecting voter turnout and in relation to any proposed strategies for improvements. Specifically, election administrators must refrain from becoming involved with or addressing issues or strategies that fall only or primarily in the political realm. For this reason, factors such as political engagement, general pessimism, and campaign issues, cannot be addressed or mitigated by election administrators without compromising the impartiality of their office. Similarly, suggestions for changes or improvements that are political in nature (such as lowering the voting age or changing the electoral process from a first-past-the-post system to a proportional representation / single transferable vote system) also cannot be addressed herein.

With this in mind, the following strategies are offered as suggestions that may address the issue of low voter turnout.

1. Investigate the Feasibility of Implementing Internet Voting

Recently, the City of Surrey Council and the City of Vancouver Council have discussed the possibility and feasibility of internet voting, whereby votes are cast on-line instead of at a physical voting place. At the federal level, Elections Canada is on record indicating that they aim to conduct a by-election by 2013 using internet voting as a trial of the technology and process. In Ontario, at the municipal level, internet voting technology has been used by some municipalities for three election cycles. Following the most recent municipal elections in Ontario in 2010, it was reported that internet and telephone voting opportunities were provided by 33 municipalities including Peterborough, Huntsville and Markham. Although there were also media reports of technical problems in some locales, overall, the innovation was well-

received. In the City of Markham, Ontario, where municipal internet voting was pioneered, success has been realized in expanding the accessibility of the vote and improving voter turnout generally through the use of internet voting.

In BC, voting over the internet is not currently prescribed in legislation and it has been reported recently in the media that the Provincial Government is not likely to entertain the required legislative and policy changes in order to allow municipalities to offer internet voting opportunities for the 2011 civic elections. However, some are hopeful that the necessary policy development, consultation and legislative work would be advanced well enough to perhaps see the option of internet voting available to municipalities in time for the 2014 civic elections. In addition, it must be noted that a significant amount of investigation and work would be required, not only from a technical view point, but also with regard to policies, election bylaws and general processes in order to even come to a decision as to whether such an initiative would be feasible. Although this approach to voting holds promise, the City of Richmond would only be in a position to investigate the feasibility of such an initiative possibly for 2014 or later.

Option 1: That staff explore the feasibility and options for internet voting and report back to Council regarding the potential for implementation for the 2014 civic election; and that a letter be written to the Provincial Government in support of any actions or legislative changes that would be required to authorize the use of internet voting.

2. Implement a "Vote Anywhere" Initiative

A "vote anywhere" initiative or system is one that allows citizens to vote at any voting place while at the same time, providing for a secure and efficient election. Traditionally in Richmond, and in most other jurisdictions, electors are required to vote at a specifically designated voting place and are not permitted to vote at any other voting place.

A "vote anywhere" system is implemented using a centralized voters list which allows election administrators to access a single electronic voters list instead of relying on multiple hard-copy printed lists at each voting place. By using a centralized electronic list, any front line election official would be able to determine whether an elector had already voted, even if it was at another voting place. This feature is what makes it possible to implement a secure system that would not have to tie the elector down to any particular designated voting place.

Pilot projects to test the effectiveness of an internally developed system have been successfully undertaken in Richmond. The hardware and software systems were first tested in 2005 at three Richmond voting places and in 2008, the system was used at the advance voting opportunities. Significant administrative and customer service efficiencies were observed with these test projects. A full city-wide or partial city-wide implementation would provide the following benefits in addition to the administrative efficiencies already observed:

- greater choice and convenience for citizens – instead of being required to vote at one designated voting place, electors could vote at any voting place of their choosing and they might be able to vote while out shopping or while out at a community centre;

- a more secure election process – once an elector has voted, a detailed electronic record is created and that person’s name is electronically crossed off of all voters lists at all voting places (if implemented city-wide); and
- affords the opportunity to locate new voting places (or “super polls”) in locations where people naturally congregate on Saturdays, such as shopping malls and community centres – in effect, taking the voting opportunity to the people instead of making the people go to the voting opportunity.

A “vote anywhere” system also addresses some of the factors and reasons identified as having negatively affected voter turnout, in particular, those cited under “personal circumstances” and “knowledge,” such as being too busy to vote, not knowing where the designated voting place was, or the voting place not being located conveniently.

Although this strategy may bring efficiencies and benefit voter participation, there are some concerns that should be considered. As with any new automated system or process, there is inherent risk with an initial rollout. Although everything possible would be done within reason to mitigate any potential technical problems, there would be little or no experience locally to draw on should any unexpected technical issues arise. In addition, this type of system has a significant hardware and software cost (summarized below) that would be required each time it was used for an election. In the absence of any objective data as to the impact of such a system on voter participation, it is difficult to gauge whether the additional expenditure would be worth the benefit. In addition, the change to voting processes that such a system would entail is significant and it is difficult to determine whether the voting public would embrace this newly-provided freedom of choice or whether it would cause further confusion around where people are supposed to vote. A carefully implemented communications plan would be critical in this regard. Finally, should internet voting be implemented for future elections, any benefit realized by utilizing a “vote anywhere” system would likely be superseded, at least partially, by the choice and convenience offered by internet voting.

At this time, staff have conducted some preliminary investigation of different implementation options with external vendors. A more modest, smaller-scale implementation, for example, using the traditional paper-based approach at neighbourhood voting places but implementing the vote anywhere electronic system at a smaller number of strategically located super polls, would focus efforts on providing the convenience of a readily-available voting opportunity at high traffic locations for those people who might not otherwise vote, while still maintaining the same level of quality service to the regular voting public. This approach may result in the best return on the investment and effort.

A full city-wide vote anywhere system implemented at new high-traffic locations (super polls) as well as at traditional neighbourhood voting places would provide the greatest efficiency and broadest voter access, convenience and choice. This option would provide a higher level of service to the regular voting public as well as target those local residents who don’t typically make the effort to specifically seek out their neighbourhood voting place on election day.

The estimated cost for this initiative for hardware, software, vendor implementation services, connectivity and election staff training, would range from \$40,000 for a smaller-scale targeted implementation to \$88,000 for a full city-wide implementation. While it is too early in the

process to determine the most appropriate and feasible approach – smaller-scale or city-wide - staff would recommend that if this strategy were supported by Council, that funding be considered for the full city-wide implementation (\$88,000) in order to preserve the full range of implementation options pending further investigation leading up to the election. Due to the significant advance planning that would be required in order to implement this type of system, a decision on whether to undertake this initiative would have to be considered and decided in the very near future.

Option 2: That \$88,000 in additional funding be considered to implement a “vote anywhere / super poll” initiative for the 2011 civic election.

3. Publish Candidate Profiles

In an effort to provide the public with a better basic knowledge of the choices available to them in an election, the City of Vancouver has for the past two municipal elections published brief candidate profiles. These profiles have been submitted by candidates as part of their nomination documents and were published on the Vancouver City website and published in a hard-copy election guide that was delivered to every Vancouver household. Vancouver election staff have indicated that the initiative has been very positively received by the public, in particular, by seniors, citizens with English as a second language, and by members of the public generally who have had difficulty locating candidate information (See **Attachment 5** for a sample of a candidate profile from the Vancouver 2008 civic election).

In contrast, most municipalities, including Richmond, have traditionally only provided the names of nominated candidates as they appear on the ballot, provided access to the candidate nomination documents (as required) and, on request, provided basic candidate contact information. This approach has often left the public frustrated when they are trying to engage themselves in the election process. However, even though many members of the public might think that the city election office is a logical source for candidate-related information, most election staff typically steer clear of providing such information out of a concern that it might appear that the election office is promoting the campaign platforms of candidates. This, of course, is a very legitimate concern as it could cause some to question the objectivity and impartiality of the election office and, by extension, the election process itself.

This potential concern was mitigated in Vancouver by handling the distribution and availability of candidate profiles in a highly controlled and careful manner. For example, the candidate photos, profile statements and contact information were submitted by the candidates in conjunction with their nomination papers and in accordance with strict rules as to length and format. In every way possible, each candidate was given a fair and equal opportunity to have their profile published along with all the other candidates and extreme care is taken to ensure that the profiles are presented in a manner that does not favour one over another. By handling the profiles in an objective manner, the City of Vancouver has endeavoured to shown that there is no bias shown toward any given candidate and the result is that the public is better served in terms of providing a central launching point to learn about the campaign participants.

This initiative addresses the concern raised by members of the public in the provincial survey and study around not having enough information to make an informed choice in the election.

If this initiative were undertaken, the candidate profiles could be included on the city website for little or no additional cost. However, to include candidate profiles on the web site and as part of the election guide that is printed and distributed to every Richmond household, an additional \$16,000 for printing and distribution would be required.

Option 3: That the option to submit candidate profiles be included as part of the nomination papers for publication on the City website only;

OR

That the option to submit candidate profiles be included as part of the nomination papers for publication on the City website and for publication in the printed city election guide that is distributed to every Richmond household; and that \$16,000 in additional funding be considered to cover the increased costs for printing and distribution.

4. Undertake an Enhanced Public Awareness and Education Strategy

In past years, the usual public awareness and education activity around the election has had to be very basic and does not provide for a robust or sophisticated campaign. Previous efforts have mainly focussed on meeting statutory advertising requirements, providing some additional discretionary advertising, distributing an election guide to Richmond households, and making information available through the City web site and general press releases.

With regard to new residents and citizens from other cultural backgrounds who speak other languages, the election office has taken some steps in an effort to provide a greater level of multi-lingual service. Specifically:

- the eight page election guide was made available in English, French, Chinese, and Punjabi;
- all required instructional materials that are typically made available at the voting places were provided in English, French, Chinese and Punjabi;
- an effort was made to hire multi-lingual election officials and have a minimum of one such official available at each voting place;
- a multi-lingual staff member was available as a resource on election day at election headquarters to answer public phone inquiries from non-English speakers; and
- emphasis was placed in the multi-lingual election guide on the election rules that allow voters to bring someone with them to assist them in the voting booth by translating the ballot and the voting instructions.

To enhance the above efforts, more can be done to increase public engagement in the process, with a view to improving election awareness and voter turnout. For example:

- expanding the use of discretionary advertising and developing a more accessible and engaging public advertising design;
- launching an election office facebook page to create a forum for public dialogue about election processes using a communications tool which has been shown to more actively engage younger citizens as well as other demographics;
- participating in an expanded regional level election-related radio campaign, and building on its previous success by including Public Service Announcement-type messaging in other media such as video (in conjunction with Metro Vancouver's studio production facilities); and
- initiating an early voter registration campaign and generally promoting greater voter participation in conjunction with UBCM's local government awareness week, which in 2011 is focussing on the upcoming local government elections under the theme "Be Heard."

This initiative addresses concerns around the lack of knowledge of the process and responds to the issue of "engagement" at the most general and broad level relating to the electoral process.

Approximately \$25,000 in additional election funding would support increased advertising costs and an expanded regional radio and multi-media awareness campaign. Many aspects of this initiative would involve an additional commitment of election staff resources aimed at managing and coordinating these initiatives.

Option 4: That \$25,000 in additional funding be considered to undertake an enhanced public awareness and education strategy regarding the civic election.

5. Measure the Impact of the Strategies after the Election and Incorporate and Improve on Successes for Future Elections

At the most basic level, the ultimate measure of success of any new strategy is whether voter turnout improves over previous years. However, based on the turnout rate alone, it would be conjecture as to which strategy, if any, might have been responsible for an increase in participation rates. It is also quite possible that the participation rates could improve or worsen for other reasons un-related to any conscious efforts made to address the problem. Given the limitations of the turnout rate as the sole means of measurement and evaluation, a more comprehensive approach could be undertaken.

It is worth noting that if a full "vote anywhere" system was implemented, more detailed statistical demographic information would become available, for example, the age breakdown of those that vote and do not vote. Such information would be helpful in analysing over time whether voter participation rates are continuing to decline amongst younger citizens or other age brackets or whether improvements in this trend are observed.

In order to obtain both quantitative and qualitative feedback from Richmond voters and non-voters as to whether specific strategies to improve voter turnout were successful, public phone surveys in conjunction with focus groups could be undertaken after the election. The survey and

focus group topics would, of course, focus on the various new strategies that were implemented, while at the same time, the general motivations for voting and not voting would be explored. The resulting analysis, when combined with the enhanced demographic data, would provide a more detailed method for measuring the success of the individual strategies. In addition, the more detailed findings would allow improvements and refinements to be made for future elections from a more informed position.

The cost to conduct a multilingual statistically-valid phone survey of 600 Richmond residents is approximately \$28,000. Six focus groups conducted with people of varying backgrounds, ages and origins would cost approximately \$27,000, for a total of \$55,000.

Option 5: That \$55,000 in additional funding be considered to gather qualitative and quantitative data to measure the success of any strategies that are implemented and to explore the motivations of Richmond voters and non-voters.

Financial Impact

As this report is presented for information only, there is no direct financial impact to the staff recommendation.

However, if Council should direct staff to implement any of these optional strategies, several have additional costs associated with their implementation as summarized below:

Investigate and report back on feasibility of internet voting	no direct cost at this time
Implementation of a "vote anywhere / super poll" system	\$88,000
Publish candidate profiles (on website and in election guide)	\$16,000
Enhanced public awareness and education strategy	\$25,000
Measuring the impact of the strategies and the election program generally	\$55,000

If Council wished to pursue any of the strategies outlined herein, or any other initiatives, it would be appropriate to consider funding any additional programs out of one-time funding from the 2010 operating surplus as it is unknown whether the strategies would be successful and whether they would warrant being incorporated into the election program and budget on an ongoing basis.

Conclusion

Based on recent studies and statistics, some of the characteristics and motivations of BC voters and non-voters have been discussed with a view to better understanding the reasons for low voter turnout and the areas where improvements to electoral processes may be made. While it is recognized that campaign participants (candidates, elector organizations, and third party advertisers) must be left to address the political side of the issue, many strategies and initiatives

can in fact be implemented by election administrators to remove barriers to voting, to provide more choice and convenience to the electorate, and to create more effective educational awareness of the electoral process.

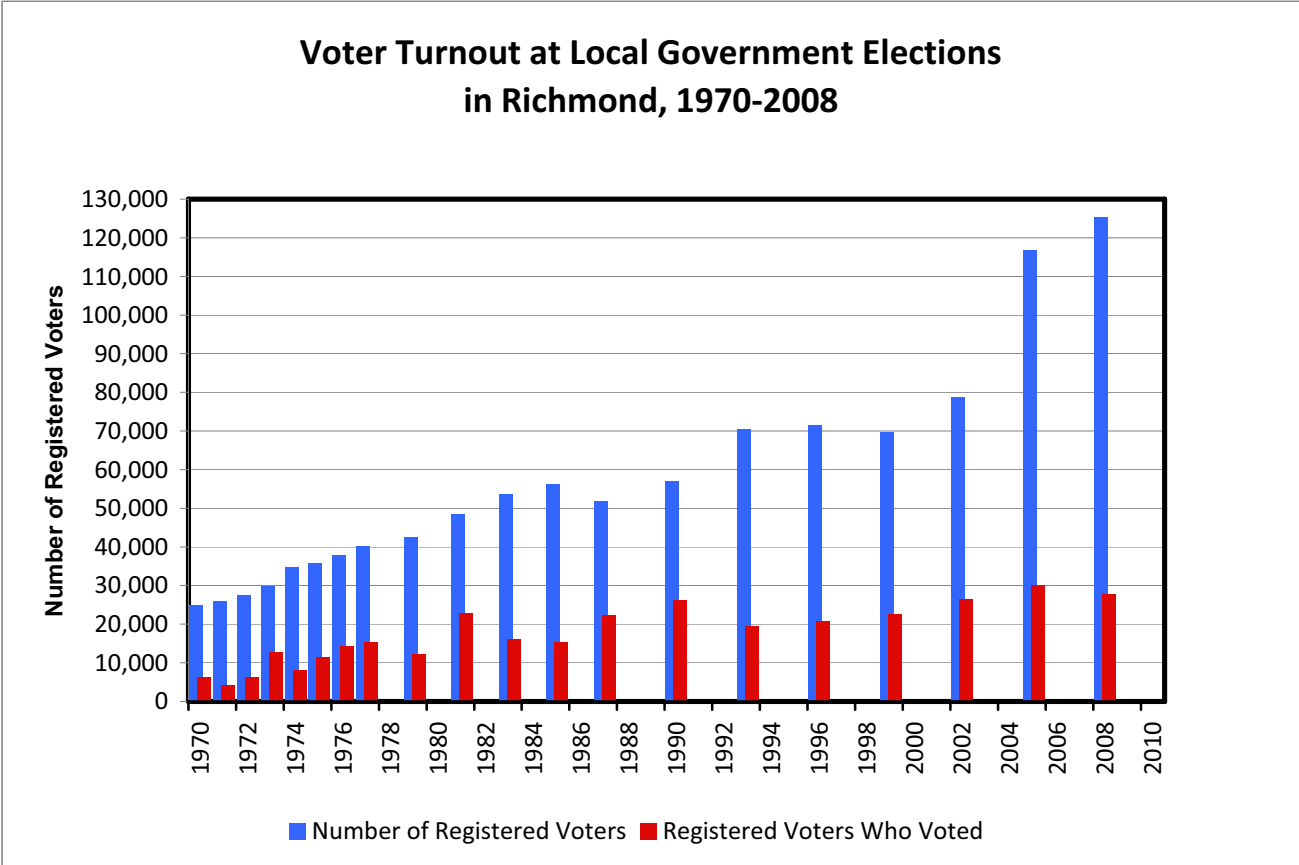
The global trend towards lower voter turnout has been a long time in the making and is a complex and multi-faceted issue. The broader problem will not be solved or reversed easily. Indeed, it would be naïve to think that by simply implementing several new initiatives over the course of a single election, that voter turnout would be “fixed” or dramatically improved moving into the future. Realistically speaking, the initiatives described in this report, if implemented, would likely be the first of many steps before observable and consistent improvements are evident. As with any long-term goal, steady and incremental progress, as well as setbacks, are likely.

Since the potential benefits of the strategies discussed in this report are purely speculative and cannot be readily quantified, staff are not in a strong position to make any specific recommendations on the initiatives. However, if Council is of the view that any of these initiatives would positively impact voter participation rates, and are good value for the additional expenditure, then these will be tested, implemented, and their impacts assessed for long-term inclusion in the election program.

David Weber
Director, City Clerk's Office and
Chief Election Officer for Richmond
(604-276-4098)

Attachments:

- Attachment 1 – Voter Turnout at Local Government Elections in Richmond, 1970-2008 (REDMS #3099199)
- Attachment 2 – Voter Turnout in Richmond by Age (REDMS #3128824)
- Attachment 3 - Main Reasons for Not Voting (Consistent Non-Voters in BC) (REDMS #3137773)
- Attachment 4 – Main Reasons for Voting (Consistent Voters in BC) (REDMS #3137775)
- Attachment 5 – Sample of Mayor Gregor Robertson’s Candidate Profile from City of Vancouver 2008 election.



(Voter Turnout in Richmond - Specific Annual Statistics – 1970-2008)

Year	Number of Registered Voters	Registered Voters Who Voted	% Turnout
1970	24,927	6,384	25.61%
1971	25,890	4,201	16.23%
1972	27,559	6,351	23.05%
1973	29,850	12,784	42.83% ^{*(REF)}
1974	34,725	8,082	23.27%
1975	35,764	11,592	32.41% ^{*(REF)}
1976	37,860	14,260	37.67% ^{*(REF)}
**(See note below regarding “staggered elections”)			
1977	40,283	15,389	38.20%

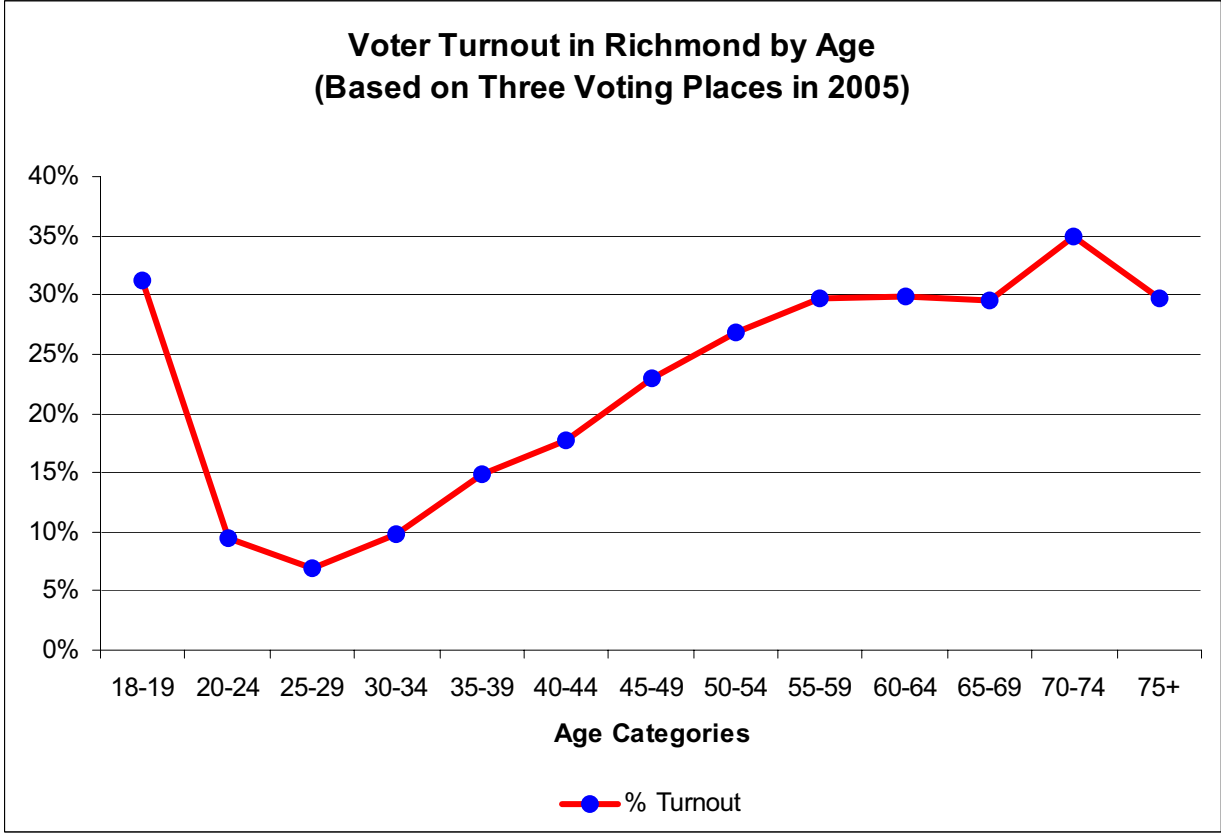
^{*(REF)} = denotes referenda held in conjunction with an election. Often (but not always), elections with referenda questions tend to attract a higher turnout when compared to non-referenda elections.

****Staggered elections:** Prior to 1977, Council seats were elected on an annual “staggered” basis, meaning one year, the office of Mayor and four Councillor seats were up for re-election and the following year, the other four Councillor seats were up for re-election (with no election for Mayor in that year). After 1977, the process changed so that all nine Council seats came up for re-election at the same time every two years. In 1987, the term of office was extended so that elections were held every three years.

Year	Number of Registered Voters	Registered Voters Who Voted	% Turnout
1979	42,602	12,317	28.91%
1981	48,543	23,038	47.46% ^{*(REF)}
1983	53,622	16,132	30.08% ^{*(REF)}
1985	56,152	15,401	27.43%
1987	51,945	22,356	43.04% ^{*(REF)}
1990	56,976	26,221	46.02%
1993	70,604	19,572	27.72% ^{*(REF)}
1996	71,589	20,730	28.96% ^{*(REF)}
1999	69,694	22,602	32.43%
2001 (By-election)	73,980	23,727	32.07%
2002	78,840	26,528	33.65%
2005	116,892	30,051	25.71%
2008	125,378	27,709	22.10%

^{*(REF)} = denotes referenda held in conjunction with an election. Often (but not always), elections with referenda questions tend to attract a higher turnout when compared to non-referenda elections.

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(Voter Turnout in Richmond by Age – Based on Three Voting Places in 2005)

Age Bracket	Number of Registered Voters	Registered Voters Who Voted	% Turnout
18 - 19	147	46	31.3% (see note 1 below)
20 - 24	1050	100	9.5%
25 - 29	1097	76	6.9%
30 - 34	1018	99	9.7%
35 - 39	1244	184	14.8%
40 - 44	1589	282	17.7%
45 - 49	1735	399	23.0%
50 - 54	1575	423	26.9%
55 - 59	1268	377	29.7%
60 - 64	766	229	29.9%
65 - 69	645	191	29.6%
70 - 74	635	222	35.0% (see note 2 below)
75 +	1481	441	29.8% (see note 3 below)

Note 1: As was the case with the provincial figures, the turnout in Richmond also drops with each successively younger age group from 70-74 until the 18 to 19 year old age bracket where an increase is observed as compared to the 20 to 24 year old age group. In the provincial demographic study this deviation in the downward trend for the youngest age group is explained as a novelty or anomaly in the way that the voters list is compiled and not a sign that young people are necessarily voting in any greater numbers. Because most citizens in this youngest age bracket have not entered the work force, and have not filed federal tax returns, the 18 to 19 year olds that are on the list consist largely of those who specifically register with the intention of voting. In the older age brackets, the registered voters are those who specifically register to vote as well as those who are added through other means, such as through information gleaned from federal tax returns. Since the method for capturing eligible voters in the youngest age bracket is less comprehensive, the participation rates or voter turnout for the 18 to 19 year olds on the voters list are skewed artificially high.

Note 2: In Richmond (in relation to voters from 3 voting places in 2005), registered voters between the age of 70 and 74 were the most likely to vote in the Richmond civic election. In other words, the voter turn-out in that particular age bracket was the highest of any other age bracket. The next highest turnout by age group was the 55 to 69 year olds, followed by the 50 to 54 year olds.

Note 3: With voters over the age of 74, the turnout drops slightly, but still only down to about the same level as the 50-69 year olds. This drop, which was also observed in the provincial study is explained by the fact that personal circumstances and difficulties often begin to set in at that age, such as decreased mobility and compromised health generally, which can become barriers to voting.

Figure 17: What was the main reason you did NOT vote during the May 12th provincial election?

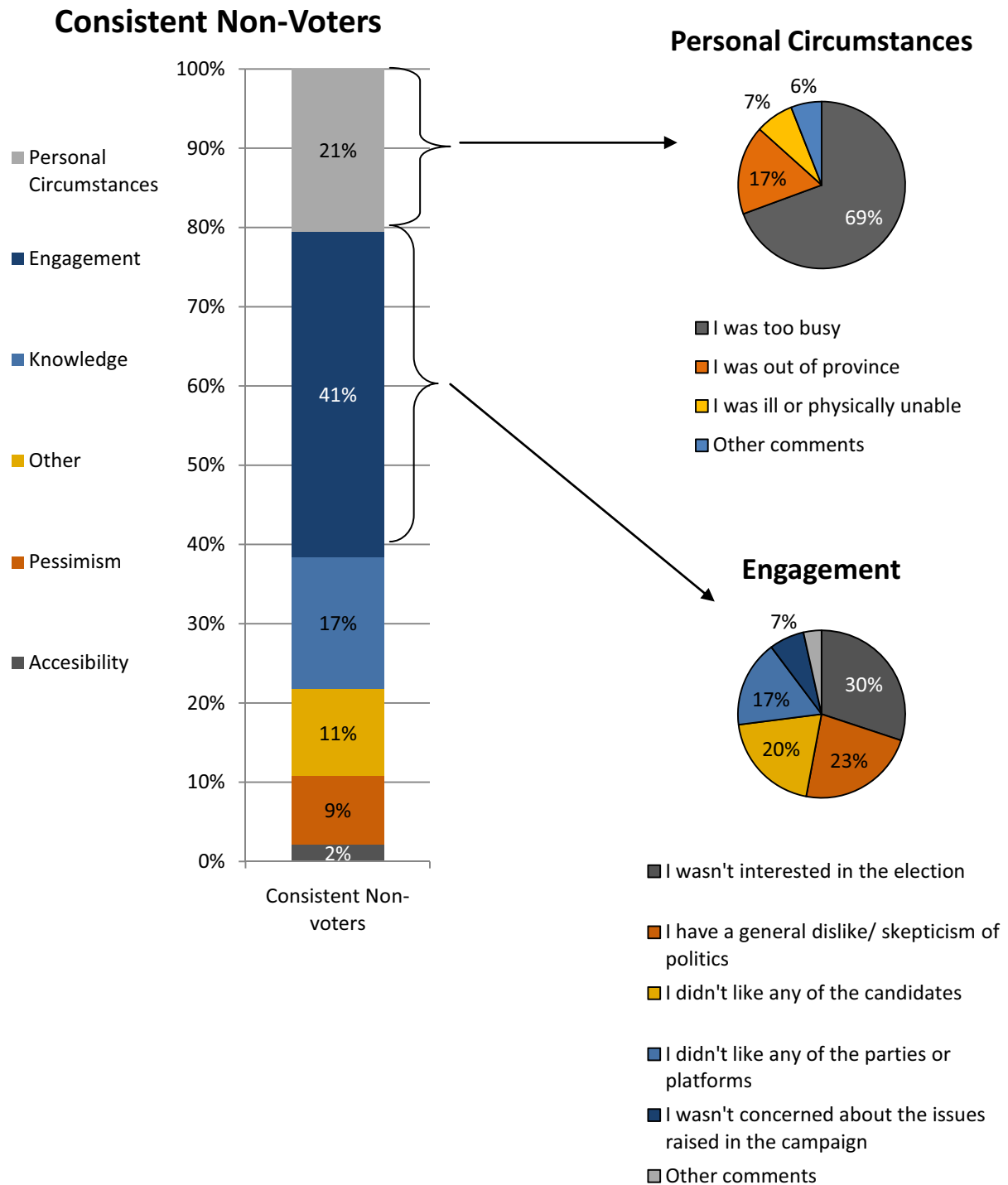
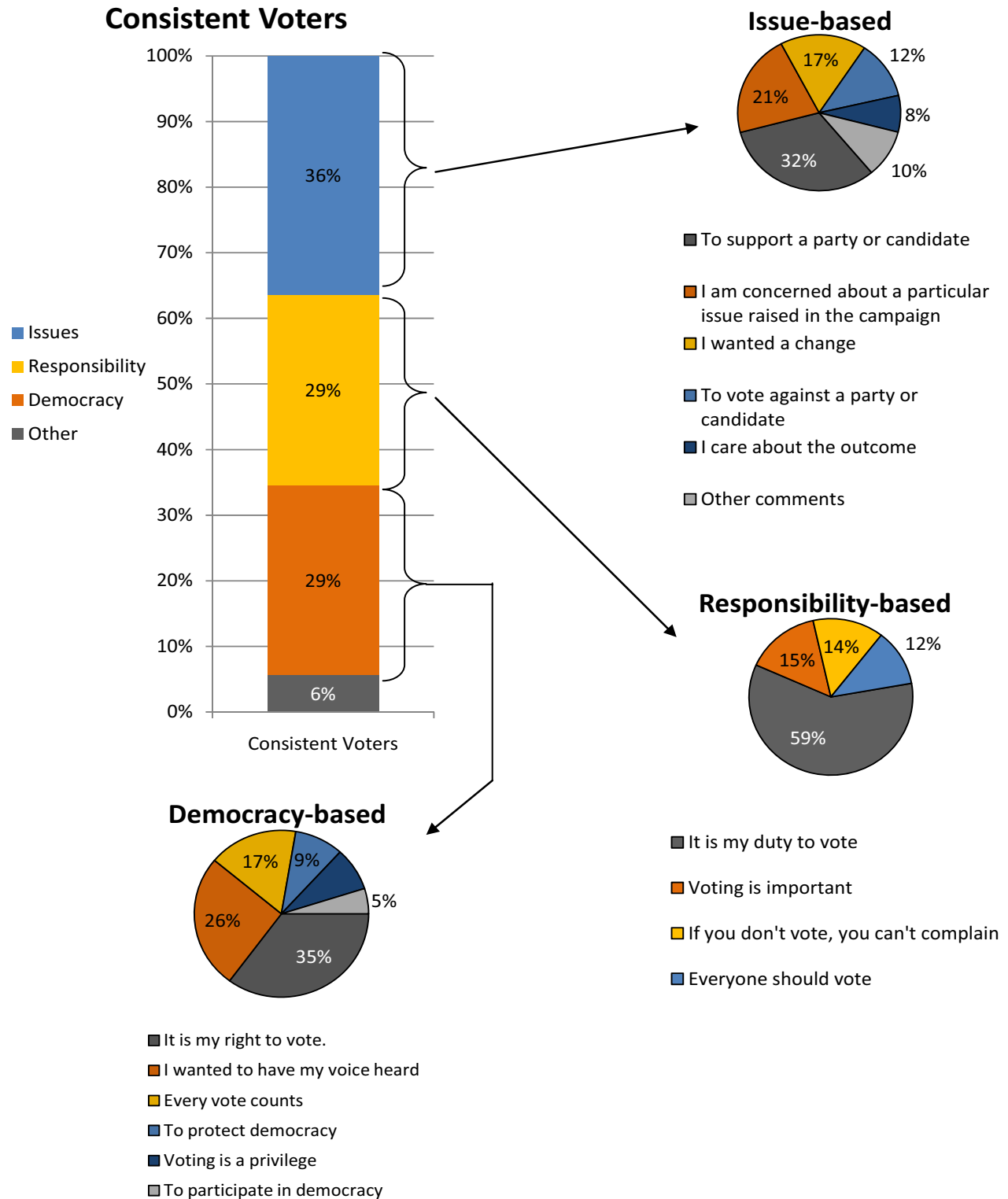


Figure 15: What was the MAIN reason why you voted during the May 12th provincial election?





ROBERTSON, Gregor

Vision Vancouver

As mayor, Gregor Robertson will bring leadership, action and vision to Vancouver City Hall. Gregor is the co-founder and former CEO of Happy Planet, one of Canada's leading organic food companies and winner of the Vancouver Mayor's Environmental Award (2003), and the Ethics in Action Award (2004). For his achievements as a successful entrepreneur and community leader, Gregor was named one of Canada's "Top 40 under 40" by The Globe and Mail in 2004.

In 2005, Gregor was elected MLA for Vancouver–Fairview and served as the Opposition Critic for Advanced Education and the Critic for Small Business and Revenue. Gregor led a successful campaign to protect affordable rental housing, fought for the regulation of carcinogens and toxins throughout BC, and has been a tireless advocate for small businesses impacted by Canada Line construction.

Raised in Vancouver and a fifth-generation British Columbian, Gregor and his wife Amy have four children.

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[Financing disclosure statement](#) (488 kb)