

## Decision Note

<b>Title:</b>	2025 Municipal General Election Report and Recommendations
<b>Date Prepared:</b>	January 28, 2026
<b>Report To:</b>	Committee of the Whole
<b>Councillor and Role:</b>	Mayor Danny Breen, Governance & Strategic Priorities
<b>Ward:</b>	Choose an item.

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### Decision/Direction Required:

Council approval is sought for the recommendation contained in the 2025 Municipal General Election Report.

### Discussion – Background and Current Status:

The City of St. John's held its 2025 Municipal General Election on Wednesday, October 8, 2025. The City conducted the election through a vote-by-mail (VBM) process, which was established under the Municipal Elections Vote By Mail By-Law enacted by City Council in July 2001.

As the election period progressed, the City faced significant challenges, most notably a national postal strike that disrupted outbound and inbound mail. This required rapid contingency planning, additional staffing, alternate voting centre arrangements, and increased communication to residents. Other challenges emerged from recurring issues with the voters list, including incorrect or outdated voter information, duplicate entries, and address inconsistencies. Additional challenges and issues are outlined in the report.

Election staff, accessibility teams, and senior leadership conducted post election debriefs to identify systemic issues needing reform.

The 2025 Municipal General Election Report outlines:

- Key highlights, statistics and timelines.
- Initiatives and resources implemented.
- Statistics and costs.
- Challenges and issues encountered.

- Lessons learned and next steps.
- Recommendation for Council.

The 2025 Municipal General Election Report recommends establishing a staff-led Election Reform Working Group to strengthen and modernize the City’s electoral processes based on feedback, lessons learned, and operational experience. The Working Group would consolidate input from community engagement, debriefs, and voter feedback, and focus on improving election operations. It would also assess future voting models, specifically whether to discontinue Vote-by-Mail or retain it with mandatory registration. The group would include representatives from the Office of the City Clerk, City Solicitor, Organizational Performance and Strategy, and Marketing Communications, and would report back to Council with recommendations by June 30, 2028.

**Key Considerations/Implications:**

1. Budget/Financial Implications: The City budgets for Municipal General Elections every four years. The report provides a summary of the 2025 Municipal General Election costs.
2. Partners or Interested Parties: City staff and public residents; representatives from various City Divisions.
3. Is this a New Plan, Master Plan, Strategy, Report, or Framework: No  
 If yes, please select the type of document: Select document type  
 If yes, are there recommendations or actions that require progress reporting?  
 If yes, how will progress be reported? (e.g.: through the strategic plan, through Cascade, annual update to Council, etc.)
4. Alignment with Strategic Directions:  
 A Sustainable City: Be financially responsible and accountable.  
 An Effective City: Ensure accountability and good governance through transparent and open decision making.
5. Alignment with Adopted Plans: N/A
6. Accessibility and Inclusion: The City of St. John’s strives to ensure that all services provided to residents are accessible and inclusive. The Municipal Elections met accessibility benchmarks, ensuring that all resident eligible to vote were able to fully

participate. The election is and will continue to be coordinated with an accessible and inclusive lens to ensure that the needs of the community are met.

7. Legal or Policy Implications: Next steps and recommendations within the report may result in legislation changes and development of internal policies.
8. Privacy Implications: N/A
9. Engagement and Communications Considerations: Next steps and recommendations within the report may result in future engagement activity and communications.
10. Human Resource Implications: N/A
11. Procurement Implications: N/A
12. Information Technology Implications: N/A
13. Information Management Implications: N/A
14. Other Implications: N/A

**Recommendation:**

That Council accept the 2025 Municipal General Election Report and approve the recommendation contained therein.

**Prepared by: Theresa Walsh, City Clerk**

**Approved by: Derek Coffey, Acting City Manager**