



Report Presented To:	Township of Southgate Council Meeting
Meeting Date:	2024-12-04
Report Number	CL2024-039
Title:	2026 Municipal Election – Voting Methods
Open/Closed Session:	Open Session
Prepared By:	Lindsey Green Clerk

Executive Summary:

This report is being provided to Council for approval of staff’s recommendation for the use of Internet and Telephone as the voting method of the 2026 Municipal Election.

Recommendation:

Be it resolved that Staff Report CL2024-039 be received for information; and **That** Council authorize internet and telephone voting as the voting method for the 2026 municipal and school board election by enactment of By-law 2024-154.

Background:

Municipal and school board elections must be held every four years and are administered by the Clerk as the Returning Officer, pursuant to the Municipal Elections Act, 1996, S.O. 1996, C.32 (the “MEA”).

The MEA states that a by-law authorizing an alternative voting method must be passed by May 1, 2026. However, it is vital that the Clerk’s Department begin the groundwork for the election in 2025 and therefore require direction from Council on the voting method to be used.

Analysis

Internet and Telephone voting was the method used by the Township for 2022 Municipal Election. [Staff Report CL2022-031 – Post Election and Accessibility Report](#) may be reviewed for a summary of the use of internet and telephone voting during the last election. Internet and Telephone voting was first used by the Township for the 2018 Municipal Election.

[Staff Report CL2021-005](#) was provided ahead of the 2022 Municipal Election which presents an in-depth breakdown of voting methods and staff’s recommendation to move forward with the use of internet and telephone voting as the sole voting method. This report may be reviewed for full background information.

Given the superior convenience and accessibility, financial considerations, constraints on staff capacity, and the positive experience of both the 2018 and 2022 Municipal elections, staff recommend that Council authorize the use of internet and telephone voting again for the 2026 municipal election.

Staff have previously provided in person help centres across the township during the voting period where residents may come if they require assistance accessing the voting platform which have historically been successful. Staff plan to continue with the use of help centres during the 2026 municipal election.

Upon approval of By-law 2024-154 to authorize the use of internet and telephone voting staff will release a Request for Proposals for Internet and Telephone voting services.

Internal Policy and Legislated Requirements:

[Municipal Act, 2001](#)

[Municipal Elections Act, 1996](#)

Financial and Resource Implications:

The total cost of the 2022 Election was \$37,544.00. Historically, each year Council allocates \$10,000.00 to the election reserve in preparation of an election every four years. Going into the 2022 election, the reserve sat at \$32,069.95 meaning we were short \$5,474.05 following the 2022 election. The reserve currently sits at \$24,525.95.

Staff anticipate a similar financial implication for the 2026 election but also keeping in mind the rising costs of goods and services since 2022, staff recommend that Council contribute \$15,000.00 to the Election reserve in 2025 and \$12,500.00 in 2026 to bulk up the reserve. This may be further refined once we have selected our internet and telephone voting provider.

Strategic Priorities:

None.

Attachments:

None.