



Report to: General Committee

Date Report Authored: March 11, 2014

SUBJECT: 2014 Municipal Election – Early Voting Opportunities
PREPARED BY: Martha Pettit, Assistant Returning Officer, Ext. 8220
Kimberley Kitteringham, Returning Officer, Ext. 4729

RECOMMENDATION:

1. That the Report entitled “2014 Municipal Election – Early Voting Opportunities” be received; and,
2. That a by-law be adopted to establish the 2014 early voting dates, times and locations within the City of Markham as outlined in Attachment “A”; and further,
3. That staff be authorized to do all things necessary to give effect to this resolution.

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this Report is to seek Council’s approval for the proposed early voting opportunities for the 2014 Municipal Election.

BACKGROUND:

Section 43 (1) of the Municipal Elections Act (MEA) requires municipalities to adopt a by-law authorizing one or more early voting days in a municipal election. Early voting days allow voters who are unable to cast a ballot for any reason on Voting Day (October 27, 2014) convenient opportunities to still participate in the electoral process. From an election administration perspective, offering early voting also helps to mitigate Voting Day crowds.

As in the 2010 Municipal Election, Markham voters will be able to vote in-person or online during the 2014 Early Voting Period. In 2010, 8.9% of Markham’s eligible voters (16,511 voters out of a possible 185,469) cast their ballot early. Of this, 3.7% voted in-person and 5.71% voted online.

OPTIONS/DISCUSSION:

2014 Municipal Election - In-Person Early Voting Places, Dates & Hours

A synopsis of the **in-person** Early Voting Period for the 2010 Municipal Election is included as Attachment “B”. For the 2014 Municipal Election, a “vote anywhere” model will again be utilized for in-person early voting. In this model, eligible Markham voters are offered the convenience of casting their ballot at any of the following proposed early voting places and on the dates/times noted:

Dates	Early Voting Place	Applicable Ward(s)
Thursday, October 16 & Friday, October 17, 2014 From 10:00 AM to 8:00 PM	Markham Civic Centre	All

Early voting would then be offered at various locations throughout the City as follows:

Dates	Early Voting Place	Applicable Ward(s)
Saturday, October 18, 2014 & Sunday, October 19, 2014 from 10:00 AM to 6:00 PM	Thornhill Community Centre	All
	Markham Civic Centre	All
	Varley Art Gallery	All
	Markham Museum	All
	Cornell Community Centre	All
	Angus Glen Community Centre	All
	Parkland Public School	All
	Milliken Mills Community Centre	All

Early voting would continue beyond the weekend at the following locations:

Dates	Early Voting Place	Applicable Ward(s)
Monday, October 20, 2014 to Thursday, October 23, 2014 from 10:00 AM to 8:00 PM	Markham Civic Centre	All
	Thornhill Community Centre	All
	Armada Community Centre	All
	Cornell Community Centre	All

* For your reference a calendar outlining these dates is appended as Attachment "C".

The number of **in-person** early voting hours being offered in the 2014 Municipal Election totals 76 hours over a span of 8 days. This represents an increase of 16 hours of early, in-person voting compared to the 2010 Municipal Election. As in 2010, an electronic Voters' List as well as vote tabulators will be utilized at each of the proposed early voting places. The use of vote tabulating equipment for the 2014 Municipal Election was approved by Council on November 20, 2012.

2014 Municipal Election – On-line Early Voting Dates & Hours

A synopsis of the **on-line** Early Voting Period for the 2010 Municipal Election is included as Attachment "B". For the 2014 Municipal Election, staff is proposing to start on-line voting on Thursday, October 16, 2014 at 9:00 AM and run until Thursday, October 23, 2014 (ending at 12 midnight). Eligible Markham voters who register to vote on-line will have 183 hours over a span of 8 days to cast their ballot via the internet. This represents an increase of 53 hours for on-line voting as compared to the 2010 Municipal Election. The use of online voting for the 2014 Municipal Election was approved by Council on November 20, 2012.

Providing additional in-person and on-line voting hours will offer a significant number of opportunities for eligible Markham voters to participate in the electoral process and should help alleviate the issues all municipalities typically experience on Voting Day with voting place line-ups.

2014 Municipal Election - Communications Plan

As part of the City's overall 2014 Municipal Elections Communications Plan, all residents will be advised of early voting opportunities and encouraged to cast their ballot (either in-person or on-line) if eligible.

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS AND TEMPLATE:

Funding is available in the 2014 Election reserve account to accommodate the coordination and administration associated with early voting.

HUMAN RESOURCES CONSIDERATIONS

Not applicable.


ALIGNMENT WITH STRATEGIC PRIORITIES:

Not applicable.

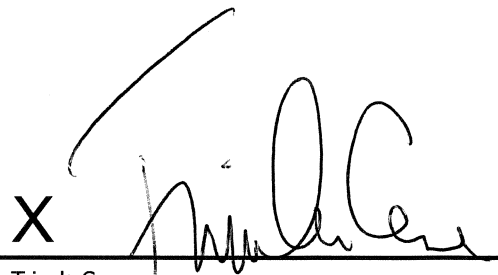
BUSINESS UNITS CONSULTED AND AFFECTED:

Not applicable.

RECOMMENDED BY:

X 

Kimberley Kitteringham
Returning Officer

X 

Trinela Cane
Commissioner of Corporate Services

Attachment "A" - A By-law to provide for early voting to be held prior to Voting Day
Attachment "B" - 2010 Municipal Election – Early Voting Period Summary
Attachment "C" - In-person and On-line Early Voting Calendar