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VOTE

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT: 2016 VOTER EXPERIENCE

Public Engagement Summary

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HALIFAX

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INTRODUCTION

The Municipal Clerk's Office is continually looking for ways to improve voter experience and accessibility. This includes sharing information with the public on where to vote, selecting convenient locations to vote and the many different options on how to place your vote.

The municipality runs elections for Mayor and Council, the Halifax Regional School Board and the Conseil Scolaire Acadien Provincial every four years. Special elections are held, as needed, to fill vacancies. The next regular elections are scheduled for October 17, 2020.

Council recently mandated the Municipal Clerk's Office to seek community input on the 2016 Municipal Election voter experience. It was recognized that collecting input eight months after the election was held, could prove difficult. However, it was deemed important to collect as much information as possible to inform the next election. The engagement ran parallel to the engagement on Campaign Finance Accountability, from June 1 to July 5, 2017.

The input gathered will help improve the delivery of municipal election services in future electoral events. This engagement gathered input on direct services available for people to vote. It is important to recognize that it does not try to answer why voter turnout was so low in the last municipal election.

Numbers across Canada show that Municipal elections rarely bring out more than 50 per cent of the eligible voting population.¹ Unfortunately, this was also true in the most recent Halifax election, held on October 15th, 2016. Voter turnout was down; with the city reporting only 31.7 per cent of voters (or 91,574 people) actually cast a ballot.²

In fact, this turnout is the lowest in the city's history. However, this is a complex issue and accessibility is only one part of the equation. The engagement did hear comments that may point to other reasons for low voter turnout, including dissatisfaction with candidates.

There also seems to be confusion over responsibilities for services between the Municipal, Provincial and Federal governments. There were several comments collected through the survey that referred to issues regarding the Provincial elections. This confusion could be attributed to the timing of the survey, just after the recently held Provincial election in June 2017, or it could speak to people's confusion about the different responsibilities and services offered by the different levels of government.

¹ Wellbeing index <https://uwaterloo.ca/canadian-index-wellbeing/blog/post/importance-voting-municipal-elections>

² Global new online article <http://globalnews.ca/news/3015325/halifax-election-2016-city-releases-official-results-voter-turnout-down/>

The input gathered from the online survey and public engagement events will help improve the delivery of Municipal Election Services in future electoral events. Staff welcomed all election related submissions, with focus on the following areas:

- 1) Access to Information – Including: was election information presented appropriately? Were enquiries responded to in a reasonable manner and timeframe?**
- 2) Effective Communication – Including: determine how the various methods used to communicate election details were received and any public suggestions on alternatives.**
- 3) Customer Service (Pre/Post Election)**
- 4) Voting Experience (Remote/In Person)**

ENGAGEMENT

The public engagement launched with an online survey posted on the Shape Your City engagement website from June 1 to July 5, 2017.

The engagement also included three public engagement sessions held over the month of June at the following locations:

Wednesday June 7th

Dartmouth, Harbour East Community Council Room, Alderney Landing, 40 Alderney Drive

Wednesday June 14th

Halifax, Halifax Hall in City Hall, 1841 Argyle St., Halifax

Thursday June 22nd

Bedford –Sackville, Bedford-Hammonds Plains Community Centre

A pop-up information session was also held on June 12 on the Eastern Shore as part of the Halifax Green Network public information meeting.

The voter experience engagement session ran as part of the Campaign Finance Accountability engagement. There were breakout stations at all three engagements to capture the public's feedback on election experience.

In total, twenty-two people attended the three engagement sessions. The Shape Your City online survey received 349 submissions. Please note there were no mandatory questions, and that for multiple choice questions respondents were able to select more than one response.

The engagement team received positive feedback from the public about the engagement process and the ability to speak with staff directly.

This report captures the main themes from the public engagement events and the online survey. The report will be shared with staff and posted on shapeyourcityhalifax.ca, the municipality's online engagement site.

ACCESS TO INFORMATION

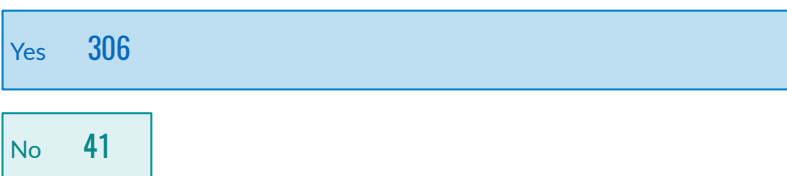
The majority of people, 88 percent, who answered this question said they received their voter information card. The voter information cards show residents that they are registered to vote and shares information on the different methods (electronic and in-person) and where and when you can vote in the lead-up to the election.

Of those who did not receive voter cards, most received assistance from the Halifax.ca website or at the polling station.

Online Survey Results

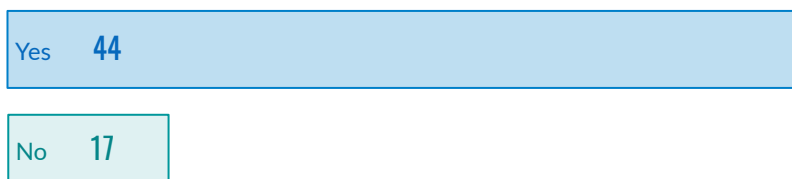
Did you receive your voter information card?

Participation by online survey votes:



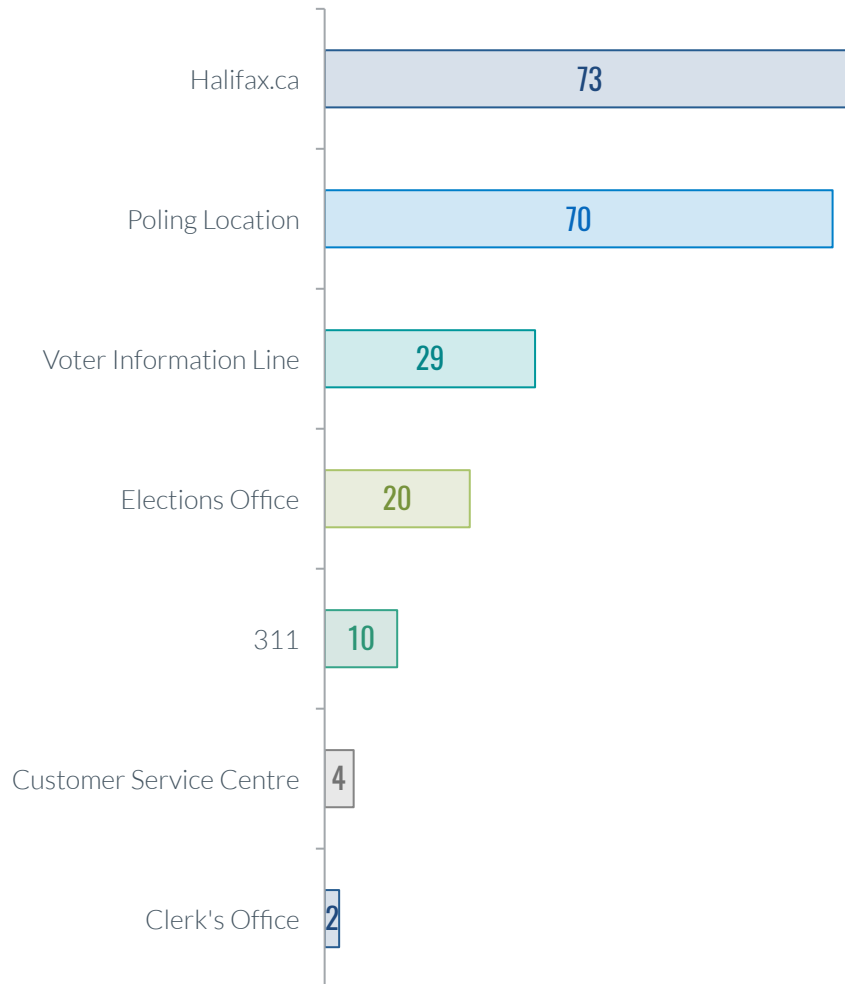
If no, were you able to receive help? (61 people responded to this question, more than the 41 people who answered "No" above. An explanation is that people may have still required help after receiving their voter card and responded to this question. Out of the 64 people who responded, 44 were successful in receiving help.)

Participation by online survey votes:



Where did you receive assistance for the voter information card or anything else related to voting? Check all that apply.

Participation by online survey votes:



"I had registered in person for the 2012 election, the website said I was registered, but I never received a voter card. When I went to the polling station on Election Day, I was not on the list. Clearly there is a database issue with voter records. A better database, perhaps more opportunities to register to vote (such as the summer leading up to an election at the various events that happen), would help solve this. Being able to register to vote online would also be great."

"The information on the voter card was confusing."

Key Themes for Access to Information

Access to Information For a full list of comments please refer to Appendix A.	Number of comments
Elector Database	4
Voter Cards	7

COMMUNICATIONS & ADVERTISING

The online survey showed the majority of people noticed advertising for the municipal election through newspapers, radio, door knockers, posters, Facebook and The Halifax.ca website. Information was shared through several channels of communication, including social media. In the online survey, 114 people noticed advertisements on Facebook, 59 people noticed Twitter and only 9 people noticed on Instagram. See graph below.

People noted that they wanted earlier communications on the election, advanced polls and where and when you can vote. This included requests for clear information on the early cut-off time for e-voting.

To view the full list of comments please refer to Appendix B. A sample of the comments is listed below.

“Halifax.ca should have a web page where candidates can submit a photo and some text on who they are and what issues they are interested in. They could also include a link to a personal website. This would allow voters one location to find some information on candidates for their district, and provide all candidates with a basic level of online presence regardless of finances or technical ability.”

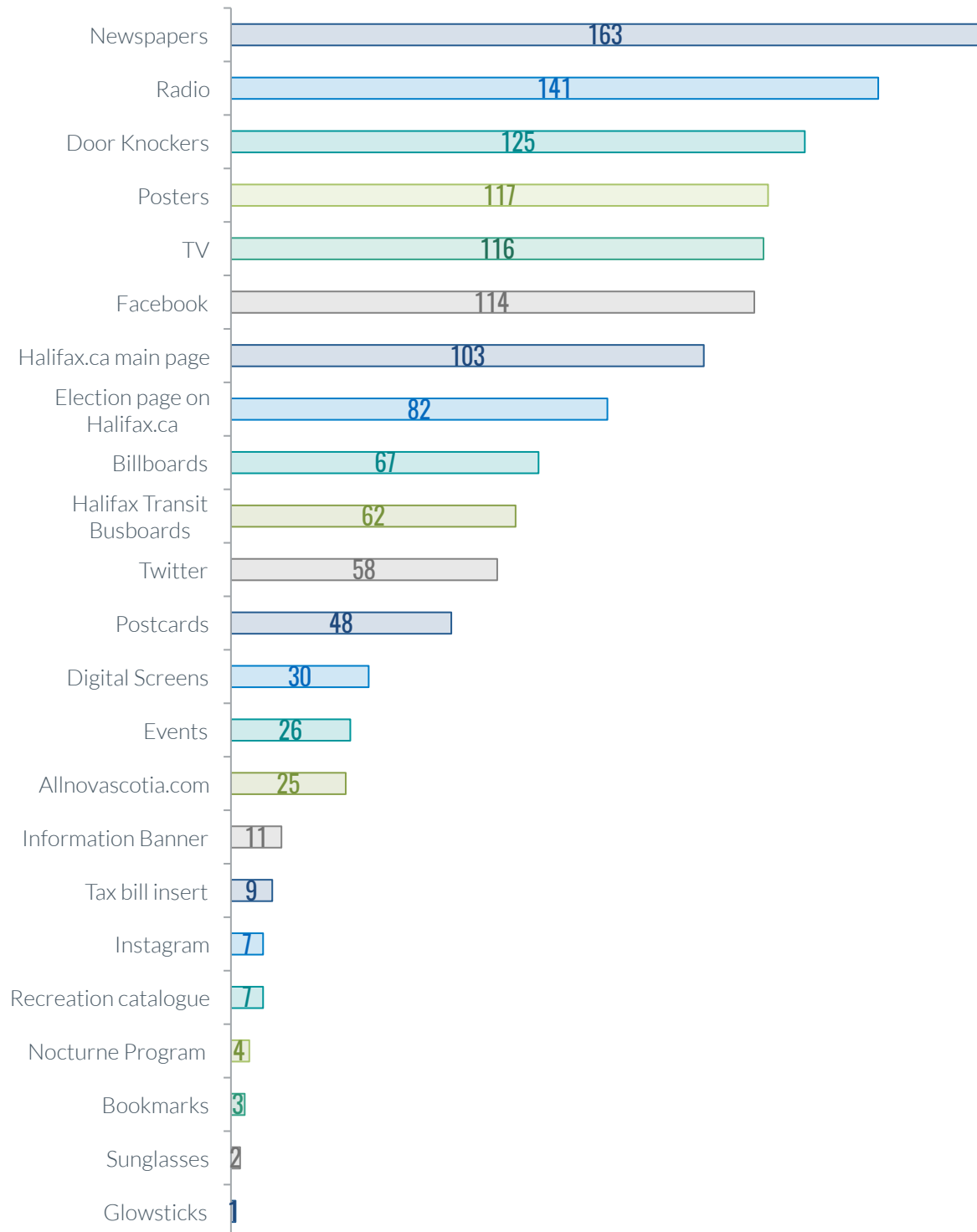
“Clearly state e-voting cut off date/time in all advertising. Put this survey out sooner for 2024.....hard to remember details more than 7 months later!”

“HRM should run information seminars long before the election, explain going and using digital messaging not mail, seminars for the young and the old and why this right is so important and your vote does count”.

Online Survey Results

Did you see any of the advertising for the 2016 municipal election? Please check all that apply.

Participation by online survey votes:



Key Themes for Communications & Advertising

Communication & Advertising	Number of comments
To view the full list of comments please refer to Appendix B.	
General Communication	9
Advertising	7
Councilor Voting Records	1

CUSTOMER SERVICE EXPERIENCE

Of the 215 people who answered the question in the online survey, 71 percent, or 152 people, said they had a positive experience. There was feedback suggesting more training for polling staff handling school board elections. There was also the suggestion that experienced polling staff be matched with new or inexperienced staff. To view the full list of comments please refer to Appendix C.

“The training of the polling station staff - particularly in regard to school board elections - needs to be improved.”

“Smooth & efficient system - HRM ahead of Province & Federal Gov't.”

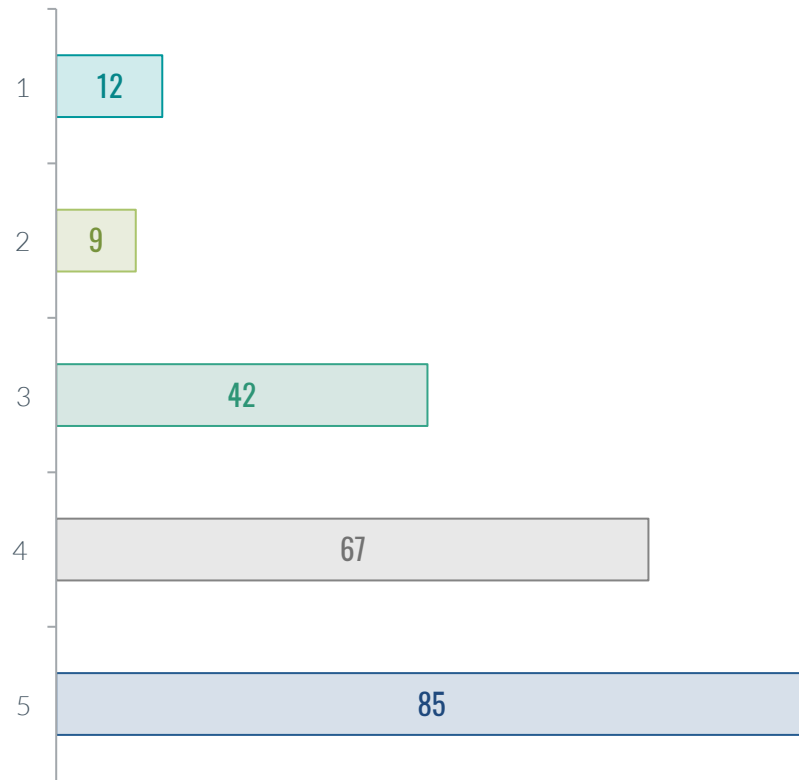
“There were not enough people in the M section to handle all the Mac.....s.”

“I worked a polling station as a polling clerk during the 2016 mayoral election. As I had never been involved in an election prior, I assumed that the polling officer would be experienced. However on voting day I discovered that the polling officer had never been involved in any elections either. We had both attended the training session. I believe it would be beneficial to match experienced pollsters with inexperienced ones. There were a few bumps and I do not believe they were handled properly because of our inexperience. “

Online Survey Results

Below the public rated their customer service experience from 1-5 with 5 being the best experience.

Participation by online survey votes:



Customer Service Experience Comments	
To view the full list of comments please refer to Appendix C.	Number of comments
Customer Service Experience	4

VOTING EXPERIENCE

Four key themes emerged from voter experience. They were electronic voting (E-voting), polling stations, including advanced polling, low voter turnout and other voting options.

Key Themes on Voter Experience

Electronic Voting For a full list of comments please refer to Appendix D.	Number of comments
Yes to electronic voting	36
No to electronic voting	12
Questions about electronic voting	1

Polling Stations For a full list of comments please refer to Appendix E.	Number of comments
Advanced polling	8
Polling stations	9

Low Voter Turnout To view the full list of comments please refer to Appendix F.	Number of comments
Reasons for low voter turnout	6
Getting people out to vote	6

Other Voting Options For a full list of comments please refer to Appendix G.	Number of comments
Proportional representation	2
Mandatory voting	2
Ballot options – none of the above	2

Electronic Voting

The most comments collected during the engagement were regarding electronic voting. It should be noted that the Municipal government is currently the only level of government that offers electronic voting in Nova Scotia. Electronic voting is not offered in the Provincial (Nova Scotia) and Federal elections.

The majority of comments were positive feedback about the electronic voting process and people requesting e-voting for future elections. However, there were some concerns about e-voting, particularly over hacking.

One person commented that they used the e-voting system because they were away on vacation but fundamentally opposed it. Another person commented:

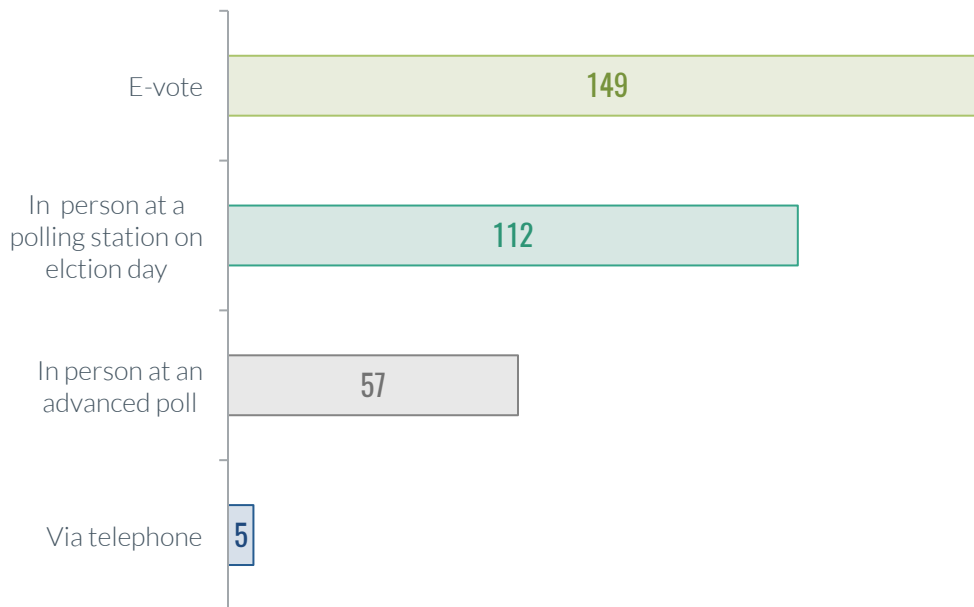
“I'm not sure about electronic voting; there is value in going to a polling station and voting in public as a citizen. Not sure that e-voting voter turnout will increase or really provide any improvement to the voting process.”

The following survey results show that slightly more people used electronic voting than voting in person on Election Day.

Online Survey Results

If you voted in the last municipal election what method did you use to vote?

Participation by online survey votes:



A few sample comments about electronic voting. For a full list of comments please refer to Appendix D.

"Please keep the e-vote option though it needs to be better publicized. I would also suggest that elections workers go to public locations to set up a kiosk where voters can vote on a laptop: libraries, seniors homes, malls, recreation centres, transit terminals, etc. One of the biggest complaints I hear about why people don't vote is that it is inconvenient to go to polling stations; they don't have access to or know how to use technology. Go to where the people are!"

"Good experience - keep on doing what you are doing. E voting is SO helpful to me as a senior who has, at times, mobility problems."

"E voting is a bad and unnecessary option. It is too open to abuse or being hacked."

Polling Stations

Most comments collected about polling stations spoke to the location or accessibility of the polling station. This included being within a reasonable walking distance, better signage and more parking. See a sample of the comments below. For a full list of comments please see Appendix E.

"It's very important that the polling stations be within a reasonable walking distance from all residents, via routes that have sidewalks. This was so for us and the polling station location worked well."

"The sites for the 2016 polling stations in District 10 were significantly inferior to those used in prior years. The MSVU site had parking and accessibility issues and was difficult to find. One of the other sites was outside the district boundaries. I believe the poor choice of polling sites contributed to the low turnout in this district."

Comments on advanced polling are mixed, some enjoyed the convenience of the advanced polling while others thought it went on too long and cost tax payers more money.

"Loved the extended time of the advanced polls - much more convenient."

"Advance voting is good but it was held to far in advance and too many days. The cost to do this was excessive and not necessary. Online voting, postal or just a few days ahead would be sufficient, too much tax payers dollars wasted!"

Low Voter Turnout

The following comments from the online survey shed some light on why there may be low voter turnout. They including voters being unavailable, not informed, dissatisfied with candidates, missing advanced polling options, recently moving, did not receive a voter card, being a permanent resident but not a citizen and acclamation. General comments left online also point to dissatisfaction with candidates. However, people commented that voter turnout was unrelated to voter experience.

"The problem with low voter turnout has nothing to do with the quality of people's experience as voters; it has to do with the quality of their experience as citizens of the municipality."

Did you vote in the 2016 election?

Participation by online survey votes:

Yes 317

No 29

If you answered no, why did you not vote?

Comments collected from online survey
Unavailable
We were away
Out of town
I was out of the province
I worked as an election worker and missed the advanced poll.
I always vote but was sick this day and unable to drive, online would have been great!
Didn't have time
It was too long of a line up and very cumbersome. I was moving the day of the election and the advance polls were outrageously backed up. I really liked the previous option of online voting and wish that had been an option this time around.
Not Informed
Was not informed of the vote
Don't follow the regular news channels and it got away from me.
Not aware of the issues. Doesn't seem to matter who wins.

Unsatisfied with the choice of candidates

Municipal gov't should be the most important, but you have awful candidates and no vision at all. As a result, the true power now lies with the Province. I'm not going to waste my time with a council more focused on minor issues in their own areas vs. a council united with a vision for the city (NOT a green/multicultural vision, but a TRUE vision toward the future)

I found no candidate worthy of my vote, and thought none would do an effective job.

Felt none of the candidates were *really* any different from each other. They don't make any significant changes. Would prefer voters had the ability to vote on specific items.

Missed cut off date for advanced polls and electronic voting

I was working a poll for the election, and did not realize until my training that I would not be able to vote the day of. My training date was too close to the cutoff date for alternative voting methods (considering I did not receive a voter card).

Didn't realize the early cut off for e-voting and was disgruntled enough about that to not vote in person because my councillor was uncontested/reclaimed and Mayor Mike had it in the bag :-)

Recently moved or changed address

I was ineligible due to residency - we just moved into municipality prior to election.

I recently moved 2 blocks from my previous address. I did not get a voter card at the new address. I went to the polling station where my wife voted earlier in the day. After waiting in line they couldn't find my address on their list. Apparently (because I moved across the street) I was supposed to report to another poll 2km away. I was still going to vote for the same candidates, of course, and my wife of the same address had voted at the polling station earlier in the day. But I was assured I would have to move to the other station. I did go to the other station but because the ordeal took so long I left without voting for another commitment.

I had recently changed addresses and did not believe I had sufficient proof of residence in the district.

No voter card

I never got my card and was too busy to get support during the available hours.
Did not receive a voting card, inconvenient to go to a polling station during the designated times (take it online!)
I couldn't find the information about where to go, only that it was happening.
Permanent resident but not a citizen
I am a permanent resident but not a citizen. I would love to vote in the election. I pay taxes here, own a house, my kids were born here and my company employs 7 people. Please move forward with lobbying the Province to allow permanent residents vote in municipal elections. Thank you
Acclamation
Councillor was acclaimed (Karsten). Would have used e-voting.
There was no one to vote for, and the Councillor that no one ran against just kept working for the developers and ignored the residents.
No one ran against the incumbent in my district.
Other
Knew it was wasted vote. My candidate lost by 1000s.
Get the word out Vote!
I didn't want to

Other Voting Options

Lastly, under voter experience, comments were captured about alternative voting options, such as proportional representation, mandatory voting and allowing for a “none of the above” option on the ballot. For a full list of comments please refer to Appendix G.

“I would like to see a spot on the ballot for " NONE OF THE ABOVE". I would also like the elections boards advertise that this option is available to the voting public. You would really get a good idea on voter dissatisfaction for the whole area. ”

COMMENTS FOR CANDIDATES

The public also communicated they want more information from their candidates, including more debates. They want a central place to find information about their candidates. One person noted that candidates should visit apartment buildings, not just homeowners.

There were also requests for programs to help candidates learn how to share their message. See a sample of the comments below. To view the full list of comments please refer to Appendix H.

“Perhaps a few more all-candidate debates in districts’ as I was unable to attend in my area. More variety in timing (day/evening) if possible.”

“If there is not already a program one is needed created to develop the next generation of candidates leadership skills and develop interest in becoming involved in the community. Too often the candidates in some riders are lackluster.”

Key Themes for Candidates

Comments for candidates To view the full list of comments please refer to Appendix H.	Number of comments
General comments	10
More information on candidates	5
Districts too big	2

OTHER COMMENTS & AREAS TO CONSIDER

The survey collected several comments regarding the Provincial elections. As mentioned earlier, this could be due to the timing of the survey taking place within weeks of the recent Provincial election or it could be due to people not being aware of the difference between Municipal and Provincial responsibilities and elections.

Other Comments & Areas to Consider	Number of comments
To view the full list of comments please refer to Appendix I.	
Comments related to the provincial election	12
Campaign finance comments	2
School board elections	2
Sign removal	1
Feedback of the survey	2
General feedback	2

IN SUMMARY

The purpose of the engagement was to collect feedback to help improve the delivery of municipal election services. It was noted before the engagement that data capture should happen directly after the election. This feedback was given throughout the engagement and the Municipal Clerk's Office agreed to have a survey in place following the next election event in 2020.

Most comments during this engagement supported electronic voting. People found it easy, accessible and convenient. However, there are still concerns from the public about the vulnerability of an electronic voting system.

There was also a strong response to the idea of communicating earlier and clarity on the different cut-off dates for advance polling and electronic voting. People thought they could vote electronically on Election Day but, in fact, electronic voting ends a few days before the election.

The public further shared ideas to make polling stations and advanced polling stations more accessible. This included having more parking, better signage and being within walking distance of polling stations.

The public also took time to leave comments directed to candidates. They requested more debates and more access to candidates and their ideas in the lead-up to the election. There was also a suggestion to have a central place to find all candidates and link to their websites.

Lastly, it should be noted that the engagement collected several comments regarding the Provincial election. As mentioned previously, this may be due to the timing of the survey, which took place shortly after the Provincial election. However, it should not be ruled out that there could be confusion on delivery of services and responsibilities among the different levels of government.

This report will be forwarded to municipal staff and taken into consideration in future delivery of services in municipal elections. It will also be posted on the Shape Your City engagement website for reference.



APPENDIX A

Themes

Access to Information

Elector Database

The elector database needs to be incorporated or I guess updated from other databases within the city. I bet that there is not one central databases that all other databases draw their information from. Due to my experience with your elections staff I will not be participating in future elections even if it means I am breaking the law.

I had registered in person for the 2012 election, the website said I was registered, but I never received a voter card. When I went to the polling station on election day, I was not on the list. Clearly there is a database issue with voter records. A better database, perhaps more opportunities to register to vote (such as the summer leading up to an election at the various events that happen), would help solve this. Being able to register to vote online would also be great.

Better information sources are needed. This was my third time voting in a municipal election in Halifax and there was no record of me in the system. I had voted provincially in the same council district in 2013. I had filed taxes at my address in 2016. I completed the census at that address in 2016. My driver's license was assigned to that address. My health card was assigned to that address. For some reason, neither my partner nor I were on the voters list, let alone at the address we live at, despite giving my address to various levels of government on many occasions.

If people aren't currently automatically registered to vote they should be.

Voter Cards

The polling station was totally inaccessible for me because I do not have a car and if I were to take a bus I would have over a mile walk to get to the bus. I am disabled and unable to walk a mile. Fortunately, at the last minute ~10 minutes before the polling station closed~ I found a neighbour to take me.] NOT getting a voter card to give me the info in advance was a major contributor since I expected the polling station to be in the same place it has been for the past 20+ years

The information on the voter card was confusing.

I had my voter card and my picture ID and if asked I could have provided more ID. Instead a sticker was placed on my voter card and I was asked to read an affidavit and sign. Why was I made to do this? Your information indicated all I needed was my voter card and proof of ID. I was very upset by this and almost left without voting but I would not let your disenfranchise me. An upset VOTER !

We would have called HRM Elections Office for voter card

I used to receive voter information cards & for some reason I was deleted from the mailing list the last election even though I have lived at the same location for 9 yrs.

I had no experience with election staff or service other than receiving a card and e-voting, and saw little advertisement that I can recall so long after the election

How do I get an election card? Also, I didn't know e-voting was possible. Thanks!

APPENDIX B

Themes

Communications & Advertising

General Communications	Use social media to emphasize the importance of voting, also consider the addition of votes on initiatives to make it worthwhile.
	Please maintain the level of public communications that was used during this latest election. It was comprehensive in distribution channels used and level of information provided.
	More advance notification of when the election will be, more notice of advance polls, better and more notification of where and when you can vote.
	Main source of information was candidates meetings, pamphlets to my mailbox, emails and lawn signs - yet you do not list any of these above.
	I was unaware that e-voting was an option.
	I understand that these semantics may have arisen for complicated legal and political reasons. But making the information clear and simple may be one way to improve voting numbers. That said, the process of registering and voting itself was very simple and the people working at the Returning Office for Clayton Park West were very helpful. I simply urge you to, please, improve your election information.
	HRM should run information seminars long before the election, explain going and using digital messaging not mail, seminars for the young and the old and why this right is so important and your vote does count.
	Halifax.ca should have a web page where candidates can submit a photo and some text on who they are and what issues they are interested in. They could also include a link to a personal website. This would allow voters one location to find some information on candidates for their district, and provide all candidates with a basic level of online presence regardless of finances or technical ability.

Good- on-line info. The Coast covered things and people well.

Advertising	Make especially clear the last day for voting in your advertising (i.e. election day).
	Don't remember about advertising
	I did not see any advertising for the date of the election or the candidates. I think there needs to at least be posters around town telling people to make sure they are registered and when to vote.
	I cannot recall where I saw advertisements for the 2016 election at this point; would be better to ask this at the polling station or immediately following the election.
	Clearly state e-voting cut off date/time in all advertising. Put this survey out sooner for 2024.....hard to remember details more than 7 months later!
	Advertise using every means available. Make it very easy to vote and to access information about the candidates.
Councillor Voting Records	Maybe better advertising on reasons why people should vote would increase voter response. Instead of focusing on party leaders, and problems no one intends to fix, we get the more of the nitty gritty. Include expense reports, allocation of funds and tax monies, real information on what's going on, in original format, and on a level everyone can understand.
	It would be helpful to have councillor's voting records online prior to an election.

APPENDIX C

Themes

POLLING STAFF

Polling Staff

The training of the polling station staff - particularly in regard to school board elections - needs to be improved.

There were not enough people in the M section to handle all the Mac.....s.

Smooth & efficient system - HRM ahead of Province & Federal Gov't.

I worked a polling station as a polling clerk during the 2016 mayoral election. As I had never been involved in an election prior, I assumed that the polling officer would be experienced. However on voting day I discovered that the polling officer had never been involved in any elections either. We had both attended the training session. I believe it would be beneficial to match experienced pollsters with inexperienced ones. There were a few bumps and I do not believe they were handled properly because of our inexperience.

APPENDIX D

Themes

Electronic Voting (E-Voting)

Yes to E-Voting

Want more e-voting

The e-voting process was simple and accessible. My partner and myself are both marginalized people who experience harassment frequently in the city, and found it extremely helpful to be able to vote online rather than have to go in person to a polling station. We have also heard feedback from friends with physical disabilities saying how much easier e-voting made the process for them. Please continue to allow e-voting as an option, and continue to upgrade the e-voting system as needed to keep it secure and up-to-date. Thank you.

Thanks for E-voting, it did not affect my decision to vote, but it did make it less time-consuming!

Should be more e-voting in elections.

Should be able to cast vote from phone. Should be able to vote on individual items through the year.

Provide for on-line voting

Please keep the e-vote option though it needs to be better publicized. I would also suggest that elections workers go to public locations to set up a kiosk where voters can vote on a laptop: libraries, seniors homes, malls, recreation centres, transit terminals, etc. One of the biggest complaints I hear about why people don't vote is that it is inconvenient to go to polling stations, they don't have access to or know how to use technology. Go to where the people are!

Online voting was very easy, I was able to vote even though I was away for election day.

Online voting please

On line voting would be really appreciated.

Should be more e-voting in elections.

Should be able to cast vote from phone. Should be able to vote on individual items through the year.

Provide for on-line voting

Online voting was very easy. I was able to vote even though I was away for election day.

Online voting please

Online voting would be really appreciated.

My vote is for online voting. Even with advance polls, if e-voting is not available I will not vote

More e-vote, less campaign signs!

Love e-voting

Keep going with the online voting options. People are busier today than ever before. Make it easy for them to vote, and you'll get a better turnout.

If you can e-vote you can e-plebiscite. That would likely also increase voter turnout.

I think the ability to vote online was fantastic! This made the process very easy for me - thank you for that!!!

I think e-voting was very easy to do and the city should keep doing it.

	I liked voting electronically.
	E-voting was great!
	Do more online voting, (imho), in my humble opinion, it would get more people voting.
	E- voting is critical for getting younger people to vote.
	Good experience - keep on doing what you are doing. E voting is SO helpful to me as a senior who has, at times, mobility problems
	E-vote is a great convenience. Of course, security is a concern but I hope you continue to offer this option.
	E-voting is the best thing ever
	E-vote is the way to go!
	I truly believe that more people would vote if it could be done online. It is the age of technology and the younger voters do everything online and do not want to go out of their way to vote.
	Being able to vote on line really simplified and enabled my political engagement, especially when the link showed up right in my social media feed.
	Allow online voting.
	The e-vote method was excellent and should continue.
	Online vote straightforward
No to e-voting	We should definitely ban e-voting. It is too susceptible to human error and hacking.
	The electronic voting has too many down sides to it, that it shouldn't be used. It doesn't look like it helped to increase voter participation and the cost is very expensive. E-voting can lead to people or special

interest groups to hold voting parties, and if you are invited to one, there is a much greater chance that your vote won't be completed in secrecy, and because of that, you may feel pressured to vote for someone other than who you want.

Stop online voting unless they are disabled and not ambulatory to make it to polling station.

Should not do e vote.

Please stop using electronic voting. It's a fundamentally opaque system that makes a joke out of the idea of scrutineering. It allows controlling spouses to vote their partners' votes. It makes a joke of the privacy considerations. It requires us to simply trust that the software is correct.

And it can be hacked.

I do not trust electronic voting, and I do not trust the Halifax elections system because of it.

If it matters, I'm a 38-year-old professional electrical engineer. I'm distrustful specifically because I understand the systems, not because I'm a luddite or afraid of technology.

I only used the e-vote system because I was on vacation over the election. Paradoxically, I am much opposed to e-voting because of the ease with which it can be scammed. I strongly recommend in-person voting at advance polls or the polling station on election day.

E-voting and telephone voting allow for coercion or bribery.

E voting is a bad and unnecessary option. It is too open to abuse or being hacked.

As far as how voting should occur: it should be by paper ballot only, on election day only, with only one or two advanced polls also by paper only. Electronic or phone voting should not be allowed. The integrity of the vote is the most important consideration regardless of voter turnout. Electronic and telephone voting are not secure enough. To imply that people do not vote because it is not convenient is to insult the intelligence of the voters. It is one of the most important democratic functions and should be treated with respect.

Do not switch to electronic voting. Electronic voting has numerous well-known security vulnerabilities. Paper ballots have had thousands of years of refinements.

Avoid trying to increase participation by allowing for internet voting - systems are unreliable and liable to tampering. Try engaging by giving constituents more substantive decision-making power and engage on a consistent basis (e.g. town halls, portals for information re local issues and decisions, etc). Make the process mean something other than a ballot box once every 4-5 years. Participatory budget initiatives in several districts are a good start - budget decisions are important and require knowledge of basic facts, then deliberation. Introduce this process in more initiatives.

I don't believe in the reliability of electronic voting

I'm not sure about electronic voting; there is value in going to a polling station and voting in public as a citizen.

Questions about e-voting

Not sure that e-voting will increase voter turnout or really provide any improvement to the voting process.

APPENDIX E

Themes

Polling Stations

Advanced Polling

Make advanced voting at least a week or two prior to actual election date. Make things as easy as possible to exercise your democratic rights.

I really liked all the advance poll opportunities!! Please continue to offer these.

Having advance polling available many days before the election renders the campaign process fruitless for those participating in the advance poll. Also it starts to render election day - a lesser event than in the past. The rationale behind advance polls is well understood but is not increasing voter turnout - ironically it might be reducing voter turnout.

Loved the extended time of the advanced polls - much more convenient.

Advance voting is good but it was held too far in advance and too many days. The cost to do this was excessive and not necessary. Online voting, postal or just a few days ahead would be sufficient, too much tax payers dollars wasted!

Went to advanced poll Saturday evening, we were 2 minutes late and they wouldn't let us vote. If you want higher voter turnout you got to cut us a little slack sometimes.

More control at advanced poles. Too many folks blocking the only door in and out causing a fire hazard. No one would take responsibility for this. It was at Canada Games Center in Clayton Park.

I understand that a lot more polling stations open up on 'Election Day', but there a lot of Returning Stations that are available as well. I have a feeling that a lot of people wouldn't mind travelling 5-10 mins extra to reach a Returning Office to vote early and, more importantly, to vote quickly, instead of voting on 'Election Day' where they may have to wait for hours.

Polling Stations

Very poor choice of polling station ...disabled unable to get into the polling station. Very bad. Very poor signage.

Very bad and dangerous parking at polling station (Church) on Pleasant Street in Dartmouth.

The sites for the 2016 polling stations in District 10 were significantly inferior to those used in prior years. The MSVU site had parking and accessibility issues and was difficult to find. One of the other sites was outside the district boundaries. I believe the poor choice of polling sites contributed to the low turnout in this district.

The training of the polling station staff - particularly in regard to school board elections - needs to be improved.

My polling location at Mumford/ Chebucto is a multi purpose facility; a church with an attached hall. Voting was in the hall. There must have been a church function happening simultaneously, causing wait and hassle to park initially, and again leaving. Had I known about these delays, I probably would have voted at a different time or not at all.

It's very important that the polling stations be within a reasonable walking distance from all residents, via routes that have sidewalks. This was so for us, and the polling station location worked well.

Don't hold polling stations in Churches. There should be a separation of church and state.

Clear information on polling stations, there wasn't very clear signage for polling stations.

Allow people to vote at polling stations in their same district if needed. If someone ends up at the wrong polling station based on the best info they can find (it was hard to find where to go with dysfunctional website) then let them vote if it is for the candidates representing their area.

Good- privacy shield when voting

APPENDIX F

Themes

Low Voter Turnout

Low voter turnout

Voter turn out is getting lower because we don't enumerate and it shows that Gov. is not interested.

If you're wondering why people don't vote in strong numbers, I can tell you: nobody credible is going to bother running, and therefore nobody is going to bother voting, when the incumbent has had thirty years of free advertising because there are no term limits.

[Dear eternally patient HRM staffer who is reading this, could you please kick this nugget of wisdom back to council? Please, they really need to hear it!]

We don't want to see you turn geriatric in your council seat, because while you sit there accruing pension it's keeping someone who has a good idea from running for the office. Set some term limits for yourselves and watch voter participation soar. If you haven't accomplished whatever you wanted to do in four consecutive terms, do you really need a fifth, sixth, seventh, ad infinitum?

Just stop, guys. Term limits. Now.

If there is a voter count less than a certain amount (50%-60%), New candidates should be picked, and another election should take place.

I don't believe the low voter turnout in the recent election was a reflection on the organization and running of the election.

I did not fill out most of the questions above because I do not remember and because I always vote and actively keep myself informed about upcoming elections. The problem with low voter turnout has nothing to do with the quality of people's experience as voters; it has to do with the quality of their experience as citizens of the municipality. There is no real relationship between citizens and city government. There is just pandering on the part of council and staff to moneyed interests in the municipality. That is what discourages voters.

Get that mayor out of here and lower salaries to below 60k, maybe then you can get more than a third of voters out.

**Getting people
out to vote**

We need to find to way to get people out to vote.....not sure how though.

We need better turnout, but I don't know if you can make it easier to vote. Some kind of mandatory scheme perhaps?

Nothing more can be done to get people to vote. Election was very well communicated. Easy access to polls and advance polls. If transportation a problem candidates will even drive you there. NO excuse for not voting!

I loved the idea of getting younger voters engaged by having "shadow" elections.
Anything that gets more people voting, especially the younger ones is good. University campuses are where a lot of people express their displeasure, so that should be a focal point for programs (which shouldn't start only when an election is underway).

I think that a tax credit of \$25 off your municipal tax bill would encourage voters to vote.
For renters, a free month on Metro Transit.

HRM poster It's your taxes Vote!

APPENDIX G

Themes

Other Voting Options

Proportional representation

Work on implementing proportional representation for a fairer election system. The representative that did get voted in in my district wasn't who I voted for and I feel that makes my vote pointless.

Proportional representation

Mandatory Voting

Mandatory for everyone, unless medical condition. Or pay the same amount as a parking ticket not to participate. There is no excuse for not voting. Last election more ways to vote then ever before. Mandatory voting on election date.

Voting should be mandatory as it is in Australia

Ballot Options

I would like to see a spot on the ballot for " NONE OF THE ABOVE". I would also like the elections boards advertise that this option is available to the voting public. You would really get a good idea on voter dissatisfaction for the whole area. Maybe this might jump start a movement to ask the voter what he or she really wants. This might work to get the voters out knowing that a real program just might do some good for all.

Give an option for - none of the above
fine for not voting

APPENDIX H

Themes

Comments for candidates

Comments for candidates

Perhaps a few more all-candidate debates in districts' as I was unable to attend in my area. More variety in timing (day/evening) if possible.

Never saw anyone here to question about things. Than after have never heard from the winning person. So I feel that I am not getting a say. On big things in the city there should be voted on or at least about by the person in my area before they vote on it for me. No I can never go to the meetings on things as I work 12 hours so never can go. That is why there be a vote or at least the member on them.

It would be good if all candidates had some instruction on how to effectively share their message. Some were very effective and others could have used some help in my view. This is why I suggested in the survey that candidates should receive some funding from the municipality - to include some advice for first-time candidates.

If there is not already a program one is needed created to develop the next generation of candidates leadership skills and develop interest in becoming involved in the community. Too often the candidates in some riders are lackluster.

Actually have the one running visit apartment buildings. Not all votes come from homeowners.

Clearly there are people in districts who are displeased with the selection of candidates available

Real candidates, aligned by party

Bring in a rule that each councillor must live within the area they represent.

We DON'T NEED 16 councillors!!!!!!!

Want- have all the promises that the candidates made

**More information about
the candidates**

More information on the candidates. They must be held accountable
If Not for your word you have nothing!

Make the issues and candidates better known

Did not receive any info on any of the people running in my riding

Disappointed with lack of information about candidates running, how to
get to know them, attend events like candidates debates. Lack of access
makes it difficult to engage.

Some of the various candidates in my area did not bother to deliver and
cards advertising their information. NO CARD NO VOTE.

Districts are too big

Gone are the days when you can routinely expect to talk to candidates
on the door in municipal elections - the districts are far too big - I wish
we could de-amalgamate and go back to more (part time) councillors
who live in your local area.

Districts far too big- only 1 candidate out of 7 made it to my door- no
supporters came at all.

APPENDIX I

Themes

Other Comments & Areas to Consider

Comments related to the Provincial Election

Get all candidates and political parties to limit the number of signs placed throughout a district, cut back on fund raising and have more get to meet the candidates open houses at High Schools and candidate debates.

I think the term 'Election Day' should be changed to reflect the actual process; it should perhaps be changed to 'Last Day of Election'. I wanted to vote for the first time in my life for the 2017 NS provincial elections, so I went to the Returning Office to get registered and I was told I could vote then and there, which I did. When I mentioned that to some of my colleagues, some of whom have voted quite a few times before, they were surprised that voting starts so much earlier than the so-called 'Election Day'. So, I went on a personal mission of informing my close friends and most of them were surprised that voting starts so much earlier than the information implies.

Really, it's easy to group all members of a party into just a party as if the MLA has no say in the operation of government. Obviously this is wrong; but I feel that it causes disengagement.

PLEASE HAVE CANDIDATES FOR ALL PARTIES. IN DARTMOUTH EAST, WE ONLY REALLY HAD THREE CHOICES, BUT FOUR WERE ON OUR BALLOT. IF A CANDIDATE QUILTS HIS CAMPAIGN, EVEN IF A DEADLINE HAS PASSED, REMOVE THEM FROM THE BALLOT OR INCLUDE ALL CANDIDATES FOR THE AREA, WHICH SHOULD HAVE ALSO INCLUDED ANDREW YOUNGER.

I moved February 2017 to Lucknow St. from Edward. I have my mail forwarded, but the yellow card did not come to my new address. I phoned the election office and wound up mailing in a request w/ 2 pieces of ID. Then 2 very nice ladies came to register my vote. I do not need such assistance, but the election office did not know where I should vote at the time I inquired.

Only an NDP candidate who came to my door thought he knew, and it turned out he did, but I wanted to make sure.

I had wonderful service at the advance poll. Staff was very friendly and things were speedy. Thank you!

One critique I have is that a poll station was listed at the wrong address (Bridgwater was listed as King Street and it was not.) And the amount of paper used every year during the actual voting process is horrendous. There's no need to print out so many things, have everyone vote, put that paper in an envelope and seal it with a giant sticker. If anything, please reduce the size of the envelope to put the vote in and please reduce the sticker size. Every little bit helps the environment, and also helps save tax dollars that are greatly wasted on paper. Thanks so much for reading my concerns. Enjoy your day!

Also, stop kicking candidates out of the party during the election. That's disenfranchisement.

Would be nice to have a central place to see the platforms for each party that is unbiased

Living in an apartment, the only election information we received was from the Liberal party through a mail drop. With all the apartment building going on in the city, more consideration needs to be given to how to reach apartment dwellers. Phone calls from candidate's offices are annoying and always end up asking if we will support said candidate. My answer is always that my choice remains between me and the ballot box. These calls are obviously not to provide information but to try to gain a vote for the candidate.

In my riding one of the candidates was removed from the ballot. Perhaps more care needs to be given to the vetting process before names are allowed on the ballot. To the best of my knowledge, this was not an isolated situation.

Service is fine. I know people who didn't vote because they couldn't reconcile the candidate with the party leadership - had that problem myself. Also, I wish there were some way to give more voice to the minority parties (NDP and Green especially) . Both these issues require a change in voting system

	Fixed election dates that fall within the timeframe the majority of students are present to vote.
Campaign Finance Comments	Implement election campaign financing policy
	I think your consultations on campaign finance are critical. It feels to me that there's a lot of public cynicism around council decision-making, and never knowing who has funded a candidate, and for how much, is a key part of that. I think the Municipality's role is to create space for transparent and fair elections. Thanks for engaging on these important issues.
	Developers or businesses should not be allowed to finance the councillors, we have to stop the corruption in this city..
School Board Elections	School board needs to be examined. Candidates, districts, role ... all need to be examined. Difficult (at best) to be an informed voter.
	I do feel that the school board voting is an area that needs improvement in how information on candidates is made available, but I suppose that may be outside of HRMs role.
Sign removal	The elections office did not properly do their job ensuring illegal signs were removed promptly.
Feedback on the survey	The questions are too late...it was a while ago. Please ask yourself the questions and see if they apply...many questions ask if you voted/service reps, and may or may not apply Some questions are redundant, if you did not require any assistance. I am sorry, but the questions are not very well written. The date is incorrect, should be 2017.
General Feedback	Voting was fine
	Fine