



City of New Westminster

Report to Council

To: New Westminster City Council
in Regular Council

Meeting Date: April 27, 2026

From: Sarah Goddard, Interim Corporate
Officer

Report No.: 2026-153

Re: **Update to the 2026 General Local Elections Plan**

Staff Recommendation

That the proposed modification to the election program for the 2026 General Local Elections, as described in the report titled "Update to the 2026 General Local Elections Plan" dated April 27, 2026 from the Interim Corporate Officer, be endorsed.

Purpose

To refine the 2026 General Local Elections voting place plan, reducing the number of voting locations on General Voting Day from 15 to 13.

Background

On March 30, 2026, staff brought forward the proposed election program for the 2026 General Local Elections, including plans for 15 voting places on General Voting Day and enhanced advance voting opportunities across the city from 5 in 2022 to 9 in 2026. The [report](#) also noted that advance voting has become an increasingly significant component of voter participation.

Since that time, staff have continued operational planning for the election and reviewed prior voter turnout patterns by location, staffing requirements, and the distribution of advance voting opportunities.

Analysis

Based on a review of turnout patterns from previous elections and anticipated voter turnout on new advance voting opportunities, two previous General Voting Day polling locations have been identified as comparatively low-turnout locations that are situated in close proximity to other polling places with higher voter volumes.

Accordingly, staff recommend that the number of polling locations on General Voting Day be reduced from 15 to 13.

This adjustment is expected to improve the overall efficiency of election delivery for the following reasons:

- staffing resources assigned to the two lower-turnout locations can be reallocated to busier voting locations where additional election officials are more likely to improve elector flow and reduce wait times;
- the proximity of the affected locations to other polling places means that voter access on General Voting Day will continue to be maintained; and
- new advance voting opportunities will be offered in the areas near the two locations proposed for removal, which is expected to further reduce demand at those locations on General Voting Day.

Given the increasing use of advance voting opportunities in local elections, staff believe that maintaining 13 General Voting Day locations, together with advance voting opportunities and mail ballot access already contemplated in the broader election plan, will continue to provide reasonable and accessible voting options for electors while allowing election resources to be deployed more effectively

Financial Implications

Reducing the number of General Voting Day polling locations from 15 to 13 is expected to generate modest cost savings associated with staffing, training, supplies, and site administration.

More importantly, this change will allow staffing resources to be redirected to higher-volume locations, where service pressures are expected to be greater. This is anticipated to improve operational effectiveness.

Next Steps

Subject to Council consideration, staff will finalize arrangements for the 13 General Voting Day polling locations and reallocate staffing resources to higher-volume polling locations.

Report Approval

Authored By

Karon Blandino, Manager, Information, Privacy, & Records

Agreed By

Sarah Goddard, Interim Corporate Officer

Approved By

Donnie Rosa, Chief Administrative Officer