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Item No. Information Item 2
Executive Standing Committee
August 18, 2025

TO: Mayor Fillmore and Members of Executive Standing Committee

FROM: Cathie O'Toole, Chief Administrative Officer

DATE: February 11, 2025

SUBJECT: 2024 Halifax Regional Municipality and CSAP Election Summary Report

INFORMATION REPORT

ORIGIN

Staff originated.

BACKGROUND

The Office of the Municipal Clerk, in coordination with its internal and external partners, successfully completed the 2024 Municipal and Conseil scolaire acadien provincial (CSAP) regular election which took place on October 19, 2024. The implementation of the election project plan began in January 2024 after the issuance of the final order from the Nova Scotia Utility and Review Board on the newly created electoral boundaries for the Halifax Regional Municipality. Under the guidance and direction of the Election Project Steering Committee, and through the creation of a dedicated corporate working group, the 2024 Election Project team included subject matter expertise from a wide range of HRM's Business Units. This collaborative and strategic approach to election planning provided the resources and expertise to successfully administer the election and established a blueprint for future election planning for the HRM's largest corporate governance project.

Voter turnout for the 2024 election reached 36.8% of the 335,341 eligible voters, with 123,529 total votes cast. This constitutes the largest number of votes cast in an HRM regular election to date. 69% of voters chose to cast their vote alternatively, through online, kiosk and telephone voting, representing 84,343 individuals vs 31% of voters who chose to vote by paper ballot or 39,186 individuals. The 2024 Halifax Regional Municipality and CSAP election involved over 1,300 election workers, 84 candidates, and 134 polling locations throughout advance and regular polling days. Halifax Regional Council was sworn in on November 5, 2024.

DISCUSSION

Staff have provided a summary report of the 2024 Halifax Regional Municipality and *Conseil scolaire acadien provincial* (CSAP) election. The report is included as attachment 1 and is being provided to Executive Standing Committee as an information item.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The Municipal Election operating budget (A125) was approved as part of the 2024/25 operating budget and included a withdrawal of \$3.5 million from Q511, the Election Reserve. The final cost to administer the 2024 Municipal and CSAP election totaled \$3,170,046.24.

An invoice in the amount of \$309,079.49 was submitted to CSAP by the Halifax Regional Municipality to recover costs associated with administering the CSAP election. This billing arrangement reflects the full cost of conducting the election in the two CSAP electoral districts within HRM. The proceeds have been returned to the Election Reserve. The net cost of the election, after this reimbursement, is \$2,860,966.75.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

There was no community engagement required for this report. Community engagement activities pertaining to the 2024 Halifax Regional Municipality and CSAP election are outlined in the attached summary report (attachment 1).

LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY

Executive Standing Committee – Terms of Reference
General Government of the Council 8

The Executive Standing Committee shall act as a review committee for matters related to the general self-governance and administration of the Council as directed by the Council.

ATTACHMENTS

1. 2024 Halifax Election Project Review & Advancing to the Next Election

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HALIFAX

ELECTION
2024

Project Review & Advancing to the Next Election

2024 Municipal and Conseil scolaire
acadien provincial (CSAP) Election

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Overview



Land Acknowledgement

Halifax Regional Municipality would like to acknowledge that we are in Mi'kma'ki, the ancestral and traditional lands of the Mi'kmaq people. The municipality acknowledges the Peace and Friendship Treaties signed in this Territory and recognizes that we are all Treaty People.

Halifax Regional Municipality would like to acknowledge the contributions of people of African descent. African Nova Scotians are a distinct founding people in our community who have contributed to and have been a key part of Nova Scotian culture and history for over 400 years.

We acknowledge that African teachings, strength, and perseverance continue to challenge and inspire our community.

Introduction

The Halifax Regional Municipality (HRM) Municipal Elections Office is an integral program of the Office of the Municipal Clerk and provides municipal election services to residents of the Halifax Regional Municipality. The Elections Office is undergoing a comprehensive, data-driven review of election services to inform improvements, ensure readiness for any special election and to prepare for the 2028 HRM and Conseil scolaire acadien provincial Elections.

This document provides an overview of the 2024 Municipal and CSAP Election. For additional information, visit halifax.ca/election.

We hope you find this review helpful. We welcome your questions and requests for additional information. You can contact the Election Office by phone (902.490.8683) or by email (election@halifax.ca).



Message from the Returning Officer

I am pleased to present the 2024 Halifax Regional Municipality and Conseil scolaire acadien provincial (CSAP) Election summary report. The 2024 Election included a series of firsts including a corporate steering committee comprised of members of the Halifax Regional Municipality's (HRM) senior leadership team and a working group of subject matter experts from a wide range of municipal business units.

This collaborative and strategic approach to election administration provided the resources and expertise to successfully conduct a complex, hybrid election using three methods of voting, while maintaining an accessible and safe voting experience for residents of the Halifax Regional Municipality.

The 2024 Municipal and CSAP Election also included:

- new electoral boundaries established for the municipality following the 2022 District Boundary Review project;
- new electoral boundaries established for Conseil scolaire acadien provincial representatives;
- an unanticipated transition between election vendors for alternative voting services (internet and telephone) in May 2024; and
- a historically high number of mayoral candidates.

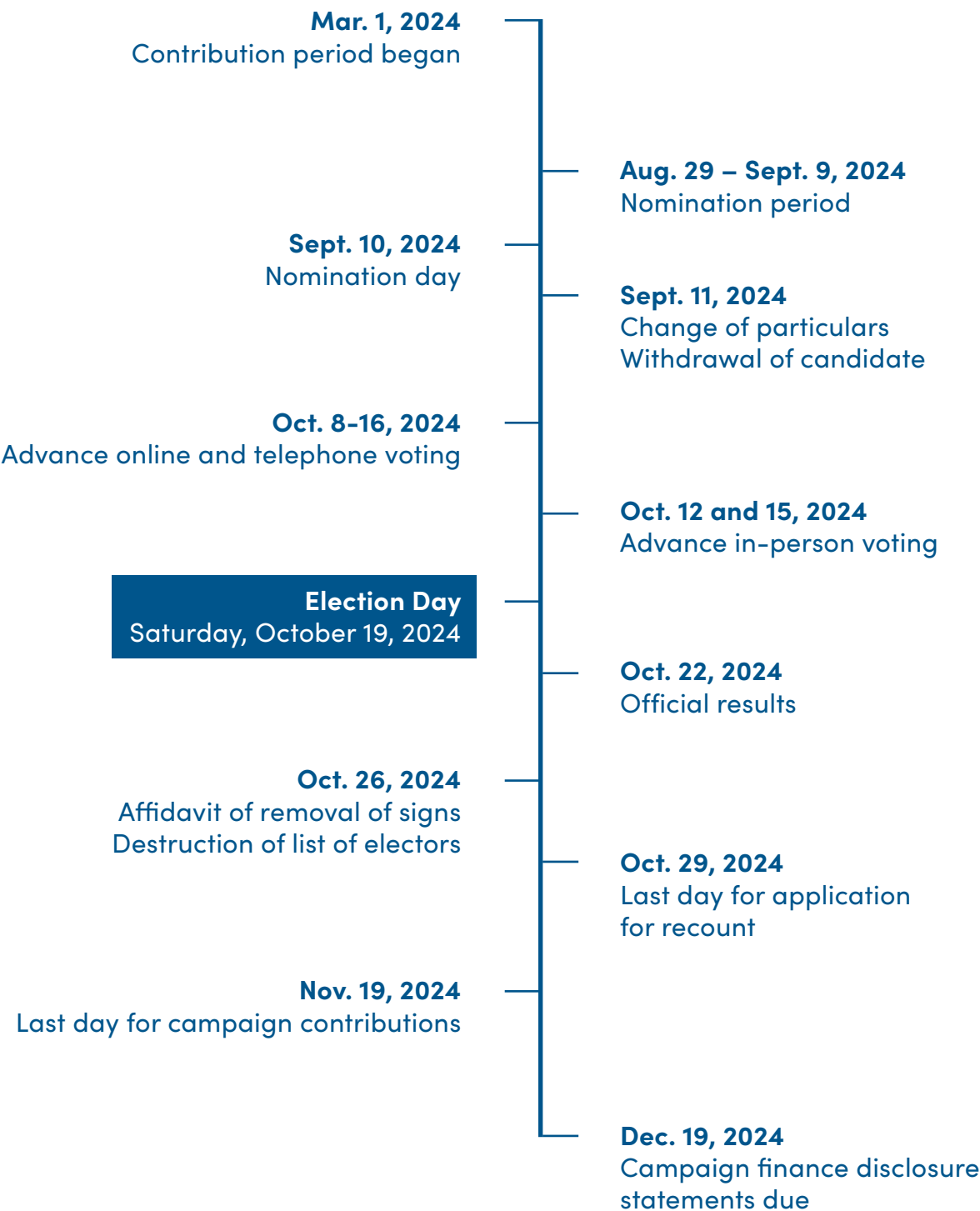
The 2024 Election involved over 1,280 election workers staffing 134 polling locations spread over a geographic area that exceeds 5,500 km². Nothing would be possible without the dedication and hard work of these individuals committed to serving their community. The election would not have been possible without the support from our partners at Conseil scolaire acadien provincial, the Department of Housing and Municipal Affairs, Halifax Public Libraries, Intelivote Systems Inc., Simply Voting, many community organizations and our dedicated colleagues at the municipality.



I am proud and grateful to the amazing election team and our partners for the commitment and support needed to deliver the 2024 Election in a safe, secure, and accessible manner.

Iain MacLean
Returning Officer/Municipal Clerk

2024 Election Legislative Timeline



Election Project Governance



Roles – Municipal Clerk, Returning Officer, and Assistant Returning Officer

Regional Council appoints a Returning Officer responsible for all regular and special elections required under the Municipal Elections Act.

The council also appoints assistant returning officers to help perform the Returning Officer's duties and represent the Returning Officer when needed.

Executive Standing Committee

Executive Standing Committee makes recommendations to Regional Council on election matters. All matters of election administration needing Council approval were considered first by Executive Standing. These reports include legislated decisions related to the administration of the election in accordance with the Municipal Elections Act.

A list of the reports submitted to the Executive Standing Committee and Regional Council related to the 2024 Municipal and CSAP Election are outlined in Appendix A.

Municipal Election Act Review

In July 2024, the Nova Scotia Department of Housing and Municipal Affairs completed a review of the Municipal Elections Act which led to gender-neutral language being updated on official election forms. The Municipal Elections Review Advisory Committee continues to meet regularly and provides recommendations to the Minister of Housing and Municipal Affairs on process or legislative amendments on municipal election administration in Nova Scotia.

Campaign Finance By-law

In January of 2024, Halifax Regional Council approved amendments to By-law C-1100, the Campaign Finance By-law. This By-law sets the rules for how municipal candidates can raise and spend money during elections. The updates include stricter rules about where donors must live, lower limits on how much candidates and their spouses can give to their own campaigns, and adjustments to donation limits to account for inflation.

Compensation Review for Election Workers

The tariff of fees and expenses for election workers was reviewed and approved in March 2024 and applied a 7.6 percent inflationary adjustment to election worker wages.

HRM District Boundary Review

The Municipal Government Act (MGA) requires that all municipalities in Nova Scotia review the number and boundaries of electoral districts in the municipality every eight years.

While the municipality is responsible for conducting the review and putting forth a recommendation, the final decision on municipal electoral districts and boundaries is made by the Nova Scotia Utility and Review Board (NSUARB).

In 2022, the municipality was required to complete a district boundary review application for the NSUARB's consideration. The review was conducted in two phases: phase one to determine the size of Council and its governance structure and phase two to set specific district boundaries. More information can be found online at [District Boundary Review](#).

Election Project Administration



Election Project Steering Committee

Conducting a secure, transparent, accessible, and legislatively compliant election is a significant corporate governance project requiring levels of support from all business units and adherence to corporate standards.

During the 2020 municipal election, the municipality used performance excellence resources to document operational actions, identifying inefficiencies and gaps in the project that needed to be addressed. This process revealed operational challenges resulting in several recommendations.

In December 2022, the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) approved the creation of a project steering committee for the 2024 Election project. The group's goal was to support clear communication and strategic resource planning for running the 2024 Election.

To support the Steering Committee's objectives, the organization created an election project working group to identify corporate expectations and efficiencies, determine resourcing needs and help develop operational plans for the 2024 Election.

Members of the 2024 Election Project Steering Committee included:

- John Traves, K.C., Chief Governance Officers/Municipal Solicitor (Chair)
- Sally Christie, Chief of Staff, Chief Administrative Office
- Jerry Blackwood, Chief Financial Officer
- John MacPherson, Executive Director, Property, Fleet and Environment
- Britt Wilson, Chief Human Resources Officer
- David Thorpe, Chief Information Officer

Election Project Working Group

The working group included all members of the core election project team in addition to representatives from multiple municipal business units/divisions as the project evolved:

- Access & Privacy
- Corporate Accommodations

- Corporate Fleet
- Corporate Security
- Facilities
- Finance - Accounts Payable and Payroll
- It Project Management Office
- Offices of Diversity & Inclusion
- Finance - Accounts Payable and Payroll
- Human Resources
- Property, Fleet & Environment

2024 Election Project Team

The organization began coordinating the core project team in 2022 and finalized the team by spring 2024.

The core election project team roles:

- Election and Special Projects Manager
- Election Project Coordinator
- IT Project Manager
- Communications Client Strategist
- Human Resources Lead
- Financial Business Partner
- Logistics Officer
- Team Lead, Contact Centre
- Team Lead, Election Area Officers
- Election Operations Coordinator
- Election Area Officers (eight)
- Election Assistants (five)

Election Team Staffing

The Elections and Special Projects Manager worked with a dedicated Talent Acquisition Specialist and Human Resources Business Partner to prepare job descriptions, conduct salary reviews, launch recruitment initiatives, schedule interviews and select the term election project operations team.

Election Contact Centre

The Election Contact Centre was established to conduct revisions to the electors list and respond to election-related inquiries from residents.

From July 22 to October 8, the contact centre operated between 8:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. and provided services in French and English. During that time, it received 9,156 calls in English and 53 calls in French.

Election Area Officers

The Election Area Officers were responsible for tasks associated with the election's preparation and organization. Each Officer was responsible for two districts and for selecting poll locations, accessibility audits, interviewing applicants, hiring applicants, coordinating training locations and organizing election activities within their districts.

Election Logistics Officer

The Election Logistics Officer oversaw the planning and setting up for the election. This included preparing polling locations and making sure all election materials were delivered on time before the polls opened. Their work involved coordinating a logistics plan, organizing district packages, ballot boxes, signs, and other supplies, as well as managing inventory and storage.

Election Office and Warehouse

For the first time, the municipal Election Office worked with the municipality's Leasing and Tenant Services team to find and set up a dedicated warehouse for the 2024 Election. The space was used to safely store and track election supplies and equipment. It also functioned as a distribution centre to safely deliver and collect supplies on advance and regular polling days across the municipality.

The election warehouse includes a secure storage facility for confidential election items such as ballots, poll books and electors' lists. This access-restricted area ensures

the integrity and security of secure election materials and equipment. Additionally, the warehouse facility allowed the Election Office to enhance its safety and security standards for election workers by providing a purpose-built area to conduct critical operational election work with no impact on other municipal operations or facilities.

Recruitment of Poll Workers

Active recruitment for election workers ran from July 3, 2024, to August 22, 2024. 6,593 applications were received for 1,280 positions required for advance polls and Election Day as well as stand-by workers. Training activities for election workers started on September 16 and ran through to October 18, 2024.

Technology

The IT Project Management Office is responsible for supporting the technical deliverables of the election. This includes support for the list of electors which is maintained by Elections Nova Scotia and transferred to the Returning Officer in advance of the election.

Voters have the option to vote on Election Day, by paper, or during the alternative voting period by telephone or online voting.

The IT Project Management Office led the IT component of the election. This included an IT Project Manager and a Business Analyst who documented processes and procedures along to identify process improvements for future elections.

Support summary:

E-Voting

Provided input into the technical requirements of the e-voting request for proposals (RFP), helped with proof of concept/testing of the solution, contracted and managed a security assessment on the solution, created training material for election workers and the public on how to use the e-voting solution, coordinated with the Election Office and alternative voting vendor on process and deliverables.

Electoral Data

Requested data from Elections Nova Scotia (ENS), performed data clean-up, matching identifications to addresses, provided test and final datasets to the e-voting vendor, and returned the revised dataset back to ENS.

Applications:

Provided and supported the election management system and the election night reporting app. Support for the election management system included entering data, setting up

user accounts, testing for accuracy, training users, creating reports, and exporting updated voting results for statistics. Support for the election night reporting app involved building and customizing the app, assessing it, training users, and entering and publishing results on election night.

Equipment

Procuring, configuring, testing, delivering, and returning all technical equipment required to support the election. Equipment includes cell phones, phones with automatic call distribution setup, printers, computers for the Election Office and for advanced voting registration locations and tablets for election night reporting (ENR) results entry.

Maps

Created and provided maps of voting locations for the voter notification letters, online mapping of polling locations and voting subdivisions and replication of district maps for Councillor candidate packages.

Website

Configured a section on Halifax.ca for the Election. This included setting up pages and working with Corporate Communications and Diversity & Inclusion to ensure accessibility and posting live results on election night.

Training

Documented and trained the key election staff (training the trainers) on how to use the advanced voting equipment and alternative voting applications.

Support and Contingency

Documented a support and contingency plan and provided support for all technical elements of the election, which included coordination and handling of the Agreed-Upon Procedures Audit conducted by Ernst & Young for the 2024 Election.

The scope of the project included:

- procurement and technical management of the e-voting solution
- management of vendor relations for the design, print and mailout of voter notification letters
- management of the process of the electoral data throughout the election
- supplying all necessary technical equipment required to support the election
- ensuring the election night reporting (ENR) application was assessed, operational and resourced for the election night results reporting
- posting live paper-based voting results on election night through the ENR application

- providing input into the design and development of the e-voting solution and training material for election workers and electors
- developing training material to train the trainers on how to assemble any equipment for any polls
- managing data for polling divisions and locations
- providing maps for district boundaries, poll boundaries and poll locations for the candidate packages, Elections Office, and e-voting vendor for voter notification letters.
- ensuring that a support and contingency plan was in place for all technical elements of the election, which included field support analysts during alternative and paper voting days
- providing the election auditors with information and hardware requested to perform the specified procedures audit
- ensuring all technical-related activities were completed before the voting process
- hosting 'lessons learned' workshops and reporting findings

Revisions Period

The voter list revisions period, as directed by Halifax Regional Council, ran from July 22 to August 30, 2024. Election contact centre staff were responsible for revising the list of electors and providing unique electronic voting credentials to newly registered electors or those that did not receive a voter information notification in the mail. As part of the communications strategy for the revisions period, a postcard was sent to all addresses in the municipality to make residents aware of the election and to check to make sure that they are on the list of electors.

List of Electors Data Transfer

The municipality receives a list of electors from Elections Nova Scotia for use for all municipal and special elections. An issue with this list resulted in names being removed from the voters list requiring a resubmission of data for the list. This resulted in additional cleansing costs and extremely high call volumes in the call center until the issue was resolved.

After receiving the revised data from Elections Nova Scotia and with significant effort from project staff, the team resolved the issue. Both the municipal Election Office and ENS flagged this item for follow-up and action after the November 2024 provincial election.

Voter Notification Letter

An addressed voter notification letter was sent to registered voters in the municipality that included a unique pin and specific information required to vote online or in-person during advance polling days and on Election Day. This included the names of all mayoral candidates, the names of Councillor candidates running in their district and CSAP candidate names running in the municipality as well as CSAP voting eligibility requirements.

Voting

The voting methods offered ensured that all eligible voters, including those with disabilities, could participate in the electoral process.

- Online – used by the municipality since 2008 and is referred as “alternative” or “electronic” voting.
- By phone - electors can vote on a touchtone telephone. This is another form of alternative voting providing access for those without a computer, smartphone, or reliable internet connection.
- In person - on advance poll days, electors can receive assistance voting electronically at a poll location and electors can vote using a paper ballot on election day at their poll location.

Polling Locations

Selecting the right voting locations was essential to ensure accessibility, convenience, security and safety for voters and elections staff. This included accessible locations, with adequate parking and proximity to transit routes.

Voting locations were located throughout each district and polling subdivision to ensure that voters had a location close to home. Staff worked with the municipal Facilities division, Halifax Regional Centre for Education, local nursing homes, hospitals, Halifax Public Libraries, private community centres and places of worship.

Because of the Halifax Public Libraries work stoppage, we relocated five advance and Election Day polling locations to previously designated backup locations.



Schools and
Campuses



Place of
Worship



Community
Centres



Recreation
Centres



Libraries

Accessibility

The Election Area Officers team, along with municipal colleagues and external partners like the Halifax Regional Centre for Education, worked for hours to make sure every polling location was accessible for voters and workers. They improved existing processes to enhance the experience for both voters and workers and to ensure the election was safe, accessible, and followed all legal requirements.

Municipal employees from the Facility, Design and Construction and Office of Diversity & Inclusion divisions designed an accessibility checklist using [Rick Hansen Foundation Accessibility Certification standards](#) to assess polling locations. It has a rating system provided by the Rick Hansen Foundation which uses trained professionals to evaluate the meaningful access of commercial, institutional, and multi-unit residential buildings and sites.

Accessible polling stations must have level access and an internal structure or layout that allows people with disabilities to cast their ballot without barriers. The Election Area Officers used these checklists to review and inspect all polling locations selected by the Election Office. Inspectors identified action items and corrected them before the election to improve accessibility at polling locations.

Election staff are trained to help those who may need it. Voters may ask to receive assistance in marking their ballot or using the online voting system by a friend, relative or the Deputy Returning Officer who has taken a sworn oath to assist electors and uphold voter confidentiality.

Those unable to travel to a polling location could vote from home by telephone or online during the alternative voting period. Voters could also apply for a proxy vote in advance of Election Day.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

The principles of diversity, equity and inclusion guided the operational direction and decision making of the 2024 Election to ensure its success. Subject matter experts from the municipality's [Office of Diversity & Inclusion/African Nova Scotian Affairs Integration Office \(D&I/ANSAIO\)](#) were included as part of the project team and election project working group to ensure that all deliverables for the project were reviewed by this group.

Election Integrity

Maintaining election integrity is a vital aspect of maintaining a fair democratic process, ensuring that elections are free from fraud, manipulation, and interference.

The goal of the election team was to ensure that all eligible voters could cast their vote without barriers, by providing safe, secure, and accessible polling locations, voting methods and clear information about voting procedures.

There was a legislative requirement for election workers to take oaths protecting elector confidentiality, and processes were reviewed to ensure that irregularities or issues within the revisions or voting process were addressed promptly and effectively.

A robust legal framework defines the rules and procedures for elections and includes laws on voter registration, voting methods and handling disputes.

Municipal cybersecurity experts protected the election from cyber-attacks, physical tampering, and other forms of interference. They also ensured all vendor agreements included requirements to safeguard voter data, protecting the security and integrity of both online and paper-based voting systems. The election project team maintained the integrity of the election through policies, procedures, thorough training for election workers, secure polling locations, and IT support. They assessed all technology to meet corporate best practices and security standards.

Election staff put safety measures in place to ensure the integrity of the electronic voting kiosks during in-person advance polling. They assessed the kiosks to ensure they met accessibility and security standards. Unique login and passwords were created for each user to prevent tampering or potential interference. They encrypted voting data and alternative voting results from advance voting were provided to the Returning Officer after the close of advance polls. These results remained sealed and securely locked until polls closed on Election Day and results were reported.

The election team implemented a support model for advanced polls and Election Day to ensure election workers had access to technical assistance when needed. They operated a help line for workers to request materials or forms, ask questions, request security or get onsite technology support. A centralized team monitored election issues and dispatched resources as needed.

Every poll location had an assigned Supervising Deputy Returning Officer onsite to manage staff and processes. An Election Area Officer managed each polling location, visiting throughout the day to replenish supplies and help resolve issues.

Privacy Impact Assessment

The municipality's Access & Privacy Office conducted a Privacy Impact Assessment (PIA) to identify and manage privacy risks associated with the election project, voting process, systems, and policies. The objective of the PIA was to:

- ensure compliance with legal, regulatory and policy requirements for privacy;
- identify and evaluate risks of privacy breaches or other incidents; and
- implement appropriate controls to mitigate unacceptable risks.

The PIA was particularly important for the election given the substantial use of sensitive electoral data, helping to safeguard voter information and prevent access and privacy issues before they arose.

Ernst & Young Electronic Voting Audit

The municipality engaged Ernst & Young LLP to perform agreed-upon election audit procedures before, during and after the electronic voting period, as required by legislation.

The audit outlined a clear plan for how electronic voting results were collected, securely stored, and verified to ensure they could not be changed or denied before being shared on election night.

The municipality engaged a third-party vendor, Intelivote Systems Inc., to administer the electronic voting process using Simply Voting alternative voting application during the advance polling period.

Agreed-upon audit procedures were carried out either in the municipal 'live election' environment or the 'test election' environment during the electronic voting period, between 8 a.m. on October 8, 2024, and 7 p.m. on October 16, 2024.

Security Measures

The election project team coordinated planning sessions with the municipality's Corporate Security team to analyze options and plan security for election polling locations. They also consulted with the City of Toronto on polling location measures to determine best practices for the 2024 Election.

Guided by Corporate Security, the election project team collaborated with Guarda World to create advance poll and Election Day security plans and staff mobile security guards. They also included security measures and escalation plans in election worker training documentation.

The team designed a variety of safe-voting materials to display at entrances and inside poll locations as reminders to visitors.

Ballot Security

Maintaining ballot security is crucial for ensuring integrity and trust in the voting process. The election team used new warehouse processes, including tracking and auditing procedures, to control access to and storage of paper ballots.

The electronic voting system was protected with firewalls, encryption, and regular testing. On Election Day, electors cast paper ballots and post-election, audits were conducted to verify the election results.

Emergency Management Planning

Election staff worked with Hazard, Risk and Vulnerability Assessment, Community Risk Reduction and the Emergency Management Office, to prepare an Elections Contingency Plan (or ECP) which was intended to provide a framework to guide the municipality's Elections Office in the continued delivery of accessible, safe and secure voting opportunities.

The Elections Project Working Group created plans and procedures for the Election Continuity Plan (ECP) to help deal with emergencies that could disrupt voting. The plan focused only on problems that might happen during the voting period, such as natural disasters, technology failures, or other emergencies. It did not cover issues before or after voting.

The ECP's goals were to make sure the election could continue safely, securely, and accessibly for all eligible voters, protect important election data, equipment, and locations, reduce recovery time after a disruption, and ensure clear communication and a step-by-step process for responding to emergencies within the municipality and with the Nova Scotia Department of Municipal Affairs.

Training and Curriculum Development

Training staff and election workers is a tremendous part of the election project's budget and planning process. As election methods had changed since the 2020 Election, all materials needed re-development.



To assist in developing 2024 election worker training material, the Election Office hired an external vendor, Priority Learning and Development, to develop the curriculum and conduct training through in-person and online sessions. Training and curriculum highlights:

- Five-week timeline
- Five facilitators
- 257 facilitation hours
- 446 curriculum development hours
- Three election worker training guides
- Two staff training guides
- 76 training workshops (67 in-person nine virtual)

Communications and Engagement

For the first time, the election project assigned a dedicated full-time Communications Client Strategist and a Public Affairs Advisor.



(From left to right: Ryan Nearing, Public Affairs Advisor; Iain MacLean, Municipal Clerk; and Lyle Quinn, Client Strategist)

With their support and support from other members of the Corporate Communications team, an integrated approach to communications was implemented to:

- ensure accurate, transparent, and timely information was provided to the intended audience;
- protect and nurture the Halifax brand;
- optimize allocation of resources and outcomes; and
- support meaningful engagement with residents and partners.

The team developed a four-phase communications plan to reach various election audiences, aligning it with the project timeline to deliver the right message at the right time.

This communications plan advised and informed the public on the election and how they could engage in the process in simple and accessible language.

The communications strategy included print ads in media outlets across the municipality, printed materials (distributed to community locations, i.e. libraries, community centres), bus advertising, messaging on the municipality's digital screen network, a comprehensive social media campaign, radio ads and close coordination with the Councillors

Support Office to promote public engagement activities through newsletters (print and electronic) and social media promotion. Additionally, information was communicated through the municipality's social media accounts and posted online at halifax.ca/elections.

The municipal website was the primary platform for information sharing the most up-to-date information for voters, candidates, and election workers.

The website provided the following:

- information for candidates;
- a list of candidates (with photographs, contact information/links to candidate social media sites); and
- information for voters directing people to the search-based 'look-up' tools "Where Do I Vote?" and "Am I on the Voter List."

The communications plan explained how the municipality would share information about the 2024 Municipal and Conseil scolaire acadien provincial (CSAP) Election. It also described how the municipality would educate and engage residents to encourage them to vote, and inform them about voting options, accessibility, and changes to district boundaries.

A new creative treatment refreshed the project design and a new Halifax | Election 2024 visual identity extension supported a unique look to Election materials. An updated tagline, **Vote. How will you cast yours?** was leveraged across creative assets, along with the existing **#HfxElection** hashtag across social media.

Key communications considerations:

- ensure all information was accessible, and any accessibility features of the election process were noted in all communications materials, for volunteering, campaigning, and voting;
- ensure key printed CSAP election communications were translated into French (in addition to all election PSAs);
- provide information representative and respectful of the diverse communities within the municipality.

Communications and Engagement Timeline



October 19

Unofficial results released



October 22

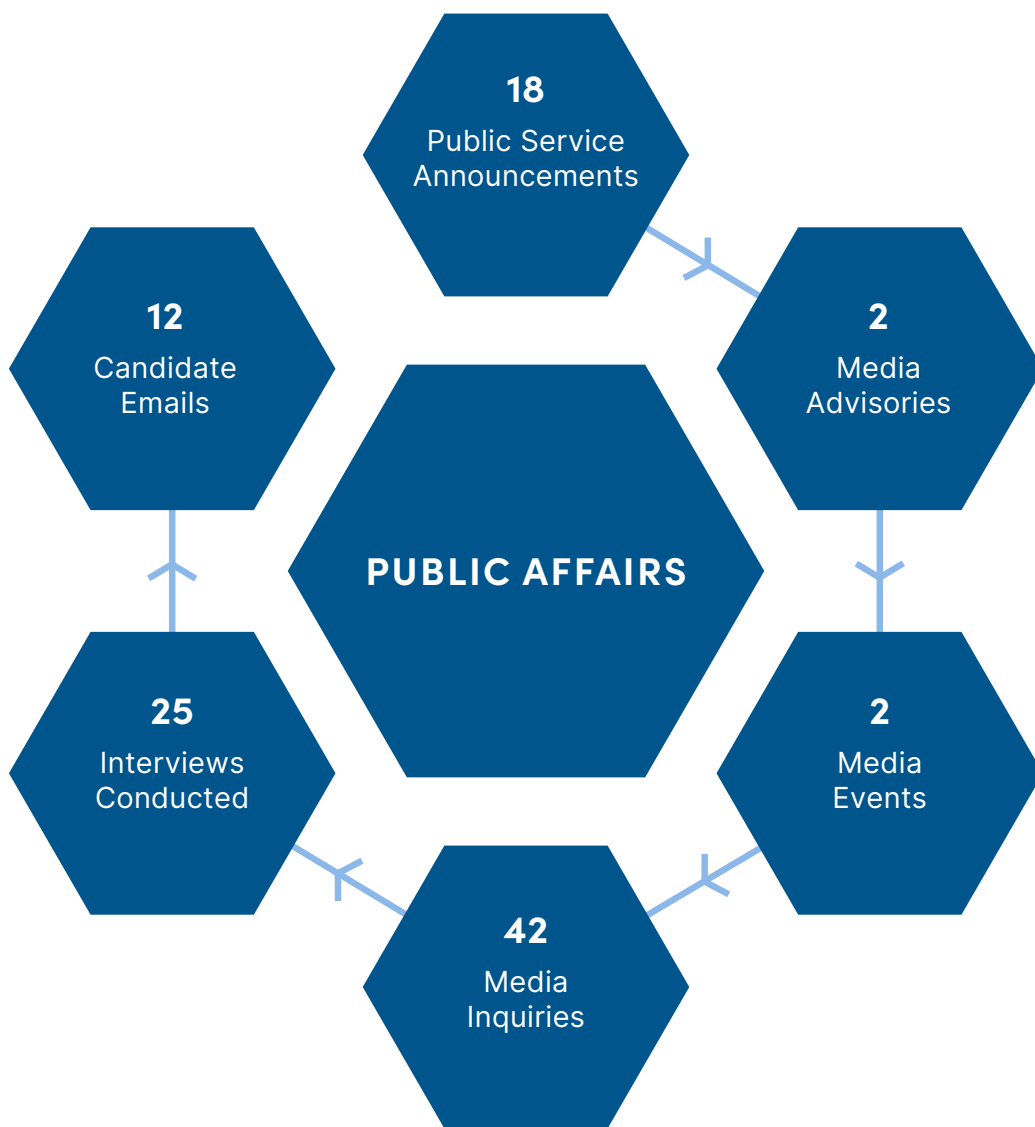
Official results released



December 19

Disclosure statements due

Marketing and Analytics



Community Partnerships and Engagement

Engaging voters involves education about candidates and the voting process. An informed community is best positioned to make decisions that reflect its best interests.

The election project team engaged several community partners, including:

- churches
- community centres
- Elections Nova Scotia
- Halifax Immigration Partnership
- Immigrant Services Association of NS
- Halifax Public Libraries
- universities/colleges
- YMCA

Nine candidate information sessions were designed to help equip potential candidates with essential information and resources about running in the 2024 Municipal and CSAP Election.

Priority was given to under-represented communities and communities most impacted by the 2022 District Boundary decision.

Communication Access Realtime Translation (CART) captioning and ASL interpretation services were offered at each session, and afternoon sessions were included to provide a variety of options for perspective candidates.

Several candidate information sessions included outgoing Councillors as guests who were not reoffering as candidates in 2024 to field questions and offer their perspectives as elected officials. A virtual participation option was also provided, recorded, and posted to halifax.ca/election.

The sessions were held from May 1, 2024, to August 21, 2024, at the following locations:

- Wallace Lucas Community Centre, Lucasville
- Halifax Central Library, Halifax
- Musquodoboit Valley Bicentennial Theatre, Middle Musquodoboit
- Virtual session on Zoom
- Dartmouth North Community Centre, Dartmouth
- Prospect Road Community Centre, Hatchet Lake
- Henry G. Bauld Centre, Westphal
- Halifax North Memorial Library, Halifax

Voter and Election Worker Engagement

The team created and carried out a detailed communications strategy to make sure information about the 2024 Municipal and CSAP Election was accessible and reached as many people as possible. They made a special effort to keep underrepresented communities and people affected by the District Boundary Review informed during all phases of the election project.

Deliverables aligned with established key messages and strategic approaches as defined within the 2024 Election communications plan.

The election project team used existing resources (i.e., events, initiatives, community leaders) where appropriate.

The project team tailored deliverables to the community's needs (e.g., less digital, more print), while being mindful of cultural and community considerations. To achieve this goal, they used existing community outreach and partnerships, including presentations to the municipality's lived experience committees.

In addition to targeted advertisements, the district election officers were present in each district using community spaces for polling locations, training election workers and recruiting community members to work during advance and regular polls.

The officers were also present at the following community events, raising awareness of voting and employment opportunities:

- ANSAIO Employment Circles
- North Preston Days
- Pride: "Pop up for Pride: Human Rights
- PRIDE: Halifax Chamber of Commerce: Pride in Entrepreneurship
- Africville Days
- Halifax Dartmouth Natal Day Parade
- Get to know your municipality event – Halifax Immigration Partnership
- Grou Tyme Festival
- Iri Ji Yam Festival
- French Services Fair – Alderney Theatre

Candidates and the Nomination Period

The 2024 Election had no incumbent mayoral candidates and no incumbent councillor candidates in 12 out of 16 districts.

The number of mayoral and councillor candidates was high, with 16 mayoral candidates, 63 councillor candidates and four CSAP candidates. Additionally, the Election Office had 17 candidates register during the campaign finance period and withdraw before submitting official nomination papers.

The nomination period ran from August 29 to September 9, 2024, and candidates were required to make an appointment with the Returning Officer to file nomination papers. The last day to file nomination papers was September 10, 2024, closing at 5 p.m.

During nomination appointments, candidates were able to meet with the Returning Officer and other election team members to file the required nomination paperwork. It was an opportunity for candidates to ask questions and review the legislative requirements required for their candidacy.

Stations were set up at City Hall to collect the required forms, verify electors, provide information, and give access to the candidate portal that provided information, documents and up-to-date elector voting information during the advance voting period.

The Elections Office significantly increased the information available online and through the Candidate Portal to ensure candidates had the access they needed, including:

- candidate information guides;
- campaign finance requirements;
- access to district maps;
- legislation and related bylaws; and
- information about Regional Council.

In addition to the information provided online, the Elections Office delivered regular candidate communication e-newsletters and held various in-person candidate information sessions.

Campaign Signage and Advertising

The municipality's By-law and compliance team, working with the Election Office, reviewed signage and advertising complaints. They received about 170 complaints about municipal election signage and noted repeat violations. In one case, they issued an order to remove temporary signage to a campaign team that repeatedly broke the rules.

There are prescribed rules for placing election signs on municipal property under [By-law S-801, Respecting Licensing of Temporary Signs](#) and a legislative requirement to remove signs within one week following election day.



Election Budget and Expenses

Total 2024 Election Budget	
Compensation and Benefits	\$1,168,600.00
Office (including e-voting solution)	\$799,400.00
External Services	\$946,000.00
Supplies	\$600.00
Building Costs	\$21,600.00
Equipment & Communications	\$269,300.00
Vehicle Expense	\$4,000.00
Other Goods & Services	\$271,800.00
Interdepartmental (Printing)	\$70,700.00
Insurance Policies and Premiums	\$3,000.00
Total 2024 Election Budget	\$3,555,000.00

Total 2024 Election Expenses	
Compensation and Benefits	1,046,345.36
Intelivote Systems Inc	710,552.65
Office	430,605.71
External Services	387,595.59
Building Costs	92,798.63
Equipment and Communications	89,089.38
Supplies	5,952.40
Vehicle Expense	19,408.87
Other Goods and Services	315,094.67
Internal Transfers	72,602.98
Total Expenses	\$ 3,170,046.24

Cost Recovery for CSAP Election

The Conseil scolaire acadien provincial act allows municipalities to recover expenses for additional costs of the CSAP school board election. Municipalities have claimed the following, where applicable:

- a portion of the stipend paid to the returning officer
- administrative costs, courier/delivery
- costs of supplies, such as ballots and poll materials
- polling station costs, including costs of poll officials
- training costs
- advertising costs

In consultation with the Department of Housing and Municipal Affairs, it was noted that most municipalities that conduct a CSAP election typically bill back one-third of the total operating expenses for their election.

In consultation with the municipal Finance team, the municipality determined that the cost recovery invoice for costs associated with the administering the CSAP school board election for 2024 would be based on a “per elected seat” model for the Halifax Regional Municipality. The total number for this is 17 (one mayoral seat and 16 councillors). The total invoice amount submitted to CSAP by the Halifax Regional Municipality was \$309,079.49. These funds have been placed back into the election reserve.

Election Logistics

Coordinating logistics for both a paper ballot election and in-person electronic voting was a complex part of the election project.

Staff provided the resources (people, supplies, equipment, and information) needed to prepare for and deliver the election early in 2024.

The success of the election project relied on the timely execution of various logistical tasks and the delivery of operational and technological resources across 16 districts within the municipality. District boundaries had changed significantly since the 2020 election and staff had to produce new strategies to meet current needs.

Election staff implemented and maintained security and storage procedures for the handling and distribution of election ballots and electronic voting equipment within short timelines. Coordination staff found efficient means to deliver the supplies for each poll location, attempting to avoid waste, yet ensuring that all polls had sufficient supplies.

Printing and Reproduction

The municipality's Print Services division provided printing and reproduction support for various aspects of the election. Print jobs for the election were completed with superior diligence and in a timeframe that fit with the project plan. The team helped to format various legislated election forms such as tally sheets and collaborated with external vendors to complete orders for items like chloroplast signage, ballot boxes, voting screens, etc., which always came in as ordered and on time.

Exclusive of the postcard and voter letters, the Print Services team produced 650,000 impressions that included training material, posters, stickers, signage, and other election materials.

Supply Distribution and Delivery

For distribution, the corporate fleet team secured eight cargo vans from one source, 10 12-to-15-foot cargo vans and two, 26-foot trucks from another source. Election staff hired 20 drivers and five back-up drivers to deliver election supplies to polling locations. They implemented strategies for tracking the movements of the drivers as they went on their assigned poll delivery and return routes. They informed drivers of expectations and routes were assigned at a training session which stressed the importance of delivering the right supplies to the right location at the right times to support the opening of the polls each day.

Warehouse Staffing

The election team hired 30 additional staff to help unload, sort, verify and clean up secured and unsecured election supplies on election night. This long, physical process could be eliminated by switching to a fully alternative election.



The Elections Office will identify action items for consideration and implementation to update election project logistic deliverables to suit the needs of future elections as the municipality considers new voting methods for elections

Alternative Voting Period – October 8 – 16, 2024

Advance voting in the Halifax Regional Municipality started at 8 a.m. on Tuesday, Oct. 8, 2024. The alternative voting period represented an eight-day period where electors could cast their votes alternatively. (internet or telephone) through Simply Voting's online voting platform as directed by Halifax Regional Council.

Alternative voting ended at 7 p.m. on Wednesday, Oct. 16, 2024. The close of the alternative voting period was necessary to prepare the voter "strike-off" lists for in-person paper-based voting on Election Day, Saturday, Oct. 19, 2024. The "strike-off" lists are updated voter lists that record votes cast by striking their name off the list as each elector casts their vote during the alternative voting period.

In total, 84,454 out of 123,529 (69.2 per cent) eligible electors chose to cast their ballot alternatively through internet, telephone, or kiosk voting. A further breakdown of the alternative voting results is included in the results section of this report.

Advance Poll Statistics



62% of electors voted over the internet representing 76,386 individuals.



2,316 of electors voted in-person over two days at a polling location (2.7% of total votes).



5% voted by telephone representing 5,732 electors (7% of total votes).



of the votes cast online, 58% voted with a desktop device and 42% used a mobile device.

Advance Polls – October 12 & 15, 2024

Advance polls on October 12 and 15, 2024 had 25 polling locations available to the public to support in-person electronic voting. The same polling locations were used for both advance poll days. A total of 10 delivery and pick-up routes, each with a vehicle and driver, delivered supplies and equipment to advance polling locations. The furthest route from the election warehouse, servicing Lower Ship Harbour and Sheet Harbour totaled a 336 km roundtrip with a travel time of 3.5 hours.

Each advance poll location was equipped with two voting kiosks and a registration computer. The removal of paper-based voting at advance polling stations eliminated the requirement for electors to vote within a prescribed polling location, allowing electors the ability to vote at any in-person voting location across the municipality.

A complement of five election staff were assigned to each location to support the in-person vote. This included a poll supervisor (SDRO), an Information Officer (IO) to assist with registering voters, two Deputy Returning Officers (DRO) to administer oaths, manage the voting kiosk and assist electors with voting as required and one Poll Clerk (PC) to record activity at the polls (oaths administered) and to assist with breaks/crowd control.

In total, 2316 electors chose to cast their ballot via in person voting kiosk on the two advance polling days, October 12 & 15, 2024. It should be noted that both advance polling days occurred during the alternative voting period, where internet and telephone voting was accessible on 24/7 basis.

Election Day – October 19, 2024

On Election Day, there were 74 polling locations throughout the Halifax region for in-person paper ballot voting. Each polling location had a specific number of polling stations (tables) assigned based on the elector population within the polling subdivision. This amounted to a total table count of 368 for the in-person paper-based voting operations on election day.

To equip and supply the Election Day polling locations, a total of 20 supply routes were required to transport essential supplies for the start of polling at 8 a.m. and return secured (ballot boxes and poll books) and unsecured material (signage, pens, paper etc.) at the close of polls at 7 p.m. The furthest transportation route from the election warehouse, servicing Upper and Middle Musquodoboit, Ship Harbour, Tangier, Sheet Harbour, and Port Dufferin totaled 254 km, roundtrip and amounted to a 2.5-hour travel time.

In general, operations at each polling location ran smoothly. The Election Office recorded issues with equipment and staffing delays, meaning that two polling locations delayed opening by 30-60 minutes, specifically in Sheet Harbour and north-end Dartmouth. Throughout the day, campaign signage identified as placed too close to polling locations was addressed by the Election Office. An issue related to an incorrect address for a polling location located in District 7 was identified before Election Day and a communications plan was activated. Additional directional signage was set up on site to assist voters at that location.

Delays in the counting of ballots, and the reporting of results occurred in multiple locations throughout the municipality due primarily to the CSAP “less than 10” ballot counting procedure and the high number of mayoral candidates to count and verify prior to results reporting. As a result, pick-up times for secure material were delayed requiring Election Day staff to work longer hours than previously scheduled on Election Day. The impacted workers were compensated for their overtime.

Election Statistics



Voter turnout reached 36.8% of the 335,341 eligible voters, with 123,529 total votes cast.



39,075 Votes were cast in-person by paper ballot on Election Day representing 30.8 % of the total votes cast during the election.



The voting process involved over 1,280 election workers, with months of behind-the-scenes planning.

Mobile Polls

The Municipal Elections Act (MEA) requires mobile polls be provided in institutions registered under the Homes for Special Care Act that have 10 or more beds.

Additionally, the Elections Office provides mobile poll services to several large Metro Regional Housing properties located in Halifax and Dartmouth. The Elections Office works directly with the institutions to identify polling times and communication of polling times.

On Election Day, October 19, 2024, in addition to the 74 poll locations for in-person voting by paper ballot, there were 43 locations identified as special care facilities that were provided mobile voting services by paper ballot. Each location had modified polling hours to accommodate residents, which was agreed upon with the facility.

Election Area Officers scheduled morning polls and afternoon polls depending on recommendation from the facilities as to the best times to reach residents.

A Deputy Returning Officer and Poll Clerk were assigned to staff one location in the morning and another in the afternoon, with the votes to be tallied at a larger poll, nearby, at the close of polls and under the supervision of a Supervising Deputy Returning Officer.

There was some miscommunication on polling time variations on the voter notification letters that were sent to the electors at some of the special care facilities. This caused some confusion with candidates who had sent scrutineers to these locations as well as with the electors themselves who were unsure what time they could cast their votes.

The Returning Officer decided to send additional election workers to staff the affected locations and extend the hours of operations to allow all residents the opportunity to cast their votes. This error was documented in post-election lessons learned activities and a resourcing strategy will be put in place for 2028 to ensure that it is not repeated.

Election Night Reporting

A team of staff from various departments met in advance of the election and coordinated election night reporting processes and people.

Upon close of the polls, on Election Day, at 7 p.m., a fresh team of 49 staff hired as IT field support back-up, results data entry clerks, supervisors and results publishing clerks operated the election night central contact centre to enter election results into the election night reporting system as called in by the Supervising Deputy Returning Officer for each table at every poll location.

Once the alternative votes received from October 8 to 16, 2024 were verified by the auditors, they were uploaded to the election night reporting system and combined with the results as they were reported from the polling locations.

These results are referred to as unofficial results, until the official addition is completed three days after the election. There was minor miscommunication at the beginning of the release of the unofficial results where some data was released before being verified. This issue was addressed quickly that evening but has been identified as an action item for process improvement and an ideas assessment for new election night reporting methods is currently underway.

Recapitulation Process and Release of Official Results

The recapitulation process required collaboration and teamwork from various municipal and election project team staff over a period of three days.

The official addition requires the returning officer to determine the number of votes for each candidate by examining the statements of poll from each polling station.

The process for the verification of the CSAP election results was cumbersome and exhaustive due to legislative requirements for reporting. If the results were fewer than 10 votes per table, this required counting at the warehouse. This process is the reason for the late reporting from some tables and significant staff overtime labour on Election Day.

The municipal election team has identified the need to improve this process and will prioritize advocating for legislative amendments by the Province of Nova Scotia for future CSAP elections. The team recognizes that the current CSAP process significantly impacts the election program's budget and staffing.

After the official count was complete, the Returning Officer filled out a summary sheet for each race. A copy was sent to each candidate, and the official results were posted [online](#).

2024 Election Results

The alternative voting period, held from October 8 to October 16, allowed voters to cast their ballots using a unique personal identification number via internet or phone, with paper ballots available only on Election Day, October 19.

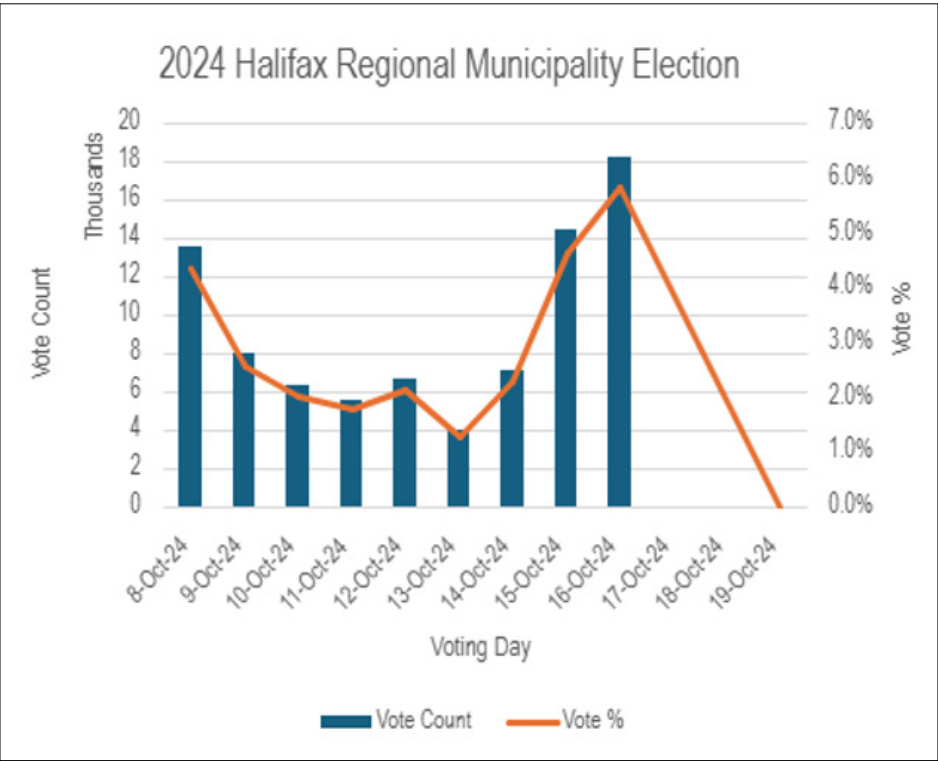
The overwhelming preference for internet voting reaffirms the importance of providing an easy-to-use, accessible online platform for all voters.

The graph below shows how quickly internet votes were coming in. The Election Office noticed a drop in online voting activity at 7 p.m. on October 16, when online voting was paused to print voter lists for paper-based voting on Election Day. From 7 p.m. on October 16 to 7 p.m. on October 19, 2024, 3,220 electors tried to access the voting website and 617 tried to access telephone voting.

Following Election Day, the election project team conducted the verification of the unofficial results, and the official results were made official on October 22, 2024, and can be found online.

During the proofing of results, there were complexities with the CSAP vote that took additional time to verify. It was determined that for future elections, the municipality needs to look at a more efficient process for combining alternative and paper votes. The current election night reporting system does not work the way it needs to publish results on the website.

Once the results were official, one candidate opted to apply to the province seeking a recount of the ballots for District 9. A judicial recount was held at the Provincial Court of Nova Scotia in Dartmouth on October 31, 2024. After the judicial recount, the results confirmed the elected Councillor for District 9.



Date	Vote Count
8-Oct-24	13647
9-Oct-24	8101
10-Oct-24	6390
11-Oct-24	5637
12-Oct-24	6715
13-Oct-24	4035
14-Oct-24	7181
15-Oct-24	14453
16-Oct-24	18295
Total	84454

Historical Election Results

Election	Format	Participation
2008 HRM and School Board Election	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Electronic voting during alternative voting period • Pen and paper and electronic at advanced polls • Paper only on Election Day 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 36.2% voter participation • 28.4% voters cast votes alternatively
2012 HRM and School Board Elections	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Electronic voting only during alternative voting period • In-person paper ballots only available on election day • 37.5% reduction in number of election day in-person polling locations from 2008 (Boundary Review) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 36.93% voter participation • 60.18% of voters cast votes alternatively
2016 HRM and School Board Election	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Electronic voting is available for an advance period up to two days before Election Day • Paper and electronic voting available at the advanced polls • In-person paper ballots only on election day 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 33.62% voter participation • 61% of voters cast votes alternatively
2019 District 15 Special Election	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Electronic polling only for advance and Election Day • In-person polls were set up with e-voting kiosks and staff to help voters 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 22.5% overall voter participation • 100% of voters cast their vote electronically
2020 HRM and CSAP Election	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Same process as 2016 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 39.83% voter participation • 76.9% of voters cast votes alternatively
2024 HRM and CSAP Election	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Electronic polling only for advance polls. In-person polls were set up with e-voting kiosks and staff to assist voters • Paper ballots only on Election Day 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 36.8% overall voter participation • 69.2% of voters cast votes alternatively (internet or telephone)

Internet Voting Study

Delvini, a global research tech firm, conducted an optional, online survey to voters during the 2024 Municipal Election, prepared by Jared Boles, and Dr. Nicole Goodman, Brock University. The findings were released in January 2025.

The study focused on internet voting, (i.e., voting that takes place in locations other than polling stations), using internet-connected devices such as computers, electronic tablets, or smartphones.

The report for Halifax, Nova Scotia included the following key findings:

- number of votes cast online: 76,386
- number of completed internet voter surveys: 12,562
- participation rate in voter survey: 16.44 per cent
- 80.34 per cent of respondents heard about Internet voting for the 2024 Municipal Election via the voter information letter
- convenience was the main reason 81.9 per cent of respondents chose to vote online in the 2024 Municipal Election
- when asked how satisfied they were with the online voting process 92.92 per cent were very satisfied and 6.1 per cent were fairly satisfied
- 87.47 per cent felt it was very important for the municipality to offer online voting
- 91.55 per cent would recommend internet voting to others
- 93.3 per cent would likely vote online in future municipal elections if internet voting were available in all elections



Recognizing Public Service Excellence



The 2024 election team was recognized by the organization and received two CAO awards for the outstanding work that was performed in delivering the 2024 municipal election.

At its core, the CAO awards program recognizes the significant contributions employees make to the municipality and to the lives of residents in our region and is a testament to their outstanding contributions and dedication to public service excellence.

In addition to the smooth operation of the election process there were highly innovative practices introduced. These include an enhanced program for educating potential candidates on running for office and the role a councillor plays. Also, extensive outreach was performed to enable unhoused and mobility challenged voters to have the opportunity to participate in the election.

Significant challenges were introduced to the process this year with the original online voting system provider unable to fulfill the commitment. The team put in extra efforts to quickly select and contract a new vendor and keep things on track. The teams' excellence was clearly demonstrated by the number and diversity of candidates, the near flawless execution of the voting, the outreach to challenged voters and the timely tabulation of the votes.

Both public facing and behind the scenes, the election team worked hard developing training and providing support for potential candidates, for the workers at the advanced and Election Day polls as well as the internal staff hired to support everything involved with election (i.e., call centres, election area officers, IT requirements, communications, finance support, logistics, etc.)

The 2024 Municipal and CSAP Election was a success and would not have been without the collaboration from all parties involved.

Swearing in Ceremony

The official swearing in ceremony for Mayor and Members of Halifax Regional Council took place November 5, 2024, at Paul O'Regan Hall at the Halifax Central Library, 5440 Spring Garden Road, Halifax, as a result of the regular election held on October 19, 2024.

Iain MacLean, Returning Officer, declared the election results and the following members of Halifax Regional Council were sworn in:

Mayor
Andy Fillmore

Councillors

District 1 Waverley – Fall River – Musquodoboit Valley Cathy Deagle Gammon

District 2 Lawrencetown – The Lakes – Chezzetcook – Eastern Shore David Andrew Hendsbee

District 3 Dartmouth South – Woodside – Eastern Passage Becky Kent

District 4 Cole Harbour – Preston – Westphal – Cherry Brook Trish Purdy

District 5 Dartmouth Centre Sam Austin

District 6 Dartmouth East – Burnside Tony Elio Mancini

District 7 Halifax South Downtown Laura Elizabeth Creelman White

District 8 Halifax Peninsula North Virginia Lynn Hinch

District 9 Halifax West Armdale Shawn Philip Cleary

District 10 Halifax – Bedford Basin West Kathryn Morse

District 11 Spryfield – Sambro Loop Patricia M. Cuttell

District 12 Timberlea – Beechville – Clayton Park – Wedgewood Janet Elizabeth Steele

District 13 Prospect Road – St. Margarets Nancy Hartling

District 14 Hammonds Plains – Upper Hammonds Plains – Lucasville – Middle & Upper Sackville John A. Young

District 15 Lower Sackville – Beaver Bank William J. Gillis

District 16 Bedford – Wentworth Jean A.J. St-Amand



Lessons Learned and Action Items

The election was successfully conducted, and it was important to record key information to highlight what went well and identify lessons learned, using the knowledge and support from across the organization during the election and planning process.

Elections by nature are cyclical and require continuous review and improvements. After the election, the project team conducted lessons learned meetings with internal and external election partners and identified action items for review and consideration prior to the next municipal election.

The election office has identified the following action items in preparation for the 2028 regular and CSAP election to assist with planning for future elections:

Election Night Reporting System

The municipality's Election Night Reporting System (ENR) was built for the election office in 2016. Updates to the ENR system were made in 2020 and 2024 but a new solution is required for future elections. The Election Office, in partnership with IT, is pursuing a capital project in the 2026/2027 capital budget to replace the current ENR.

Election Management System

The election project team has identified the need for process improvements and efficiencies respecting operational logistics for vendors, election workers and election worker training. An 'ideas assessment' (IT process) is currently underway to procure an election management system. This solution will improve on-boarding and management of election workers; help process payments quickly for election workers and vendors and keep all operational information in one place.

Initiate the resourcing study for the conduction of an all-electronic election.

Amendments to Campaign Finance by-law

Disclosure, reporting, and surplus statements are due within 60 days after ordinary polling day and are posted online once received. Surplus funds can be donated to a non-profit organization or held in trust by the municipality for the candidate to use in a future election.

In the past, candidates chose to donate surplus funds to charity, however in this election, five candidates chose to have their surplus funds held in trust for a future election.

This created additional work for the municipality's legal team and the Elections Office as this option had not been selected previously. Financial accounts and trust agreements needed to be drawn up and executed with each candidate. The Elections Office would like a review of this policy.

Review regulations on third-party advertising in municipal campaigns

Over the course of the 2024 election, concerns were brought forward to the Election Office from residents, candidates, and campaign staff regarding instances of third-party advertising in municipal campaigns. Unlike the provincial Elections Act (NS), the Municipal Elections Act (MEA) does not regulate third-party election advertising expenses.

The MEA only regulates contributions made to a candidate, or an association that was created to support a candidate, and those contributions must be made to the agent. By-law C1100, Respecting Campaign Financing is limited to "contributions and expenses for the election campaigns of candidates for the office of Mayor or councillor." The power does not extend to regulating third-party election advertising expenses. Regulation of third-party advertising for municipalities in Nova Scotia would require a legislative amendment from the Province of Nova Scotia.

The Elections Office will bring forward recommendations to Halifax Regional Council later in 2025 on third-party advertising regulation in municipal campaigns in Nova Scotia.

Training program

Reviews and improvements including updated checklists and training videos to be held on an election worker portal for access outside of training sessions. Additionally, there is a strong need for more comprehensive and situational-based training, especially for specific processes like the "fewer than 10" ballots. Recorded training sessions and clear role definitions can help reduce confusion and improve performance.

Re-evaluation of call centre operations

The call centre ran exceptionally well with low call abandonment rates, but election staff are building a business plan to further investigate integrating with existing 311 operations for continuity and efficiency purposes.

Coordinator Roles

Changes and additions to coordinator roles will be considered specifically for support and coordination of institutional voting opportunities and candidate coordination.

CSAP Partnership

Look at creating a service level agreement for administering CSAP elections and making efforts to improve the partnership for sharing information with their candidates and voters.

Election Area Officer Resource Packages

Provide more resources specific to their role (i.e., polling location contract templates, formats for managing poll workers, training documents and templates to assist with onboarding). Election area officers and election team leads had one-on-one sessions with the HR Talent Specialist to help with hiring poll workers and it was identified that interview panel training should be provided to those staff at the beginning of their term and that for future needs, the program should be tailored to meet the needs of election staff.

Use of Remote Accumulation Sites

Election staff will look at implementing remote accumulation sites for faster access, distribution and return of supplies.

Mock Election Activities

Election staff coordinated mock sessions for the nomination period, revisions period and alternative voting. In future, election staff should coordinate more mock election sessions to help with election readiness.



Advancing to the Next Election



The work does not stop once an election is complete. There are many important steps to take to prepare for the next election. Below are high-level steps of work planned each year until the next election.

2025 | Year 1

- review lessons learned and identify action items
- prepare election project information report for review by Executive Standing Committee
- destroy materials at the conclusion of any court matters
- receive and post candidate financial disclosure statements
- refine four-year and by-election readiness plans and budget
- review of Administrative Order 2019-001 ADM, respecting elections - Use of Municipal assets
- proposed amendments to By-law C-1100 Respecting Campaign Finance

2026 | Year 2

- policy review and development Administrative Order 2017-009-ADM Respecting District Funds
- complete the resourcing study for a fully alternative election
- plan technology changes for election night reporting and election management systems
- prepare requests for proposals (RFPs)
- partner engagement to identify election planning and service delivery considerations

2027 | Year 3

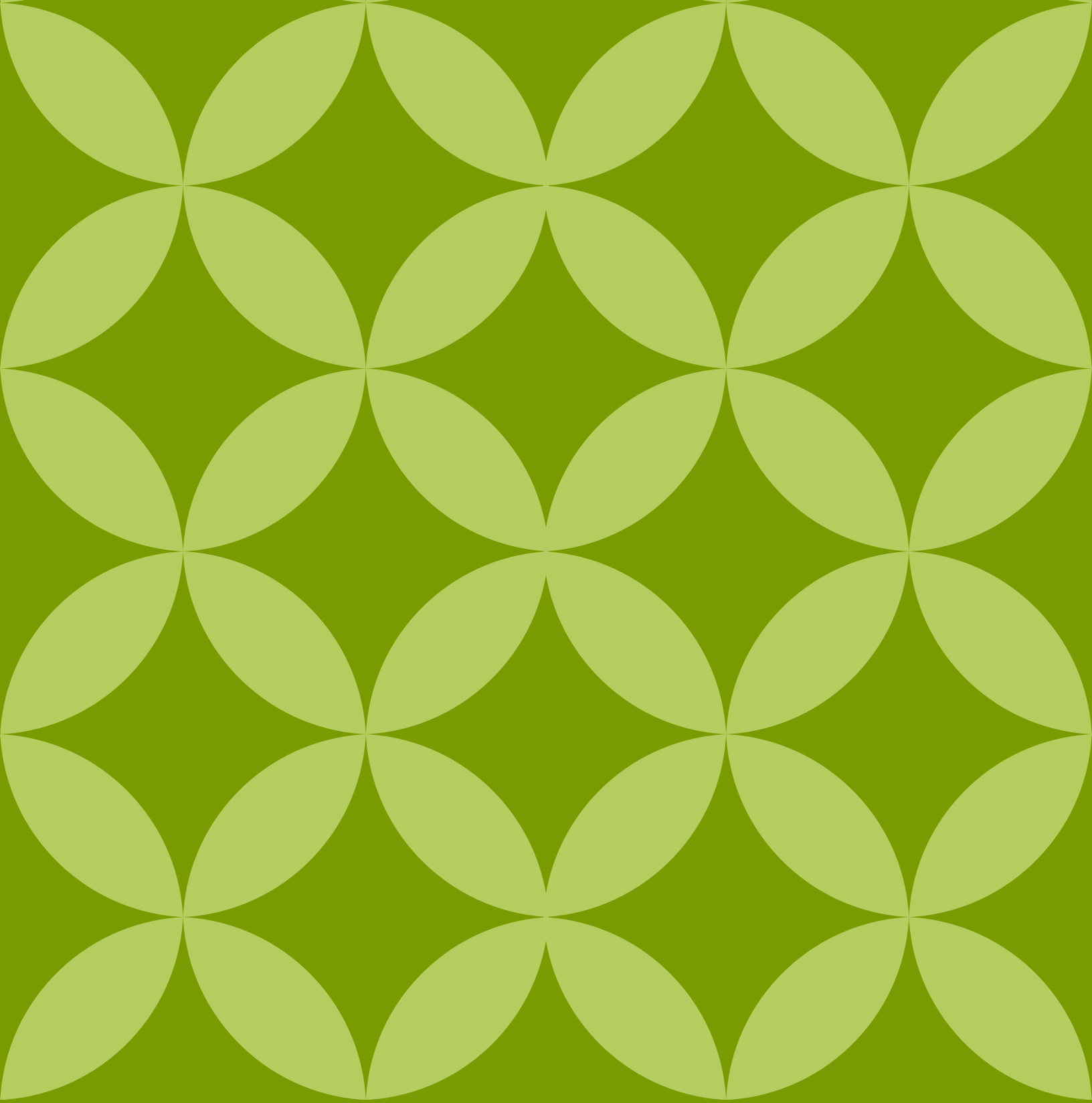
- implement process and technology changes
- redesign processes for hiring, voting, materials and logistics
- onboard term staff, corporate partners and trainers
- formalize external partner strategies and contracts
- communicate changes regarding election by-laws

2028 | Year 4

- accept candidate nominations
- book polling locations
- onboard and train new election staff
- conduct training and integration of staff and corporate partners
- conduct voting station facility inspections
- order, receive and kit election materials
- hire and train election poll workers
- conduct the 2028 election

Appendix A – Report Links

Report Title	Executive Standing Committee meeting date	Regional Council meeting date
<u>Amendments to By-law C1100, the Campaign Financing By-law</u>	September 25, 2023 November 27, 2023	December 12, 2023 (first reading) January 9, 2024 (second reading)
<u>2024 Halifax Regional Municipality and CSAP Regular Election: Appointment of Returning Officer, Delegation of Authorities, and Use of Provincial List of Electors</u>	November 27, 2023	December 12, 2023
<u>2024 Halifax Regional Municipality and CSAP Election – Information Sharing Agreement with Elections Nova Scotia</u>	March 11, 2024	March 19, 2024
<u>2024 Halifax Regional Municipality and CSAP Elections – Election Methods and Alternative Voting Dates</u>	March 11, 2024	March 19, 2024
<u>2024 Municipal and Conseil scolaire acadien provincial (CSAP) Election Polling Divisions & Tariff of Fees and Expenses – Information Report</u>	Due to timing, this report was sent directly to Halifax Regional Council as an information item.	March 26, 2024
<u>2024 Municipal and CSAP Election – Mailout Cards and Completion Date for Revisions Period</u>	June 17, 2024	July 9, 2024
<u>Proposed Amendments to Administrative Order 48, Respecting the Creation of Community Councils, Naming of Polling Districts for 2024 Municipal and CSAP Election</u>	Council report	August 6, 2024



HALIFAX

ELECTION
2024