

2026 Municipal and School Board Elections Update

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| Presented To: | City Council |
| Meeting Date: | February 24, 2026 |
| Type: | Managers' Reports |
| Prepared by: | Christine Hodgins Clerk's Services |
| Recommended by: | Chief Administrative Officer |

Report Summary

This report provides information regarding the upcoming 2026 Municipal and School Board Election and a recommendation regarding related policies and By-laws.

Resolution

THAT the City of Greater Sudbury directs staff to present the by-laws as outlined in the report entitled "2026 Municipal and School Board Elections Update" from the Chief Administrative Officer presented at the City Council meeting on February 24, 2026.

Relationship to the Strategic Plan, Health Impact Assessment and Climate Action Plans

This report refers to operational matters.

Financial Implications

All activities carried out in relation to the 2026 Municipal and School Board Elections will be funded through the Municipal Election and Governance Reserve Fund.

Background

The Municipal Elections Act, 1996, (the "Act") establishes the framework that guides the conduct of municipal and school board elections and vests the municipality's Clerk with the responsibility and necessary authority to plan and execute the elections.

On December 10, 2024, City Council passed a resolution CC2024-295 directing staff to proceed with a hybrid electronic and paper ballot voting method. Online advanced electronic voting will be available starting at 10:00 a.m. on October 16, 2026, and voters will be able to cast their ballots online until the close of voting at 8:00 p.m. on Election Day, October 26, 2026.

In addition to online voting, voters will be able to cast their ballots at in-person voting locations on three separate days:

- October 17, 2026, from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. at an advanced in-person paper ballot voting location;
- October 24, 2026, from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. at an advanced in-person paper ballot voting location; and
- October 26, 2026, from 10:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m., Election Day in-person voting locations.

To facilitate the casting of electronic and paper ballots, the City issued a request for proposals. Three bid submissions were received and reviewed by staff from Clerk's Services and Information Technology, after which the contract was awarded to Voatz Inc. for both electronic and paper ballot solutions. The successful proponent is a well established election solutions vendor with municipal election experience in Ontario, having served a number of municipalities with populations of 100,000 or more.

Voters' List

As of January 2024, Elections Ontario has taken over the responsibility of maintaining the list of eligible electors for municipal elections, while MPAC remains responsible for voter school board support. The change to allow municipalities to use the same list of electors used for provincial elections is intended to provide municipalities with a list of electors that is more accurate.

The Elections Ontario website currently includes a "Voter Registration" feature on its landing page, allowing individuals to check, update, or add their information to the Voters' List. Changes to a voter's school board support may also be completed online through MPAC's website or by submitting a completed copy of their [Application for Direction of School Support form](#).

The Preliminary List of Electors will be received on August 14, 2026, providing the municipality with an opportunity to review the list and make additional edits such as removing duplicates. The official revision period will begin on September 1, 2026. During this time, voters will continue to be able to request to be added to the Voters' List or request corrections to their information by attending City locations.

Key Dates

In addition to the City's Municipal and School Board Elections webpage, key dates will also be communicated through traditional and online media platforms to ensure electors, potential candidates, and the public are aware of key dates throughout the election cycle.

Important dates include:

- May 1, 2026 – Opening of Nominations for Candidates
- August 21, 2026 – Close of Nominations and last day to withdraw candidacy.
- August 24, 2026 – Certification of Nominations and Acclaimed Offices
- October 16, 2026 – Beginning of the Advanced Voting Period
- October 26, 2026 – Election Day
- November 15, 2026 – Beginning of New Term of Council
- November 24, 2026 – Inaugural Meeting of Council

Voting Locations

For voters who prefer to cast a paper ballot or do not have access to the necessary technology to cast an electronic ballot, voting locations will be available across the city. When determining voting locations, the Election Team considers the following criteria:

- Accessibility features,
- Proximity to transit and main roadways,
- The voter catchment area,
- Parking and paths of travel to the venue, and
- Power and internet connectivity.

As in previous elections, the city uses a vote-anywhere model, allowing voters to cast their ballots at any location. Voting locations on major roadways are designated as larger voter locations with additional resources to accommodate voters travelling to and from their daily activities.

Voter Engagement

Information for voters, candidates and third parties will be communicated to the public through the City of Greater Sudbury's website, which will be continuously updated throughout the election cycle. Additional media channels, such as social media platforms, will also be used to ensure that both candidates and voters have the information they need to run for office and make an informed choice come voting time.

Next Steps

To progress with election planning and to meet legislated requirements, Clerk's Services recommends that the following by-laws be brought forward at an upcoming meeting.

Use of Municipal Resources By-law

Municipalities are required to establish a policy regarding the use of municipal resources. The current Use of Municipal Resources By-law outlines how municipal resources may and may not be used during the election period and a number of amendments are proposed. Although the proposed changes are minor, they are necessary to adapt the by-law to current day best practices. The definition of "City Hall" reflects the temporary relocation of Council Chambers from Tom Davies Square to the Lionel E. Lalonde Centre while allowing sufficient flexibility to capture any unanticipated relocations.

Additional verbiage is recommended to clarify what constitutes a municipal event, to avoid commingling municipally funded or hosted events with campaign activities. Finally, an addition was made to address candidate debates held at City facilities, ensuring equal opportunity to participate.

A By-law to Authorize Various Matters Under the Municipal Elections Act, 1996

The Municipal Elections Act also requires municipalities to pass by-laws to permit the use of certain technology and processes, including:

- The use of internet voting as an alternative voting method;
- The use of optical scan tabulators;
- The use of French language in all forms;
- Authorizing the use of proxy voting at in-person paper ballot voting locations; and
- The prohibition of proxy voting for online voting.

Conclusion

As the Election Team continues to work through the 2026 Municipal and School Board Election cycle, information will be added and updated on the election website.

Resources Cited

Municipal Elections Act, 1996, S.O. 1996, c. 32, Sched. - <https://www.ontario.ca/laws/statute/96m32#BK69>

December 10, 2024, City Council Report: 2026 Municipal and School Board Elections - <https://pub-greatersudbury.escribemeetings.com/Meeting.aspx?Id=9dc27de2-63a4-4684-b51a-7cff1f24a452&Agenda=Agenda&lang=English&Item=44&Tab=attachments>

Elections Ontario – Register to Vote - <https://vreg.registertovoteon.ca/en/home>

MPAC Portal - <https://www.aboutmyproperty.ca/#/auth/home>

MPAC Application for Direction of School Support form
- <https://www.mpac.ca/sites/default/files/docs/pdf/ADSS-new-form-EN.pdf>