



Elections Administration Audit

May 31, 2023

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- On January 25, 2023, Council passed a motion that the Auditor General undertake an audit of the election process in order to:
 - Ensure that sufficient systems, resources, vendors and vendor agreements, and policies and procedures are in place **to comply with the provisions** of the Municipal Elections Act
 - Produce an **actionable set of recommendations** focused on improving the administration of the City of Hamilton's elections for the 2026 municipal election
 - Make recommendations to Council with regard to **suggested legislative reforms** to the Municipal Elections Act
- The audit process was to include the retention of an election expert, and the solicitation of feedback from electors and candidates.

Legislative and Regulatory Requirements

The Clerk is responsible for administering municipal elections in accordance with the Act. The Clerk's responsibility includes:

- (a) preparing for the election;
- (b) preparing for and conducting a recount in the election
- (c) maintaining peace and order in connection with the election; and
- (d) in a regular election, preparing and submitting the report described in Subsection 12.1(2) [accessibility report]

The Clerk has the **independent authority** under the Act to prescribe procedures and forms that are not otherwise provided for in the Act or regulations, including the power to require a person to furnish proof of identity and residence, citizenship or any other matter.

Municipal Elections Act: General Principles

The Clerk shall create and implement any policies and procedures that are necessary to conduct an election in a manner that reflects the principles of the Act, and its regulations.

These **principles** are generally recognized as being:

- (a) The secrecy and **confidentiality** of the voting process is paramount;
- (b) The election shall be **fair and non-biased**;
- (c) The election shall be **accessible** to the voters;
- (d) The **integrity** of the voting process shall be maintained throughout the election;
- (e) There is to be certainty that the **results** of the election reflect the **votes cast**;
- (f) Voters and candidates shall be treated **fairly and consistently**; and
- (g) The **proper majority vote governs** by ensuring that valid votes are counted and invalid votes are rejected so far as reasonably possible.

Voting Methods Approved for the 2022 Election




In-person voting on election day, and at advance polls conducted on specific days and locations in each ward. Votes were cast by marking physical ballots which are read and counted by tabulator machines.

In-person voting at special advance polls being conducted at institutions using “**ballot on demand**” technology. This technology enabled a ballot to be printed and cast at the institution’s location for any ward to offer convenience to voters who might otherwise face barriers or have to travel to their ward to vote.

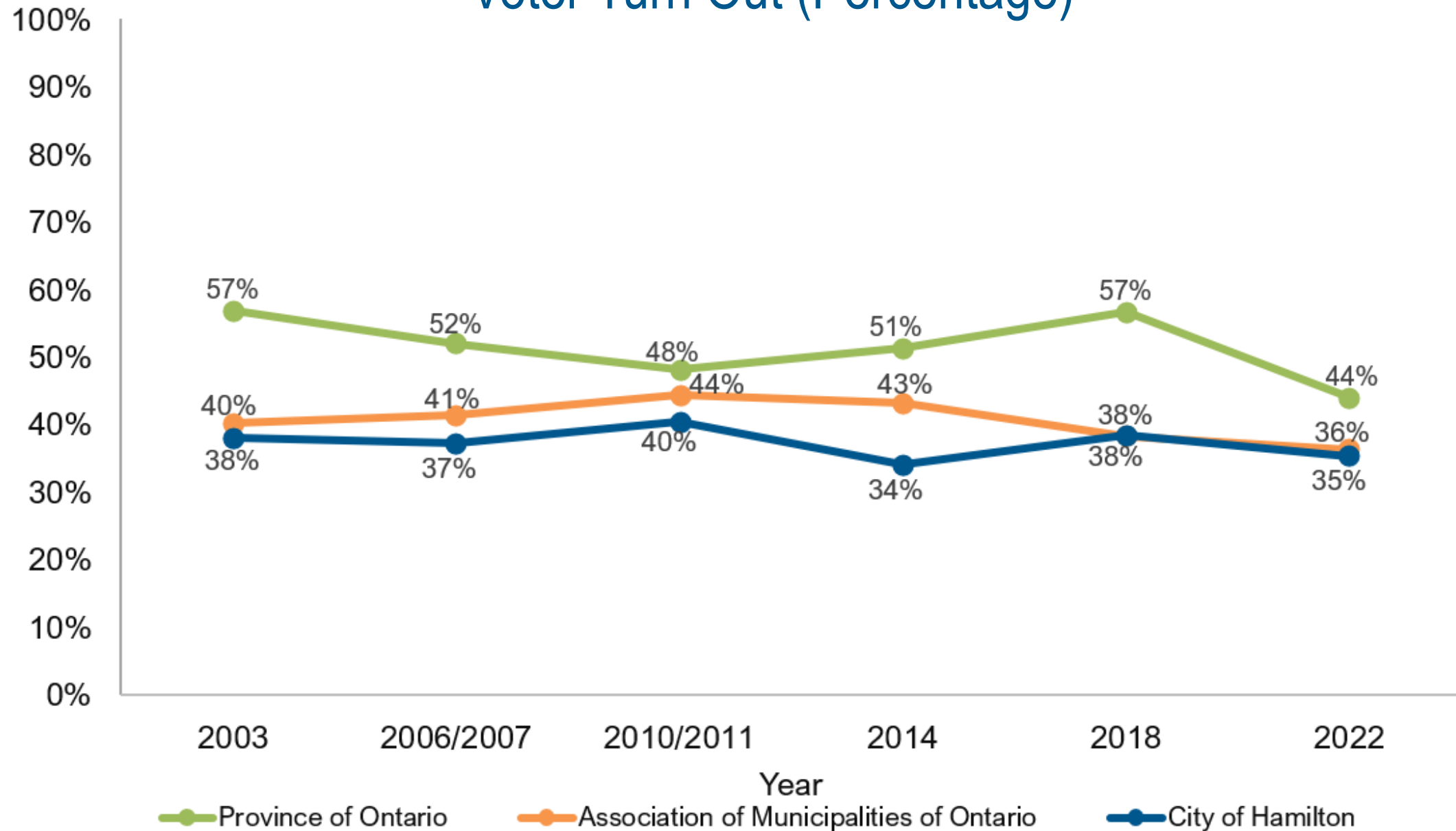
Vote by Mail which allowed eligible electors to make application to be able to receive a vote by mail kit containing a ballot, instructions, voter declaration form and secrecy and prepaid return envelopes.

2022 Election at-a-glance

- One Mayor, 15 Councillors, and 22 School Board Trustees were elected to office.
- There were a total of 143,375 votes cast out of 405,288 electors eligible to vote, resulting in a voter turnout of 35.38%. By comparison, the City of Kitchener had a turnout of 20.26%, Cambridge 28.87%, Waterloo 27.18% and Ottawa 43.79%. The average turnout across Ontario was 36.3%.
- The total spending for the election was \$2.7M which compares slightly favourably to the budget of \$2.8M.




Voter Turn Out		
	Number of Eligible Voters	405,288
	Ballots Cast	143,375
	Voter Turn Out	35.38%

Voter Turn Out (Percentage)



Source: Elections Ontario, Association of Municipalities of Ontario, and, City of Hamilton, Office of the City Clerk.

City of Hamilton Voting Methods Used by Electors (2022)

Voting Methods	Number of Ballots	Percent Turn Out
 Ballots cast (vote Tabulator) Election Day	109,179	76.15%
 Ballots Cast (vote Tabulator) Advance Poll	31,748	22.14%
 Vote by Mail	2,448	1.71%
Total	143,375	100%

Three parallel streams of work:

- Evaluation of compliance with the Municipal Elections Act by municipal elections expert regarding the key processes used to administer the election. Additional assessment of lessons learned and value for money improvement opportunities completed by OAG.
- Valencia Risk reviewed controls and risks related to technologies used to conduct the election including tabulators and e-poll books, and related software.
- Two surveys conducted and analyzed by Metroline Research Group including electors and candidates.

Results of Compliance Review

Overall, the OAG found that the Clerk's processes **substantially complied** with requirements under the *MEA*. While there were some deviations, they did not compromise in any material way the seven principles of the *Act*.

There were four areas that raised concerns to the OAG:

- 1) Voting hours compliance (some non-compliance)
- 2) Vote by mail privacy breach (some concern/area for improvement)
- 3) Voter notification cards (some concern/area for improvement)
- 4) Voters' list (some concern/area for improvement)

Voting Hours Compliance

- Election day 12 of 157 polls opened late (including 3 past 10:30AM – last poll 11:20)
- Caused by technical problems with the e-poll book software - slowed down or prevented access to voter information and monitoring of activity at the polls
- Clerk sought a legal opinion and decided to declare an emergency to extend hours at polls
- Technology issue was unprecedented however we expected there would be more rigorous protocols in place for the situation
- Need to have stronger process regarding monitoring of poll opening and dealing with different types of technical issues
- Declaration of emergency not consistent across the Province - need for Provincial guidance

Vote by Mail Privacy Breach

- There was a privacy breach in the administration of vote by mail that was the result of human error/poor understanding of the mail tool
- Breach ultimately affected 167 individuals that had applied to use the vote by mail process
- A mass email was sent to registrants in which the recipients email addresses were visible to all receiving the email
- There was a failed attempt to recall the email
- Recipients were informed of the breach and the Information and Privacy Commissioner was notified
- The risk of such a breach could have been avoided by using dedicated software for email marketing or by having “compensating controls”

Voter Notification Card Challenges

- The City faced challenges with the printing and mailing of voter notification cards
- The original print vendor was unable to fulfill the contract services which left the Clerk scrambling to arrange a combination of in-house and 3rd party providers
- The late tendering of the contract was a significant contributing factor
- At the same time there was a shortage of the specified paper stock
- Delays left the Elections Office reliant on Canada Post to get cards out before advance polls by meeting their service standards, but in any case past the originally planned timelines

- Voters list requires a significant amount of work/staff time in a compressed period
- MPAC's preliminary list July 31, and final list September 1 after which there were still 136,927 changes.
- Completeness and accuracy impacted other processes e.g. Vote By Mail & VNC's
- As of January 2024: list will be supplied by the Province
- Expected to be an improvement however that is still an unknown
- Another major challenge on election day: candidates not able to obtain an up-to-date strike-off list
- Due to technology issues experienced on election day

What Happened on Election Day

- Widespread disruption due to failure/slowdown of technology
- E-poll books are the laptops that provide election workers the ability to check-in voters and strike them off as having voted
- The technology vendor experienced problems with one or more servers which affected capacity of the system to process voter information
- Lack of vendor communication including the nature, scope and time to resolution created uncertainty about the need to switch to manual processes
- Inhibited the “dashboard” function which told the election office about whether polls were open/active
- Need more rigorous contingency procedures and training in place re: technology failures and switch over to manual (simulation/table tops exercises)

Main Efficiency and Effectiveness Issues

- Management of logistics
- Management of technology risk
- Improving the candidate experience
 - More dedicated staff with specific training
 - Customer service orientation
 - Improvements to the portal
- Improvements to resource management, organization and training
 - Key positions filled sooner with dedicated staff (e.g. Communications, Recruitment, Logistics, Organizational Development/Learning, Technology)
 - Review of standards for resourcing poll locations
 - Without City staff resource needs would not be met

Consideration of Alternative Methods and Innovations

- Vote by mail – consider authentication software
- Expand ballot on demand
- Vote by home visit
- Possible expansion of number of advance days
- Voters in training program for youth
- Use of internet voting – need for robust evaluation of risk

- Amend legislation requiring polls opening late automatically remain open after 8 p.m.
- Advocate for clarity regarding the objectives, roles, enforcement of third party advertisers and the responsibility for regulatory oversight
- Amend legislation so that municipal elections be held on a *day* when schools are not in session
- Increase the amount of time between nomination day and voting day
- Advocate that the Province be more assistive in providing legal interpretations of the Municipal Elections Act and procedural requirements including guidelines/interpretations
- Advocate to the Province and/or work with municipal partners in development of criteria for poll location accessibility/suitability
- Amend Form 2 for candidates obtaining nominations to accommodate more than 25 signatures
- Advocate to provide more clarity and guidance on declarations of emergency



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**City of Hamilton
Elections Administration Audit
Technology Report**

May 19, 2023



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1. Introduction

The City of Hamilton engaged Valencia Risk to support the internal audit of IT controls surrounding the 2022 municipal election processes. Our objective was to examine and evaluate the use of technology and related administrative procedures and controls; specifically, the technologies used to maintain and administer the Voter's List; and the technologies used for Tabulation of the votes.

To do so, Valencia:

- Examined and evaluated IT systems, resources, vendors and vendor agreements as well as policies and procedures supporting electoral practices at the City and compliance with the Municipal Elections Act.
- Suggested actionable items based on recommendations to mitigate gaps in existing processes that can be implemented for the 2026 municipal election.
- Provided the Office of the Auditor General with suggestions for support or legislative reforms to be provided to the Province of Ontario through Elections Ontario.

2. Audit Methodology

In the absence of existing Canadian guidance or standards to assess electoral technical controls, Valencia has referenced the draft [NIST Election Infrastructure Profile](#) (NIST IR 8310) provides a voluntary, risk-based approach for managing cybersecurity activities and reducing cyber risk to election infrastructure.

Our team used this cybersecurity framework:

- 📌 To highlight and communicate high priority security expectations
- 📌 As a guideline for assessing the information gathered in interviews and in documentation to assess the state of City of Hamilton's elections technologies.

Emphasis was placed on six control categories from the NIST framework: Asset Management, Governance, Access Control, Awareness and Training, Anomalies and Events, and Recovery Planning.

These six controls categories were aligned, and high-level findings are summarized below.

3. Summary

Standards, Guidance, and Legislation

- Canadian standards have not been established for municipalities pertaining to technology and cybersecurity controls.
- Policies and procedures are based on prior years' elections processes and lessons learned.

Procurement

- Sole source for selection of DataFix (Voter's List) and Dominion (Vote Tabulator) was approved by Council, and relied on Elections Ontario own rigorous procurement practices and the US Election Assistance Commission Certification Process)
- Limited involvement of IT Department to establish technical security controls.
- No clear security requirements established in RFP or Contracts provided by Vendors.

Training and Support

- Training from DataFix and Dominion was limited to FAQ's and Online self serve with some "train the trainer" support.
- Staff training was not always mandatory and focused on execution and response to technical failures (manual processes established)
- Unclear engagement, roles and responsibilities regarding IT and IT Security.

3. Summary (continued)

Project Management

- Well organized and executed by Clerks office and IT project manager
- Limited number of continuing/experienced staff
- Reliance on past processes and lessons learned
- Well supported by Dominion
- Lack of support from DataFix (Specifically when troubleshooting electoral technologies)

Controls

- Standards and vendors used by the Province were adopted and adhered to by the Clerk's office
- Accountability for IT security and cybersecurity controls and standards was not well established or understood resulting in a complete reliance on contracted third parties.
- Weak controls regarding WiFi passwords for polling stations.
- Absence of Detective Intrusion Monitoring
- Assumptions made around detective controls to identify repeat/fictitious voters

Suggested support from Province and/or Legislative Reform

- Elections Ontario has established an [Advisory Committee on Standards for Voting Technologies](#) and will be taking over the voter's list from MPAC
- Request best practices for all municipalities that includes IT security standards

4. Findings

(a) Standards, Guidance, and Legislation

- 📌 We found no policies or procedure that specifically address cybersecurity for the election process.
- 📌 No Canadian Elections IT and cybersecurity standards currently exist. Valencia used the US NIST Framework on Cybersecurity (NIR 8310). It considers regulatory, risk, legal, environmental, operational controls.
- 📌 Cybersecurity expertise was not engaged internally or through a third party for the 2022 municipal election, leading to IT security roles and responsibilities not being fully defined.
- 📌 A risk assessment was completed; however, comprehensive IT threats, risks, and vulnerabilities were not documented, no cybersecurity personnel were involved in the election process.
- 📌 The Clerk's office addressed regulatory items, including civil liberties and privacy requirements.
- 📌 The IT department was not included in efforts to review IT configurations, assist with policy development, review of implementations, or to provide guidance on IT security.

Conclusion: Management is **compliant with established legislation** and **partially compliant** with the standards outlined in the Draft NIST IR 8310.

Recommendation: Until Canadian guidance is available, management should adopt the framework used in NIST IR 8310 and engage the IT department to ensure the skills required to address IT Security and Cybersecurity relevant to the Elections process.

4. Findings

(b) Procurement

- 📌 The Clerks office used sole sourcing to obtain elections technology and chose to use the same voting list (DataFix) and tabulation (Dominion) vendors. This was approved in advance by council.
- 📌 Hardware, rental inventory, and external information systems were thoroughly documented and catalogued; however, they were not prioritized based on classification, criteria, or business value.
- 📌 Cybersecurity expertise was not engaged internally or through a third party.
- 📌 The IT department was not fully engaged in the procurement process or finalization of contracts with DataFix or Dominion.
- 📌 Contracts were drafted by vendors and not by the City of Hamilton

Conclusion: Management is **compliant** for adherence to established internal policies and procedures. Management is **partially compliant** with standards outlined in the Draft NIST IR 8310.

Recommendation: Management should establish clear accountability for the IT department to prepare and review technology and IT security and cybersecurity requirements for both the RFP and the final contract.

4. Findings

(c) Training and Support

- Roles and responsibilities for technical team members in the context of the 2022 election were well understood and integrated in organizational charts.
- Delays at the polling stations were due to 2 main factors:
 - 1) Lack of Datafix server capacity for updates to the Voters' list
 - 2) Uncertainty at polling stations on when to transition to backup procedures to keep the voter line moving.
- Dominion Voting provided online and in-person training primarily directed to senior individuals at the City of Hamilton.
- DataFix training was primarily provided online and through FAQ's and assistance was not timely when syncing issues delayed updates to the voter lists resulting in delays at some voting locations.

Conclusion: Management is **partially compliant** with the standards outlined in the Draft NIST IR 8310.

Recommendation: Management should make all training sessions mandatory for all staff involved in the elections process. The IT department should be invited to all training sessions. Training should be improved on when moving to backup processes.

4. Findings

(d) Project Management

- The Clerk's Office used project management effectively and engaged an IT project manager appropriately and showed maturity in its management of communications.
- Milestones, critical functions and dependencies for the 2022 elections were understood and established. Contingency planning included offline and/or manual backup to maintain the voter list and tabulation of votes. Load balancing was done on the website hosting the election results and select location testing to validate SIM cards connection prior to election day.
- A full understanding of the resilience requirements was achieved by the team; this did not translate into correct execution when server lag was experienced through DataFix.

Conclusion: Management is **compliant** with the standards outlined in the Draft NIST IR 8310 and established internal policies and procedures.

4. Findings

(e) Controls for Systems and Preparation

- IT systems for approximately 700 elections laptops, (ePollBooks) were configured, updated, and tested to the established specifications before the election.
- Despite the absence of cybersecurity guidelines, management developed appropriate and effective physical and IT security for election rooms, ballots, voter information, mail voting, information access, tabulators, regulators, and poll location Wi-Fi.
- The IT security team was short staffed. A cybersecurity team was not consistently engaged to identify, assess, or implement IT security technology; IT incident response and recovery plans were not developed or tested.
- An IT security vulnerability assessment, or management plan, specific to the elections process was not provided.

Conclusion: Management is **partially compliant** with the standards outlined in NIST IR 8310.

Recommendation: Management should complete an IT security vulnerability assessment and management plan specific to the Elections process.

4. Findings

(e) Controls for Risk Assessment

- 📌 A risk assessment was introduced and implemented for the first time in 2022.
- 📌 The City of Hamilton's 2022 municipal election risk assessment concentrated on establishing a basic outline of potential threats with mitigation options, focusing on operational impact.
- 📌 Likelihood, impact, and mitigation strategies were identified, but did not factor in identified vulnerabilities or threats.
- 📌 Risk mitigation strategies and options were provided prior to the election. On election day, the City displayed good inventory capabilities for its physical devices and systems.

Conclusion: Management is **partially compliant** with the standards outlined in the Draft NIST IR 8310.

Recommendation: As a member of the Municipal Information Systems Association (MISA), Hamilton also has access to security threat feeds and resources. Management should consider an IT vulnerability assessment specific to external threats relevant to election day.

4. Findings

(e) Controls for Physical and Network Security

- Management used appropriate physical security and secure networks to protect data-at-rest.
- Data transitioned from polling locations to transmission sites was physically moved to a secure room for upload to a collator and sending to City Hall via a secure municipal network.
- Hardware inventory was maintained in Microsoft Excel sheets.
- Vote technologies used (DataFix and Dominion) were the same as used by Elections Ontario who required these vendors to provide proof of certification by the US Elections Assistance Commission. These technologies were also thoroughly tested by Elections Ontario.
- Reliance on e-mail "bcc" functionality for constituent communication contributed to a privacy breach.
- The City recorded a chain of custody for removable media such as memory cards and USD sticks used in the election. Items were protected by encoded zip-ties to ensure that potential tampering could be detected.
- Access to systems is controlled, with the technical team only having administrator privileges and only two people having access to election results folders.

Conclusion: Management is **compliant** with the applicable controls outlined in the NIST IR 8310.

4. Findings

(e) Controls for Access and Passwords

- Management documented and managed credentials and identities using a Contacts and Password List Excel spreadsheet.
- Some passwords were simple and easy to guess or crack.
- Knowledge of administrator credentials were held by technical team and election data folders had controlled read and write accesses (limited to 2 users).
- Physical access to assets was managed and protected by sealing memory cards with unique keys.
- Collation of election data took place on Hamilton laptops behind the DMZ to minimize risks and final reporting took place on a Dominion laptop never connected to the internet.

Conclusion: Management is **compliant** with the standards outlined in the Draft NIST IR 8310.

Recommendations: Management should consider improving password security by using passphrases or complex passwords. Municipal credentials would be stronger when paired with a password manager protected by multifactor authentication.

4. Findings

(e) Controls for Detection and Response

- Management did not deploy or test detection technologies specific to the 2022 municipal election (Cybersecurity detection requirements are not contemplated in current legislation).
- Management did not implement network monitoring, physical monitoring, or personnel monitoring for potential cybersecurity events.
- Detection methods were absent for mobile code, malicious code, and cybersecurity attacks.
- Monitoring processes for unauthorized personnel was limited and was absent for software or connection.
- Devices used for the 2022 elections were not assessed by an internal cybersecurity expert.
- Incident thresholds were not fully defined.
- No tabletop exercises were conducted to test IT incident response plans and contingencies.

Conclusion: Management has gaps in its detection methods regarding cybersecurity attacks and is **non-compliant** with the standards outlined in NIST IR 8310.

Recommendation: IT security should assess all devices and enable detection technologies specific to the Elections process and increase monitoring on election day.

4. Findings

(e) Controls for Incident Management

- 📌 A risk assessment was conducted prior to the election and included risk mitigation guidance.
- 📌 No IT incident response and recovery plans were identified specific to the election, however a lessons learned approach was taken by the City following the election highlighting issues and actionable items identified on election day.
- 📌 Technical teams were available, called upon to resolve ongoing issues.
- 📌 Immediate involvement of legal counsel and the privacy officer due to a privacy breach resulted from an error using the “bcc” function resulted in a successfully communicated and contained incident.
- 📌 In the case of delays in mail-in ballots, affected residents were contacted in a timely manner, open channels were there to communicate with City Hall about election issues.
- 📌 IT incident response plans specific to the Election were not developed or tested in advance.

Conclusion: Management is **partially compliant** with the standards outlined in the Draft NIST IR 8310.

Recommendation: Management should consider use of technology appropriate for controlling distribution lists instead of relying on the “bcc” function. IT incident response scenarios should be developed and tested in a tabletop exercise.

Appendix

Documents Reviewed & Interviews

Documents: 245 documents were provided as support for Policies and Procedures referenced and developed for the 2022 election. 82 of these documents were considered in-scope for this internal audit.

Interviews:

Maria McChesney	IT Director
Aine Leadbetter	Manager, Elections Print/Mail
Andrea Holland	City Clerk
Kris Fletcher	Consultant
Brenda Stephan	IT Project Manager
Diane Robinson	Consultant
Lalitha Flach	COO, Elections Ontario
Stephen O'Brien	City Clerk - Guelph

E-mail Response:

Steve Papoulias	Dominion Voting Representative
Carl Stevenson	Manager (acting): Infrastructure & Security
Hortense Harvey	Datafix Representative



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Prepared by Valencia IIP Advisors Ltd.

Our thanks to management who were responsive and transparent and have shown a clear desire for improvement by participating in this audit.



Hamilton

Elections Audit – Market Research

April, 2023



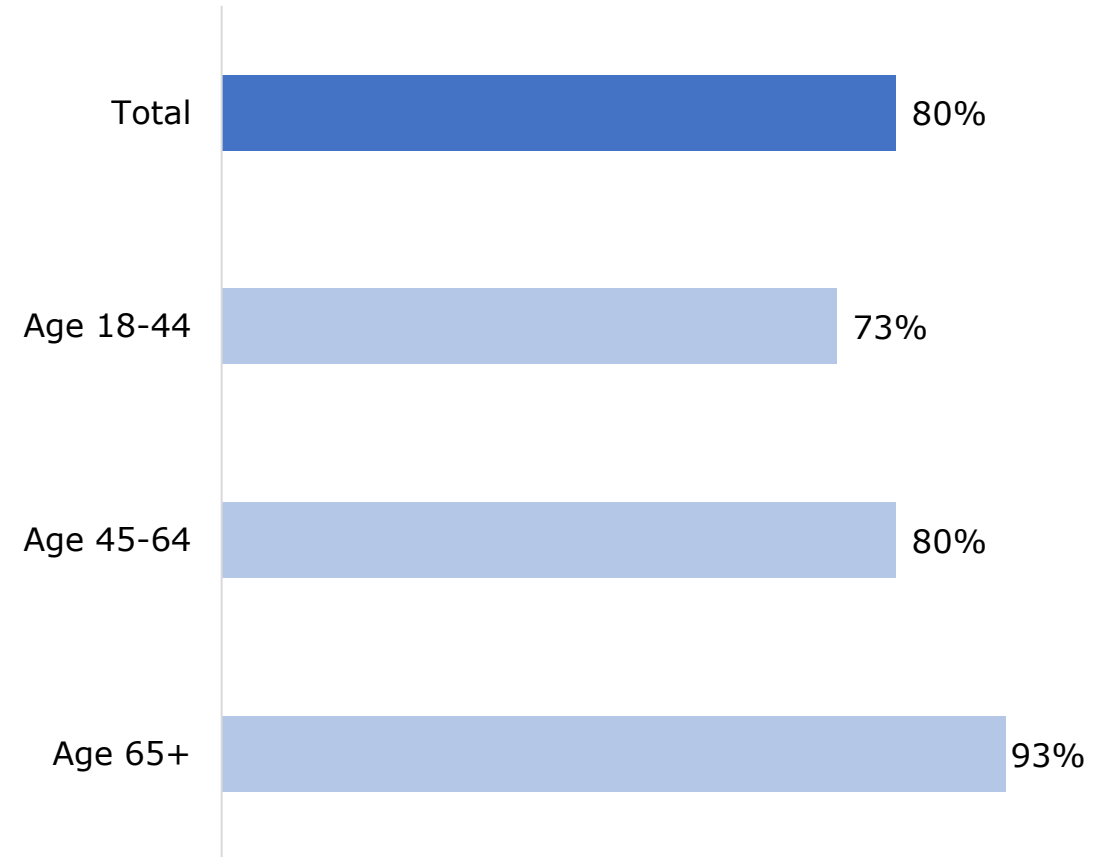
Background

- The purpose of this report is to summarize findings from market research completed with City of Hamilton eligible voters during April, 2023.
- The percentage of eligible voters in this survey is vastly inflated compared to the reality of voter turnout in the 2022 Municipal Election. We have seen this before. It is a combination of people who did not vote, not wanting to be part of a survey that reviews the last election, some eligible voters being confused about which election they voted in, and likely a small percentage who said they voted when they didn't.
- The results in this case provide insights into eligible voters' voting in the last municipal election - the information provided, their experience casting a vote, the polling stations, and their feelings on internet voting.
- Considering the under-representation of those who did not vote, it's likely that the percentage of people who were not interested in municipal politics or elections is under-represented as well.
- This research was conducted for the Office of the Auditor General for the City of Hamilton, as part of their audit of the 2022 Hamilton Municipal Elections Administration.
- This research utilized quantitative research methods including the following:
 - a random telephone survey with 600 interviews, considered accurate to within +/- 4%, 19 times out of 20 (95% Confidence Interval); and,
 - a survey sent to all registered candidates for Mayor, Council and School Board Trustee

Community Survey

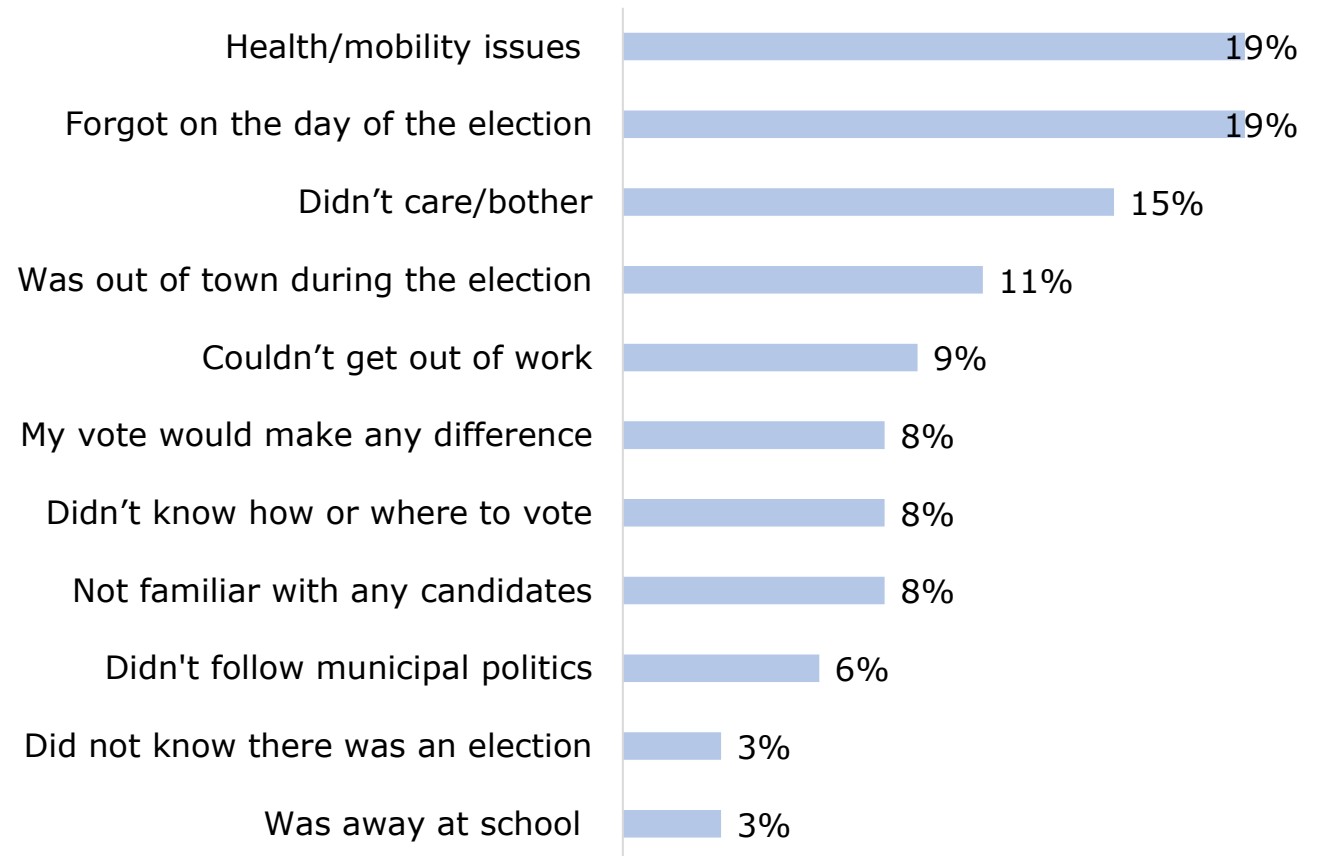
Voter turn out

- The Community Survey, conducted with eligible voters of the City of Hamilton, attempted to engage both voters and non-voters. The proportion of those who say they voted in the past election vastly exceeds actual voter turnout.
- This was expected. In our experience, those who did not vote have no interest in participating in a survey about the election, and a small percentage will claim they did vote.



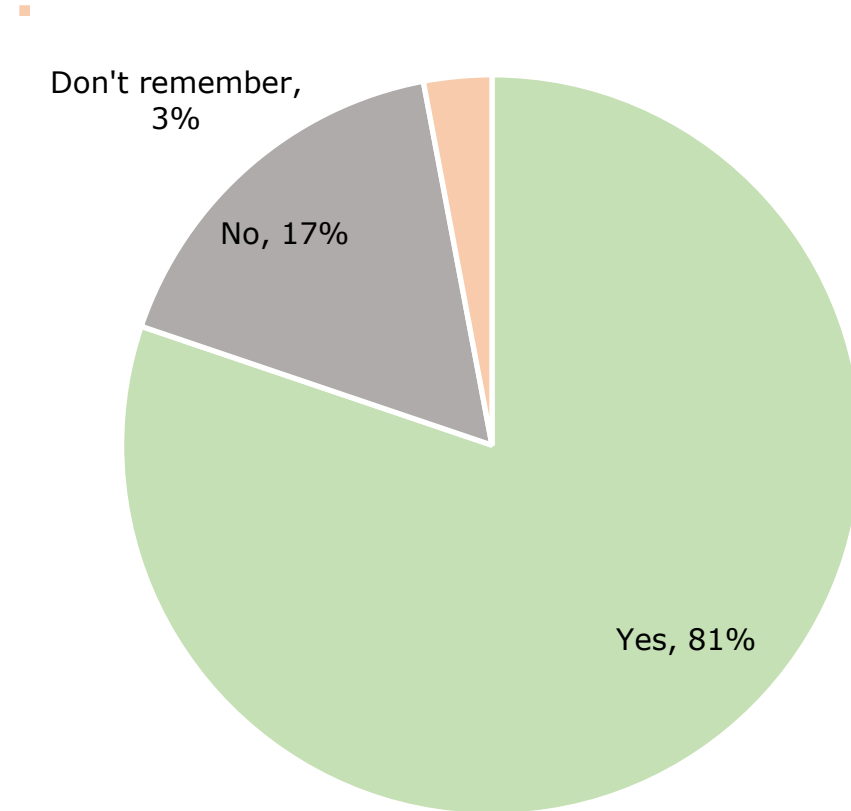
Reasons for not voting

- Overall, about three-quarters (77%) of those who said they didn't vote did not prioritize it or didn't make enough of an effort to vote. That includes those who "didn't bother" (26%), "forgot" (19%), weren't familiar enough with the candidates to consider voting (13%), or even did not know how or where to vote (11%).
- For the rest, 12% were not in town on Election Day (primarily 18-44 years who could have been away for school), or had health/mobility issues that prevented them from going out to vote (11%).



Voter card

- 4 out of 5 residents say they received their voter card
- 97% of those who received a voter card said it was correct.
- 12% visited voterlookup.ca. The other 88% didn't visit or weren't aware what it is.



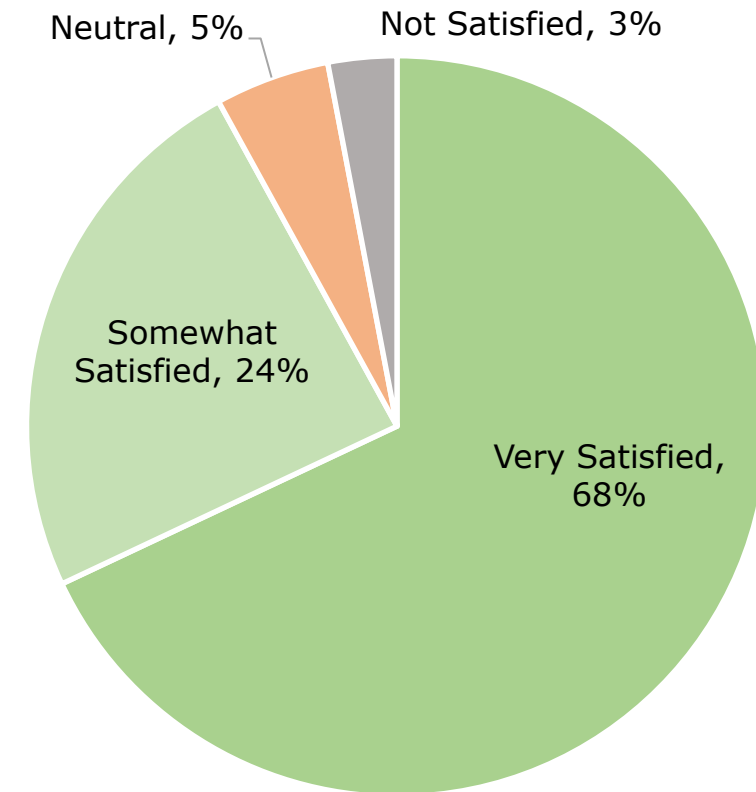
Voting method

- 7 of 10 voted in person
- Almost 3 in 10 voted at an advance poll
- 2% voted by mail

Voting Method	Total	Age 18-44	Age 45-64	Age 65+
Voted in person on election day	70%	79%	67%	63%
Voted in person at an advance poll location	28%	17%	32%	36%
Voted by mail	2%	4%	1%	1%

Voting experience satisfaction

- Overall, 92% of eligible voters who voted were satisfied with the experience, with 68% saying 'very' satisfied, and 24% saying 'somewhat' satisfied.
- 8% of electors (n=13 people) were not satisfied with their experience.
- 86% of those who voted said it took them 10 minutes or less to cast their ballot.
 - 51% of those who voted said it took less than five minutes
 - 95% were satisfied with the time it took them to vote.



Internet voting

- Just under one-third were aware internet voting is happening in other communities.
- About half (52%) of eligible voter would be likely to have used internet voting if it had been available
- 44% feel that internet voting is safe and secure, 29% do not, and 27% did not know.
- There is support for using internet voting in future municipal elections, in total 83% feel it should be considered

	Total	18-44	45-64	65+
Hamilton should not consider internet voting	17%	15%	14%	25%
Not sure I would use internet voting, but it should be considered so others can use it	42%	34%	47%	49%
Should definitely consider internet voting, and I would vote online	41%	51%	39%	26%

Communications

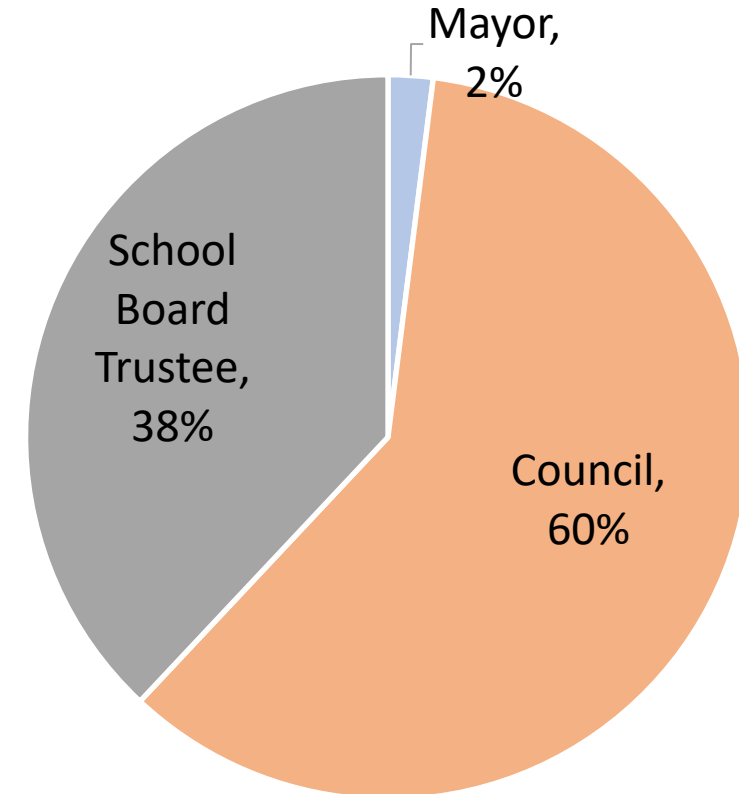
- 51% actively sought out information about the 2022 Election
- Those who voted (57%) were far more likely than those who did not (24%)
- Overall, those who sought out information were able to find what they were looking for.

	Not easy	Neither easy/ difficult	Some- what easy	Very easy	Don't know/ doesn't apply
Voting dates and times	–	3%	16%	74%	6%
Voting locations	6%	12%	18%	64%	–
What to bring to a voting location	–	12%	20%	68%	–
Who the candidates were	–	6%	6%	88%	–

Candidate Survey

Basic Information

- 150 candidates from the 2022 Election were sent an online survey to complete. A total of 42 candidates returned a survey, a response of 28%
- 60% of those who replied to the survey were a candidate for City Council, 38% for school board trustee, and 2% was a candidate for mayor
- 62% were running for office for the first time, 38% have run previously
- Within the group that had run for office in the past, 56% had run once or twice in the past, and 44% have run three or more times



Nomination Period

- Hamilton-offered resources had higher awareness and usage than provincial and other resources.
- Highest resource usage included the City website and the Candidates' portal

	Awareness	Usage
City of Hamilton website	88%	79%
Candidates' portal	81%	67%
Candidates' Information Session offered by the City of Hamilton	79%	43%
Election Office by email	74%	48%
Election Office by phone	71%	43%
City Sign By-law	71%	38%
Election Office Policies, Procedures and FAQs	67%	33%
Election office by in person or virtual meetings	60%	38%
Candidates' Guide, offered by the province of Ontario	57%	41%
Potential candidates school offered by another organization	19%	—
Municipal World tools and resources	14%	2%

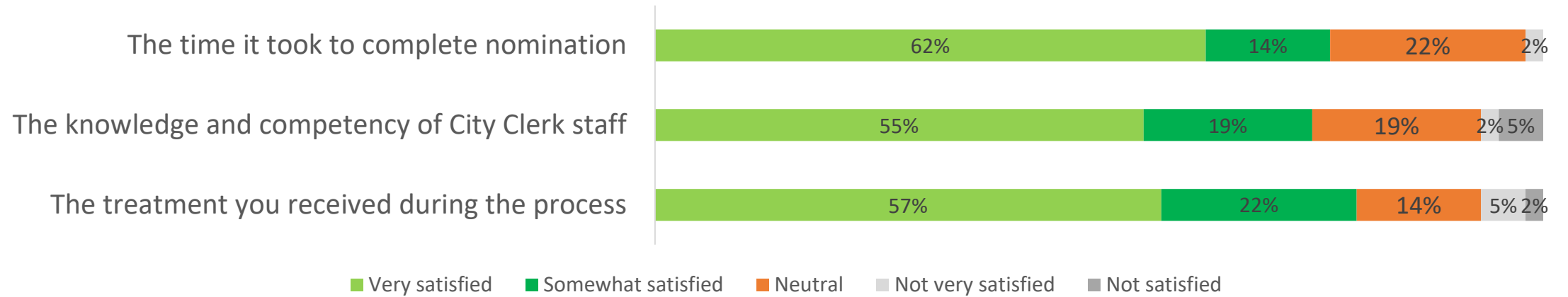
Nomination Period

- Overall, at least half of candidates were satisfied (very or somewhat) with every resource.

	Used	Not satisfied at all	Not very satisfied	Neutral	Somewhat satisfied	Very satisfied
Candidates Portal or City of Hamilton website	67%	4%	25%	10%	36%	25%
Candidates Information session, offered by the City of Hamilton	43%	–	–	39%	39%	22%
City Clerk’s office by email	48%	–	15%	15%	25%	45%
City Clerk’s office by phone	43%	11%	5%	28%	17%	39%
Sign By-Law	38%	13%	12%	–	44%	31%
City Clerk’s office by in person or virtual meetings	38%	–	13%	6%	31%	50%
Election Office Policies, Procedures and FAQs	33%	21%	–	29%	29%	21%

Nomination Period

- Overall, candidates were satisfied with the nomination filing process. 76% were ‘very’ or ‘somewhat’ satisfied.
- Candidates were mostly satisfied (very or somewhat) with these three parts of the nomination process:
 - 76% were satisfied with the time it took to complete the nomination
 - 74% were satisfied with the knowledge and competency of City staff
 - 79% were satisfied with the treatment/comfort they received



The Campaign

- About 4 in 5 candidates who completed a survey made use of the candidates portal (81%)
- There could be some room for improvement, as 26% said it was “somewhat” or “very” difficult to find information on the portal
- The issues ranged from site navigation, accessing the voters list (before or on election day) and other technical issues

Accessing policies and procedures	91%
Reviewing the voters list	85%
Reading correspondence from the City, including maximum campaign expenses, FAQ documents, letters from the Clerk	74%
Reviewing legislation	65%
Accessing guides	59%
Tax base	3%

The Campaign

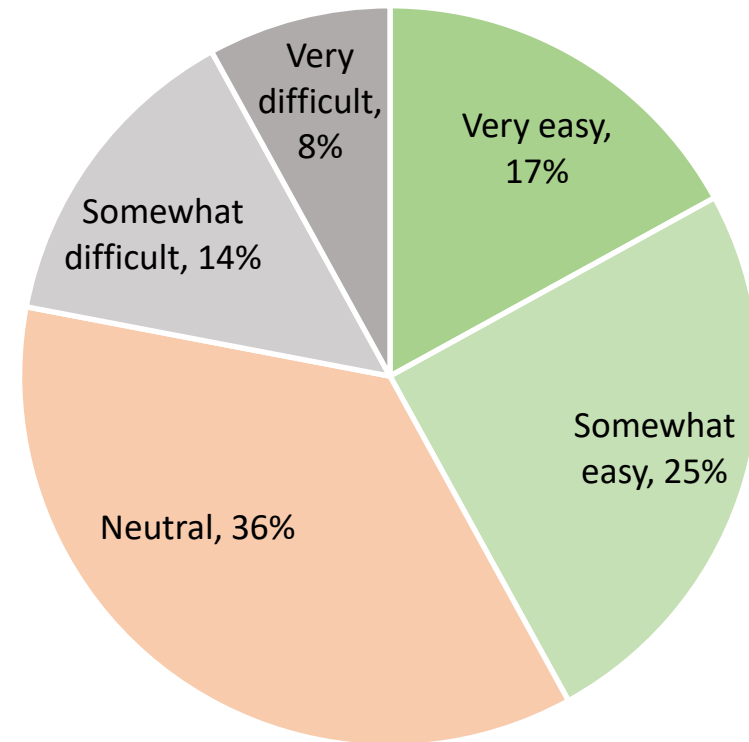
Voter information card not received	67%
Voter not aware of their vote/polling location	55%
Voter not on the voters list	45%
Voter needed information on “vote by mail” processes	43%
Voter not aware of the election	31%
Voter was unsure about municipal election issues	29%
Voter not aware of the election dates	24%
Not being allowed into apartment buildings or condominiums while campaigning	24%
Campaign signs not placed appropriately	21%
Complaints about accessible voting locations	19%
Voter didn’t know where to find information about the various candidates	12%
Voter didn’t know how to get answers to their election questions	10%
Other	6%

Voters List

Most candidates who responded to this survey had received a copy of the voters list (86%).

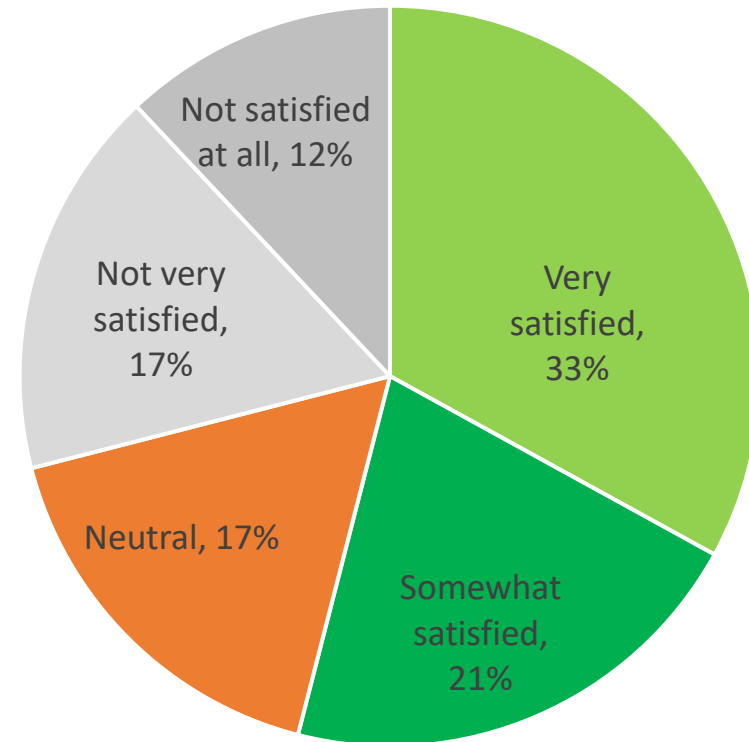
Overall 42% found it 'very' or 'somewhat' easy, compared to 22% who found it 'somewhat' or 'very' difficult. The balance (36%) found it neither easy or difficult.

Among the eight candidates who found it difficult, the reasons varied from technology challenges, preferring printed vs. online, and that it wasn't really in a candidate friendly format. Some mention about the voters list not working properly on Election Day, so that candidates could see who had voted.



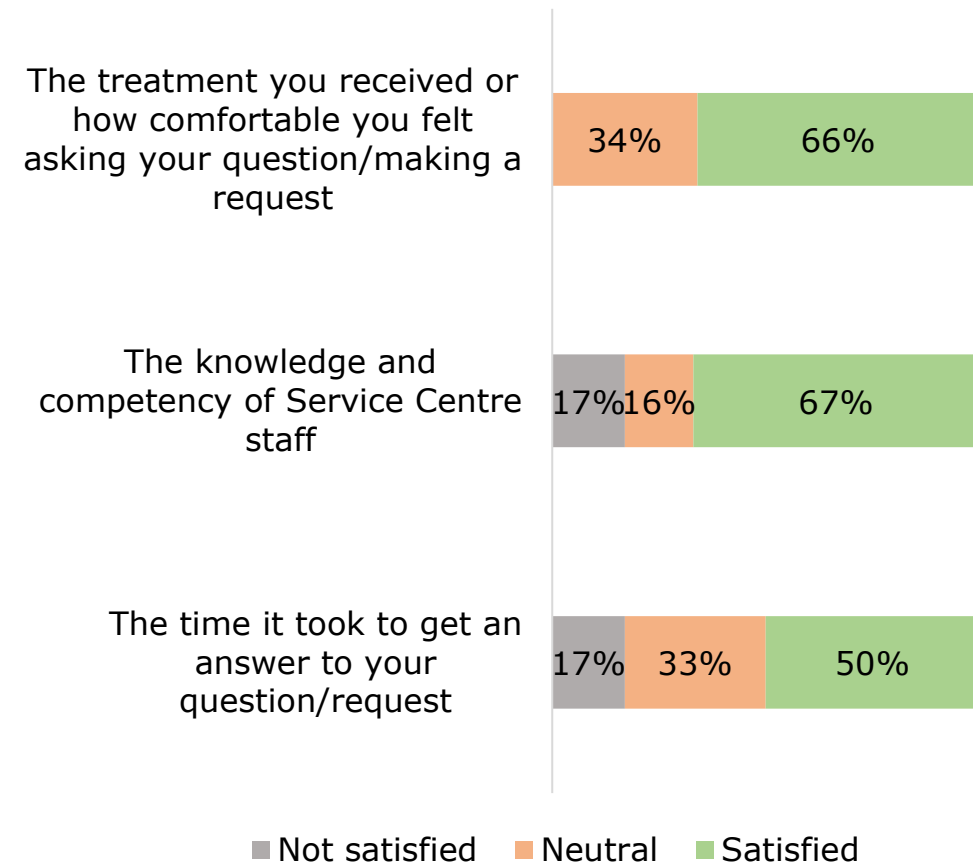
Election Office

- 57% of candidates needed to contact the Election office.
- Among that group (24 candidates), 38% were satisfied, 45% were not.
- Those not satisfied with the results were asked to expand on why, and the theme seems to be a perceived lack of knowledge and professionalism from the Election office staff.



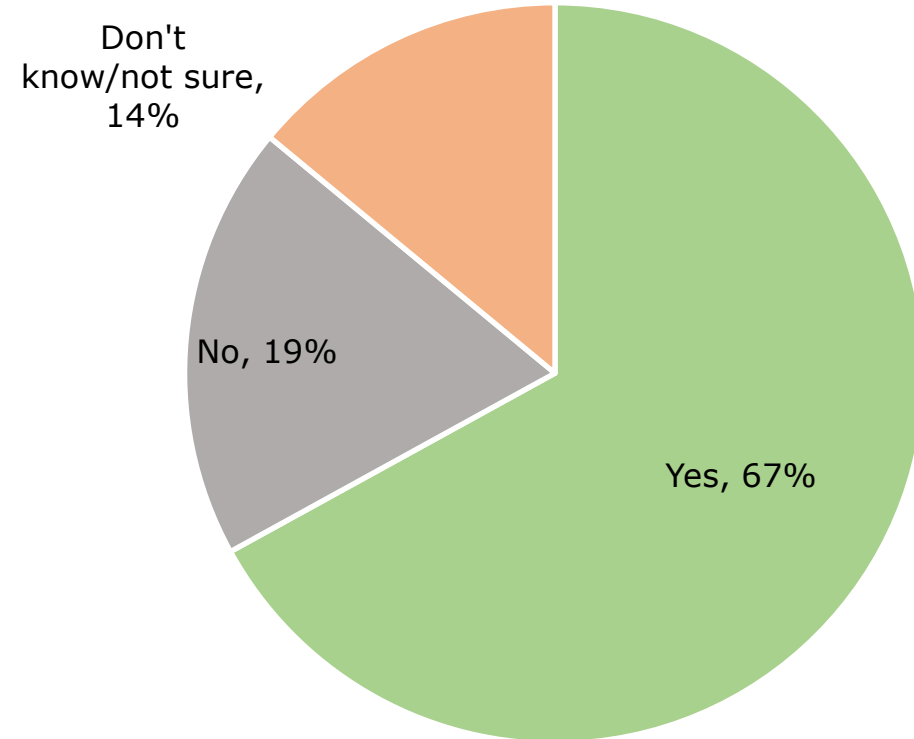
Contact Centre/Municipal Services Centre

- 7 in 10 (71%) of the candidates in this survey contacted the Customer Contact Centre or the Municipal Services Centre with a question/request about the election
- Two-thirds of these candidates were satisfied with the knowledge and competency of the Service Centre staff (67%) and the treatment they received asking their question (66%)
- 50% were satisfied with the speed of getting an answer to their question.



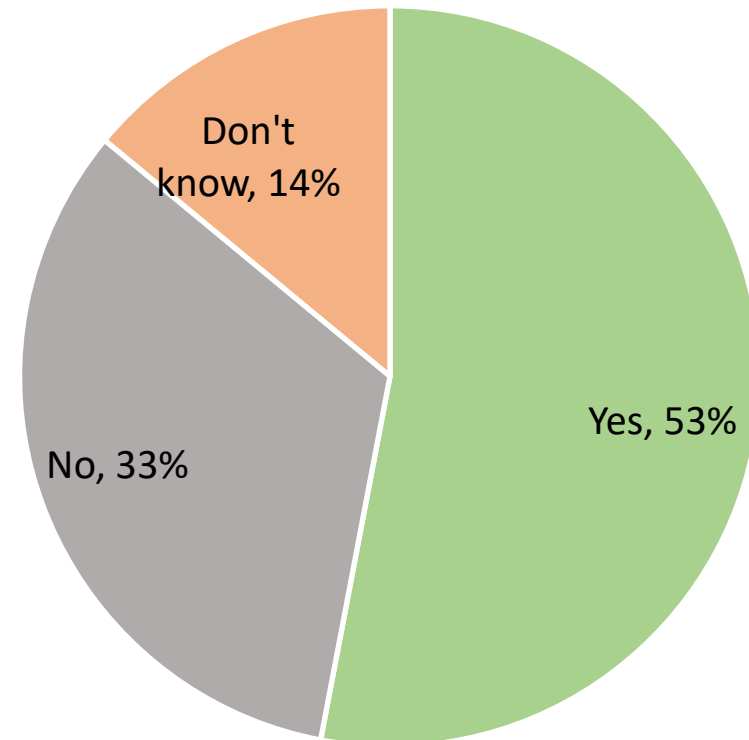
Voting options for the future

- Two-thirds feel that the City of Hamilton should continue to offer voting by mail (67%).
- 19% (about 1 in 5) feel that mail voting should be discontinued. A review of their responses as to why indicates a concern about fraud.



Voting options for the future

- 55% of candidates who responded to the survey are aware of internet voting.
- Whether aware of internet voting or not, 60% of the candidates feel that internet voting is safe and secure.
- 53% of candidates in this survey feel that Hamilton should offer internet voting in the future. 84% of those who believe internet voting is safe and secure feel that it is a good idea, compared to 6% of those who do not feel it is safe and secure.
- Those who feel that Hamilton should offer internet voting in the future say it will allow better access, is more convenient, and could encourage younger eligible voters to vote.



- Voters' List
 - Completeness, accuracy, duplicates, timeline pressures
- Exposure to technology failures, particularly on Voting Day
- Improving the Candidate Experience
- Logistics Management
 - particularly Vote by Mail and Voter Notification Card
- Resources and organizational structure
- Training
 - Particularly preparation for contingencies such as technology failure

- We identified many significant opportunities for improvement, and a total of 50 recommendations were made.
- Management is largely agreeable with the audit findings and recommendations.
- We recommend that the City Clerk be requested to report back to the OAG by September 2023 with their detailed management action plans.
- Once these are found to be acceptable by the OAG, they will be reported to GIC.



QUESTIONS?