



Committee of the Whole Report

Report Number: CLK2025-008
Meeting Date: November 4, 2025
Title: Municipal Election 2026 – Voting Method
Description: Internet/Telephone Voting
Author and Title: Cathie Ritchie, City Clerk

Recommendation(s):

That Report CLK2025-008, **Municipal Elections 2026 – Voting Method**, be received;

That internet/telephone voting be approved as the voting method for the 2026 municipal election;

That internet/telephone voting be approved as the voting method for any by-elections for the position of Mayor during the 2026-2030 term of Council;

That internet voting be approved as the voting method for any by-elections for the position of ward Councillor or School Board Trustee during the 2026-2030 term of Council;

That a by-law be brought forward to Council authorizing the alternative voting method and advance voting as prescribed by Section 42 of the Municipal Elections Act, 1996, S.O. c 32 as amended; and

That this recommendation be brought forward to Council for consideration at the next Regular Council Meeting.

Department Head: _____

Financial/Legal/HR/Other: _____

Chief Administrative Officer: _____

Background:

The Municipal Elections Act (MEA) states that municipal elections are to be held every four years with the next voting day being Monday, October 26, 2026.

In 2016, the Municipal Elections Act was amended. Section 42(1) sets out that council may pass a by-law authorizing an alternative voting method as long as a by-law is passed before May 1 in the year prior to the election.

The 2018 Municipal Election was the first election for the City of Kawartha Lakes using internet/telephone voting, the same voting method was also used for the 2022 Municipal Election.

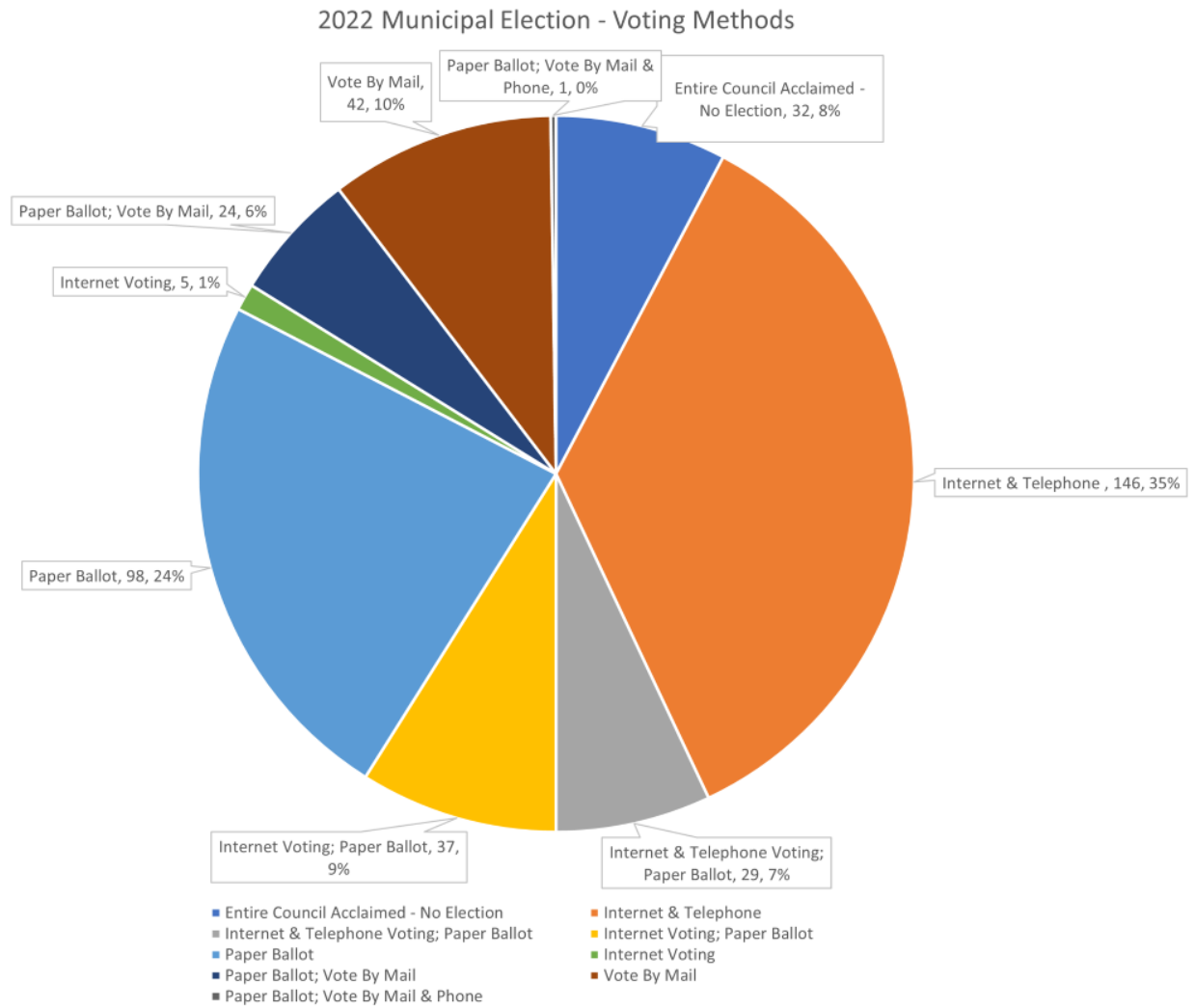
The 2025 By-Election for Ward 5 was conducted solely by internet voting.

The following tables provide the voter data from the 2022 Municipal Election.

2014 to 2022 Total Voter Turnout Comparison:

	Kawartha Lakes	Ontario-Wide Estimate (source: AMO):
2022	32.66%	32.90%
2018	38.05%	38.29%
2014	41.49%	43.12%

How votes are cast continues to move to technology-based methods. In 2022, 217 municipal governments used internet and/or phone/combined method, which is 42 more than the 2018 election. The following charts illustrate the methods used by Ontario Municipalities in 2022.



CKL 2022 Election Voting Method Comparison:

Method	Count	Percentage
Internet	19,280	83.33%
Telephone	3,338	14.43%
Kiosk/Voters Receiving Assistance (including Long Term Care)	518	2.24%
Total	23,136	

This report is being presented in advance of May 1st, 2026 to obtain Council's approval to maintain internet/telephone voting as the voting method for the 2026 Municipal Election, to use internet/telephone voting as the voting method for any by-election for the position of Mayor during the 2026-2030 term of Council and to use internet voting as the voting method for any by-election for the position of ward Councillor or School Board Trustee during the 2026-2030 term of Council.

Rationale:

Of all voting methods, internet/telephone voting provides the best and most efficient way for persons with disabilities and/or those who are seasonal electors, who will not in the City of Kawartha Lakes during the voting period, to participate in the election process.

During the 10-day voting period there will be multiple voting locations throughout the City (City Hall, Municipal Services Centres, Libraries) where tablets and computers will be made available to the public to accommodate those who may not have the technology or the connectivity that is needed to cast their vote. Staff will be present at each voting location to assist electors and there will be an Election Help Line that will support those who need assistance. Staff will also attend Long Term Care and Retirement Facilities prior to, and again on, Election Day to provide an opportunity for all qualified electors within those facilities to cast their vote. Alternatively, telephone voting is also available for those who do not wish to utilize online voting.

Council authorized internet/telephone voting for the 2022 Municipal Elections, therefore a by-law would have to be passed to authorize the alternative voting method for the 2026 Municipal Elections.

Section 43 of the Municipal Elections Act, 1996, c.32 as amended regarding advance voting shall apply in respect of the 2026 municipal election. Ten days for voting, including voting day will be provided.

Other Alternatives Considered:

To maintain and build on modernization, no other alternatives are proposed.

Alignment to Strategic Priorities

The selection of a voting method has the potential to support many of the goals or enablers within the adopted Strategic Plan 2024-2027. Internet/telephone voting:

Healthy Environment

- Reduces paper usage and therefore supports the Integrated Waste Management Strategy
- Reduces transportation needs and therefore reduces greenhouse gas emissions

An Exceptional Quality of Life

- Will provide greater opportunity to those with physical disabilities or other restrictions the ability to cast their votes reducing the number of those possibly disenfranchised from carrying out their civic rights.

Good Government

- Increase efficiency and effectiveness of service delivery
- Promote continuous improvement to Make It Better
- Improves accessibility for those with disabilities or location challenges on election day
- Shows fiscal responsible service delivery
- Provides excellent customer service

Financial/Operation Impacts:

The City currently budgets \$70,000.00 annually to reserves for the four-year term for election purposes.

Attachments:



2025-XXX A Bylaw to
Authorize Alternative 1

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Department Head: Ron Taylor, CAO