

City of Sarnia

Frequently Asked Questions Regarding Internet/Telephone Voting

More information available online at www.sarnia.ca or by calling the City Clerks Department 519-332-0330 ext. 3320.

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When is the next municipal election?

The next municipal election will be held **Monday, October 22, 2018**. Candidates are able to file nomination papers from **Tuesday, May 1, 2018** up until **2 p.m. on Friday, July 27, 2018**.

Who is responsible for municipal elections?

Under the *Municipal Elections Act* clerks of local municipalities are responsible for preparing for and conducting elections and must ensure privacy and integrity of the vote.

The clerk must ensure that all members of the electorate are given every opportunity to vote and that the voting process is as accessible and accountable as possible.

City Council must authorize by-law alternative methods of voting such as optical vote tabulators and internet/telephone voting. Under the Municipal Elections Act, the last day to pass such a by-law was May 1, 2017.

What has Council decided to date in regards to Internet/ Telephone Voting?

Council at their November 14th, 2016 regular meeting approved the following resolution;

“That Sarnia City Council authorize the use of internet and telephone voting as an alternative voting method in the 2018 municipal election; and;

That Sarnia City Council authorize the City's participation in a joint RFP for Internet/Telephone Service Providers with other municipalities in Lambton County.”

At the March 20th, 2017 Council meeting, the awarding of the joint RFP and adopting of the by-law to implement internet/telephone voting was before Council. Council adopted the following resolution:

“That Sarnia City Council accepts the Proposal submitted by Intelivote System Inc. in the amount of \$130,219.12 including non-rebateable

*HST, for the services of telephone and internet voting.
That Mayor and Clerk be authorized to sign the necessary agreements
if required.
That Sarnia City council adopts the By-Law to implement
Internet/Telephone Voting for the 2018 Municipal Election.*

In the 2015 Budget discussions (held in 2014) funds were included in the election reserve to accommodate internet voting. This was the direction given with the potential of reducing election costs in various areas, such as training, administration, staffing, and resources.

Is a public meeting required for the process of choosing an alternative form of voting?

No. The Municipal Elections Act has no requirement to hold a public meeting on alternative methods of voting, and there is no statutory public input period. The City's Notice Policy requires that an issue of this nature be advertised as part of the standard council meeting process, which includes public agendas and notices. The City also provides council highlights, which are circulated to the media and posted on the website.

The City provides notice in accordance with the Notice Policy and legislative requirements, although Council has the ability to direct staff to provide additional means of public notice. For instance, Council has asked staff to conduct public meetings and surveys on other matters of public interest, such as the Arena Management Strategy, the Dog Park Pilot Project, Jackson Pool, and others.

How long have municipalities had the option to use electronic voting?

Electronic voting has been allowed and encouraged in the Municipal Elections Act since 1996. Electronic voting was first used by Peterborough in 2003.

Who are the partner municipalities in Lambton County collaborating on internet/telephone voting as an alternative voting method?

Seven partner municipalities are collaborating in Lambton County to use internet/telephone voting:

- Oil Springs
- Sarnia
- Petrolia
- Lambton-Shores

- Point Edward
- Warwick municipality
- Plympton-Wyoming

Intelivote provided the same volume pricing to this group as it did to the other clients it had already contracted with up to that time.

What are the benefits of Internet/Telephone Voting?

- **Accessibility:** If you are away on travel for either business or personal, may be suffering from illness, shift work, have a disability, or may have difficulty travelling, you can cast your ballot from anywhere with an internet connection or working touchtone telephone.
- **Convenience:** Remotely cast your vote from anywhere using a computer, smart phone, tablet device, or touchtone phone, 24 hours a day over a 10-11 day period of time (to be determined).
- **Environmentally Friendly:** Reduction in greenhouse gas emissions as voters no longer need to travel to polling locations. Additionally, the City will no longer require the printing and subsequent shredding of paper ballots, and will be providing Voters' Lists to candidates in electronic format only.
- **Fast, Reliable, and Secure:** The voting process will be serviced by Intelivote Systems Inc., who have helped to safely and effectively service 63 internet and telephone elections successfully for Ontario municipalities in 2014. As a whole, Intelivote Inc. has conducted over 1,150 elections.
- Other electronic voting providers in Canada have also never had a penetration into their system that resulted in a contravened election. The industry keeps an open communication between all the suppliers when it comes to attempts on their technology and shares this type of information.

Will the 2018 municipal election strictly be using the internet/ telephone voting method?

Yes. Internet/telephone voting complies with the *Municipal Elections Act (MEA)* by making the election accessible to all voters, therefore, no paper balloting is required.

How will a person vote and what assistance is available?

The voting period extends from Thursday, October 11 through to Monday, October 22 at 8:00 pm. An eligible voter may cast their vote from anywhere using an internet-connected device or touchtone telephone. Voter Help Centres

will provide assistance and issue new PINs. City Hall will be open to assist voters on weekdays during business hours and Saturday 10 am to 4 pm. Additional voter help centres will be open from at 4 pm to 8 pm on Monday October 22 at Clearwater Arena, St. Patrick's Catholic High School, Bright's Grove Public School, and City Hall.

How are security issues addressed for internet/telephone voting in a municipal election?

Many of the security issues have been addressed in the Request for Proposal (RFP); the Vendor, Intelivote Inc. scored the highest out of the various vendors in the technical/security area. Security measures include the following:

- Working in conjunction with internet voting experts (vendor), procedures are established by the municipality to address, mitigate, and in some cases eliminate, potential risks by employing both technical and process related security measures designed to support system administration and control user access.
- The transmission of data over the internet along with the selections made by the voter are all encrypted for security reasons. Intelivote's system and data are secured in an Uptime Institute Tier III certified facility managed by Rogers Colocations Services.
- Technological advances in protective measures such as firewalling (a part of a computer system or network that is designed to block unauthorized access while permitting outward communication), and user authentication techniques (required passwords, etc.), all decrease the likelihood and effectiveness of these threats.
- Proper testing and auditing throughout the various implementation phases also serves to protect the voting system from external threats.
- Validating the identification of voters is a concern regularly cited with internet voting. To respond, internet voting includes voter authentication practices which can be customized to include personalized security questions and/or unique identification codes (Voter IDs and PINs). Municipalities can request that the vendor include the requirement for an elector to enter an additional verification along with the provided voter ID and PIN (such as birth date). This step helps alleviate concerns associated with the risk of an individual obtaining a Voter Information Letter intended for another elector.
- Only electors on the voters list receive credentials in the mail which will be used to vote online. As with past practices electors must complete a form and/or provide ID to be added to the voters list.

Are there security risks associated with online voter registration?

The province only recently implemented online voter registration. The City of Sarnia has used this method of online voter registration since 2010, and MPAC began storing voter information electronically well before that.

What other municipalities use internet/telephone voting?

97 Ontario municipalities used internet/telephone voting in 2014, and 194 will be using the method in 2018, (including 101 Intelivote clients) out of 440 municipalities. This includes Middlesex County and 8 municipalities in Lambton County.

Large municipalities using the process include Halifax, Honolulu, HI, Greater Sudbury, Chatham-Kent, Burlington, and Brantford. Municipalities offering internet/telephone only include Ajax, Stratford, and Newmarket.

The technology is regularly used by trade unions, professional associations, and political party leadership elections such as Liberal Party of Canada 2013 leadership race.

Is it possible that the new voting method will exclude some voters, such as seniors?

Internet and telephone voting has been promoted as a way of engaging young voters, but the research conducted by the Munk School of Global Affairs found that the highest rate of internet use was baby boomers, with 75% of online voters being 45 or older.

Statistics from 2014 indicate that voter turnout for senior demographics tends to remain the same or increase slightly in municipalities that have adopted internet/telephone as the only method of voting. Touchtone telephone was a popular method in 2014 for older age groups, especially those age 70 and above.

The City intends to implement an educational campaign that will target seniors, and we are partnering with libraries as well as offering devices and assistance at voter help centres.

Is there a plan in place in case something goes wrong with electronic voting methods?

The Clerk has the ability to declare an emergency under Section 53 of the Municipal Elections Act if they are of the opinion that circumstances are likely to prevent the election from being carried out in accordance with the legislation.

Procedures were developed by the Clerk's Department in December 2017 with regards to emergencies. These procedures require the Clerk to post notice of the emergency on the municipal website, social media, radio, and television to advise the public if they election has been delayed.

The Clerk's department also has the ability to consider alternative options for reporting results, notifying electors, election workers, the voting period (delay or extension of hours or days), and/or setting up alternative Voter Help Centres.

Our vendor will take direction from us and has the ability to stop the system from accepting votes by internet or telephone to prevent the election from continuing or starting as necessary.

During the RFP process what distinguished Intelivote Systems Inc. from Dominion Voting and other vendors?

The Request for Proposal (RFP) had a scoring process based on three main areas; Technical, Financial and the Interview process. Intelivote scored 894 in total by eight of the Lambton area municipality clerks (or their designate). Dominion Voting scored 863 in total. The vendors were close in scoring, but Intelivote addressed security concerns directly and could provide staff assistance with standard operating procedures, project management and educational materials which was important to the eight area municipalities, since this is a new alternative voting method in these jurisdictions.

Intelivote's response required over 70 pages of technical, security and operational information.

The other two proponents did not technically meet the threshold before the financials were opened.

Has Intelivote Systems Inc. had any legal action against it?

Intelivote was the subject of a legal matter that occurred in November, 2015 where the Federal government's Atlantic Canada Opportunity Agency (ACOA) filed to have Intelivote repay investment loans. ACOA had changed the method of payment based on new rules the government has instituted requiring loans to be paid on a monthly basis rather than as a percentage of revenue per year. This change impacted how and when Intelivote would have to make loan payments and was inconsistent with their business model as 75% of Intelivote's business typically occurs in the 4th quarter each year. Intelivote still has a loan with the ACOA and a negotiated repayment schedule.

How will the electronic voting company ScytI be involved in the municipal election?

Intelivote established with ScytI in late 2015, a series of concepts that they agreed would be used to create a new version of electronic voting that incorporated some of the most popular features of the Intelivote system and some of the patented cryptology used in the ScytI system, and launch an innovation centre in Halifax that would serve as a centre of excellence for electronic voting development and delivery. ScytI's investment in the centre coupled with Intelivote's experience in the Canadian market served as the basis for the next generation of electronic voting that is being used in the 2018 Ontario elections.

What is Intelivote's prior experience in providing electronic voting services to municipalities?

- Intelivote has provided electronic voting services to municipalities across Canada since 2010.
- Most recently, Intelivote supported 23 elections in Nova Scotia where over 70% of the eligible electors (over 500,000) in the province could vote electronically in 2016.
- Intelivote currently continues to use their technology to deliver elections across Canada and the United States, and have approximately 70 municipalities signed to election contracts.

What is included in the services provided by Intelivote?

- The costs of Voter Instruction Letter printing, production, and postage are included in the services provided by Intelivote. These services represent about 56% contract, or \$68,081 before HST. For comparison purposes, postage and printing costs for the 2014 election totaled \$71,827.
- The remainder of the contract is the cost of electronic voting services. This also includes project management, onsite support, and travel. As a result of partnering with other Lambton municipalities, we will receive a discounted price of \$54,464 for electronic voting services before HST.
- Intelivote provides election software and support services. Intelivote's main office is in Dartmouth, Nova Scotia, and staff are located throughout Canada. Its electronic system is hosted in the Bell Canada Data Centre in Halifax.
- Intelivote will work with an approved elections communications company based in Ottawa for the purpose of producing and mailing secure voter letters.

What are the overall costs of electronic voting compared to other methods?

The costs of elections in Canada, and in most places in the world, are measured based on the cost per eligible elector. Paper based municipal elections in Ontario average between \$4-\$6 per eligible elector, provincial elections between \$7-\$9, and Federal elections \$13-\$15 per eligible elector.

The Intelivote price is \$2.25 per eligible elector and the cost of the voter instruction letter and postage is included in that at \$1.25. Internet/telephone voting costs \$1.00 per elector.

Did staff research the experiences of other municipalities before recommending Intelivote?

- Staff conducted research on the election experience of Ontario municipalities that utilized Intelivote in 2014. Clerks from Ajax, Cobourg, and seven municipalities in Middlesex County were consulted.
- The Town of Ajax used Intelivote in 2014 without paper ballots. Intelivote delivered the service effectively and provided adequate support. Ajax was able to deliver the election well under budget. No security issues were reported.
- The Town of Cobourg has used Intelivote since 2006 and utilizes their services without paper ballots. Cobourg responded positively regarding technical support and project management. Intelivote has delivered within budget and no security issues were reported.
- The Middlesex County municipalities used Intelivote without paper ballots in 2014. Staff reported that Intelivote security features are “trusted and secure.” Clerks from Middlesex County municipalities reported being “very impressed” with services provided including preparation of procedures and forms, which saved staff time.
- As a follow-up to a recent media interview staff contacted the Halifax Regional Municipality (HRM). HRM began using Intelivote in 2009. Most recently, Intelivote delivered the advance electronic polling service in HRM’s October 2016 full election. Election staff reported that Intelivote delivered services delivered as expected, and that support service exceeded expectations. HRM consists of former Halifax County and the former separated towns and cities of Halifax, Dartmouth, and Bedford. These were amalgamated in 1996. HRM has over 400,000 residents.

- Intelivote has a long list of clients that includes over 70 Canadian municipalities and over 40 unions and professional organizations. The company grosses millions of dollars a year in revenue and has minimal overhead beyond a staff of nine.
 - Financial due diligence has limitations in any procurement process because it is impossible to know with certainty that a company will remain financially viable. Circumstances can change within months or weeks.
- We understand that Intelivote is in a positive situation to deliver services and meet its debt obligations.