



100 John West Way
Aurora, Ontario
L4G 6J1
(905) 727-3123
aurora.ca

Town of Aurora
Council Report
No. CS25-007

Subject: Additional Information Regarding Internet Voting

Prepared by: Michael de Rond, Town Clerk

Department: Corporate Services

Date: April 22, 2025

Recommendation

1. That Report No. CS25-007 be received for information

Executive Summary

This report provides additional information to report CS25-006 – 2026 Municipal Election – Methods of Voting.

- The online voting standards created by the Digital Governance Standards Institute (DGSi) focus on security of systems and data
- The number of municipalities in Ontario using internet voting continues to rise with few major issues with its use being reported

Background

During the discussion of report CS26-006 – 2025 Municipal Election – Methods of Voting at the April 8, 2025 Committee of the Whole meeting, further information regarding internet voting was requested.

Analysis

The online voting standards created by the Digital Governance Standards Institute (DGSi) focus on security of systems and data

[The new standards](#), published in December 2024, mandate that internet voting vendors must provide documentation to the municipality on how they will detect and prevent or adequately mitigate each of the commonly cited classes of risks including:

- External threat actors
- Insider threats
- Malware
- Denial of Service (DoS) or Distributed Denial of Services (DDoS)
- Social engineering
- Voters' device tampering
- Insufficient IT Resources (vendors must prove that they have the resources to monitor the threats/risks noted in this report)
- Weak authentication procedure
- Voter data/information penetration, exfiltration, and eavesdropping
- Server-side logic and accuracy errors
- Server-side network security configuration errors which would increase the vulnerability of the network and/or system
- Unauthorized modification of voting system code, i.e. server-side code being different from what was scrutinized

Town staff will be diligent in ensuring that the chosen vendor provides this information well in advance of the internet voting system going live. In addition to these measures, during the election period when the system is live, staff constantly monitor the system looking for irregularities. The system will be capable of producing immediate reports regarding instances such as multiple ballots being received from the same IP address. A number of more than 5-6 could be an indicator of voter fraud and staff would be able to know immediately that this is occurring. It is also important to note that while staff can monitor instances such as number of ballots submitted from a single IP address, it does not mean that staff know how Aurora residents are voting. The secrecy of the ballot is paramount in an election and staff will never be in a position to know how someone has voted.

The number of municipalities in Ontario using internet voting continues to rise with few major issues with its use being reported

The City of Markham became the first municipality to use internet voting in 2003 with the number of municipalities using it since steadily increasing. In 2018, 150 municipalities in Ontario used internet voting and in 2022 that number went up to 217. The 2022 number represents about half of Ontario municipalities now using internet voting in some capacity. It's fair to expect this number to increase again in 2026 and into the future as fast and secure broadband services are extended to the more rural areas of the province.

Since its inception in Ontario municipal and school board elections, few major issues regarding the use of internet voting have been reported. Further to that, staff are not aware of any issues related to security or data privacy. The most commonly reported issue has been lack of bandwidth during the busiest times. Research shows that, despite advanced opportunities to cast a ballot, most people cast their ballot in the final two hours of an election. This has caused internet voting services to be 'overloaded' and inaccessible at crucial times, causing municipalities to extend voting late into the night on election night, or even into the next day. This has not been a concern in Aurora as the Town has historically stopped internet voting on the day prior to election day. This forms part of the reason why staff recommend internet voting not be available on election day in 2026.

Advisory Committee Review

None

Legal Considerations

The election service provider will be determined through a public procurement, which is currently being undertaken. As part of the procurement, an extensive list of security measures and data protection requirements are being compiled, which the vendors will be required to provide. Upon award, the Town will enter into an agreement with the selected vendor, which will obligate the vendor adhere to all the required security and protection requirements. Among others, the vendor will be required to maintain the information in Canada, comply with any applicable legislative and regulatory requirements, undertake extensive security risk and privacy assessments, and implement a variety of security measures. The Town will maintain ownership of the election data during the term of the agreement, and such data will be returned or otherwise destroyed by the vendor as per legislative requirements.

Financial Implications

Staff expect the internet voting system to cost approximately \$50,000. This represents around 13% of the overall election budget.

Communications Considerations

Communications will support the promotion of the municipal election, including details on voting options, through a comprehensive outreach strategy, including website updates, social media campaigns, e-newsletters, and traditional media releases.

Climate Change Considerations

None

Link to Strategic Plan

The Town of Aurora's strategic plan can be described in one sentence; "Our vision for Aurora 2031 is: An innovative and sustainable community where neighbours care and businesses thrive." The adoption of a hybrid method of voting supports the Town of Aurora being an innovative community. A hallmark of innovation is developing new techniques for traditional processes, and the implementation of internet voting fits this description.

Alternative(s) to the Recommendation

1. Council provide direction.

Conclusions

Internet voting is a safe, secure and popular way for Aurora residents to cast their ballot during the 2026 Municipal and School Board Elections.

Attachments

None

Previous Reports

[CS25-006 – 2026 Municipal Election – Methods of Voting](#)

Pre-submission Review

Agenda Management Team review via email on April 15, 2025

Approvals

Approved by Patricia De Sario, Director, Corporate Services/Town Solicitor

Approved by Doug Nadorozny, Chief Administrative Officer