

## **Election 2017**

### **Voter engagement and communications summary**

Strathcona County is conducting elections for the positions of Mayor, Councillor and School Board Trustee in 2017.

**Election Day is October 16, 2017.**

#### **Outcome**

Voters are aware of where to vote, and encouraged to come out and vote.

#### **Communications goals**

- Build a high degree of awareness among Strathcona County citizens of when and where to vote, positions to elect, the process for voting, and final results
- Increase interest in the election, and ultimately voter turnout, through effective communications of the voter engagement opportunities
- Instill confidence in election process through timely and accurate communication
- Ensure awareness of the election among Strathcona County employees, including guidelines for any direct employee involvement in the running of the election

#### **Communications and engagement**

Voter engagement and communications for Election 2017 will include various activities and tools to inform citizens and candidates about the election, and introduce some new initiatives aimed at increasing voter turnout.

#### **Similar to 2013, Election 2017 communications/engagement will include:**

- "Where to vote" cards mailed to each household
- Online "Where to vote" search tool
- Advertising: newspaper ads, grocery store AdBars, posters, tent cards, decals, online advertising, UT bills, transit interior/exterior ads, digital signage, outdoor signs
- County/school/community newsletters
- School phone systems and Chamber email fan-outs
- News releases/media coverage
- Web and social media
- Presence at the Chamber Trade Fair
- Youth voter outreach (Grade 6)

**“New” initiatives to enhance voter engagement include:**

Increased education outreach and participation opportunities

- **Voter engagement election kit** – to contain tools and materials that support awareness of the election and education on the importance of voting. The kit would be available for community groups, schools, the public and candidates to use to enable grassroots election promotion and fan-out, to help heighten awareness, interest and voter participation.

The Election Team plans to consult with **Council advisory committees** (e.g., Community Living Advisory Committee, Youth Council) to obtain support for, and input to this initiative. It will ensure organizations such as the Information and Volunteer Centre and Chamber of Commerce are aware of the kit.

Tools and materials would be made available online/self-serve/downloadable, and as limited print materials available for pick up at the Election Office. Items may include posters, handbills, factsheets, stickers, social media image downloads, etc.

- **Election 2017 “education”** advertising and media coverage.
- **Talk it up” Election 2017** in the social media – asking “what is your plan to get out and vote?”, and to promote “bring a friend”.
- **“People on the street” video** – collage of citizens responding to the question, “Why do you plan to vote?...” “Because...”
- Presence in Strathcona County parades including the **Canada Day Parade** to be explored with partners
- Possibly partner with the Chamber of Commerce to **“webcast” candidate forums** and explore other ideas for its involvement in supporting voter engagement (e.g., one idea is a Chamber-initiated challenge between Strathcona County and another municipality for highest voter turnout.)
- **Information session with all Grade 12** students in Strathcona County (SCA, Salisbury, ABJ, Bev Facey & Ardrossan). This continues our partnership with the school boards to build awareness with future voters and their parents.
- Work with the school boards to determine feasibility of encouraging **students to work in the polls** on Election Day.

Increased Advance Vote opportunities and access

- Introduce **continuous advance voting two weeks before the Election** at a central location that has frequent traffic such as the Sherwood Park Mall.

- **New advance voting station locations** are being considered at recreation centres and the Bethel Transit Centre, each provided over one or two days. (Note in 2013, the Advance Vote was held on four dates at the Community Centre and Ardrossan Recreation Complex locations.)
- Work with Strathcona County Transit on possible **free transit on Election Day** for local routes, and SCAT to help address any transportation barriers for people in getting to voting stations.

#### Public engagement feedback

- An election-related question will be in the **2017 Spring Public Survey**, under the level of awareness heading, asking if residents are planning to vote and if not, ask survey respondents to tell us why not.
- An **exit survey** to understand the demographics and reasons for voting will be conducted to assist with planning of future elections.

#### Messaging – additional focus

In addition to core information that citizens need to know to vote on Election Day, more education and messages as to why it is important to vote in a municipal election will be included in Election 2017 communications.

Key message: The people we elect to represent us make important decisions on our behalf. A Council establishes policies and programs that guide delivery of services that affect and touch our daily lives and that shape our future.

### **Key Milestones/Dates**

In addition to ongoing general communications and voter engagement activities leading up to the fall election, notice and promotion of Election 2017 will be boosted at these key milestones:

#### **Milestones**

- **Candidates Guide released**
- **Call for election workers**
- **Special Ballots**
- **Notice of Nomination Day**
- **Nomination Day** – September 18
- **Candidates Declared**
- **Notice of Advance Vote**
- **“Where to Vote” card mailout**
- **Notice of Election** (as legislated)
- **Election results**

#### **Communications timing**

*April*  
*June*  
*Mid July*  
*Early September*  
*Mid September*  
*Mid September*  
*October*  
*Early October*  
*Mid October*  
*Unofficial results: October 16*  
*Official results: October 20*

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Voter Engagement and Communication Summary  
2017 Municipal Election

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