



AGENDA - COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Thursday, July 3, 2025, 9:00 A.M.

COUNCIL CHAMBERS, CITY HALL, 1 CENTENNIAL SQUARE

The City of Victoria is located on the homelands of the Songhees Nation and Xwsepsum Nation

Meeting will recess for a lunch break between 12:00 p.m. and 1:00 p.m.

Pages

A. TERRITORIAL ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

B. INTRODUCTION OF LATE ITEMS

C. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

D. CONSENT AGENDA

E. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

E.1 Council Member Motion: Residential Tenancy Act

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Referred from the June 26, 2025 Committee of the Whole meeting.

A Council Member Motion requesting changes to the Residential Tenancy Act by removing supportive housing and improving safety in supportive housing by permitting police involvement in tenant selection.

F. STAFF REPORTS

F.1 Bringing Bike Share to Victoria

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A report providing an overview of background information, policy context, best practices, options and recommended approaches to supporting a successful bike share system in Victoria and seeking direction from Council for staff to issue a Request for Proposals to allow for a privately owned and operated electric bike share system in the City.

F.2 2025 Crystal Pool Referendum Lessons Learned

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A report regarding lessons learned from the 2025 Crystal Pool Referendum, and outlining proposed improvements for future elections, by-elections and referendums, and providing Council with an opportunity to offer feedback.

G. NOTICE OF MOTIONS

H. CLOSED MEETING, IF REQUIRED

I. ADJOURNMENT OF COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE



Council Member Motion
For the Committee of the Whole Meeting of June 5th, 2025

To: Committee of the Whole
From: Councillor Gardiner
Subject: Residential Tenancy Act

Date: May 27th, 2025

BACKGROUND

At the May 22, 2025 Committee of the Whole meeting I asked Chief Manak what changes he thought would assist supportive housing managers in controlling the behaviour of those housed in supportive housing buildings such as the Swift Street and Fort Street complexes.

My question followed news of the Greater Victoria Emergency Response Team (GVERT) action which involved the seizure of fentanyl, a handgun, and substantial cash located in a supportive housing facility.

In early April I attended the forum put on by Pacifica Housing “Beyond the Noise”. Managers from a few areas in BC described their challenges maintaining a safe place for those housed in the supportive housing complexes they managed. One manager from Victoria described his complex as a “war-zone”.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council recommend that the Mayor write to the Premier, copying the Minister of BC Housing and Municipal Affairs, and the Minister of Public Safety and Solicitor General, requesting:

- 1) that the BC Government make changes to the Residential Tenancy Act as per the BC Coalition for Safe and Sustainable Housing recommendation (removing supportive housing from the Residential Tenancy Act).
- 2) that the BC Government make changes to policy and regulation to permit the local police to work with BC Housing supportive housing contractors during their selection of people who are invited into supportive housing complexes.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "C. Gardiner", written over a horizontal line.

Councillor Gardiner

H.2 Council Member Motion: Residential Tenancy Act

Committee received a Council Member Motion from Councillor Gardiner dated May 27, 2025 requesting changes to the Residential Tenancy Act by removing supportive housing and improving safety in supportive housing by permitting police involvement in tenant selection.

Moved and Seconded:

That Council recommend that the Mayor write to the Premier, copying the Minister of BC Housing and Municipal Affairs, and the Minister of Public Safety and Solicitor General, requesting:

1. that the BC Government make changes to the Residential Tenancy Act as per the BC Coalition for Safe and Sustainable Housing recommendation (removing supportive housing from the Residential Tenancy Act).
2. that the BC Government make changes to policy and regulation to permit the local police to work with BC Housing supportive housing contractors during their selection of people who are invited into supportive housing complexes.

Motion to refer:

Moved and Seconded:

That this matter be referred to the June 26, 2025, Committee of the Whole meeting, and that Council requests Mayor Alto communicate with the B.C. Coalition for Safe and Sustainable Supportive Housing (SaSSH) to clarify advocacy on their behalf to the provincial government, and report back at the June 19, 2025, Committee of the Whole meeting.

OPPOSED (3): Councillor Hammond, Councillor Gardiner, Councillor Coleman

CARRIED (6 to 3)



Committee of the Whole Report

For the Meeting of July 3, 2025

To: Committee of the Whole **Date:** April 4, 2025
From: William Doyle, Director, Engineering and Public Works
Subject: Bringing Bike Share to Victoria

RECOMMENDATION

That Council direct staff to issue a Request for Proposals and prepare amendments to relevant City bylaws to allow for a privately owned and operated electric bike share system in the City of Victoria with an intended launch in spring 2026.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to provide an overview of the opportunity, feasibility and recommended operating model to bring a bike share service to Victoria. A bike share system provides publicly available, easy-to-ride bicycles and helmets that are shared between users.

Many cities in BC, across North America and around the world have established successful bike share systems. Staff have developed a recommended approach for Victoria based on lessons learned and established best practices from these jurisdictions. With a growing network of comfortable infrastructure throughout the city, a strong tourism market, and the City's role as a regional entertainment, shopping and employment centre, Victoria has the ideal conditions to facilitate a successful bike share system.

If approved by Council, implementation of a system would be completed through a competitive public procurement process with the goal to launch in spring 2026. The system would be comprised of electric bikes available across the city in designated parking zones. Bringing e-bike share to Victoria is consistent with policies and goals identified in Go Victoria, the Climate Leadership Plan and the Official Community Plan.

PURPOSE

This report provides an overview of background information, policy context, best practices, options and recommended approaches to supporting a successful bike share system in the City of Victoria. The report seeks direction from Council for staff to issue a Request for Proposals to allow for a privately owned and operated electric bike share system in the city.

BACKGROUND

What is bike share?

A bike share system provides publicly available, easy-to-ride bicycles and helmets that are shared between users and typically rented through a smartphone application. Bike share is particularly well-suited for one-way trips, trips integrated with transit, for visitors, those worried about bike theft and those that do not own a bike or e-bike but want to try one. A bike share system complements other shared micromobility options that have been operating in Victoria since the 1990s, such as car share services.

From 2017-18, a private company, U-Bicycle, operated a dockless bike share service in the region, including within the City of Victoria. As with most early versions of dockless bike share, the pilot was implemented rapidly without an accompanying regulatory framework. The lack of fleet management practices and user requirements resulted in accessibility concerns for pedestrians and operational maintenance challenges for City crews. The lack of regulations and requirements combined with unsophisticated technology led to a high degree of theft and vandalism. These lessons learned have contributed directly to this report's recommendations.

In the last seven years there have been considerable advancements in bike share technology, infrastructure and best practices in regulating and managing these types of services. Devices are custom-built for modern shared micromobility systems, last longer, are easier to park and use, and are less prone to theft and accessibility concerns than their predecessors.

Over the last nine months, staff have extensively reviewed research and publications and met with jurisdictions across the province, bike share operators and internal stakeholders to determine the feasibility and requirements to formally bring bike share to Victoria. There are more than 3,000 bike and/or scooter share systems worldwide, including 40 in Canada. More locally, systems are currently operating in Nanaimo, Courtenay-Comox and fourteen municipalities in Metro Vancouver. In January 2025, the City of Langford closed the intake on their Request for Proposals for a shared micromobility provider.

Why bring bike share to Victoria?

In 2023, according to the North American Bikeshare and Scootershare Association, 37% of shared micromobility trips in North America replaced trips that otherwise would have been taken by motor vehicles. Access to shared micromobility would provide another sustainable transportation option for residents and visitors. Go Victoria, adopted in 2019, includes a goal of accelerating shared mobility choices through dedicated parking, curb space management and the adoption of new bylaws and permitting processes. Go Victoria supports the electrification of shared mobility services which reduce vehicle ownership.

As of 2022, 13% of all trips in Victoria were made by bicycle (one of the highest modal shares in the country). Residents and visitors are supported by nearly 40 km of All Ages and Abilities routes throughout the municipality. With a dense, growing urban environment where 80% of households have one or fewer vehicles, and a strong visitor market, Victoria offers ideal conditions for a successful bike share system. There is increasingly an expectation from visitors that modern cities offer shared micromobility.

Data from the CRD Origin and Destination study (2022) show that while e-bikes make up only 10% of bikes owned, they represent 30% of the cycling trips in the region. In the City of Victoria, 65% of residents own a bicycle, but only 8% own an e-bike.

ISSUES & ANALYSIS

There are different ownership models, parking models and types of devices that can make up bike share systems. This report provides the recommendations for each with details on other models available in Appendix A.

Ownership Models

There are typically four different ownership models for bike share systems:

- Publicly owned and operated.
- Publicly owned and externally operated.
- Privately owned and operated.
- Publicly administered but privately owned and operated.

The recommended model for Victoria is a publicly administered but privately owned and operated system. Under this model, the City would select the operator through a public procurement process. The selected operator would provide the devices and booking system, manage day-to-day operations and set the rental fees to generate revenue. This is currently the most popular approach in Canada as it allows for a high degree of regulation and oversight while limiting the public investment required. This model also allows experience and expertise to be obtained, which could be used if a different ownership model was considered in the future. Disadvantages of this model include a lack of control over pricing for users and implications if the system is not profitable for the operator.

Best practices for successful application of this model include:

- Selecting a sole operator through a competitive procurement process to support financial viability and offer a consistent user experience and set of regulations and expectations.
- Establishing a proactive and collaborative relationship with the operator.
- Introducing a robust framework of rules and regulations that allow for strong municipal oversight and clearly defines the roles and responsibilities of both parties.
- Providing a contract that allows both the city and operator to have clarity and certainty.

Parking Models

There are typically three different parking models for bike share systems:

- Docked
- Dockless
- Parking zones

The recommended parking model for Victoria is requiring shared bikes to be parked in designated parking zones around the city. This model has many of the same benefits of docked systems while replacing the permanent locking stations with a cheaper, lighter and more flexible approach. Typically, geofence technologies (a virtual boundary) are used in combination with a painted, signed boundary to demark the dedicated parking zone. Dependent on location/anticipated demand, these

will be approximately the size of a single vehicle parking space. Parking zones could be upgraded to docked charging stations in the future if desired. Constructing and providing the parking zones for use by the selected operator allows for ownership of the parking zones for potential future versions of shared micromobility systems, provides more control over location and design, and allows the operator to focus on other elements of the system.

Best practices for siting parking zones include:

- Locating them on a consistent basis in visible, easy to access spaces to make them predictable to find.
- Locating them at key destinations on or in close proximity to All Ages and Abilities (AAA) cycling routes to increase convenience.
- Right sizing each parking zone to ensure sufficient space while recognizing competing demands for public space.
- Ensuring sidewalks, pedestrian pathways and boulevards are kept clear to mitigate impacts to pedestrian accessibility and tree health.
- Providing city-wide coverage and equitable distribution of parking zones and available devices to serve all residents.

Devices

There are typically three types of devices that are used in shared micromobility systems:

- Classic bikes
- E-bikes
- E-scooters

The recommended model for shared devices in Victoria is to implement e-bikes only. Shared e-bikes are being used much more widely and for longer trips than classic bikes and are more accessible to a wider range of the population. Disadvantages include that they tend to be priced higher than classic bikes for the user due to being more expensive to purchase and maintain. E-bikes also require charging, which tends to be done through battery swapping, where removable batteries are charged off-site and replaced with fully charged batteries. At this time, e-scooters are not being recommended due to the lack of permanent provincial regulation surrounding their use on streets, along with parking and safety concerns. It is recommended to ensure the e-bike share system is successful prior to considering expansion to other devices.

Best practices for shared e-bikes include:

- GPS on all bikes and batteries.
- Adjustable helmets attached to every bike.
- Speed limiters to control maximum speeds of devices.
- Double kickstand to facilitate parking in parking zones.
- Remote power and locking control.

NEXT STEPS

If the recommendation is approved by Council, staff will prepare a Request for Proposals to solicit a private provider to operate a bike share system in Victoria. Staff would also prepare amendments to relevant City bylaws to ensure proper regulations are in place for the anticipated launch in spring 2026.

OPTIONS & IMPACTS

Option 1 – Issue RFP for E-Bike Share (RECOMMENDED)

Direct staff to issue a Request for Proposals and prepare amendments to relevant City bylaws to bring a privately owned and operated electric bike share system to the City of Victoria for intended launch in spring 2026.

This option will align with the recommended operating model of a publicly administered but privately owned and operated system comprised of electric bicycles available at mandatory parking zones throughout the city. Supporting elements will include community partner engagement and an education and communication campaign.

Option 2 – More Research

Direct staff to conduct additional research and continue monitoring shared micromobility trends and best practices before reporting back to Council at a future date. This option delays any implementation of an e-bike share in Victoria until at least 2027.

Option 3- Do Not Move Forward

Direct staff to not move forward towards bringing an e-bike share system to Victoria.

Accessibility Impact Statement

If embedded into the system, bike share will advance the objectives of the City's Accessibility Framework by enhancing equity and accessibility. By integrating universal design principles, bike share can support the City's commitment to equitable transportation options, public space and the built environment.

E-bikes can offer people with certain disabilities increased mobility, well-being, and independence. E bikes require less physical effort and have been found to be used more by diverse populations in bike share systems. Requiring parking zones, rather than a dockless model, will significantly reduce sidewalk clutter, mitigating accessibility concerns. Equitable placement of parking zones will improve access across the city, particularly in areas with limited transit service. Affordability concerns may be partially addressed through low-income pass programs as part of the Request for Proposals process, with further equity considerations explored through community partner engagement and the procurement process.

To ensure accessibility and safety for all users, including those with disabilities, the Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC) will be consulted throughout the planning and implementation phases. The AAC supports the recommendations for parking zones and the devices to be e-bikes.

Provincial regulatory requirements will restrict access to those old enough to operate an e-bike (14 or 16 years old, dependent on the type of device provided by the operator).

2023–2026 Strategic Plan

Implementing e-bike share aligns with many of Council's strategic priorities in the Strategic Plan including in Transportation, Climate Action and Environmental Stewardship, Community Well-Being and Safety and Economic Health and Vitality.

Impacts to Financial Plan

Operating costs for implementing city-wide bike share are anticipated to be borne by the selected private operator and owner of the system. Any loss of parking meter revenue through the creation of parking zones is anticipated to be offset through the provision of new paid parking spaces throughout the city. Capital costs for building all the parking zones are anticipated to be between \$100,000 and \$200,000 and would be integrated with major capital projects and delivered through the City's existing annual capital Transportation budget. Maintenance costs for parking zones would be integrated into annual operating budget within Public Works. Existing staff resources would also be used to manage the operating relationship with the selected provider.

Official Community Plan Consistency Statement

Shared mobility services, including bike share, aligns with the updated Official Community Plan.

CONCLUSIONS

With more than 40km of All Ages and Abilities cycling routes, increasing density, and the growing popularity of e-bikes, Victoria is now ready for a regulated bike share service. While there are many different models for shared micromobility services, a privately owned and operated bike share system using mandatory parking zones and e-bikes is the best option for Victoria at this time. This model allows for municipal oversight with rules and operating regulations secured through a procurement process and limits financial risk to the City. A well-planned and managed system can further the City's mobility and climate goals and provide valuable services to residents, visitors and commuters.

Respectfully submitted,

John Hicks
Manager, Transportation Planning

Toby Lewis
Acting Assistant Director, Transportation

Stephanie Williams
Coordinator, Transportation Planning

William Doyle,
Director, Engineering and Public Works

Report accepted and recommended by the City Manager.

List of Attachments

Appendix A: Further Information on Micromobility Models

Further Information on Micromobility Models

Ownership Models

There are four primary ownership models for bike share:

- **Publicly owned and operated** - Publicly subsidized, these systems can offer affordable pricing for users leading to higher usage. Advantages include full control over all aspects of the system, but require significant capital investment, internal expertise and risk.
- **Publicly owned and externally operated** - Similar to the publicly owned and operated model requiring public capital investment, expertise is provided instead by an external operator, reducing risk but potentially increasing cost of creating and managing the system. Public-private partnerships fit into this model.
- **Privately owned and operated** - a private company controls and operates all aspects of the system with little to no input from cities, taking all the risk including capital investments. This model tends to be used in dockless systems which require less infrastructure and are characterized by higher prices and fewer rules.
- **Publicly administered but privately owned and operated service (recommended)** - This is currently the most popular approach in Canada as it allows for a high degree of regulation while limiting the public investment required. Disadvantages of this model include a lack of control over pricing for users and implications if the system is not profitable for the operator. This model allows experience and expertise to be obtained which could be used if a different financial model was considered in the future.

Parking Models

There are typically three primary parking models for bike share:

- **Docked** - Physical locking stations which reduce concern over errant bike parking and theft but require high capital costs and long lead times for the infrastructure and offer less flexibility to move stations when required.
- **Dockless** - Also known as free-floating, this model allows bikes to be parked anywhere within certain parameters, making the system quick and inexpensive to implement. Dockless systems are often characterized by errant parking of bikes, sidewalk accessibility concerns and can be unpredictable for the user on where to find bikes. This model is not appropriate for a dense, urban environment and requires significant regulations and rules to be followed. An early version of the dockless model, operated by the private company U-Bicycle, was previously present in Victoria, Saanich and Oak Bay.

- **Parking Zones (recommended)** - This model has many of the same benefits of docked systems while replacing the permanent locking stations with a cheaper, lighter and more flexible approach. Typically, geofence technologies (a virtual boundary) are used in combination with a painted, signed boundary to mark the dedicated parking zone. Dependent on location/anticipated demand, these will be approximately the size of a single vehicle parking space. Parking zones could be upgraded to docked charging stations in the future if desired. Constructing and providing the parking zones for use by the selected operator allows for ownership of the parking zones for potential future versions of shared micromobility systems, more control over location and design, and allows the operator to focus on other elements of the system.

Devices

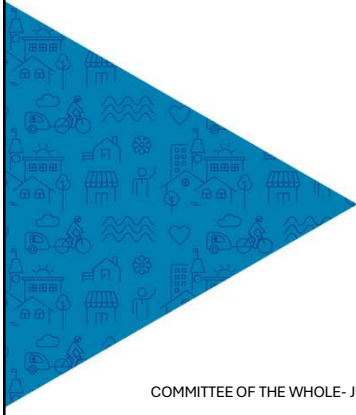
There are typically three types of devices in shared micromobility systems:

- **Classic bikes** - Analogue, pedal bikes used in older, traditional bike share systems. These are cheaper to purchase and maintain but pose the largest barrier to entry in terms of physical effort required and can lead to significant rebalancing challenges. Almost all systems are now moving towards offering at least some e-bikes, due to their popularity.
- **E-scooters** - Electric, upright scooters are proving popular, particularly with younger populations, visitors and those less familiar with bicycles. However, they can lead to more operational issues, both real and perceived, including those related to parking infractions, irresponsible riding and safety. They also tend to be taken for shorter trips, more likely to replace walking trips. While many cities are continuing to introduce shared scooters, others are banning them outright or requiring physical docking stations (such as Vancouver). At this time, e-scooters are not being recommended due to the lack of permanent Provincial regulation surrounding their use on streets, along with parking and safety concerns. It is recommended to ensure the e-bike share system is successful prior to considering expansion to other forms of micromobility and allow time for both staff and the public to adapt to shared mobility in Victoria.
- **E-bikes (recommended)** - Like personal electric bicycles, shared e-bikes are being used much more widely and for longer trips than classic bikes and are more accessible to a wider range of the population. Disadvantages include that they tend to be priced higher than classic bikes for the user due to being more expensive to purchase and maintain. E-bikes also require charging, which tends to be done through battery swapping, where removable batteries are charged off-site and replaced with fully charged batteries. In more established, publicly owned systems, batteries can be charged at electrified docking stations. This reduces labour costs of battery swapping but requires high capital costs for the infrastructure which cannot be easily relocated.

2025

CITY OF VICTORIA | Engineering and Public Works

Bringing Bike Share to Victoria



COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE - JULY 3, 2025



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Outline

- Bikeshare overview
- Background and Victoria Context
- Operating Models
- Financial Implications
- Access Considerations
- Timing



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What is Bike Share?

- Publicly available
- Shared between users
- Locations across the city
- Unlock and pay through app
- Adjustable helmets attached to bike or BYOH



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Who uses Bike Share?

Those who:

- Don't own a bike/e-bike
- Want to make a one-way trip
- Want to integrate their trip with transit
- Are concerned about bike theft
- Are visiting



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Previous Experience - U-Bicycle Pilot Project

- Very early version of a dockless system
- No or few rules and regulations
- Little collaboration with City
- Theft and vandalism
- Many lessons learned



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Why Bring Bike Share to Victoria?

**Draft
OCP Target:**
By 2050, 80% of
trips taken are by
walking, rolling,
cycling or transit

GOALS

- 1 Make every street safer and more enjoyable for walking
- 2 Make cycling safer, more convenient and comfortable
- 3 Evaluate, prevent and remove barriers to accessibility in our transportation network
- 4 Build a community culture that supports accessibility and active transportation



- Bike share aligns with Go Victoria, Climate Leadership Plan, Strategic Plan and direction of draft updated Official Community Plan
- In 2023, 37% of trips taken by bike or scooter share in North America replaced what would have been motor vehicle trips

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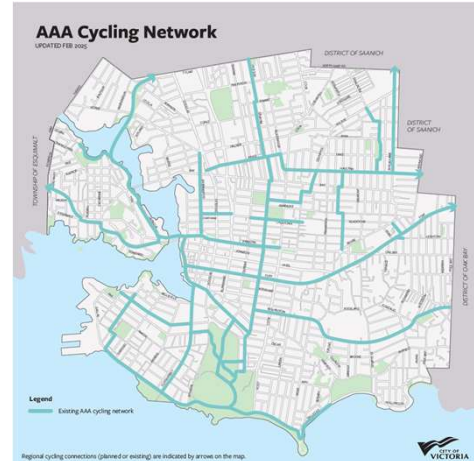
What has Changed in Victoria?

All Ages and Abilities (AAA) cycling network

- Over 40km built since 2017
- 2024 Transportation Association of Canada Achievement Award

Not Just Bikes

- Road safety improvements for everyone
- Pedestrian and accessibility upgrades
- Landscaping
- Placemaking
- Skateboards
- Scooters



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What has Changed in Victoria?

Results

- 13% of all trips by bike ↑
- 31% of all trips by walking ↑
- Cycling/walking injuries down 37% ↓
- 36% decrease in vehicle transportation GHG emissions ↓
- E-bikes being used at high rates yet low ownership rates



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Shared Mobility in Victoria

- 80% of households in Victoria have one or fewer vehicle ↑
- 10% of households belong to a car-share organization ↑
 - Modo and Evo are both expanding
- Shared mobility is established and successful



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What has Changed in Bike Share Systems?

- Better technology
- Fewer, more experienced providers
- More best practices including regulatory framework
- Better working relationship between providers and municipalities
- More data demonstrating effectiveness and popularity



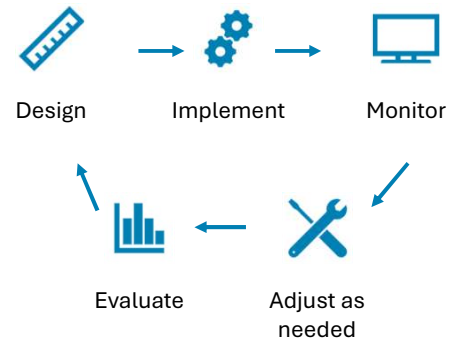
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Key Considerations

- Ownership Models
- Devices
- Parking Models



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Ownership Models

Not Currently Recommended

- Publicly owned and operated
- Publicly owned but externally operated
- Privately owned and operated



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Ownership Models

Currently Recommended

- Publicly administered but privately owned and operated
 - Minimizes risk, expertise and capital investment required
 - Allows for more regulation around devices, parking and rebalancing but not pricing
 - Selected through procurement



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Devices

Not Currently Recommended

Classic bikes

- First generation of bike share
- Can be clunky and hard to ride
- Largest barrier to entry in terms of knowing how to ride
- Cheaper to purchase and maintain



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Devices

Not Currently Recommended

Electric Scooters

- Lack of permanent provincial regulation
- More safety concerns and require more regulations
- More concerns around parking
- Easier to steal
- Very popular particularly with tourists



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Devices

Recommended

Electric Bikes

Advantages:

- Easier for more people to ride
- Easier to rebalance
- Harder to steal
- More popular than classic bikes

Disadvantages:

- More expensive
- Require charging
- Provincial restrictions on minimum age requirements

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Shared E-Bikes would Include:

- GPS on all bikes and batteries
- Adjustable helmets attached to every bike
- Speed limiters to control maximum speeds of devices
- Double kickstand to facilitate parking in parking zones
- Remote power and locking control



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Parking Models

Not Currently Recommended

- Docked



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Parking Models

Not Currently Recommended

- Dockless



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Parking Models

Recommended

- Parking Zones
 - Virtual and physical boundaries
 - Keep pedestrian areas clear
 - Visible, easy to access spaces (often at intersections)
 - At key destinations
 - On or near AAA routes
 - City-wide coverage



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Financial Implications

- Purchase and maintenance of bikes to be fully covered by provider
- Estimated \$100,000 to \$200,000 in City capital investment to construct parking zones across the city
- Minimal operating expenses for City expected
- Can be completed within existing Transportation budget



²¹ COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE- JULY 3, 2025



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Accessibility and Equity Considerations

- Devices
 - E-bikes are easier to ride for more people
- Parking zones
 - Mitigate sidewalk and accessibility concerns
- Access considerations
 - Access for targeted groups can be improved through equity programs (e.g. low income)

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Timing

- Summer 2025
 - Targeted community partner engagement
 - Parking zone engagement
 - Procurement – Request for Proposal to select operator
- Fall 2025 – Winter 2026
 - Parking zone planning
 - Bylaw amendments
- Spring 2026
 - Launch

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Recommendation

That Council direct staff to issue a Request for Proposals and prepare amendments to relevant City bylaws to allow for a privately owned and operated electric bike share system in the City of Victoria with an intended launch in spring 2026.

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**Committee of the Whole Report
For the Meeting of June 26, 2025**

To: Committee of the Whole **Date:** June 4, 2025
From: Curt Kingsley, City Clerk
Subject: Crystal Pool Referendum - Lessons Learned

RECOMMENDATIONS

That Council direct staff to prepare the necessary bylaw amendments to:

1. Authorize the Chief Election Officer to provide exceptions to deadline for mail ballot voting to account for extraordinary circumstances.
2. Review signage regulations and expand regulations governing election signage to apply to all voting opportunities, including Provincial and Federal elections.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to present lessons learned from the 2025 Crystal Pool Referendum, outline proposed improvements for future elections, by-elections, and referendums, and provide Council with an opportunity to offer feedback.

Voter turnout for the referendum was 15,547 voters, representing 21.18% of registered voters. To facilitate participation, the City offered 10 voting places on general voting day, three advance voting opportunities, mail ballot voting, and special voting opportunities at four residential care facilities.

To enhance accessibility for all voters, the City implemented the following measures:

- Wheelchair-accessible voting places at all general and advance voting locations;
- Clearly designated curbside voting at all locations;
- An accessible voting machine available at Crystal Garden during both advance and general voting;
- Mail ballot voting available to all eligible electors;
- Special voting opportunities at participating residential care facilities.

The City exceeded statutory advertising requirements to encourage voter participation. In addition to required notices, the City employed social media, mailed postcards to all households, and advertised through print and radio channels.

Staff received concerns from the public on a desired voting location, ballot questions, returned ballots, and online voting.

The overall cost of the 2025 Referendum was \$496,705.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to present lessons learned from the 2025 Crystal Pool Referendum, outline proposed improvements for future elections, by-elections, and referendums, and provide Council with an opportunity to offer feedback.

BACKGROUND

Legislative Framework

General local elections, by-elections, and referenda are regulated under the *Local Government Act* and the *Local Elections Campaign Financing Act* with certain discretion to local procedures established by bylaw and policy.

The *Election Procedures Bylaw* (Appendix 1) regulates the conduct of City elections in Victoria, including automated voting machines and mail ballots. It outlines procedures for nominations, voter identification, voting opportunities, and post-election steps. Additionally, it includes regulations for election signage and special voting provisions for hospitals and residential care facilities.

The referendum was the first voting opportunity since Council adopted the *Election Policy Guidelines* (Appendix 2) on October 19, 2023. The guidelines provide a comprehensive framework to support the Chief Election Officer for planning and conducting elections and voting opportunities, including: a minimum number of voting locations, special voting curbside voting, considerations for selecting voting locations with geographic proximity to electors, areas of population density, and multiple transportation options.

2025 Crystal Pool Referendum

Victoria voted on whether the City may borrow up to \$168.9 million to replace the Crystal Pool and to select a preferred site option: Central Park North or Central Park South. General voting was held February 8, 2025, and voter turnout was 21.18%. A total of 15,547 of 73,409 eligible voters cast ballots. The total number of ballots cast during advance voting was 1,188. Voter turnout was consistent with historical levels for by-elections and referendums.

The City had ten voting locations for general voting day (Appendix 3) and three advance voting opportunities were at Crystal Garden. Voting locations were chosen following the Election Policy Guidelines.

Special voting took place at four care facilities, each with 50 or more units, where a total of 68 ballots were cast. This is fewer than 2018 with 403 ballots at 14 facilities, and 2022 with 306 ballots at 13 facilities. Staff contacted every eligible facility and four facilities decided to participate.

The City first offered mail ballot voting to all eligible voters in the 2020 by-election. The City's *Election Procedures Bylaw* permits mail ballot voting and outlines the procedures. 1,212 mail ballots were cast

in the referendum. Mail ballot voting has gradually decreased since first offered, consistent with post-pandemic trends to return to in-person voting. 60 mail ballots were received after the legislated deadline of 8:00 p.m. on general voting day and were therefore not counted, in accordance with provincial legislation.

The table below shows ballots cast at each voting location or opportunity:

Voting Location	Votes Cast	%Turnout
Crystal Garden – Advance Voting	2,367	3.22%
Special Voting	68	0.093%
Mail Ballots	1,212	1.65%
Crystal Garden – General Voting Day	1,030	1.40%
Central Middle School	1,430	1.95%
George Jay Elementary School	1,614	2.20%
Glenlyon Norfolk School	628	0.86%
James Bay Elementary School	1,446	1.97%
Margaret Jenkins Elementary School	797	1.09%
Oaklands Elementary School	1,351	1.84%
Quadra Elementary School	1,101	1.50%
Total	15,547	21.18%

ISSUES & ANALYSIS

Voting Opportunities

General Voting Locations and Technology

Ten general voting locations were selected in accordance with the *Election Policy Guidelines*. All voting locations were spacious and allowed voters to wait inside, which was a key consideration due to the timing of the referendum in February. While some voting locations had lines during peak hours, each voting location had sufficient staff levels, and the City did not receive any complaints about lines or wait times.

Staff were satisfied with the voting locations for the Referendum and will continue to utilize the *Election Policy Guidelines* to assess options for 2026.

Each voting location had a minimum of two ballot tabulators, with a third ballot tabulator available if needed. Electronic voter check-in, first introduced in 2014, providing several benefits including automatically updating the voter list, increased confidentiality, audit functions, and access to demographic information. It also facilitated a “vote anywhere” model, as opposed to designated voting locations that can be a barrier for voters.

Advance Voting

The Election Policy Guidelines set a minimum of at least two advance voting locations with four advance voting days. A second location and for a fourth advance voting day was planned for the Referendum, however emergent circumstances resulted in the cancellation of this voting opportunity without sufficient time to plan, book, and staff a new opportunity.

Special Voting

Voter turnout at participating care facilities was lower than expected. Most care facility administrators expressed a preference for mail ballot voting due to administrative challenges and health and safety concerns.

Mail Ballot Voting

Mail ballot voting continues to be effective in supporting voter accessibility and participation, particularly for individuals unable to attend in-person voting opportunities due to health, mobility, or scheduling challenges.

The City's *Election Procedures Bylaw* outlines the process for requesting, issuing, and receiving mail ballots ahead of general voting day. Following the 2020 by-election—the first-time mail ballot voting was offered to all eligible voters after a provincial legislative change—staff implemented procedural and bylaw changes to enhance efficiency. Lessons learned from the high mail ballot volume in 2020 informed improvements ahead of the 2022 General Local Election, including changes to expedite the counting process and enable earlier release of preliminary results.

The 2025 Referendum was the second election utilizing these updated procedures, and mail ballots were successfully counted in a timely manner on election night.

In response to operational challenges experienced during the 2022 General Local Election—when voters could request mail ballots until 8:00 p.m. on the final voting day—staff implemented procedural changes for the 2025 Referendum. These changes included:

- A deadline for mail ballot requests one week before general voting day; and,
- Earlier issuance of mail ballots, enabled by the absence of candidate nominations.

These adjustments allowed staff to better support voting place operations during the critical final days of voting. The deadline date was widely communicated in all referendum-related materials, and staff did not receive much feedback indicating this resulted in challenges for voters.

Two complaints were received from voters with medical concerns who missed the mail ballot request deadline. Staff are not aware if those voters attended a voting location instead. For greater certainty, staff recommend Council amend the *Election Procedures Bylaw* to permit the CEO, or designate, to issue mail ballots beyond the stated cut-off in extraordinary circumstances. This would accommodate voters facing sudden medical or personal emergencies.

Although the Canada Post labour disruption had concluded prior to the issuance of mail ballots, delivery delays persisted due to ongoing service backlogs. In anticipation of this, staff proactively communicated with voters that they could opt to pick up mail ballot packages directly from City Hall, thereby mitigating potential impacts on ballot return timelines.

Election Administration

Referendum Ballot

The 2025 Referendum was the City's third referendum in twenty-five years. While referenda follow the same procedures as local elections under the *Local Government Act*, there are specific requirements for a referendum including the separation of ballot questions. To comply with the legal requirements, the ballots were designed to have one question on the front and one question on the back and the voting tabulators were calibrated with a safeguard to prevent accidental casting of an incomplete ballot. Staff received questions and concerns from voters about the ability to respond to one question and the privacy of their vote. Staff have documented the concerns raised by voters and will ensure the concerns are addressed in the future referenda.

Online Voting

Staff received complaints and inquiries about lack of online voting. The *Local Government Act* prohibits online voting. There have been UBCM resolutions in 2011, 2015, 2019, and 2024 supporting online voting, the Province has not made the legislative changes to permit it.

Recommended Improvements

Public Access to Nomination Documents

The *Local Government Act* requires in-person public access to nomination documents and it allows for the provision of online public access only to these documents when specified in an election procedures bylaw. The City's Election Procedures Bylaw provisions for online availability of nomination documents has made personal information broadly available and staff received privacy concerns from candidates and nominators.

Following Council's previous direction on the lessons learned from the 2022 General Election, staff will recommend changes to the *Election Procedures Bylaw* to balance candidate and nominator privacy concerns with online availability of nomination documents.

Election Signage

Staff identified gaps in the City's current regulations regarding the placement of election signage during Provincial and Federal elections. While the *Election Procedures Bylaw* regulates signage related to general local elections, by-elections, and referenda, it does not explicitly extend to other voting opportunities. Staff recommend updates to City regulations to ensure signage rules apply consistently across all elections, as well as review opportunities to improve signage regulations.

Mail Ballot Voting

Staff experienced two situations where a voter missed the mail ballot request deadline due to unusual or urgent medical-related circumstances. Staff recommend Council amend the *Election Procedures Bylaw* to permit the CEO, or designate, to issue mail ballots beyond the request deadline in extraordinary circumstances to accommodate voters facing sudden medical or personal emergencies.

OPTIONS & IMPACTS

Option 1 – Approve staff’s recommendations in this report.

That Council direct staff to prepare the necessary bylaw amendments to:

1. Authorize the Chief Election Officer to provide exceptions to deadline for mail ballot voting to account for extraordinary circumstances.
2. Review signage regulations and expand regulations governing election signage to apply to all voting opportunities, including Provincial and Federal elections.

Implications:

- Improves accessibility if unable to attend a voting location due to extraordinary circumstances.
- Regulation of election signage for all voting opportunities establishes clear and consistent guidelines to protect public safety and public amenities.

Option 2 – That Council provide alternate direction to staff.

This option would require Council to provide direction to staff.

Implications:

- Potential for improvements based on lessons learned would not be implemented.

Accessibility Impact Statement

Provisions in legislation permit assistance to be offered to voters who may have difficulty voting without assistance or entering the voting place where curbside voting is an option. In addition, mail ballot and curbside voting is an opportunity available to anyone.

Impacts to Financial Plan

The budget for referendum was \$600,000, which is consistent with the 2022 general election. However, unlike a general local election, the school district does not contribute to 1/3 costs of a municipal referendum. The overall cost of the 2025 Referendum was \$496,705.

CONCLUSIONS

The 2025 Crystal Pool Referendum allowed staff to apply new guidelines and try out ideas before the next general local election. Staff recommend that Council amend bylaws to allow exceptions to the

mail ballot voting deadline and expand election signage regulations. These proposed changes would enhance mail voting accessibility and clarify election signage rules.

Respectfully submitted,

Monika Fedyczkowska
Legislation and Policy
Analyst

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Legislation and Policy
Analyst

Curt Kingsley
City Clerk

Susanne Thompson
Deputy City
Manager and
Chief Financial Officer

Report accepted and recommended by the City Manager

List of Attachments

Appendix 1: Election Procedures Bylaw

Appendix 2: Election Policy Guidelines

Appendix 3: 2025 Voting Locations

ELECTION PROCEDURES BYLAW

A BYLAW OF THE CITY OF VICTORIA

The purpose of this Bylaw is to regulate the conduct of City elections and other voting, including the use of automated voting machines and mail ballots.

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29 Repeal

30 Effective date

Under its statutory powers, including sections 8(4) and 65 of the *Community Charter* and Parts 3 and 4 of the *Local Government Act*, the Council of The Corporation of the Corporation of the City of Victoria in an open meeting enacts the following provisions:

PART 1 – INTERPRETATION

Title

1 This Bylaw may be cited as the “Election Procedures Bylaw”.

Definitions & interpretation

2 (1) In this Bylaw

“acceptable mark”

means a mark that is identifiable by the vote tabulating unit, and is made by an elector in the space provided on the ballot opposite the name of any candidate or opposite either ‘yes’ or ‘no’ on a question.

“automated vote counting system”

means a system that counts and records votes, processes and stores election results, and is comprised of the following equipment having the functions indicated:

(a) a number of ballot-scanning vote tabulating units, each of which rests on a ballot box, and

(b) a number of portable ballot boxes;

“ballot”

means a single automated ballot card designed for use in an automated vote counting system, which shows

(a) the names of all of the candidates for the office of Mayor and each office of councillor, and

(b) all of the choices on all of the questions on which the opinion or assent of the electors is sought;

“ballot return override procedure”

means the use, by an election official, of a device on a vote tabulating unit, that causes the unit to accept a returned ballot;

“election headquarters”

means City Hall, located at #1 Centennial Square, Victoria, British Columbia;

“election”

means an election for the number of persons required to fill an office on the City Council;

“elector”

means a resident elector or non-resident property elector of the City;

“general local election”

means the election held in 2022 and in every 4th year after 2022 for the mayor and councillors of the City.

“general voting day”

means

- (a) for a general local election, the 3rd Saturday of October in the year of the election,
- (b) for elections other than a general local election, the date set under sections 54, 55 or 152 of the *Local Government Act*,
- (c) for other voting, the date set under section 174 of the *Local Government Act*;

“memory card”

means the storage device that stores all of the permanent results for the vote tabulating unit;

“other voting”

means voting on a matter referred to in section 170 of the *Local Government Act*;

“portable ballot box”

means a ballot box that is used as a voting place where a vote tabulating unit is not being used or is not functioning;

“question”

means the bylaw or other matter on which the assent or the opinion of the electors is sought by other voting;

“register tape”

means the printed record, generated from a vote tabulating unit at the close of voting on general voting day, that shows the number of votes

(a) for each candidate for the office of Mayor and each office of councillor, and

(b) for and against each question;

“returned ballot”

means a voted ballot, inserted into a vote tabulating unit, that is not accepted and is returned by the unit to the elector with an explanation of the marking error that caused the ballot to be unacceptable;

“secrecy sleeve”

means an open-ended folder or envelope used to cover ballots to conceal the choices made by each elector;

“vote tabulating unit”

means a device into which voted ballots are inserted, and that scans each ballot and records the number of votes for each candidate and for and against each question.

- (2) Each provision of this Bylaw is intended to be independent of all other provisions to the extent that if any provision is declared invalid for any reason by a court of competent jurisdiction, all other provisions of this Bylaw remain valid and enforceable.

Application

- 3 This Bylaw applies to all elections and all other voting.

PART 2 – CONDUCT OF ELECTIONS & OTHER VOTING

Nomination deposits

- 4 (1) A nomination for election to hold office as a member of Council must be accompanied by the following nomination deposits:

- (a) \$100.00 for each candidate for the office of Mayor;
 - (b) \$100.00 for each candidate for the office of councillor.
- (2) A nomination deposit must be held and dealt with by the chief election officer in accordance with section 88 of the *Local Government Act*.

Number of nominators

- 5 A nomination for election to hold office as a member of Council must be made by at least the following number of qualified nominators:
- (1) 25 for each candidate for the office of Mayor;
 - (2) 25 for each candidate for the office of councillor.

Signage

- 6 An election sign for an election or municipal referendum is permitted on property only in accordance with the specifications and requirements in Schedule A of this Bylaw.

Provincial list of voters

- 7
- (1) As authorized under section 76 of the *Local Government Act*, the most current Provincial list of voters prepared under the *Election Act*, available at the time an election or other voting is to be held, is the register of resident electors for the City.
 - (2) The Provincial list of voters becomes the register of resident electors no later than 52 days before general voting day for each election or other voting.
 - (3) A person who, on the basis of the Provincial list of voters, appears to meet the qualifications to be registered as a resident elector of the City is deemed to be registered as a resident elector of the City.

Voter identification

- 8
- (1) The chief election officer or the presiding election official is authorized to require an elector to produce identification in the form of any class of document set out in section 3 of B.C. Regulation 380/93 [*Local Government Elections Regulation*].
 - (2) The chief election officer or the presiding election official may take other reasonable precautions to ensure that an elector is qualified to vote and votes only once in an election.

Additional general voting opportunities

- 9 As authorized under sections 106 and 170 of the *Local Government Act*, the Council authorizes its chief election officer to
- (a) establish additional voting opportunities for general voting day for each election and other voting; and

- (b) designate the voting places and voting hours for the voting opportunities under subsection (a), within the notice requirements and limits set out in section 106(2)-(4) of the *Local Government Act*.

Required advance voting opportunities

- 10 As required under sections 107, 170 and 175 of the *Local Government Act*, advance voting opportunities must be held, for each election and for other voting, on the following days before general voting day:
 - (a) on the 10th day before general voting day; and
 - (b) on the Monday immediately preceding general voting day, or, if the Monday immediately preceding general voting day is a holiday, on the next day that is not a holiday.

Additional advance voting opportunities

- 11 As authorized under section 108, 170 and 175 of the *Local Government Act*, the chief election officer is authorized to establish dates for additional advance voting opportunities and to designate the voting places and set the dates and voting hours for those additional advance voting opportunities.

Special voting opportunities

- 12
 - (1) The chief election officer must establish the dates and voting hours when and the places where special voting opportunities will be conducted for each election or other voting in accordance with this section and any additional requirements under the *Local Government Act*.
 - (2) The only electors who may vote at a special voting opportunity are electors who, on the date on which the special voting opportunity is held and before the end of the voting hours for that special voting opportunity, have been admitted as patients to the hospital at which the special voting opportunity is held, or are residents at a care facility with at least 50 residents for a which a special voting opportunity is being conducted.
 - (3) The voting hours for a special voting opportunity must not be earlier than 9:00 a.m. or later than 4:00 p.m. of the day on which the special voting opportunity takes place.
 - (4) The chief election officer may limit the number of candidates' representatives who may be present at a special voting opportunity, subject to section 109(3) of the *Local Government Act*.

PART 3 – AUTOMATED VOTING

Use of voting machines

- 13 Voting may be conducted in a general local election and other voting in the City by using an automated vote counting system.

Automated voting procedures

- 14 (1) When an elector enters a voting place, and before a ballot is issued to the elector, the presiding election official must direct an election official to provide a demonstration of the method for voting by using an automated vote counting system to the elector, if requested by the elector.
- (2) After receiving a demonstration under subsection (1), if applicable, an elector must proceed to the election official responsible for issuing ballots.
- (3) The election official responsible for issuing ballots
 - (a) must ensure that the elector
 - (i) is qualified to vote in the election, and
 - (ii) completes the voting book as required by the *Local Government Act*; and
 - (b) after satisfying paragraph (a), must give to the elector a ballot, a secrecy sleeve if the elector requests it, and any further instructions requested by the elector.
- (4) After receiving a ballot, an elector
 - (a) must proceed immediately to a voting compartment;
 - (b) may vote only by making an acceptable mark on the ballot
 - (i) beside the name of each candidate of choice up to the maximum number of candidates to be elected for the office of mayor and for each office of councillor, and
 - (ii) beside either 'yes' or 'no' in the case of each question;
 - (c) must place the marked ballot into a secrecy sleeve, if applicable, proceed to the vote tabulating unit, and under the supervision of the election official in attendance, insert the ballot directly into the vote tabulating unit; and
 - (d) may request a replacement ballot from the election official in attendance if
 - (i) before inserting a ballot into the vote tabulating unit the elector decides that they made a mistake when marking the ballot, or
 - (ii) a ballot is returned by the vote tabulating unit.
- (5) The presiding election official or alternate presiding election official must carry out the following procedures if an elector requests a replacement ballot in accordance with subsection (4)(d):
 - (a) issue the replacement ballot to the elector;

- (b) mark as “spoiled” the ballot that is being replaced; and
 - (c) retain all spoiled ballots separately from all other ballots.
- (6) Spoiled ballots must not be included in the counting of votes on ballots.
- (7) For the purpose of counting acceptable marks, the presiding election official must reinsert a returned ballot into the vote tabulating unit by using the ballot return override procedure if the elector
 - (a) has not damaged the returned ballot to the extent that it cannot be reinserted; and
 - (b) does not want a replacement ballot.
- (8) A ballot counted by the vote tabulating unit is valid and all acceptable marks contained on that ballot must be counted subject to a determination made under a judicial recount.
- (9) An elector must immediately leave the voting place after the vote tabulating unit indicates that the elector’s ballot has been accepted.
- (10) The election official supervising a vote tabulating unit must insert into a portable ballot box all ballots delivered by electors during a time when the vote tabulating unit is not functioning and is not replaced.
- (11) An election official must carry out the following procedures under the supervision of the presiding election official as soon as is reasonably possible after a nonfunctioning vote tabulating unit becomes operational or is replaced with another vote tabulating unit:
 - (a) remove the ballots contained in the portable ballot box that temporarily replaced the nonfunctioning vote tabulating unit; and
 - (b) insert into the functioning vote tabulating unit the ballots removed under paragraph (a).
- (12) For the purpose of counting acceptable marks after the close of voting on general voting day, and under the supervision of the presiding election official, an election official must use the ballot return override procedure to reinsert into a vote tabulating unit ballots that were temporarily stored in a portable ballot box under subsection (10) and that are treated as returned ballots by the vote tabulating unit into which they were placed under subsection (11).

Advance voting opportunity procedures

- 15 (1) Vote tabulating units must be used to conduct the vote at all advance voting opportunities.
- (2) Voting procedures at advance voting opportunities must follow as closely as possible those described in section 14.

- (3) At the close of voting at each advance voting opportunity the presiding election official must ensure that
 - (a) no additional ballots are inserted in the vote tabulating unit;
 - (b) the portable ballot box is sealed to prevent insertion of any ballots;
 - (c) the register tapes in the vote tabulating unit are not generated; and
 - (d) the memory card of the vote tabulating unit is secured.
- (4) At the close of voting at the final advance voting opportunity the presiding election official must
 - (a) ensure that any remaining ballots in the portable ballot box are inserted into the vote tabulating unit;
 - (b) secure the vote tabulating unit so that no more ballots can be inserted; and
 - (c) deliver the vote tabulating unit together with the memory card and all other materials used in the election to the chief election officer at election headquarters.

Special voting opportunity procedures

- 16 (1) A portable ballot box must be used for all special voting opportunities unless the chief election officer determines that it is practical to use a vote tabulating unit.
- (2) The presiding election official at a special voting opportunity must proceed in accordance with
 - (a) sections 14(2), (3), and (4)(a), (b), and (c) to the extent that they are applicable when a portable ballot box is being used; and
 - (b) section 15 when a vote tabulating unit is being used.
- (3) The presiding election official at a special voting opportunity
 - (a) must ensure that a portable ballot box is secured when not in use; and
 - (b) at the close of voting at the final special voting opportunity must seal a portable ballot box and return it together with all other election materials to the chief election officer.

PART 4 – MAIL BALLOTS

Mail ballot voting and registration authorized

- 17 (1) Voting by mail ballot and elector registration by mail in conjunction with mail ballot voting are authorized.

- (2) All electors may apply to vote by mail ballot in accordance with section 18.
- (3) Once a mail ballot package has been accepted by the chief election officer, that elector may only vote by mail ballot.

Application procedure for mail ballot

- 18 (1) An elector must only apply to vote by mail ballot in the manner and form required by the chief election officer, within the time limits established by the chief election officer.
- (2) The chief election officer must make mail ballot applications available at least 21 days in advance of an election.
- (3) Upon receipt of a request for a mail ballot and as soon as practicable, the chief election officer or designated election official must:
 - (a) make available to the applicant, a mail ballot package as specified in section 110(7) of the *Local Government Act*, together with an elector registration application where required; and
 - (b) record and, upon request, make available for inspection:
 - (i) the name and address of the person to whom the mail ballot package was issued; and
 - (ii) information as to whether or not the person is registered as an elector.

Voting procedure for mail ballot

- 19 (1) In order to vote using a mail ballot, the elector must mark the ballot in accordance with the instructions contained in the mail ballot package provided by the chief election officer.
- (2) After marking the mail ballot, the elector must:
 - (a) place the mail ballot in the secrecy sleeve, and seal the secrecy sleeve;
 - (b) place the secrecy sleeve in the certification envelope, and complete and sign the certification on such envelope, and then seal the certification envelope;
 - (c) place the certification envelope, together with a completed elector registration application, if required, in the outer envelope, and then seal the outer envelope; and
 - (d) return the outer envelope and its contents to the chief election officer at the address specified so that it is received no later than the close of voting on general voting day.

Mail ballot acceptance or rejection

- 20 (1) The chief election officer or designated election official must:
- (a) record the date a mail ballot package is received;
 - (b) examine the certification envelope and elector registration application, if applicable, and make a mark on the certification envelope as “accepted” if satisfied or “rejected” if not satisfied as to:
 - (i) the identity and entitlement to vote of the elector;
 - (ii) the completeness of the certification envelope;
 - (iii) the completeness of the elector registration application, if applicable;
 - (iv) whether the mail ballot has been received before the close of general voting day; and
 - (c) retain certification envelopes to deal with a challenge of an elector under section 22.
- (2) If a certification envelope is marked as rejected under subsection 1(b), the chief election officer or designated election official must note the reasons for the rejection and the mail ballot must not be counted in the election.

Counting of mail ballots through vote tabulating unit

- 21 (1) The following procedures must be followed in counting mail ballots accepted under section 20(1):
- (a) certification envelopes must only be opened by the chief election officer or designated election official in the presence of at least one other person, including any scrutineers present;
 - (b) the chief election officer or designated election official must place all secrecy envelopes into a designated ballot box;
 - (c) under the direction of the chief election officer, after the secrecy envelopes have been placed in the designated ballot box, then:
 - (i) the ballot box containing the secrecy envelopes must be opened;
 - (ii) the secrecy envelopes must be removed and opened; and
 - (iii) the ballots contained in the secrecy envelopes must be inserted into a vote tabulating unit.

- (2) The chief election officer must initiate the process in subsection (1) at least two days before the general voting day but, in order to process a high volume of mail ballots, may carry out the process every day between 9:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. beginning on the Monday five days prior to general voting day until the close of general voting day.
- (3) The chief election officer or a designated election official must notify candidates of the scheduled dates and times for counting mail ballots by vote tabulating units at least 24 hours prior to the count.

Challenge of elector: mail ballots

- 22 (1) A person exercising the right to vote by mail ballot may be challenged in accordance with, and on the grounds specified in section 126 of the *Local Government Act* from the time a mail ballot package is requested up until 4 p.m. on the day the mail ballot package is received by the chief election officer or designated election official.
- (2) The provisions of section 126(2) to (5) of the *Local Government Act* apply when challenging a person's right to vote.
- (3) If a challenge has been resolved and the person is permitted to vote, the chief election officer must process the mail ballot package in accordance with section 21(1) and keep a record in accordance with section 126(5) of the *Local Government Act*.

Elector's name already used

- 23 Where, upon receiving a request for a mail ballot, the chief election officer determines that another person has voted or has already been issued a mail ballot in that elector's name, the provisions of section 127 of the *Local Government Act* apply.

Replacement of spoiled mail ballot

- 24 (1) Where an elector unintentionally spoils a mail ballot before returning it to the chief election officer, the elector may request a replacement ballot by advising the chief election officer or designated election official and returning the spoiled ballot to the chief election officer or designated election official.
- (2) Where a request has been made in accordance with subsection (1), the chief election officer or a designated election official must issue a new mail ballot package in accordance with subsection (1) until the close of general voting day.
- (3) The chief election officer must keep a record of returned spoiled mail ballot packages.

PART 5 – POST-ELECTION PROCEDURES

Procedures after close of voting on general voting day

- 25 (1) After the close of voting on general voting day, each presiding election official at a voting opportunity, other than advance and special voting opportunities in an election must
- (a) ensure that any remaining ballots in the portable ballot box are inserted into the vote tabulating unit;
 - (b) secure the vote tabulating unit so that no more ballots can be inserted;
 - (c) generate three copies of the register tape from the vote tabulating unit; and
 - (d) deliver one copy of the register tape together with the vote tabulating unit to the chief election officer at election headquarters.
- (2) After the close of voting on general voting day, each alternate presiding election official at a voting opportunity, other than advance and special voting opportunities, must
- (a) account for the unused, spoiled and voted ballots and place them, packaged and sealed separately, into the election materials transfer box along with one copy of the register tape;
 - (b) complete the ballot account and place the duplicate copy in the election materials transfer box;
 - (c) seal the election materials transfer box;
 - (d) place the voting books, the original copy of the ballot account, one copy of the register tape, completed registration cards, keys and all completed administrative forms into the chief election officer portfolio; and
 - (e) transport all equipment and materials to election headquarters.
- (3) At the close of voting on general voting day the chief election officer must direct the presiding election official for the advance voting opportunity and any special voting opportunities where vote tabulating units were used, to proceed in accordance with subsections (1) and (2).
- (4) Under the direction of the chief election officer, at the close of voting on general voting day the following procedures must be followed:
- (a) all portable ballot boxes used in the election must be opened;
 - (b) all ballots in portable ballot boxes must be removed and for counting be inserted into a vote tabulating unit;

- (c) after the procedures set out in paragraphs (a) and (b), the procedures set out in subsections (1) and (2) must be followed to the extent that they are applicable.

Recount procedure

- 26 If a recount is required, it must be conducted under the direction and supervision of the chief election officer using the automated vote counting system and in accordance with the following procedures:
- (a) the memory cards of all vote tabulating units must be cleared;
 - (b) vote tabulating units must be designated for each voting place;
 - (c) all ballots must be removed from the sealed ballot boxes; and
 - (d) all ballots, except spoiled ballots, must be reinserted in the vote tabulating units.

Tie votes after judicial recount

- 27 A tie vote that exists after a judicial recount will be resolved by conducting a lot in accordance with section 151 of the *Local Government Act*.

PART 6 – GENERAL

Electronic disclosure of nomination documents

- 28 The chief election officer is authorized to provide public access to nomination documents referred to in section 89(8) of the *Local Government Act* by electronic means and publish the nomination documents on the City's website from the time of filing until 30 days after the declaration of election results.

Repeal

- 29 Bylaw No. 02-013, the Election Procedures Bylaw, is repealed.

Effective date

- 30 This Bylaw comes into force on adoption.

READ A FIRST TIME the	12th	day of	May	2022
READ A SECOND TIME the	12th	day of	May	2022
READ A THIRD TIME the	12th	day of	May	2022
ADOPTED on the	19th	day of	May	2022

“CURT KINGSLEY”
CITY CLERK

“LISA HELPS”
MAYOR

Schedule A

Election Signage

GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

- Sign permits are not required.
- Signs must not be visible from any voting place.
- Signs must not be illuminated, animated, rotating, flashing or have moving lights or other electrical features.
- Signs must meet the requirements of the *Local Election Campaign Financing Act*.
- Elections signs for municipal or school trustee elections or by-elections, or referenda are permitted only within the municipal election period, beginning with the first day of the nomination period.
- Signs must be removed within four (4) days after the election or referendum vote.

GENERAL PROHIBITIONS


- Signs are prohibited on:
 - medians and traffic islands, and in municipal planting beds;
 - boulevard trees, or within one (1) metre of a boulevard tree;
 - all City facilities or structures, parks, and playing fields, including the adjoining boulevard area.
- Signs are prohibited on public or private property that:
 - are within one (1) metre of a fire hydrant;
 - obstruct or detract from any traffic control device or signage;
 - obstruct the line of vision at an intersection; or
 - are placed in a manner that may constitute a hazard to pedestrians, cyclists or vehicles.

GENERAL ENFORCEMENT

- Signs installed in prohibited areas will be removed by City staff if not removed or relocated within 24 hours notice to the applicable candidate or campaign office.
- Where there are immediate safety concerns or damage to municipal property, City staff will immediately remove the signs and then contact the candidate or campaign office.
- The City will assume no responsibility for any damage to election signs where they are removed by city staff in prohibited locations.

ADDITIONAL CANDIDATE RESPONSIBILITIES

- Persons installing signs on municipal property must be aware of the risk of damage to underground utilities. A call must be made by the candidate or their agent to the City at least 48 hours in advance of the installation in order to confirm that the location chosen is safe.
- Any damage to underground utilities or services as a result of election signs being placed on municipal property is the responsibility of the candidates and their agents.
- Candidates and their agents are liable for any damage done to City property in placement of election signs on municipal property.
- Candidates and their agents should also reference applicable Provincial and Federal statutes and regulations for additional requirements.

		CORPORATE POLICY
		Page 1 of 2
SUBJECT:	ELECTION POLICY GUIDELINES	
SPONSOR:	CITY CLERK	
AUTHORIZED BY:	COUNCIL	
EFFECTIVE DATE:	October 19, 2023	

POLICY STATEMENT

The Election Policy Guidelines recognize that the City's Chief Election Officer (CEO) is responsible for ensuring all elections are in accordance with legislation and the City's Election Procedures Bylaw. The CEO has a statutory responsibility to impartially manage election planning and proceedings and to protect the integrity of the election.

PURPOSE

The purpose of the Policy Guidelines is to outline key principles and considerations when conducting an election or an assent vote in Victoria. The Policy Guidelines will ensure there is equitable and convenient access to voting locations aligned with City values and policies.

APPLICATION

1. The Policy Guidelines apply to all City election and assent voting processes.

POLICY GUIDELINES

General

2. A minimum of one (1) month of planning before appointing a Chief Election Officer.
3. Appointment of at least two (2) Deputy Chief Election Officers.
4. Acquisition of at least one (1) additional administrative staff member or contractor to help coordinate all election preparations.
5. A minimum of eight (8) general voting day locations.
6. At least two (2) advance voting locations and at least four (4) advance voting days.
7. Special voting opportunities at participating care facilities as per the Election Procedures Bylaw.
8. Mail ballot voting with prepaid postage for all eligible voters.
9. Curbside voting available upon request at all voting places and all advance voting opportunities.

Voting Locations and Facilities

10. Considerations in selecting suitable voting locations include:

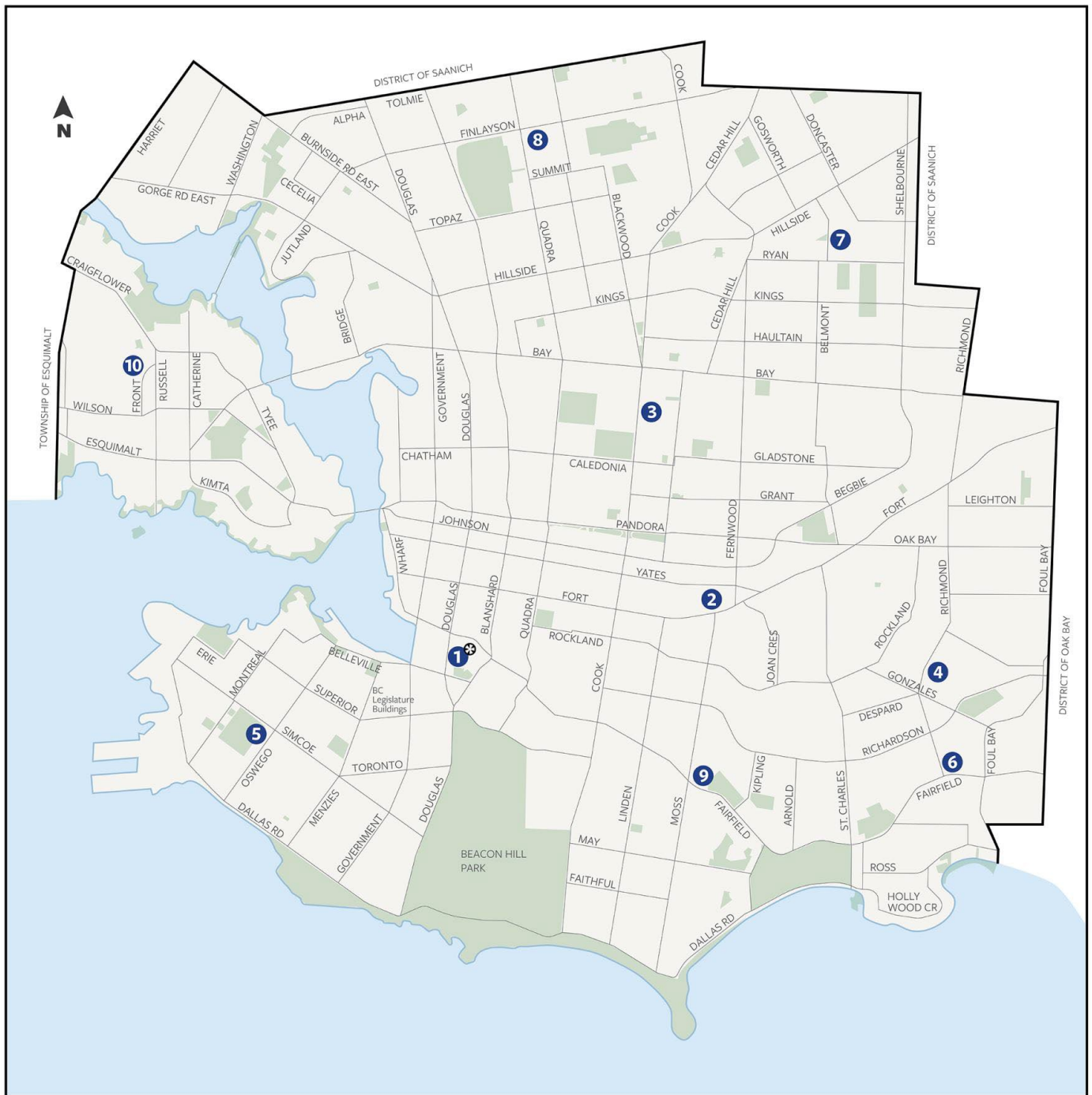
- (a) Geographic proximity to electors and areas of population density.
- (b) Multiple transportation options for accessing the location, such as arterial roads and public transportation routes.
- (c) Locations that are familiar locations of public services such as schools, recreation, community, or convention centres.
- (d) A minimum interior space of the average dimensions of a school gymnasium (33 metres long by 18 metres wide).
- (e) Capacity to accommodate voters inside to reduce lineups outside.
- (f) Available accessible parking.
- (g) Sufficient utility services (electrical outlets, internet connectivity).
- (h) Washrooms and accessible washrooms.

Engagement

- 11. An engagement plan, informed by the engagement plans from previous elections, developed by Engagement staff that goes beyond the requirements of the *Local Government Act*.
- 12. A minimum of two (2) election newsletters and/or election information mailed to each household for general local elections.
- 13. A minimum of one (1) election newsletters and/or election information mailed to each household for by-elections and assent votes.

Accessibility, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion

- 14. A minimum of one (1) accessible voting machine available during advance and general voting in a central location.
- 15. Election planning informed by the City's Accessibility and Inclusion Policy, Accessibility Framework, and Equity Framework to increase equitable access to voting, subject to the requirements of the *Local Government Act*.
- 16. Accessibility of voting locations and services evaluated using Elections Canada and Elections BC guidelines and best practices, subject to the requirements of the *Local Government Act*.
- 17. Information mailed to electors, and all other information provided in a plain, accessible language and format containing available accessibility services.



1. Crystal Garden*
2. Central Middle School
3. George Jay Elementary School
4. Glenlyon Norfolk (Middle & Senior) School
5. James Bay Community School
6. Margaret Jenkins Elementary School
7. Oaklands Elementary School
8. Quadra Elementary School
9. Sir James Douglas Elementary School
10. Victoria West Elementary School

*An accessible voting machine was available at Crystal Garden.