



# BOARD REPORT

**TO:** Chair and Directors

**File No:** Amendment Bylaw No. 5779

**SUBJECT:** Amendment to Election Procedures Bylaw – Mail Ballot Voting Provisions

**DESCRIPTION:** Report from Lynda Shykora, Deputy Manager, Corporate Administration Services dated June 8, 2018.

**RECOMMENDATION #1:** THAT: "General Local Government Election and Other Voting Amendment Bylaw No. 5779" be read a First, Second and Third time this 21<sup>st</sup> day of June, 2018.

**RECOMMENDATION #2:** THAT: "General Local Government Election and Other Voting Amendment Bylaw No. 5779" be adopted this 21<sup>st</sup> day of June, 2018.

**SHORT SUMMARY:**

Corporate Administration Chief and Deputy Election Officers have reviewed past results for voter turnout in relation to Mail Ballot Voting for local government elections. This voter opportunity is underutilized and there is significant administrative work in providing mail ballot voting to the electorate. Therefore, Amendment Bylaw No. 5779 is proposed to remove Mail Ballots as a voting opportunity from the CSR D General Local Election and Other Voting.

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**VOTING:** Unweighted Corporate  LGA Part 14 (Unweighted)  Weighted Corporate  Stakeholder (*Weighted*)

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**BACKGROUND:**

Mail Ballot Voting may be done by mail for Electors who:

- (a) have a physical disability, illness, or injury that affects their ability to vote at another voting opportunity; or
- (b) expect to be absent from the Regional District on General Voting Day and at the times of all advance voting opportunities; or
- (c) who reside in a location accessible only by boat, aircraft or remote forest service road.

Mail Ballot voting was implemented for the 2014 General Local Elections. A copy of the 2014 Election Results, including results for Mail in Ballots, is attached to this report.

In terms of the practical side of issuing mail ballots to electors, there is:

- a) a limited time frame in which to offer mail ballot applications due to the constricted time frame once final candidates are known and ballots are printed and available for distribution. (Applications for Mail Ballot voting are accepted for approximately one month before Voting Day; onus on the applicant to submit any mail ballot to the CSR D office by the end of General Voting Day).

b) Mail Ballot Procedures are extensive in terms of issuance and the voting procedures (reference to Bylaw No. 5661, Sections 12 through 19);

c) Applications for mail ballots must be vetted by staff to ensure voter eligibility. For example, in 2014 elections the CSRD received many requests for mail ballots that were denied. This was primarily due to residence of the applicant, where we experienced multiple instances of voters from out of Province, but perhaps owned property in the CSRD, who were not eligible to vote.

d) An element that causes some discomfort to election staff is the lack of control as to if, or when, a mail ballot will be returned to the CSRD by the deadline, in order to be counted. In 2014, there was an example where the postal service did not deliver a mail ballot to the CSRD office. Unfortunately the mail ballot was located several weeks after the election, but it was too late to have it counted at that point in time.

### **POLICY:**

Local Government Act

CSRD General Local Government Election and Other Voting Bylaw No. 5661.

### **FINANCIAL:**

No major financial implications on the Election Budget as most administrative election support is funded through the Corporate Administration budget.

### **KEY ISSUES/CONCEPTS:**

The change in General Voting Day from November to October in the calendar year presents less weather related challenges for voters to get to the polls, and also means that eligible 'snowbird' electors are more likely to be in the area for Advance Voting opportunities in October.

Extensive administration is involved with the Mail ballot voting procedures.

The use of mail ballot voting in the 2014 general local election was insignificant in comparison to in-person voting at Advance Voting and on General Voting Day.

### **SUMMARY:**

There is not opportunity for a local government to customize its own procedures for mail ballot voting; the procedure is legislated. Mail ballot voting is not a requirement, it is an optional procedure that local governments may choose to offer as an alternate voting opportunity.

Staff are recommending the Board consider the bylaw amendment to minimize administrative support in relation to the preparing, mailing, review of mail ballot applications, ballot acceptance (or rejection) for a system that staff views as a restrictive, cumbersome and a typically underutilized legislative process.

### **COMMUNICATIONS:**

The amended General Voting Day and Other Voting Procedures Bylaw will be posted on the CSRD website.

**DESIRED OUTCOMES:**

Amending Bylaw No. 5779 is recommended for three readings and adoption at the June 2018 Regular Board meeting.

That the Board consider support for staff recommendations.

While the staff recommendation is to amend the Election Procedures Bylaw, it is recognized that the Board may wish to retain mail ballot voting as an additional voting opportunity in order to accommodate as many voters as possible to take part in the local government election process.

**BOARD'S OPTIONS:**

1. *Endorse the Recommendation(s).*
2. *Deny the Recommendation(s).*

**LIST NAME OF REPORT(S) / DOCUMENT(S) AVAILABLE FROM STAFF:**

N/A

**Report Approval Details**

Document Title:	Election Procedures Amendment Bylaw.docx
Attachments:	- BL 5779 General Local Government Election and Other Voting, Amendment - Removes Mail Ballot Voting Provisions.pdf - BL5661 General Local Government Election and Other Voting.pdf - Election Results, including Mail Ballot Voting 2014.pdf
Final Approval Date:	Jun 19, 2018

This report and all of its attachments were approved and signed as outlined below:



**Charles Hamilton - Jun 19, 2018 - 3:46 PM**