

## COUNCIL REPORT

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**Meeting Date:** September 2, 2025  
**Department:** Legal and Legislative Services  
**Report No.:** LLS-2025-11  
**Submitted by:** Jennifer Pereira, Director of Legal and Legislative Services/Clerk  
**Approved by:** Rob Browning, Chief Administrative Officer

**SUBJECT:** 2026 Municipal Elections – Voting Method

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**RECOMMENDATION: THAT:** Council approve the use of the internet/telephone alternative voting method for the 2026 Municipal Election being held on Monday, October 25, 2026, and further;

**THAT:** Council waive the provisions of the purchasing by-law and authorize the Mayor and Clerk to enter into an agreement with Intelivote Systems Inc. for the provision of internet/telephone services for the 2026 Municipal Election, and further;

**THAT:** By-law No. 90-25 be referred to the Consideration of By-laws Section of the agenda for approval.

### **BACKGROUND:**

In accordance with the Municipal Elections Act, municipal elections are to be held every fourth year and Voting Day is to be held on the fourth Monday in October. Therefore, the next municipal election will be held on October 25, 2026.

Pursuant to Section 42 (1) of the Municipal Elections Act, the council of a local municipality may pass a bylaw authorizing an alternative voting method as long as a bylaw is passed before May 1 of the election year.

The Municipality of Strathroy-Caradoc utilized the internet/telephone alternative voting method for the 2014, 2018 and 2022 Municipal Elections.

In conjunction with the internet/telephone alternative voting method, the Municipality utilized Municipal Voterview (MVV), a software program offered by DataFix. MVV is an elector name management application that improves the quality of voter information and reduces election costs. It is a sophisticated data-cleansing tool that identifies and corrects problems with elector information, generates a

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comprehensive suite of election reports, and provides an automated process for providing elector list revisions back to MPAC.

## **COMMENTS:**

Alternate, remote methods of voting are not new to Ontario municipalities. Vote-by-mail and telephone voting have been used in a number of municipalities for decades. In the 2022 Municipal Elections, over 300 municipalities out of the 444 in Ontario used internet voting in some capacity.

### **Internet/Telephone Alternative Voting Method – 2026 Election**

The following municipalities utilized the internet/telephone alternative voting method for the 2022 Municipal Election: Thames Centre, Middlesex Centre, Lucan Biddulph, Strathroy-Caradoc, Adelaide Metcalfe, Southwest Middlesex, and North Middlesex.

The group rate (participation in conjunction with other municipalities in Middlesex and Elgin Counties) to use the internet/telephone voting method with Intelivote Systems Inc. for the 2026 Municipal Election will be approximately \$2.75 per elector (an increase of approximately \$.30 per elector from the 2022 election). The total cost will be adjusted (+/-) depending on the number of electors.

Since 2006, Intelivote Systems Inc. has conducted a total of 315 municipal elections, by-elections, and plebiscites.

Intelivote Systems Inc. works closely with DataFix. Therefore, the Municipal Voterview (MVV) program will still be able to be utilized for voter information.

### **Benefits of Internet/telephone Voting**

- Voter choice, flexibility and convenience
- Immediate, auditable accurate results
- Voter intent is clear: no spoiled ballot issues, positive ballot confirmation
- Potential to increase voter participation (however, turn-out is also dependent on close races and whether or not there are contentious issues)
- Increased participation of older voters (45-65 age group)
- Opportunity to engage younger voters
- Addresses provincial accessibility requirements
- Cost effective

### **Security and Integrity**

When casting a ballot, privacy and security of the secrecy of the vote is paramount. Intelivote System's security ensures that every voter's voting experience is both secret and secure. Similar to the paper voting experience, the electronic voting process disassociates the voter's identity from the cast ballot when it is "deposited" into the system. The system takes the encrypted ballot information from the voter's electronic or phone vote and creates a voter receipt. This is similar to the ballot receipt detached from a paper ballot when it is marked and returned to the voting official in a paper voting scenario. The encrypted ballot is randomly inserted into the "electronic ballot box", severing

the relationship between the voter and the ballot. The receipt is the mechanism that ensures the ballot was successfully recorded in the system. This combination of processes coupled with the security of the system results in the trusted and secure status of the system.

#### **Rationale to Waive the Tendering Process for Internet/Telephone Voting**

1. Specific services provided and extensive municipal election experience (315 elections)
2. Exceptional service/support provided during the previous three elections
3. Compatibility and partnership with DataFix (the company that provides the Voters' List software)
4. Partnership with other Middlesex and Elgin County Municipalities to achieve cost savings and broader promotional opportunities

#### **CONSULTATION:**

Clerks, Municipalities of Middlesex and Elgin County  
Dean Smith, President of Intelivote Systems Inc.

#### **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:**

The 2022 Municipal Election cost was \$51,059. Funds are budgeted and allocated to the Election Reserve account in each of the three years between elections, in the amount of \$25,000 per year. In the year of the election, the actual amount remaining and required is budgeted. Based on the rate from Intelivote Systems Inc. and an increased number of eligible voters, the approximate cost for the 2026 Municipal Election is estimated at \$70,000.

#### **STRATEGIC PLAN ALIGNMENT:**

This matter is in accord with the following strategic priorities:

The Municipality of Strathroy-Caradoc offers seamless, responsive service and an exceptional experience for every customer.

#### **ATTACHMENTS:**

Electronic Voting Service Agreement 2026