

This document contains important information that may affect you. Please have it translated if you do not read or understand English.

Ce document renferme des renseignements importants. Veuillez le faire traduire si vous ne lisez ou ne comprenez pas l'anglais.

本文件包含可能影響您的重要信息。如果您不閱讀或不懂英語，請將其翻譯。

本文件包含可能影响您的重要信息。如果您不阅读或不懂英语，请将其翻译。

이 문서에는 귀하에게 영향을 미칠 수 있는 중요한 정보가 포함되어 있습니다. 영어를 읽거나 이해하지 못하는 경우 번역해 주십시오.

تذکر: این سند حاوی اطلاعات مهمی است. اگر زبان انگلیسی نمی‌دانید و متوجه نمی‌شوید، خواهشمند است بخواهید آن را برای‌تان ترجمه کنند

CURRENT VOTING PROCEDURES FOR DIRECTOR ELECTIONS

The current procedure for the election of UNA Directors is less formal than the procedure for the election of mayors and councillors in municipalities, which is standardized through legislation contained within the [Local Government Act](#).

As a not-for-profit organization, overall legislative authority for the holding of Director elections is contained within the [Societies Act](#). Unlike the *Local Government Act*, which is very prescriptive, the *Societies Act* provides flexibility regarding the election process, noting that “To become a director of a society, other than a first director, an individual must be elected or appointed to that office *in accordance with the bylaws*.”

Electronic voting is a common tool for Society voting and is used regularly by societies across the country.

A key to voting in a UNA election, is that a resident needs to be a [UNA Member](#). To be eligible to be a member, a person must be:

1. At least 18 years of age, and
2. Reside in any of the following local areas or designated buildings:
 - East Campus
 - Chancellor Place
 - Hampton Place
 - Hawthorn Place
 - Wesbrook Place
 - Central Building
 - Focal Building

If you are not currently a UNA Member, but are eligible, please [sign-up](#) to become a member.

Although there are several election-related details specified in the UNA [Bylaws](#), the process also leaves several items to the discretion of the Board. Bylaw 5.11 states that “The Board shall establish all procedures for the conduct of an election that are not provided under these Bylaws.”

For the 2021 Director election the items that were confirmed by the Board included the following:

- The form of ballot
- Dates for the election
- Election process – including “How to Vote” document. This included the locations where ballots can be dropped off (was translated into six languages – French, Traditional Chinese, Simplified Chinese, Korean and Farsi)
- Election signage details
- Confirmation of details regarding the release of UNA membership data (register of members) with candidates

The current process for voting for UNA directors, approved by the UNA Board for the last election cycle, is as follows:

- The UNA mails out a voting package to all UNA members with the ballot and candidate information.
- The voting package contains the following information:
 1. A ballot, with the names of candidates listed,
 2. A secrecy envelope, that lacks identifying marks,
 3. A certification envelope, on which is printed:
 - i. A unique envelope number along with space for the voting member to write their name,
 - ii. A space for the voting member to write their residential address,
 - iii. A statement attesting that the voting member is entitled to vote,
 - iv. A statement attesting that the voting member understands that they are entitled to vote only once and that the enclosed ballot is their only vote,
 4. A return outer envelope with postage paid and addressed to the UNA.
- To vote, UNA Members need to do the following:
 - i. Vote for up to seven (7) candidates by marking the box to the left of their choices on the ballot. The ballot will be rejected if votes are cast for more than seven candidates.
 - ii. Insert the marked ballot into the secrecy envelope and seal it.
 - iii. Place the sealed secrecy envelope into the certification envelope, seal it and fill out the required information.
 - iv. Place the certification envelope into the return outer envelope and seal it. The return outer envelope is postage paid.

- Voters may return their completed ballots in either of the following ways:

1. By mail

Drop their return outer envelope (with the ballot, secrecy envelope and certification envelope enclosed) in a Canada Post mailbox. Note that the ballot must be received by the UNA by the voting deadline for it to be included in the vote counting. Please allow time for mailing.

2. By dropbox

Drop their return outer envelope (with the ballot, secrecy envelope and certification envelope enclosed) by the voting deadline, in one of the drop boxes at the following locations:

- i. Wesbrook Community Centre at 3335 Webber Ln.
 - ii. Old Barn Community Centre at 6308 Thunderbird Blvd.
 - iii. UNA Main Office at 202-5923 Berton Ave.
- When the deadline for receiving the ballots has passed, staff and volunteers, overseen by an independent Elections Officer, undertake the counting process as follows:

Step A1: Counting all envelopes received

Step A2: Processing the return outer envelopes and certification envelopes

Step A3: Opening the certification envelopes and secrecy envelopes

Step B1: Verifying the ballots and tallying the votes

Step B2: Consolidating all tally sheets

Step B3: Final reporting

As noted in the [UNA Election Summary Report](#) provided to the Board, there were several issues identified related to the current system, including:

- Ensuring sufficient replacement ballots were available on weekends.
- The time required to count the ballots due to the complex multiple envelope system and requirement to validate certification envelopes.
- Issues with members not understanding how to utilize the ballot package (i.e., using the wrong envelopes) – leading to spoiled ballots.
- A significant number of ballots that do not make it back to the UNA within the required time frame to be counted in the voting.
- Mailing issues due to Canada Post postal code changes and other addressing issues.
- Delay in receiving ballots at the counting location due to need to pick-up physical ballots from various locations.

BEST PRACTICES

When the review of the UNA election processes took place in 2015, the Election Reform Committee recommended enhanced mail-in/delivery for the 2015 election, along with a second option for in-person voting with an option to vote by mail/delivery for the 2016 and subsequent elections. The report further recommended that the UNA reconsider online voting “if and when it was implemented for local government elections in B.C.”

Although online voting has not been implemented for local government elections in B.C., it is commonly used for local government elections in Ontario and Nova Scotia, as well as in elections for not-for-profit entities across the country.

Although there is some flexibility depending on the electronic voting platform utilized (and whether the electronic voting will also be accompanied by vote-by-phone), a common process for electronic voting is as follows:

1. A third-party software platform will be used. There are a number that could be considered, including ([*Simply Voting*](#), [*Scytl*](#), [*Intelivote Systems Inc.*](#), [*Voatz*](#), [*Neuvote Systems Inc.*](#)).
2. Once the organization has confirmed who will vote (in this case it would be UNA Members), the voters are sent voting information, either electronically via email address, or via mail (municipalities in Ontario send via mail as per their legislative requirements – The UNA could distribute via email). This correspondence will contain the information on how to vote.
3. The correspondence can have information on how to vote in multiple languages, and the voting platform can be multilingual.
4. Each voter will receive a unique PIN (personal identification number). To vote, a voter will need to be authenticated by entering their PIN together with other identifying information such as their voter’s name or their date of birth. Once the voter declares that they are who they represent to be, they will vote through the secure electronic platform. The voting software will allow each voter to vote only once.
5. Voting could be done from any smart phone/computing device. In addition, a physical voting station could be established at which voters could vote using an available computer or tablet.

A video showing a typical municipal voting process is available [here](#).

The Association of Municipalities of Ontario notes that of the 417 municipal elections held in the province in 2022, more than half — 217 — used online or phone voting.

Examples of communities that utilize online voting for municipal elections are as follows:

- [*Kawartha Lakes*](#)
- [*Vaughn*](#)

- [Markham](#)

Although telephone voting comes up frequently in conjunction with electronic voting, discussions with vendors that provide electronic voting indicate that the option to vote by phone is not typically utilized by many voters and adds more costs to the process.

As opposed to telephone voting a recommended approach is to provide secure voting kiosks, where those who may have issues with electronic voting can receive assistance from election workers. As most browsers include accessibility features that help the visually impaired, this does not unfairly impact those with vision accessibility issues. Any voting kiosks with election worker assistance would be in addition to any assistance provided through the election platform.

ASSESSMENT CRITERIA FOR REVIEW OF COMMUNITY FEEDBACK

The following are criteria that can be applied in assessing the move to electronic voting for Director elections. Several of these criteria require judgement calls. A summary of the GHR Committee's comments on the application of these criteria will accompany any recommendations to the UNA Board.

- **Aggregate voter participation:** Is it likely that more or fewer residents will vote than at present?
- **Participation by specific groups:** Are specific groups of voters—e.g., younger voters, older voters, voters whose second language isn't English—more or less likely to vote?
- **Secrecy on the counting of ballots (ballot anonymity):** Is a voter's ballot secret when it is counted?
- **Secrecy on completion of ballots:** Can any other person see how a particular voter is voting and hence be in a position to coerce the voter to vote in a particular way?
- **Voter authentication:** Is the voter the person they claim to be (i.e., no voter fraud)?
- **Technological uncertainty:** What is the risk of technological problems, initially and on an on-going basis?
- **Process uncertainty:** What is the risk of process problems, initially and on an on-going basis (i.e., delays in receiving ballots)?
- **Implementation:** What is the cost and staff time for implementation?
- **Administration:** How costly is it to administer the voting procedure?

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Like any move to new technology there are inevitably concerns that will be raised. The following are some frequently asked questions:

a. Is electronic voting secure?

All recognized electronic voting platforms that the UNA would consider have received third party audits and certification. In the most recent Ontario municipal elections more than half of the municipalities used either electronic or phone voting.

b. How will I know that my vote has been cast? Is there a way to confirm that it was received? How will the results be verified?

Electronic voting systems utilize a Voter-Verified Audit Trail (VVAT) - an independent verification system for voting systems designed to allow voters to verify that their vote was cast correctly, to detect possible election fraud or malfunction, and to provide a means to audit the stored electronic results. Although there are various processes depending on the platform utilized, it is common for voters to be provided with a unique voting receipt, which serves as confirmation of a submitted vote, and allows for post-election auditing if required.

c. Is it more secure than our current system?

The current system requires voters to receive their paper ballots by mail, sign a declaration declaring that they are eligible to vote, and will only vote once, and then return the ballot via either placing in a drop box or sending it in the mail. The electronic system would entail receiving the voting instructions through email, confirming an electronic declaration, and voting through a secure online portal. This system would eliminate several of the more convoluted steps in our current system. Regardless of the system - paper or electronic - any attempt by one person to usurp materials or attempt to take another person's vote are illegal actions.

d. Has the UNA utilized electronic voting in the past?

Yes. The UNA utilized electronic voting for the 2020 Special General Meeting during the pandemic. A platform from Simply Voting was used in conjunction with paper proxies, and there were no reported problems. Electronic voting has not been used for Director elections.

e. How much does electronic voting cost?

The costs of the voting platform depend on the number of voters and associated add-ons. Incorporating telephone voting would add to the costs, but depending on the vendor, costs are anticipated to range between \$15,000 to \$30,000 per election.

f. How does that compare to our current election costs?

The 2021 UNA election cost approximately \$33,000.

g. Which system (paper through mail or electronic voting) is likely to provide more voter participation?

Moving to an electronic voting option would provide the convenience for people to vote from wherever they were, and with the ability to provide a multilingual interface, it is expected that voter turnout would increase.

In the last UNA election, a total of 1209 votes were cast, out of a potential 6059 members, for a total voter turnout of 20 per cent. As election rules and number of candidates for the elections have varied quite dramatically over time, it's hard to compare the results to previous years, but in the most recent municipal election in Vancouver, voter turn out in Vancouver was 36 per cent, so there is room for improvement.

TIMELINE & NEXT STEPS

