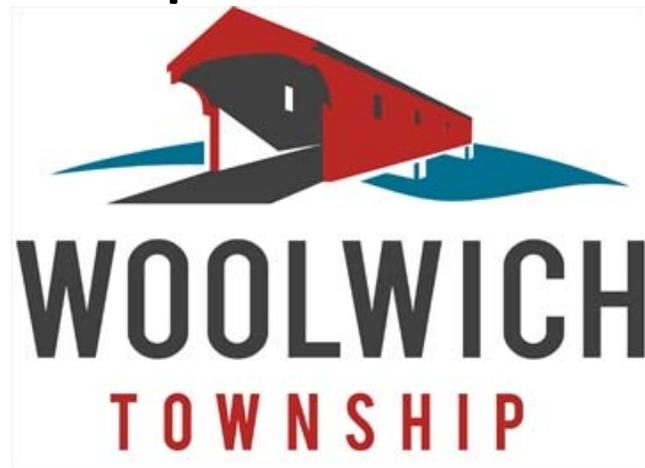# 2018 Municipal Election Experience

About Woolwich Township

- Lower-tier municipality in Waterloo Region

- Population 25,000

- Woolwich runs election for 1 Mayor, 5 Ward Councillors, 1 School Board Trustee

- Reports on results for 1 Regional Chair and 3 School Board Trustees

Voting Method

- 2018 Election was the first time using internet and phone voting
- Recommended for:
  - Accessibility
  - Lower cost
  - Voter convenience
  - Fast and accurate results reporting
- Used Dominion's Internet and Phone voting system
- No paper ballot option available (or backup)

WOOLWICH
TOWNSHIP

Voting Method

- 2 weeks of advance voting – many voters voted early
- 4 Election Help Centres
  - all at Township facilities with Township WiFi and cell backup
  - scheduled hours during advance
  - open 10 am – 8 pm on Oct 22 (and 23)
- Staffing:
  - All election workers were Township Staff
  - Clerk and Deputy: at Administration Office
  - Executive Officer: Election Help Centres & Help Phone

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TOWNSHIP

What Happened: October 22

- Voting System slowdown around 10 am
  - Reported by help centres at 10 am Oct 22
  - Communication to Election Help Centres: be patient
  - Slowdown lasted 10-15 min
 - Dominion hosted debrief call around noon – everything functioning normal

What Happened: October 22

- Voting system slowdown - 6:00 pm
  - 6:10 – slowdown reported by all Election Help Centres
  - 6:30 – high frustration at Help Centres, drafted notice of disruption
  - 7:00 – notice of disruption released - media calls & emails started
  - 7:15 – what were others doing?
  - 7:30 –election emergency declared, extend voting by 24 hours
  - Voters at Election Help Centres watch for updates and try again
  - 7:55 – press release issued
  - 8:30 – all Election Help Centres rebooked and staffed
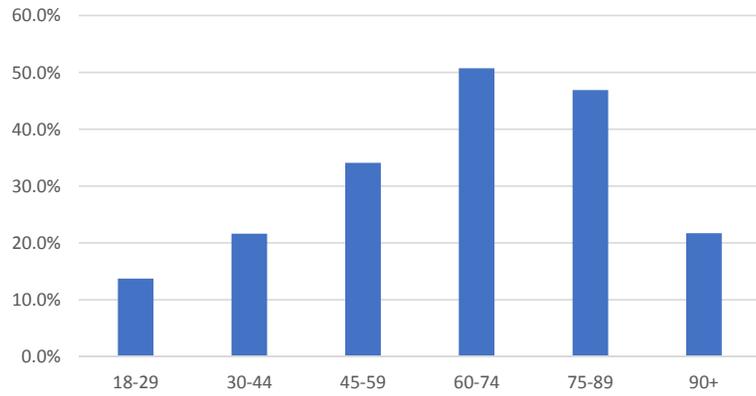 - 9:00 – answered media inquiries

What Happened: October 23

- Help Centres reopened
  - same hours and locations
  - Very little traffic
- 8:00 – voting closed
- 8:01 – produced results
- 8:05 – released results to candidates
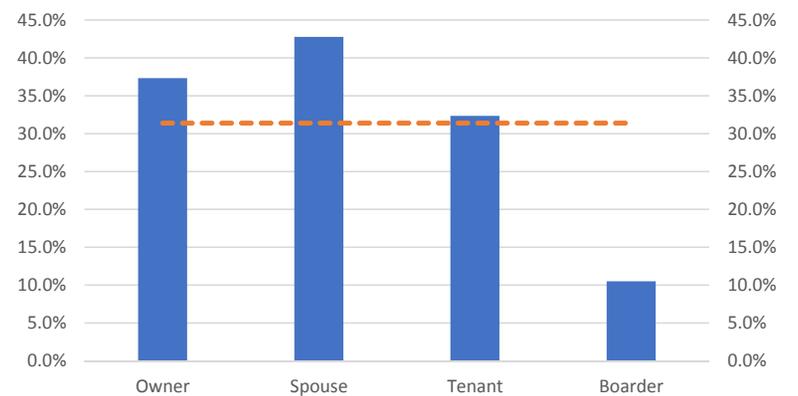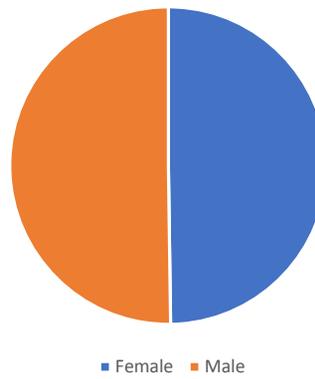- 8:15 – released results to media and on website

Votes by Date and Method
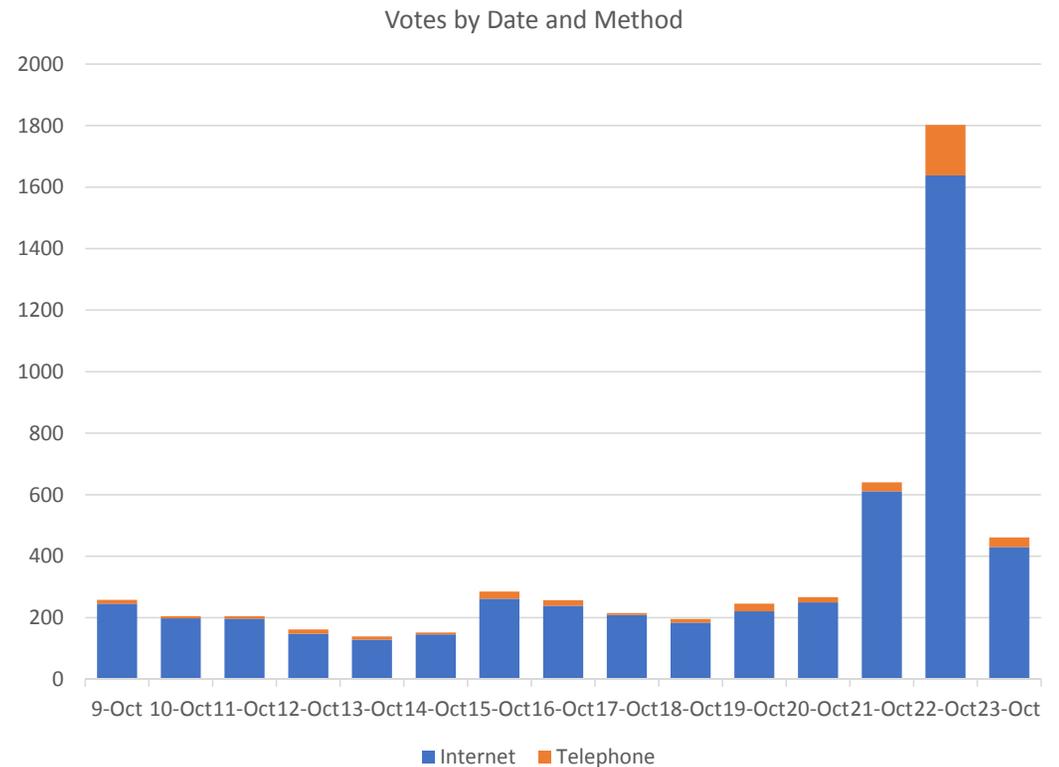
Voter Demographics

Voter Turnout by Age

Woolwich: Voter Turnout by Occupancy Status

Voter Gender

Female   Male

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Voter Feedback Survey

- Overall responses
  - of 115 surveys, 93% would use internet and telephone again
- Responses after system slowdown
  - more comments about slow the system, but many still liked online voting
  - some voters suggested using a hybrid-voting method or having a "plan B"
- Accessibility Feedback
  - generally positive about accessibility of voting system
  - questions about WCAG Level AA 2.0
  - most did not like phone voting
- Accessibility Advisory Committee happy with online option

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What we learned: Communications

- Media
  - helped get out the message quickly
  - we were not prepared for the number of media requests
- Staff
  - between slowdown and decision to extend voting – staff did an excellent job dealing with frustrated customers with no official message
- Other Clerks
  - good to know what others were doing (duration of extension)
  - aligned with neighbour
  - Regional clerks hid results for Regional Chair/Trustees

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What We Learned: Other

- Candidates
  - need to be kept informed but not allowed to influence work
- Politicians
  - wanted answers at Council
  - debrief report and delegation from Dominion Voting
- Emergency Plan
  - helped inform our decision to extend voting
  - helped messaging as a "service disruption"
- No immediate backup plan
  - no paper ballot backup ready that night

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Mitigating Risk in Subsequent Elections

- Council will decide if they wish to use online voting in future
  - May be difficult to get political buy-in
- If using internet voting again
  - Backup voting method if online down
  - Multiple voting methods
  - Improved communications
- Ensure compliance with provincial standards for online voting (if any)

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