



Survey report
Voting methods review



November 2020

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Methodology & Logistics

Background & Overview

The following represents the findings from a November 2020 telephone survey of N=600 City of Guelph residents (18 years of age or older) conducted by Oraclepoll Research Limited for The City of Guelph. The purpose of the research was to gather opinions from residents on issues related to remote voting methods for the 2022 Municipal and School Board Election.

Study Sample

A dual frame random database (RDD) was used for the sample. It was inclusive of landline and cellular telephone numbers. The sample was stratified to ensure that there was an equal distribution across the community and N=100 surveys were conducted in each Ward. The survey screened to ensure respondents were 18 years of age or older and were residents of each Ward. Gender and age samples were also monitored to ensure they reflected the demographic characteristics of the community.



Survey Method

All surveys were conducted by telephone using live operators at the Oraclepoll call center facility. A total of 20% of all interviews were monitored and the management of Oraclepoll Research Limited supervised 100%. The survey was conducted using computer-assisted techniques of telephone interviewing (CATI) and random number selection (RDD).

Logistics

Surveys were conducted by telephone at the Oraclepoll call center using person to person live operators from the days of November 9th to November 14th, 2020.

Initial calls were made between the hours of 6:00 p.m. and 9:00 p.m. Subsequent call-backs of no-answers and busy numbers were made on a (staggered) daily rotating basis up to 5 times (from 10:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m.) until contact was made. In addition, telephone interview appointments were attempted with those respondents unable to complete the survey at the time of contact. If no contact was made at a number after the fifth attempt, the number was discarded and a new one supplanted it.

Confidence

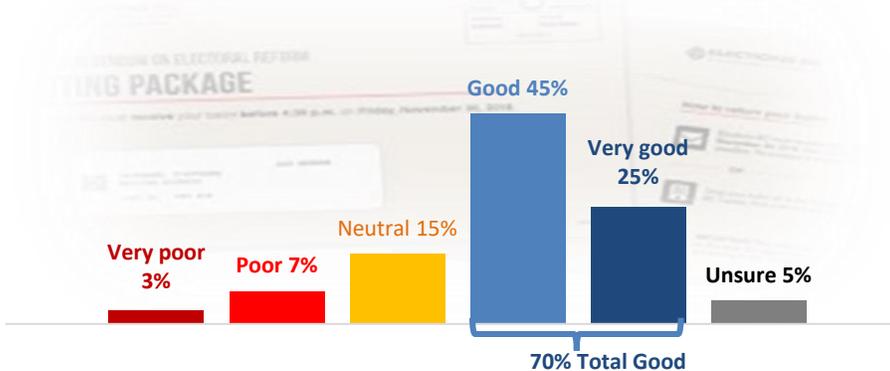
The margin of error for the total N=600 sample is $\pm 4.0\%$ at the 95% confidence interval.

Remote Voting Methods Awareness

Residents were first asked to rate their awareness of three remote voting options using a five-point rating scale.

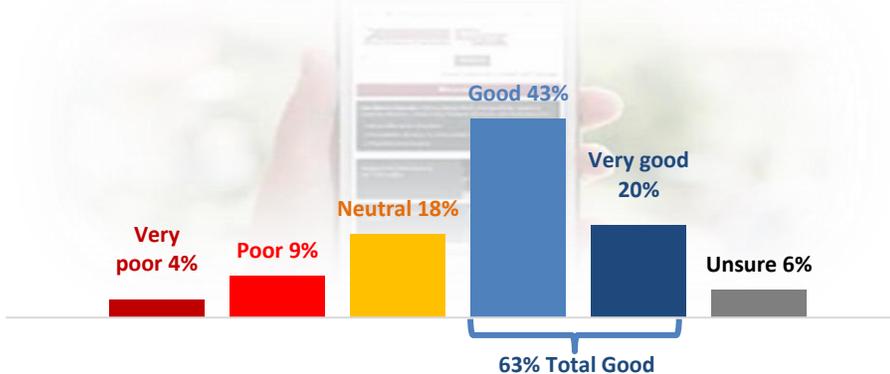
*“How would you rate your understanding of how to vote using the following three remote voting methods?
For each one, please use a scale from one being a very poor understanding to five a very good understanding.”*

Q1. Mail



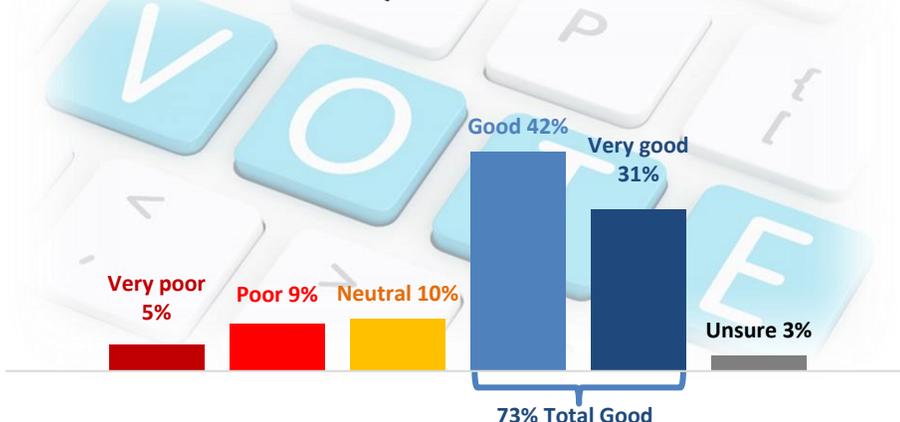
This method had the second highest rating of the three as seven in ten said they have a good (45%) or very good (25%) understanding of voting by mail. Total good results were consistent among age groups under age 70 but lowest among 70-79 (53%) and 80+ year old’s (50%). More males (74%) compared to females (68%) had a good or very good understanding.

Q2. Phone



The phone method rated lowest with 63% saying they had a good (43%) or very good (20%) understanding of telephone voting. Total good understanding was highest among 30-39 (74%), 40-49 (72%), 18-29 (68%) and 50-59 (66%) year old’s. It was lower among older residents 60-69 (52%), 70-79 (40%) and those 80+ (34%). Results were also higher among males (67%) in relation to females (61%).

Q3. Internet

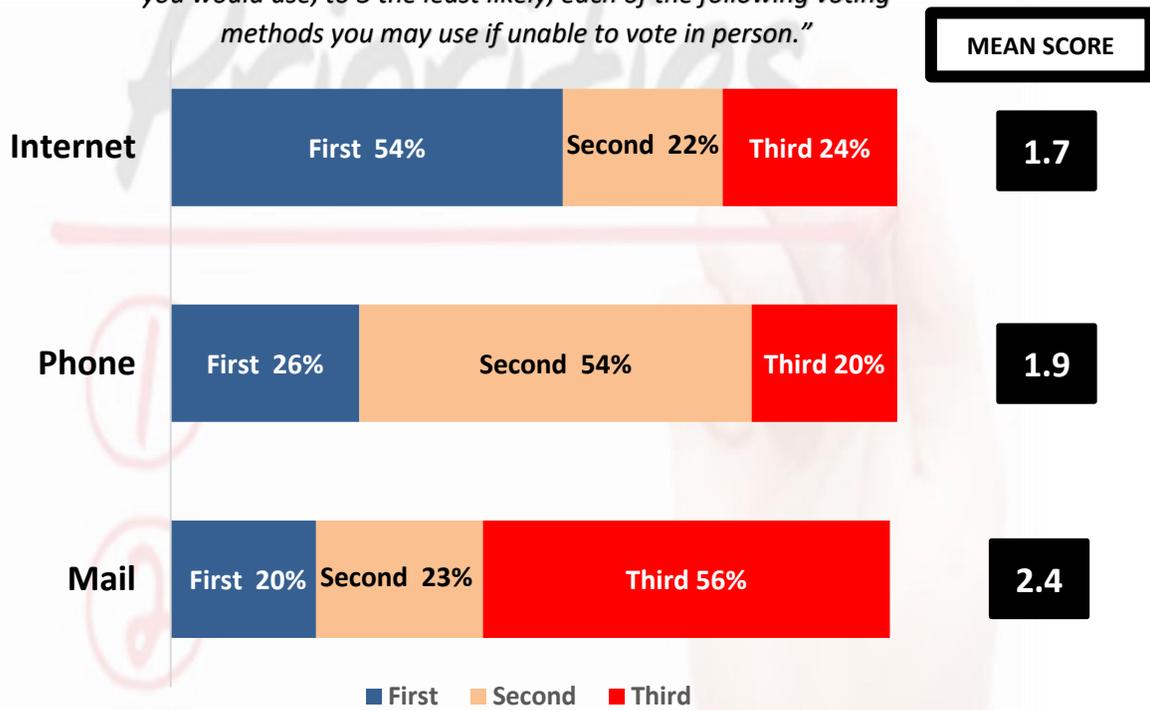


The highest combined good and very good understanding was for internet voting at 73%. Understanding was driven by younger voters age 18-29 (89%), 30-39 (84%), 40-49 (81%) and 50-59 (78%), compared to those older 60-69 (56%), 70-79 (34%) and 80+ (29%) years of age. Results by gender were 76% male and 70% female.

Priority Ranking – Voting Methods

Respondents were then asked to rank in order of priority preference the three remote voting options from 1-being the highest or most likely to use to 3-the lowest or least likely . Unsure or do not know answers are excluded from the reporting of the mean score and the first, second and third rankings for each option presented in the charts.

Q4. “Sometimes due to travel, extreme weather, illness, or other issues, people may find they are unable to vote in person. Please rank in order of priority preference, from 1 being the most likely that you would use, to 3 the least likely, each of the following voting methods you may use if unable to vote in person.”



Internet voting ranked highest in terms of its mean score at 1.7, followed by the telephone at 1.9, while mail in balloting came in third (2.4). The internet also garnered the highest percentage of first place selections (54%), followed by telephone (26%) – that recorded the most second (54%); and then mail (20%).

Internet voting was scored first primarily by younger residents 18-29 (77%), 30-39 (74%) and 40-49 (63%). Among those 50-59, 46% ranked it first and 44% second. Only 14% of 60-69-year old’s, 18% of those 70-79 and 13% of respondents 80+ ranked the internet first. Sixty percent of males ranked it first, compared to 45% of females as did 31% of those with a disability.

As a first choice, telephone was most selected by those with a disability (45%), as well as the oldest 80+ (56%), 70-79 (37%) and 60-69 (45%). More females (29%) than males (22%) chose phone as their top pick.

Mail voting had its highest first response from respondents 70-79 (40%), 60-69 (39%), 80+ (34%) and 50-59 (25%), along with more females (23%) than males (15%) and 19% of those with a disability.

Reasons for Most Likely Using

Respondents were asked about the main reason they would be most likely to use their first-choice remote voting method that they identified in Q4. One open response was accepted.

Q5a. "Why are you most likely to use the <??> option?"

MAIL (N=117)

<i>Technology issues / uncomfortable with / I am old school</i>	N=32	27%
<i>Just prefer it</i>	N=20	17%
<i>Do not know</i>	N=18	15%
<i>Used to / most familiar with</i>	N=17	15%
<i>Less chance errors / glitches / crashes</i>	N=17	15%
<i>Practical</i>	N=5	4%
<i>Easiest</i>	N=4	3%
<i>Trustworthy</i>	N=3	3%
<i>Less chance of fraud</i>	N=1	1%

Mail voting was preferred by those that dislike or are not comfortable with technology. In addition to being more familiar with mail, it is also seen as being less prone to error and more trustworthy.

PHONE (N=148)

<i>Easiest</i>	N=42	28%
<i>Do not know</i>	N=35	24%
<i>Just prefer it</i>	N=34	23%
<i>Trustworthy</i>	N=11	7%
<i>Practical</i>	N=7	5%
<i>Less chance of fraud</i>	N=7	5%
<i>Less chance errors / glitches / crashes</i>	N=4	3%
<i>Everything is technological / use it elsewhere / daily</i>	N=4	3%
<i>Used to / most familiar with</i>	N=2	1%
<i>Do not have to leave home</i>	N=2	1%

Telephone voting is perceived by its supporters as an easy practical, reliable, approach. Some just prefer it, others said it is practical and safe with less of a chance of errors.

INTERNET (N=309)

<i>Comfortable with technology / most people are</i>	N=105	34%
<i>Do not know</i>	N=57	18%
<i>Everything is technological (online) use it elsewhere / daily</i>	N=53	17%
<i>Just prefer it</i>	N=48	15%
<i>Easiest</i>	N=16	5%
<i>Used to / most familiar with</i>	N=12	4%
<i>Practical</i>	N=8	3%
<i>Do not have to leave home</i>	N=6	2%
<i>Less chance errors / glitches / crashes</i>	N=2	1%
<i>Trustworthy</i>	N=1	<1%
<i>Less chance of fraud</i>	N=1	<1%

Internet voting appeals to those comfortable with technology and who see online activity as part of everyday life. There are those that just prefer it and perceive it as a practical, easy way to cast a ballot.

Reasons for Least Likely Using

Next, residents were asked why they selected their third or least likely to use remote voting method. One open response was accepted.

Q5b. "Why are you least likely to use the <??> option?"

MAIL (N=323)

<i>Do not know</i>	N=118	36%
<i>Lack of confidence in mail / postal service</i>	N=83	26%
<i>Outdated</i>	N=38	12%
<i>Lost ballots</i>	N=35	11%
<i>Open to fraud</i>	N=18	6%
<i>US Election experience</i>	N=13	4%
<i>Legitimacy concerns</i>	N=8	2%
<i>Security issues / not secure enough</i>	N=7	2%
<i>Too complicated</i>	N=3	1%

The most named concern related to a lack of confidence in the postal service. Others felt the method was outdated, had trepidation over lost ballots, fraud, or security and some even referenced issues raised in the US Election.

PHONE (N=114)

<i>Do not know</i>	N=51	45%
<i>Security issues / not secure enough</i>	N=18	16%
<i>Online a better option</i>	N=16	14%
<i>Open to fraud</i>	N=15	13%
<i>Too complicated</i>	N=9	8%
<i>Legitimacy concerns</i>	N=5	4%

While a significant number were unsure of why they would be least likely to vote by phone, security, fraud and seeing online as a better option were referenced.

INTERNET (N=140)

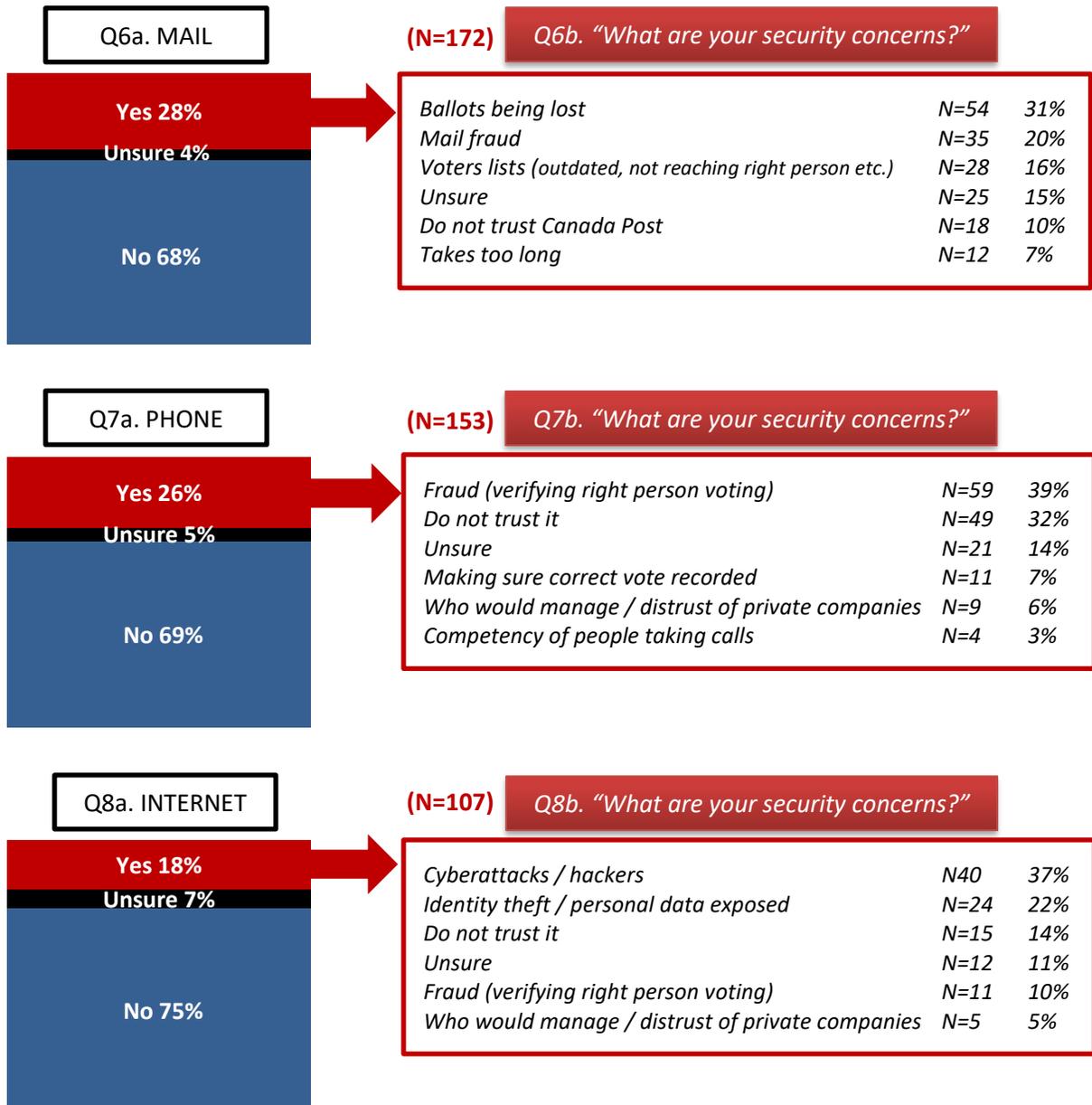
<i>Do not know</i>	N=40	29%
<i>No PC, internet / not tech savvy / not technical</i>	N=34	24%
<i>Security issues / not secure enough</i>	N=24	17%
<i>Open to fraud</i>	N=18	13%
<i>Too complicated</i>	N=16	11%
<i>Legitimacy concerns</i>	N=8	6%

Those least likely to use internet voting cited a lack of technical or computer skills (as well as not having a PC or internet access), security, fraud, legitimacy, and concerns over it being too complicated.

Security Concerns

All residents were probed if they have any security concerns with each of the three remote voting methods. If they had a concern (answered “yes”), an open-ended follow-up question asked them to name or state the issue.

“Would you have any security concerns with each of the following remote voting methods if the City offered them?”

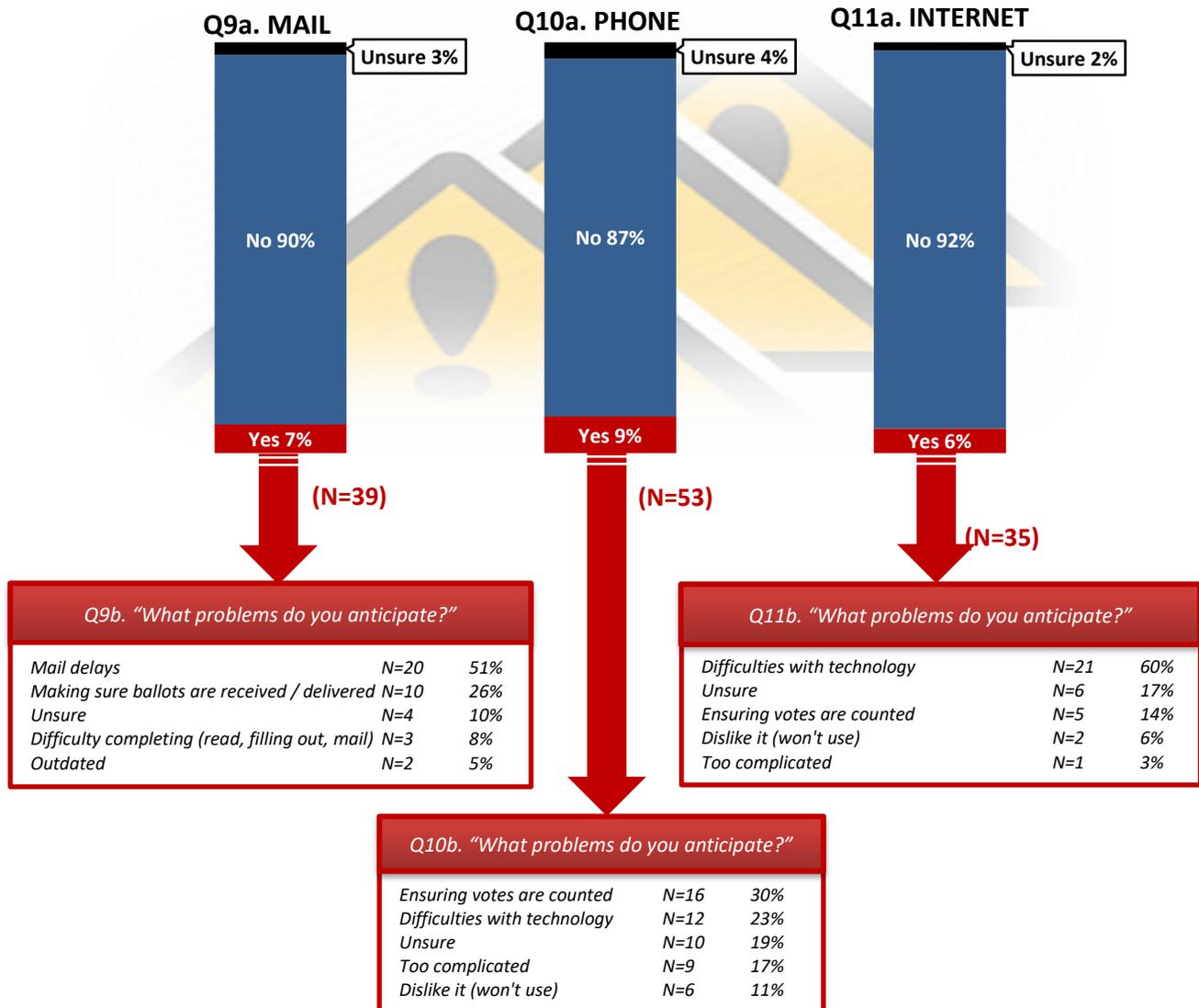


While overall security concerns were modest, they were highest for mail voting at 28%, next followed by telephone at 26% and lowest for internet balloting at 18%. Mail security concerns included potential lost ballots, fraud, dated voters lists and postal service issues. Apprehensions over telephone voting focused on fraud or making sure the correct person is voting and a general lack of trust. Internet security concerns tended to relate to cyberattacks, data or identity theft, fraud, and a general distrust.

Other Concerns

All N=400 respondents were next asked if they had concerns other than security with each of the three remote voting options. If they had a concern (answered “yes”), an open-ended follow-up question asked them to name or state the issue.

“Other than security concerns, do you see any other challenges or potential problems with each of the following remote voting methods if the City offered them?”

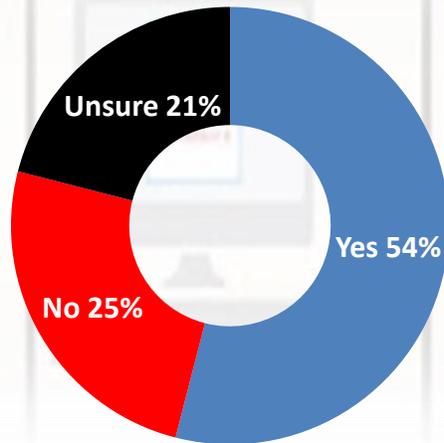


There were a low number of respondents that said there would be problems other than security including 9% for telephone, 7% for mail and 6% internet voting. Mail concerns related to delays, ballots not being received or delivered and problems completing and mailing the forms. Telephone mentions included issues over votes being counted, technology gaps or difficulties, being complicated and a general dislike of the method. The primary problem seen with internet voting was difficulty with the technology or people not being adept enough, ensuring votes are registered and disliking it because it is too complicated.

Voting Remotely

In the final question, respondents were asked if they would be more likely to vote remotely in the future, this considering the Covid 19 pandemic.

Q12. "Considering the COVID-19 pandemic, are you more likely to vote remotely in the future?"



	YES	NO	UNSURE
18-29	73%	11%	16%
30-39	70%	13%	18%
40-49	67%	16%	18%
50-59	60%	14%	26%
60-69	24%	59%	17%
70-79	21%	50%	29%
80+	9%	41%	50%

	YES	NO	UNSURE
Yes	65%	20%	15%
No	54%	25%	21%

	YES	NO	UNSURE
Male	54%	23%	23%
Female	57%	24%	19%
Other	50%	33%	17%

Fifty four percent of respondents are more likely to vote remotely in the future, 21% are undecided and only 25% are not likely to vote this way. Those under age 60 and especially under 50 had the highest percentage of more likely to vote remotely responses, as did slightly more females than males. Sixty five percent of residents with a self identified disability said they are more likely to vote remotely.

Results by Question

How would you rate your understanding of how to vote using the following three remote voting methods? For each one, please use a scale from one being a very poor understanding to five a very good understanding.

Q1. Mail		
	N	Percent
Very poor understanding	16	2.7
Poor understanding	42	7.0
Neither poor nor good understanding	91	15.2
Good understanding	268	44.7
Very good understanding	151	25.2
Don't know	32	5.3
Total	600	100.0

Q2. Phone		
	N	Percent
Very poor understanding	22	3.7
Poor understanding	57	9.5
Neither poor nor good understanding	106	17.7
Good understanding	260	43.3
Very good understanding	118	19.7
Don't know	37	6.2
Total	600	100.0

Q3. Internet		
	N	Percent
Very poor understanding	30	5.0
Poor understanding	55	9.2
Neither poor nor good understanding	61	10.2
Good understanding	249	41.5
Very good understanding	185	30.8
Don't know	20	3.3
Total	600	100.0

Q4. Sometimes due to travel, extreme weather, illness, or other issues, people may find they are unable to vote in person. Please rank in order of priority preference, from 1 being the most likely that you would use, to three the least likely, each of the following voting methods you may use if unable to vote in person.

	N	Mean
Q4a. Vote by mail	574	2.3589
Q4b. Vote by phone	574	1.9408
Q4c. Internet voting	574	1.7056

Q4a. Vote by mail			
		N	Percent
	First choice	117	20.4
	Second choice	134	23.3
	Third choice	323	56.3
	Total	574	100.0
	Don't know	26	
Total		600	

Q4b. Vote by phone			
		N	Percent
	First choice	148	25.8
	Second choice	312	54.4
	Third choice	114	19.9
	Total	574	100.0
	Don't know	26	
Total		600	

Q4c. Internet voting			
		N	Percent
	First choice	309	53.8
	Second choice	125	21.8
	Third choice	140	24.4
	Total	574	100.0
	Don't know	26	
Total		600	

IF UNSURE IN Q4 SKIP TO Q6

Q5a. Why are you most likely to use the <??> option?		
	N	Percent
Don't know	110	19.2
Comfortable with technology / most people are	105	18.3
Just prefer it	102	17.8
Easiest	62	10.8
Everything is technological (online) / use it elsewhere / daily	57	9.9
Technology issues / uncomfortable with / I'm old school	32	5.6
Used to / most familiar with	31	5.4
Less chance errors / glitches / crashes	23	4.0
Practical	20	3.5
Trustworthy	15	2.6
Less chance of fraud	9	1.6
Don't have to leave home	8	1.4
Total	574	100.0

Q5b. Why are you least likely to use the <??> option?		
	N	Percent
Don't know	207	36.1
Lack of confidence in mail / postal service	83	14.5
Open to fraud	50	8.7
Security issues / not secure enough	49	8.5
Outdated	38	6.6
Lost ballots	35	6.1
No PC, internet / not tech savvy / not technical	34	5.9
Too complicated	28	4.9
Legitimacy concerns	21	3.7
Online a better option	16	2.8
US Election experience	13	2.3
Total	574	100.0

Would you have any security concerns with each of the following remote voting methods if the City offered them?

Q6a. Mail			
		N	Percent
	Yes	172	28.7
	No	406	67.7
	Unsure	22	3.7
	Total	600	100.0

IF YES ASK Q6b

Q6b. What are your security concerns?			
		N	Percent
	Ballots being lost	54	31.4
	Mail fraud	35	20.3
	Voters lists (outdated, not reaching right person etc.)	28	16.3
	Unsure	25	14.5
	Do not trust Canada Post	18	10.5
	Takes too long	12	7.0
	Total	172	100.0

Q7a. Phone			
		N	Percent
	Yes	153	25.5
	No	416	69.3
	Unsure	31	5.2
	Total	600	100.0

IF YES ASK Q7b

Q7b. What are your security concerns?			
		N	Percent
	Fraud (verifying right person voting)	59	38.6
	Do not trust it	49	32.0
	Unsure	21	13.7
	Making sure correct vote recorded	11	7.2
	Who would manage / distrust of private companies	9	5.9
	Competency of people taking calls	4	2.6
	Total	153	100.0

Q8a. Internet			
		N	Percent
	Yes	107	17.8
	No	452	75.3
	Unsure	41	6.8
	Total	600	100.0

IF YES ASK Q8b

Q8b. What are your security concerns?			
		N	Percent
	Cyberattacks / hackers	40	37.4
	Identity theft / personal data exposed	24	22.4
	Do not trust it	15	14.0
	Unsure	12	11.2
	Fraud (verifying right person voting)	11	10.3
	Who would manage / distrust of private companies	5	4.7
	Total	107	100.0

Other than security concerns, do you see any other challenges or potential problems with each of the following remote voting methods if the City offered them?

Q9a. Mail			
		N	Percent
	Yes	39	6.5
	No	542	90.3
	Unsure	19	3.2
	Total	600	100.0

IF YES ASK Q9b

Q9b. What problems do you anticipate?			
		N	Percent
	Mail delays	20	51.3
	Making sure ballots are received / delivered	10	25.6
	Unsure	4	10.3
	Difficulty completing ballots (reading, filling out, having to mail)	3	7.7
	Outdated	2	5.1
	Total	39	100.0

Q10a. Phone			
		N	Percent
	Yes	53	8.8
	No	523	87.2
	Unsure	24	4.0
	Total	600	100.0

IF YES ASK Q10b

Q10b. What problems do you anticipate?			
		N	Percent
	Ensuring votes are counted	16	30.2
	Difficulties with technology	12	22.6
	Unsure	10	18.9
	Too complicated	9	17.0
	Dislike it (won't use)	6	11.3
	Total	53	100.0

Q11a. Internet			
		N	Percent
	Yes	35	5.8
	No	554	92.3
	Unsure	11	1.8
	Total	600	100.0

IF YES ASK Q11b

Q11b. What problems do you anticipate?			
		N	Percent
	Difficulties with technology	21	60.0
	Unsure	6	17.1
	Ensuring votes are counted	5	14.3
	Dislike it (won't use)	2	5.7
	Too complicated	1	2.9
	Total	35	100.0

Q12. Considering the COVID-19 pandemic, are you more likely to vote remotely in the future?			
		N	Percent
	Yes	327	54.5
	No	149	24.8
	Unsure	124	20.7
	Total	600	100.0

The final questions are about yourself and are important for overall reporting and analysis. Once again, I would like to assure you that all individual responses will remain confidential.

D1. Which of the following age groups may I place you in?			
		N	Percent
	18-29	119	19.8
	30-39	112	18.7
	40-49	120	20.0
	50-59	80	13.3
	60-69	94	15.7
	70-79	38	6.3
	80 or older	32	5.3
	Refused	5	.8
	Total	600	100.0

D2. Gender			
		N	Percent
	Male	278	46.3
	Female	302	50.3
	Other	12	2.0
	Refused	8	1.3
	Total	600	100.0

Disabilities, both visible and invisible, include physical, hearing, seeing, developmental learning or mental health conditions, chronic illness, and addictions. Disabilities may be from birth, caused by injury or accident, developed over time, or results from the combination of a person's condition and barriers in society.

D3. Do you identify as a person with a disability?			
		N	Percent
	Yes	75	12.5
	No	515	85.8
	Refused	10	1.7
	Total	600	100.0