AMCTO 2022 Post Election Survey Report

Context

As has been an AMCTO tradition post-elections, we asked our members for support in collecting election administration and operational information following the 2022 municipal elections.

AMCTO collaborated with the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing (MMAH) to enhance data quality and reduce duplicative inquiries thereby reducing the burden on municipal clerks responding to the survey.

The data collected through these surveys was analyzed for key trends.

This deck was prepared to provide AMCTO members with key information for comparing election administration practices across the Province.

For further clarification or questions regarding this report, please contact advocacy@amcto.com.

Research Notes

- The **AMCTO 2022 Post Election Survey** had 220 respondents from various municipalities, a change from 263 respondents in 2018. Respondents were dispersed across zones with most respondents from municipalities +/- 50,000 populations.

- The **MMAH 2022 Post Election Survey** had 414 respondents, one from each municipality in Ontario that administers elections. This is consistent with 2018.

- Each chart includes the number of respondents for that particular question (represented as the N#). In some cases, respondents were able to select multiple responses, so the N# does not always correspond to the number of municipalities that responded to that question.

- The report sometimes compares data across population groupings, as well as AMCTO Zones, and MMAH regions.

Outline

- **Election Trends** – voter turnout, council size, and wards
- **Election Administration** – election staffing, voters' list, voting methods, advanced voting, compliance audit committees, third party advertising
- **Spotlight: Third Party Advertising** – a closer look at our members' experiences with registered third party advertisers
- **Spotlight: Internet Voting** - a closer look at some of the challenges and opportunities with internet voting
- **Contact**

Election Trends

This section identifies key findings related to general election trends including voter turnout, council size and wards

Voter Turnout: 2018 and 2022 voter turnout comparison

Comparison of 2018 & 2022 voter turnout N=414
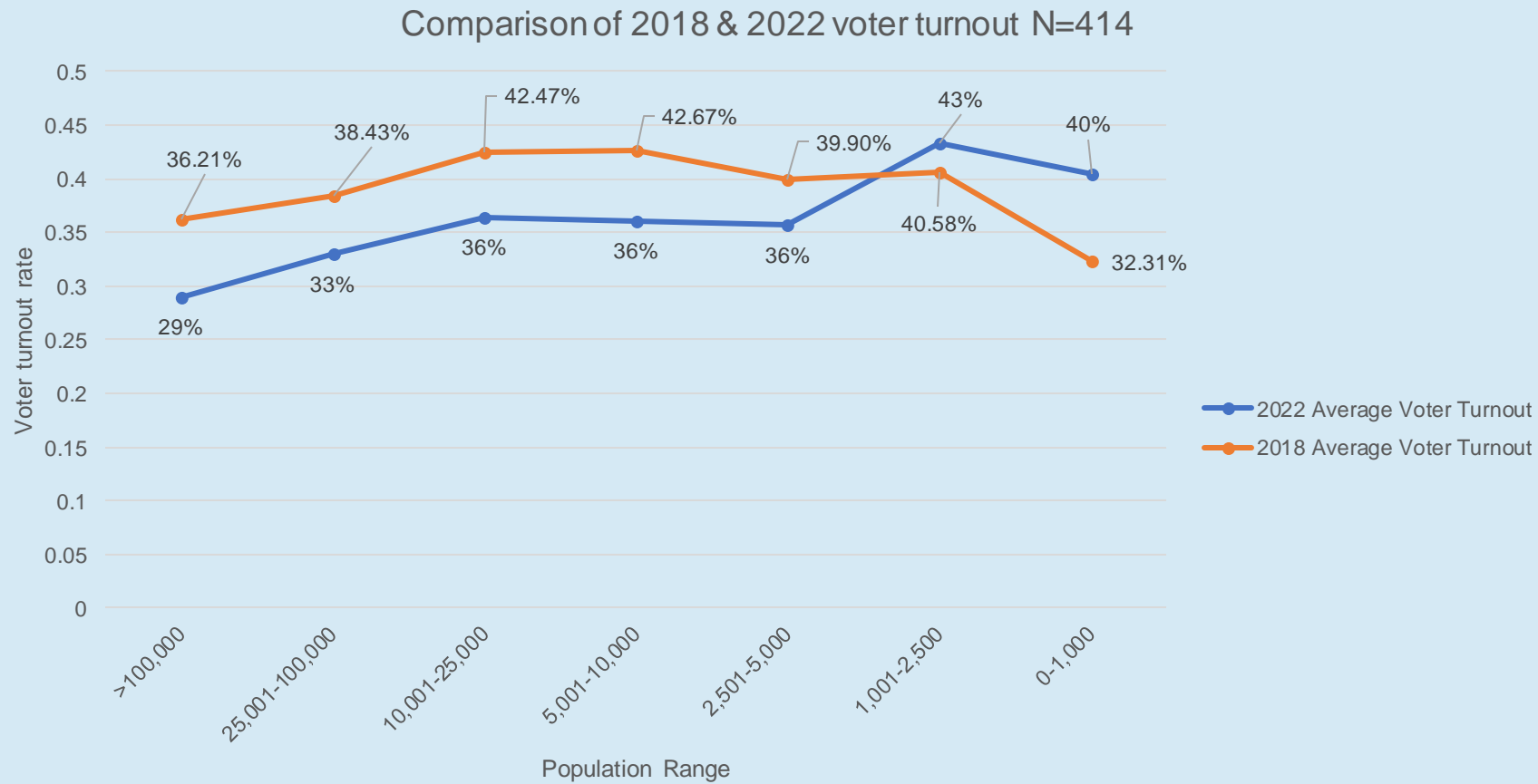
Key findings

- Voter turnout for most municipalities declined more than 4% between 2018 and 2022.
- Contrastingly, voter turnout increased for municipalities with populations of less than 2500.
- Voter turnout increased by more than 8% for municipalities with populations less than 1000.

Voter Turnout: Acclamations and voter turnout

Voter turnout by percent of acclamations (N=414)
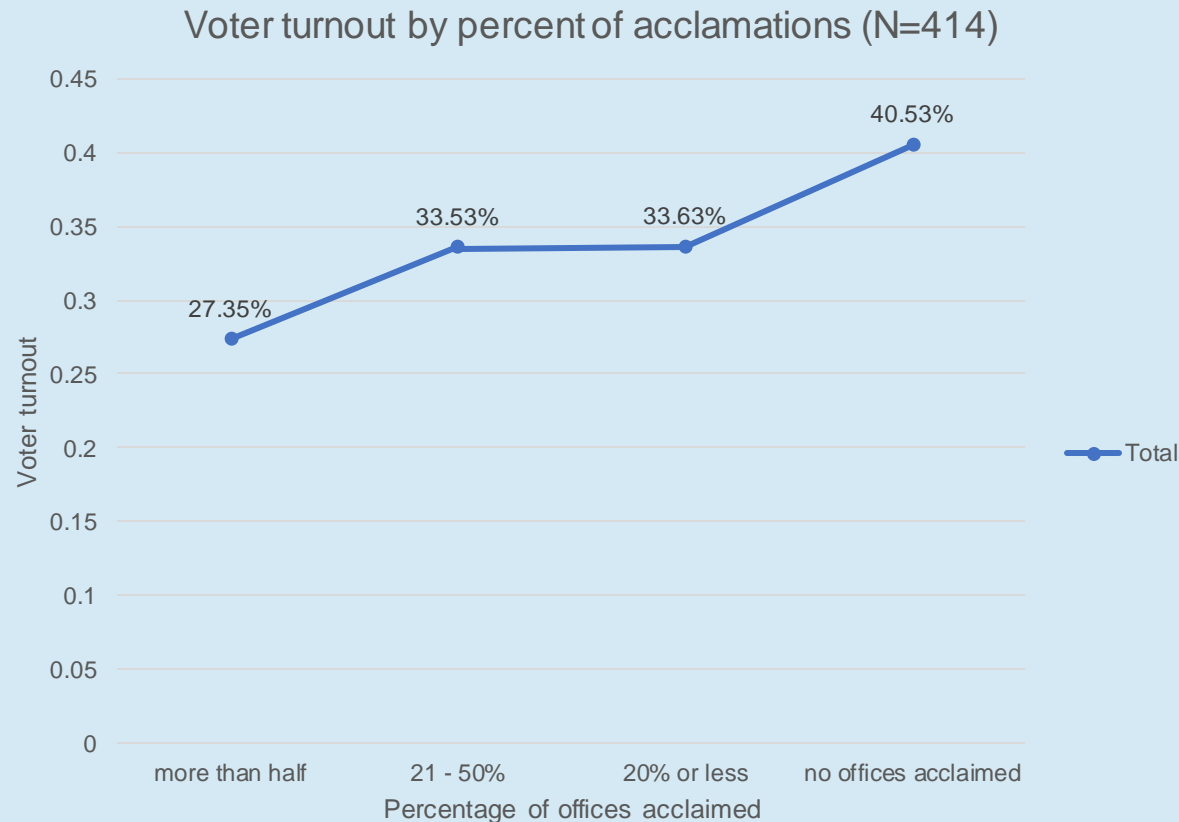

Key findings

- There appears to be an association between voter turnout and the percentage of acclaimed offices.

- Voter turnout is 13% higher in municipalities with no acclaimed offices than it is in municipalities with more than half of offices acclaimed.

- Voter turnout is about 10% lower when the head of council is acclaimed.

Council: Average council size by population

Average council size by population N=414
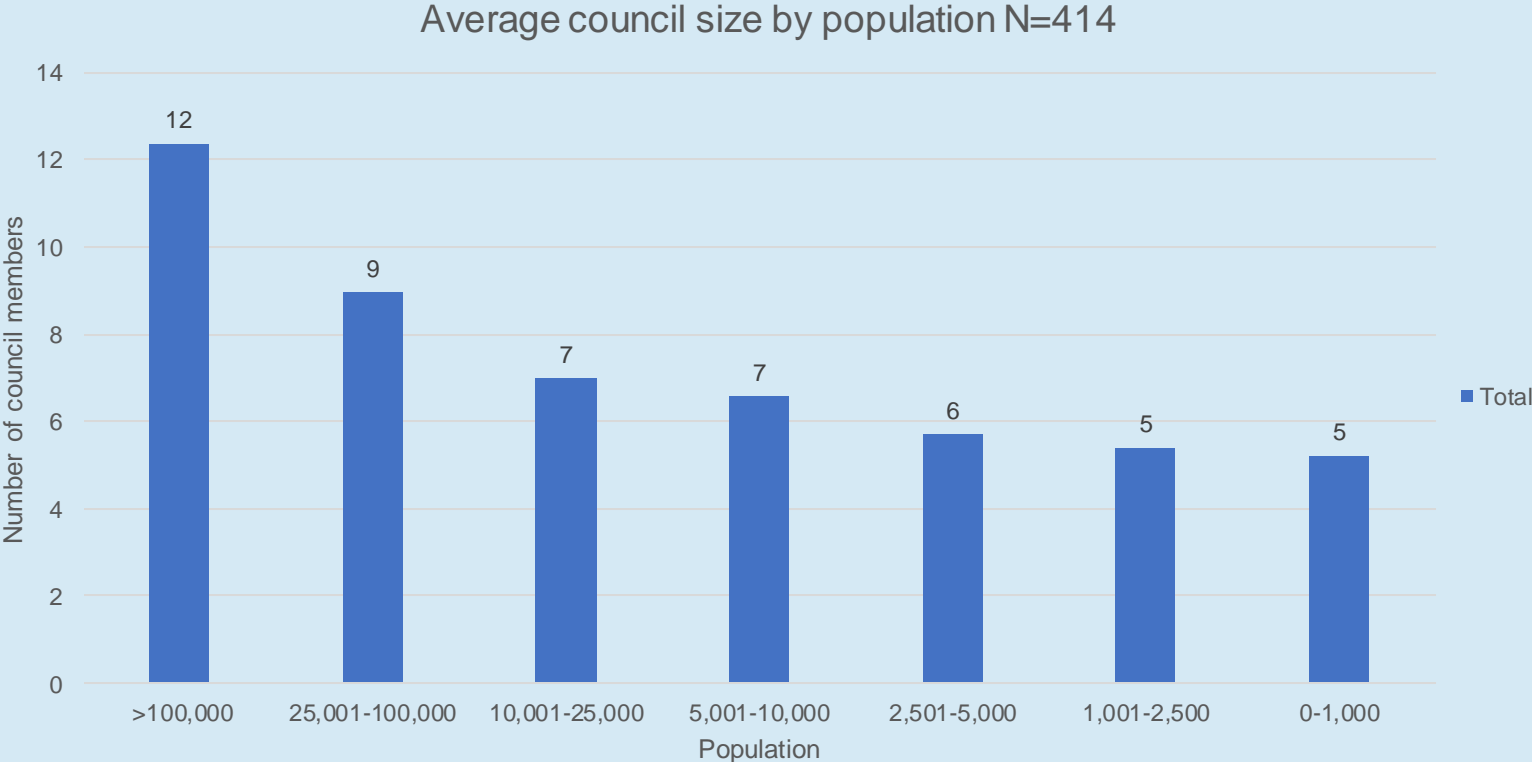
Council: Average council size by population & MMAH region

Average council size by population and region N=414
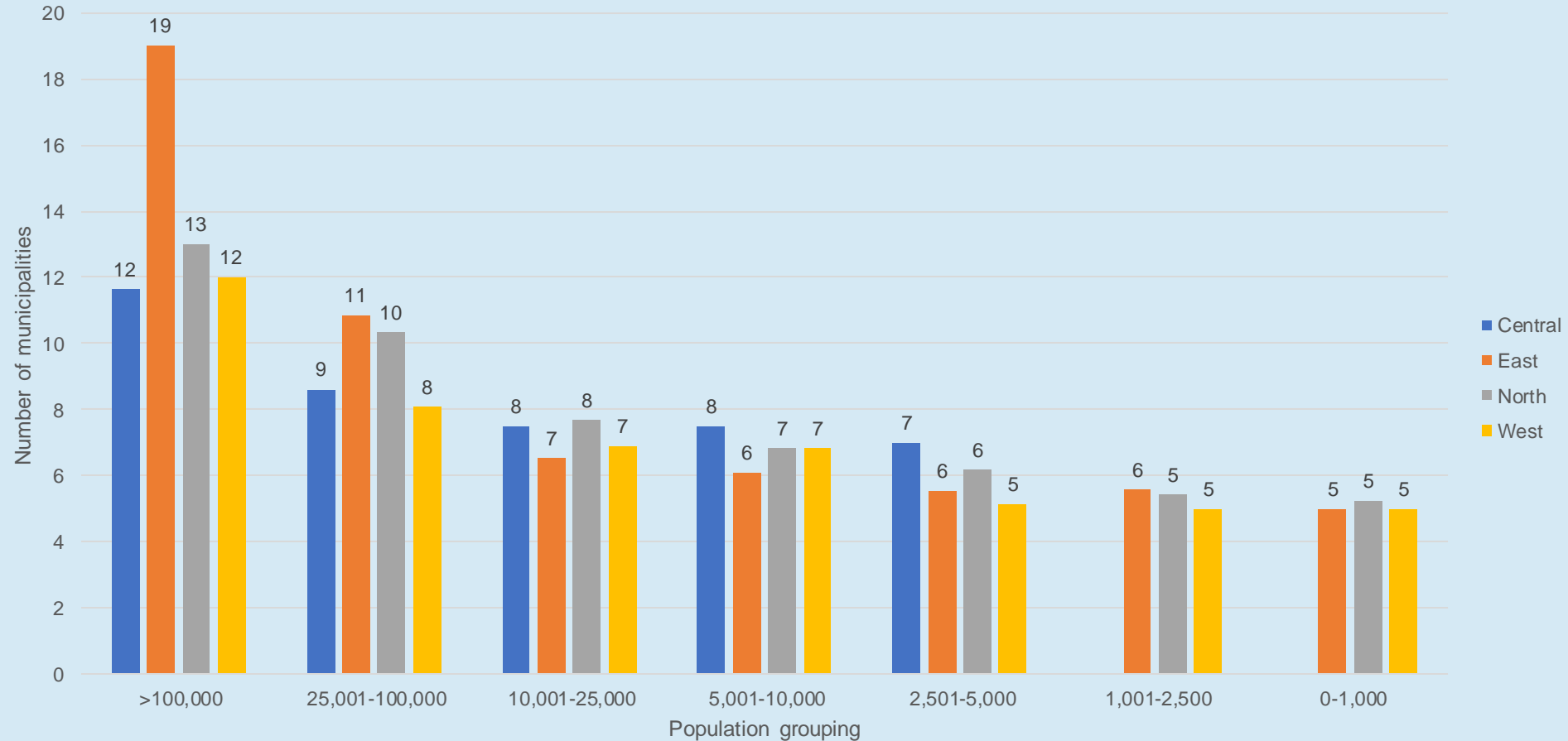
Election Administration

This section looks at key election administration and operational considerations including election staffing, voters list, voting methods, tabulator usage, and compliance and third-party advertising

Election Staffing: Average number of election staff working election by population

Population	Average of number of permanent staff (i.e. municipal staff) dedicated to the management of the election	Average of number of contract staff hired to help deliver the election (not including poll workers) (e.g. election coordinator)	Average of number of staff hired for voting day only (e.g. poll workers)
Fewer than 10,000	2.3	0.4	3.4
10,000 – 50,000	3.6	1.1	27.0
All municipalities under 50,000	2.7	0.6	10.9
50,000 – 100,000	2.6	1.4	138.8
100,000 – 250,000	6.2	2.1	275.5
More than 250,000	2.1	10.1	1131.4

Key findings:
- The number of permanent staff dedicated to managing elections is highest for municipalities with populations of 100,000-250,000; whereas, municipalities with populations of over 250,000 hire more contract staff to deliver the election.

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# Election Staffing: Municipalities that experienced challenges recruiting election staff by AMCTO Zone

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Percent of municipalities that experienced challenges recruiting staff by zone (N=220)
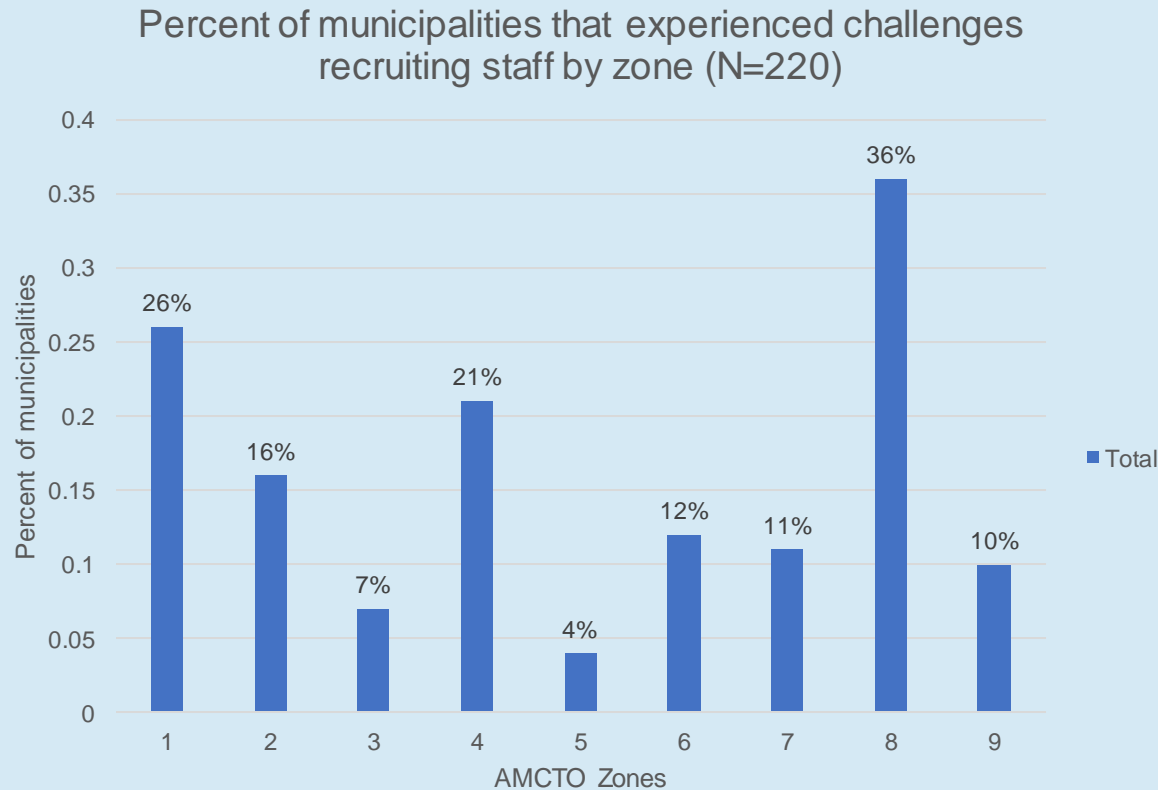
Key findings:

Overall, 14% of municipalities had challenges recruiting staff to work in the election, **36% of municipalities in Zone 8** had challenges recruiting staff to work in the election - 22% more than the average.

Municipalities in Zones 1 and 4 also reported having challenges recruiting staff with 12% more than average having difficulty in Zone 1 and 7% more than average having difficulty in Zone 4.

The lowest percentage of municipalities having challenges recruiting staff was in Zone 5 with only 4% having challenges recruiting staff.

Election Staffing: Municipalities that experienced challenges recruiting election staff by population

Percentage of municipalities within population grouping that experienced challenges recruiting staff (N=220)
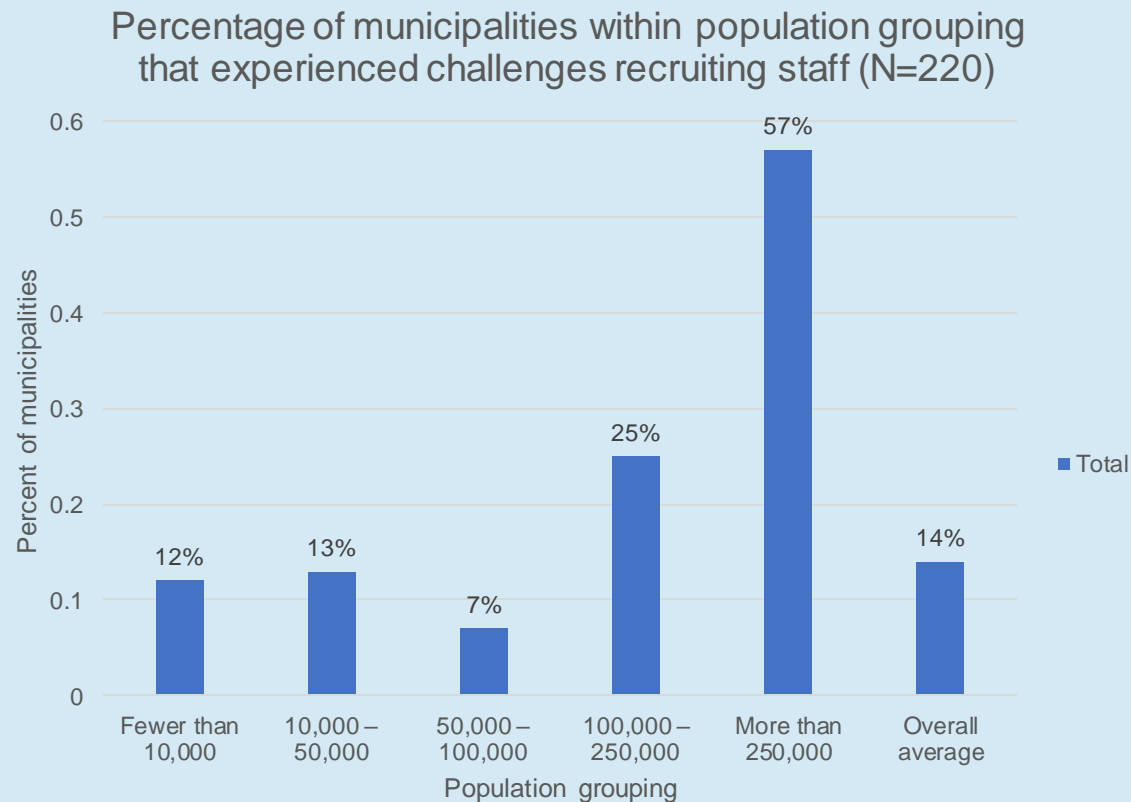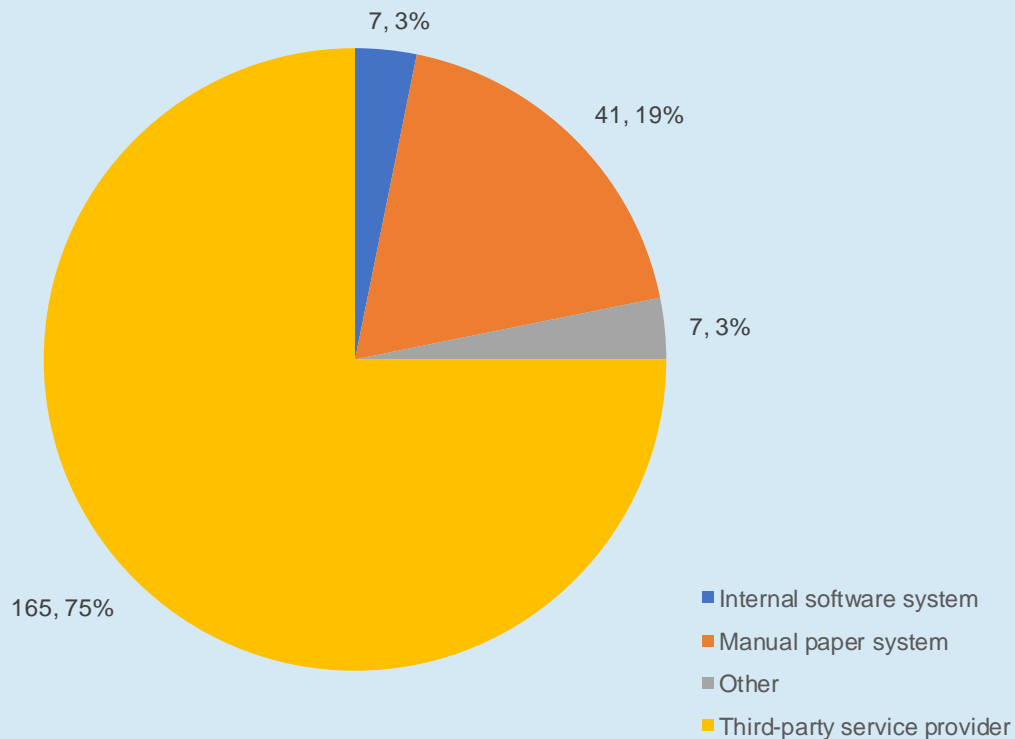
Key Findings:
Municipalities with the highest populations reported having the most challenges recruiting staff. The largest percentage of **municipalities that had challenges recruiting were those with populations over 250,000 with 57%** reporting that it was difficult to find staff to work the election.
Followed by municipalities with between 100,000-250,000 of whom 25% reported challenges finding staff.
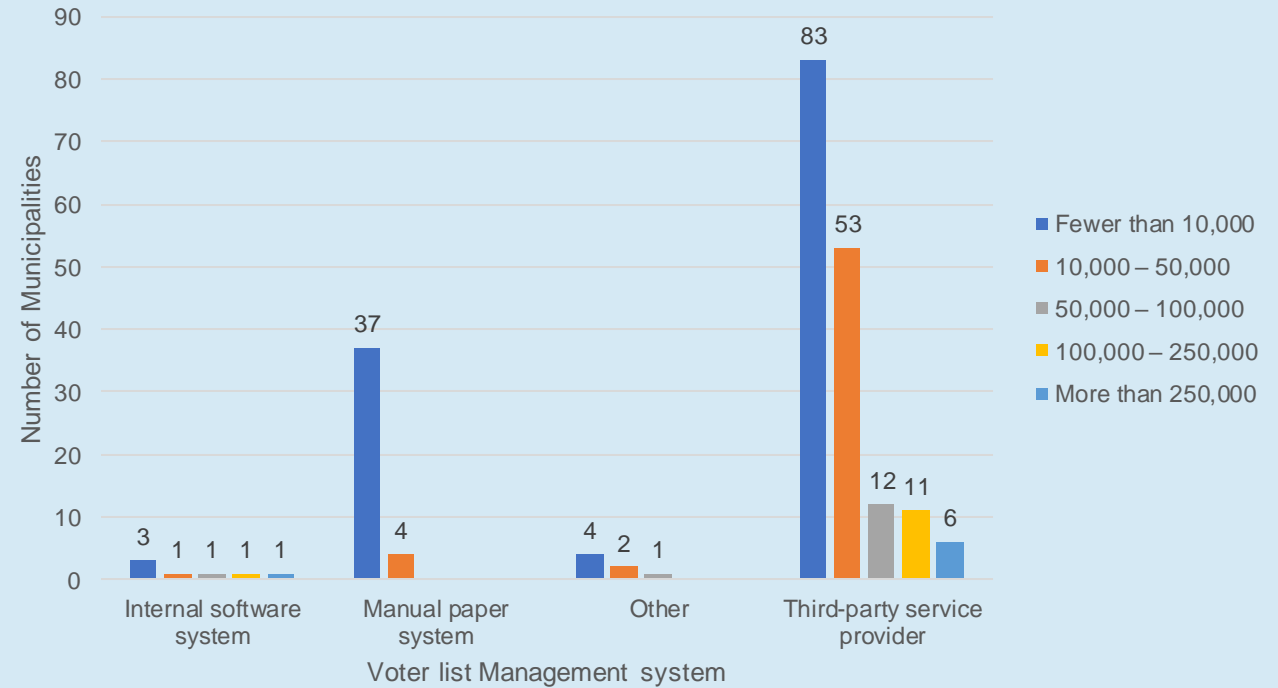
Key findings from election staffing data

- The number of permanent staff dedicated to managing elections is highest for municipalities with populations of 100,000-250,000 whereas **municipalities with populations of over 250,000 hire more contract staff** to deliver the election.

- Overall, **14% of municipalities surveyed had challenges recruiting staff** to work the election.

- **Municipalities in some Zones had more challenges recruiting staff to work than others.** 36% of municipalities in Zone 8, 26% of municipalities in Zone 1 and 21% of municipalities in Zone 4 had trouble recruiting staff.

- **A higher share of municipalities with large populations had challenges recruiting staff.** 57% of municipalities with populations over 250,000 had trouble recruiting staff and 25% of municipalities with populations between 100,000-250,000 had trouble recruiting staff.

- The number of municipalities that reported having trouble finding staff was the lowest for **municipalities with populations between 50,000 and 100,000** where only **7% of municipalities had challenges finding staff.**

Voters List: Voters list management

Municipal voters list management (N=220)

- Internal software system
- Manual paper system
- Other
- Third-party service provider

7, 3%
41, 19%
7, 3%
165, 75%

Voter list management systems by population (N=220)

Number of Municipalities
Voter list Management system

- Fewer than 10,000
- 10,000 – 50,000
- 50,000 – 100,000
- 100,000 – 250,000
- More than 250,000

Internal software system: 3, 1, 1, 1, 1
Manual paper system: 37, 4
Other: 4, 2, 1
Third-party service provider: 83, 53, 12, 11, 6

Voters List: Number of changes to voters list by population

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Number of changes to voter list by population (N=220)
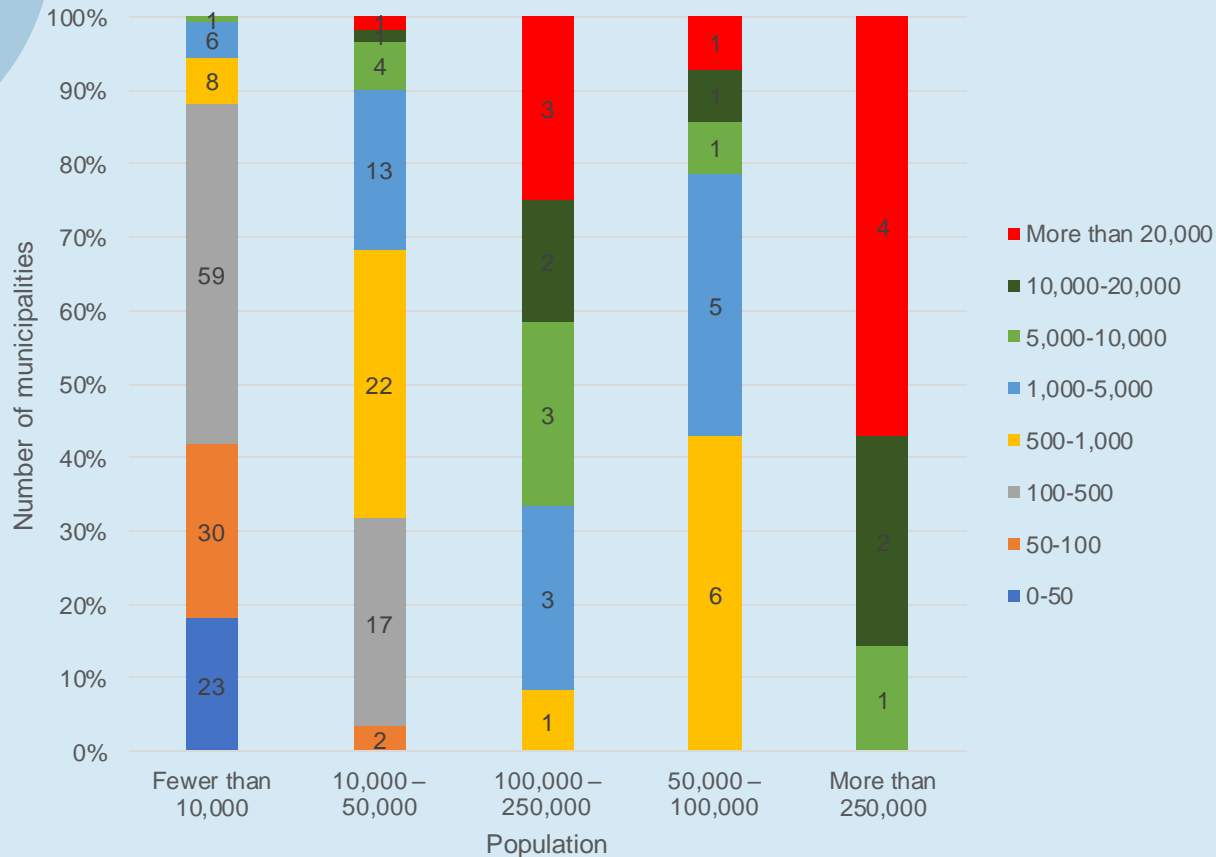
Population	\multicolumn{8}{c}{Number of changes to voter list}	Grand Total
	0-50	50-100	100-500	500-1,000	1,000-5,000	5,000-10,000	10,000-20,000	More than 20,000	
Fewer than 10,000	23	30	59	8	6	1			127
10,000 – 50,000		2	17	22	13	4	1	1	60
100,000 – 250,000				1	3	3	2	3	12
50,000 – 100,000				6	5	1	1	1	14
More than 250,000						1	2	4	7
Grand Total	23	32	76	37	27	10	6	9	220

Key findings:
Several municipalities reported needing to make a significant number of changes to their voters list. **At least 32 municipalities reported needing to make changes to the voters list equal to or exceeding 10% of their population.**
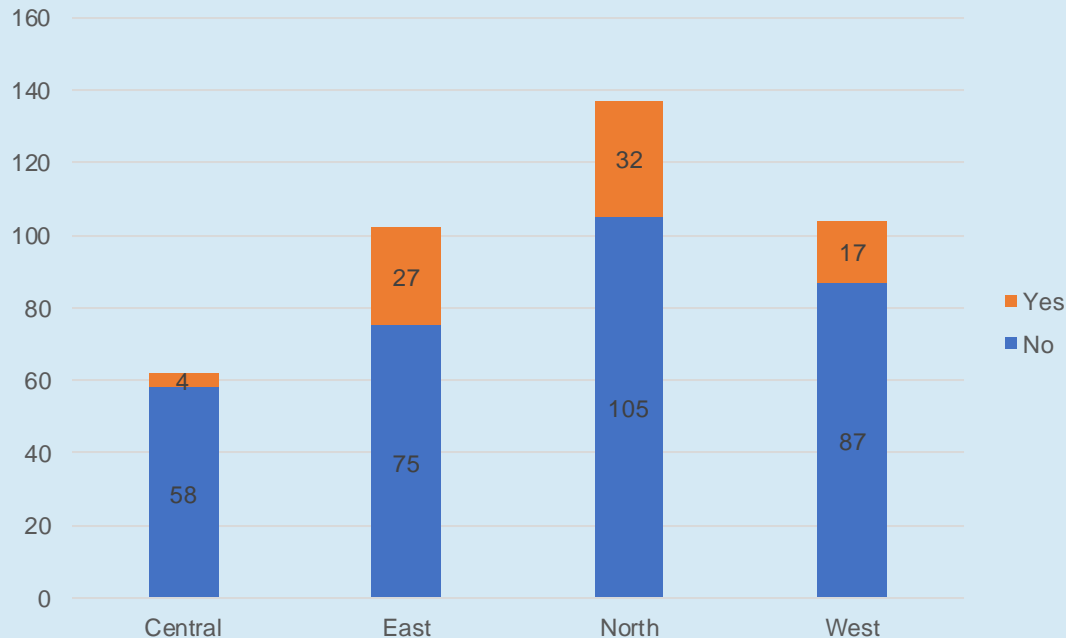
16

Compliance: How do municipalities determine if contributions exceed the maximum allowable amount?

How does your municipality determine whether any contributors exceed the maximum allowable amount? (N=220)

- Clerk's office fulfilling it
- Finance department fulfilling it
- Other
- Using an external consultant
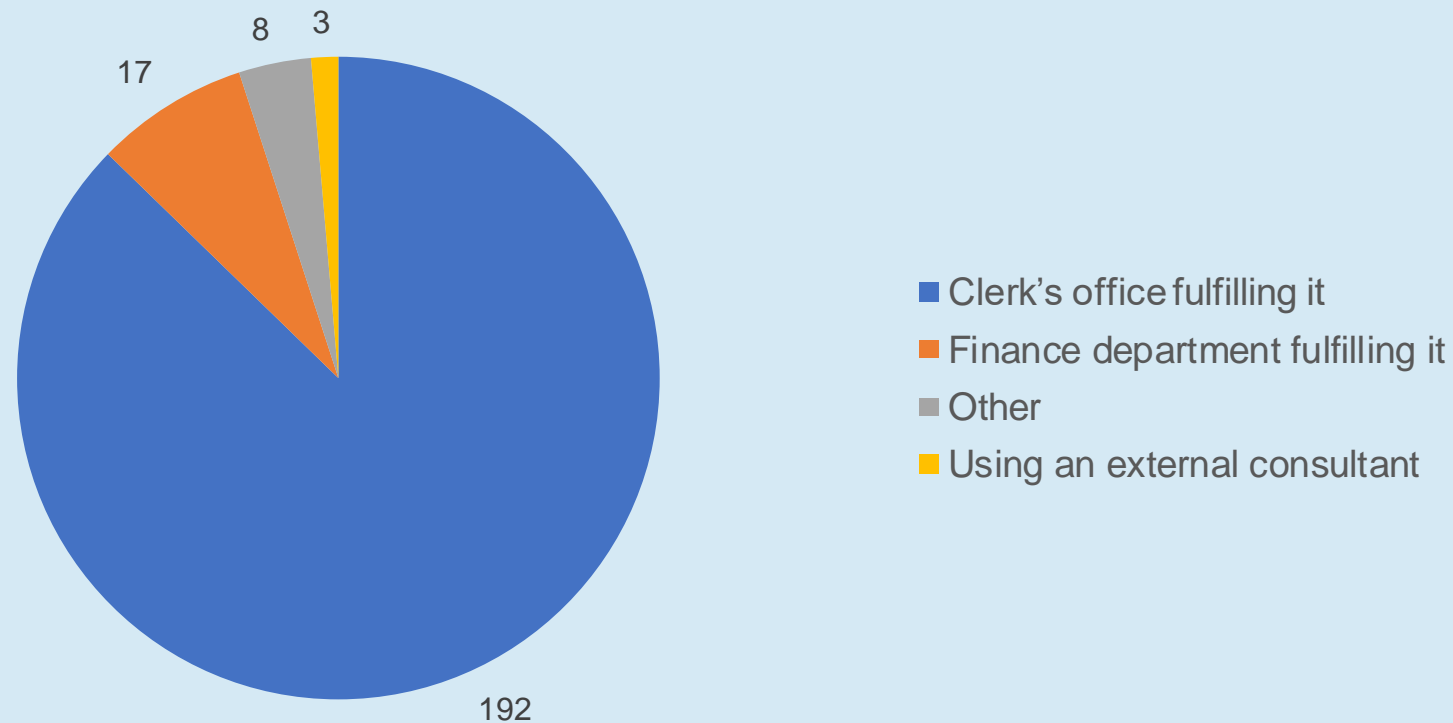
Compliance: Compliance Audit Committees (CAC)

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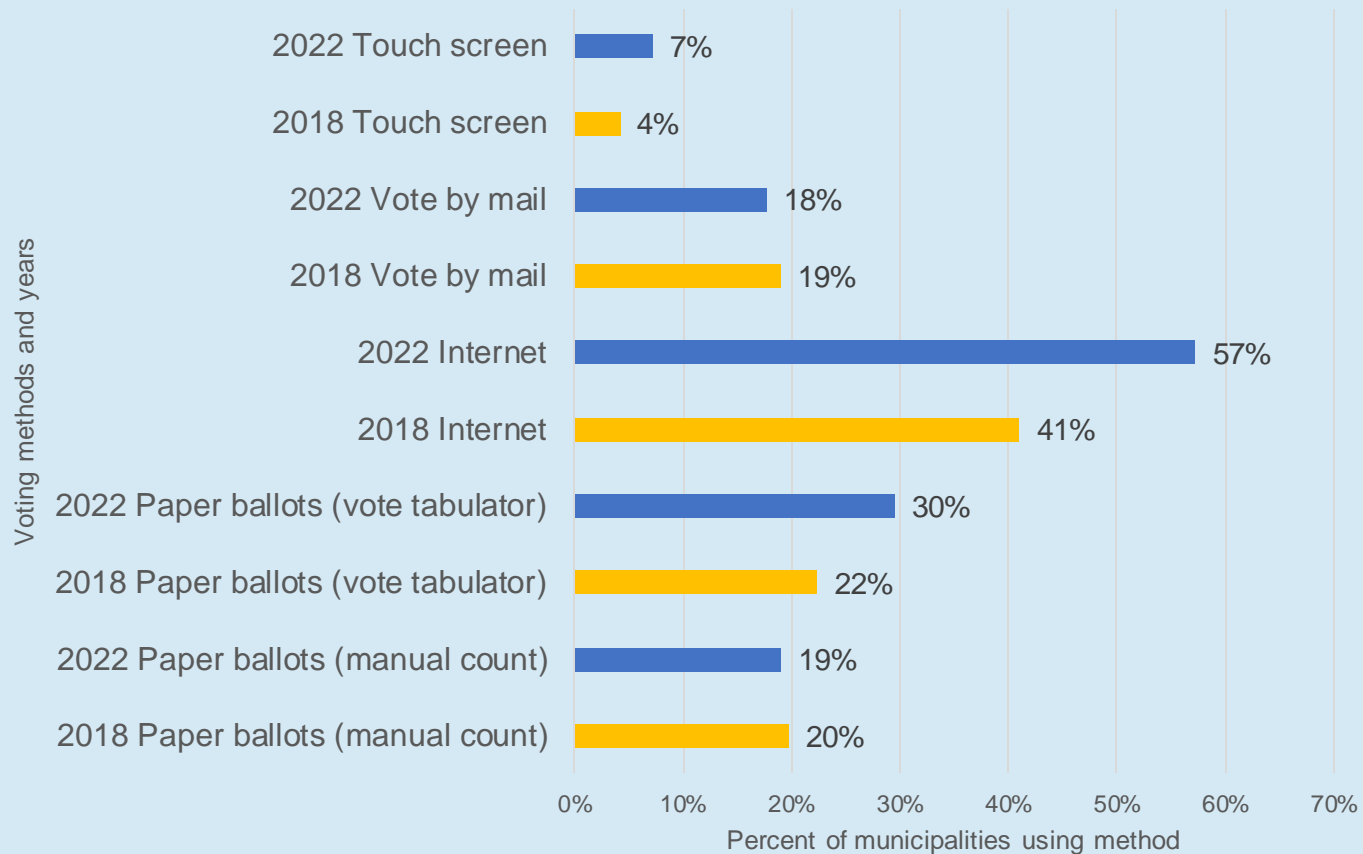### Challenges finding CAC members by region (N=405)

Key Findings:
Overall, **20% of municipalities had challenges recruiting for their compliance audit committee.** The most municipalities in the **East and North regions** reported difficulty finding CAC members (26% and 23% respectively) whereas municipalities in the Central region had the least difficulty (6%). **25% of single tier** municipalities reported challenges finding CAC members. **28% of municipalities with populations under 1000** reported challenges finding CAC members.

Note: N reflects the fact that some municipalities may use more than one voting method

Voting Methods: 2018 and 2022 comparison

Voting methods comparison, 2018 and 2022
N=263 (2018) N=220 (2022)

2022 Touch screen — 7%
2018 Touch screen — 4%
2022 Vote by mail — 18%
2018 Vote by mail — 19%
2022 Internet — 57%
2018 Internet — 41%
2022 Paper ballots (vote tabulator) — 30%
2018 Paper ballots (vote tabulator) — 22%
2022 Paper ballots (manual count) — 19%
2018 Paper ballots (manual count) — 20%

Voting methods and years

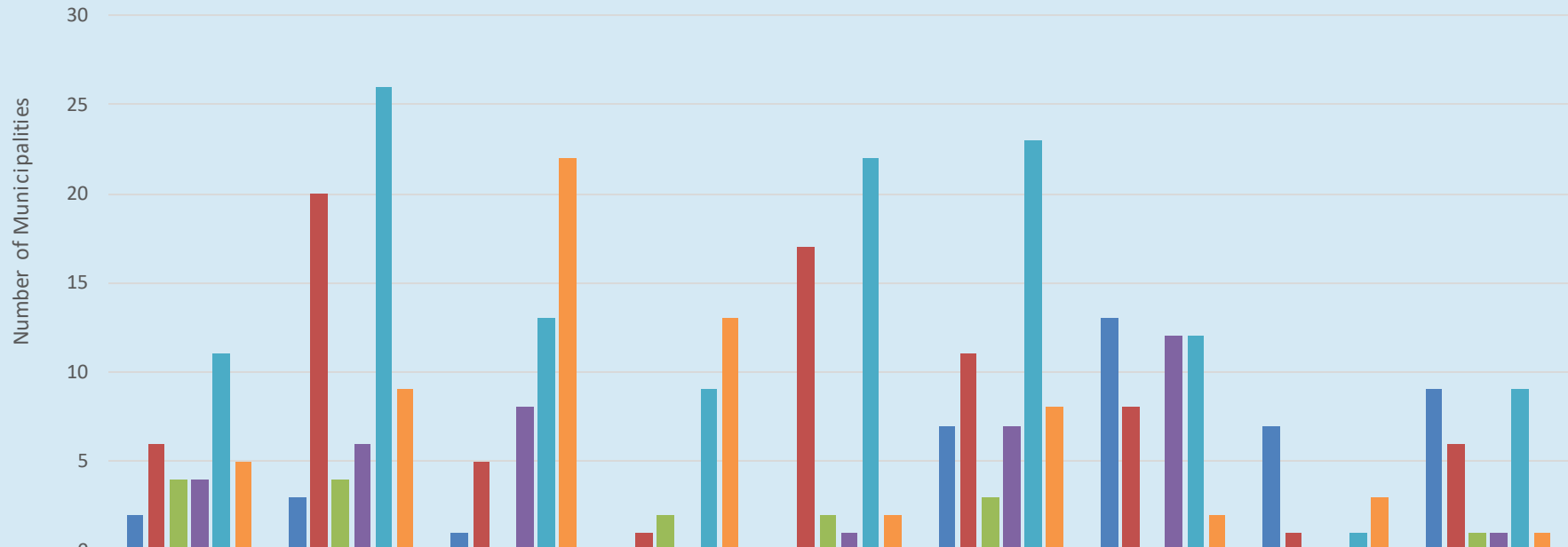Percent of municipalities using method

Key finding:
The percentage of respondent municipalities using **vote tabulators and internet voting increased** significantly between the 2018 and 2022 elections, with increases of 8% for vote tabulator use and 16% for internet voting use respectively.

Voting Methods: By AMCTO Zone
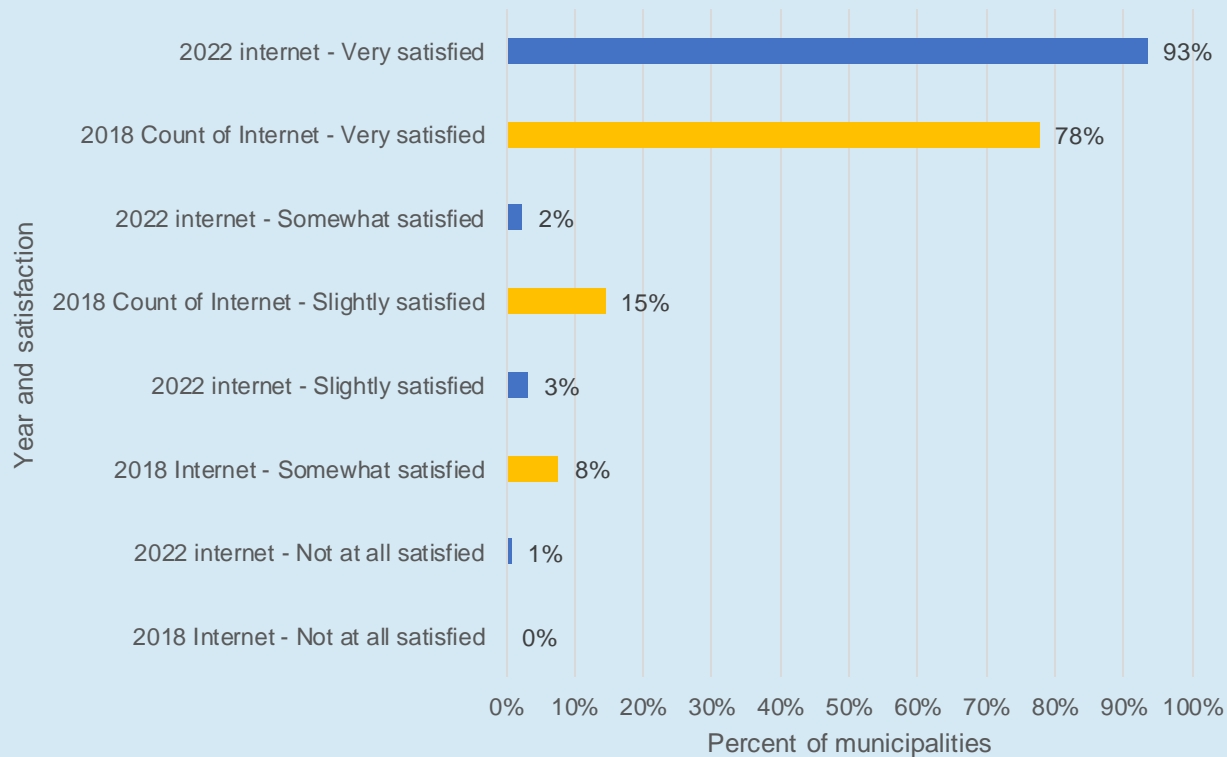

AMCTO zones and vote methods (N=363)

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
■ Count of Paper ballots (manual count)	2	3	1			7	13	7	9
■ Count of Vote by phone	6	20	5	1	17	11	8	1	6
■ Count of Touch screen	4	4		2	2	3			1
■ Count of Vote by mail	4	6	8		1	7	12		1
■ Count of Internet	11	26	13	9	22	23	12	1	9
■ Count of Paper ballots (vote tabulator)	5	9	22	13	2	8	2	3	1

AMCTO Zone

Note: N reflects the fact that some municipalities may use more than one voting method

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Voting Methods: Internet voting satisfaction

Satisfaction with internet voting 2018 comparison (N=117) & 2022 (N=123)

- 2022 internet - Very satisfied: 93%
- 2018 Count of Internet - Very satisfied: 78%
- 2022 internet - Somewhat satisfied: 2%
- 2018 Count of Internet - Slightly satisfied: 15%
- 2022 internet - Slightly satisfied: 3%
- 2018 Internet - Somewhat satisfied: 8%
- 2022 internet - Not at all satisfied: 1%
- 2018 Internet - Not at all satisfied: 0%

Year and satisfaction (vertical axis)
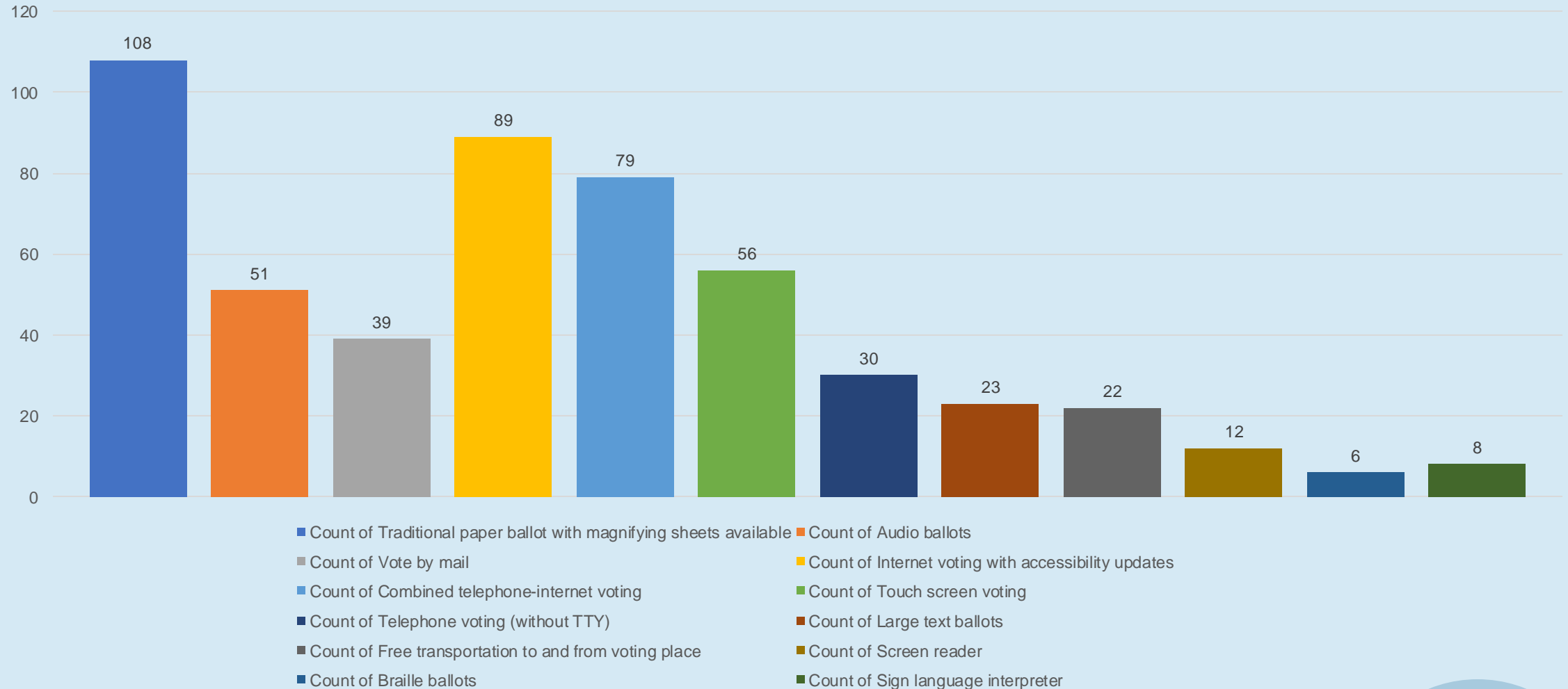*Percent of municipalities* (horizontal axis)

Key findings:
Satisfaction with internet voting increased between 2018 and 2022 with **15% more municipalities that used internet reporting that they were very satisfied with the method in 2022.**
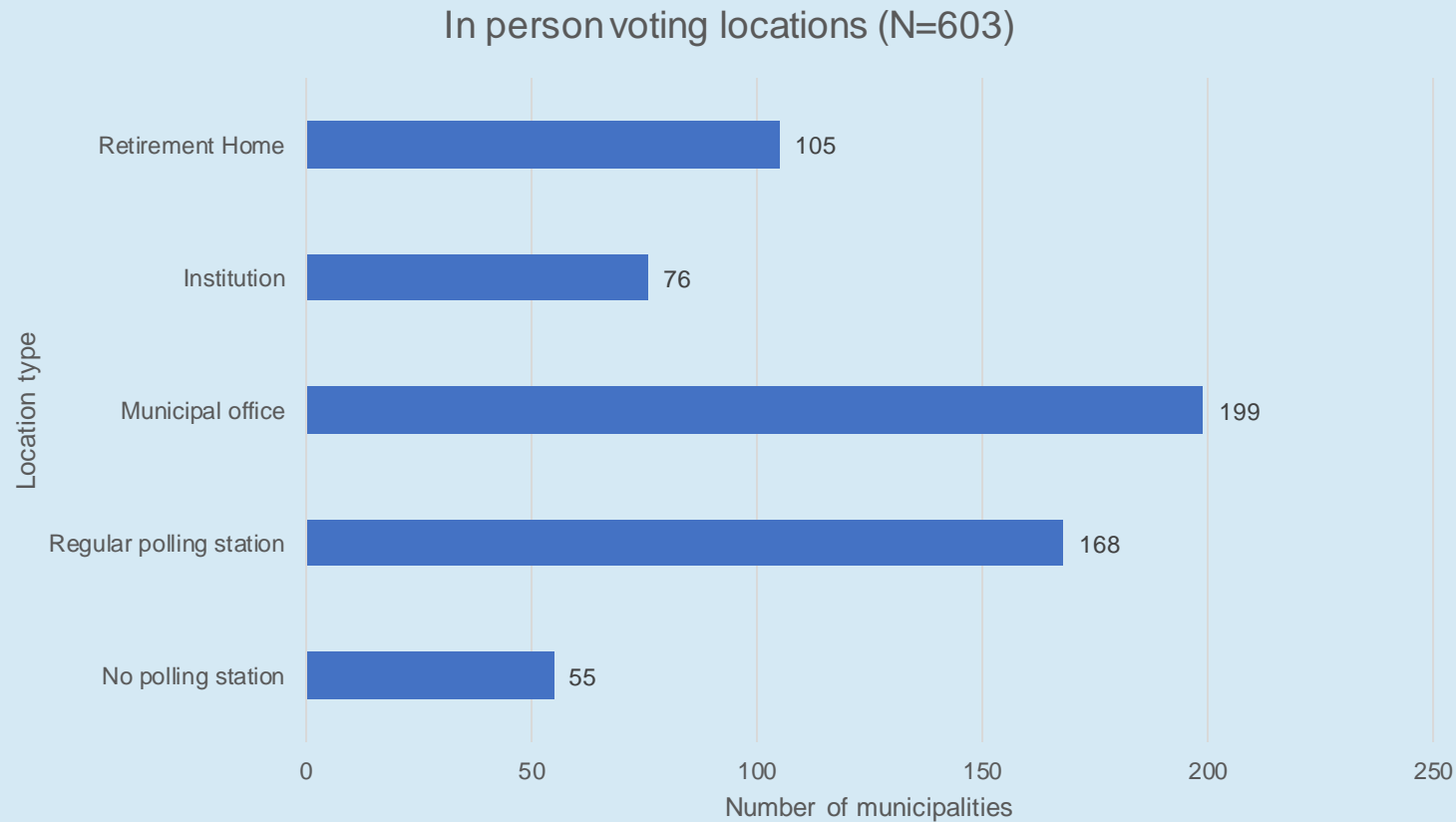
Voting Methods: Accessible Voting

Number of municipalities providing each accessible voting method (N=523)

Legend:
- Count of Traditional paper ballot with magnifying sheets available
- Count of Audio ballots
- Count of Vote by mail
- Count of Internet voting with accessibility updates
- Count of Combined telephone-internet voting
- Count of Touch screen voting
- Count of Telephone voting (without TTY)
- Count of Large text ballots
- Count of Free transportation to and from voting place
- Count of Screen reader
- Count of Braille ballots
- Count of Sign language interpreter

Values: 108, 51, 39, 89, 79, 56, 30, 23, 22, 12, 6, 8

Note: N reflects the fact that some municipalities may use more than one voting method

Voting Methods: In person voting locations

In person voting locations (N=603)

Horizontal bar chart — X axis: Number of municipalities (0 to 250); Y axis: Location type

Location type	Number of municipalities
Retirement Home	105
Institution	76
Municipal office	199
Regular polling station	168
No polling station	55

Note: N reflects the fact that some municipalities may use more than one voting method

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Tabulators: Overall vote tabulator usage

Municipalities that used vote tabulators by population (N=220)
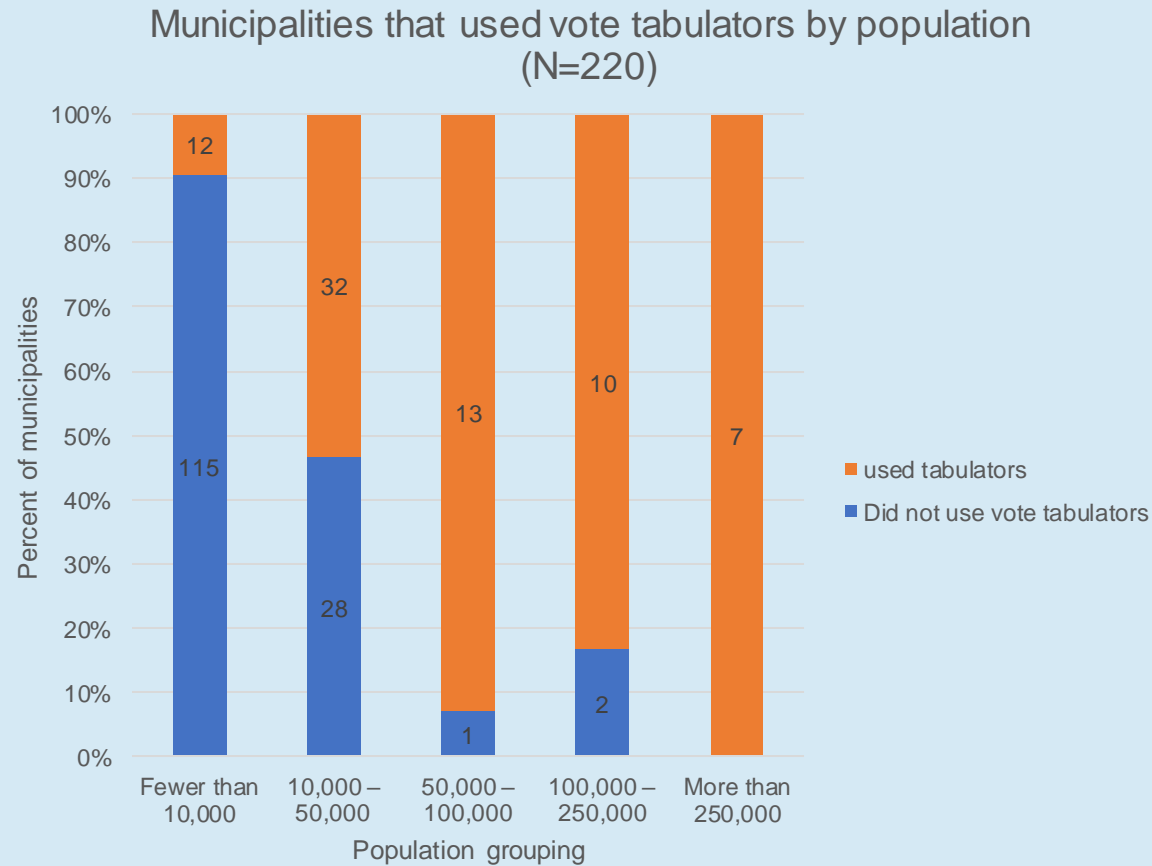
Key findings:
Overall, 34% of municipalities reported using vote tabulators, an **increase of 8%** from 2018. **Most municipalities with populations over 50,000** reported using vote tabulators as well as more than half of municipalities with between 10,000-50,000.

Tabulators: Vote tabulator usage by AMCTO Zone

Vote tabulator usage by AMCTO zone (N=220)
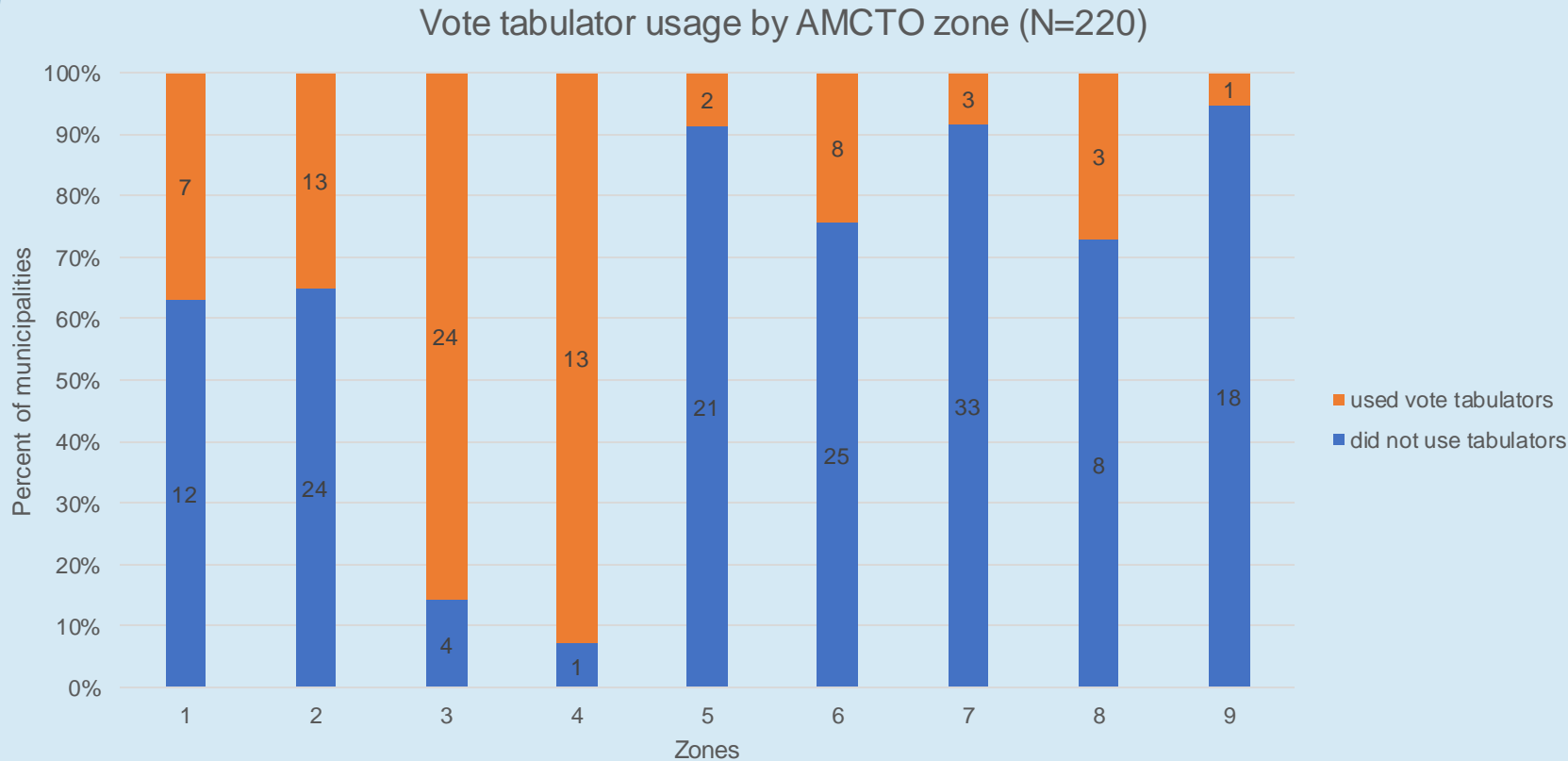
Key findings:
Vote tabulators are more common in Zones 3, 4 and least common in Zones 5, 7 and 9.

Spotlight: Third-Party Advertising

AMCTO is spotlighting data in this given that this is the second election since third-party advertising rules were changed substantially, we've taken a closer look at our members' experiences with registered third-party advertisers.

Third-Party Advertising: Presence of third-party advertisers by AMCTO Zone

Registered 3rd party advertisers by zone (N=220)
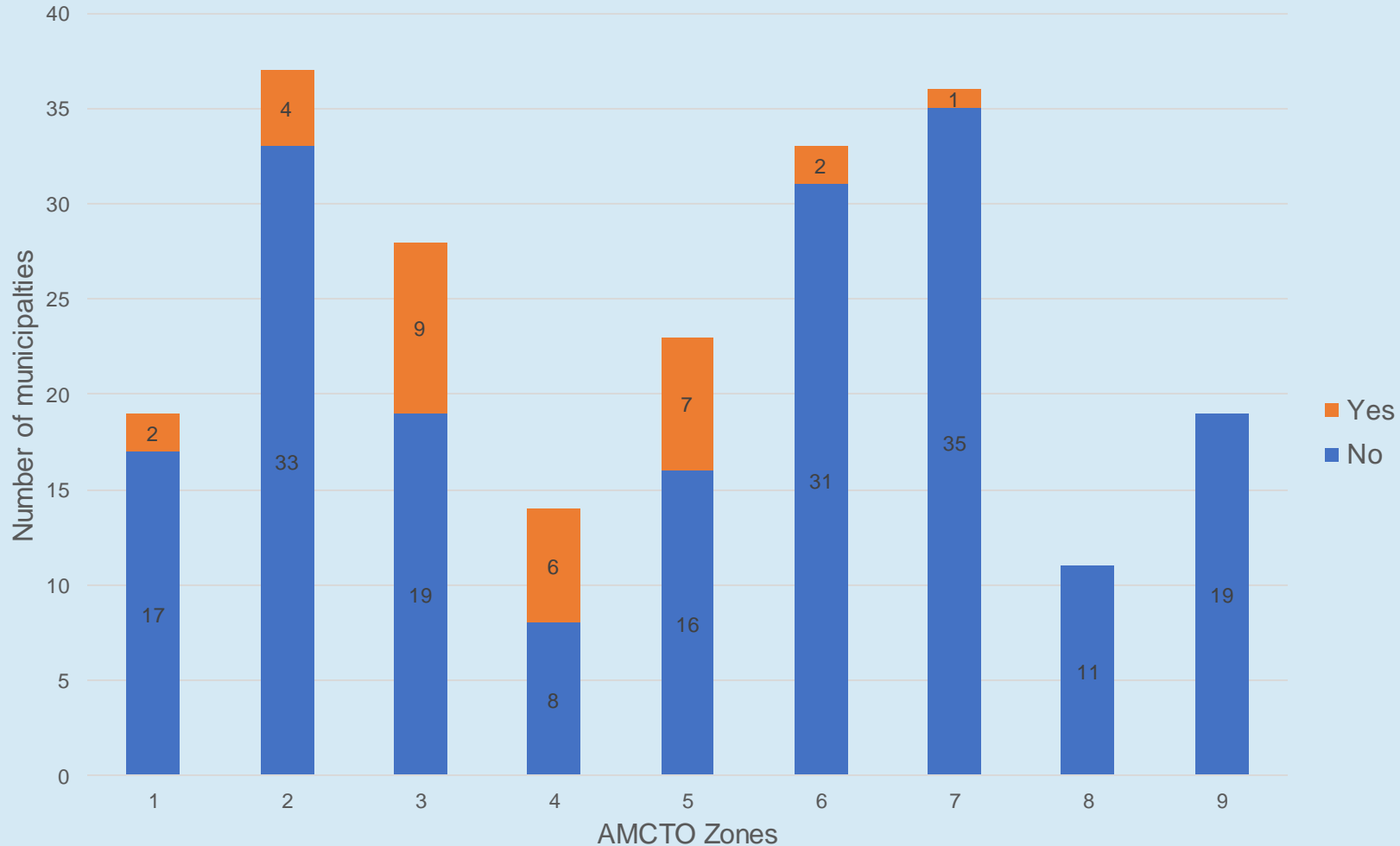
Third-Party Advertising: Presence of third-party advertisers by population size

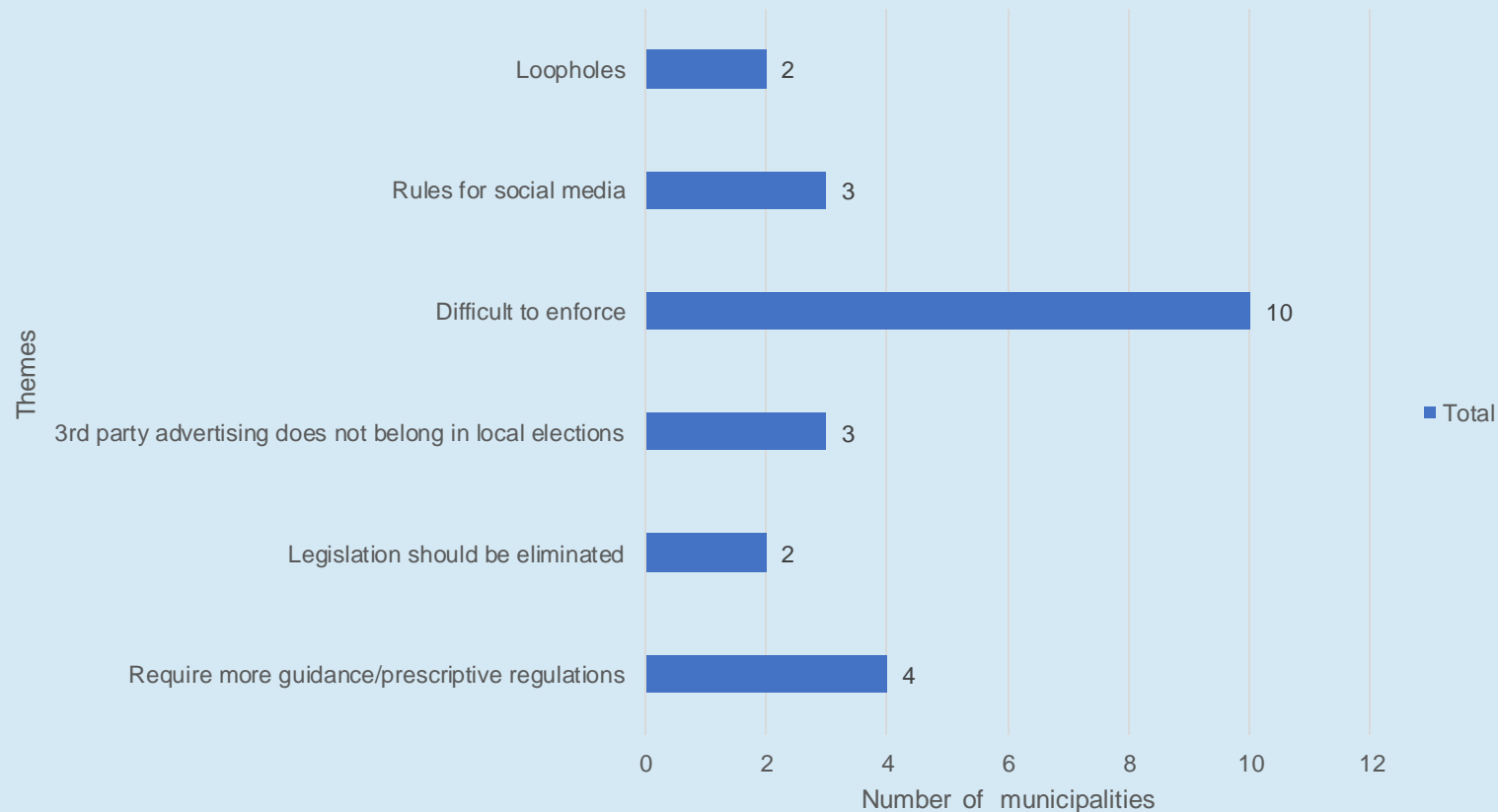Registered 3rd party advertisers by population size N=220
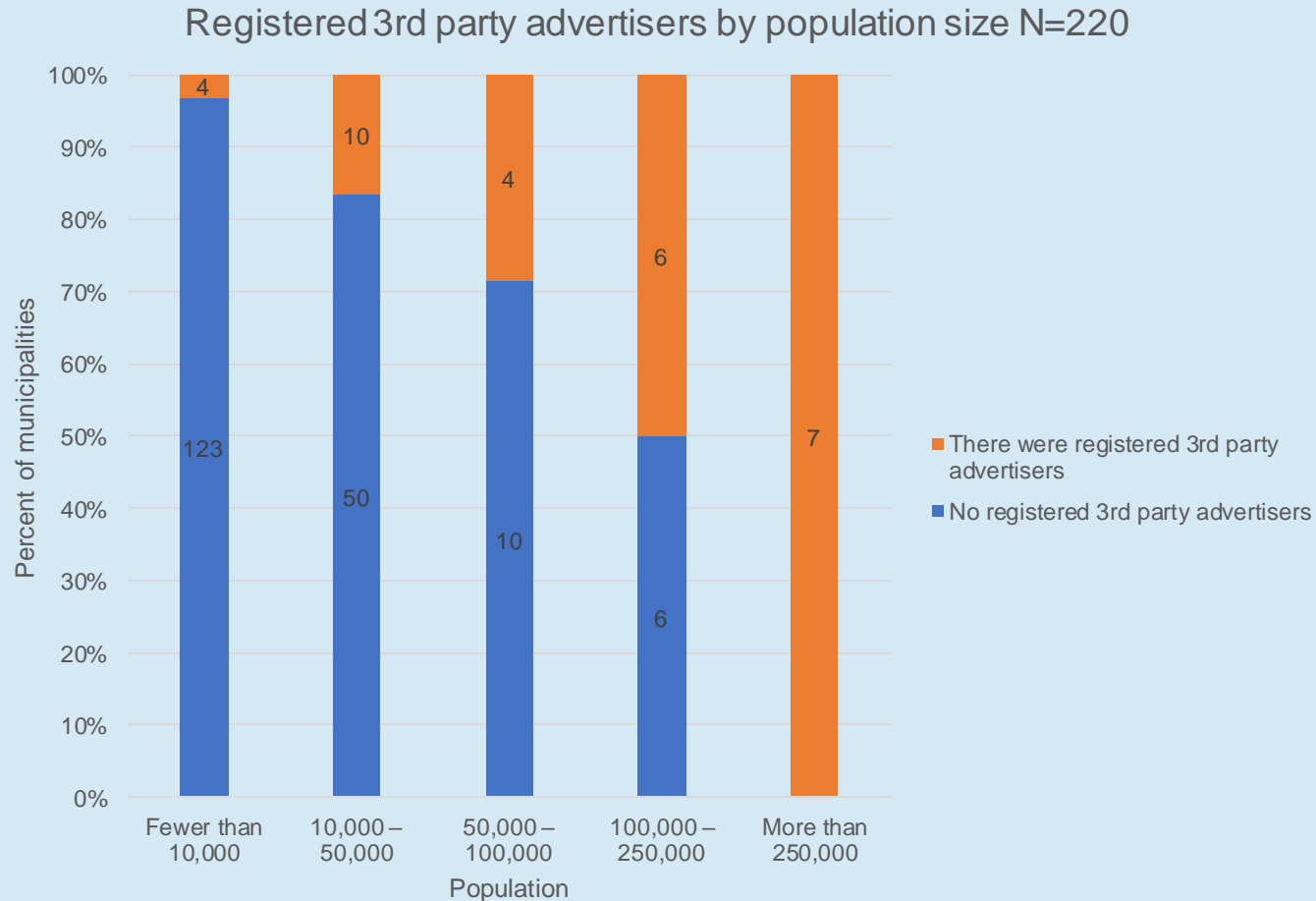
Key findings:
14% of municipalities reported having registered third-party advertisers. Generally, larger municipalities were more likely to have registered third-party advertisers but 4 municipalities with fewer than 10,000 people had third-party advertisers.

Third-Party Advertising: Experiences of clerks

We asked clerks to explain their experiences with third-party advertising rules – 24 provided a response which were then analyzed for trends and themes:

Thematic analysis of qualitative 3rd party advertising responses (N=24)

Themes / Number of municipalities

Theme	Total
Loopholes	2
Rules for social media	3
Difficult to enforce	10
3rd party advertising does not belong in local elections	3
Legislation should be eliminated	2
Require more guidance/prescriptive regulations	4

Registered third-party advertising qualitative responses

26 municipalities provided qualitative responses about their experiences with third-party advertising rules some key quotes are outlined below:

"As per our previous recommendations for the review of the MEA, clarification around social media use is needed. Clarification around whether promoted social media posts count as third party advertising would be beneficial. Page 3 of the Guide for third party advertisers does not include promoted posts. In fact, there's a very broad statement that posting to social media is exempt. We have spent a lot of time explaining that the prescribed role of the City Clerk during the election is limited to providing information to those who are interested in becoming registered third-party advertisers and information to those who are already registered. In accordance with the Municipal Elections Act, 1996 (the MEA), the City Clerk has no role in investigating concerns related to third-party advertising campaigns. As seen in 2018, our hands are tied in cases where the individual/corporation/trade union doesn't bother to register as a third-party advertiser"

"Need clear guidance on what constitutes third-party advertising and advertisements and not just a response from the Ministry that municipalities need to seek legal advice"

"Need prescriptive regulations on what documentation they need to provide to confirm status (i.e. Corporate Profile, Articles of Incorporation, etc.)"

"Only act on complaints. Have to use contracted legal services to ensure there is a breach. At the end of the day, if a breach, unless they voluntarily comply, a small municipality is not going to court"

"Remove from legislation, it does not work at local level and there is no enforcement abilities for illegal third-party activities"

Spotlight: Internet voting

AMCTO is spotlighting data in this section given the trend of increased use of internet voting. In this 2022 post-election survey, additional questions pertaining to internet voting were included to gain further understanding of the adoption of internet voting in Ontario municipalities.
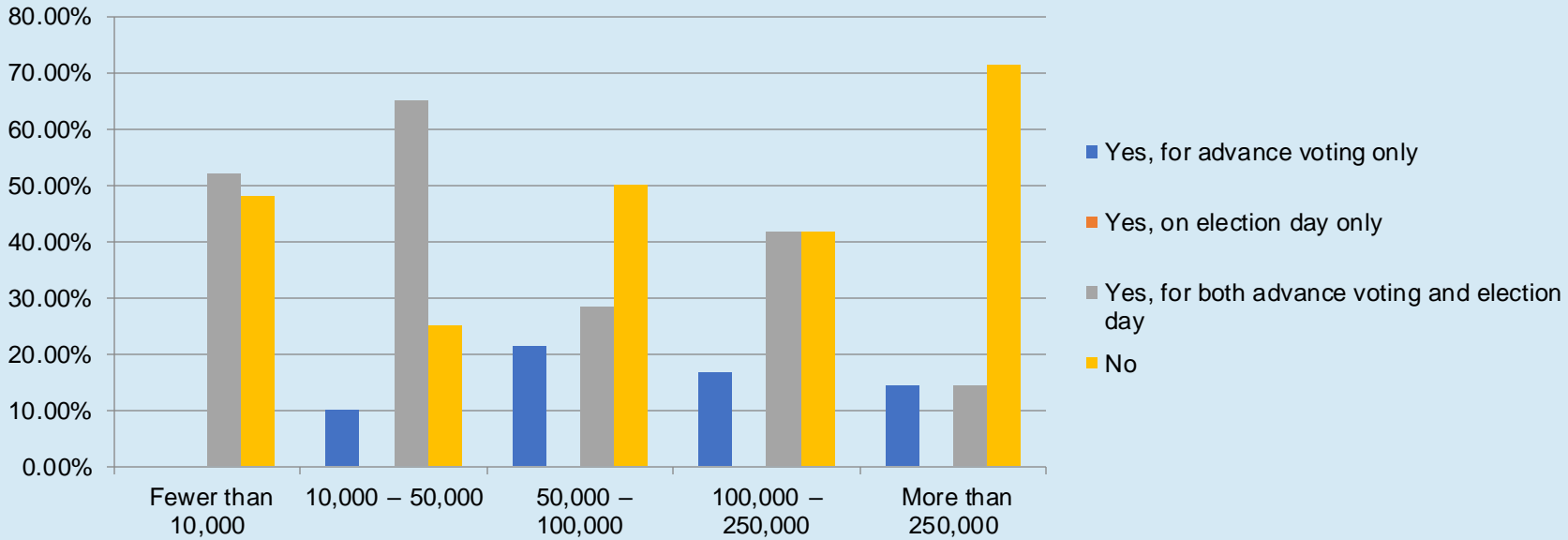
Use of internet voting by AMCTO zone

Internet voting by zone (N=220)
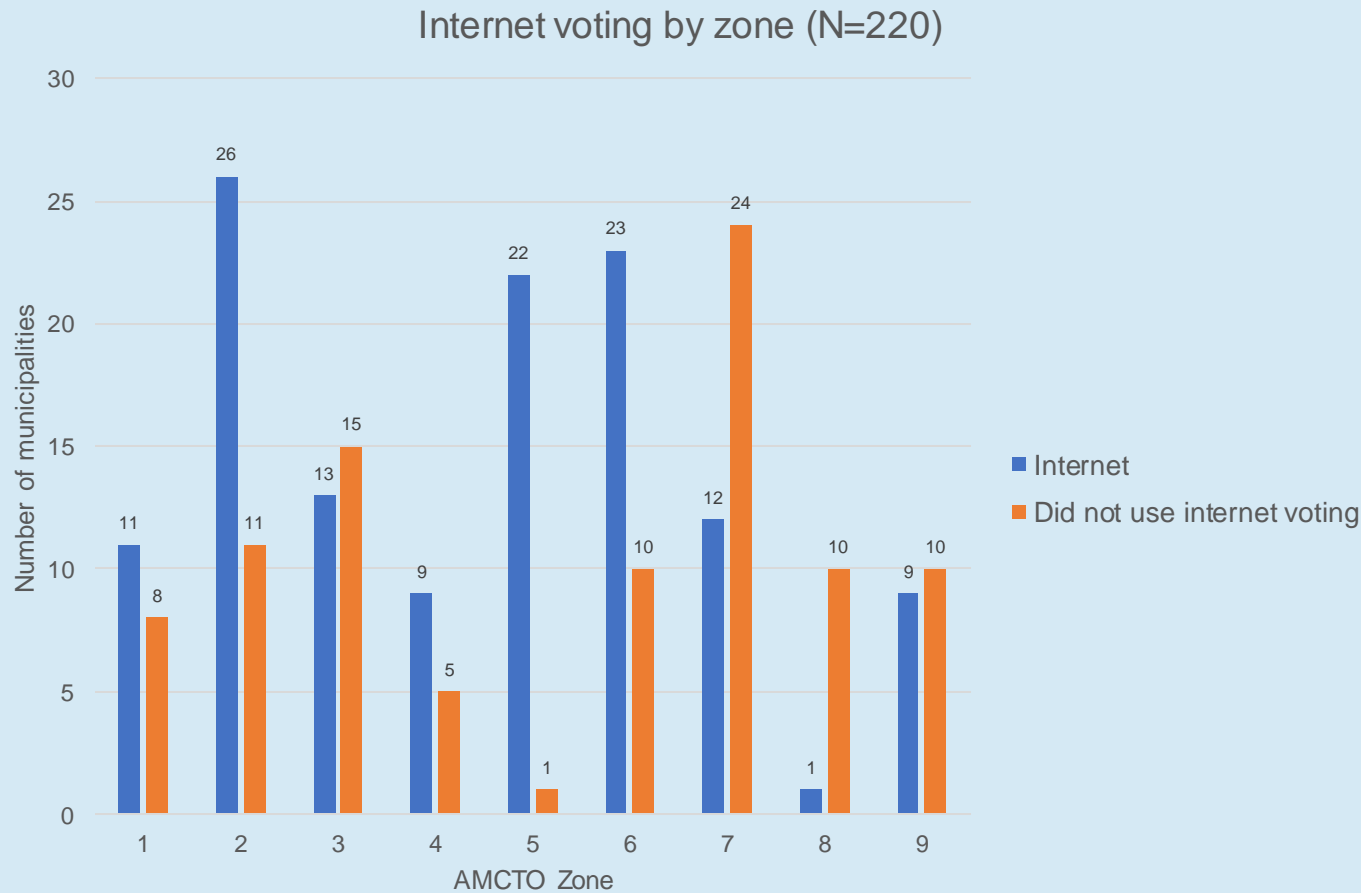
Key findings
Overall, more than half (58%) of municipalities used internet voting. Internet voting use was highest in Zone 2,5 and 6, and lowest in Zones 7 and 8.

Use of internet voting by population

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Use of Internet Voting by Population (N=220)

Legend:
- Yes, for advance voting only
- Yes, on election day only
- Yes, for both advance voting and election day
- No

	Yes, for advance voting only		Yes, on election day only		Yes, for both advance voting and election day		No		Total	
Fewer than 10,000	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	51.97%	66	48.03%	61	57.73%	127
10,000 – 50,000	10.00%	6	0.00%	0	65.00%	39	25.00%	15	27.27%	60
50,000 – 100,000	21.43%	3	0.00%	0	28.57%	4	50.00%	7	6.36%	14
100,000 – 250,000	16.67%	2	0.00%	0	41.67%	5	41.67%	5	5.45%	12
More than 250,000	14.29%	1	0.00%	0	14.29%	1	71.43%	5	3.18%	7
Total	5.45%	12	0.00%	0	52.27%	115	42.27%	93	100.00%	220
								Answered		220

Challenges with internet voting


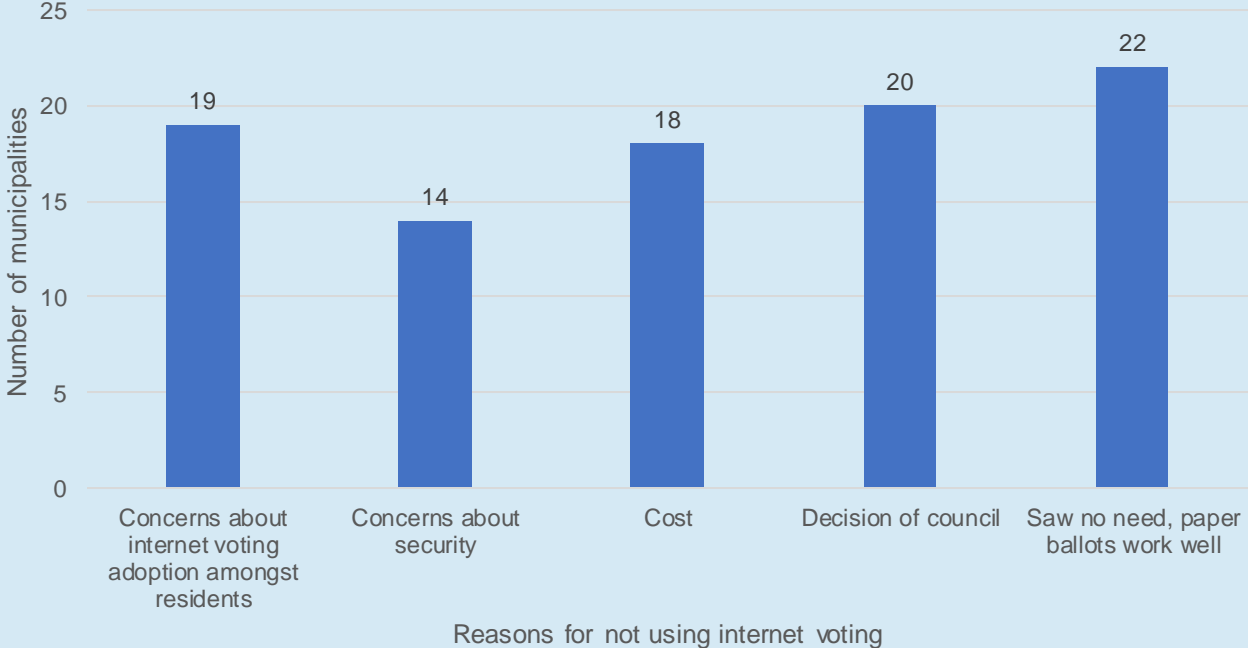Challenges with internet voting (N=33)
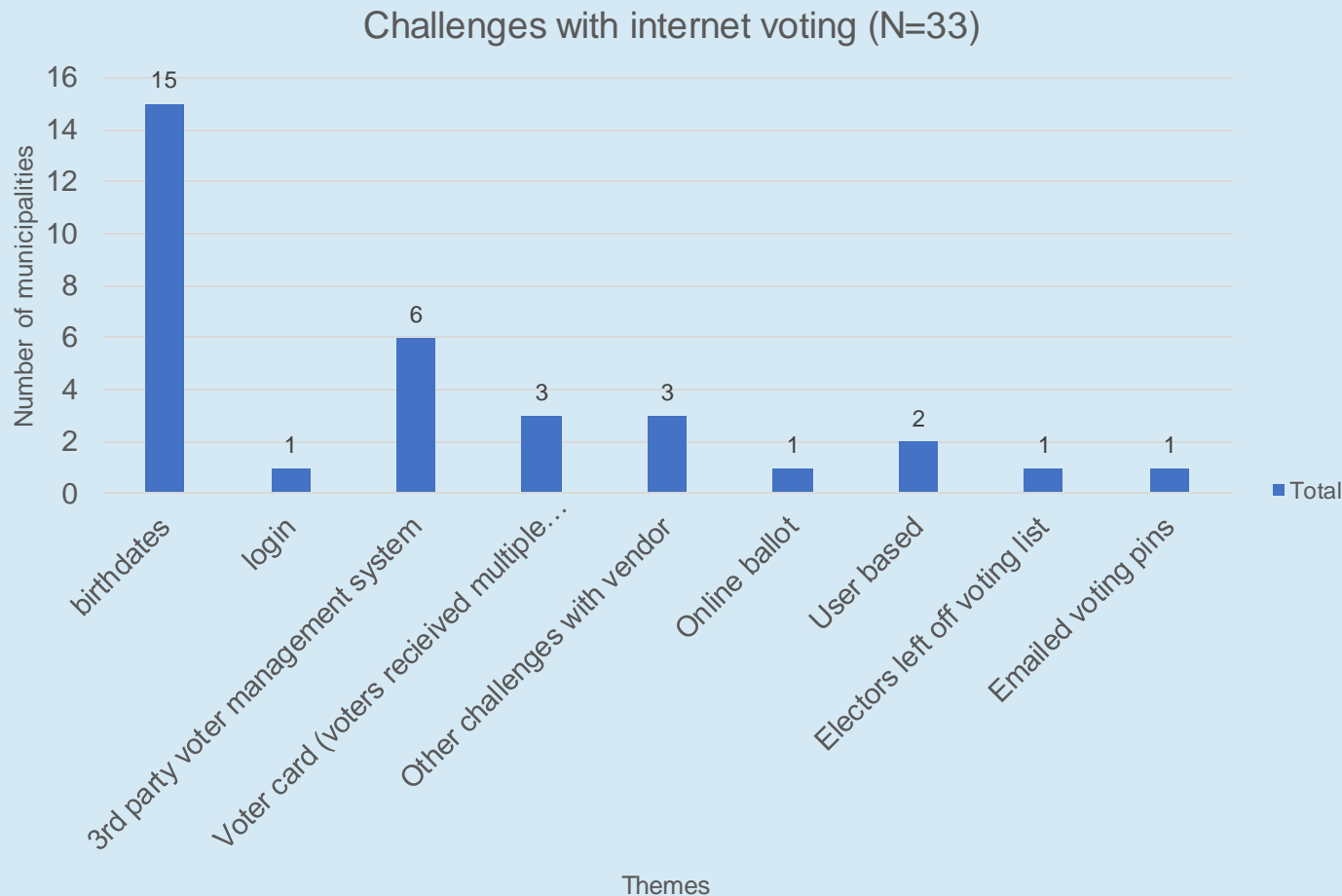
Key findings

- 20% of municipalities that used internet voting encountered some challenges.
- Problems were often related to incorrect voter list data such as incorrect birthdates; duplicates of electors or names being left off the voter list.
- Challenges with the voter list sometimes created additional challenges with issuing voter cards.
- Some municipalities experienced challenges with software providers.

Reasons for using or avoiding internet voting
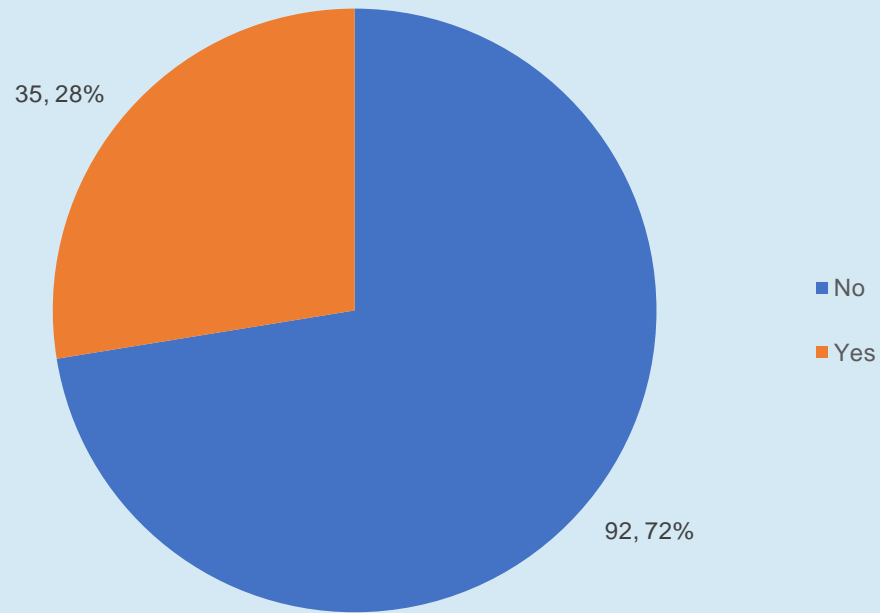

Reasons for using internet voting (N=127)
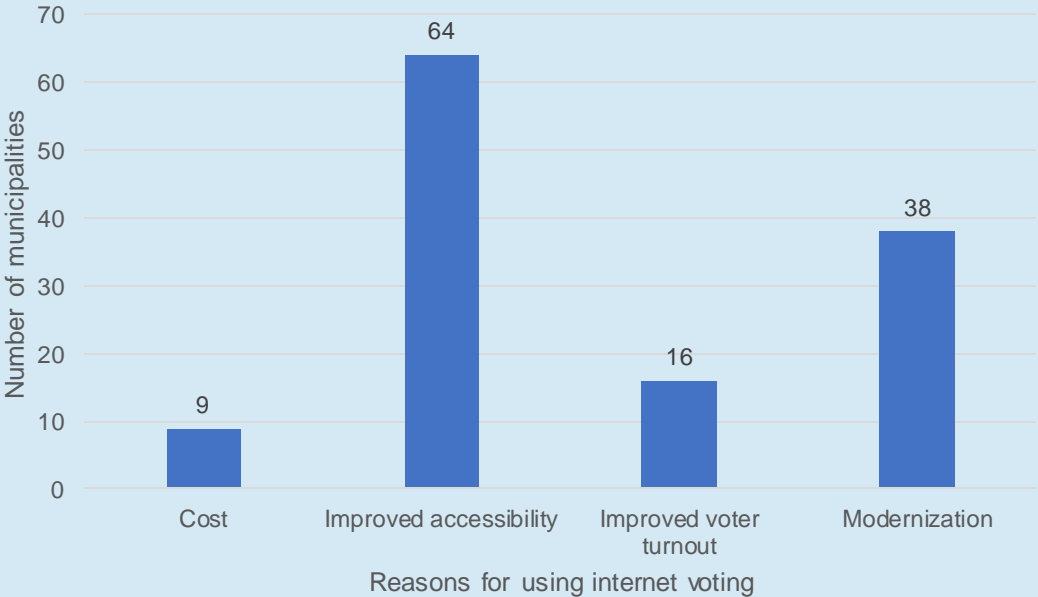
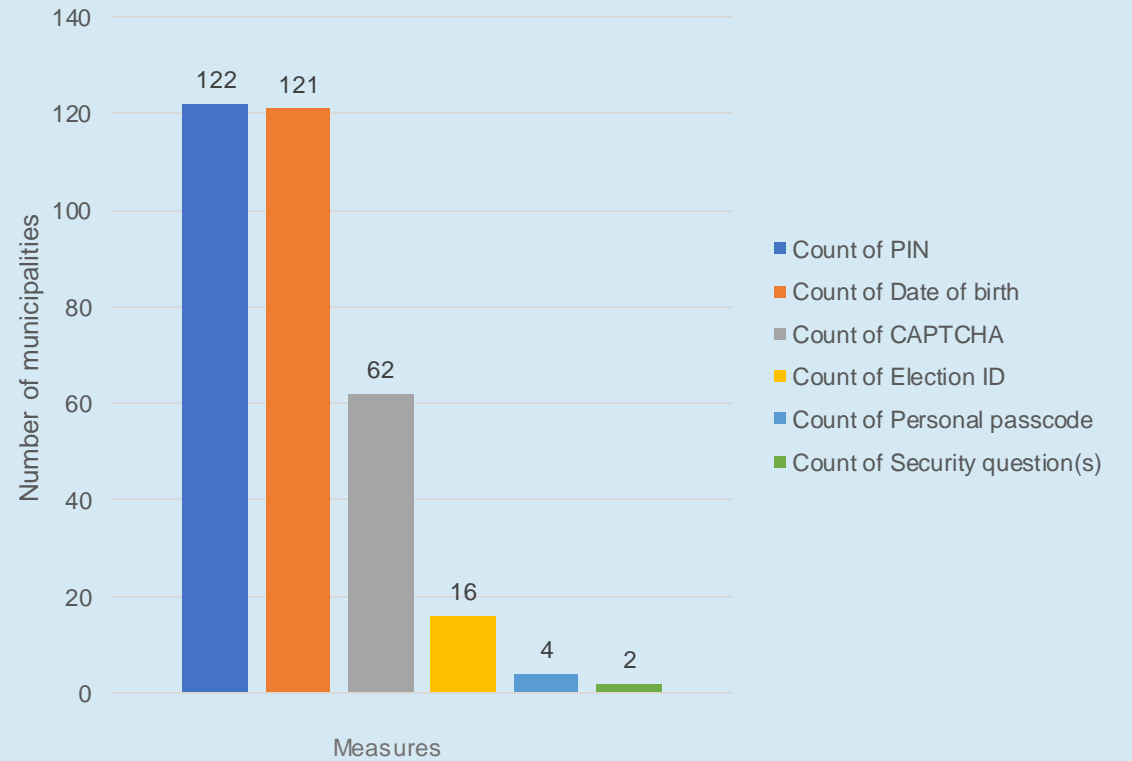Reasons for not using internet voting (N=93)

Internet voting security

Registration required before voting? (N=127)

- No
- Yes

35, 28%

92, 72%

Security measures (N=327)

122 121

62

16

4 2

- Count of PIN
- Count of Date of birth
- Count of CAPTCHA
- Count of Election ID
- Count of Personal passcode
- Count of Security question(s)

Number of municipalities

Measures

Electronic Voting Standards

- There was a 16% increase in the number of municipalities who used internet voting from 2018 to 2022.

- We know that standards, particularly for online voting, are of interest to our members, and are aware of work going on in the sector to create voluntary digital voting standards.

- For this reason, we took the time to dig deeper and ask members about their initial thoughts on electronic voting standards.

Support for electronic voting standards

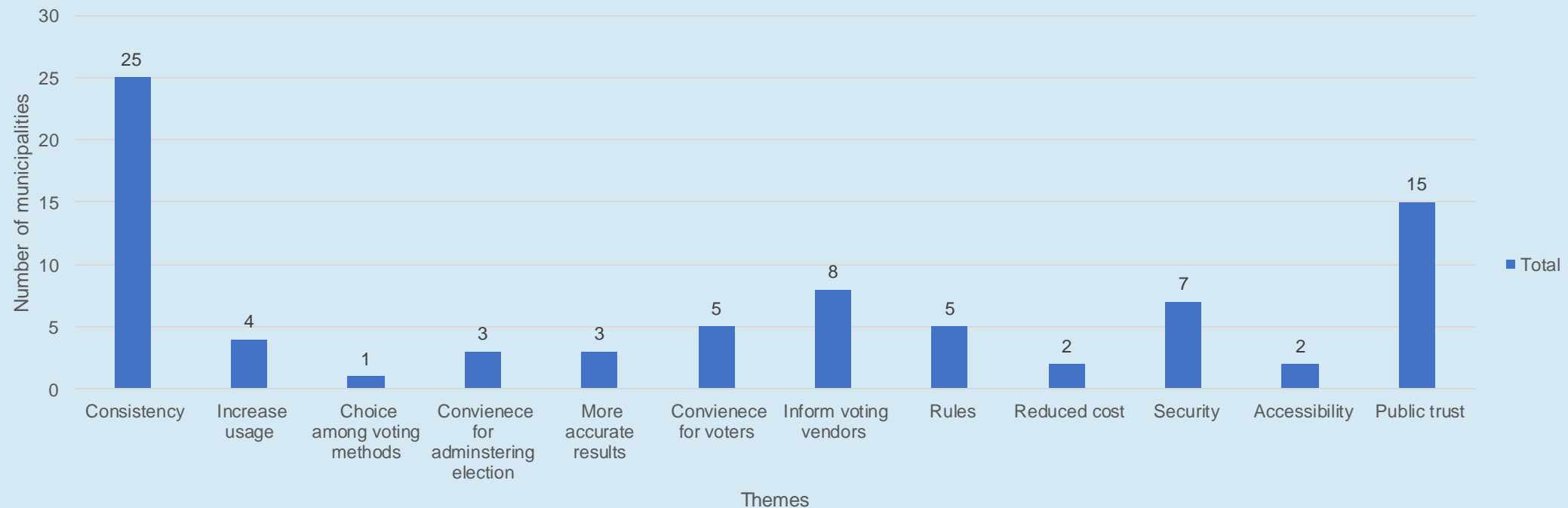Support for standards among municipalities that used internet voting (N=127)
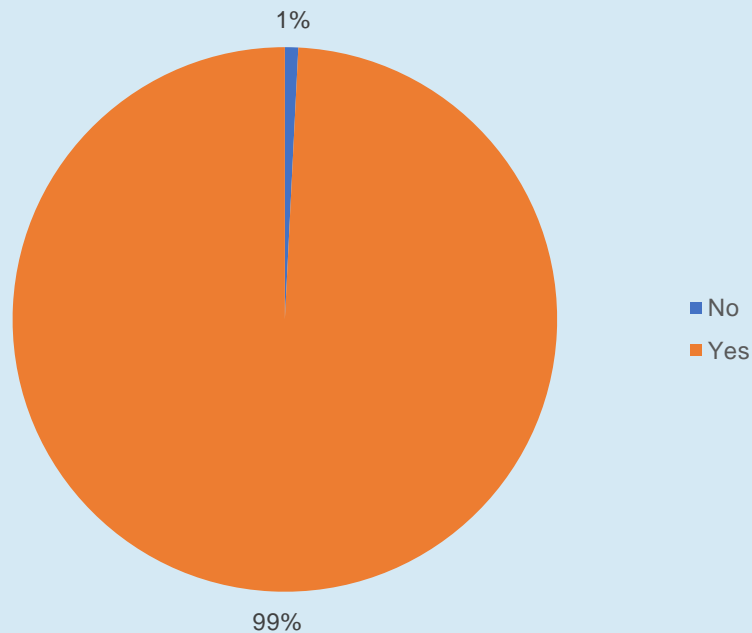
1%

99%

- No
- Yes

Support for standards among municipalities that did not used internet voting
(N= 93)

20%

80%

- No
- Yes
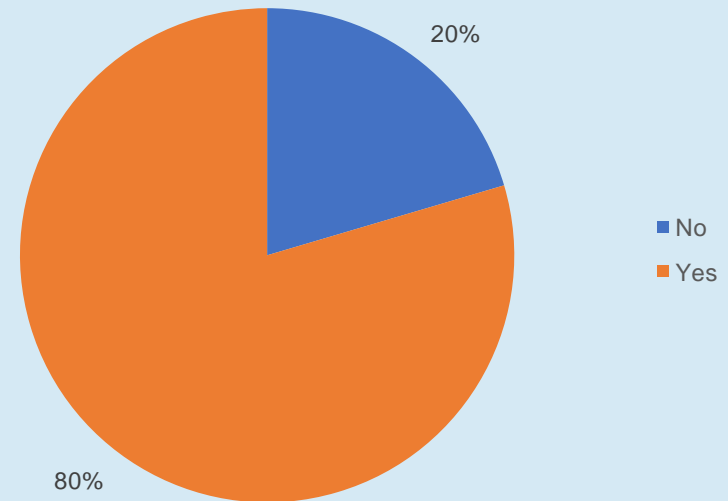
Support for electronic voting standards among those who used internet voting

Respondents were asked to explain why they would support electronic voting standards – 56 provided a qualitative response which were then analyzed for trends and themes:

Themes in qualitative responses of support of electronic voting standards

Support for electronic voting standards among those who used internet voting

Overall, 126 of 127 respondents that used internet voting were supportive of electronic voting standards:

Key quotes:

*"Standardization for all municipalities would ensure a province-wide **standard for security and operational experience.** Many municipalities lack the resources necessary to properly consider security needs for an internet voting system"*

*"Standards would ensure **consistency in format, security, etc. across vendors.** Some vendors have a great overall product while others only excel at one aspect vs another (i.e. security vs friendly user format/interface)"*

*"There are a lot of questions concerning electronic voting from some residents. There are standards set out for paper voting in the MEA. There should also be a **standard for electronic voting** as it is now left to the municipality and **vendors.** It may provide **further confidence** in these systems"*

*"…An incident that challenges the integrity of one election **fuels public skepticism against technology** in general, and is often based on false or misleading information about what actually happened. This is the biggest threat to our democratic institutions today. With this, everyone would benefit from **a defined set of technical and operational protocols** that impose a minimum level of due diligence before anyone deploys any form of election technology"*

Support of electronic voting standards among those who did not use internet voting

Respondents who did not use internet voting were asked to explain whether they would support electronic voting standards – 28 provided a response which were then analyzed for trends and themes:
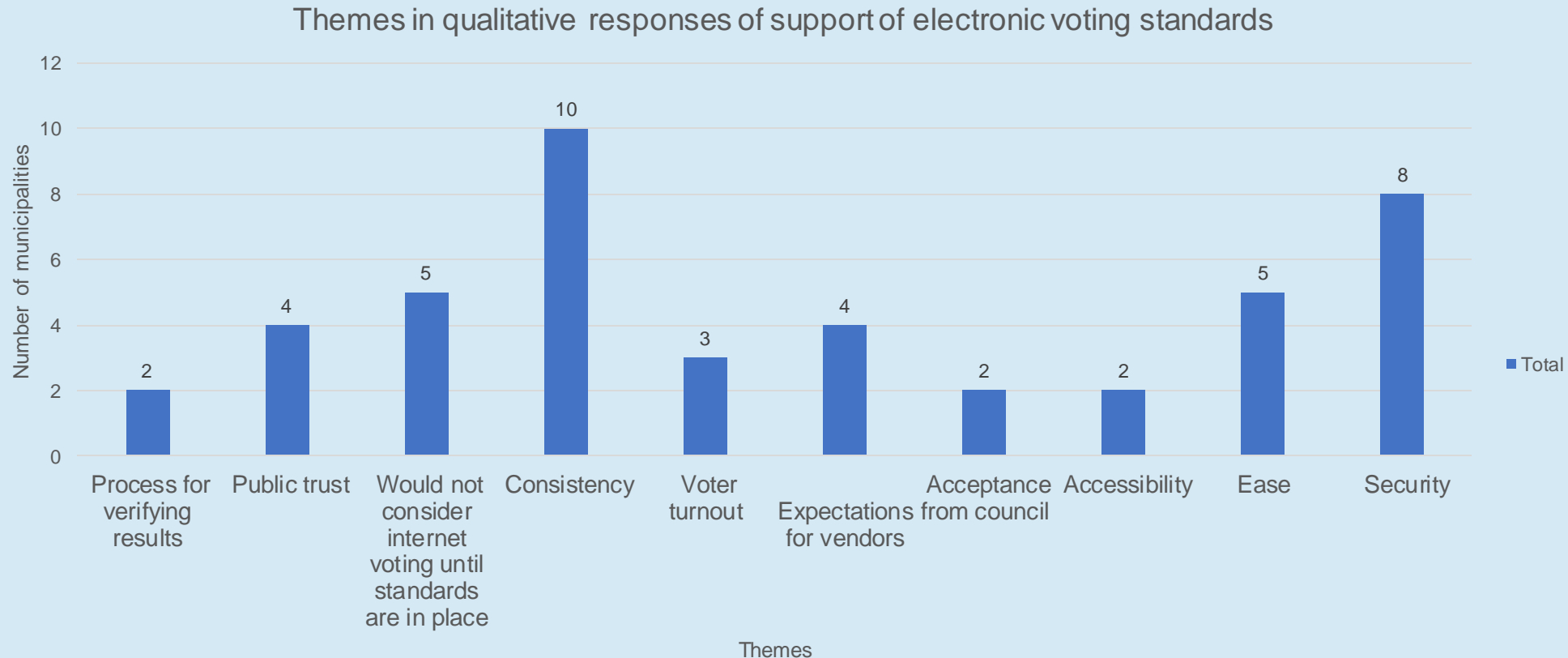
Themes in qualitative responses of support of electronic voting standards

Support of electronic voting standards among those who did not use internet voting

Of the 93 municipalities that did not use internet voting, 74 were supportive of electronic voting standards. Of these, 28 provided qualitative responses.

Key quotes:

*"May assist in **the acceptance by Council** if standards and regulations exist, particularly with respect to internet and program **security requirements**, and minimum requirements for logic and accuracy **testing for the service providers**"*

*"Our hesitation around recommending internet voting related partially to a lack of standards or established testing methods to **verify the integrity** of the election. **If these were available we would more likely recommend it's use**. The other factor was the poor voters' list data for this method. So many incorrect or missing data like birthdays makes managing internet voting a challenge"*

*"The City… supports alternative voting methods **that increase voter accessibility and voter turnout.** As there are existing concerns about the **security** and integrity of electronic voting, the development of standards at a provincial or national level would reduce risks to election security and **reinforce public trust** in municipal elections"*

Apprehensions about electronic voting standards among those that <u>used</u> internet voting

While most municipalities that used internet voting support the implementation of electronic voting standards, three suggested that they would only support standards under certain circumstances:

Key quotes:

*"I think that there would **be less scrutiny with internet voting** if a standard was in place. People are expecting to be able to use technology to cast their ballot in the municipal election and if a municipality decides not to proceed with internet voting due to challenges that have occurred in 2018 and 2022, **there is [a risk] that voter turnout will decrease** even more"*

*"I would support this as long as it is laid out to **consider all municipal structures**. There are many small municipalities that use this method of [v]oting and it is important that standards put in place do not create **undue burden on smaller municipalities**"*

*"I would support standards being implemented as long as each municipality is **still able to choose** which voting method they want to use"*

Apprehensions about electronic voting standards among those that <u>did not use</u> internet voting

Of the 93 municipalities that did not use internet voting, 19 suggested that they would not support electronic voting standards. Twelve provided a qualitative response to explain why not:

Key quotes:

*"Our area is largely **without a stable internet provider**, broadband coverage and cell phone coverage. It is **not an effective method for our location**"*

*"**Too cost prohibitive** for a small municipality"*

*"Demographics. We have a very large percentage of the population that is **elderly** and not computer friendly. Transitioning them would be a very unpopular position".*

*"Not **forced compliance**. Allow municipalities to make the best option that best suits their areas"*