

# DEMOCRATIC ENGAGEMENT

## SUMMARY OF INDICATORS

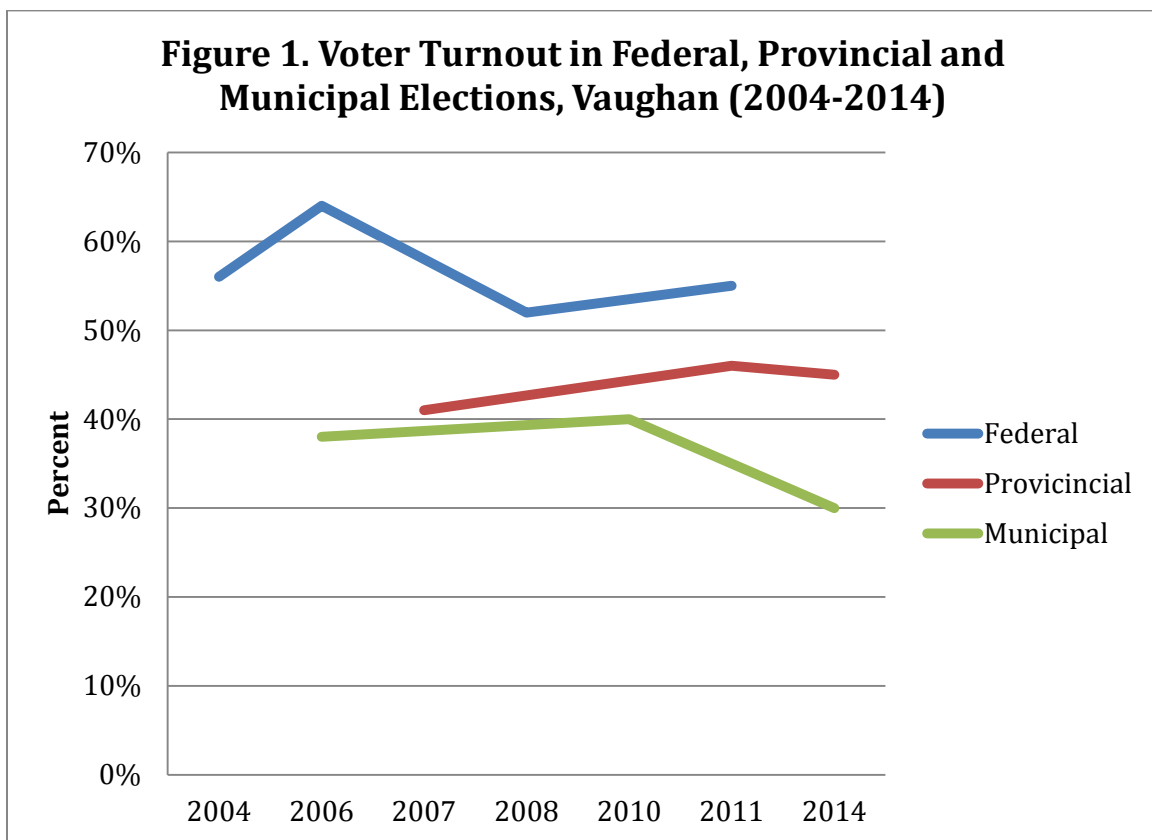
CIW National Report 2012	Vaughan Wellbeing Report	
<i><b>Voter turnout</b></i> – % of Canadians voting in the federal election	<i><b>Voter turnout</b></i> – % of Vaughan residents voting in the federal, provincial and municipal elections	■
<i><b>Interest in Politics</b></i> – % of Canadians reporting not interested in politics at all		■
<i><b>Percentage that strongly agree it is every citizen's duty to vote in federal elections</b></i>		■
<i><b>Representation of Women in Parliament</b></i> – percentage of women in Parliament	<i><b>Representation of Women in Council</b></i> – percentage of women in City Council	■
<i><b>Ratio of Registered to Eligible Voters</b></i>	<i><b>Ratio of Registered to Eligible Voters in municipal elections</b></i>	■
<i><b>Confidence in Parliament</b></i> – proportion of Canadians reporting a great deal or quite a lot of confidence in federal parliament		■
<i><b>Satisfaction with Democracy</b></i> – proportion of Canadians reporting “very satisfied” or “fairly satisfied” with the way democracy works in Canada		■
<i><b>International Aid (Net Official Development Assistance as a % of Gross National Income)</b></i>		■

- Comparable indicator available
- Similar indicator available
- No comparable indicator available

## FINDINGS BY INDICATOR

### VOTER TURNOUT

Similar to the trend observed in Canada (CIW, 2012), a decreasing number of Vaughan residents are turning out to vote in federal and municipal elections (see Figure 1 below). For provincial elections, however, there appears to be a slight increase in voter turnout. Among elections at all levels of government, municipal elections observed the lowest voter turnout rates in Vaughan, with 40% in 2010 and 30% in 2014 (City of Vaughan, 2011; City of Vaughan, 2014a). The greatest fluctuations in voter turnout rate were seen in federal elections (Elections Canada, 2015).



#### Sources:

1. Elections Canada. (2015). Past elections. Retrieved from <http://www.elections.ca/content.aspx?section=ele&dir=pas&document=index&lang=e>
2. Elections Ontario. (2015). Official Past Election Results. Retrieved from <http://www.elections.on.ca/en-CA/Tools/PastResults.htm>
3. City of Vaughan. (2015). Elections – Results. Retrieved from <https://www.vaughan.ca/elections/Pages/Results.aspx>

## REPRESENTATION OF WOMEN IN COUNCIL

Females account for just over half, or 51.1%, of the population of Vaughan (Statistics Canada, 2012). The women population is under-represented in the government where only 33% of the members of the City Council are women (City of Vaughan, 2014b). This percentage decreased from 2010, whereby women accounted for 44% of Council members (City of Vaughan, 2011). Despite it being an under-representation, the percentage of women in Council in the City of Vaughan is above the 30% threshold necessary for government to adequately reflect women's concerns as defined by the United Nations (UNICEF, 2006).

## RATIO OF REGISTERED TO ELIGIBLE VOTERS IN MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS

The ratio of registered to eligible voters in Vaughan was 90 out of 100 voters in the 2011 municipal election.<sup>1,2</sup> Although high, the 2011 statistics was lower than that of 99 out of 100 voters in the year 2006.

## OBSERVATIONS

While the available data indicate a decline in voter turnout over time and under-representation of women in government, there is not enough evidence to provide a comprehensive view of how engaged Vaughan residents are in the democratic process. Furthermore, there is a need for data on voters' beliefs and interest as compared to voter participation and engagement to capture the full intent of the domain.

Past efforts to boost voter turnout in the 2014 municipal election had been considered but were not realized (Kelly, 2013). The significant drop in voter turnout between 2010 and 2014 indicates that residents may be becoming disengaged. This can be supported by the lack of improvement in the sense of community belonging reported by York Region residents, as presented in the Community Vitality report. The significant decline in voter turnout highlights the need to revisit ways to encourage Vaughan citizens to cast ballots. There is also a need to identify the underlying causes of such low voter turnout as well as the populations that are least likely to vote in order to develop targeted strategies to increase voter turnout.

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<sup>1</sup> Data derived based on the following definition for 'eligible voters': Canadian citizen aged 18 years and over.

<sup>2</sup> Since the Census of Population was not conducted in 2010, the population count for the Census from the closest year (i.e. 2011) was used to represent the number of eligible voters for the 2010 election.

## REFERENCES

1. Canadian Index of Wellbeing (CIW). (2012). *How are Canadians Really Doing? The 2012 CIW Report*. Waterloo, ON: Canadian Index of Wellbeing and University of Waterloo.
2. City of Vaughan. (2011). Extract from Council meeting minutes of May 24, 2011. Retrieved from: [http://meetingarchives.vaughan.ca/extracts\\_2011/pdf/29ws0517ex-11.pdf](http://meetingarchives.vaughan.ca/extracts_2011/pdf/29ws0517ex-11.pdf)
3. City of Vaughan. (2014a). Unofficial Election Results from City of Vaughan. Retrieved from: <https://www.vaughan.ca/news/Pages/Unofficial-Election-Results-from-City-of-Vaughan.aspx>
4. Elections Canada. (2015). Past elections. Retrieved from: <http://www.elections.ca/content.aspx?section=ele&dir=pas&document=index&lang=e>
5. Statistics Canada. (2012). Vaughan, Ontario (Code 3519028) and York, Ontario (Code 3519) (table). Census Profile. 2011 Census. Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 98-316-XWE. Ottawa. Retrieved from: <http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2011/dp-pd/prof/index.cfm?Lang=E>
6. City of Vaughan. (2014b). City Council. Retrieved from: <https://www.vaughan.ca/council/Pages/default.aspx>
7. City of Vaughan. (2011). Vaughan Community Profile. Retrieved from: [http://www.vaughan.ca/business/general%20documents/vaughan\\_community\\_profile\\_2011\\_english\\_final.pdf](http://www.vaughan.ca/business/general%20documents/vaughan_community_profile_2011_english_final.pdf)
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9. Kelly, Tim. (July 18, 2013). Apathy, helplessness cited in Vaughan for low voter turnout. *Yorkregion.com*. Retrieved from: <http://www.yorkregion.com/news-story/3897574-apathy-helplessness-cited-in-vaughan-for-low-voter-turnout/>