

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

MUNICIPAL CENSUS

April 2018 | PROGRAM AND SERVICE REVIEW

Edmonton

WHAT IS PROGRAM & SERVICE REVIEW?

Program and Service Review (PSR) is composed of an internal team dedicated to evaluating the services offered by the City of Edmonton. The objective is to help City Council achieve its strategic goals and determine how our organization can improve the services that matter to Edmontonians, in ways that maximize citizen tax dollars.

SUMMARY OF SERVICE AREA

As Edmonton continues to grow, collecting up-to-date population data is an important and effective way to plan for the needs of a diverse city. Census information is used by various facilities, organizations, and stakeholders to assist in delivering a wide range of municipal services from schools, transit, and roads to recreational centres, fire and police services. In addition, federal and provincial grant monies are dependent upon an accurate population count generated by the municipal census.

Municipal Census Public Service

The City of Edmonton typically conducts a municipal census every **two** years. The data collected helps the City qualify for valuable population-based grants from the provincial and federal governments. This is separate from the Federal Census, which is conducted by the Government of Canada every five years.

Information gathered during the census is used by the City and other businesses and stakeholders to help plan for business needs.

Participation is highly encouraged, but not mandatory.

Who is Impacted? City of Edmonton Residents

While all residents are counted in, only one (18+) person per household must complete the municipal census on behalf of that address.

The Municipal Census Policy C520B

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Each Program and Service Review (PSR) typically begins with a review and a challenge panel including: community, academia, industry and peer subject matter experts who help provide focus to the analysis, challenge the recommendations, and provide guidance. *Please note: each service area has a tailored approach for engagement and analysis.*

	INTERNAL	EXTERNAL
ENGAGEMENT	Employee interviews and internal surveys.	Federal Census staff interview, Challenge Panel.
ANALYSIS	Review of key documents (e.g., business plans), High level analysis (e.g., finance, human resources, etc.), City Council reports and presentations.	Review of academia and other secondary research, benchmarking against other municipalities.

RECOMMENDATIONS WHY & IMPACT

The primary objective of the recommendations within this Program and Service Review is to reduce completion barriers and improve citizen awareness of and willingness to participate in the Edmonton Municipal Census.

SERVICE & RECOMMENDATION	WHY	IMPACT
<p>1 Census <i>Continue conducting a municipal census</i></p>	<p>Current State (What we found):</p> <p>A large urban centre of nearly one million people, Edmonton continues to be one of Canada’s fastest growing cities. Although the federal government obtains a population count at the city level, the information can be outdated, as the federal census is completed every five years. Conducting a Municipal Census every one to two years is necessary for the City to secure per-capita federal and provincial funding.</p> <p>Census data is used by many businesses and organizations for operational planning; both within the City (internally), and with stakeholders (externally), information gathered from a municipal census is accessed for diverse long-range planning and development activities.</p> <p>Future State (What we will do): Continue conducting a Municipal Census every one to two years.</p>	<p>Impact: Citizens will continue to benefit from federal and provincial funding that supports City services.</p> <p>The City of Edmonton and important stakeholders will have the ability to effectively plan for the future of a growing city.</p> <p>Cost to Implement: A census once every two years has a budget of \$2,115,000 and typically results in approximate grants and funding of \$142 per person.</p>
<p>2 Census <i>Census to be conducted in 2019 rather than 2018</i></p>	<p>Current State (What we found): In 2016, the Federal Census and Edmonton Municipal Census were conducted just six weeks apart, causing confusion among residents. A discrepancy between the Municipal and Federal Census population counts also led some to question the reliability of the municipal results.</p> <p>Conducting a Census is costly; however, cost recovery is achieved through increased federal and provincial funding when population growth exceeds 4.5%.</p> <p>Future State (What we will do): Defer the 2018 Municipal Census to 2019 in an effort to develop strategies to maximize the benefits of conducting a Municipal Census.</p>	<p>Impact: Deferring the census for one year will allow time to develop the strategies highlighted in recommendation four, leaving sufficient time to ensure the census is relevant and impactful for citizens.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A one-time savings of \$1.1M (average annual census operating budget).
<p>3 Census <i>Amend the Municipal Census Policy to continue Census activities every two years, dependent on specific criteria</i></p>	<p>Current State (What we found): By completing a Municipal Census every two years, Edmonton aligns with other major Canadian Cities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Only 15 municipalities in Alberta conduct an annual census. <p>Future State (What we will do): Continue the practice of conducting a Municipal Census roughly every two years, unless a Municipal Census:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - takes place one year prior to a federal census, - takes place in the same year as the federal census, or - takes place in the year following a federal census. <p>Exceptions: Conduct a Municipal Census if significant growth is forecasted during a non-scheduled federal census year (2019 and 2020 are expected high growth years).</p> <p>Do not conduct a Municipal Census if growth forecasts are low or funding opportunities are not available.</p> <p>Suggested Municipal Census years: 2019, 2020, 2023, 2025, 2028, 2030.</p>	<p>Impact: A regularly scheduled Census provides consistency and the ability to strategically plan for the future.</p> <p>Not conducting a Municipal Census in the same year as a Federal Census will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Produce one-time savings of approximately \$1.1M. - Eliminate the confusion encountered in 2016. - Increase the relevance of both the federal and municipal censuses.
<p>4 Census <i>Conduct in-depth analysis and statistical review of census data collected</i></p>	<p>Current State (What we found): In 2016, Edmonton’s Municipal Census count was 3.68% <i>lower</i> than the Federal Census count. Other Alberta municipalities conducting a census in 2016 reported — on average — 0.34% <i>higher</i> than federal census numbers. This translated to a loss of a potential \$4.7M in grant funding based on population count.</p> <p>Ten questions on the 2016 census had high non-response rates (over 20%); examples of these questions include marital status, household income, and employment status.</p>	<p>Impact: Developing internal capacity to conduct in-depth analysis will give the City of Edmonton the ability to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Foster organizational skills development and knowledge transfer in this area. - Develop corrective strategies and actions based upon prior learnings, maximizing the benefits of

	<p>Future State (What we will do): Complete a comprehensive review of census data collected to determine patterns, process, and best practices to be implemented for the next census. This will include specialized support for statistical analysis.</p>	<p>conducting a Municipal Census.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Encourage greater completion rates in the Municipal Census through ease of participation.
<p>5 Census <i>Conduct a needs assessment and cost benefit analysis of individual questions to be asked</i></p>	<p>Current State (What we found): The 2016 Edmonton Municipal Census had 18 questions, which is the highest of all municipalities in the province, with most averaging three questions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Feedback from other municipalities suggested that citizens may be more apt to answer a shorter survey. - Total time to complete the Municipal Census: four minutes for a household of four. <p>Future State (What we will do): Complete an in-depth needs assessment and cost benefit analysis to determine:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - If other data sources are available to reduce the number of potential questions that need to be asked. - If the data can be collected through random sampling rather than surveying the entire population. 	<p>Impact: Fewer questions on the Municipal Census will reduce the time required to complete it.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Increasing citizen convenience and willingness to complete. - Improved participation will result in additional grant funding.
<p>6 Census <i>The City of Edmonton will develop a corporate approach to determine what resident information to collect during the census and how to collect it</i></p>	<p>Current State (What we found): Census data is maximized to inform decision-making both within and outside the organization. The City uses relevant, actionable information to ensure decisions are evidence-based and can be evaluated.</p> <p>An integrated approach to the Municipal Census is used when deploying technologies for (online and in-person) data collection, creating a targeted marketing strategy, and collecting and managing the census data.</p> <p>Future State (What we will do): The City will develop a corporate approach to what resident information is needed, and how and when the data is best collected. This will include integrating IT, marketing, data management and data collection.</p> <p>Corporately planning the collection of all data — its purpose, use, collection, retention, and availability may start with applications in conducting a Municipal Census, but can have wider applications across the corporation.</p>	<p>Impact: Making the best use of available data in organizational decision-making will result in smarter investments, better planning and programming for residents, and sound policy development.</p>
<p>7 Census <i>Improve promotional activities and encourage online participation</i></p>	<p>Current State (What we found): Online participation for Edmonton’s 2016 Municipal Census was 23%, compared to the 2016 Federal Census level of 68% online completion. This difference highlights that access to technology is not a barrier to completion for residents. Online collection is preferred as it saves \$2.56 per dwelling visit by a census worker.</p> <p>Future State (What we will do): Targeted marketing and communications campaigns will educate the public on the importance of the Municipal Census for City planning and grant opportunities.</p> <p>The City will encourage online participation to streamline data collection, reduce the cost of door-to-door census work, and increase reliability of data.</p>	<p>Impact: Increased participation will result in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - More accurate population count. - Increased grant and funding opportunities. - Availability of essential population data to help the City and other organizations make evidence-based decisions. - Cost savings of \$2.56 per household that completes the census online.
<p>8 Census <i>The Office of the City Clerk will conduct an analysis of census worker pay structure</i></p>	<p>Current State (What we found): Census workers go door-to-door collecting information for the Municipal Census from those households that do not complete the census online.</p> <p>Census workers are paid \$2 for each completed household.</p> <p>Future State (What we will do): Census worker pay analysis will be conducted prior to every census in order to understand the tradeoffs associated with potentially reduced</p>	<p>Impact: Worker pay procedures and legislation change on a regular basis. Due to the gaps in years between census projects a complete worker pay evaluation should be completed for each project.</p> <p>Census worker pay analysis will ensure that workers are paid in</p>

	pay or payment processes (i.e. per house pay vs. hourly pay)	accordance with City and provincial legislation, while ensuring pay reduction strategies are appropriately employed for each project.
<p>9 Census <i>The City of Edmonton will conduct an end-to-end process review of the Municipal Census</i></p>	<p>Current State (What we found): To ensure the Municipal Census remains relevant and responsive, the City will undergo a comprehensive review of the process from start to finish.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - There is value in exploring the current process employed in the planning, development, implementation and finalization of the municipal census. <p>Future State (What we will do): Conduct an in-depth review of the entire lifecycle of the Municipal Census including planning, development, execution and finalization of the project.</p>	<p>Impact: An improved census process can lead to greater resident participation, which generates a valuable data set in addition to per capita government funding.</p> <p>An improved process will also help save dollars as data collection is streamlined (e.g. online).</p>
