

03/10/2021

Reference No. OCC-2021-003

To: City Council

From: Aileen Giesbrecht  
City Clerk and Returning Officer

Subject: **Permanent Electors List - 2025 Edmonton General Election**

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This memo responds to the Councillor Inquiry made at the February 22, 2021 City Council meeting. The inquiry is as follows:

That the Returning Officer provide a memo to City Council with the following information regarding the creation of a Permanent Electors Register as per section 49 of the Local Authorities Election Act, for the 2025 Edmonton General Election:

- overall timelines and costs associated with the creation and maintenance of a Permanent Electors Register
- opportunities to obtain and share information with the Election Commissioner
- current information about incorporating enumeration as part of future municipal census
- high-level potential impacts a Permanent Electors Register would have on the planning and operations of a General Election

#### **Local Authorities Election Act**

The Local Authorities Election Act refers to the creation and maintenance of a permanent electors register in Section 49:

- Section 49: Permanent electors register  
"Subject to this section, a municipality may, by bylaw,
  - (a) direct the secretary to prepare a permanent electors register of residents in the municipality who are entitled to vote in elections,
  - (b) prescribe procedures and forms governing the enumeration of electors and any other methods of compiling and revising a permanent electors registry, and

(c) provide for the use of the permanent electors register to create a list of electors who are entitled to vote in an election.”

Section 49 outlines how to create the register: either by entering into an agreement with the Chief Electoral Officer to share and maintain elector information or undertaking an enumeration to build the list from scratch, or a combination of both.

### **What Would be Required**

Developing and maintaining a Permanent Electors List requires both an initial investment and ongoing resources to ensure the list remains accurate and usable. It is anticipated that a Permanent Electors List would lengthen the election planning process for future elections.

The high-level impacts of a Permanent Electors List would have on the planning and operations of a General Election include:

- A one-time project to complete a business case assessment to fully define the requirements, and if approved, to develop the tools, technology, resources and processes required to compile and maintain an Electors List;
- Realignment of the General Election project to ensure the Electors List is accurate and valid prior to an election;
- Additional ongoing resources (staff, technology, equipment and space) required to maintain and support the Electors List both during a General Election and the non-election period; and
- Development of a separate enumeration project or a realignment of the municipal Census and subsequent policy adjustments.

### **Process Options**

Edmonton Elections has two options for developing a Permanent Electors List: (1) obtaining a list from the Province (via Elections Alberta), then validating and updating the data or (2) creating a list from scratch, via an enumeration exercise. Both options have benefits and implications:

#### Using the provincial Electors List:

- *Benefit:* access to a pre-prepared list, in a useable electronic format
- *Implications:* the City of Edmonton is responsible for validation and updating the data; this could include modifying the voting process to conduct this validation and update prior to an elector receiving their ballot or conducting an enumeration.

All data updates would be required to be forwarded to the Province for integration into their list(s). Depending on the data sharing agreement, the City may or may not maintain the list between municipal elections.

Developing a City of Edmonton Electors List:

- *Benefit:* data is of known accuracy and could be paired with the Census to gain additional insights into the population of the city
- *Implications:* obtaining this data requires an enumeration exercise, which can be expensive and time-consuming. If paired with the Census, concerns around FOIP may be present and would require mitigation. The City would be required to continue enumeration on a defined schedule to ensure the Electors List is accurate and valid prior to a General Election.

**Next Steps**

After the 2021 Edmonton General Election is completed, including receipt of all disclosure statements and required reporting, Edmonton Elections will bring a report to Council in Spring 2022.

A copy of this memo will be added to the Edmonton Elections web page.

C: Andre Corbould, City Manager