

Procedure and cost of a vote on a question (plebiscite)

Council directed that Administration report back on the procedure and implications of the feasibility of a plebiscite on secondary suites including a potential question. This attachment describes the procedure and cost of a vote on a question.

The Municipal Government Act, R.S.A. 2000, c.M-26 ("MGA") no longer uses the term "plebiscite." Instead, the MGA refers to the process as simply a question that is put to the electorate for a vote.

Relevant provisions of the MGA are as follows:

236. (1) A council may provide for the submission of a question to be voted on by the electors on any matter over which the municipality has jurisdiction.

(2) A vote of the electors under subsection (1) does not bind council.

237. A vote of the electors under this Part must be conducted in accordance with the *Local Authorities Election Act*.

Procedure

Council must first, by resolution, determine if a question will be put to the electors under the MGA. The second step is a resolution to set the date for a vote in consultation with the Returning Officer, and finally Council must determine the wording of the question as it will appear on the ballot.

For the result of a vote to be an accurate opinion of those who cast a ballot, Council must formulate a clear and concise question in conjunction with Law and Planning, Development & Assessment (PDA). In accordance with Section 62 of the Local Authorities Election Act, the question must be worded for the elector to choose "for" or "against" or "yes" or "no."

Cost

A budget estimate is presented for inclusion of one question on secondary suites in conjunction with the 2017 General Municipal Election and the estimated cost of a an election held only for the purpose of the question.

The essential public education, to ensure electors understand the question and the result of a "for or against" or a "yes or no" vote, is not included in the attached budget. PDA would undertake this education.

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Cost of a Vote held in conjunction with The 2017 General Election

Printing Cost of Ballots:	\$ 100,000
Advertising Costs:	\$ 200,000
Additional Supplies: (Ballot Boxes, etc.)	\$ 30,000
Instructional Forms and other legislative forms:	\$ 30,000
Additional Staffing:	<u>\$ 30,000</u>
Total:	\$ 390,000

Cost of a Vote of The Electors held only for the purpose of the Question

The estimate is based on costs for running an election with one ballot. The cost would be approximately \$ 2 million. A stand-alone question is more costly than a question in conjunction with a municipal election, as all the routine costs of an election are attributed to the question.