

**Law and Legislative Services Report to
Combined Meeting of Council
2019 February 04**

**ISC: UNRESTRICTED
C2019-0137**

Civic Census Program

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report recommends a review of the value and benefits of conducting an annual census program and examines potential legislative changes that impact the conduct of the 2019 Civic Census.

ADMINISTRATION RECOMMENDATIONS:

That Council direct Administration to:

1. Conduct a review of the value and benefits of conducting an annual municipal census program and report back in Q4 2019; and
2. Review and provide recommendations to amend the *Civic Census Policy CC005* in Q4 2019.

PREVIOUS COUNCIL DIRECTION / POLICY

Civic Census Policy CC005 (Attachment 1) outlines the purpose, frequency, data being collected, use of the data, stewardship and confidentiality related to conducting a municipal census. The Schedule of Additional Questions to Base Census (Attachment 2) outlines what years additional questions are scheduled to be included in the Civic Census.

BACKGROUND

The Federal Census is conducted every five years with results (data) available 18 months to two years later. The most recent Federal Census was in 2016. The next Federal Census will take place in 2021 and Administration is working with Statistics Canada to identify efficiencies and opportunities to collaborate.

The City of Calgary has conducted an annual Civic Census since 1958 with data available within two months of completion. In 1984, 1994 and 2005 extensive reviews of the Civic Census were undertaken. In all three cases, Council confirmed to continue with an annual census as laid out in the *Civic Census Policy CC005* (Attachment 1). An extensive review of the Civic Census has not been conducted since 2005 and this report supports the importance of conducting this type of review.

According to previous reviews, the data collected by the Civic Census is used for planning purposes by internal departments (e.g. Transportation, Corporate Analytics and Innovation, Utilities and Environmental Protection, Community Services), by business partners (e.g. Calgary Public Library, Calgary Public Board of Education, Calgary Separate Catholic School District) and by external users (e.g. Southern Alberta Institute of Technology, Calgary Chamber of Commerce, Mount Royal University).

In 2018 December, the City Clerk was made aware of potential changes to the *Determination of Population Regulation* under the *Municipal Government Act* (MGA) that governs the Civic Census. The proposed changes include:

- Technical review and update to the Census Manual
- Shadow population requirements (not currently used by The City of Calgary)
- Changes in quality assurance requirements

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- Inclusion of telephone interviews and mail-out surveys as accepted methodology
- Additional details on collective dwellings
- Extrapolation for non-response
- Sample questionnaires, forms, and letters
- Alignment with Federal Census questions and quality assurance

Feedback on the proposed changes was provided to Municipal Affairs in early January and a “What We Heard” document with feedback from their stakeholders will be posted on their website soon. In addition to feedback from municipalities, Municipal Affairs works with Statistics Canada to align data collection and analysis methodology. Further exploration is expected by Municipal Affairs and Statistics Canada to develop a position on extrapolation. Some of the proposed changes have yet to receive ministerial approval.

INVESTIGATION: ALTERNATIVES AND ANALYSIS

The proposed changes to the legislation require adjustments to processes used to conduct the Civic Census. The 2019 Civic Census is being planned while making adjustments to incorporate the proposed changes. Since December, staff have been working to include the potential new requirements as best practices. For 2019, enhanced oversight of data collection will be provided by the addition of on-street supervisors. Although the proposed legislation changes would reduce the overall number of households that require auditing, there is a need for more frequent check-ins with workers that can be provided by the on-street supervisor. The addition of this new position delayed the opening of worker applications to 2019 February 1, but it is not expected to affect recruitment.

Requests for services and accessibility to results have increased in recent years. In 2018, Administration introduced interactive maps and moved historical census information to the Open Data Catalogue. The Elections & Census Office has seen an increase in requests to be able to add additional questions to the existing schedule. The schedule of additional questions to base census was set for 1999 to 2022 (Attachment 2). To be better prepared for the possibility of adding questions, additional flexibility is currently being coded into the application to allow for additions of non-base census questions.

Following the 2019 Civic Census, Administration is recommending that a review be conducted and results brought to Council in Q4 2019, as per recommendations on page 1. This review will ensure that the right oversight and skills are in place to deliver the Civic Census and to be prepared for suggested legislative changes. Considerations in the review will include:

- a review of current processes to align with new legislated requirements;
- identification of internal and external users of census data and their use of data;
- feedback of internal and external users of census;
- a review of the census question schedule and potential changes or new questions;
- framing of questions;
- identified value of providing census data annually;
- a scan of other municipalities and census programs;
- best practices in other jurisdictions; and
- identifying future alignment with the Federal Census.

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In addition to a review of the Civic Census program, Administration is recommending that Civic *Census Policy CC005* be reviewed and updated to match new confidentiality requirements that may be introduced in new legislation.

Stakeholder Engagement, Research and Communication

Administration has engaged with Municipal Affairs to understand proposed changes to the legislation, and with Statistics Canada to identify opportunities for alignment and efficiencies for the conduct of the 2021 Federal and Municipal Census.

Strategic Alignment

This report aligns with Council's priority of a well-run city: "Calgary's government is open, responsive, accountable and transparent, delivering excellent services at a fair price."

Social, Environmental, Economic (External)

Census data is used by many stakeholders for planning and analysis to determine business decisions that impact the citizens of Calgary.

Financial Capacity

There is no additional financial impact to conduct this review.

Risk Assessment

A thorough review of the Civic Census Program will ensure alignment with legislation and ensure that key stakeholders receive the data they require.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS:

A review of the Civic Census is recommended to ensure requirements within legislation are being met, to identify efficiencies, to understand stakeholder needs, and to align the Civic Census with the four-year election program.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Civic Census Policy CC005
2. Schedule of Additional Questions to Base Census