

Four-Year Election Program

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report provides details on the four-year election program, in preparation for the 2021 General Election.

ADMINISTRATION RECOMMENDATION:

That the Priorities and Finance Committee:

1. Receive this report for information; and
2. Recommend that Council accept this report for information.

PREVIOUS COUNCIL DIRECTION / POLICY

The previous Council direction is included as Attachment 1.

BACKGROUND

The Elections & Census Office delivers the following:

- Annual census (2019) and enumeration (2017),
- City-wide petition reviews (2016),
- By-elections (2015) and votes (2018), and
- General elections (2017).

Following the 2017 General Election, an audit was undertaken by the City Auditor's Office (AC2018-0852) to identify the root cause of issues that occurred during the 2017 Election and identified areas that require improved processes in order to successfully deliver a modern vote or election.

In 2018, Council directed Administration to conduct the Vote of the Electors (Vote 2018). Vote 2018 provided an opportunity to implement changes to election processes which were evident with the improved voting experience provided to Calgarians.

INVESTIGATION: ALTERNATIVES AND ANALYSIS

Overview of the Four-year Election Program

Building on the experiences from the 2017 General Election, the changes that were implemented during Vote 2018, and reviews that were conducted after each event, the Returning Officer has begun the development of a repeatable program to guide future events. At the foundation of the four-year election program is the identification and definition of the four-year cycle. The cycle assigns specific types of activities and deliverables to each year.

Four-Year Election Program

A four-year schedule of work is provided in Attachment 2.

Business Process Focus

Standard, repeatable, and integrated processes are the backbone to the successful execution of complex events. Developing, training, and enforcing standard processes and procedures is one of the key components of the four-year program. The process development methodology is intended to produce processes that are repeatable, that clearly define the responsibilities of each role, and that identify interdependencies. The benefits of repeatable, easily understood processes are the efficiencies gained when all team members understand the impact of their actions and the expectations of their role.

Continuous improvement is central to on-going process efficiency. The four-year election program incorporates regular, scheduled reviews of all processes to ensure efficiencies are being maintained and new opportunities are identified and integrated into the program.

Event Readiness

Ensuring that the Elections and Census team is prepared to execute any event at the appropriate time is an important element of the four-year election program. While the date of general elections is known years in advance, other events can occur with little notice. These events include by-elections, vote of the electors, and petition reviews. The program includes an annual review in January of Elections and Census preparedness to execute these types of events.

Annual Events

The Civic Census has been conducted annually in Calgary since 1958. The data collected is used by The City for the planning of services, such as roads, transit, recreation and water and is also used by public and separate school boards for enrolment predictions, decisions on future schools, and by the provincial government for determining per capita grant allocations.

Like the four-year election cycle, the census will also conform to a phased review, plan, and execution cycle that is repeated annually.

In 2019, the Civic Census will undergo a program review of the use of data, collection of the data, an analysis of how the data is shared, and the appropriate time for conducting the civic census.

Service Streams

Successful event management requires an integrated process-based approach that spans multiple areas of expertise. Six services streams have been identified to structure the four-year election program:

- ***Governance***: The role of the governance stream is to maintain alignment with the program vision, ensure adherence to legislation, and improve the outcome of processes.

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Governance includes managing legislative changes, program budgeting, process management, risk and issue management, records management, and office support.

- *Relationship Management*: The Relationship Management stream promotes the positive participation in the electoral events by voters, candidates, and partner organizations. Relationship management is responsible for communications and the management of partnerships such as citizen outreach, candidate outreach, third-party advertisers, other orders of government, and the visitors program.
- *Recruitment and Training*: An event requires the recruitment and training of temporary contract workers and support staff. The Recruitment and Training stream identifies the staffing and skills required to execute an event; develops the strategy to acquire the right staff; and develops and delivers the training necessary to provide them with a solid understanding of the processes they will implement.
- *Technology and Data*: The reliability of technology management is foundational to developing and maintaining public confidence and to ensuring the integrity of the data and the protection of personal information. Good data supports good decision-making. The Technology and Data stream is responsible for developing a technology roadmap, application support, voting technology support, web services, network and connectivity, data management, analytics and reporting, and IT support.
- *Readiness*: The Readiness stream helps to identify and mitigate risks associated with event execution. It includes regular event readiness checks, supply management, location and event logistics, as well as GIS and mapping.
- *Delivery*: The Delivery stream focuses on the management of event-day processes and directs the event execution. For vote-based events this includes vote station management, mail-in ballots, advance vote management and alternative voting (drive-up voting, vote bus, hospitals) management. For the census, the Delivery stream oversees the deployment of census takers and on street supervisors and manages the collection of census data.

Professionalization of Service Delivery

The goals of the organizational structure proposed for the four-year election program are to ensure the program operates at peak efficiency during all phases of the program, to ensure we have the necessary skills to support the identified service streams, and to professionalize the event delivery.

The number of people and the type of skills required to deliver an election varies over the four-years of the program. Having the expertise available at the optimal time for each of the service streams is a corporate-wide endeavour. Sourcing subject matter expertise from within the Corporation is a standard practice used in other municipalities and one that Calgary used during the 2018 Vote with success. For example, working with Supply Management to lead the Readiness stream; working with Corporate Analytics and Innovation for GIS support to determine voting subdivisions and voting map tools; and working with Information Technology to lead the Technology and Data stream.

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The benefits of using internal resources includes ensuring the program is industry compliant, meets legislative requirements, business needs and City policies while fostering a collaborative model to support these important events. Using a One City, One Voice approach to this program leverages existing expertise, encourages collaboration and helps provide a positive experience for all involved.

Recent Local Authorities Election Act changes

In January 2019, amendments to the Local Authorities Election Act (LAEA) were introduced with changes to a number of areas including candidate nominations, candidate fundraising and third-party advertising registration and disclosure requirements. A summary of the changes is included in Attachment 3.

The Returning Officer will return to Council by the summer of 2020 with a revised Election Bylaw and instructions in preparation of the 2021 General Election.

At the 18 December 2017 Regular Meeting of Council, the Returning Officer was directed to include in this report election eligibility requirements for voters and candidates, and enhancements of ID requirements without disenfranchising votes. The eligibility of voters and candidates has been updated in recent amendments to the LAEA and no longer requires electors to have resided in Alberta for six months prior to Election Day. Changes to the LAEA allow the Minister of Municipal Affairs and the Minister of Education to create a list of acceptable identification in addition to the list provided by the Chief Electoral Officer of Alberta. Working with Service Alberta and other municipalities' Returning Officers, the Returning Officer will work to ensure this list includes Calgary's needs for identification. The LAEA also includes provisions for municipalities to create and use a voters list. The use of a voters list in combination of ID requirements set by the LAEA will help ensure public confidence is maintained in the democratic process.

An outreach plan will ensure ongoing partnerships with agencies and schools to deliver the election experience to minors and disenfranchised voters. Some opportunities include presentations to students and community groups, educational materials and work opportunities including positions for youth aged 16 and above.

Next Steps

To support the implementation of the four-year election program, the Returning Officer will be presenting the following to Council over the next two years:

- July 2019 – Updated Terms of Reference and updated Ward Boundary Determination and Review policy (CC017) for the Ward Boundary Commission. Recruitment for the Ward Boundary Commission will occur during the regular recruitment campaign for the Boards, Committees, and Commissions with appointments at the 2019 Organizational Meeting of Council.
- September 2019 – Response to the City Auditor's Report on further enhancements to event processes.

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- December 2019 – Census Service Review.
- June-July 2020 – Updates to the Election Bylaw (35M2018).
- July 2020 – Final report of the Ward Boundary Commission.

Stakeholder Engagement, Research and Communication

In addition to the findings from the City Auditor's report (AC2018-0852), the 2017 Election review and Vote 2018 debrief documents, best practices were researched from The City of Toronto and The City of Edmonton Election Offices as well as Elections Alberta.

Strategic Alignment

This report aligns with Council's priority of a Well-Run City: "Calgary has a modern and efficient municipal government that is focused on resilience and continuous improvement to make life better every day for Calgarians by learning from citizens, partners, and others" (One Calgary 2019-2022).

Social, Environmental, Economic (External)

Financial Capacity

The costs associated with the development of the four-year program are funded through existing capital identified in One Calgary 2019-2022.

Risk Assessment

Without the implementation of the four-year election program, there is a potential of experiencing impediments during the 2021 General Election.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS:

To meet Council's expectations of a professional Elections and Census program that ensures the orderly and efficient delivery of events consistent with legislation, City procedures, City policies, which provides public confidence in the democratic process, and to be prepared to conduct the 2021 General Election.

ATTACHMENT

- 1 – Previous Council Direction
- 2 – Elections Four Year Cycle
- 3 – Amendments to the LAEA