

Priorities Committee Meeting_Jan29_2019

STRATEGIC INITIATIVE AND UPDATE

2018/2019 Ward Boundary Review

Report Purpose

To update Priorities Committee on the Ward Boundary Review.

Our Prioritized Strategic Goals

Governance Requirement

Goal 7 - Provide opportunities for public engagement and communication

Report

Through passing the Ward Boundary Review Policy GOV 002-032, Council aims to ensure equal and effective representation. This representation is fundamental to any democratic electoral system. Equal representation is the principle that all votes should have equal weight. In a ward system, this means that the number of people living and voting in each ward should be similar. Effective representation ensures that voters have the ability to access their elected representative equal in strength to the rest of the population, and relatively equivalent ward populations are important to allow for parity.

The policy outlines the criteria to be used when reviewing ward boundaries, and if desirable, developing options for any ward boundary changes. The policy also defines the framework for the review and sets out the responsibilities of the Returning Officer and Council.

The Returning Officer is required to provide a summary of the census results to Council for the first completed census after the municipal election, in this case, the 2018 census. Enclosure 2 provides a breakdown of the current population and eligible voters by ward and the deviation from the mean population and mean eligible voters by ward. Enclosure 3 contains graphs that illustrate a comparison of the population and number of eligible voters in each ward to the mean for both urban and rural wards.

Based on the 2018 census results, Ward 4 exceeds the +25% deviation threshold and therefore the Returning Officer will develop proposals for appropriate ward boundary adjustments pursuant to the criteria set out in the policy. Council may consider adjusting other ward boundaries as well, to allow for future growth over the next ten years (one of the criteria in the policy). The policy also directs that ward boundaries are to be designed with the intent of lasting a minimum of two municipal elections.

On June 21, 2016 Council directed the Returning Officer to conduct a ward boundary review following the 2018 municipal census and report to Council by the end of the first quarter of 2019. This ward boundary review report will address the requirements under the policy, and the findings of the 2018 municipal census.

Next steps:

The Returning Officer will:

1. Develop ward boundary proposals based on the criteria contained in the policy,
2. Work closely with internal stakeholders including Planning and Development and Communications,
3. Consult with external stakeholders including residents and our election partners (Elk Island Public and Elk Island Catholic) to understand the impact of any changes to the ward boundaries, and

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4. Present options to Council in 2019.

Council and Committee History

September 13, 2016	Council gave second and third reading to Bylaw 22-2016: Municipal and Boundaries and Council Composition bylaw which made minor changes to the municipal boundaries for the 2017 election.
June 21, 2016	Council gave first reading to Bylaw 22-2016: Municipal Ward Boundaries and Council Composition.
June 21, 2016	Council directed Administration to conduct a ward boundary review following the 2018 municipal census and report back to Council by the end of Q1 2019.
April 5, 2016	Council approved GOV-002-032: Ward Boundary Review Policy.

Other Impacts

Policy: GOV-002-032: Ward Boundary Review Policy

The Municipal Government Act (MGA) and the *Local Authorities Election Act (LAEA)* govern processes associated with municipal elections. The legislation allows municipalities to establish electoral boundaries for municipal elections and to determine the number of councillors for each ward.

Interdepartmental: GIS Branch of Information Technology Services, Planning & Development Services, Communications

Master Plan/Framework: n/a

Enclosures

- 1 GOV-002-032: Ward Boundary Review Policy
- 2 2018 Population and Eligible Voters by ward containing deviation from the mean
- 3 Urban and Rural Population and Eligible Voter Bell Curves
- 4 2018/2019 Ward Boundary Review Update PowerPoint Presentation