



# CITY POLICY

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**POLICY NUMBER: C469A**

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**REFERENCE:**

City Council  
11 October 1994

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**ADOPTED BY:**

City Council  
17 February 2009

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**SUPERSEDES:**

**C469**

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**PREPARED BY:** Corporate Services Department

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**DATE:** 28 January 2009

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**TITLE:** **Ward Boundary Design Policy**

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**Policy Statement:**

Clear, distinct and easily identifiable ward boundaries are essential to the municipal election process. Ward boundary design should also respect the democratic principle of “one-person, one-vote” by striving to keep ward populations substantially equal.

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**The purpose of this policy is to:**

1. Establish criteria to be used by the Returning Officer in developing proposals for Ward boundary changes.
2. Define the responsibilities in the Ward boundary review process.
3. Provide a framework for the Ward boundary review process with regard to timing, involving stakeholders and establishing reporting procedures.



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## 1. DEFINITIONS

- 1.01 Community League Boundary - the boundary of a community league as established by the Edmonton Federation of Community Leagues.
- 1.02 Electors - eligible voters, as defined by the Local Authorities Election Act.
- 1.03 Population - the total number of people residing within a defined area.
- 1.04 Ward - a municipal electoral district for the purpose of electing members of Council and School Board Trustees, created under the Municipal Government Act and the Ward Boundary Bylaw.

## 2. CRITERIA

The following criteria are to be used by the Returning Officer in creating or designing Ward boundaries:

### 2.01 Population vs. Number of Electors

The Population per Ward, not the number of Electors per Ward, will be the primary factor in designing Ward boundaries.

The optimum Population per Ward will be determined by dividing the City Population by the number of Wards. Ward boundaries will be designed so the Population of each Ward is within a range of +/- 25% from the optimum.

The optimum number of Electors per Ward will be determined by dividing the number of Electors in the City by the number of Wards. Ward boundaries will be designed so the number of Electors in each Ward is within a range of +/- 25% from the optimum.

Respecting these "+/-" ranges will ensure that Wards are substantially equal with each other in both Population and number of Electors.

### 2.02 Future Growth

Ward boundaries are to be designed with the goal of lasting at least three municipal general elections before a major revision is necessary. The potential for growth or decline in each Ward over the next three elections will be taken into account by having the highest Ward Populations and number of Electors in stable or declining Wards and the lowest Ward Populations and number of Electors in growth area Wards.



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## 2.03 Respecting Community League Boundaries

Since Community Leagues reflect the borders and concerns of neighbourhoods, Ward boundaries are to be designed so no Community League is split between two Wards.

Since Community League Boundaries are not controlled by the City and are subject to change, it may be necessary to make minor modifications to the Ward boundaries prior to the major revision planned for every three (3) municipal general elections.

## 2.04 Communities of Interest and Diversity Within Wards

Ward boundaries will be designed to ensure communities with common interests or sharing a common roadway access are kept within the same Ward.

Also, where possible, the distribution of residential, commercial, industrial, institutional and green space areas between Wards will be taken into account so that each Ward contains a mixture of these developments.

## 2.05 Easily Identifiable Boundaries

Wherever possible, Ward boundaries will be readily identifiable to the public by utilizing major streets and significant natural and man-made barriers such as the river, ravines, railways, etc.

## 2.06 Least Number of Changes

Ward proposals developed by the Returning Officer should involve the fewest changes possible to accomplish the required adjustments.

## 2.07 Block-Shaped Wards

Ward boundaries are to be designed relatively block-shaped with straight sides. This will help to ensure that Ward boundaries are drawn impartially. Ward boundaries which are long, narrow and twisted, or have saw-toothed or indented sides are more likely to give the appearance of being designed in a biased approach to achieve a specific result.



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## 3. PROCEDURE

### 3.01 City Council will:

- (a) Inform the Returning Officer of revisions that are desired to the Ward boundaries;
- (b) Direct the Returning Officer to conduct a formal review of the Ward boundaries and to prepare boundary proposals for the consideration of Council;
- (c) Provide input into the Ward boundary proposals prepared by the Returning Officer, and;
- (d) Decide on any changes to be made to the Ward boundaries and pass the required bylaw by October in the year prior to a municipal general election to provide sufficient implementation time.

### 3.02 Returning Officer will:

- (a) By September of the year following every municipal general election, send a summary to Council through the Executive Committee identifying
  - the current Population and number of Electors for each Ward,
  - the current "+/-" of Population and number of Electors of each Ward from the optimum Ward size, and
  - potential Ward boundary adjustments required before the next municipal general election;
- (b) When directed by City Council, develop Ward boundary proposals based on the criteria contained in this policy;
- (c) Arrange for input from the following stakeholders to determine the impact of any potential Ward boundary changes;
  - General Public (through a public hearing),
  - Edmonton Public School Board,
  - Edmonton Separate School Board,
  - Edmonton Federation of Community Leagues, and
  - City Administration;
- (d) Prepare the bylaw to adopt the accepted Ward boundary changes, and;
- (e) Implement the approved changes to the Ward boundaries.



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**Policy Title:** **Ward Boundary Determination and Review**

**Policy Number:** **CC017**

**Report Number:** **N/A Amended by C2013-0182**

**Approved by:** **Council**

**Effective Date:** **1993 May 3**

**Business Unit:** **City Clerk's Office**

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## **BACKGROUND**

Section 148 of the Municipal Government Act (MGA) governs the establishment and use of a Ward system in The City of Calgary. A plebiscite, held and passed by the electorate in 1960 October 19, re-established a ward system in The City of Calgary pursuant to a 1913 plebiscite abolishing the ward system. A second plebiscite vote, held on the same day in 1960, determined the wards should be "block shaped" not "pie shaped".

Under Sections 214a and 214b of the City Act, which was replaced by the Municipal Government Act, six wards were established. Bylaw Number 66/77, passed by Council on 1977 January 24, increased the number of wards to 14.

The current Ward Boundaries Bylaw is Bylaw 19M91, as amended. The boundaries have the potential to be amended, prior to every general election with the effective date for amended boundaries being the date of the general election, Section 149 of the MGA.

## **PURPOSE**

The purpose of this policy is:

1. To establish a Ward Boundary Commission (hereinafter called the "Commission"), appointed by Council, to undertake major revisions to ward boundaries and provide recommendations to Council;
2. To establish the membership, terms of reference and appointment process for the Commission;
3. To establish the criteria to be considered by the Commission for major reviews and by the Returning Officer for minor revisions in developing proposals for Ward Boundary changes;
4. To provide a method for Members of Council to provide representation to the Commission and the Returning Officer;

5. To establish a process and timing for major ward boundary reviews;
6. To establish a process for minor revisions; and
7. To provide authorization to the Returning Officer to determine minor adjustments to ward boundaries arising from new developments and annexations.

## **POLICY**

### **CRITERIA**

The criteria used by the Commission and the Returning Officer for developing ward boundary recommendations are as follows:

1. **Total Population/Total Electors** – all calculations will be based on the total population from the most recent civic census. The total population is to be relatively equal between the wards. It is also desirable to maintain a relative equality in the number of electors in each ward. The number of electors found at the most recent enumeration conducted by The City of Calgary will be used as the reference;
2. **Deviation** –at a major review, the allowable deviation from the mean population per ward is +/- 10 to 15%. This is consistent with current court decisions. The maximum allowed deviation +/- 25%. A minor review will be conducted only when the maximum deviation is, or will be at the next election, exceeded and a major review is not scheduled;
3. **Future Growth** – the potential for growth in each ward over the next 10 years is a factor to be considered;
4. **Community Boundaries** – wherever possible, the ward boundaries and The City developed Community District Boundaries should coincide. Community Association boundaries are also given consideration but it must be noted that these boundaries are not controlled by The City and change at the decision of the communities involved;
5. **Easily Identifiable Boundaries** – wherever possible, the ward boundaries shall be readily identifiable to the public by utilizing major streets, significant topography, etc.;
6. **Block Shaped Wards** – in accordance with the 1960 October 19 plebiscite, wards are to be relatively “block” shaped and not “pie” shaped with the downtown being the centre of the pie;
7. **Environmental Mix** – efforts will be made to equalize, wherever possible, the distribution of commercial, rural, industrial, institutional and green space areas between the wards;
8. **Historical Ward Boundaries** – consideration of the historical ward boundaries in an area of the city will be given, however it is not mandatory that these boundaries be used; and

**Philosophy of Approach** – the general philosophy to be used by the Commission in developing recommendations for Ward Boundary changes is twofold; (a) to develop changes which should not require major adjustments for a span of three general elections; and (b) to have the higher population in the more population stable city wards and the lower population in the growth area wards.

## **PROCEDURE**

Major revisions shall be undertaken by the Commission and minor reviews by the Returning Officer.

Third Reading of a bylaw amending the ward boundaries which results from a revision or review is to be given by Council no later than September in the year prior to a general election to ensure sufficient implementation time prior to the enumeration of electors.

### **Major Revisions**

Major revisions are revisions that examine The City as a whole as if no current boundaries existed. Major revisions are conducted by the Commission and address all established criteria. Major revisions are planned for every second general election commencing in January 2015.

### **Minor Reviews**

Minor reviews are those that address issues arising from population deviation only. The recommended changes to Council are the minimum number required to correct population imbalances, in accordance with criteria number 1 in September/October two years following a general election. Recommendations for minor reviews are prepared by the Returning Officer.

An additional criteria used for a minor review is the least number of changes. To reduce confusion to the electorate and implementation costs, proposals developed should involve the fewest changes possible to accomplish the required adjustments to the population.

### **Adjustments**

Adjustments are those changes made by the Returning Officer as a result of annexation or as a result of development of a community that causes new homes or streets to be split by the ward boundary in an inappropriate way. Most annexations do not require changes to the Bylaw, but if amendments are required to the bylaw, the Returning Officer shall submit an amending bylaw to Council with a report.

## **WARD BOUNDARY COMMISSION**

### **Membership**

The Commission shall consist of four members as follows:

1. A person who understands The City from a political and organization perspective, such as a former member of Calgary City Council who has not sought election in the most recent election and is not involved in lobbying The City;

2. Two (2) electors, with an interest and expertise in political science, public policy, or urban issues and who is not involved in lobbying The City; and
3. The City of Calgary Returning Officer.

### **Appointment**

Applications and nominations to be a Member of the Commission will be submitted to and processed by City Clerks. The appointments to the Commission will be made at the second Organizational Meeting of Council following every third general election.

### **Commission Chair**

The Chair shall be selected by the Commission members at the first meeting of the Commission from amongst the Council appointed members.

### **Remuneration**

Members of the Commission, other than the Returning Officer, shall receive a flat rate sum for remuneration for the work involved in the Commission. The Chair shall receive an additional sum for the work of the Chair and writing the report.

Out of pocket expenses for items such as parking shall be reimbursed.

### **Ad Hoc Commission**

Council may direct that an ad hoc major revision occur at times other than scheduled by this Policy. In the case of an ad hoc revision, the same process will apply except that the appointment may be made at a Council meeting other than the Organizational Meeting.

### **Input Members of Council/School Boards**

The Commission shall interview each Member of Council, within the first two months of appointment of the Commission, to obtain the input of these persons. Members of Council not wishing to be interviewed may submit input in writing or by email to the Returning Officer.

As both school boards, The Calgary Board of Education and the Calgary Catholic Board are impacted by The City's ward boundaries, through a joint election agreement under the Local Authorities Election Act, the Commission shall provide for the Boards to give such input as they desire near the start of the process.



## **Public Consultation**

The Commission shall hold at least four sessions, one in each quadrant, for public consultation on ward boundaries. These sessions may be held at any point in time during the process at the discretion of the Commission.

## **Report Deadlines**

- The Commission shall report to Council with recommendations no later than 18 months before the general election or within one year of appointment of an ad hoc Commission.

## **Minor Review Steps**

1. In September of the year following a general election, a projection of the ward populations for the next election and deviation shall be prepared to identify potential ward boundary adjustments required before the next election and shall be sent to Council;
2. The Returning Officer shall identify the potential areas that do not fall within the established Criteria 1 and 2, and the potential changes that address these issues with consideration of other established criteria. The potential changes presented to Council will be the smallest number possible to bring population deviation in line with Criteria 2. For a minor review, this information shall be provided to Members of Council, representing the affected wards, for input prior to the report going to Council;
3. The Returning Officer shall prepare an amending bylaw for Council, following Council direction received from the Council report;
4. The Returning Officer is authorized to adjust ward boundaries as a result of annexation within the existing bylaw; and
5. The Returning Officer shall report to Council with an amending bylaw on minor adjustments for Ward Boundaries, resulting from annexation, when the existing Ward Boundary extensions are insufficient or when new community developments will be bisected by existing boundaries.

## **Advertised Bylaw**

The ward boundary bylaw is a statutorily advertised bylaw under Section 606 of the Municipal Government Act. The bylaw must be advertized at least twice in two different weeks. In the 60 days following the last advertisement, the public has the right to submit a petition under the MGA, Section 219, either for or against the bylaw.

After advertising and before second reading of the bylaw, Council may introduce amendments. However; substantive changes to the boundaries will result in a requirement to re-advertise and allow for a petition.

## **Responsibilities**

### **City Council:**

1. To inform the Commission and/or Returning Officer, of suggestions, changes, recommendations, etc. which are desired;
2. To provide direction to the Returning Officer on minor revision of the ward boundaries;
3. To provide direction to the City Clerk and the Returning Officer on the desire to conduct an ad hoc major revision of ward boundaries outside of the schedule established in this policy;
4. To provide input and direction into the proposals and recommendations submitted to Council; and
5. To determine and adopt the changes to the boundaries and subsequently give three readings to the required bylaw.

### **Commission:**

1. To provide Council with recommendations for major revisions to ward boundaries taking into consideration the timing, input and criteria provided for in this Policy;
2. To obtain public input on the criteria used to determine ward boundaries and validate or negate criteria found in this policy; and
3. To review this policy at the conclusion of the revision and submit recommendations for change to Council in a final report.

### **Returning Officer:**

1. To monitor and report to Council, in September following a general election when a Commission is not mandated, on the projected ward populations at the next general election;
2. To identify potential changes required for a minor review in the September report to Council;
3. To provide necessary resources for major revisions, e.g. computing, training, reference material, etc. to the Commission;
4. To prepare the bylaws required to implement Council decisions;
5. To implement the changes to the ward boundaries, ensuring the boundaries do not come into effect before Election Day in accordance with the MGA; and
6. To report to Council, prior to appointment of a Commission, with recommendations on remuneration of Commission members.

## **AMENDMENTS**

2013 March 18  
1993 May 03  
1991 May 06  
1977 January 24  
1960 October 19