

**THE CITY OF EDMONTON**  
**BYLAW 18483**  
**COUNCIL CODE OF CONDUCT**

**WHEREAS:**

The Municipal Government Act requires councils of all municipalities in Alberta to adopt a code of conduct by bylaw;

Committing to a code of conduct provides Councillors with shared accountability and a framework to guide ethical conduct in a way that upholds the integrity of the City and the high standards of professional conduct the public expects from elected officials;

A code of conduct is one aspect of accountability and transparency both internally, as between Councillors and City employees, as well as externally, with other levels of government, the media, and the public;

Council recognizes that Edmontonians expect the highest standards of ethical conduct from their elected officials and that public interest is best served when Councillors perform their functions of office and manage their private interests with integrity, accountability, transparency, and respect;

The role of a Councillor is to be actively engaged with the electors, community, and region in a way that demonstrates the shared responsibility of being a Councillor and member of a productive Council; and

Considering the City's municipal purposes and the duties of Councillors, Council desires to demonstrate and promote the principles of integrity, accountability, transparency, and respect through its actions and behaviours;

Edmonton City Council enacts:

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|--------------------|---|---|
| <b>PURPOSE</b>     | 1 | The purpose of this bylaw is to adopt a code of conduct for Councillors.  |
| <b>DEFINITIONS</b> | 2 | <div style="margin-left: 20px;">(1) Unless otherwise specified, words used in this bylaw have the same meaning as defined in the Municipal Government Act or the <i>Local Authorities Election Act</i>, RSA 2000, c L-21.</div> <div style="margin-left: 20px;">(2) In this bylaw:<div style="margin-left: 20px;">(a) “<b>City</b>” means The City of Edmonton;</div><div style="margin-left: 20px;">(b) “<b>City employee</b>” means an individual that reports to the</div></div> |

City Manager or City Auditor and provides services to the City under an employment agreement, personal services agreement, or in the capacity of agent, student, or volunteer;

- (c) **“City Manager”** means the chief administrative officer of the City;
- (d) **“Council”** means the City’s council;
- (e) **“Councillor”** means the City’s councillors and includes the Mayor;
- (f) **“Councillor’s employee”** means an individual that provides services to a Councillor under an employment agreement, personal services agreement, or in the capacity of agent, student, or volunteer;
- (g) **“Councillor’s family”** means a Councillor’s spouse or adult interdependent partner, a Councillor’s children, the parents of a Councillor, and the parents of a Councillor’s spouse or adult interdependent partner;
- (h) **“Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act”** means the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*, RSA 2000, c F-2;
- (i) **“Mayor”** means the City’s chief elected official;
- (j) **“Municipal Government Act”** means the *Municipal Government Act*, RSA 2000, c M-26; and
- (k) **“spouse”** means the spouse of a married person but does not include a spouse who is living separate and apart from the person if the person and spouse have separated pursuant to a written separation agreement or if their support obligations and family property have been dealt with by a court order.

## **RULES FOR INTERPRETATION**

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This code of conduct is intended to supplement any other legal duties imposed on a Councillor by an enactment, bylaw, or Council approved policy, including:

- (a) *Alberta Human Rights Act*, RSA 2000, c A-25.5;

- (b) Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act;
- (c) *Local Authorities Election Act*, RSA 2000, c L-21;
- (d) Municipal Government Act;
- (e) *Occupational Health and Safety Act*, SA 2017, c O-2.1;  
and
- (f) Council Procedures Bylaw, Bylaw 18155.

|                        |   |  |
|------------------------|---|--|
| <b>CODE OF CONDUCT</b> | 4 | The code of conduct contained in Schedule A of this bylaw is adopted by Council to apply to all Councillors in their capacity as elected officials.  |
| <b>COMPLAINTS</b>      | 5 | If any person believes that a Councillor has contravened the code of conduct adopted by this bylaw, the person may make a written complaint in accordance with Schedule B - Complaints.  |
| <b>SANCTIONS</b>       | 6 | <p>(1) If Council determines it appropriate to do so, Council may, by motion passed by special resolution, impose sanctions on a Councillor who contravenes the code of conduct adopted by this bylaw in accordance with Schedule C - Sanctions.</p> <p>(2) Notwithstanding anything in this bylaw, Council may not impose any sanction that has the effect of preventing the Councillor from fulfilling their legislated duties.</p> <p>(3) Nothing in this bylaw requires Council to impose a sanction for any complaint or contravention.</p> |

Read a first time

Read a second time

Read a third time

SIGNED AND PASSED

THE CITY OF EDMONTON

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MAYOR

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CITY CLERK

## **SCHEDULE A**

### **COUNCIL CODE OF CONDUCT**

#### *Part A: Representing the Municipality*

1. While carrying out their duties, Councillors must:
  - a) act in the best interests of the City as a whole;
  - b) consider all decisions and issues thoughtfully, consistently, impartially, and fairly by considering all relevant facts, opinions, and perspectives;
  - c) attend and vote at all meetings as empowered by and in accordance with the Municipal Government Act, unless prohibited by an enactment from doing so;
  - d) accurately represent and respect decisions made by Council while preserving the value of fair comment and differences of opinion; and
  - e) communicate respectfully with members of the public, Councillors, City employees, and Councillor's employees.

#### *Part B: Communications*

1. Without limiting the ability of a Councillor to hold a position on an issue and respectfully express their opinions, Councillors will:
  - a) ensure their communications accurately reflect the facts of Council's decisions;
  - b) refer inquiries regarding Council's position on an initiative to Council's representative for that initiative;
  - c) ensure that all communications are accurate and not issue any communication that the Councillor knows, or ought to have known, to be false;
  - d) ensure that all communications issued by, or on behalf of, the Councillor, including social media, are respectful and do not discriminate, harass, defame, or demonstrate disrespect toward any person; and
  - e) not issue any communications that mislead Council or the public about any matter.
2. No Councillor may engage in negotiations or make representations or commitments on behalf of the City unless authorized to do so by Council, but may advocate for the City's interests to any level of government or non-governmental body as opportunities arise.
3. If a Councillor becomes aware of or receives an inquiry that is a ward-specific constituency issue relating to another Councillor's ward, the Councillor will refer the matter to the ward Councillor or request that the person contact the ward Councillor, or alternatively, the Mayor.

#### *Part C: Decision-making Processes*

1. Councillors will exercise their authority to make decisions in a manner that demonstrates fairness, respect for differences, and an intention to work together for the common good and

in the public interest.

2. Councillors will prepare for meetings by reviewing materials in advance and will be respectful and attentive to, and ask informed questions of, the public and City employees providing information at a meeting.
3. Councillors will not provide information contained in records or documents at a meeting unless those records or documents have been provided to all of Council in advance, if possible.
4. Councillors will obtain all necessary information about the operations and administration of the City from the City Manager using processes developed by the City Manager, and will respect the role of City employees to provide neutral and objective information without undue influence and interference.

Part D: Adherence to Rules

1. Councillors will comply with the procedural rules for meetings established by Council.
2. Councillors will comply with all applicable laws and Council approved policies, and will support City employees and Councillor's employees to the same on behalf of the City.

Part E: Respectful Interactions

1. Councillors will conduct themselves with decorum at all times, including while attending meetings, interacting with City employees and Councillor's employees, and engaging with the public.
2. Councillors who act as chair of a meeting will, at the start and throughout the meeting, set expectations for appropriate decorum and conduct for all in attendance.
3. Councillors must not use any harassing, offensive, discriminatory, disrespectful, or unparliamentary language about Council, a Councillor, City employees, Councillor's employees, or the public.
4. A Councillor must not demand a City employee to engage in partisan or political activities at any level of government, or subject any City employee to reprisal for a refusal to engage in such activities. A Councillor must also not subject any City employee to reprisal for any engagement in partisan or political activities at any level of government that is done in their personal capacity.
5. If a Councillor makes an inquiry to a City employee when the inquiry is not made in their professional capacity as Councillor, the Councillor must inform the City employee that they are acting in a personal capacity and not as a Councillor.

#### Part F: Confidential Information

1. Councillors must keep confidential all information received during a Council or council committee meeting held in private in accordance with the Municipal Government Act, information that would be exempt from disclosure under the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, or otherwise received in confidence or marked as confidential.
2. If a Councillor receives confidential information, they must use the information only for the purpose for which the information is intended and to fulfill the duties of their office, and must not seek to access confidential information for any other purpose.
3. A Councillor must not use confidential information for personal or private interests, including interests of the Councillor's family, or in any way that may cause harm or detriment to any person.
4. Councillors must respect the right of access to City records under the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act and the obligation to protect privacy, and will:
  - a) provide any records subject to an access request under the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act to the City employee appointed as head for the purposes of that Act;
  - b) not interfere with the access request processes set out in the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act and implemented by the head;
  - c) after receiving notice of an access request, not alter, destroy, or withhold any record that is subject to the request; and
  - d) safeguard personal information.

#### Part G: Conflicts of Interest

1. Councillors will adhere to the pecuniary interest obligations prescribed by the Municipal Government Act, and will obtain advice whenever a potential pecuniary interest may exist to preserve the integrity of Council's decisions.
2. When exercising official duties, a Councillor must not give preferential treatment to any person or organization with the intent of advancing the Councillor's private interests or for their personal benefit.
3. A Councillor must not act as an advocate before Council on behalf of any person or organization for compensation.
4. Councillors must not use information received as an elected official that is not available to the public or the rest of Council, for a purpose other than carrying out the Councillor's duties.
5. Councillors should avoid carrying out their duties in any manner that may reasonably be perceived as being in conflict with any future endeavour that may be undertaken by the

Councillor.

6. Councillors have a right to freely and fully participate in the political process in their personal capacity, including contributing personal money or real property, volunteering, or offering financial support of partisan political activity, provided that, when doing so, they disclose that such participation is not in their capacity as elected officials.
7. While acting in their capacity as elected officials, Councillors will not:
  - a) attend partisan political events; or
  - b) contribute money or real or City property for the benefit of a political party, constituency association, or candidate, or in support of partisan political activities that involve direct or indirect support of, or opposition to, any political party or candidate for public office.
8. Council may, by motion, direct a Councillor or the Mayor to participate in the political process as Council determines appropriate. Whenever such direction is given, the provisions in this part must be applied in a manner that supports participation to the extent that is reasonable and in accordance with applicable laws and Council's direction.

#### Part H: Use of Influence

1. Councillors must not use, or attempt to use, their office for the purpose of intimidating, influencing, threatening, coercing, or directing a Councillor's employee or City employee in a manner contrary to the employee's duties or for the Councillor's personal benefit.
2. If serving as a reference or recommending an individual for employment with the City, a Councillor must comply with the City's hiring practices and must not use their role as an elected official to unfairly influence any hiring decisions.
3. Councillors must not contact or attempt in any way to influence any member of a judicial, quasi-judicial, or regulatory body before which the City may be a party regarding a matter before that body.

#### Part I: City Assets

1. Councillors will only use City assets to assist them in carrying out their duties, but may use City assets that are generally available to the public on the same terms and conditions offered to the public, including complying with booking procedures and paying applicable fees.
2. A Councillor may use communication facilities, such as computers, telephones, electronic mail, and mobile devices, provided by the City for personal use provided that such use is not offensive or inappropriate, or would not cause harm to any person.
3. Councillors will comply with all information security procedures applicable to City employees and will not take any actions that may compromise the integrity or security of the



City's information systems.

4. A Councillor must not attempt to obtain financial gain from any of the City's intellectual property, and all Councillors acknowledge that the City's intellectual property is owned by the municipal corporation.
5. Councillors will maintain their constituency and City records in accordance with City policies and applicable laws.
6. Immediately prior to the end of their term of office, Councillors will return City assets, including City records, to the City Manager.

*Part J: Orientation and Training*

1. Councillors will attend all training required by the Municipal Government Act to be provided to Councillors, as well as any additional training directed by Council.

*Part K: Elections and Campaigning*

1. Public events and advertising or media paid for through City budgets allocated for Council use (ward budgets or Council Contingency) or public events organized or sponsored by Councillors using any City budgets or assets must be completed by May 31 of a general election year and not scheduled until following the inaugural organizational meeting of Council.
2. Councillors must not issue City-funded ward newsletters and City-funded mass electronic mail distributions after May 31 of a general election year.
3. Councillors who are nominated to run for re-election must not participate in any City-sponsored events requiring them to perform official ceremonial duties between nomination day and election day.
4. Councillors must not use their office, the services of City employees, or any City assets, including any of the City's intellectual property, communication facilities, or other facilities, for election- or campaign-related activities.
5. Councillors may only use the City's website, social media, and electronic mail only for official duties. Councillors will maintain separate websites, social media, and electronic mail accounts for all campaign activities and communications. Website and electronic mail distribution lists that are used for official duties may not be used for campaign activities and communications. However, this does not prevent the returning officer from providing links to campaign websites for all candidates on the City's elections website.
6. Councillors must not use any City communications facilities or services for their campaign, including the use of media contacts, electronic mail addresses and distribution lists, the City

of Edmonton photo library, and website development, writing, or print material services provided by City employees.

7. Councillors must not seek individual advice from City employees regarding election rules and processes or their obligations as candidates, including any obligations as candidates that may apply while the Councillor holds office. However, nothing restricts a Councillor from receiving information available to all candidates for an election.
8. Councillors must not use their office to gain an unfair advantage over other candidates, or to provide an unfair advantage for a candidate.
9. Councillors must not use City assets to promote or oppose the candidacy of any person to elected office in any municipal, provincial, or federal campaign.
10. Councillors will respect the role of the returning officer, and will not seek to interfere with the returning officer's duties or any election process.
11. Nothing in this part restricts a Councillor from accepting services or support from City employees or Councillor's employees for election-related purposes, provided that the individual is acting in a personal capacity, on personal time, and not receiving remuneration from the City for the same services.

#### Part L: Gifts and Benefits

In this part, "gift" means a fee or advance paid to or a gift or personal benefit provided with the Councillor's knowledge to a Councillor, the Councillor's family, or to a Councillor's employee, that is connected directly or indirectly to the performance of the Councillor's duties.

1. No Councillor will accept a gift, unless it is:
  - a) compensation authorized by legislation, including compensation for serving on external bodies as a Council-approved City representative;
  - b) suitable mementos (e.g. personal plaques, books, coffee mugs, pen and pencil sets, ties, and scarves) received as an incident of accepted protocol or normal expression of courtesy, or a reasonable memento of a function honouring the Councillor;
  - c) a political contribution otherwise authorized and reported by law, such as in the case of Councillors running for office;
  - d) services provided without compensation by persons volunteering their time to further the interests of the City or the Councillor's ward;
  - e) food, lodging, transportation, or entertainment provided by other levels of government or by the government of a foreign country, or by a conference, seminar, or event organizer where the Councillor is attending in an official capacity;
  - f) in-kind (non cash) sponsorships or donations for community events organized or run by a Councillor, or a third party on behalf of a Councillor, provided that the event will be held in accordance with the standards of conduct and decorum expressed or implied in this

- code of conduct;
- g) admission to, and food and beverages consumed at, community events and widely-attended events such as conventions, conferences, sporting and arts events, banquets, or training and education programs, provided that:
    - i) the Councillor's attendance serves a legitimate purpose associated with the Councillor's duties;
    - ii) admission is offered by the entity responsible for organizing or presenting the event;
    - iii) the admission is unsolicited by the Councillor; and
    - iv) the value is reasonable and the invitations infrequent.
2. A Councillor will, as soon as practicable, return to the donor any gift that does not comply with this code of conduct, along with an explanation as to why the gift cannot be accepted.
  3. Official gifts received by Councillors on behalf of the City are considered City assets and are managed by the City Manager for public display and/or archiving.
  4. Councillors must disclose any single gift accepted by the Councillor with a fair market value in excess of \$300, as well as all gifts from a single donor in a calendar year that collectively exceed \$300, with the exception of gifts falling under sections 1(c) and 1(d) of this part. Each Councillor must file a quarterly disclosure statement with the Office of the City Clerk outlining all gifts exceeding \$300 received for that quarter, or stating that there is nothing to disclose.
  5. Disclosure statements will identify the:
    - a) nature and source of the gift;
    - b) date on which the gift was received; and
    - c) fair market value of the gift.
  6. Disclosure statements may be reviewed by the Ethics Advisor for compliance with this code of conduct and/or future guidance with respect to content.
  7. Disclosure statements will be a matter of public record, in the prescribed format determined by the City Clerk.

## **SCHEDULE B COMPLAINTS**

### *Submission Process*

If any person believes that a Councillor has contravened this code of conduct, that person may make a written complaint to Council Services Committee, care of the Office of the City Clerk. A sample complaint form will be made available on the City's website.

Written complaints must include the following:

- a) the provisions of the Council Code of Conduct allegedly contravened and the facts surrounding the allegation, including any witnesses;
- b) the name of the Councillor(s) alleged to have contravened the Council Code of Conduct; and
- c) the complainant's name and contact information,

and may be submitted by electronic mail or delivered to:

Office of the City Clerk  
3rd Floor, City Hall  
1 Sir Winston Churchill Square  
Edmonton AB T5J 0R2

A complaint must be received by the Office of the City Clerk, on behalf of Council Services Committee, not later than 60 days after the date the person became aware of the conduct giving rise to the complaint. Council Services Committee may use its discretion to grant extensions if:

- a) the delay occurred in good faith;
- b) it is in the public interest to conduct an investigation or to give consideration whether to conduct an investigation; and
- c) no substantial prejudice will result to any person because of the delay.

On receipt of a complaint, an initial assessment will be completed. Complaints that:

- a) are not about a current Councillor;
- b) are about the conduct of a Councillor's employee;
- c) allege criminal activity;
- d) allege a violation of the Municipal Government Act or the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act; or
- e) are covered by other applicable legislative appeal, complaint, or court processes,

will be immediately refused and the complainant will be advised in writing, with reasons, and provided with information regarding other options, if applicable.

### Investigation

Complaints accepted by the Office of the City Clerk, on behalf of Council Services Committee, will be investigated, however:

- a) complaints received or under investigation within 90 days prior to a municipal election may be suspended until after election day; and
- b) if Council Services Committee determines that a complaint is frivolous, vexatious, or made in bad faith, Council Services will immediately dismiss the complaint.

If Council Services Committee determines that informal resolution may be possible, Council Services Committee may, with written consent of both the complainant and respondent Councillor(s), refer the complaint to a third party for resolution.

If a complaint cannot be resolved informally, Council Services Committee will conduct a formal investigation, and may direct that a third party investigator be retained to do so. Formal investigations must be conducted in a fair, timely, and confidential manner that respects the principles of procedural fairness and natural justice.

Prior to commencing a formal investigation, the complainant and respondent Councillor will receive written notice of the investigation, and the respondent Councillor will receive a copy of the complaint. Names of complainants and witnesses may be provided to the respondent Councillor(s) if:

- a) the investigation cannot be completed without releasing the complainant's name; or
- b) the respondent Councillor(s) require the name(s) to properly respond to the allegations.

During an investigation, a complainant or witness may be asked to provide additional information and may be asked to provide information through a statutory declaration. If a statutory declaration is requested, the Office of the City Clerk may provide a Commissioner for Oaths, free of charge. City employees or Councillor's employees may also be requested to provide information, and any person conducting an investigation on behalf of Council Services Committee may look at any record or thing belonging to or used by the City, and enter any City facility for the purpose of completing the investigation. The respondent Councillor(s) is entitled to disclosure of all relevant information gathered during an investigation.

Once all information has been gathered, the respondent Councillor will have 10 days to respond to the complaint in writing and may provide any further information in support of their response. This deadline may be extended at the discretion of Council Services Committee.

Council Services Committee will strive to complete investigations within 90 days of the date the complaint is accepted. This deadline may be extended at the discretion of Council Services Committee.

Nothing in this bylaw restricts Council Services Committee from providing interim reports to

Council on any matter relevant to a complaint, including reports of any interference, obstruction, or retaliation with an ongoing investigation.

### Reporting

Following the investigation, if Council Services Committee believes the complaint is substantiated, Council Service Committee must provide a report to Council. The report must contain:

- a) a summary of the complaint;
- b) a summary of information gathered and conclusions made; and
- c) a recommended resolution, including any recommended sanctions in accordance with Schedule C - Sanctions.

Reports to Council from Council Services Committee may be discussed in private as permitted by the Municipal Government Act.

Once Council has received and considered the report from Council Services Committee, it will be reviewed in accordance with the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act and will be posted, to the extent possible, on the City's website.

## **SCHEDULE C SANCTIONS**

On receipt of a substantiated complaint received from Council Services Committee, Council must consider the complaint and results of the investigation, and may impose sanctions on the Councillor subject to the complaint. Council may accept, vary, replace, or reject the recommendations of Council Services Committee.

The Councillor subject to the complaint will have regard to the public perception and appropriateness of participating in the meeting where the complaint is discussed by Council Services Committee and/or Council, but cannot be prevented from participating in debate and voting on the resolution should they wish to.

Council may, by motion passed by special resolution, impose any of the following sanctions:

- a) issue a letter of reprimand addressed to the Councillor;
- b) require the Councillor to issue a letter of apology;
- c) direct the publication of a letter of reprimand or request for apology and the Councillor's response;
- d) pass a motion to censure;
- e) require the Councillor to attend specified training;
- f) suspend the Councillor from acting as deputy Mayor or acting Mayor, and assign those roles to another Councillor;
- g) suspend the Councillor's duties as chair of Council or council committee meetings and assign those duties to another Councillor;
- h) suspend the Councillor's membership on a council committee;
- i) restrict the Councillor's access to electronic confidential records and require the Councillor to return copies of Council records following each meeting; or
- j) any other sanction Council deems appropriate.

Council may not impose any sanction that has the effect of preventing the Councillor from fulfilling their legislated duties.

If Council imposes a sanction that involves a reduction or suspension of a Councillor's non-legislated duties, Council may also direct that the remuneration payable to the Councillor be reduced or suspended by a proportionate amount.

Council may, in accordance with the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, direct that the details of the sanction imposed be released to the public or remain private.

When imposing a sanction, including deciding whether to release the details of the sanction to the public, Council must consider all of the following:

- a) the severity or consequences of the contravention;
- b) the consequences of the contravention;

- c) the principles and intent of this code of conduct;
- d) the public interest; and
- e) whether the Councillor has previously contravened this code of conduct.

Nothing in this bylaw requires Council to impose a sanction for every substantiated complaint. Contraventions that were inadvertent or made in good faith may result in no sanction being imposed.