

BYLAW 20304

City of Edmonton Ward Boundaries and Council Composition Bylaw (Amendment No. 4)

RECOMMENDATION

That Executive Committee recommend to City Council:

That Bylaw 20304 be given the appropriate readings.

Purpose

To adjust the design of municipal Ward boundaries.

Readings

Bylaw 20304 is ready for first reading only.

Advertising and Signing

The Bylaw cannot be signed and thereby passed prior to the completion of the required advertising and subsequent 60-day petition period that occur following first reading.

Position of Administration

Administration supports this Bylaw.

Report Summary

City Policy C469A - Ward Boundary Design Policy, states that following every municipal general election, the Returning Officer is required to submit a report to Council through Executive Committee that provides information regarding Edmonton's municipal ward boundaries, including proposed adjustments.

This report recommends two such adjustments, to be enacted via amending Bylaw 20304 - City of Edmonton Ward Boundaries and Council Composition Bylaw (Attachment 1).

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REPORT

As per City Policy C469A - Ward Boundary Design Policy, following every municipal general election the Returning Officer is required to send a summary to Council through 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;
- potential Ward boundary adjustments required before the next municipal general election

The current Ward boundaries, which were recommended by the Ward Boundary Commission (WBC) and approved by Council in 2020 via Bylaw 19366 - Amendment to Bylaw 15142 - City of Edmonton Ward Boundaries and Council Composition, came into effect on Election Day, October 18, 2021. As per Policy C469A, major Ward boundary adjustments are designed to withstand three general election cycles, with the next major boundary review expected to occur following the 2029 Edmonton Election, unless otherwise directed by Council.

Current Population and Variance for Each Ward

Attachment 2 indicates the current population of each Ward and the variance from the optimum Ward population which, according to Policy C469A, is determined by dividing the city population by the number of Wards. Policy 469A allows a variance of +/-25 per cent from this optimum. The optimum Ward population for 2022 is 89,487.

Using Administration's population projections, which are based on a growth methodology developed by the Urban Planning and Economy Department, all Wards remain in compliance with policy criteria related to population distribution in 2022.

Current Number of Electors and Variance for Each Ward

Attachment 3 indicates the estimated number of electors for each Ward, and the variance from the optimum. Similarly to calculations regarding population, the optimum is calculated by dividing the total number of electors by the number of Wards. The 2019 optimum number of Electors is 52,429.

The number of electors for each Ward is an estimated figure, determined using information provided by Elections Alberta in 2019. Given that this is the most recent source of data available to Administration, methodology could not be applied to appropriately project the estimated number of Electors in 2022. However, it is reasonable to infer from the population projections for 2022 that the number of Electors in each Ward falls within the +/-25 per cent variance allowed by Policy C469A.

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Future Growth

Criteria within Policy C469A states that Ward boundaries are to be designed with the goal of remaining compliant with Policy criteria for at least three municipal general elections before a major revision is necessary.

Growth projections developed by Administration verify that Ward populations will continue to meet the policy criteria regarding population distribution and growth at every election interval until the next major review is anticipated following the 2029 municipal general election, as shown in Attachment 4.

As such, the Returning Officer does not recommend any major adjustments based on the criteria of population, electors or future growth.

Potential Ward Boundary Adjustments Prior to the Next General Election

Analysis of the data regarding the relatively equal distribution of population and electors between Wards verifies that the current Ward boundaries should withstand the next two election cycles without requiring a major adjustment. The additional aspects of the Returning Officer's review involved an assessment of potential minor adjustments that could be made to improve operational effectiveness and the experience of electors based on the 2021 Edmonton Election project.

Potential Ward boundary adjustments were considered in the context of the criteria outlined in Policy C469A and the operational lessons learned from the 2021 municipal general election, which prioritize the voting experience for electors in future elections.

Policy C469A requires that seven criteria be applied to the design of Ward Boundaries:

- 1) Population vs. Number of Electors
- 2) Future Growth
- 3) Respecting Community League Boundaries
- 4) Communities of Interest and Diversity Within Wards
- 5) Easily Identifiable Boundaries
- 6) Least Number of Changes
- 7) Blocked Shaped Wards

These recommended adjustments, which focus principally on criteria regarding Communities of Interest and Diversity within Wards, Easily Identifiable Boundaries, and Least Number of Changes would lead to increased alignment between municipal Ward boundaries and those of Edmonton School Division and the Edmonton Catholic Separate School Division. Boundary alignment enhances the voting experience of electors and the facilitation of the election project by:

- decreasing the number of ballot styles at Advance Vote and Election Day voting stations;
- simplifying the ballot allocation processes for electors and voting station staff; and

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- reducing the total number of ballot styles that are distributed to voting stations.

Two potential adjustments are recommended for Committee's consideration. Other potential adjustments were identified that would provide further alignment between municipal and school board Ward boundaries. However, as those adjustments would impact significant Ward populations, involve relatively large land parcels and therefore do not fully comply with the criteria regarding Communities of Interest and Diversity Within Wards and Least Number of Changes, they were not brought for Ward for Committee's consideration.

Potential Boundary Adjustment 1

Move the Calgary Trail South neighbourhood to Ward papastew from Ward Karhiio to align the municipal Ward boundary with Edmonton School Division and Edmonton Catholic Separate School Division Ward boundaries, as shown in Attachment 5.

This adjustment:

- eliminates one Edmonton School Division and one Edmonton Catholic Separate School Division Ballot Style from the Ward, thereby reducing the total number of ballots at Advance voting stations and at one Election Day voting station;
- has no impact on estimated number of eligible electors (zero eligible electors in the Calgary Trail South Neighbourhood as per the 2019 data from Elections Alberta);
- has a minimal impact on population in the affected Wards (11 individuals residing in commercial land, based on the 2019 municipal census); and
- involves a relatively small parcel of non-residential land (0.65 square kilometres (km²)).

Potential Boundary Adjustment 2

Move the Yellowhead Corridor West neighbourhood to Ward O-day'min from Ward Anirniq to align the municipal Ward boundary with the Edmonton School Division Ward Boundary, as shown in Attachment 6.

This adjustment:

- eliminates one Edmonton School Division Ballot Style from one Election Day voting station;
- has no impact on estimated number of eligible electors (zero eligible electors reside in the Yellowhead Corridor West neighbourhood as per the 2019 data from Elections Alberta);
- has no impact on population in the affected Wards (zero individuals reside on the land parcel, based on the 2019 municipal census);
- involves a relatively small parcel of non-residential land (CN Railyard - 1.16km²).

Executive Committee is asked to recommend the above minor adjustments to municipal Ward boundaries, as proposed by Administration and reflected in Bylaw 20304 - City of Edmonton Ward Boundaries and Council Composition Bylaw, to Council. The redline document that

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illustrates the subsequent adjustments to Bylaw 15142 City of Edmonton Ward Boundaries and Council composition are provided as Attachment 7.

COMMUNITY INSIGHT

Administration consulted officials with the Edmonton School Division and Edmonton Catholic Separate School Division, both of whom indicated their support for Administration's recommended adjustments. Additionally, the Edmonton Federation of Community League was contacted, as a named stakeholder in Policy C469A, however no response was received during the engagement process.

Extensive public engagement was conducted by the Ward Boundary Commission in 2019 and 2020, when the most recent major adjustments to Ward boundaries were contemplated.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Bylaw 20304 - City of Edmonton Ward Boundaries And Council Composition (Amendment No. 4)
2. Current Ward Population and Variance - Post 2021 Edmonton Election
3. Estimated Number of Electors and Variance - Post 2021 Edmonton Election
4. Projected Population Growth and Variance by Ward
5. Potential Adjustment 1
6. Potential Adjustment 2
7. Redline amendments - Bylaw 15142 City of Edmonton Ward Boundaries and Council Composition Bylaw

OTHERS REVIEWING THIS REPORT

M. Plouffe, City Solicitor