

BYLAW 20304

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

RECOMMENDATION

That Bylaw 20304 be given first reading.

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.

Previous Council/Committee Action

At the October 26, 2022, Executive Committee meeting, the following motion passed:

That the October 12, 2022, Office of the City Clerk report OCC01350 be referred back to Administration to revise Bylaw 20304 City of Edmonton Ward Boundaries and Council Compensation Bylaw (Amendment No. 4) to delete Boundary Adjustment # 2 (as shown in Attachment 7) and return to City Council.

Report Summary

Council Policy C469A - Ward Boundary Design (superseded by Council Policy C469B - Ward Boundary Design, approved at the October 17, 2022, City Council meeting), states that following

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every municipal general election, the Returning Officer is required to submit a report that provides information regarding Edmonton's municipal ward boundaries, including proposed adjustments.

This revised report now recommends one adjustment to Ward boundaries to be enacted via Bylaw 20304 - City of Edmonton Ward Boundaries and Council Composition Bylaw Amendment No. 4 (Attachment 1). The proposed adjustment was determined by the findings of the review required by Council Policy C469A - Ward Boundary Design and incorporates direction provided by Executive Committee at the October 26, 2022 meeting.

REPORT

As per Council Policy C469A - Ward Boundary Design, following every municipal general election the Returning Officer is required to send a summary to Council 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 December 2020 (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 determined by dividing the total number of electors by the number of Wards. The 2019 optimum number of Electors is 52,429.

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The number of electors for each Ward is an estimated figure, 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.

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.

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.

Administration proposed two potential adjustments to Executive Committee at their meeting of October 26, 2022. Executive Committee directed that the second proposed adjustment be removed.

Recommended Boundary Adjustment

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:

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- 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)).

The revised bylaw includes the recommendation from Executive Committee.

City Council is asked to give first reading to Bylaw 20304 which amends Bylaw 15142 City of Edmonton Ward Boundaries and Council Composition Bylaw by moving the Calgary Trail South neighbourhood to Ward papastew from Ward Karhiio. A redline version of the bylaw is provided as Attachment 6.

If Bylaw 20304 receives first reading, Administration will advertise the Bylaw, enable the 60-day petition period and return to Council in Q2 2023.

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 adjustment. 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. Recommended Boundary Adjustment
6. Redline amendments - Bylaw 15142 City of Edmonton Ward Boundaries and Council Composition Bylaw

OTHERS REVIEWING THIS REPORT

- M. Plouffe, City Solicitor