

## BYLAW 21201

### Amendments to Bylaw 21014 - Elections Bylaw

#### Recommendation

That Bylaw 21201 be given the appropriate readings.

#### Purpose

To amend Bylaw 21014 - Elections Bylaw to provide for the use of elector assistance terminals in elections within the framework of the amendments made to the *Local Authorities Election Act* (LAEA) by the *Municipal Affairs Statutes Amendment Act, 2025* (Bill 50). Bylaw 21201:

- Authorizes the Returning Officer to provide elector assistance terminals
- Requires the testing of elector assistance terminals before and after use
- Provides directions for the use of elector assistance terminals

In accordance with the LAEA, this bylaw must be passed before June 30, 2025.

#### Readings

Bylaw 21201 is ready for three readings.

A majority vote of City Council on all three readings is required for passage.

If Council wishes to give three readings during a single meeting, then prior to moving to third reading, Council must unanimously agree “That Bylaw 21201 be considered for third reading.”

#### REPORT

Bill 50 amends the LAEA to authorize the City of Edmonton to provide elector assistance terminals in local elections.

An elector assistance terminal is a ballot-marking machine that allows an elector to mark a ballot by an accessible means, including by use of Braille-coded keypad, touch screen, pressure-sensitive paddle or breath-enabled marking. These devices also typically include

## **BYLAW 21201 Amendments to Bylaw 21014 - Elections Bylaw**

features that enable electors with low or no vision to read a ballot independently, such as audio output, enlarged text and high contrast display.

Proposed Bylaw 21201 will amend Bylaw 21014 to authorize the Returning Officer to provide elector assistance terminals for any election. If approved, Edmonton Elections will provide an elector assistance terminal at each ward-based advance voting station and one city-wide voting station on Election Day in the 2025 Edmonton Election.

In accordance with the new section 84.1 of the LAEA, the proposed amendments to Bylaw 21014 require an elector assistance terminal to:

- Allow an elector to vote privately and independently.
- Operate independently of the Internet or another electronic network.
- Create a paper ballot that records the vote cast.
- Allow an elector to verify the elector's vote before it is cast, without the assistance of another person.
- Prevent the choice of an elector from being made known to an election officer or scrutineer.

As required by the LAEA, the proposed amendments to Bylaw 21014 also:

- Prescribe directions for the use of the elector assistance terminal by an elector.
- Require that the elector assistance terminal be tested before the first elector uses the equipment to vote and after the last elector uses the equipment to vote.

Section 9 of Bylaw 21014 authorizes the Returning Officer to establish the form of ballot for each election. This authority allows the Returning Officer to prescribe the form of ballot for use with the elector assistance terminal, and is compliant with the legislative requirement.

A redline version of Bylaw 21014 showing the proposed amendments is provided in Attachment 2.

## **Community Insight**

On May 12, 2025, Edmonton Elections solicited feedback from the Accessibility Advisory Committee (Committee) regarding the use of elector assistance terminals and the proposed bylaw amendment. The Committee was fully supportive of the amendment and the enabled use of elector assistance terminals, noting that they provide the only means through which an independent voting process can be offered to some electors with disabilities. Edmonton Elections also reached out to the CNIB. While a response was not received before this report was finalized, CNIB has publicly advocated for the use of accessible voting equipment, most notably in their October 27, 2024 Open Letter to Minister McIver and Premier Smith in Response to Bill 20.

## **Budget/Financial Implications**

The estimated costs of providing elector assistance terminals for the 2025 Edmonton Election are \$45,000, which will be managed within the existing operational budget for the upcoming Election.

## **BYLAW 21201 Amendments to Bylaw 21014 - Elections Bylaw**

### **Attachments**

1. Bylaw 21201 - Bylaw 21014 - Elections Bylaw, Amendment No. 1
2. Bylaw 21014 - Elections Bylaw REDLINE

### **Others Reviewing the Report**

- M. Gunther, Acting City Solicitor