



# **2025 Edmonton Election**

## Interim Report

**January 2026**  
**Version 2.0**

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## Executive Summary

This interim report is the first step in the review of the 2025 Election and has been drafted to provide additional context to the report being provided by the City Auditor to Audit Committee in early February. This is not the complete evaluation of the 2025 election, the work is on-going.

As part of operational planning, a reporting framework was developed to support a thorough assessment and evaluation of the 2025 Edmonton Election. After the October 2025 election, changes were made to the reporting framework to include an interim report that could be completed based on initial analysis and in time for the February 2026 Audit Committee meeting. While the evaluation is ongoing, this interim report provides an update on the initial themes identified to date, including:

- waiting times at voting stations,
- gaps in training for some election workers,
- complexity in election processes and forms; and
- challenges with the new systems used at voting stations.

The 2025 Edmonton Election, as with all municipal elections, involved legislative changes, primarily driven by amendments to the Local Authorities Election Act and associated regulations. Key changes included:

- the mandatory use of a permanent electors register,
- enhanced requirements for verifying elector eligibility,
- the prohibition of alternative voting equipment such as, including tabulators for counting marked ballots, and
- the introduction of local political parties and slates.

Many aspects of the voting experience were impacted, and several new processes and systems were implemented for this election.

Over the coming months, Edmonton Elections will conduct a more thorough analysis of its own systems and processes to identify contributing factors and opportunities for improvement toward the development of action plans for future election events. These actions will be detailed in the final post-election report and will inform the planning and delivery of the 2029 Edmonton Election. This report will be released publicly.

## About Edmonton Elections

Edmonton Elections is the non-partisan section within the Office of the City Clerk that plans and executes the Edmonton General Election (Edmonton Election) on behalf of the City of Edmonton, Edmonton School Division (Edmonton Public School Board) and Edmonton Catholic Separate School Division.

Edmonton Elections completes this work in alignment with the provisions and associated regulations of the [Municipal Government Act](#), the [Local Authorities Election Act](#), the [Education Act](#) and the [City of Edmonton Elections Bylaw 21014](#).

## Guiding Principles

Edmonton Elections administers the Edmonton Election within legislative requirements and uses the following principles, established for the 2021 election to guide decisions and ensure Edmontonians have confidence in accessible electoral processes.

### Accessible

All Edmontonians are able to access the services, supports and information they need to trust and participate in civic processes.

### Inclusive

All Edmontonians are able to participate in civic processes.

### Equitable

Barriers to services, supports and information will be removed, enabling all Edmontonians to see themselves represented in the outcome of civic processes.

### Ethical

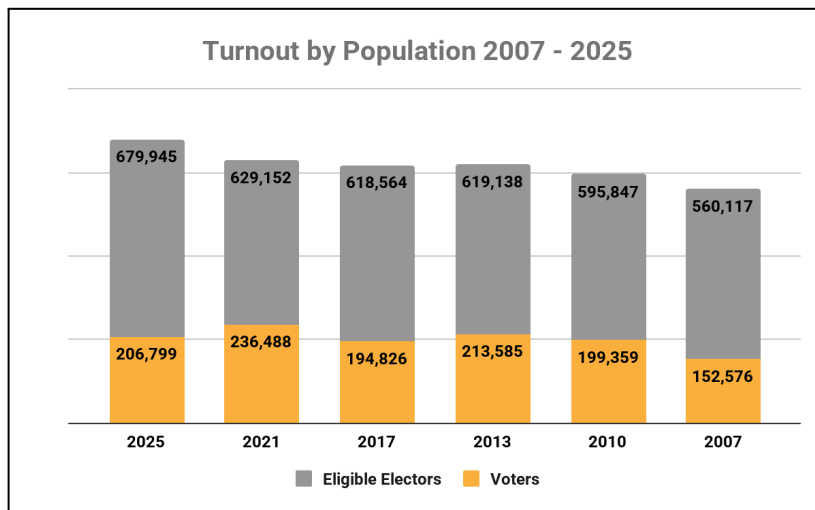
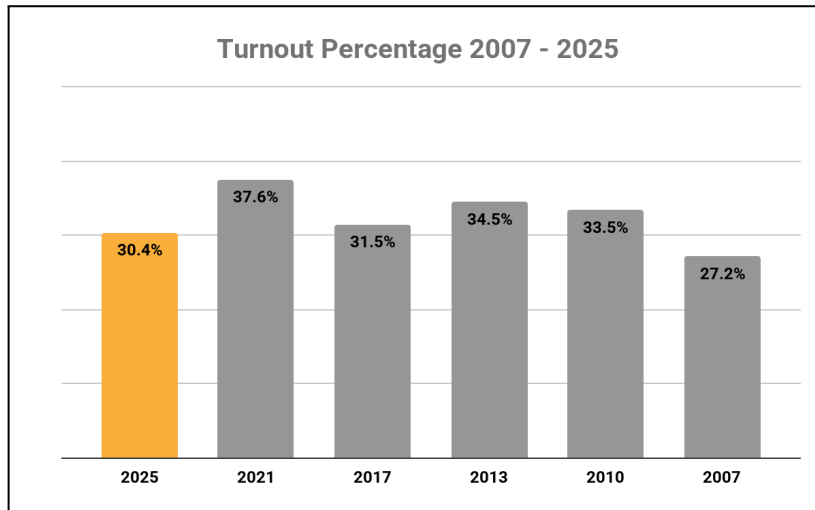
Edmonton Elections will maintain the highest standard of ethics at all times, and ethics will be a primary focus for all decisions and activities.

### Safe

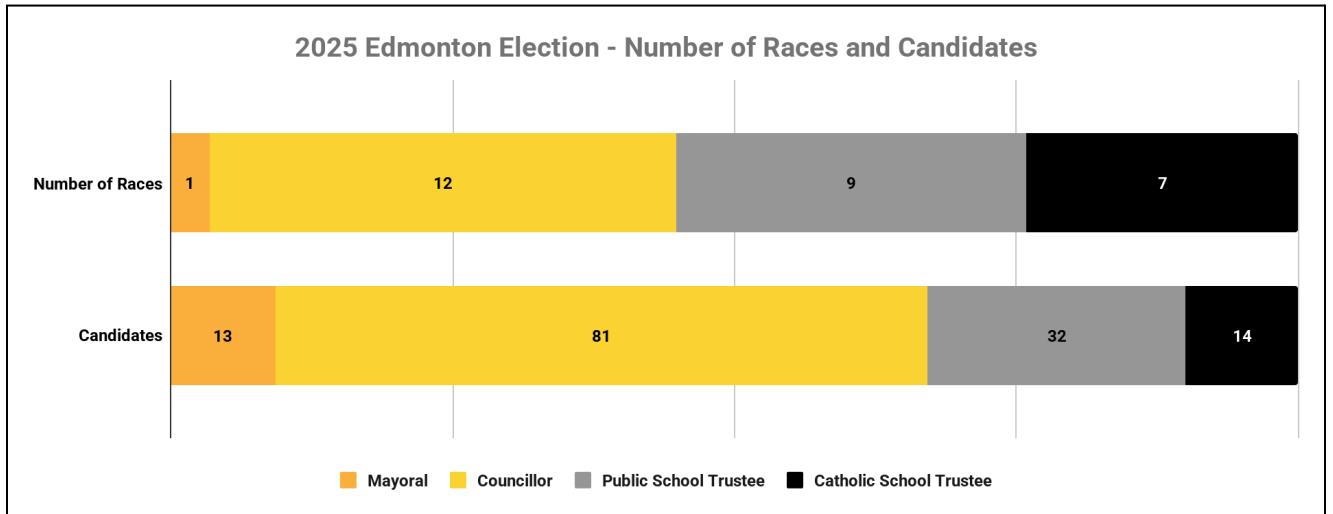
All participants will be able to respectfully and safely engage with civic processes.

## Introduction

The Edmonton Election is the opportunity for eligible Edmontonians to elect a Mayor, Councillors, and Trustees for the Edmonton School Division and Edmonton Catholic Separate School Division. The 2025 Edmonton Election was held on October 20, 2025 and included an advance voting period from October 7 to 11, 2025, as well as special (mail-in) ballots and voting in 74 institutional facilities (including hospitals, seniors accommodation facilities and post-secondary institutions). A total of 206,799 Edmontonians, out of 679,945 eligible electors, cast ballots across one Mayoral, 12 Councillor, 9 Public Trustee and 6 Catholic Separate Trustee<sup>1</sup> races for a turnout of 30.41% eligible electors. The 2025 Edmonton Election saw a total of 140 nominated candidates consisting of 13 Mayoral, 81 Councillor, 32 Public School, and 14 Catholic School Trustees.

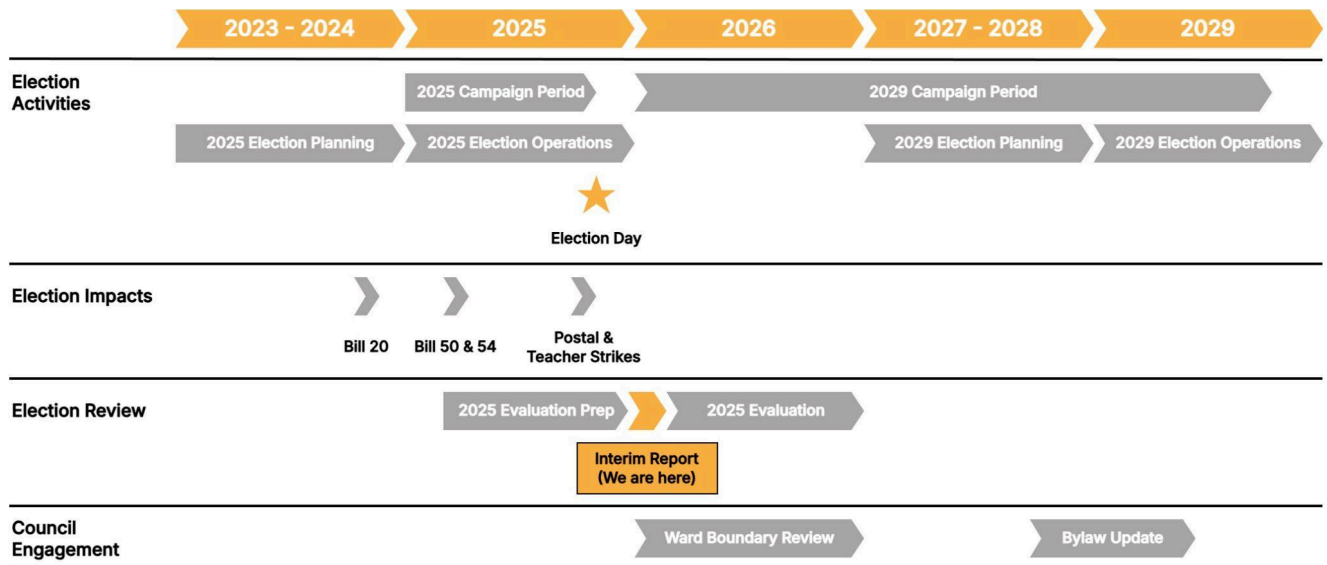


1. The Catholic School Trustee for Ward 75 was acclaimed and no election was held.

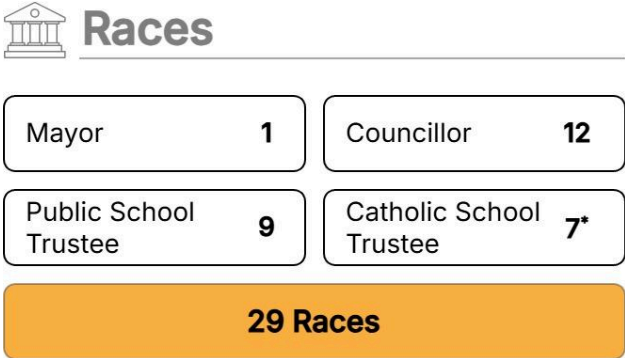


### The Road to the 2029 Edmonton Election

Planning for the 2025 Edmonton Election began in 2023 and adapted in response to several factors over 2024 and 2025. Changes to election legislation, including the *Municipal Affairs Statutes Amendment Act, 2024* (October 2024) and the *Municipal Affairs Statutes Amendment Act, 2025* and *Election Statutes Amendment Act, 2025* (May 2025), required Edmonton Elections to update its systems and processes to align with the requirements of the amended legislation. In September and October of 2025, planning for the election was further impacted by both a postal and teachers strike, a significant communication channel to Edmontonians was affected as was the availability of election workers.



As with each election, Edmonton Elections completes an evaluation to understand what went well and where there are opportunities for improvement in preparing for the next election event. Planning for the evaluation of the 2025 Edmonton Election started in early 2025 with the development of an evaluation framework as well as engagement with providers to collect survey data for analysis. Additionally, as with previous elections, the Office of the City Auditor was engaged. For the 2025 Election, the Office of the City Auditor completed an advisory engagement.



\*Catholic School Division Ward 75 had only one candidate and was acclaimed

This report does not intend to provide a comprehensive review of the 2025 Edmonton Election and is only the first stage of evaluation work that will be continuing throughout 2026. This work will support a deeper understanding of the feedback and data that has been collected, identifying contributing factors and areas for improvement. This work will support election planning work throughout 2027 - 2028 and ultimately the delivery of the 2029 Edmonton Election.

## Election Review Approach for the Interim Report

After each election, Edmonton Elections reviews the activities surrounding the event. For the 2025 Edmonton Election, a holistic evaluation and reporting framework was developed in April 2025, based on a robust administrative review and the perspective of a broad range of participants.

While the *Local Authorities Election Act* provides the framework for the election, Edmonton Elections is responsible for the implementation of the legislative requirements, and the many operational and technical details. Numerous decisions were made by the Returning Officer and Edmonton Elections staff, beginning in the days following the 2021 Edmonton Election. It is this implementation during the preparation activities and conduct of the election that is the focus of this review.

To conduct this review, Edmonton Elections:

- partnered with Angus Reid Group and the City of Edmonton Corporate Research Unit to collect feedback from citizens, political participants and election workers;
- engaged external parties to review processes and procedures during and after the election; and
- analyzed administrative data collected during the election through a variety of sources.

To date, Edmonton Elections collected survey data and feedback from over 8,000 Edmontonians, election workers and political participants. Elections Calgary and Elections Saskatchewan have also been initially engaged to review key processes and provide suggestions and opportunities for improvement. Further analysis and discussions will take place in 2026. There are also internal reviews to be completed.

All of the information gathered through these sources is used to prepare the final report on the election, including learnings and actions supporting the development of the workplan for the 2029 Edmonton Election.

This interim report is based on data available by mid-December 2025 and was drafted in early January 2026. These timelines are to align with the Office of the City Auditor's Advisory Report to the Audit Committee in early February. This interim report highlights the themes that have been identified throughout the review to date as well as the next actions to be completed in the development of the final report and actions coming from the 2025 Edmonton Election.

## Initial Findings

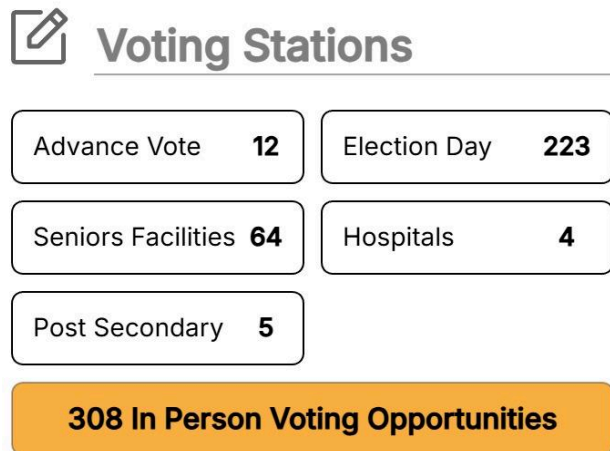
The following section highlights the initial key findings identified from the review activities completed to date. Significant themes emerging from the feedback and evaluation conducted include:

- voting experience,
- election worker training, and
- complexity of voting processes, forms and systems.

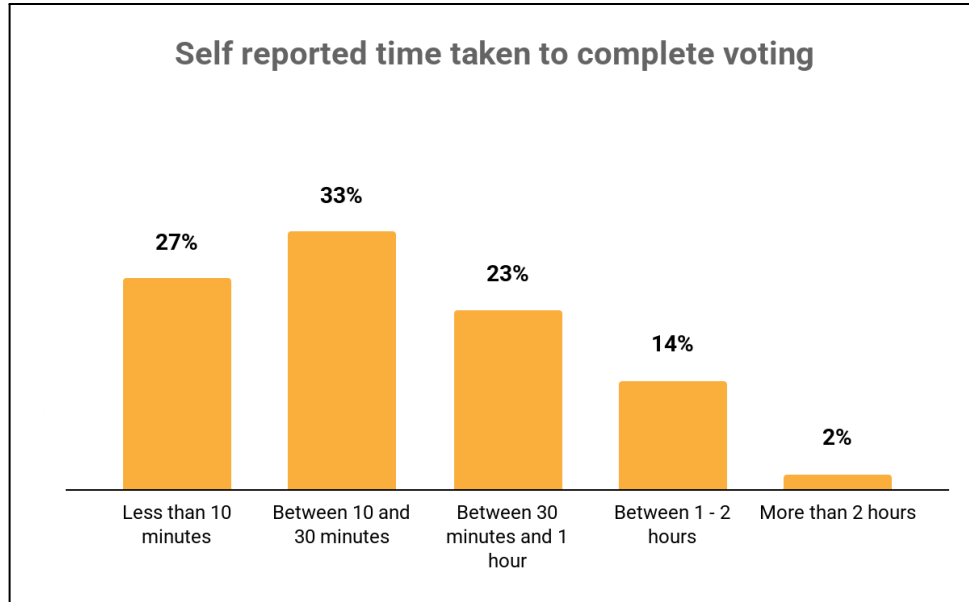
Further analysis to identify contributing factors and specific opportunities for improvements will be completed in 2026 with the action plan forming a part of the final election report.

### Voting Experience

The implementation of new voting processes had an impact on the voting experience for the 2025 Edmonton Election. Edmonton Elections received numerous reports of long lines at voting stations. Where possible, additional staff and resources were deployed to add capacity to voting stations experiencing higher volumes than anticipated.



In a survey conducted after the election, 60% of voters reported that they were able to complete voting in 30 minutes or less, and 83% completed voting within one hour. The remaining 16% of voters reported taking more than one hour to vote. Similarly, 15% of election workers reported long lineups or excessive wait times as an issue at their voting station.



Overall, 63% of voters were satisfied with their voting experience. However, the time taken to complete voting was highly correlated with satisfaction with the voting experience, with 70% satisfaction among those who waited less than one hour, 24% satisfaction amongst those who waited one to two hours and 14% satisfaction among those who waited more than two hours.

### Training

During the 2025 Edmonton Election, a total of 5,409 election workers filled a total of 6,629 positions. A common theme from the feedback was the need to enhance training.

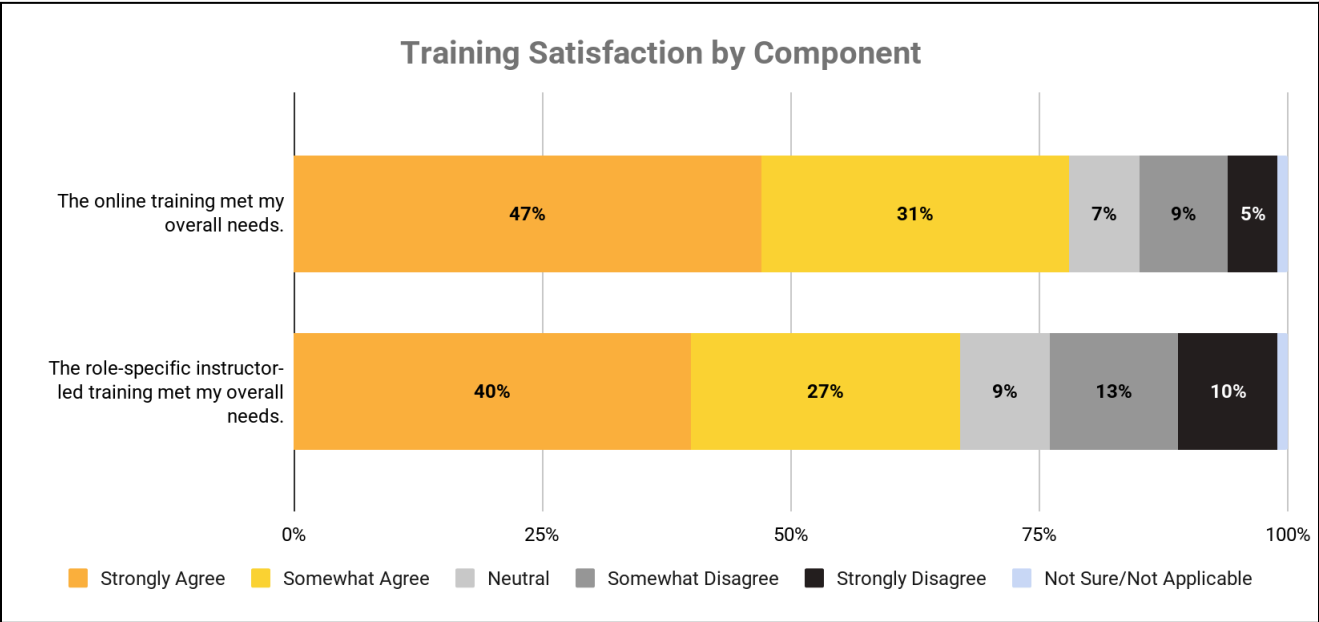
## Election Workers



\*Some election workers filled multiple positions

Mandatory training was completed in two parts by all election workers: a set of self-guided online modules that introduced election workers' role in implementing election processes and instructor-led, role specific training. The online training modules took approximately two hours to complete and the in-person position specific training took between two and three hours depending on the position(s) worked.

78% of Elections workers reported that they agreed (somewhat or strongly) that the online training module met their overall needs with 67% reporting that the instructor-led position-specific training met their overall needs. Specific feedback from election workers suggested that more hands-on training in the use of the electronic electors register as well as completion of the forms was needed. While more experiential learning opportunities were part of the initial strategy and approach, they were challenging to implement extensively in the instructor-led component of election worker training. This was due in large part to the overlapping timelines for the development of the system, election processes and the training curriculum in a condensed planning period.



Based on feedback received during advance vote, an Election Readiness Fair was established to provide a supplementary training opportunity, including hands-on training, for supervisors at voting stations before Election Day. This event provided participants with opportunities to complete additional training in a computer lab and hands-on activities with forms, as well as the opportunity to review the materials and equipment that they would be using on Election Day and have their questions answered.

A total of 325 election workers (63%) performing in Presiding Deputy, Assistant Presiding Deputy and Area Supervisors roles participated in the Election Readiness Fair. Of those that attended, 85% reported that they were able to apply what they learned to their work and 81% reported that it enabled them to better support their team. Unfortunately, due to the timing and the volume of election workers, this opportunity was not able to be offered to all election workers.

## **Process & Forms Complexity**

Local election processes and forms are prescribed by provincial legislation, including the *Local Authorities Election Act* and *Local Authorities Election Act Forms Regulation*. Using this legislation as a minimum standard, Edmonton Elections builds on its processes and procedures to deliver the election in accordance with electoral best practices. Given the introduction of several new processes, a key focus for Edmonton Elections was creating procedures to guide and support election participants through this highly regulated event. A common theme appearing in the feedback received from both voters and election workers was the complexity of the voting process and completion of election forms, specifically at the voting station.

15% of surveyed voters in the 2025 Edmonton Election commented on the need for process simplification, highlighting the completion of forms, verification steps and multi-station workflows as points of frustration. Similarly, 25% of election workers reported that they disagreed (strongly or somewhat) with the statement that “The processes I had to follow were efficient”.

Specifically, 22% of election workers disagreed with the statement that “Ballot accounting procedures were easy to complete”. While the tracking and accurate accounting of ballots is critical to the integrity of the election and legislatively mandated, election workers felt that this activity reduced their ability to serve electors.

## **System Complexity**

The 2025 Edmonton Election saw the implementation of the new permanent electors register. To support this requirement, Edmonton Elections used an electronic elector register to administer voting using the permanent electors register at voting stations during advance voting and on Election Day.

In addition to feedback from election workers that hands-on training would have better supported them in the use of this system, 22% of election workers reported that the technology (hardware or software) was difficult to use. Additionally, nine percent of election workers reported technical issues with the use of the hardware or software during their workday.

Feedback from voters identified more complex scenarios, such as adding or moving an elector on the register, taking more time to process and slowing the voting experience.

## Legislation for the 2025 Election

The 2025 Edmonton General Election saw changes in the legislative landscape with amendments to the *Local Authorities Election Act* and associated regulations in 2024. The following provides a summary of legislative changes that had a significant impact on the planning and execution of the election.<sup>2</sup>

### **Mandatory use of a permanent electors register**

In previous elections, municipalities could choose to use a permanent electors register to administer local elections. This is not something that had been used by Edmonton Elections since 1992, as it was not an operational requirement. Edmonton Elections is now required to implement and maintain a permanent electors register for the City of Edmonton and to align the data with Elections Alberta's provincial register of electors. For the 2025 Edmonton Election, this necessitated updates to voting processes to support the addition or changes to the permanent electors register where a voter did not appear, or had moved, as well as mechanisms to securely receive, store and share updates on the register with Elections Alberta.

Additional changes to voting processes were needed to verify each elector's registration on the permanent electors register prior to voting. Requirements for electors to prove their eligibility when voting now vary depending on whether or not the elector is registered on the permanent electors register.

### **Prohibition of alternative voting equipment**

Another significant change was the prohibition of alternative voting equipment for the counting of ballots. Most significantly, this prohibited the use of tabulators for the counting of ballots. This change required a shift to a hand-counted vote, where every ballot is verified manually by an election official, as well as separate ballots and ballot boxes for each race. The legislation specifically permits the use of elector assistance terminals, which allow an elector to mark a ballot by an accessible means, including by use of a braille-coded keypad, touch screen, pressure-sensitive paddle or breath-enabled marking. This was a legislative adjustment in mid-2025.

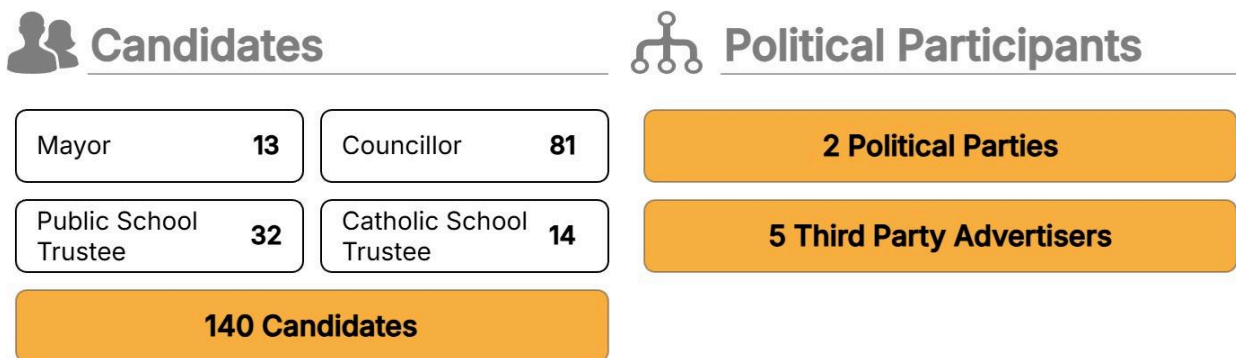
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2. The October 2, 2024, Office of the City Clerk Report [OCC02658, Bill 20 Update and Budget Adjustment](#) provides more information on the legislative changes affecting the 2025 Edmonton Election.

## Introduction of parties and slates

Local political parties and slates were introduced for the 2025 Edmonton Election, allowing candidates to run under a party banner or cooperate as a slate. This requirement was enabled through new processes to support registration for new parties and slates, updates to candidate registers and ballots to identify candidate's party or slate affiliation, and to administer campaign finance disclosures.

In the lead up to the 2025 Election, Edmonton Elections saw the registration of two political parties, one slate, and five third party advertisers<sup>3</sup>.



## Updated campaign financing and nomination requirements

Previously, the period when candidates were permitted to accept campaign contributions or incur campaign expenses began on January 1 of the year of the election. The campaign period was expanded to four years beginning January 1 of the year following the election. New processes were introduced to allow candidates to submit a notice of intent to run at any time during the campaign period. All candidates were subject to increased financial reporting requirements. The legislation requires disclosures outlining a candidate's received contributions and incurred expenses to be submitted annually during the campaign period, and for an interim disclosure to be submitted before the end of September in the election year. Similar disclosure requirements apply to local political parties, slates and third party advertisers.

Given the ability for campaigns to receive contributions and incur expenses over a longer four year cycle and new political participants, processes were updated to support the administration of registration and financial disclosures for political parties, slates, third party advertisers and candidates.

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3. One third party advertiser and one slate withdrew their registration prior to the election.

## New Initiatives

To further support the administration and experience of the 2025 Edmonton Election, several new initiatives were implemented to address legislative changes, improve the voting process, and ensure greater accessibility and efficiency. The following section highlights some of these key initiatives.

### Enhanced Recruitment Initiatives

In preparing for the election, the Edmonton Elections team processed 11,663 recruitment applications and hired 5,409 workers to fill 6,629 roles<sup>4</sup>. In order to recruit the significantly increased number of election workers, an enhanced hiring strategy was developed that featured a variety of new external and internal initiatives.

Notably, the minimum age requirement for the Deputy Returning Officer position was lowered to 16. This brought Edmonton Elections into alignment with provincial and federal recruitment requirements, and provided youth with an opportunity to actively engage in election processes while also broadening the pool of potential applicants. Edmonton Elections held a hiring event in partnership with Norquest College, creating an in-person application opportunity and a means to engage with a diverse student community.

Internal hiring initiatives, intended to leverage the core competencies of City of Edmonton employees, provided a further means to fill election worker positions. Area Supervisors, who provided quality assurance to voting stations on Election Day, were recruited through the Election Leadership Training Program, a nine month learning opportunity offered to emerging people leaders. An additional Adopt-a-Voting station initiative saw 29 voting stations fully staffed by teams of City of Edmonton employees. The initiative provided a valuable opportunity to participating groups and further enhanced internal leadership capacity within the organization. Assigning Adopt a Voting Station teams to locations with anticipated high turnout in areas of the city ensured a consistent experience for electors and enabled Edmonton Elections to proactively enhance staffing capacity elsewhere.

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4. Some election workers filled multiple positions.

### **Cart Logistics Model**

Based on findings from the 2021 election, a new voting station logistics model was implemented for the 2025 Edmonton Election. Secure election carts were used to distribute all ballots, forms and voting supplies to voting stations for advance vote and Election Day voting opportunities. The mobility and security features of the election carts greatly simplified the logistics of moving election materials to voting stations for election workers.

### **Electronic Elector Register at Voting Stations**

To integrate the new permanent electors register in voting processes at voting stations, Edmonton Elections utilized an electronic elector register at the voting stations to enable election workers to search, update, add and strike-off voters during the voting process. This required deploying computer equipment and software at the voting stations to facilitate the electronic elector register and real-time strike-off of voters.

The electronic elector register was chosen as the method to implement the permanent electors register due to the ability to implement higher security standards, ensuring the integrity of personal information is protected more effectively, and to allow for real-time updates to be made to the permanent electors register during the voting process. The electronic elector register also provided the ability for live data synchronization, which added an additional layer of security and integrity to voting processes.

### **Accessibility and Inclusion**

Edmonton Elections developed a public [Accessibility and Inclusion Plan](#) outlining actions taken to identify and mitigate barriers to participation for historically underrepresented communities in particular. The plan featured 28 actions across four areas of focus and will serve as a foundation for longer term strategies to ensure equitable access to opportunities related to the Edmonton Election.

## Further Review and Planning for 2029 Edmonton Election

Using the detailed feedback and data collected, Edmonton Election will perform more rigorous, in-depth analysis and evaluation to better understand the underlying factors contributing to the key themes identified in this interim report. This in-depth work will continue to utilize tools including:

- data analysis,
- process, training & technology reviews,
- root cause workshops, and
- external reviews.

This next phase will provide the necessary detail to develop the final election review report. The final report will provide a broader overview of the 2025 election, reviewing each of the key process areas, including both election and supporting processes, identifying lessons learned, and building an action plan with opportunities for improvement.

The resulting action plan will be formally embedded into Edmonton Elections' annual operating plans for the 2026 to 2028 fiscal years. This commitment ensures that improvements are not one-off efforts but are integrated into our multi-year work cycle. This structured approach will provide the clear roadmap necessary for the development and delivery of a more efficient, accessible and successful 2029 Edmonton Election.