

2021 General Election Summary Report



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Land Acknowledgement

The City Clerk and Returning Officer respectfully acknowledges that the 2021 General Election took place on the traditional territories of the peoples of the Treaty 7 region in Southern Alberta, which includes the Blackfoot First Nation tribes of Siksika, the Piikuni, the Kainai, the Stoney Nakoda First Nations tribes of Chiniki, Bearspaw, and Wesley and the Tsuut'ina First Nation. The city of Calgary is also homeland to the historic Northwest Métis and to Métis Nation of Alberta, Region 3.

Message from Kate Martin, City Clerk and Returning Officer



I am pleased to present the 2021 General Election Report. The October 18, 2021 General Election was one of the largest Canadian elections to have taken place to date during a pandemic. The COVID-19 pandemic challenged Elections Calgary to be adaptive to changing circumstances, continuously making contingency plans, and be innovative to ensure a safe and accessible voting experience for all Calgarians. In addition to the COVID-19 pandemic, the 2021 General Election was particularly complex due to:

- Legislative changes;
- New ward boundaries;
- The addition of a Council-directed fluoridation question for voters;
- A Senate nominee election;
- Two provincial questions; and,
- A historically high number of candidates.

Despite uncertainty and complexity brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic, the 2021 General Election was successful and a true community and corporate event that would not have been possible without the support of Elections Calgary's partners including the Calgary Board of Education, Calgary Roman Catholic Separate School Division, community organizations and the many colleagues from across The City of Calgary. Of course, the 2021 General Election would not have been achieved without the hard work and dedication of the nearly 4,000 election workers who served their community with pride, ensuring a safe and efficient voting experience. While administering a General Election during the COVID-19 pandemic was unprecedented, I am thankful for the patience and understanding offered by Calgarians, candidates, our stakeholders, and the media.

In the spirit of continuous improvement, a representative telephone survey of 500 Calgary voters was administered following the 2021 General Election, measuring the effectiveness of voter safety measures, voting station accessibility and Elections Calgary's communication tactics. [Detailed survey results are available on electionscalgary.ca](#). In addition to the survey, Elections Calgary has undertaken a comprehensive, data-driven review of its election services and operations to help inform improvements and ensure readiness for any by-election or vote of the electors and the 2025 General Election.

I am extremely proud of the Elections Calgary team and grateful for our amazing partners for their commitment and support in delivering the 2021 General Election in a safe, accessible and legislatively compliant manner.



Kate Martin
City Clerk and Returning Officer
The City of Calgary

The 2021 General Election was administered in accordance with the *Local Authorities Election Act*, *Referendum Act* and *Alberta Senate Elections Act*.

Role of Council and School Boards

The role of Council in a General Election is set out in the *Local Authorities Election Act* (the Act). Council is responsible for passing bylaws and resolutions within their jurisdiction, including the Election Bylaw ([Bylaw 35M2018](#)). Council approves budget allocation for the election, the Ward Boundary Review and Determination Policy ([Policy CP2019-04](#)), the Electoral Ward Boundaries Bylaw ([Bylaw 19M91](#)) and bylaws governing the placement of election signs, including the Temporary Signs on Highways Bylaw ([Bylaw 29M97](#)) and Use of Parks and Pathways Bylaw ([Bylaw 11M2019](#)). Council also directs a vote of the electors on a question or bylaw.

Through an agreement authorized under section 3(1) of the Act between The City of Calgary, [Calgary Board of Education](#) and [Calgary Roman Catholic Separate School Division](#), the City Clerk and Returning Officer serves as Returning Officer for trustee elections. School board jurisdictions are determined by the Minister of Education while school boards determine their respective ward boundaries. Where directed by a school board, a by-election is administered by Elections Calgary.



Role of the City Clerk and Returning Officer

At The City of Calgary, the City Clerk is also the Returning Officer. The City Clerk and Returning Officer is accountable for independently and impartially administering their statutory duties related to:

- General elections and by-elections for The City of Calgary offices of mayor and councillors and the trustees of the Calgary Board of Education and Calgary Roman Catholic Separate School Division administered under the Act and *Education Act*;
- Vote of the electors on questions or bylaws directed by Council; and,
- Senate elections administered under the *Alberta Senate Election Act* and provincial referendum questions administered under the *Referendum Act* when directed to occur with a General Election.

The City Clerk and Returning Officer also undertakes delegated duties of the Secretary in the Act. As set out in the Election Bylaw ([Bylaw 35M2018](#)), the City Clerk and Returning Officer appoints the Deputy City Clerk and Substitute Returning Officer. The City Clerk and Returning Officer provides executive leadership to [Elections Calgary](#), the organizational division accountable for election services.

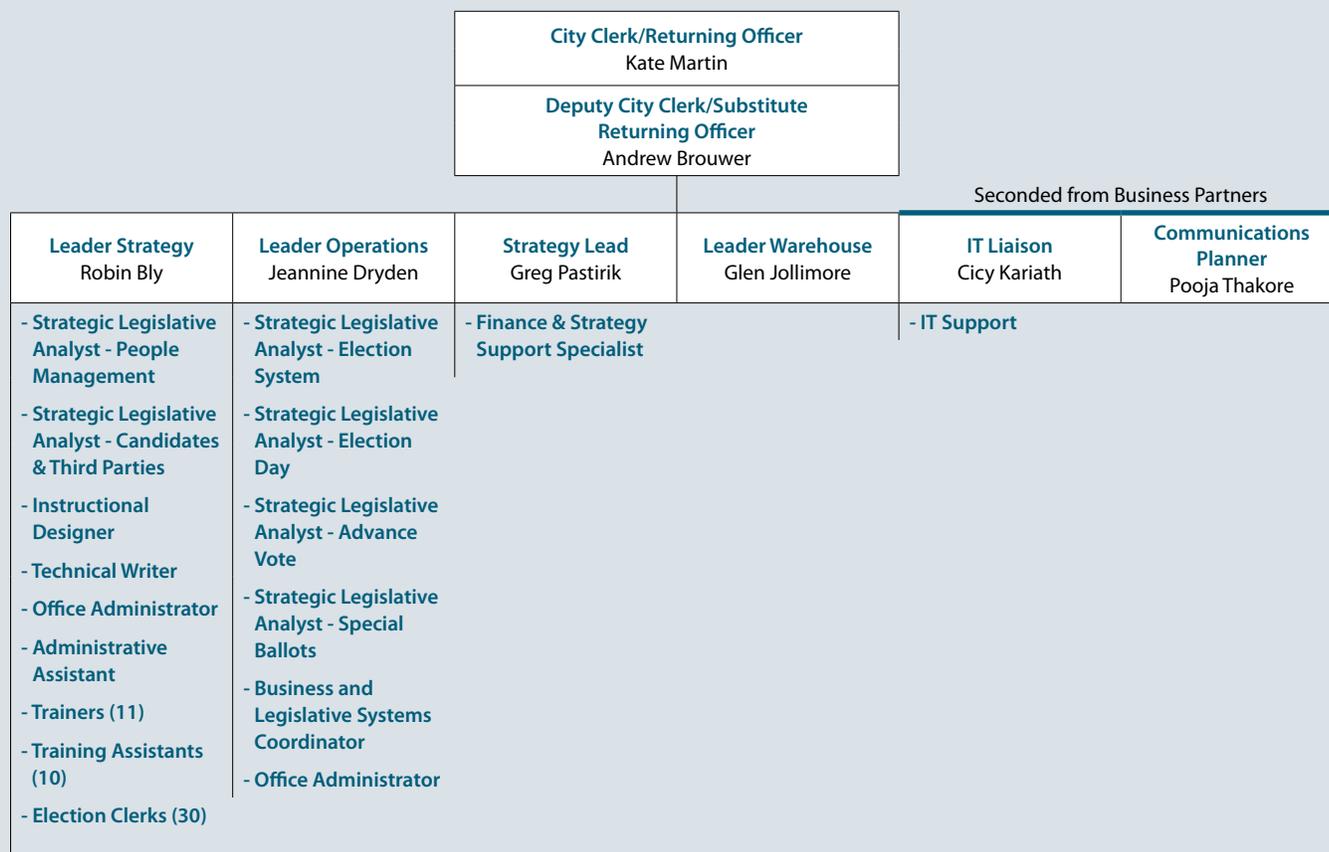


Role of the Deputy City Clerk and Substitute Returning Officer

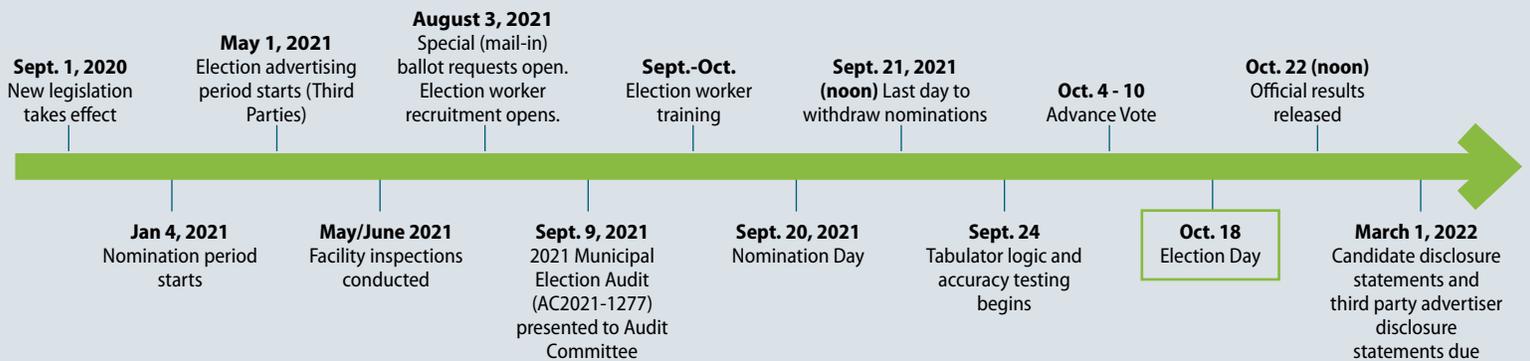
The Deputy City Clerk and Substitute Returning Officer is accountable for leading the day-to-day operations of the Elections Calgary team, undertaking a wide range of responsibilities including:

- Liaison to the City Clerk and Returning Officer, City leadership, Legal, City Auditor and other internal partners;
- Liaison to school boards, Airdrie/Cochrane/Chestermere, Elections Alberta, Election Commissioner, and Ministry of Municipal Affairs;
- Division leadership, recruiting, onboarding and supporting the Elections Calgary team;
- Delivering accessible and legislatively compliant voting opportunities and processes;
- Media relations and issues management;
- Candidate and third-party advertiser relations;
- Risk mitigation and issues escalations;
- Leading ward boundary reviews and drafting bylaws, policies and procedures; and,
- Ensuring legislative compliance and exercising the statutory duties of returning officer, where required or delegated.

Elections Calgary Organizational Chart



2021 General Election Timeline



PREPARING FOR THE 2021 GENERAL ELECTION

Planning for the 2021 General Election included:

- Reviewing changes to election legislation and adjusting processes;
- COVID-19 pandemic response and safety;
- Ward Boundary changes; and,
- A question on the ballot, Referendum and Senate Election.



LEGISLATIVE CHANGES

Local Authorities Election Act

Significant changes were made to the *Local Authorities Election Act* since the 2017 General Election. Most notably, changes were focused on the nomination period, campaign finances and the introduction of legislation for third party advertisers.

Highlights of the legislative changes impacting the 2021 General Election included:

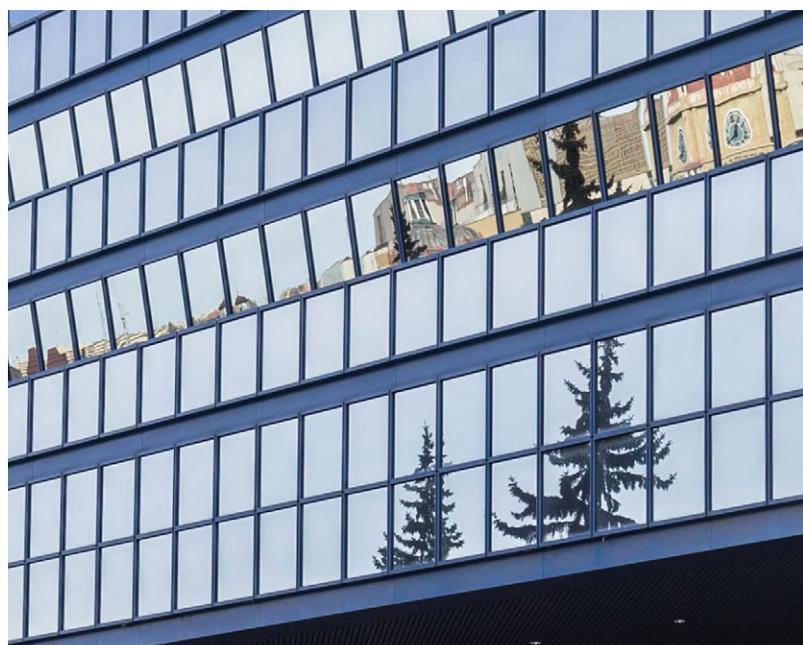
- **Nomination period added.** A nine month nomination period was added. Nominations were accepted from January 4 to September 20, 2021.
- **Pre-election disclosure eliminated.** The authority for municipalities to pass a pre-election disclosure bylaw was removed.
- **Individual contribution limit increased.** The individual contribution limit increased to \$5,000 per candidate during the campaign period from January 1 to December 31, with no restrictions on the number of candidates an individual can contribute to.
- **Self-fund amount increased.** Candidates' own contributions (self-funded) amount was increased from \$4,000 to \$10,000 per year.
- **Contribution amount outside the campaign period increased.** Contribution amounts to a candidate outside the campaign period was increased from \$2,000 to \$5,000 in the aggregate per year.
- **Campaign surpluses no longer held in trust by The City.** Candidates from the 2021 General Election may retain any surplus amount under \$1,000 and any amount over \$1,000 must be donated to a registered charity.
- **Addition of third party advertisers to legislation.** New legislation was introduced to govern the finances and accountability of third parties that engage or intend to engage in election advertising.
- **Third party advertiser contributions.** Contributors to third party advertisers are limited to \$30,000 per election advertising period in the aggregate.
- **Introduction of Election Commissioner.** The Election Commissioner is a provincial compliance officer empowered with enforcement authority regarding campaign finance activities of candidates and all activities of third-party advertisers.

Since the 2017 General Election, there have been four amendments to the *Local Authorities Election Act*:

- Bill 81, Election Statutes Amendment Act, 2021 (December 8, 2021)
- Bill 45, Local Authorities Election (December 9, 2020)
- Bill 29, Local Authorities Election Amendment Act, 2020 (July 23, 2020)
- Bill 23, An Act to Renew Local Democracy in Alberta (December 11, 2018)

Election Related Bylaws

In 2018, during the Vote of the Electors, tabulators were used for the first time by Elections Calgary. The Election Bylaw (Bylaw 35M2018) was created in 2018 to provide for the use of tabulators, but required additional updates in order to prepare for the 2021 General Election. A report outlining the changes to the Election Bylaw was delivered to Council in June 2021. The changes included administrative amendments, accountability for Alberta Senate election and provincially-directed referendum questions, and ballot procedures to enhance transparency of processes. The Early Voting Hours Bylaw (Bylaw 29M2007) was also updated to allow early voting for separate school voters located outside of Calgary.



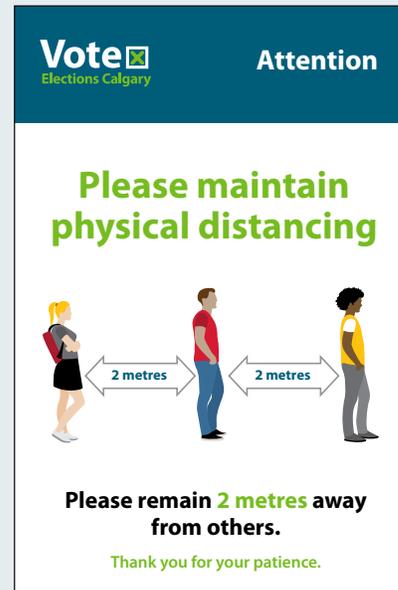
A PANDEMIC ELECTION

In response to the COVID-19 Pandemic, Elections Calgary closely monitored public health measures and best practices throughout the planning process. Internally, Elections Calgary focused on obtaining sufficient office and warehousing space to allow safe spacing for Elections Calgary staff, including:

- Two separate office and warehousing locations to allow for social distancing
- Implementation of City COVID-19 protocols (masking, sanitizing, social distancing, etc.)
- Staff COVID-19 safety education
- Personal Protection Equipment (PPE) and sanitizing materials

To ensure a safe election, new election processes and materials were put in place to ensure the health and safety of voters, candidates, scrutineers and election workers:

- Additional voting station facilities were selected to reduce the number of voters at each station
- Additional training facilities were selected to reduce the number of election workers in each training session
- Online information sessions were held for election worker applicants
- Hybrid online and reduced capacity in-person training sessions were held
- Floor plans and voting station room set-ups were reviewed to allow adequate spacing for election workers, voters, and scrutineers
- Signage was created to remind voters of face covering requirements and physical distancing
- Voting stations were supplied with PPE and sanitizing materials
- Voters were encouraged to bring their own pens/pencils
- The voter registration form was made available online and in the election guide sent to all households in Calgary to allow voters to pre-populate the form and reduce their time in the voting station
- Curbside voting was offered to those who could not enter the voting station



Elections Calgary also worked with other City departments and Alberta Health Services to identify voting stations during the Advance Vote and on Election Day where the mobile vaccine clinics could be set-up nearby, offering an added convenience for voters who wished to get their COVID-19 vaccination.

2021 CITIZEN PERSPECTIVES SURVEY:

VOTING EXPERIENCE

Agree that when voting...

- I felt safe **99%**
- I had no accessibility issues **98%**
- Voting station was conveniently located **97%**
- Voting hours were convenient **96%**
- Wait times were reasonable **91%**
- Station was not excessively crowded **89%**

COVID -19 SAFETY PROTOCOLS

My comfort was improved by...

- Workers wearing masks **87%**
- Signs to support distancing **85%**
- Handsanitizer **85%**
- Single-use or sanitized pencils or pens **83%**
- Plexiglass shields **83%**
- Cleaning in-between voters **77%**

NEW WARD BOUNDARIES

Ward boundaries maintain equitable representation by Councillors across the city. To achieve equitable representation, each ward should have a similar population and align with communities of interest and case law regarding political constituency boundaries, among other factors. The process for ward boundary reviews is defined by a Council approved policy, which sets out the criteria for the boundaries established.

In 2019, Council directed the City Clerk and Returning Officer to conduct a minor review of ward boundaries because Wards 3 and 7 had populations that were comparatively lower, and Ward 12 had a population that was comparatively higher to other wards. Two scenarios were prepared using criteria outlined in the *Ward Boundary Determination and Review Policy*. These scenarios were presented to the public through online and in-person engagement. The feedback received was analyzed and used to create the final scenario presented to Council. On July 20, 2020 the first reading of the bylaw to approve new ward boundaries by

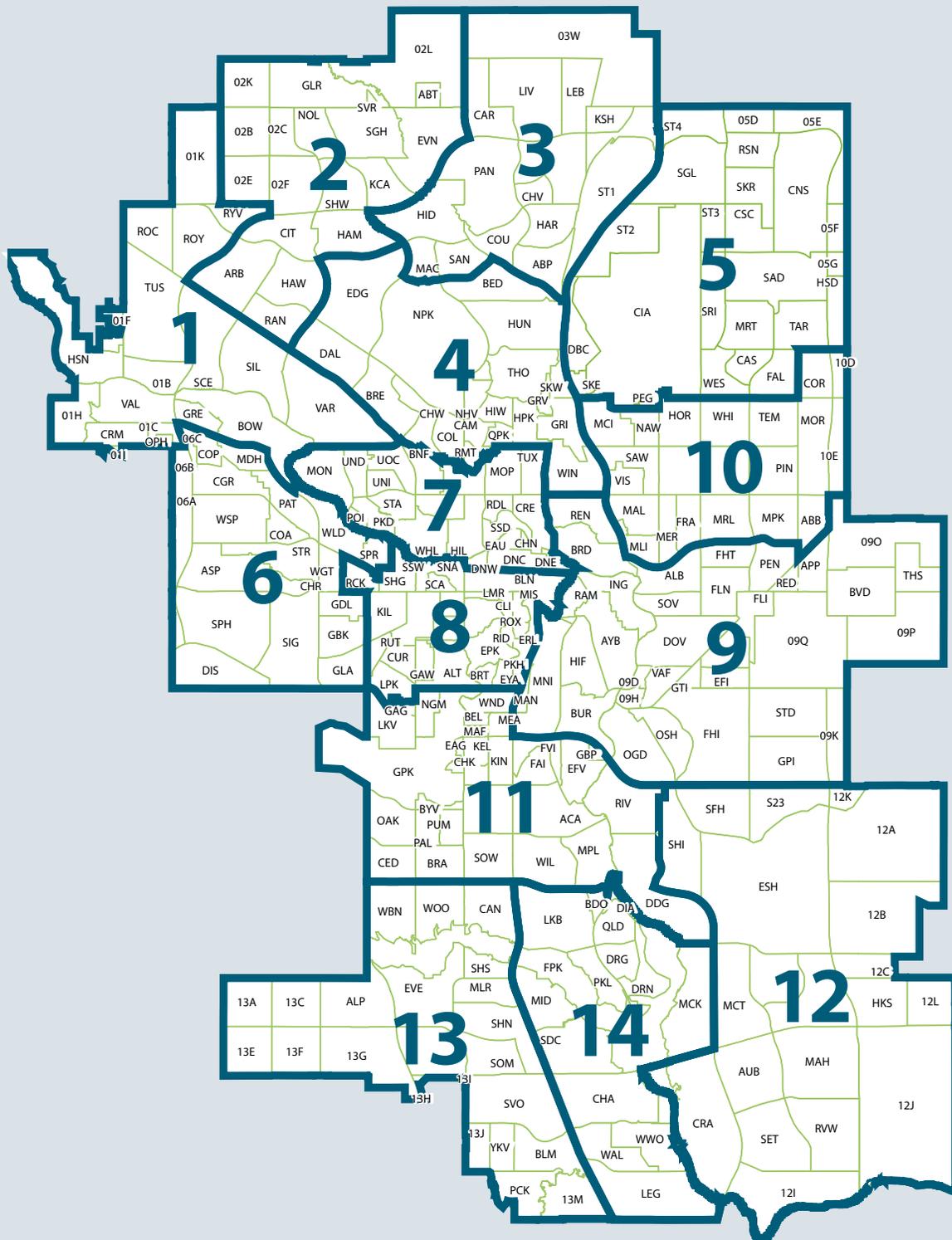
Council took place, along with a public hearing. Public notice and the petition submission period took place between July and September 2020. On October 5, 2020 Council gave second and third reading to Bylaw 23M2020 to implement the ward boundary changes. Ward boundary changes went into effect on Election Day, October 18, 2021.

Communication to voters included reminders to check their ward boundaries and candidates were provided with maps and information for the new ward boundaries they were campaigning in.

More information on the most recent ward boundary review can be found at <https://engage.calgary.ca/wardboundaries>.



CALGARY WARD BOUNDARIES



A QUESTION ON THE BALLOT, REFERENDUM AND ALBERTA SENATE ELECTION

For the 2021 General Election, municipalities across Alberta were directed to include two referendum questions and the Alberta Senate Election. This meant that in addition to voting for mayor, councillor and school board trustee, voters also marked the ballot for a question on the ballot (municipal), two referendum questions (provincial) and the senate (provincial).

A question on the ballot

A question on a municipal ballot is conducted under the Act, as directed by City Council. The City of Calgary has a long tradition of submitted questions for a vote of the electors (e.g. 2018 Olympic vote, 1988 fluoridation and video lottery terminals vote). Generally, it is more common to have these questions included with a General Election, than to have a stand alone Vote of the Electors. Council approved a question to be added on the ballot about fluoridation at the February 1, 2021 Strategic Meeting of Council.

Referendum

Provincial referendums are conducted under the *Referendum Act* and can be regarding constitutional or non-constitutional questions. Alberta has held two referendums under this Act. The Order in Council to conduct a constitutional referendum on equalization and the Order in Council to conduct a referendum on daylight saving time were issued on August 9, 2021.

Alberta Senate Election

Historically, Senate elections have been conducted in conjunction with a Provincial General Election (2004, 2012) or municipal General Elections (1989, 1998).

The Order in Council and Writ of Election for the 2021 Alberta Senate Election was issued on June 23, 2021, to hold an election to select three Senate nominees who may be summoned to the Senate of Canada, to fill a vacancy or vacancies relating to Alberta. The Senate Election took place in conjunction with the 2021 General Election.



Administration of the Election

NEW PROGRAMS AND INITIATIVES

Elections are a cyclical process, which require continuous review and improvements. After a review of the 2017 General Election and 2018 Vote of the Electors, the following programs and initiatives were identified as a focus for the 2021 General Election:

Accessibility improvements to improve access to voting and the voting experience for persons with disabilities and diverse communities.

Modernization of the four-year election program including the introduction of tabulators and a new election management system.

Recruitment and training program improvements including an internal “Work the Vote!” program and Youth outreach.

Accessibility

Improvements required for accessibility in voting stations were identified in the 2017 Election Audit. After consultation with The City’s Advisory Committee on Accessibility and other jurisdictions, the following improvements were undertaken for the 2021 General Election:

- Facility inspections were conducted for every voting station, including an accessibility checklist based on Federal and Provincial voting station accessibility standards and modifications (e.g. ramps) if required.
- Enhanced customer service training for election workers on working with people with disabilities.
- Outreach and communication to organizations who provide support to persons with disabilities, including The City’s Advisory Committee on Accessibility and the Disability Action Hall.
- Voter assist machines available at all Advance Vote locations, allowing voters with disabilities to mark their ballots independently.
- Mail-in ballots were made available to voters.
- Curb-side voting for persons unable to physically enter a voting station.



Diversity and Inclusion

Elections Calgary supports diversity and inclusion in the election process. The following improvements were made for the 2021 General Election to improve the voter experience.

- The voter information guide was available in twelve languages in addition to English.
- Instructions on how to mark a ballot were included in the top ten most spoken languages inside each voting station.
- Election workers were recruited with language skills and placed in voting stations where they could support voters’ language needs.
- Signage was posted at each voting station to indicate languages spoken by workers.
- Languages spoken by each election worker was written on their ID badge.



Modernization

In 2019, Council was presented with the plan for the four-year election program. This plan included a focus on business processes, event readiness and service streams. The service stream for technology and data included plans to move from hand count ballots to the use of vote tabulators and the replacement of the election system.

Tabulators were not new to Elections Calgary in the 2021 General Election, as they were previously used during the 2018 Vote of the Electors. Key activities that were undertaken to ensure the successful implementation of tabulators included:

- Processes for voters and election workers
- Tabulator back-up procedures
- Updated Elections Bylaw
- Rigorous tabulator testing
- Testing of the results transmission
- Training for Tabulator Clerks

With a focus on security and privacy, Elections Calgary undertook a Privacy Impact Assessment on new election technology infrastructure and processes. Ahead of the 2021 General Election, a new software solution was implemented to support the following areas:

- Mail-in ballots (requests, status, and database)
- Election workers (applications, hiring status, assignments, training and pay)
- Voting subdivisions and voting stations (database)
- Contact centre (issues tracking and transferring)
- Candidates (database)

Recruitment and training

A successful election is dependent on having the right election staff. The 2021 General Election saw a number of improvements to the recruitment program including the introduction of the *Work the Vote!* program and a targeted youth worker campaign.

Recruitment for election workers opened August 3, 2021 and saw over 11,000 interested applicants apply for various voting station positions. Of those, 3,969 workers were hired for both the Advance Vote and Election Day. To mitigate election staffing changes and cancellations of workers on Election Day over 500 standby workers were hired.

The *Work the Vote!* program was a pilot program approved by The City's Executive Leadership Team, designed to provide opportunities for Management Exempt City staff to participate in the 2021 General Election. Over 100 City staff were recruited to provide support on Election Day as Area Supervisors, or leading the decentralized distribution and support centres, known as Ward Offices.

In an effort to introduce new generations into the many employment opportunities provided during elections, a youth hiring campaign was conducted for the position of Information Officer. Over 800 youth applied and 193 positions were filled with youth aged 16 and 17.

The COVID-19 pandemic required an agile approach to training, which was expanded to include both online and in-person training opportunities. Elections Calgary held over 400 in-person, socially distanced training sessions. In addition, Elections Calgary launched nine new online courses for all workers. Offering online courses available through the Election Management System added modernization and further accessibility for all election workers, while also limiting the time for in-person training to reduce the spread of COVID-19 and adhere to the current protocols.



There were more locations and more hours to vote this Municipal election

Advance Vote:
October 4 – 10, 2021

37 total designated
Advance Vote stations

↑ 11 more than 2017

**Designated weekday and weekend
ADVANCE VOTE stations hours**
Mon-Fri: 8 a.m. - 7 p.m.
Sat: 10 a.m. - 7 p.m. Sun: 10 a.m. - 3 p.m.

Election Day:
October 18, 2021

188 total designated
Election Day voting stations

↑ 22 more than 2017

**Longer voting hours
on Election Day**
8 a.m. – 8 p.m.



**Designated weekday and weekend
ADVANCE VOTE stations hours**
Mon-Fri: 8 a.m. - 7 p.m.
Sat: 10 a.m. - 7 p.m. Sun: 10 a.m. - 3 p.m.

2,293 available
Advance Vote hours

↑ 1,187 more than 2017



IMPROVEMENTS TO EXISTING PROCESSES

In addition to the new programs and initiatives, improvements were also made to existing processes to improve the voter and candidate experience and ensure the conduct of a safe, accessible and legislatively compliant election.

Candidates and Third Party Advertisers

The 2021 General Election had a record number of vacant seats, with no incumbent mayor and no incumbent councillor in 9 out of 14 wards. In addition, there was a record number of mayoral and councillor candidates with 27 Mayoral candidates on the ballot and 100 Councillor candidates in total.

Nominations for the 2021 General Election opened on January 4, 2021, creating a nine-month long nomination period compared to a single nomination day in previous legislation. Elections Calgary developed a new candidate process to accommodate the nominations throughout the year with the goal of creating a safe, accessible and consistent experience and an opportunity for candidates to ask questions and review the legislative requirements.

In an effort to ensure candidates had access to the information they needed, Elections Calgary significantly increased the amount of information available online for candidates, including information on:

- Campaign finances and disclosure requirements,
- Scrutineers at voting stations,
- Maps, community profiles and guidebooks,
- Campaigning during the pandemic,
- Census data, citizen satisfaction survey data, open data,
- Election legislation and related bylaws; and
- Information about City of Calgary Council and School Board Trustee resources.

In addition to the information provided online, Elections Calgary delivered regular e-newsletters and virtual information sessions. Information sessions were provided on the following topics:

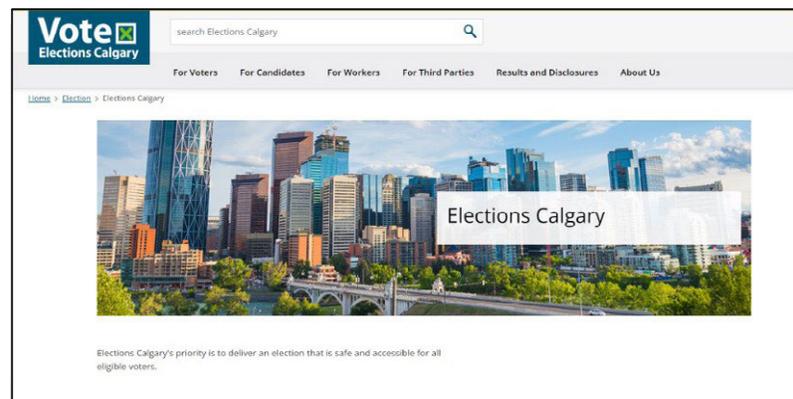
- How to submit nomination papers
- The voting process
- Introduction to Third Party Advertisers

For the first time in Calgary municipal elections, Third Party Advertisers (also referred to as TPAs) were legislated in the Act.

TPAs were required to register with Elections Calgary if they engaged in election advertising between May 1st and Election Day. A list of registered TPAs was provided on Elections Calgary's website. TPAs are also legislatively required to file disclosure statements and an advertising return with Elections Calgary.

To assist candidates and TPAs navigate the new rules for election advertising, Elections Calgary developed:

- A virtual information session about TPAs and the registration process
- Expanded web content specifically about TPAs on ElectionsCalgary.ca



Communications and Engagement

A multi-phased communications plan was developed to reach various election audiences, which also aligned with the business timeline to ensure the right message at the right time. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, all forms of communication were digital or print based, as no in-person engagement could take place.

Goals & Objectives

The communications and engagement had three main goals:

1. Build awareness with stakeholders so they are informed and educated;
2. Support eligible voters who may have barriers to accessing or interpreting election information; and
3. Demonstrate Elections Calgary's commitment to a safe voting experience.

Overview

The Elections Calgary website was our primary tool for information as it had the most up to date and accurate information for voters, candidates, Third Party Advertisers, election workers and new content specific to public concerns on voting technology and election security as well as COVID-19 protocols and precautions. With commitment to plain language, the Elections Calgary website was a primary tool to reduce confusion and provide information on:

- What was on the ballot (with sample ballots)
- List of candidates (with contact information/links to candidate websites)
- When and where to vote (directing people to the search based Where Do I Vote? look up tool)

Candidates and When & Where to Vote were the top two most visited pages, at 47.8% and 15.9% of page views by Election Day. On Election Day the Results page had the most page views at 45.2%, indicating informed voters

CITIZEN PERSPECTIVES SURVEY:

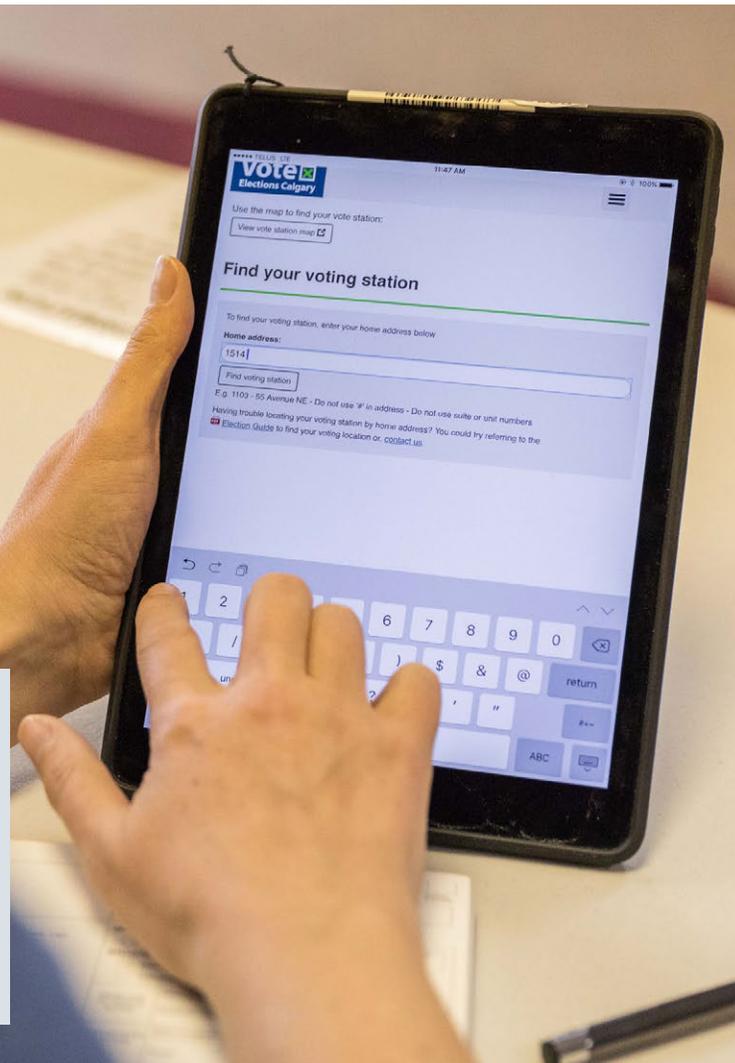
ELECTION COMMUNICATION EFFECTIVENESS

73% had enough information

81% Information was easy to understand

80% Information was available at the right time

78% Information was available in channels that I use



The election information campaign was split into two phases with two different messages:

Phase 1: Advance Vote

Key message: Vote Early

Promoting the Advance Vote was intended to minimize the wait times at voting stations on Election Day. Promotion began after Nomination Day (September 20th) once the list of candidates was finalized until the end of Advance Vote (October 10).

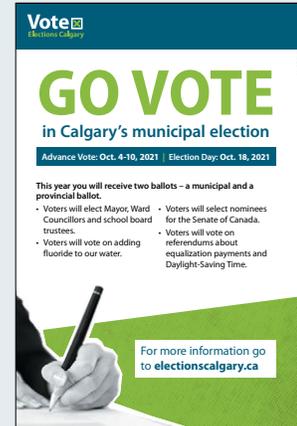


Phase 2: Election Day

Key message:

Go vote

These ads began after the Advance Vote period ended (October 11) and were a final opportunity for people to vote in person and become aware of what was on the ballot prior to voting on Election Day (October 18).



To reach voters for both phases, Elections Calgary:

- Used stakeholder analysis to target specific groups through paid and organic channels (digital, radio, tv, print and out of home which had 69.5M impressions).
- Utilized earned media through regular press releases.
- Dedicated more time and resources towards promoting Advance Vote to encourage more people to vote early.
- Allocated the majority of the paid media budget to digital advertising (31%) to maximize return on investment, given the increase in digital consumption due to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Based decisions on recommendations from The City of Calgary's Multicultural Strategy including:
 - ◇ Expanding beyond translating information into the top 5 non-English languages to the top 12, (based on a population size of greater than 5,000 who speak the language) to reach more diverse groups.
 - ◇ Sharing information with more ethnic media sources to increase reach with multicultural markets.

Voter information was translated into the top 12 languages other than English. Ten per cent of paid advertising went towards ethnic media sources (print and radio).





- Sent two city-wide direct mail pieces to all residential addresses with voter information. For the first time, we sent an addressed voter card with details on designated voting stations and accessibility information.
- Held online information sessions for candidates, third party advertisers and election workers to share information and answer questions.



- Used videos as a communication medium, resulting in 4 informational videos that could be easily shared.
 - ◊ We leveraged new features on Instagram to reach a wider audience
 - ◊ Cast Calgarians of diverse backgrounds and promoted a safe voter experience
- Worked with The City of Calgary's Indigenous Relations Office to:
 - ◊ Identify websites to promote election information and election jobs with paid advertisements.
 - ◊ Include an Indigenous land acknowledgement on our website and voter guide for the traditional territories of the peoples of the Treaty 7 region in Southern Alberta, the historic Northwest Métis and to Métis Nation of Alberta, Region 3 as part of The City's efforts towards Truth & Reconciliation.
- Promoted youth hiring to engage young people early to build interest in civic participation.
- Put up guerilla-marketing style signs throughout the city with QR codes linking to the Where Do I Vote? tool

Elections Calgary achieved 70M paid media impressions with a \$242K total spend with 6 weeks in market. 7,245 earned media articles were published over the campaign period which had an 842.M reach.



Partnerships

Elections Calgary worked with City of Calgary partners to help connect with those outside of the regular distribution channels and identify any barriers to information and changes to content or messaging that might be required.

Some of the key partnerships included:

- Advisory Committee on Accessibility
- Age-Friendly Calgary
- Alberta Health Services
- Anti-Racism Committee
- Calgary Catholic Immigration Society
- Calgary Homeless Foundation
- Calgary Local Immigration Partnership (CLIP)
- Calgary Neighbourhood Partnership Coordinators
- Calgary Public Library
- Calgary Student Alliance and post-secondary student groups
- Disability Action Hall
- Immigrant Services Calgary
- Indigenous Relations Office
- Post-Secondaries: University of Calgary, SAIT, Mount Royal University, Bow Valley College
- Prospect Human Services
- Social Wellbeing Committee
- Youth Employment Centre

Plan My Vote

Most groups helped distribute information to their networks which allowed us to reach more eligible voters. A unique partnership was formed with the Calgary Public Library, who used Elections Calgary's data to develop the Plan My Vote tool to help guide when and where to vote.

- Users were directed to enter their address first, followed by whether they want to vote during the Advance Vote or on Election Day.
- The tool would then use their address to display their voting station.
- Users could then enter how they planned travel to their voting station (walk, cycle, drive, transit) and what time they intended to vote.
- Once this has been selected, voters were given a complete itinerary of where, when, and how to vote and a list of identification options they could bring.

All of this information used our Where Do I Vote? Tool which had the most up to date and accurate information. Ten thousand vote plans were created.



Data-Supported Decision Making

Voting Subdivisions and Facilities

Using set-criteria to select voting subdivisions (VSD), additional considerations were taken before finalizing, including the data analysis of:

- New builds (including estimations on occupancy)
- Estimated travel-time to the voting station from the furthest address within the VSD
- Access to Calgary Transit
- Major roadway construction
- Historical voter turnout
- Facility data including Public and Separate schools and facility data from The City of Calgary Building Central Database.
- Election worker surveys from past elections

Estimated Voter Turnout

The estimated voter turnout was used to determine logistics such as the number of ballots supplied to each voting station and the number of forms and materials required.

Voter turnout was estimated using the following data sets:

- The number of voters per voting subdivision (data from Elections Alberta's enumerated electors list)
- Historical voter turnout by ward (data from Elections Calgary)
- Trends in Advance Vote turnout (historical data from Elections Calgary and trends in elections for other levels of government)



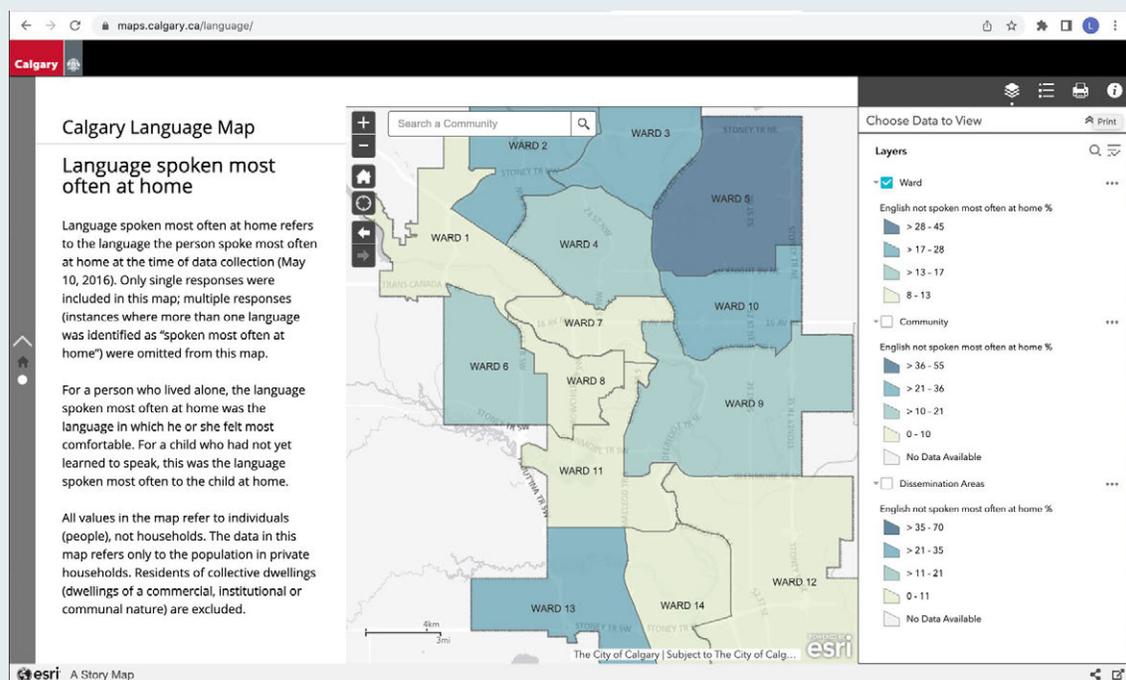
Estimated Election Worker Requirements

The estimated number of election workers required used estimated voter turnout along with the following data to determine how many workers were required for each station.

- Best practices from Elections Calgary and other municipalities to determine an average processing time per voter
- The number of eligible voters per station
- Facility information (e.g. square footage, room dimensions)

Language analysis

To determine which languages to translate information into, recommendations from The City of Calgary's Multicultural Strategy and Language Map were reviewed. In 2021, Elections Calgary expanded beyond translating information into the standard top 5 non-English languages to the top 12 in addition to the French language, based on a population size of greater than 5,000 who speak the language, to reach more diverse groups.



Election Readiness Audit

Working with the City Auditor's Office in the summer of 2021, Elections Calgary underwent an audit to assess readiness to deliver a safe and effective 2021 General Election. The City Auditor's Office provides independent and objective assurance services to add value to The City of Calgary and enhance public trust. The following excerpt is from the executive summary of the City Auditor's report:

"We concluded Elections Calgary has refined processes and planned effectively to administer the 2021 General Election and mitigate risks due to significant changes. We reviewed plans regarding ballot supply, voting station selection, recruitment, staffing and training, communication, tabulator testing, and end of night procedures, and determined Elections Calgary incorporated significant changes in planning, such as ward boundaries, longer ballots, and COVID-19.

Elections Calgary made data-driven decisions using historical data and Geographic Information Systems technology to calculate 100% ballot supply and allocation to voting subdivisions, and staffing levels required at voting stations. We identified improvements to data integrity controls that will

strengthen calculations and plans to ensure effective ballot distribution and adequate voting station staffing.

Elections Calgary conducted comprehensive facility inspections and assessed accessibility, technology, and COVID-19 requirements. We identified an opportunity to improve voting processes by re-forecasting demand closer to Election Day for voting options where a voter does not wish to enter the voting station, given the risk that conditions and restrictions related to COVID-19 could change.

Elections Calgary responded promptly to our recommendations for improvement by implementing suggestions as they were identified, and refining processes and plans."

The complete 2021 Municipal Election Audit report can be found online at calgary.ca.



ELECTION INTEGRITY

Elections Calgary ensures the integrity of the election through a variety of means including policies and procedures, comprehensive election worker training, a voting station support model and ensuring all technology is tested to meet best practices in security standards.

There are many safety measures used to ensure that there is no tampering with the tabulators at any time of the voting process. Voting tabulators are tested before, during and after they are used to ensure accuracy and security. Physical and digital security keys are used to ensure the devices are not altered or tampered with. Voting data is encrypted and results are only available to election officials after the voting stations close.

An extensive support model is in place for Advance Vote and on Election Day to ensure election workers have assistance when required. A help line is open for election workers to request additional materials or forms, to ask questions or request onsite assistance. Election issues are monitored by a centralized team and resources are dispatched as required. Every voting station has an assigned supervisor who visits throughout the day and carries additional supplies, helps with issues and liaises with the City Clerk and Returning Officer through the Elections Calgary team.

Vote
Elections Calgary

Instructions for Electors
General Election Date: October 18, 2021

A Person May Vote Only Once – It Is An Offence To Take A Ballot Out Of A Voting Station

To Vote for Mayor, Councillor or Trustee:
Mark each ballot by completely shading in the circle in the space provided on the right hand side opposite the name of the candidate(s) of your choice. The Ballot indicates the maximum number of candidates that can be voted for. You may vote for less than the maximum number, but not for more.



To Vote for Senate:
Mark each ballot by completely shading in the circle in the space provided on the right hand side opposite the name of the candidate(s) of your choice. For Senate select up to ___ choices on the ballot.

Question/Referendum:
In the case of a ballot for a bylaw or question, mark the ballot by shading in the circle opposite either "For" or "Against" or opposite either "Yes" or "No"

After Marking Your Ballots
Place each ballot inside its secrecy sleeve, ensuring only the top of the ballot with the DRO initials is visible.
Hand the ballots to the deputy supervising the ballot box. The deputy will, after verifying the initials on the ballots, will run the ballots through the tabulator which will then be deposited into the ballot box.



You have now completed the voting process. Please leave the voting station.

Spoiled Ballot(s)
If you have marked your ballot in error, or defaced it in anyway, you may return it and obtain a replacement from the deputy who gave it to you.
If a ballot is torn, defaced, or otherwise dealt with by an elector so that the elector can be identified, the ballot is rejected and shall not be counted.



SELECTING VOTING STATIONS

The City Clerk and Returning Officer is authorized by bylaw to designate more than one voting station for each subdivision and the location of those voting stations for an election.

In previous elections, the Advance Vote stations were city-wide, meaning a voter could go to any voting station in the city to cast their ballot. Primarily due to concerns of COVID-19 and to ensure accurate logistics for supply distribution to an increased number of voting stations (e.g. ballots, PPE, forms) Advance Vote stations were changed to designated stations for the 2021 General Election, with the exception of modified city-wide voting based on wards available at City Hall and Post-Secondaries. Advance Voting stations were located close to homes and were easy to access by Calgary Transit.

Elections Calgary maintains an ongoing partnership with both the Public and Separate school boards to ensure a non-instruction day is scheduled for Election Day, which allows schools to be used as voting stations as much as possible. In addition to schools, voting stations are typically located in community centres, libraries, places of worship, and recreation centres. In 2021, 80% of Election Day voting stations were held in Public or Separate schools.

The Advance Vote had 34 weekday stations and 29 weekend stations available to the public. In addition, Elections Calgary provided onsite voting opportunities at five shelters and 56 care facilities during the Advance Vote period. On Election Day, there were 188 voting stations, an increase of 22 from 2017.

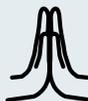
There are several locations and times to make it as convenient as possible for people to vote. Using a community-based approach, selected voting stations are close to home and easy to access, such as:



City Hall



Schools and campuses



Places of worship



Community Centres



Recreation Centres

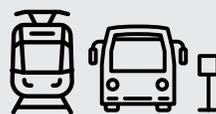


Libraries

The stations have been carefully selected so that they are easy to access whether driving, walking, cycling or taking transit.



Most are located within a **2.5 km radius of residential areas** (~10 minute drive) and have adequate free parking.



2/3 of advance vote stations are **within 1 km of a high frequency stop** (LRT/BRT/Max)



All stations are **within 800 meters of regular service stops** (~10 minute walk)

MAIL-IN (SPECIAL) BALLOTS

Mail-in ballot requests were open from August 3 to October 18, 2021. Over 7,500 requests for mail-in ballots were received for the 2021 General Election. Voters were able to request their mail-in ballot package online or by telephone. Voters had the option to return their ballot packages by courier, mail, in-person at the Election Office, or at one of five mail-in drop box locations across the city. Partnering with Calgary Public Library, four of the mail-in drop boxes were located in libraries. The drop-boxes were a new initiative to provide convenience to voters returning their completed mail-in packages.



ELECTION COSTS

Elections Calgary provides election services to the Calgary Board of Education and the Calgary Roman Catholic Separate School Division to deliver the school trustee elections in coordination with the General Election. As part of a cost-sharing agreement between the City of Calgary and the school boards, the boards together pay 30% of the election expenses.

Election Operations	Election supplies Rentals Salaries Administration	4,427,343
Voter Engagement and Communications	Advertising Voter communications Design services	1,022,350
Voting Station Workers	Recruitment Training Pay	1,856,598
Voting Technology and Services	Tabulators Ballots Ballot boxes Onsite support	1,165,680
Total		8,471,971

The composite ballot

A composite ballot is a ballot that contains more than one vote for an office or question on the same ballot. Composite ballots are commonly used when using tabulators to reduce the environmental impact and costs. For the 2021 General Election, two composite ballots were used, a municipal ballot and a provincial ballot.

The municipal ballot had the options for Mayor, Councillor, School Board Trustee, along with a question directed by Council on fluoridation in the water:
Are you in favour of reintroducing fluoridation of the municipal water supply?

The provincial ballot had the options for the senate election and two referendum questions:

- 1) *Should section 36(2) of the Constitution Act, 1982 – Parliament and the government of Canada's commitment to the principle of making equalization payments – be removed from the constitution?*
- 2) *Do you want Alberta to adopt year-round Daylight Saving Time, which is summer hours, eliminating the need to change our clocks twice a year?*

ADVANCE VOTE AND ELECTION DAY

The 2021 **Advance Vote** saw record turnout of **141,329** eligible voters casting their ballots, an **89%** ↑ increase from the previous Advance Vote turnout record of 74,965 in 2017.

A total of **6,805** votes were cast by **mail-in ballot**.

Overall voter turnout was **46.38 %** with **393,090** voters.

Total enumerated electors was **847,556**

On Election Day, most voters experienced **low wait times** with the majority of stations reporting average wait times of 5 to 10 minutes between 8 a.m. and 3 p.m. and 10 to 15 minutes between 3 p.m. and 8 p.m.

Historically, the busiest times at voting stations is between 4 pm and 8 pm, which is consistent with the 2021 wait time reporting.

Over 220 voters were able to vote through our curbside voting process at voting stations.

RESULTS

As each voting station was equipped with a vote tabulator, results for the 2021 General Election were generated by vote tabulators. Election Day voting stations generated results at the station after the close of the voting station. Advance Vote, hospital, care facilities, shelters, and mail-in ballot results were generated at the Election Office on Election Day. All election results were printed by election staff and posted for candidates and scrutineers to view.

Once the voting station tabulators produced results in the voting station successfully, they were securely transmitted to a central location. Elections Calgary began publishing unofficial results as they came in, within approximately 30 minutes of the close of voting stations at 8 p.m. The quick generation and publication of unofficial counting of ballots was due to the use of vote tabulators.

Following Election Day, Elections Calgary along with specialists from our vote tabulator vendor conducted the verification of the unofficial results and transmission of results. Results of the 2021 General Election were made official on October 22, 2021 and can be found online at www.electionscalgary.ca along with various election-related data sets available through a partnership with Open Data at The City of Calgary.

Four requests for recount were received for the Mayoral, Ward 3 Councillor, Ward 4 Councillor and Ward 9 Councillor contests. Section 98(1) of the Act sets out the criteria for three scenarios where a Returning Officer may make a recount, and provides that if the Returning Officer makes a recount, the Returning Officer shall proceed to count the ballots in the same manner as the voting stations. The Returning Officer considered the information provided in support of the recount requests and determined that there were insufficient grounds for alleging that the record of the count of votes was inaccurate. In addition, the Returning Officer considered other circumstances (administrative or technical errors) under which a recount may be conducted and determined that there were insufficient grounds to conduct a recount.

In 2021, Elections Calgary conducted a post-election survey. Of those surveyed, 73% had enough information to vote.

Next Steps

The work at Elections Calgary doesn't stop once an election is complete. There are many important steps to continue in order to prepare for the next election. Below are high level steps of the work that is planned in each year until the next General Election.

2022 (Year 1):

- Review debriefs and formalize recommendations
- Destruction of 2021 General Election materials (at the conclusion of any court matters)
- Receive and post candidate financial disclosure statements
- Refine four-year and by-election readiness plans and budget
- Issue election summary report (this report)
- Begin population review in preparation for ward boundary adjustment recommendations
- Advocate legislative changes
- Election technology and physical security review
- Equity in Service Delivery Fund research: Improving Voting Program Design for Calgary's Diverse Population

2023 (Year 2):

- Refine the Elections Calgary organizational model
- Redesign processes for 2025 (hiring, voting, materials and logistics)
- Plan technology changes
- Update bylaws and policies
- Prepare Requests for Proposals (RFPs), if required
- Partner and stakeholder engagement to identify election planning and service delivery considerations
- Present ward boundary adjustment recommendations
- Conduct ward boundary and Council composition review, if required

2024 (Year 3):

- Present ward boundary and Council composition recommendations, if required
- Implement process and technology changes
- Onboard limited term staff, corporate partners and trainers
- Formalize external partner strategies
- Book voting stations
- Update ward boundary bylaw, if required
- Outline proposed changes to the election bylaws

2025 (Year 4):

- Accept candidate nominations and third party advertiser registrations
- Continue training and integration of staff and corporate partners
- Conduct voting station facility inspections
- Onboard and train new limited term staff
- Order, receive and kit election materials
- Hire and train election workers
- Conduct the 2025 General Election



Recommended changes

Some of the changes that Elections Calgary is considering after the 2021 General Election include:

Continuous improvement

A review of the 2021 General Election has identified a number of initiatives to investigate:

- Service improvements to better reflect the needs of diverse Calgarians, including newcomers and persons with disabilities
- Enhancing and expanding internal and external partnerships to better engage with key stakeholders and improve the voting experience, including Council, school boards, post-secondaries, and community organizations
- An alternative supply delivery model to streamline warehousing and distribution
- Updates and improvements to event readiness, staff capacity, election technology and election processes

Election Integrity and Security Review

Although there were no incidents or issues with the integrity and security of the 2021 General Election, Elections Calgary will be conducting an election integrity and security review to ensure that the processes and technology follow best practices.

Election legislation changes advocacy

Elections Calgary will conduct a review of the Local Authorities Elections Act and advocate for changes to close gaps, improve clarity, align with modern election practices and support Council direction.



Feedback on this report?

Please send your comments, concerns or questions to elections@calgary.ca or contact 311.