



Report

TITLE: ELECTORAL BOUNDARY REVIEW PROJECT

Meeting: Council Meeting

Meeting Date: September 11, 2024

Background

At the December 13, 2023 Council meeting, Council approved the Flagstaff County Electoral Boundary Review Framework, attached, and approved to include options for seven divisions and options to reduce to five divisions.

Municipal Government Act requirements:

The Municipal Government Act (MGA) Section 148 provides municipalities with the ability to divide the municipality into wards and to establish their boundaries by bylaw. A proposed Electoral Boundaries Bylaw would amend the electoral boundaries in the County in accordance with Section 148 of the Act. The MGA includes a number of other requirements for adopting this bylaw, as follows:

- In order to come into effect for the 2025 election, the bylaw must be adopted by December 31, 2024. Section 151(1)
- The bylaw must be advertised. 151(3)
- Prior to the third reading of the bylaw, a 60-day time period must be provided to allow residents to prepare, distribute, and submit a petition regarding the amendment. 151(4), 231(4)
- The proposed bylaw must be advertised in order to notify residents of the date of the public hearing and establish the 60-day petition period. 231(4), 606, 606.1.

Budget Implications of reducing to five Councillors:

The annual estimated cost to support one councillor position annually is an estimated \$56,925 (\$227,700 over four years) which includes wages, travel, conference, benefits, laptop, and reimbursed expenses. Over a four-year electoral term, decreasing from seven Councillor positions to five Councillor positions equates to an estimated cost savings of \$455,400 for the County.

2024 Municipal Census results and comparisons:

As part of the Electoral Boundary Framework process, Phase 2 was to complete a municipal census which was completed in May and June 2024, for the purpose of determining the current population count by division. This census has allowed very accurate modeling to be undertaken for the development of electoral boundaries within the municipality.

The results of the municipal census provide the **Current Division Boundary Information** as follows:

Division	2024 Municipal Census Population	Percentage
1. Rick Manning	417	11.4%
2. Mat Ponto	527	14.4%
3. Jeff Eckstrand	657	18.0%
4. Melvin Thompson	437	11.9%
5. Don Kroetch	707	19.3%
6. Larry Hiller	530	14.5%
7. Howard Shield	385	10.5%
Total	3660	100.0%

Average Population Per Division of Surrounding Counties for comparison:

County	Divisions	Population	Avg. Pop. Per Division	Dwellings	Pop. Density per sq. km
Flagstaff County	7	3660	523	1510	0.9
<i>Flagstaff County</i>	5	<i>3660</i>	<i>732</i>	<i>1510</i>	<i>0.9</i>
Beaver County	5	5868	1174	2177	1.8
Wainwright County	7	4276	611	1490	1.0
Provost County	7	2071	296	851	0.6
Paintearth County	7	1990	284	648	0.6
Camrose County	7	8504	1215	3223	2.6
Stettler County	7	5666	809	1945	1.4

Electoral Boundaries proposed Concept Maps:

Phase 3 of the Framework is to provide concept maps utilizing 2024 population census data, and the criteria established. Attached are 4 concept maps as follows:

1. 7 divisions showing balanced population
2. 7 divisions showing balanced residences
3. 5 divisions showing balanced population
4. 5 divisions showing balanced residences

Council is to determine which concept maps will be included as an option for consideration during the Public Consultation and Engagement.

Public Participation Plan:

Phase 4 of the Framework is Public Consultation and Engagement. Attached is the proposed Public Participation Plan for the 2024 Electoral Boundary Review which includes:

1. Post information to educate the public on the Electoral Boundary Review via website, social media and the Community Press.
2. An Electoral Boundary Review online survey will be made available in the local paper and online through the website and social media.
3. An open house at the administration office will be held where the concept maps will be displayed, and the proposed changes will be reviewed to gather feedback from residents.
4. Results of the public engagement will be reviewed by Council.
5. First Reading of the Electoral Boundaries Bylaw with single boundary map to present to public.
6. A public hearing will be held to consider a new Electoral Boundaries Bylaw.

Electoral Boundaries Bylaw Timeline:

Based on the timelines and the petition period requirements outlined in the Municipal Government Act, administration is requesting the following:

1. Schedule an Open House on Tuesday, October 1st for the public consultation of the concept maps.
2. Schedule a Special Council meeting on Monday, October 7th, 2024, for review of public consultation and first reading of the Electoral Boundaries Bylaw.
3. Cancel the December 11th, 2024 Council meeting and schedule a Council meeting to be held on Wednesday, December 18th, 2024 (to accommodate for the 60-day petition period) where the Public Hearing for the bylaw would be held, followed by 2nd and 3rd reading of the bylaw.

Alignment with the Strategic Plan

Our Vision: To be a strong, vibrant, and sustainable regional Community of communities, contributing to a rural essence and quality of life.

Recommendations

1. THAT the Public Participation Plan for the 2024 Electoral Boundary Review be approved as presented.
2. TO determine which Electoral Boundaries proposed concept maps be included as options for consideration during the Public Consultation and Engagement process.
3. THAT as part of the Consultation and Engagement process of the Electoral Boundaries review, to schedule an Open House at the Administration Building on Tuesday, October 1st, 2024.
4. TO schedule a Special Council meeting on Monday, October 7th, 2024, for review of public consultation and first reading of the Electoral Boundaries Bylaw.
5. To cancel the December 11th, 2024 Council meeting and schedule a Council meeting to be held on Wednesday, December 18th, 2024.