

2020 Local Government Election – Advance Polls

ISSUE

In an effort to raise awareness of the election, encourage voter turnout, and provide opportunities for voting while people are active in the community, the Returning Officer can establish advance polls.

BACKGROUND

In accordance with the legislation, a number of decisions related to holding a municipal election are required by City Council and the Returning Officer. This report addresses the establishment of advance polls.

CURRENT STATUS

In an effort to provide adequate voting opportunities to citizens, advance polling stations are established in various locations across the city.

DISCUSSION/ANALYSIS

Section 83 of *The Local Government Election Act, 2015* authorizes the Returning Officer to establish one or more advance polls for voters at least three days and not more than 15 days before the day of the election, and to set the days and hours for advance voting, excepting those to be established for personal care facilities and similar institutions, which are the subject of a separate report.

Historically, advance polls have been established at City Hall, the University of Saskatchewan, and four shopping centres (Lawson Heights Mall, Confederation Mall, Market Mall, and The Centre Mall). These locations will be established for the 2020 election, with the addition of Prairieland Park (Appendix 1). Appendix 2 sets out the days and hours advance polls will be open at each location.

Advance voting voter turnout increased 62% (7,580-12,272) from 2009 to 2012 and 43% (12,272-17,603) from 2012 to 2016. It is anticipated that voter turnout for 2020 will follow this trend.

IMPLICATIONS

The number of days planned for advance polls increased from 6 days in 2016 to 7 days in 2020. With increasing popularity and voter turnout at advance polls for the last two elections as well as the 2020 federal election, it is appropriate to provide increased advance voting opportunities and at areas with typically high traffic throughout the day.

NEXT STEPS

A copy of this report will be provided to both the Public and Separate School Boards for information. A comprehensive communication plan for all aspects of the 2020 municipal and school boards elections is being developed with the Communications & Public Engagement division.

APPENDICES

1. Advance poll map
2. Advance poll locations, dates, and hours

Report Approval

Written by: Scott Bastian, Returning Officer
Reviewed by: Joanne Sproule, City Clerk
Approved by: Joanne Sproule, City Clerk

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