

June 30, 2021

2021 Voting Opportunities

Planning the October 18, 2021, General Election

Elections Calgary's priority is to deliver safe, accessible, and legislatively compliant election services to voters, candidates, and third-party advertisers.

The October 18, 2021, General Election has been planned differently than previous elections due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Plans and decisions were made months in advance of Election Day and include processes for conducting the General Election in a manner that will reduce the risk of spreading COVID-19. Plans also include provisions to ensure a safe voting experience should the pandemic worsen and public health restrictions return. In preparing its plans, Elections Calgary consulted with the Ministry of Municipal Affairs, Elections Alberta, Alberta Health Services, The City's Rapid Response Team and carefully considered the experiences of other jurisdictions having recently held elections.

Examples of plans supporting the potential return of public health restrictions include:

- Providing additional voting stations located close to voters' residences.
- Providing additional advance voting hours thus reducing the volume of voters on Election Day (typically, Calgary's busiest day of voting in a general election).
- Assigning voters to specific stations during the Advance Vote and on Election Day, supporting more predictable and manageable capacity, reducing crowding and ability to provide social distancing. This is especially important this year, given a few factors:
 - As of June 30, 2021, there are 121 candidates for the offices of mayor, councillors and school board trustees. Each candidate is authorized to appoint scrutineers to witness the process in voting stations on their behalf where their election is being held. Mayoral candidates may appoint a scrutineer in each voting station across the city (as of June 30, 2021, there are 20 mayoral candidates).
 - Scrutineers may also be appointed in each voting station across the city by Senatorial candidates, and electors in favor or opposition of the provincial referendum question(s) and question on the ballot regarding the re-introduction of fluoride to the municipal water supply.

- The total number of candidates for the General Election and Senate Election will only be known on noon on September 21, 2021.
- Voter turnout is unknown, but typically higher where incumbents do not seek re-election and where there is a question on the ballot.
- Arranging for a non-instructional (“professional development”) day on October 18, 2021 with the Calgary Board of Education and Calgary Roman Catholic Separate School Division. This helps to ease capacity and parking availability in schools used as voting stations.
- Promoting voting information through a wide range of communications tactics. Information will be made available in Calgary’s top languages spoken in households and formats accessible to persons with disabilities. Information will be available online and mailed to every household in Calgary.
- Voting format and processes have been selected to best predict and manage the capacity, ability to social distance easily maintain public health protocols and logistical considerations. While recognizing their convenience, the following are examples of voting formats not selected for the 2021 General Election:
 - A vote bus was not selected because it does not allow for sufficient social distancing.
 - A drive-up vote was not selected given the complexity of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), cost and protocols required and to ensure Alberta Health Services has access to drive-up facilities for COVID-19 testing and vaccines.
- Voting plans support best practices regarding adequate distribution and supply of ballots and accessible facilities with adequate parking. These practices were successfully implemented in the 2018 Olympic vote on a question, as outlined in the [2017 Municipal Election Follow-up Audit, AC2020-0196](#).

Additional Voting Opportunities

In keeping with efforts to support a safe and accessible voting experience, Elections Calgary will offer additional voting opportunities compared to the 2017 General Election, including:

- An increase in the total number of voting stations:
 - Advance Vote: Currently, 33 planned* [24 in the 2017].
 - Election Day: Currently, 186 planned* [170 in the 2017].
- Additional advance vote hours planned: *
 - Currently, total of 2,211 hours across all voting stations [1,106 in 2017].
 - Monday October 4 – Friday October 8 (8 a.m. – 7 p.m.).
 - Saturday, October 9 (10 a.m. – 7 p.m.).

- Sunday, October 10 (10 a.m. – 3 p.m.).
 - Most Advance Vote stations are located within a 2.5 km radius of residential areas.
 - Most Election Day voting stations are located within 1 km radius of residential areas.
 - Longer voting hours on Election Day: 8 a.m. – 8 p.m. [10 a.m. – 8 p.m. in 2017].

*As of June 30, 2021, subject to confirmation of rental arrangements. Voting opportunities and locations will be shared with candidates and the public in September 2021.

Vote Anywhere

In previous General Elections, “vote anywhere” was offered during the Advance Vote. This allowed voters to cast their ballot at any Advance Vote station, regardless of their residence.

While Elections Calgary recognizes the convenience and ease of access associated with a “vote anywhere” Advance Vote, as this General Election was planned during the pandemic, it was important to establish a vote model that would reduce the risks of COVID-19 infections, in the event of a prolonged pandemic. Unlike in any previous General Election, a “Vote anywhere” may introduce potential risks to public safety, should public health restrictions return.

“Vote anywhere” and other voter engagement opportunities which are not compromised by current public health restrictions or concerns will be considered for future electoral events.

Additional information about voting opportunities is provided in the [Questions and Answers](#) section and will be updated on the Elections Calgary website, electionscalgary.ca.

Questions and Answers

How will Calgarians vote?

Eligible voters will vote at designated voting stations during the Advance Vote from October 4 through 10, 2021, as well as on October 18, 2021, (Election Day).

Mail-in (special) ballots will continue to be available for voters who will be absent during available voting, those who have a disability preventing them from voting in person, or for those who are working as an election worker. Applications for mail-in (special) ballots open August 3, 2021, and can be made through the Elections Calgary website (www.electionscalgary.ca), and by contacting 311.

How will I know where to vote?

New in this General Election, a voter information card will be distributed to each household showing their voting opportunities.

In addition, voting information will be available through the Where Do I Vote? tool, through The City's social media accounts, on the Elections Calgary website (www.electionscalgary.ca), and by contacting 311.

Will a “vote anywhere” Advance Vote, vote bus and drive-up voting be offered during the Advance Vote?

No, these options will not be offered during the 2021 Advance Vote, given public safety, logistical complexity, and cost considerations. These opportunities will be considered for future electoral events.

Will a “vote anywhere” Advance Vote be offered at post-secondary institutions?

Like other parts of the city, a “vote anywhere” advance vote will not be offered during the 2021 Advance Vote period at post-secondary institutions. Recognizing the convenience a “vote anywhere” model offers, this General Election students and post-secondary institution employees can vote close to their residence. Other orders of government have legislation enable the use of mail-in (special) ballots or other procedures to capture students and employees of post-secondary institutions that are not currently legislated and/or available to voters in Calgary.

Elections Calgary is currently connecting with post-secondary student unions and administration to determine how to best engage student voters and faculty and share available voting and employment opportunities as election workers.

Will Elections Calgary change its approach to voting opportunities should the COVID-19 pandemic improve?

Voting opportunity plans for the October 18, 2021, General Election will remain unchanged should the COVID-19 pandemic improve. This approach ensures a safe voting experience should the pandemic worsen, and public health restrictions return. This approach also mitigates risks associated with introducing late changes to processes.

Elections Calgary continues to monitor and follow all current public health and City of Calgary requirements in effect.

What are the accessible voting options?

Accessible voting equipment will be available during the Advance Vote to allow voters to mark their vote independently using various appliances (e.g., sip/puff, paddles with Braille and audio devices). Persons with disabilities may also choose to be assisted by a friend or family member attending with them, or by an election worker. Alternatively, a mail-in (special) ballot may also be applied for.

Elections Calgary sought the input of the Advisory Committee on Accessibility to enhance accessibility measures. All voting stations have been inspected to evaluate physical accessibility.

Will voting opportunities be available to voters who reside in shelters and care facilities?

Yes, voting opportunities will be established in shelters and care facilities. Additionally, voting stations will be provided for in hospitals on Election Day. Details are currently being confirmed and will be shared with candidates and the public in September 2021.

What do I have to bring with me to vote?

To vote, you must bring one of the following forms of identification (ID) containing your name and current address. Picture ID is not required.

Government issued ID documents:

- Identification issued by a Canadian government, whether federal, provincial or local, or an agency of that government, that contains a photograph of the elector and their name and current address; or

Government-issued ID documents:

- Government cheque or cheque stub; or
- Income/property tax assessment notice; or
- Statement of government benefits (e.g. employment insurance, old-age security, social assistance, disability support or child tax benefits); or

School, college or university ID documents:

- Correspondence issued by a school, college or university; or

Attestation:

- A letter or form (attestation) confirming that the person lives at the stated address. The letter can be signed prior to the vote by any of the following:
 - the authorized representative of a correctional institution; or
 - the responsible authority of a supportive living facility or treatment centre; or
 - the authorized representative (landlord) of a commercial property management company; or
 - the authorized representative of a post-secondary institution; or
 - the authorized representative of a facility that provides services to the homeless;or

Other ID documents:

- Bank/credit card statement or personal cheque; or
- Insurance policy or coverage card; or
- Letter from a public curator, public guardian or public trustee; or
- Pension Plan statement of benefits, contributions or participation; or
- Residential lease or mortgage statement; or
- Utility bill (e.g. telephone, public utilities commission, television, hydro (electric), gas or water); or
- Vehicle ownership, registration or insurance certificate.