



Budget Service Change Request

Service Change Type

- New Service
- Service Update
- End of Service

2025 MUNICIPAL CENSUS AND ELECTION

Service and Adjustment Summary

Service	Service Description	Service Value and/or Level	2025 Budget Adjustment
Municipal Census	Organization and coordination of municipal census.	Allow for the collection of important demographic data to assist in the planning and provision of community services.	Delay conducting Census in 2025. On ramp the Census in 2028.
Municipal Elections	Organization, coordination and delivery of municipal elections.	Provide residents the opportunity to elect community members to represent their interests and govern their community.	Transfer census funding in 2025 to Municipal Elections with new Bill 20 requirements.

Why change now? What is the need?

Under the *Municipal Government Act (MGA)* a municipality has the discretion to conduct a census. A municipal census is a count of all the residents living within a municipality, as of the designated census day. A census can be used to collect additional information to assist in the planning of municipal services, programs and resource allocations. The Town of Okotoks has never collected any data beyond the number of individuals residing in the dwelling or location.

In 2019, the Government of Alberta announced that it would develop a system to estimate the population of each municipality annually instead of using municipal censuses between each federal census year. The change was driven by the province’s goal for greater consistency in population data due to municipal censuses only being used by a limited number of municipalities. Okotoks 2023 population estimate calculated by AB Treasury Board is 32,563, which is usually used for grant purposes.



In 2023 a new census regulation and manual was created to acknowledge municipal census results. In 2023 only 5 municipalities conducted a municipal census. The City of Leduc was one of the 5 municipalities that conducted a census in 2023 at a cost of \$83,000.

Most municipalities rely on the information provided from the federal census prepared by Statistics Canada and released once every five years. The most recent federal census was completed in 2021 and released on February 9, 2022.

The last municipal census conducted by the Town was in 2018. The next federal census will be in 2026.

- 2021 Federal Census – 30,405
- 2018 Municipal Census – 29,002
- 2016 Federal Census – 29,016
- 2016 Municipal Census – 28,016
- 2014 Municipal Census – 27,331

Considering the new election processes for 2025, arising from Bill 20, Administration recommends that the 2025 municipal census be cancelled and the census budget of \$95,500 be allocated to the 2025 new election processes (manual ballot counts, recounts, special ballots, creation and use of a permanent electors' list). Administration is awaiting the new election regulations to finalize logistics for the new processes under Bill 20.

Administration is recommending that an on ramp for budget for census be considered for the 2028 budget to explore enhanced data needs and analysis at that time. The next federal census will be conducted in 2026 with information releases in early 2027.

What is the expected community impact/benefit? How much of the community will be impacted and/or benefit from the change?

No direct impact to the community by cancelling the Census.

Redirecting the funds for the election will help with a more effective and efficient process.

What is the expected impact/benefit for the organization?

The impact of canceling the municipal census in 2025 for Okotoks would have limited impact as there is no need to strategically connect the household survey and census processes. The Town has collected limited data asking only the number of residents. Other tools have been developed to collect data to assist in decision-making processes such as social pinpoint, and public engagement activities including the household and budget surveys. In addition, the regular federal census information, provides much more accurate, and detailed data at no cost to the Town.



For the election, it is anticipated that an extra 60 people will need to be hired to manually count ballots on election night (excluding any recounts). This is based on 15 counting tables of 3-4 people (caller out of ballot, 2 tally sheet markers, and one bundling ballots/processor). It is anticipated that it will take approximately 6 hours to count the ballots with results announced around 3 a.m. the day after Election Day.

Budget Change (M's)

Annual Estimated Change	2025B	2026F	2027F	2028F	2029F	Total
	\$0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	\$0.000

We will reallocate the money between the cost centers for the Business Center. Overall no budget change required.
