



RMA Resolution – 2025 Municipal and Federal Election Dates

Electoral Division: All

File: N/A

Date:	September 10, 2024
Presenter:	Tyler Andreasen, Lead Legislative Officer
Department:	Legislative Services

REPORT SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to consider the submission of an emergent resolution through the Rural Municipalities of Alberta (RMA) due to the simultaneous scheduling of the 2025 municipal and federal elections and the challenges this may cause for municipalities in Alberta.

Both the 2025 municipal and federal elections are targeted for Monday, October 20, 2025 pursuant to the Local Authorities Election Act and Canada Elections Act. The simultaneous scheduling of the 2025 municipal and federal elections may lead to the following operational challenges for municipalities in Alberta:

- difficulty securing adequate voting stations for the municipal and federal elections due to higher demand for facilities that are able to accommodate voting stations, leading to operational challenges and a potential shortage of places to vote. Administration is aware that the federal government may not be willing to share voting stations with municipalities;
- increased competition for election workers for the municipal and federal elections in an environment in which municipalities often compete among other municipalities in their region for experienced election workers;
- voter fatigue, as voters may find it challenging to navigate between two different election campaigns and voting in two different elections on the same day or may be discouraged from paying attention to or voting in either election; and
- voter turnout, which was 35% in the 2021 municipal election, may be negatively impacted due to the concurrent municipal and federal elections competing for the public’s time and attention.

Administration is aware that the federal government is considering legislation to move the 2025 federal election from Monday, October 20, 2025 to Monday, October 27, 2025. While this would be preferable to holding both the 2025 municipal and federal elections on the same day, it would still lead to operational challenges for municipalities in Alberta, as the federal election campaign and advance voting would still overlap with the 2025 municipal election.

The draft resolution, included as Attachment A to this report, outlines the need for collaboration between the provincial and federal governments to mitigate these operational challenges by rescheduling either the 2025 municipal or federal election to an alternate and more appropriate date.

Council is being asked to approve submitting the emergent resolution to the October 4, 2024 Central Rural Municipalities of Alberta (CMRA) District 2 meeting. If the emergent resolution is successful there, it will proceed to the fall 2024 RMA convention.

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ADMINISTRATION'S RECOMMENDATION

THAT Council approves submitting the emergent resolution regarding the concurrent 2025 municipal and federal election dates, as presented in Attachment A, to the Central Rural Municipalities of Alberta (CMRA) District 2 Resolution Committee.

BACKGROUND

The *Local Authorities Election Act* and the *Canada Elections Act* govern the scheduling of municipal and federal elections in Alberta and Canada, respectively. According to section 11(1)(a) of the *Local Authorities Election Act*, municipal elections are set for the third Monday in October every four years, which for the 2025 municipal election is October 20. Similarly, section 56.1(2) of the *Canada Elections Act* mandates that federal elections occur on the third Monday of October four years after the last federal election, which also falls on October 20, 2025.

Section 56.2(1) of the *Canada Elections Act* allows the Chief Electoral Officer of Canada to choose an alternate date for federal elections if the date would conflict with provincial or municipal elections. When the provincial *Municipal Affairs Statutes Amendment Act, 2024* (Bill 20) comes into full force and effect, the *Local Authorities Election Act* will grant the Minister of Municipal Affairs of Alberta the authority to address unusual or unforeseen circumstances impacting the conduct of municipal elections.

ANALYSIS

The overlapping 2025 municipal and federal elections may result in significant logistical challenges for municipalities in Alberta, such as:

- difficulty securing adequate voting stations for the municipal and federal elections due to higher demand for facilities that are able to accommodate voting stations, leading to operational challenges and a potential shortage of places to vote;
- increased competition for election workers for the municipal and federal elections in an environment in which municipalities often compete among other municipalities in their region for experienced election workers;
- voter fatigue, as voters may find it challenging to navigate between two different election campaigns and voting in two different elections on the same day or may be discouraged from paying attention to or voting in either election; and
- voter turnout, which was 35% in the 2021 municipal election, may be negatively impacted due to the concurrent municipal and federal elections competing for the public's time and attention.

Rescheduling either the 2025 municipal or federal election to an alternate and more appropriate date would result in improved availability of voting stations and election workers, as well as reduce voter fatigue associated with holding two different election campaigns simultaneously and holding two different elections on the same day. Administration is aware that the federal government may not be willing to share voting stations with Alberta municipalities for the 2025 federal election unless the voting stations have separate indoor spaces.

Administration is also aware that the federal government is considering legislation to move the 2025 federal election from Monday, October 20, 2025 to Monday, October 27, 2025. While this would be preferable to holding both the 2025 municipal and federal elections on the same day, it would still lead to operational challenges for municipalities in Alberta. For example, the federal election campaign and advance voting dates would still overlap with the 2025 municipal elections in Alberta.

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If neither the provincial nor federal government reschedule the 2025 municipal or federal election, municipalities are empowered under section 11(2) of the *Local Authorities Election Act* to change the date of the municipal election on their own accord from the third Monday in October (October 20, 2025) to the Saturday immediately preceding the third Monday in October (October 18, 2025).

Changing the date of the 2025 municipal election to Saturday, October 18, 2025 under section 11(2) of the *Local Authorities Election Act* would require the County to pass a bylaw no later than June 30, 2025. This would help to alleviate but not eliminate the logistical challenges identified with holding a simultaneous municipal and federal election in 2025.

COMMUNICATIONS / ENGAGEMENT

Administration has engaged several urban municipalities to submit a similar resolution through Alberta Municipalities, which is the urban equivalent of the RMA, and has received indication that a similar resolution will be submitted through Alberta Municipalities.

Whether the 2025 municipal election and federal elections are held concurrently or not, a communications plan will be developed and implemented by the County for the 2025 municipal election to keep stakeholders and the public informed.

IMPLICATIONS

Financial

There are no direct financial or resource implications associated with submitting the emergent resolution through the RMA, as any advocacy with the provincial and federal governments would be conducted by the RMA if the resolution is successful at its fall 2024 convention. There will be direct financial and resource implications if the date of either the 2025 municipal or federal election remains unchanged.

These financial and resource implications would include additional investments in education and awareness campaigns, increased compensation to attract election workers, and staff time and resources dedicated to responding to increased inquiries and possible complaints from inevitable confusion between the 2025 municipal and federal elections.

Community

Rescheduling either the 2025 municipal or federal election would have positive impacts on the community by reducing fatigue and confusion between two simultaneous election campaigns, increasing voter turnout, mitigating an already stressful environment for election workers, and providing an overall positive election experience for electors.

STRATEGIC ALIGNMENT

There is no strategic alignment associated with this report.

ALTERNATE DIRECTION

Administration does not have an alternate direction for Council's consideration.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A: Proposed Emergent RMA Resolution

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APPROVALS

Manager:	N/A
Executive Director/Director:	Gina van den Burg
Chief Administrative Officer:	Byron Riemann

