



P.O. Box 1749  
Halifax, Nova Scotia  
B3J 3A5 Canada

**Item No. 13.1.2**  
**Executive Standing Committee**  
**June 17, 2024**

**TO:** Mayor Savage and Members of Executive Standing Committee

**SUBMITTED BY:** - ORIGINAL SIGNED -

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Cathie O'Toole, Chief Administrative Officer

**DATE:** May 28, 2024

**SUBJECT:** 2024 Municipal and CSAP Election – Mailout Cards and Completion Date for Revisions Period

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**ORIGIN**

This report originates from staff.

Under the *Municipal Elections Act*, Halifax Regional Council is required to provide direction on the use of mailing cards to voters to promote the election and to set the date on which the Amended List of Electors will be certified by the Returning Officer.

**LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY**

Municipal Elections Act, R.S.N.S. 1989, c. 300 (“MEA”), Subsections 34 (1) and 38(1), as follows:

34 (4) In addition to the notice referred to in subsection (1), the returning officer or the registrar of voters shall, **if directed by the council**, give additional notification that the preliminary lists of electors have been prepared by:

- (a) distributing flyers to households;
- (b) mailing cards to voters;
- (c) providing for advertisements, as directed by the council.

38 (1) On or before the date chosen by the council on the advice of the returning officer, the revising officers shall furnish the returning officer or registrar of voters with a list of electors consisting of the preliminary lists of electors together with the amendments that they have made to the lists as a result of their sittings.

**Recommendations on Page 2**

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

It is recommended that Executive Standing Committee recommend that Halifax Regional Council:

1. Direct the Returning Officer to provide additional notification to voters in the Municipality by mailing them postcards which notifies them that the preliminary list of electors has been prepared, and such notification may include promoting the 2024 municipal and CSAP election.
2. Based on the advice of the Returning Officer, set the date that the revising officers must furnish the Returning Officer with the preliminary list of electors, together with the amendments they have made to the lists, to be Friday August 30, 2024.

## **BACKGROUND**

HRM has used postcards to notify and promote the municipal and CSAP elections during previous years, in addition to other forms of communication such as in person citizen/candidate engagement sessions, social media outreach, and print advertising. The Elections Office would like to continue the practice of mail-out postcards for the 2024 municipal and CSAP election. Postcards are mailed to residents to remind them of the upcoming election, provide information on how to update their voter information, add themselves to the list of electors if they are not currently on it, and to watch for their voter letters which are distributed in advance of the alternative voting period in October 2024.

On December 12, 2023, Council directed the Elections Office use the List of Electors prepared by Elections Nova Scotia as the Preliminary List for the 2024 municipal and CSAP elections. Under the *MEA*, the Returning Officer appoints Revising Officers to revise and update the Preliminary List to create the "Amended List of Electors" (basically the Preliminary List of Electors together with all the amendments the Revising Officers have made to it). This revision period traditionally lasts one month and will begin on July 22, 2024. The *MEA* requires that the Revising Officer present the Amended List to the Returning Officer for certification on a date selected by Council. The purpose of item 2 of the recommendation of this Report is to seek Council direction on the date for the certification of the Amended List. The Elections Office is recommending that Council select Friday, August 30, 2024, as the date for the certification of the Amended List. (this becomes known as the Revised List of Electors). After that point, voters can continue to register and update their information by telephone until the end of the "Alternative Voting Period" (October 16 2024 at 7:00 pm) under section 7A of the *Alternative Voting Bylaw*. Voters who are not registered by October 16, 2024, can still vote by presenting at a polling station on Ordinary Polling Day and taking the prescribed Oath under section 98 of the *MEA*.

## **DISCUSSION**

In addition to mailing a postcard to each residence in HRM, postcards have also been distributed to libraries and recreation facilities to spread awareness of the upcoming election and promote the revisions period. These are a cost-effective means of communicating directly with residents.

The initial revisions period, which runs from July 22 to August 30, 2024, allows residents to contact the Election Contact Centre to ensure their information is correct in the voter information system.

## **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

The mail-out and printing costs for the postcards is estimated to be \$34,600. These costs have been considered within the municipal election operating budget (A125). On April 23, 2024, Halifax Regional Council approved the 2024/25 operating budget and a withdrawal of \$3.5 million from Q511, the Election Reserve.

The set-up of the Voter's Help Centre to receive calls was already scheduled for July 22, 2024. There are

no additional financial implications for certifying the Amended List of Electors on August 30, 2024.

**RISK CONSIDERATION**

The 2024 election is legislatively required.

**COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

No community engagement was required.

**ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS**

No environmental implications were identified.

**ALTERNATIVES**

Executive Standing Committee could choose to recommend that Regional Council:

Not do mailouts for notification and the promotion of the election. This is not recommended as it would reduce communication with residents about the election.

Shorten or lengthen the revisions period, this is not recommended as it would affect the amount of time voters have to call in and confirm their information and would delay the Elections Office in having the list ready for voter letters to be prepared.

**ATTACHMENTS**

None.

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A copy of this report can be obtained online at [halifax.ca](http://halifax.ca) or by contacting the Office of the Municipal Clerk at 902.490.4210.

Report Prepared by: April Doucette, Elections Coordinator, Office of the Municipal Clerk, 902.490.8683  
Liam MacSween, Elections Manager, Office of the Municipal Clerk, 902.233.5207

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