

Title of Resolution: Electronic Voting for the 2025 Municipal Elections

Moved by : City of Lethbridge

Seconded by:

WHEREAS Electronic voting, as an option, could be deemed as a convenience by many voters, with the potential to increase voter participation; and

WHEREAS The technology now exists to provide secure and auditable electronic voting processes; and

WHEREAS The general population is increasingly embracing the use of technology for a wide variety of uses; and

WHEREAS The use of electronic voting would provide opportunities for efficiencies and lower costs for municipalities by reducing the number of polling stations and associated staffing; and

WHEREAS Voters could participate in a barrier free election process, unimpeded by mobility challenges, parking issues, traffic jams, line-ups to vote, ballot shortages or adverse weather;

IT IS THEREFORE RESOLVED THAT the Alberta Urban Municipalities Association enter into discussions with the Government of Alberta and advocate for the necessary legislative changes Local Authorities Election Act to permit secure electronic voting in time to be implemented for the 2025 Alberta municipal elections.

Background : Electronic Voting for the 2025 Alberta Municipal Elections

The issue of electronic voting has been one which has been discussed extensively and tried in a few jurisdictions in Canada and in countries around the world.

The **Advantages** of electronic voting are generally acknowledged to be :

- Convenience and accessibility for voters – Voters don't need to travel to polling stations within defined time periods or line up to register and vote.

- Lower cost of voting than traditional methods

- Potential to increase voter turn out

- Instant absentee ballot

- Avoids issue of limited number of printed ballots (ballot shortages)

Disadvantages of electronic voting cited are:

- Hacks or viruses being used to corrupt the results

- Technical difficulties such as server crashes

- Difficulty verifying voter I.D.

- Limited access to internet and limited understanding on the part of some voters.

The technology for electronic voting has now progressed to the point where the disadvantages have been addressed and safe, secure electronic voting is a viable alternative which could be used to supplement existing voting practices. These technologies include block chain, fingerprint and facial recognition.

The ability to access electronic voting on home computers and mobile devices is now available and could be tested over the next four years in order to make it available for the 2025 Alberta municipal elections.

In addition, there would need to be amendments to the Local Authorities Election Act in order to permit electronic voting. Electronic voting is currently precluded.

There are Alberta companies who could handle the electronic voting process.

The Alberta Urban Municipalities Association would need to begin discussions with the Alberta government early to get verification processes completed and legislation in place by October 2025.