

Home Away From Home Service **Bylaw No. 389**

Determination of Total Number of **Electors for Purposes of an Alternate Approval Process**

- Purpose:** To make a fair determination of the total number of electors within the area affected by Bylaw No. 389, being Home Away From Home Service Establishing Bylaw 2020. An elector is defined as a person who would qualify to vote on the question of approving Bylaw No. 389 if such a vote was to be held on the date this report is prepared.
- Area Affected:** The area affected by Bylaw No. 389 is the entire Strathcona Regional District including the City of Campbell River, Village of Gold River, Village of Sayward, Village of Tahsis, Village of Zeballos and Electoral Areas A, B, C and D.
- Approval Process:** The Regional District intends to proceed with an alternative approval process to determine whether Bylaw No. 389 may be adopted without obtaining the assent of the electors by voting. Should it be determined that less than ten percent of the eligible electors within the Strathcona Regional District file a written objection to Bylaw No. 389 prior to the deadline for responses, the Regional Board may proceed to adoption without the requirement to obtain elector assent by voting in accordance with the provisions¹ of the *Local Government Act*. In the event ten percent or more of eligible electors object to the adoption of Bylaw No. 389 prior to the response deadline, the bylaw may only be adopted if approved through an assent voting process.
- Authority:** The use of an alternative approval process for obtaining the approval of the electors for Bylaw No. 389 is authorized by section 86 of the *Community Charter*, and section 342(2) of the *Local Government Act*.
- Elector Eligibility:** For the purposes of this report the criteria used for determining the eligibility of persons to vote as electors is based on Part 4 [*Assent Voting*] of the *Local Government Act* of British Columbia. That statute defines electors to include persons who meet the following criteria:
- Canadian citizen
 - 18 years of age or older
 - resident of British Columbia for the last 6 months
 - resident of (or owner of real property within) the voting jurisdiction for the last 30 days
 - not otherwise disqualified from voting

Methodology: This report will attempt to make a fair determination of the total number of electors within the area affected by Bylaw No. 389. The number of electors will be the total of those persons who qualify to vote as resident electors and those who qualify to vote as non-resident property electors. Since the methodologies for determining the total number of each type of elector differ significantly, they will need to be determined separately with the results of those calculations aggregated for the purposes of this report.

Resident Electors

Both the Federal and Provincial election authorities maintain lists of registered voters but the databases are not aligned with local government jurisdictional boundaries and are therefore not particularly useful for purposes of this report. Since there is no reliable information available using existing voter enumeration data, it is necessary to consider the use of other data for the purpose of preparing an estimate of eligible electors.

BC Stats and ElectionsBC are public agencies which maintain comprehensive databases of population, population distribution, voter eligibility, voter participation rates and other demographics. The following data are supplied by those agencies:

Demographic	Estimate	Source
Population of British Columbia	5,071,336	BC Stats (July 1, 2019)
Population of Strathcona Regional District	49,085	BC Stats (July 1, 2019)
Provincial electors in British Columbia	3,564,307	Elections BC (July 1, 2019)

Using the above data it can be determined that approximately 70.28% of the population of British Columbia would likely qualify as provincial electors. Notwithstanding minor variations in regional demographics it is believed that this ratio would be sufficiently accurate for estimating the number of provincial electors within the Strathcona Regional District. Since the majority of qualifications required for voting in provincial elections are the same as those required for voting as a resident in local elections, the application of this ratio should provide a reasonable starting point for estimating the number of resident electors within the Strathcona Regional District. Therefore, multiplying the above percentage against the 49,085 population estimate provided by BC Stats yields a total of 34,499 eligible provincial electors resident in the Regional District.

Since there is a minimum residency² requirement associated with qualifying to vote locally it is necessary to eliminate from the above estimate the number of electors who have not resided within the boundaries of the Regional District for the past 30 days. BC Stats maintains annual estimates of international, interprovincial and intraprovincial immigration and emigration for each regional district in British Columbia and has estimated that total in-migration of 2,909 persons occurred between mid-2018 and mid-2019 for the Strathcona Regional District. Although this data does not include 2020 migration numbers it is the most

recent data available and is fairly consistent with previous years. Therefore, assuming that in-migration continues to occur at this rate and that the rate is fairly constant throughout the year, an estimate of the number of persons who move to the Strathcona Regional District within a typical 30 day period may be calculated as follows:

$$\frac{30 \text{ days}}{365 \text{ days}} \times 2,909 = 239$$

Assuming that the provincial ratio of 70.28% eligible electors to total population also applies to recent arrivals, it may be concluded that 168 residents would be disqualified from voting for failing to meet the 30-day residency requirement.

The calculations for resident electors within the Strathcona Regional District may therefore be summarized as follows:

$$\begin{array}{l} \text{Step 1:} \quad 3,564,307 \text{ (eligible provincial electors)} \\ \div 5,071,336 \text{ (total population of B.C.)} \\ = 70.28\% \text{ (B.C. average \% of electors)} \end{array}$$

$$\begin{array}{l} \text{Step 2:} \quad 49,085 \text{ (Strathcona Regional District population)} \\ \times 70.28\% \text{ (B.C. average \% of electors)} \\ = 34,499 \text{ (Strathcona Regional District resident electors)} \end{array}$$

$$\begin{array}{l} \text{Step 3:} \quad 34,499 \text{ (Strathcona Regional District resident electors)} \\ \quad \quad -168 \text{ (30 day residency disqualification)} \\ = 34,331 \text{ (net Strathcona Regional District resident electors)} \end{array}$$

It is concluded that a fair estimate of the number of resident electors within the Strathcona Regional District, based on the most recently available data and taking into account those who would be disqualified from voting due to having recently arrived in the Regional District, is 34,331.

Non-Resident Property Electors

Unlike Provincial elections in British Columbia, persons who do not reside within the local voting jurisdiction may qualify to vote in local elections solely on the basis of property ownership³. These non-resident property electors (NRPE's) must be qualified in all other respects (ie. Canadian citizen, 18 years of age or older, resident of BC, etc.) before they may be considered eligible electors. It is important to reiterate that persons who qualify as resident electors within a voting jurisdiction cannot also qualify as non-resident property electors for the same voting jurisdiction.

Demographic	Count	Source
Total properties within Strathcona Regional District	24,234	BC Assessment Authority (April 20, 2020)
Total registered owners within Strathcona Regional District	29,735	
Registered owners resident within Strathcona Regional District	25,675	
Registered owners resident outside of British Columbia	1,233	

In order to estimate the number of NRPE's within the boundaries of the Strathcona Regional District the database of the BC Assessment Authority was queried, and it was determined that there are 24,234 separate properties within the Regional District and 29,735 unique registered owners of those properties.

From this total of 29,735 potential electors the following were eliminated in order:

- 25,675 owners of property resident within the Strathcona Regional District;
- 1,233 owners being non-residents of British Columbia;
- 1,339 owners being corporate entities; and
- 12 properties owned by the Crown (Federal or Provincial);

It was therefore concluded that a reasonable estimate of the number of persons who could qualify to vote as non-resident property electors within the Regional District based on the most recently available data is 1,476. In arriving at this estimate it is worth noting that voting requirements related to age or citizenship of property owners have not been addressed since there is no data available to the Regional District upon which it could evaluate this demographic.

Summary:

The total number of eligible electors within the Strathcona Regional District has been fairly determined to include 32,498 residential electors and 1,476 non-resident property electors for a total of 33,974.

Conclusion:

For the purpose of the alternative approval process for Bylaw No. 389, being Home Away From Home Service Establishing Bylaw 2020, the total number of eligible electors has been fairly determined to be 33,974. The number of valid elector responses that are required to withhold approval for the adoption of Bylaw No. 389 without first obtaining elector assent by voting is therefore 3,398.

- References:
1. S.86 *Community Charter* and s.342 *Local Government Act*
 2. S.65(1)(d) *Local Government Act*
 3. S.66 *Local Government Act*