

Cortes Island Dog Control Service **Establishing Bylaw No. 522**

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. 522, being Cortes Island Dog Control Service Establishing Bylaw 2023. An elector is defined as a person who would qualify to vote on the question of approving Bylaw No. 522 if such a vote was to be held on the date this report was prepared.
- Area Affected:** The area affected by Bylaw No. 522 is the entire area included within Electoral Area B (Cortes Island).
- Approval Process:** The Regional District intends to proceed with an alternative approval process to determine whether Bylaw No. 522 may be adopted without first obtaining the assent of the electors by voting. Should it be determined that less than ten percent of the eligible electors within the affected area file a written objection to Bylaw No. 522 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 that ten percent or more of eligible electors object to adoption of Bylaw No. 522 prior to the response deadline, the Board would need to consider the options that may be available for adopting the bylaw or, alternatively, defeating the bylaw.
- Authority:** The use of an alternative approval process for obtaining the approval of the electors for Bylaw No. 522 is authorized by section 407 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 Electoral Area B (or owner of real property within Electoral Area B for the last 30 days)
 - not otherwise disqualified from voting
- Corporate entities are not permitted to qualify as electors in British Columbia.
- Methodology:** This report will attempt to make a fair determination of the total number of electors within the area affected by Bylaw No. 522. 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.

Resident Electors

Both the Federal and Provincial election authorities maintain lists of registered voters but the databases are not necessarily 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, Elections BC and the Ministry of Municipal Affairs are public agencies that 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	5,319,324	BC Stats (July 1, 2022)
Population of Strathcona Regional District	48,150	Municipal Affairs (December 31, 2022)
Population of Electoral Area B	1,119	Municipal Affairs (November 1, 2017)
Provincial electors in British Columbia	3,618,796	Elections BC (September 20, 2023)

Using the above data, it can be determined that just over 68% 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 Electoral Area B of the Strathcona Regional District. Once this number has been determined and, 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, this total should provide a reasonable estimate of the number of resident electors within the area affected by Bylaw No. 522.

To summarize, the number of resident electors within the service area for the proposed regional housing service may therefore be estimated as follows:

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Step 1:} & \quad 3,618,796 \text{ (eligible provincial electors)} \\ & \quad \div 5,319,324 \text{ (total population of B.C.)} \\ & \quad = 68.03\% \text{ (B.C. average \% of electors)} \end{aligned}$$

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Step 2:} & \quad 48,150 \text{ (Regional District population)} \\ & \quad \times 68.03\% \text{ (B.C. average \% of electors)} \\ & \quad = 32,757 \text{ (Regional District resident electors)} \end{aligned}$$

$$\begin{aligned}
 \text{Step 3:} & \quad 32,757 \text{ (Regional District resident electors)} \\
 & \quad \times 2.32\% \text{ (percentage of SRD residents in Electoral Area B)} \\
 & \quad = 761 \text{ (Electoral Area B resident electors)}
 \end{aligned}$$

It may therefore be concluded that a fair estimate of the number of resident electors within Electoral Area B, based on the above data, is 761.

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 real 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.

The following information has been extracted from the database of the Assessment Authority for BC and is useful for estimating the number of NRPE’s who may exist within the proposed service area.

Demographic	Count	Source
Total properties within Electoral Area B	1,023	BC Assessment Authority (March 24, 2023)
Total registered owners of Electoral Area B properties	932	
Registered owners resident within Electoral Area B	493	
Registered owners resident outside of British Columbia	148	
Corporate and public owners of real property	91	

In order to estimate the number of NRPE’s within the boundaries of the proposed dog control service area, the database of the BC Assessment Authority was queried, and it was determined that there are 1,023 separate properties within Electoral Area B and 932 unique registered owners of those properties.

From this total of 932 potential electors the following were eliminated in order:

- 493 owners of property who reside within the proposed service area;
- 148 owners of property who reside outside of British Columbia; and
- 91 owners who are corporate or public entities;

It may therefore be concluded that a reasonable estimate of the number of persons who would qualify to vote solely on the basis of ownership of real property would be 200. It may also be noted that this estimate does not account for age, citizenship or other factors that may affect voting entitlement since that information is not generally available to the Regional District.

Summary:

The total number of eligible electors within Electoral Area B has been fairly determined to include 761 resident electors and 200 non-resident property electors for a total of 961.

Conclusion:

For the purpose of the alternative approval process for Bylaw No. 522, being Cortes Island Dog Control Service Establishing Bylaw 2023, the total number of eligible electors has been fairly determined to be 961. The number of valid elector responses required to ensure that approval for the adoption of Bylaw No. 522 is not given without first obtaining elector assent by voting is therefore 97.

- 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*