

Regional Housing Service **Bylaws No. 512 and 515**

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. 512, being Regional Housing Service Establishing Bylaw 2023, and Bylaw No. 515, being Regional Housing Loan Authorization Bylaw 2023. An elector is defined as a person who would qualify to vote on the question of approving Bylaws No. 512 and 515 if such a vote was to be held on the date this report was prepared.
- Area Affected:** The area affected by Bylaws No. 512 and 515 is the entire area included within the Strathcona Regional District.
- Approval Process:** The Regional District intends to proceed with an alternative approval process to determine whether Bylaws No. 512 and 515 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 Bylaws No. 512 and 515 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 Bylaws No. 512 and 515 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 Bylaws No. 512 and 515 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 the Strathcona Regional District (or owner of real property within the Strathcona Regional District 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 Bylaws No. 512 and 515. 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 those 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)
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 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 Bylaws No. 512 and 515.

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

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

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

It may therefore be concluded that a fair estimate of the number of resident electors within the Regional District, based on the above data, is 32,757.

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 Strathcona Regional District	24,405	BC Assessment Authority (March 24, 2023)
Owners of properties in Strathcona Regional District	21,107	
Registered owners residing within Strathcona Regional District	17,172	
Registered owners residing outside of British Columbia	773	
Corporate and public owners of real property	1368	

In order to estimate the number of NRPE's within the boundaries of the proposed regional housing service area, the database of the BC Assessment Authority was queried, and it was determined that there are 24,405 separate properties within the Strathcona Regional District and 21,107 unique registered owners of those properties.

From this total of 21,107 potential electors the following were eliminated in order:

- 17,172 owners of property who reside within the Strathcona Regional District;
- 773 owners of property who reside outside of British Columbia; and
- 1368 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 located within the Strathcona Regional District would be 1,794. 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 the Strathcona Regional District has been fairly determined to include 32,757 resident electors and 1,794 non-resident property electors for a total of 34,551.

Conclusion: For the purpose of the alternative approval process for Bylaws No. 512, being Regional Housing Service Establishing Bylaw 2023, and Bylaw No. 515, being Regional Housing Loan Authorization Bylaw 2023, the total number of eligible electors has been fairly determined to be 34,551. The number of valid elector responses required to ensure that approval for the adoption of Bylaws No. 512 and 515 is not given without first obtaining elector assent by voting is therefore 3,456.

- 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*