



**TOWN OF BLACKFALDS
REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING
REQUEST FOR DECISION**

MEETING DATE: May 25, 2021

PREPARED BY: Justin de Bresser, Director of Corporate Services

SUBJECT: 2021 Municipal Census

BACKGROUND:

A Municipal Census was conducted between March 1 to March 31, 2021 through the initial online census and then door to door enumeration. The online portion commenced from March 1st through to March 15th while for the remainder of the month the Census was completed with door-to-door remuneration. Alberta Regulation 63/2001, the Determination of Population Regulation was repealed with the census population estimates now taken over by the Office of Statistics and Information.

The information collected from the Census is used to throughout the organization to assist in planning, education, service delivery and development opportunities. The Census has been instrumental in identifying the need for educational requirements within the community.

The municipal census is consistent with the overall Municipal Sustainability Plan which will support a “Sustainable Community” by ensuring current information for community wide initiatives, promotion and lobbying to local and higher levels of government.

DISCUSSION:

This is the 1st year since 2018 that census data was collected by the Municipality using a combination of online collection and enumerators. In 2021, a shorter form census was agreed upon and implemented at a substantially reduced cost. The two-question census included:

- Number of Residents
- Age of the Residents

Marketing and Communications promoted the Online Census with a social media campaign as well as community signage at major intersections. The 2021 Census has a dedicated page on the Towns website. Alternative methods of completing the census included:

- Email
- Phoning the Census line and leaving the information
- Completing online
- Phoning the Civic Centre

Between the online and door-to-door enumerators the town completed 99% of the dwellings, with only 38 incomplete addresses. Enumerators completed 70% of the census, while 30% was received online.



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The population count from the census for 2021 is 11,015. This is an increase of 890 from the 10,125 count in 2018. The growth of 890 translates into 8.8% increase over the three-year period or on average 2.93% per year. The Alberta provincial average increase for the last three-years is as follows¹;

Province of Alberta

- January 2020 to January 2021 - 0.78%
- January 2019 to January 2020 - 1.65%
- January 2018 to January 2019 - 1.45%

Given the percentage of increase over the provincial average, it indicates that the Town of Blackfalds is still a community of choice.

Demographics

The following table indicates the change in ages from 2018.

| Range | 2018 | % | 2021 | % | Change |
|-------------------|---------------|-----|---------------|-----|--------|
| 0-5 | 1,158 | 11% | 1,307 | 12% | 1% |
| 6-20 | 1,854 | 18% | 2,336 | 21% | 3% |
| 21-40 | 3,521 | 35% | 3,835 | 35% | - |
| 41-55 | 1,510 | 15% | 1,717 | 16% | 1% |
| 56-65 | 729 | 7% | 803 | 7% | - |
| Over 65 | 345 | 3% | 489 | 4% | 1% |
| Undeclared | 1,008 | 10% | 528 | 5% | -5% |
| Total | 10,125 | | 11,015 | | |

Economic Development

Economic Development will use the 2021 Census data to develop accurate assessments of economic wellbeing for the community. To maintain a Smart Growth trajectory, we use the data to plan for the development of housing and business infrastructure and identify the gaps in a healthy, varied, and competitive business community.

Data from the Census will be used to plan for services, such as daycare centres, schools, and local healthcare networks. The data will also be used to identify trends and changes in business practices and provide factual information on emerging economic and social issues, as well as opportunities and challenges for growth within the business community.

¹ <https://open.alberta.ca/dataset/alberta-population-estimates-data-tables>



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FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

The budget for the census was \$30,000 based on previous years spending. However, the modified short question form, along with reduced software cost allowed this year's census to be completed for \$10,405 (Not including internal staff time). The following is a breakdown of cost associated with the Census:

| | |
|-----------------------|-----------------|
| - Software | \$700 |
| - Enumerators | \$4,698 |
| - Postage | \$3,510 |
| - Signage/Printing | \$497 |
| - Online Census Prize | \$1,000 |
| Total | \$10,405 |

ADMINISTRATIVE RECOMMENDATION:

That Council move to accept the 2021 Municipal Census as information.

ALTERNATIVES:

- A) That Council does not accept the 2021 Municipal Census as information.
- B) That Council refer this back to Administration for further review.

Approvals:

Acting CAO Sean Barnes

Department Director/Author