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## Municipal Vote Notes

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Welcome to the first issue of Municipal Vote Notes! We are here to keep you up to date on the implementation of the [Helping Tenants and Small Businesses Act, 2020](#) to prepare you for changes in your elections process related to the municipal voters list.

### **What is the *Helping Tenants and Small Businesses Act, 2020*?**

The *Helping Tenants and Small Businesses Act, 2020* (“the Act”), was known as Bill 204 prior to receiving Royal Assent on October 1, 2020. The Act gives Elections Ontario (EO) the mandate to establish a single provincial register that includes both provincial and municipal electors, and transfers the responsibility for municipal voters list preparation from the Municipal Property Assessment Corporation (MPAC) to EO beginning January 1, 2024.



## The Municipal Voters List Program

Planning and running municipal and District Social Services Administration Board (DSSAB) elections is complicated, and takes a lot of work. To improve the quality of the key input – the voters list – the Act legislates two major changes. First, is the mandate for EO to establish a single, permanent register that includes both provincial and municipal electors. Second, is the transfer of the responsibility for municipal voters list preparation from the MPAC to EO.

In developing the new register, EO is making a fundamental change by shifting from a property-centric to a person-centric data model which will more accurately capture electors. This new model will be supported by data feeds from Elections Canada, Canada Post, Canada Revenue, several provincial ministries including Transportation and Health and Long-Term Care, MPAC, and others. Since municipalities and DSSABs have first-hand experience in converting preliminary lists of electors (PLEs) into the voters list, we are looking for your feedback as the program goes forward. Longer term, the connections we are making between municipalities and EO will allow us to continue working together to improve the municipal elections process.

### ***Key Milestone Dates***

- October 2020: Legislation enacted
- January 2023: New register goes live, EO shadows MPAC for by-elections
- January 2024: EO takes over preparation of PLEs

### ***Implementation Plan***

The Municipal Voters List (MVL) Program consists of four main elements:

1. Building the single elector register – January 2021 to December 2022
2. Building the municipal portal – February 2022 to January 2023

#### 4. On-boarding municipalities – July 2023 to January 2024

In order to guide the development stage of the MVL Program, EO's tactics include the use of surveys and working groups to identify stakeholder voters list needs. The Municipal Working Group (MWG) includes members from municipalities in each of the Association of Municipal Managers, Clerks and Treasurers of Ontario (AMCTO)'s nine zones, representing small, medium, and large municipalities across the province. The DSSAB Working Group consists of representatives from each of Ontario's ten DSSABs with experience in running elections for representatives from Territories Without Municipal Organization (TWOMOs).

EO is currently meeting monthly with the MWG, and on an individual basis with DSSAB representatives, in order to define information needs and understand approaches to voters list development and maintenance.

### On-going Challenges

While we are working to improve the coverage of the new register, some areas will remain challenging. Collection of school board support data will remain with MPAC, as the new legislation does not transfer this responsibility to EO. Addressing, particularly in rural areas, will also remain a challenge until Ontario adopts a more rigorous approach to standardizing addresses, a change for which EO is currently advocating. We will also be reliant on elector self-reporting for some categories of data, including spousal information.

### Conclusion

These new changes are complex and will take time to implement. MPAC is still responsible for provisioning the PLE for the 2022 municipal election. However, EO and MPAC are collaborating to include revisions from the provincial general election in municipal PLEs.

We will begin to onboard stakeholders into EO's new municipal portal in mid-2023, and the full transition from MPAC to EO will be complete by January 1,

enfranchise traditionally underserved populations. Key to this success is the close collaboration of EO with municipal, DSSAB, and school board election staff involved in the planning and running of elections. Your feedback and involvement are critical in ensuring that we develop products that suit your needs.

## We Want to Hear from You

With planning underway for the municipal elections in October we will do our best to respect your immediate priorities. Responsibility for provincial elections in June may result in a pause to MVL outreach activities, but it is never too early for you have your say and influence the path to a better voters list.



If you have any advice about ways to improve voters list quality or election planning, we would love to hear from you! The team can be reached by email at [voterslist@elections.on.ca](mailto:voterslist@elections.on.ca).



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