



GOVERNANCE STANDING POLICY COMMITTEE REPORT

Title 2025 Council Orientation 90-Day Plan

Meeting Date June 26, 2025

Submitted By Councillor Crowson, Chair Governance Standing Policy Committee

Recommendation of Governance Standing Policy Committee:

BE IT RESOLVED THAT Council:

1. Adopt the 2025 Council Orientation 90-Day Plan, as provided in Attachment 1, as amended to include a discussion on the promotional items and its role in Advocacy as part of the November 7, 2025 session; and
2. Direct the City Clerk to book half-day placeholders in Council's calendars, once per month, for ongoing continuous learning including but not limited to tours, orientations, and engagement sessions for Council, commencing after the 90-day Orientation.

Vote:

In Favour: 4-0 (Unanimous)

Public Speakers at the Meeting: None

Public Submissions: None

Submitted By Bonnie Hilford, City Clerk & Returning Officer

Summary

As per the *Municipal Government Act*, 'a municipality must offer, and each councillor must attend, orientation training to be held prior to or on the same day as the first organizational meeting or the first regularly scheduled council meeting'.

This report provides, for approval, the Council Orientation 90-Day Plan for members of Council elected to Office after the 2025 Municipal Election. As per *Council Orientation Council Policy* CC7, Council is to approve the orientation plan before the General Municipal Election.

The Orientation will provide Council with timely and relevant information and tools they require to understand municipal government, the Organization and their role responsibilities, and duties as Elected Officials to assist with making informed decisions and engage with and represent their constituents.

The Orientation Plan reflects engagement of past observations and learnings which has helped to balance the “amount and pace” of information provided with “capacity and need”.

After the 90 days, one half-day a month will be devoted to continuous learning.

Recommendation(s)

The Governance Standing Policy Committee recommends that Council:

1. Adopt the 2025 Council Orientation 90-Day Plan, as provided in Attachment 1.
2. Direct the City Clerk to book half-day placeholders in Council's calendars, once per month, for ongoing continuous learning including but not limited to tours, orientations, and engagement sessions for Council, commencing after the 90-day Orientation.

Financial

The City Clerk's Office has approximately \$34,000 of funding for both the Swearing-In Ceremony and Council Orientation (external facilitators, materials, venues and other training and development that Council may request throughout their term).

Background and Prior Decisions

Pursuant to *City Council Orientation Council Policy CC7*, Administration must present a Council orientation and training plan to Council, for approval, before every general municipal election.

The *Municipal Government Act* s201.1 states:

- 1) *A municipality, in accordance with the regulations, must offer, and each councillor must attend, orientation training*
 - a) *on the following topics, to be held prior to or on the same day as the first organizational meeting following a general election required by section 192, or in the case of a councillor elected at a by-election, on or before the day that councillor takes the oath of office:*
 - i) *role of municipalities in Alberta;*
 - ii) *municipal organization and function;*
 - iii) *roles and responsibilities of council and councillors;*
 - iv) *the municipality's code of conduct;*
 - v) *roles and responsibilities of the chief administrative officer and staff,*
 - and*
 - b) *on the following topics, to be held prior to or on the same day as the first regularly scheduled council meeting, or in the case of a councillor elected at a by-election, within 90 days after that councillor takes the oath of office:*
 - i) *key municipal plans, policies and projects;*
 - ii) *budgeting and financial administration;*
 - iii) *public participation;*
 - iv) *any other topic prescribed by the regulations.*

Engagement

- In 2024, Council was surveyed for feedback about their experience with the 2021 Orientation and ideas for improvement for the 2025 Orientation. Five members of Council provided feedback that was incorporated into the Plan.
- The Senior Leadership Team, the Executive Leadership Team and City Manager were engaged, providing review and feedback to the Plan.

Recommendation and Option(s) Analysis

During the Orientation, Council will learn:

- Their roles, responsibilities, and duties;
- Administration's roles and responsibilities;
- Council's working relationships with Administration;
- The City's governance structure, how authorities are assigned and decisions are made;
- City bylaws, Council policies, and strategic plans;
- Status of City business and current issues facing the City; and
- Public communication.

Feedback from Council's survey on the 2021 Orientation included the following:

- Too much information;
- Too short of a period of time;
- Too detailed;
- Full days were too long;
- The Plan and session materials should take into account [Members of Council's duties](#);
- Council's Strategic Plan was rushed;
- Virtual sessions were not as effective as in person (during Covid); and
- Presentations and materials were only provided on TEAMS, not providing the ability for Council to write notes.

As a result, the following revisions to the Orientation are included:

- The duration of the upcoming orientation will be over three months instead of one;
- The Plan is designed to provide information at a high-level basis that Council will encounter or apply early in their term, with deeper dives later in the term as items occur or are presented to Council;
- Orientation days will be half days instead of full days, generally in the morning;
- The *Municipal Government Act* was revised to have certain sessions completed prior to the Organizational Meeting and the first Council Meeting. It also requires that councillors must attend orientation training;
- Council's Strategic Plan will commence Q1 2026 after the orientation and when Council is more familiar with their roles;
- After the 90-day orientation, a consistent half-day a month for the entire term of Council will be allotted to orientation/trainings/engagements - commencing February 2026; and
- Tabbed binders containing the orientation materials will be provided for ease of reference and documentation of notes, in addition to electronically.

Council key dates pertaining to the Orientation include:

- Municipal Election - October 8-20;

- Official Election results deadline – Noon, October 24;
- Swearing-In Ceremony of Council-Elect - October 27;
- Inaugural Organizational Meeting - November 3;
- First Council Meeting – November 3;
- Standing Policy Committee (SPC) meetings commence - November 19; and
- First Public Hearing - January 20, 2026

Key highlights of the Council Orientation Plan include:

- The 90-day plan commences Tuesday, October 28, the day after Council-Elect is sworn in, and ends on January 27, 2026;
- To comply with the new legislation, the entire Council has been pre-registered for the Elected Officials Education Program (EOEP) on November 1, prior to Council's first meeting. The program was developed by the Alberta Urban Municipalities Association and Rural Municipalities of Alberta to provide professional development to elected officials and ensure they are well-positioned to serve their communities effectively as well as provide networking and learning opportunities with other elected officials from other municipalities to give other perspectives;
- The Alberta Municipalities Convention (usually in September) occurs in November in an election year to provide the new Council with information, learning sessions and networking to assist them in their role. It will be held November 12-14 in Calgary;
- Facilitators will be both internal Administration subject matter experts and external facilitators, who have expert knowledge on the topics they are presenting.

After the 90-days, continuous learning and development will be provided for Council's term. One half-day a month, usually the first Tuesday morning of the month coinciding with a Council meeting, will be devoted to tours, engagement, professional development, refreshers, deeper-dive sessions, or other training Council may want. The days will be blocked in Council's calendars and added to the Meeting Calendars. Topics already being considered are Chair Training, Capital Improvement Program, Community Engagement (external presenter), Procurement, Infrastructure Tour, Community Social Development, Lethbridge Land, and Rezoning Conversions/Social & Urban Revitalization Tour.

Additional supplemental information will also be provided that will assist Council such as links to governance, training and City documents, as well as an Acronym Listing (Attachment 3).

- Community/Citizen impact - A big part of why elected officials are successful comes from the knowledge of their communities; the people, the landscape, the opportunities, and the challenges. Information on the aforementioned will be provided in the Plan. It is planned to have the individual session materials, that are not subject to FOIP, on the City's Election website for the public to view.
- Risk - A Council Orientation, with specific requirements, must be provided after a new Council is sworn in Office after a General Municipal Election as per the *Municipal Government Act*. Failure for Administration to provide an orientation or failure for Members to participate in the orientation risks Members not having the knowledge to perform their role to the best of their ability and to the satisfaction and expectations of their constituents. A well-organized and thoughtful orientation program will position Council to effectively discharge their roles and responsibilities.

- Implementation and Communication Plan - Once the 2025 Council Orientation 90-Day Plan is adopted by Council:
 - The Plan (including this report and all attachments) will be published on the [City's Election webpage](#) to assist candidates running for a position on Council with scheduling and expectations after the election;
 - External facilitators can be booked; and
 - Administration can commence development of the content and presentations.

Attachment(s)

1. 2025 Council Orientation 90-Day Plan
2. Calendar View - 2025 Council Orientation 90-Day Plan
3. Orientation Supplemental Information

Approvals

Department Director: Bonnie Hilford

City Manager: Lloyd Brierley