

# Political Parties in Municipal Elections

## Omnibus Research

Prepared for:  
Alberta Municipalities

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Prepared by



In partnership with

**Trend**  **Research**

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# Methodology

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- Survey questions were administered through the *TrendWatch Alberta Omnibus Survey* between August 29 and September 12, 2023.
- *TrendWatch Alberta* is a monthly omnibus survey of 900 Albertans, ages 18 and over. The margin of error for a probability sample of 900 people is plus or minus 3.3 percentage points, 19 times out of 20 (i.e., at a 95% confidence interval).

## Survey Design

- Survey respondents were initially contacted at random by live telephone interviewers and given the option of:
  - answering the survey over telephone at that time,
  - answering over the telephone at a more convenient time, or
  - receiving the link and answering the survey on-line.
- The initial sample list contained approximately 50 percent landlines and 50 percent cellphones.
- Interviewers made up to five attempts to reach each phone number in the sample before classifying it as unreachable.

## Interviews

- All surveys were conducted by qualified interviewers working out of Trend Research's centralized CATI facility in Edmonton. Field supervisors were always present to ensure accurate interviewing and recording of responses.
- The interviewing staff at Trend receives extensive training on the proper administration of interviews and are closely monitored by supervisors. A minimum of 10 percent of each interviewer's work was unobtrusively monitored for quality control in accordance with the standards set out by the Canadian Research Insights Council (CRIC).

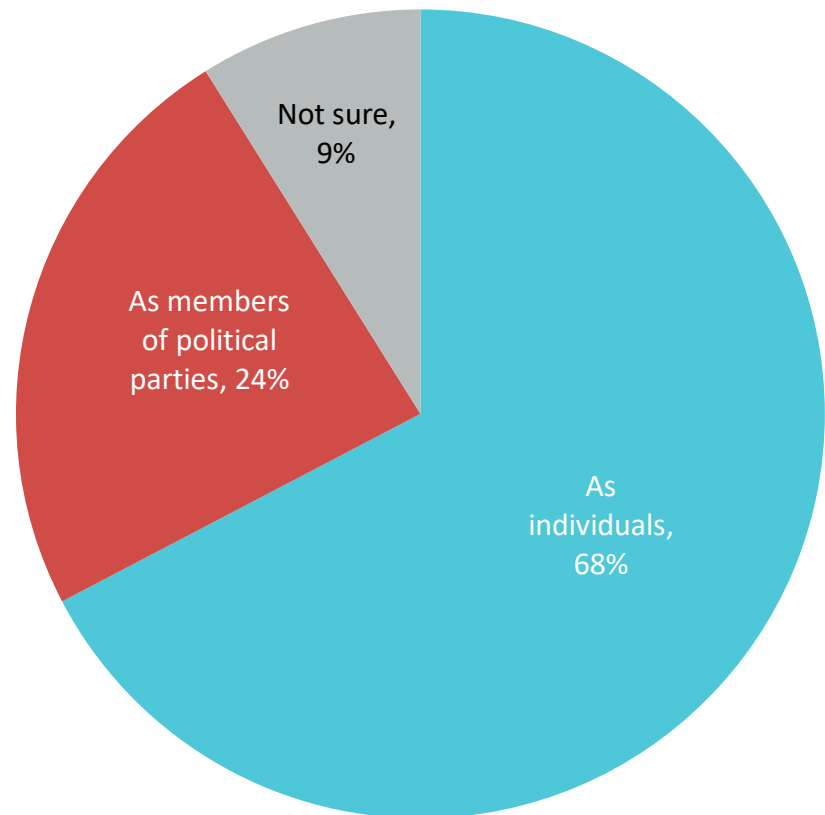
# Survey Findings

# Party Affiliation in Municipal Elections

Survey respondents were reminded that most candidates who run in federal and provincial elections in Canada represent political parties, but this is not the case in municipal elections. They were then asked if they would prefer to see municipal candidates continue to run as individuals, or as members of a political party.

More than two in three Albertans (68%) would prefer to see municipal candidates run as individuals. One in four (24%) would prefer to see them run as members of a political party, and nine per cent are unsure.

Those with a post graduate education are particularly likely prefer to see candidates run as individuals (77%).



In federal and provincial elections in Canada, most of the candidates who run represent a political party. In municipal elections in Alberta, candidates run as individuals, not members of political parties. In your view, would you prefer to see municipal candidates where you live run...?

# Agreement with Statements

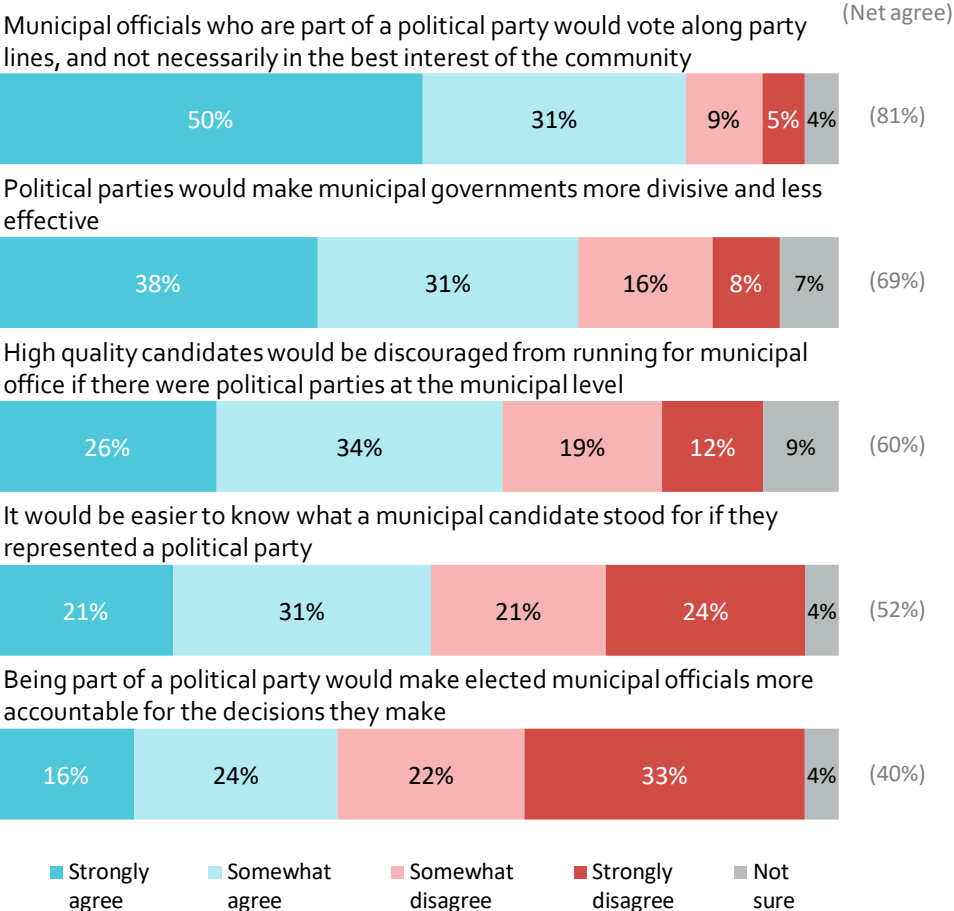
In order to gain a better understanding of why people do or do not support the introduction of political parties in municipal politics, survey respondents were presented with five statements and asked the extent to which they agree or disagree with each.

An overwhelming majority of Albertans (81%) agree that, if political parties are introduced into municipal elections, “municipal officials who are part of a political party would vote along party lines, and not necessarily in the best interest of the community” (including 50 per cent who strongly agree).

Most Albertans also agree that “political parties would make municipal governments more divisive and less effective” (69%), and that “high quality candidates would be discouraged from running for municipal office if there were political parties at the municipal level” (60%).

Albertans are divided on whether “it would be easier to know what a municipal candidate stood for if they represented a political party” (52%).

Finally, Albertans tend to disagree that “being part of a political party would make elected municipal officials more accountable for the decisions they make” (40%).



Please indicate your agreement or disagreement with each of the following statements about introducing political parties into Alberta municipal elections.

# Agreement with Statements

Those who prefer to see municipal candidates continue to run as individuals are particularly likely to agree that independents would be more likely to work in the best interest of the community (92%), parties would make municipal government more divisive (82%), and high quality candidates would be discouraged from running if there were political parties (73%).

Those who would prefer to see municipal candidates run as members of political parties are particularly likely to agree that it would be easier to know what a municipal candidate stood for if they represented a party (87%), and that being part of the party would make them more accountable (79%).

Also noteworthy is that those with a high school education or less are particularly likely to agree that it would be easier it would be easier to know what a municipal candidate stood for if they represented a party (67%), and that being part of the party would make them more accountable (52%).

**% saying “agree”**  
Based on those who prefer for candidates run as ...

	Total (n=900)	Individuals (n=680)	Members of political parties (n=614)	Don't Know (n=78)
Municipal officials who are part of a political party would vote along party lines, and not necessarily in the best interest of the community	82%	92%	60%	65%
Political parties would make municipal governments more divisive and less effective	69%	82%	38%	45%
High quality candidates would be discouraged from running for municipal office if there were political parties at the municipal level	60%	73%	32%	37%
It would be easier to know what a municipal candidate stood for if they represented a political party	52%	38%	87%	64%
Being part of a political party would make elected municipal officials more accountable for the decisions they make	40%	25%	79%	44%

Please indicate your agreement or disagreement with each of the following statements about introducing political parties into Alberta municipal elections.

# Questionnaire



**Alberta Municipalities  
Omnibus Questions on Municipal Political Parties**

August 10, 20

QUOTAS FOR ALBERTA: N=900

[Calgary\\_300](#)  
[Edmonton\\_300](#)

OTHER: North = 100, Central = 100, South = 100

Telephone script in red. Online script in green.

Hello, my name is \_\_\_\_\_ from Trend Research, an Alberta-based research company. We are conducting an important study about issues that concern Albertans. Please be assured that we are not trying to sell you anything. We are just interested in your opinions.

A. **DO NOT ASK:** Gender

1 – Male Quota = 450  
2 – Female Quota = 450

B. Which of the following categories best describes your age?  
**READ - CODE ONE ONLY**

1 - 18-19 years  
2 - 20-24 years  
3 - 25-34 years  
4 - 35-44 years  
5 - 45-54 years  
6 - 55-64 years  
7 - 65 and over  
9 - DK/NA

Insert quotas

C. What are the first three digits of your postal code?

\_\_\_\_\_|

To begin with, I have some questions on elections ...

M1. In federal and provincial elections in Canada, most of the candidates who run represent a political party. In municipal elections in Alberta, candidates run as individuals, not members of political parties. In your view, would you prefer to see municipal candidates where you live run ... **READ AND RANDOMIZE**

1 – As individuals, or  
2 – As members of political parties  
9 – Don't know / not sure

M2. Please indicate whether you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, or strongly disagree with each of the following statements about introducing political parties into Alberta municipal elections.

**READ AND RANDOMIZE**

	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree	DK/NA
a) It would be easier to know what a municipal candidate stood for if they represented a political party	1	2	3	4	9
b) Political parties would make municipal governments more divisive and less effective	1	2	3	4	9
c) Being part of a political party would make elected municipal officials more accountable for the decisions they make	1	2	3	4	9
d) High quality candidates would be discouraged from running for municipal office if there were political parties at the municipal level	1	2	3	4	9
e) Municipal officials who are part of a political party would vote along party lines, and not necessarily in the best interest of the community	1	2	3	4	9

**DEMOGRAPHICS**

Just before we finish, I'd like to ask you a few questions strictly for classification purposes

D1. Which of the following best describes your present employment status? **READ LIST**

1 – Working full-time  
2 – Working part-time  
3 – Unemployed or looking for a job  
4 – Stay at home full-time  
5 – Student, or  
6 – Retired

**DO NOT READ**  
9 – DK/NA

D2. Do you work in the public or private sector? **(IF NOT WORKING, ASK ABOUT LAST JOB)**

1 – Public sector, meaning any level of Government  
2 – Private sector, meaning private industry or business  
9 – DK/NA

D3. What is the highest level of education that you have reached?

**DO NOT READ - CIRCLE ONE ONLY**

- 1 – Completed / some elementary school
- 2 – Completed / some high school
- 3 – Completed / some college, vocational or trade school
- 4 – Some university
- 5 – Completed university (Bachelor's Degree)
- 6 – Post graduate/professional school (Master's Degree or PhD)
- 7 – No schooling
- VOLUNTEERED**
- 8 - DK/NA

D4. Do you have any children in your household age 17 and under?

- 1 – Yes
- 2 – No

D5. For statistical purposes only, we need information about your income. All individual responses will be kept confidential. Please tell me which category applies to your **total household income before taxes** in 2022. **READ - CIRCLE ONE ONLY**

- 01 - Under \$10,000
- 02 – \$10,000 to less than \$20,000
- 03 - \$20,000 to less than \$30,000
- 04 - \$30,000 to less than \$40,000
- 05 - \$40,000 to less than \$60,000
- 06 - \$60,000 to less than \$80,000
- 07 - \$80,000 to less than \$100,000
- 08 - \$100,000 to less than \$120,000
- 09 – Over \$120,000
- 10 – Don't know / refused

These are all the questions I have. Thank you very much for your participation.

# Data Tables



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