



## CITY OF LOWELL ELECTIONS AND CENSUS OFFICE GUIDE TO CHANGES IN 2021 MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS

### I. INTRODUCTION

This guide has been prepared to provide candidates with information regarding the new electoral system the City of Lowell will employ for municipal elections this year. Under a federal consent decree in the matter of Huot et. al. v. City of Lowell, the City is changing from an at-large electoral system to an at-large and district based “hybrid” system for municipal elections. This guide has been prepared to provide an overview of these changes and what they mean for you.

### II. MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS UNDER THE PREVIOUS “AT-LARGE” SYSTEM

Prior Municipal Elections were conducted in an “at-large” electoral system. Under this system, all candidates ran City-wide for City Council and School Committee. There were nine (9) City Council Seats and six (6) School Committee seats. City Councilors and School Committee members serve two year terms.

All of the candidates listed on a ballot ran for the same seats, and the system was “winner take all.” The candidate with the most votes would take the first seat. The next highest vote gatherer would get the next highest seat, the third highest voter getter would get the third seat, and onward until all available seats were filled.

### III. MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS UNDER THE NEW “HYBRID” SYSTEM

Starting this year, municipal elections will be conducted through a district and at-large “hybrid” system. While City Councilors and School Committee members will continue to serve two year terms, the manner in which voters will elect them has changed. A summary of these changes is provided below:

#### A. City Council

Under the hybrid system, the City is divided into eight City Council districts. A color map of these new City Council districts is included with this guide and can be found as **Exhibit A**.

The number of City Council seats has been expanded from nine to eleven seats total. Of these eleven seats, eight seats are divided up among the eight districts, one seat per district. Candidates running for a district seat are elected by voters who reside in that district only. Thus, the voters from each district will vote for the candidate to represent their district on the City Council, and the candidate with the most votes from the district will be elected to the seat.

The remaining three City Council seats remain at-large, which means that all voters in the City will vote to fill these seats. The three candidates with the highest vote tallies will be elected to fill these seats.

At the first City Council session in 2022, all eleven City Councilors will be sworn in. After they are sworn in, they will select amongst themselves a member to serve as mayor and a member to serve as vice-mayor for the two year term.

When seeking nomination for any City Council seat, a candidate must declare on their nomination papers what seat they are seeking, whether at large or district. A candidate cannot run for both an at-large seat and a district seat at the same time.

#### B. School Committee

Under the hybrid system, the School Committee will remain at six elected seats. However, four of these seats will now be district seats. These four School Committee districts are created by combining two of the eight City Council districts as follows:

- School Committee District 1 is comprised of City Council Districts 1 and 8
- School Committee District 2 is comprised of City Council Districts 4 and 2
- School Committee District 3 is comprised of City Council Districts 3 and 5
- School Committee District 4 is comprised of City Council Districts 6 and 7.

A color map of these new School Committee districts is included with this guide and can be found as **Exhibit B**.

The remaining two School Committee seats will remain at-large. Just like with the at-large City Council seats, all voters in the City will vote for these at-large School Committee candidates. The two candidates with the highest vote tallies will be elected to fill these seats.

#### IV. CONTACT INFORMATION

If you have any questions please contact the Elections Office:

**City of Lowell Elections and Census Office**  
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