



2018 Municipal Election Accessibility Plan

Section 12.1 of the *Municipal Elections Act, 1996*, states that

“a Clerk who is responsible for conducting an election shall have regard to the needs of electors and candidates with disabilities.”

Section 12.2 of the *Municipal Elections Act, 1996*, states that

“The clerk shall prepare a plan regarding the identification, removal and prevention of barriers that affect electors and candidates with disabilities and shall make the plan available to the public before voting day in a regular election”

The City Clerk is responsible for conducting Municipal Elections in accordance with the *Municipal Elections Act, 1996*, the *Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001* and the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005*.

The following is the proposed Accessibility Plan for the 2018 Municipal Election. As items are completed the date completed column will be updated.

Actions
Attend meeting a of the Accessibility Advisory Committee to discuss measures used in 2014 Municipal Election and receive comments and suggestions for 2018
Consult with the Accessibility Coordinator to discuss 2018 Municipal Elections Accessibility Plan throughout various stages of the election planning and delivery
Utilize an accessibility checklist that was created with input from the Accessibility Advisory Committee that was reviewed by the Accessibility Coordinator in the spring of 2017 to ensure it is still AODA compliant.
Assess voting equipment to ensure it met the needs of the electorate.
Review past election practices and identify any risk to the accessibility of candidates and electors and identified the impact of the risk and developed measures to minimize the risk.

Communications and Information

Action
Communication initiatives and information for candidates and electors will be available in alternate formats
Post all information to municipality's website including links to the Candidates Guide to Accessible Elections, produced jointly by the Association of Municipal Managers, Clerk's and Treasurer's of Ontario as well as other related material. (if produced in 2018)
Provide candidates and staff with information relating to accessible customer service
Provide information to candidates regarding campaign expenses and particular rules affecting disabled candidates
Communications will be available to facilitate notice of service disruption





Voting Locations

Action
Conduct site visits of all new voting locations to ensure accessibility based on checklist requirements. Sites that were used in 2014 will be revisited to ensure that accessibility standards were still met.
Continue to look for locations that are fully accessible in 2018 or work with City staff /voting location staff to ensure location is accessible or made accessible for voters.
Provide accessible voting equipment at each permanent voting location, on all voting days. Audio ballots will be provided on every machine, at every location. In addition, the size of the text on the ballots can be increased to enhance readability. An attachment for sip and puff will be available at each voting location. A sign language interpreter will be on "stand by" on Voting Day to ensure availability for electors requiring assistance.
Provide a voting opportunity at individual buildings or complexes with 75 or more dwelling units to increase accessibility and voting opportunities. A comprehensive communications strategy will be developed to advertise these opportunities
Provide appropriate signage at voting locations. Mobile signs will be rented to identify voting locations as well as voting dates and times. The signs are highly visible and very effective. Provide additional signage to buildings/complexes with 75 units or more, particularly if units are in more than one building.
Permit service animals and support persons in all voting locations. Election staff will be trained to ensure that service animals would be permitted. Confirmation will be requested from each voting location regarding access for service animals.
Ensure designated or reserved parking for persons with disabilities at each voting location. This will be confirmed during site inspections of each location.
Provide Barrie Transit/BACTS passes to attend voting location as part of voter notification information letter. Information will be posted on buses and on some transit shelters regarding voting and promoted free transit as an alternative means to reach voting locations. Investigate and work with Transit to have a voting bus.



Voting locations set up to allow for maximum accessibility. This will include ensuring the distance between voting machines, location of power cords, lighting, signage (internal), etc. all considered in the set up of the room, as feasible.

Additional seating will be provided, where feasible at voting locations.

Election Supervisors will be provided with a corporate issued cell phone so they could contact the Deputy City Clerk and Election Coordinator with any questions to ensure expedient customer service and minimize disruptions to voters

Voting

Action

Accessible voting equipment will be available at all voting locations during all voting opportunities.

A Touch screen equipment will be utilized for every voter. This equipment can provide a larger text size and the availability of an audio ballot on each machine, at every voting location, every voting day.

Provide instructions on use of accessible voting equipment including notice of availability of the Accessible Customer Service Policy.

Signs posted at each voting machine. Video demonstration provided on the City's website and through Rogers Television. Information on all voting opportunities will be included in insert in the newspaper (special pull out feature).

Magnifying sheets will be available if an elector required one for viewing forms or the ballot on the touchscreen (beyond the enhanced font size already provided by the touchscreen). Magnifying sheets provide enhanced capability for those who are visually impaired to read and complete paperwork and vote more independently

Schedule extended advance voting opportunities including the Saturday of the Thanksgiving weekend

Multiple advance voting dates will be scheduled for the 2018 Municipal Election.

Promote advance voting opportunity for electors with disabilities

Notices for the entire voting period will include a promotion to encourage voting early for all electors and information about accessible voting.

Provide vote anywhere in the municipality at advance voting dates and on Voting Day

Action

Provide two voting opportunities on the premises of institution in which 20 or more beds were occupied by persons who are disabled, chronically ill or infirmed and retirement homes in which 50 or more beds were occupied.





Advance communication of alternative and Voting Day opportunities to electors throughout complexes, particularly those buildings with a mix of life lease, seniors apartments, institutions and retirement homes will be provided.

Provide American Sign Language interpreters at a facility occupied by the hearing impaired.

An American Sign Language interpreter was also on standby on final voting day and a staff member with knowledge of American Sign Language was available for alternate/advance voting days.

Staff Training

Action

Staff training will incorporate provisions to meet accessible customer service standards – including a section of the staff manual.

The Election Worker Manual will include information on accessible customer service. Staff were required to read an Accessible Customer Service Handbook and sign an acknowledgement form in this regard.

Election staff will be trained on how to assist voters with any abilities.

Election staff will be encouraged to monitor an elector's concerns and needs to ensure they were met, i.e. if an individual with a walker was in a long line, staff observed, and if felt that the elector was having difficulties, offered a chair and ensured that their place was saved in the voting line-up or offered assistance to help (did not assume assistance was required)

Election staff will be trained to identify a service animal and followed the Municipality's Accessible Customer Service Policy details related to service animals were included as part of the Accessible Customer Service Handbook that will be provided to staff.

Staff will be advised during training that service animals will be permitted in voting locations

Election staff will be instructed to access doors frequently to offer assistance and watch for electors unable to easily enter the building

Greeters will be available to open doors at locations without push button automatic door openers for every elector.

