



Post-Election Report – 2022 Municipal Election Accessibility Initiatives

January 3, 2022

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

Section 12.1(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 12.1(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 2022 Municipal Election Accessibility Plan was completed on May 31, 2022. The plan was made available on the City’s Election Website and distributed to all candidates. The Plan was available in alternative formats upon request.

Section 12.1(3) of the *Municipal Elections Act, 1996* states that:

“Within 90 days after voting day in a regular election, the clerk shall prepare a report about the identification, removal and prevention of barriers that affect electors and candidates with disabilities and shall make the report available to the public.”

This report provides an overview of the accessibility actions undertaken for the 2022 Municipal Election and identified in the Municipal Election Accessibility Plan.

2022 Election Plan	Comments and Observations
General Items	
Present the draft 2022 Municipal Election Accessibility Plan to the Accessibility Advisory Committee/Accessibility Coordinator and receive comments and suggestions.	The Deputy City Clerk and Election Coordinator presented the draft 2022 Municipal Election Accessibility Plan to the Accessibility Advisory Committee. The Committee provided valuable feedback, and made suggestions with respect to communications to voters, and configuration of the online and telephone ballot.
Utilize an accessibility checklist that was created with input from the Accessibility Advisory Committee, and reviewed by the Accessibility Coordinator, to ensure it is still AODA compliant.	The checklist was reviewed and determined to be AODA compliant. The checklist was used to evaluate Voter Assistance Centre locations, and identify any measures that may be required to mitigate accessibility concerns. The checklist was also used when considering the set-up and flow of the Voter Assistance Centres to ensure adequate spacing between kiosks and to avoid any trip hazards.



2022 Election Plan	Comments and Observations
<p>Assess voting equipment to ensure it meets the needs of the electorate.</p>	<p>A new internet/telephone voting method was introduced for the 2022 Municipal Election. The new voting method allowed electors to vote in the comfort and privacy of their own homes. Electors were able to cast their vote at a day and time most convenient to them.</p> <p>Additionally, for the first time voters were able to access the City's online Voter Registration Portal. The Portal provided electors with the ability to add or correct their information on the Voters' List from the comfort, privacy, and convenience of their own homes.</p>
<p>Review past election practices and identify risks to the accessibility of candidates and electors, identify the impact of the risk, and develop measures to minimize the risk.</p>	<p>The evaluation of previous elections assisted in informing all aspects of the 2022 Municipal election, including the location of Voter Assistance Centres, and the consideration of accessibility measures during the procurement of the internet/telephone voting solution, and the configuration and functionality of the online and telephone ballot.</p>
Communications and Information	
<p>Communication initiatives and information for candidates and electors will be available in alternate formats.</p>	<p>Staff were prepared to provide information in alternate/accessible formats upon request. Information was provided to electors and candidates in various formats, such as electronic and paper copies. No requests for information in an alternative format, such as braille, were received.</p>
<p>Post all information to the 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 (AMCTO), as well as other related material.</p>	<p>The City's website was updated to provide easier access to voter, candidate and third party advertiser information and forms. Efforts were undertaken to improve the layout of website content to improve readability and navigation of the site.</p> <p>Positive feedback regarding the information and organization of the City's election webpages was received.</p>
<p>Provide candidates and staff with information relating to accessible customer service.</p>	<p>Information was made available to candidates on the City's website and in the Candidates Information Guide related to accessible customer service, including a variety of quick reference guides. Accessible customer service information was provided to all election staff as part of their training and training material.</p>



2022 Election Plan	Comments and Observations
<p>Provide information to candidates regarding campaign expenses and particular rules affecting candidates with disabilities.</p>	<p>A copy of the provincial Candidates' and Third Party Advertiser Guides, which includes information concerning election expenses incurred as a result of a disability, were provided to all candidates. In addition, the Candidates' and Third Party Advertiser Guides were made available on the City's website.</p>
<p>Communications will be available to facilitate notice of service disruption.</p>	<p>The City's website, social media channels, and signage at Voter Assistance Centres were available if service to the voting platform was to be disrupted and/or if a Voter Assistance Centre had to be closed or moved due to unforeseen circumstances.</p>
Voter Assistance Centres	
<p>Conduct site visits of all Voter Assistance Centres to ensure accessibility based on checklist requirements. Sites that were used in 2018 will be revisited to ensure that accessibility standards were still met.</p>	<p>Site visits were completed for all Voter Assistance Centres to ensure the locations met accessibility requirements, and to identify any areas that required additional accessibility measures to be implemented.</p>
<p>Continue to look for locations that are fully accessible in 2022, or work with City staff/outside organizations to ensure location is accessible or made accessible for voters.</p>	<p>All 10 Voter Assistance Centres were fully accessible. Greeters were provided at each of the locations to assist voters with entering the location and directing the voter to the appropriate area or election staff.</p>
<p>Provide accessible voting equipment at each Voter Assistance Centre, on all voting days. Audio ballots will be provided at every location. In addition, the size of the text on the ballots can be increased to enhance readability.</p> <p>A sign language interpreter will be on "stand by" on Voting Day to ensure availability for electors requiring assistance.</p>	<p>All Voter Assistance Centres were equipped with laptops, iPads, and telephones to facilitate online and telephone voting. The laptops and iPads could be configured to adjust the size and contrast of the text on the online ballot. The telephone voting provided an option for electors who prefer to require an audio ballot.</p> <p>A staff member was available if a request for sign language interpreter was received. However, no requests were received during the voting period.</p>
<p>Provide appropriate signage at Voter Assistance Centres.</p> <p>Mobile signs will be rented to identify voting locations as well as voting dates and times. The signs are highly visible and very effective.</p>	<p>Signage and directional arrows were implemented at Voter Assistance Centres to assist voters in locating the appropriate room within the building.</p> <p>Mobile signs were rented and placed at each Voter Assistance Centre to easily identify the location for electors. The signs were highly visible and very effective.</p>



2022 Election Plan	Comments and Observations
<p>Ensure that service animals and support persons are permitted in all Voter Assistance Centres.</p> <p>Election staff will be trained to ensure that service animals would be permitted.</p>	<p>Election staff were trained to ensure the understanding that service animals and support persons would be permitted in the Voter Assistance Centre.</p>
<p>Ensure designated or reserved parking for persons with disabilities at each Voter Assistance Centre. This will be confirmed during site inspections of each location.</p>	<p>Each Voter Assistance Centre included designated or reserved parking for persons with disabilities.</p>
<p>Provide Barrie Transit/BACTS passes to attend a Voter Assistance Centre as part of the Voter Information Letter circulated to all electors.</p> <p>Information will be posted on buses and on some transit shelters regarding voting and free transit as an alternative means to reach Voter Assistance Centres.</p> <p>Investigate and work with Transit to have a voting bus.</p>	<p>Barrie Transit/BACTS passes were included with the Voter Information Letters distributed to all electors.</p> <p>The information promoting free transit as an alternative means to reach Voter Assistance Centres was posted on buses and some transit shelters.</p> <p>The Legislative and Court Services Department partnered with Transit and Access Barrie to arrange for the use of a fully accessible City bus as a voting bus. The Voting Bus travelled to 10 locations throughout the City over 3 days for 2 hours each. The Voting Bus was equipped with iPads and stylus' to allow voters to register and vote on the bus. Communication regarding the location of the voting bus was available on the City's website, social media channels, and the newspaper. The Voting Bus generated positive feedback from the voters.</p> <p>Outreach to those experiencing homelessness was also provided by election officials at various agencies and locations across the City. Staff attended 6 locations for 2 hours each to assist unsheltered residents in casting their votes.</p>
<p>Voter Assistance Centres set up to allow for maximum accessibility. This will include ensuring the distance between voting kiosks, location of power cords, lighting, signage (internal), etc. are all considered in the set-up of the room, as feasible.</p> <p>Additional seating will be provided, where feasible at Voter Assistance Centres.</p>	<p>The distance between the voting kiosks, location of power cords, lighting, signage (internal), etc. were all considered in the set-up of the Voter Assistance Centre to ensure it was as accessible as possible.</p> <p>Additional seating was provided at all Voter Assistance Centres.</p>



2022 Election Plan	Comments and Observations
<p>Election Supervisors will be provided with a corporate issued cell phone so they can contact the Deputy City Clerk and Election Coordinator with any questions to ensure expedient customer service and minimize disruptions to voters.</p>	<p>Election Supervisors were each 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.</p> <p>A Microsoft Teams Channel was set up with all Voting Location Supervisors and the Deputy City Clerk and Election Coordinator as participants. The channel was used to answer any questions or issues that arose, and to monitor the volume of voters at each location.</p>
<p>Magnifying sheets will be available to assist voters in reading forms or information at the Voter Assistance Centre. Magnifying sheets provide enhanced capability for those who are visually impaired to read and complete paperwork and vote more independently.</p>	<p>Magnifying sheets were available at all Voter Assistance Centre locations to assist electors in reading and completing paperwork.</p>
Voting	
<p>Accessible voting devices will be available at all Voter Assistance Centres and will provide options such as larger text size and audio accessibility at every Voter Assistance Centre, every voting day.</p>	<p>Voter Assistance Centres were equipped with laptops and iPads, which had the capability to increase text size and contrast of the online ballot. In addition, each Voter Assistance Centre was equipped with a telephone for voters wishing to access an audio ballot.</p>
<p>Provide instructions on use of accessible voting equipment including notice of availability of the Accessible Customer Service Policy.</p> <p>Signs will be posted at each voting device.</p> <p>Information on all voting opportunities will be included in insert in the newspaper (special pull-out feature).</p>	<p>The Accessible Customer Service Policy and step by step instructions for the online and telephone/audio ballots were provided to each Voting Location Supervisor.</p> <p>The accessibility features of the voting methods were provided on the City's website.</p> <p>The dates and duration of the voting period, and the Voter Assistance Centre opportunities were published in This Week In Barrie (TWIB) and posted to the City's website and social media channels.</p>
<p>Advance voting dates will be scheduled for the 2022 Municipal Election to provide additional voting opportunities and assistance to voters.</p>	<p>An advance voting period took place from October 14 to October 23, 2022. This provided electors with ample opportunities to add their name to the Voters' List, seek assistance if necessary, and/or cast their vote.</p>



2022 Election Plan	Comments and Observations
<p>Promote advance voting opportunities for electors with disabilities.</p> <p>Notices for the entire voting period will include a promotion to encourage voting early for all electors and information about accessible voting.</p>	<p>The convenience of the remote voting method was promoted to all electors, including those with disabilities.</p> <p>The advance voting period was advertised on the City's website, social media channels, and in This Week In Barrie (TWIB).</p>
<p>Provide 'vote anywhere' opportunities in the municipality during the advance voting period and on Voting Day.</p>	<p>The internet and telephone voting method allowed electors to cast their ballots anywhere with a telephone and/or internet connection, and at any time during the voting period.</p> <p>Voter Assistance Centres were set up to process electors from all wards. This allowed electors to choose a location that was most convenient to them.</p>
Long-Term Care Facilities	
<p>Provide two voting opportunities on the premises of institutions in which 20 or more beds are occupied by persons who are disabled, chronically ill or infirm, and retirement homes in which 50 or more beds are occupied.</p>	<p>Two voting opportunities were provided at each of the institutions and retirement homes as planned with the exception of two locations. Two locations were in a declared COVID-19 outbreak during the advance vote period and on Election Day. Staff delivered Voter Information Letters to these locations and provided the staff of these institutions with a direct phone number to call election staff if assistance was needed.</p>
Staff Training	
<p>Staff training will incorporate provisions to meet accessible customer service standards – including a section of the staff manual.</p> <p>The Election Worker Manual will include information on accessible customer service. Staff will be required to read the Accessible Customer Service Handbook before working at Voter Assistance Centres.</p> <p>Election staff will be trained on how to assist voters with varying abilities.</p>	<p>The Accessible Customer Service Handbook was distributed to all election staff. Staff training manuals also included information on providing inclusive and accessible customer service.</p> <p>Election staff were trained on how to assist voters with varying abilities during their training session.</p>
<p>Election staff will be encouraged to monitor an elector's concerns and needs to ensure they are met, i.e. if an individual with a walker is in a long line, election staff should offer a chair.</p>	<p>Election staff monitored voter needs and attempted to provide assistance when appropriate and feasible.</p>





2022 Election Plan	Comments and Observations
<p>Election staff will be trained to identify a service animal and follow the City's Accessible Customer Service Policy.</p> <p>Staff will be advised during training that service animals will be permitted in voting locations.</p>	<p>Details related to service animals were included as part of the Accessible Customer Services Handbook provided to Election staff.</p> <p>Staff were advised during their training that service animals are permitted in voting locations.</p>
<p>Election staff will be instructed to monitor entrances and exits frequently to offer assistance and watch for electors unable to easily enter or exit the building.</p> <p>Greeters will be available to open doors at locations without push button automatic door openers.</p>	<p>Election staff were instructed to frequently monitor doors and to offer assistance to electors unable to easily enter or exit the Voter Assistance Centre.</p> <p>Greeters were posted at each Voter Assistance Centre and assisted voters with opening doors and directing voters to the appropriate staff or voting kiosk.</p>

