



# Post- Election Accessibility Report

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## **INTRODUCTION**

The Municipal Elections Act, 1996, Section 12.1(3) indicates that the Clerk shall prepare a report within 90 days after voting day in a regular election, about the identification, removal and prevention of barriers that affect electors and candidates with disabilities. The report shall be made available to the public.

Staff in the Legislative Services Division strived to make the 2018 Municipal Election accessible and inclusive through the implementation of the following initiatives, as they relate to the identification, removal and prevention of barriers to candidates and voters with disabilities.

## **IDENTIFICATION OF BARRIERS**

- Legislative Services staff consulted with the Town's Accessibility Advisory Committee regarding election related accessibility initiatives.
- An accessibility checklist was developed and used during site inspections of potential voting locations.
- All voting equipment was evaluated and assessed to ensure it met the needs of voters with disabilities.
- A demonstration of all voting equipment was presented to the Town's Accessibility Advisory Committee for comment.
- A risk analysis of past administrative practices was performed and identified potential risk to accessibility needs. As a result, strategies were developed to minimize these risks during the 2018 election.

## **REMOVAL AND PREVENTION OF BARRIERS**

### **Information and Communication**

Legislative Services Staff underwent the following initiatives to ensure communication practices were inclusive:

- All election information was advertised to be available in an alternative format upon request.
- All related information was posted to the Town's website.
- The Legislative Services email account was utilized for receiving and addressing feedback.
- Nursing homes and retirement facilities assisted in circulating election information to its residents.

- All signs posted at voting locations were designed following accessible signage guidelines.

### **Voting Locations**

- Site inspections were performed at all potential voting locations.
- Accessibility checklists were completed for each location.
- Service animals and support persons were permitted in all voting locations.
- All posted signs at voting locations were designed following accessible signage guidelines.
- All voting locations provided sufficient designated accessible parking spaces.
- Election staff were instructed to monitor accessible entrances and provide assistance to voters experiencing difficulty entering the building.
- Voting opportunities were provided at institutions, in which 20 or more beds are occupied by persons who are disabled, chronically ill or infirm.

### **Voting Methods**

- ExpressVote ballot marking technology was provided at all voting locations on all voting days offering all electors the opportunity to vote independently by touch screen, audio-tactile keypad or rocker paddle.
- Voting locations were equipped with tools and resources such as magnifying sheets for persons with visual disabilities.
- Election staff provided support, as requested, for all persons with varying abilities.

### **Staff Training**

- Staff training incorporated information relating to the training requirements set out in the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 with a focus on assisting voters through the election process at the voting locations.

## **PUBLIC FEEDBACK**

The Town encourages feedback from the public. Feedback in the form of an email was received on October 24, 2018 from an elector regarding the ballot style. The elector indicated that the ballot had fine, small print for the candidate names and the ballot marking circle was too small and hard to identify. The elector requested for the next election the font be larger, all in capital letters and the ballot marked with a traditional “X” in a box with thick, dark borders.

Staff noted the feedback for consideration in the 2022 Municipal Election. The elector was notified of such direction. Staff also notified the elector that each voting location for the 2018 Municipal Election had an ExpressVote ballot marking touch screen available to all electors. The ExpressVote equipment has large lettering and has the capability enlarge the font as well as change the color contrast of the touch screen to accommodate individuals with visual impairments. The elector was advised that the ExpressVote ballot marking touch screen was presented to the Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC) for comment on October 26, 2017. The AAC supported the use of the ExpressVote equipment for the 2018 Municipal Election.

## **NEXT STEPS**

All comments received regarding improving the deliverance of election services relating to accessibility needs will be taken into consideration during the implementation stages for the 2022 municipal election.

### **Applicable Legislation and Requirements**

Municipal Elections Act

Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005