



CITY OF HAMILTON

POST-ELECTION ACCESSIBILITY REPORT

2018 MUNICIPAL ELECTION

January 17, 2019

The *Municipal Elections Act, 1996* requires that the Clerk shall prepare a report within 90 days of voting day regarding the identification, removal and prevention of barriers that affect electors and candidates with disabilities and shall make the report available to the public.

In preparation for the 2018 Municipal Election, Election staff consulted with Talent & Diversity, the AMCTO Municipal Election Project Team, the Disabled and Aged Regional Transportation System (D.A.R.T.S.), and the Advisory Committee for Persons with Disabilities.

Polling Locations

A comprehensive accessibility audit of each polling location was conducted prior to the 2018 Municipal Election using a revised polling location assessment form that was developed with assistance of Talent & Diversity.

Approximately 500 potential locations were visited and assessed for use during the 2018 Municipal Election.

The following considerations were taken into consideration in determining the suitability of facilities that were to be used by the City of Hamilton as voting locations:

Entrance and Egress

Accessible routes were required for each voting location used in the 2018 Municipal Election, ensuring that any barriers were removed to allow ease of entry for electors and candidates. The routes to polling locations were free from barriers and accessible for all electors and candidates. Locations that were not equipped with automatic accessible push buttons were provided greeting staff to ensure that electors with accessibility issues could enter the premises and make their way unimpeded to the polling location.

Parking

All voting locations had onsite accessible parking clearly marked with the International Symbol of Accessibility as well as an accessible route from the parking to the voting location within the building.

Transit

Proximity to Hamilton Street Rail (HSR) transit routes was a consideration when selecting polling locations in the HSR service area.

Interior of Voting Area

All impediments in hallways and low hanging signs were removed, and the International Symbol of Accessibility was prominently displayed on signage, at access doors and within the voting location.

Locations were well lit with ample signage posted to direct electors to the voting location within the building.

Following the assessment of all the potential voting locations by the City's Election staff, there were 17 Advanced Polling locations, 23 Special Advanced Polling locations and 172 Election Day Polling locations established.

Voting at the Polls

In advance of the Advanced Polls and Election Day, plans were implemented to ensure that every voter was able to cast their ballot in an accessible manner:

Accessible Voting Options

Advanced Polling locations were equipped with a Touch Screen Voting Tabulator (Dominion Imagecast Evolution) to assist electors. This special tabulator also allowed the electors to use an accessible ballot marking device, if the touch screen was not acceptable. These alternative marking devices were the Audio-Tactile Interface (ATI) Hand Held Touch Pad, Paddles and Sip and Puff devices. Each device connects to the Tabulator and allows the elector to cast their ballot. These Touch Screen Voting Tabulators were available for use at Advanced Polls in each of the City's fifteen (15) Wards and at one location within each Ward on Election Day. Information regarding the availability of this technology was published on the City of Hamilton's website and printed on the Voter Notification Cards.

On Election Day a lower and wider voting table was utilized to accommodate wheelchairs. Locations were selected to allow ease of use throughout the poll for wheelchair and scooter users.

Information and direction at each poll was provided in large font and all polling locations had magnifying sheets to assist in reading ballots and instructions.

Curbside Voting and D.A.R.T.S

Where an elector was unable to leave their vehicle, curbside voting was available at all polling locations. Election Officials would be called to an elector's vehicle and administer a ballot to the elector, maintaining the privacy and security of the elector's vote at all times.

The Election staff were once again able to negotiate a program with D.A.R.T.S. for picking up electors, providing a ride to a polling location, and waiting for the elector to return to the vehicle from voting.

An elector who identified themselves to the Election staff with accessibility requirements or were accompanied by D.A.R.T.S. were provided with 'Front of the Line' service. 'Front of the Line' service, provided an elector with accessibility requirements to move to the front of the line and through to the voting booth with minimal delay, which took into consideration the City of Hamilton's Idling By-law.

The 'Front of the Line' service was precipitated through feedback from the Advisory Committee for Persons with Disabilities and negotiations with D.A.R.T.S.

Voting Proxy

Electors that were physically unable to attend at a polling location were able to appoint another qualified elector to vote on their behalf using the voting proxy process.

Training

All Election Day staff were trained using the City Council approved Customer Service Standard for the City of Hamilton.

Voting Assistance

Electors under the *Municipal Elections Act, 1996* were provided with the ability to have an individual accompany them when casting their ballot. A designated support person or a “Friend of the Voter” was administered an oath of secrecy/confidentiality prior to providing such assistance.

In lieu, of an elector bringing someone to the voting location with them, our Election Day staff were trained and prepared to assist electors who ask for assistance in acting as a “Friend of the Voter”.

Feedback

Public feedback about the manner in which election services were provided to persons with accessible needs may be submitted to the City Clerk through a variety of methods:

- Telephone: 905-546-2424 Ext. 4408
- Email: clerk@hamilton.ca
- Mail or in person: 71 Main Street West, Hamilton, Ontario L8P 4Y5

The feedback process provides Election staff with an opportunity to take corrective measures to prevent similar recurrences, address training needs, enhance service delivery and provide alternative methods of providing election services.

Janet Pilon
Acting City Clerk