

City of Guelph 2018 Municipal Election Accessibility Plan



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Introduction

In accordance with the Municipal Elections Act, 1996 (MEA), all municipalities are required to adhere to the following provisions:

Electors and candidates with disabilities

12.1 (1) A clerk who is responsible for conducting an election shall have regard to the needs of electors and candidates with disabilities. 2009, c. 33, Sched. 21, s. 8 (8).

Plan regarding barriers

12.1 (2) 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. 2016, c. 15, s. 11.

Report

12.1 (3) 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. 2016, c. 15, s. 11.

Accessibility

45. (2) In establishing the locations of voting places, the clerk shall ensure that each voting place is accessible to electors with disabilities. 2009, c. 33, Sched. 21, s. 8 (23).

The City of Guelph is committed to providing an accessible and barrier free community and services. The following plan has been developed in advance of the 2018 Municipal Election in order to identify measures to be taken and reported to the public following the election and to ensure compliance with MEA provisions, the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA) and the City's Corporate Accessibility Policy.

Objectives

This plan has been created to outline the measures that the City of Guelph will be considering and implementing in order to ensure that the all electors and candidates have an equal opportunity to participate in the 2018 Municipal Election.

The objectives of the plan include ensuring that:

- all voting locations are accessible, including accessible parking and transportation options;

- persons with disabilities are able to independently and privately mark their ballot and verify their selection;
- persons with disabilities have full and equal access to all information on where and when to vote and on eligible candidates;
- persons with disabilities can fully participate in the Municipal Election as electors and/or candidates in an equal way;
- electors and candidates with disabilities are aware of the accessibility measures that are being considered and are available.

Development of Plan

When developing this plan, the following steps were taken to make sure that all legislated requirements were met and that a suitable implementation plan was in place:

- A review and analysis was conducted of related documents including the City's Corporate Accessibility Policy, accessibility guides provided by AMCTO, and other supporting materials from the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing.
- Meetings and consultations between the 2018 Election Team and the Accessibility Services Coordinator for the City of Guelph.
- Consultation and Plan review with the City of Guelph Accessibility Advisory Committee.

Voting Locations

A comprehensive accessibility audit of each physical voting location has been conducted using the site audit form listed in Appendix A. The following considerations are taken into account when determining which facilities will be used as voting locations:

Accessible Route

Proximity of the voting location to accessible public transit routes will be considered in the selection of voting locations. The name and/or address of the voting location shall be clearly visible from street level. The voting area must be identified with clear and understandable signage. The route will connect to and be accessible from a municipal sidewalk.

Entrance and Egress

The route to the entrance of the voting location shall be unobstructed and accessible. The route shall be wide enough to allow for an individual using a wheelchair, scooter or service animal to travel safely. Doors and pathways will be a minimum of 920mm (36 inches). Doors into the voting location and voting area should have an automatic door option and be easy to open. Easy to open will be defined according to an acceptable gauge of pressure as recommended by the

Accessibility Services Coordinator. Routine checks of entrance and egress routes will be made throughout the voting days.

Parking

Accessible parking shall be available at all voting locations. The designated parking space(s) will be clearly marked with the international Symbol of Accessibility and be on firm and level ground close to the entrance of the voting location. There will be an accessible route from parking to an accessible entrance. By-law staff will monitor and enforce parking at voting locations throughout the day.

Transit

Voting locations will be selected considering proximity to transit routes and distances from transit stops will be calculated and considered. The City Clerk's Office and Guelph Transit will work collectively to ensure that voters' with accessible needs are able to get to voting locations using the existing transit bus and mobility services.

Interior Voting Area

Access to the interior voting area and voting booth will be level and slip-resistant. Any doormats or carpeting must be level with the floor to prevent potential tripping hazards. The voting area will be well lit and seating shall be available. Entrance corridors must be clear of obstructions and tripping hazards and will allow sufficient space for use of a wheelchair or scooter. There will be clear signage directing voters to the voting area within the building.

Accessible Voting Booth

Accessible voting booths will be available at each voting place. These booths will be low in height and have a wide area to allow for individuals who use a wheelchair or scooter to vote independently and secretively. Pedestal tables will not be used at accessible voting stations.

Accessible Voting Options at Voting Locations

As part of the voting methods employed by the City Clerk, provisions for electors with disabilities have been planned for voting locations. Every effort has been made to ensure that every voting location is as accessible as possible.

During the advance voting period from October 12-14, all advance voting locations will be equipped with the ATI Handheld Touch Pad, the Paddles and Sip and Puff devices. Advanced voting locations are City Hall, the Evergreen Seniors Centre, the Clair Road Emergency Services Centre and, on Friday, October 12 only, the University of Guelph Athletics Centre.

On voting day, October 22, voters will be able to vote at any location in their ward. For voters who wish to use the ATI Handheld Touch Pad, the Paddles or the Sip and Puff devices, one voting location in each ward has been chosen that will be equipped with all three accessible ballot marking devices. The locations chosen in each ward were selected based on the convenience of the location, the amount of accessible parking available, proximity to main transit routes and accessible features of the facility. The voting locations selected to be fully accessible for voting day are the following:

- Ward 1: Guelph City Hall, 1 Carden Street
- Ward 2: Evergreen Seniors Community Centre, 683 Woolwich Street
- Ward 3: Dublin Street United Church, 68 Suffolk Street West
- Ward 4: West End Community Centre, 21 Imperial Road South
- Ward 5: Harcourt Memorial United Church, 87 Dean Avenue
- Ward 6: Salvation Army Citadel, 1320 Gordon Street

When a voter receives their voter notification card in the mail it will list the closest voting location to their address, as well as, all of the other locations they can choose from in their ward on voting day. On the card it will indicate which location will have all accessible devices available.

Accessible Ballot Marking Devices

The accessible ballot marking devices that have been chosen are the Audio-Tactile Interface (ATI) Hand Held Touch Pad, Paddles and Sip and Puff devices. Each device connects directly to the Tabulator with a standard USB connection at a distance with a separate ballot marking table to allow for a private and confidential voting experience. Each vote is recorded directly to the memory card in the Tabulator. When a ballot is recorded by the Tabulator from an assistive device it is indistinguishable from any other vote cast on that machine. Election staff will be available to assist any voter when using any of these devices.

Further information on each device and how it works has been included below and is based on information from the AMCTO Voter's Guide to Accessible Voting.

ATI Hand Held Touch Pad

The hand held device provides an audio ballot for voters with visual impairments. Each device has braille labels, and buttons with different shapes and colours to allow voters to listen to the audio instructions with headphones and hear the candidate options, and then touch the appropriate button to vote for the candidate of their choice. The controls allow each voter to adjust volume, pause and repeat audio messages, and adjust the audio speed based on their preference.

Paddles

The paddle device provides ease of use for voters with mobility disabilities. Paddles are attached to the ATI touch pad and voters follow audio instructions with

headphones and press the appropriate paddle to indicate which candidate they wish to vote for. Since the paddles are connected to and use the audio feature on the ATI device the same controls regarding volume, pause, repeat and speed adjustment apply to this method of voting.

Sip and Puff

The sip and puff device provides ease of use for voters with mobility disabilities. The sip and puff device is attached to the ATI touch pad and voters follow audio instructions with headphones and a disposable mouth piece is provided near the machine. Voters then follow the audio instructions and vote by sipping/puffing for the candidate they wish to vote for. Similar to the paddles, since the sip and puff device is connected to the ATI touch pad, the same controls regarding volume, pause, repeat and speed adjustment apply to this method of voting.

Voting Assistance

Support Person/Friend of the Voter

Pursuant to Section 9 of the City's Corporate Accessibility Policy people with disabilities shall be permitted to be accompanied by a support person at any voting location. A designated support person and/or 'Friend of the Voter' will be administered an oath of secrecy/confidentiality prior to providing any such assistance.

Service Animals

Electors and candidates are permitted to be accompanied by a service animal at all voting locations.

Voting by Proxy

Any qualified elector on the voters' list may appoint another qualified elector to vote on their behalf. The appointment must be made on the prescribed form available at ServiceGuelph, on the GuelphVotes website and can be requested by phone to the Clerk's Office at 519-837-5625 or TTY at 519-826-9771. The elector intended to be the voting proxy will need to bring in the form to City Hall and will be required to take a statutory declaration before a Commissioner of Oaths. A Commissioner from the City Clerk's Office will be available to administer this oath when the form is brought in. Proxy forms can be submitted to the City Clerk's Office anytime between Monday and Friday, 8:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. starting July 27, 2018 after 2pm until October 22, 2018.

If an elector is appointed as a proxy for a family member, being a spouse, sibling, parent, child, grandparent or grandchild, they may act as a proxy for additional family members as needed. However, an elector may only act as proxy for one non-

family member. A voting proxy may act for one non-family member or the family members noted above, but not both.

Election Officials

Election Officials are available to assist any voter with a disability who is unable to mark a ballot or may have difficulty with reading or writing. All individuals working in the capacity of an Election Official are formally appointed as such and administered an oath of secrecy prior to voting day.

Communications

The City of Guelph 2018 Municipal Election Accessibility Plan will be made available on the GuelphVotes website at guelph.ca/vote and at ServiceGuelph on request. The plan will be available in any alternative formats upon request as per the AODA requirements.

Application

In accordance with Section 4 of the City's Corporate Accessibility Policy, all Election Officials will participate in required training on providing accessible customer service.

Candidates must also have regard to the needs of electors with disabilities. Campaign offices, election materials and canvassing should all be reviewed in order ensure that they are fully accessible.

Election Feedback

Any individual has the opportunity to submit feedback regarding the provision of accessible customer service. They can do so through the feedback process outlined in the City's Corporate Accessibility Policy that has been outlined below.

Should members of the public wish to provide feedback regarding Election accessibility they can do so:

- In person to the Returning Officer, Deputy Returning Officer or the Accessibility Services Coordinator;
- By telephone, via the election line: 519-837-5625, the City's general inquiries line: 519-822-1260 or TTY: (519) 826-9771;
- In writing to the attention of the Accessibility Services Coordinator, 1 Carden St, Guelph, ON, N1H 3A1;
- By using the Accessibility Standards of Customer Service Feedback Form, which will be available on the City's website at ServiceGuelph and at all voting locations; or
- By email to guelphvotes@guelph.ca or accessibility@guelph.ca

Once feedback has been received, the City will implement the following process:

- If the feedback is received by a City employee other than a Manager, Supervisor, Executive Director or Accessibility Service Coordinator, the employee will forward the feedback form to his or her supervisor and the Accessibility Services Coordinator.
- The Supervisor will forward the form to the relevant Service Area or employee.
- The relevant employee will take appropriate action in a timely manner with the assistance of the Accessibility Services Coordinator and members of other departments if needed.
- Whether the feedback is intended to be a helpful suggestion or a complaint, the employee along with the Accessibility Service Coordinator will assess current policies, practices, and procedures to determine if any changes are required.
- Employees will follow up with the person who submitted the feedback if more clarification is needed, or if the person has requested that follow up take place.
- Employees will keep records of all steps taken, including any discussions with the person submitting the feedback and any actions taken.
- All feedback will be provided to relevant City employees who will follow up as appropriate.

Reporting

In accordance with Section 12.1 of the MEA, within 90 days after voting day, the City Clerk will prepare a report about the identification, removal and prevention of barriers that affect electors and candidates with disabilities and will make the report available to the public. This report will be available on the City's election website at Guelph.ca/vote and in alternative formats upon request.

Additional Resources

Further information can be found on the City of Guelph website at <http://guelph.ca/living/accessibility/> or by contacting any one of the following individuals:

Leanne Warren, Accessibility Services Coordinator
 519-822-1260 extension 2670
 519-837-5625 (TTY)
leanne.warren@guelph.ca

Stephen O'Brien, City Clerk/Returning Officer
 519-822-1260 extension 5644
 519-837-5625 (TTY)
stephen.obrien@guelph.ca

Jennifer Slater, Manager Information, Privacy and Elections/Deputy City Clerk
 519-822-1260 extension 2605
 519-837-5625 (TTY)
jennifer.slater@guelph.ca

Appendix A: Voting Location Site Audit Form

Voting Location Site Audit Form

Section 1: Facility Contract Information

- Facility Name
- Date of Site Audit
- Ward
- Street Address

Section 2: Facility Exterior

Parking

- # of parking lot spaces
- # of on street parking spaces
- # of accessible parking spaces
- External lighting (Y/N)
- Is lighting on a timer? (Y/N)

Accessibility

- Is the facility name and address clearly visible from the street and sidewalk? (Y/N)
- Is the sidewalk approaching the facility sloped or on a hill? (Y/N) Slope measurement:
- Is there a crosswalk or light to cross traffic close to the facility? (Y/N)
- Is the facility accessible by public transit? (Y/N)
- Is accessible parking available? (Y/N) Number of spaces:
- What is the average distance accessible parking to the entrance? Distance:
- Are the accessible parking space(s) clearly marked with signage displaying the international symbol of accessibility? (Y/N)
- Is the parking space firm and level? (Y/N)
- Are curb ramps provided? (Y/N)
- Are curb ramps and ramps unobstructed and free of potential barriers? (Such as parking spots that could block access, garbage can at top or bottom of ramp, etc.) (Y/N)
- Is space large enough to meet the needs of an elector or candidate who uses a vehicle equipped with a wheelchair lift (? (Y/N)
- Is the route to the entrance unobstructed and have continuous, smooth hard surfaces with no abrupt changes in level? (Y/N)
- Is the route wide enough so someone using a wheelchair, scooter or service animal can travel safely? (Y/N) Door measurement:
- Is the entrance accessible using a ramp? (Y/N) Angle measurement:
- Is the ramp well designed and safe? (Y/N)
- Is there an automatic door opener? (Y/N)

- Is the door hardware accessible? (Can the door be operated using a closed fist?) (Y/N)
- Is the doorway wide enough for a person using a wheelchair or scooter to pass through? (Y/N) Minimum 36 inches
- Is the door easy to open? (Y/N) Pressure measurement: 5 pounds max
- Is the entrance easy to see? (Y/N)
- Is the entrance well lit? (Y/N)

Section 3: Facility Interior

Advanced voting location and details:

Election day location and details:

Equipment

- # of required chairs
- Required chairs supplied? (Y/N)
- Are all lights working?
- # of required tables
- Required tables supplied? (Y/N)
- Is first aid available?

Power Supply

- Plug distance from location to election staff (in feet)
- Plug distance from location to Vote Tabulator (in feet)
- All plugs tested? (Y/N)
- Do plugs by election staff have a 110V/15A capacity? (Y/N)
- Are any extension cords required? (Y/N)
- If yes, how many?
- Will extension cords be supplied by the facility? (Y/N)
- Are power bars available and supplies by the facility? (Typically only 1 needed) (Y/N)

Accessibility

- Is there level access from the entrance to the voting area? (Y/N)
- Is the voting area on the ground floor? (Y/N)
- If the answer was no the above question, are there elevators available? (Y/N)
- Is the flooring non-slip, even and level? (Y/N)
- Is the voting area well lit? (Y/N)
- Are there seats available for people to rest if needed? (Y/N)
- Are corridors and doorways spacious enough for a wheelchair or scooter to pass through comfortably? (Y/N)
- Does the voting area have sufficient space for a wheelchair or scooter to move about? (Y/N)
- Does the facility have accessible washrooms? (Y/N)

Additional Remarks & Notes

SECTION 4: FACILITY DIAGRAM