

Accessibility Measures

MAKE YOUR MARK

Brampton Votes 2018

1/11/2019

Accessibility Report



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Introduction

This Accessibility Measures Report for the 2018 City of Brampton Municipal Election is a requirement under the *Municipal Elections Act, 1996* (MEA), as amended.

In early 2018, the City of Brampton published its Accessibility Plan for the 2018 Municipal Election, also a requirement under the MEA. The plan can be found on the City's website.

The MEA states the following:

Section 12.1 (1) 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) 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.

Section 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.

Section 45 (2) In establishing the locations of voting places, the clerk shall ensure that each voting place is accessible to electors with disabilities.

The *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005*, defines a disability as follows:

- Section 2 (a) any degree of physical disability, infirmity, malformation or disfigurement that is caused by bodily injury, birth defect or illness and, without limiting the generality of the foregoing, includes diabetes mellitus, epilepsy, a brain injury, any degree of paralysis, amputation, lack of physical co-ordination, blindness or visual impediment, deafness or hearing impediment, muteness or speech impediment, or physical reliance on a guide dog or other animal or on a wheelchair or other remedial appliance or device,
- (b) a condition of mental impairment or a developmental disability,
 - (c) a learning disability, or a dysfunction in one or more of the processes involved in understanding or using symbols or spoken language,
 - (d) a mental disorder, or
 - (e) an injury or disability for which benefits were claimed or received under the insurance plan established under the *Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997*; (“handicap”)

The City of Brampton Municipal Accessibility Plan (2013-2017) includes a statement of commitment towards accessibility:

The City’s mission is to be a vibrant, safe and attractive city of opportunity where efficient services make it possible for families, individuals and the business community to grow, prosper and enjoy a high quality of life.

The City values diversity and inclusiveness and the unique contribution that each resident makes to the local community.

The City recognizes that preventing new barriers, reducing and removing existing barriers and enhancing access to our goods, services and facilities is essential to providing

increased opportunities that foster independence, inclusion and dignity for people of all ages and abilities.

This Accessibility Measures Report outlines the steps that were taken by the City of Brampton Election Office to address accessibility requirements in an attempt to ensure that the 2018 Brampton Municipal Election was accessible to all electors and candidates. This report is intended to meet the above legislative requirements and the City's statement of commitment towards accessibility.

This report was reviewed by the City's Accessibility Coordinator.

Voting Locations

Selection of Voting Locations

The MEA states that each voting place must be accessible to electors with disabilities.

In the spring of 2018, the Election Team completed site inspections of proposed voting locations in Brampton. Over 140 locations were inspected, including schools, City of Brampton recreation centres, churches and long-term care facilities.

To ensure a consistent approach was used for inspections, an inspection checklist was completed for each of the locations. This checklist was reviewed by the City's Accessibility Coordinator to ensure that all accessibility considerations were reviewed consistently.

Items on the checklist included whether or not the facility had an automated door, level entrances, accessible parking and a reasonable distance from parking to the space to be used for voting. This checklist ensured that locations selected were the most accessible to electors. Appendix A is a copy of the checklist used by the Election Team.

Due to an increase in elector population since 2014, a number of new voting locations were inspected and used in this election.

Voting Location Accessibility

Voting Location Entrance

All voting locations were inspected to ensure that entrances were wide enough for a person with a mobility disability to pass through. If the main entrance to the voting location was inaccessible or not within close proximity to the voting area, another accessible entry point was used. A door person was assigned at every school during voting hours to assist with opening the doors for electors and directing them to the voting place.

Pylons were used to identify any hard surface settlements or grade changes that were not clearly marked or visible at the entrance to the voting location or on the route of travel from the parking lot to the entrance of the voting location.

Signage

All voting locations were clearly marked on the exterior of the building/facility with an orange City of Brampton “Vote Here” sign. Where the voting location entrance was not the main entrance, multiple exterior signs were used to direct electors to the entrance.

Internal directional signage (arrows and “Voting”) that met the City of Brampton’s visual standards was used at all voting locations. Other directional signage included “Voting Location” and “Accessible Entrance” signs.

Voting Area

All election workers were provided with a sample of the voting location set-up as part of their training materials. During the training sessions all election workers were instructed to ensure that space be provided to allow at least one accessible voting area. These areas had a four-foot clearance around the entire table to allow a person with a mobility disability to maneuver around the voting area with ease and vote independently and in secrecy.

Accessible Parking

Designated parking for people with disabilities was provided as close as possible to the entrance of the voting location. Accessible parking spaces were clearly posted and marked.

Additional temporary signage was provided and installed by the Public Works and Engineering Department when a voting location did not have adequate accessible parking in proximity to the voting location entrance.

Voting Methods and Elector Assistance

Accessible Voting Equipment

Accessible voting equipment was provided at each Advance Voting location and at one designated location in each ward on Voting Day in order to assist electors with accessibility requirements in voting independently. Information on accessibility and the election, including a list of accessible voting locations was available on the City's website and via social media.

Election workers were hired and trained on how to use this equipment in order to assist electors with the use of the accessible voting tools. The accessibility tools available with this equipment included headphones (audio ballot), high contrast viewing, Braille keypad, Sip-N-Puff and Rocker Paddles.

For the 2014 Municipal Election, Braille ballot templates were created and available for use at each voting location. Braille ballot templates were not developed for the 2018 Municipal Election, because they were not used in 2014, and in consultation with the Accessibility Coordinator, the Election Team felt that the tools available via the Accessible Voting Unit would be more useful to electors.

Voting by Proxy

A person unable to attend a voting location on Voting Day could appoint a person to vote by proxy on their behalf.

Assistance with Marking the Ballot

Election workers were provided instructions and tips in their worker manual on how to assist electors with varying types of disabilities, language barriers or different cultural/ethnic backgrounds.

Election workers, if requested by an elector, were permitted to assist with marking the ballot.

As an alternative to receiving assistance from election workers, an elector who required assistance marking their ballot was also able to be assisted by a “friend”. The person appointed as a “friend” was required to take an oath in order to accompany the elector to the voting compartment.

Use of Interpreters

Election workers could act as interpreters at the Advance Voting locations or Voting Day locations to translate information to electors who were unable to understand voting instructions in English. An elector was also permitted to bring their own interpreter. The person appointed as “interpreter” was required to take an oath in order to interpret voting instructions.

Magnifying Screens

During Advance Voting and on Voting Day, each voting location was supplied with magnifying screens for use by electors with a visual impairment.

Pad of Paper

As part of their supplies, election workers were provided with a pad of paper to communicate with electors with a hearing impairment.

Service Animals

Electors and candidates were permitted to enter a voting location (Advance Voting and Voting Day) with their service animal.

Curbside Voting

Curbside voting was available at all of our voting locations for any electors unable to enter the voting location.

Access to Information

Provision of Election Information

Alternate Formats

Candidates, electors and workers were able to receive information and copies of election documents in alternate formats upon request to the City Clerk's Office.

Translation of Elector Information

By-law 255-2017 was passed in November 2017 so that elector information could be translated into the City's languages spoken at home by at least 0.5% of the population, plus French. Languages that met this criteria included:

- Punjabi
- Urdu
- Gujarati
- Tamil
- Hindi
- Spanish
- Portuguese
- Tagalog
- Vietnamese

How to vote information was available in all of the above languages, at each voting location.

Information Booths

To make the entire election process accessible to as many electors as possible, the Election Team managed information booths during the week and on weekends leading up to the election at the following events/locations:

- celeBRAMPTON
- Farmer's Market (present at six)
- Canada Day
- Friday Night Live

- Youth Programming in Garden Square
- Saturday Movie Night (present at two)
- Bollywood Film Night
- Gore Meadows Community Centre
- Mount Pleasant Village Market (present at four)
- Cassie Campbell Community Centre
- Bramalea City Centre
- Brampton Transit Customer Appreciation Week

The information booths provided electors opportunities outside of normal business hours to confirm or update information on the Voters' List, ask questions about the election, apply to work the election, etc.

Election related materials and handouts were also provided to City of Brampton recreation centres and Brampton Library branches – these materials were placed in main areas or on front counters for the public to view and/or take.

Training

An Inclusive Customer Service component was included as part of the training for all election workers, highlighting the following:

- Legislative requirements for accessibility
- Embracing Brampton's diversity
- Flexible service that meets the needs of each individual customer
- Use of gender neutral language

The Election Team also provided accommodation for election workers with disabilities, including ensuring accessible training facilities and assisting election workers with disabilities.

Advance Vote

More locations, more voting opportunities

The Election Team aimed to provide greater accessibility during the Advance Voting period by offering more days and more voting opportunities for electors. Advance Voting began with three days of continuous voting (October 2-4) at City Hall, followed by voting taking place at ten locations (one in each ward) during the Thanksgiving weekend on Saturday, October 6. For the first time we also offered three days of continuous voting at the Civic Centre (October 9-11), which proved to be quite successful. Saturday, October 13 was the final day of Advance Voting with voting taking place at the same ten locations as the previous Saturday.

In 2014, Advance Voting was offered on Saturday, October 11 and 18, with voting take place at five recreation centres across the City (one located in each ward pairing). Continuous voting was also offered at City Hall and Bramalea Transit Terminal from October 14 to 16. The Voting Bus and Home Voting Service were also offered during continuous voting.

The number and distribution of Advance Voting locations provided additional accessible voting opportunities and may have contributed to an increase in elector turnout for Advance Voting.

Voting Day

Vote Anywhere in your Ward

In previous elections, an elector had to vote at a designated location on Voting Day, which was determined by their qualifying Brampton address. In keeping with the aim of increasing accessibility and providing greater customer service this election, the Vote Anywhere in Your Ward model was implemented, allowing electors to vote at any one of the 12-18 voting locations within their ward. This option provided more convenience for the elector in being able to choose where to vote within their ward.

The Accessible Voting Unit was also available at a designated voting location in each ward on Voting Day. With the Vote Anywhere model,

electors who required use of the unit and corresponding accessibility tools would be able to travel to the designated location.

Consultation with the Accessibility Coordinator and Accessibility Advisory Committee

During the development of the 2018 Municipal Election Plan the Election Team consulted with the City's Accessibility Coordinator, Wendy Goss. Ms. Goss assisted with making voting locations more accessible, and provided input on signage and route of travel.

The Brampton Soccer Centre had the highest elector turnout for Advance Voting and Voting Day. This location presented a number of accessibility considerations due to the installation of new hardwood flooring on Field D. To protect the hardwood flooring, a vinyl covering was required to be placed over the floor. The following measures were put in place to ensure that the voting location would be accessible, and that electors could move throughout the location with ease:

- A ramp was installed and used to help electors exit the voting place – the ramp was constructed and installed by Parks Maintenance.
- Stanchions and metal barriers were put in place to direct electors to the entrance and exit areas.
- To eliminate any potential tripping hazards, utility mats were ordered and placed on top of the vinyl floor covering that was installed to protect the new hardwood floor.

Ms. Goss met the Election Team on-site numerous times to assist with these measures, and reviewed and provided comments on the proposed ramp and voting location layout.

In addition to consultation with the Accessibility Coordinator, the Election Team presented to the Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC) on February 13, 2018 and to the local Canadian National Institute for the Blind (CNIB) support group on April 23, 2018. The presentations provided an overview of accessibility initiatives for the election, and allowed members of the AAC and CNIB support group to provide feedback and to try the accessible voting equipment.

Members of the AAC and CNIB support group provided valuable input and assistance to the Project Plan including input on training of election workers and how the Election Team could ensure that voting locations were as accessible as possible.

Conclusion

As part of the City's ongoing commitment to ensure that municipal elections are accessible to persons with disabilities as well as minimizing language and cultural barriers, the Election Team is pleased with the success of the initiatives implemented in 2018, as discussed in this report and is dedicated to increasing accessibility for electors and candidates in future municipal elections.

Appendix A: 2018 Municipal Election Voting Locations - Inspection Checklist

Location:			Ward:	Sub:	Inspection Date:			
Address:					Description of Location (i.e. Gymnasium):			
Location Contact(s):					Inspected By:			
Custodian (schools):								
Accessibility Considerations			YES	NO	N/A			
Is there accessible parking?					How many spots are available?			
Is the accessible parking located close to the entrance? Or ability to create some?								
Is there a clear and level path of travel from the parking to the entrance? (1.1m width min)								
Is the entrance and parking lot lit?								
Is there level access to the entrance?								
Is there a ramp to the entrance?								
If there is a ramp and the landing area is several feet above the ground, are there handrails for the ramp?								
Is the entrance door automated?					Push <input type="checkbox"/> Sliding <input type="checkbox"/>			
Are the hallways at least 3.5 feet wide?								
Is the voting location on the main level?								
If not, is there an elevating device to the second level?								
Is there adequate space to post a directional sign inside and along the hallway to the voting location?								
Is there at least one door into the voting location that can be propped open and that is no less than 33.5 inches wide?								
Any posts or other obstacles in the room where furniture will have to be placed around?								
Is there at least an 8 ft by 8 ft clearance within the voting location around the registration table and to the back of the accessible voting table?								
Is there enough space to allow a 3.5 ft wide path of travel between tables?								
Is there an electrical outlet close to the accessible voting booth - to accommodate an assistive device?								
Is there an accessible washroom close to the voting location?								
Are service animals permitted in the school?								
Are you planning any construction before October 22?								
Technical Considerations			NOTES					
Facility (Check one): City <input type="checkbox"/> Dufferin-Peel Catholic DSB <input type="checkbox"/> Peel District SB <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/>								
Wireless status:								
Number of power outlets : 3 prong 2 prong			Location:					
Other Considerations			YES	NO	N/A			
Speak to Principal about Hall Monitor?								
Washrooms available for election staff?								
Close to bus routes?								
Street parking available?								
Location visible from the street?								
Is the proximity of entrance close to voting room?								
Is extra signage required?					External <input type="checkbox"/> Internal (directional) <input type="checkbox"/>			
Are tables and chairs available?					Table Size: Table Qty: Chair Qty:			
Is the lighting adequate?					Requirements:			
Windows					Quantity: Location:			
Entrances/Exits - voting room					Quantity:			
Square footage								
Maximum occupancy of the voting room								
Proposed Layout			General Notes					
						Location Recommended for Use: Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>		
						Was this location utilized in 2014? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>		

Appendix A: 2018 Municipal Election Voting Locations - Inspection Checklist

Location Photographs	
1. Name of School	2. Entrance into Facility
3. Entrance into Voting Space	4. Voting Space
5. Voting Space	6. Reserve