



SUBJECT: 2022 Municipal Election Accessibility Plan

TO: Corporate Services, Strategy, Risk & Accountability Cttee.

FROM: Office of the City Clerk

Report Number: CL-29-22

Wards Affected: all

File Numbers: 165-16

Date to Committee: July 4, 2022

Date to Council: July 12, 2022

Recommendation:

Receive and file office of the city clerk report CL-29-22 regarding the 2022 Municipal Election Accessibility Plan.

PURPOSE:

Vision to Focus Alignment:

- Building more citizen engagement, community health and culture
- Deliver customer centric services with a focus on efficiency and technology transformation

Background and Discussion:

The 2022 Municipal Election Accessibility Plan, attached as Appendix A, provides an overview of initiatives for the upcoming election, aimed at improving accessibility for voters and candidates during an election. The main objective of the plan is to identify and eliminate barriers for persons with disabilities to ensure that the election is accessible for all. The plan covers key areas such as consultation, voting locations, voting methods, communication and access to information, and recruitment and training.

Section 12.1(1) of the Municipal Elections Act, 1996, (the Act) states that a clerk shall have regard to the needs of electors and candidates with disabilities, and section 12.1(2) indicates that the clerk shall prepare a plan regarding the identification, removal

and prevention of barriers that affect electors and candidates with disabilities. Section 12.1(3) provides that the clerk must provide a report 90 days after Voting Day regarding the identification, removal and prevention of barriers that affect electors with disabilities

Strategy/process

To develop the 2022 Accessibility Plan, the Election team reviewed the 2018 plan to ensure key areas were considered. Additionally, a jurisdictional scan was conducted to compare various initiatives in other municipalities. The Accessibility Plan is a living document and is updated as the Election team receives feedback and the plan is further refined.

90 days post-election, the Election team will prepare and submit a report reviewing the initiatives proposed for the 2022 election in the Accessibility Plan and whether or not the plan met its objectives of making the election an accessible one for all electors in Burlington. The report will also address any areas for improvement for the 2026 election.

Below is a high-level overview of the key considerations and approaches that are described in the 2022 Municipal Election Accessibility Plan (Appendix A).

Consultation

This key area was considered to ensure that stakeholders have input into the accessibility plan. The 2022 Municipal Election Accessibility Plan was presented to the Burlington Accessibility Advisory Committee for input and feedback. The plan will also be posted online for public review and input. Where necessary, the election team will conduct consultations as needed, to ensure accessibility standards are maintained throughout the election. The plan is a living document and will be updated accordingly.

Voting Locations

The Act states that each voting location place must be accessible to electors with disabilities. City of Burlington will have a total of 27 in-person voting locations. This number includes three advance poll locations and 24 Voting Day locations. Site inspections were conducted for all proposed voting locations prior to finalizing the list of voting locations. For any locations with accessibility concerns, remediation plans will be put into place to address any issues prior to Voting Day.

Voting Methods

City of Burlington will provide electors with various methods to cast their vote including online voting, in-person advance polls, proxy voting and in-person accessible voting locations on Voting Day, including polls in institutions such as long-term care and retirement homes. Online voting will take place over a 10-day period from Oct. 11 to

Oct. 20, 2022. In-person advance polls will take place in 3 locations across the City on Oct. 15 and Oct 18. Voting Day is on Oct. 24 and electors will be able to cast their ballot in any location in their Ward.

Communication and Access to Information

The Elections Team will ensure that election information is available online in clear and simple language and that it is continuously updated to reflect the most recent developments and information. Election information will be provided in alternate formats upon request and information about voting options will be clearly communicated to electors and candidates.

Recruitment and Training

All election workers will receive training to ensure they are able to provide accessible customer service and are well equipped to assist all electors. Accessibility training will be a mandatory component of election training, and election workers will gain an understanding about the services and accommodations available to assist all electors. Election workers will also be provided with an opportunity to indicate any accommodations they may require to work on advance poll or Voting Day to ensure an inclusive experience.

Financial Matters:

Total Financial Impact

Should any accessibility remediations for voting locations be required, the election budget will be used as source of funding.

Source of Funding

Election reserve is provided to support the election costs. Each year there is an annual contribution of \$160,000.

Other Resource Impacts

Not applicable.

Climate Implications

Not applicable

Engagement Matters:

The 2022 Municipal Election Accessibility Plan was presented to the Burlington Accessibility Advisory Committee on June 9, 2022. Feedback from the committee is being taken under consideration where possible as the plan is further refined, and election planning is underway. In addition, the City's Accessibility Coordinator was consulted, and they have provided comments to the Elections Team. For example, an alternate in-person voting location with better accessibility features was identified through our consultation. This location has now been inspected and confirmed for use for Voting Day. Further feedback and suggestions from the Accessibility Coordinator are being reviewed by the Elections Team to further improve accessibility.

Additionally, highlights of the 2022 Municipal Election Accessibility Plan will be presented to the Burlington Seniors Advisory Committee on June 27, 2022.

Conclusion:

The 2022 Municipal Election Accessibility Plan outlines the proposed initiatives to remove barriers and to ensure the election is an accessible one for all electors and candidates. Within 90 days after voting day, the Clerk will prepare a report about the identification, removal and prevention of barriers that affect electors and candidates with disabilities. The report will examine the effectiveness of accessibility initiatives proposed in this plan.

Respectfully submitted,

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Elections Officer

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Appendices:

A. 2022 Municipal Election Accessibility Plan

Report Approval:

All reports are reviewed and/or approved by Department Director, the Chief Financial Officer and the Executive Director of Legal Services & Corporation Counsel.