



2018 City of Kitchener Municipal Election Accessibility Report

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COK - 2018 Municipal Election Accessibility Report

1. Consultation Barriers:

Consult with individuals and groups in the community to gain an increased understanding into providing an accessible election for persons with a disability and to receive feedback on this Plan.

Consultation Initiatives	Post-election Action Analysis
Review comments from electors, candidates, and election workers regarding 2014 election.	Comments from electors, candidates, and election workers were reviewed and taken into consideration when making election-related decisions for the 2018 election.
Consult with Grand River Accessibility Advisory Committee (GRAAC) early in the process to obtain Committee feedback on potential barriers and methods to overcome these barriers.	City staff presented the Accessibility report to GRAAC on Thursday October 26, 2017 where valuable feedback was provided. Adjustments to the Plan were made based on this feedback to overcome potential accessibility barriers.
Collaborate with disability groups and networks to help disseminate election information through the City's website, social media, etc.	Ray of Hope, St. John's Kitchen, the Multi-Cultural Centre and many of the institutions used as voting locations allowed us to place posters there prior to Election Day which advertised election information. Additionally, election information was disseminated via the City's website and social media in order to reach a wider audience.
Conduct a post-election survey to receive additional feedback including follow up with disability groups	A post-election survey has been distributed to candidates and the Manager Deputy Returning Officers to gather feedback. Additionally, any feedback from electors at voting locations, especially regarding accessibility concerns, have been collected for review and consideration for the 2022 municipal election.
Attend any meetings or events that promote accessibility to bring attention to accessibility-related barriers for elections.	City staff attended GRAAC to bring attention to possible accessibility-related election barriers and to also receive feedback regarding the City's proposed accessible election initiatives.
Consider having a preview day for accessible voting equipment to increase comfort level for voters with disability.	The delivery date of the voting equipment did not allow sufficient time to prepare for a preview day to view the accessible voting equipment.

2. Communication Barriers:

Provide election information in an accessible format and utilize multiple broadcast mediums to maximize access.

Communications Initiatives	Post-election Action Analysis
Focus on presenting election information in a clear and easy to understand manner.	All election information was written using plain language and election jargon was eliminated where possible. Where needed, jargon was explained/defined. Additionally, all election information on the election website was written to comply with AODA standards.
Dedicate a section of the City of Kitchener election website to accessibility.	Sections of the City's election website were dedicated to accessibility. These pages included: "How to Vote" and "What's New".

COK - 2018 Municipal Election Accessibility Report

Publish updates continuously on the City's election website throughout the 2018 election.	The City's election website was continuously updated during the 2018 election to ensure new information and data was released in a timely manner.
Ensure election web pages are W3C Consortium WCAG 2.0 Level AA Compliant.	All election pages are W3C Consortium WCAG 2.0 Level AA Compliant.
Create a dedicated e-mail address regarding accessibility	The email AccessibleElection@kitchener.ca was created and published on the City's website as a method of corresponding with candidates, electors and the media. Staff monitored the email account closely to respond to inquiries or comments promptly.
Provide equipment to facilitate communication for elections staff and members of the public who are deaf, deafened or hard of hearing.	The City's TTY phone line was available to communicate with any deaf, deafened and hard of hearing candidates, electors and potential election workers. An ASL interpreter was provided to facilitate training an election worker who has a hearing disability. He was also provided with flash cards (made by staff) for easy/clear communication with electors at the voting location. Staff have discussed supplying all locations with the flash cards for electors who have a hearing disability at all locations in the 2022 election. Additionally, 5 Advanced Poll locations were provided with accessible vote tabulators to facilitate voting for those who had a hearing/vision/mobility impairment.

3. Candidate Campaign Barriers:

Provide candidates with election information on how to make their campaigns accessible and election information that is accessible and available in alternative formats upon request.

Assistance to Candidates Initiatives	Post-election Action Analysis
Provide candidates with AMCTO guide for running an accessible campaign.	All candidates were provided with the AMCTO guide via the City of Kitchener's website.
Provide candidates with list of locations and services to connect with electors without a permanent residence.	A list of locations was published on the City's website. Outreach to agencies serving people without a permanent residence was done which included a poster campaign.
Provide information regarding accessibility to candidates in an information package and also post on the City website.	The AMCTO guide for running an accessible campaign was posted on the City's website which included various topics concerning accessibility.
Hold candidate information sessions at accessible location(s).	There were no candidate information sessions held. Candidates who had questions were welcomed to come to City Hall, 2nd floor, Legislated Services (an accessible location) to have them answered. Candidates were also welcomed to contact City staff via any other communication method (phone, email, mail etc.)

COK - 2018 Municipal Election Accessibility Report

<p>Make information available in alternative formats upon request.</p>	<p>All election-related information was posted to the City's website where electors, candidates etc. could download the appropriate document or view the information online. Those that did not have access to the electronic versions were provided with hard copies when requested. City Staff also prepared documents in both English and French which were available upon request.</p>
<p>4. Voting Location Barriers: Ensure voting locations are accessible and easy to navigate.</p>	
Voting Locations Initiatives	Post-election Action Analysis
<p>Perform a site visit to inspect all potential voting locations for accessibility.</p>	<p>All election voting locations were assessed on their accessibility and those that were accessible and met other criteria were selected as 2018 voting locations.</p>
<p>Ensure voting locations have adequate signage for easy navigation.</p>	<p>All voting locations were supplied with numerous signs to be placed on both inside and outside of the location. Election workers were instructed during training that it was their responsibility to place the signs in areas with high visibility to ensure ease in accessing the voting location. Change of copy signs at locations were used where available. Locations that were challenging to navigate internally were assigned additional election workers to assist voters.</p>
<p>Ensure there is an accessible entrance to the voting location.</p>	<p>All voting locations were inspected to ensure the entrances were compliant with our accessibility standards. Those that developed an issue after the inspections were rectified. For example, Alpine Public School had to change their main entrance from the accessible entrance to a side door – to compensate City staff built and delivered a ramp on Election Day so that electors with accessibility needs would be able to enter the location with ease.</p>
<p>Enhance walkability from parking lots to voting locations to reduce any arduous distances.</p>	<p>City staff increased the number of city facilities used as voting locations from 2014 to help increase walkability. Additionally, City staff worked with schools to maximize the number of available parking spots (e.g., covering "Staff Only" parking signs in school lots) for use by voters. Additionally, when possible, the most accessible entrance was used at each voting location</p>
<p>Establish voting locations at St. John's Community Kitchen and Ray of Hope that are accessible to electors without a permanent residence.</p>	<p>St. John's Kitchen and Ray of Hope were used as Advanced Poll locations on Thursday October 11th for electors who were without a permanent residence.</p>
<p>Establish voting locations at retirement homes and institutions to assist electors.</p>	<p>Voting locations were implemented at 16 institutions (including Long-Term Care facilities) across the City.</p>

COK - 2018 Municipal Election Accessibility Report

5. Voting Process Barriers:

Ensure the voting process is accessible to persons with a disability.

Voting Process Initiatives	Post-election Action Analysis
Ensure accessible voting equipment is available at polling locations.	5 Advanced Poll locations were supplied with accessible voting equipment for electors who had hearing/vision or mobility impairments.
Train election worker to assist voters when requested. This includes accommodating bedside voters.	All election workers were provided training on AODA standards and assisting voters with disabilities. They were also trained on how to assist voters with voting including accommodating bedside voters.
Produce a clear guide to using accessible voting equipment.	Each Manager Deputy Returning Officer (MDRO) and Tabulator Assistant (TA) was provided clear, hands-on instructions on how to use the accessible voting equipment in order to be able to guide/assist electors at the Advanced Poll locations.
Design ballots with ballot vendor and accessibility groups to make them easier to mark voting selections.	City staff met with Dominion Voting, the ballot vendor, to discuss increasing the size of the target box. Unfortunately the vendor was unable to increase the size as it would interfere with coding but City staff has emphasized the need to do something for the 2022 election. Additionally, City staff ensured the correct pronunciation for each candidate's names for the audio ballots.
Provide Affidavits of Residence and Oaths of Identification to facilitate voters with no permanent residence and/or identification.	These forms were supplied to all voting locations including St. John's Kitchen and Ray of Hope to enable such voters to receive a ballot and vote.
Provide text magnifiers to assist electors who have limited vision.	All voting locations were supplied with magnifiers at Advanced Polls and on Election Day.
Supply notepads to facilitate communication with electors who are hard of hearing or deafened.	All voting location were supplied with notepads at Advanced Polls and on Election Day.
Have chairs or stools available for electors who cannot stand for a prolonged period.	All voting location were supplied with chairs/stools at Advanced Polls and on Election Day.
Create a process to notify electors in the case of an emergency or disruption to services.	Emergency procedures were created and Communications staff were prepared to publish/distribute a notification in the case of an emergency.
Assess the state of alternative voting options for next election.	Alternative voting options will be assessed for the 2022 election after reviewing feedback from City staff, electors, election workers and candidates including the feasibility of offering more accessible voting locations on Election Day.

COK - 2018 Municipal Election Accessibility Report

6. Training for Election Workers to Overcome Barriers:

Training for election workers will include a focus on accessibility to increase familiarity with accessible options.

Voting Process Initiatives	Post-election Action Analysis
Train all election workers on accessible election equipment and assisting electors with a disability.	All Advanced Poll Manager Deputy Returning Officers (MDRO) were trained on how to set up and use the accessibility voting equipment as well as how to appropriately assist electors during the process. All election workers were trained on how to respectfully assist voters with disabilities.
Train election workers on not restricting service persons or animals who are assisting a person with a disability.	All election workers received training material regarding the appropriate actions to take when in the presence of a service person/animal who are assisting a person with a disability. The training material included situational accessibility dos and don'ts.
Hire additional election worker so assist at certain voting locations to enhance accessibility.	Certain voting locations in larger subdivisions were provided with additional election worker to enhance accessibility. Locations that had additional election workers included Alpine Public School and the Kitchener Memorial Auditorium Complex.
Provide election workers with accommodation upon request to ensure training is accessible to all election workers.	An election worker with a hearing disability was provided with an ASL interpreter for the Election Worker training. City staff also prepared flash cards to use at the voting location for easy communication between the election worker and voters.
Hire election workers for St. John's Community Kitchen and Ray of Hope who understand the needs of the voters at these locations.	City staff reached out to St. John's Kitchen and Ray of Hope and were able to hire election workers who were volunteers at those organizations and understand the needs of that community. Staff also worked with these organizations to ensure a balance between meeting the legislative requirements of the Municipal Elections Act and reducing barriers for their community.
Include information on processing forms in the election worker training guide.	The Manager Deputy Returning Officer and Deputy Returning Officers received training material with instructions on processing forms to enable voters without a permanent residence or identification to vote.
Review Accessibility Course to familiarize election workers with providing an accessible election to all voters.	Highlights and key points from Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) literature as well as other accessibility organizations were included in election worker training.

COK - 2018 Municipal Election Accessibility Report

7. Additional Initiatives:

Additional initiatives not included in the initial Accessibility plan that were carried out.

Subject	Initiative
Training	An election worker with a hearing disability was hired and provided with an ASL interpreter in order to complete the mandatory Election Worker training. City staff also prepared flash cards to use at the voting location for easy communication between the election worker and the voter. Correspondence with this worker took place via video relay service. City staff facilitated this election worker's return to City Hall as per the requirements of the election position.
Voting locations	City staff allowed voters to park on the street near voting locations without receiving a ticket if parking at the location was limited providing fire routes were not blocked and accessible parking spots were not used by those who did not have a disability.
Voting Process	An elector with a mobility disability mistakenly came to Kitchener City Hall on Election Day thinking it was open for voting as it was for Advanced Polls. The elector did not have enough time to take the bus to their correct location before the close of polls and so a City staff member drove the elector to their correct location, providing the elector with the ability to successfully cast their vote.