ACCESSIBLE ELECTION PLAN

City of London 2018 Municipal Election

OCTOBER 22, 2018

City of London
DRAFT Accessible Election Plan 2018

Introduction

The City of London is committed to making municipal elections accessible to all citizens of London – including voters, candidates, employees and volunteers who participate in the election administration. The City of London's Accessible Election Plan 2018, supports and enhances the City's policies, multi-year Accessibility Plan and commitment to respond to the needs of persons with disabilities.

Purpose

The focus of the Accessible Election Plan 2018 is to:

a) ensure that electoral services are accessible to all electors and candidates;
b) identify and eliminate barriers for persons with disabilities; and
c) create a positive and inclusive voting experience.

Plan Development and Review

The City of London's Accessible Election Plan 2018 was developed by members of the City Clerk's Elections Team, in consultation with the Accessibility Advisory Committee and the City's Municipal Policy (AODA) Specialist.

The following criteria were considered in the development of this Plan:

Policies and procedures must be consistent with the principles of the *Municipal Elections Act, 1996*, the *Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001*, and the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005*, and respect the dignity and independence of persons with disabilities.

The City Clerk's Office will continue to learn, develop and adjust the Accessible Election Plan 2018 in order to meet the needs of persons with disabilities. This Plan will be reviewed and updated as new opportunities are identified or become available. Following the election the City Clerk will review the outcomes with the Accessibility Advisory Committee to identify potential areas of improvement and any additional barriers experienced during the election that can be addressed in future plans. The City Clerk will report to Municipal Council within 90 days following the election on the outcomes and performance of the Accessible Election Plan 2018.

Legislative Requirements – *Municipal Elections Act, 1996*, as amended

The City Clerk is responsible for conducting municipal elections and establishing policies and procedures to ensure that all electors have the opportunity to fully participate in the 2018 Municipal Election.

The Municipal Elections Act, 1996, as amended states the following:

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).

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.

12.1(2) 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.

41 (3) The clerk shall make such changes to some or all of the ballots as he or she considers necessary or desirable to allow electors with visual impairments to vote without the assistance referred to in paragraph 4 of subsection 52 (1). 1996, c. 32, Sched., s. 41 (3); 2001, c. 32, s. 30 (1).

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)

Accessible Customer Service

The City Clerk's Office is committed to providing quality goods and services that are accessible to all persons in accordance with the City of London Accessible Customer Service Policy (Appendix "A") and in compliance with the customer service standards of the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005*. In fulfilling our mission, the City Clerk's Office will provide services that respects the dignity and independence of persons with disabilities.

Definitions and Barrier Types

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

(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.

Attitudinal Barriers: Barriers result when people think and act based on false assumptions. Example: receptionist talks to an individual's support person because she or he assumes the individual with a disability will not understand.

Information and Communication Barriers: Barriers created when information is offered in a form that suits some, but not all, of the population. Example: print that is too small for some people to read and public address systems that alert only people who can hear the message.

Technology Barriers: Barriers occur when technology, or the way it is used, cannot be accessed by people with disabilities. Example: Websites that are not accessible to people who are blind and require the use of screen reader software.

Physical and Architectural Barriers: Physical barriers or obstacles that make it difficult for some people to easily access a place. Example: a door knob that cannot be turned by a person with limited mobility or strength, or a hallway or door that is too narrow to allow a person who uses a wheelchair to pass through safely.

Organizational Barriers: Occur when policies, practices or procedures result in some people receiving unequal access or being excluded. Example: A hiring process that is not open to people with disabilities.

Key Areas of Focus in the Elections Process

The Elections Office has identified the following five key areas of focus within the election process to prevent and remove accessibility barriers:

1. Elections Communication and Information
2. Voting Locations
3. Voting Methods
4. Recruitment and Selection of Election Workers
5. Assistance for Candidates

Elections Communication and Information

Initiative 1: Provide an informative and accessible election website

Strategies	Barrier Type	Measurable
Ensure election information is available in clear, simple language.	Information/ Communication	Feedback
Continuously update election information posted on the City's website to reflect the most recent information, and temporary disruptions. Enhance the City's "Where Do I Vote?" web application to provide accessibility information about voting places.	Technology	# of website hits # of inquiries related to election accessibility
Ensure election web pages are W3C Consortium WCAG 2.0 Level A compliant.	Technology	Level of compliance
Establish and continuously update a dedicated accessibility section on the election's web site that provides information on the initiatives undertaken by the City Clerk's Office.	Information/ Communication	# of website hits # of inquiries related to election accessibility # of social media posts related to election accessibility
Make feedback and accommodation request forms available through website.	Information/ Communication	# of forms completed

Initiative 2: Provide election information in alternative formats and through multiple channels

Strategies	Barrier Type	Measurable
Present information about election accessibility to stakeholder and community organizations.	Attitudinal	# of presentations # of organizations involved in accessibility planning
Produce a "How to Vote" pamphlet in English and additional languages and make the booklet available in both print and alternative formats.	Information/ Communication	# of pamphlets printed # of pamphlets distributed # of languages available
Produce an accessible "How to Vote" video and posting it to the City's website.	Information/ Communication	# of video views

Strategies	Barrier Type	Measurable
Produce a city-wide mail out election that outlines key election information.	Information/ Communication	# of households reached # of mail outs

Voting Locations

Initiative: Ensure all voting locations are accessible to electors with disabilities

Strategies	Barrier Type	Measurable
Review and update Voting Location Accessibility Checklist.	Organizational	Date reviewed by
Review all potential voting locations with consideration for public transit access; provide information to voters on public transit access.	Physical/ Architectural	# of voting locations located directly on a public transit route # of voting locations located less than 250 metres from public transit route # of voting locations located greater than 250 metres from a public transit route
Review all potential voting locations for accessibility including two (2) accessible parking spots near the closest entrance to the poll(s).	Physical/ Architectural	# of locations with 2 accessible parking spots
All voting locations to be inspected prior to Voting Day to ensure accessibility for all voters.	Physical/ Architectural	# of locations inspected
Where possible, the accessible entrance is to be the same as the main entrance.	Physical/ Architectural	# of locations where main entrance is also the accessible entrance
In the event of disruptions to service or unforeseen circumstances that affect the accessibility of voting places during the Advance Vote or on Voting Day, notices of disruption will be posted as soon as possible: - on the City's website - Facebook: London Votes, - Twitter: @LondonVotes - at the site of the disruption When applicable, a media advisory will be issued.	Information/ Communication	# of notices posted # of interactions on social media

Initiative: Ensure all voting location access routes and entrances are clearly identified

Strategies	Barrier Type	Measurable
Ensure electors with accessibility needs are directed to the accessible voting entrance by prominent signage.	Physical/ Architectural	# of accessibility related signs at each voting location
Use large-print signage at voting locations; train election workers to communicate with people who are blind or have low vision. Consult with Accessibility Advisory Committee on best practices.	Information/ Communication	Feedback

Initiative: Ensure all voting location owners and managers are aware of accessibility requirements

Strategies	Barrier Type	Measurable
Notify all voting location owners and managers of legislative accessibility requirements in order to prevent last minute changes to polls locations.	Attitudinal	# of facility owners and managers notified
Welcome the use of support persons and service animals in voting locations. Educate election staff on appropriate communication with electors and service animals.	Attitudinal	Information provided in election accessibility procedure manual

Initiative: Provide a contact centre to deal with accessibility issues, concerns or complaints

Strategies	Barrier Type	Measurable
Establish website channel to accessibility feedback forms so that an elector who encounters an accessibility issue can contact Election or Accessibility staff: Email: elections@london.ca	Information/ Communication	# of accessibility related emails
Provide details of accessibility features available to electors and candidates at Advance Vote locations on the Accessible Election section of the City's website.	Information/ Communication	# of webpage hits

Initiative: Provide a mechanism for feedback on the list of proposed voting locations

Strategies	Barrier Type	Measurable
Use the received feedback to ensure that voting locations are accessible to electors, as required by the *Municipal Elections Act, 1996.*	Organizational	# of modifications made based on feedback, if necessary
Provide details of accessibility features available at voting locations on the Election section of the City's website.	Information/ Communication	# of website hits

Voting Methods

Initiative: Provide accessible voting opportunities

Strategies	Barrier Type	Measurable
Provide voters with the option to vote by mail or vote by proxy.	Physical/ Architectural	# of proxy forms distributed # of vote by mail ballots
Review ballot design to increase legibility; Increase legibility of ballots through use of accessible font styles and sizes, appropriate case usage, and colours, where possible.	Information/ Communication	Ballot design review
Provide an accessible ballot marking device at all advanced polls for	Physical/ Architectural	# of accessible voting machines

Strategies	Barrier Type	Measurable
independent voting via "sip-and-puff", the use of paddles, or a tactile device.		
Provide magnifiers, pens and paper at all voting locations.	Physical/ Architectural	# of magnifiers at each voting location # of pen and paper pads at each voting location

Initiative: Provide voting opportunities in institutions and retirement homes

Strategies	Barrier Type	Measurable
Establish voting locations at the following facilities in order to allow eligible residents of the facility the opportunity to vote: • any institution in which 20 or more beds are occupied by persons who are disabled, chronically ill or infirmed • a retirement home in which 50 or more beds are occupied.	Physical/ Architectural	# of retirement/ nursing homes where a voting location has been established

Initiative: Provide assistance to electors with disabilities as requested

Strategies	Barrier Type	Measurable
Upon request, provide voters with the opportunity to vote from anywhere at the voting location (including curbside) with assistance from a Deputy Returning Officer.	Physical/ Architectural	# of curbside accommodation requests
Upon request, assist the elector with voting or reading of ballot.	Organizational	average # of requests
Train Deputy Returning Officers to assist voters with voting process when requested.	Organizational	# of Deputy Returning Officers trained
Enable voters to swear an oath if they are unable to provide the required identification and/or documentation with a signature.	Organizational	# of oaths

Initiative: Provide instructions on the use of accessible voting equipment

Strategies	Barrier Type	Measurable
Produce videos that outline the voting process and the accessible voting technologies in use for the election. Videos will include accessible elements and captioning. Post the videos on the City's website.	Information/ Communication	# of videos produced # of views
Provide pictorial instructions on voting processes at all voting locations.	Information/ Communication	# of pictorial instructions at each voting location
Host a media promotion event (September 2018) on voting technology, including accessible voting equipment and processes.	Attitudinal	# of attendees, media coverage

Recruitment and Staffing

Initiative: Provide accessibility training to all employees and Voting Day workers who participate in the election

Strategies	Barrier Type	Measurable
Develop an Accessible Election Procedure Manual providing direction on how the City of London will address the needs of persons with disabilities during the election and distribute the Manual during training.	Organizational	# of manuals printed and distributed
Develop accessibility training and reference materials for all election staff, including: • How to interact and communicate with persons with various types of disabilities; • How to interact with persons who use assistive devices or require the assistance of a service animal or support person • How to use voting equipment and assistive devices to deliver election services • What to do if a person is having difficulty accessing election information or services.	Organizational	# of accessibility references materials printed and distributed, # of staff trained
Require all election staff and workers to confirm in writing that they have received elections and accessibility training.	Organizational	# of signatures

Initiative: Ensure the recruitment process for staff is accessible

Strategies	Barrier Type	Measurable
Provide accommodations and special services for interviews, upon request.	Physical/ Architectural	# of accommodation and special services requests
Ensure the worker's manual and/or other relevant materials are available in an accessible format, upon request.	Information/ Communication	# of reference materials produced in an accessible format

Assistance to Candidates

Initiative: Provide candidates with information on how to make their campaign accessible to the public

Strategies	Barrier Type	Measurable
Provide candidates with references and links to the following provincial publications: • Accessible Campaign Information and • Communication • Accessible All-Candidates Meetings • Candidates' Guide to Accessible Elections (by Association of Municipal Clerks and Treasurers of Ontario)	Organizational/ Attitudinal	# of references distributed # of candidates reached
Provide information to each candidate on how to assist them in running an	Organizational	# of candidates reached

Strategies	Barrier Type	Measurable
accessible campaign at the time of filing nomination papers, and during the candidates' information sessions.		

Initiative: Provide candidates with access to information in alternative and accessible formats

Strategies	Barrier Type	Measurable
Ensure the candidate guide and/or other relevant publications are available in an accessible format, upon request.	Information/ Communication	# of accessible candidate guides distributed
Provide the City of London voters' list in an electronic format to candidates, upon request.	Technology	# of electronic voters' lists distributed
Hold candidate information sessions in accessible locations.	Physical/ Architectural	# of information sessions held in an accessible location
Provide accommodations and special information services upon request.	Organizational	# of accommodation and special services requests

Post-Election Report

Following the election the City Clerk will review the outcomes with the Accessibility Advisory Committee to identify potential areas of improvement and any additional barriers experienced during the election that can be addressed in future plans. The City Clerk will report to Municipal Council within 90 days following the election on the outcomes and performance of the Accessible Election Plan 2018.

The City Clerk's post-election report will be posted on the City's web site in a format accessible to persons with disabilities and distributed to disability groups and other stakeholders, upon request.

Feedback

The City Clerk welcomes feedback to identify areas where changes and improvements can be considered and undertaken and ways in which the City can improve the delivery of an accessible election. The feedback process provides City Clerk's Election Staff with an opportunity to carry out corrective measures to prevent similar recurrences; address training needs, enhance service delivery, and provide alternative methods of providing accessible election services.

Please provide us with your feedback so that we can continuously improve the accessibility of London's municipal elections. Feedback can be submitted to the Elections Office through a variety of methods including:

Telephone	519-661-4535
In Person	300 Dufferin Ave, Lower Level
Fax	519-661-4892
Mail	300 Dufferin Ave, Lower Level Elections Office, London ON N6A 4L9
Website	www.london.ca/elections

The London Accessibility Feedback Form can be found on the City of London's website. This form will be forwarded to the Elections Office for action. Additionally, staff can, upon request complete and submit the feedback form on behalf of the person with a disability.

Each completed form is reviewed by the City Clerk's Election Staff who will respond to the candidate or elector directly within two business days, providing an anticipated action and timeframe for a full response where appropriate.

If you require this information in a different format, please contact the Elections Office.