ACCESSIBILITY REPORT
2018 Toronto Municipal Election

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Message from the Clerk

"It is with pride and enthusiasm that I present the City of Toronto's third Election Accessibility Report, documenting both the meaningful progress we have made since 2014 and opportunities for continued improvement going forward."

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New in 2018

The 2018 Election saw great strides in accessibility through added voting options, public consultation on key operational decisions, and improved access to election information.

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Ensuring that elections are accessible requires an understanding that conventional voting methods may not meet the needs of all eligible electors. For this reason, Election Services has invested in assistive devices and offered various voting options, in a way that not only upholds the integrity of the electoral process but ensures individuals can exercise their right to vote with dignity and independence.

Message from the Clerk

It is with pride and enthusiasm that I present the City of Toronto's third Election Accessibility Report, documenting both the meaningful progress we have made since 2014 and opportunities for continued improvement going forward.

Elections are the cornerstone of a truly democratic society, requiring a commitment to legislative compliance, elaborate logistical planning, an engaged electorate, and fair and equal treatment of all candidates in order to be successful. This becomes even more complex when conducting an election in the fourth largest municipality in North America, with over 1.8 million eligible electors, 15,000 Election Day staff, 1,700 accessible voting places and 501 candidates running for six different offices.

The passage of the Better Local Government Act, 2018 and subsequent court proceedings resulted in unforeseen changes to the administration of Toronto's municipal election, including reducing the number of wards from 47 to 25 and extending the nomination period for the offices of councillor and school board trustee.

Our team responded swiftly to these changes in a way that was compliant with the legislation and upheld our commitment to accessibility for candidates and electors. This included taking measures to ensure that all accommodations and voting options continued to be made available to electors with disabilities, as well as developing a communications plan to explain the impacts of the legislative changes to candidates and electors as clearly and quickly as possible.

Nevertheless, one of the most important roles of the City Clerk's Office is to ensure that elections are accessible to all eligible voters and candidates. Election staff worked with members of the Accessibility Outreach Network and community organizations to improve the accessibility of the 2018 Election, going far beyond the legislated accessibility requirements. I would like to thank them for their hard work, and am confident that the culmination of these efforts will have a lasting impact on electoral engagement in Toronto.

This report reflects our commitment to fulfilling our accessibility mandate with sincerity, collaboration, and in the spirit of continuous improvement. Community involvement has resulted in many lessons learned since the release of the first Election Accessibility Report eight years ago, and I welcome your continued input and support as we work towards identifying gaps and priorities to further reduce barriers in the 2022 election.

Ulli S. Watkiss
Toronto City Clerk

ABOUT THIS REPORT

The Election Accessibility Report demonstrates how Election Services has worked towards the recommendations made in the 2014 Accessibility Report. These recommendations were actioned through the development and tracking of accessibility initiatives in the 2018 Election Accessibility Plan, which was generated in extensive consultation with community organizations and persons with disabilities.

Toronto's first formal Election Accessibility Report was produced in 2010 to meet new provisions in the Municipal Elections Act requiring the City Clerk to prepare a report on the identification, removal and prevention of barriers that affect electors and candidates with disabilities.

Both the 2014 and 2018 reports have built on this foundation, expanding accessibility efforts in areas such as community engagement, employment, voting place inspections, communication of voting options and staff training. Going into the 2018 Election, the key recommendations were to:

- Find new ways to reach persons who do not identify as having a disability but who may still encounter a barrier to voting;

- Continue to investigate alternative voting options that meet the principles of the Municipal Elections Act, including Internet voting and home voting;

- Collaborate with other City divisions to find effective ways of engaging their networks and stakeholders in the election process and disseminating election information;

- Continue to include accessibility information in all election communications;

- Continue to build awareness of the importance of accessible campaigns and accessible all-candidate meetings; and

- Continue to work closely with the Accessibility Outreach Network and persons with disabilities to eliminate barriers in the election process.

In addition to addressing these recommendations, this Accessibility Report also serves as an important mechanism for remaining accountable to the thoughtful feedback and suggestions we received from residents and accessibility advocates, while being transparent in our efforts to anticipate and respond to societal, legislative, and technological changes.

This report highlights new initiatives in 2018, followed by outcomes and recommendations organized into these six key areas:

1. **Consultation**
2. **Voting Options and Accommodations**
3. **Communication and Information**
4. **Voting Places**
5. **Candidate Information**
6. **Accessible Customer Service**

NEW IN 2018

The 2018 Election saw great strides in accessibility through added voting options, public consultation on key operational decisions, and improved access to election information. The following are highlights of some of the new initiatives that were introduced this election.

Home Visit Pilot Program

In April 2017, based on recommendations from the 2014 Municipal Election Report on Accessibility, City Council authorized the establishment of a home visit pilot program for voters unable to leave their home due to illness, injury and/or disability. As part of this program, a team of two election officials brought a ballot to the elector's home during the five-day advance vote period (learn more on page 18).

Ballot Redesign

For the 2018 election, the ballot was redesigned to improve accessibility and make the process of marking the ballot as simple as possible. The new ballot reflected feedback from persons with disabilities and saw many accessibility improvements including a larger font size and instructional image, thicker border lines between offices, simplified language in the instructions, and changing the way people mark their ballot from connecting an arrow to filling in an oval (learn more on page 12).

MyVote

MyVote is an accessible online tool, where voters were able to input their address and find personalized information about the election. This included information about their new ward, the candidates running in their ward, direct links to candidate websites and social media pages (where provided), and their voting location with the corresponding accessibility information.

New in 2018, voters were also able to use MyVote to view and print their Voter Information Card and add themselves to the voters' list (learn more on page 22).

CONSULTATION

Recognizing the value of a truly collaborative environment in advancing the objectives of the Accessibility Plan, the City Clerk is committed to working with individuals that reflect the diversity within the disability community, as well as the community organizations and advocacy groups that represent them. This has been achieved through community consultation to better understand existing barriers and a collaborative approach to identifying and working towards solutions.

Accessibility Outreach Network

In 2010, Election Services established the Accessibility Outreach Network (AON) as a way to build meaningful relationships with persons with disabilities, community advocates and service providers, through quarterly meetings and regular communication with members. These ongoing relationships are mutual by design, where members provide input on all areas of election planning and receive resources and tools that align with their organization's civic engagement mandates and/or goals.

AON Workgroups

Many AON members also participated in the AON workgroups. In 2018, there were three active workgroups that focused on advancing accessibility objectives in the following key areas of election planning:

1. Public Consultations, Communications, and Candidate Information
2. Voting Options and Provisions
3. Voting Places and Customer Service

These workgroups served as smaller roundtables, where members had a chance to delve deeper into topics such as the home visit pilot program, the Accessible Customer Service Handbook, the instructional video on how to use the accessible voting equipment, and strategic outreach. This model also enabled election staff to work alongside people with lived experience facing barriers related to disability, to consider different viewpoints and arrive at strategies together.

Community Partnerships

Aside from the AON and AON workgroups, election staff consulted and collaborated with various internal and external organizations that represented intersecting identities and barriers, and persons with disabilities that were not associated with disability-serving organizations. This included working with the Election Outreach Network, Election Youth Outreach Network, and other community organizations that serve seniors, people experiencing homelessness, new Canadian citizens, youth, people from the LGBTQ2S+ communities, and Indigenous communities.

Special Consultations

When tackling topics of special interest to particular groups, Election Services also conducted consultation sessions and sought out the expertise of accessibility consulting groups.

For example, in the lead up to the 2018 Election, there was a review of the ballot design with the aim of improving accessibility and making the process of marking the ballot as simple as possible.

This review involved two consultation sessions with people who may face barriers when marking their ballot, including persons with various types of disabilities, first-time voters, and people with English as a second language.

This range of perspectives resulted in a number of accessibility improvements including a larger font size and instructional image; thicker border lines between offices; simplified language; and most notably, changing the way people mark their ballot from connecting an arrow to filling in an oval.
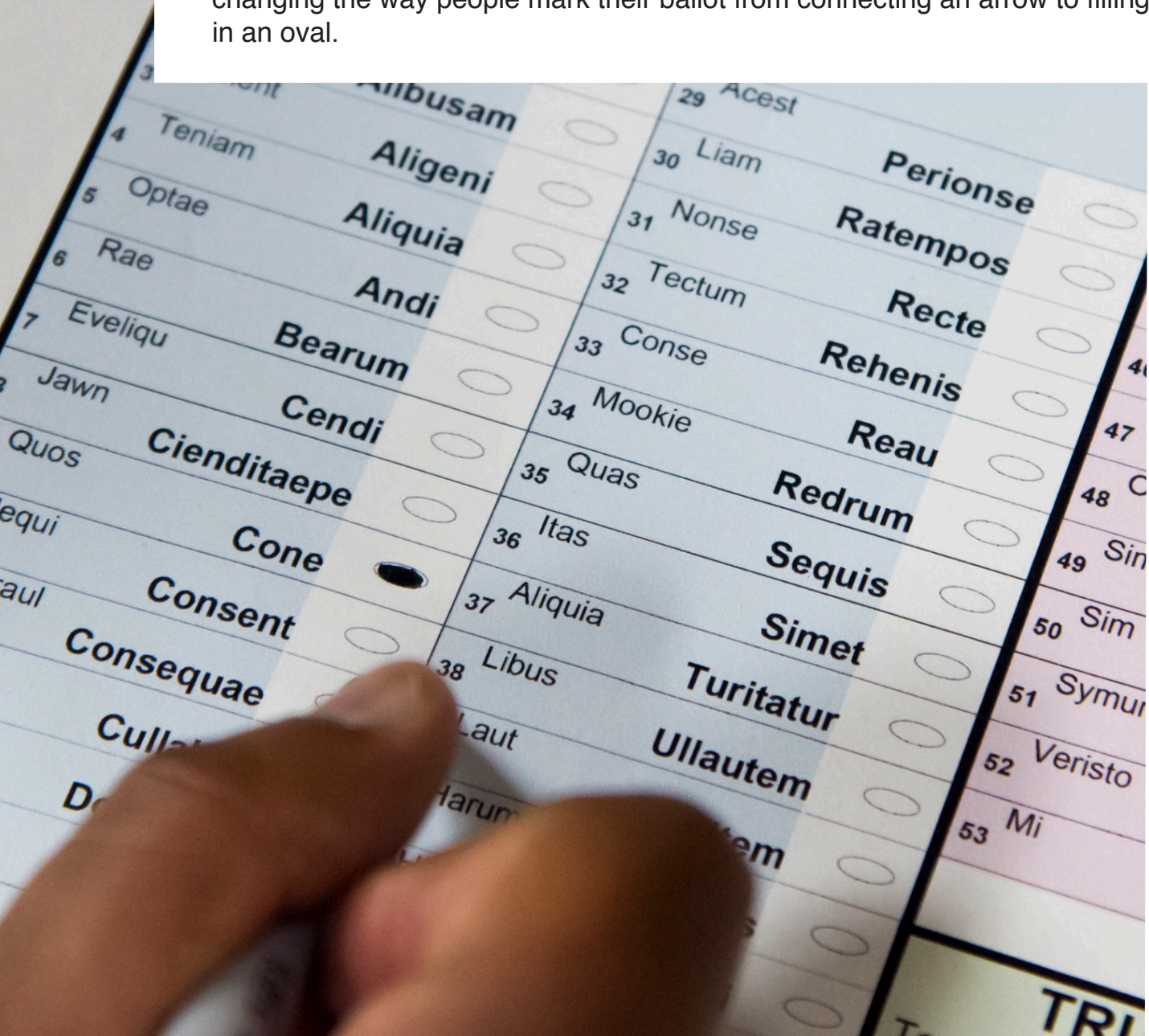
Highlights

A presentation was delivered to the Toronto Accessibility Advisory Committee to solicit feedback on the Accessibility Plan.

The Accessibility Outreach Network consisted of 98 members, representing 49 organizations and 29 community advocates.

The Election Outreach Network consisted of 204 members, representing 108 organizations.

The Election Youth Outreach Network consisted of 60 members, representing 36 organizations.

A post-election online survey was completed by 67 members of the Election Outreach Networks.

» 51% (34 respondents) indicated that they serve or represent persons with disabilities.

» 91% (61 respondents) thought that Election Services' outreach initiatives helped reduce barriers to electoral participation.

» 90% (60 respondents) stated that participating in the Election Outreach Networks met their expectations and added comments such as "fantastic co-operation and direction"; "we were able to bring information and resources to people in their own neighbourhoods"; and "ongoing meetings provided opportunities for information sharing and input into new initiatives".

Moving Forward

Strengthen relationships with the members of the AON, while continuously monitoring and remedying potential gaps in representation.

Investigate emerging public engagement trends and technology to help facilitate remote participation in AON meetings and consultation sessions.

Consult with persons with disabilities to inform all areas of election planning, with special attention to new technology, voting options, web applications, accessibility training for voting place staff, and the development of accessibility.

"I have seen the City Clerk make the necessary changes, over the years, bringing the Toronto Civic Elections in compliance with the AODA. This continued commitment from the City of Toronto furthers its desire to make our world-class city, barrier-free for both seniors and the disabled in our society."

- Howard Wax, TTC's Advisory Committee on Accessible Transit

VOTING OPTIONS & ACCOMMODATIONS

Ensuring that elections are accessible requires an understanding that conventional voting methods may not meet the needs of all eligible electors. For this reason, Election Services has invested in assistive devices and offered various voting options, in a way that not only upholds the integrity of the electoral process but ensures individuals can exercise their right to vote with dignity and independence.

Assistive Technology and Tools

Accessible voting equipment was available at all voting locations A Voter Assist Terminal (VAT) was available at all locations during advance vote and at two locations per ward on election day. The VAT is a ballot-marking machine, where voters insert their paper ballot and then scroll through and select candidates using a variety of accessible navigation options, including a touch screen, audio function, braille embossed key pads, a rocker/foot paddle, or sip and puff tube. In addition, the VAT can also be personalized to individual needs by adjusting settings such as font size, contrast level, and the pace and volume of the audio.

Other assistive tools that were available at all voting locations included memo pads to assist with communication, magnifiers, and voter information in braille.

Voting Options

The City Clerk is committed to continuously exploring emerging technology and other solutions that can improve accessibility for voters with disabilities. In past years, there has been extensive research and consultation to investigate the implementation of Internet voting. It was found that there is currently no system that is fully accessible and can guarantee security, ballot secrecy and voter integrity. The City Clerk remains of the opinion that current Internet voting systems are not secure enough for large scale use in binding, public elections. However, staff will continue to explore online voting as technology advances based on advice from cyber-security experts.
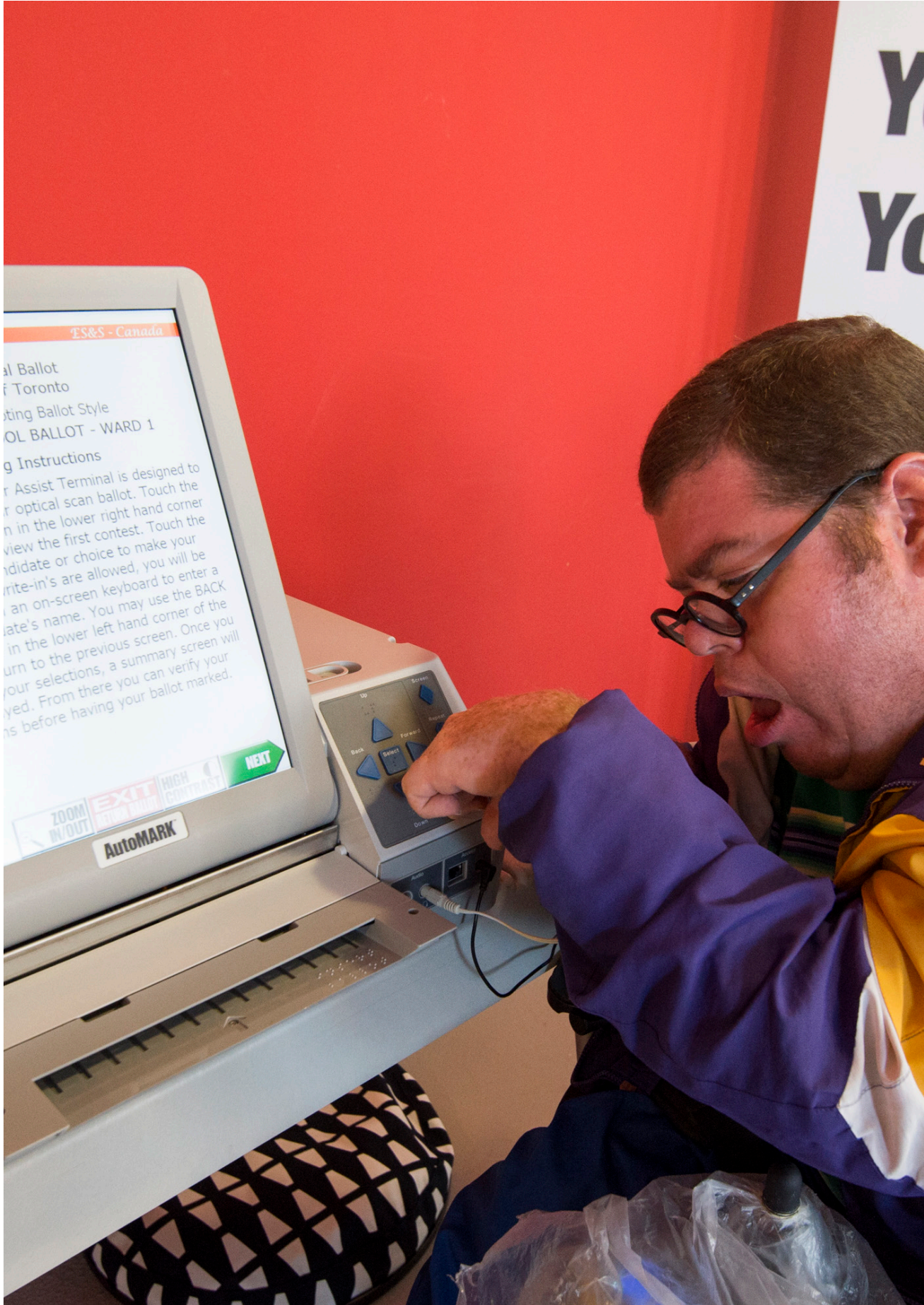
In 2018, the following voting options were available:

Voters were able to have someone provide personal assistance behind the voting screen if needed. This could be a friend, family member, personal support worker, or an election official trained in providing accessible customer service.

Ballot transfers were available to voters who wanted to vote at another location within their ward, due to reasons such as accessing the VAT or voting at a location more suitable to individual needs or circumstances.

Voting by proxy allowed voters who were unable to vote for any reason to appoint another eligible elector to vote on their behalf.

Curbside voting enabled voters who were unable to enter the voting place or voting room, to request to have their ballot brought out to them so they could vote from their vehicle or another location within the voting place.

Home visits enabled voters who could not attend a voting place due to illness, injury and/or disability, to vote from home.

Highlights

Over 200 people used the Voter Assist Terminals.

66 ballot transfer requests were accommodated.

A new voting option was introduced that allowed people unable to attend a voting place to vote from home by requesting a home visit, including people in hospitals and other health care facilities.

"My disability was accommodated 110%. The service accommodated more than any other service, and was above expectation."

- **Home Visit Pilot Program, Elector Survey**

Moving Forward

Investigate ways to leverage the accessibility features on personal devices to enable people to mark their ballot with the assistance of tools that are familiar and personalized to their particular needs, such as zoom features and flashlights.

Explore the use of assistive technology to support communication with voters who have hearing loss.

Investigate alternative voting methods that would make voting independently more accessible for voters with disabilities, including options such as internet voting, voting kiosks, and braille ballot overlays.

Consult with persons with disabilities when identifying requirements for new voting technology.

Assess options to improve access to voting for people residing in hospitals and other health care facilities.

HOME VISIT PILOT PROGRAM

In the 2014 Municipal Election Report on Accessibility, the City Clerk committed to providing more accessible voting options, including investigating options for home-bound and hospital-bound electors.

Subsequently, in April 2017, City Council authorized the establishment of a home visit pilot program for voters who are unable to leave their home due to illness, injury and/or disability to be introduced in the 2018 municipal election. To support the development of this new program, Election Services consulted with members of the AON and internal and external organizations that provide home services and care.

As part of this program, a team of two Home Visit Officers brought a ballot to the elector's home during the five-day advance vote period. Proactive recruitment efforts were made to find highly-qualified staff with previous experience working with vulnerable populations and people that require home services. Home Visit Officers received a full-day of intensive training, which covered topics such as accessible customer service, health and safety, and election principles such as secrecy of the vote and fair treatment of all electors.

To register for the program, individuals called an Election phone line where staff walked them through the home visit process and scheduled their visit. During this intake, election staff confirmed the elector's information on the voters' list and asked questions to help prepare for the home visit, such as whether the voter required assistance marking the ballot and any special instructions or considerations for staff upon arrival.

Individuals requesting a home visit were asked to affirm verbally or in writing that they were unable to leave their home due to illness, injury and/or disability. They were not asked to provide supporting documentation or the personal reasons for their request.

Given that this was a new program, it was important to document lessons learned and evaluate the implementation and outcomes of the pilot program. An evaluation of the program included a post-election telephone survey for home visit electors and an online survey for home visit officers.

Highlights

A new home visit pilot program was implemented, enabling 350 voters who could not attend a voting place due to illness, injury and/or disability, to vote from home.

Hired and trained highly qualified Home Visit Officers with experience working with vulnerable populations or persons with disabilities.

A post-election telephone survey was completed with 183 home visit electors.

» **79%** (144 electors) rated their experience as 'excellent' and 16% (30 electors) rated it as 'very good'.

» **94%** (172 electors) indicated that they were very satisfied with the service received from election officials.
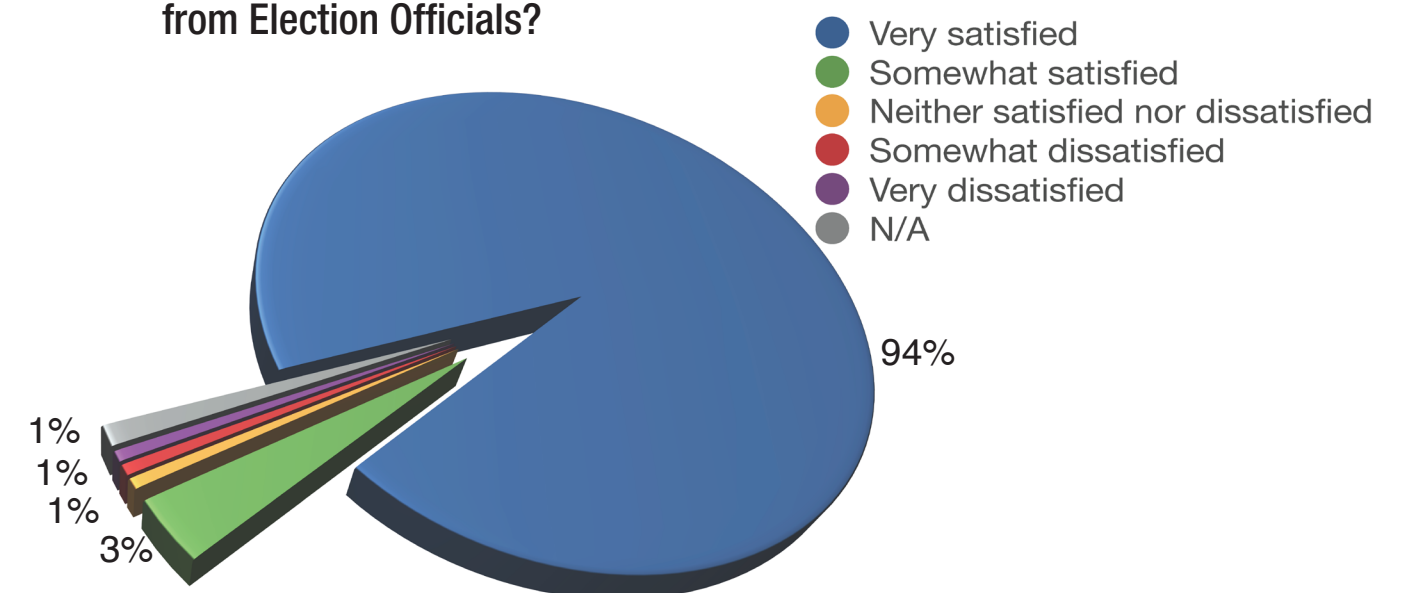
Moving Forward

Consult with Elections Ontario on the possibility of promoting and distributing material about the City of Toronto's home visit program through the provincial home visit program.

Continue to investigate alternative ways for electors to mark their ballot during a home visit.

Explore permitting caregivers to vote while election officials are conducting a home visit.

Increase outreach to electors with disabilities who may not be associated with partnering service providers and include information about the home visit program in materials that outline voting options and accommodations.

How would you rate the service you received from Election Officials?

- Very satisfied
- Somewhat satisfied
- Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
- Somewhat dissatisfied
- Very dissatisfied
- N/A

94%
1%
1%
1%
3%

COMMUNICATION & INFORMATION

Election Services has made significant efforts to ensure that important information about the election reaches persons with disabilities, especially information about the voting options and accommodations available. Recognizing that voters with disabilities may encounter barriers to accessing information, this has been achieved through consultation, partnerships, and an intentional combination of different communication channels, approaches and formats.

Communications & Advertising

Election information was provided to the public in multiple formats and through various communication channels, including How to Vote booklets in braille, videos with on-screen ASL interpretation and captioning, advertising in communication outlets that have a focus on accessibility (such as Abilities magazine and Accessible Media Inc.), and 27 different radio stations. Expanding election radio advertisements was a suggestion from the AON, as it was said to be a common source of information among people with vision loss.

In addition, informative election pamphlets were mailed to every household in Toronto and included a description of available voting options and accommodations, as well as where to call or email if an individual has questions or concerns related to accessibility.
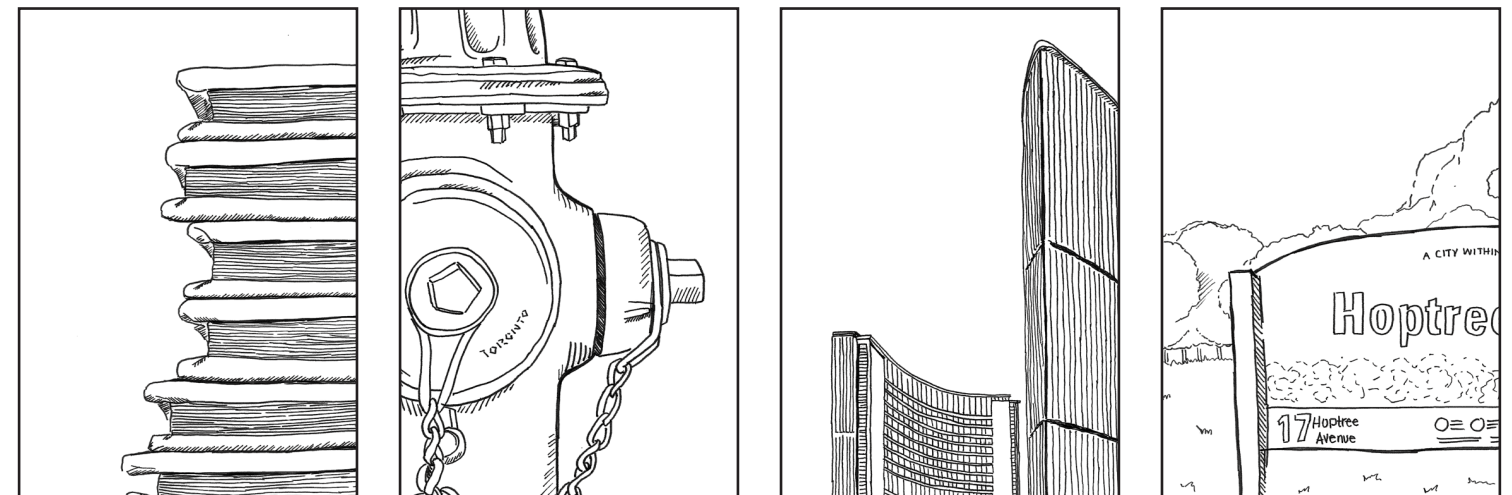
Online Information and Tools

The election website is fully compliant with current accessibility standards (Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0 Level AA) and hosts a range of valuable information for voters, such as what to expect at the voting place, identification and eligibility requirements, and how to add yourself to the voters' list. It also contains specific information related to accessibility, including voting options and accommodations and the full 2018 Election Accessibility Plan. As suggested by the AON, accessibility information was linked directly on the main page of the election services website to make them easy to find.
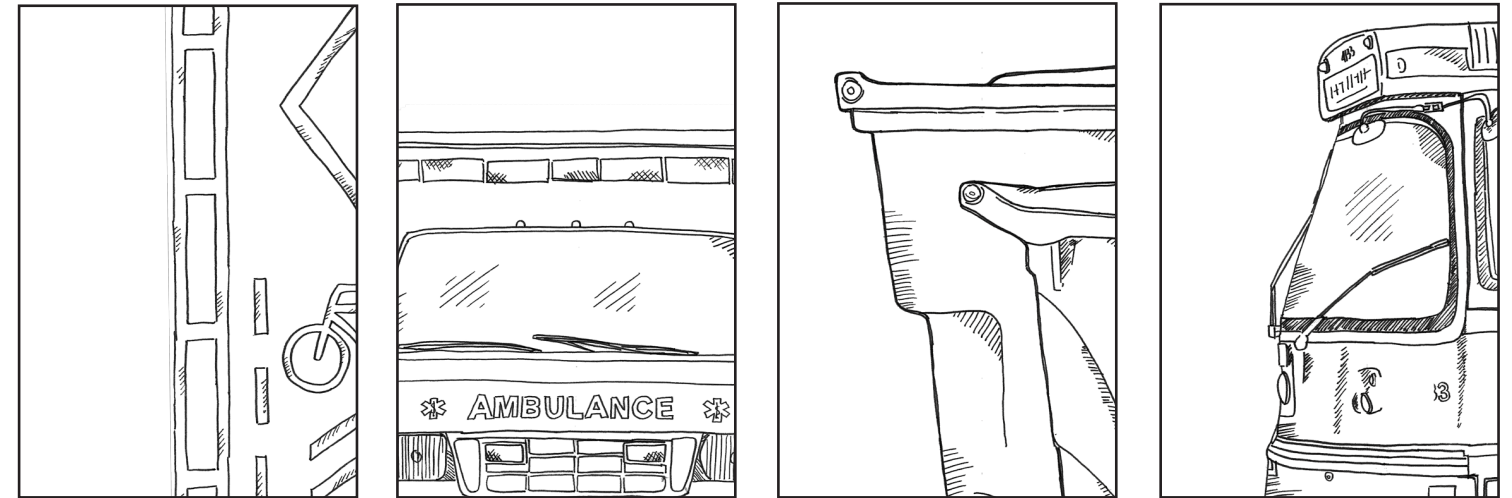
Your City. Your Vote. October 22

toronto.ca/elections

TORONTO

Call 311

Online Information and Tools

Another online resource that greatly improved access to election information is MyVote, an accessible online tool where voters were able to input their address and find personalized election information. This included information about the voter's new ward; the candidates running in their ward with direct links to candidate website and social media pages; and their advance vote and election day voting locations with related accessibility information. MyVote users were also able to check if they were on the voters' list and view a sample of their ballot, providing an opportunity to become familiar with it in advance and help reduce potential confusion with Toronto's composite ballot.

For the 2018 election, many features were added to MyVote to improve accessibility, including being able to add yourself to the voters' list. Electors were also able to view and print their Voter Information Card on their own devices, enabling electors to access the information on personal devices already customized to their individual needs and preferences.

Community Outreach and Partnerships

Aside from far-reaching communication measures, Election Services also conducted intentional outreach to share accessibility information with groups that advertising and online services may not reach. Election staff interacted with residents at community events across Toronto, where staff set up interactive tables to share information, distribute informative postcards, and answer questions. Staff also engaged the public through 'Elections 101' presentations, to share information about who can vote, how to vote, voting options and accommodations, identification requirements, and ward changes.

In addition, community partners and members of the Accessibility Outreach Network were provided with tools and resources to independently disseminate accurate information about the election within their communities. This grassroots model has been invaluable, empowering trusted community leaders to provide election information in a way that is tailored and appropriate to the needs and interests of the recipients.

VOTE October 22

MyVote Everything You Need.

TORONTO   toronto.ca/elections/myvote
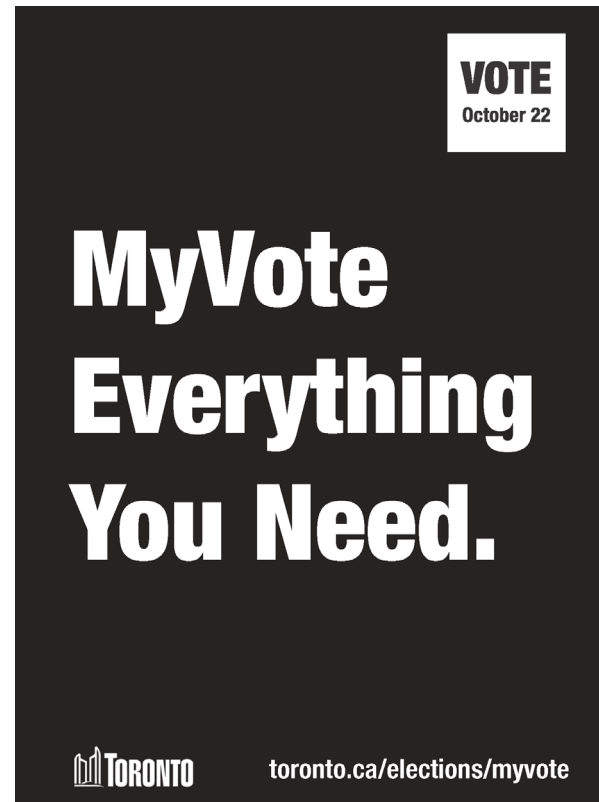
Highlights

Approximately 1.3 million election information pamphlets were mailed to every household in Toronto.

Outreach was conducted at 51 events, including People in Motion, a disability exhibition; and Mayfest, an event with a focus on people who have hearing loss.

Over 5,000 postcards outlining voting options and accommodations were distributed to residents and community partners; and 80 accessibility posters were mailed to community organizations to be posted at their facilities.

31 'Elections 101' presentations and/or mock elections were facilitated with residents and community organizations, such as Pegasus Community Project for Adults with Special Needs and the Parks, Forestry and Recreation Disability Steering Committee.

The MyVote web page had 702,371 views, the Accessibility Plan web page had 5,801 views, and the Voting Options and Accommodations web page had 8,042 views.

Moving Forward

Conduct user-testing on online applications such as MyVote, with consideration for different versions of screen reader technology.

Consult with persons with disabilities on the layout of the election website to support a design that is easy to navigate using a screen reader.

Monitor emerging communication channels and investigate new ways to reach persons with disabilities, such as podcasts and accessible media outlets.

Conduct consultation in the development of braille resources to ensure that the content is appropriate and relevant to voters with vision loss.

Collaborate with community partners in the development of outreach and communication materials to ensure that the information being shared is significant, relevant and conveyed in the most effective way for the intended audience, with regard to different types and degrees of disability.

CANDIDATE INFORMATION

It is vital that persons with disabilities have the same opportunities as others to participate in all areas of an election. This includes running as a candidate and accessing information about candidate campaigns in order to make an informed decision. As outlined below, Election Services has gone beyond legislative requirements to ensure that it is doing its part to help remove existing barriers in the democratic process.

Accessibility for Candidates with Disabilities

Under the Municipal Elections Act, the City Clerk must have regard for the needs of candidates with disabilities. Pursuant to this provision, all communications and resources sent to candidates were accessible and available in alternate formats upon request.

Information was made available across multiple channels, including the Election Services website, social media platforms, dedicated phone lines and a central email account. Candidates were also provided with resources to promote awareness of the City's accessibility initiatives, including procedures for the home visit pilot program and Voter Assist Terminals.

In addition, Election Services hosted a number of in-person information sessions at accessible venues, with accommodations available upon request. A video of the information session was recorded and posted with closed captioning on the election website, along with accessible presentation slides.

Accessible Information about Candidates

Members of the AON have reported encountering a number of barriers when trying to access information about candidates and their campaigns, including inaccessible campaign offices, websites, printed campaign materials and all-candidate meetings.

Although the City Clerk does not have the authority to require campaigns to be accessible, Election Services raised awareness about the value of accessible campaigns through communication with candidates as well as registered third party advertisers. For example, the importance of accessible campaigns was highlighted in both candidate and third party advertiser information sessions, and candidates were provided with resources on how to make their campaigns accessible to voters.

After the 2014 Election, the City Clerk recommended to the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing that the Municipal Elections Act be amended to include a requirement for candidates to make their campaigns accessible. This amendment was not adopted and will be requested again with respect to both candidate and registered third party advertiser campaigns for future elections.

Highlights

Held five candidate information sessions and three third party advertiser information sessions, attended by approximately 350 people, during which the value of accessible campaigns was reinforced (a further candidate information session on financing is scheduled for early 2019).

Resources made available to all candidates included a guide on accessible campaigns, as well as options and accommodations available to voters.

Moving Forward

Request that the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing amend the Municipal Elections Act to include a requirement that candidates and registered third party advertisers make their campaigns accessible; and, add a provision to ensure that expenses related to making campaigns accessible are not subject to the spending limit.

Continue to build awareness of the importance of accessible campaigns through providing resources and information sessions.

Explore opportunities to inform candidates and registered third party advertisers of practical ways to make their campaigns more accessible, with attention to campaign information, campaign offices, and/or all-candidates meetings.

VOTING PLACES

Establishing accessible voting places is one of the most important undertakings to achieving an accessible election, and is a requirement of the City Clerk under the Municipal Elections Act. However, finding 1,700 voting places that are accessible and available continues to be a significant challenge, especially given that the City Clerk does not have the authority to require building owners to install accessible amenities for the election. In light of these challenges, Election Services has taken extensive measures to prevent accessibility issues at voting places by conducting thorough voting place inspections and applying temporary modifications where required.

1,700 Voting Places for the 2018 Municipal Election
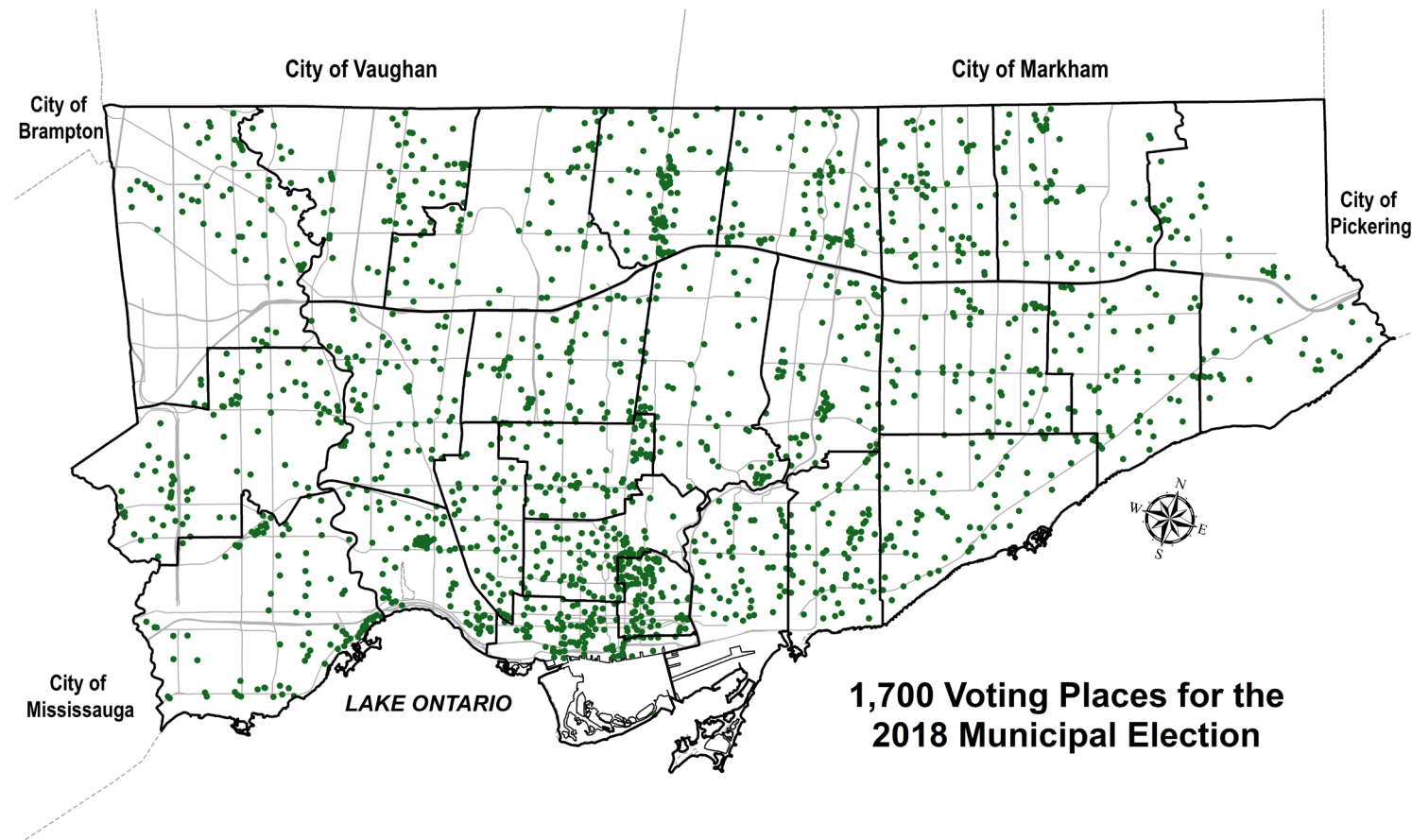
Voting Place Inspections

Each voting location was inspected multiple times using consistent accessibility criteria that included parking, route of travel, slope and surface, and the availability of a power door opener (full inspection checklist is linked in Appendix A). In addition, a preliminary list of voting locations was posted online and sent to members of the AON to provide input and flag any undetected accessibility issues.

Voting Place Modifications

These inspections helped identify which locations required temporary modifications such as ramps, transition strips, door handles, and additional accessibility signage. It also identified which locations needed the support of an Accessibility Officer to provide voters with assistance in areas that may present barriers. This included duties such as opening doors that do not have automatic push buttons and operating elevators.

Beyond the accessibility measures in place, Election Services also set up contingency plans to quickly resolve accessibility issues reported by electors and voting place staff on voting days. This included remedies such as putting up extra signage, communicating service disruptions, deploying accessibility officers and arranging the installment of temporary ramps.

Highlights

All 1,700 voting places underwent multiple inspections that considered accessible criteria such as accessible parking, route of travel, slope and surface, availability of a power door opener, and accessible washrooms for voting place staff.

Accessibility issues were rectified through temporary modifications, including installing 60 ramps, 54 door handles, accessibility signage, and accessibility officers.

Voting locations were placed in 103 long term care homes and 88 seniors' residences, where residents were also able to request bedside voting.

A partnership with Wheel-Trans and the Advisory Committee on Accessible Transit was formed to support accessible transportation options to voting places. This included cross-communication of information and a dedicated Wheel Trans staff who worked with election staff to assist riders with disabilities who experienced difficulty booking a trip or getting to their voting place.

Moving Forward

Consider new ways of reinforcing the obligations of voting facilities to maintain the contracted voting room and entrances on election day, in order to avoid potential impacts on the accessibility measures in place.

Encourage persons with disabilities to call the accessibility line to report any issues that they encounter at a voting place, so that barriers can be addressed quickly and to help prevent others from encountering them as well.

Explore how new path-finding applications can support voters with vision loss at voting locations.

Collaborate with TTC Wheel-Trans to identify ways that their services can be more conveniently accessed on voting days.

"On behalf of the community that we support including those who have disabilities who were hired to work the past election, we thank Election Services for your hard work and dedication to make the election process accessible."

- Richard McCallum, Spinal Cord Injury Ontario

ACCESSIBLE CUSTOMER SERVICE

Voting place staff play an important role in creating a positive experience for voters and implementing the voting options and accommodations available. Although there were over 15,000 people hired and trained on a number of important election procedures, Election Services has made considerable effort to ensure that accessible customer service and addressing attitudinal barriers remained a priority.

Accessibility Training

All in-class training, online modules and staff manuals included information about how to provide accessible customer service, as well as the accommodations and assistive tools available. To enhance the learning experience of the Accessibility Officers, Information Officers and Trainers, persons with disabilities were recruited to support their in-class training. This allowed voting place staff to hear firsthand about barriers in the voting process from people with lived experience, enriching their understanding of accessibility and the significance of barrier-free voting.

In addition, all voting place staff received an Accessible Customer Service Handbook. This resource was updated for the 2018 election, with input from members of the AON. It included information about different types and degrees of disabilities, practical tips to providing accessible customer service, and appropriate interaction with assistive devices and service animals.

Recruiting Persons with Disabilities

Election jobs were actively promoted through the AON, disability-serving organizations and at community events to ensure persons with disabilities were made aware of the employment opportunities and accommodations available. Aside from working on election day, multi-day extended roles such as Training Attendance Clerks were also promoted to disability communities. Proactively recruiting persons with disabilities not only supported an election workforce reflective of society, but also brought different perspectives and backgrounds to voting place teams in support of improved customer service.

Highlights

Over 15,000 voting place staff were trained on accessibility and received an Accessible Customer Service Handbook.

Actively recruited persons with disabilities to support the training of Accessibility Officers, Information Officers and trainers.

The dedicated accessibility phone number and email address was promoted broadly in 2018, inviting residents to reach out with questions and/or issues leading up to and on election day.

Moving Forward

Explore expanding the role of the VAT officer to support their voting location through other operational and accessibility-related duties.

Continue to consult with persons with disabilities in the development of accessibility training modules and materials.

Investigate additional ways to encourage the disclosure of disability-related accommodation needs among voting place staff, to help better assign individuals to the most suitable locations and positions.

Recruit people with lived experience as accessibility trainers for the VAT Officers, similar to the existing training model used for Accessibility and Information Officers.

Improve the collection of demographic information about voting place staff, including those that identify as having a disability, to better measure and monitor outcomes of recruitment.

CONCLUSION

Moving forward, the City Clerk will continue to approach the administration of Toronto's municipal elections from a lens of accessibility-by-design, while monitoring and leveraging leading practices from other jurisdictions. In the course of advancing the accessibility initiatives in the areas of consultation; voting options and accommodations; communication and information; voting places; candidate information; and accessible customer service; the City Clerk will also work to anticipate and respond to emerging demographic and technological changes.

Given that the number of people in Toronto aged 65 and over is expected to double by 2041, a priority moving forward will be preventing barriers for older voters with age-acquired disabilities. As seen in the implementation of the home visit pilot program, older voters may not identify as having a disability or seek out information related to accessible options and voter accommodations. Future accessibility planning must account for an increase in people requiring accessible services and intentional outreach and communication measures to this demographic.

Another area of focus moving forward will be investigating how emerging technologies can support more voting options that enable persons with disabilities to vote independently. This will involve consulting with persons with disabilities to identify gaps in existing assistive devices and voting options, as well as developing inclusive requirements for new technology. It will also entail a look at how evolving accessibility features on personal devices can be leveraged to improve access to voting locations and ballot marking.

This report has captured many of the outcomes resulting from a range of accessibility initiatives implemented in the 2018 election, while marking a renewed commitment to collaboration and innovation as planning for the 2022 election begins. Electoral participation is a basic democratic right and the City Clerk will continue to work within her mandate to ensure that persons with disabilities are not disenfranchised in the electoral process and that democratic participation is accessible to all.

Appendix A: Related Links

Please note the related links can all be found on the Election Services website: **toronto.ca/elections**.

Previous Accessibility Plans and Reports

2018 Accessibility Plan (includes reported outcomes and achievements)

2014 Accessibility Report

2010 Accessibility Report

Web Pages

Election Services Website

Voting Options and Accommodations

Accessible Voting Equipment - Video

How to Vote - Video

MyVote - Video

Related Legislation, Policies and Procedures

Municipal Elections Act

Home Visit Pilot Program Procedure

Additional Election Policies and Procedures

Accessibility Resources

Candidate's Guide to Accessible Elections

Accessible Customer Service Handbook for Election Staff

Voting Places

2018 Voting Places

Voting Place Inspection Checklist

Social Media

Twitter @torontovotes

Instagram @torontovotes

Facebook: Election Services

Appendix B: Acknowledgements

The groups listed below have supported the advancement of the 2018 Accessibility Plan by having representative(s) on the Accessibility Outreach Network, who provided thoughtful input in all areas of election planning and shared accessibility information within their networks.

Thank you for your valuable contributions.

- Albanian Canadian Association Kosova
- Alliance for Equality of Blind Canadians
- Balance for Blind Adults
- Bellwoods Health Services
- Bob Rumball Canadian Centre of Excellence for the Deaf
- Canadian Association of Retired Persons
- Canadian Council for the Blind in Toronto
- Canadian Council on Rehabilitation and Work
- Canadian Hearing Society
- Canadian Helen Keller Centre
- Canadian National Institute for the Blind
- Centre for Independent Living in Toronto
- Christian Horizons
- CIVIX
- Commonwealth of Dominica Ontario Association
- Community Living
- Democratic Engagement Exchange, Ryerson University
- Disability Awareness Consultants
- Elections Canada
- Elections Ontario
- Equity Diversity Human Rights Division, City of Toronto
- ESS Support Services
- Find Help Information Services
- Frontier Computing
- Government of Ontario
- Harmony Place
- Learning Disabilities Association of Toronto District
- March of Dimes
- Miles Nadal Jewish Community Centre
- Multiple Sclerosis Society
- OCAD University
- Ontario Federation of Cerebral Palsy
- Parks, Forestry and Recreation Division, City of Toronto
- Public Appointments, City of Toronto
- ReelAbilities Toronto Film Festival
- Ryerson University, School of Disabilities Studies
- Skills for Change
- Social Planning Toronto
- Spinal Cord Injury Ontario
- St Stephen's Community House
- Toronto Accessibility Advisory Committee
- Toronto Community Housing
- Toronto Drop-in Network
- Toronto Public Library
- TTC Advisory Committee on Accessible Transit
- TTC Wheel-Trans
- Unison Health and Community Services
- Vita Community Services
- York West Visions Support Group

List of Organizations

The organizations listed below have helped advance the objectives in the 2018 Accessibility Plan by having representative(s) on one of the Election Outreach Networks and/or were sent election information to share within their networks.

- 6 St. Joseph House
- Abrigo Centre
- Access Alliance Multicultural Health
- AccessPoint
- Action for Neighbourhood Change
- Advent Forestview Retirement Residence
- Afghan Women's Organization
- African Diaspora Youth Network in North America
- Africans in Partnership Against Aids
- Agincourt Community Services Association
- AIDS Committee of Toronto
- Alano Broadview Club
- Albanian Canadian Association Kosova
- All Saints Church-Community Centre
- Alliance for Equality of Blind Canadians (AEBC)
- Alliance for South Asian AIDS Prevention
- Altamont Long Term Care
- APOD Hub Elections 101
- Applegrove Community Complex
- Arab Community Centre of Toronto
- Art Community Art Centre
- Asian Community AIDS Services
- Association of Spanish Speaking Seniors of the Greater Toronto
- Balance for Blind Adults
- Bandladeshi-Canadian Community Services
- Baycrest Health Sciences
- Baycrest Terrace
- Belka Camp
- Bellwoods Health Services for Toronto Central
- Belmont House
- Bethany Baptist Church - Food Bank
- Bethlehem United Church - Kitchen
- Birchmount Bluffs Neighbourhood Centre
- Black CAP
- Bob Rumball Canadian Centre of Excellence for the Deaf
- Boys and Girls Club of East Scarborough
- Boys and Girls Club of Lawrence Heights
- Bridgepoint Health
- Bridges
- Buddies in Bad Times Theatre
- CAFCAN (Caribbean-African Canadian Social Services)
- Canadian Council on Rehabilitation and Work
- Canadian Federation of Students Ontario
- Canadian Hearing Society
- Canadian Helen Keller Centre
- Canadian Lesbian and Gay Archives
- Canadian Muslim Vote
- Canadian Red Cross Scarborough Drop-In Centre
- Canterbury Place Retirement Residence
- Caribbean Canadian Catholic Centre - Soup Kitchen
- Casey House
- Catholic Crosscultural Services
- CDI College
- Cecil Community Centre
- Cedarbrook Lodge
- Cedarvale Terrace Nursing Home
- Centennial College
- Central Eglinton Community Centre
- Central Neighbourhood House
- Central Toronto Youth Services
- Centre for Addiction/Mental Health
- Centre for Community and Learning Development
- Centre for Independent Living in Toronto
- Centre for Social Innovation
- Centre for Spanish Speaking Peoples
- Cheltenham Care Community
- Chester Village
- Chinese Canadian National Council Toronto Chapter
- Christian Horizons
- Christie Gardens
- Christie Ossington Neighbourhood Centre
- Christie Refugee Welcome Centre
- Christie-Ossington Men's Shelter
- Church of the Holy Trinity
- Church of the Redeemer
- Churches on the Hill Food Bank - Timothy Eaton Memorial Church
- Civic Action
- CMHA
- CNIB
- Commitment to Community (C2C)
- Common Ground Cooperative
- Community Matters
- Co-operative Housing Federation of Toronto
- Copernicus Lodge
- Cornerstone Place
- COSTI
- COTA - Bailey House
- Council of Educators of Toronto
- Covenant House
- Craiglee Nursing Home
- CRC Regent Park Community Food Centre
- CUIAS Immigrant Services
- Culture Link Settlement and Community Services
- Daily Bread Food Bank
- Davenport-Perth Neighbourhood and Community Health Centre
- Deerwood Creek Care Community
- Delmanor Prince Edward
- Delta Family Resource Centre
- Developing Young Leaders of Tomorrow, Today Project
- Dis-Orientation/Social Justice Fair
- Dixon Hall
- Dom Lipa Slovenian Linden Foundation
- Doors Open Toronto
- Downsview Long Term Care
- East Metro Youth Services
- East Scarborough Storefront
- Eastview Neighbourhood Community Centre
- Eatonville Care Centre
- Egale Canada Human Rights Trust
- Egale Youth OUTreach Counselling and Drop-In Centre
- Ehatare Retirement Home
- Elections Ontario
- Elm Grove Living Centre
- ESS Support Services

- Etobicoke Children's Centre
- Eva's Phoenix
- Eva's Place
- Eva's Satellite
- Evangel Hall
- Evergreen Centre for Street Youth: Yonge Street Mission (YSM)
- Extendicare Bayview Villa
- Extendicare Rouge Valley
- Extendicare Scarborough
- Fairview Nursing Home
- Fieldstone Commons Care Community
- Fife House
- Film & Entertainment Industries
- Find Help Information Services
- First Work
- Flemingdon Community Legal Services
- Flemingdon Community Support Services
- Flemingdon Park Community Food Bank
- Fort York Food Bank
- Fountain View Care-Building 2
- Fred Victor Centre
- Frontier Computing
- Garden Court Nursing Home
- Gathering Place Drop-In: Toronto Council Fire Native Cultural Centre
- George Brown College
- Glen Rhodes United Church - Food Bank
- Good Neighbors Scarborough Drop In
- Good Neighbours Club
- Good Shepherd
- Grace Pascoe Care Centre - Calvary Baptist Church - Calvary Food Bank
- Griffin Centre
- Guildwood Extendicare

- Habitat Services
- HALCO- HIV/AIDS Legal Clinic Ontario
- Harmony Hills Care Community
- Harmony Place Support Services
- Harold & Grace Baker Centre
- Harriet Tubman Community Organization
- Hawthorne Place Care Centre
- Hellenic Home
- Help2learn
- Heritage Nursing Home
- Homes First Society
- Horizons
- Houselink Community Homes
- Houses of Providence
- Housing Connections
- Housing for Youth in the City of York Corporation
- Humber College
- Humber Heights Long Term Care
- Humber Valley Terrace by Revera
- Humewood House Association
- Ina Grafton Gage Home
- Independent Living Skills
- Info To Go
- Inside Out
- Inspire Democracy
- Isabel & Arthur Meighen Manor
- Islamic Social Services and Resources Association
- Ivan Franko Home for the Aged
- Jamaican Canadian Association
- Jane and Finch Boys and Girls Club
- Jane and Finch Community & Family Centre
- Job Start
- Kababayan Multicultural Centre
- Kennedy House Youth Shelter

- Kennedy Lodge Nursing Home
- Kensington Gardens North
- Kensington Gardens South
- Koffler House - Food Bank
- La Passerelle
- Labdara Lithuanian Nursing Home
- Lakeshore Area Multiservice Project (LAMP)
- Lakeside Long Term Care Centre
- Learning Disabilities Association of Toronto District
- Learning Enrichment Foundation
- Let's Talk - Fallstaff Community Centre
- LGBT Youth Line
- Lighthouse
- Local Champion (Flemingdon Neighbourhood)
- Local Immigration Partnership
- Main Street Terrace
- Malaysian Association of Canada
- Malvern Family Resource Centre
- Manantial Neighbourhood Services
- Margaret's Housing and Community Services
- Mayfest
- Maynard Nursing Home
- Maytree
- McCall Centre for Continuing Care
- Men's Ministry Drop-In
- Mental Health Program Services of Metropolitan Toronto
- Met Community Services Drop-In
- Metropolitan Community Church
- Michael Garron Hospital
- Midland Gardens Care Community
- Miles Nadal Jewish Community Centre
- Millennium Support
- Miziwe Biik
- Mon Sheong Home for the Aged
- Mon Sheong Scarborough LTC

- MUC Shelter Corp.
- Muslim Welfare Centre - Food Bank
- Muslim Womxn at Ryerson
- Mustard Seed
- Native Child & Family Services
- Native Men's Residence - Vaughan
- Neighbourhood Arts Network
- Neighbourhood Information Post
- New Visions Toronto
- Nisbet Lodge
- Norfinch Care Community
- North Park Nursing Home
- North York Community House
- North York Harvest Food Bank
- North York Women's Centre
- Norwood Nursing Home
- Npower
- Oasis Dufferin Community Centre
- OCAD
- OCASI
- Ode - 2 Spirit Youth Group
- Older Women's Network
- Ombudsman Toronto
- One Kenton Place
- Ontario Federation of Cerebral Palsy
- Our Place Community of Hope
- Pakistani Community Centre
- Parkdale Activity Recreation Centre
- Parkdale Community Food Bank
- Parkdale Community Information Centre
- PEACH Youth Space
- Pegasus
- People in Motion
- Pieces to Pathways

- Planned Parenthood Toronto
- Polycultural Immigrant & Community Services
- Pride
- Pride at Work
- Rainbow Railroad
- Ralph Thornton Community Centre
- Rayoak Place Retirement Residence
- ReelAbilities Toronto Film Festival
- Regesh Family and Child Services
- Rekai Centre
- Revera West Side
- Rex Pride
- Rise Edutainment
- Rockcliffe Care Community
- Rose of Sharon
- Rosewood Taxpayers' Association
- Runnymede Healthcare Centre
- Ryerson University
- Ryerson University Student Union
- Sanctuary Ministries
- Scadding Court - Citizenship Ceremony
- SCAN Summit
- Scarborough Centre for Healthy Communities Fair
- Scarborough Retirement Residence
- Scarborough Storefront
- Scott Mission
- SEAS
- Second Harvest
- Seneca College
- Seniors Forum
- Seniors Health Centre
- Seniors Voice
- Shepherd Lodge
- Sherbourne Health Centre
- Silent Voice Canada
- Sistering: A Woman's Place
- Sisters of St. Joseph of Toronto
- SKETCH: Working Arts for Street-

- Involved and Homeless Youth
- Skills for Change
- Skylark
- Social Exchange Fair
- Social Planning Toronto
- Sojourn House
- Sound Times
- Spelling Bee of Canada
- Spinal Cord Injury Ontario
- St Ann Parish - Food Bank
- St James Town Community Corner
- St Jamestown Service Provider Network
- St John's Mission
- St Stephen's Community House
- St Thomas Aquinas Parish - Food Bank
- St. Bernard's Residence
- St. Christopher House
- St. Clair O'Connor Community
- St. Felix Centre
- St. George Care Community
- St. James Cathedral Drop-In
- St. John The Compassionate Mission
- St. Simon's
- St. Vincent De Paul
- Stop Community Food Centre
- Street Haven at the Crossroads
- Street Souls: St. Stephen-In-The-Fields Anglican Church
- Success Beyond Limits
- Sunnybrook Hospital
- Suomi Koti Finnish Centre
- Supporting Our Youth (SOY)
- Syme-Woolner Neighbourhood & Family Centre
- Taste of Regent Park
- Temple Emanu-El

- Tendercare Living Centre
- Teresa Group Child and Family Aid
- Terrace Gardens Residence
- TESCO Multicultural Settlement Organizations
- TESS Client Advisory Group
- The 519
- The Briton House
- The Canadian Muslim Vote
- The Corner Drop-In: St. Stephen's Community House
- The Gibson Long Term Care Centre
- The Neighbourhood Group
- The Neighbourhood Organization
- The Next Edition
- The O'Neill Centre
- The Salvation Army
- The Scott Mission
- The Spot - Jane and Finch Centre
- The Stop - Community Food Centre
- The Westbury
- The Wexford
- The Yonge Street Mission
- Thompson House
- Thorncliff Food Bank
- TinyTO
- Tony Stacey Centre for Veterans Care
- Toronto Aboriginal Support Services Council
- Toronto Arts Council
- Toronto Christian Resource Centre
- Toronto Community Hostel
- Toronto Community Housing
- Toronto Council Fire Native Cultural Centre
- Toronto District School Board
- Toronto Drop-in Network
- Toronto Grace Hospital
- Toronto Hispanic Chamber of Commerce
- Toronto HIV Aids Network

- Toronto Hostels Training Centre
- Toronto Local Immigration Partnerships
- Toronto Military Family Resource Centre
- Toronto Neighbourhood Centre
- Toronto Newcomer Council
- Toronto Public Library
- Toronto PWA Foundation
- Toronto Rehabilitation Institute
- Toronto Strong Neighbourhood Strategy Board
- Toronto Tenants
- Toronto Youth Cabinet
- Tourism Services
- Trilogy Long Term Care
- Trinity-St. Paul's United Church
- Turning Point Youth Services
- Ukrainian Canadian Care Centre
- Unison Health and Community Services
- Unity Mosque
- University Health Network
- University of Toronto
- University of Toronto's Student Unions
- University Settlement
- Valleyview Residence
- Vermont Square
- Villa Colombo
- Visible Minority Radio & TV Network
- VPI Working Solutions
- Walmer Road Baptist Church - Food Bank
- Warden Woods
- Wellesley Central Place
- West Neighbourhood House
- West Park Healthcare Centre

- West Park Long Term Care Centre
- West Scarborough Community Legal Services
- West Scarborough Neighbourhood Community Centre
- West Toronto Support Services
- Westminster Chapel at High Park Outreach Ministries - Food and Clothing Bank
- Weston Area Emergency Support - Frontlines Building
- Weston Gardens Retirement Living
- Weston King Neighbourhood Centre
- Weston Terrace Care Community
- White Eagle Residence
- Women's Habitat
- WoodGreen Community Services
- Working Women Community Centre

- Wychwood Open Door Drop-In Centre
- Yee Hong Centre for Geriatric Care
- YMCA
- Yonge Street Mission: Evergreen Centre for Street Youth
- York Memorial Presbyterian Church - Food Bank
- York University
- York Weston Community Fair
- Young Parent Resource Centre
- Youth Unlimited
- Youth Without Shelter
- YWCA

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