



THE CORPORATION OF THE TOWNSHIP OF KING
Report to Committee of the Whole

Monday, January 9, 2023

Corporate Services Department - Clerks Division
Report Number COR-CLK-2023-001
2022 Municipal and School Board Post-Election Accessibility Report

RECOMMENDATION(S):

The Director of Corporate Services respectfully submits the following recommendation(s):

1. Report Number COR-CLK-2023-001 be received for information.

REPORT HIGHLIGHTS:

- Within 90 days after a regular election, the Municipal Clerk must prepare a report on the identification, removal, and prevention of barriers that affect electors and candidates with disabilities and make the report available to the public.
- This staff report and its attached Appendix A has been prepared to comply with this requirement under the *Municipal Elections Act, 1996*.

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this report is to inform Council and the public of the accessibility measures taken with respect to the 2022 Municipal and School Board Election in the Township of King and to comply with the *Municipal Elections Act, 1996*, s. 12.1(3).

BACKGROUND:

Under the *Municipal Elections Act, 1996*, (the "Act") the Municipal Clerk is responsible for the proper legislative and administrative conduct of municipal and school board elections and establishing policies and procedures to ensure that all electors have the opportunity to participate fully in the election.

The Act requires the Clerk to have regard for the needs of electors and candidates with disabilities and to ensure that all voting places are accessible to electors with disabilities. The Clerk is also required, within 90 days after a regular election, in accordance with s. 12.1(3) of the Act, to prepare a report on the identification, removal, and prevention of barriers that affect electors and candidates with disabilities and make the report available to the public. This staff report and its attached Appendix A has been prepared to comply with this section of the Act.

In addition to the Act, the Clerk must also comply with the requirements of the *Ontario Human Rights Code*, the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005*, (the "AODA"), and its regulation the *Integrated Accessibility Standards (O. Reg. 191/11)*.

ANALYSIS:

Please see the report regarding accessibility initiatives undertaken for the 2022 Municipal and School Board Election attached as Appendix "A".

Customer Service Survey Results

Random electors had an opportunity during the Advance Vote to participate in a customer service survey upon casting their ballot. The survey was completed with 366 respondents and consisted of four (4) questions. It was the first time a survey like this was conducted at the polling location and provided an opportunity to gather some baseline data and overall feedback on the electors' experience.

The results of the survey are below:

1. Overall, my voting experience today was positive.
 - Strongly Agree - 86.61% (317)
 - Agree – 12.02% (44)
 - Disagree – 1.37% (5)
 - Strongly Disagree – 0.00% (0)

2. I found elections staff today to be helpful and courteous.
 - Yes – 99.73% (365)
 - No – 0.27% (1)

3. Acknowledging you are attending this in-person poll today, if there was an option to vote via internet instead, would you have?
 - Yes – 51.1% (187)
 - No – 48.9% (179)

4. The facility I attended today satisfied by accessibility needs.
 - Yes – 95.36% (349)
 - No – 0.82% (3)
 - Not Applicable – 3.83% (14)

Vote at Home Program Update

Council authorized the establishment of a new Vote at Home Program for homebound electors for the 2022 Municipal and School Board Election. The program was made available during the Advance Voting period and between the hours of 9 a.m. and 4 p.m. with two designated election officials assigned to administer the program and a Township electric vehicle. The program was utilized by one elector and the feedback on the experience was very positive. Staff consider the availability of the program to be of added value, of minimal costs, and will consider opportunities to enhance the promotion of this program for homebound electors next election.

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS:

An annual budget contribution of \$30,000 is made to the election reserve each to offset the total funds required to deliver and administer the municipal and school board elections for a total of \$120,000. Due to increasing costs related to inflation, supplies and materials, and staffing resources, an increase to

the annual election reserve amount will be brought forward as part of the 2023 Budget proposal to cover future increase costs for the election.

ALIGNMENT TO STRATEGIC PLAN:

The 2019-2022 Corporate Strategic Plan was formally adopted by Council on September 21, 2020 which emphasizes all of the ICSP Pillars (Financial, Economic, Socio-Cultural and Environmental) and is also aligned with the long-term vision defined in the Official Plan. The 2019-2022 Corporate Strategic Plan aims to ensure staff initiatives focus on current Term of Council priorities in support of the Township's long-term vision to 2031.

This report is in alignment with the CSP's Priority Area(s), associated Objective(s) and/or Key Action(s):



**Cultivating Safe,
Healthy and
Resilient
Communities**

Fostering Healthy, Diverse and Complete Communities

- Improve Accessibility



**Service Delivery
Excellence and
Innovation**

Increasing Community Engagement

- Actively Communicate with Citizens
- Increase Community Outreach Initiatives

Leverage Technology to Optimize Service Delivery

- Modernize Service Delivery Methods
- Evolve to Become Mobile Ready

This report is linked to our Strategic Plan by promoting accessible municipal elections and removing barriers to democratic participation and community engagement.

CONCLUSION:

The 2022 Municipal Election process was an accessibility friendly success. All citizens who wished to vote were able to do so no matter what form of disability they may have while allowing them to maintain their dignity when doing so. All initiatives and feedback received will be incorporated during the 2026 Municipal Election process.

Thanks to all King staff, election officials, and participating King schools for ensuring facilities were inclusive and fully accessible to all during this election period.

ATTACHMENTS:

[COR-CLK-2023-001 - Appendix A](#)

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ACCESSIBILITY INITIATIVES UNDERTAKEN FOR THE 2022 MUNICIPAL ELECTION	
Pursuant to Section 12.1(3) of the <i>Municipal Elections Act</i> , 1996, regarding the identification, removal and prevention of barriers that affect electors and candidates with disabilities.	
A. IDENTIFICATION OF BARRIERS	
Actions in 2022	Considerations for 2026
<p>1. Reviewed and received input on election accessibility initiatives from Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC).</p> <p>The AAC was kept updated and advised throughout the election process (i.e., facility audits, accessible equipment, reviewed training video).</p>	<p>The AAC continue to be kept informed and involved in the Election process from an early stage.</p>
<p>2. Engaged the Township Accessibility Committee Staff Liaison for comment, input and assistance.</p> <p>Assisted in identifying barriers and submitted comments on accessibility using the Accessibility Friendly Checklist. The checklist included such items as door widths, ramp widths and grades, availability of automatic accessible door entrances, lighting, and available accessible parking.</p>	<p>The AAC along with the Staff Liaison will continue to participate in site visits to ensure that all polling locations are inspected using the Accessibility Friendly Checklist and provide comment back to the Clerk and Election Coordinator.</p>
<p>3. Reviewed past election practices to identify barriers to the accessibility of candidates and electors.</p> <p>The <i>Municipal Elections Act</i> enables a voter to bring a support person to assist them in voting; permits the Deputy Returning Officer (DRO) to assist the voter if asked to do so; and provides that if someone comes to the voting location but cannot access the voting area, an election officer can assist the voter by bringing the ballot to the voter outside of the voting location.</p>	<p>Continue educating candidates and voters about assistive voting technologies and their availability during the election period.</p> <p>Ensure voters are aware of their right to have a support person assist them with; voting, utilizing assistive voting technologies, use of the 'Vote at Home Program', or request other forms of assistance from election staff.</p>

B. COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION	
Actions in 2022	Considerations for 2026
<p>1. Ensured communication and information for candidates and electors was available in multiple formats.</p> <p>Registered candidates were provided with a full paper copy of the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing 'Candidates' Guide', as part of their Nomination Package. The entire package was also made publicly available in an electronic format on the website. Alternate formats of all materials and notices were available upon request.</p> <p>Notices and information were communicated to the registered candidates via e-mail and in-person when Nomination Packages were distributed. General election information bulletins and notices to the public were posted to the Township website www.king.ca as well as in the local newspaper. Information and communication materials were also available at the Municipal Centre in the Clerk's Division as well as in alternate formats, upon request.</p> <p>The Township participated in a joint advertising campaign with other York Region municipalities to communicate and promote the 2022 Municipal Election. These advertisements were promoted on local radio stations, were published online, and in local newspapers throughout the 2022 period.</p> <p>Individual Voter Notification Cards were sent by first class mail to all electors on the Voters List. The cards advised electors that accessible equipment (Audio Tactile Interface (ATI)) would be available during each Advance Vote day. The information was included in many pieces of information such as notices that were placed on the Township's website and in the local newspaper.</p>	<p>Pursue collaborative communication and information campaigns with municipal partners throughout York Region.</p> <p>Encourage candidates to promote Advance Voting days, MPAC's <i>VoterLookup.ca</i> initiative, and early engagement in the voting process.</p> <p>Evaluate the Voter Notification Card to enhance accessibility, ease of reading, and promote the 'Vote at Home' program.</p>
<p>2. Posted all information to the Township website.</p> <p>The Township participated in promoting the Municipal Property Assessment Corporation's (MPAC) <i>VoterLookup.ca</i> website and initiative, which enabled electors to add and/or update their address information prior to the 2022 Elections. During the election period from Sept. 1 to Oct. 24, 2022, voters were able to update their voter and address information through the Township's election portal.</p>	<p>Ensure the Township's website remains compliant with the World Wide Web Consortium's Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0 Level A, as per requirements under O.Reg 191/11.</p> <p>Work with MPAC to enhance the <i>VoterLookup.ca</i> website.</p>

	<p>Other information available on the Township’s website included, but was not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ‘Am I on the Voters’ List’ (Voter Lookup) search functionality was provided to the public as an opportunity to see if they were on the voters list • List of candidates and contact information • Dates and locations for Advance Voting • Voting location and hours for Election Day • Frequently Asked Questions • Application to amend the Voters Lists • Application process to appoint proxy voters • Advertisement, application and information for election staff positions. <p>Any or all the above information was available in alternate formats upon request.</p>	<p>Enhance website information with visuals and videos of the types of and how to use the accessible equipment.</p>
<p>3.</p>	<p>Receiving feedback on accessibility initiatives.</p> <p>The Township website has an Accessibility section where persons may complete a feedback form on any aspect pertaining to accessibility on any property owned and operated in the Township.</p> <p>A customer service survey was available on-site during advanced voting dates for those electors who wished to participate when voting.</p>	<p>Review public feedback survey from 2022 Elections and incorporate/identify improvements.</p> <p>Review feedback forms and procedures to ensure compliance with regulations.</p>
<p>4.</p>	<p>Provided candidates with information relating to accessible customer service.</p> <p>The Township performed a mock election poll for candidates to attend and receive information on election training and equipment. The information included how election staff would engage in accessible customer service and were shown the accessible voting equipment (ATI).</p> <p>The candidates were also provided with information regarding the ‘Vote at Home Program’, with 2022 being the first initial offering of the program. The candidates were asked to include information about the accessible equipment in their campaign materials, and were encouraged when speaking with their constituents, to advise them that accessible voting equipment will be available at all advance voting locations.</p> <p>Candidates also received the “Candidate’s Guide to</p>	<p>Continue to provide information to candidates to enable effective communication and information being conveyed to the community.</p>

	<p>Accessible Elections” within their Nomination Package prepared by the Association of Municipal Clerks and Treasurers of Ontario (AMCTO) in partnership with the Accessibility Directorate of Ontario.</p>	
C. VOTING LOCATIONS		
Actions 2022	Considerations for 2026	
<p>1.</p>	<p>Conducted site visits of all voting locations to ensure accessibility.</p> <p>The AAC Staff coordinator along with Election and IT Staff, conducted an accessibility audit of all voting locations using the accessibility checklist created by the Accessibility Advisory Committee. The Township has historically used accessible voting locations featuring wheelchair accessible ground-level entrances, with elevator access as needed, and adequate parking.</p> <p>Where the elevator was not accessibly automated, election staff were appointed to operate the elevator.</p> <p>Where the site did not have enough dedicated accessible parking spaces as determined during the audit, additional accessible spaces were designated using temporary signage provided by the Public Works Department.</p>	<p>All municipal facilities be upgraded with automated or push-button accessible entrances.</p> <p>For future installations of elevators in municipal facilities, the elevator be fully user-operated and accessible.</p> <p>Ensure there is adequate signage indicating accessible parking spaces and directing people to the accessible entrances.</p>
<p>2.</p>	<p>Voting locations set-up for maximum accessibility.</p> <p>Floor plans were developed for each location, with the intention to provide adequate space to accommodate wheelchairs or other assistive devices while also minimizing the distance for persons with mobility limitations.</p> <p>Additional chairs were provided for people to be seated where there were lineups, and/or to be used behind the voter screens. As part of their training, election staff were advised to be aware of electors who may have difficulty waiting in line and offer them the use of a chair or other assistance.</p> <p>Staff of the Township’s Community Services Department were asked not to book any large events on Election Day to ensure there would be adequate parking for the electors. Election staff were asked to park farther away to ensure parking spots would be</p>	<p>Continue to evaluate locations or additional locations that best serve maximum accessibility.</p> <p>Consideration be given to utilizing the new Township Wide Recreation Centre if it is completed as an alternative to the King City Community Centre & Arena building.</p>

	available close to entrances.	
3.	<p>Addressed accessibility concerns with School Boards.</p> <p>Two (2) schools from the York Region Public School Board were utilized, being King City Secondary School and Nobleton Elementary School. On-site inspections were conducted at both schools, and both were found to be accessible.</p> <p>Signage was provided to direct electors to the accessible entrances. School staff and election staff were advised to park at the far end of the parking lots to ensure electors would have access to parking spots close to the entrances.</p>	<p>Continue collaborating with the school administration and custodial staff to discuss set-up and equipment (tables and chairs) required.</p> <p>Contact schools early to reserve space and plan, including booking tables and chairs.</p> <p>Ensure school facilities have adequate interior and exterior lighting on Election Day, and that spaces used for voting locations have adequate power and wireless internet access to reduce the use of extension cords and computer cables, which are tripping hazards.</p>
4.	<p>Provided Appropriate Signage at Voting Locations.</p> <p>During the site inspections, signage was checked to ensure that the location name/address was visible, designated parking spaces identified, accessible entrances and the route from the parking area to accessible entrances were all clearly marked. Public Works provided temporary parking signs for persons with disabilities where additional spaces were deemed to be needed.</p> <p>Signage was also provided both in the interior and exterior of all facilities to direct electors to the voting area and to the elevators.</p>	<p>Continued awareness and consideration during location assessments.</p>
5.	<p>In the event of any last-minute voting location change:</p> <p>Disruption of Service notices were provided to all Election staff for all locations, if so required.</p> <p>Staff would provide a notice on the Township's website under the News and Notices section, and in the local Township newspaper (if available), as well as posting notices at the Township recreation facilities and libraries, and on the door of the facility involved. If the changes were last minute, notices would be posted on the website and on social media, and a staff person would be placed at the location to advise</p>	<p>Conduct an emergency preparedness training session and mock scenario focused on response during a voting day.</p>

	electors and direct them to the alternate location, or provide whatever information is required.	
D. VOTING & EQUIPMENT		
Actions 2022		Considerations for 2026
1.	<p>Assessed voting equipment to ensure it meets the needs of the electorate and provided accessible voting equipment.</p> <p>The Township leased Vote Tabulator machines for the 2022 Elections. This equipment included an Audio Tactile Interface (ATI) device that enabled electors to create and mark their ballot using a combination of audio and tactile instructions and controls. For electors with visual disabilities, the ATI featured audio instructions for navigating and marking a ballot, combined with physical controls utilizing shapes and braille to assist with input. For electors with mobility disabilities, the ATI was also equipped with foot paddles and a 'sip-and-puff' device capable of recording electors' instructions for marking their ballot using their feet or mouth. This equipment was set up away from other voting screens and voter activity to provide privacy for electors.</p> <p>This equipment was tested for logic and accuracy in accordance with the Vote Tabulator policy.</p> <p>ATI equipment was available on all Advance Voting days. On Election Day, each voting location was provided with page magnifiers to assist persons with visual disabilities to read their ballot.</p>	<p>Research and consider implementation of alternative voting technologies to enhance accessibility for voters with limited abilities.</p>
2.	<p>Provided instructions on the use of accessible voting equipment.</p> <p>Election staff were trained to demonstrate the ATIs and to assist any person who asked to use the equipment. Once the elector appeared comfortable and ready to cast his/her vote, the staff person would retire to provide privacy while the elector voted but would remain nearby in case the elector needed assistance.</p> <p>Electors were also advised of their right to have a support person assist them with marking their ballot, and/or request the assistance of an Election Official if necessary.</p>	<p>Continue to provide training and instruction on the use of accessible voting equipment.</p>

3.	<p>Scheduled extended Advance Voting opportunities</p> <p>There were twelve (12) Advance Voting opportunities during the 2022 elections – three (3) consecutive Saturdays in October and nine (9) days during the two weeks prior to the Election including evening hours at the Municipal Centre. Extensive advertising was undertaken to ‘spread the word’ and to encourage persons with disabilities to attend the Advance Votes. Electors could vote at any Advance Vote, with locations spread throughout the municipality.</p>	<p>Consideration of advanced voting locations and dates to enhance voting options.</p>
4.	<p>Provided opportunities on the premises where an institution in which twenty (20) or more beds are occupied by persons who are disabled, chronically ill or infirmed.</p> <p>There is only one (1) such institution in King Township currently, the King City Lodge. Election staff contacted facilities staff at the Lodge prior to the election to work on procedures and any additional requirements for election day. Township staff attended on site at the location on Election Day from 10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. (noon). Information was sent to the residents and staff in advance, advising them of when the voting hours would take place at their residence.</p>	<p>Staff acknowledges the assistance and cooperation of the King City Lodge staff and will continue to work closely with staff for future elections.</p>

E. STAFF TRAINING	
Actions 2022	Considerations for 2026
<p>1. Incorporated provisions to meet accessible customer service standards and provided reference materials.</p> <p>In accordance with <i>Ontario Regulation 191/11, Integrated Accessibility Standards</i> made under the <i>Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005</i>, everyone who works for a municipality must receive customer service training regarding their interaction with individuals with various disabilities and how best to provide service.</p> <p>The Corporate Services Department - Clerks Division provided training to all election staff, which included a half-hour video training program (produced by Elections Ontario), slide presentation, and manuals on accessible customer service. Advance vote election Staff were familiarized with the operation of the ATIs during the training sessions. Accessible customer service training for all election staff was a mandatory condition of employment.</p> <p>Election staff assigned to the 'Vote at Home' program for homebound electors received extensive training, including the requirement to review the 'Vote at Home' Procedure.</p> <p>Election staff were advised that service animals and support persons are permitted in all voting locations and reviewed appropriate procedures to follow in these circumstances.</p>	<p>Update training package to reflect any/all legislative amendments in preparation for the 2026 elections.</p> <p>Consider additional promotion materials and measures regarding the Vote at Home program.</p>
<p>2. Monitored electors' concerns and ensured that their needs were met.</p> <p>Staff were trained to be observant and if any person appeared to need assistance, to offer to help the person. It was stressed that staff should never touch or try to assist without first asking the person if they could help. Staff were trained to monitor electors and if someone was in a line up and appeared to be having difficulties standing for a long period of time, to offer a chair and to ensure the person did not lose his/her place in line.</p>	<p>Ensure an adequate staffing complement is on site to address specific needs, accommodating electors as required.</p> <p>Provisions of continuous training and education will be included for staff, as ongoing development.</p> <p>Implement a customer service survey in 2026 to continue to obtain data and metrics regarding the voters' experience.</p>

<p>Staff were educated in recognizing different types of disabilities, including those that are not visually apparent, and how to respond appropriately to best assist the elector.</p> <p>Certain election staff were appointed as greeters and attended at the door/main entrance to assist as needed.</p> <p>Election staff were trained to identify service animals and to permit service animals in the voting location(s) and to allow support persons to attend and assist the voter if the voter so wished.</p> <p>Election staff were advised of the 'curb-side' service option and were prepared to attend or assist electors that were unable to enter the voting location.</p> <p>Staff conducted a customer service survey during the advanced election to obtain data about the electors voter experience.</p>	
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