

TO: Committee of the Whole	
MEETING DATE: January 15, 2019	
SUBJECT/REPORT NO: 2019-04 ADMIN – 2018 Municipal Election Accessibility	
APPROVED BY: Mike Purcell, CAO	SUBMITTED BY: Elaine Gunnell, Municipal Clerk

RECOMMENDATION

That Council acknowledge receipt of Report 2019-04 ADMIN – 2018 Municipal Election Accessibility – from the Municipal Clerk regarding the identification, removal and prevention of barriers that affect individuals with disabilities for the 2018 municipal election required by Section 12 of the Municipal Elections Act, 1996, as amended.

PURPOSE/BACKGROUND

Section 12 of the Municipal Elections Act, 1996, as amended requires that 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.

INFORMATION

Barriers to accessibility can be:

- Physical barriers, such as the need to negotiate steps to enter a building;
- Communication barriers, due to vision or hearing impairments or learning disabilities; and
- Other barriers, such as a lack of information or understanding on the part of people interacting with the persons with disabilities.

In order to identify barriers, prior to Voting Day, staff reviewed the types of barriers and the election process to help determine any potential or existing barriers that could impede persons with disabilities from accessing information, completing forms, understanding the process or exercising their right to run or vote in the election.

Measures to address barriers included:

Physical Barriers

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The Callander Community Centre was used as the Voting Place for both Advance Votes and on Voting Day, because of its physical accessibility. Prior to the voting days, staff checked exterior lighting and identified a problem that was readily fixed by Operations prior to the voting days. This ensured adequate lighting after dark, which is especially important for those with vision impairments. Elections staff also checked the various accessibility features of the facility to ensure all were adequate. We reviewed the internal traffic flow to the information/registration and forms tables, polling stations and privacy-screened voting areas to ensure enough space for the use of mobility devices. Sufficient accessible parking spaces were already in place next to the entrance to the voting place. There were no issues with physical barriers to filing a nomination for Candidates, since the Nomination Paper forms were available online and the Nomination Papers could be filed either in person at the Municipal Office, which has accessible access, or by an agent.

Communication Barriers

Prior to the voting days, elections staff reviewed the potential barriers for electors with communications impairments. To assist those with communication impairments the following steps were taken:

- Ballots were ordered with a reverse print (white or coloured printing on a black background) because that is more legible to those with visual impairments.
- “Accessible ballots”, which are notched beside the place to mark the “x: to assist the visually impaired fill out the ballot, were also made available.
- Large print copies of the ballot were displayed on the inside of the privacy shields and magnifier sheets were placed in the ballot marking stations.
- Printed instructions were available at the information and forms tables, and the polling stations to assist those who were hearing impaired.
- As much as possible all notices, forms, etc. were posted online which gave both electors and candidates the opportunity to take any additional time needed or use assistive devices to read and understand them.

Other Barriers

We ensured that all personnel involved in administering the election or providing information to the electorate and candidates had been trained in Accessible Customer Service and specific training on things such how to assist people with various types of disabilities, support persons and support animals was covered in the Election Workers training. Assistance was provided, as needed, for completing required forms both prior to and on Voting Day. At the Voting Place, notices concerning Accessible Customer Service procedures were posted and Feedback Forms were available on site.

APPENDICES / SCHEDULES

n/a

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